LIMIT CYCLE

It must be a canon of natural law
or a reflex reaction like jerking of knees,
That whenever a company's profits are down
They proclaim an across-the-board hiring freeze.

Seniors looking for work find the door has been barred.
The red carpets that last year were there in full view
Have been rolled up and mothballed and stored out of sight,
And the letters all read, "Don't call us, we'll call you."

For the next several years on each campus you'll find
Would-be engineers singing their frustrated blues,
And the word gets to seniors in high school that if You select engineering you'll pay some high dues.

Now these kids are no dummies, they soon get the drift.
And to business and law school they roll in a wave.
Engineering enrollments go down like a stone
And the deans struggle vainly their budgets to save.

It's a national crisis! Blue ribbon commissions
Spend years and big bucks in a terrible fright,
And proclaim that the old engineering profession
Is sick unto dying, with no hope in sight.

Then of course there occurs a dramatic reversal
That cuts short the agonized moaning and tears,
For it seems that the companies had a good quarter
And all of a sudden they need engineers!

The call soon goes out, all the freezes are lifted,
Red carpets are hauled out and vacuumed with care,
But recruiters soon find to their shock and surprise
That the students they're trying to get aren't there.

Now the circus begins, it's the law of the jungle,
If your pulse can be measured they want you right then.
Up go salaries, perks, and enrollments once more
Till the whole silly cycle starts over again.

So what can we learn from this sad sordid story?
The moral in just a few words I'll disclose:
If our industry wants to stay healthy it might think
Of lifting its gaze past the end of its nose.
OH NO, IT'S THE E WORD!

Thermo mavens rant about it.
Gibbs and Sandler and Van Ness
Give you formulas and prose
About this thing that's known as S.
It increases with disorder,
It's a property of state,
It is zero for some crystals,
It's the universe's fate.
It can be dq, dU
and sometimes dH over T,
It's a measure of extent of
Irreversibility.
It accounts for work that's lost
In engines, blenders, pipes and flues,
Due to friction or to mixing.
It's a game we always lose.
Its the reason we succumb
To Deaths inexorable crunch,
It equals k ln omega,
It's why thers no free lunch.
You can look it up in tables,
Find it on a Molliegraph,
But can they tell you what the hel is it really is?
Don't make me laugh!

Ther must be some way to explain
in terms we all could understand,
If in truth we should play its one of
The things that can't put in traction.

TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP (SHORT FORM)

If you're anxious for to shine in the academic line
As a man of wisdom rare,
You must cultivate the Dean and bring in lots
of green
And publish everywhere.
You must go to learned meetings and exchange
flamboyant greetings
With the heroes in your field.
Your rise will be dramatic and your peer
reviews ecstatic.
And your reputation sealed.

And everyone will say,
As the plaudits come your way,
If this young man got a PYI
Not to mention an ERC,
Why, what a very paragon of scholarship
This bright young man must be.

Be nimble on your feet too when a VIP you meet
who
In your field enjoys respect.
Though you think that in his work he is a
thoroughgoing turkey
You must smile and genuflect.
For some day he'll have a vote on a proposal that
you float,
As toward major grants you steer,
And you wouldn't want him to cut you down in
his review,
Like you did to him last year.

As your star goes on ascendin' you must guard
against a tendency
To ease up on the pace.
Work at night and on the weekend.
Lest in time you face a bleak end.
In the crucial tenure chase.
Teach your class, serve on committees, go give
talks in far-off cities,
Put equipment out on bids,
And maybe every week or two a reasonable thing
to do
Is visit with your wife and kids.

As everyone will say,
As you turn prematurely gray,
If this young man works a hundred-hour week
Which is far too much for me,
Why, we had better find him a Distinguished Chair
So he doesn't jump to M.I.T.

1 For those who lack the Patience for the long version. (Apologies to W.S. Gilbert.)
2 Or woman.