

## For Frank and HPSG!

At Frank's retirement,  
---John Nerbonne

Hear the story of Frank Van Eynde,  
Polyglot, scholar, and linguist, kinda.

He'd found his niche, machine translation:  
Eurotra work was pure elation

But once upon a midnight dreary,  
It flashed on Franck, where IS the theory?

The logic of tense appealed a bit,  
Nailed the diss. in lickety-split.

But tenses gave us little glamour,  
We needed breadth, so looked to grammar.

The problems then were transformations,  
Giving fits to computations!

Chomsky grammar needed rupture:  
Time to take up phrasal structure!

We'd never want to denigrate,  
But even less to generate.

Of course, the trees must still remain,  
Enriched a bit, like on cocain.

A bit like hoarders, greedy creatures,  
We packed the theory into features.

A brilliant flash of Ivan Sag's  
"Feature structures are just DAGs"

He loved detail, had no aversion,  
To functions, vars, and to recursion!

We write it up, then let it fly  
See what we get to unify!

Complements/adjuncts, no complaint.  
Just write up one big type constraint!

Frank was always quite exact,  
Knew all the lit, and all the facts!

But we'd accepted "competence",  
For which we're ever penitent.

To bring the theory to fruition,  
Frank had to bypass intuition!

That's right, the data needs some care,  
With treebanks we can treat it fair.

And with a bit of inspiration,  
We'll add abounding annotation.

All solved, all done, we found the cure?  
For Frank, it's not, we know for sure!

He's going strong, must be forgiven,  
For youthful sins, when heads were driven!

He won't retreat, become a monk,  
We wish you all the best, dear Frank!