whilst stopping in Plover Bay some of our men found a key of specimens preserved in alcohol belonging to one of our Smithsonian collectors. Having had a long abstinence from exhilarating drinks, the temptation was too much for them, and they proceeded to broach the contents. After they had imbibed to their hearts' content and became visibly affected thereby, they thought it a pity to waste the remaining contents of the barrel, and, feeling hungry, went on to eat the lizards, snakes, and fish which had been put up for a rather different purpose!

Frederick Whymper (describing an incident in August 1867 in Plover Bay, Alaska), Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska (New York, 1869).

In 1948 when I was six years old, I was selected to appear on Art Linkletter's radio program People Are Funny. The night before the show, my mother worked feverishly getting me ready. On the show I was the first child to be announced. Art Linkletter asked me, "Debby, do you know what happened last night?" In my cutest little voice, I responded, "No, what?" There was hysterical laughter. Without saying another word to me, Art Linkletter turned to the next child and asked him the same question. He answered, "President Truman was elected." I have spent the rest of my life trying to figure out what happened.


Whitehead himself had moments when he was not quite sure where he had put things. One day in the early 1930s he had Professor James Melrose of Illinois to tea at the Whitehead cottage... It occurred to Whitehead that his guests might like to see the work in progress on a library addition to the house. So he led them outside, first carefully putting on Professor Melrose's hat which he found in the coatroom closet and assumed was his own. After the excursion he returned the hat to the closet, but at tea's end, when he and Mrs. Whitehead prepared to accompany the guests to their car, he went there once more for his hat. This time Melrose had beat him to it and retrieved his lawful property. Whitehead reached up to the place where his visitor's hat had been, made a little exclamation of surprise, then trotted some distance to a spot where his own hat hung on a hook. It was clear to his guests that the author of Process and Reality did not realize there were two hats, but believed that his own had in some unaccountable way changed its place.


The classical tradition of striptease... offers a valid metaphor for the activity of reading. The dancer teases the audience, as the text teases its readers, with the promise of an ultimate revelation that is infinitely postponed. Veil after veil, garment after garment, is removed, but it is the delay in the stripping that makes it exciting, not the stripping itself; because no sooner has one secret been revealed than we lose interest and crave another... To read is to surrender oneself to an endless displacement of curiosity and desire from one sentence to another, from one action to another, from one level of the text to another. The text unveils itself before us, but never allows itself to be possessed; and instead of striving to possess it, we should take pleasure in its teasing.

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One day while driving my car I violated a traffic regulation. A policeman stopped me and asked my name. When I told it to him he looked up and said—"but not the Nobel Prize scientist?" Upon my affirmative answer, he tore up the ticket and held up the ticket so I could drive away more easily.


T hayer amused himself by attracting the great horned owls as twilight came on. To do this he made a peculiar sucking sound with the back of his hand, and the owls began magically to appear almost at once. One was so deceived by Thayer's calls that he swooped down and lit for a moment on the top of Thayer's bald head.


A very small child I painted a piebald horse with watercolors; everything was finished down to the hoofs.

My aunt who helped me with the painting had to go out and suggested I wait for the hoofs until her return. I remained alone in front of the unfinished picture and suffered from the impossibility of putting the last touches of color on the paper. This last task seemed so easy to me. I thought if I made the hoofs very black they would certainly be completely true to nature. I put as much black on the brush as I could. One instant—and I saw four black, disgusting, ugly spots, utterly foreign to the paper, on the horse's feet. I felt desperate and horribly punished! Later I understood very well the Impressionists' fear of black, and still later it cost me a real struggle of the soul to put pure black on the canvas. Such a misfortune as a child casts a long shadow over many years of later life.


W hen Laurel was a child, in this room and in this bed where she lay now, she closed her eyes like this and the rhythmic, nighttime sound of the two beloved reading voices came rising in turn up the stairs every night to reach her. She could hardly fall asleep, she tried to keep awake, for pleasure. She cared for her own books, but she cared more for theirs, which meant their voices. In the lateness of the night, their two voices reading to each other where she could hear them, never letting a silence divide or interrupt them, combined into one unceasing voice and wrapped her around as she listened, as still as if she were asleep. She was sent to sleep under a velvety cloak of words, richly patterned and stitched with gold, straight out of a fairy tale, while they went reading on into her dreams.


I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only a boy playing on the sea-shore, diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

Issac Newton, Memoirs.

E ducation and learning, while on the one hand furthering this process of discovery, on the other hand gradually brake and finally stop it completely. There are relatively few adults who are fortunate enough to have retained something of the child's curiosity, his capacity for questioning and wondering. The average adult "knows all the answers," which is exactly why he will never know even a single answer. He has ceased to wonder, to discover. He knows his way around, and it is indeed a way around and around the same conventional pattern, in which everything is familiar and nothing cause for wonder. It is this adult who answers the child's questions and, in answering, fails to answer them but instead acquaints the child with the conventional patterns of his civilization, which effectively close up the asking mouth and shut the wondering eye.

Woody is just at a loss in the country. He comes to visit and does everything there is to do in a fraction of the morning. He fishes, he plays ball, and then he's at loose ends and it isn't even noon yet. He wouldn't dream of going swimming. We only have a lake to swim in. And he says there are living things in the lake. You ought to hear the way he says it. To him, it's not a joke.

In the evening when the sun goes down, he starts thinking of the Cutter Family, remember, in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*? And he talks about the possibility of deadly serpents in the lake.

Mia Farrow (describing Woody Allen when he visits her country house in Connecticut) interviewed by Chicago Sun-Times film critic Roger Ebert in Savannah News-Press (Sunday, 1 March 1987), p. 8G.

On Paris once I had two strawberry finches. Having to leave the city for a few days, I asked Mary if she would save them for me. On my return, noticing that she had not removed their cover (indeed had her head up and turned, as in thought, I pulled it off myself and cried out at once, "Père God, imposters") moving like a risen Becamiller, Mary said, in her light pining voice, "That cat and your abominable eye! Who on earth before has known one finch from another?"


A pupil should be taught what it means to know something, and not to know it; what should be the design and end of study; what valor, temperance, and justice are; the difference between ambition and greed, loyalty and servitude, liberty and license; the marks of true and solid contentment; the extent to which we should fear disgrace, affliction, and death; the true springs of our actions and the reasons for our varied thought and desires. Our first lessons, I think, should teach us how to rule our behavior and understanding, how to live and die well.


I say that there should be an art exam for people, just for the right to call themselves artists—it wouldn't give you any other guarantee—if you're a brain surgeon, you have to pass a test. If you're an artist, you should be able to pass a test, too, at least something rudimentary and simple, but nobody seems to want to.


Below: Label for hypothetical Dali shaving cream, proposed by Michael Davis, a reader from Charlotte, North Carolina.

On my way home I passed a booth where a man was calling out that here were the famous German dwarf and his three dwarf children; the living skeleton; and, to conclude, the fattest girl that ever was seen. I paid my shilling, and went in. After waiting a quarter of an hour, till five other spectators arrived, the curtain was drawn up, and the most impertinent 'charlatanerie' exhibited that ever I witnessed. The living skeleton was a very ordinary-sized man, not much thinner than I. As an excuse for our disappointment, we were assured that when he arrived from France he was a skeleton, but that since he had eaten good English beef steaks, it had been found impossible to check his tendency to corpulence.

At Walden pond, I found a new musical instrument which I call the ice-harp. A thin coat of ice covered a part of the pond but melted around the edge of the shore. I threw a stone upon the ice which rebounded with a shrill sound, and falling again and again, repeated the note with pleasing modulation. I thought at first it was the 'peep' 'peep' of a bird I had scared. I was so taken with the music that I threw down my stick and spent twenty minutes in throwing stones single and in handfuls on this crystal drum.


To laugh at yourself is the most important thing. Not at others, but yourself—that's the great thing. The day I graduated from high school, we were all asked what would we like to be. I had no idea so I said, "I think I'm going to be a clown." A symbol of man's suffering on earth, you might say, and of his conquest over it, too. Because at bottom I think there is a great deal of clown in me. I'm kind of a schizoid type, who laughs and cries at the same time.


I have a precise picture of the moment I wanted to become an artist...it happened when I was fifteen and my cousin, who probably was ten or fifteen years older than I was, came into the house with a brown paper bag, and he said, "Do you want to see a pigeon?" I thought he had a pigeon in the bag, and said, "Yes." He took a pencil out of his pocket, and he drew a pigeon on the side of the bag. Two things occurred. One was the expectation of seeing somebody draw a pigeon; and two, it was the first time I had actually ever observed someone make a drawing that looked like the actual object—as opposed to my own rudimentary drawing. I was literally struck speechless. It seemed a miraculous occurrence, the creation of life, and I have never recovered from that experience.


Look at this...It turns out there is a pop group called the Police— I don't know why they are called that, presumably to distinguish them from the punks—and they've made an album of my essay The Ghost in the Machine...A rather difficult book has become the inspiration for a pop group. It came as a great surprise to me. I'm slightly tickled by it.


...beautiful as the chance meeting upon a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella!

Isidore Ducasse, alias Comte de Lautreamont, Les Chants de Maldoror (Paris, c. 1868).

The horse and mule live 30 years And nothing know of wines and beers. The goat and sheep at 20 die And nothing know of wines and beers. The cat in milk and water soaks Without the aid of rum or gin. The cow drinks water by the ton And nothing know of wines and beers. The modest, sober, bone-dry hen Lays eggs for nogs, then dies at 10. They sinless live and swiftly die; All animals are strictly dry: But sinful, ginful, rum-soaked men Survive for three score years Stay pickled till they're 92.

Anonymous. Suggested by Barbara E. Cie, a reader from Searchlight, Nevada.
he Zebra or Zabra of this country being about the bigness of a mule, is a beast of incomparable swiftness, strack about the body, legges, eares, and other parts, with blacke, white and browne circles of three fingers broad; which do make a pleasant shew.

Leo Africanus (16th century Moorish explorer) in R. Brown, ed., The History and Description of Africa (Hayluyt Society, 1896).

It is probably immaterial that economic necessity compels Mondrian to paint flower still lifes, which he embarrassedly pushes out of the way when one visits his studio.


Two guys, one from Brooklyn and one from the midwest, are sitting on a park bench. "Look at all dem bolds," says the man from Brooklyn. "Excuse me," responds the man from the midwest, "Those are birds." "Really?" says the Brooklynite, "Well, dey shore choips like bolds."

A favorite joke from the childhood of the BALLAST Subscription Boy.

He greatest tragedy that can befall a teacher, according to Einstein, is when he finds that his language, method, and problems have ceased to be those of the new generation of students, whose presuppositions he may find not only alien but willfully irrational.


This issue of BALLAST we dedicate to David Suter, an American editorial cartoonist, whose works are often published in Time, The New York Times, Harper’s, The Progressive, The Atlantic, and other publications. We enthusiastically recommend his book, Suterisms (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), from which we reproduce the cover and one of the artworks.

"If it had been possible to graft M.C. Escher onto David Suter before dawn, which is to say an artist who can turn a realistic thought inside out and show you its cortical illusions," Tom Wolfe

Suggested by Randall Cope, a reader from St. Simons Island, Georgia.

Gathered about the table, I observed some seven or eight persons, amongst whom, in particular, my eyes lighted upon a fair-haired young man, of some five or six-and-twenty years of age, astonishingly handsome in spite of a slight touch of baldness. I pressed him for news of Naples, and in particular, of music in that city; he answered my curiosity with answers that were clear-cut, brilliant and humorous. I enquired of him whether, when I reach Naples, I might still hope to see Rossini's Otello. I pursued the topic, asserting that, in my opinion, Rossini was the bright hope of the Italian school; that he was the only living composer who had true genius as his birthright. At this point I noticed that, not only of his many friends, but of his many companions, who were grinning openly. To cut a long story short, this was Rossini.


Picasso, you and I are the greatest painters of our time, you in the Egyptian style, I in the modern.


The patient displayed an unusual memory for exact dates, not only of his many previous hospital transfers, but of trivia, such as "the day the TV set went out of order." A pair of mentally retarded twins who had the unusual ability to give the day of the week in the past and future were concurrently in the hospital and well known to the staff, who had all been told by the twins on what day of the week they had been born. With the above as a clue, and with no advertisement by the patient, I and the other staff told him our birthdays at his initial interview, and were amazed to find that he too had the remarkable ability to state instantly the day of the week on which they fell. Verification of his ability with a larger range of dates was achieved by the convenient procedure of checking with the twins. The twins were asked the dates individually as a check of their accuracy, but this was superfluous, as they never disagreed.

I eat my peas with honey  
I've done it all my life  
It makes the peas taste funny  
But it keeps them on the knife.

Anonymous. Suggested by Dickerson Tuttle, a reader from Rushsylvania, Ohio.

Russell saw the world in terms of clear-cut logical distinctions, while Whitehead concentrated on the interconnectedness of things. Russell expressed well the difference between himself and his old mentor when he said that he, Russell, saw reality as a heap of shot, while Whitehead thought it was a bowl of treacle.


We all look on with anxious eyes  
When father carves the duck,  
And mother almost always sighs  
When father carves the duck.  
Then all of us prepare to rise  
And hold our bibs before our eyes  
And be prepared for some surprise  
When father carves the duck.

Anonymous. Suggested by Margaret Dunwoodie, a reader from Mud Butte, South Dakota.

I was born cross-eyed. I could see only large patterns, houses, trees and outlines of people—and all coloring was blurred. I could see two dark areas on human faces, but I could not see a human eye or a teardrop or a human hair. Not until I was four years old, in 1899, was it discovered that my cross-eye-ness was caused by my being abnormally farsighted. Lenses fully corrected my vision. Despite my new ability to apprehend details, my childhood's spontaneous dependence only upon big patterns has persisted.


When you get to the point where you cheat for the sake of beauty, you are an artist.

Max Jacob, *Art Poétique* (1922).

Beautiful Soup, so rich and green,  
Waiting in a hot tureen!  
Who for such dainties would not stoop?  
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!

Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!  
Beau--ootiful Soo--oop!  
Soo--oop of the e--e - -evening,  
Beautiful, beautiful Soup!

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (London, 1865). Suggested by Dean L. Schwarz, master potter, in his lecture on "remembering Marguerite Wildenhain." Each summer Schwarz conducts a school, in which is taught the Dornburg (Bauhaus) pottery tradition at his gigantic rural home in Northeast Iowa. Many of his former students are professional potters. The first of three 4-week sessions begins this year on 2 June. For further information, write: Dean L. Schwarz, South Bear School, Rural Route 5, Box 163, Decorah, Iowa 52101-9340.

Quaker, Cope refused to take a gun with him on his fossil-hunting forays, despite the fact that these led him into territories populated with hostile Indians. On one occasion, finding himself surrounded by a distinctly unfriendly band, Cope distracted his captors from their murderous intentions by removing and putting back his false teeth. Enthralled by this performance, they made him do it over and over again and eventually released him unharmed.


Ida and I were once guests in the house of an elderly lady in London; the conversation turned to Gandhi, who had come to London, in 1931, after being imprisoned several times, and had been honorably received as a delegate to the second Round Table Conference on India. He had come off the ship, clad only in a loincloth, and leading a goat; he lived on its milk, and on vegetables. The lady was deeply shocked that such an uncouth visitor should be thought fit to lead a country—how could it be, when he did not wear trousers in front of the King? Gently I turned her round to look at the wall, on which hung a painting of Christ on the Cross. She never invited us to her house again.


She could not find any toilet paper in her stall, and asked the lady in the next booth, "Darling, is there any tissue in there?"  
"Sorry, no."

"Then have you any Kleenex?"

"Afraid not."

Then Tallulah said, "My dear, have you two fives for a ten?"


Question: If a fire broke out in an art museum, which painting would you take with you?  
Answer (from Tristan Bernard): I would take the one nearest the entrance.

Answer (from Jean Cocteau): I would take the fire.
One Sunday afternoon after a little skirmish we both sat reading. The door and windows were closed, and the stove was burning full blast. I opened the door and he shut it. I opened a window and he shut it. I shut the door of the stove to diminish the draught and he opened it. (Neither of us had spoken.) I felt that I was losing, and fast losing my self-control. What could I do next? My eye fell upon a jar of water in which the brushes were soaked. I picked it up, and, lifting up the lid of the stove, pored the contents over the red-hot cinders. There was an explosion and I was half-blinded by the steam and ashes. When I recovered my sight, I looked at Corvo. He hadn't budged. He only interrupted his reading from time to time to blow the ashes off his book. I had lost again.


Many likes to bring two things together into one... He lives by making associations and he is doing well by himself and in himself when he thinks of something in connection with something else that no one ever put with it before. That's what we call a metaphor. Robert Frost, "An Interview with Robert Frost," in John Ciardi, Dialogue With An Audience (New York: J.P. Lippincott, 1963), p. 172.

Young women are very immoral, not because their natural average disposition is either better or worse than of women of other tribes and races, but because public opinion is all in favor of what may be called 'gallantry'. When a woman is discovered in an intrigue, a great outcry is made, and the neighbors rush to the scene with much laughter. A goat is sent for on the spot for a peace-making feast between the gallant and the husband. Of course the neighbors also partake of the feast; the husband and wife both look very happy, and so does every one else, except the lover, who has to pay for the goat.


Models, however, aren't real. And metaphorical models are even less so. Light does not travel in straight lines, we only represent it that way. Nor are all the features of our mathematics features of our data. Twice 25 is 50, but 50 Fahrenheit is not twice warmer than its half. With metaphorical models the discrepancies are even greater.


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The art of writing consists of putting two things together that are not unlike and that belong together like a horse and cart.


The most accomplished monkey cannot draw a monkey. Only man can do that, just as it is only man who regards this ability as a distinct merit.

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg.

While hunting and trapping skunks I could not avoid being sprayed with their scent. I reeked of their nauseous odor, and there was loud protest from members of the family when I came into the house. While the strong odor was disagreeable to me, I considered tolerating it an exhibition of heroism. I was not in the least humiliated by being a great nuisance to the family, but persisted in renewing contacts with the fetid animals in a spirit of daring without attempting to defend myself against scolding and reprimands from every member of the household. After one year of this I gave it up.


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Our life should always be arranged just as if you were studying theology, or philosophy, or other theories, that is to say, eating and drinking moderately, at least twice a day, electing digestible and wholesome dishes and light wines; saving and sparing your hand, preserving it from such strains as heaving stones, crowbars, and many other things which are bad for your hand, from giving them a chance to weary it. There is another cause which, if you indulge it, can make your hand so unsteady that it will waver more, and flutter far more, than leaves do in the wind, and this is indulging too much in the company of women.

Cennino Cennini (Renaissance artist regarding how artists should live), in Robert Goldwater and Marco Treves, eds., Artists on Art (New York: Pantheon, 1945).

It is impossible for a creative artist to be either a Puritan or a Fascist, because both are a negation of the creative urge. The only things the creative artist can be opposed to are ugliness and injustice.

Liam O'Flaherty, interviewed in The New York Post (27 November 1937).

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People would greet me and my reflection in the mirror.

W e looked exactly alike.

I n the middle of the street, calling out absent-mindedly, "I am looking for a friend with whom I can talk and whom I can love."

O nce he visited a school in Stockholm, and was taken in to a geography lesson. He went up to the map on the wall, pointed to Italy, and said: "This is London." The pupils stared at him in surprise. At Summerhill when he did things like that, they laughed and told him he was a silly fool.

T he 'Divines' were the Church students of the College, wearing the cassock and biretta and studying for the priesthood. So far as I can remember, Rolfe worked with us only a short time—a thin, somewhat emaciated, rather good-looking young man. In the course of his first week he took us by surprise one dinner time by exclaiming aloud, in an interval of silence—"Oh! What lovely legs!" This, in those far-off days of the past, was considered a somewhat outrageous exclamation to come from the lips of a Church student... But it turned out that the legs he was referring to were those of a small insect which was creeping towards his soup-plate.

Edgar Tafel, Years With Frank Lloyd Wright: Apprentice to Genius (New York: Dover, 1979), p. 68.

Grandmother always spoke with a strong accent and was never able to distinguish the word "kitchen" from "kitten."


The image contains text that is not meaningful or does not form a coherent sentence.