

Ballad of 465 Noyes Lab

Remembered By: Edwin C. Friederich

Edwin C. Friedrich, BS '57 chemistry, remembers this poem's mysterious appearance on a Noyes bulletin board. He made a copy in the fall of 1956. He was at this time doing senior research for Prof. D.E. Applequist. He went on to get his Ph.D. from UCLA and is now an emeritus professor of chemistry at U.C. Davis.

Ballad of 465 Noyes Lab

In a beaker, in the gunk bath
stood a product thick and black
Was a compound from Berichte
What an error! What a hack!

Dr. Curtin told his student
This stuff once again to brew
If you think this was accomplished
Then my friend, "I've news for you."

This poor hacker set to make it
Just as Wittig wrote it down,
Mixed the compounds slow and careful
Till it turned a viscous brown.

Placed the mixture on the steam bath
Thought that heat would do no harm,
Little thought he happy, cheerful
That it soon would grow too warm.

Out the lab door, gaily tripping
Down to Farwell's one and all,
Charlie's coffee signaled, beckoned
No one could resist the call.

Elevator was there waiting,
Gladly they began their ride,
But the joy soon turned to sorrow
Doctor Adams peered inside.

"Ach, Mein Kinder," said he softly
"Don't you like it here at all?"
Then he quickly changed the subject
"Oh, my God! The whole east wall."

Thoughts of Farwell's now forgotten,
One and all they hurried back,
Found they now a lab transfigured;
Walls once white were now jet black.

Morning sunlight, inward streaming
Showed the damage to us all.
Said Doctor Adams, shrugging shoulders,
"Strange it took so long to fall."
Or "Don't those roaches have their gall!"

Anonymous