

"GEORGE DID IT" by Jeremy Peill (Tie for Second Place)

In my boyhood, I heard this phrase a lot  
When things got broken or dirty or torn.  
Once my father had found me he'd warn,  
"I *know* you did that," like a shot.

But I rarely had and I kept saying so  
Until he'd relent and allow me to leave,  
My face burning up and my spirits so low,  
That he'd feel bad too at seeing me grieve.

He'd settle the matter the best way he knew  
In every such domestic whodunit--  
Admitting no wrong but to make me less blue--  
He'd sigh and he'd say, "George must have done it."

Now *he* wasn't George, nor my sister, nor Mum.  
There were no brothers; nor lodgers in sight,  
No neighbors called George, not even a chum,  
So George was a figmentary White Knight.

Mysterious George was oft my way out,  
Conjured ever again as the last resort  
To forestall my emotional rout.  
So I saw George as a *really* good sport.

But as I grew older his mention grew rare  
Until I lived at home no more but down  
At Addlestone with my new wife fair,  
And the blessed gift of a thriving son.

Here one day I opened the door and found  
A wild Gypsy-like man there before me,  
Vacuum cleaner in hand, holding his ground.  
He growled at me, "I'm Geoorch. Vrom *Hungaree*."

"Come in George, "I bid him, "But *please* take care.  
Our home is *new*. My wife's proud of it all.  
Wipe your feet and set your vacuum there.  
Take a seat and tell me why you call."

To say he sold vacuums wasn't enough.  
I got his whole story in thrilling detail;  
From Hungary--where his life was quite rough--  
Via Wales with its much more cheerful tale.

In Wales he met *his* new wife Mary.  
She taught him his English but spoiled his accent  
So his talk sounded weird and contrary,  
All Hungaro-Magyar-Celtic it went.

But through this dense tangle I made out his plight:  
At selling he'd been a winner in Wales--  
More than any other salesman might  
In scoring record vacuum sales.

His bosses decided George would make  
A super sales manager for sure,  
But here they committed a serious mistake.  
'Twas *pity* that won him clients galore!

But who pities sales managers? So he  
Stood no chance. As his company's sales fell  
His bosses were finally forced to agree,  
"George can't man age at all, on ly sell."

So George took Mary and daughters three  
And went into England a new job to seek.  
By searching most assiduously  
He found a new vacuum brand in a week!

But not being Welsh we English are hard hearted.  
George trudged his way from door to heartless door.  
"Zese vooomen vill *not* from zeir cash be parted,"  
Said George, slumped before me forlorn and footsore.

We already *had* a vacuum cleaner.  
Margaret certainly didn't need two;  
(Our small savings would be even leaner).  
Then I thought of *my* George who'd been so *true*;

That George's name kept its place in my heart.  
This George to our new home had done no harm.  
I craved for a way to repay his part  
In ameliorating my boyhood alarm.

"Why don't we work together?" I suggested.  
"I could certainly use more income too."  
"Can vee haf an trink on it?" George requested,  
And we sealed our agreement, after a few.

But during a week of wet evenings long,  
Squelching through mud to every new house,  
We had to conclude that we'd both been wrong.  
With zero success we could only grouse.

But I'd learned so much from my new friend.  
He'd been a Hungarian test pilot,  
Flying Western jets and prop jobs without end--  
Donated by defectors—'til he got

*Bored.* George and his fellows sought distraction,  
Diving jets straight down in games of chicken.  
This became their favorite recreation  
'Til George had lost most of his comrades, then

He turned to swigging antifreeze from  
The foreign interceptors in his care  
Which multiplied crashes at the `drome  
'Til nothing was left to take up in the air.

One dark night George swam the Danube, midstream  
On the flood tide for twenty miles, until  
Landing in Austria he claimed his new dream:  
Freedom from Communist rule—what a *thrill!*

But George's dream lasted barely a day.  
He found himself just one more refugee  
Bundled with others, dispatched on their way--  
In his case to Wales, to *school* and Marie.

Right after our vacuum venture  
George disappeared from the neighbourhood.  
Then at last a letter came to our door.  
But its news was nothing of good.

From England penniless George had gone off  
To Khartoum, to run a three-wheeler plant  
For the government, of all things. Don't scoff;  
Whatever George *could* do he couldn't say *can't*.

He soon got his plant in a huge Egyptian mess,  
Fled with his family to Cairo then  
Boarded a British VC 10 and... guess!  
Called the Embassy for guards and when

They came the captain, claiming sovereign right,  
Rebuffed the officials out for George's blood,  
Got *airborne* before they could stop the flight  
Of this failed autocrat, whose name was now mud.

So George had escaped again clean away  
From whatever damage he'd done--this time  
To the pearl of Abdel-Nasser's eye that day;  
This *saboteur*, this threat in every clime.

The hapless Minister for Industry,  
Endungeoned and tortured to his limit  
Screamed out to the palace emissary, conductor's wave  
"George Did It, George Did It, George Did It."

### Epilogue

I still remain grateful that George took the blame,  
Cutting his teeth in the home of my youth.  
Yet long before George earned world-wide ill fame,  
Oh *how* did my father divine the truth?