

# Mom's Soap Poem

## Christmas 1973

Listen, my children, and you shall hear  
(Are you sitting down with a bottle of beer?  
Preparing yourselves for a sigh and a tear)  
I fear

### I BLEW IT

Soap it was I thought that I would make  
Instead of sew or brew or spin or bake,  
This sub-culture perhaps is not for me,  
But I got off on the economy  
And meritorious simplicity  
Of your idea.

### GOOD LUCK

The project started in a daze  
Midst Co-op books so bright with ways  
To do it yourself  
And save your pelf  
While earning enjoyable praise.

Book in hand and glint in eye  
With firm intent to do or die  
Off to butcher shop for fat  
Another trip for oil and vat  
And lye (Oh, my head sinks low  
When I think of the wasted dough!)

Efficiently I measured out  
Ingredients without a doubt  
Of my success.  
Rendered fat to tallow white  
Spirit rising to great height  
Of puffed pride.  
Mixed together, all went well,  
Temp'rature and texture swell,  
Time for bedding down the soap  
Full of joy and full of hope,  
In foil pans I poured the stuff  
Three of them were just enough

On pans a blanket thick and warm  
So mix would mingle, rest and form  
Castillian bars so white and rich  
(But how that soap did play the bitch!)  
Yet then my joy was unsurpassed  
How could I know it was my last  
For three days?

So sat me down to take my ease  
Rejoicing in capacities  
For crafts and creativities  
For three minutes.  
But here, my dears, was my mistake  
To think that I could take a break  
For three seconds.

Back turned, luck turned;  
Stomach churned, soap book spurned;  
All was burned, much was learned;  
Witches of Macbeth returned.

Soap commenced to hiss and boil;  
Nothing was according to Hoyle.  
Book consulted, only said  
"Now your soap has gone to bed."

### I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN

Bed has always been the place  
For the chemical embrace,  
When fat and lye come face to face  
They either love or war's the case.

Situation greatly worsened  
Soap and soap book strongly cursened.  
Filthy Brew has melted foil  
Made a mockery of toil.  
See it flow onto Formica!  
Black with molten foil, no likah!  
Down the cupboard onto floor  
New events a terrible bore,  
Blanket on the top et through  
By this awful surging brew;  
Skin and hair its natural prey,  
To stem its tide there is no way.

Noxious fumes invade the air;  
Scene too horrible to bear,  
Shrieks and wails and lamentations  
Only goad these fomentations  
Spreading now to every corner  
Wish I'd never been a borner.

Finally, wearied of its sport,  
Congealed into rigor mort,  
On every surface lying thick,  
To get it up is quite a trick  
This witch's sabbath I deplore  
No soap I'll make for ever more,  
But worse than that I have no gift,  
What a flop! But don't be miffed  
Contain your tears, suppress your ire  
For every child has dam and sire,  
Don't be down and don't be blue,  
This year your father's comin' through!

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### BUT WAIT! (by Philip Bouwisma)

This story has a sequel.  
Though in poetic skills unequal,  
Philip needs to tell his story  
Which attests to Mother's glory.  
Considering his predilection  
She prepared one more confection  
Which was more humanitarian,  
Vegan, hip and vegetarian.  
Made from gentle stuff like glycerine,  
Not animal fat and viscereine,  
It did not go to civil war,  
Eat the pan and soil the floor,  
But metamorphosed into bars  
Of soap deserving many stars.  
So while the others gnashed their teeth,  
Philip bathed, a great relief  
To all around him, giving hope  
That he might oftener use soap.  
In fact, in spite of all their fears,  
This batch lasted many years.