

Computer Science Themed Poems I

December 8, 2010

These poems were entries in the Computer Science Poetry Contest held in conjunction with the department's Grace Hopper Birthday and Computer Science Education Week Celebration on Wednesday, December 8, 2010. Entries were restricted to at most 16 lines of at most 80 characters each. Poems (identified by number) were posted during the party and party attendees were invited to cast at most three votes. The top vote-getter was "Computer Science Funding Woes" by Janet Rion. Entries whose authors agreed to their posting appear below.

Computer Science Funding Woes

Hark, a solicitation, a BAA . . .
Check the deadline, clear the way.
Who is the sponsor, who is the lead?
Try to work it out at breakneck speed.

Technical problems . . . see the PI,
Budget changes make you cry.
Students are counting on you for funds:
Slots and money is how it all runs.

Teaching and Science are the honey,
Once busy bees gather the money.
Fifty proposals thirty rejected,
This is not what I expected . . .

Back to FastLane and Grants.gov,
Chasing the dollars that we all love.
Trying to re-do what I just done !!!!!!!
Now doesn't this sound like fun?

– *Janet Rion*

Deep Thought in C

Eureka! I have
found the answer to life, the ...
Segmentation fault.

– *Christina Wallin*

Pointers in the Night

(A remake of Frank Sinatra's Strangers in the Night)

Pointers in the night, exchanging values,
seg-faulting in the night, what were the chances
we'd be going home, before the night was through???

Something in your address, was so misleading,
Something in your syntax, was so not-right-ing,
Something in my heart told me I must NULL you!

Pointers in the night!
Two empty eyes, debugging pointers in the night
up to the moment when I ran valgrind, oh, only few more and we'll
go,
home was just a block away, a cold, endless walk away?

– *Nikola Chonkov*

Ode to Debugging

There once was a monad so vile
That no Haskell hacker could make it compile.
What the type errors said
Made everyone dread
That all of their efforts were futile.

– *Donya Quick*

A Two-Ring Tribute

There was a young scholar named Turing
Whose thoughts on C S were enduring.
 His machines execute
 Any program to boot;
Their power we found most alluring.

– *Stan Eisenstat*

To the Zoo & Back

(A remake of Savage Garden’s To the Moon & Back)

I am taking my time making up the reasons
to justify not knowing who my suitemates are,
Guess it shows, from my time.log and the blood in my eyes,
I know this room better than the one where they are.

They are saying
He doesn’t like humans much,
And he doesn’t really look as such
That’s when StarCraft saves me from demention,
And when I am in my private space,
I pack my bag for that other place,
And now I am waiting for the right kind of moment
to come, (and I’ll say to them)
I’m saying

Gotta go to the Zoo and back,
And I’ll see ya, I’ll see ya t’morrow maybe?

– *Nikola Chonkov*

An Ode to the Three-Year Plan

A department CS I well know
Believed it could just grow and grow
The Provost stepped in
Said, “You’ll never win”
And declared any growth would be slow.

– *Michael Fischer*

Because I could not cope with dot

(apologies to Emily Dickinson)

Because I could not cope with dot,
I stuck with javac.
I hoped to duck runtime debug
For all eternity

But what's the point of classy files
That never get as far.
As java p.q.r
.classname — risking bugs or smiles?

– *Drew McDermott*¹

Objection

There once was a woman name Dana,
There was never anyone insaner!
Students shouldn't eat cake,
They should work without break!
Please! Find someone to restrain her!

– *Wet Blanket Assistant Professor*

¹ Dots play many roles in Java. The role alluded to in my poem is its use in defining packages. If a Java program `classname.java` begins with the statement
`package p.q.r;`
then, assuming `java` and `javac` are using the same classpath, the program must be invoked as
`java p.q.r.classname`
There is no interesting way to abbreviate this; you just get used to typing it. The compiler, `javac`, doesn't require the dots; it just wants the source file.