



Committing a *Faux pass*

A Faux pass, a Painting
By Justin Pearson, 2007
Oil on Canvas, 48x38 cm

Poem By Sandy Clark, 2009
Committing a faux pass

Committing a *faux pas*, in a café or a bar,
is a horror that is instantly lamented,
an unfortunate expression, or a phrase without discretion:
it's a talent that I seemingly invented.

And you don't know what to say, and you try to look away,
and you wish that you were in another place,
and you rue your lack of reverence, and swear yourself to temperance,
and wish that you could take off into space.

Say there's someone from your past, and her belly's grown so fast,
that you pass on your best wishes and ask 'When?',
then you comprehend - too late - that she's simply put on weight,
and you know she'll never talk to you again.

And you don't know what to think, 'cause your brain is on the blink,
and you'd take it back completely if you could,
but the damage has been wrought, and communication's fraught,
and you wish that you could disappear for good.

Or there's something that you've heard, and you say that it's absurd,
and you think they must be crazy – then there's silence,
then you realise, quite belated, that a guest may be related,
and you're very very sorry for your stridence.

And you don't know what to do, and you turn a little blue,
and you stammer out excuses in despair,
but the atmosphere is terse, and it only makes it worse,
and you wish that you could vanish in thin air.

At a table with some strangers, you are shrill about the dangers,
of those surgical procedures to stay young,
then you figure by the tension, it's a thing you shouldn't mention,
'cause there's someone there who's clearly had it done.

And you don't know where to look, and you feel a little crook,
and you contemplate pretending to be faint,
but you know it wouldn't work, and you'd look a bloody jerk,
and you wish that you were somewhere that you ain't.

Or you meet a flame from school, and remind her of some fool,
and you ask if she recalls that bloody loser,
then she indicates her spouse, and you slowly work it out,
and you know that you have dropped a bloody doozer.

And you find it hard to breathe, and you wish that you could leave,
and you wonder if this ever leads to violence,
and you pray that it will end, every time that you offend,
and you vow that in the future there'll be silence..

Committing a *pas, faux*, is a train wreck, only slow,
and it's terminal when all is done and said,
but I'll say it at the last – with respect to those who've past -
there are times when you are simply better dead!