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ALABLITS

AMBROSIA ● LOGENBERRY ● ARTICHOKE ● BUTTERMILK ● LICORICE ● TARTAR ● SHALLOT

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; we thought not, so she hinted to him that his mother might be expecting him. He was so slow in acting upon the hint that we were all in despair 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.

Mark Van Doren, *The Autobiography of Mark Van Doren* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), p. 24.

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.

Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, trans., *Russian Formalist Criticism Four Essays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 12.

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.

James McMullan, *Revealing Illustrations* (New York: Watson-Guption, 1981), p. 102.

If an artist (or scientist) uses his work to explore the limits of his own imaginative powers, 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.

Liam Hudson, *Bodies of Knowledge: The Psychological Significance of The Nude in Art* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), p. 46.

What interests me is to set up what you might call the *rappports de grand ecart*--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 *rappports de grand ecart*: 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.

Pablo Picasso, quoted by Francoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life With Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 59-60.

Puns, pungently pointed and perpetrated promptly are productive of a prurition of a pretty proportion of piquant pleasure; but puns protracted and in every person's premises, should be punishable by a propulsion of the perpetrator from the punning premises.

Boston Evening Transcript (6 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 off-beat 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 make 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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One day there in Ohio, when I was a little fellow, they took me to a neighbor's where an old, 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 atremble 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 and the way we go.

William Allen White, *The Autobiography of William Allen White* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1946).

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 humour. 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. Lise 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.

Otto R. Frisch, *What Little I Remember* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 37-38.

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 "Exempt". He then gathered his possessions together in inverse order, made another low bow, and departed a free man.

Edward Marsh, *Ambrosia and Small Beer* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1965), p. 301.

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

James Joyce, in Samuel Beckett et al., *Our Examination Round His Factification for Incamination of Works in Progress* (New York: New Directions, 1972), p. 193.

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.

Graham Greene, *A Sort of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 50.



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 failing 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 end was when my old aunts while undressing him removed a toe with his socks.

Graham Greene, *A Sort of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), pp. 22-23.

Ladies and jellypoos:
 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 spit.
 We thank you for your unkind
 attention.
 The next meeting will be held
 At the four corners of the round
 table.

Nonsense verse, quoted in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, editor, *Speech Play: Research and Resources for the Study of Linguistic Creativity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), pp. 108-109.

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.

C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1962) pp. 105-106.

Life's more important than a living. So many people who make a living are making death, not life. Don't ever join them. They're the gravediggers of our civilization--the safe men, the compromisers, the money-makers, the muddlers-through.

James Hilton, *Random Harvest* (Boston: Little Brown, 1941).

Select such subjects that your pupils cannot walk without seeing them. Train your pupils to be observers, and have them provided with the specimens about which you speak. If you can find nothing better, take a house-fly or a cricket, and let each hold a specimen and examine it as you talk.

Louis Agassiz, in Lane Cooper, ed., *Louis Agassiz as a Teacher: Illustrative Extracts on His Method of Instruction* (Ithaca, New York: Comstock Publishing, 1945), p. 82.



Above: An illustration from Karen Fredericks, *Modern Love*, available from Printed Matter, Inc., 7-9 Lispenard Street, New York, New York 10013, for \$6.95 plus \$1 postage and handling for first book, 50¢ each book thereafter. Order #A1801X. Other great titles by Fredericks include *Girl Talk* (\$2.00, #B436 E), *Shame* (\$1.50, #BB0023E), and *Remembrance of Smells Past* (\$2.00, #B435 E).

What's the difference between photographers and the whooping cough? One makes facsimiles and the other make sick families.

What's the difference between a church bell and a pickpocket? One peals from the steeple, and the other steals from the people.

I like much to lie with my head very high. I think it is healthy to do so. At home I always have a couple of pillows, and if I am in a strange house, the first thing I ask is whether I can have a couple of pillows. I ask it without the least ceremony, whether of gentlemen or of ladies. When I was at Laird Heron's in Galloway, I said to the lady of the house, "I beg you, Madam, let me have your best bedroom and a couple of pillows." She could not grant me my first request, but she saw to the second. Likewise, when I was at the Earl of Galloway's, my Lord Garlies was so polite as to show me to my bedroom and say, "Mr. Boswell, you will have the goodness to mention it if there is anything you lack." I walked very softly over and looked at the bed. "My Lord," said I, "there is nothing lacking but a couple of pillows, and I hope I shall have enough interest to procure them." Sometimes I have forgotten to ask for my pillows, or have asked for them when it was too late; when the housekeeper had gone to bed and had her keys in her pocket carefully placed under her head. In such a case I have been extremely embarrassed. I have been at my wits' end. However, I have always found some expedient. I have sometimes put my clothes and sometimes a cushion in place of the pillows. I would rather use a stone than sleep without having my head well raised.

James Boswell, in Mark Harris, editor, *The Heart of Boswell* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), pp. 102-103.

I am convinced that the model for most painters and artists of our generation was the comics. For artists who have grown up during the last fifty years, copying the comics is almost the equivalent of the Academy.

James McMullan, *Revealing Illustrations* (New York: Watson-Guption, 1981), p. 10.

Mississippi said to Missouri
 If I put on my New Jersey
 What will Delaware?
 Virginia said, Alaska.

Children's verse, quoted in Carl Withers, *A Rocket in My Pocket* (New York: Henry Holt, 1948), p. 193.

What do you get when you cross a mobster with a conceptual artist? You get an offer you can't understand.

Suggested by Roger Holmes, a reader from Woodbury, Connecticut.

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

John Aubrey (describing Robert Hooke, 17th century experimental philosopher, whose portable drawing mechanism, a hooded camera obscura, is illustrated below) in Oliver Lawson Dick, editor, *Aubrey's Brief Lives* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 242. See also John H. Hammond, *The Camera Obscura: A Chronicle* (Bristol, England: Adam Hilger, 1981).



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. By this means you insure yourself a very different kind of enjoyment from that which the author has been so kind as to plan for you. You enjoy something entirely accidental; you consider the whole of existence from this standpoint; let reality be stranded thereon.

Soren Kierkegaard in "The Rotation Method" in Robert Bretall, ed., *A Kierkegaard Anthology* (New York: The Modern Library, Random House, 1959), pp. 31-32.

Suddenly 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.

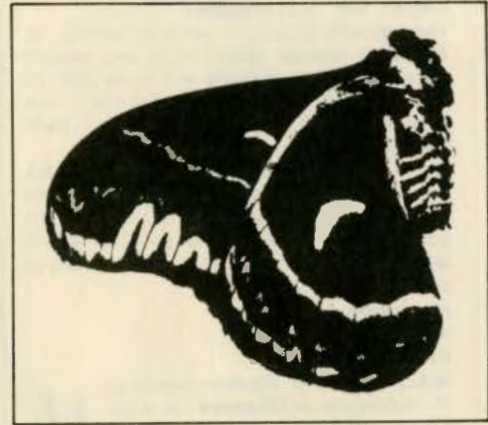
William James (describing his emotional breakdown, disguised as the statement of an anonymous French correspondent), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), p. 138.

Shirley Oneple,
Shirley Twople,
Shirley Threepole,
Shirley Fourpole,
Shirley Fivepole,
Shirley Sixpole,
Shirley Sevenpole,
Shirley Eightpole,
Shirley Ninepole,
Shirley Temple.

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.

Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), p. 34.



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.

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 each 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.

Robert Fitzgerald (recalling the writer James Agee), ed., *The Collected Short Prose of James Agee* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970), p. 23.

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.

Nicholas Fox Weber, "Anni Albers to Date" in the catalog, *The Woven and Graphic Art of Anni Albers* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1985), p. 19.

We didn't any longer want to fool the eye; 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 in connection with both newspapers and bottles, too. This displaced object has entered a universe for which it was not made and where it retains, in a measure, its strangeness. And this strangeness was what we wanted to make people think about because we were quite aware that our world was becoming very strange and not exactly reassuring.

Pablo Picasso, quoted by Francoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life With Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 77.

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 fail to cross and uncross the legs.

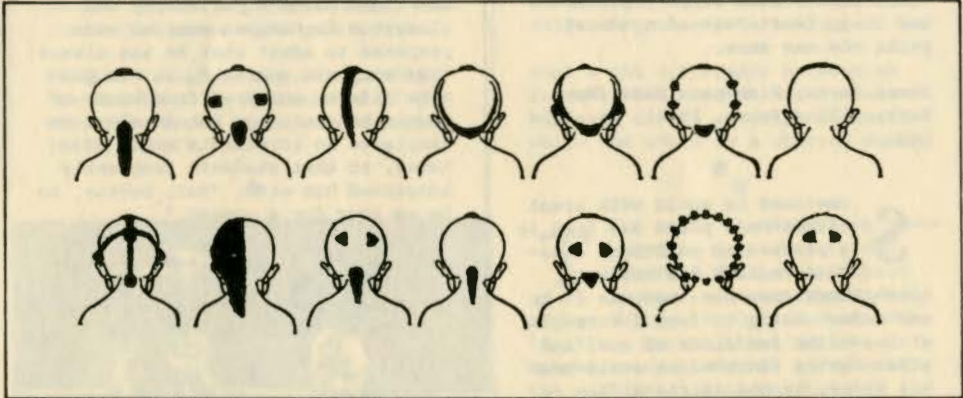
A game observed in Arkansas, described in Paul G. Brewster, *American Nonsinging Games* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 124.

Humpty Dump Dublin squeaks through his nose;
Humpty Dump Dublin hath a horrible vorse;
But for all his kinks English, plus his irismanx brogues
Humpty Dump Dublin's grandada of all rogues.

James Joyce, quoted by Anthony Burgess in *Joysprick* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1973), p. 136.

Do you carrot all for me?
My heart beets for you.
With your turnip nose
And your radish face
You are a peach.
If we cantaloupe
Lettuce marry
Weed make a swell pear.

Children's verse, quoted in Carl Withers, *A Rocket in My Pocket* (New York: Henry Holt, 1948), p. 193.



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).

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 1958 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.

L.S. Hearnshaw (describing the personal habits of the British psychologist, Sir Cyril Burt), *Cyril Burt, Psychologist* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 199.

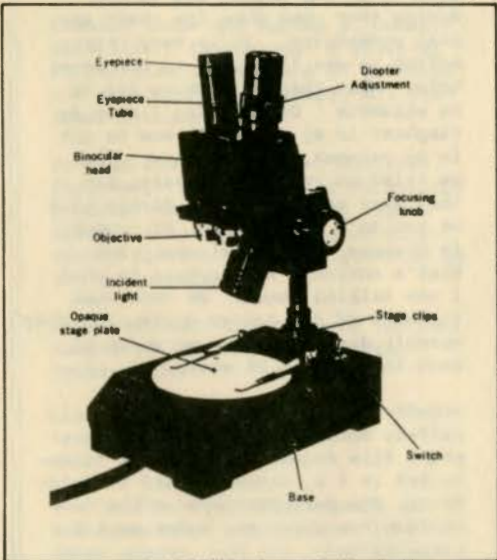
Want a collapsible butterfly net? How about a copy of the definitive study of *The Nesting Behavior of Dung Beetles*? Or (as pictured on the left) an affordable stereo microscope? Write for a free catalog from BioQuip Products, P.O. Box 61, Santa Monica, California 90406.

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 catsup 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
Sopolio 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.

Children's verse, quoted in Florence Maryott, "Nebraska Counting Out Rhymes" in *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 1(1936), pp. 58-59.



And how war yore maggies? Answer: They war loving, they love laughing, they laugh weeping, they weep smelling, they smell smiling, they smile hating, they hate thinking, they think feeling, they feel tempting, they tempt daring, they dare waiting, they wait taking, they take thanking, they thank seeking, as born for lorn in lore of love to live and wive by wile and rile by rule of ruse 'reathed rose and hose hol'd home, yeth cometh elope year, coach and four, Sweet Peck-at-my-Heart picks one man more.

James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Viking Press, 1959), pp. 142-143.

Sometimes he would with great earnestness place his feet in a particular position, sometimes making his heels to touch, sometimes his toes, as if he was endeavouring to form a triangle, at least the two sides of one, and after having finished he would beat his sides, or the skirts of his coat, repeatedly with his hands, as if for joy that he had one his duty, and what was extraordinary, after he had quitted the place, particularly at the entrance of a door, he would return to the same spot, evidently, I thought, from a scruple of conscience, and perform it all over again.

Frances Reynolds, sister of Sir Joshua Reynolds (describing the peculiar gesticulations of the 18th century genius Samuel Johnson), as quoted in James L. Clifford, *Dictionary Johnson: Samuel Johnson's Middle Years* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 281.

Players are divided into two groups approximately equal in number. One group goes to one side of a building, the other to the opposite side. A player on one side throws the ball over the building, calling as he throws it, "Anthony Over!" (usually corrupted into "Handy Over!" or "Anty Over!"). Those on the other side are on the lookout for the ball and try to catch it. If the ball is not caught, someone on the opposite side then throws it back over, with the same cry. If the ball is caught, however, the player who caught it runs around to the other side of the building and tries to hit one of the players of the second group. The player hit must then join the side of the one who hit him. The game continues until all those of one side have been hit.

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

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."

James R. Mellow (in his description of William James), *Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Company* (New York: Avon Books, 1975), pp. 46-47.



Above: An illustration from Lynda J. Barry, *Girls & Boys* (Seattle: The Real Comet Press, 1981), available from Printed Matter, Inc., 7-9 Lispenard Street, New York, New York 10013, for \$5.95 plus \$1 postage and handling for first book, 50¢ each book thereafter. Order #A1572E.

His wit was usually aggressive. Sometimes he chose the rapier. Lady Astor neither gave nor asked for quarter, and she got none from him. At a dinner party she told him: "Winston, if I were your wife I'd poison your soup." He replied, "Nancy, if I were your husband, I'd drink it."

William Manchester, *The Last Lion, Winston Spencer Churchill* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1983), p. 34.

One Daniel Healy, of Donaghmore, in Ireland, having three different times dreamed that Money lay concealed under a large Stone in a field near where he lived, procured some Workmen to assist him in removing it, and when they had dug as far as the foundation, it fell suddenly and killed Healy on the spot.

John Aubrey, *Aubrey's Brief Lives* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 59.

Oct. 12, P., a handsome maid living in Catstreet, being deeply in love with Joseph Godwin, a junior fellow of New Coll., poyson'd herself with rats-bane. This is mention'd because it made a great wonder that a maid should be in love with such a person as he, who had a curl'd shag-pate, was squint-ey'd and purblind, and much deform'd with the small pox.

Anthony Wood (17th century Oxford antiquary), *The Life and Times of Anthony a Wood* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 71.

Well, sir, we left New York drunk and early on the morning of February second. After fifteen days on the water and six on the boat, we finally arrived on the shores of Africa. The first morning saw us up at six, breakfasted and back in bed at seven. This was our routine for the first three months. We finally got so we were in bed at six thirty. The principal animals inhabiting the African jungle are moose, elks and Knights of Pythias. Of course, you know what a moose is. That's big game. The first day, I shot two bucks. That was the biggest game we had...The elks, on the other hand, live up in the hills, and in the spring they come down for their annual convention. It is very interesting to see them come to the water hole. What they're looking for is an elkahole. One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got in my pajamas, I don't know. Then we tried to remove the tusks, but they were embedded in so firmly that we couldn't budge them. Of course, in Alabama, the Tuskaloosa. But that's entirely irrelevant to what I was talking about. We took some pictures of the native girls, but they weren't developed, but we're going back in a couple of weeks.

Groucho Marx (in the role of Captain Jeffery Spaulding) in the 1930 Paramount film *Animal Crackers*, as transcribed in P.D. Zimmerman and B. Goldblatt, *The Marx Brothers at the Movies* (New York: New American Library, 1970).

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

John Allen Paulos, *I Think, Therefore I Laugh: An Alternative Approach to Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

Charles Harrison and Fred Orton, eds., *Modernism, Criticism, Realism: Alternative Contexts for Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984). See especially their portrait of Lenin, in the style of Jackson Pollack.

Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

Edward R. Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 1983).

Bauhaus Photography (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).

Jonathan Miller, *States of Mind* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

Elliott Oring, *The Jokes of Sigmund Freud: A Study in Humor and Jewish Identity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), particularly the illustration on the dust jacket.

Leonard Zusne and Warren H. Jones, *Anomalistic Psychology: A Study of Extraordinary Phenomena of Behavior and Experience* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1982).

D. Lamb and S.M. Easton, *Multiple Discovery: The Pattern of Scientific Progress* (England: Avebury Press, 1984), including sections on accidental discovery, and originality in art and science.

Bevis Hillier, *The Style of the Century 1900-1980* (London: Herbert Press, 1983).

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

When 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.

William H. Gass, "The Soul Inside the Sentence" in *Habitations of the Word* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), p. 117.



Reverend & Mrs. William A. Spooner

In one bar, I remember, I was dancing with a handsome and unusually well-built girl, who asked me, 'Kohi shimas' ka?'--Shall we make coffee? Her intention was so patently goodhearted that I was quite moved, and went to some trouble to explain that, much as I liked the stuff during the day, I found that I couldn't sleep after it in the evening... 'So?' she responded sympathetically, and we continued to dance. Fondly recalling the girl's considerateness the next morning, it suddenly struck me that it was not *kohi* she had proposed to make, but *koi*, a word rather similar in pronunciation but having the meaning of 'love between man and woman'.

D.J. Enright, *Memoirs of a Mendicant Professor* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 18.

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.

This issue of BALLAST is posthumously 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 metaphasis, the accidental transposition of sounds in spoken language, as when one 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 icicle" in place of "A well-oiled bicycle." Or "I have in my bosom a half-warmed fish" for "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 Augarde, *The Oxford Guide to Word Games* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 172-177.

Tell Serret 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 incorrections, those deviations, remodelings, changes in reality, so that they may become, yes, lies if you like--but truer than the literal truth.

Vincent Van Gogh, *Complete Letters* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1958).

In 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 derision. There can be no true progress in the teaching of natural science until such methods become general.

Louis Agassiz, in Lane Cooper, ed., *Louis Agassiz as a Teacher: Illustrative Extracts on His Method of Instruction* (Ithaca, New York: Comstock Publishing, 1945), p. 82.

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."

Michel de Montaigne (Renaissance essayist) in Marvin Lowenthal, ed., *The Autobiography of Michel de Montaigne* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935).

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 kick you in the
Behind the refrigerator
Lies a broken glass
Lulu fell down
And broke her big fat
Ask me no more questions,
I'll tell you no more lies,
That's what Lulu told me
Just before she died.

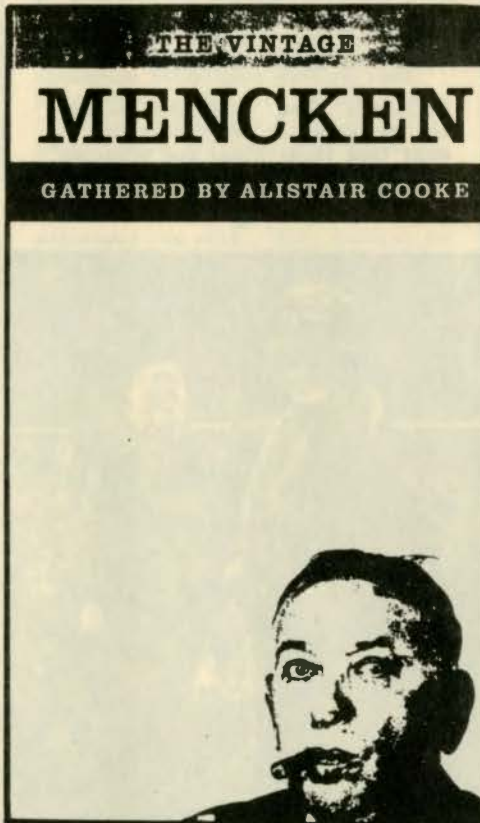
Children's rhyme, recorded May 1976 in Baltimore, Maryland, quoted in Susan Stewart, *Nonsense: Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p. 105.

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.

Mark Van Doren, *The Autobiography of Mark Van Doren* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), pp. 7-8.

...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.

Ruth Suckow, *A Memoir* (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1952), pp. 84-85.



Looking over the whole range of his work today, we can see that if he was overrated in his day as a thinker, he was vastly underrated as a humorist with one deadly sensible eye on the behavior of the human animal. He helped along this misconception by constantly reminding people that he was a critic 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 that when all his private admirations were aped and exhausted, there emerged the style of H.L. Mencken, purified and mellowed in later years, a style flexible, fancy-free, ribald, and always beautifully lucid: a native product unlike any other style in the language.

Alistair Cooke, regarding the American editor, essayist, and critic Henry Louis Mencken, in his introduction to *The Vintage Mencken* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), the cover of which is reprinted above.

One evening we were reading Othello, with the captain of Oppidans taking the title part. When he was 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.

Julian Huxley, *Memories* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), p. 49.

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 #!@ in the corner.

Edward Marsh, *Ambrosia and Small Beer* (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1965), pp. 268-269.

Some Cow-stealers will make a hole in a hott loafe newly drawne out of the oven, and put it on an Oxes-horn for a convenient time, and then they can turn their softened hornes the contrary way: So the owner cannot swears to his own beast. Not long before the King's restauration, a fellow was hang'd at Tyburn for this Trick, and sayd, that he had never come thither, if he had not heard this Trick spoken of in a Sermon. Thought he, I will try this Trick.

John Aubrey, *Aubrey's Brief Lives* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 33.

My 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.

Milton Glaser, "I Listen to the Market" in Marshall Blonsky, ed., *On Signs* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 468.