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The Supreme Nonet. Book Review Of: "The Supremes": Essays on the Current Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. by Barbara A. Perry

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## THE SUPREME NONET

**“THE SUPREMES”:** ESSAYS ON THE CURRENT JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES. By Barbara A. Perry.<sup>1</sup> Peter Lang Publishing. 1999. Pp. 159. \$24.95.

*Thomas E. Baker*<sup>2</sup>

Having pulled this book down off the shelf,  
I was at something of a loss.  
For it is all about Supreme Court Justices,  
With nary a word about Diana Ross.

Berry Gordy had Supremes in threes,  
Diana, Mary, and Flo were first and last came Susaye.  
Barbara Perry's book has each of the current nine,  
And each one gets his of her own brief essay.

All the old biographical facts are here,  
And some new ones are added for good measure.  
The essays line up the Justices in seniority,  
For your reading pleasure.

William H. Rehnquist sits in the center chair.  
In Swedish, his surname translates “mountain goat.”  
Going from “Lone Ranger” to “Chief Justice”  
Makes you wonder if gold stripes are simply his way to gloat.

John Paul Stevens wears a trademark bow tie,  
To match his judicial idiosyncrasy.

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He would never utter a word on George Carlin's list,  
But to flag-burners shows an uncharacteristic hostility.

Sandra Day O'Connor dated a fellow named Rehnquist  
And after law school was asked to be a legal secretary.  
Years later, she and her partner Lewis Powell  
Would be the first two "Brethren" to dance at a court ceremony.

Antonin Scalia was a conservative fetus who grew up a Frankfur-  
tian.  
D.C. Circuit law clerks nicknamed him "the ninopath."  
He is as original a stylist as an originalist can be,  
But colleagues who disagree with him often read his wrath.

Anthony M. Kennedy was Ronald Reagan's third choice  
As a conservative swing voter.  
But lo and behold, the bespectacled Californian was confirmed,  
Only to become a Powellian free floater.

David H. Souter turned out to be the stealth nominee.  
He knew Rudman and Rudman knew Sununu.  
But ask George Herbert Walker Bush today,  
And he would shrug and say "Who knew, who knew?"

Clarence Thomas grew up speaking Gullah  
And tells a rags to robe story that sounds like a Horatio Alger  
plot.  
More books will be written than have been,  
And that is an awful lot.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg made Bill Clinton tear up,  
In the same Rose Garden ceremony Brit Hume got kayoed.  
Pundits often wonder,  
If she will be the first Chief Justice to wear a jabot.

Stephen G. Breyer was Ruth Ginsburg's bridesmaid,  
But the bouquet he somehow managed to catch.  
The second time was the charm for him,  
After being backed by Ted Kennedy and Orrin Hatch.

Besides these breezy, witty essays,  
There is a handy little bibliography.  
That will allow you to pursue your interest,  
In further Supreme Court Biography.

The whole thing is only 170+ pages.  
It'll cost you twenty-five bucks plus whatever.  
But it only goes to show you,  
That you should never judge a book by its cover.