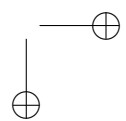
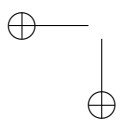
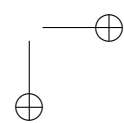
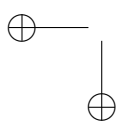
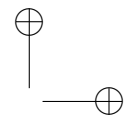
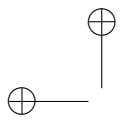
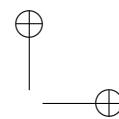
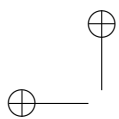


LARKS IN MY HAIR



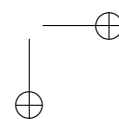
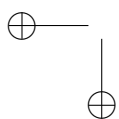


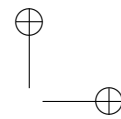
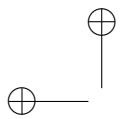


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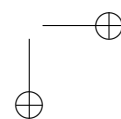
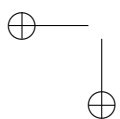
Ethel Jacobson

IWP





2026
First Published, 1952





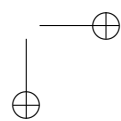
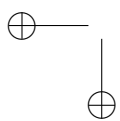
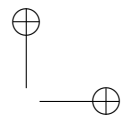
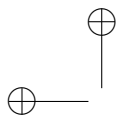
INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD ARMOUR

Light verse is so sharp and swift and streamlined that it has a modern look. Yet it is an ancient and honorable kind of poetry. It has been written by Chaucer and Shakespeare and Herrick and Pope and Byron, in fact by every poet who has had moments of playfulness and has not taken himself too seriously. At its best, light verse is a widely appealing and highly civilized form of writing. And here, certainly, is light verse at its best.

Ethel Jacobson is one of the most popular light verse writers in America today, and her popularity has a sound basis. On the technical side, she has variety and music in her meters, freshness and unexpectedness in her rhymes. A poem by Ethel Jacobson always has a special lilt that intrigues the ear. In her attitude, in what she has to say, there is a shrewd but amiable view of the human scene, and there is that curious blend of apparent opposites: criticism and sympathy.

Here is light verse in the best tradition – to be envied by fellow-craftsmen and enjoyed by everyone.

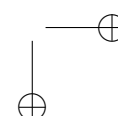
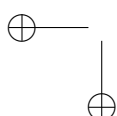


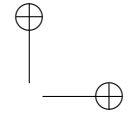
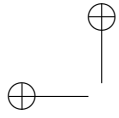




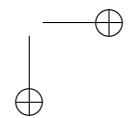
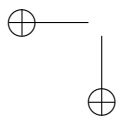
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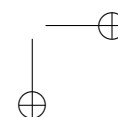
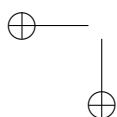


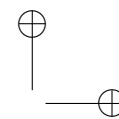
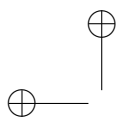
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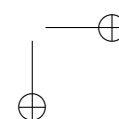
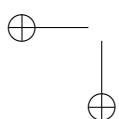


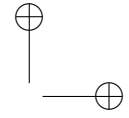
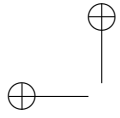
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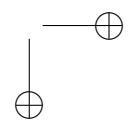
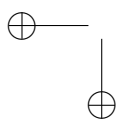
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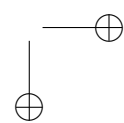
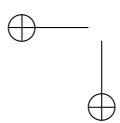
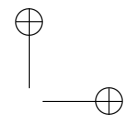
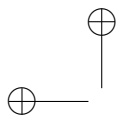


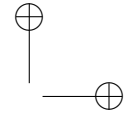
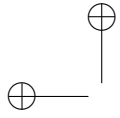


When the skie falth we shall have Larkes. HEYWOOD.

Or, if you prefer Rabelais,
Si les nues tomboyent esperoyt prendre les alouettes.

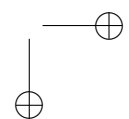
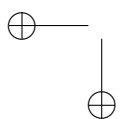






COMMENT, PROFESSIONAL

Writing's like flirting;
No text can reach you:
If you can't do it
No one can teach you;
Cautious, respectable
People drop you,
But if you can do it
No one can stop you!





FOREWORD TO A FIVE-YEAR DIARY

O snappy job of scarlet leather,
With golden hasps to clasp together,
A golden key to keep secure
Gay tales more dashing than demure,
Why were you sent to me, me who
Nothing – ever – happens – to?
Was it a hint... oblique, perhaps?
Or was he one of these funny chaps?
But here you are and here I be
And ah, shall I write,

“Dear Diary:
Arose betimes
(Nine o’clock).
Walked the dog
Around the block.
Had the seamstress.
Washed my head.
Caught a cold.
And so to bed.”?

Each page provocatively sighs
For lilting tales of lovers’ lies.
Rash and revealing words should scrawl
And TELL – in purple backhand – ALL!





*And oh, with fingers frantic, fleet,
I should rip out some damning sheet
And thrust it in the taper there
All in one mad, mad moment ere
Sir Godfrey bursts my chamber door
And snatches, with a baffled roar,
At – what? An entry which might say
In bitter candor,*

“Rain today.
Went to dentist.
Home and read.
Still have cold.
And so to bed.”?

Dear Diary:

I'd share your shame
To chronicle a life so tame.
You rate the starriest of hours
Who'll get you read to twenty juries –
Some lustrous Jane or luscious Jenny
Who loves not wisely but too many.
So here's a foreword as your due.
(Would that I could live up to you!)
But here's where it ceases and desists,
And the rest of you will be laundry lists.





LABORATORY TESTED

Scientists are experimenting with an Osculometer to analyze the dynamics of kissing. — JOHN E. GIBSON.

Science now has come to this:
Machines to calibrate the kiss;
To measure and weigh it,
To chart and assay it
For traction, intensity,
Dew point and density.
Valves pop, sparks leap,
Boards blaze with lights,
As oscillant needles
Mark osculant heights.
Science marches on, hup, hup!
Plug me in and pucker up.





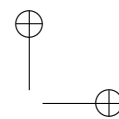
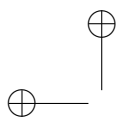
ON TURNING THE OTHER EAR

Am I your friend or am I your friend?
I've listened to you for hours on end,
I've lent an ear till it needs retuning,
Heard you bleat till I felt like swooning.
For endless eons I've been harangued;
I've hung on your words till I'm almost hanged,
Sustained by one shining hope; i.e.,
That presently I might pipe with glee,
"Let's talk about me!"

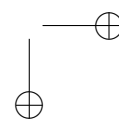
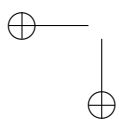
Haven't I been, pal, the perfect listener,
Oh-er and ah-er and that-and-this'ner?
Haven't I played the stooge ideally,
Murmuring "Yes" and "Quite!" and "Really?"
While I was loudly talked to death,
Awaiting the moment when, out of breath,
Voiceless, spent, you'd have to agree
To a strange, mad notion of mine; e.g.,
"Let's talk about me!"

But all my buddies have throats of brass
And nerves of the same base stuff, alas.
They drone and babble; they rant and thunder;
Their nonstop monologues plow me under;
And then when they finally cease their crowing,
What's their last gasp? "I must be going."





I can't even blurt – so fleet they flee! –
My piteous, piquant, poignant plea:
“Let’s
talk
about
me!”



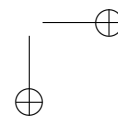
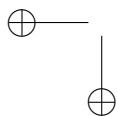


**SOMETHING FOR YOUR WIFE...
AND WRAP IT AS A GIFT**

“Something for your wife...?”
The salesladies chirrup
In a voice like the drip
Of the treaciest of syrup.
“And what’s the lady’s size?”
They liltily request.
You cry she’s not as high
As the pocket of your vest,
And the salesladies sigh,
“Well-l, we’ll do our best. . . .”

“Nothing big,
Nothing bright,
No drape shape –
She hasn’t the height.
Sable’s too regal.
Silver fox? *Non!*
Perhaps the little woman
Could manage *mouton*. . . .”

The salesladies all
Are slinky-tall as goddesses.
They can wear *mink*
And jewel-crusted bodices.





Orchids big as platters
They flaunt triumphantly –
For anything with dash
You must be six-foot-three,
And so they all agree on
The innocuous for me!

Nothing elegant,
Nothing lush;
The dinkiest of trinkets –
“In scale” is what they gush.
“Here’s something suitably
Conservative and mild –
The little woman’s lost
In creations too high-styled.”
They said it
And they SMILED. . . .
And is it any wonder
If the little woman’s riled?

“Something for your wife?”
Yes! Here’s her very order:
A saleslady’s head
In an aspic border.





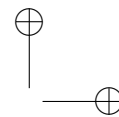
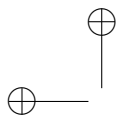
BEACH PICNIC

The outing was really
A lulu, a dilly.
The fog was dense
And dank and chilly
But every one tanned –
To third-degree burns –
And the kiddies fell off
Of the cliff by turns.

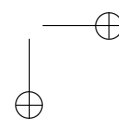
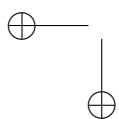
The hampers were bulging,
The menu faultless,
Though salads were sandy
And sandwiches saltless,
And Wilberforce dropped
The banana-cream pie,
La Verne had a pickle fork
Jabbed in her eye,
Some cutup went swimming
With Mother's new hat on,
And Dorcas was nipped
By a crab that she sat on.

And then when the rains came –
They're sudden, you know! –
We found all our things
As we packed up to go,





Except Grandma's teeth,
Bill's swimming fins,
The keys to the car,
And one of the twins.





SONG FROM THE BAYOUS

Four persons were arrested today in a wife-swapping deal that included the trading of four children, two mules, and forty acres of land. — NEWS ITEM.

*He took my gal and I took his'n.
Warn't no call fer to hustle us to prison.
It were fair and square – and what's to keep a man
From adrivin' of a bargain as a smart man can?
Oh, he got Gladys and I got Stella;
He got the goat and the moo-cow Bella;
I got the mules and the forty of tobaccy,
And he got stuck with the kids, by cracky!
Warn't no business fer the law to stop;
And a man's got to look to hisself in a swap!*





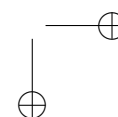
INFINITIVES UNINHIBITED

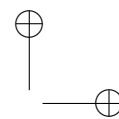
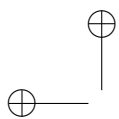
The split infinitive, says Havelock Ellis, was banned by ignorant grammarians through a false analogy to Latin (where the infinitive is never split because it is impossible). In the greater freedom of English it can be split, and has been done for hundreds of years by the greatest masters of the language.

To crassly split infinitives
Was branded reprehensible,
A trifle less than fratricide
And just as indefensible;
Avoided by the meanest bard,
Abhorred by the biographer;
A sin in the bright lexicon
Of every lexicographer.

But here's one to belatedly
Uphold the scorned vulgarian;
To boldly claim the blame is with
The stultified grammarian,
The pedant quick to, as it were,
Be tricked by false analogy.
(His brain's preserved in alcohol
For Freshman Mineralogy.)

So, friend, hew to the infinite;
Let the splits fall, interjectable!
This schoolmarm plague is found to –
After all this! – be respectable.

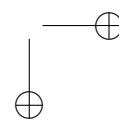
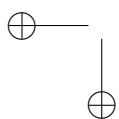


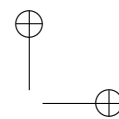
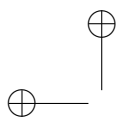


COMPLICATIONS HAVE SET IN

Existence once was free from care,
Serene and uncomplex.
My days were quite untroubled by
The Big Strong Silent Sex.

I never gave a thought to men
Or knew they were alive,
Long ago – so long ago! –
When I was four or five.

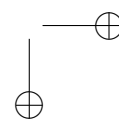
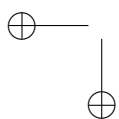




ROSY THOUGHT

Government bureau seeks clue to pink hue of flamingoes. —
NEWS ITEM.

What is it makes flamingoes pink?
It gives one furiously to think
Why they remain that rosy hue
Instead of turning green or blue.
Nobler brains than mine debate
Problems of more cosmic weight –
War, and Waste, and Wickedness –
Often with no more success
Than when I sit and think and think
What makes flamingoes pink. . . .





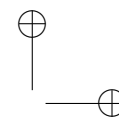
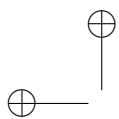
TRY THE SECRET

It's fun, at times, when your cronies call
And you end up throwing a genteel brawl,
But it's even nicer to lock your portals
And batten the hatches to roving mortals
And take the telephone off its hook
While you go to bed with a good fat book.
Your sanctum's hushed as the Dalai Lama's;
You're wearing your chartreuse silk pajamas;
Your midriff's claimed by the tomcat Melvin,
And a juicy murder is yours to delve in.

Some read the whimsical de la Mare,
But ruddier meat is your midnight fare:
A bit of mayhem, a dash of arson,
A kidnapped heiress, a blackmailed parson,
A doctor with botts and schizophrenia –
And, lady, don't sniff that doped gardenia!
There's Louie the Lug, the hangman's jackal;
An old crone's brutally throttled cackle;
Poisoned bonbons. . . . You eye, so late,
The few you've left on your bedside plate!
A man-eating tiger prowls the deck. . .
And Melvin suddenly bites your neck.

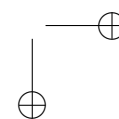
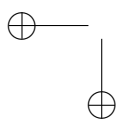
That spy was reading one night – well, thus.
They fished her out of the Bosphorus.





The ape man grunts as he strikes. . . or was it
Something gibbering in your closet?
Melvin's back is a fright-wigged arc:
Something's there in the rustling dark!
That stealthy scrape, that evil mutter
Can't be merely a creaking shutter,
Can't be mice. . . "DON'T SHOOT!" you shout,
As for no good reason the lights go out. . .

Turn, at your peril, to Literature
For a quiet evening, but first make sure
You've switched on each photoelectric beam
And the Pinkerton men are what they seem,
And you've Great Danes shackled at post and pillar –
Why, then curl up with your killer-diller,
And breathless follow each thrilling clue –
Just Alice of Old Vincennes and you.





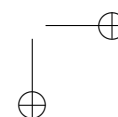
ODE TO A SMALL DICTIONARY

For ALBERT H. MOREHEAD, who thereupon wrote the only
small dictionary that HAS all the words in it.

O contretemps conceivably
Can find me unprepared;
There's no cul-de-sac of knowledge
Where my learning can't be aired;
Of all cultural impasses
I'm the nonchalant surmounter
With my Dandy Dictionary
From the Drugstore Counter.

It's full of little supplements
Of esoteric lore
Like what's the time in Sydney
When it's noon in Singapore,
And the measure of a cubit
And a geodetic minute –
But the simplest word you try to find
Is never, never in it.

Oh, I know the salutation
For a viscount's seventh son;
The population (1910)
Of Little Beaver Run;



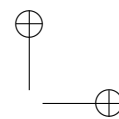
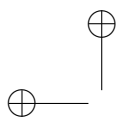


I can stun the sagest savant
With some random acquisition
From ray edifying summary
Of bargain erudition.

There are Fancy Foreign Phrases
And Correct Atomic Weights,
A Glossary of Yachting
And the Mottoes of the States;
For such quaint and useful tidbits
Here's the place to make a beeline –
But you'll never find the word for, say,
A small domestic feline.

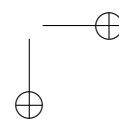
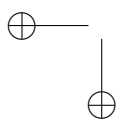
What a mine of miscellany,
What a treasure trove of tracts
In my Handy Home Compendium
Of Fascinating Facts!
But wilder hopes keep mounting
For this lush repository:
Some day I'm going to hunt a word
That's there in all its glory!

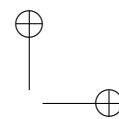
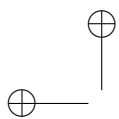




KITTEN

A fluff of fur
Lined with purr.

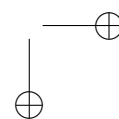
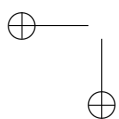


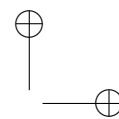
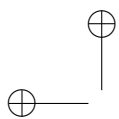


SLEIGHT-OF-SPRING

*Spring is a magic-show,
Spring is hocus-pocus:
Now you see a bank of snow,
Now a bed of crocus.*

*Nothing's up her sleeve now
But the thousand paper hats
Of daffodils, and a bare bough
Turned to pussy-cats!*



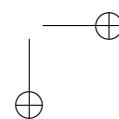
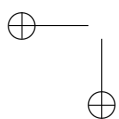


EMBRACE THE WIND

The swerve of a swallow's flight,
The sun on dancing water,
These you can have and hold
With a growing daughter.

The very scent of springtime,
A snowflake's frozen lace
You can touch and keep with the
Quicksilver of her face.

Go embrace the morning wind,
Blow kisses to a star.
A tall young daughter is
As fair, and as far.



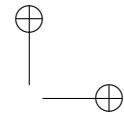
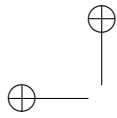


TWIN FAWNS

Motionless in the road they stood
Profiled against the cottonwood,
Heads turned toward us in grave surprise,
All velvet ears, all wide dark eyes.
Then with a bouncing pogo lobe
One soared incredibly up the slope,
Stopping to view from a granite height
The peril below, then he skipped from sight.

The other fawn paused a moment more
For the prompting of secret inborn lore
Until, though no movement disturbed the air,
Even as we watched – he wasn't there.
The road was empty. But under the tree,
Where we pretended we couldn't see,
In the scanty thicket two shadows froze –
The fawn's crouched close to the guarding doe's.
They watched the menace until we passed
And the road was clean of our taint at last,
And safely once more gentleness stood
And was comforted under the cottonwood.



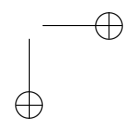
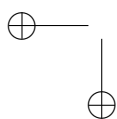


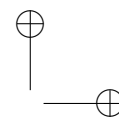
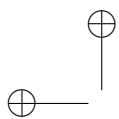
A SLIGHT CASE OF DOMESTICATION

We met up ages and ages ago. . . .
The beeches whispered, the moon was low,
The scented breeze was a soft caress,
And we hadn't been around much, I guess. . . .
We felt the lures of a thousand springs –
And who were we to mistrust them things?

But still and all, and nevertheless,
I'd often read in the Sunday press
And in weighty tomes that go in for such,
Of the marital customs of Greek and Dutch
And Chinese, Zulu, and Cherokee;
And I knew that wedded felicity
Depended on whether you both were Gallic
Or Unitarian or brachycephalic,
And couples whose matings had been "arranged"
Were much less likely to grow estranged –

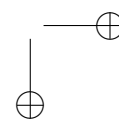
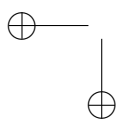
Where mamma and papa, with wisdom sound
And based on experience, look around
And pick out the likeliest candidate
To make their daughter a proper mate,
Considering this and weighing that,
Like: Will his Doberman like your cat,
And what of his prospects and his family tree,
And whether he's wanted by the gendarmerie.





But you and me, huh, what did we do?
We wandered out to admire the view;
You touched my hair, and you found it nice,
And I looked in your eyes – and saw shoes and rice.
Did we stop to figure out were we born
Under the right sign in Capricorn?
Did I think to check your Binet report?
And was I the manic-depressive sort?
Would you scream for steak when I'd ordered squabs?
And did you have one of these here now jobs?

No, we took the plunge, without reason or rhyme.
It just seemed a good idea at the time.
But the joke's on us, or the books were wrong –
'Cause, looky! We've lasted a whole year long!





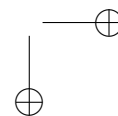
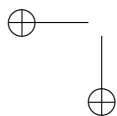
THE UNBENT TWIG

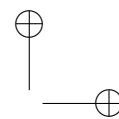
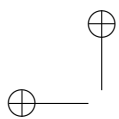
When Susie came to bless our home,
My full heart fashioned a joyful pome
Till Reason rasped, with an ugly leer,
“O.K., but where do we go from here?”

For I'd been taught, as a young girl is,
The principal exports of far Cadiz,
And French subjunctives and Saxon rimes
And all about Homer his life and times,
And Avogadro and Alcibiades,
But nothing of infantile diets and diades;
So, full of impatience and mother love,
I set out to master these last above.

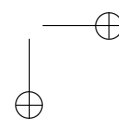
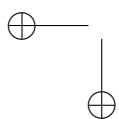
There were books in rows, there were books in stacks,
On library shelves and reference racks,
And I read each expert and conned each system
And carefully set out to check and list 'em
From Dr. Watson to Dr. Holt
And the Mustn't-Spank-ers, in one stiff jolt;
From cod-liver oil to Constructive Play,
From Z-is-for-Zebra to Vitamin A.

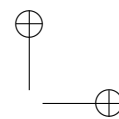
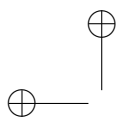
Yet, hard though I struggled to weigh and weed 'em,
New books came faster than I could read 'em,





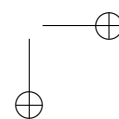
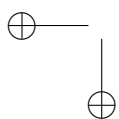
Each blandly discrediting all the lore
I'd painfully managed to grasp before.
Oh, I studied madly till wan and woozy,
But I couldn't decide how to bring up Susie.
 But while I grew groggy
 At Wisdom's cup,
 What do you think?
 Susie grew up.

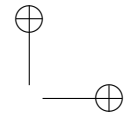
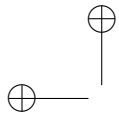




PACKAGE DEAL

Little boys
Like noise,
Mangy cats,
Tame rats,
Wiggly worms –
And thrive on germs.
So Mom
Must be calm
And take germs,
Worms,
Rats,
Cats,
And noise,
Along with boys.



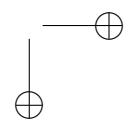
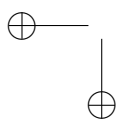


POTLUCK

Where do you find each saint and sinner
That you bring home, my sweet, to dinner?
Your desk, at five, is a mighty magnet –
For lamsters fleeing the D.A.'s dragnet,
A brother Beta called Blenkinsop,
And a man you met in the barbershop.

Some are noisy and some are glum.
Some want buttermilk, some want rum,
Some eat nothing but quail and turbot,
While some eat the doilies under their sherbet,
And they all regale you with epic sagas
Of how they're allergic to rutabagas,
Their charmed escape from a bear they'd struck,
While you're wishing their next bear better luck,
And they hint at *affaires du coeur* unlistable –
Womankind finds them irresistible!
And, lor, they panhandle us
Something scandalous!

Angel, I'm all for hospitality,
Even a certain prodigality,
But comes a time in the best menages
That frowns on impromptu entourages;
When all that's left of the Sunday roast
Appears as hash on a round of toast,





And the tea cart's set by the fire, for two,
And there's just enough coffee for me and you
And there's maybe a chop apiece, and, my!
Almost a half of a pecan pie.
And that's when you bring home a visiting Moose
And six of the boys from Syracuse.

What's the attraction here, my pet?
Hardly the table I'm known to set –
The hurriedly opened can of beans,
The musty crackers, the lank sardines,
The dab of chutney, the pickled peach
Frantically thrown in the yawning breach
While Angela weeps at the kitchen sink,
Swears to leave, and resorts to drink.

So, once a week, come home untended.
Don't bring Elmer – or ALL IS ENDED.
Tell him I've got the mumps or diphtheria;
Tell him to go to a cafeteria;
Tell him the city is full of beaneries,
Grill rooms, snack bars, and all-night wieneries;
Or, when dusk falls on the downtown region,
You'll find you're one of the homeless legion,
Adrift with your buddies, saint and sinner,
And you can go home with them to dinner.





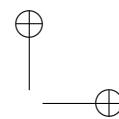
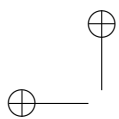
SONG FOR MY SUPPER

I am the baby who always gets
The pit in the cherry pie.
When there's one bone left in the fillet of sole
Who gets that fishbone? I.
On the walnut hull in the coffee cake
Who breaks a tooth? Correct!
And I cut my lip on the lobster shell
In the patty I select.
Heigh-ho, m'lud,
And a bucket of blood.

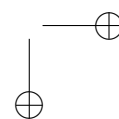
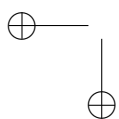
I sputter and choke on the lemon pip
That lurks in my cup of punch.
I rate the lump in the mashed potatoes,
The seed in the apple crunch.
When a grapefruit sharpshooter takes his stance
He pitch-shots right to my eyes.
And you'd be surprised at what I find
In a simple tomato surprise!
Mais non! And nyet!
And carramba yet!

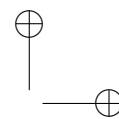
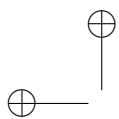
Now for minor lapses of haute cuisine
Which seem fated to embellish
My daily diet – and mine alone –
I'm acquiring a mournful relish.





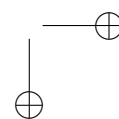
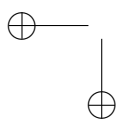
And I've come to look for the hair in the soup,
The sand in the spinach. . . . I'm hep, child,
That I'm marked apart at the festal board:
I'm just God's perfect stepchild.
Sing willow waly,
Life's pretty scaly.

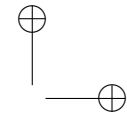
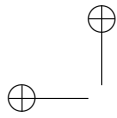




EASY, BROTHER

*Women aren't practical,
You claim, so - hold it! Steady,
Next time you hear one singing out,
"I'm practical-ly ready!"*



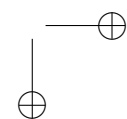
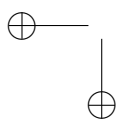


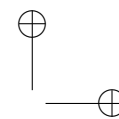
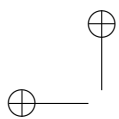
WHAT, NO BIRDIE?

Friends, you call yourselves! Ho, and ha!
Lowest forms of bacteria,
Lurking at kitchen doors and stairs
To pounce on a lady unawares
Who's pondering matters of greater weight
Than getting her camera angles straight.

O warped of mind, O false of heart,
Practitioners of this rudest art,
You scuttle forth from a stagnant drain
To startle an innocent chatelaine
While she's grubbily weeding the garden path,
Or dunking her toes in a mustard bath,
Or fondly believing she's quite alone
With a specially succulent chicken bone.

Is nothing sacred, is nothing safe
From pictured malice and graphic strafe?
A lady can't do her chores, Lord knows,
As a series of modern-dance tableaux;
But why must each sorry gaucherie be
Preserved on film for posterity –
No freak, foreshortened pose get by
The camera's bleak obsidian eye?
I've sat for hours by the lily pool
In a frock of lace, with a scarf of tulle,

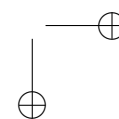
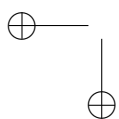


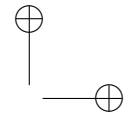
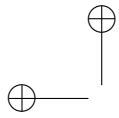


And my toothiest, most expectant smile –
And no lens focused in half a mile.
But I trip on the garbage pail and – Quick,
Shutters click!

Candor, you call it? Faugh, and fie!
A scurvy virtue indeed, I cry,
When a lady can't straighten a stocking seam
Or plaster her nose with freckle cream
Or scrub at a greasy broiler rack
Or treat herself to a henna pack –
Even her shower's not out of bounds
For the deep-dyed double-exposure hounds.

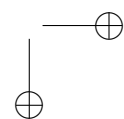
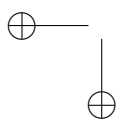
A hobby's such good clean fun, you plead.
Well, maybe a hobby is all I need,
Making angle shots – with a .38 –
Till the last lens-sniper is laid in state.

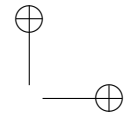
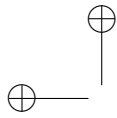




HOME DELIVERY

Rover brings the paper in.
Isn't Rover bright?
Rover brings the paper in –
Bite by bite.





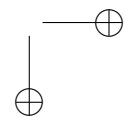
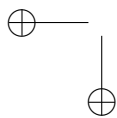
THE SAD OBIT OF ENGLEBERT SNIT

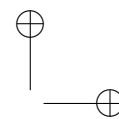
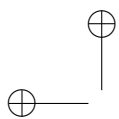
Englebert Snit
Was an exquisite wit
Unhonored in Broadway society;
His mind was as keen
As a blade damascene,
But was stamped “delayed action” variety.

What goals he would make
In the mad give-and-take
Of fast conversational polo!
Except that our wag
Never hatched out a gag
Till mournfully going home solo.

He'd be out on a spree
Where the bright repartee
Would ricochet fast as a bat out –
Well, the point is, each crack
Would fall flat with a smack
As he'd top it, while putting the cat out.

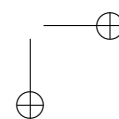
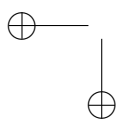
What scintillant quips
Fairly dripped from his lips!
They'd fill a hilarious volume.
But the drip was so late
That his fate was to rate
No mention in anyone's colyum.





So all over town
They put Englebert down
As mentally far from resilient;
Never dreaming, in short,
What a screaming retort
He'd think of, belatedly brilliant.

When he lay on his ear
On a lily-draped bier,
None guessed that their loss was so notable,
Though his smile was a tip
That he'd hit on a pip
Too late – once again! – to be quotable.





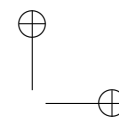
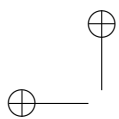
THE GOOD BLACK DRESS

My spirit, in these somber days,
Yearns for hues that fairly blaze.
I'm sick of looking drab and quiet.
I'd be a spectroscopic riot!
So deck me, please, in tangerine,
In turquoise, puce, and poison green. . . .
But what I buy, I must confess,
Is – just another Good Black Dress.

A Good
Black
Dress.

The kind you can *Wear with Anything* –
With an apron, say, at the kitchen sink;
With a half-dozen yards of Eastern mink;
With a single spray of strelitzia bloom,
A pearl tiara, an osprey plume,
A fichu filched off of Whistler's Mother,
And your old sorority pin. Oh, brother.
Come, trick me out in purple, gold,
Like that gay Assyrian wolf of old;
In rich and gory *sang de boeuf*
Trimmed in what looks like scrambled *oeuf*,
With ruby sequins in my hair –
And shall we say the midriff bare?



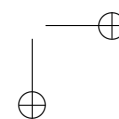
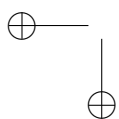


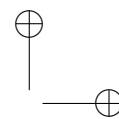
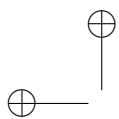
*I'll show 'em who's a mouse! But yes!
Charge it! . . . No-o, the Good Black Dress.*

The Good
Black
Dress.

The dress you can *Wear to Anything* –
To “21” for an *apéritif*;
To monster rallies for Greek Relief;
To First Aid classes; to church; to work;
To shops (where everyone calls you “Clerk”!);
To your husband’s great-aunt’s Sunday teas;
And your own unlamented obsequies –

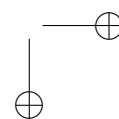
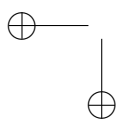
Deadly respectable to the end
In your Good Black Dress,
Your pal, your friend.





YOU SHED IT!

*Black is truly so chic, so "right,"
So neat it sets tongues agog –
Unless you own a large, white
Shaggy dog...*





EXTRACURRICULAR

Hints on popularity and romance include advice on makeup and admonitions “to be appreciative of your dates” and “to be true to every one.” — COED HANDBOOK, OREGON STATE COLLEGE.

*Time was when a college
Was rock-ribbed and stern;
Austere were the arts
A young female could learn;
But now alma maters
Have broadened their span
As up-to-date tipsters
On Getting Your Man.*

Gosh, who wants to plan to
Take Sanskrit or Bantu
Since prexies began to
Dish glamour-girl tags?
A knowledge of Hegel,
All Gaul, or the Plague'll
Not help you finagle
A drag with the stags.

*But study your Handbook
And you'll be a wow.
Avoid painted toenails,
The overplucked brow;*



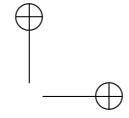
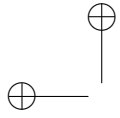


*Be pleasant to dates
If you want them to fall;
Say "Thank you, sir!" and – oh,
Be true to them all.*

If you'd be a smoothie
That none can resist,
Don't weep when mascaraed,
Don't giggle when kissed;
Know when to encourage
And how long to stall;
And – hip, hip for State, girls! –
Be true to them all.

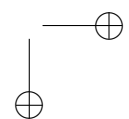
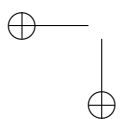
*The old "Do or die!"
Marks the belle of the ball. . . .
And what fun to try
To be true to them all!*





EPITAPH FOR A GOOD GIRL

NO MAN WITH WHOM
SHE YEARNED TO ERR
EVER MADE
A PASS AT HER.





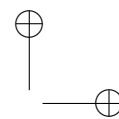
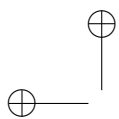
QUEENS WILD

Women are charming, as only they can be
When shyly confessing to a shopping spree.
Women are dainty, graceful as a cat.
Women can be sold a tea bag for a hat.
Women can babble, pretty as a brook;
They're darn good company – and some can even cook.
They're nice 'round the house, though difficult to tame,
But women don't belong in a poker game.

The critters have various uses, brother,
Like if you want a wife or if you want a mother.
There's few fields left where they can't claim fame,
BUT THEIR FORTE ISN'T A POKER GAME.

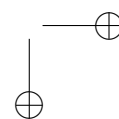
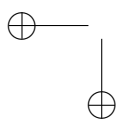
Women can't remember if a straight beats pairs.
They serve you refreshments: cocoa and eclairs.
They chuck good hands in a petulant rush,
Then draw four cards – to a royal flush.
They can drive you wilder than the one-eyed jacks.
Ante? Skip it, there's a sale at Saks'!
They can't stand winning – they crow like sin.
And you pay their losses, so you can't win.
Women can lead a useful life,
Like if you need a mother, or if you need a wife.
They've further accomplishments we all might name,
BUT THEY PLAY THE DEUCE WITH A POKER GAME.





PARDON MY SLALOM

*It's so close to flying –
This soaring on skis,
Leaping through space
With spectacular ease;
Each nerve must be steely,
Each sense razor-sharp. ...
It's so close to flying,
I'm buying a harp.*



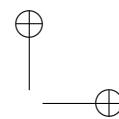
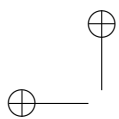


**NO, I DON'T WANT TO SEE
YOUR ETRUSCAN AMPHORAE**

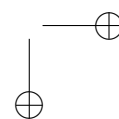
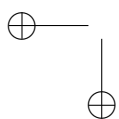
Am I less than human, or – breathe it! – more,
That I'm the one human who sets no store
By stamps or snuffboxes, jade or string?
I, in short, don't collect a thing.
Yet judge and jockey, and poor and rich
Alike seem hit by the selfsame itch,
And from two to ninety they sweat and scheme
And hunt and haggle, with eyes agleam –
For what, O febrile, perverse fanatic?
For junk out of somebody else's attic!
I may be missing delights unguessed,
But I'm by Possessiveness unpossessed.
I seek no birds' eggs or butterflies;
I swipe no jewels from idols' eyes;
I fill no bookshelves with curiosa,
Nor covet my neighbor's drypoints, no suh!
And I don't collect – with a capital K –
Porrings, post cards, or cloisonne,
Dueling pistols or candelabra,
Various voodoo abracadabra,
Aquamarines or alimony,
Or the shell of the mettlesome abalone.

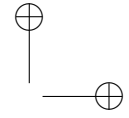
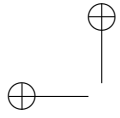
But oh, wherever I chance to stray
Folks look at me in the oddest way,





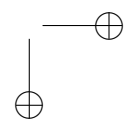
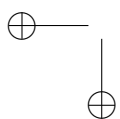
With an ill-hid sneer, and a lifted brow,
And a "Well, little girl, what now, what now?
Haven't you any Chinese brasses
Or theatre programs or Swedish glasses,
Dog-eared Pepyses or Aristotles?
Any old rags, any old bottles?
Without my Lalique, my dear, I'd die!
How do you fill your life... and why?"
So I guess I'll just have to throw in my hat
For all I collect is cracks like that,
While stamps and snuffboxes, string and jade
Are left for the normaler man and maid.





JAKE, BY CANDLELIGHT

O Limehouse hop-joint's murk is thicker,
Yet here we dine by this fitful flicker,
Gnawing who knows what in state
And doubtless from each other's plate.





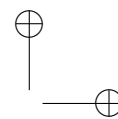
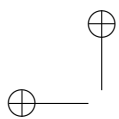
JERRY LOU KNOWS BEST

Let baby choose own food, says leading pediatrician.

Jerry Lou knows best,
Doctors realize at last.
The Eat-that-oatmeal! Era
Is fortunately past.
Spinach-is-so-good-for-you
Is just an ugly rumor –
And who should spike it better
Than the ultimate consumer?
What they stuffed you with was cruel,
So be stubborn as a mu-el;
No self-respecting baby would
Refuel with gruel!

So, angel, yowl
For some lobster claws to crack,
A platterful of smorgasbord,
And wheats – a stack;
A sizzling T-bone steak
That would choke a gorilla
And hot mince pie
A la mode vanilla.
Henceforth you'll choose your menus
And be their sole concocter.
Isn't Science wonderful? It now says you're the doctor!

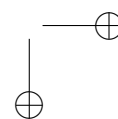
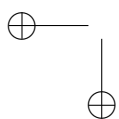


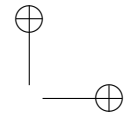
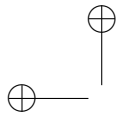


MINK IN THE PINK

Government war-time scientists were assigned to the breeding of pink, blue and lilac mink.

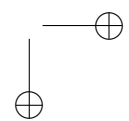
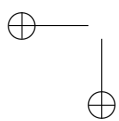
The scientist is the strangest gink!
He toils forever on the brink
Of vast achievements such as pink,
Baby blue and lilac mink.
His weighty projects make us blink:
Pills to drive a man from drink;
Plans for an escape-proof clink;
Doughnuts that you cannot sink;
Woolen socks that never shrink;
Toaster cords that never kink;
Skunks that never – well, I think
I'd rather concentrate on pink,
Baby blue and lilac mink,
But the scientist is the strangest gink!





RIME CRIME

*If you must have a rhyme for 'month'
You desperately lisp, like 'Wunth
Upon a time,' or cry, 'You dunth!'
Or thundry thimilar thilly thtunth.*





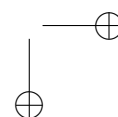
WHAT, NO MARJORAM?

That makes the potentate swell with pride,
What makes the jurist grow starry-eyed,
The steel tycoon and the movie czar,
The wrestling champ and the opera star?
Is it their fame in their chosen field,
The rich rewards which their labors yield?
No, they fancy themselves in a chef's high hat
Invading the commissariat.

*Yippy-i-ay
And a pinch of mace,
Who'll take vanilla
In bouillabaisse?*

The pilot zooms through an icy blizzard,
The surgeon sutures your favorite gizzard
In manner bored, blase, distraight,
But, get a few choice friends at bay,
They'll flush and wriggle and beam and puff
To whip up their very own mock plum duff.
Oh, they'd pass up the Nobel prize, *mon Dieu*,
To be hailed a chef of the *cordons bleu*.

*Yippy-i-ee
For his veal noisetie
And his coconut rarebit
Vinaigrette.*





The prince in his palace, the clerk in his cottage
Are gravely concocting a mess of pottage;
Poets, scurrying in garrets, worry
Over too much saffron in their sea-squid curry.
Teacher, preacher, right down the line
Have *spécialités* at which they shine
And it's always something like brains or collops
Or tripe-and-eggplant or frizzled scallops.

Yippy-t-i
And a powdered clove
And everything else
But the kitchen stove!

So crown his brow with the festive bay,
With a sprig to spare for his pet soufflé.
Just turn him loose with the leeks and chives
And he'll be yours the rest of your lives.
Though nations topple, his artist's soul
Finds glad release in a casserole,
And a lady's digestion's a paltry price
To keep him groggy in Paradise.

Yippy-t-o
And a whorileberry
And half a hogshead
Of cooking sherry!





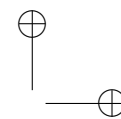
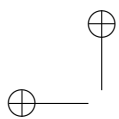
LITERARY SECTION

The literary ladies
Are gathering in force –
The Bemises and Bradys –
For elegant discourse,
And Mesdames Ames to Wheeling
Are quivering in their seats
For poets and darjeeling,
For essayists and eats.

The chairman's scoured the city
For an author on the hoof,
Informative, yet witty,
And not too gauche a goof;
Dynamic, yes, and vital,
Yet who owns a decent suit
And possibly a title
And is housebroken to boot.

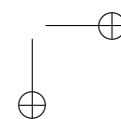
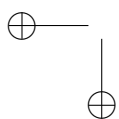
The ladies coo and twitter,
Their shoes slipped off their feet.
They knit and buzz and titter
And think he's awfully sweet!
They surge up uniformly
To back him in a nook
To compliment him warmly
On someone else's book.

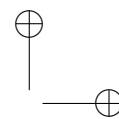
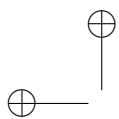




The Camerons and Coxes
Are thrilled as they can be,
And drip their silver foxes
In one another's tea.
The Sheridans and Shafers,
Their eyes on starry trails,
Munch happily on wafers
Right through their lacy veils.

They don't need Dr. Gallup
To check their solemn find:
That "the way to keep morale up
Is To Not Neglect The Mind."
And whatever the fates bestow, it's
No match for Mrs. Glutz
Replete with pekoe, poets,
And pistachio nuts.

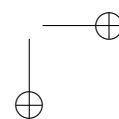
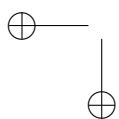




FAT AND FURIOUS

Obesity caused by over-eating, medics insist. — NEWS ITEM.

*The verdict stands
Despite our yelpings:
It isn't glands
But second helpings.*





SCORPIO ASCENDANT

The Scorpio woman is the femme fatale type. — HOLLYWOOD
ASTROLOGER.

I'm a panther woman, a *femme fatale!*
Each eyelash shatters a saint's morale;
I'm deep, inscrutable as the Sphinx –
So astrological science thinks!

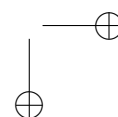
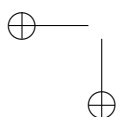
It's written plain in the reeling stars,
Vouched by Venus, averred by Mars.
I lure men's souls to a dank abyss
With a laugh as cold as a cobra's kiss;
I lie all day on a jaguar skin
And grind up pearls for the company gin
And I plan and plot and plot and plan –
More action, slave, on that ibis fan! –
And I toss admirers down flaming craters
Or feed the pieces to alligators
And leer when their loved ones beg for mercy –
Me and the Lorelei, me and Circe!
Me and the menads! Me and me!
The stars in their courses so agree.

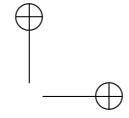
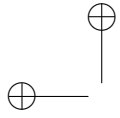
I'm one with Lilith, with Theda Bara.
I wouldn't be seen in last week's tiara.
What oaf gave vent to that odd Bronx cry?
What next of kin shall we notify?





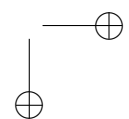
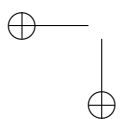
I've Helen's features (I merely quote).
Oh, yeah! Watch me launch that cattle boat!
Eve, Cleopatra, Louisville Lou,
The Queen of Sheba had their points too.
We're women of Destiny, willy-nilly.
The constellations don't lie, you silly!
My beauty weaves its miasmal spell:
Men rush to a nasty doom pell-mell –
Infidel, nonbeliever, dope,
Here it is in my horoscope!
They spurn fame, fortune, family ties
For one chill gleam from my basilisk eyes! . . .
This adulation grows wearisome.
Kindly back out of the Presence, scum.
Oh, I plot and plan and plan and plot
And cripes, it's monotonous, that's what.
Ah, not to be one of history's sirens
With a corner on glamour in these environs! . . .
But the stars in their courses so agree,
And can I make a bum of astrology?

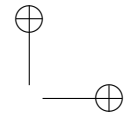
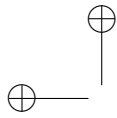




LADY POETS

*They never had themselves a time,
But how they love to sin in rhyme –
Lyricizing theoretic
Pasts, alas, all too sin-thetic.*





MS. FOUND IN A BROMO BOTTLE

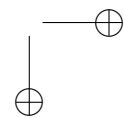
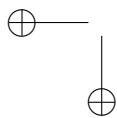
O heave ho! And avast below!
And up with the trusty anchor!
There's a walloping breeze that whips the seas,
So break out the boom and spanker.
The soil-bound soul can stick to his hole
And grub in his earthy prison
While I watch the wake of our garboard strake
From my perch in the tops'l-mizzen.

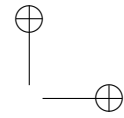
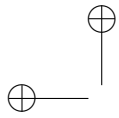
*(How innocent I, to sense no trap
When I let them sell me a yachting cap!)*

Though the scuppers quail in a tropical gale
I'm no frail diletante –
And can I ad lib with a spindle-jib
When it comes to a lusty chantey!
I can luff and yaw, I can haw gee haw,
And I port me a snappy hellum
As the wind howls free through the dank debris
Of the barnacled cerebellum.

*(Over the waves I'd have to roam,
With Mothersills' on the shelf at home!)*

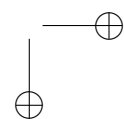
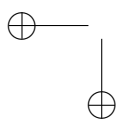
Oh, there's ocean brine in these veins of mine
And salty the dreams I've harbored





Of binnacle-lights on the midshipmites
While the porpoises leaped to starboard.
As I ride the storm in shipshape form
I tell every landsman, Pfui!
Though the bobstay creaks and the bowsprit leaks,
I'm safe in the breeches buoy.

*(How green, how glassy the heaving sea –
But don't think the sea has a thing on me!
Eight bells, matey, and all is well,
And I'm over the side with the next big swell.)*



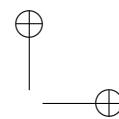
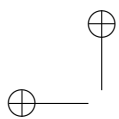


THE LADY AND THE MACHINE AGE

“A woman!” they say, as they crane their neck
To look at a specially messy wreck.
“A woman driver,” they chorus, “ah!”
As who should shrug and say, “*Et voilà!*”
But whoever the luckless dame may be
I know no qualms, for it’s never me.
I smile serenely my nicest smile,
Modest, virtuous, free from guile,
For I’ve never cruised down a busy street,
Stopping to window-shop each ten feet,
Or signaled left when I scooted right
While taxies turned prematurely white,
Or stepped on the gas when a sign said STOP
And vivisected a traffic cop.
Fenders flourish, pedestrians thrive
For all of me. . . . I just don’t drive.

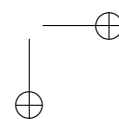
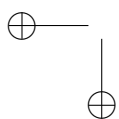
But ah, for the perfect passenger:
Ladies and gentlemen, I am her!
There in the back seat, what do I do?
I sit, and ride, and admire the view.
Round hairbreadth turns I never ache
Pressing an imaginary four-wheel brake.
My faith’s sublime that you who drive
Will presently bring me back alive.

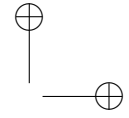
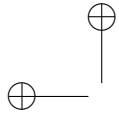




Cars have gadgets and knobs, I know,
That you push and wiggle to make them go,
But what or why I never learned,
And I never tell you where you should have turned
Or, "Your fan belt's loose," or, "You're out of gas,"
Or, "I told you you didn't have room to pass!"
Or, "That was a boulevard stop, you oaf!"
I'm happy to let the chauffeur chauff.

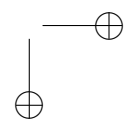
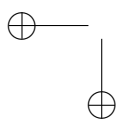
And if all the jokes about women and cars
Were laid end to end, they'd reach to Mars –
Allowing for detours and accidents –
And the Martians could keep them, with my compliments.

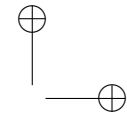
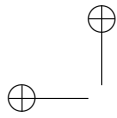




POINT OF RETURNING MEMORY

*When we've driven so far –
Just too far to turn back –
We recall what we didn't
Remember to pack.*





THE NOT TOO INTUITIVE SHE

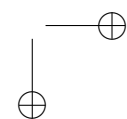
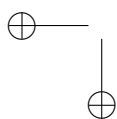
Upton Sinclair says his wife is so psychic she knows what he is doing and even thinking at all times.

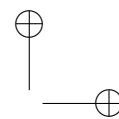
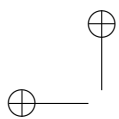
Is she sweet and petite?
Is she light on her feet?
Is her voice as the murmur of linnets?
When your date is at eight
And she's late, must you wait
No longer than five or six minutes?

Is she loyal and leal?
Are her eyelashes real?
Is she pleased by your penchant for punning?
You've a treasure, a joy;
She's a jewel, my boy!
But – yipe! If she's psychic, start running.

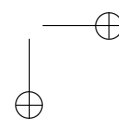
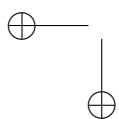
So her temper is jake?
Can she bake you a cake?
Is she frequently good to her mother?
Is she slender and tender,
Not bent on a bender?
Start rushing her preacherward, brother!

Is she canny and frugal
As Angus McDougal?





Simpatico? Laddie, hop to it!
When wives *understand* –
Ah, there's nothing so grand –
But find one who won't overdo it!





**AFTER ALL, THERE'S A POINT
BEYOND WHICH MODESTY
IS AN UNWORTHY AFFECTATION**

I don't know Just What This Country Needs,
Nor how to make capers from nasturtium seeds,
Nor how you could have set that six-spade bid
By not underleading the ace you did,
Nor a quaint resort off the beaten track
That tourists haven't sent to ruin and rack,
Nor the only right way to make Tom and Jerries,
Nor how to get erotica in Public Liberies.

I don't know, either, how to cure a cold,
Nor a wonderful place to have your fortune told,
Nor whether crab louis and milk combine,
Nor What I'd Do If That Brat Were Mine.
I can't even say What I'd Do With a Million!

But I – ah! I am one in a billion.





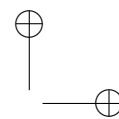
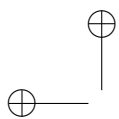
**THE SAD CASE OF
THE HORRIBLE HOUSEKEEPER**

*The house is slick as any pin –
And no one dreams of dropping in.
The fireside brasses gleam and wink
So furiously it makes you blink;
The furnishings are sleek and chaste,
Each drapery fold exactly spaced,
Just like the pictures to be seen
In a home-and-garden magazine.*

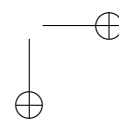
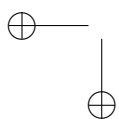
There's no forgotten toy on view,
No lamp shade that I've knocked askew,
No hassock Junior's hacked the feet off.
The floor is something you can eat off!
No spider dangles from the cornice,
And I myself am scrubbed to soreness;
I've done my nails and put on makeup
And even went and whipped a cake up!

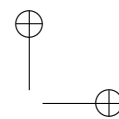
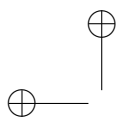
But there are days my ardor slacks.
I sort of, so to speak, relax
Knee-deep in dust and sewing scraps,
Dog hairs, books, and booby traps
Like skates and balls in every path,
While socks drip dankly in the bath
And lilies wither, strangely rank,
And the cat's upset the guppy tank.





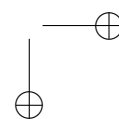
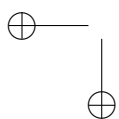
The FBI would be in clover –
Such gorgeous fingerprints all over!
And – seeing the junk — there deposit –
Doubtless a corpse in every closet.
The sink is full, the larder bare;
A dish towel's wrapped about my hair.
The doorbell rings, as sure as sin –
And everyone I know troops in.

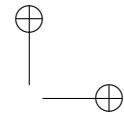
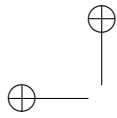




TIMELY TRIBUTE

*Set the banners flying,
The trumpets madly blowing,
Bring a sheaf of roses
For lovely Betty Brent.
At 10:15 she murmured,
“Well, I really must be going.”
At 10:16, by gosh, she up and
Went.*

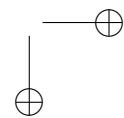
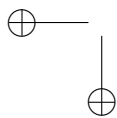


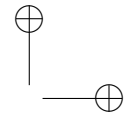
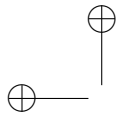


**THE LADY WHO HASN'T
A FIVE-GAITED SEAT**

I never did care
 For the old gray mare –
 And horsemen I find much duller –
 Nor would I give
 A rusty old sieve
For a horse of another color.
 Though a gallop in the park
 Is considered quite a lark
By our painfully active gentry,
 I much prefer the rack
 To a pinto's back
And my reasons are element'ry.

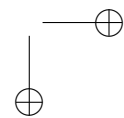
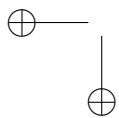
For I just don't like the horsey set
 And the horsey set don't like me.
 This bob, bob, bobbin'
 On poor old Dobbin
 Is nothing but miserie.
When you once get topside
 They're twelve feet high
And they bare their teeth
 And they bat their eye
And you post – *smack, smack!* –
 On your well-cut breeches
And they always decant you
 In briery ditches





And you sleep on your face
On account of stitches.
But bad as the dumb brutes are, my pet,
They're nothing compared to the horsey set.

So I got no truck with the horsey set
Though they bathe in musk and roses.
Their chitchat's all
Of the stable and stall
And they whinny it through their noses.
No palomino
For this bambino –
I quit on the second bounce!
But the blindest staggers
To the swaggering braggers
Who are horsier than their mounts.
'Cause I just don't like the horsey set
And they don't like me – or what'll you bet?





GONE TO MY HEAD

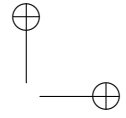
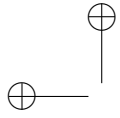
Now I have it home at last
All my frenzied searching past,
All my frantic shopping done:
Now the darling prize is won. . . .

Burst the ribbons and lift the lid
And see what treasure is coyly hid;
Crown the waiting, triumphant brow.
You've time to sit and admire it now.
But surely –

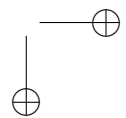
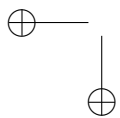
 What did the salesgirl say?
At first all the new hats look this way.
One has to get used to something new.
Or maybe I have it hind-side to. . . .
YAH, IT'S A FRAME! That fiendish crew
Swore it did something for me. True;
But what, I ask you? Here's your hat,
And a snappy *emptor caveat*.

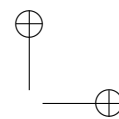
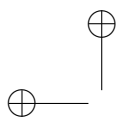
Still, they dropped a sporting hint,
But Moddom's brain was in a splint:
Didn't they, in justice, add
It was *truly mad, but mad* –
Most amusing, no? But no.
Go on, laugh, you so-and-so.





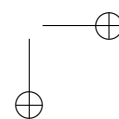
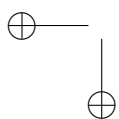
Apple Annie would be miffed,
Wouldn't touch it as a gift.
Fun's fun, and all that,
But take a gander at this hat!





REFORMERS

*Reformers rant
And scold the town
For practices
On which they frown.
They lambaste sin
And loathe excess
With just a hint
Of wistfulness.*





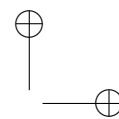
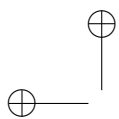
POINT OF ORDER

Give a gal a gavel,
 Enthrallingest of tools,
And watch the lady travel
 The realm of Robert's Rules.
A housewife she, with four kids
 And a Federated flair –
Just heap her chest with orchids,
 Address her as "The Chair,"
And there's no telling where the gal
 Will parlay it from there.

She'll head a dedicated group
Hereby-Resolving with a whoop:
That their Senator's a nincompoop;
 That they'll outlaw atom fission
And drunken drivers and football pools;
But they're All in Favor of bonds for schools
And international Golden Rules
 And Woman's Global Mission.

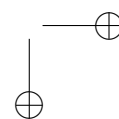
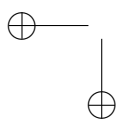
Oh, give a gal a gavel,
 A mike, and lots of air,
And swiftly she'll unravel
 Each tangled world affair.
Just grant her a Committee,
 A consecrated Board,

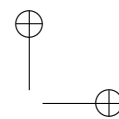
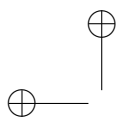




And she'll beautify the city,
Clean up the Second Ward,
And make some grafting bureaucrat
More fearful of the Lord.

Give a gal a gavel,
Wish her lots of luck –
Then, brother, hit the gravel.
Duck!



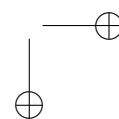
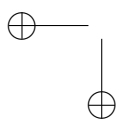


MENTAL HAZARD

*Blessed are the dull,
Happy are the dumb.
Brains only make you
Gray and glum.*

*The witless wight
He can laugh and sing
With never a thought
For the reckoning.
The cretin is carefree
Beyond belief.
What does thinking
Get you? Grief.*

*Ignorance is bliss;
Wisdom is pain.
Why was I cursed
With this mighty brain?*



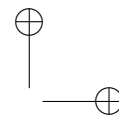
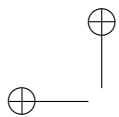


SONG FOR BRACE AND TWO BITS

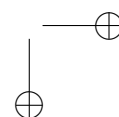
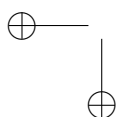
Now leaps the pulse, now stirs the blood,
And nothing can stem the torrential flood;
An instinct deep in this cave-bred soul
Now laughs like a madman at control.
With a squeal like the squeak of a rusty ratchet
I wildly grab for my trusty hatchet.
Now cringes man, now cowers mouse;
I'm about to Re-Do the House!

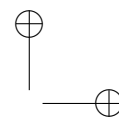
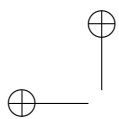
Oh, nothing much – just a shelf or two
And a scalloped valance to frame the view
And a cupboard here and a whatnot there
And a phone stand chopped in under the stair.
What wonders are waiting to be wrecked!
All my new stuff to be antiqued,
All my antiques to be up-to-dated,
All beds neatly decapitated,
Love seats tufted with button backs,
Washstands made into record racks:
Grieg and Gershwin and Godunov
In blond baroque with the handles off.
Now skulks the family drawn and tense.
Now stalks the cat in a dudgeon hence.
But I'll rejoice in my crowning feat:
The padded walls of my chaste retreat!
For as Demon Rum to the spineless souse
To me is the “as-is” house.





(And while kiddies and spouse
May growl and grouse –
Next month?
I'll Re-Re-Do the House!)

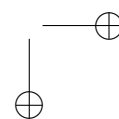
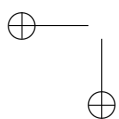




ADVICE

Sweet in the giving, bitter to take,
Shunned till too late to retrieve your mistake,
Offered with obvious relish and unction,
Spurned with deplorable lack of compunction.

Laszlo, Luigi, McTavish and Nels
Differ intensely in everything else,
But mention Advice and not one's so insensate
But feels he's uniquely equipped to dispense it.





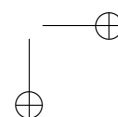
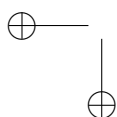
GARDENER'S SONG, ANY WEEK

*You should have been here
Last week, my dear. . .*

The garden was simply a maze of bloom!
Azaleas here, and flowering broom –
Though it's just through flowering; violets, too,
And everyone came for miles to view
My Indian quamash – that brownish bed –
And my woolly speedwell. How well it sped!

*If you could be here
Next week, my dear. . .*

You'd see such mums as you've never seen,
Dahlias big as a soup tureen,
Roses leaping the garden wall
And ruffled zinnias eight feet tall!
I'd send you home with a huge bouquet –
The glads will be gorgeous, any day;
The asters soon will be at their peak
And the lemon verbena will simply reek!
We're just in-between now, so to speak;
Though the place looks blossomless, bare, and bleak,
It's beautiful – any other week.





TEA FOR ONE

Tea, Twombly, for one. Moddom regrets
She's not at home to nobody today.
Kind hearts and also likewise coronets
Just leave her livid in a great big way.
Tea for one – in the Magenta Room.
But first turn all the pictures face about.
Moddom craves silence, solitude, and gloom.
Affix the SCARLET FEVER sign without.

Tea, Twombly, for one. Moddom can stand
Just so much merry chitchat with her peers,
And then she finds a poker in her hand,
Sees spots, and has this ringing in her ears.
Moddom would munch a crumpet undisturbed
And, unassisted, polish off the jam.
Her antisocial instincts can be curbed
So long, and then the watchword is Scr-ram!

Leave no glib loud-mouth boor profane this eve
With drear haranguings till ears turn to stone.
Tea, Twombly, for one. And, as you leave,
Remove the guppies. Moddom would be alone.





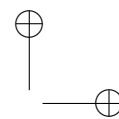
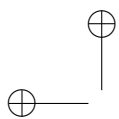
FORE!

The sun is shining on meadows wide
With dandelions and daisies pied,
On rolling hillocks and sylvan nooks
And sandy hollows and purling brooks
And on your reporter, the saddest dub
That was ever lured to the country club.

For "Golf," they sang, "is beyond compare!"
And, "It keeps you out in the open air!"
So we find our heroine, dazed and meek,
Taking a stance that's at least unique,
Larruping off with a mighty drive –
Scarcely a daisy is now alive! –
Sighting yon green, so green, so yon...
But don't get excited; she's not on.
Oh, the woodsy thickets are lovely spots
For some of her neatest carom shots,
And the gurgling brooks hymn a requiem
To the thirty-nine balls she sinks in them,
While in every sand trap that lines the way
Here we go gathering nuts in May....

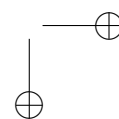
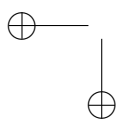
Now whose is this weary, broken form,
What little Orphan of which big Storm,
Here where the dandelions list?
Is it our fair protagonist?

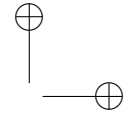
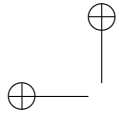




And are birdies still merely feathered friends?
Has bogey frightened her into the bends?
Would I might claim that our Dainty Bess
Was of sterner stuff – but the answer's Yes.
She's the Missingest Link on the local links.

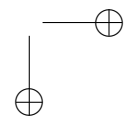
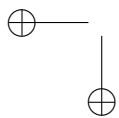
Who's game for a go at tiddly-winks?

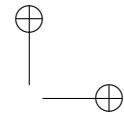
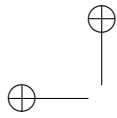




JAUNDICED THOUGHT FOR JANUARY

*If good resolutions wouldn't ebb
But would last at least from Jan. to Feb.,
I'd be the sweet
And haloed saint
Which I
Obvi-
Ously
Ain't.*



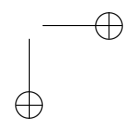
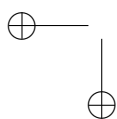


TAME COTTONTAIL

Rabbit, did you mind?
Was I unkind
To pick you up in the winter wood
Where you stood
Beneath the snowy tree,
Your forepaws at your breast,
Looking at me?

A starved baby, lost,
Whiskers stiff with frost,
Home you came to my sky-high warren,
Frightening, foreign
To the forest-born – but, Rabbit,
How swiftly you put on your jaunty
City habit!

Sleek now, and fat,
You view my flat
With bright proprietary eyes,
Content with plaster skies,
Your carrot cache,
The ice cream you beg from my plate,
And the bed you chose – the hassock pulled close
To the grate.





YOU, AGAIN?

You shouldn't have doors
If you have a cat.
Cats always have to be
Where they aren't at.
They spend half their nine lives
Imperiously pawing,
Caterwauling dismally,
Rearing and clawing
Till a door is opened.
Then they stand and look,
Casing the prospect
Like an ultra-cautious crook,
Meditative, pensive
As a lama in a trance,
While you itch to boot them
In their furry pants.

Finally, deliberate,
With cool, languid grace
They glide across the sill,
At a snail's mad pace...
All but the tail...
But at last that's through the crack,
And the door is slammed...
And they're wailing to get back.



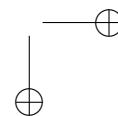
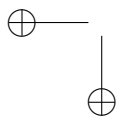


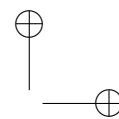
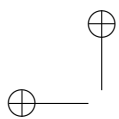
REQUIEM FOR YOUTH

Put away the rag dolls,
Put away the blocks,
The monkey-on-a-string,
And the jack-in-the-box.
Metaphoric silver
Shines among the gold:
Noel's grown up –
She's four years old!

*Who wants a sand pail,
Who wants a truck,
A little woolly lamb
And a little wooden duck?
Once she was their proud,
Their charmed possessor.
Put them all away
For some possible successor.*

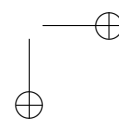
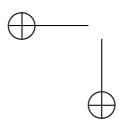
*What about Minnie Mouse
And Sally Ann Jane?
"We want a dress
With a long gold train!"
Age has a dignity
Ladies must uphold.
Noel's grown up –
She's four years old!*

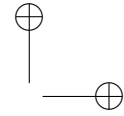
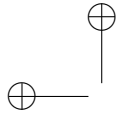




*Here's Mr. Noah
And here is the Ark.
"We'd rather drive, James,
Twice around the park!"
Who wants a wagon,
And who wants a kite?
"We want coffee in the
Drawing room tonight!"*

Put away the rag dolls,
The chart for Tommy Tooth;
Pin up the curly locks.
Sic transit Youth.
The last rope's jumped,
And the last hoop's rolled.
Noel's grown up –
She's four year old!



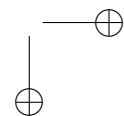
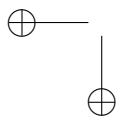


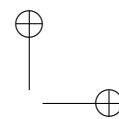
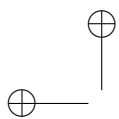
SONG FOR A HICKORY LIMB

*Mother's decrepit, void of vim,
And ripe for a mercy slaughter –
The mother who's got herself out on a limb
By having a teen-age daughter.*

For who so ancient, so faded, haglike,
Really quite perfectly weird and baglike?
Who so utterly antediluvian?
Mummy. Egyptian or dwarf Peruvian?
No, no, no! Can't you comprehend?
Mummy, a girl's so-called best friend.

Oh, mother's a mother and mother's a wife,
But mother, deplorably, don't know life.
She don't know how ghastly a person feels
When she sends back those sandals with jeweled heels
And buys something more what she calls jeune fille –
Like your formal of pink-sprigged organdie.
Mother belongs on the antique shelf.
Mother was never a girl herself.
What if you blister? You *got* to get tanned!
The trouble with mothers – *they don't understand!*
For poor old mother is not in the swim
As is her darling daughter
Who I'd like to see tanned – with a hickory limb –
And put on bread and water.





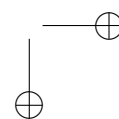
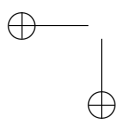
LITTLE BROTHER

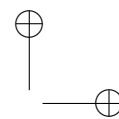
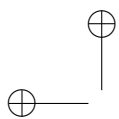
He's mostly knees and freckles
And his hair's a stringy mop;
But Lucybelle is pink and white,
With yellow curls on top.

He's brown and lank and grubby,
With a crooked sort of grin;
But Lucybelle has pansy eyes,
And dimples in her chin.

Oh, he gets into trouble
Every time he dares to stir,
But Lucybelle can steal the jam
And no one dreams it's her.

And they stand him in the corner
For his soul's immortal sake,
But she gets asked to stay to tea
And stuffed with angel cake!



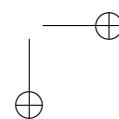
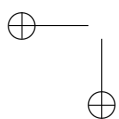


TERRY IS SIX

Her hug is bearish,
Her shriek's nightmarish,
Her glance is angelically
Devil-may-care-ish.

Her grin's contagious,
Her dimples? Outrageous –
Specially when
She's a bit rampageous!

But what other smile
Can so beguile,
With two teeth missing
In the center aisle?





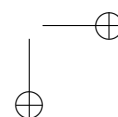
THE SPITBALL CROWD

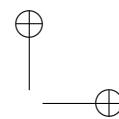
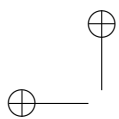
Surveys reveal large percentages of pupils in modern grade and high schools who are ignorant of history, sentence structure, simple addition, the months of the year, and how to tell time. — NEWS ITEM.

Modern education
Has been dandy, has been ducky.
The current generation
Is deliriously lucky.
Its members have been spared the blight
Of bothering to read and write.

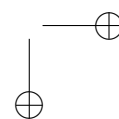
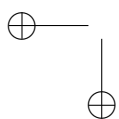
McGuffey's Third
Got the bird,
And – long division?
How absurd.
They don't study, they don't mind,
But no one's ever left behind.
They learn no lessons, thumb no books,
And they give Teacher dirty looks.

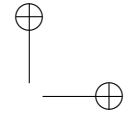
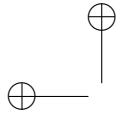
How virgin their mentalities,
Their wants uncurbed and candid,
And, my! their personalities
Are only too expanded.
Their social attitudes are dillies,
But syntax gives them the howling willies.





For Teacher was the damp-eared kind
Whose pedagogic frills
Left rude discipline behind
And all the prosy skills
The times demand of lass and lad
Who now must haply learn to add,
And ponder over 3×3 ,
Penmanship, and C-A-T.

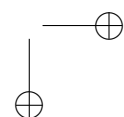




CHRISTINE

During the war, honorable mention was awarded to Christine,
a robot device to replace lady ship sponsors.

Left behind in Progress' wake
Is Mrs. Agatha Gremlich Drake
With the dewlap and the splayed incisors,
Who was once the darling of the Higginses and Kaisers.
A minor official's minor wife,
Heisting a bottle was her love, her life,
And bashing it over some cruiser's noggin
With, "I christen thee Seymour F. X. Scroggin."
No more abustle at festive duties –
With a bosomful of American Beauties,
Adrip with a litter of silver foxes –
She heaves a blow like a dowager ox's
While showers of glass and *fin sec* fly
In an admiral miles to starboard's eye.
No one was more intrepid, stauncher
Than Agatha D., the Demon Launcher,
But speedups and the resistless movement
Of technological improvement,
Plus growing womanpower conser-
Vation doomed the lady sponsor.
Now fair Christine, the robot dame
With the riveted angle-iron frame,
Blooms as the hardy flowering sage
Of an all too Mechanistic Age.





WILD GEESE

Last night the wild geese flew over,
A dark cloud under the moon.
And my heart, my heart cried to them
Through the winged silver wonder of the night.
Magically, unwaveringly southward,
The wild geese flew over.
The shadow of that poignant, passionate winging
Fell on my heart,
My heart that always had been shaken by the beauty
Of the wild-geese-flying-over school of poetry.
This morning some local yokel has to tell me
They weren't geese at all, but that low-comedy bird the
pelican.
And anyway this time of year they're flying north.
*Well, all I got to say is, some dang birds sure high-tailed it
somewhere last night,
Even if certain yaps I could name
Haven't any more poetry in their souls
Than a ape.*





**CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG,
IF YOU THINK IT'S WORTH IT**

We went to the Russells' Saturday night –
“It was Sunday,” you murmur, always right.
Well, Sunday then, and the Browns were there.
“The Greens, as it happened.” *Bien, mon cher*,
And they'd just flown in on the midnight plane
From Portland, Oregon – Portland, Maine?
Well, anyway, Portland – Oh, by train?
You're sure they didn't come over the Donner Pass
On a tandem bicycle?

Well, it doesn't matter; they'd spent all year –
You sure it was only a week end, dear? –
On the Lido – Thank you, in the Levant,
And Josie's uncle – Huh, Jerry's aunt?
The one with the lisp and all that dough
And the dreamy schooner – I know, I know,
That was Pre-Inflation, but they still can row
In the dinghy or whatever they call that little caboose effect,
And where was I?
What I'm getting at, if I could commence,
Is this utterly weird coincidence –
Oh. It wasn't. Well, next time I'll tell, friend,
A tale uncorrected to the end.
I'll just sit back, relaxed, and smile,
And – in my own words, my unchecked style –





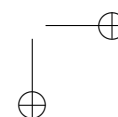
Quote:

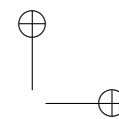
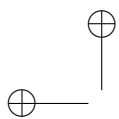
This is the way I whacked him up!
I conked him cold with a loving cup
And yippy-i hip and thigh I smote
And rammed a bottle of creosote
Right down his crabby, blabby throat
And gleefully hid the antidote
And paddled a boat
To a spot remote
And dumped him over
To see if he'd float
In a three-button concrete overcoat.

End quote.

And, concrete and all, you'll writhe in an eternity of torment
because you won't be able to chide gently:

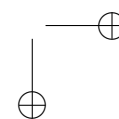
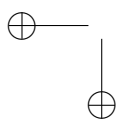
"No, darling, you just used an Igorot head ax, remember?"





INSCRIPTION FOR A PLANET

The earth's a sphere the sun controls,
A trifle flattened at the poles,
Revolving daily on its axis
And sure of little but death and taxes.
World, when you were young and new
How pleasant must have been the view
Before your sea-squids and your skegs
Grew restless and developed legs
And cerebellums and ambition
And instruments of demolition –
Before, in fact, they grew so smart
They blew the whole darn works apart.





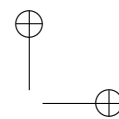
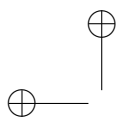
WELFARE, LARGE ECONOMY SIZE

*Most richly blessed are we indeed
Of regimented mortals,
For any jerk can see indeed
We've crashed Utopia's portals.
Deliriously lyrical,
We sing our joyous fate –
That economic miracle,
The Welfare State.*

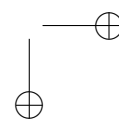
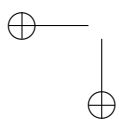
Our forebears were a grimy lot
Who sweated and fought for what they got,
Too all-fired dumb to know what's what –
That the world owed 'em a living.
They crossed the sea in a clumsy tub
And built their homes and raised their grub
And they all worked like Beelzebub
With no wailing or misgiving.

But we don't slave and we don't save;
We're cared for cradle to the grave –
So long, of course, as we behave.
If we ask no painful audits
We can claim new benefits at will,
For it's Washington that foots the bill –
And doing it from an empty till
Deserves our wildest plaudits.





*Now banished to obscurity
Are wraiths of an early era
When our glamorous "Security"
Was a still-undreamed chimera.
Times like ours no longer breed 'em –
Dolts who brayed perverse hoorah's
For some gimmick they called "Freedom."
Wonder what it was.*





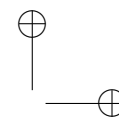
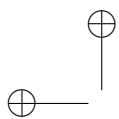
GRANDMA'S GIRL

The breeze was soft,
The moon was dim,
Stars gleamed in
The eyes of him,
But cool in my blood stream,
Measured, slow,
Grandmother Prudence
Cautioned "No."

We wandered down
The shadowed hill,
We paused to hear
A whippoorwill.
Warring forebears
Were my lot.
Grand'mère Félicité
Breathed, "Why not?"

Attitudes
Are molded in
Pulse and vein
By ancient kin,
As the hand
Defines the glove.
Grandmother Prudence
Frowned at love,
But Grand'mère Félicité
Gave me a shove.

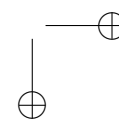
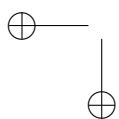


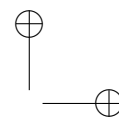
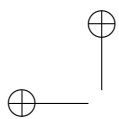


DOMESTIC TESTAMENT

I have the oddest husband
I note with some chagrin.
He doesn't hang his hat up
On a lamp when he comes in.
Cheerfully, efficiently
He carves the Sunday roast,
And he never reads the paper
Over breakfast eggs and toast.

He mails my letters promptly,
Remembers birthdays too.
He leaves the bathroom tidy.
His poker nights are few.
He rather likes my bonnets.
He thinks my bridge ideal.
I have the oddest husband!
Do you suppose he's real?

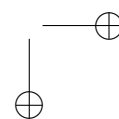
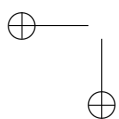


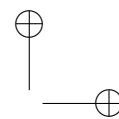
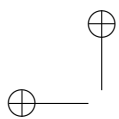


ASPENS

A thousand little wind bells
Swing against the sky,
Tinkling in the least breeze
That hop-skips by.
Jade and sage and silver,
Like a thousand fish
They flicker in the sunlight
And give their tails a swish.

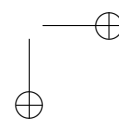
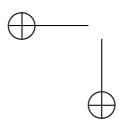
A breath from silent snow peaks
Saunters down the draw
With small secret stirrings
Like field mice in the straw,
Making crystal music
That never quite stills
Where aspens hang their wind bells
About the whispering hills.





TREETOP STARS

Mountain stars are friendly stars, so close they
seem to shine,
Dancing in an aspen, twinkling in a pine.
Town stars are far away, pale and dim and cold.
But here the mountain stars swing low for leafy
arms to hold.





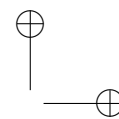
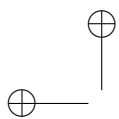
REMARKS

The pig goes *oink*,
The cow goes *moo*,
The lamb goes *baa*,
And I love ewe.
The cat goes *mrowr*
In the moonlight pale
And rime never rippled
As rhapsodic as his tail.

The chick goes *cheep*,
The frog goes *beep*,
From Nevada to Vermont
The Virginia creepers creep;
The weeping willows weep;
The blinking owls blink;
I dip my pen in moonshine
And then I drink the ink.

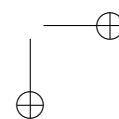
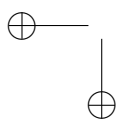
The burro goes *haw*,
The pup goes *arf*;
What eyelashes flutter
When girarfe meets girarfe!
The bee goes *z-z-zz*
But my darling goes, "*H'm'm'm?*"
And heigh! the doxy over the dale,
I go, "*M'm'm'm'm!*"





HONEYMOON BREAKFAST

Orange juice, chilled
And a warming kiss;
A blueberry muffin
Buttered with bliss;
Ambrosial coffee
That smells of heaven;
Two more kisses. . .
Or five. . . or seven;
Shining eyes
That repeat their troth. . .
And a dream house sketched
On the breakfast cloth.





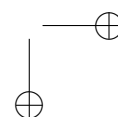
CROCUS

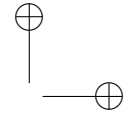
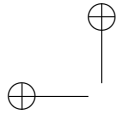
In frosty ground, through crusted snows
Every year the crocus blows
That now lifts up its stubby head
Beneath an iron, martial tread.

But, right on schedule, spring is here
When first those reckless buds appear,
When brooklets slough their icy covers
And lanes are murmurous with lovers.

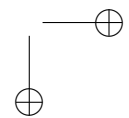
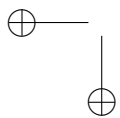
Spring is in the imminent offing;
Skeptics mute their raucous scoffing;
Hurdy-gurdy monkeys climb
Porch-rails for a shiny dime;
Robins nest in every hedge;
Village drunkards take the pledge;
Quarts of sulphur and molasses
Lave the gullets of the masses;
Bears pop out of winter caves;
Grandmas sigh for permanent waves;
And kiddies, in the balmy air,
Are snipped from winter underwear.

Maiden glances lift and warm
Toward someone in a uniform,
Alight with hope that time may bring
A kinder and less clangorous spring,





When not one stubby lifted head
Need fall beneath a martial tread,
As peacefully, through crusted snows,
The foolish, lovely crocus blows.





HOW'S YOUR SECOND CHAPTER?

Some sell debentures, some tend bar,
Some peer through telescopes assaying a star,
Some are stevedores, crooners, cooks,
And some poor schnooks write books.
And the authors they toil;
They burn the midnight oil.
While their lonely wives – with a family friend –
Can burn the candle at the sociabler end,
The authors they languish
In solitary anguish
In a dudgeon in a tower,
While their brains hour on hour
They sit desperately tearing
Like a herring.

O to be a plumber! O to be a draper!
O to stir the pulp vats where they make the paper;
To wear plaid mackinaws and chop down the pines;
To lounge at a linotype – when not in picket lines;
O to oil the presses that eat books ad infinitum –
So some other schmoe has to write 'em!
For the authors they slave,
They groan and curse and rave;
They rattle with the Muse, and blench –
O evil-eyed untoothsome wench
Whose hot embrace is like a vise –
And it couldn't happen to nicer guys.

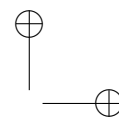
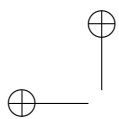




They're free to wallow in drudgery
Month in, year out, with no guarantee
That when they exhaustedly tap out FINIS
The ledger won't show a permanent minus,
As publishers chorus: "*Ravissante!*"
But not – just – quite – what our readers want."

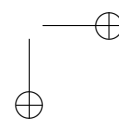
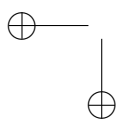
So the authors don't eat, while their loved ones sob,
"Leave books to the bird with a government job."
So some lead a band, or fight each Friday night,
Much too smart to learn to read and write.
They'll barber you, embalm you ("A singe and facial, suh?")
But – mess with a book? *Unh-unh!*
Authoring's a gamble, a game not worth the price
But nobody's smart enough to take such good advice.

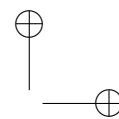
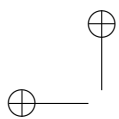




HERE WE GO

Perennial pest
To haunt our nest
Is the featherbrained,
Forgetful guest
Who comes for the day
Or a three-month stay
And leaves behind
When she flits away
A coat, a veil,
Her keys, her kale,
Which you must hunt
And wrap and mail.
Her rings, her comb,
Her Bubble Foam
By post (prepaid)
Must trail her home.
Such folk, in fairness,
Should be branded
Or travel naked
And empty-handed.



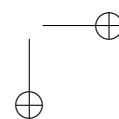
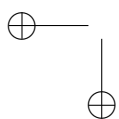


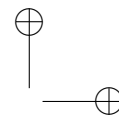
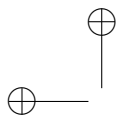
FOR SPRING FEVER

*I took a purple clover,
A swaying blade of rye,
A honey-colored sunbeam,
And a crystal cube of sky.*

*I blended them, I laced them
With other things I took –
The shadow of a moth wing,
The rushing of a brook,
The underearthen tumult
Of a seed about to sprout –
And I steeped them all together
To bring the essence out.*

*I stirred it with a fern frond
Crisp with April rain,
Then poured it in a tulip cup
And drank it like champagne.*





PEANUTS

*I always munch that One Too Many –
Then wish I hadn't eaten any.*

