

Gaudeamus Igitur by John Stone

For this is the day of joy
which has been fourteen hundred and
sixty days in coming
and fourteen hundred and fifty-nine
nights
For today in the breathing name of Brahms
and the cat of Christopher Smart
through the unbroken line of language
and all the nouns
stored in the angular gyros
today is a commencing
For this is the day you know too little
against the day when you will know too
much
For you will be invincible
and vulnerable in the same breath
which is the breath of your patients
For their breath is our breathing and our
reason
For the patient will know the answer
and you will ask him
ask her
For the family may know the answer
For there may be no answer
and you will know too little again
or there will be an answer and you will
know too much
forever
For you will look smart and feel ignorant
and the patient will not know which day
it is for you
and you will pretend to be smart out of
ignorance
For you must fear ignorance more than
cyanosis
For whole days will move in the direction of
rain
For you will cry and there will be no one to
talk to
or no one but yourself
For you will be lonely
For you will be alone
For there is a difference
For there is no seriousness like joy
For there is no joy like seriousness
For the days will run together in gallops and
the years
go by as fast as the speed of thought
which is faster than the speed of light
or Superman
or Superwoman
For you will not be Superman
For you will not be Superwoman
For you will not be Solomon
but you will be asked the question
nevertheless
For after you learn what to do, how and
when to do it
the question will be whether
For there will be addictions: whiskey,
tobacco, love
For they will be difficult to cure
For you yourself will pass the kidney stone
of pain and be joyful

For this is the end of examinations
For this is the beginning of testing
For Death will give the final
examination
and everyone will pass
For the sun is always right on time
and even that may be reason for a
kind of joy
For there are all kinds of
all degrees of joy
For love is the highest joy
For which reason the best hospital is
a house of joy
even with rooms of pain and loss
exits of misunderstanding
For there is the mortar of faith
For it helps to believe
For Mozart can heal and no one
knows where he is buried
For penicillin can heal
and the word
and the knife
For the placebo will work and you
will think you know why
For the placebo will have side effects
and you will know
you do not know why
For none of these may heal
For joy is nothing if not mysterious
For your patients will test you for
spleen
and for the four humors
For they will know the answer
For they have the disease
For disease will peer up over the
hedge
of health, with only its eyes
showing
For the T waves will be peaked and
you will not know why
For there will be computers
For there will be hard data and they
will be hard
to understand
For the trivial will trap you and the
important escape you
For the Committee will be unable to
resolve the question
For there will be the arts
and some will call them
soft data
whereas in fact they are the hard
data
by which our lives are lived
For everyone comes to the arts too
late
For you can be trained to listen only
for the oboe
out of the whole orchestra
For you may need to strain to hear
the voice of the patient
in the thin reed of his crying
For you will learn to see most
acutely out of

the corner of your eye
to hear best with your inner ear
For there are late signs and early
signs
For the patient's story will come to
you
like hunger, like thirst
For you will know the answer
like second nature, like first
For the patient will live
and you will try to understand
For you will be amazed
or the patient will not live
and you will try to understand
For you will be baffled
For you will try to explain both,
either, to the family
For there will be laying on of hands
and the letting go
For love is what death would always
intend if it had the choice
For the fever will drop, the bone
remold along
its lines of force
the speech return
the mind remember itself
For there will be days of joy
For there will be elevators of elation
and you will walk triumphantly
in purest joy
along the halls of the hospital
and say Yes to all the dark
corners
where no one is listening
For the heart will lead
For the head will explain
but the final common pathway is
the heart
whatever kingdom may come
For what matters finally is how the
human spirit is spent
For this is the day of joy
For this is the morning to rejoice
For this is the beginning

Therefore, let us rejoice
Gaudeamus igitur.