

Precarity, the Misery Cat

Precarity's a strategy to pay less for our work
By pretending that stability's some bed-of-roses perk
The VC's safe as houses, while the rank and file despair
Crying "Never mind the stakeholders – Precarity's not fair!"

Precarity, Precarity, there's nothing like Precarity
To show you how they value you with quite unwelcome clarity
While no-one's safe, our risk of being burdened's not the same
No - somehow it's the women, the disabled, and the BAME
What bolsters inequality? What is the sector's shame?
What stresses out the workforce? Aye, Precarity's to blame!

The precarious are shattered, they've got little left to give
You'll know us if you see us, for we've lost the will to live
Our brows are deeply lined with stress, our heads are full of worry
As from our zero-hours to our nought-point-two we scurry
Trying not to look too scary as the caffeine makes us shake
'Cause though you think we're half asleep, we're really half awake...

Precarity, Precarity, there's nothing like Precarity
Requests for fair adjustments will be met with much hilarity
Why should we move OUR meetings when you're hardly ever here?
Don't like it? You're disposable. Precarity, my dear!

It's outwardly respectable (that's Higher Ed, alright)
But the figures that emerge after an FOI-ish fight
Show the ranks of the precarious are swelling year on year
Now, some say it's not our problem cause it's much worse there than here

Well

“First they came for the people on zero-
hours teaching contracts in the post-92s,
and I said, ‘Well, they knew what they were
signing up for...’”

Sod that, we’re a union, and Precarity’s not fair!

So, when a student finds their favourite tutor’s gone away
‘Let go’ to fund more building (though their REF submissions stay)
Remaining colleagues scramble to pitch in because they care
They shouldn’t have to do it, but Precarity’s not fair
And when the loss has been absorbed, the boss is bound to say
“You’re doing FINE without them!” in that terrifying way
“We can make some more efficiencies, according to my spreadsheet
“My workload model says that one in five of you are dead meat!”

And as we’re worked to pieces, and the leaky pipeline bubbles
Redundancies are threatened, and the VC’s bonus doubles
As we’re ground down into profit, and morale is past repair
I offer you a simple truth – Precarity’s not fair!
Precarity, Precarity, there’s nothing like Precarity
Come gather round – it’s time to find our strength in solidarity
If you use us to build ‘excellence’, don’t say we’re going spare
We’re going spare alright – enough! Precarity’s not fair!