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The Pardoner's Tale & Trump

"The Pardoner's Tale" may well be the title of a forthcoming book on the ex-president of the United States. Citizen Donald Trump leaves behind a treasure trove of tweets, tantrums and tales of fakery along with questionable pardons.

In Chaucer's "The Pardoner's Tale," the protagonist "had hair as yellow as wax, But smooth it hung, as does a strip of flax." He carried a "wallet...brimful of pardons come from Rome all hot" as he traveled the countryside preaching about the sin of avarice. He sold official church pardons and fake relics in exchange for forgiveness and made money for himself, not the church which he represents.

Before the age of tweets, the pardoner used his bully pulpit to endlessly berate pilgrims for their sinfulness, so as to intimidate them into donating money for his own self-promotion: "Thus I repay folk who make trouble for us pardoners; Thus I spit out my venom under hue."

Oscar Wilde lamented "There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about." That is the organizing concept to understand the behavior of Donald Trump.

Citizen Trump would be the best author of his "Pardoner's Tale." He could begin his autobiography with the last lines of "The Pardoner's Prologue": "For though myself be a very vicious man, Yet I can tell you a moral tale, Which I am accustomed to preach in order to profit. Now hold your peace! My tale I will begin."

Robert F. Lyons

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