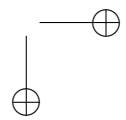
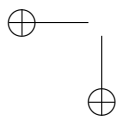
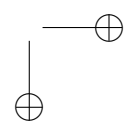
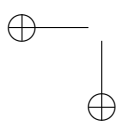
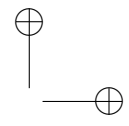
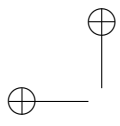
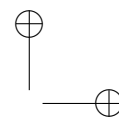


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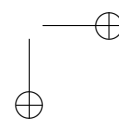
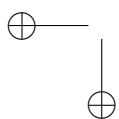


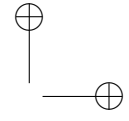
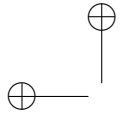


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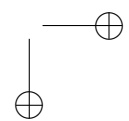
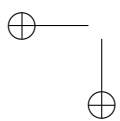
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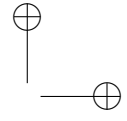
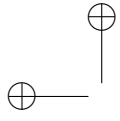
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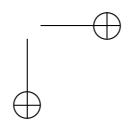
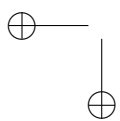


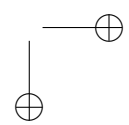
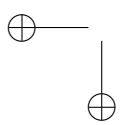
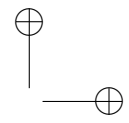
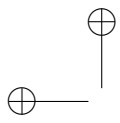
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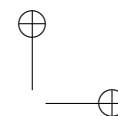
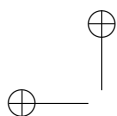




FOR JAKE  
WHO'D RATHER HAVE A PAN-SIZE BROOKIE.







## FOREWORD BY RICHARD ARMOUR

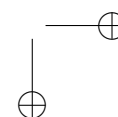
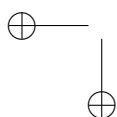
Light verse is an exacting art, demanding technical perfection, precision in the choice of words, and a nimble wit. But these are merely tools. More important is the requisite attitude toward life and toward oneself, a sense of the comic, the ability to detect the incongruous and the absurd.

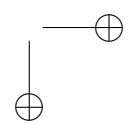
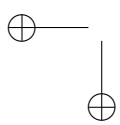
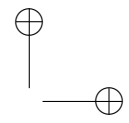
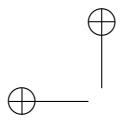
Ethel Jacobson is one of the best modern practitioners of an art that began, in English, with Chaucer. She is a light verse writer's light verse writer, able to cram much into few words, well-versed as well as well-versified, respectful of the requirements of her craft. What she has to say is as fresh and unexpected as the way she says it. Hers is the sharpness, not of claws, but of a keen and observant mind.

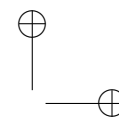
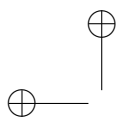
She sees the defects of the human race, but merely records them without bitterness and without preachment. ("If you know a better race," she suggests, "go join it.") All through her work runs a genuine regard for people, animals, and nature, wild or tame. She is capable of high satire and sparkling fun, but the fun, almost invariably, turns on herself. This is not only the kind of poet but the kind of person Ethel Jacobson is.

Her verses, in the thousands, have appeared in leading national periodicals. Her rhymes have been collected – not calm and collected, just collected – in two previous volumes, *LARKS IN MY HAIR*, and *MICE IN THE INK*.

Here, now, is another volume of bright, skillful lines in the best tradition of an ancient and honorable art.

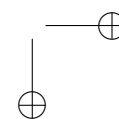
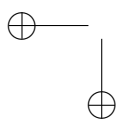


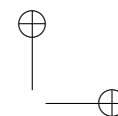
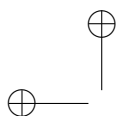




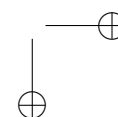
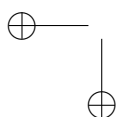
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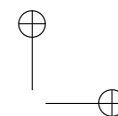
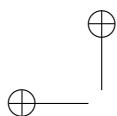
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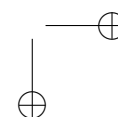
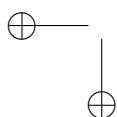


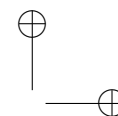
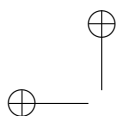
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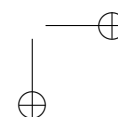
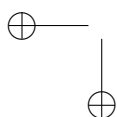


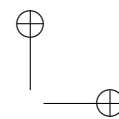
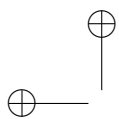
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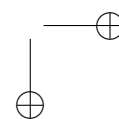
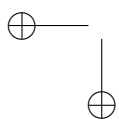


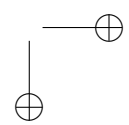
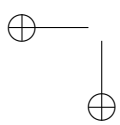
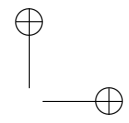
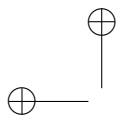
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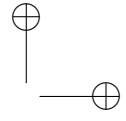
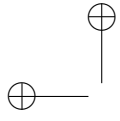




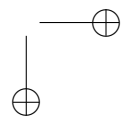
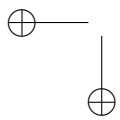
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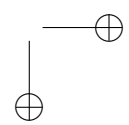
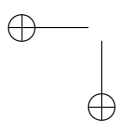
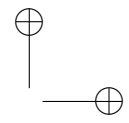
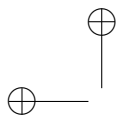


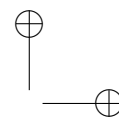
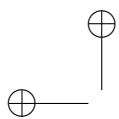




**I'LL GO QUIETLY**

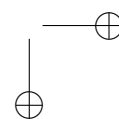
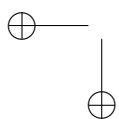


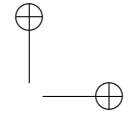
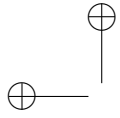




## I'LL GO QUIETLY

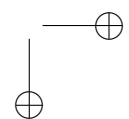
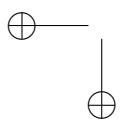
I had no mother  
To guide me, true,  
But I take the rather  
Dispiriting view  
That if I'd of knew  
What I ought to of knew  
I still would of did  
What I done.

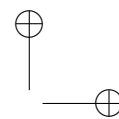
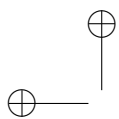




**UH-HUH**

At two remarks, I think,  
Credulity takes flight:  
“I never slept a wink!”  
And “I couldn’t eat a bite!”

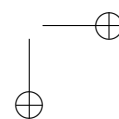
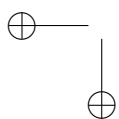


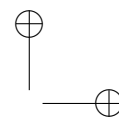
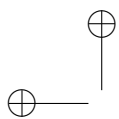


**TO FRIENDS  
WHO WON'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER**

Friends, if so you would be called,  
Harken when I holler.  
Here my calorie ration's scrawled;  
Every swaller  
Not allotted by this sheet  
Adds its hated morsel  
Till I look as if I eat  
More than a horse'll.

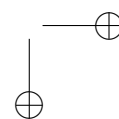
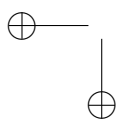
Please, when I refuse a dish,  
Don't be so insistent!  
Sure, I'm famished. It's delish.  
How resistant  
Must I be when starved for months?  
Though self-denial's saintly,  
I can say No only once,  
And then but faintly.

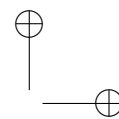
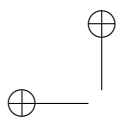




### LISTING BADLY

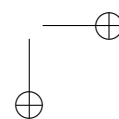
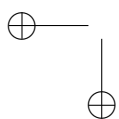
I make out lists determinedly  
Of THINGS TO DO: Find suitcase key;  
Phone the cleaners; write Aunt Lil;  
Buy shower gift; pay doctor bill.  
I write them down. So far, so good.  
They may get done. Add: Knock on wood.  
But I never even up the score.  
I cross out one, then add three more,  
Just struggling deeper in the hole,  
Envyng the listless soul.

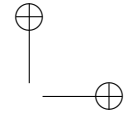
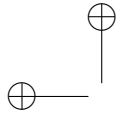




### SHOPPER ON A BUDGET

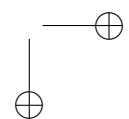
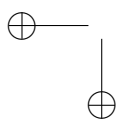
My wildest dream of affluence,  
Of having the Midas touch,  
Is to breeze through shops saying, "Charge it!"  
Before I inquire, "How much?"

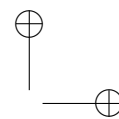
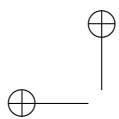




### THOUGHTS FROM A SKI LODGE

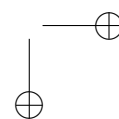
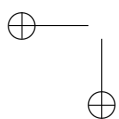
To brave sheer slopes –  
Or hug the fire, afeared –  
Distinguishes the skier  
From the skeered.

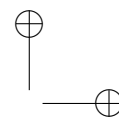
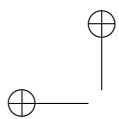




**WHO ASSIGNS THE ACCESSORIES, ANYWAY?**

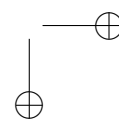
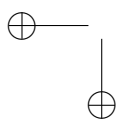
A girl for you, a boy for me;  
Just the way it ought to be!  
But sure enough, the dimpled cheek,  
Golden curls, petite physique  
And long-lashed eyes are lavished on  
Not little Jennifer, but John.

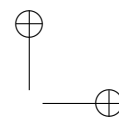
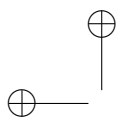




## FUTILITY

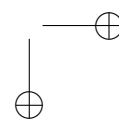
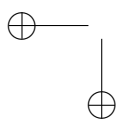
Hold a snowflake in your fist,  
Wrestle with the morning mist,  
Ride astride a butterfly,  
Sweep the teeming ocean dry,  
Pin your shadow to the wall,  
Fishtail up a waterfall,  
Tame the wolf within the fold –  
And reason with a three-year-old.

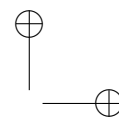
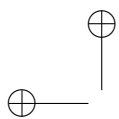




### **FUTURE PIANIST**

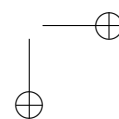
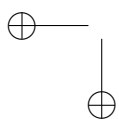
Some day I'll sail to far-off lands  
And play hard pieces on concert grands.  
I'll wear red velvet and opal rings  
And play for presidents, sheiks, and kings,  
And they'll send me roses in buckets and pails,  
If I can only learn these scales.

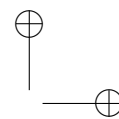
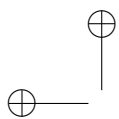




## BOY

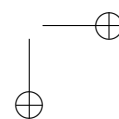
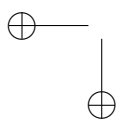
His little heart grew joyful,  
    Though ours fell with a thud,  
When our adventurous toddler  
    First discovered mud.  
Domestic calm was jolted  
    When he discovered frogs  
And snakes and caterpillars  
    And skunks and pollywogs.  
Life grows more complicated  
    As each new phase unfurls.  
But he is even joyfuller.  
    He's discovered girls.

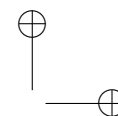
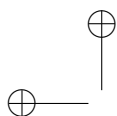




## SPECIFICATIONS

We need a house  
    With cast-iron floors,  
Bullet-proof windows,  
    Bangless doors,  
And furniture made  
    Of concrete blocks  
To take the barrage  
    Of daily knocks  
From normal, happy,  
    Healthy, fine,  
Lively, vigorous  
    Tots like mine.

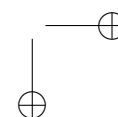
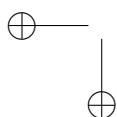


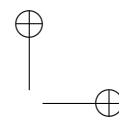
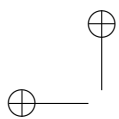


## HOW NOW, NO COW?

“Milk now produced synthetically in laboratories.” — NEWS  
ITEM

The pretty milkmaid of nursery rhymes  
And of bedtime tales from olden times  
Has long been supplanted on modern farms  
By electric gadgets with metal arms.  
Mechanization marches on,  
And now it's Bossie who's going, gone –  
As milk is made by science now,  
Eliminating even cow.  
Tomorrow's tot will drink synthetics,  
Himself a product of neo-genetics,  
And automation's final glory –  
But that's another bedtime story.

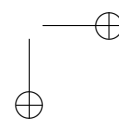
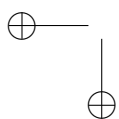


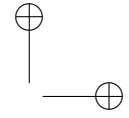
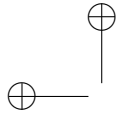


### THE MOOSE IN THE CABOOSE

Amorous moose, mistaking the diesel whistle for a love call,  
are being hit by speeding trains in Newfoundland. — NEWS  
ITEM

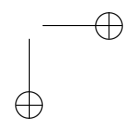
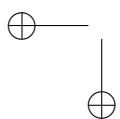
The diesel toots  
And mournfully hoots  
And it sounds like love  
To the antlered brutes.  
O sorry fate,  
To find that your mate  
Kept a blind date  
With a diesel freight!

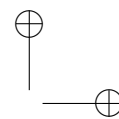
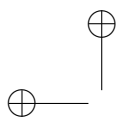




### FLOWER EXPERT

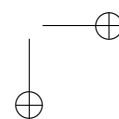
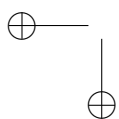
Daisies and roses  
I tell instantaneous,  
All other posies  
Are: Miscellaneous.

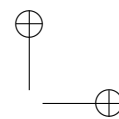
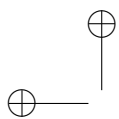




### LOW BRIDGE

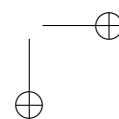
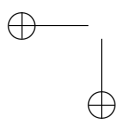
The East that West should never meet  
Makes too many foursomes too complete.  
For East plays only party bridge,  
Requiring the brains of a gnat or midge,  
While West grows wroth if conversation  
Disturbs his scowling cerebration.  
East – West – I hope the twain  
Never meet under my roof again!

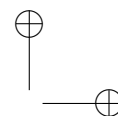
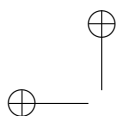




### HIGH SCORE

Today, today was Bridge Club day  
And look! I won first prize!  
It's decorated with silver stars  
And – I guess these are butterflies,  
And it came in a simply darling box  
With a bow of enormous size,  
And I'm not just sure what it is as yet,  
But look! I won first prize!



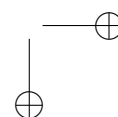
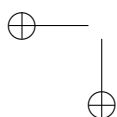


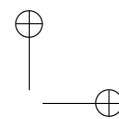
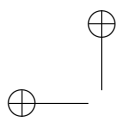
### ARITHMETICAL REFLECTION

Twenty-eight Children Bring Marital Rift. — HEADLINE

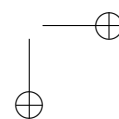
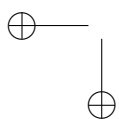
Twenty-eight children bring marital rift.  
Twenty-eight tots make a staggering gift.  
Heaven can be over-lavish with treasure  
We'd just as soon take in less prodigal measure.  
Twenty-eight children to get out of bed,  
Twenty-eight children who have to be fed,  
Twenty-eight shoelaces broken at once,  
Twenty-eight mislaid-Geography hunts!  
Think of the ears someone has to wash back of,  
Mismatched socks someone has to keep track of,  
Sinks that a mountain of dishes reposes in.  
Think of the hankies to blow all their noses in!

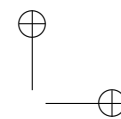
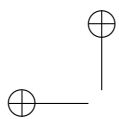
Twenty-eight children can't live in a shoe;  
They need a stout barracks, half cell-block, half zoo.  
Children, like olive plants, bless any board,  
But it's blamed little peace their environs afford.  
Sparing them only spoils twenty-eight rods;  
They never care where they park chewing gum wads;  
With air guns they're often precociously smart;  
And it takes a wise father to tell them apart –  
Twenty-eight children adorning your path,  
Who every Saturday night need a bath,  
And who add to your joy, when you're down in the dumps,  
With nine thousand measles and fifty-six mumps.





Twenty-eight children bring marital rift  
(But not one, you gather, sufficiently swift).  
Yet perhaps it were less understatement to say  
That they bring a disruption resembling Pompeii –  
A splintering breach, and a bursting asunder  
As lights up the sky in a seven days' wonder,  
With lava and cinders stupendously hurled,  
That shatters the seismographs half round the world.

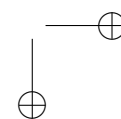
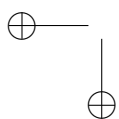


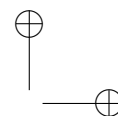
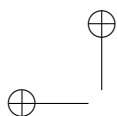


### SPARE THE SWITCH

Spare the rod, we're told, no more!  
Psychologists demand it –  
The same shrill pedants who of yore  
Peremptorily banned it.  
They warned of dire catastrophes.  
If erring tots were paddled.  
We'd blight their personalities.  
Their ids would all be addled.

But years of Junior's tyrant whim,  
Unwarped and uninhibited,  
Made experts take a view more dim  
Of the end results exhibited.  
Now Junior's end is a target fair,  
And Mommy's aim's a honey.  
The paddywhack is back! Beware!  
The fix is off now, sonny.

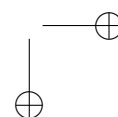
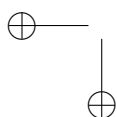


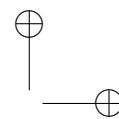
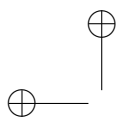


### MEDICAL PILGRIMAGE

She went to Dr. Weaver  
And she thought him rather good  
But just a teensy bit too young,  
So she went to Dr. Wood.  
But he was just a mite too old  
So she switched to Dr. Payne.  
Somehow his name depressed her  
And she never went back again.

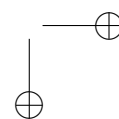
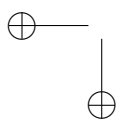
She next tried Dr. Hagenpflug,  
Consulted Dr. Green  
And Drs. Aabt and Yarborough  
And everyone in between,  
And was just about to try  
A Dr. Zorn, a bearded foreigner,  
When she passed a trailer on a curve  
And went to the county coroner.

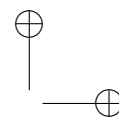
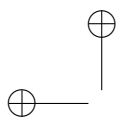




### MAN AT THE WHEEL

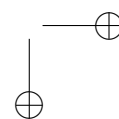
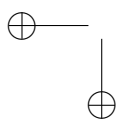
When some day-dreaming Joe snarls traffic  
And I murmur in tones seraphic,  
“Man driver,” I needn’t look,  
Knowing my spouse like a book. . .  
He’s pretending he didn’t hear me,  
Bored to the core,  
And wearing his Pained Expression No. 4.

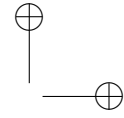
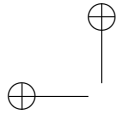




### FIG LEAF

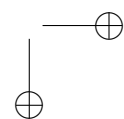
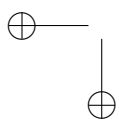
A tree once flourished in a garden fair,  
And a lovely lady with nothing to wear  
Admired a leaf that was scalloped and sleek.  
She tried it on. She cried, "How chic!"  
And that led to peplums, tunics, frills,  
Paris, France – and all those bills!

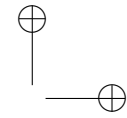
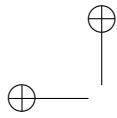




### HAT HASSLE

Briskly a man goes out to buy a hat  
At the nearest shop. Immediately he picks  
The first one he sees, saying, "Wrap it up." And that  
Is that for another year, or three, or six.  
Ah, not for him the searching, as for a Grail,  
The pouring over Vogue, or the Sunday ads  
Clipped – French Designer's Models, Slashed, on Sale!  
(But are tricorne classic chic or passing fads?)  
Women, however, frantic for a chapeau,  
Will comb every store in town, relentlessly  
Trying on, sighing, spurning, moaning low,  
"It's nice, but it doesn't do a thing for me."  
Perhaps it does something for their troubled ids,  
But it leaves the livid salesladies flipping their lids.



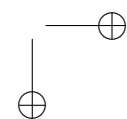
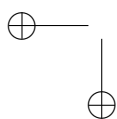


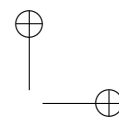
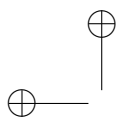
## MINORITY REPORT

Women prefer cave men, reports American Sociological Society.

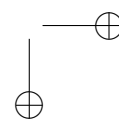
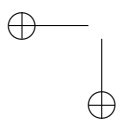
Pause a moment, my lamb, my pet.  
Don't start anything you'll regret.  
Before you pull any caveman capers,  
Don't believe all you read in the papers.  
What is that light in your dotting eye,  
The long-pent yearning which weights your sigh,  
That quickened breath, that hopeful gleam?  
Yes, my sweet, it's a pretty dream.  
But just a second, before you seize  
Time and me by the forelock, please  
Ask yourself, as you heft that club  
Or the femur hacked from a mastodon cub,  
As you poise that flint ax above my bean;  
Is this what those scientists really mean?  
Were their experiments truly conclusive?  
Or were their notions of being abusive  
Too academic, too mild, too weak –  
How do you know what caveman technique  
May be to a sheltered Ph.D.  
Or a Fellow in Sociology?

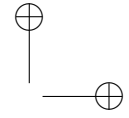
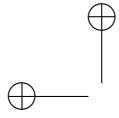
Also, those scientists failed to state  
Just how your mate might reciprocate –  
So open your mind to a prudent doubt  
Before you go throwing your weight about.





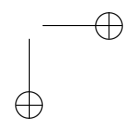
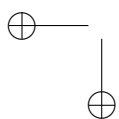
Before you go lifting the first rash finger,  
While some trace of sanity still may linger,  
Ponder this ladylike veneer  
Beneath which the cavewoman soul may peer.  
Are you man enough to call her hence?  
Then let the party, my own, commence!  
Let the pyrotechnics, my love, begin!  
Learn it the hard way: You Can't Win.  
Then ho! for the grim, primeval law  
Of savage tooth and cunning claw.  
What's left of your body I'll donate to science  
In which you so trustfully placed reliance,  
While calm, contented my life shall be,  
Thanks to your Double Indemnity.

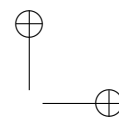
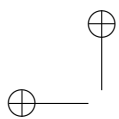




### SO GOOD IS TOO GOOD

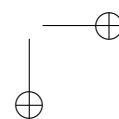
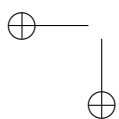
Your eyes hold mine in an ardent gaze  
That speaks with disturbing fluency.  
One casual touch and my heart displays  
An old and familiar truancy.  
Your protestations, your deft approach  
Are too pleurably persuable.  
I'd be off for a ride in a pumpkin coach  
If one notion were more subduable –  
The one thought left when I sense the spell  
Of a line that you ought to syndicate:  
I muse: If you merely played pool that well,  
What a misspent life it would indicate!

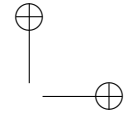
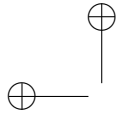




### **VISITING HOUR**

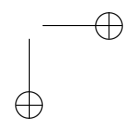
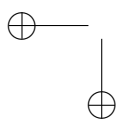
The patient in 516  
Is peacefully pounding her ear  
When guests arrive on the scene,  
Bearing gifts and words of cheer.  
They puff on a black cigar.  
They jiggle the bed. They shriek:  
"The kids just smashed your car.  
Joan died right here, last week."  
The patient twitches and glowers.  
The guests leave, feeling dandy.  
And the nurses take out the flowers.  
And the nurses eat the candy.

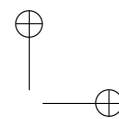
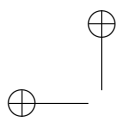




### **BARGAIN HUNTER**

Spread out the haloes; let her be loosed  
Where they're all tagged: Originals, Sharply Reduced!  
Let her ecstatically try on wings  
And "specials" in angel underthings.  
Let her find counters heaped with shoes –  
Marked down, jeweled, cloud-soled, Size Two's –  
And a love of a harp at a fractional price,  
Or she won't be happy in Paradise.





## THE WAIST-MAKERS

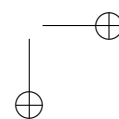
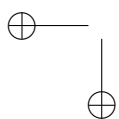
Designers say waistline to be normal. — NEWS ITEM

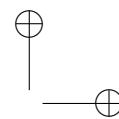
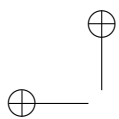
Where is the waistline going to be?  
Around the chest? Below the knee?  
Concealed within the infamous sack?

No!

Back

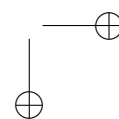
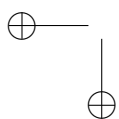
In the weirdest place for a waist to be;  
Where nature put it originally.

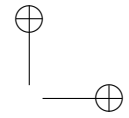
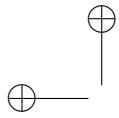




### THE CUMMERBUND

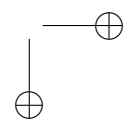
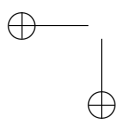
The cummerbund you bought  
Last Whitsuntide  
Is good as new, but only  
Fits untied.  
Your mirror shows increased  
Rotundancy,  
A superabundant  
Cummerbundancy.

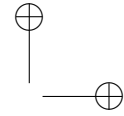
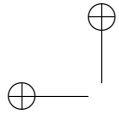




### GNU VIEW

How ludicrously he's designed!  
To humans he looks humorous,  
But he's a dreamboat to his kind.  
That's why the gnu's so gnumerous.



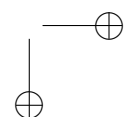
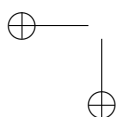


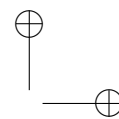
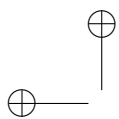
### JUST CALL ME OLD PAINT

My spouse can paint a kitchen chair  
And not end up with turquoise hair.  
He can paint the cabinets, paint the wall,  
And never spatter a drop at all  
On fixtures, clothes, or fingernails.  
He could paint in white gloves, white tie, and tails.  
He's slow, he's pokey, but not to beat about it,  
He's finically, morbidly, fanatically neat about it.

Now I can paint – and paint with relish –  
But somehow I manage to embellish  
More of the ceiling, floor, and me  
Than the purported embellishee.

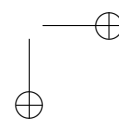
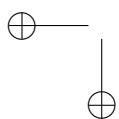
When through, I seldom bother to clean  
The brushes till they gleam, pristine.  
And paint cans – I never put the lid on tight enough,  
To hear him tell it. The allegation's right enough,  
But why can't he let me paint my way  
And not have cat fits? Well, all I can say  
Is, I'm too old to change my way of painting houses.  
All I can do at this point is change spouses.

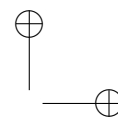
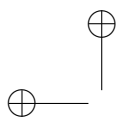




### LOVE NEST NOTE

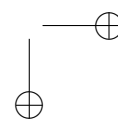
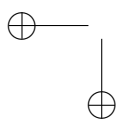
I've swept the hearth  
And cleaned the grate,  
I've plumped the cushions,  
Polished the plate,  
Lit the candles,  
Arranged the flowers –  
It's obvious that  
I've slaved for hours,  
Hours which my lord  
Is swiftly summing  
In one gruff, boorish  
“Company coming?”

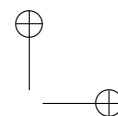
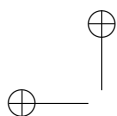




### RECURRENT MEDITATION

A trillion stars are set in space,  
Each in its own accustomed place.  
In every molecule of earth  
Each atom keeps its proper berth.  
How neat, how orderly, how planned –  
All things in heaven, sea or land!  
It just amazes me the more:  
What I can do to a dresser drawer.



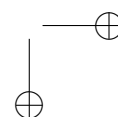
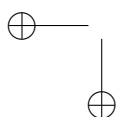


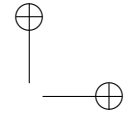
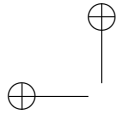
### WITH THESE LILY HANDS

Halt and admire our hanging shelves;  
Then marvel – we made them our very selves!  
You'd hardly believe, and you'd never dream  
That they once were orange crates! Don't they seem  
Like something you'd find at Monticello?  
The city dump? You waggish fellow!  
They cost us nothing; we just used vision,  
Imagination and bold decision,  
A nail or two and some elbow grease.  
Result: this staggering masterpiece!

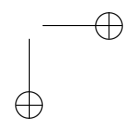
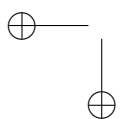
The crates were splintery, warped and battered –  
Details, we knew, that hardly mattered  
After we sanded, scraped and planed,  
Bleached and straightened and beveled and stained,  
Rubbed with rottenstone, dovetailed, glued,  
Patched and puttied and countersunk-screwed,  
And applied ten coats of lacquer, clear,  
And lastly added a thin veneer  
Of blond mahogany. Now, behold,  
You couldn't buy them for love nor gold!

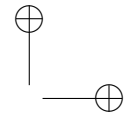
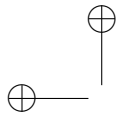
Adding that darling pierced-brass gallery  
Only took maybe two weeks' salary.  
Think what we saved by being thrifty!  
The power tools came to eleven-fifty –





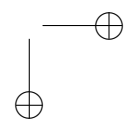
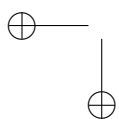
Thirteen hundred, before we were through –  
And building the workroom was extra too.  
But someday we'll want – perhaps rails for the plates –  
And we won't need a thing but a few more crates!

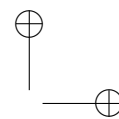
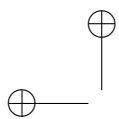




**NEW IMPROVED PACKAGE**

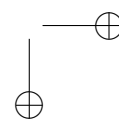
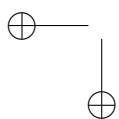
“Punch here,” I read on the carton,  
“For new easy-pouring spout,”  
    After I’ve clawed  
    And gouged and chawed  
The other corner out.

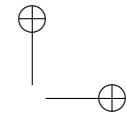
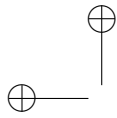




### THE SCORE ON DECOR

The home has that bare,  
Uncluttered look,  
No bonbon dish,  
No vase, no book,  
No knick, no knack,  
No cigarette,  
And not one African  
Violet.  
It's not that this spare  
Decor's the rage,  
But Baby has reached  
The toddling stage.



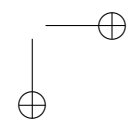
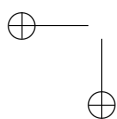


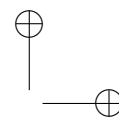
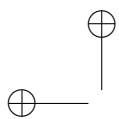
### READER'S CHOICE

I'm not the literary sort,  
I'm far from intellectual.  
My studious pursuits, in short,  
Are few and ineffectual.  
And yet you'll find me (Go on, look!  
Don't give up so darn readily.)  
With nose forever in a book  
And eyeballs shuttling steadily.

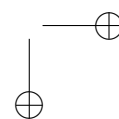
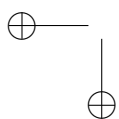
A cook book, my hearties,  
A manual of EATS  
From fabled fare for parties  
To quickie budget treats.  
Compendium of sauce and spice,  
Of sumptuous comestible,  
Ill read you once, I'll read you twice  
If only you're digestible.

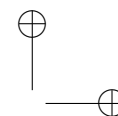
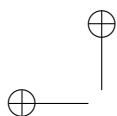
For me no plot, no labored tale,  
No page on page of scenery,  
But how the Bechamel should veil  
Some toothsome table greenery.  
No characters in quandaries  
Which Homicide makes merry in.  
I'll settle for ingredients, please,  
And when to put the sherry in.





A cook book, my darlings,  
A gustatory lexicon  
From jellied tongues of starlings  
To cherimoyas Mexican.  
The recipes, I beg!  
Not for using, just for looking.  
(I cannot boil an egg,  
But I love to read what's cooking!)



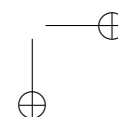
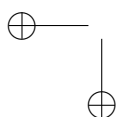


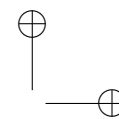
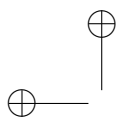
## CHOCOLATE SUPREME

When I like chocolate  
I like chocolate:  
Chocolate cake with chocolate icing  
Almost too gooey and thick for slicing;  
Chocolate waffles, chocolate mousse;  
Chocolate Alaska, Chocolate Russe;  
Black-bottom pie, black-topped to match,  
With – in the middle – more chocolate, natch.

For when I say chocolate  
I mean chocolate:  
At breakfast for a wake-up drink;  
At midnight on Insomnia's brink  
(And what in-between snack's half so dandy  
As chocolate-covered chocolate candy?);  
Chocolate sundaes; chocolate Mondays;  
Maybe chocolate salmagundis –  
Though somehow I've not tried chocolate yet  
On asparagus or a lamb noisette,  
Why wouldn't it make a gourmet's delight?  
I believe I'll try it this very night!

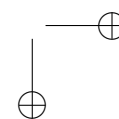
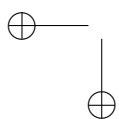
For when I want chocolate  
I want chocolate!  
Let doctors scowl, let dentists rave;  
Chocolate's the onliest thing I crave,  
And happy am I to spy that treat  
And take the bitter with the sweet.

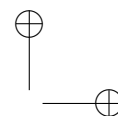
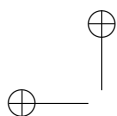




## CHAGRIN D'AMOUR

He sighed, "Gorgeous creature,  
O fairest of fair,  
I swoon at the sultry  
Perfume of your hair."  
He breathed, "One fond kiss,  
Or I die," and, aw, gee,  
I'd have jumped if the guy  
Had been talking to me.





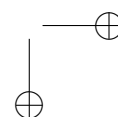
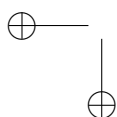
### SONG FOR SIT-ON-YOUR-NECK WEEK

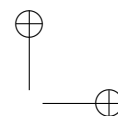
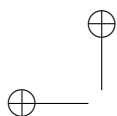
“Exercise Ruining Nation’s Health,” says Doctor. — NEWS  
ITEM

Medical science now agrees  
With one of my favorite theories.  
Now comes the glorious vindication  
For what’s been my favorite detestation.  
The hoary scientist now appears  
From the cloistered lab where he’s toiled for years,  
Crying, “Jacobson had the right idea!  
Give her the red-plush pharmacopoeia!  
But me none of your bootless butts;  
Jacobson is – *je wohl!* – the nuts!”

For I’d been ahead of my time, it seems  
(These things come to the bard in dreams),  
And “Exercise,” was my earnest cry,  
“Is just a fad that will soon pass by!  
Exercise is a nervous habit;  
Exercise is the badge of Babbitt,  
Pathologic, a superstition,  
And ruinous to the disposition.

“The puffing priests of physical culture  
Gnawed at our vitals like a vulture;  
Climbing Matterhorns, swimming Tibers,  
They frazzled all of our finest fibers,

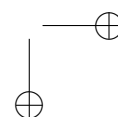
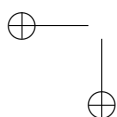


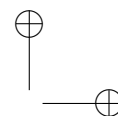
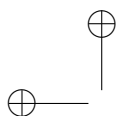


Warped our tendons and wrenched our muscles,  
Energated our best corpuscles,  
And ought to be hanged on the public highway –  
And someday science will see it my way!”

Throw out your weights and wands. you dubs;  
Bury those gilded Indian clubs,  
Or you’ll be a marvel of knotty sinew  
With hypersclerosis of everything in you.  
Only dumbbells, use dumbbells, sirrah;  
This is the Easy-Does-It Era!  
Now we de-emphasize brawn and bone,  
And Cultured Coma’s come into its own.  
The cult of the extrovert’s antebellum,  
But don’t take my say-so. . . . Doc, you tell ’em!

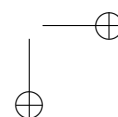
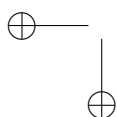
You may be wise,  
You may be wealthy,  
But exercise  
And you’ll be unhealthy!

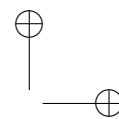
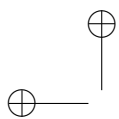




### TIZZY IN A TEA ROOM

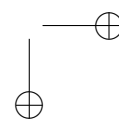
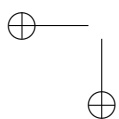
When the waitress finishes tabulating,  
The ladies start confabulating:  
“Mine was the Chef’s Surprise –” “Let’s see,  
The tarts were a quarter, and I had three –”  
“Mine was a dollar twelve, I think –”  
“Was the salad extra, or just the drink?”  
“No, wait, if Joan had the Shoppers’ Plate  
And four cents tax and five make eight –”  
“The way I figure, mine’s ninety cents –”  
And they never split the difference.  
What offers such mental acrobatics  
As feminine higher mathematics?

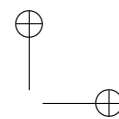
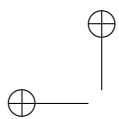




### **DON'T MENTION IT**

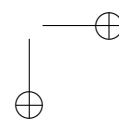
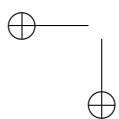
What a darling outfit!  
“What, this old rag?”  
You look like the mint.  
“I’m a positive hag!”  
Swell job you did!  
“It was utterly foul.”  
Well, its nice to see you –  
“Yeah, that’s a howl.”  
How friends might brighten  
Our dreary lot  
If they’d just accept compliments,  
Meant or not.

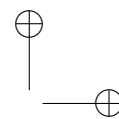
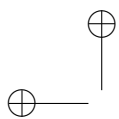




## HIDEWAY

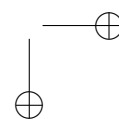
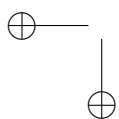
Give me a cabin beside a stream  
Where I can invite my soul and dream,  
Far from the madding, gadding crowd,  
I'll loaf on my private personal cloud,  
Forgetting the world. But you know what,  
Will I by the same world be forgot?  
A fat lot!  
Cousins and classmates I can't remember  
Will swarm to my door and stay through September  
Or even November.

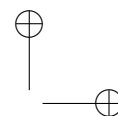
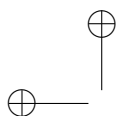




### DEVILGRASS

Armed and girded for the fray  
With a vast and glittering array  
Of formidable garden tools,  
Plus the doggedness of a dozen mules,  
I sedulously set about  
To clean the devilgrass clear out  
Of ravaged lawn and flower bed.  
I rake up every single shred,  
Each thrusting rootlet, stem and joint  
Till – proud but weary – I can point  
To a garden with no trace of it –  
Except one hidden half-inch bit  
Which sprouts – and spreads –  
    And two weeks later  
My devilgrass crop is even greater.



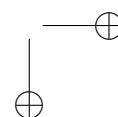
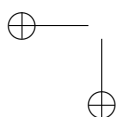


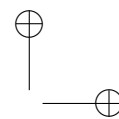
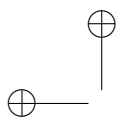
### BARRING ACCIDENTS —

When I cut my finger, O my love,  
It rates but a smile, a snicker,  
A trifling ill to think nothing of,  
To cause not an eyelid's flicker.  
But when you get a scratch, you wail alarms;  
The picture abruptly alters.  
You blench. You bellow. You flail your arms.  
The Spartan within you falters.

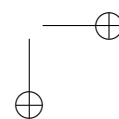
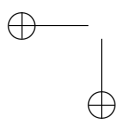
And mummy must kiss it  
To make it well,  
And pour on the iodine  
While you yell,  
And swathe you in bandages,  
Tape, and gauze,  
While you anxiously test  
For locking jaws.

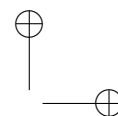
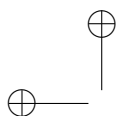
When I catch a cold – how dull of me.  
What rot to disrupt the house with!  
You'd think I did it deliberately  
To harrass a patient spouse with.  
But when you have the sniffles, hearts stand still.  
It's – Quick, the pneumonia jacket!  
And here's your insurance and here's your will  
Done up in a handy packet.





And mummy must tenderly  
Tuck you in  
With a benzoin kettle  
Under your chin,  
And fix you toddies  
Of snake-bite cure,  
And pretend you've a dangerous  
Temperature.  
No minor mishaps for men! Ah, me,  
They all the time have to live dangerously.

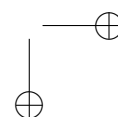
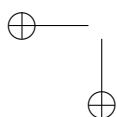


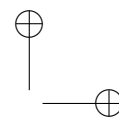
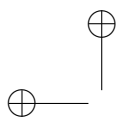


### PERSON TO PERSON

One's easy-going, placid,  
And averse to scenes and feuds.  
The other, a bit more acid,  
Sulks and skulks and broods.  
One acts on the spur of the moment –  
Never hesitates or waits.  
The other in anguished foment  
Forever procrastinates.

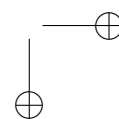
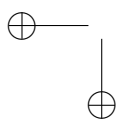
One's orderly and meticulous,  
With everything neat and trim.  
The other thinks it ridiculous  
To be so grisly grim.  
One whoops down echoing hallways.  
The other won't murmur Boo.  
And, always and always and always,  
Guess who marries who.

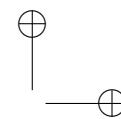
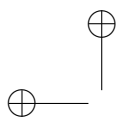




### THE HORRIBLE HORTICULTURIST

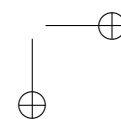
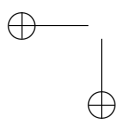
A garden's gracious and scene,  
I know, but when it comes  
To gardening, I'm awfully green –  
All but my thumbs.

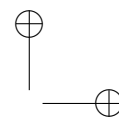
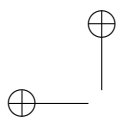




### GROWING PAINS

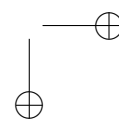
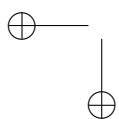
The adolescent's going through  
A period of growth,  
Of difficult adjustment.  
He's a dervish, he's a sloth,  
A cynic, a romantic,  
A genius and a lout;  
And parents grow near-frantic  
Until he sweats it out,  
With this inglorious result:  
One more staid, confused adult.

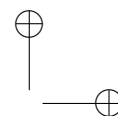
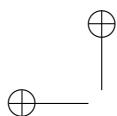




### EUPHEMY AND ME FOR YOU

Of men and nations, candidly,  
I'd be more optimistic  
If they'd say, "Let's be unprincipled,"  
Not, "Let's be realistic."



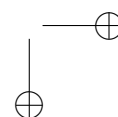
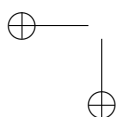


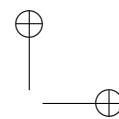
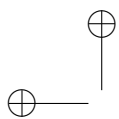
### NEVER APOLOGIZE, NEVER EXPLAIN

Living's a vexing and perilous task  
Shot with frustration, foredoomed to defeat.  
Booby traps lurk where you guilelessly bask.  
You long for a lift? Here's a boot in the seat.  
Open your mouth and, however discreet,  
You've put in your foot – and your horror's in vain,  
So skip the excuses! Don't sputter and bleat;  
Never apologize, never explain.

When horned by dilemmas, it's useless to ask  
Why you're of Fate's cosy and ill-starred elite  
Whose least boner sets off a dynamite cask.  
How raucous the jeers all your alibis meet –  
Words that guess who is elected to eat?  
Friend and foe blast them with ribald disdain.  
The damage is done, the debacle complete.  
Never apologize, never explain.

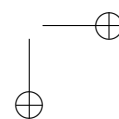
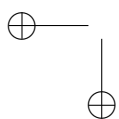
Don't in despair seek the comforting flask.  
It triples your blunders; its cheer is a cheat.  
Never trust Fortune's benign-seeming mask –  
She's scheming some new way to turn on the heat!  
And, pal, when you dream you're parading the street  
Wearing nothing but spats and a gold-headed cane  
And you wake up to find that it's real – I repeat:  
Never apologize, never explain.

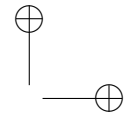
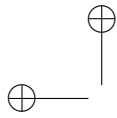




*L'envoi*

*Faux pas* and fumbles are right on your beat.  
When your gamut's from ghastly to simply inane,  
Whatever you say makes it worse. Don't entreat!  
Never apologize, never explain.

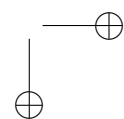
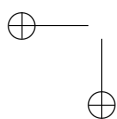


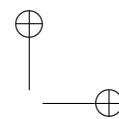
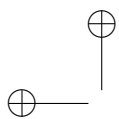


**SHAMING THE DEVIL  
HAS ITS COMPLICATIONS**

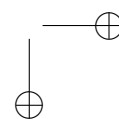
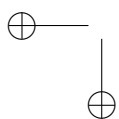
Mummy's precious moppet,  
    Since first you cut a tooth  
What were you admonished?  
    Always speak the truth.  
And Speak the Truth and Fear Not –  
    Loftiest of cults –  
Is what you duly practice,  
    With pretty bleak results.

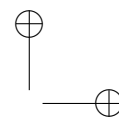
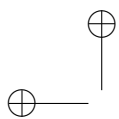
The boss, the bishop, no matter who knocks,  
In a treble that carries for blocks and blocks  
You greet with gems from your growing store  
Of undeniably candid lore.  
A digest – succinct! – of mummy's words,  
Explaining about the bees and birds,  
And, Look, mummy's hair, it was done in the city,  
And isn't it getting red and pretty?  
She's forty-one and my daddy's thirty.  
All of our tea towels are awful dirty.  
I go to Sunday school just 'cause I hafter.  
I got a uncle the cops are after.  
Know what my daddy says for "heck"?  
And how did you pain my mummy's neck?





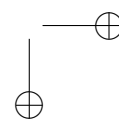
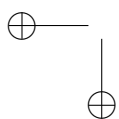
Little pitchers have big ears,  
But daily it amazes  
The way you overhear remarks  
And pick up certain phrases.  
Though I've assured you solemnly  
The truth will never hurt you,  
Your parents hardly fare as well,  
The way you wield that virtue.  
What a capacity for veracity! –  
Six times peskier than mendacity.

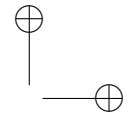
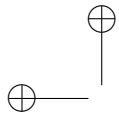




### **POLLS CLOSED**

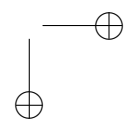
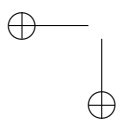
Election cigars are now butts in the gutter,  
The thundered orations not even a mutter.  
In every last whistle-stop, village and city,  
Names have been called that were not very pretty.  
The record's been stood on, revised, or recanted,  
While hecklers were planted and news stories slanted;  
And babies got kissed and the air waves got frazzled  
And voters were needled and wheedled and dazzled  
And couldn't again take the mud, threats, and jeers  
Of electioneers – not for another four years.

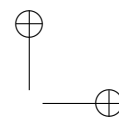
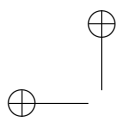




## **POLITICAL PRONOUNCEMENT**

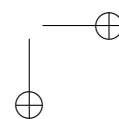
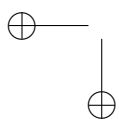
Don't take each noble  
Phrase apart,  
But like a work  
Of abstract art,  
Enjoy it! None  
So gauche, so green,  
As the boor who bleats,  
"What does it mean?"

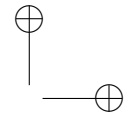
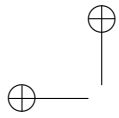




### INVESTMENT COUNSEL

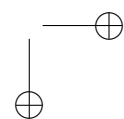
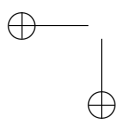
Buy them when they're low;  
Sell them when they're high;  
Know a good astrologer  
And a guy who knows a guy  
Whose cousin knows the son of one  
Of the top White House advisors;  
Then play it safe with growth stocks like  
Low-cal tranquilizers.

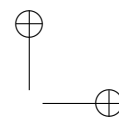
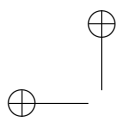




### THE NOTE

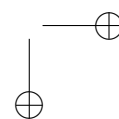
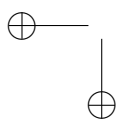
The Lion once, some years B.C.,  
Lived on honey like the bee,  
Lunched on grass like zebra, donkey,  
Munched bananas like the monkey.  
Then one day a too myopic  
Leo – or just misanthropic,  
Bored or careless, rash or hasty,  
Nibbled a zebra, found him tasty,  
Started sampling other critters  
(Raw, not in ragouts or fritters);  
Brisket, rump, and rib he'd bite 'em in,  
Find 'em crammed with every vitamin.  
Leo retired as an apiarian.  
And other animals, still vegetarian,  
Appointed an absent member to deliver a  
Curt note of protest to this convert to carnivora.  
"Don't wait for an answer," they told their emissary.  
And he didn't. Leo ate him on a biscuit, with sherry.

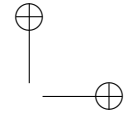
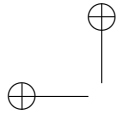




### LIONIZED

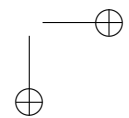
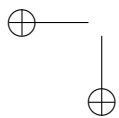
Mary had a little lion,  
Fawn-furred, tawny-spotted,  
And everywhere that Mary went  
The cunning lion trotted.  
He daily lapped his bowl of cream  
And the fruit he was allotted.  
(One day the fruit fermented and  
Her little friend got potted.)  
She held his paw and stroked his mane,  
As side by side they squatted,  
Then he embraced her tenderly  
And severed her carotid.

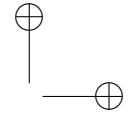
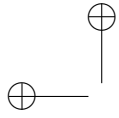




### 90 IN THE SHADE

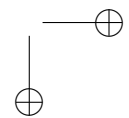
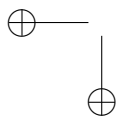
I should weed and hoe;  
I should mow the lawn;  
But my git-up-and-go  
Has git-up-and-gone.

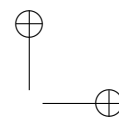
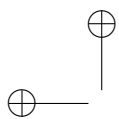




**GOLFING ON THE GREEN  
IS MORE FUN THAN MOWING IT**

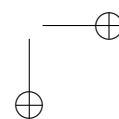
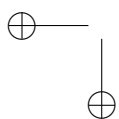
Him cut the grass?  
He has creeping paralysis.  
Yet he can golf  
Till his pinkies have calluses.

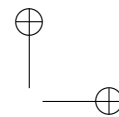
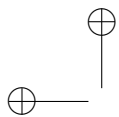




## CINDY LOU

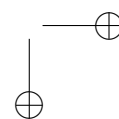
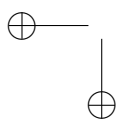
Five feet tall,  
Cool blue eyes,  
You know she's the small  
Expensive size.

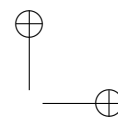
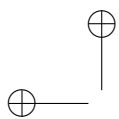




**MAIL BOX**

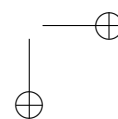
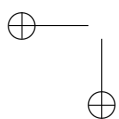
One flip  
Will do,  
But I always  
Give two.  
Don't you?

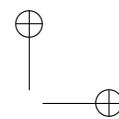
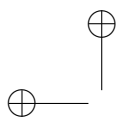




### LET'S MODERNIZE THE EVENTS

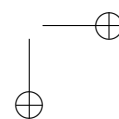
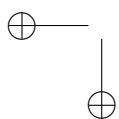
I grace no Olympics committee, but  
I propose a race from concessionaire's hut –  
An eighty-yard dash over crowded beach  
With six double-decker cones (three peach,  
One cherry-revel, two English toffee),  
A handle-less cardboard cup of coffee,  
Five hot dogs (one plain, four mustard),  
Three sticks of paraffined frozen custard,  
A packet of petrified macaroons,  
A half dozen cokes, three red balloons,  
Two fifty-nine in change, and –  
    No third hand.

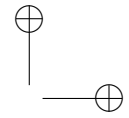
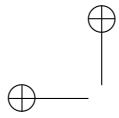




### BEACH SEEN

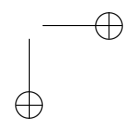
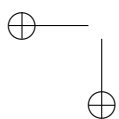
Call me just a common scold,  
But everyone, I stoutly hold,  
Has obligations to his kind –  
Like scattering no melon rind,  
No crust of bun, no pit of peach  
Upon a foot of public beach.  
Its sands should loom uncluttered by  
Debris that might offend the eye.  
Unsightly objects should be barred,  
Esthetic charms should stay unmarred.  
So, swathed in robes, I here recline.  
I bare no limb, expose no spine,  
Lest nature lovers glare and wince –  
Including some who should take hints.

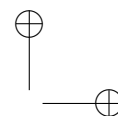
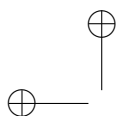




### SNAPPY WELCOME

It's grand to see you back again!  
Now life takes up the slack again.  
Your trip was fine, I'll stipulate,  
If you'll just kindly skipulate  
That bulging walletful of "snaps," as  
I have homicidal lapses  
Faced with views befogged, unglamorous,  
Trapped by all-too-amateur cameras.



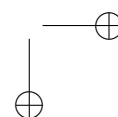
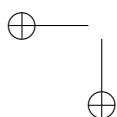


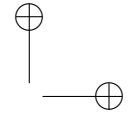
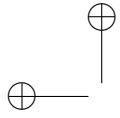
**AND THE VILLAIN PURSUED HER,  
BUT INTERMITTENTLY**

Pause, trustful maidens, and heed if you can  
A rather harsh view of that predator, Man,  
A critter you'll know by the glint in his eye  
Which bodes you no good – only now, girls, it's high  
Time you knew why.  
That gleam means he's fervently, madly devoted –  
To fishing, hip-booted, to hunting, red-coated,  
To hackenschmidt, harness race, skiing and skoaling  
And having a ball – base, billiard, or bowling.

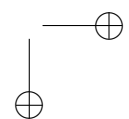
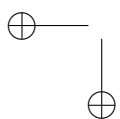
What lass hasn't learned at her fond mother's knee  
The proper technique for an amorous He?  
But his covetous eye's on a boat  
That'll barely float  
Or a trout  
He can brag about  
Or a bigger tweeter for his hi-fi set  
Or a telescopic lens for his camera yet,  
While a girl, he can take or leave her.  
So much for your eager beaver.

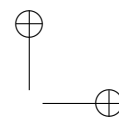
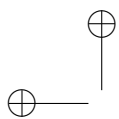
Yup, sweeter than dryads disporting in greenery  
To him is the hum of a hunk of machinery,  
A migrating wood duck's quack,  
Or aces back to back.





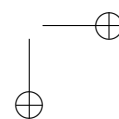
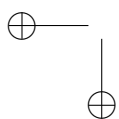
So don't trust the varmints. Their hearts all belong  
To the Series, or snooker, or barbershop song,  
Or some shiny new toy – and it's bucks to a dime  
That you won't need your track shoes for weeks at a time.

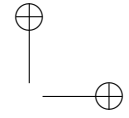
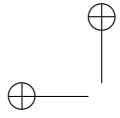




**DISHEARTENING OBSERVATION  
ON THE ROMANTIC FRONT**

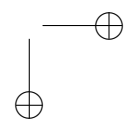
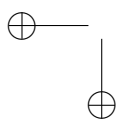
Men you can trust  
Are dry as dust.

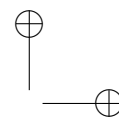
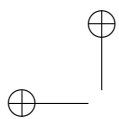




### **FOWLING PIECE**

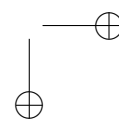
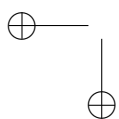
He raised his trusty gun. What luck!  
The mallard was as good as plucked.  
His aim was true! And then the duck  
Ducked.

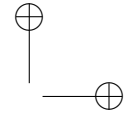
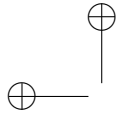




### ROVER RECUMBENT

He's not allowed upon the bed.  
He's learned! We never need remind him,  
He always jumps down promptly when  
That's where we find him.



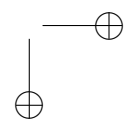
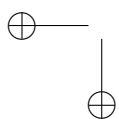


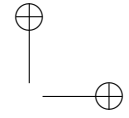
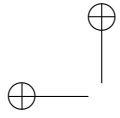
### **A LITTLE LESS RESPECT, PLEASE!**

Youth I adore. I lift my tongue  
To chant the charms of the fair and young,  
Their radiant bloom, their fire, their verve,  
And occasionally their colossal nerve.  
For Youth toward Age is so sweetly dutiful,  
Showing an homage that's all too beautiful –  
Specially matrons, fresh as can be,  
Who yield to a withered old crone like me  
And who, when I enter, pointedly rise,  
Nothing but deference in their eyes.

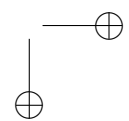
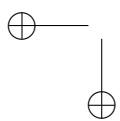
“Pray, is it true,  
They shyly pant,  
“What they say about you  
And General Grant?”

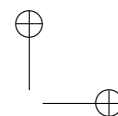
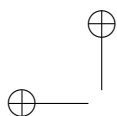
Sisters, I'm thrilled by your touching solicitude –  
Wishing to shield me from every vicissitude,  
Buying me “Sermons for Fifty-Two Sundays”  
While gifting each other with sheer black undies.  
Honest, I know it's a bit of a shocker,  
But, shucks! I can make it as far as the rocker.  
Please, no afghan, no shawl, no hassock;  
I'm spry for my age, which is Early Jurassic.  
Stop waving ammonia corks under my nose –  
I just shut my eyes for a moment's repose!





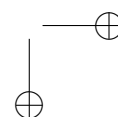
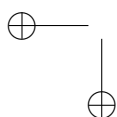
But Youth goes dashing  
To high adventures  
While Age sits gnashing  
Its plastic dentures.

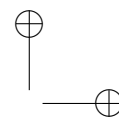
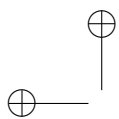




## THE GOAT

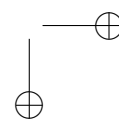
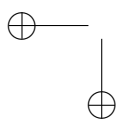
Everything's *table d'hôte*  
To a goat.  
Mairzy dotes  
And goats eat oats  
And sheets off the line and paint off boats;  
While baby kids, I hear, can  
Devour barbed wire or beer can  
Without the slightest question  
Of impairing their digestion.  
Besides, they do it while leaping abysses  
And precipices  
With all the graceful demeanor  
Of a premiere ballerinar.  
You can tell a nanny from a billy  
By whether it wears a Van Dyke, silly.  
And you needn't see or hear one  
To realize you're near one.  
But, truthfully, goats have been much maligned.  
They're sweet and clean and affectionate and kind  
And make wonderful pets, but – but –  
That's one slight drawback. They butt.  
Still, this world would be a peacefuller place if everyone had  
a goat and would feed it and pet it  
And be smart enough never to let anyone get it.

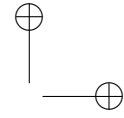
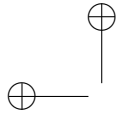




## MULE

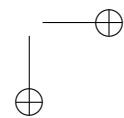
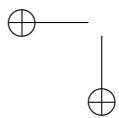
Malevolent,  
Fey –  
All heels  
And bray.

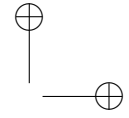
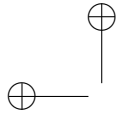




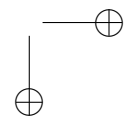
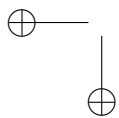
### **KILLED IN COMMITTEE**

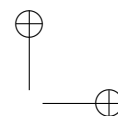
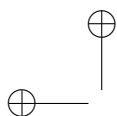
The ladies are having an all-day brawl,  
They've unfurled banners, they've hired a hall,  
They're flaunting badges that bear their name  
And the fortunate hamlet whence they came.  
The fixtures ring with their squeals and chortles;  
Cramming corridors, jamming portals,  
Cozening strangers with terms endearing  
In frantic last-minute electioneering,  
Swapping promises, trading pledges,  
Skirting veracity's farthest edges,  
Like bees berserk in a perfume emporium,  
Ladies now swarm through the auditorium.  
Buxom, billowy, fair and fat forms  
Throng the passages, fill the platforms,  
Seconding motions, taking notes,  
Reading minutes and casting votes.  
(There must be an office for every maid  
Or she goes home mad with her dues unpaid.)  
Oh, each last one, through the night's gray reaches,  
Hopefully practiced acceptance speeches,  
And they're all installed with the pomp and drama  
Befitting a new-found Dalai Lama;  
While down in the cloakroom, drowned in tears,  
Madam ex-President holds her ears.  
Their eyebrows slander the Chair's new sable  
And point the feud at the speakers' table





As matrons mark, with a camera eye,  
The grandes toilettes of the bigger fry  
While waxing brilliantly argumentative,  
Framing wires to their Representative.  
More and more Feminine-Mystiquey,  
The femmes have *veni, vidi, vici*.  
Moose, Rotarians blush for shame:  
The female's more deadly at one more game  
So here's a toast, brothers; drink your fill:  
THE LADIES! (God bless 'em. Who else will?)

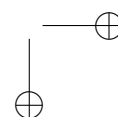
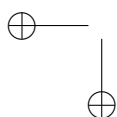


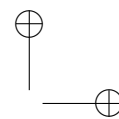
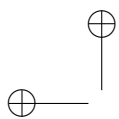


### A ROW IS A ROW IS A ROW

Who ever invented the rowboat?  
No monument blazons his fame.  
That leaky and creaky and slow boat  
No crackpot's been willing to claim.  
It floats – like a yacht or a show boat! –  
But founders, by choice, in a sulk  
While you reach shore quicker with no boat  
Than propelling that ponderous hulk.  
(And next time I  
Will holler “Nix,”  
Rather than lie  
In such a fix.)

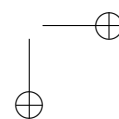
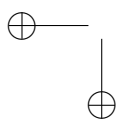
Whoever invented the rowboat  
Was an Inquisitorial Spaniard  
Who sailed in a slaves-chained-below boat,  
And I hope he was hanged to a lanyard.  
It groans like an overage towboat;  
It smells like an overage scow.  
And if I must go there in a rowboat  
Even Paradise won't be enow.  
(I'll dead-man's-float  
Across the Styx.  
Me and a boat  
Just don't mix.)

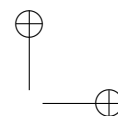
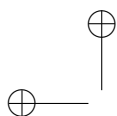




### **TO THE RANTER ON THE ROSTRUM**

Your topic was timely,  
Your form was tiptop  
But, sir, dare I whisper a hint?  
You came to so many  
Good places to stop –  
And you din't!



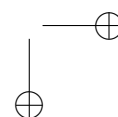
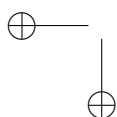


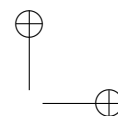
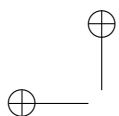
### PSST!

You're a model of every perfection  
That man has been known to assume,  
From a candidate seeking election  
To an heiress' tentative groom.  
You've a minimum quota of vices;  
You ooze with good humor and amity;  
So why, in these small social crises,  
Are you such a domestic calamity?

I mean, pal, those times when I stealthily try  
To signal a warning, to give you the eye,  
Like, "Don't keep insisting they all stay to dinner. . . .  
The Simms, you should know, aren't speaking to Skinner. . . .  
Please, no more drinks for your woopsy pal, Ed. . . .  
Ixnay on politics; Ruthie's a Red;  
Grimly I wigwag behind some broad back:  
"Divorces are dynamite; Jane's ditching Jack."  
But you, heart's desire, do you savvy and heed?  
No indeed.

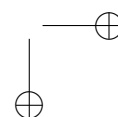
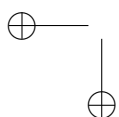
What's more, do you just let 'em pass unobserved?  
Your hearty response has the whole room unnerved.  
You loudly cry, "What, dear? You're making such faces!  
The gang's taken potluck at lots of worse places. . . .  
And why the big wink? . . .  
Don't give who a new drink? . . .  
And is Jack in the clink?  
What became of the gink? . . .

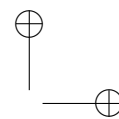
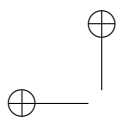




Look, somebody, slap her; she'll choke on that cough!  
This is clean – just a nifty that Dixon got off . . . .  
Baby, you nervous? Your foot's idly tapping  
'Scram, bum,' in Morse. There it goes again, rapping  
Lurid suggestions no lady should quote.  
Now what? . . .  
    Well, I'll be a son of a goat!"  
Won't you ever get hep, show some savvy, kind suh?  
    Unh-uh.

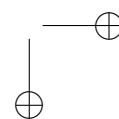
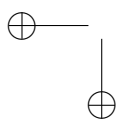
It can't be you're simply malicious.  
    That low-down a guy couldn't go!  
The very idea's meretricious,  
    Insanely suspicious, I know.  
So I herald your worth without stint, dear,  
    Except for this singular stricture:  
As a husband you can't take a hint, dear,  
    Till I spell it or draw you a picture!

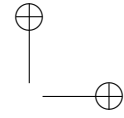
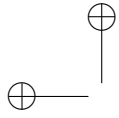




### **THE TROUBLE WITH COCKTAIL DIPS**

Too  
Much goo.



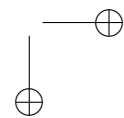
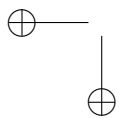


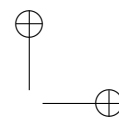
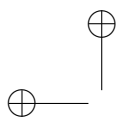
## NO TIE

Let's heap the platters and fill the bowls  
And ask in a few congenial souls.  
Let's roast a goose and let's eat by candles  
And get caught up on the local scandals.

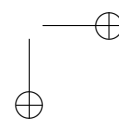
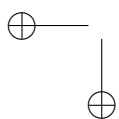
A modest dinner,  
But do it cockily –  
Real hollandaise  
To mask the broccoli;  
Company crystal;  
Cherrystone clams;  
And crepe-paper pants  
On the goose's gams.

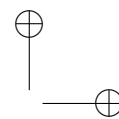
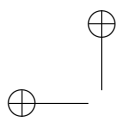
But Jim is allergic to fowl and fish,  
And Vi eats only some nut-bran dish,  
And we can't have Bob if we ask his ex,  
And the Wards aren't speaking to the Vanderbecks.  
Sally will knit while soufflés grow gruesome  
And Kay nabs you for a private twosome;  
Judge Johansen will wax pontifical;  
Christopher's tales will be too specific;  
Young Doc Ames will start drumming up trade,  
With Mrs. Ames eyeing my prized new maid,  
And Congressman Krump will stump for votes,  
While the Henshaws fly at the Brewsters' throats.





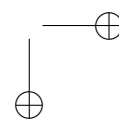
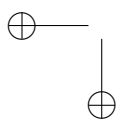
They'll break our bread and they'll share our salt,  
And all will be merry as a burying vault  
And far too clear, O my noble lord,  
Why it's commonly known as the festive bored.  
So let's have a dinner –  
But just us two.  
We'll warm the remains  
Of last night's stew,  
Plus crackers and cheese  
From the pantry shelves,  
And provide all the boredom  
We need, ourselves.

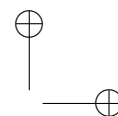
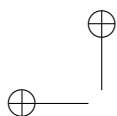




**WHAT'S FOR DINNER,  
AS IF EVERY HUSBAND  
DIDN'T KNOW?**

What's for dinner?  
How right his hunch!  
Whatever it was  
He had for lunch.



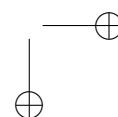
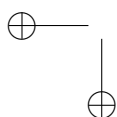


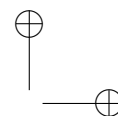
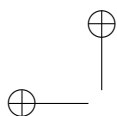
## HERE'S TO CRIME

“WHODUNIT? Whodunit?” 's  
What I want to know.  
Give me a body  
And watch me go!

Various questions obsess other people:  
How many angels can dance on a steeple?  
How many neutrons can fit in an atom?  
How high is up to the ultimate stratum?  
Who was it ghosted the Bhagavad-Gita?  
Who'll win the seventh at Santa Anita?  
Who'll lend me ten for a week or two?  
Does your cigarette taste more like glue?  
Is my sweetie true?  
And, if so, to who? ...  
Some like starlight, roses, rhyme,  
But give me crime  
Every time.

Give me a body, slightly used:  
Any old body – bruised, contused,  
With a slug in the chest, a knife in the heart,  
Embossed in Braille by a poisoned dart,  
Mussed, and trussed with piano wire,  
Drowned, and browned on a well-laid pyre,  
Fatally doped, lethally dosed,  
Ever so charmingly cyanosed,

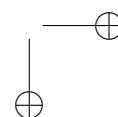
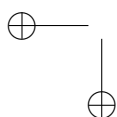


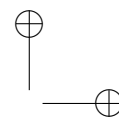
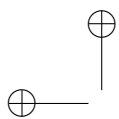


Stiff and cold as a fossil tortoise,  
With more than a touch of rigor mortis,  
A bluntly instrumented head. . . .  
And dead, quite dead.

Then lay it out neatly on the floor  
In a windowless room with a padlocked door  
(The corpse having swallowed the only key,  
As is later revealed by the autopsy).  
Mark with an X and strew with clues:  
The gambling grandmother's IOU's,  
A thread from a dark green Donegal tweed,  
A vicious tropical centipede,  
A monogrammed link, a lipstick smear,  
The missing pearl and a severed ear.

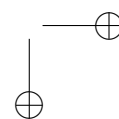
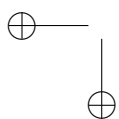
Great are the joys of contemplation,  
Of metaphysical meditation.  
Some find politics sublime.  
I'll take crime.

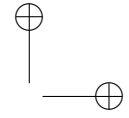
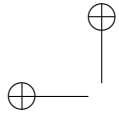




### **DELAYED RESPONSE**

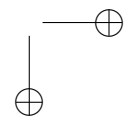
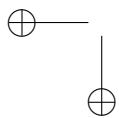
My comebacks are flat and unfunny.  
They're dumb cracks, for anyone's money.  
The best I can do  
At the time is "Says who?"  
But later I'll think of a honey.

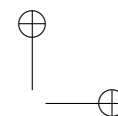
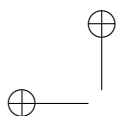




### THE ELBOW

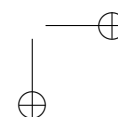
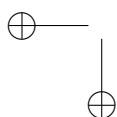
The Elbow is a neat device  
We seldom give a thought to.  
Thanks to this blessing without price  
We function as we ought to.  
We eat and dress and comb our hair –  
Try it, if you doubt it,  
As if no handy hinge were there.  
See? You're lost without it!  
We couldn't golf or wash our face  
Or heist our pet libations  
Or share a truly fond embrace...  
So, Elbow, salutations!

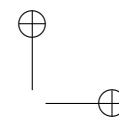
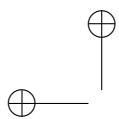




### **EARMARKED**

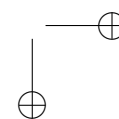
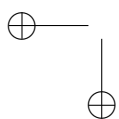
Ears come in every size and shape –  
With peaked lapels and London drape,  
Rosy as conch shells from Sardinia  
And Giant Ruffled like a zinnia.  
If they're too large there's a waiting pack  
Of friends delighted to pin them back,  
And nothing in all the world surpasses  
Ears for anchoring one's glasses.  
How fortunate they come in pairs –  
For earrings that milady wears,  
While blather from some boresome brother  
Can go in one and out the other.  
Ears grow caulflowered if you clout them,  
But we'd all look awfully plain without them.

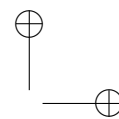
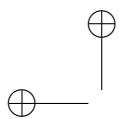




### NECKS TO NOTHING

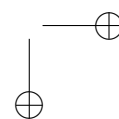
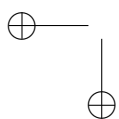
The Neck connects the head and thorax –  
Unless it's whacked by a Choctaw war ax,  
Which children often yearn to do  
When, having Necks, they must wash them too.  
Later they think a Neck's superb,  
As it becomes an active verb.  
Then Trouble dogs us like a pup, to  
Show that our Neck's what we're in it up to.  
As down through toilsome years we trek,  
What's sticking out a mile? Our Neck,  
Till we reach the Pearly Gates to bleat,  
“We'll try to do better necks time, Pete.”

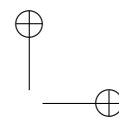
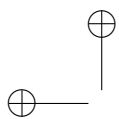




### REAR GUARD

Nature, thoughtfully inspired,  
Gave us a place to sit when tired.  
And, when we sit, she gave us Laps  
Where wraps are parked, and cats take naps.  
When we stand up, our Lap's not there.  
But oh, *toujours la derriere!*



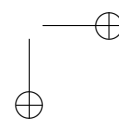
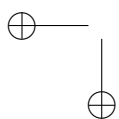


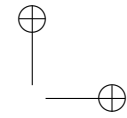
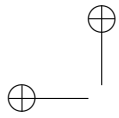
### **SLEEPSTAKES**

Some people go to bed at night  
And one-two-three, they're out like a light.

Others turn and toss and stall  
And never sleep a wink at all.

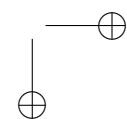
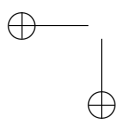
And, friends, forgive me – Do you mind?  
I HATE TO HEAR ABOUT EITHER KIND.

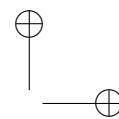
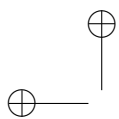




### **WE DID OUR OWN LANDSCAPING**

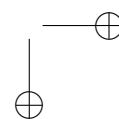
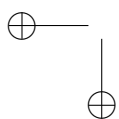
My spouse likes everything trim and neat;  
I think a wild disorder's sweet.  
He'd plant the tidiest beds and rows;  
I'd have a jungle. So it goes.  
He'd clip the hedge to a plumb line true;  
I'd let it sprawl as it wanted to.  
So do come see us! The front walk winds  
Right to the door, which the visitor finds  
With no really serious difficulties.  
Just bring your machete and it's a breeze.

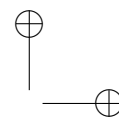
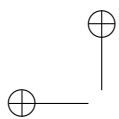




### TWO CATS ON A DOORMAT

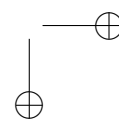
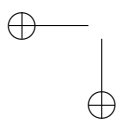
They park by the door, idling, sunning,  
With headlights burning and motors running.

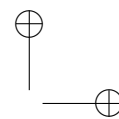
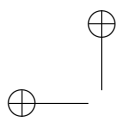




### ADVISOR

Never make free  
With advice, said he –  
Advising me  
Gratuitously.

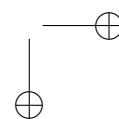
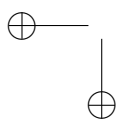


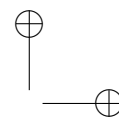
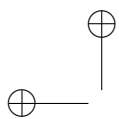


### LINES SCRATCHED IN WET CEMENT

A guest for whom I did not care  
Had an utterly uncanny flair  
For dropping by my modest lair  
When I hadn't swept, but was tinting my hair.  
She'd finger dust, and with gimlet glare  
Peer at my ugliest beat-up chair  
To chirp, with her social worker air,  
"How quaint!"

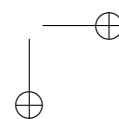
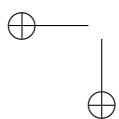
I took her to see the cellar,  
And nobody knows what there befell her.

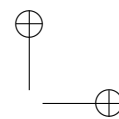
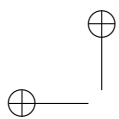




**OH, NO!**

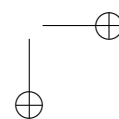
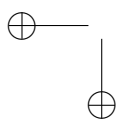
You're already  
Past help.  
By the time  
That you yelp,  
"They can't DO  
This to me!"  
Doggone it,  
They've done it.

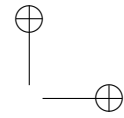
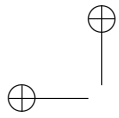




### **THE CAT IS A CREATURE OF DUSK**

The cat is a creature of dusk.  
Stealthy as the shadow  
That creeps on padded paws  
Across the meadow,  
Still as the grey hill,  
It crouches when day dies,  
Watching the night come  
With firefly eyes.





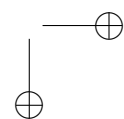
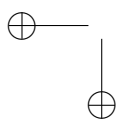
## MOUNTAIN LION

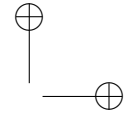
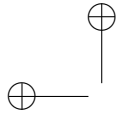
Dappled as this mountain way  
In sunlight filtering through firs,  
Gold and quicksilver shadows play  
Where the great cat stirs.

Part of the patterned noonday he,  
Crouched on his hearth of shale and stones,  
Twitching a tail tip rhythmically,  
Warming his bones;

Dozing, all but the topaz eyes  
That mark each flicker of leaf or grass,  
But – there only a lizard lies,  
Two beetles pass.

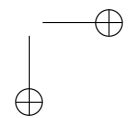
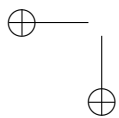
A lazy ripple of tawny coat,  
And forepaws knead, as a dream enwraps.  
There is a rumbling in the throat.  
A purr, perhaps?

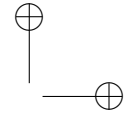
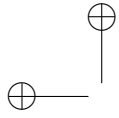




## ART CRITIC

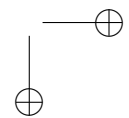
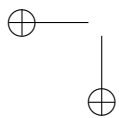
Chilled, arthritic fingers stroke  
The silver-bearded chin,  
Pale eyes studiously frown.  
Querulous and thin,  
The voice drones on of “overtones...  
Dynamic symmetry...  
Impressionism... brush strokes...  
A palette’s muted key...”  
The painted nymph upon the wall  
Grins back with dancing eyes,  
Impertinent with pity and  
Unconscionably wise.

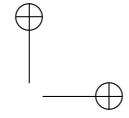
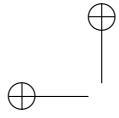




### GLAZE-FIRING

Dance, Fire, to the potter's desire.  
Heat, beat – as the cones dip,  
At the carven feet, at the smooth lip  
Of the bowl. Fuse these molten hues  
Masked in gray, till cherry-rose  
The radiant clay burns, glows.  
Ancient rite, rose to white,  
Hotter grows your candlemas.  
Now stone flows, now mud is glass.  
Fire, abate your sorcery. Wait  
Till the earthen form, flame-jeweled, stands  
Crackling and warm in the potter's hands.





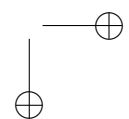
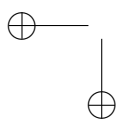
### **BACKGROUND MUSIC**

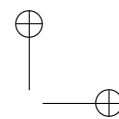
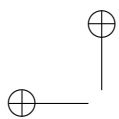
Who sleeps beside a running stream  
Hears its music thread a dream.

Like water gliding over stones,  
Care slips from his tired bones.

All the day's disharmonies  
Are resolved in melodies

As the mind hums an ancient air  
Though deep in slumber, unaware.

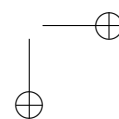
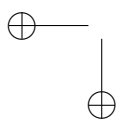


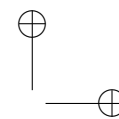
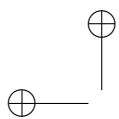


## SIERRAS

Bare and bleak,  
Each soaring peak  
And jagged line  
Of anticline  
Is fixed and cold  
In the tortuous mold  
Of some primeval  
Earth upheaval.

Harsh the face  
Where glaciers trace  
In slow assault  
Each rift and fault.  
Yet, heart and bone,  
I must be stone –  
To know so austere  
A kinship here.





### PAVANE

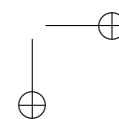
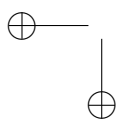
My neighbor lives upon the hill.  
His lawns are velvet spread,  
And there in the plane trees' dappling  
His hundred peacocks tread.

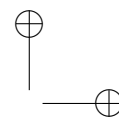
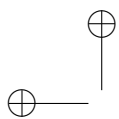
They jewel all the terraced slope  
With jasper, lapis, gold –  
A glory that my ravished eyes  
Are free as his to hold.

Elegantly robed and crowned,  
They yet are not too vain  
To visit my small garden  
Below them in the lane,

Their regal talons tear my vines.  
Their beaks slash fruit to shreds.  
They make a Persian broidery  
Of vegetable beds.

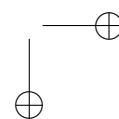
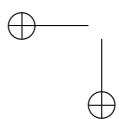
My neighbor owns magnificence  
We can enjoy together. . .  
I lift from my garden's shambles  
One gleaming bronze-blue feather.

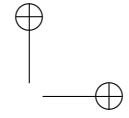
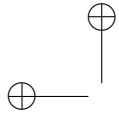




**STARS**

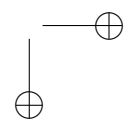
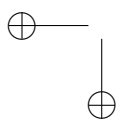
Crystal fish  
Caught in the seine  
Of the trawler, Night.

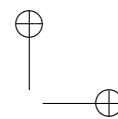
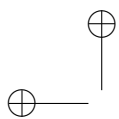




### FRIENDLY DEER

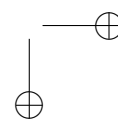
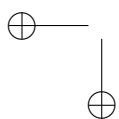
Harsh my welcome for you. Go,  
Unafraid and friendly deer.  
You gaze upon a mortal foe.  
Here's no haven. Come not near.  
Flee with every straining breath.  
Seek some far, forbidding height.  
Know me for the shape of death,  
Waiting, cunning. Shun my sight.  
As I love you, come not near  
This hand of mine nor any other.  
Though mine's no weapon you must fear,  
I cannot answer for my brother.

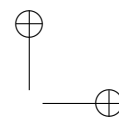
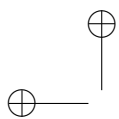




### ALLISON STREET, REMEMBERED

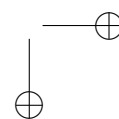
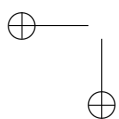
The rows of hollyhocks looked stiff and starched  
Behind white pickets as I clattered by.  
The elms and our two scarlet maples arched  
Against a strangely bare and silent sky  
As I'd think now – no power line, no plane –  
Just, above lacy boughs, the pale day moon,  
A swirl of swallows, the chatter of sudden rain,  
Or bob of kites on a breezy afternoon.  
The sidewalk then was slate – gray slate, they said,  
Pieced like a crazy quilt in one long strip,  
But colored, you could see – blue, violet, red,  
And with a nice click, so you didn't walk but skip  
Or skate or roll a hoop of sanded birch,  
Or hopscotch Sunday all the way to church.

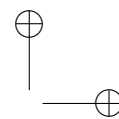
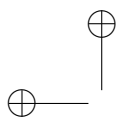




### WILD HORSE CANYON

From the arroyo onto the canyon floor  
Where the hump-backed boulders sit sunning,  
Drunk with sunrise and the bubbling cold  
Of the grass-rimmed spring, they pour –  
Wild horses running.  
Raising small dust devils about a bleaching bone,  
Making small lightnings as hooves skitter a stone,  
Graceful as palo verde blossoms blown  
On the winds of dawn, exultant as a bird,  
Unreined, unbridled, shod with air, imp-spurred,  
Like a flash flood, the wheeling, plunging herd  
Sweeps morning before it – wild horses running, running!



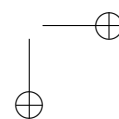
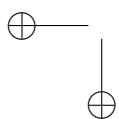


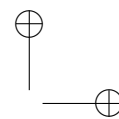
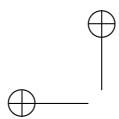
### **MAYTIME. FREEZE**

Snow, snow, softly fall.  
The young leaves droop beneath your pall.  
The wren sits huddled, her small chilled breast  
Brooding the eggs in an icy nest.

Blow, blow, wind from the south.  
Breathe new life with your warm sweet mouth.  
Brush away rime from spring's gaunt face.  
Loosen this iron-cold embrace.

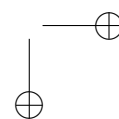
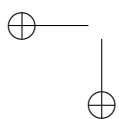
Snow, melt, dissolve to mist!  
Let the sap thaw, and buds untwist,  
And the buffeted bird be solaced and find  
Not all springs false, nor all hope blind.

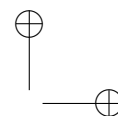
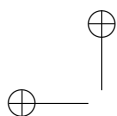




### THE MOON-WATCHERS

The Japanese, at heart a simple people,  
May cut one window just to watch the moon –  
A silver lantern high in a fir-tree steeple,  
An apple golden as the sun at noon,  
A white jade cradle, a carved ivory face  
Rainbow - wreathed, a pearly nautilus  
Sailing the clouds, or just a misted place  
That seems to glow a shade more luminous. . . .  
Let us now for a moment – do you mind? –  
Turn off the lights, the television set,  
Draw back the draperies and raise the blind  
To watch an antique planet climbing yet –  
A chalice, a lotus bloom serene and bright,  
Not just a missile target for tonight.

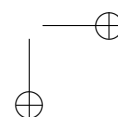
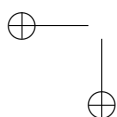


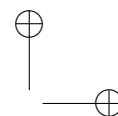
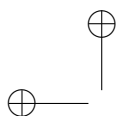


### DEATH OF A GROVE

They pulled the trees today. The men came in  
And hacked the branches heavy with golden fruit.  
From the house I heard the saws, the tractor's din,  
And the wrenching of stubborn root.  
Now a thousand rabbits, suddenly dispossessed,  
Race crazed with fear from stump to scattered nest.

We got a good price. But where we'll live I just  
Can't say – not Orangewood Heights, Exclusive Tract,  
Orange firewood in its dust. I choked with the dust  
As noisy stump-pullers backed,  
And men laughed, seeing the frenzied rabbits mill.  
I didn't watch, but I heard. . . . And I hear them still.





## BLUE GROSBEAKS

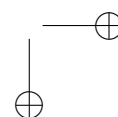
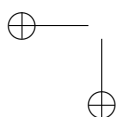
In areas where they had been almost exterminated by illegal hunters, blue grosbeaks are beginning to reappear.

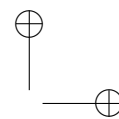
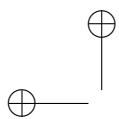
Back again

To the tangle of elderberries in the far meadow  
Are the blue grosbeaks.

Bluer than lupine, bluer than noon sky –  
Impudent blue for which they were snared and slain! –  
The grosbeaks are here again.

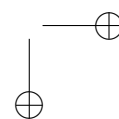
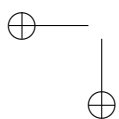
Straw-stuffed, staring with eyes of glass,  
From collectors' shelves in Sudbury and in Sydney  
They have flown from the varnished perches,  
Fled the glued boughs, and come back to the elderberries.  
Bright in the lupine, bright in the noon sky,  
Bluer than blossom,  
Brighter, bluer than all high heaven,  
The impudent, slain  
Grosbeaks are back in the home meadow again!

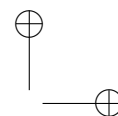
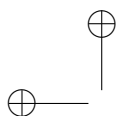




### FIGURINE OF KUAN YIN

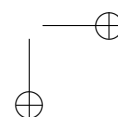
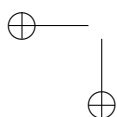
In porcelain finger tips,  
In the patient eyes  
That outstare evil,  
All compassion lies.  
Though now the dragon springs,  
Ruthless and mad –  
Mercy remains,  
Carved on a lily pad.

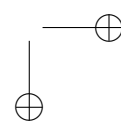
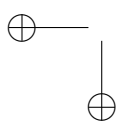
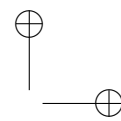
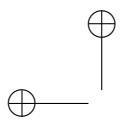


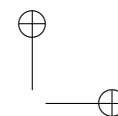
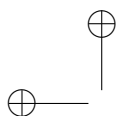


### PLANES, CHRISTMAS EVE

A thunder on the air,  
A streak on the midnight sky,  
And swifter than shooting star  
The planes rip by –  
Jets, by the splendid roar,  
Hurling mile-high through space  
Above a wondering boy  
With upturned face.  
His sheep stand huddled close  
As the solitude is rent  
And man's frail toys invade  
The firmament.  
Then they are gone, and only  
Hill and boy and beast  
Remain, and a beckoning star  
Bright in the east.







It is customary at this point to add a few words

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As with many famous characters, there is a difference of opinion about Ethel Jacobson. In the hope of adding to the critical confusion these quotes from the dust jacket are appended here. . .

Exhaustive studies have proven that within 138  $\frac{7}{8}$  days, excepting Leap Year, which has 29, the dust jacket becomes tattered and discarded, the dust thereafter collecting directly on the book. Thenceforth, should anyone ask, "Who is this Ethel Jacobson?" only Echo would answer, unless he is still orbiting in space.

These pronouncements are also placed here strategically for the benefit of mystery fans who always peek first in the back of the book to see whodunit.

Here's who. No one has yet hazarded a guess as to why.

One of America's most popular poets. — THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A fearsome and wonderful way with words. — WILLIAM ROSE BENET

I laughed till the tears ran down into my shoes. — JACK WOODFORD

The "deaness" of Post poetry. Ethel has racked up about 500 Post appearances in her day, and the sunset is nowhere near. — INSIDE INFORMATION, THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

You must be an old, emaciated hag, who lives in a damp cave. — UNKNOWN FAN

Ask her a silly question and she'll give you a silly answer — worth about \$15 a word. — THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

I love you. — GURNEY WILLIAMS (LOOK)

Irrepressible! — SILENCE BUCK BELLOWS, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Irresistible! — CLARISSA DE VILLERS, PROMENADE

Why can't you learn to cook, or something? — MY HUSBAND

