

ODE TO THE SUNDEW

By Joyce Ferguson 2/19/2019

Oh, Sundew, pretty Sundew, I've known you just a while.
But you've been round for centuries, sipping insect bile.
T'was quite a trek to find you. But I had lots of fun.
I didn't see your picture, before my search begun.

Were you small and short, or tall and slender built?
What color were your petals? Were you plain or brightly gilt?
Well I found you with my friends, growing in the fen,
A place of carbonate acid. In the moss you made your den.

Bouncing on your fen moss and your sphagnum as it floats.
Was a joyful time of laughter as I sought you with bright folks.
Your distribution, circumboreal in the temperate zone.
Who would have thought you clever, to eat on insect bones?

How beautiful you are, at least in summer's sun.
You glisten as the diamonds. Is your nation like the Huns?
Your family, Droseraceae. Your genus *anglica*.
Near your side your cousin, *linearis* all in bud.

Oh, *Anglica*, some call you, the English Great Sundew.
But *Linearis*, Slenderleaf, is what the blokes named you.
All North American *Droseras* have 20 chromosomes,
But *Anglica*, you're different, with 40 that you own.

Some error in meiosis, apparently occurred,
At creation of your pollen and your ovule, you were stirred.
And from *Rotundifolia*, and *Linearis* breeds,
Anglica, you're fertile, through amphidiploidy.

Small autogamous creature, you do your own self mate.
Described to us by Hudson, in 1778.
A basal rosette at your feet, just four inches high,
Your peduncle, maybe eight, reaches to the sky.

And underneath your skirt, some tiny little corms.
Also, you're perennial, once you have been born.
Your leaves are red and green, of the hue of Christmas Grinch.
But solid red they turn, if they become sun drenched.

Your laminae may grow to be, slightly longer than an inch,
But your petioles are longer, and your rosette rather dense.
Your stalk it holds a flower, and often up to five.
But each one gets its turn to be, admired opened wide.

Your petal gown is white, and very, very thin,
Perhaps an half inch round about. Its beauty makes me grin.
Ringing 'bout your pistil are five stamen, yellow tipped.
From its top three styles, 2-lobed and purple dipped.

Oh, *Anglica* your laminae are rather kind of round.
But *Linearis* you've decided slender leaves profound.
The gorgeous part about you is your sparkle and your shine.
For you look as though the morning dew, all day about you binds.

On the edges of your laminae, you grow a hundred treats.
And sometimes on your plane sides, a shorter similar sweet.
Short, little lollipops, for all the fairies' joy.
A clear and viscous droplet tops, each one as a coy.

Yes, you're a devilish creature, or shall I say quite smart?
A lure you made to capture, any prey that round you darts.
These tentacles of yours, stalked mucilaginous glands.
Are like a thousand sticky fingers on numerous little hands.

And when the Northern Bluet, or other dragonflies,
Smell your tempting perfume, on you they soon will die.
The moment that they touch you, you grab them tight and curl,
Your thigmotropic motion, winds up, like hair upon a girl.

In fifteen little minutes you asphyxiate their spiracles.
But this your nutrient soup, is your blessed God made miracle.
A fascinating work, ingenious by design,
Just so you've got some nitrogen. God to you is kind.

Before the winter comes, and your wetland home is ice,
Your life blood's well protected, 'cause you curl your leaves up tight.
You knot them at the ground, and surround your resting bud,
Then lie dormant until spring, in your hibernacula.

Your antitussive properties help people with dry coughs.
But now-a-days, such medicine, most folks would only scoff.
If it weren't a lot of work, I might try to make some dye,
From your red and vibrant color, I would grind you, but you'd cry.

And I'd rather see your glory, and leap from float to float.
Than to haul through all that jackstraw, a fine and slender boat.
So, rest assured your glistening will carry on quite marvelous.
And your future progeny, will ever be carnivorous.