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A boy named Eddie Shell came one afternoon to play with Frank and me, and at the hour for going home did not know how to do so. This is a malady that afflicts all children, but my mother was not sure how she should handle it in Eddie's case. She consulted us secretly as to whether he should be asked to stay for supper; it in Eddie's case. She consulted his mother might be expecting and began to feel guilty because we had not pressed him to stay. What I remember now is Eddie standing at last on the other side of the screen door and trying to say good-by as if he meant it. My mother said warmly: "Well, Eddie, come and see us again." Whereupon he opened the door and walked in.


Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war... And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.


Sometimes when I am sitting at my drawing table thinking of ideas for a particular assignment, it occurs to me that the total range of my metaphoric invention is circumscribed by a tiny list of events and images that caught my attention between the ages of five and twenty-five. It is disappointing to believe that I became a closed system in my middle twenties; but I think that in terms of archetypal incidents and objects, nothing very strong has been added to my subconscious vault since that time.


If an artist (or scientist) uses his work to explore the limits of his own imaginative power, and then, by making them public property, abandons them, he will experience not just post-parturitional gloom, but a state in which his own boundaries, both internal and external, have been dangerously weakened. He has subjected himself to a species of leaching, and, temporarily at least, will be vulnerable both to the alien from without and the alien from within. Each successive work thus becomes a means of repairing the damage done by the artist to himself by the publication of the work previous to it. In this respect, the production of symbolically significant objects, of whatever sort, becomes the temporary cure for the disease of which it is itself the cause. We produce in order to recover our equilibrium, but our equilibrium is in question because we produce.


What interests me is to set up what you might call the rapports de grand esprit—the most unexpected relationship possible between the things I want to speak about, because there is a certain difficulty in establishing the relationships in just that way, and in that difficulty there is an interest, and in that interest there is a certain tension and for me that tension is a lot more important than the stable equilibrium of harmony, which doesn't interest me at all. Reality must be torn apart in every sense of the word. What people forget is that everything is unique.

Nature never produces the same thing twice. Hence my stress on seeking the rapports de grand esprit: a small head on a large body; a large head on a small body. I want to draw the mind in a direction it's not used to and wake it up. I want to help the viewer discover something he wouldn't have discovered without me.

Boston Evening Transcript (5 August 1832), quoted by C.G. Loomis in "Traditional American Wordplay, Wellerisms, or Yankeeisms" in Western Folklore 8 (1949), p. 2.

Mark Van Doren: Nothing in nature is more beautiful than the eye of a horse.
Ballast.

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As for the contents of BALLAST, there is no shortage of material for future issues. But our readers should not be discouraged from sending in offbeat examples of verbal and visual wit of the sort that the journal might publish. Original material must be explicitly labeled as that. Material which is not original must clearly mark note of its author and source. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless it is accompanied by a self-addressed envelope with adequate postage affixed.

Some of the books mentioned in BALLAST are currently available and can be obtained through a bookstore. Other books are out of print, in which case they may be available at used bookstores and libraries.

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ne day there in Ohio, when I was a little fellow, they took me to a neighbor’s where an old man had died, and I stood with my mother looking at him. She went away for a moment and left me in the room with the body. I stood mute and all astreml in my heart when suddenly, without warning, the old jaw on the dead face unhinged, dropped, and the mouth opened. With an agonized scream I fled from the room, and so as a little child I knew and understood as much as any man has ever known of life’s two great mysteries—life and death, joy and sorrow, the way we come to the world and the way we go.


Gustav Hertz...was quite bald; his head, shining like a polished billiard ball, was said to illuminate the darkened lecture room and make projection difficult. He had a peculiarly impish sort of humor. Sometimes he came to drink tea with the chemists in the laboratory...On one occasion he waved the tea aside with the remark "I am fed up with that stuff, give me the alcohol" and got one of the students to hand him a bottle of absolute alcohol from the shelf. Lisa Meitner was horrified "But Hertz, you can’t drink that, it’s pure poison!" Hertz took no notice, poured himself a tumbler and drank it down without any ill effects; he had got the student to fill the bottle with water beforehand.


Here’s the Lytton (Strachey) story of his medical examination in the last war... It seems he went equipped with an overcoat, an umbrella, a rug and an air cushion, and was ushered into the presence of about 6 doctors and given a chair. After making a low bow...he proceeded to lay his umbrella on the floor, took off his greatcoat and arranged it over the chair back, put the rug on the seat and the air cushion on the rug—then rose and faced the Board, who sent up a universal shout of "Reexamined". He then gathered his possessions together in inverse order, made another low bow, and departed a free man.


In gutter dispair I am taking my pen toilet you know that, being leyde up in bad with the prevalent distemp­ ter I opened the window and in flew Enza.


My favorite toys in those days were a clockwork train and lead soldiers. When the soldiers had lost too many limbs to stand up we melted them down in a frying pan over the nursery fire and dropped them into cold water as people do now in Sweden on New Year’s night, seeking omens of the future.


Undoubtedly one of our favorite books is Adaptive Coloration in Animals by Hugh B. Cott (London: Methuen, 1940). Most of the illustrations, such as this camouflaged leg of a frog, are the author’s drawings. He is a prominent zoologist and a former military camouflage officer.

At the age of eighty-nine he fell under a tube train owing to falling eyesight...He lay, quiet and self-possessed, beside the live rail while the train moved back and it was found that he had only bruised a rib...when he was ninety-one, he fell out of a tree (he was pruning the branches) and for a while he had to take to his bed, but a more humdrum accident proved the fatal one, a year later, when he tripped over a chair on the lawn. He survived quite a while even then, though bedridden...and the first sign of his approaching was when my old aunts while undressing him removed a toe with his socks.

Ladies and jellyspoons: I come before you To stand behind you To tell you something I know nothing about. Last Thursday Which was Good Friday There will be a mothers' meeting For fathers only. Wear your best clothes If you haven't any, And if you can come, Please stay at home. Admission is free So pay at the door Pull up a chair And sit on the floor. It makes no difference Where you sit The man in the gallery Is sure to split. We thank you for your unkind attention. The next meeting will be held At the four corners of the round table.


My mother was sitting by the window, about a yard away from the table. My sister was at school and our maid in the kitchen. Suddenly there sounded a report like a pistol shot. I jumped up and rushed into the room from which the noise of the explosion had come. My mother was sitting flabbergasted in her armchair, the knitting fallen from her hands. She stammered out, "W-w-what's happened? It was right beside me!" and stared at the table. Following her eyes, I saw what had happened. The table top had split from the rim to beyond the center, and not along any joint; the split ran right through solid wood. I was thunderstruck. How could such a thing happen?...Some two weeks later I came home at six o'clock in the evening and found the household—my mother, my fourteen-year-old sister, and the maid—in a great state of agitation. About an hour earlier there had been another deafening report...In the cupboard containing the bread basket I found a loaf of bread, and, beside it, the bread knife. The greater part of the blade had snapped off in several pieces. The handle lay in one corner of the rectangular basket, and in each of the other corners lay a piece of the blade. The knife had been used shortly before, at four-o'clock tea, and afterward put away. Since then no one had gone to the sideboard.


The whole secret lies in arbitrariness. People usually think it easy to be arbitrary, but it requires much study to succeed in being arbitrary so as not to lose oneself in it, but so as to derive satisfaction from it. One does not enjoy the immediate, but rather something which he can arbitrarily control. You go to see the middle of a play, you read the third part of a book. With H. H. there is a way as to portray without naming a public figure. Jim developed a second-hand flute into Leslie Howard, and a Grand Rapids easy chair into Carl Sandburg.

On one of these Sunday excursions when I went along I remember that we amused ourselves during the long black blowy subway ride by playing the metaphor game: by turns describing an inanimate object in such a way as to portray without naming a public figure. Jim developed a second-hand flute into Leslie Howard, and a Grand Rapids easy chair into Carl Sandburg.

Above: Xerox of a specimen of a Cecropia moth (Hyalophora Cecropia), largest moth in the United States, here reduced to 72% of actual size. At BALLAST, we have raised Cecropia moths for several years, along with Luna moths and Monarch butterflies. See Paul Villiard, Moths and How to Rear Them (New York: Dover Publications, 1975). For addresses of where to buy eggs or cocoons, ask BALLAST.

He (Paul Klee) was, she says, aloof and unapproachable, "like St. Christopher carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders," but she saw his work and loved it. Every six months or so his recent watercolors were shown on the walls of a corridor at the Bauhaus; Anni admired them tremendously and bought one. She also had a chance to participate in a birthday celebration held for Klee on his fiftieth birthday, in 1929. Three students in the Dessau weaving workshop hired a small plane from the nearby Junkers aircraft plant so they could have this mystical, other-worldly man’s birthday presents descend to him from above.


John Hoskyns, the Painter, being at Freshwater, to draw pictures, Mr. Hoskyns observed what he did, and, thought he, why cannot I do so too? So he gitts him Chalk, and Ruddle, and coale, and grinds them, and putt on them on a Trencher, gott a pencil, and to works he went, and made a picture: then he copied (as they hung up in the parlour) the Pictures there, which he made like.


Shirley Oneple, Shirley Twople, Shirley Threeple, Shirley Fourple, Shirley Fivemple, Shirley Sixple, Shirley Sevenple, Shirley Eightple, Shirley Nineple, Shirley Timple.

Children’s game verse, recorded in Edinburgh, England, circa 1940.

Logic exists in the mind. Numbers exist only in the mind. I don’t get upset when scientists say that ghosts exist in the mind. It’s that only that gets me. Science is only in your mind too, it’s just that that doesn’t make it bad. Laws of nature are human inventions, like ghosts. Laws of logic, of mathematics are also human inventions, like ghosts. The whole blessed thing is a human invention, including the idea that it isn’t a human invention.


S

uddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. Simultaneously there arose in my mind the image of an epileptic patient whom I had seen in the asylum, a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves against the wall, with his knees drawn up against his chin, and the coarse gray undershirt, which was his only garment, drawn over them enclosing his entire figure. He sat there like a sort of sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and looking absolutely non-human. This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other. That shape am I, I felt, potentially. Nothing that I possess can defend me against that fate, if the hour for it should strike for me as it struck for him. There was such a horror of him, and such a perception of my own merely momentary discrepancy from him, that it was as if something hitherto solid within my breast gave way entirely, and I became a mass of quivering fear.

We didn't any longer want to fool the eyes; we wanted to fool the mind. The sheet of newspaper was never used in order to make a newspaper. It was used to become a bottle or something like that. It was never used literally but always as an element displaced from its habitual meaning into another meaning to produce a shock between the usual definition at the point of departure and its new definition at the point of arrival. If a piece of newspaper can become a bottle, that gives us something to think about because we were quite aware that our world was becoming very strange and not exactly reassuring.


Several players are seated in a circle. The leader takes a pair of scissors in his hand, crosses his legs unobtrusively, and says, "I received them crossed and I pass them uncrossed." As he repeats the words "I pass them uncrossed," he uncrosses his legs, and hands the scissors to the player nearest him. The scissors pass clear around the circle, and the joke is to see how many of the players fall to cross and uncross the legs.


For Burt, particularly during his years of retirement, letter writing was an extremely important channel of communication. At a rough estimate he would write something approaching 1500 letters a year. A great many of these would be in his own beautifully legible handwriting and no copies would be kept. Important letters were typed, and copies filed. From 1956 onwards the files are systematic and full. Burt was a fluent letter writer, and many of his letters were of extraordinary length, at times amounting to a dozen, or even twenty, pages. The time he devoted to correspondence must have been prodigious.


Want a collapsible butterfly net? How about a copy of the definitive study of *The Nesting Behavior of Dung Beetles*? Or (as pictured on the left) an affordable stereo microscope? Write for a free catalog from BioQuip Products, P.O. Box 61, Santa Monica, California 90406.

Above: Haircuts of young Native American males of the Osage and Omaha nations were indications of the plant or animal clan with which they were associated. For example, the first haircut from the left on the top row was analogous to the head and tail of an elk, while the second from the right on the bottom row was emblematic of the teeth of a reptile. See F. La Flesche, "The Osage Child-Naming Rite" in *43rd Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1925-1926* (Washington, D.C., 1928).

What's the difference between a boxer and a person with the common cold? One knows his blows, and the other blows his nose.

What is the difference among the son of a king, the mother of a monkey, a bald head, and an orphan? The son of a king is an heir apparent; the mother of a monkey is a hairy parent; a bald head has no hair apparent; and an orphan has nary a parent.

Come smoke a coca cola, drink cat eye cigarettes. See Lillian Brussels wrestle with a box of castanets. Pork and beans will meet tonight and have a finished fight. Chauncey de Pew will lecture on Sopollo tonight. Bay rum is good for horses. It is the best in town. Castoria cures the measles. If you pay five dollars down teeth extracted without pain. At the cost of half a dime, overcoats are selling now. A little out of time. Do me a favor--drop dead.

JAMES'S behavior in the classroom was energetic and unconventional. In his enthusiasm or his absorption in a problem, he would assume unorthodox positions, sometimes sprawling on the floor to scribble on a hand-held blackboard. In his brown tweeds, students thought he looked "more like a sportsman than a professor." Others felt that he acted like a "nervous thoroughbred," fidgeting, active, high-spirited. Even those who found James's philosophy and classroom techniques wanting were prepared to admit that he was always "throwing off sparks." In his private life he suffered from bouts of morbid sensitivity, but in class he displayed an inveterate sense of humor, so that students frequently addressed him with, "But, Doctor, to be serious for a moment."


A game observed in Kansas, described in Paul G. Brewster, American Non-smoking Games (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 84.

A game observed in Kansas, described in Paul G. Brewster, American Non-smoking Games (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 84.
What's the difference between a jailer and a jeweller? One watches cells and the other sells watches.

What's the difference between a ball and a prince? One is thrown in the air and the other is heir to the throne.

What's the difference between a big storm cloud and a lion with a toothache? One pours with rain while the other roars with pain.

**RECOMMENDED**


What's the difference between an oak tree and a tight shoe? One makes acorns, and the other makes corns ache.

**W**hen a real inspirational storm strikes, as it did Rilke, it strikes not John Jerk but a genius; it is as prepared for as a blitzkrieg; and it is the summation of a lifetime of commitment and calculation. If we think it odd the gods should always choose a voice so full and gloriously throated, when they could presumably toot through any instrument, we should remember that it is their choice of such a golden throat, each time, that makes them gods.


Reverend & Mrs. William A. Spooner

What's the difference between a lazy student and a fisherman? One hates his books, while the other baits his hooks.

What's the difference between a cat and a comma? One has its claws at the end of its paws, while the other has its pause at the end of a clause.

What's the difference between a riddle and two elephants sitting on a hamburger? One is a conundrum, while the other is a bun under 'em.

What's the difference between an irate circus manager and a Roman barber? One is a raving showman, while the other is a shaving Roman.

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**T**his issue of BALLAST is post-humously dedicated to the Reverend William Archibald Spooner, who was the Warden of New College in Oxford from 1903 to 1924. During his lifetime, he became associated with metaphor, the accidental transposition of sounds in spoken language, as when someone intends to say "Let me show you to your seat" but says instead "Let me sew you to your sheet." This type of mistake is commonly called a spoonerism. Supposedly, Reverend Spooner made many errors of this kind. He was, for example, reported to say "A well-boiled pickle" in place of "A well-oiled bicycle." Or "I have in my bosom a half-formed wish." Or (in scolding a student) "You have hissed my mystery lectures, and you have tasted a whole worm" instead of "You have missed my history lectures, and you have wasted a whole term." To find out more of Spooner's life (for example, that he was an albino), see William Hayter, *Spooner: A Biography* (London: W.H. Allen, 1977). A handful of photographs accompany the text, including a double portrait (reproduced here) of the Reverend and Mrs. Spooner. See also the section on spoonerisms in Tony Hugaerde, *The Oxford Guide to Word Games* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 172-177.

Tell Sarrant that I should be desperate if my figures were correct, tell him that I do not want them to be correct. Tell him that my great longing is to learn to make these very incorrectnesses, those deviations, remodelings, changes in reality, so that they may become, yes, lies if you like—but truer than the literal truth.

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I n 1847 I gave an address at Newton, Massachusetts, before a Teachers' Institute conducted by Horace Mann. My subject was grasshoppers. I passed around a large jar of these insects, and made every teacher take one and hold it while I was speaking. If any one dropped the insect, I stopped till he picked it up. This was at that time a great innovation, and excited much laughter and discussion. There can be no true progress in the teaching of natural science until such methods become general.


I know a man who, when I ask him what he knows, fetches me a book to show me. He cannot so much as tell me he has piles in his behind until he first looks up in his dictionary the meaning of "piles" and "behind."


Lulu had a steamboat
The steamboat had a bell
Lulu went to heaven
The steamboat went to
Hello, operator, give me number nine
If you disconnect me, I'll tell you no more lies, fetch me a book to show me. He cannot so much as tell me he has piles in his behind until he first looks up in his dictionary the meaning of "piles" and "behind."


I do not know in what year, a cow chased me across the barnyard and would have had me on her horns had not my father run to close a gate between us...The next day my father shut the cow into a stall and sawed off her horns; I witnessed the operation, and learned for the first time that horns are full of blood.


...as he went further into old age, his health grew increasingly fragile. It was like an old suit, he wrote—as soon as one hole got patched up, it sprang another hole in another place.


O ne evening we were reading Othello, with the captain of Oppidians taking the title part. Accusing Desdemona of her unfaithfulness, a surprising modesty overtook him, and instead of bursting out with "You have played the strumpet in my bed," he rather hesitatingly mumbled: "You have played the...trumpet in my bed" upon which the Shakespeare society dissolved in explosive laughter.


A sergeant was lecturing on ship building, and began by saying that two trees were mostly used, the Hoak (voice from the class) Isn't it Oak, sir? Sergeant. The Hoak and the Helm. Voice. Isn't it Elm, sir? Sergeant. The Hoak and the Helm. These trees are also used in making Piles for Piers, by which I do not mean Hemorrhoids for Haristocrats like that young #10¢ in the corner.


S one Cow-stealers will make a hole in a hott loafe newly drawn out of the oven, and put it on an Oxe-horn for a convenient time, and then they can turn their softened horns the contrary way: So the owner cannot swear to his own beast. Not long before the King's restauration, a fellow was hang'd at Tyburn for this Trick, then I suddenly found myself doing the same, and exhausted, there emerged the story of E.L. Mencken, purified and mellowed in later years, a critical of ideas, which was true only as the ideas were made flesh. He was, in fact, a humorist by instinct and a superb craftsman by temperament. So he became more interested in design, then I became a magazine designer, then I became more interested in design, then I became a magazine designer, then I suddenly found myself doing interiors; now I am designing supermarkets and play parks for children and new petrol stations and so on. And I always realized that if you are lucky, you can abandon your own mastery. Learn how something is done and do it well, and then move on to something else.


M y whole work from a career point of view has been to try to abandon what I knew how to do. I started out doing humorous illustrations, then doing more serious illustrations, then I became more interested in design, then I became a magazine designer, then I suddenly found myself doing interiors; now I am designing supermarkets and play parks for children and new petrol stations and so on. And I always realized that if you are lucky, you can abandon your own mastery. Learn how something is done and do it well, and then move on to something else.