

GREENKEEPER,
GOLF'S FORGOTTEN MANBy
William F. Steedman

The feats of golf's anointed in the enlightened age
Are spread with care meticulous upon the printed page.
We read of Pro and Champion -- and of some less-gifted chaps
Who break into the 60s (with the aid of handicaps);
But it's really quite unlikely that you'd recognize the name
Of one who does as much as they to help along the game.
I mean the guy who grows the grass, - the man behind the scenes,
That unobtrusive character - - the Keeper of the Greens.

He needs a milder temper than the meekest of the saints.
The only time he hears from us are when he hears complaints:
The pins are here instead of there; the rough's too rough, and oft
The greens at once are far too fast, too slow, too hard, too soft.
His name is mentioned only when we put him in the pan --
When cheers are being handed out, he's Golf's Forgotten Man.

How often do we pause to think, when we espy our pill
Perched neatly on the velvet turf, of all the toil and skill
That put the emerald carpet there? Not often, sirs. But when
The ball is in a divot-hole, that's something else again.
Where is that dot-dash greenkeeper, is what we want to know.
We'd like to tell him off, but good, the (censored) so-and-so,
Forgetting that the cavity that's causing all the fuss
Was dug, say, half an hour ago by somebody like us.
For whatsoever circumstance our feelings may annoy
We blame the Keeper of the Greens -- he's golfdom's Whipping Boy.

Though you think the G. K.'s duties don't require a mind too bright,
In things that we know little of he's really erudite.
Of matters biochemical a lot he has to know:
What fertilizers best will help the tortured grass to grow;
What dope most likely will persuade the fairway weeds to die;
How much he should nitrongenize his fescues and his bents;
How to kill mosquito batches and caterpillar tents.
He looks like any field hand in his corduroys or jeans,
But he's something of a scientist, the Keeper of the Greens.

He's enough of a mechanic, too, to keep in good repair
Equipment that's subjected to the rugged wear and tear
Of mowing ninety acres of uneven, tough terrain,
O'er rocks and roots and stump-holes, in sun and snow and rain.
His pumps he must maintain in shape to keep the pressure high
Lest sprinklers stop a-sprinkling and precious grasses die.
Long hours he spends a-tink'ring with his gadgets and his gear
Far from the captious members' ken, golf's Unsung Engineer.

Before the sun's first level rays strike o'er the dewy lea
He's sweeping greens, or raking traps, or marking off each tee,
But you seldom run across him, for he keeps out of your way
For fear he might commit the crime of interrupting play.
Apart from human contacts he spends his toilsome days,
A man whom there are few to know, and fewer still to praise.
Still, as you proudly view, or stride across those verdant scenes,
Just think, where would you be without the Keeper of the Greens.