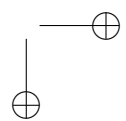
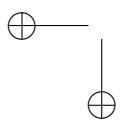
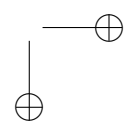
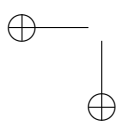
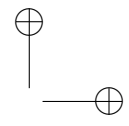
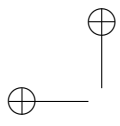
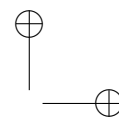


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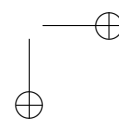
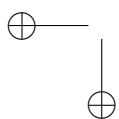


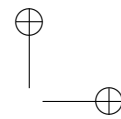
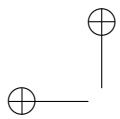


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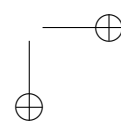
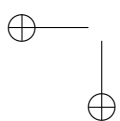
Ethel Jacobson

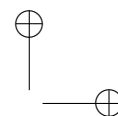
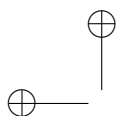
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2026
First Published, 1955





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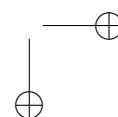
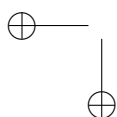
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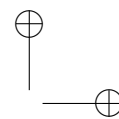
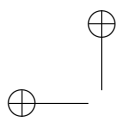
AND NOEL

PARENTHETICALLY PARENTAL

Child, Child, when you were two
Who was my angel lambkin? You!
And who was your idol? Naturally –
Who but that matchless paragon, me?
The world was wonderful, wide, provocative –
And you, indefatigably talkative.
All things challenged your questing mind
Like, *Why was the elephant so designed?*
Why doesn't Grandfather's head have fur on?
How does the kitten turn her purr on?
Infant wonderment starred your eyes,
Tripped from your tongue in a thousand Why's;
And you brought each appeal to headquarters here
Where I had the answers crystal-clear.

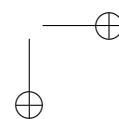
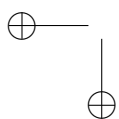
Child, Child, when you were ten
Whom did you turn to? Right again!
Whither were problems all directed?
Breathes there a parent who hasn't suspected?
Your eyes grew brighter than Christmas tinsel as
Questions pelted me: *What are peninsulas?*
Where are perimeters? When's Pi? Why?
What did Benjamin Franklin fly?
Now, in your teens – still interrogative,
Curious, clamorous, all agog-ative,
Who's still your guide, your personal oracle?
Who – though redundant as well as rhetorical,

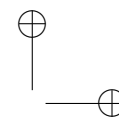
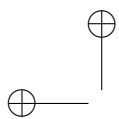




Who? Anyone but a creaking parent
Such as this fossilized declarant.
Wisdom, authority all reside
In a tight sort of corporate teen-age hide.
Oldsters are hopelessly out of step.
Contemporaries alone are hep.

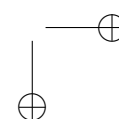
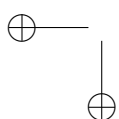
Yet in my dotage I cherish, shakenly,
Trust once invested – however mistakenly,
However briefly – in my omniscience,
Now bared in its painful insufficiency.
And now when you rush by my fireside chair
I timidly, on occasion, dare
To seek enlightenment, voice a query,
For you're now the one with the answers, dearie.
But, ah, what a fount was I of knowledge
Until you outgrew your paper dollage.

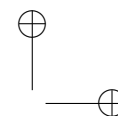
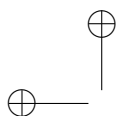




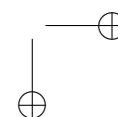
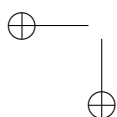
CONTENTS

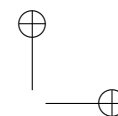
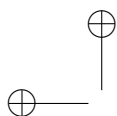
<i>Mice in the Ink</i>	1
<i>Just the Facts, Ma'am</i>	2
<i>Too Late to Classify</i>	3
<i>Outline for Everything</i>	5
<i>Diurnal Dilemma</i>	6
<i>Cro-Co-Dile</i>	7
<i>Unquellable Ella</i>	8
<i>Anthropological Ode</i>	9
<i>Not With Your Bifocals</i>	10
<i>Afternoon of a Femme</i>	11
<i>The Trouble With Parties</i>	12
<i>Morning's at Sevens and Sixes</i>	13
<i>Defrosting Day</i>	15
<i>Campers Depart</i>	16
<i>Country Church</i>	17
<i>For Summer – Coquette</i>	18
<i>Antic Wind</i>	19
<i>Teechur is a Dunce</i>	20



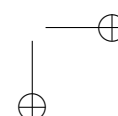
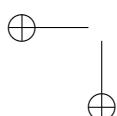


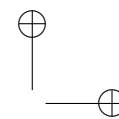
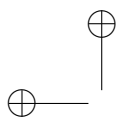
<i>Switch</i>	21
<i>Hey, Mom!</i>	22
<i>Why Daddy?</i>	23
<i>Longfellows Get the Short End</i>	24
<i>Giraffes and Gnus</i>	26
<i>Home Sick</i>	27
<i>Fete Champetre</i>	28
<i>Mystery</i>	29
<i>Garden Gripe</i>	30
<i>Planting Instructions</i>	31
<i>Deer in the Garden</i>	32
<i>The Ground Owl</i>	33
<i>The White Crane</i>	34
<i>Girl With Crayon</i>	35
<i>Spring Song for a Flashy Palette</i>	36
<i>Ungracious Hostess</i>	38
<i>Guest Pests</i>	39
<i>No Baby Sitter</i>	40
<i>First Word</i>	42
<i>Writer's Cramp</i>	43
<i>Whodunit</i>	45
<i>Peremptory Challenge No. 24</i>	46
<i>And/Order in the Court</i>	48
<i>Stanzas Under a Crazy Quilt</i>	49
<i>Reversal of Form</i>	50
<i>Handyman</i>	51



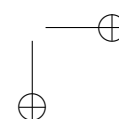
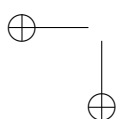


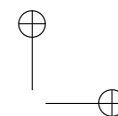
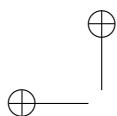
<i>Matrimonial Hazard</i>	52
<i>Song of Slap-Happy Jurisprudence</i>	53
<i>Have a Loaf</i>	54
<i>Side Order</i>	55
<i>Footnote for a Maxim</i>	56
<i>Balances are Certainly Trials</i>	58
<i>Check, Mate?</i>	59
<i>From the Meditations of Madame Ah Foo</i>	60
<i>No News is Good News</i>	61
<i>The Sloth</i>	62
<i>Habitual Ritual</i>	63
<i>Some Fun, Hey, Son?</i>	64
<i>I Love John</i>	66
<i>Pat. Applied For</i>	67
<i>Crepuscule</i>	68
<i>Oxalis</i>	69
<i>Sea Urchin</i>	70
<i>In This Still Cove</i>	71
<i>Late</i>	72
<i>Query on Child Rearing</i>	73
<i>Picasso or Pistachio?</i>	74
<i>Mail Stall</i>	76
<i>Disillusion</i>	78
<i>No Flowers</i>	79
<i>Don't Tell Me It's Showing</i>	81
<i>Rhapsody, With Thermostat</i>	82



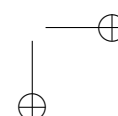
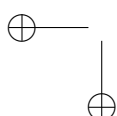


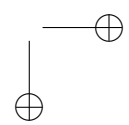
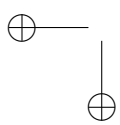
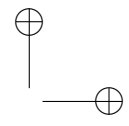
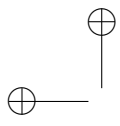
<i>Grievance Committee</i>	84
<i>The Yo-Yo's Bride</i>	85
<i>Masculine Intuition</i>	87
<i>Campaigner</i>	88
<i>Fourth Thursday After the First Tuesday</i>	89
<i>Deodar</i>	91
<i>Solo for a Tin Whistle</i>	92
<i>Driving in Traffic is Hardly Seraphic</i>	94
<i>Violation</i>	95
<i>Magic Therapy</i>	96
<i>Cautionary Poem for the Mental Type</i>	97
<i>Jacaranda in Bloom</i>	98
<i>Nevermore Shall Dawn This Spring</i>	99
<i>Snowflake</i>	100
<i>Glacier</i>	101
<i>Desert Poppy</i>	102
<i>Gossamer Shower</i>	103
<i>Santana</i>	104
<i>Water Snake</i>	105
<i>Who's Gainer?</i>	106
<i>The Ideal</i>	108
<i>Bell Song</i>	109
<i>Office Party</i>	110
<i>Brief Biog.</i>	112
<i>Aspen in Autumn</i>	113
<i>The Red Hat</i>	114

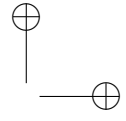
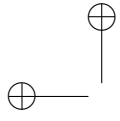




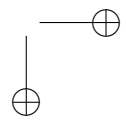
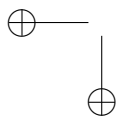
<i>Alien</i>	115
<i>Singing Girl</i>	116
<i>Entremets</i>	117
<i>Calorie-Counter</i>	119
<i>Menu Maneuvers</i>	120
<i>The Lady Poet Takes the Cheerful View</i>	121
<i>Fan</i>	122
<i>New Dress</i>	123
<i>Timeless Stanzas</i>	124
<i>Dithyramb for a Dollar Bill</i>	125
<i>Fur-Bearance</i>	127
<i>Yoicks!</i>	128
<i>Hospitality Exchange</i>	129
<i>The Bridge Fiend's Curse</i>	131
<i>Geraniums, I Love You</i>	132
<i>Chagrin</i>	134
<i>What Shall Be Left of Beauty?</i>	135
<i>To Hum at Night</i>	136
<i>Noel</i>	137
<i>Kuan Yin, Goddess of Mercy</i>	138
<i>Atomic Courtesy</i>	139
<i>Intruder</i>	140
<i>Wood Thrush</i>	141

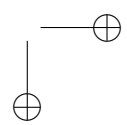
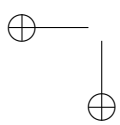
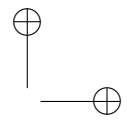
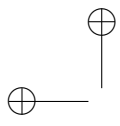


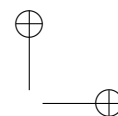
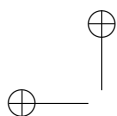




MICE IN THE INK







MICE IN THE INK

Oh, the mice got in the ink
And they dabbled frisky toes
And raced across the paper
In erratic little rows.

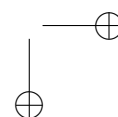
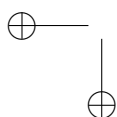
They left intriguing traces
Of their giddy midnight lark,
And the critics scratched their noggins
As they pondered every mark.

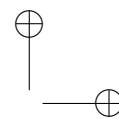
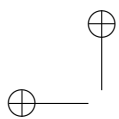
“It’s cryptic, esoteric. . .
It doesn’t deign to scan. . .
Neither rowdyish nor facile
To please the vulgar man. . .

“Here’s Meaning’s ineluctable
Quintessence, viz., to wit.”
And they bound it in a precious book.

* * *

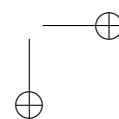
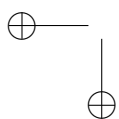
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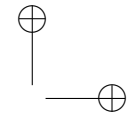
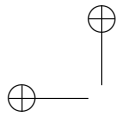




JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM

What fanciful versions I tell!
But, frankly, I tell them so well,
And I'm such a suggestible elf,
That soon I believe them myself.



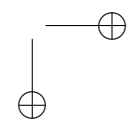
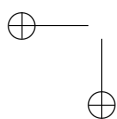


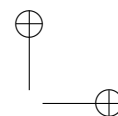
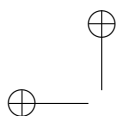
TOO LATE TO CLASSIFY

HELP WANTED – FEMALE, SECTION D,
A morbid attraction
Holds for me,
And my heart contracts with a chill misgiving:
Suppose I had to earn an honest living?
When I was young, why wasn't I made
To learn myself a respectable trade?
Here's somebody wants a FANCY PRESSER;
LADY RECEPTIONIST, young, neat dresser;
HOSTESS, refined, for salon de danse;
And FINISHER, exp. on men's dress pants.

But oh, there's never an ad I see
Could even remotely apply to me.
Nobody buys up space in the Times
For WANTED: LADY for custom rimes;
Answer telephone; go home nights;
Interview Monday. Mr. Seitz.

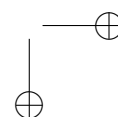
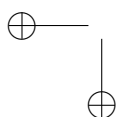
Wherever I cast my weary eye
I see: Exp. only need apply;
MODEL, lingerie, stylish stout;
GOVERNESS, Swiss, with Thursdays out;
ASS'T. BKKPR; CL'K; MARCELLER;
LADY BARBER; and LADY TELLER;
LADY oboe, dble in brass;
And CHOCOLATE DIPPER, must have class.

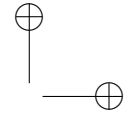
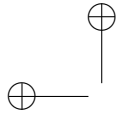




But nobody nowhere seems to need
GIRL, no class, no brains, no speed,
Unable to master simple addition;
No good habits; no ambition;
Dependability undesired;

No exp. nec., no ref. required.
Oh, I burst into tears and hide from view
When they say, "Hey, you there, what do you do?"
So before I became this sobbing wreck
I should have been took by the swan-like neck
And learned WAX FLOWERS or ALTERATIONS,
And not be exposed to humiliations
By gifted goddesses still in their teens
Who know what PBXing means.





OUTLINE FOR EVERYTHING

HEAVEN

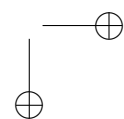
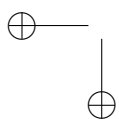
A place of Babylonian splendor
And cherubim of neuter gender.

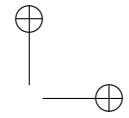
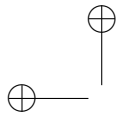
EARTH

In practically every stratum
Cash is the main desideratum.

HELL

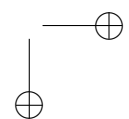
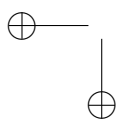
The climate's frankly far from swell –
But how august our clientele!

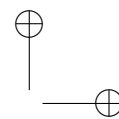
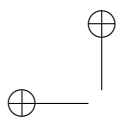




DIURNAL DILEMMA

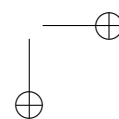
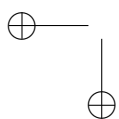
To go to bed
I do despise
As much as, mornings,
I hate to rise.
Why must life
Be fraught with these
Baleful incon-
Sistencies?

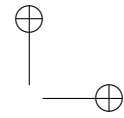
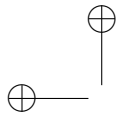




CRO-CO-DILE

I wish
I were
A Cro-
Co-Dile.
When Pee-
Pul smile
That super-
lor smile,
I'd gent-
Ly un-
Dertake
To chide them
By smil-
Ing back –
But from
Outside them.



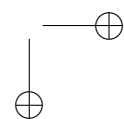
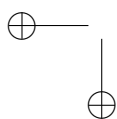


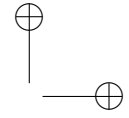
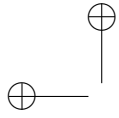
UNQUELLABLE ELLA

Ella Mae Sue has an elfin quirk,
As you'd know if you ever listened,
For Ella's the gal who goes berserk
Till all Ella owns is christened.
And she names her chattels with gentle wit
That never is sharp or shrewish;
In fact – as she'll hasten to admit –
It's downright Whimsy Pooh-ish.

Her cat is the Countess Twitchell-tail;
Her bungalow's Mortgage Manor.
Her car's not a car – it's Abigail.
The screen door's Fanny Fanner.
She lives with The Generalissimo,
Her schizophrenic terrier.
One guppy's just plain Mary. So?
The other guppy's Merrier.

Ella Mae Sue has a rocking chair
Which she calls The Good Ship Nancy.
Her powder room? That's The Pierre,
All cops are Sergeant Clancy.
You want a name for a ring-tailed gnu?
Ella's the gal to mint it.
(I have a name for Ella Mae Sue
But no one will let me print it.)





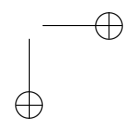
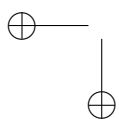
ANTHROPOLOGICAL ODE

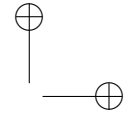
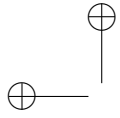
Oh, Man came from the slime and ooze
In the days of brontosauruses,
And he took to shaving and wearing shoes
And befriending girls in choruses.

He crept from out the clammy cave
Where covered the amblotheriums,
And if his women didn't behave
He walloped their lean posteriums.

Evolving apace, he grew refined
And invented things like Etiquette,
And his courting club was left behind
Whenever he chased a petiquette.

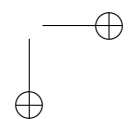
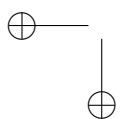
And his chance of escape is just as slim,
Now that the petiquette chases him.

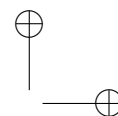
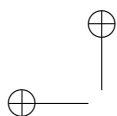




NOT WITH YOUR BIFOCALS

False lashes are
A waste of time
Once Madame
Has passed her prime.

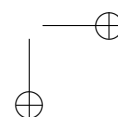
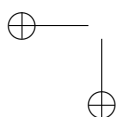


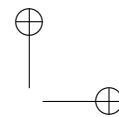
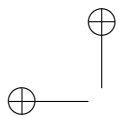


AFTERNOON OF A FEMME

I'm taking the afternoon for me –
For a manicure-and-mudpack spree.
I've laundered my hair and crimped it flat,
Sleek as a fished-from-a-cistern cat.
But, ah, when I comb it out tonight
I'll be a ravishing sight!
I'll work such wonders with rouge, mascara,
You'll think I'm Amber, or Scarlett O'Hara;
Though now I look, in this greenish mask,
Like – let's not ask!

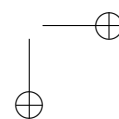
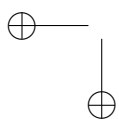
But wait, just wait until I replace
This faded bathrobe with moonbeam lace,
These frowzy slippers with silver ones,
And hose with no runs!
And so an old beau – wouldn't you know! –
That the last I heard was in Saskatoon –
Drops in. This afternoon.

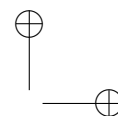
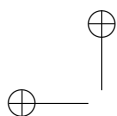




THE TROUBLE WITH PARTIES

There's always some predatory dame with
Base designs on the guy you came with.



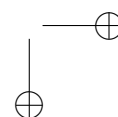
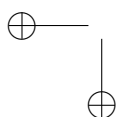


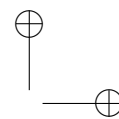
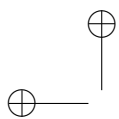
MORNING'S AT SEVENS AND SIXES

Breakfast ought to be a solitary feast;
Pre-prandial tempers are captious, at the least;
Pre-prandial looks are seldom at their best
Or equal to that zero-hour acid test.

There are morning scenes of delightful domesticity,
Serene and cheery, and exuding rare felicity,
Where no one has a grouch on, and no one has a head,
And no one has been forcibly drafted from his bed;
Where Dad's not fuming, and chronically late,
And Mom's not flustered, with a traffic-court date,
And Sister isn't seething in a Stygian glumness,
Berating the remainder of the family's dumbness.

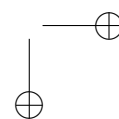
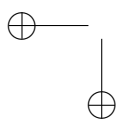
Sometimes Baby, I am well enough aware,
Doesn't kick shins and rub oatmeal in his hair,
And Brother is a charming, courtly little chap,
Not snarling, "Ya rat, whyncha button ya trap?"
No, there's dulcet talk of the most urbane variety
And no one even peeks at the Sports or Society,
And pleasaunce and peace rule the merry commissary
Where the cat doesn't leap from the cream to the canary
While Grandpa combs coddled egg from his imperial
And everybody shrieks above a radio serial.

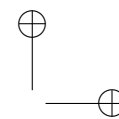
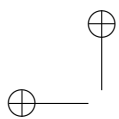




Oh, harmony reigns, and a politesse de luxe –
At those gracious boards that I've read about, in books;
For they largely exist but in fancy and in whimsy,
And their prototypes in fact are exceptionally flimsy –
Where the toast's never burnt, and the coffee's never weak,
And the human disposition's at a beatific peak.

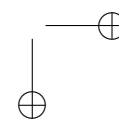
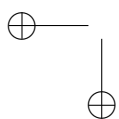
What a winsome thought! But with things as they are
The homicide rate would drop 'way below par
If most of us never saw any one else
Till that first cup of coffee was under our belts.

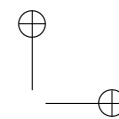
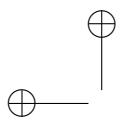




DEFROSTING DAY

To waste good food
Is a sin and a shame,
So I save each left-over
Dab of same:
The carrots (to add
To soup, perhaps?),
The beans, the greens,
The sundry scraps
To toss in a salad
Or a ragout.
I refrigerate 'em
A week or two –
Until furry peas
And mouldy kraut
Can be thrown in all
Good conscience out.





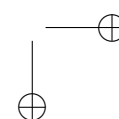
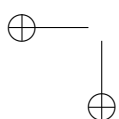
CAMPERS DEPART

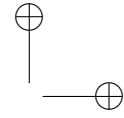
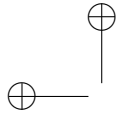
Milkweed nods
Silken pods.

The willow weeps.
The wild rose sleeps.

The chipmunk's wise
And sparkling eyes

View our removal
With approval.

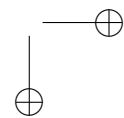
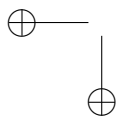


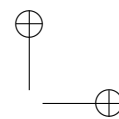
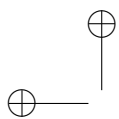


COUNTRY CHURCH

Upturned faces shimmer, bright
In slanting shafts of patterned light,
Purple, ochre, ruby-red.
Gaily summer-bonneted,
In lacy straws with flowered brims
Where daisies bob to ancient hymns,
The smiling congregation nods,
At peace in this their house, and God's.

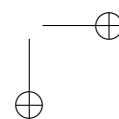
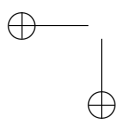
From the wide meadow all about
Butterflies whisk in and out.
A honeybee explores in vain
The lilies on a tinted pane.
Unto the everlasting hills
The tiny organ wheezes, stills;
And, "Oh, repent thy worldly choice!"
Quavers a patriarchal voice;
And, "Oh, beware the Judgment Day!" ...
But here the air is sweet with may,
And hellfire seems so far away.

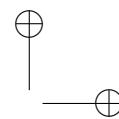
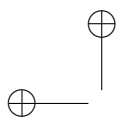




FOR SUMMER – COQUETTE

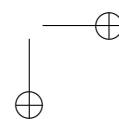
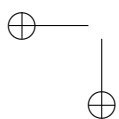
Pink of mallow,
Tule's blue,
Moonglow petals
Of feverfew,
Golden barley,
Silver rye,
And one small,
Black butterfly –
One coguettish,
Velvet, sleek
Beauty spot
For Summer's cheek!

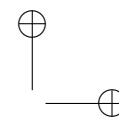
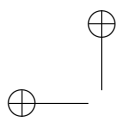




ANTIC WIND

Leaping the slim green willows,
Bowing the purple beeches,
Casting to every corner
Of heaven's farthest reaches,
Coursing the moon-washed meadow,
With crystal manes streaming
Come the wind's pale horses,
Hooves of silver gleaming –
The antic phantom horses
That Night rides, dreaming.



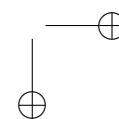
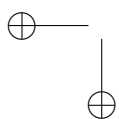


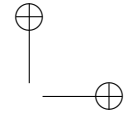
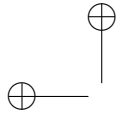
TEECHUR IS A DUNCE

Schoolteachers fail in Third Grade tests. — *News Item.*

Don't chide little Wilbur
Or feel that he's dumb
If he adds two and two
And gets five as the sum,
Or likes to spell cat
With a capital K.
Teacher has probably
Taught him that way.

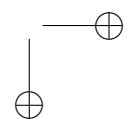
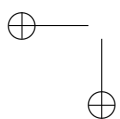
He still may be President –
Anyway Senator –
If he can't tell you
His country's progenitor.
Don't give him up
As a dull-witted elf:
Yesterday Teacher
Flunked that one herself.

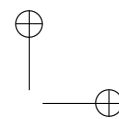
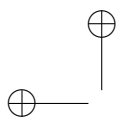




SWITCH

Now Teacher must cajole and truckle
Where once she smartly rapped a knuckle,
And Psychological Research
Supplants ye olden switch of birch.





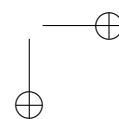
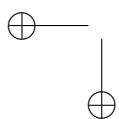
HEY, MOM!

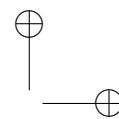
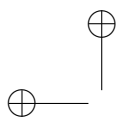
Quiet, ordered and serene
Be your angel child's routine.

Don't excite her, don't alarm her.
Let no nervous tensions harm her.

Let no psychic shocks confound her.
With all gentleness surround her,

While she strives as fiercely to
Raise holy heck for both of you.

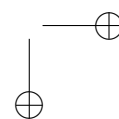
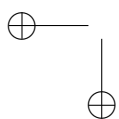


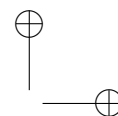
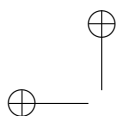


WHY DADDY?

Send stamped envelope and a dime for free booklet on "How to Employ the Reversible Why." — *Parent counselor.*

Free – for a dime. What a wonderful buy!
"How to Employ the Reversible Why."
Don't pass it up or you'll certainly rue it,
Specially parents whose tots beat them to it.
My child at four, I'm unhappily sure,
Sent in her dime for that dandy brochure,
And now spends each moment in pitiless glee
Employing Reversible Why's on me.



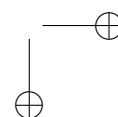
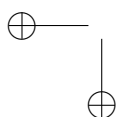


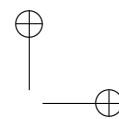
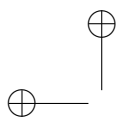
LONGFELLOWS GET THE SHORT END

We're the Tall, Strong, Silent Type,
But it's time we began to yap;
For superior height, it turns out, is a blight –
A hazard, a handicap.
For whether it's closets tucked under a stair
Or something in Gentlemen's Ready-to-Wear
Or seats in a theatre, classroom or bus
They're just not for us –

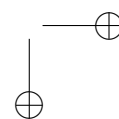
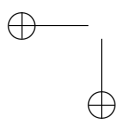
Us Tall, Strong, Silent Guys;
Why, the only known use for our noble size
Is as basketball centers, or reaching top shelves,
Or haybarn rafters (when hanging ourselves).
Ah, Life is a shirttail that's certain to fly out,
Sidewalk awnings that poke an eye out,
Bathroom mirrors we see in clearly
Up to our Adam's apple, nearly,
And chandeliers that miss creasing our skulls
By mirakulls!

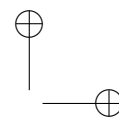
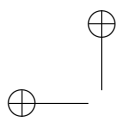
Though we're Tall, Strong, Silent birds
So admired in rugged fiction,
In real life, boy, it's not the McCoy –
Frustration is ours, and friction
From tearoom booths designed for midgets,
Close-coupled shorts that give us the fidgets,
Pint-size cars that smugly defy us,
And beds we must sleep in on the bias.





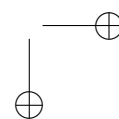
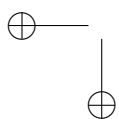
Oh, the present's grim and the future's dim,
But Silence at least is past
For our Tall, Strong Brotherhood,
Beefing at long, long last!

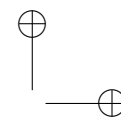
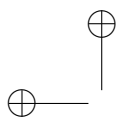




GIRAFFES AND GNUS

Giraffes and gnus
In zoos amuse
Curious crowds
Of humans whose
Ludicrous aspects,
It ensues,
Likewise amuse
Giraffes and gnus.



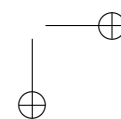
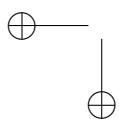


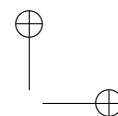
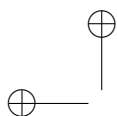
HOME SICK

Too sick to lift
A fountain pen,
Dad stayed home
From work. So then

He sprayed the bugs
And hoed the beans
And beat the rugs
And fixed the screens
And clipped the hedge
And cleaned the drains
And painted the ledge
And puttied the panes. . .

Wives have odd
Ideas – in essence,
That chores contribute
To convalescence.

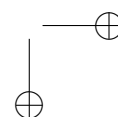
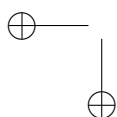


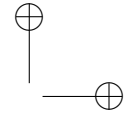
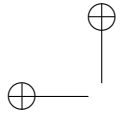


FETE CHAMPETRE

Oh, come my dearie, and come, my hearty;
The Jakes are throwing the cutest party –
A garden fete, so to speak, you see –
Right here where the garden's going to be.
We made the plans – right out of our head! –
From concrete steps to petunia bed,
And we slaved till our two broad backs were bent
With the matchless joy of accomplishment.
But all of a sudden we thought as one:
Our friends would adore such wholesome fun.
So come to the party and bring your hoe –
You'll have just the ball of your life, we know!

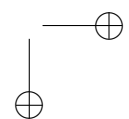
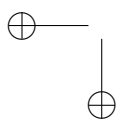
Oh, come to the party and bring your spade
(The ground's not yet to the finished grade);
Just don your work gloves and bring your pick
And some can mix mortar and some lay brick.
The communal spirit's the thing, my pets! ...
Pointed, how everyone sent regrets.

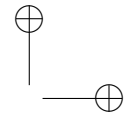
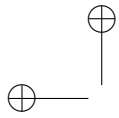




MYSTERY

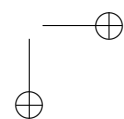
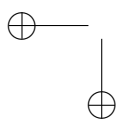
Though you plant broccoli,
Limas, beets,
Peas and similar
Succulent eats,
Golden Bantam
And beans – b'gosh,
Everything comes up
Squash.

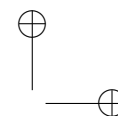
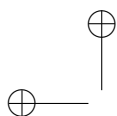




GARDEN GRIPE

Now beetles poke proboscises
Down helpless salpiglossises,
And aphids guzzle nectar
In the floribunda sector.
The caterpillars' ravages
Are worse than Colts' and Savages',
And I, poor wretch,
Must spray and swat
And take up arms
Against the lot.



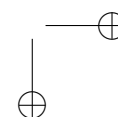
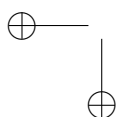


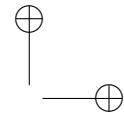
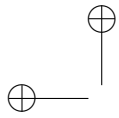
PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

“Rich, sandy loam,” the packets read
About each precious garden seed.
 Rich, sandy loam – that’s what you sow
 The little beggars in. Heigh-ho,
Simple as apple pie, they plead.

Where do they live, the roguish breed
That write that sort of airy screed?
 Where do they find, I’d like to know,
 Rich, sandy loam?

My soil defies the rankest weed;
It dulls my pick. I sweat; I bleed!
 And boy, I’ll plant the next dumb Joe
 Who breathes those words, six feet below. . .
And thus, in time, achieve indeed
 Rich, sandy loam.

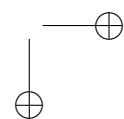
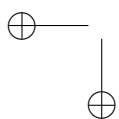


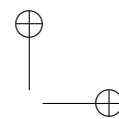
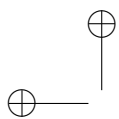


DEER IN THE GARDEN

The columbines are trampled,
The lilies are matted and brown
Here in the lee of the cabin
Where someone bedded down,
Where someone lies curled and sleeping
In ferns, in the star-pale light
With sharp hooves neatly folded
And tranquil lashes tight.

The pansies stand beheaded.
Someone cropped them clean
Whose flanks are softer velvet
Than the tawniest petal's sheen.
For what of leaf or flower
Can a garden hope to show
Fair as the dreaming vandal,
This blossom-sated doe?

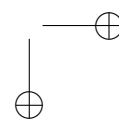
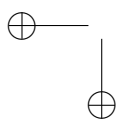


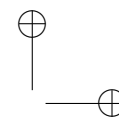
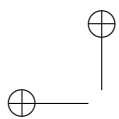


THE GROUND OWL

In your doorway sunning
 Beneath the tamarack,
You bowed with such grave courtesy
 That I bowed back.

A small enough encounter,
 With nothing more to tell –
Two strangers meeting, troubling
 To wish each other well.





THE WHITE CRANE

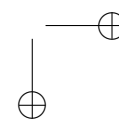
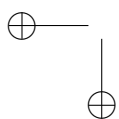
Out of the dusky rose of sky
And twilight's blurred
Swift-gathering shadows, silently
Dropped the lone bird.

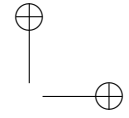
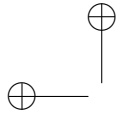
From the horizon and beyond,
Storm-buffed, whipped,
To my chance haven of a pond
The spent wings dipped.

Still as a figure in a frieze
In the dying day
He stood among fat farm muscovies,
Whiter than they.

* * *

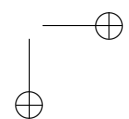
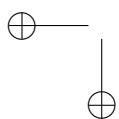
The water dimpled pink and gold
With the new dawn.
But the wind was fretful, the slant rays cold,
And the visitor gone.

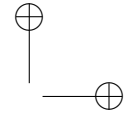
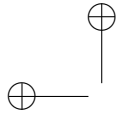




GIRL WITH CRAYON

Winter etches acidly
In black on paper-white.
Winter is a willow tree
In the pale night,
A crosshatch of boughs
Where snow lies serene
Till Spring comes, a vandal,
And scribbles it with green.



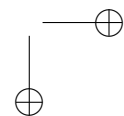
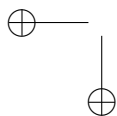


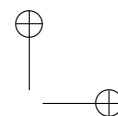
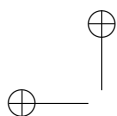
**SPRING SONG
FOR A FLASHY PALETTE**

Don't look now, but it's spring, tra la,
And winter's trappings – like that! – go blah.
Oh, spring is here with its rising sap
When a rapt expression engulfs my map
And my eyeballs roll and I go around
On my very own brand of mayhem bound,
With a hamstrung conscience that bodes no good
To the best burl walnut and satinwood.

It's spring – and home is a pit of gloom,
A dingy prison, a dismal tomb;
So I paint the dining room shocking pink,
Dab passion flowers around the sink,
Stipple the hall a modest red
And dot mauve stars on the guest-room bed;
And the foyer's presently pure Van Gogh,
While the study's a dream in pistachio.

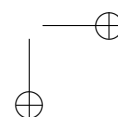
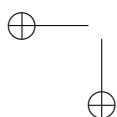
I paint the tables, I paint the chairs;
I stripe the ceilings and scallop the stairs;
I tint the weather vane crimson madder
And they come and get me with the Hook-and-Ladder.
The pantry's purple, and rather mad;
The steps are sort of a spotted plaid;

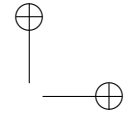
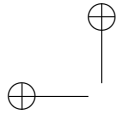




The bath is full of surrealist nudes
Trolling for eels in fuchsia snoods.
I spatter my hair, the rugs, the walls,
But still inexorably Art calls.

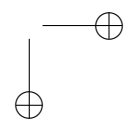
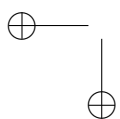
Don't look now, but it's spring, to-woo.
I know it's here by the gentian blue,
The primrose yellow, the willow green
Of the paint I sling in my spring routine,
And the scented air that is rare as wine
With the heady bouquet of turpentine.
Though winter may find no creature duller,
Comes spring – and I'm carnage in technicolor!

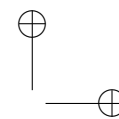
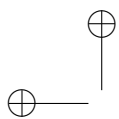




UNGRACIOUS HOSTESS

Guets should leave
At an hour auspicious
Or stay and help us
Do the dishes.

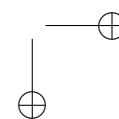
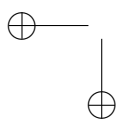


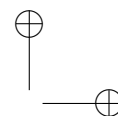
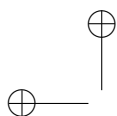


GUEST PESTS

They happen to happen by at noon,
Swearing they must be dashing – soon,
But somehow or other they stay to lunch,
To tea, to cocktails – dinner – brunch –
Blandly disrupting your household rhythm.
(How lucky! They brought their toothbrush with 'em!)

Immune alike to subtle hinting
And comments you'd be jailed for printing,
They always happen to happen by;
And lugubriously you wonder why
They don't go happen to some one else,
And why there's no bounty on their pelts.



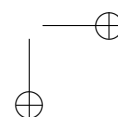
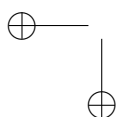


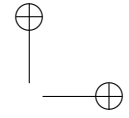
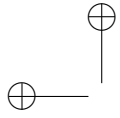
NO BABY SITTER

Oh, where shall we find us a sitter
To stay with our precious papoose?
I've been buried alive till I yearn to contrive
Just one festive night on the loose.
I love little Suzie,
I'd do her no harm;
I'll praise till I'm woozy
Her virtue and charm;
But we haven't stepped out
Since we dated the stork –
And waiting without
Is all Greater New York!

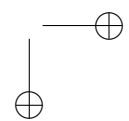
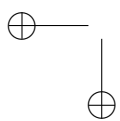
But first we must find us a sitter
To park our sweet innocent lamb with –
Who won't pacify her;
i.e., gag and tie her,
Then grab the best silver to scam with.
I'm long overdue for a fling on the town;
This joyless confinement is getting me down;
Yet Suzie we can't simply bop on the beezee
And hang by her little pink thumbs in the freezer.

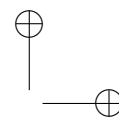
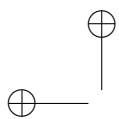
Please, someone, send us a sitter –
To trust with our cherished bambino!
We would doll up and go
To the neighborhood show





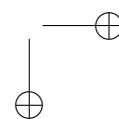
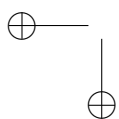
For a mad, frenzied orgy of Screeno.
But here I stay cooped.
I'm mentally looped;
My eyes have a glitter;
My youth I must fritter
Until we sequester a suitable sitter.

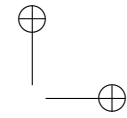
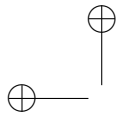




FIRST WORD

Imagine it –
 A prodigy!
Today she talked,
 And fluently!
No child of ours
 Could be a dunce;
But – to converse
 At seven months!
Although it's strange
 She chose to speak
In Toltec, Czech –
 Or was it Greek?

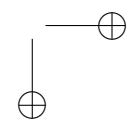
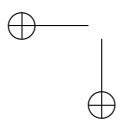


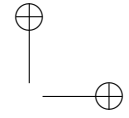
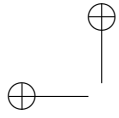


WRITER'S CRAMP

Oh, the Literary Tea
Is a high-flown sort of toot
Where the literary quality
Is often sub-acute
And the tea, the pained disciple finds,
Is likely to be tea,
And the decibels go crazy
With the clash of "me" and "ME!"

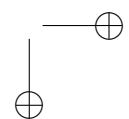
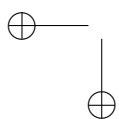
There are authors, heaven knows;
There are lunks who never write;
But the choice between the two
Is dishearteningly slight –
From the brave four-letter lads
Who write rugged Anglo-Saxon;
Crank who shrill alarms
On a made-in-Moscow klaxon;
Dewy maids whose prose
Is the least bit overripe;
Hacks whose stock in trade
Is a profile and a pipe;
Swarthy lady swamis
Quoting odds on The Beyond;
And pixie-minded poets
In an alcove with a blonde;
To melancholy husbands
Straining glumly at their gyves,

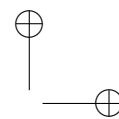
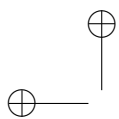




Egged on the ask for autographs
By Drama Section wives;
Coots who know their life
 Would make such a thrilling tale –
Which you're to write and publish,
 Going divvies on the sale –
And twerps who murmur, "I write too,
 But" – with a dazzling smile –
"I don't commercialize it."
 So you trip them in the aisle.

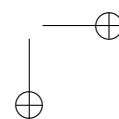
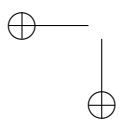
Every White-House-memoir writer
 Haunts these Culture-ridden shambles,
While the birds who read such gook
 Swell such gruesome little gambols
As the elegant, un-air conditioned
 Zombies' jamboree
That is known in morbid circles
 As a Literary Tea.

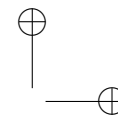
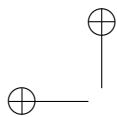




WHODUNIT

By Suspect One
It's never Dun.
Suspect Two
Is never Who.
Three, Four, Five –
And down the list,
In turn are fancied
Then dismissed.
The Culprit's some
Innocuous lunk
Of whom you've never
Even think.



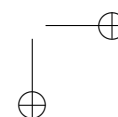
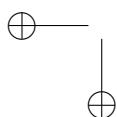


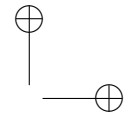
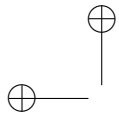
PEREMPTORY CHALLENGE NO. 24

Justice is blind and not a proper chaperone for men and women locked up together, Maryland legislators were told by opponents of jury duty for women. "It's just an excuse to escape domestic life. Homes will be broken up," it was charged.

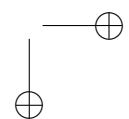
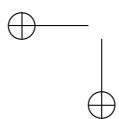
The champions of Womanhood
Cry out in fear and fury.
No woman ever came to good;
By serving on a jury.
If any shred of chivalry
Endures in these environs
Don't put her under lock and key
With stray Don Juans and Byrons.
(Dear me, who's holding hands with whom
Behind the doors of the jury room?)

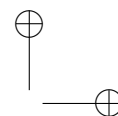
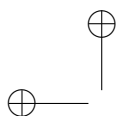
Yet where did jurors merit such
A meretricious aura
That housewives shun their tainted touch
Of Sodom and Gomorrah?
For not one that I've ever viewed
In flesh or in the papers
Seemed quite the type for revels rude
Or overgiddy capers.
(What goings-on do folk assume
Behind the doors of the jury room?)





The foreman is a wanton waif
Who'll grab you in a headlock,
But surely Mrs. Gruber's safe
However long the deadlock!
Besides, sunk in a dismal stew
Of legal dialectic,
Though willing, who is equal to
Hilarity more hectic?
(O augurers of direful doom,
In sober truth we can presume
But Saturnalias of Gloom
Behind the doors of the jury room!)





AND/ORDER IN THE COURT

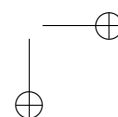
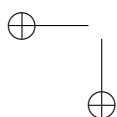
Justice Brown of Alabama (*Minor v. Thomasson* 182 So., 16),
condemning the use of *and/or* in a prayer for relief, questions
the propriety of praying in the conjunctive-disjunctive.

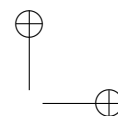
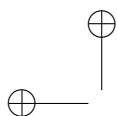
Good and/or true people,
Words can be weasels;
Shun the vile and/or
As you'd shun the measles.

Hark! from the bench
Comes a sternly judicial
Excoriation
To make it official,

A legal pronouncement
That's grim and debunked-ive:
Don't pray in, pray,
The conjunctive-disjunctive,

Or risk being held
In contempt of the jurist
Whose classical robes
Sheathe the soul of a purist.



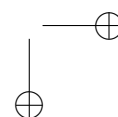
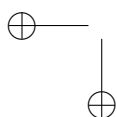


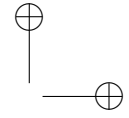
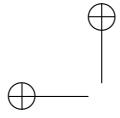
STANZAS UNDER A CRAZY QUILT

When morning dawns I rub my eyes
And wonder if it's wise to rise.
I warily peruse the headlines,
All the news that makes the deadlines:

Right of Way With Truck Contested,
Simple Service as Requested;
Tot With Poppun Slaughters Four;
Tourist Knifed by Stevedore;
Wipe Out Gangdom, Sheriff's Dictum –
Passerby, to Date, Sole Victim;
Thought It Was a Moose, Says Friend;
Wife at Bedside to the End;
Stalls on Crossing in Jalopy;
Cleveland Papers Kindly Copy.
All these giddy gals and gents
Happening to accidents,
All that useless wear and tear
On those who rise to do and dare!

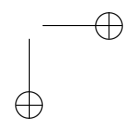
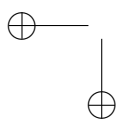
They shake off Morpheus' embrace
To rouse, and dress, and wash their face –
And slip down manholes, trip in gutters,
And get brought back in state on shutters.
Oh, close the blinds, Celeste, and scam.
They'll have to come and get Madame.

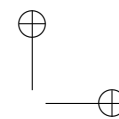
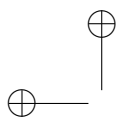




REVERSAL OF FORM

I whizzed like a breeze
On my nice new skiis
Till a tree interrupted
And I bottoms-upted.

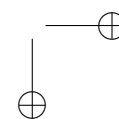
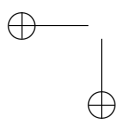


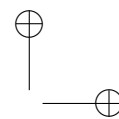
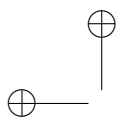


HANDYMAN

“Bring the saw! Fetch the hammer!”
Thus my lord’s imperious clamor.
Like a surgeon with a life
Beneath his operative knife,
He raps out, “Pliers... putty... brads...
Ratchet-brace... plane... adze...
Auger-bit... scribe... YOW!
That’s an artery, holy cow!
Quick, the iodine!! Hurry, bud!!!
And a bucket to mop up all this blood.”

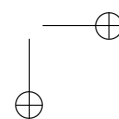
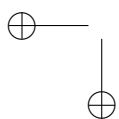
It’s ever thus, till my soul revolts
With a cry of “Nuts... rivets... and bolts!”
When my lord essays a hazardous role
Like fixing a wobbly curtain pole.

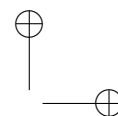
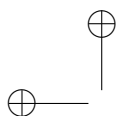




MATRIMONIAL HAZARD

The glamor boy's
A risky spouse;
He often proves,
Alas, a louse.

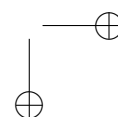
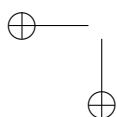


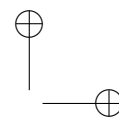
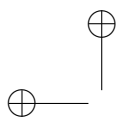


SONG OF SLAP-HAPPY JURISPRUDENCE

Philip J. Finnegan, a Chicago judge, has ruled that a husband may legally slap his wife as hard as he likes, just so he doesn't kill her. — *News Item*.

This is the story of poor Judge Finnegan –
Opened his mouth and put his foot in again,
Opened his face, and was it red!
And, oh, don't he wish them words unsaid!
Poor Judge Finnegan sat on the bench
And tossed out an innocent monkey wrench;
Druv who can say by what smoldering fires,
Voicing who knows what suppressed desires,
Victim who cares of what mad delusion?
Now twice confounded in his confusion!
“Slap your wife hard as it pleases you,
Just so she eventually comes to.”
That's where you're wrong, Judge! He who slaps
Is far safer seeing it's really taps!
But the press boys pounced on his disquisitions
And smeared his views over six editions.
Now where may our jaunty jurist roam?
Poor Judge Finnegan dassn't go home
Where, calm, contained, even slightly bored,
Mrs. Finnegan waits her lord.



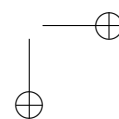
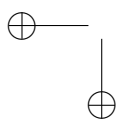


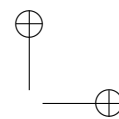
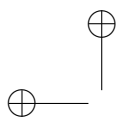
HAVE A LOAF

Pie and cake and such are nice
But let the truth be said:
I'd rather settle for a slice
Of Fresh Baked Bread.

Honest, lusty,
Crunchy, crusty,
Buttery, steamy,
Utterly dreamy,
Brown of complexion,
Riz to perfection,
And piping hot –
Though the doc says not!

Pie and cake and such are slick,
But for real deep-down appeal
Pass the bread, and slice it thick,
And let me have the heel!

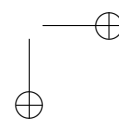
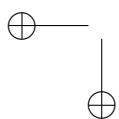


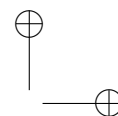
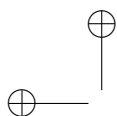


SIDE ORDER

We don't feed Rover
At the table.
We don't feed – that is,
If we're able
To keep our eyes
From meeting his.

We don't feed Rover...
Well, that is...





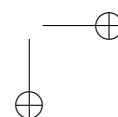
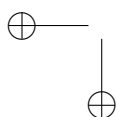
FOOTNOTE FOR A MAXIM

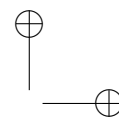
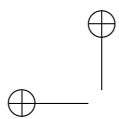
“Tell the truth and shame the devil.”

How very nice, I often think,
That Truth's not popular, like Drink;
Although it's unsurpassed no doubt
To write a lofty ode about
Or sculp upon the courthouse square –
If we take care to leave it there.

But what if, through some whim of fashion,
Folks indulged a sudden passion
For blurting out the awful truth?
What consternation in Duluth!
What social chaos in Elyria!
In Walla Walla what hysteria!

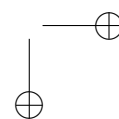
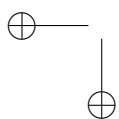
Family ties would soon grow weak.
Boon companions would cease to speak.
Next-door neighbors would bury the ax
Gleefully in each other's backs.
Strangers would cry in accents vile,
“Podner, when you say that, smile!”
And lifelong friends would taste of joys
Now left to Hatfields and McCoys.

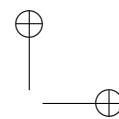
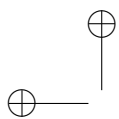




For Truth is great and shall prevail
But we'd rather hear a fairy tale,
And no base slander so inflames
As too plain talk from Truthful James.
The lad who starts "To be quite frank –"
Leaves a foreboding chill and dank.
Bleak indeed is "On the level –"
While "Tell the truth and shame the devil"
Was smiled upon by men like Edison
But it ladled out some bitter medicine.

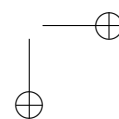
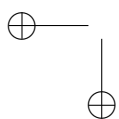
So keep your good home truths, amigo;
They're far too clobbering to the ego.
If you want to go on being gregarious
Just let your fibs be glib and various.
It's amiabler to temporize.
Here's to Bigger and Better Lies.

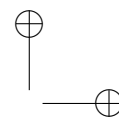
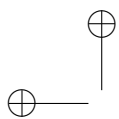




BALANCES ARE CERTAINLY TRIALS

How much you saved by a bargain hat;
Your comfy bank balance – stuff like that
Would give you a wonderfully heady sense
Of thrift and financial competence
If husbands hadn't a horrid trick
Of checking a lady's arithmetic.

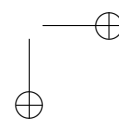
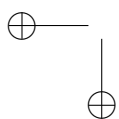


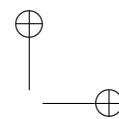
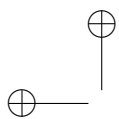


CHECK, MATE?

“Isn’t that just like a woman?”
Half serious, half in fun
He condescendingly asks unendingly
Each time you act like one.

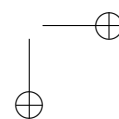
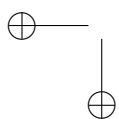
Forever aggrieved and rueful
At heaven’s inscrutable plan,
He mouths the cliché in the same lofty way.
Isn’t that just like a man!

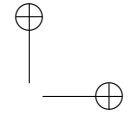
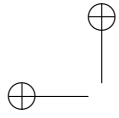




**FROM THE MEDITATIONS OF
MADAME AH FOO**

Strange how much it costing man
To learn fine beast can also-ran.
Great mind may figure handicap,
Study form and weather map,
But paper showing rate no soap
When noble equine not read dope.
If best horse fade in stretch, farewell:
No catchum pari-mutuel.
If no-good nag with heaves and cough
Beat wire, that how they paying off.
Sorry lesson all must learning.
(Ear of husband all same burning?)



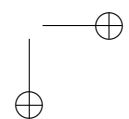
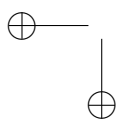


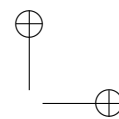
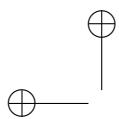
NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

The world, alas, is too much with us –
Late and soon, night and noon,
Every hour on the hour
The hardy commentators flower
Dishing news réchaufféed,
Hashed brown, résuméed,
Dramatized, doctored, slanted,
And later casually recanted.
The world is too much with us.

FLASH!

It's broken out in another rash
(As you read in last night's Herald Gazette).
How do you dial a string quartette?



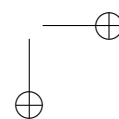
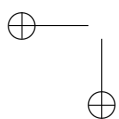


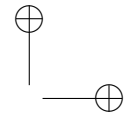
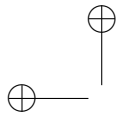
THE SLOTH

His is a truly super
Talent for repose.
He lives in blissful stupor,
Hanging by his toes.

He slaves to pay no taxes,
Invents no bomb, no jet –
Just climbs a tree, relaxes,
And lets his betters sweat.

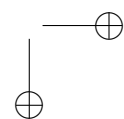
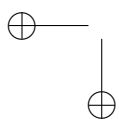
He's dumb,
You want to bet?

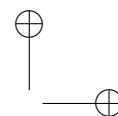
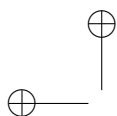




HABITUAL RITUAL

Home from the office
And one-two-three
“Is dinner ready?”
It better be!
Or Oo-oo-oo!
 How he’ll stew,
 And set,
 And fret,
 And gloom,
 And fume,
 Till . . .
“Dinner’s ready, milord!”
 And that is
When he goes off
 To wash his patties.



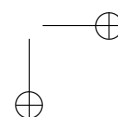
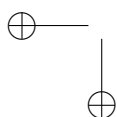


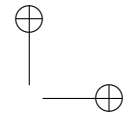
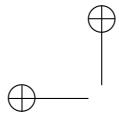
SOME FUN, HEY, SON?

Manufacturers of practical joke items report banner year. —
News Item.

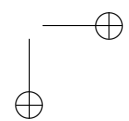
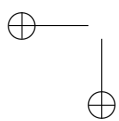
My lad, are you weary of drab and dreary
Days that spell mere subsistence?
Don't try hara-kiri! You're promised a cheery
And laughter-convulsed existence.
For amateur comics – clerks, morticians,
Nuclear physicists, obstetricians –
Whoop up the craze for practical jokes as
They vie in buying mechanical hoaxes
Like dribble glasses, electrified chairs,
Exploding cigars, and other droll wares
Some pillar of industry manufactures
With no extra charge for the compound fractures
Sometimes sustained by the clumsy bloke
Who doesn't know how to take a joke.

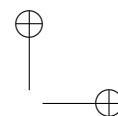
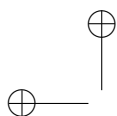
So cheerio, son, on every hand
Are prankful cronies, a ghoulish band
Proffering cayenne-flavored toffee,
Spoons that melt as you stir your coffee,
Sugar that's alum, salt that's Epsom –
If you're to outstrip 'em you'll have to step some!
A plastic rattlesnake shares your bed.
With scented glue they shampoo your head.





And – talcum? Ho-ho, that's itching powder!
And, look, half a mouse in your bowl of chowder. . .
My lad, you act leery of all this cheery
To-do. Can't you stand the gaff?
Shake! (Nothing jolts like a few hundred volts,
And it's Anything for a Laugh.)

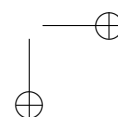
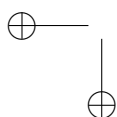


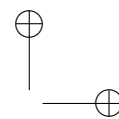
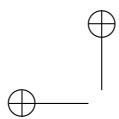


I LOVE JOHN

I love John. I think he's sweet.
He's my darling, I repeat –
Though I prefer men somewhat taller,
With ears perhaps a trifle smaller.
I love John; I think he's dear!
What if he can't discuss Vermeer,
And his hair's not thick and blond and wavy,
And he always sops his bread in gravy?

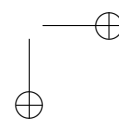
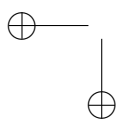
Ah, for a tan, terrific combi-
Nation who could rumba, samba,
Fell a ruffian at one blow,
Cow headwaiters, quote Li Po,
And drape his lady in pearls and mink!
... But I love John,
I think...

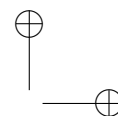
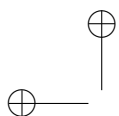




PAT. APPLIED FOR

I've a dozen fancy gadgets meant
For getting tops off things –
To pry the lid, the bottle cap
That clings and clings and clings.
But there's just one that's worth a hoot,
That works – and like a charm!
It's a simple, sturdy, never-failing
Husband's good right arm.



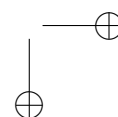
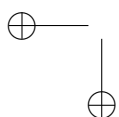


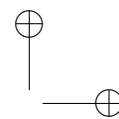
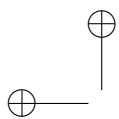
CREPUSCULE

Under the tangled willows in the first starshine,
In the deeper shade of the cypress pine
Where the brook unwinds like a tinsel skein,
The grey bats dance to its hushed refrain.

They skim the ripples, they drift and dip;
They flee and flutter and soar and skip;
Like pewter shuttles they cross and twist
To weave a pattern of stars and mist.
In the pearly glow when the last light dies
They thread their looms on the ghostly skies.

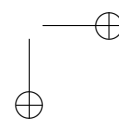
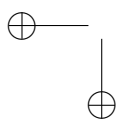
Under the tangled willows in the first starshine,
In the deeper shade of the cypress pine
Where the pools are deepest, the grey dusk stirs
On silent wings, in silver furs.

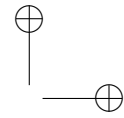
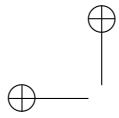




OXALIS

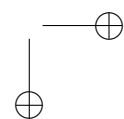
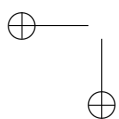
Where late the snow lay drifted
Under the hemlocks, now
Where the pale sunlight sifted –
Like tumbled coins it sifted
Beneath the brooding bough –
Here gleams the waxen chalice,
Upthrust on fragile stem,
Of the lovely wild oxalis –
Snowdrifts of white oxalis
At the grove's ragged hem.

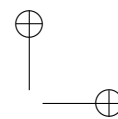
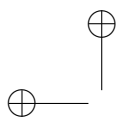




SEA URCHIN

Surf and sand and bright blown locks,
 Small head bent,
 Still, intent
Over a pool between the rocks
 Where fringes of sea-
 Anemone,
Purple, coral, are gently curled. . .
 Till deep in a tea-
 Cupful of sea
Dwarfed to this small, strange, watery world,
 Magic-glossed,
 The musing child is lost.



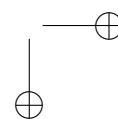
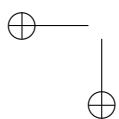


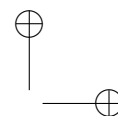
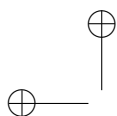
IN THIS STILL COVE

In this still cove, this cave of waters,
Scooped from the ocean and the cliffs –
Between the trailing sand verbena
And the sea with its canted skiffs –

Here sleep the sea winds, curbed and gentled;
And here are sunset dyepots hurled,
Glinting against a gull's white breast
In a sand-and-seaweed world.

Here is no scar more dreadful than
A delicate scoring on wet sand –
A gull's lace footprints criss-crossed where
The curving tides have fanned.





LATE

Shadows lay thick
About the door.
She'd never stayed out
So late before.

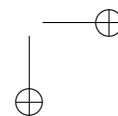
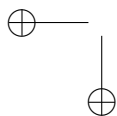
First we were angry,
Then we were scared.
What fates we pictured
And fearsomely shared!

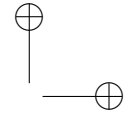
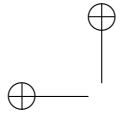
Then, out of nowhere,
She ambled in,
With her knees all scratched
And a smudgy chin,

With a broken tooth,
And minus her hat,
And clutching the neck
Of a mangy cat.

Her guardian angel
Was silently thanked,
And our angel child –
Less silently – spanked.

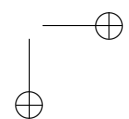
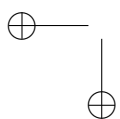
Harsh? Old-fashioned?
Perhaps. But then
She's never stayed out
So late again!

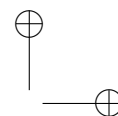
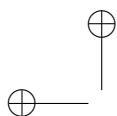




QUERY ON CHILD REARING

Why must forbearance
Be strictly for parents?





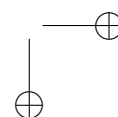
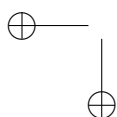
PICASSO OR PISTACHIO?

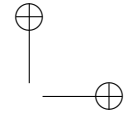
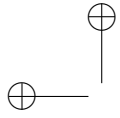
It's Varnishing Day, and we're paying a visit
To "Ah!" and "Hooray!" every startling what-is-it –
The rhomboids awry and the comets and whorls
That replaced recognizable seascapes and girls.

For when I was young and tender,
Ere I quaffed the Cubists' cup,
You could guess a portrait's gender
And you knew which side was up.
Without diagrams or scorecards
You distinguished birds from bees
Though no masterpieces wore cards
To explain such mysteries.

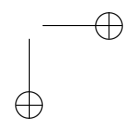
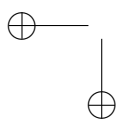
But we've long been regaled with abstraction and mobile
That everyone hailed as an art new and noble.
Technique was de trop, just an outmoded fetter
When each Sunday Schmoie went da Vinci one better.

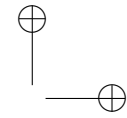
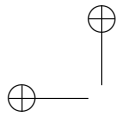
No fuddyduddy study
Like anatomy and stuff.
Just grab a paint brush, buddy,
And let none say, "Hold, enough!"
It's well that Holbein's dead now;
He could never make a goal in it
When no one paints a head now,
Just "impressions" of the hole in it.





Still, trend follows cycle,
And it may appear
That the Era of Ike'll
Bring change even here,
Till lush Yards of Roses
Again bloom as Art.
But now Grandma Moses
Is my sweetheart.



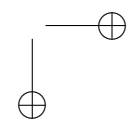
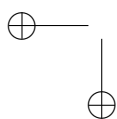


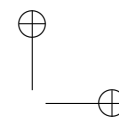
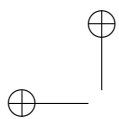
MAIL STALL

My mail piles up day after day,
Though some of it's answered right away –
The part that involves no thought at all,
Just a routine brief and hasty scrawl.
But other letters are set aside,
The ones that I re-read, rolling-eyed;
The scintillant, sprightly, salty, spoofy ones,
Tender and fond, irrepressibly goofy ones.
They're duly placed in a special niche –
Though after a while I forget just which –
Till I find the leisure that they require
To be answered in kind, as I dearly desire.

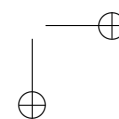
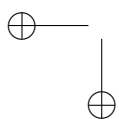
But leisure being a rare commodity,
Outside thesauruses strictly an oddity,
Weeks go by, then it's months and years
That I'm in epistolary arrears.
I thumb yellowed pages. Weep, don't scoff;
The writers have long since written me off.
And thus I've belatedly glimpsed the light;
My system can hardly be classed as bright –
To slight the diverting, encourage the dull,
Myself promoting this lethal lull.

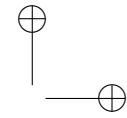
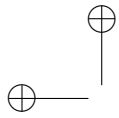
So now it's skidoo to this postal aridity!
Life's too short for such wilful stupidity.





Friends, remember me? Drop me a line,
For pity. For Pete's sake. For Auld Lang Syne.
And henceforth I'll answer before they get cold,
While the statements and tax forms are pigeonholed.
With joy I'll take pen in hand; I won't care if
It means that I'll presently hear from the sheriff.
"You are hereby advised. . ." That's as far as I'll read 'em!
The fire on the grate is my bright torch of freedom.
Correct legal paragraphs promptly are ashes –
But I'll love mail that's all exclamations and dashes!

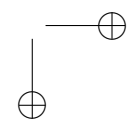
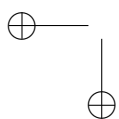


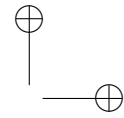
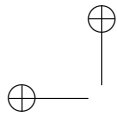


DISILLUSION

It makes a girl
Feel pretty small
To think she has
To go and fall
For someone whom
The maddest flight
Of fancy could
Not deem a knight –
No Launcelot,
No Galahad,
No clad-in-shining-
Armor lad.

Oh, how depressed
And how chagrined
Is she who finds
Her hopes are pinned
To no Morte-d'Arthurish
Ideal
But a – How you call heem
In Engleesh? – heel.



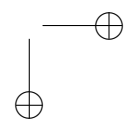
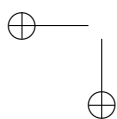


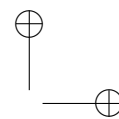
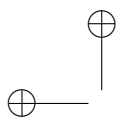
NO FLOWERS

There are some women who get brought orchids,
Even a few of the ones with four kids,
Dames whose spouses at close of day
Homeward merrily wend their way
Bearing Love's little gift of roses,
Pearls, or perfume in six-ounce doses,
At least there are such in Song and Story
(Sic – Applesauce and Allegory).

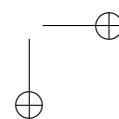
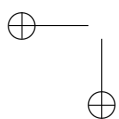
Now I have a man of sterling worth,
Far too good for this grasping earth,
That any girl would have proudly landed,
And he never comes home empty-handed.
But I get brought – Well, what would you think?
A nice new filter for the kitchen sink
And a gadget that leads a double life
As nutmeg grater and grapefruit-knife,
And cherry-pitters and needle-threaders
And cream whipper-uppers, and cabbage-shredders,
And oh the puzzles, the magic slates,
The jumping beans and asbestos plates!
In these Love's Offering shyly lurks
(And none, by any chance, ever works).

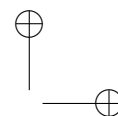
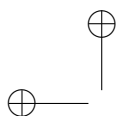
Oh, how can a man pass dully by
A florist's, with unenkindled eye,





Yet, let a street-hawker flash his kit,
He'll gape for hours entranced by it
Till lured by the spieler's necromancy
He comes home laden like a Christmas tree
With half the world's known tinware supply
And the finest radish-peelers money can buy.
(While my private opinion of the orchid-raters
Is, they're all either hussies or prevaricators.)

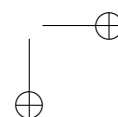
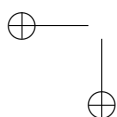


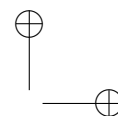
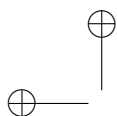


DON'T TELL ME IT'S SHOWING

No shortage of long underwear seen. — *News Item.*

Courage, be of cheer!
Though chill the night and drear,
Though straight to you from Arctic floe
Refrigerated breezes blow,
And after taxes who can think
Of Persian lamb or pastel mink?
You're not enough of a plutocrat
For even fitch-dyed alley cat.
Yet let the gale, the blizzard howl,
The sportive pneumococcus prow!;
You're snug and safe from an icy fate
In long – red – winter-weight,
 Weather-proofed,
 Wooly-woofed,
 Wrap-around,
 Button-bound,
 Zoot-suity,
 Heavy Duty
 Draft-free
 Lingerie.



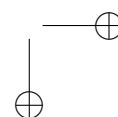
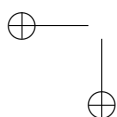


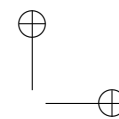
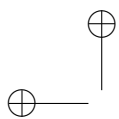
RHAPSODY, WITH THERMOSTAT

The weather, not so long ago,
Was something to be talked about;
Not to be changed or rearranged,
Just roundly cussed and squawked about
Whenever the sun would rise and shine
On a sad, heat-blasted spectacle,
On humans parched and all unstarched
And alarmingly apoplectical.

But now we needn't swelter
As our forbears did.
We needn't grin and bear
This horrid torrid air,
For somebody got smart enough
To take us off the grid.
He invented air-conditioning,
He did, he did, he did!
So let's line up and "Thank you, sir!"
And doff a grateful skimmer,
On account of out of summer
He's the guy who took the simmer.

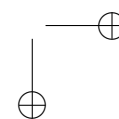
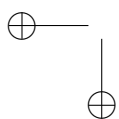
The heat may be so sultry,
The humidity so tropical
That women faint and every saint
Turns fiercely misanthropical.

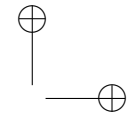
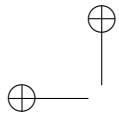




The mercury may sizzle up
To see if we're combustible,
But here's a cure for the temperature:
Now Fahrenheit's adjustable!

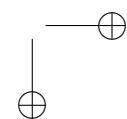
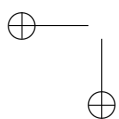
No longer need we stifle
As in days gone by.
When a heat wave soars,
We can come indoors
Where a polar gust engulfs us
As we gasp a joyful sigh.
We can jump right from the frying pan
To the freezer, if we're spry,
And be twenty goose bumps cooler
Than a snow peak in Esthonia.
Today, hooray, we take our choice:
Prostration or pneumonia.

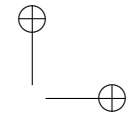
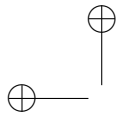




GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

You can't say Boo
To Sally Lou.
You can't kid Gert –
She just acts hurt.
Suggest a correction
With vast circumspection –
They start hitting ceilings:
You've injured their feelings.
Such sensitive plants
Leave you yearning to clout 'em –
And lucky the household
Completely without 'em!





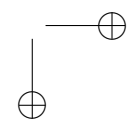
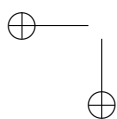
THE YO-YO'S BRIDE

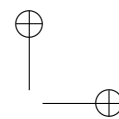
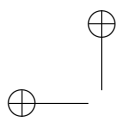
Give ear to my saga of anguish and pain
And let's shed a tear in each other's champagne
For I'm but an innocent victim of fate
In one of its scurviest hassles to date.

My downfall, I'm frank to admit, was a man –
Not one of the hunting and fishing clan,
No poker fiend – I'd been warned of those,
So what did I say when he came to propose
But "Yes"? Then I found that the ugly lug
Was a deep-dyed virulent sports car bug!

Oh, I was a rosy, radiant bride
But he left me the minute the knot was tied.
He'd a date at Palm Springs, the bridegroom said,
With some sort of drophead. He should drop dead,
For he came home for dinner just six weeks late –
From Bremerton via Golden Gate.

He tootles about some airport strip
Unbaling hay at a fireball clip,
Or spinning out on a hairpin turn
While brakes and his lonely child-bride burn,
Or he has to sit up with a sick MG
Performing some delicate surgery
On a hypersclerotic set of gears –
While I lose at canfield again, my dears.

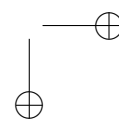
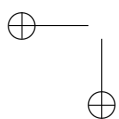


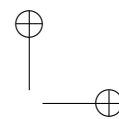
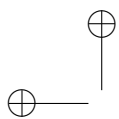


Now I fill my life in a gruesome way
With solitaire. And can I crochet!
I go on bird walks. I skate. I swim.
(I can jump in the lake for all of him.)

My neighbor's husband comes home and dines,
But mine? He's out at Torrey Pines
Or Seafair or Pebble Beach or Chino
Or Sebring or where I should head for – Reno.

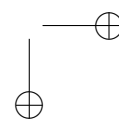
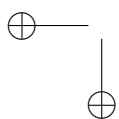
But not any more! I'm fed. I'm through.
Yet where can I turn but to racing too? ...
Now watch him get nerfed when I'm at the wheel
Of my Class B. Vintage Locomobile!

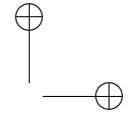
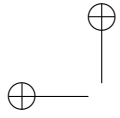




MASCULINE INTUITION

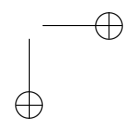
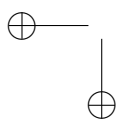
On heretofore-never-traveled roads,
Seeking friends'-who've-moved abodes,
A man won't stop to ask directions.
He'll spurn such pleas with curt rejections.
He thinks some mystical revelation
Will guide him to his destination
Steered by a sort of second sight.
And – here's what his wife can't bear – he's right!

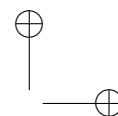
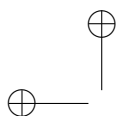




CAMPAIGNER

The decibel
Weaves a spell
Quicker than
Logic can.



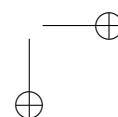
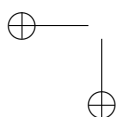


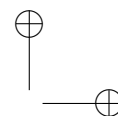
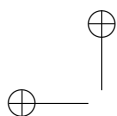
**FOURTH THURSDAY
AFTER THE FIRST TUESDAY**

The orators have spouted,
Exhorted and harangued.
We've heard the virtues touted
Of lads who should be hanged.
We've all been stuck for ducats
When someone passed the hat
Where buncombe came in buckets
And whitewash by the vat.

The minions have madly and merrily minioned,
The henchmen have henchd to the hilt
To see that each voter was rightly-opinioned
And all opposition was kilt.
The pundits have punned (whose pontifical humor
Took labels to mark it as such)
And the pollsters have polled (second-guessing each rumor,
Which seldom proved anything much).

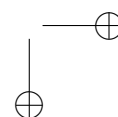
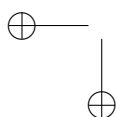
The drums have all been beaten;
The horns have all been blown;
The fish fries have been eaten;
The brickbats have been thrown;
The platforms have been mounted
To scold at Graft and Vice.
The votes are in and counted
(Sometimes more than twice).

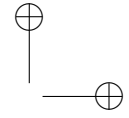
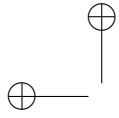




The rallies are over, the ranting and railing
At sundry recalcitrants, sullen and sore.
The neighborhood "coffees," the stuffing and mailing
Of candidates' blurbs are (hosanna!) no more.
The looks at a record as checkered as gingham;
The wailing at Apathy, lost in a dream;
The neat little blocs and the boys who could swing 'em –
They've all given way to a pleasanter theme.

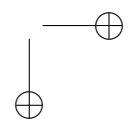
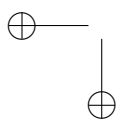
The Ins and Outs have thundered.
The halls have been re-hired
Where irked aspirants wondered
How incumbents had been sired.
The losers turn at last now
To earn an honest living.
Election Day is past now –
So, happy Thanksgiving!

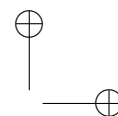
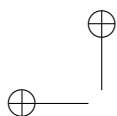




DEODAR

The deodar's a charming shrub.
You buy it in a gallon tub.
Lovingly you set it out
Beside your door. You watch it sprout.
You watch it spread. No green bay tree
Flourishes more happily.
It takes the lawn, the steps, the path.
It twines through parlor, bedroom, bath.
You nevermore see sun or star
Once you plant the deodar.
There's just one cure, victims say:
Move away.

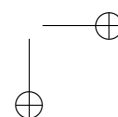
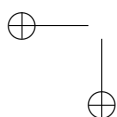


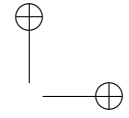
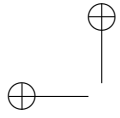


SOLO FOR A TIN WHISTLE

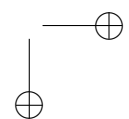
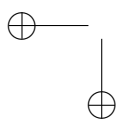
O waly waly for social graces –
The blather you bleat in pink-tea places,
The smirks, the chirps, and the civil drivell
That make your cantankerous innards shrivel.
Yet why be the death's-head at the feast?
Pretend to be amiable, at least!
What though you're moody and apprehensive?
You gallantly try to be inoffensive.
It's kinder, politer if you conform
To the giddy amenities of the norm. . .
But the word's passed round as you dish that tosh out,
"Sister, that blister's a washout!"

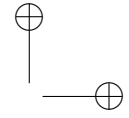
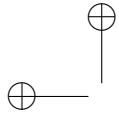
So crawl in a corner, mutter, and glare
If some fluttery biddy gets in your hair;
And if anyone asks you what do you think,
You tell 'em, sweetheart, and let 'em blink!
They can be gracious and gay and girlish;
You act natural – frankly churlish.
Maybe your comments are somewhat sweeping.
Maybe the honor guest goes home weeping.
Just speak your mind with uncurbed temerity. . .
Yet do they laud such superb sincerity?
They gimlet you to the far horizon
And twitter, "The critter's pizen."





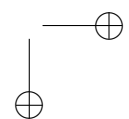
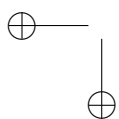
O waly waly for social graces!
I'm asked to fewer and fewer places.
Whatever I do, results don't vary.
Around these parts I'm Typhoid Mary.

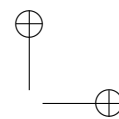
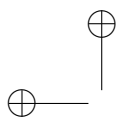




**DRIVING IN TRAFFIC
IS HARDLY SERAPHIC**

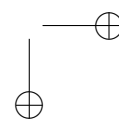
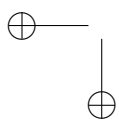
I start. I stop.
I barely crawl.
I spurt ten feet.
And then I stall.
I'm tooted at, stared at,
Hooted at, blared at,
Sideswiped, glared at,
Gestured at, swore at!
It's more than mortal
Flesh should bear,
Merely to get
From Here to There.

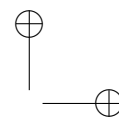
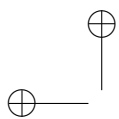




VIOLATION

I hanker to blast
With my trusty repeater
The fiend who invented
The parking meter.
Why must my time limit
Always expire
When I'm trying on girdles
Or under the drier?



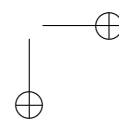
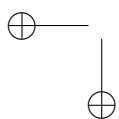


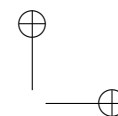
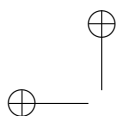
MAGIC THERAPY

I'm Mary of Scots
 In a long purple train.
I'm Gwendolyn Glotz
 And the lovely Elaine.
I play hurdy-gurdies.
 I snow in July.
I'm one of the birdies
 They baked in a pie.

I'm spun out of glass
 So Please Handle With Care.
I breakfast on grass.
 I wear larks in my hair.
Worry's a habit
 That gnaws like a rat...
But I've a white rabbit
 That lives in my hat!

A wave of my glove
 And red roses appear,
And a ruby-eyed dove
 Flies out of my ear...
Tricks may unpucker
 The tangliest brain;
But how can you succor
 The hopelessly sane?



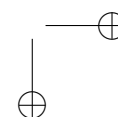
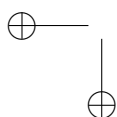


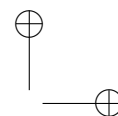
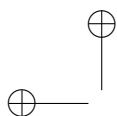
CAUTIONARY POEM FOR THE MENTAL TYPE

Overthinking may injure brain tissue, says specialist. — *News Item.*

Don't overwork your little brain.
It knows no panacea
To ease the pain, the baneful strain
Of just one Bright Idea.
Take no swig at Wisdom's fount.
Don't cry, "This here one won't count!"
Just a coupla quick ones? Nay!
Schizophrenia lies that way.

Thinking causes headaches, fits;
It's habit-forming, tricky.
It'll blitz your wits to itsy bits –
A sort of mental Mickey.
Rashly stirring up your mind,
There's no telling what you'll find!
Is it worth the risk, cheri? ...
Better play it safe, like me.





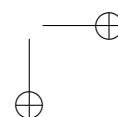
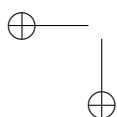
JACARANDA IN BLOOM

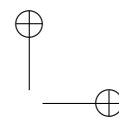
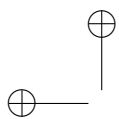
Heavenward, heavenward the great tree stretched
Wide, wide arms, flower-etched,
Aching with blooms a rarer blue
Than heaven itself ever knew.

The dancing blossoms clustered high,
Garlands to veil the paler sky,
Bells of sapphire to swing and fall
Till a petaled carpet covered all. . .

Till earth and tree were the hue of heather,
Hyacinth, periwinkle, bluebird feather,
Bright as the robes of angels winging,
Color of silence, color of singing.

The wind shook another panicle free
And the housewife frowned, "What a dirty tree!"
And, striding across the scattered bloom,
She hurried in and fetched a broom.

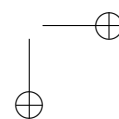
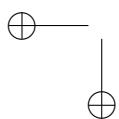


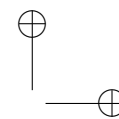
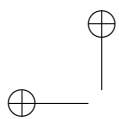


NEVERMORE SHALL DAWN THIS SPRING

Nevermore shall bloom this rose,
Nevermore shall dawn this spring.
Cherish it before it goes
Past all vain remembering.

Take the slight and fragile gift,
This brief measure of delight.
Soon the scattered petals drift
Down every heedless wind of night.





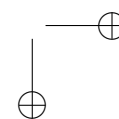
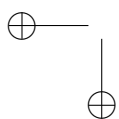
SNOWFLAKE

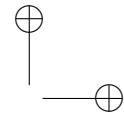
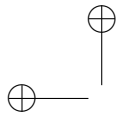
Be satisfied
To stand aside,
Quiet, knowing
Beauty's going.

The bittern calls. . .
The flake falls.
Hungrily caught,
It dies, is naught.

Let the eyes weep,
Let the mind keep
Enchantment that slips
Past fingertips.

Loneliness calls.
Loveliness falls. . .
Beauty's essence
Is evanescence.

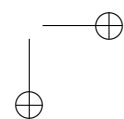
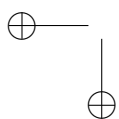


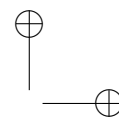
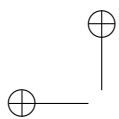


GLACIER

Blue are the shadows, blue as sky
Where the broad ice-river winds,
And sun on snow has a naked glow
That burns, and blinds.

The stony shore is deeply scarred
By the glacier's clawing fingers,
And Time moves slow – slow, slow, –
And Eternity lingers.

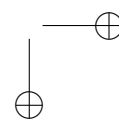
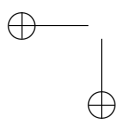


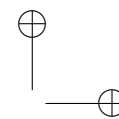
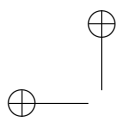


DESERT POPPY

From ragged, spiny
Silvery leaves
The poppies spring
In prodigal sheaves,
Crinkled, papery
Discs that blow
Wide for the glowing
Heart to show.

Beside the mesquite
And dusty sage,
Over this arid
Heritage,
Matilija poppies
Foam, a tide
Of virginal white
For the desert's bride.

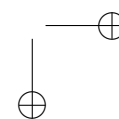
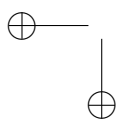


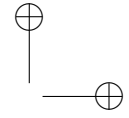
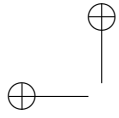


GOSSAMER SHOWER

Seeking new homes, clouds of baby spiders may travel for miles on floating strands of gossamer.

There was an added shimmer to the air,
A glimmer of crystal blown,
Of tenuous filaments flown
On the dying breeze. Who cast these nets to snare
The fugitive sunset? Whose each aerial berth?
O cobweb gossamer pall –
Cascading fairy-fall! –
As infant parachutists float to earth.



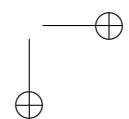
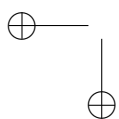


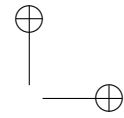
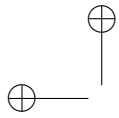
SANTANA

A desert wind with devil face
Sears this green and pleasant place.
Bud and tendril know its breath
And the brittleness of death.

Even as they half unfurled,
Curving fronds are shattered – curled,
Awkward and unlovely now
On the shriveled, useless bough;

So my heart at one hushed word
Felt the blighting gust which stirred
Tattered palm and blossoming fig –
And snapped as lightly as a twig.

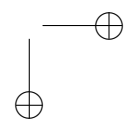
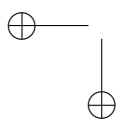


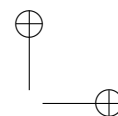
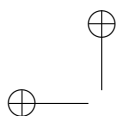


WATER SNAKE

Sinuous among the reeds,
At a human tread
You freeze to utter stillness.
Your onyx cameo head
Lifted, searching and aware
Of alien intrusion
You lie, a reed among the reeds
In serpentine illusion.

A charcoal shadow cleanly striped
With yellow pale as sun
Slanted through cobalt-shaded pines,
You and the bank are one.
You pause, and stare – then through the reeds
You vanish like a dream
To write your wraithlike going
In a ripple on the stream.





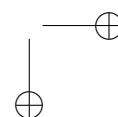
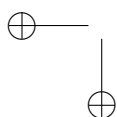
WHO'S GAINER?

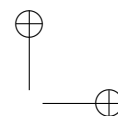
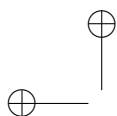
Oh, you take the high dive
And I'll take the low dive
And I'll hit the briny before you.
My webfooted truelove,
Go find yourself a new love
Or else a milder hobby, I implore you!

A hobby, let us say,
More like checkers or croquet
Or piping on the piccolo
Or modeling in clay,
Not these plunges into space
Where I crash-dive on my face
Or do agonizing back flops
Into Davy Jones' embrace.

But you take the high dive
And I take the low dive.
Was ever a maid so ill-omened?
I'll be the dankest bride
Ever stranded by the tide
On the bonny, bonny banks of Loch Lomond.

I tried to be a sport
But this caper's not my forte –
These paralyzing, petrifying
Lethal Leaps – in short,

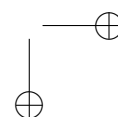
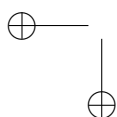


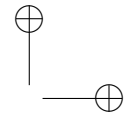
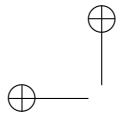


You can take the high dive
And also the low dive.
I know when I'm licked, pal.
I want no part of no dive.

Why teeter on a ledge
Till I topple off the edge,
Taking headers in the sedge,
Being fished out with a dredge,
Jarring vertebra and molar,
Growing polar and more polar?
I shoulda went and fell for
A philatelist or bowler.

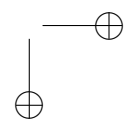
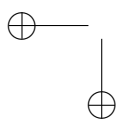
But you and your high dive
Will drive me to a low dive –
Than which none is lower or baser,
With sawdust on the floor
And a bouncer at the door
And where water's used only as a chaser.

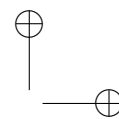
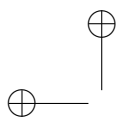




THE IDEAL

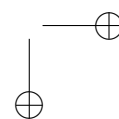
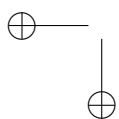
Maidens, never
Smile upon
The man who is
A paragon.
At first perfection
May allure you
But the living up to
Will kill or cure you.

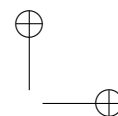
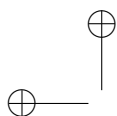




BELL SONG

“Bells, bells, bells,”
Sang Edgar Allan Poe,
Before the buzzing hells
Our office wretches know.
Those batteries of phones
Go “Br-r-rrr” on a dozen fronts.
They blare in strident tones
And all of them ring at once!
Oh, it’s bells, bells, BELLS,
Till you feel you’d like to slay ’em,
As you yearn to throttle another
Bell –
Alexander Graham.



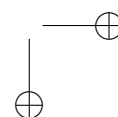
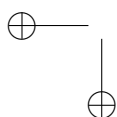


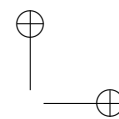
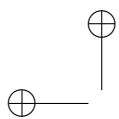
OFFICE PARTY

Deck the office walls with holly;
Drape the files with Yuletide firs!
'Tis the season to be jolly
With our cherished customers.
Free cigars – the air is murky!
Wassail flows till the treasurers squirm.
Pass the nuts, the deviled turkey,
And toast the Boss! It's on the firm.

Merry Christmas, one and all!
We're throwing our yearly giant brawl
And it's Open House – till they burn it down –
For pious pilgrims on the town.
Abercrombie, you dog, how's tricks?
And old B. J. of Dunkle and Hicks!
Season's greetings, Luke and Larry,
Tom and Dick – and even Harry,
The lush who gobbled the holly berries
Insisting that they were cocktail cherries.

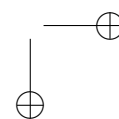
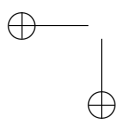
Come, replenish the garnished platter,
And six more gallons of eggnog batter.
Chant "White Christmas" while popcorn scoots
Merrily down the mailing chutes.
We'll harmonize till the Veeps have fits
And we'll all play marbles with olive pits

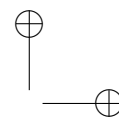
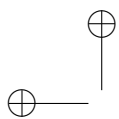




While wives and kiddiekins phone and grieve:
“Father, come home! It’s Christmas Eve!”
But the water cooler flows bonded Bourbon
And the last car’s left on the interurban.

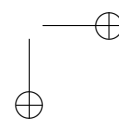
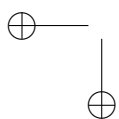
Deck the PBX with holly;
Drape the desks with Yuletide firs!
'Tis the season to be jolly
With our darling customers.
Throw confetti through the transom!
Spin the bottles down the hall!
Shout it high and wide and handsome:
“Merry Christmas, one and all!”

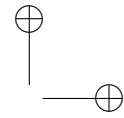
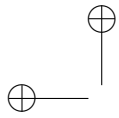




BRIEF BIOG.

Mary was a plain girl,
Modest as a wren.
Men looked at Mary
And didn't look again.



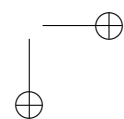
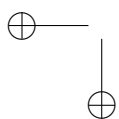


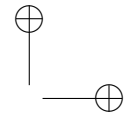
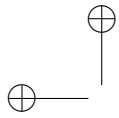
ASPEN IN AUTUMN

On this autumn hillside
Where summer greenly bloomed,
Now the bush stands flaming,
Bright and unconsumed.

Shimmering and golden
Now, itself a pyre,
Every leaf is speaking
With a tongue of fire –

As on an ancient hillside,
Scatheless as a rock,
A bush burned for a shepherd
Keeping Jethro's flock.



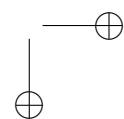
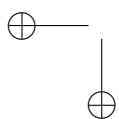


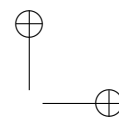
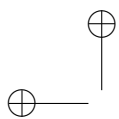
THE RED HAT

You're comfortably past the stage
That's primly called "a certain age,"
Safely beyond the strains and fears
Of the prevaricating years
Till now you flaunt them as a banner
In your own special manner.

The impish eye is frosty blue;
The soft coiffure is snowy, true;
The brow is time-kissed; yet upon it
Is perched no dull and somber bonnet,
But archly frivolous wings of red
Tilt on that giddy head.

Eighty's mighty young, at that,
In a new red hat!

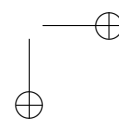
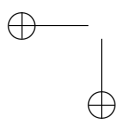


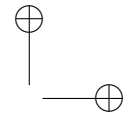
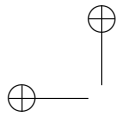


ALIEN

Here is a small community of peace.
The field mouse patters
Through the tunneled grass;
The creamy fawn
Leaps, luminous as dawn;
The wood thrush spins its song out –
Till I pass.

A hundred hearts beat
Suddenly loud and fleet.
Wariness flares
From wild and darkening eyes.
And I retreat
On awkward, alien feet
That for a moment trespassed
In paradise.

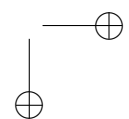
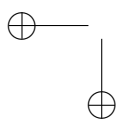


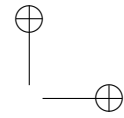
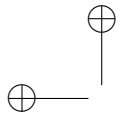


SINGING GIRL

Reap the kisses from my mouth,
In the land to which I go
There will be eternal drouth
Where no kisses bloom and blow.

Stay a moment by this heart;
Shut out all its crowding fears.
It must lie alone, apart,
So many thousand dusty years.



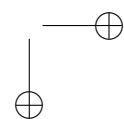
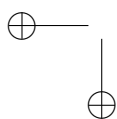


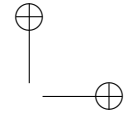
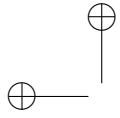
ENTREMETS

Alas, I cannot learn to care
For aught but the most bourgeois fare.
Sad-eyed Bossie's scrambled brains
May please the Whitneys and the Paynes.
The Astors and Morgans
May munch on organs,
While Stuyvesants may dote on dishes
Heaped with roe from lesser Fishes.
Rattlesnakes
May furnish steaks
And cater to our better wakes,
While mussels and mullets
Slip grandly down more cultivated gullets.

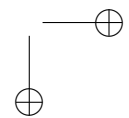
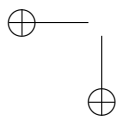
Admittedly plebeian,
I chant no gourmet's paeon.
The eel may gambol in the river,
The fatted goose retain his liver,
The turtle thrive, alive and green,
Nor swan-dive in my soup tureen,
While as for grouse and other game,
The higher the fewer, I always claim.

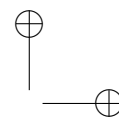
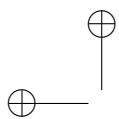
So, hostess, here a suppliant begs:
Go easy on the plovers' eggs





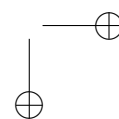
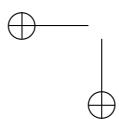
And spare me, in your mercy, dinners
Of some poor ruminant's wretched inners –
The which, beneath appropriate stones,
Should be interred with their bones.

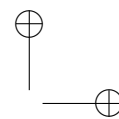
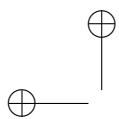




CALORIE-COUNTER

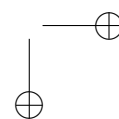
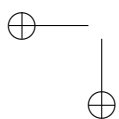
You take one helping,
Take a second,
Hoping to heaven
They'll go unreckoned;
And you won't count them,
But Reason pales
At the fiendishness
Of the bathroom scales!

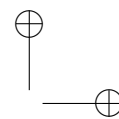
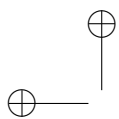




MENU MANEUVERS

Let's have just a salad
For dinner tonight!
It's healthful and tasty,
Nutritious and light.
We eat too much meat
And potatoes and gravy,
And I'm growing weary
As scullery slavey.
Well-l, yes, I just came
From a tea at the Clydes,
But there isn't the slightest
Connection! Besides,
Hadn't you said that
Your belt's getting tight?
Let's have just a salad
For dinner tonight!





**THE LADY POET
TAKES THE CHEERFUL VIEW**

A hundred years from now, my sweet,
I'll snuggle in my winding-sheet,

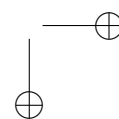
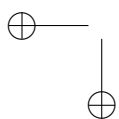
And never stir to smell the rose
Whose rootlets interlace my toes,

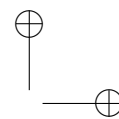
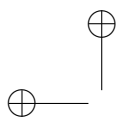
Nor brush aside the worm in fear
That nibbles coyly at my ear.

And oh, some other maid will tread
A sod grown greener since I'm dead:

She'll listen for a false love's cry,
And wish to heaven she were I,

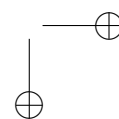
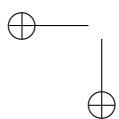
I who shall lie and smile, my sweet,
And snuggle in my winding-sheet.

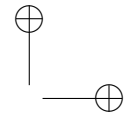
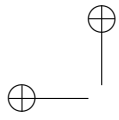




FAN

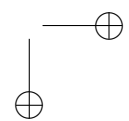
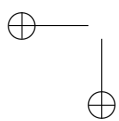
Ah, poisonous fame!
To be dogged by the dame
Who breathes, "So you write!"
And squeaks with delight,
Then is moved to exclaim,
"Under what name?"

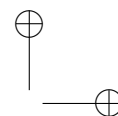
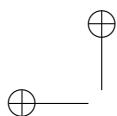




NEW DRESS

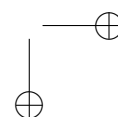
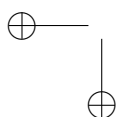
It looked so different on the dummy
Without my derriere and tummy!

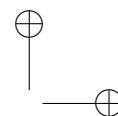
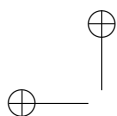




TIMELESS STANZAS

Hickory dickory dock.
I never know what's o'clock.
My lack of any sense of time
Is so ridiculous it's sublime.
Tell me, pray -, is it four - so soon?
And Wednesday - what, Friday afternoon?
Dear me, Time has been certainly flying,
Years uncounted been borning and dying
(And with barely any improvement, either)
While I stepped out for a mental breather.
Teetering at Eternity's brink,
It's always Later Than I Think.
All of a sudden the day is gone.
Somehow or other the weeks danced on.
Though I jot down memos and set alarms,
I'm held by unseen, malicious arms,
So I visited a friend in St. Joseph's (who
Carelessly sideswiped a truck or two)
But, plagued by my usual fancy flukes,
By the time I get there he's out of a cast and
being measured for an appendectomy.
At St. Luke's.



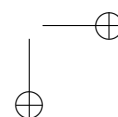
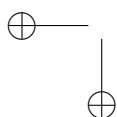


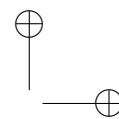
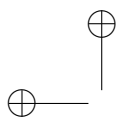
DITHYRAMB FOR A DOLLAR BILL

Like leaves athrill with chlorophyll
Aflutter in the breeze,
How, O brand-new Dollar Bill,
I wish you grew on trees!

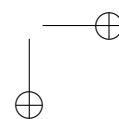
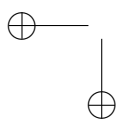
I beat my little brains, I do,
And try to make a buck or two,
And so does every struggling neighbor
Who's not allergic yet to labor.
How potent is the urge of habit
(Like multiplying in the rabbit)
To work to make one's own small way!
But Diligence is for Dopes today.
What Cause that's Worthy – or so labeled –
For solvency's sweet sake gets tabled?

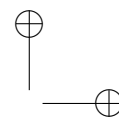
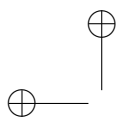
We who to the grindstone keep
A sore protesting nose
Might as well be mice or sheep,
Since where our money goes
Isn't in our personal pants
But straight in Uncle Sam's –
And Uncle loves Extravagance
As wolves love little lambs.





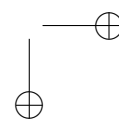
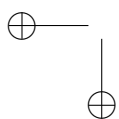
Like leaves before the hurricane,
O Dollar Bill, you travel
Over the farthest sea and plain
While me, I hit the gravel.
You're marked for hosts of far-off friends
Too smart to yearn to earn you,
While Uncle spends and spends and spends
Like he had you to burn you.
(Hush! Nothing's burning, you can see,
But this microscopic cinder, me.)

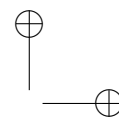
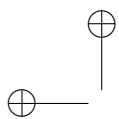




FUR-BEARANCE

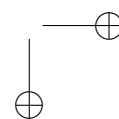
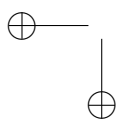
With near-mink,
Sable-dyed,
Simulated
Leopard hide,
The colonel's lady,
The corporal's kin
Are sisters under
Their rabbit skin.

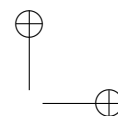
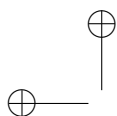




YOICKS!

In classic roles
Of wooed and wooer,
Man was planned
As the pursuer
Of a shy,
Reluctant mate;
But Woman likes
To demonstrate
There's nothing that
A man can do
That she can't do –
And better, too!





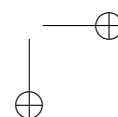
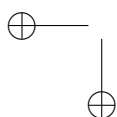
HOSPITALITY EXCHANGE

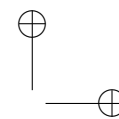
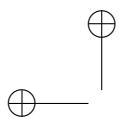
Scene: The Larrabee's Midtown Den

The Wiffletrees, lamb, are here again
And we'll have to quit going to bed by ten;
They think all New Yorkers are Sobols and Beebes,
So ho! for a weekful of heebie-jeebies.
They come like Lochinvar out of the West,
Rarin' to go, and festively dressed,
Reeking with vim and a vast vivacity,
Boasting a bottomless liquid capacity.
Barely they'll burst through our peaceful door
When it's hey! for a couple of shots – or more –
Then hip, hip, hip! for the Persian Room,
The Rockefeller Rink, The Stork, Grant's Tomb,
And fourth-row-center at every show
That merrily flaunts an SRO.
Oh, it's hi! – sky high! – when they're poured aboard
And we're to our shattered hearth restored
Where we've quietly sat and hibernated
Except when these firemen have to be feted.

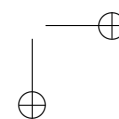
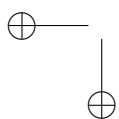
Six Weeks Later: The Wiffletrees

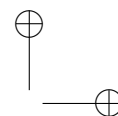
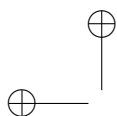
Lovey, those dreadful Larrabees
Are here for a whirl at Los Angeleeze.
They'll want to step out and Dance and Dine,
So no more hitting the hay by nine.





Dust off your go-to-meeting hat
And dig up a fifth of this and that;
We'll live in Derbies and Bowls and taxis
And swimming pools (marble) and Slapsie Maxie's.
Yoicks! for zombies at the Mocambo,
Yay! for the Grove 'neath a sheltering palmbo,
Yippee! that place with the rain on the roof,
Ye-ow! for the movie lots seen on the hoof
And Catalina and Santa Anita
And can't we meet Zsa Zsa and Gobel and Rita?
Let's hope we can last till the "black-coffee-and"
At some all-night Hollywood drive-in stand
Whence we'll speed our guests to the railroad track
And - yah, yah, yah! hope they never come back.

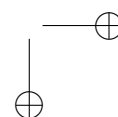
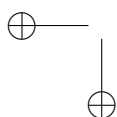


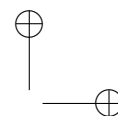
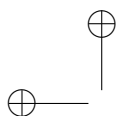


THE BRIDGE FIEND'S CURSE

Go never darken my door again!
Go far from the haunts of decent men
Where you'll never trump, with smiling face,
As you cry, "Why, partner, was that your ace?"
Go hence, begone! Avaunt! Avast,
You who keep peeking at the trick before last
And liting, "I'm sorry, but what did you throw
On that first heart round? It's silly, I know,
But I must have revoked when clubs were played...
And I thought you could ruff, so I ducked that spade...
Yes, I saw you discard the diamond jack
And I fully intended to lead one back
But I wanted to try a sort of finesse...
And ha! I redoubled from fright, I guess...
Cheer up, we saved rubber, anyhow.
What's a set of twenty-two hundred now?"

Go, I tell you, go far and fast!
May your forcing takeouts always be passed,
May your slam invitations never succeed,
And your partner govern each bid and lead
By the stars, or sun-spots, or Greek soothsayers,
And may all your children be pinochle players!



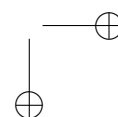
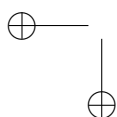


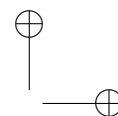
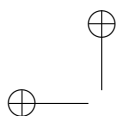
GERANIUMS, I LOVE YOU

Oh, go and plant you roses
(Some ever-so-hybrid tea)
But ah, the brave geranium,
The sturdy, bourgeois geranium
Is the darling flower for me.

Other fanciers (bitter cup!)
Call it a weed and pull it up;
They wouldn't give it garden room!
Theirs must be more exotic bloom –
The tuberous, to be sure, begonia;
Trumpery, trumpet-tipped bignonia;
Pale gardenias (that bloom so easy);
Fragile fuchsias from far Zambezi;
Epidendrum and choice cymbidium;
Irises rarer than iridium.

Firsts at every flower show
Are what you're sure to fetch
For daffodils or Siberian squills
Or your horrid hairy vetch;
Scapose-umbelled double trillium,
Dianthus barbatus (yah, Sweet William!),
Blooms that are fussy about the soil,
Babied with sulphonated oil,

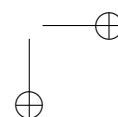
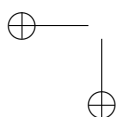


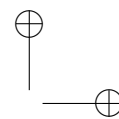
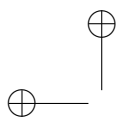


Pampered with bone meal, vitamin-plied,
And catered to like a wealthy bride –
Yet turn your back and they mutter, Fie on you!
And up and die on you.

Happily then, this heart and cranium
Hail the ubiquitous geranium,
Asking no loam, no lime, no peat,
Thriving like crazy in cracked concrete,
Everblooming and nonpestiferous,
To scornful gods I threw the gage.
O mortal blow! to find me so
Clean, and spicily odoriferous,
I'll deck the table, I'll make bouquets of it,
Go to the opera draped in leis of it,
And strum my lyre in dizzy praise of it!

Go propagate an orchid –
The parasitic McCoy –
But ah, the rank geranium,
The common garden geranium
Is the lazy tyro's joy!

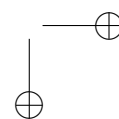
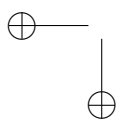


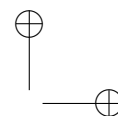
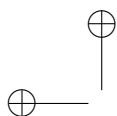


CHAGRIN

Oh, once I'd storm and once I'd rage
And dread the night, and curse the morrow.
To scornful gods I threw the gage.
I walked with Grief, I slept with Sorrow.

Now in our love secure I go
Nor writhe nor rail like one demented.
O mortal blow! to find me so
Domesticated and contented.

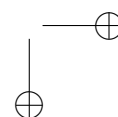
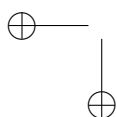


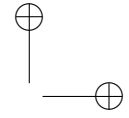
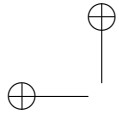


WHAT SHALL BE LEFT OF BEAUTY?

What shall be left of beauty when you die?
Only the sea that frets the rocky strand;
Only a pebble shining in the hand;
A star that pales against the morning sky;
Nothing except the sunlit mists which lie
On the far hills. No loveliness shall stand
Except a nameless flower in the sand,
A nameless bird's remote and questing cry.

Others shall walk where you have lately been,
Yet wake no singing echo, and disclose
No swift, beloved figure set apart,
No hand like yours to clasp all joy within,
No voice that is your voice, although my heart
Seek it on every changing air that blows.



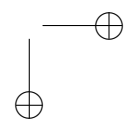
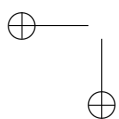


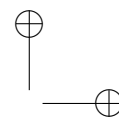
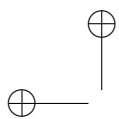
TO HUM AT NIGHT

I'll lie upon my bed,
Cool and straight in lawn.
No tear shall I shed
At the dismaying dawn.

The dark, wheeling hours
Shall not pluck out my eyes.
My dreams shall be flowers
On the midnight skies.

Time is a friend
To bring heart's ease.
All nights end.
Even these.



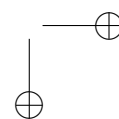
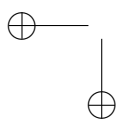


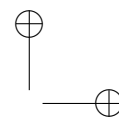
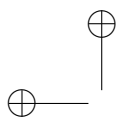
NOEL

Cathedral spires of pine and spruce
Tower against the night
Where winter galaxies unloose
Their shafts of frosty light.

Oh luminous and hushed the land,
Waiting, listening. . .
On such a night an angel band
Once was heard to sing.

On such a night was music wrung
From heaven and all the spheres.
Listen, and hear the tidings sung
Across the starry years!

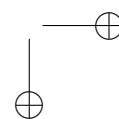
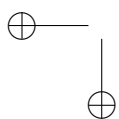


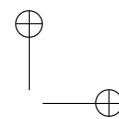
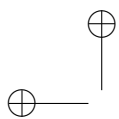


KUAN YIN, GODDESS OF MERCY

Curved and cool as the lotus,
She gazes undismayed
Across the inconsequential dust
Where dynasties are laid.

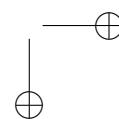
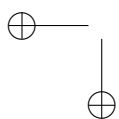
How much wider, bloodier
Must grow the mortal rift
Before a torn world pauses
To take her quiet gift?

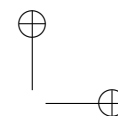
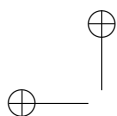




ATOMIC COURTESY

To smash the simple atom
All mankind was intent.
Now any day
The atom may
Return the compliment.





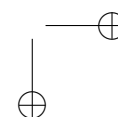
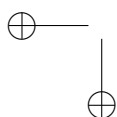
INTRUDER

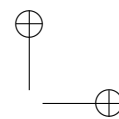
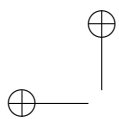
World, a little longer wait,
Your hand upon this neat white gate;
Before you stumble rudely through –
Stop. Admire the view:
The tidy beds of mignonette,
Forget-me-not and violet,
Roses pruned with patient care,
And butterflies – butterflies everywhere!
Let your eye follow the smooth raked path
To the splashing of martins in their bath,
Before bush and bird retreat
At the thunder of your feet.

World, with your hand upon the latch,
Pause and let the senses snatch
Something of this doomed moment.

Soon

You may have need to remember June
And martins in a garden. . .





WOOD THRUSH

No eye
May spy
Where the wood thrush sings,

But hid
Amid
Boughs brown as wings,

His joy
Can buoy
The soul undone

Till ache
Forsake
The listening one.

