

## Turning 30 on Opening Night

by Jonathan Raz  
for Jeffrey Raz on his birthday  
May 31, 1987/1988

The Flying Karamazov Brothers juggled  
(you knew that) and they acted well. Shakespeare  
appeared in person, sniffed and preened his costume.  
Ethyl Eichelberger swished around,  
while Avner the Eccentric wowed the Times,  
and on tall stilts with flashing lights was Raz:

It's Jeffrey to his closest friends, but Raz  
is how he's known as acrobat and juggler  
to all subscribers to the New York Times.  
Add to his credits: Lincoln Center/Shakespeare;  
It goes with Italy and theatres all around  
the States. He was professional in costumes

with pink high heels, and reappeared in costume  
(unlike Baryshnikov's) to dance as Raz.  
Nine balls or sixteen pins can spin around  
when Mark and Danny D. and Jeff are juggling.  
A note: his iambs sound as good as Shakespeare  
has always sounded since Queen Betsy's time.

In early England, even in our time  
(an abstract century), it's been a custom  
to frame a poem in rhyme. We all know Shakespeare  
did, but this one (its written by another Raz)  
revolves and winds; permutes; it juggles  
end-words up the stanzas and around.

And like a silver pin that hits the ground,  
any metered end-word can be dropped,  
and no retort is ever quite in time,  
and few can satisfy a picky customer.  
But audiences often laugh when Raz  
recites a drop-line, courtesy of Shakespeare.

The crowded Earth's a stage, so stated Shakespeare.  
He must have meant a stage that's wide and round,  
A stage on which the actors such as Raz  
Walk, struggle, love, and sleep, beat time  
to music from backstage and get in costume  
for the final act, where everyone juggles.

Let us honor jugglers of Shakespeare's time  
and pratfalls, dramaturgy, lights, and costumes,  
and all Vaudevillians, expressly Raz.