

# A Light in the Attic



poems and drawings by  
**Shel Silverstein**

## **A Light in the Attic**

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### **A LIGHT IN THE ATTIC**

There's a light on in the attic

Though the house is dark and shuttered,

I can see a flickerin' flutter,

And I know what it's about.

There's a light on in the attic.

I can see it from the outside,

And I know you're on the inside . . . lookin' out.

7

### **HOW MANY, HOW MUCH**

How many slams in an old screen door?

Depends how loud you shut it.

How many slices in a bread?

Depends how thin you cut it.

How much good inside a day?

Depends how good you live 'em.

How much love inside a friend?

Depends how much you give 'em.

[illustration: across the foot of pages 8 and 9 is a long row of all different

kinds of houses: large

and small, apartment houses and

single-family homes,

thin and wide houses.]

[8]

MOON-CATCHIN' NET

I've made me a moon-catchin' net,

And I'm goin' huntin' tonight,

I'll run along swingin' it over my head,

And grab for that big ball of light.

So tomorrow just look at the sky,  
And if there's no moon you can bet  
I've found what I sought and I finally caught  
The moon in my moon-catchin' net.  
But if the moon's still shinin' there,  
Look close underneath and you'll get  
A clear look at me in the sky swingin' free  
With a star in my moon-catchin' net.

[illustration: in addition to the row of houses at the bottom,  
there is a picture of

a child swinging at the bottom of a long-handled net that has  
caught a star.]

[9]

HAMMOCK

Grandma sent the hammock,  
The good Lord sent the breeze.  
I'm here to do the swinging--

Now, who's gonna move the trees?

13

[Illustration on pages 10 and 11: A child (on page 10 at the bottom of the poem)

is holding one end of a hammock. On page 11, the other end is attached to one branch of a large tree.]

11

HOW NOT TO HAVE

TO DRY THE DISHES

If you have to dry the dishes

(Such an awful, boring chore)

If you have to dry the dishes

('Stead of going to the store)

If you have to dry the dishes

And you drop one on the floor--

Maybe they won't let you

Dry the dishes anymore.

[illustration: a girl with a lot of black fuzzy hair is holding a very large plate under her nose and a dish towel in one hand. A broken plate lies on the floor next to her]

12

STOP THIEF!

Policeman, policeman,

Help me please.

Someone went and stole my knees.

I'd chase him down but I suspect

My feet and legs just won't connect.

[illustration: a large man with spaces between thighs and boots-- no knees.]

16

Mrs. McTwitter the baby-sitter,

I think she's a little bit crazy.

She thinks a baby-sitter's supposed

To sit upon the baby.

[illustration:

A

large woman with a big puffy hairdo and glasses sitting.  
Small feet

are sticking out from under her.

]

14

### PRAYER OF THE SELFISH CHILD

Now I lay me down to sleep,

I pray the Lord my soul to keep,

And if I die before I wake,

I pray the Lord my toys to break.

So none of the other kids can use 'em. . . .

Amen.

[Illustration: A child is kneeling by his bed praying, his toys behind him.]

15

WHAT DID?

What did the carrot say to the wheat?

" 'Lettuce' rest, I'm feeling 'beet.' "

What did the paper say to the pen?

"I feel quite all 'write,' my friend."

What did the teapot say to the chalk?

Nothing, you silly . . . teapots can't talk!

[illustration: A teapot with long legs and feet in men's shoes faces a tall piece of chalk with shorter legs and women's shoes.]

18

[illustration: A large carrot with arms and legs, hands and feet, holding a piece

of wheat is facing a large fountain pen, which is writing I  
FEEL ALL WRITE

on a piece of paper.]

17

SHAKING



Geraldine now, stop shaking that cow

For heaven's sake, for your sake and the cow's sake.

That's the dumbest way I've seen

To make a milk shake.

29

[illustration: a small girl is shaking a very large cow]

19

## SIGNALS

When the light is green you go.

When the light is red you stop.

But what do you do

When the light turns blue

With orange and lavender spots?

[illustration: a tall traffic light bending slightly.]

20

## PICTURE PUZZLE PIECE

One picture puzzle piece

Lyin' on the sidewalk,

One picture puzzle piece

Soakin' in the rain.

It might be a button of blue

On the coat of the woman

Who lived in a shoe.

It might be a magical bean,

Or a fold in the red

Velvet robe of a queen.

It might be the one little bite

Of the apple her stepmother

Gave to Snow White.

It might be the veil of a bride

Or a bottle with some evil genie inside.

It might be a small tuft of hair

On the big bouncy belly

Of Bobo the Bear.

It might be a bit of the cloak

Of the Witch of the West

As she melted to smoke.

It might be a shadowy trace

Of a tear that runs down an angel's face.

Nothing has more possibilities

Than one old wet picture puzzle piece.

[illustration: a single picture puzzle piece]

21

PUT SOMETHING IN

Draw a crazy picture,

Write a nutty poem,

Sing a mumble-gumble song,

Whistle through your comb.

Do a loony-goony dance  
'Cross the kitchen floor,  
Put something silly in the world  
That ain't been there before.

22

## MONSTERS I'VE MET

I met a ghost, but he didn't want my head,  
He only wanted to know the way to Denver.  
I met a devil, but he didn't want my soul,  
He only wanted to borrow my bike awhile.  
I met a vampire, but he didn't want my blood,  
He only wanted two nickels for a dime.  
I keep meeting all the right people--  
At all the wrong times.

[Illustration: a small boy looking at a large genie-type creature with a devilish

face, but he isn't scar

y]

23

## ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND

If we were a rock 'n' roll band,

We'd travel all over the land.

We'd play and we'd sing and wear spangly things,

If we were a rock 'n' roll band.

If we were a rock 'n' roll band,

And we were up there on the stand,

The people would hear us and love us and cheer us,

Hurray for that rock 'n' roll band.

If we were a rock 'n' roll band,

Then we'd have a million fans.

We'd giggle and laugh and sign autographs,

If we were a rock 'n' roll band.

[24]

If we were a rock 'n' roll band,

The people would all kiss our hands.

We'd be millionaires and have extra long hair,

If we were a rock 'n' roll band.

But we ain't no rock 'n' roll band,

We're just seven kids in the sand

With homemade guitars and pails and jars

And drums of potato chip cans.

Just seven kids in the sand,

Talkin' and wavin' our hands,

And dreamin' and thinkin' oh wouldn't it be grand,

If we were a rock 'n' roll band.

[illustration: across the bottom of both pages 24 and 25 are an assortment of

girls and boys playing a tennis racket like a guitar; ping pong paddles like

cymbals; a potato chip can like a drum; a brush. They are sitting on the sand playing like a rock-and-roll band.]

[25]

## SOMETHING MISSING

I remember I put on my socks,

I remember I put on my shoes.

I remember I put on my tie

That was painted

In beautiful purples and blues.

I remember I put on my coat,

To look perfectly grand at the dance,

Yet I feel there is something

I may have forgot--

What is it? What is it? . . .

[illustration: a man standing, completely dressed except for his pants. He's

wearing a cap, a striped tie, a jacket (one hand is in his

jacket pocket,

horizontally striped calf-length socks, and laced shoes)

26

MEMORIZIN' MO

Mo memorized the dictionary

But just can't seem to find a job

Or anyone who wants to marry

Someone who memorized the dictionary.

[illustration: a large open book with a pair of feet sticking out from under it and hands holding the book open.]

30

[illustration: at the top of the page, a large star with a small person kneeling on one of the points polishing it]

SOMEBODY HAS TO

Somebody has to go polish the stars,

They're looking a little bit dull.

Somebody has to go polish the stars,



For the eagles and starlings and gulls  
Have all been complaining they're tarnished and worn,  
They say they want new ones we cannot afford.  
So please get your rags  
And your polishing jars,  
Somebody has to go polish the stars.

28

## REFLECTION

Each time I see the Upside-Down Man  
Standing in the water,  
I look at him and start to laugh,  
Although I shouldn't oughtter.  
For maybe in another world  
Another time  
Another town,  
Maybe HE is right side up

And I am upside down.

[illustration: a baldheaded person standing in the water looking at his reflection]

29

## FANCY DIVE

The fanciest dive that ever was dove

Was done by Melissa of Coconut Grove.

She bounced on the board and flew into the air

With a twist of her head and a twirl of her hair.

She did thirty-four jackknives, backflipped and spun,

Quadruple gainered, and reached for the sun,

And then somersaulted nine times and a quarter--

And looked down and saw that the pool had no water.

[illustration: at the bottom of this page is a girl in a bathing suit and bathing cap sitting at the edge of a swimming pool looking up at the girl on the next page.]

43

[Illustration: the diving girl from the poem is in mid-air, all twisted up,

looking aghast, having just realized there is no water in the pool]

[31]

HERE COMES

Here comes summer,

Here comes summer,

Chirping robin, budding rose.

Here comes summer,

Here comes summer,

Gentle showers, summer clothes.

Here comes summer,

Here comes summer--

Whoosh--shiver--there it goes.

32

THE DRAGON OF GRINDLY GRUN

I'm the Dragon of Grindly Grun,

I breathe fire as hot as the sun.

When a knight comes to fight

I just toast him on sight,

Like a hot crispy cinnamon bun.

When I see a fair damsel go by,

I just sigh a fiery sigh,

And she's baked like a 'tater--

I think of her later

With a romantic tear in my eye.

I'm the Dragon of Grindly Grun,

But my lunches aren't very much fun,

For I like my damsels medium rare,

And they

always

come out well done.

[illustration: at the bottom of the previous page are the peaks of a mountain

range. At the side of this page is a large dragon, sitting on a mountain slope,

with a tear coming down from his eye, looking at a small woman.]

33

## BLAME

I wrote such a beautiful book for you

'Bout rainbows and sunshine

And dreams that come true.

But the goat went and ate it

(You knew that he would),

So I wrote you another one

Fast as I could.

Of course it could never be

Nearly as great

As that beautiful book

That the silly goat ate.

So if you don't like

This new book I just wrote--

Blame the goat.

[illustration: A satisfied-looking large goat sitting on his haunches. In front of

him is a fairly big book with a bite taken out of it.]

34

## MESSY ROOM

Whosever room this is should be ashamed!

His underwear is hanging on the lamp.

His raincoat is there in the overstuffed chair,

And the chair is becoming quite mucky and damp.

His workbook is wedged in the window,

His sweater's been thrown on the floor.

His scarf and one ski are beneath the TV,

And his pants have been carelessly hung on the door.

His books are all jammed in the closet,

His vest has been left in the hall.

A lizard named Ed is asleep in his bed,

And his smelly old sock has been stuck to the wall.

Whoever room this is should be ashamed!

Donald or Robert or Willie or--

Huh? You say it's mine? Oh dear,

I knew it looked familiar!

[illustration: a bunch of stuff going from along the bottom of the page up the

right-hand side to the coat hanging on a hook. There are a nose-and-glasses; binoculars; bottle with straw; boot; drum; long-necked banjo; baseball bat and glove; apple core; shoe; opened book; clock; playing card.

35

NEVER

I've never roped a Brahma bull,

I've never fought a duel,

I've never crossed the desert

On a lop-eared, swayback mule,

I've never climbed an idol's nose

To steal a cursed jewel.

I've never gone down with my ship

Into the bubblin' brine,

I've never saved a lion's life

And then had him save mine,

Or screamed Ahoooo while swingin' through

The jungle on a vine.

I've never dealt draw poker

In a rowdy lumber camp,

Or got up at the count of nine

To beat the world's champ,



I've never had my picture on  
A six-cent postage stamp.  
I've never scored a touchdown  
On a ninety-nine-yard run,  
I've never winged six Daltons  
With my dying brother's gun . . .  
Or kissed Miz Jane, and rode my hoss  
Into the setting sun.  
Sometimes I get so depressed  
'Bout what I haven't done.

36

## DAYAFTER HALLOWEEN

Skeletons, spirits and haunts,  
Skeletons, spirits and haunts.  
It's a halloween sale:  
A nickel a pail

For skeletons, spirits and haunts.

Skeletons, spirits and haunts,

More than most anyone wants.

Will you pay for a shock,

'Cause we're overstocked

On skeletons, spirits and haunts.

[illustration: A short person wearing a large pointed hat has her mouth wide

open calling out her wares. In her hands are heads on tall sticks: a round

head with one eye; an elongated, bald head; a skeleton head; and a bald head

with a large nose, bared teeth, eyelashes, moustache and scraggly beard.]

37

WAVY HAIR

I thought that I had wavy hair

Until I shaved. Instead,

I find that I have

straight

hair

And a very wavy head.

[illustration: A man with a hairless, bumpy head is looking into a hand-held mirror]

38

LONGMOBILE

It's the world's longest car, I swear,

It reaches from Beale Street to Washington Square.

And once you get in it

To go where you're going,

You simply get out, 'cause you're there.

[illustration: the front part of a very long car. The rest of the car extends across

the bottom of the preceding page]

39

## BACKWARD BILL

Backward Bill, Backward Bill,

He lives way up on Backward Hill,

Which is really a hole in the sandy ground

(But that's a hill turned upside down).

Backward Bill's got a backward shack

With a big front porch that's built out back.

You walk through the window and look out the door

And the cellar is up on the very top floor.

Backward Bill he rides like the wind

Don't know where he's going but sees where he's been.

His spurs they go "neigh" and his horse it goes "clang,"

And his six-gun goes "gnab," it never goes "bang."

Backward Bill's got a backward pup,

They eat their supper when the sun comes up,

And he's got a wife named Backward Lil,

"She's my own true hate," says Backward Bill.

Backward Bill wears his hat on his toes

And puts on his underwear over his clothes.

And come every payday he pays his boss,

And rides off a-smilin' a-carryin' his hoss.

44

[illustration: A man sitting backward on a horse. A boot, turned backward, is sitting on his head. The horse is branded with 2 backward capital letter B's.

]

[41]

MR. SMEDS AND MR. SPATS

Mr. Spats

Had twenty-one hats,

And none of them were the same.

And Mr. Smeds

Had twenty-one heads

And only one hat to his name.

[illustration: along the bottom of this page and the next is a row of various kinds

of buildings, short and tall, narrow and wide, each with a lot of windows. A short moustached man in an overcoat is walkin

g  
toward the facing page. On his head  
are 21 hats of various kinds]

[42]

Now, when Mr. Smeds

Met Mr. Spats,

They talked of the

Buying and selling of hats.

And Mr. Spats

Bought

Mr. Smeds'

hat!

Did you ever hear anything

Crazier than that?

[illustration: a man with 21 heads, each with a different kind of expression (some look grouchy, some happy, some surprised), is walking toward the preceding page. The head on top is wearing a hat.]

[43]

## SNAKE PROBLEM

It's not that I don't care for snakes,

But oh what do you do

When a 24-foot python says . . .

[illustration: at the bottom of page 44, stretching into page 45, a long python is twisted into the words I love you. He's looking at a little boy. The boy is standing with his hands clasped behind his back looking as if he doesn't know what to do.]

54

[illustration of the poem on page 47: a large bear sitting in the refrigerator; the

boy is peering from behind the open door. There are grapes

and a broken dish

with spilled liquid on the floor. The fridge is full of food.]

BEAR IN THERE

There's a Polar Bear

In our Frigidaire--

He likes it 'cause it's cold in there.

With his seat in the meat

And his face in the fish

And his big hairy paws

In the buttery dish,

He's nibbling the noodles,

He's munching the rice,

He's slurping the soda,

He's licking the ice.

And he lets out a roar

If you open the door.



And it gives me a scare

To know he's in there--

That Polary Bear

In our Fridgitydaire.

55

## SUPERSTITIOUS

If you are superstitious you'll never step on cracks.

When you see a ladder you will never walk beneath it.

And if you ever spill some salt you'll throw some 'cross your back,

And carry 'round a rabbit's foot just in case you need it.

You'll pick up any pin that you find lying on the ground,

And never, never, ever throw your hat upon the bed,

Or open an umbrella when you are in the house.

You'll bite your tongue each time you say

A thing you shouldn't have said.

You'll hold your breath and cross your fingers

Walkin' by a graveyard,

And number thirteen's never gonna do you any good.

Black cats will all look vicious, if you're superstitious,

But I'm not superstitious (knock on wood).

[illustration at top of page: a hand with very long fingers, one entwined around

the other.]

56

Oh, the blithery, blathery pirate

(His name, I believe, is Claude),

His manner is sullen and irate,

And his humor is vulgar and broad.

He has often been known to imprison

His friends in the hold dark and dank,

Or lash them up high on the mizzen,

Or force them to stroll down a plank.

He will selfishly ask you to dig up  
Some barrels of ill-gotten gold,  
And if you so much as just higgup,  
He'll leave you to fill up the hole.  
He may cast you adrift in a rowboat  
(He has no reaction to tears)  
Or put you ashore without NO boat  
On an island and leave you for years.  
He's a rotter, a wretch and a sinner,  
He's foul as a fellow can be,  
But if you invite him to dinner,  
Oh, please sit him next to me!

[illustration: at the top of the page, a pirate's head - hat with skull and

crossbones, large pointed nose, long bushy beard]

## HURK

I'd rather play tennis than go to the dentist.

I'd rather play soccer than go to the doctor.

I'd rather play Hurk than go to work.

Hurk? Hurk? What's Hurk?

I don't know, but it must be better than work.

50

## ANCHORED

Our anchor's too big for our ship,

So we're sittin' here tryin' to think.

If we leave it behind we'll be lost.

If we haul it on board, we will sink.

If we sit and keep talkin' about it,

It will soon be too late for our trip.

It sure can be rough on a sailor

When the anchor's too big for the ship.

[illustration: a boy and 2 girls are sitting in a boat. The boy is holding a rope attached to a very large anchor, which is resting on the bottom of the lake

under the water. The water and sandy bottom extend from page 50. In the

water next to the boat is a little fish. The boat is near the shore.]

51

## UNSCRATCHABLE ITCH

There is a spot that you can't scratch

Right between your shoulder blades,

Like an egg that just won't hatch

Here you set and there it stays.

Turn and squirm and try to reach it,

Twist your neck and bend your back,

Hear your elbows creak and crack,

Stretch your fingers, now you bet it's

Going to reach--no that won't get it--

Hold your breath and stretch and pray,  
Only just an inch away,  
Worse than a sunbeam you can't catch  
Is that one spot that  
You can't scratch.

[illustration: a man with his hands twisted around trying to scratch his back]

52

## SQUISHY TOUCH

Everything King Midas touched  
Turned to gold, the lucky fellow.  
Every single thing I touch  
Turns to raspberry Jell-O.  
Today I touched the kitchen wall (squish),  
I went and punched my brother Paul (splish).  
I tried to fix my bike last week (sploosh),

And kissed my mother on the cheek (gloosh).

I got into my overshoes (sklush),

I tried to read the Evening News (smush),

I sat down in the easy chair (splush),

I tried to comb my wavy hair (slush).

I took a dive into the sea (glush)--

Would you like to shake hands with me (sklush)?

[illustration: a little girl with curly hair looking up, as if talking to the reader. She is standing in what looks like a pile of suds. Behind her, in the suds, is a woman's face, a leg sticking up, a bike wheel, a shovel, and the back of a chair.

]

53

IMPORANT?

Said little a to big G,

"Without me,

The sea would be

The se,

The flea would be

The fle.

And earth and heaven couldn't be

Without me."

Said big G to little a,

"Even the se

Could crsh nd spry,

Nd the fle would fly

In the sme old wy,

Nd erth nd heven still would be,

Without thee."

[illustration: A very big capital G talking to a smaller lower case a ]

54

THUMB FACE



There is a face upon my thumb--

I did not paint it there--

With pointy ears and winky eyes

And greenish bristly hair.

I keep it hidden from my friends

So that they will not stare.

It has a little twisty mouth,

And yellow teethies, too.

It snickers when I hold my fork,

It giggles when I'm blue,

And laughs and laughs and laughs

At everything I try to do.

[illustration: a very large hand with a thumb with a face on it  
looking at the

other four fingers]

The Homework Machine, oh the Homework Machine,  
Most perfect contraption that's ever been seen.  
Just put in your homework, then drop in a dime,  
Snap on the switch, and in ten seconds' time,  
Your homework comes out, quick and clean as can be.  
Here it is--"nine plus four?" and the answer is "three."

Three?

Oh me . . .

I guess it's not as perfect

As I thought it would be.

[illustration on pages 56 & 57: a boy at the bottom of page 56 is holding a piece

of paper that's coming out of a very large machine, shaped like a right triangle,

inside of which are many gears, pulleys, etc., and another boy sitting inside

writing on a piece of paper.]

[illustration: 8 balloons with strings hanging down floating]

## EIGHT BALLOONS

Eight balloons no one was buyin'

All broke loose one afternoon.

Eight balloons with strings a-flyin',

Free to do what they wanted to.

One flew up to touch the sun--POP!

One thought highways might be fun--POP!

One took a nap in a cactus pile---POP!

One stayed to play with a careless child--POP!

One tried to taste some bacon fryin'--POP!

One fell in love with a porcupine--POP!

One looked close in a crocodile's mouth--POP!

One sat around 'til his air ran out--WHOOSH!

Eight balloons no one was buyin'--

They broke loose and away they flew,  
Free to float and free to fly  
And free to pop where they wanted to.

58

## ATIONS

If we meet and I say, "Hi,"

That's a salutation.

If you ask me how I feel,

That's consideration.

If we stop and talk awhile,

That's a conversation.

If we understand each other,

That's communication.

If we argue, scream and fight,

That's an altercation.

If later we apologize,

That's reconciliation.

If we help each other home,

That's cooperation.

And all these actions added up

Make civilization.

(And if I say this is a wonderful poem,

Is that exaggeration?)

[illustration: a girl and a boy bowing to each other]

59

## MUSICAL CAREER

She wanted to play the piano,

But her hands couldn't reach the keys.

When her hands could finally reach the keys,

Her feet couldn't reach the floor.

When her hands could finally reach the keys,

And her feet could reach the floor,

She didn't want to play that ol' piano anymore.

[illustration: a girl with long, stringy hair sitting on a piano stool in front of an upright piano. Her fingers are on the keys but her feet are dangling. A piece of piano music is propped in front of her, a little too high for her to see. On top of

the piano is a plant.]

60

ANTEATER

"A genuine anteater,"

The pet man told my dad.

Turned out, it was an aunt eater,

And now my uncle's mad!

[illustration: an anteater looking at a pair of high-heeled shoes with straps.]

61

BUCKIN' BRONCO

Can you ride the buckin' bronco?

Can you stay in that ol' saddle

Till your teeth begin to rattle?

Can you whoop and bounce

And stick upon his back?

Can you ride the buckin' bronco

While he's snortin' smoke and kickin'

And your stomach starts to sicken

And you feel as though

Your spine's about to crack?

62

I can ride the buckin' bronco,

I'll just sit up here and whistle

Till his strength begins to fizzle

And he knows that I'm

His master finally.

Yes I'll tame the buckin' bronco,

You can see me settin' easy.

Here's the buckin' bronco,

Here is me.

[Illustration on pages 62 and 63: on the outside edges of both pages, near the bottom, are people in stands at a rodeo cheering. In the center is a large bucking bronco. At the edge of p. 63, near the top, is a pair of booted feet, horizontal, indicating that the rider has been thrown off the bronco. There is an arrow from

the line Here is me pointing to the feet.]

63

SNAP!

She was opening up her umbrella,

She thought it was going to rain,

When we all heard a snap

Like the clap of a trap

And we never have seen her again.

[Illustration: a closed umbrella with a pair of feet sticking out from it.]

64



## OVERDUES

What do I do?

What do I do?

This library book is 42

Years overdue.

I admit that it's mine

But I can't pay the fine--

Should I turn it in

Or hide it again?

What do I do?

What do I do?

[illustration: a man looking very confused, hugging a book to his chest.]

65

## WILD STRAWBERRIES

Are Wild Strawberries really wild?

Will they scratch an adult, will they snap at a child?

Should you pet them, or let them run free where they roam?

Could they ever relax in a steam-heated home?

Can they be trained to not growl at the guests?

Will a litterbox work or would they leave a mess?

Can we make them a Cowberry, herding the cows,

Or maybe a Muleberry pulling the plows,

Or maybe a Huntberry chasing the grouse,

Or maybe a Watchberry guarding the house,

And though they may curl up at your feet oh so sweetly,

Can you ever feel that you trust them completely?

Or should we make a pet out of something less scary,

Like the Domestic Prune or the Imported Cherry,

Anyhow, you've been warned and I will not be blamed

If your Wild Strawberry cannot be tamed.

[illustration: a very large strawberry with short legs and sharp

teeth]

66

HOW TO MAKE A SWING

WITH NO ROPE

OR BOARD OR NAILS

First grow a moustache

A hundred inches long,

Then loop it over a hick'ry limb

(Make sure the limb is strong).

Now pull yourself up off the ground

And wait until the spring--

Then swing!

[Illustration: going up the right-hand side of the page is a tree trunk. From a branch at the top of the page hangs a long string looped under a boy's nose. Apparently it is his moustache, and he is swinging, hands clasped around

h

is knees]

67

## GUMEYE BALL

There's an eyeball in the gumball machine,

Right there between the red and the green,

Lookin' at me as if to say,

"You don't need any more gum today."

[illustration: gumball machine on 4 long legs; an eye is among the gumballs.]

68

## HOT DOG

I have a hot dog for a pet,

The only kind my folks would let

Me get.

He does smell sort of bad

And yet,

He absolutely never gets

The sofa wet.

We have a butcher for a vet,

The strangest vet you ever met.

Guess we're the weirdest family yet,

To have a hot dog for a pet.

[illustration: a boy is holding a hotdog behind him on a long string. He's looking back at the hotdog with a not-too-happy look on his face. He seems t

o

be wearin

g

one-piece pajamas]

77

[illustration: a Frisbee]

ADVENTURES OF A FRISBEE

The Frisbee, he got tired of sailing

To and fro and to;

And thought about the other things

That he might like to do.

So the next time that they threw him,

He turned there in the sky,

And sailed away to try and find

Some new things he could try.

He tried to be an eyeglass,

But no one could see through him.

He tried to be a UFO,

But everybody knew him.

He tried to be a dinner plate,

But he got cracked and quit.

He tried to be a pizza,

But got tossed and baked and bit.

He tried to be a hubcap,

But the cars all moved too quick.

He tried to be a record,

But the spinnin' made him sick.

He tried to be a quarter,

But he was too big to spend.

So he rolled home, quite glad to be

A Frisbee once again.

78

## COME SKATING

They said come skating;

They said it's so nice.

They said come skating;

I'd done it twice.

They said come skating;

It sounded nice. . . .

I wore roller--

They meant ice.

[illustration: a girl's head from the nose up peering through cracked ice; apparently she'd fallen through. She has a cap on her head.]

71

THE MEEHOO WITH AN EXACTLYWATT

Knock knock!

Who's there?

Me!

Me who?

That's right!

What's

right?

Meehoo!

That's

what I want to know!

What's



what you want to know?

Me who?

Yes, exactly!

Exactly what?

Yes, I have an Exactlywatt on a chain!

Exactly

what

on a chain?

Yes!

Yes

what

?

No, Exactlywatt!

That's what I want to know!

I told you---Exactlywatt!

Exactly

what

?

Yes!

Yes what?

Yes, it's with me!

What'

s with you?

Exactlywatt--that's what's with me.

Me who?

Yes!

Go away!

Knock knock . . .

[illustration on pp. 72 & 73: Behind a door a face peeks out. Knocking on the door is a creature with a smiling face holding by a chain a very large blob with feet, one eye, and a cap on its head]

[Illustration: at the side of p. 74, on the top, is a clown's face with a false nose; at the bottom is a leg with a very large shoe.]

## CLOONY THE CLOWN

I'll tell you the story of Cloony the Clown

Who worked in a circus that came through town

His shoes were too big and his hat was too small,

But he just wasn't, just wasn't funny at all.

He had a trombone to play loud silly tunes,

He had a green dog and a thousand balloons.

He was floppy and sloppy and skinny and tall,

But he just wasn't, just wasn't funny at all.

And every time he did a trick,

Everyone felt a little sick.

And every time he told a joke,

Folks sighed as if their hearts were broke.

And every time he lost a shoe,

Everyone looked awfully blue.

And every time he stood on his head,

Everyone screamed, "Go back to bed!"

And every time he made a leap,

Everybody fell asleep.

And every time he ate his tie,

Everyone began to cry.

And Cloony could not make any money

Simply because he was

not funny

.

[74]

One day he said, "I'll tell this town

How it feels to be an unfunny clown."

And he told them all why he looked so sad,

And he told them all why he felt so bad.

He told of Pain and Rain and Cold,  
He told of Darkness in his soul,  
And after he finished his tale of woe,  
Did everyone cry? Oh no, no, no,  
They laughed until they shook the trees  
With "Hah-Hah-Hahs" and "Hee-Hee-Hees."  
They laughed with howls and yowls and shrieks,  
They laughed all day, they laughed all week,  
They laughed until they had a fit,  
They laughed until their jackets split.  
The laughter spread for miles around  
To every city, every town,  
Over mountains, 'cross the sea,  
From Saint Tropez to Mun San Nee.  
And soon the whole world rang with laughter,  
Lasting till forever after,

While Cloony stood in the circus tent,  
With his head drooped low and his shoulders bent.  
And he said, "THAT IS NOT WHAT I MEANT--  
I'M FUNNY JUST BY  
ACCIDENT  
."

And while the world laughed outside,  
Cloony the Clown sat down and cried.

75

TRYIN' ON CLOTHES

I tried on the farmer's hat,  
Didn't fit.

A little too small--just a bit  
Too floppy.

Couldn't get used to it,  
Took it off.

I tried on the dancer's shoes,

A little too loose.

Not the kind you could use

For walkin'.

Didn't feel right in 'em,

Kicked 'em off.

I tried on the summer sun,

Felt good.

Nice and warm--knew it would.

Tried the grass beneath bare feet,

Felt neat.

Finally, finally felt well dressed,

Nature's clothes just fit me best.

[illustration: Under a large triangular-shaped floppy hat sits a person in shorts; all that can be seen of the person is her seat, legs, feet and hands. She's putting a ballet slipper on one foot; the other already has a slipper on it.

]

76

## SHAPES

A square was sitting quietly

Outside his rectangular shack

When a triangle came down--kerplunk!--

And struck him in the back.

"I must go to the hospital,"

Cried the wounded square,

So a passing rolling circle

Picked him up and took him there.

[illustration: Rolling along is a circle with a smile on its face;  
on top of it is a

square, also smiling, and on top of

i

t



,  
resting on its point, is a right triangle,  
also smiling.]

77

TIRED

I've been working so hard you just wouldn't believe,

And I'm tired!

There's so little time and so much to achieve,

And I'm tired!

I've been lying here holding the grass in its place,

Pressing a leaf with the side of my face,

Tasting the apples to see if they're sweet,

Counting the toes on a centipede's feet.

I've been memorizing the shape of that cloud,

Warning the robins to not chirp so loud,

Shooing the butterflies off the tomatoes,

Keeping an eye out for floods and tornadoes.

I've been supervising the work of the ants

And thinking of pruning the cantaloupe plants,

Timing the sun to see what time it sets,

Calling the fish to swim into my nets,

And I've taken twelve thousand and forty-one breaths,

And I'm TIRED!

[illustration: Sticking out from a lot of tall grass we see the legs and

bare feet of a person, apparently sitting; a small butterfly is flying nearby.]

[78]

PREHISTORIC

These lizards, toads and turtles, dear, with which you love to play,

Were Dinosaurs and Plesiosaurs in prehistoric days.

They fought the armored Ankylosaurs and wild Brontosaurus,

Glyptodons and Varanids and hungry Plateosaurus.

Sharklike Ichthyosaurs and flying Pteranodon,

Tyrannosaurus, Kronosaurus and treacherous Trachodon.

Shrieking Archaeopteryx, Triceratops as well,

And those that I cannot pronounce, nor even try to spell.

But anyway, they slowly turned to lizards and turtles and snakes.

And all the brave and wild and woolly prehistoric people--

They turned into us, for goodness' sakes!

[illustration: a bald small boy is sitting on top of the skull of a

giant prehistoric skeleton. The hands and feet of another small person, apparently inside the skull, are sticking out of its eye and nose sockets.]

86

[illustration: a guitar with arms and hands and a wide-open mouth, apparently singing.]

MY GUITAR

Oh, wouldn't it be a most wondrous thing  
To have a guitar that could play and could sing  
By itself--what an absolute joy it would be  
To have a guitar . . . that didn't need me.

80

## SPELLING BEE

I got stung by a bee  
I won't tell you where.  
I got stung by a bee  
I was just lyin' there,  
And it tattooed a message  
I can't let you see  
That spells out . . . . .

[illustratio

n: a person whose pants are down

by his/her

ankles is looking over his/her

shoulder at the reader. On his/her bottom is HELLO.  
YOU'VE BEEN STUNG BY A BEE ]

87

[illustration: We see a person from the waist up with a lot of hair who is sprinkling pepper on his/her head.]

ALWAYS SPRINKLE PEPPER

Always sprinkle pepper in your hair,

Always sprinkle pepper in your hair.

For then if you are kidnapped by a Wild Barbazzoop,

Who sells you to a Ragged Hag

Who wants you for her soup,

She'll pick you up and sniff you,

And then she'll sneeze "Achooo,"

And say, "My tot, you're much too hot,

I fear you'll never do."

And with a shout she'll throw you out,

And you'll run away from there,

And soon you will be safe at home a-sittin' in your chair,

If you always, always, always,

Always, always, always, always,

Always, always sprinkle pepper in your hair.

82

PECKIN'

The saddest thing I ever did see

Was a woodpecker peckin' at a plastic tree.

He looks at me, and Friend, says he,

Things ain't as sweet as they used to be.

[illustration: a woodpecker sitting on a tree in a pot, looking very sad.]

83

IT'S HOT!

It's

hot

!

I can't get cool,

I've drunk a quart of lemonade.

I think I'll take my shoes off

And sit around in the shade.

It's

hot!

My back is sticky,

The sweat rolls down my chin.

I think I'll take my clothes off

And sit around in my skin.

It's

hot!

I've tried with 'lectric fans,

And pools and ice cream cones.

I think I'll take my skin off

And sit around in my bones.

It's

still

hot!

[Illustration: a person with sweat dripping from his face sitting droopingly in a chair. His body, except for his face, is just the bones. There is a fan in front of him and a glass, empty except for ice cubes and a straw, behind the chair.]

84

TURTLE

Our turtle did not eat today,

Just lies on his back in the strangest way

And doesn't move.

I tickled him

And poked at him

And dangled string in front of him,



But he just lies there

Stiff and cold

And sort of staring straight ahead.

Jim says he's dead.

"Oh, no," say I,

"A wooden turtle cannot die!"

[illustration: a turtle on its back]

85

CROWDED TUB

There's too many kids in this tub.

There's too many elbows to scrub.

I just washed a behind

That I'm sure wasn't mine,

There's too many kids in this tub.

[illustration: a bathtub, with a shower pole and dripping shower head at

the left is stuffed with people, with arms and legs sticking out

of the tub. On the floor are puddles of water, a bar of soap, and a frog looking at the tub.]

86

## CHANNELS

Channel 1's no fun.

Channel 2's just news.

Channel 3's hard to see.

Channel 4 is just a bore.

Channel 5 is all jive.

Channel 6 needs to be fixed.

Channel 7 and Channel 8 --

Just old movies, not so great.

Channel 9's a waste of time.

Channel 10 is off, my child.

Wouldn't you like to talk awhile?

98

[Illustration: On a hill is a very large hippopotamus with

wings

and aviator's goggles.]

## HIPPO'S HOPE

There once was a hippo who wanted to fly--

Fly-hi-dee, try-hi-dee, my-hi-dee-ho.

So he sewed him some wings that could flap through the sky--

Ski-hi-dee, fly-hi-dee, why-hi-dee-go.

He climbed to the top of a mountain of snow--

Snow-hi-dee, slow-hi-dee, oh-hi-dee-hoo.

With the clouds high above and the sea down below--

Where-hi-dee, there-hi-dee, scare-hi-dee-boo.

88

(Happy ending)

And he flipped and he flapped and he bellowed so loud--

Now-hi-dee, loud-hi-dee, proud-hi-dee-poop.

And he sailed like an eagle, off into the clouds--

High-hi-dee, fly-hi-dee, bye-hi-dee-boop.

(Unhappy ending)

And he leaped like a frog and he fell like a stone--

Stone-hi-dee, lone-hi-dee, own-hi-dee-flop.

And he crashed and he drowned and broke all his bones--

Bones-hi-dee, moans-hi-dee, groans-hi-dee-glop.

(Chicken ending)

He looked up at the sky and looked down at the sea--

Sea-hi-dee, free-hi-dee, whee-hi-dee-way.

And he turned and went home and had cookies and tea--

That's hi-dee, all hi-dee, I have to say.

89

WHATIF

Last night, while I lay thinking here,

Some Whatifs crawled inside my ear

And pranced and partied all night long

And sang their same old Whatif song:

Whatif I'm dumb in school?

Whatif they've closed the swimming pool?

Whatif I get beat up?

Whatif there's poison in my cup?

Whatif I start to cry?

Whatif I get sick and die?

Whatif I flunk that test?

Whatif green hair grows on my chest?

Whatif nobody likes me?

Whatif a bolt of lightning strikes me?

Whatif I don't grow taller?

Whatif my head starts getting smaller?

Whatif the fish won't bite?

Whatif the wind tears up my kite?

Whatif they start a war?

Whatif my parents get divorced?

Whatif the bus is late?

Whatif my teeth don't grow in straight?

Whatif I tear my pants?

Whatif I never learn to dance?

Everything seems swell, and then

The nighttime Whatifs strike again!

90

SOUR FACE ANN

Sour Face Ann,

With your chin in your hand,

Haven't you ever been pleased?

You used to complain

That you had no fur coat,

And now you complain of the fleas.

[illustration: a chubby girl sitting on the floor, wrapped in a fur coat, with her head in her hand, looking unhappy.]

91

## THE CLIMBERS

A mountain climbing exploration

Took us to these distant peaks

Where no one's ever been before.

Was it my imagination?

Did I feel this mountain move?

Did I hear it snore?

[illustration: pages 92 & 93: a mountain with people crawling up and sliding down the other side. On the upside one person is pulling another, and two people are pulling a third. On the top of the mountain, one person is standing. On the downslope, one person is sliding down; one person seems to have fallen headfirst into the side of the mountain; one person is standing looking

at another who is wedged between rocks at the bottom of the mountain and a cliff. One person is on the top of the cliff helping up another person who has climbed up the cliff.]

## ROCKABYE

Rockabye baby, in the treetop.

Don't you know a treetop

Is no safe place to rock?

And who put you up there,

And your cradle too?

Baby, I think someone down here's

Got it in for you.

[illustration: a baby in a basket on a tree branch]

## THE LITTLE BOY AND THE OLD MAN

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon."

Said the little old man, "I do that too."

The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."

"I do that too," laughed the little old man.



Said the little boy, "I often cry."

The old man nodded, "So do I."

"But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems

Grown-ups don't pay attention to me."

And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.

"I know what you mean," said the little old man.

95

**SURPRISE!**

My Grandpa went to Myrtle Beach

And sent us back a turtle each.

And then he went to Katmandu

And mailed a real live Cockatoo.

From Rio an iguana came,

A smelly goat arrived from Spain.

Now he's in India, you see--

My Grandpa always thinks of me.

[illustration: pages 96 & 97:

a girl is hugging her little brother who is afraid to look at the huge box, which is standing on 6 tall legs and is marked HANDLE WITH CARE; AIR MAIL; POSTAGE DUE; SPECIAL DELIVERY; FRAGILE; PERISHABLE; THIS END UP; OPEN HERE. The box looks like a large square animal and two eyes seem to be looking at the children.]

96 & 97

TICKLISH TOM

Did you hear 'bout Ticklish Tom?

He got tickled by his mom.

Wiggled and giggled and fell on the floor,

Laughed and rolled right out the door.

All the way to school and then

He got tickled by his friends.

Laughed till he fell off his stool,

Laughed and rolled right out of school

Down the stairs and finally stopped

Till he got tickled by a cop.

And all the more that he kept gigglin',

All the more the folks kept ticklin'.

He shrieked and screamed and rolled around,

Laughed his way right out of town.

Through the country down the road,

He got tickled by a toad.

Past the mountains across the plain,

Tickled by the falling rain,

Tickled by the soft brown grass,

Tickled by the clouds that passed.

Giggling, rolling on his back

He rolled on the railroad track.

Rumble, rumble, whistle, roar--

Tom ain't ticklish anymore.

[illustration: a boy rolled up in a ball with a big smile on his

face]

127

[illustration: the top half of a bald man with his fingers in his mouth]

### THE NAILBITER

Some people manicure their nails,

Some people trim them neatly,

Some people keep them filed down,

I bite 'em off completely.

Yes, it's a nasty habit, but

Before you start to scold,

Remember, I have never ever

Scratched a single soul.

99

### THE FLY IS IN

The fly is in

The milk is in

The bottle is in

The fridge is in

The kitchen is in

The house is in

The town.

The flea is on

The dog is on

The quilt is on

The bed is on

The carpet is on

The floor is on

The ground.

The worm is under

The ground is under

The grass is under

The blanket is under

The diaper is under

The baby is under

The tree.

The bee is bothering

The puppy is bothering

The dog is bothering

The cat is bothering

The baby is bothering

Mama is bothering

Me.

100

## STRANGE WIND

What a strange wind it was today,

Whistlin' and whirlin' and scurlin' away

Like a worried old woman with so much to say.

What a strange wind it was today.

What a strange wind it was today,

Cool and clear from a sky so grey

And my hat stayed on but my head blew away--

What a strange wind it was today.

[illustration: the top half of a man, dressed in jacket, vest and shirt, with

tie flying and hat on top of where a head should be but isn't - just a blank space.]

101

ONE TWO

One two, buckle my shoe.

"Buckle your own shoe!"

Who said that?

"I did. What are you doing with those silly buckles on your shoes anyway?"

Three, four, shut the door.

"You shut it--you opened it."

Er . . . five, six, pick up sticks.

"Why should I pick them up--do you think I'm your slave? Buckle my shoe, shut the door, pick up sticks, next thing you'll be telling me to lay them straight."

But it's only a poem. . . . Nine, ten, a big fat . . . oh never mind.

102

TUSK, TUSK

The Walrus got braces,

And that's why his face is

A tangle of wires and steel.

He'll sit and he'll wait

Till his tusks are both straight--

And then think how happy he'll feel!

(But meanwhile, they're ruining his meal.)



[Illustration: a walrus sitting atop an iceberg with wires and braces

around his tusks.]

103

### CAPTAIN BLACKBEARD DID WHAT?

The sea is a-roarin', the sea gulls they screech,

The bosun he rants and he raves.

And the whole scurvy crew

Says, "It's true, yes it's true,

Ol' Captain Blackbeard's shaved."

We had buried some treasure (and bodies as well)

And was just sailin' back from the cave,

When he calls fer boiled water

And stomps down below

An' gor' but he comes up shaved.

There's a chickenish stubble, and fishbelly skin

On that face, once so blazin' and brave.

And his ol' faithful parrot  
Can hardly bear it  
Since ol' Captain Blackbeard shaved.  
When he shouts, "Board and sink her!"  
It sounds like a clinker  
And gets lots of laughs from the slaves.  
And his loud bawdy songs  
Seem a little bit wrong  
Since ol' Captain Blackbeard shaved.  
Now no one is fearing his look or his lash  
Or his threats of a watery grave.  
And things ain't the same  
In the piratin' game  
Since ol' Captain Blackbeard shaved.

[Illustration: pages 104 & 105: a pirate, bald and beardless,  
is sitting on

a railing. A parrot above is screeching at him. Three other pirates with beards, one with a moustache, are pointing at him and laughing.]

104 & 105

[illustration: a child flying through the starry sky on a magic carpet]

## MAGIC CARPET

You have a magic carpet

That will whiz you through the air,

To Spain or Maine or Africa

If you just tell it where.

So will you let it take you

Where you've never been before,

Or will you buy some drapes to match

And use it

On your

Floor?

106

## OUTSIDE OR UNDERNEATH?

Bob bought a hundred-dollar suit

But couldn't afford any underwear.

Says he, "If your outside looks real good

No one will know what's under there."

Jack bought some hundred-dollar shorts

But wore a suit with rips and tears.

Says he, "It won't matter what people see

As long as I know what's under there."

Tom bought a flute and a box of crayons,

Some bread and cheese and a golden pear.

And as for his suit or his underwear

He doesn't think about them much . . . or care.

107

## IT'S ALL THE SAME TO THE CLAM

You may leave the clam on the ocean's floor,

It's all the same to the clam.

For a hundred thousand years or more,

It's all the same to the clam.

You may bury him deep in mud and muck

Or carry him 'round to bring you luck,

Or use him for a hockey puck,

It's all the same to the clam.

You may call him Jim or Frank or Nell,

It's all the same to the clam.

Or make an ashtray from his shell,

It's all the same to the clam.

You may take him riding on the train

Or leave him sitting in the rain.

You'll never hear the clam complain,

It's all the same to the clam.

Yes, the world may stop or the world may spin,

It's all the same to the clam.

And the sky may come a-fallin' in,

It's all the same to the clam.

And man may sing his endless songs

Of wronging rights and righting wrongs.

The clam just sets--and gets along,

It's all the same to the clam.

[illustration: a slightly open clam shell with eyes peering out]

108

HULA EEL

Take an eel,

Make a loop,

Use him as a Hula Hoop.

Feel him twist and twirl and spin,

Down your ankles, round your chin,

Tighter, tighter, tighter yet,

Ain't an eel a lovely pet?

Hey--answer when I talk to you--

Don't just stand there turning blue.

[illustration: a child with a lot of spiky hair being squeezed tightly

by a long eel that is wrapped around him]

109

BORED

I can't afford

A skateboard.

I can't afford

An outboard.

I can't afford

A surfboard.

All I can afford

Is a board.

[illustration: a boy holding a very long board with a nail in one end]

110

## STANDING IS STUPID

Standing is stupid,

Crawling's a curse,

Skipping is silly,

Walking is worse.

Hopping is hopeless,

Jumping's a chore,

Sitting is senseless,

Leaning's a bore.

Running's ridiculous,

Jogging's insane--

Guess I'll go upstairs and

Lie down again.



## WHO ORDERED THE BROILED FACE?

Well, here you are,

Just as you ordered,

Broiled face with butter sauce,

Mashed potatoes on the side.

What do you mean you wanted me fried?

[illustration: a man's angry-looking face, mouth open, on a tray, balanced

on a waiter's fingers]

## THE MAN IN THE IRON PAIL MASK

He's the man in the iron pail mask,

He can do the most difficult task,

He can duel, he can joust,

He can charge, he can chase,

He can climb, he can rhyme,

He can wrestle and race.

He'll show you his courage

But never his face,

No matter how often you ask.

He's the Brave and the Fearless

The usually Tearless

Man in the iron pail mask.

[illustration: a boy in overalls with a big pail covering his head and face

and a play sword in his hand.]

113

[illustration: On the top of the page, A large bird looking sort of like a

goose but with a very big tummy is flying; an egg has dropped part way down the page.]

GOOLOO

The Gooloo bird

She has no feet,  
She cannot walk  
Upon the street.  
She cannot build  
Herself a nest,  
She cannot land  
And take a rest.  
Through rain and snow  
And thunderous skies,  
She weeps forever  
As she flies,  
And lays her eggs  
High over town,  
And prays that they  
Fall safely down.

## HEADACHE

Having a tree growing up out of me

Is often a worrisome thing.

I'm twisty and thorny and branchy and bare

But wait till you see me in Spring.

[illustration: the top half of a boy with a large branchy tree growing from his forehead]

115

## QUICK TRIP

We've been caught by the quick-digesting Gink,

[illustration: kicking legs of two children are in the bottom half of a very large, open mouth with sharp teeth]

116

And now we are dodgin' his teeth . . .

[illustration: the front and middle part of the long serpentine body of the creature in

whose mouth the children ar

e

, and its front legs]

117

And now we are restin' in his intestine,

[illustration: the end of the creature's body,

with tail and rear legs]

118

And now we're back out on the street.

[illustration: one child tumbling, the other sitting on the ground]

119

LITTLE ABIGAIL AND THE BEAUTIFUL PONY

There was a girl named Abigail

Who was taking a drive

Through the country

With her parents

When she spied a beautiful sad-eyed

Grey and white pony.

And next to it was a sign

That said,

FOR SALE--CHEAP.

Oh, said Abigail,

"May I have that pony?

May I please?"

And her parents said,

"No you may not."

And Abigail said,

"But I **MUST** have that pony."

And her parents said,

"Well, you can't have that pony,

But you can have a nice butter pecan

Ice cream cone when we get home.

[illustration: a young woman with long hair is lying in bed, eyes closed,

head resting on pillows which are piled high against a tall headboard. Above her, pinned to the wall, is a picture of a horse and the words, THE PONY THAT THEY WOULDN'T BUY ME. TOO LATE! ]

120

And Abigail said,

"I don't want a butter pecan

Ice cream cone,

I WANT THAT PONY--

I MUST HAVE THAT PONY."

And her parents said,

"Be quiet and stop nagging--

You're not getting that pony."

And Abigail began to cry and said,

"If I don't get that pony I'll die."

And her parents said, "You won't die.

No child ever died yet from not getting a pony."

And Abigail felt so bad

That when they got home she went to bed,

And she couldn't eat,

And she couldn't sleep,

And her heart was broken,

And she DID die--

All because of a pony

That her parents wouldn't buy.

(This is a good story

To read to your folks

When they won't buy

You something you want.)

[illustration: a man on his knees, facing the bed on the preceding page,

hands clasped, tears running down his face. He's thinking,  
OH WHAT



FOOLS WE WERE. His wife is standing behind him in a nightgown, hand

over her eyes, tears running down her cheeks. She's thinking, OH, IF SHE WERE ONLY ALIVE I WOULD BUY HER A HUNDRED PONIES. ]

121

## HICCUP CURE

Hic . . .

Hic . . .

Hic . . .

Hic . . .

Want to cure your hiccups quick?

Stick out your tongue and bite your lip.

Hold your breath and shake one hip,

Pull back your left foot and kick up.

Now, you see, we've cured your hiccup.

Nothing much to it--don't you feel swell?

Hic . . .

Oh well . . .

122

## THE PAINTER

I'm the man who paints the stripes upon the zebras,

And I also paint the warts upon the toad.

And with this brush and pot

I give leopards lovely spots

And add some color to the chipmunk's coat.

I paint the flamin' red on Robin Redbreast,

I pour the blue on bluegills by the shore.

And when the firefly's dim

I splash silver paint on him,

And he shines more brightly than he did before.

Jack Frost? He's just a part-time workin' fellah,

Touchin' up the leaves and trees and things.

He's famouser than me,

But I'm happier than he,

'Cause I paint the ones that runs--and flies--and sings!

[illustration: along the bottom of pages 122 & 123 a tall man is lying on the

floor using a large paintbrush to paint a duck. H

e's bald and has a big grin on

his face and a very big chin. He's wearing a tank top, long pants and sandals.]

128

NOBODY

Nobody loves me,

Nobody cares,

Nobody picks me peaches and pears.

Nobody offers me candy and Cokes,

Nobody listens and laughs at my jokes.

Nobody helps when I get in a fight,

Nobody does all my homework at night.

Nobody misses me,

Nobody cries,

Nobody thinks I'm a wonderful guy.

So if you ask me who's my best friend, in a whiz,

I'll stand up and tell you that Nobody is.

But yesterday night I got quite a scare,

I woke up and Nobody just wasn't there.

I called out and reached out for Nobody's hand,

In the darkness where Nobody usually stands.

Then I poked through the house, in each cranny and nook,

But I found somebody each place that I looked.

I searched till I'm tired, and now with the dawn,

There's no doubt about it--

Nobody's gone.

## ZEBRA QUESTION

I asked the zebra,

Are you black with white stripes?

Or white with black stripes?

And the zebra asked me,

Are you good with bad habits?

Or are you bad with good habits?

Are you noisy with quiet times?

Or are you quiet with noisy times?

Are you happy with some sad days?

Or are you sad with some happy days?

Are you neat with some sloppy ways?

Or are you sloppy with some neat ways?

And on and on and on and on

And on and on he went.

I'll never ask a zebra

About stripes

Again.

[illustration: a boy with a note pad facing an annoyed-looking zebra whose

head is sticking out between the bars of a large cage.]

[125]

## THE SWORD-SWALLOWER

The great sword-swallower Salomar,

He wears no ties or collars.

He leans back, opens up his mouth,

And "Gulp," his sword he swallows.

I guess he finds it fun to feel

That steel down in his belly.

It's fine for he, but as for me--

I'll take some bread and jelly.

[illustration: a chubby man with a turban and a sword sticking out of his mouth.]

126

## ARROWS

I shot an arrow toward the sky,

It hit a white cloud floating by.

The cloud fell dying to the shore,

I don't shoot arrows anymore.

[illustration: a very sad boy holding a bow looking at a fluffy cloud that is on the ground with an arrow stuck in it.]

127

## THE TOAD

### AND THE KANGAROO

Said the Toad to the Kangaroo,

"I can hop and so can you,

So if we marry we'll have a child

Who can jump a mountain or hop a mile

And we can call it a Toadaroo,"

Said the hopeful Toad to the Kangaroo.

Said the Kangaroo, "My dear,

What a perfectly lovely idea.

I would most gladly marry you,

But as for having a Toadaroo,

I'd rather we call it a Kangaroad,"

Said the Kangaroo to the frowning Toad.

So they argued but couldn't agree

On Rangaroo or Kangaree

And finally the Toad said, "I don't give a dang

If it's Rootakoad or Toadakang--

I really don't feel like marrying you!"

"Fine with me," said the Kangaroo.

And the Toad had no more to say,

And the Kangaroo just hopped away.

And they never married or had a child



That could jump a mountain or hop a mile.

What a loss--what a shame--

Just 'cause they couldn't agree on a name.

[illustration: a toad on the top of page 128 is on the top of a tall hill. He's talking to a large kangaroo with flowers in its hand and in its pocket, on page 129, facing him.]

134

[illustration: on page 130 is a large fat batter standing on one leg about to swing his bat. On page 131 is a boy all rolled up like a ball.]

PLAY BALL

Okay, let's play, I think that we

Have everyone we need.

I'll be the strong-armed pitcher

Who can throw with blinding speed.

And Pete will be the catcher

Who squats low and pounds his mitt,

And Mike will be the home-run king

Who snarls and waits to hit

One, loud and long and hard and high,

Way out beyond the wall.

So let's get start-- What? You? Oh, yes,

You can be the ball!

130 & 131

## FRIENDSHIP

I've discovered a way to stay friends forever--

There's really nothing to it.

I simply tell you what to do

And you do it!

[illustration: a hand with a finger pointing]

## EXAMINATION

I went to the doctor--

He reached down my throat,

He pulled out a shoe

And a little toy boat,  
He pulled out a skate  
And a bicycle seat,  
And said, "Be more careful  
About what you eat."

132

## POEMSICLE

If you add sicle to your pop,  
Would he become a Popsicle?  
Would a mop become a mopsicle?  
Would a cop become a copsicle?  
Would a chop become a chopsicle?  
Would a drop become a dropsicle?  
Would a hop become a hopsicle?  
I guess it is time to stopsicle,  
Or is it timesicle to stopsicle?

Heysicle, I can't stopsicle.

Ohsicle mysicle willsicle lsicle

Havesicle tosicle talksicle

Likesicle thissicle foreversicle--

Huhsicle?

[illustration: a man's head is attached to a triangular frame which is

attached to a wheel.]

133

## SENSES

A Mouth was talking to a Nose and an Eye.

A passing listening Ear

Said, "Pardon me, but you spoke so loud,

I couldn't help but overhear."

But the Mouth just closed and the Nose turned up

And the Eye just looked away,

And the Ear with nothing more to hear

Went sadly on its way.

[illustration: across the bottom of the page, an open mouth, a nose, and an open eye with lashes; and, at the bottom of the next page, an ear.]

139

[illustration: a head hinged where the forehead would be. The top of the head is pushed back, so that an opening is visible above the face. This opening is full of worm-like stuff.

HINGES

If we had hinges on our heads

There wouldn't be no sin,

'Cause we could take the bad stuff out

And leave the good stuff in.

135

FEAR

Barnabus Browning

Was scared of drowning,

So he never would swim

Or get into a boat

Or take a bath

Or cross a moat.

He just sat day and night

With his door locked tight

And the windows nailed down,

Shaking with fear

That a wave might appear,

And cried so many tears

That they filled up the room

And he drowned.

[illustration: To the left of the poem on p. 136 is part of a door, with a key floating near it under water. To the right of the poem, and on page 137, many things that would be in Barnabus' bedroom, including Barnabus, are floating in or at the top of water. Barnabus; a partly eaten sandwich; a toothbrush; a horseshoe; a cap; a shoe; an open book; an apple core; an alarm clock; and pencil and papers are floating

in

the water. Barnabus' bed is on the floor; the bedclothes are floating up from the bed. A telephone is on the floor with the receiver and cord having floated to the top; a chair; a desk; a lamp; a cup; and a vase with flowers are floating at the top.]

136 & 137

TWISTABLE, TURNABLE MAN

He's the Twistable Turnable Squeezable Pullable  
Stretchable Foldable Man.

He can crawl in your pocket or fit in your locket

Or screw himself into a twenty-volt socket,

Or stretch himself up to the steeple or taller,

Or squeeze himself into a thimble or smaller,

Yes he can, course he can,

He's the Twistable Turnable Squeezable Pullable  
Stretchable Shrinkable Man.

And he lives a passable life

With his Squeezable Lovable Kissable Hugable  
Pullable Tugable Wife.

And they have two twistable kids  
Who bend up the way that they did.

And they turn and they stretch

For this Bendable Foldable

Do-what-you're-toldable

Easily moldable

Buy-what-you're-soldable

Washable Mendable

Highly dependable

Buyable Saleable

Always available

Bounceable Shakable

Almost unbreakable

Twistable Turnable Man.



[illustration: a man with arms and legs all twisted around him]

138

BATTY

The baby bat

Screamed out in fright,

"Turn on the dark,

I'm afraid of the light."

[illustration: a bat with big eyes and a pointy nose looking afraid]

142

[illustration: From the left side of p. 140 to the right side of p. 141

is stretched a group of children of all shapes: round and thin, bald and

with hair, boys and girls, and a baby. Some are stretching a banner that

says Union for Children's Rights. Various others are holding poles with

signs that say UCR; STRIKE! STRIKE! FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS; LONGER

WEEK ENDS; SHORTER SCHOOL HOURS; HIGHER ALLOWANCES; LESS

BATHS AND SHOWERS; NO BRUSSEL SPROUTS; MORE ROOT BEER; AND SEVENTEEN SUMMER VACATIONS A YEAR; IF YOU'RE READY TO STRIKE-LINE UP RIGHT HERE

]

143

[illustration: a hand holding a long feather]

HITTING

Use a log to hit a hog.

Use a twig to hit a pig.

Use a rake to hit a snake.

Use a swatter to hit an otter.

Use a ski to hit a bee.

And use a feather when you hit me.

CATCHING

I tried to catch a cold  
As he went running past  
On a damp and chilly  
Afternoon in autumn.

I tried to catch a cold,  
But he skittered by so fast  
That I missed him--  
But I'm glad to hear you caught him.

142

DEAF DONALD

Deaf Donald met Talkie Sue

But

[picture of 3 boys signing: hand with thumb pointing to self;  
hands crossed over chest; knuckles pointing to other  
person]

was all he could do

And Sue said, "Donald, I sure do like you."

But

[picture of 3 boys signing: hand with thumb pointing to self;  
hands crossed over chest; knuckles pointing to other  
person]

was all he could do

And Sue asked Donald, "Do you like me too?"

But

[picture of 3 boys signing: hand with thumb pointing to self;  
hands crossed over chest; knuckles pointing to other  
person]

was all he could do

"Good-bye then, Donald, I'm leaving you."

But

[picture of 3 boys signing: hand with thumb pointing to self;  
hands crossed over chest; knuckles pointing to other  
person]

was all he could do

And she left forever so she never knew

That [

hand with thumb pointing to self;

hands crossed over chest; knuckles pointing to other person]

means I love you.

156

[illustration: an octopus under the water]

144

HAVE FUN

It's safe to swim

In Pemrose Park.

I guarantee

There are no sharks.

[illustration: a girl swimming toward the preceding page,  
where the

octopus is under the water]

145

## DOG'S DAY

They could have sung me just one song

To kind of sort of celebrate.

Or left a present on the lawn

A juicy bone, a piece of steak--

Instead of just a candle on

This lump of dog food on my plate.

But no one cares when a dog was born,

And this ain't much of a birthday cake.

[Illustration: a dejected-looking dog with a nightcap on his head. Next

to him is a dish piled high with dog food with a lit candle stuck in it.]

146

## SKIN STEALER

This evening I unzipped my skin

And carefully unscrewed my head,

Exactly as I always do

When I prepare myself for bed.

And while I slept a coo-coo came

As naked as could be

And put on the skin

And screwed on the head

That once belonged to me.

Now wearing my feet

He runs through the street

In a most disgraceful way,

Doin' things and sayin' things

I'd never do or say,

Ticklin' the children

And kickin' the men

And dancin' the ladies away.

So if he makes your bright eyes cry

Or makes your poor head spin,

That scoundrel you see

Is not really me--

He's the coo-coo

Who's wearing my skin.

[Illustration: a strange-looking creature with 3 hands and 3 feet

pulling on a suit of skin as if it were a pair of pajamas. He has one

leg and one hand in it, but it's too short for him. He has one eye

and a wide grinning mouth.]

147

LADIES FIRST

Pamela Purse yelled,

"Ladies first,"

Pushing in front of the ice cream line.

Pamela Purse yelled,



"Ladies first,

Grabbing the ketchup at dinnertime.

Climbing on the morning bus

She'd shove right by all of us

And there'd be a tiff or a fight or a fuss

When Pamela Purse yelled,

"Ladies first.

Pamela Purse screamed,

"Ladies first,

When we went off on our jungle trip.

Pamela Purse said her thirst was worse

And guzzled our water, every sip.

And when we got grabbed by that wild savage band

Who tied us together and made us all stand

In a long line in front of the King of the land--

A cannibal known as Fry-'Em-Up Dan,

Who sat on his throne in a bib so grand  
With a lick on his lips and a fork in his hand,  
As he tried to decide who'd be first in the pan--  
From back of the line, in that shrill voice of hers,  
Pamela Purse yelled,  
"Ladies first.

[Illustration: the poem is on p. 148. At the bottom, in the left corner, is a girl with her hand raised apparently shouting Ladies first.

On the facing page, p. 149, is a fat cannibal king with a wreath on

his head and big smile on his face. In his right hand is a fork and in his

left, a knife. He sits on a throne which h

as two skulls on the top of it.

]

## FROZEN DREAM

I'll take the dream I had last night

And put it in my freezer,

So someday long and far away

When I'm an old grey geezer,

I'll take it out and thaw it out,

This lovely dream I've frozen,

And boil it up and sit me down

And dip my old cold toes in.

[Illustration: an old man wrapped in a blanket sitting in a high-backed

chair with his feet in a pail of what looks like water - but the pail is marked

DREAM #5]

150

## THE LOST CAT

We can't find the cat,

We don't know where she's at,

Oh, where did she go?

Does anyone know?

Let's ask this walking hat.

[illustration: a large woman's hat with 4 little black feet sticking out from underneath, walking toward the right.]

151

GOD'S WHEEL

God says to me with kind of a smile,

"Hey how would you like to be God awhile

And steer the world?"

"Okay," says I, "I'll give it a try.

Where do I set?

How much do I get?

What time is lunch?

When can I quit?"

"Gimme back that wheel," says God,

"I don't think you're quite ready yet."

[Illustration: spreading over the bottoms of pages 152 and 153 is a

very large top half of the world with a large steering wheel on top.

A small boy is standing on part of it below the wheel talking to an

unseen Being above.]

152

## SHADOW RACE

Every time I've raced my shadow

When the sun was at my back,

It always ran ahead of me,

Always got the best of me.

But every time I've raced my shadow

When my face was toward the sun,

I won.

## CLARENCE

Clarence Lee from Tennessee

Loved the commercials he saw on TV.

He watched with wide believing eyes

And bought everything they advertised--

Cream to make his skin feel better,

Spray to make his hair look wetter,

Bleach to make his white things whiter,

Stylish jeans that fit much tighter.

Toothpaste for his cavities,

Powder for his doggie's fleas,

Purple mouthwash for his breath,

Deodorant to stop his sweat.

He bought each cereal they presented,

Bought each game that they invented.

Then one day he looked and saw

"A brand-new Maw, a better Paw!

New, improved in every way--

Hurry, order yours today!"

So, of course, our little Clarence

Sent off for two brand-new parents.

The new ones came in the morning mail,

The old ones he sold at a garage sale.

And now they all are doing fine:

His new folks treat him sweet and kind,

His old ones work in an old coal mine.

So if your Maw and Paw are mean

And make you eat your lima beans

And make you wash and make you wait

And never let you stay up late

And scream and scold and preach and pout,

That simply means they're wearing out.

So send off for two brand-new parents

And you'll be as happy as little Clarence.

[154]

[Illustration: On the right-hand side of the page, Clarence's parents, in bathrobes and slippers, are standing on the doorstep looking surprised.

Clarence, dressed in short overalls and a short-sleeved shirt, is running

happily, arms upraised, off the doorstep to welcome his new parents,

who are sitting in the mailbag that's atop the mailman's back. They are smiling at Clarence.]

155

RHINO PEN

Tell me then,

Of all you've seen,

What could be more preposterous



Than forgetting your pen

And writing a theme

With

The

Horn

Of

A

Patient

Rhinoceros?

157

[Illustration: A row of students sitting at school desks starts at the bottom

right-hand side of page 156 and continues across the bottom of page 157.

The boy at the first desk is writing with the horn of a rhinoceros. The rest

of the very big rhino is floating upside

down

above him. Behind the boy are a girl

writing with a fountain pen; a boy with glasses writing with a ball-point pen; and a girl writing with a fountain pen. Inkwells are on the desk of the first boy and the girl behind him.]

158

IF

If I had wheels instead of feet

And roses 'stead of eyes

Then I could drive to the flower show

And maybe win a prize.

PUSH BUTTON

I push the light switch button and--

click

--the light goes on.

I push the lawn mower button and--

voom

--it mows the lawn.

I push the root beer button and--

whoosh

--it fills my cup.

I push the glove compartment button--

clack

--it opens up.

I push the TV button and-

zap

--there's Wyatt Earp.

I push my belly button . . .

BURP!

158

KIDNAPPED!

This morning I got kidnapped

By three masked men.

They stopped me on the sidewalk,  
And offered me some candy,  
And when I wouldn't take it  
They grabbed me by the collar,  
And pinned my arms behind me,  
And shoved me in the backseat  
Of this big black limousine and  
Tied my hands behind my back  
With sharp and rusty wire.  
Then they put a blindfold on me  
So I couldn't see where they took me,  
And plugged up my ears with cotton  
So I couldn't hear their voices.  
And drove for 20 miles or  
At least for 20 minutes, and then  
Dragged me from the car down to

Some cold and moldy basement,  
Where they stuck me in a corner  
And went off to get the ransom  
Leaving one of them to guard me  
With a shotgun pointed at me,  
Tied up sitting on a stool . . .  
That's why I'm late for school!

[illustration: a blindfolded girl sitting on a box, arms and legs chained and ropes wrapped around her legs and arms and body.]

159

SUSPENSE

Oh Murdering Jack

Tied Louise to the track

In a plan that was grisly and gory,

While back in the shack

Was her Marvelous Mack,  
Held prisoner there by the Outlaw Suntory.  
Then the wolf pack attacked  
And then down from the stack  
With six-guns ablaze jumped young Billy McClory.  
A CRASH! And a CRY! And I'm sorry but I  
Have forgotten the rest of the story.

[160]

DINNER GUEST

When the Razor-Tooth Sline  
Comes to my house to dine,  
You may find me in France or Detroit,  
Or off in Khartoum or in the spare room  
Of my Uncle Ed's place in Beloit.  
You may find me in Philly, Racine or Rabat,  
You may reach me in Malmo or Ghor.

You may see me in Sikkim and likely as not

You will run into me at the store.

You may find me in Hamburg

Or up in St. Paul,

In Kyoto, Kenosha or Nome,

But one thing is sure, if you find me at all,

You

NEVER

shall find me at home.

[illustration: In the bottom right-hand corner of the page is a two-story

house. The Razor-Tooth Sline's feet are on the bottom of the preceding

page; his long legs rise almost to the top of the page. His large-winged,

very plump body is at the top of both pages. His long neck and drooling

mouth are hanging down, nearing the house. He looks

something like a

bald dragon, but his tongue is a lot shorter.]

[161]

## IN SEARCH OF CINDERELLA

From dusk to dawn,

From town to town,

Without a single clue,

I seek the tender, slender foot

To fit this crystal shoe.

From dusk to dawn,

I try it on

Each damsel that I meet.

And I still love her so, but oh,

I've started hating feet.

[illustration: a crowned prince kneeling on one knee holding a crystal shoe

toward an empty chair.]



## ALMOST PERFECT

Almost perfect . . . but not quite.

Those were the words of Mary Hume

At her seventh birthday party,

Looking 'round the ribboned room.

This tablecloth is

pink

, not

white

--

Almost perfect . . . but not quite.

Almost perfect . . . but not quite.

Those were the words of grown-up Mary

Talking about her handsome beau,

The one she wasn't gonna marry.

Squeezes me a bit too tight-  
Almost perfect . . . but not quite.  
Almost perfect . . . but not quite.  
Those were the words of ol' Miss Hume  
Teaching in the seventh grade,  
Grading papers in the gloom  
Late at night up in her room.  
They never cross their t's just right-  
Almost perfect . . . but not quite.  
Ninety-eight the day she died  
Complainin' 'bout the spotless floor.  
People shook their heads and sighed,  
Guess that she'll like heaven more.  
Up went her soul on feathered wings,  
Out the door, up out of sight.

Another voice from heaven came--

"Almost perfect . . . but not quite."

163

### PIE PROBLEM

If I eat one more piece of pie, I'll die.

If I can't have one more piece of pie, I'll die.

So since it's all decided I must die,

I might as well have one more piece of pie.

MMMM-OOOH-MY!

Chomp-Gulp-'Bye.

[illustration: a large fat arm and hand reaching out for a slice of pie]

164

### THE OAK AND THE ROSE

An oak tree and a rosebush grew,

Young and green together,

Talking the talk of growing things--

Wind and water and weather.

And while the rosebush sweetly bloomed

The oak tree grew so high

That now it spoke of newer things--

Eagles, mountain peaks and sky.

"I guess you think you're pretty great,"

The rose was heard to cry,

Screaming as loud as it possibly could

To the treetop in the sky.

"And you have no time for flower talk,

Now that you've grown so tall."

"It's not so much that I've grown," said the tree,

"It's just that you've stayed so small."

[illustration: The gnarled thick trunk of a tree and below it a petaled rose]

## THEY'VE PUT A BRASSIERE ON THE CAMEL

They've put a brassiere on the camel,

She wasn't dressed proper, you know.

They've put a brassiere on the camel

So that her humps wouldn't show.

And they're making other respectable plans,

They're even insisting the pigs should wear pants,

They'll dress up the ducks if we give them the chance

Since they've put a brassiere on the camel.

They've put a brassiere on the camel,

They claim she's more decent this way.

They've put a brassiere on the camel,

The camel had nothing to say.

They squeezed her into it, I'll never know how,

They say that she looks more respectable now,

Lord knows what they've got in mind for the cow,

Since they've put a brassiere on the camel.

[illustration: the poem is on p. 166; on page 167 is a camel with its two

humps covered by a brassiere, the straps of which are around the camel's

middle and rear. The camel is looking perplexed.]

166 & 167

## THIS BRIDGE

This bridge will only take you halfway there

To those mysterious lands you long to see:

Through gypsy camps and swirling Arab fairs

And moonlit woods where unicorns run free.

So come and walk awhile with me and share

The twisting trails and wondrous worlds I've known.

But this bridge will only take you halfway there--

The last few steps you'll have to take alone.

[illustration: The poem is on p. 169. On p. 168 is part of a

bridge bending toward the poem on p. 169, with a person standing on the very end. At the bottom of both pages, under the curve of the bridge and under the poem,

are roads leading to different kinds of places: a mosque; a skyscraper; something that looks like the Space Needle; something that looks like a medieval castle]

[168 & 169]

[illustration: a girl and a boy bowing to each other]

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[illustration at bottom of page: a bald man with bushy eyebrows and a

moustache that completely covers his body and trails behind him all across

the page and halfway into the preceding page]

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[illustration: a half-mask, eyes and nose looking at the words below]

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[Shel Silverstein's signature]

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With an Exactlywatt" was inspired by Abbott and Costello,  
and "Deaf Donald" showed up after a conversation with  
Pare Larsson. The rest I just made up.

S.S.