

# The Copywriters Act

## A nonsense play in two drafts



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**Scene:** The Press Room  
Dramatis Personae

**Patrick Gobody**, Editor  
**Tony Mee**, Assistant Editor  
**Tim**, A trust-worthy copywriter.

### The Brief:

We must tell our customers in our usual eloquent way that our strictly apolitical newspaper will now accept pan-European political news around the clock.

### **First Draft:**

'And oft when I remember now!  
Our wayward pens were never capped!  
Before the hour of ten o'clock !  
As through the death-watch hour of night  
Our printing presses foretold the light!  
But hawk! ... a noise from hills unseen!  
From writers pastures ever green!  
Where Pan's sweet music doth abound!  
To push and push sweet time ajar!  
And chase the fairy moonbeams far!  
Beyond the darkest midnight hour!'

**PATRICK:** I definitely like your first draft Tim! I'm not too sure about the word 'now' in the first line though... 'remember now'... seems to suggest that we might not have been too good on the old memory banks in the past, eh?

**TONY:** I agree! I'm not too sure that our readers will understand 'oft' ... might be better to spell it out. And while we are at it could we remove some of those exclamation marks... too many and a bit passé nowadays, what?

**PATRICK:** What's really bothering me is that bit in the fifth line about our printing presses predicting the future. That will have to go, Tim. We might have the church down on top of us if we run that line as it stands. And we can't afford to fall out with the representatives of such a huge section of our market.

**TONY:** Hmmmmm! Just as well you spotted that. But isn't there a bit of a credibility problem creeping into the next line? I mean if the hills were so far away as to be unseen... a noise wouldn't carry that far would it? Wouldn't 'sound' be better word? Let's give it a bit of body and call it 'robust sound'... there's a nice solidity in that.

**PATRICK:** Isn't 'robust' just a little bit sexist? You're good on these things, Tim, have you another word for bust?

**TONY:** Hold it a sec... I think I have it here in my dictionary ... busted. Now that should do it very nicely. Hmmmm - 'busted sound' doesn't quite fit the bill. I've got it! ... soundbust - that's it! 'A soundbust from hills unseen'. Hey! That's really good isn't it?

**PATRICK:** That's settled then. I'm still not altogether sure what you mean by 'writers pastures ever green', Tim. But I like the sound of it. Green is the big buzz word in the market right now. Nice line! It wouldn't be seen as a bit too political... would it?

**TONY:** Might try and squeeze in the word 'labour' somewhere, Tim, just to even things out a bit.

**PATRICK:** To be on the safe side, Tim, better write in the Conservative Party too!

**TONY:** And sorry Tim! The fairies have got to go. Can't have that. Could they not just be moonbeams on their own? Hmmmmm - I can see where you are coming from. You're covering all eventualities, aren't you Tim? You're thinking of the nights when there's no moonbeams. Good thinking! That's what we pay you all that fairy gold for isn't it, tee hee!

**PATRICK:** Ho hum! Is it that time already? Better leave you to get on with it Tim, we'll need that final draft by lunchtime you know. But I think we've got it all clear now. Haven't we?

**Second Draft:**

'Because we're green  
And conservative  
We robustly labour  
After midnight! '

**PATRICK:** Much better altogether, Tim. Much better indeed. Love the way you get to the point quickly. We really put you up against it, didn't we?

**TONY:** We're definitely all on the same wavelength now, Tim. But are we pushing it too far trying to get conservative to rhyme with labour? Let me just check that in my dictionary...

[Abrupt Curtain on this harmless nonsense](#)



... bears afoot. From the underfoot series.  
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