

A Word Or Two For Jennybelle

Jennybelle, whatever you do
When you go strolling through the zoo,
Observe the signs the keeper placed:

Please do not tease the chimpanzee.
Her name is Prudence. See, she wears
A long wig and a willing face.

Please do not feed orangutangs.
Their names are Percy, Sam and Bill.
They get good dinners every night.

Please do not reach your hands through bars.
A gibbon, name of Albert, shrieks.
Lemurs lean out to nip your knees.

Jennybelle, with your mad makeup --
Mascara intricate, dimple simple,
Lips on wrong, gone long and leerful --

You're a vicious civic problem!
Remember what your mama said:
Invite no confidences from

Apes in Bermudas, posing for
America, a camera.
Look out, look out for Liberty...

That old baboon forgets he has
A flaming and inflamed behind.
A big bat wags between his legs.

Walk if you will down crazy lanes
Of cellophane and peanut shell.
But when you crackle through the zoo

And soft talk rattles every cell,
When Sam and Bill wink back at you
And tiptoe through the monkey waltz,

Observe the signs the keeper placed;
Remember what your mama said --
The price of unspent innocence.

— Ralph S. Pomeroy

Davis, California