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A Grammarian's Birthday

Srinivas

“Here’s wishing you a birthday joyful,”
Offers Noun. “Why, thank you, there!”
Replies the reborn, bright and hopeful.
“But who is *here*?” curiously fair
The reborn asks. “Here’s wishing you,”
Returns Verb, “many happy returns
Of the day!” Most kindly you wish,
The reborn rebuts, “but pray let me learn
Who is *here*?” The adjective with relish
Gushes aloud: “Here’s wishing you
The best of birthdays...” — delighted,
Responds the reborn: “Most wondrously
Do you greet me, but be not slighted
That I ask ‘who is *here*?’” “Most thund’rously...
Not...,” Adverb joins: “Here’s wishing you
A birthday feted well!” “It already is,”
The reborn rejoins, “and thank you, but
Couldn’t you tell me who *here* is?” “Hard is
This day to miss,” Conjunction in-cuts,
“And here’s gifting fame and fortune to you...
This fine ‘born-day’!” “Born-what, you say?
Thank you f’rever more and glad I am,
But who might *here* be?” the reborn relays.
“By Jove!” jests Preposition, “no sham
In this sentiment: and here’s wishing you
A fine cake flavoured by life’s great crests
And the precious cherry on top!” “What a lot,”
The reborn chants, “of merry fools you’ll best,
Wishing me as *here*, a heresy, like as not!
Or by *here* did you mean *I* (read *you*)?”

“So we did! So did I, who am interjection;
That there is Adjective, abuts Noun,
Breezy sunsets, their affection;
This is Adverb, and Verb adorns,
Pulling one fast, their remit true.
Then we have Preposition, of sorts
A social saint; Conjunction’s there too,
P’haps patching up voices or warts.

“We are the children of your heart,
The parents of your mind; we are

Names and forms, great loves and hates.
We are too what we become, between,
Throats and ears, and what might be—
And we're here to wish you a birthday
Free from the fetters of tense and time;
And full with the pauses of lived mimes.”

Biographical Note:

Srinivas currently teaches English at the SSN College of Engineering in Chennai, where he was born and received his formative education. He is a theoretical linguist by training and is interested in the phonology of Dravidian languages, linguistic typologies and models of prosodic structure. When he is not teaching English or working on an academic paper, he watches cricket or takes long walks. The thoughts he has, the sights he sees and the sounds he hears during these walks often find expression in his scribbles.