

*But I Really Don't Want
To Be Free*

I'm often asked about the kind of verse
I write: Just why it's formal and not "free."
And I reply that poetry sounds worse
To me tossed off like prose, unmusically.
But those who find more virtue playing past
The measured bar, like tennis sans the net,
Respond that these constraints long kept us cast
Within that boxed-in space between each fret
A fingerboard allows, hence deaf to tones
Resounding rather from our deepest "truths."
So, to see for myself, I did a quatrain ungoverned
By formal prosody in order to assess whether beauty really
Depends more on "truth" than technique, which only
Curbs creativity's spontaneousness, they say, and sounds daft.
My verdict: Freedom sucks; I'll stay with craft.

—David Borodin, April 18-25, 2025

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