

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington Poem to Mrs. C. E. Pearson, February 7, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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Off with my head, I am a Scottish list.
Off with my tail, and I must run away.
Off head and tail, a general, you wist.
Pear Harbor had me anchored in the bay.

Head off, I am a ducky.
Off head and tail, a drink.
My whole, if you'd be lucky,
You will not do, I think.

My first, a "woody" place where they seem to love divorce.
My second is a joint at the south end of a horse.#
And if for this rank crudity you'll give to me your pardon,
You'll often find my whole in a sweet, old-fashioned garden.
#As he goes north.

My first, Loki's daughter, ancient Teutonic.
My second, a sweetheart of Zeus.
Then a figure of speech that is often laconic.
My whole is a flower profuse.

My first, now, is a pooch, and my second is his caudle,
Or else my first is short and brusque, my second to befall.
My whole would make it shorter, taking no time to dawdle,
And if my whole were short, my whole would make it
shorter still.

(Now I'll admit my whole is not quite the word to use
if by shortening my whole man's best friend you would abuse.
It does not fit the claws at the end of a cat's paws
As well's it fits the clauses at the end of great long
pauses.)

Behead me, a dipper am I.
(You know there are different sorts.)
Curtailed, here you live and you die.
(Some are built to live in, some for sports.)
My whole is a rite -- priests will do it.
Do you know the word? Hamlet# knew it.
#Hamlet the elder.

Behead me, I'm a planet spinning about the sun.
Curtail me, I'm an organ -- by love 'tis often won.
Curtail again and listen, and this is what you'll do.
You'll need one more beheading to do it with, 'tis true.
Behead me twice and curtail once and beauty you will see.
Behead me twice, curtail me twice, a measure I will be.
Behead me twice, curtail me thrice, an article that's small.
Behead three times, curtail three times, I disappear,
that's all.

My feet are on my whole as I sit and meditate,
And watch the play of sparks and flames within the
glowing grate.

Behead me, I'm a market where many goods are sold.
Behead me twice, I'm beauty -- I may be young or old.
Behead me once, curtail me twice, -- you could do this
to art,

But if you love true beauty you could not have the heart.
Behead me twice, curtail me once, a measure I will be.
Behead me twice, curtail me twice, an article, you see.

And if you are my whole you should
get me readily.