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 me 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 meant it. He came walking in.

Whereupon he opened the door and trying to say good-by as if he didn't have to go home did not know what I meant. My mother said warmy: "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.


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 (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 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 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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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 spit.

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.


**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, potentiually. 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.


**T**

he 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.


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.

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 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.


Several players are seated in a circle. The leader takes a pair of scissors in his hand, crosses his legs obtrusively, 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.


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.


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 castanets 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 Sopolo 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.

A and how war yore maggies?


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, repetitively 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.


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 invertebrate sense of humor, so that students frequently addressed him with, "But, Doctor, to be serious for a moment."


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, elk and horns 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 elk, 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 elk hole. 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 Tuskalosa. But that's entirely irrellephant to what I was saying. We took some pictures of the native girls, but they weren't developed, and we're going back in a couple of weeks.

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.

**strophic**

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.


**dragon**

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.

**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 metaphasis, the accidental transposition of sounds in spoken language, as when he 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 icle" 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 Hugard’s *The Oxford Guide to Word Games* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 172-177.

**T**

ell 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 incorrectnesses, those deviations, remodelings, changes in reality, so that they may become, yes, lies if you like—but truer than the literal truth.

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.


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 kick you in the
general.


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.


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 loaf newly
drawn out of the oven, and
put it on an Oxes-horn for a
convenient time, and then they can
turn their softened horns the con­
trary 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, and next day, 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.


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 super­
markets 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.