

*There's a little ambiguity over  
there among the bluebells*

*By Ruth Krauss*

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*There's a little ambiguity over  
there among the bluebells*

*By Ruth Krauss*

Although the literary world knows Ruth Krauss best as the author of, quite literally, dozens of utterly delightful books for children, the theater world has increasingly come to know another aspect of her work — the poem plays collected here for the first time as a selection in a book.

Some of these plays are really poems. That is to say that the delight in reading the texts on which the performances are based adds to and complements the whole experience of seeing the staged realization in a very special way, because one can visualize so clearly and perfectly for oneself all the potentials of the images on which the performance is based.

Similarly, some of these poems are really plays, pre-

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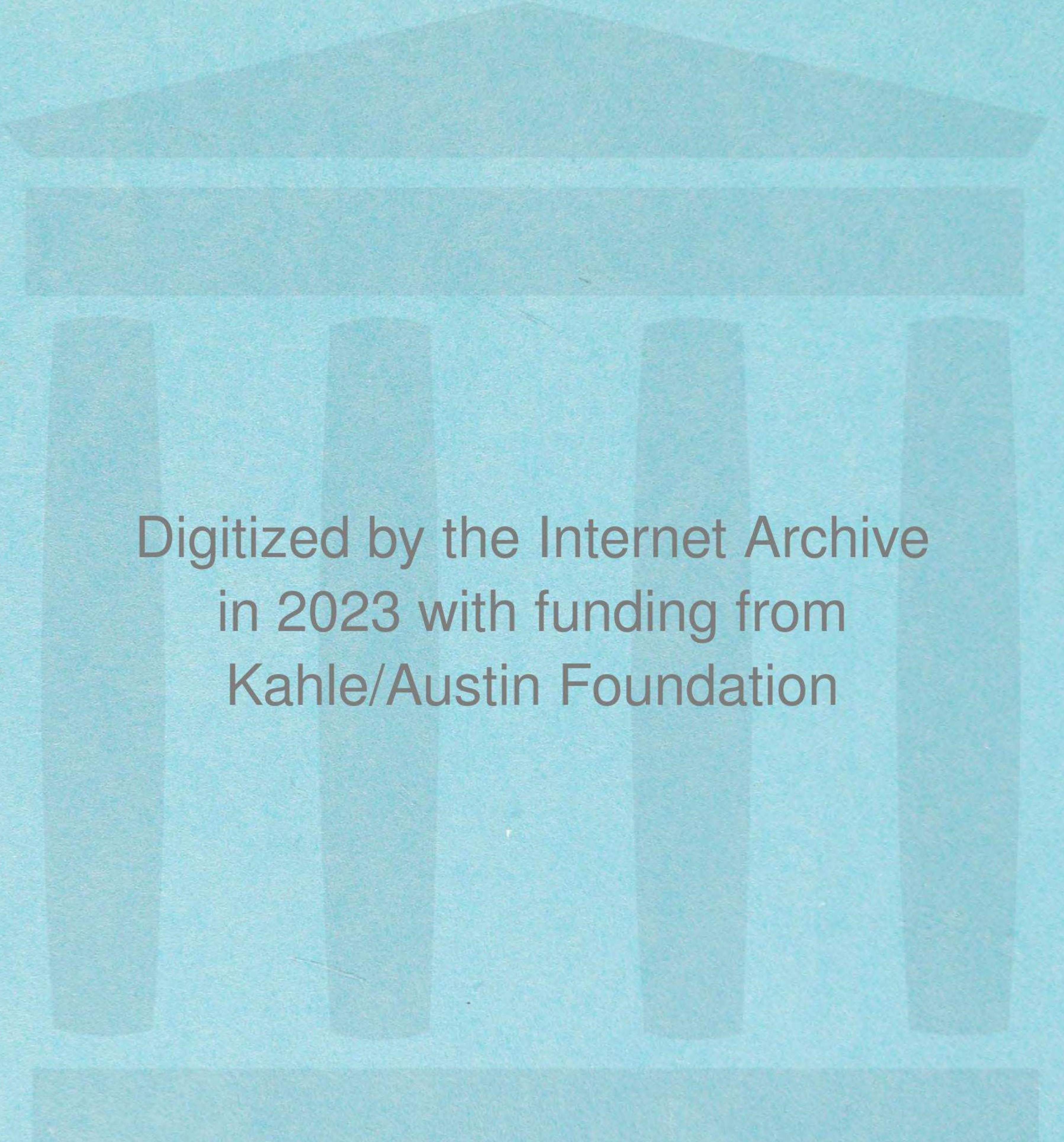
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*There's a little ambiguity over there among the bluebells*



1968  
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*There's a little ambiguity over there among the bluebells*  
*and other theater poems*  
by Ruth Krauss  
graphics by Marilyn Harris

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

This is a Krauss sampler disorganized to turn you on to the possibilities of selection and juxtaposition and creating your own show. The theater pieces have been set to music, published and widely performed at Judson Poets Theater, Café Cino, Café la Mama, Actors Studio, etc. – *the editor*

## Weather

Cloudy with occasional immaculate conception today.

## Drunk Boat

act one everyone is born  
act two South Pole  
act three West 86th Street  
act four everyone contracts  
act five everyone recovers  
act six everyone dies

Act seven  
because seven is a magic number  
the torch carriers are waiting on the side

### TORCH SONG

Life, the girls are wearing their skirts higher  
and higher  
for you  
Life, at the South Pole the icebergs  
are dancing for you  
For you the film-makers are making films  
And me I am writing a poem  
for you  
look! no hands—  
I be carry for you torch great torch set on fire whole world  
waterfalls green lightnings maelstrom  
unlatched land and the tree that will become a violin  
or perhaps a fence  
Life, I am eyes full of accolades for you  
my ocean  
my moon  
my horse

a great meadow appears  
the clown riding a broomstick-with-wings comes  
galloping over it  
“Pardon me, Sir” he says to the broomstick  
“I thought you was a horse”

the broomstick takes off from under  
the clown and flies away

CLUNK MAN  
Clunk!



NARRATOR: in a poem you make your point with lemons-on-fire

LEMONS-ON-FIRE fly out overhead across the  
horizons over into onto the stage from all  
directions the people run out and bow lie down  
and roll in the grass on the rooftops in the sand

ICEBERG: and it would be nice to have an iceberg going  
in and out

## Narcissus

NARCISSUS: How much do you love me how much

IMAGE: As much as tomato soup

NARCISSUS: Help!  
Send Help!

Runners start running  
People jump out of windows  
Cabbages jump out of the ground  
There's a crucifixion . . .

NARCISSUS: ?????

IMAGE: ?????

CABBAGES: ?????

?????: ?????

?

## News

A crowd of twenty-three thousand coy mistresses is expected to turn out this morning for the forty-four day ruby-finding meet by the Indian Ganges' side. Eighth race on the card is scheduled for quaint honor to succumb to the tide at 4:35 P.M. and will be telecast. Thus while her willing soul transpires, she who wins shall take her due except she come up with the same bruised thigh that put her out of action last week.

## Questions or maybe Answers

CHILD

Grandfather, do old people grow down  
as young people grow up?

GRANDFATHER

Of course not, child.

(the grandfather begins to grow down his knees  
are shortly framed in flowers his gold watch chain  
his beard and now like Whitman full of butterflies

## Trio

whom does the little one favor  
whom does the little one favor

the little one favors the moon

whom does the little one favor  
whom does the little one favor

the little one favors a young lettuce leaf

whom does the little one favor  
whom does the little one favor

the little one favors the East River  
and the Queensborough Bridge  
and a beard full of butterflies  
a beard full of butterflies  
that's whom the little one favors



## Horse-Opera-With-Wings

Here comes the poet a-riding riding riding  
Here comes the poet a-riding  
on a HORSE-WITH-WINGS

POET: what a poet wants is—

THE HORSE takes off from under the POET and  
flies away

CLUNK MAN: Clunk

## If Only

If only I was a nightingale singing  
If only I was on my second don't-live-like-a-pig-week  
If only the sun wasn't always rising behind the next hill  
If only I was the flavor of tarragon  
If only I was phosphorescence and a night phenomena  
at sea  
If only Old Drainpipe Rensaleer as we used to call him  
hadn't hit bottom in Detroit the time he made  
a fancy dive and got absentminded and forgot  
to turn and all his shortribs got stove in he  
got sucked down the drainpipe because the grate  
wasn't on  
If only I didn't have to get up and let our dog out now  
If only the glorious day in April because it has no  
beginning or end that all Flatbush had awaited  
impatiently between creation and construction  
has come  
If only I was James Joyce and had written Finnegans Wake  
only then I'd be gone  
If only it was I had been cornerstone of the Parnassian  
edifice  
If only I too had the force to batter a reader about  
like a shuttlecock and then strike him or her  
out with an indelible phrase to make him or her  
forever after a changed him or her  
If only somebody would hug me right now  
If only I was a sickle moon only then I'd never be full  
If only I could explode like Symbolism  
If only on the other hand I never explode like Symbolism

If only I was rain in the highest branches  
If only I was a little stairs running straight up out  
of the sea  
If only somebody would kiss me on the back of the neck  
right now  
If only somebody would complain to *me*  
“Je n’ose pas me plaindre, ô maîtresse ingrate;  
Vous êtes sans oreille et je perdrais mon cris.”  
If only I hadn’t read the Consumer’s Report on the  
Chicken Industry  
If only those degraded bastards hadn’t monkeyed around  
with the Oreos Sandwich pattern  
If only I didn’t have to get up and let our dog in  
again now  
If only Alicia had never answered the phone that day  
If only Dudley didn’t go around thinking she’s the  
infant Jesus because she was born on Christmas and  
we should have a parade  
If only I didn’t think I was the infant Jesus otherwise  
what was I doing hanging upside down in a blue  
light in the barn all night  
If only Gold’s Delicatessen was on Chestnut River Road  
If only New York City was in Connecticut  
If only I had not said no to just lunch  
If only I had said no to just lunch  
If only we had not had to have our picnic sitting in the  
middle of the bridge  
If only I too could be reassisted and rise up in the  
clocks that are moving saying ‘Rainbow,  
rearrange yourself’ and the precious stones  
crying out in envy ‘Oh aha!’ And in the forest  
lip daughters orange and kneeling in the clear  
deluge heavy with nakedness that makes her in  
the shade the flower

If only I was a plum

If only the seagulls would stop dropping clamshells  
on our roof

If only the girl and boy who all summer  
were walking the roads hand in hand  
and all autumn were walking the roads  
hand in hand and all winter are walking  
the roads hand in hand and all spring what on earth  
is going to happen to them hand in hand if only  
it stopped here and they could never  
know

If only I had never seen a shining river pouring  
out of the sky

If only the new rational interpretation for the Dodgers  
was not unfolding for a formal christening

If only I had never been a part of that almost completely  
human story where second base like the marrow of  
its bones mounted on air

If only Charlie Ebbets would go away

If only I didn't have so much electricity

If only I was a farm only I'd be sure to be  
a farm full of onions and pigs  
instead of a delightful acre of  
young green lettuces

If only I was a really sharp operator

If only I didn't forget the eggs every time I boiled them

If only I didn't forget the toast every time I boiled it

If only our dog wasn't such a pest and what was he doing  
anyway riding through the air all night in a white  
closed limousine

If only I had looked down that hole in Yucatan

If only I knew whether to wave at second hand Plymouths

If only somebody was following me down a street in Paris  
right now

If only a thousand poetry students dressed like sheiks  
would ride motorcycles down the street in front  
of our house right now

If only I was dawn

If only I was a drunken boat sailing between the lines

If only I was more mystically charged than blackest night

If only the little boy wearing glasses hadn't asked  
me if I was a witch

If only they didn't throw crackers around every morning  
and when it's not that it's dried apricots

If only I wasn't so interested in the Emperor's marriage

If only when you left them alone for ten minutes they  
didn't burn down the house

If only they would stop pursuing me to the four passions  
of the soul namely joy hope grief and fear

If only it was I who had invented suitable images  
of California

If only I was Socrates only then I'd be gone

If only he had never called me one of those who come  
into the world with a ray of moonlight in  
their brains

If only I was a little shell full of roaring

If only I lived in a little red caboose

If only men wouldn't commit bigamy for me

I only I had not seen the pushcart peddler out selling  
me in a quarter edition translated by James Joyce  
last night

If only I had not played the violin until after

If only bigamy would go away

If only trigamy would go away

If only our dog would stop staring at me  
If only they had never moved me farther out into the  
Western Ocean

If only my dream would not rise and fall by the moon  
If only there were no chimneys in it  
‘and a bird is flying by under a chimney in it?’  
‘and a duck is sitting on itself in it’  
‘and a sun is rising under the duck?’  
‘and a sun is rising under the duck’  
‘under the falling?’  
‘rising under the falling’  
‘the falling’  
‘the falling’  
‘and the moon again’  
‘the moon again’  
‘moon again’  
‘moon’

If only I had never read that Space too is warped  
If only my source too was in the mountain  
If only I could forget that nifty number with a beautiful  
haircut everything working right doing her  
half-Veronicas out there with a mink stole and  
absolutely devastating the bull she had the  
sweat running out of the palms of my hands  
If only she hadn't killed a hundred and fifty-eight bulls  
If only I too could do half-Veronicas out there with  
a mink stole  
If only Milwaukee hadn't been on its can during the  
Depression

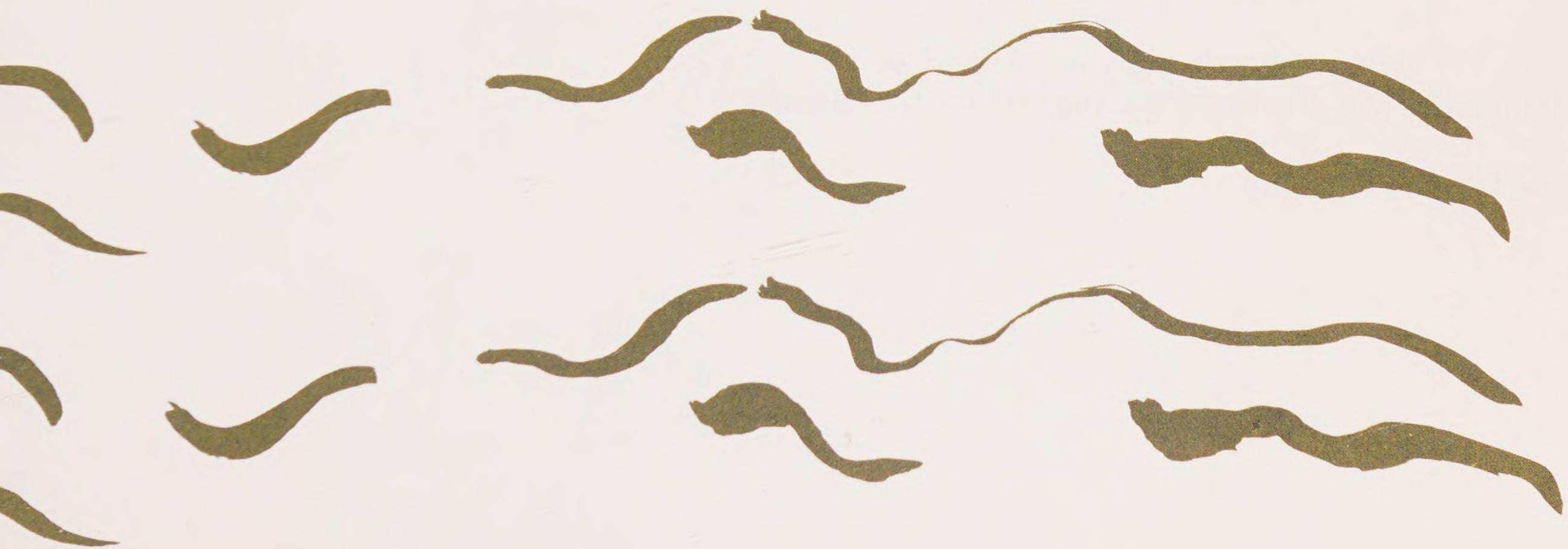
If only he hadn't told me that a dog represented a  
father to me  
If only France was in Connecticut  
If only England was in Connecticut  
If only Connecticut was in Turkey  
If only Turkey was in Tierra del Fuego  
If only I too was words on the page but much more  
a music that exists off the page  
If only Connecticut was in France  
If only I was in France  
If only I was in Vallauris  
If only Vallauris was in me  
If only Picasso was in Connecticut  
If only Connecticut was in Picasso  
If only I was in Picasso  
If only Picasso no! once a companion always a companion  
If only I could bark louder  
If only I had read the Consumer's report on green mascara  
If only I wasn't tougher than a night in jail  
If only once again the mountain was covered with peaches  
If only once again for me green lace tangles  
were storming in the sea  
If only once again the petticoats were flying down  
116th Street  
If only I had known how convenient it was to be a baby  
If only hallo Al! I fal from my shall  
If only we hadn't taught Hero's father how to get peanuts  
out of keyholes

If only I hadn't had to climb the mountain last night  
with my head tucked underneath my arm  
If only he hadn't been Catholic  
If only once again I could comb my hair and it would  
stand up stiff in a crown of icicles instead  
of thorns  
If only I knew what the woman in the night meant when  
the messenger from the wars raced up to her holding aloft  
the mass of pink ribbons with among them a black  
whip and she cried 'O look! My belt! He brings  
me fair girdle'  
If only I was a really neat hustler  
If only I could go skiing in the Virgin Islands  
If only I am never a lion in front a goat in the middle  
and a serpent behind infesting mountains  
If only he had not had a wife and six children  
If only I could strike gold in me I guess I'd know it  
If only I was a band full of bells  
If only memory was like a chalk drawing  
If only memory is never like a chalk drawing  
If only we had not had to have our picnic sitting on  
the banks of the South Norton Y swimming pool  
If only my engine too had shine-in-the-coal between  
the wild cherry trees  
If only I had asked the girl on the train what she meant  
when she said 'If only the curl stays in my hair  
until midnight'  
If only I could read without glasses I could have  
followed the handbook directions for distress  
signals  
If only I had put more hearts on the Valentine dragon  
for Jill  
If only I had never jumped over the city in the  
half day light

**Complaint**

Ah me!

I am the sea



## **Ballet for Peaches**

DONKEY: What a POET wants is Chicago covered  
with peaches

the POET covered with peaches flies  
onto the stage

the DONKEY climbs aboard and together  
they disappear into a wildrice moonset

where shortly they are joined by  
IMAGES OF MR. EINSTEIN waving hello with his socks

the IMAGES multiply



## **A Show A Play: It's a girl!**

a station  
boy and girl  
train enters  
much kissing between boy and girl adieu goodbye a little weeping  
farewell  
boy climbs on train  
station exits with girl

a station  
hundreds of people  
train enters  
all the people climb onto the train  
station exits

o parted lovers  
soliloquies o  
suicide from cliffs that are leaping  
o foxes pretending to be men

the ocean is a novel of wild lace and young dragons

a mountain is pink

air fresh

station empty

enter train

hundreds of passengers get off with picnic baskets and singing

train exits with landscape

the hundreds of passengers begin kissing each other

the station master the telegraph officer

the ticket seller the news stand woman the

oranges the boards of the platform the

barnswallow nests in the rafters over the

benches the timetables the trash disposal boxes

the mail slit the cigarette machine the telephone

booth the telephone the numbers on the dial the

holes for putting your finger in the ceiling the

cobwebs the new green paint the sign saying

women the sign saying men the boxes of red geraniums

planted by the Women of Darien the radiators the

heat the dust the cigarette butts the ashes

the ashes

a station  
is empty  
enter train  
hundreds of trees get off

the ocean the ocean is a novel  
a sword fight breaks out  
Yoshitsune of The Thousand Cherry Blossom Trees  
once again once again they die  
once again they swords in hand  
turn backward in their somersaults  
the mountain is pink  
fresh is the air  
a station is empty  
enter train of wild lace and young dragons get off  
with picnic baskets of singing the station goes  
away goodbye farewell adieu and kisses  
a little weeping are your wings  
o boy o girl  
o barnswallow nests in the rafters  
in the rafters

in the rafters a station  
boy and girl  
enter train weeping  
adieu oranges they kiss goodbye farewell  
poor train once again  
the station goes away  
o station that went away the show goes on  
o novel of wild dragons turning back somersaults in lace  
o hundreds of fresh pink mountains  
fresh is the air o  
fresh is the air  
fresh is o

#### SONG OF THE MELANCHOLY DRESS

I stand among The Thousand Cherry Blossom People  
the air is swords and broken  
where is the ocean the wild  
where is the lace the dragons where  
and the station that went away  
where is the mountain where  
is the train is it vanquished again and turning  
backward o backward in  
back somersaults  
where are the red geraniums planted by the Women of Darien where  
o my station that went away my ocean o  
my novel my pink mountain my young dragons

o parted lovers soliloquies o  
suicide from cliffs that are leaping  
o foxes pretending to be men

## Dante and the Poet

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with—

DANTE flies onto the stage  
from all directions  
the urinating multitudes electrocute themselves  
and the landscape becomes

DARK CLOSETS full of no light fly on take over

NARRATOR

night falls is it a shell yes  
the shell opens  
seven ladies in bright kimonos  
are seated as if pearls

CHORUS OF LADIES

this is your house, Onward,  
will you come in  
costume motion verse and music  
every part of you we invite  
like a favorite avacado vine

NARRATOR

and gradually they are telling her they tell her  
a story  
to seduce her

LEADER OF THE CHORUS OF LADIES

once-upon-a-time—

ALL THE LADIES TOGETHER

once-upon-a-time—

NARRATOR

Onward, the protagonist, steps into the shell  
listening to the roar  
she is laughing to keep time  
her body is moving as if about to dance  
the north of her is green

the seven ladies in bright kimonos

are still seated as if pearls

the shell closes

night goes up in flame is it the sleeves  
of the kimono of the sun yes

**Onward**



## News

Miss Diana Palmer went roaring through a ceremony tonight of white lace whips waving wild and hurtling with winds of eighty miles an hour or more over the top of the Wedding March straight to the bottom of Christ Church (Baptist) with Mr. Theodore Van Huston. This was her maiden voyage.



Molly

Apollinaire trying to translate himself into English

New York Poetry Student

Catalogue of Philosophy Courses

**Quartet**

MOLLY

yes

APOLLINAIRE

the garden of the song

bats itself like flowers

MOLLY

I said yes

APOLLINAIRE

in the wind

who bats like flowers

MOLLY

I will Yes

APOLLINAIRE

batting in the wind

PHILOSOPHY CATALOGUE

the pre-Socratic School

and the Vedas

MOLLY  
and the sea the sea  
crimson sometimes like fire

POETRY STUDENT  
Farina of my heart with atomic lyric of lump  
You electrify me more than a sixteen-story sonnetful  
of astro-camera-cognac

APOLLINAIRE  
the garden of the troops  
sings very sweetly  
while slowly the cows  
are abandoned

POETRY STUDENT  
You are the missile-piece in my son-of-a-cream-of-stanza

MOLLY  
and the fig tree in the Alameda gardens yes  
and all the queer little streets  
and pink and blue and yellow houses

PHILOSOPHY CATALOGUE  
Plato and the Upanishads

MOLLY  
and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a flower of the mountain

APOLLINAIRE

like a masque of tyranny  
memories sound  
among the winds  
I shall return to myself often

PHILOSOPHY CATALOGUE

the Indianism of Jesus  
the Buddhism of the Essenes

POETRY STUDENT

the happy-go-boiled-again of my consonance

MOLLY

like the Andalusian girls

APOLLINAIRE

and so much of the universe is forgotten  
where is Christopher Columbus  
who owes us the unmemorizing of continence  
and takes so seriously phantoms

MOLLY

going about serene with his lamp  
yes and then we'd have a hospital nurse next thing  
on the carpet and O

POETRY STUDENT

My cracked bean of galaxy-enjambement  
My purée of pentameter in a pink parachute

PHILOSOPHY CATALOGUE  
Islam and the West  
Thoreau and his contemporaries

APOLLINAIRE  
the Don Juan of a thousand and three comets ha!

MOLLY  
and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall

POETRY STUDENT  
You a anapest are in constellation of mush

APOLLINAIRE  
toujours

PHILOSOPHY CATALOGUE  
the Hinduism of Turgenev  
Tolstoy  
Dostoyevsky  
Gorky  
England-Ireland  
the impact of the East on Yeats  
T. S. Eliot  
Aldous Huxley

APOLLINAIRE  
toujours

MOLLY

I thought as well him as another

POETRY STUDENT

A salad-ballad in bullet and  
capsule of hexameter-corn

PHILOSOPHY CATALOGUE

Egyptian philosophy  
Indian thought

APPOLLINAIRE

let us pass  
all passes

MOLLY

all perfume yes  
and his heart was going like mad

APPOLLINAIRE

toujours toujours  
it makes a little heavy  
and your hair  
so long, Marie  
which gives an air  
of going to adventure



## News

A young man in scanty contemplation clad was picked up yesterday while undergoing a dialect change at the junction of Second Avenue and St. Germaine. He is said to be the first of the season.

## Re-examination of Freedom

ONE

If I were FREEDOM  
I'd enter the mountains  
and run like a waterfall

Two

If I were FREEDOM  
I'd be that mud puddle  
where Walter Raleigh laid his cloak  
no I mean I'd be that cloak  
laid by Sir Walter in the puddle of Queen Elizabeth I mean  
the puddle for Queen Elizabeth I mean  
once there was a puddle and there was a queen and  
along came Sir Walter Somethingorother and laid down his cloak  
for her  
if I were FREEDOM  
I'd be that cloak  
and the World my Queen  
I mean

THREE

If I were FREEDOM  
I'd take off I'd fly  
most beautiful I  
would range in the sky  
another sun  
and the people sunflowers

ALL

If I  
If I  
and  
If I

SONG

If I were FREEDOM  
I'd love you  
in the demented batteries  
I'd love you  
on the sidewalk  
I'd love you  
and glasses are empty but  
I'd love you I'd love you

abandoned thus to the fury of symbols  
If I were FREEDOM  
and suddenly there is the wilderness  
I'd love you  
yes all hands are lost when the ship goes down but  
I'd love you  
the shadows crowd on the shore  
I love you  
tell me before the ferryman's return  
I love you I love you  
and everything is full of the sea

If I were FREEDOM  
I'd love you  
dirty calabash  
I'd love you  
my lion  
I'd love you I'd love you  
if I were FREEDOM  
on feathers in my head if there were snow  
on cards on the tables on the chairs  
the waves distill you  
and the night

salt white stuff on stones  
I love you  
so that one discovers strawberries at the rim of fire everyday  
I love you I love you  
which is a condition that becomes a festival

## Questions or maybe Answers

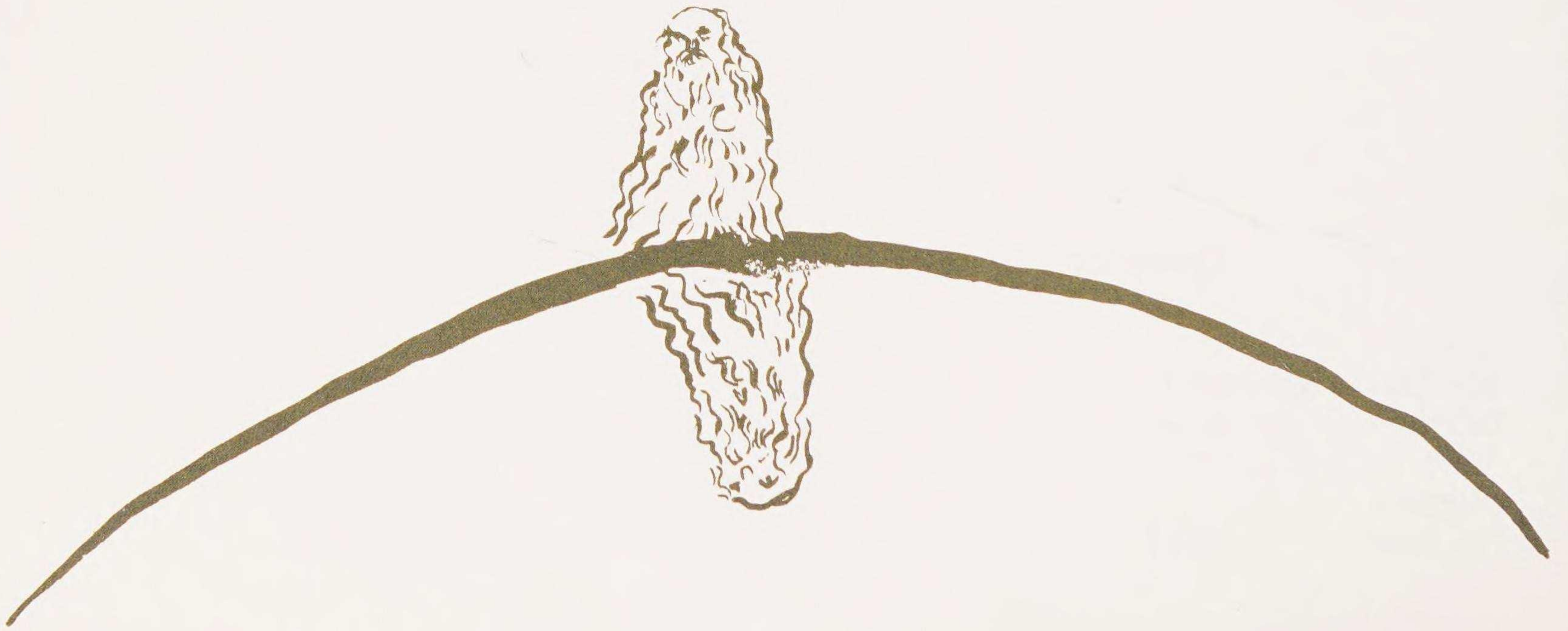
CHILD

Mother, in autumn do bricks  
fall the way leaves do?

MOTHER

No, dear.

(child goes off—theatre falls)



## There's a little ambiguity over there among the bluebells

ONE: What a poet wants is a lake in the middle  
of his sentence  
(a lake appears)

TWO: yes and a valid pumpkin  
(a pumpkin appears)

THREE: and you should slice up language like a  
meatcutter abba dabba dabba dabba yack  
(sliced up language appears)

FOUR: It's fine we have inhibitions  
otherwise we'd all be dead  
(all drop dead)

FIVE: or flat on our backs  
(all roll over onto backs)

SIX: yes and everyone on rollerskates in bed  
would be nice  
(everyone on rollerskates in bed appears)

SEVEN: and a delayed verb

EIGHT: and an old upright piano  
(an old upright piano appears)

(all bow together to the audience and to each other)

NINE: goes to the piano and begins to play  
(everyone dances)

**There's a little ambiguity**

ONE: What a poet wants is a lake in the middle  
of his sentence  
(a lake appears)

an avalanche appears  
an earthquake appears  
a hurricane appears  
my feelings are a lake  
the strategy of lakes is infinite

— Ruth Krauss

Several people were asked how they would stage  
Speech One from the title poem...

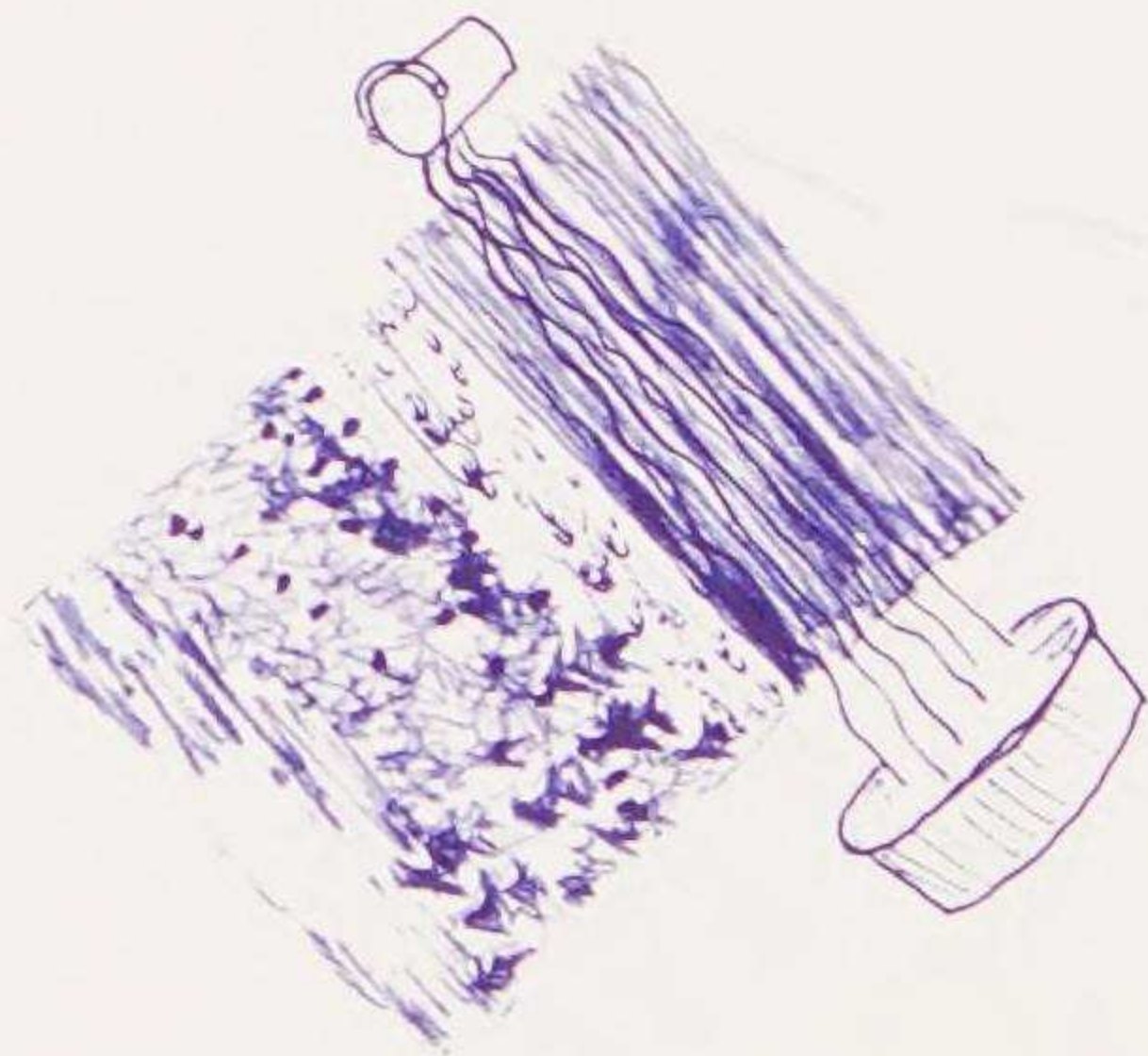
Film of entire cast running down stair entrance to park projected  
onto front curtain. ONE steps through the curtain, thereby step-  
ping through the cast on film, thereby rustling the curtain, thereby  
making a lake, and says:  
What a poet wants is a lake in the middle of his sentence.  
— Jerry Bloedow

[Speaker is perhaps dressed in a business-suit, grey-flannel, black shined shoes, black socks, white shirt, conservative tie, has relatively long hair with daisies in it.] [or feminine equivalent, black dress, string of pearls]

“ . . . of his sentence”

Slide is projected on screen center stage, large as possible but clear, of a lake (Lake Tahoe, for example), but sideways, so that water is to the right, mountains, trees to the left. A stage-worker, behind screen, not to side (dressed in black if slide does not show on him, in white if it does), pours from a bucket (white if bucket intercepts projection, into a *metal* (or *wooden*, may be better, but *not plastic*) wash-tub on floor. When last drip ends (5 seconds at most, don't wait for very last drip) blackout (except on speaker, or as arranged by director). Whole thing quick & snappy.

— George Brecht



WHAT A POET WANTS IS A



IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS SENTENCE

Remy Charlip

SPOTLIGHT on a STOVE.

VOICE (offstage): What a poet wants is a lake in the middle of his sentence.

COOK enters. Second spot falls on PEOPLE at a TABLE, forks in fists, prongs up. COOK removes a huge CAKE from the oven. It's a map of the USA. Ignoring the body of the cake, she carefully cuts off the frosting from the top, and gives some to each person at the table—but ONLY the Great Lakes. The rest is thrown away. ORNAMENTAL MIRROR may be tilted to show this to AUDIENCE.

Blackout.

— Dick Higgins

for television

A field in Vietnam. Shots & mortar fire. Men running & crouching.  
A medic crouches over a young soldier lying in the grass. The medic  
is breathing into the young soldier's mouth - repeatedly - he tries  
to revive the wounded man. Finally he gives up. The man is dead.

Walter Cronkite's voice is heard:

“What a poet wants is a lake in the  
middle of his sentence.”

Rain falls on the corpse of the young soldier.

- Peter Levin

Performed as part of a full piece called "The Cantilever Rainbow," at Café la Mama, in April 1965. Music by Don Heckman. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow.

The title of the poem-play "Ambiguity" is on a roller with other titles of plays by Ruth Krauss, which were done as one piece. In a music interlude, actor who is ONE turns the title roller in rhythm (Peter Berry) standing on a platform. Music stops, Actor ONE cane, delivers line "What a poet wants is a lake in the middle of his sentence," assuming the role of the poet. Actors Two, THREE, and FOUR who are girls (Arlene Rothlein, Yolande Bavan and Carol Lipis), are in a semi-circle below the poet. They grasp arms, and lean backwards forming a circle singing "a lake appears," as they become the lake. Actor ONE jumps into the center of their circle as the girls say "splash." Water ballet music comes on as all four swim around the stage in a water ballet dance in blue light. Their movement continues, suggesting the idea of the loveliness of a lake in poetic imagery. As the music stops they end up in their positions for the next line, "yes and a valid pumpkin."

- Lawrence Sacharow

House is dark

VOICE

Stagelights on

A prisoner sits fishing in the lake in the middle of his sentence

Stagelights off

Cell

Cutout weighted curtain or transparent curtain with painted bars across stagefront

Prisoner

In blue workpants & shirt with stenciled numbers

Sitting

On a cot almost parallel to stage right but angled toward center upstage

Lake

Huge blue balloon semi-inflated

- Frances Starr



## Questions or maybe Answers

in a cottage kitchen

CHILD: Mother, was a skyscraper  
once a little cottage  
like ours?

MOTHER: No, dear. Of course not.

(the COTTAGE begins to grow . . .

## Uri Gagarin & William Shakespeare

compare thee  
more lovely  
and a single spin around the earth  
winds do shake  
withstanding well the state of weightlessness  
too short  
too hot  
and often could see the earth my native  
fair from fair sometime declines  
through portholes no  
by chance or  
speed and changing course  
shall not fade  
I remember  
possession of that fair  
in my swift flight  
covered in areas by clouds  
and in his shade  
eternal lines  
alone  
so long as men can breathe or eyes  
so long  
no falling continuously no

## **News**

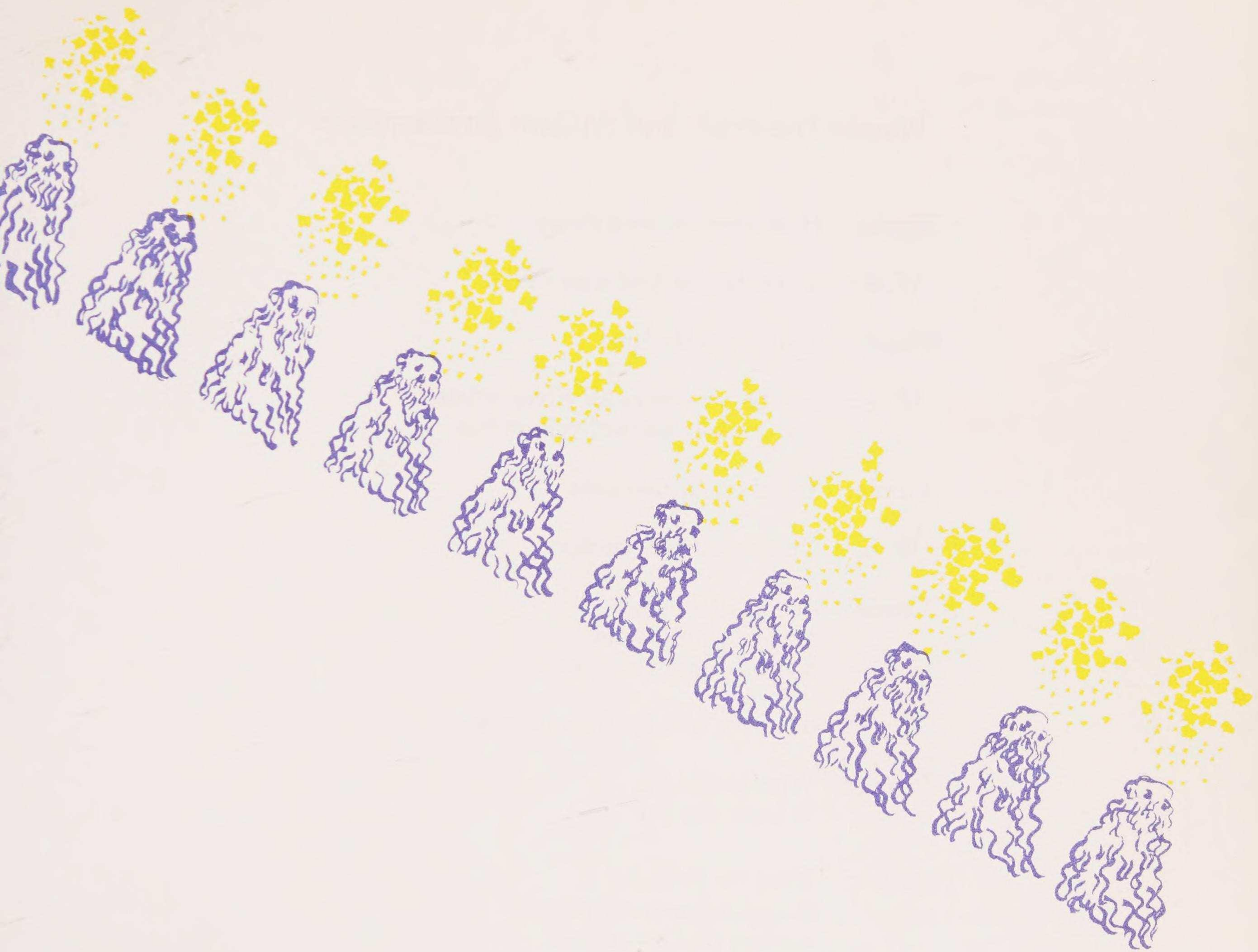
“This measure,” the Attorney-General stated, “This legislation—which I endorse—requires some thirty thousand skylarks to register for the first time with my office.” And he left the room.

If I were FREEDOM  
I'd never be Aunt May  
who thinks she is the U.S.A.  
and her left leg is Florida

MAY: or is it my right  
no my left  
I'll have a Civil War  
I'll sell Louisiana to Napoleon

LOUISIANA flies away

LEFT LEG: Napoleon Napoleon  
la la la la la——



## Winnie-The-Pooh and William Shakespeare

Winnie: How sweet to be a cloud

W. S.: when daisies pied and violets

Winnie: floating in the blue

W. S.: and lady-smocks all silver-white  
and cuckoo-buds of yellow hue

Winnie: Iniquum fatum fatu

W. S.: Cuckoo cuckoo cuckoo

Winnie: every little cloud  
always sings aloud  
it makes him very proud

W. S.: on every tree for thus sings he

Winnie: Winnie Ille Pu  
Winnie Ille Pu

Together: Ecce Pu Ecce Pu  
it makes him very proud  
cuckoo cuckoo cuckoo  
to paint the meadows with delight  
to be a little cloud

SPRING running wild and throwing flowers  
comes upon the POET  
running wild and looking for a flower  
they collide

## Practical Mother's Guide

BELL: begins ringing

CHILD: Mama Mama,  
is that the bell for springtime?

MOTHER: No, silly, that's the door bell.  
Would you answer it please.

DIRECTIONS: CHILD runs to the door

CHILD: Mama Mama, it's a man with the sun.

MOTHER: Well, dear, tell him to leave it.

CHILD: He says it's c.o.d.  
And Mama, it's all tied up in ribbons and moths.

MOTHER: Ask him to bring it back tomorrow please.  
We have no money in the house.

CHILD: Mama, he should leave it anyway.  
It *was* the bell for springtime  
and if we don't take it in but  
send it away—  
Mother Mother, the sun—  
what will happen to it?

MOTHER: Well, I don't know.  
Shells are full of the sea  
the sea is full of waterbabies  
and if you look in the eyes of the waterbabies . . .  
.....  
Tell the man to take away the sun  
and bring you a waterbaby.

CHILD: Sir, we have no money for the c.o.d.  
Could you please leave the sun  
and it shine anyway?

MAN: Why not.  
Here.

DIRECTIONS: CHILD takes the sun  
and does a sun dance

## The 50,000 Dogwood Trees at Valley Forge

HEADLINE: The 50,000 dogwood trees at Valley Forge are  
at the peak of their –

TREES: Bow! Wow! Wow!

HEADLINE: according to the Pennsylvania Department of  
Forests and Waters.  
Special details of State Police have been  
assigned to –

POLICE: Bow! Wow! Wow!

HEADLINE: and to direct the –

AUTOMOBILES: Bow! Wow! Wow!

HEADLINE: automobiles –

TREES: Bow! Wow! Wow!  
Bow! Wow! Wow!

POLICE: Bow! Wow! Wow!  
Bow! Wow! Wow!

HEADLINE: Bow! Wow! Wow!  
Bow! Wow! Wow!

ALL: Bow! Wow! Wow!  
Wow! Wow! Wow!  
Wow! Wow! Wow!  
Wow! Wow! Wow!





## **A Beautiful Day**

**GIRL:** What a beautiful day!

**THE SUN** falls down onto the stage

## Duet

the day is so pretty

the umbrella is yellow

the day is so pretty  
the sun is so shining

the umbrella is yellow  
with white lace all around

the day is so yellow  
the umbrella is so pretty  
the sun is so all around  
with white lace so shining

the umbrella is so yella  
the sun is so pretty  
with white all so shining  
around lace so yellow umbrellow  
with day is so yello sa yella  
umbrella sa pretty sa yad

sa pretty sa yaddy  
sa ley low sow lamu  
brell white lace with shining  
the sun is so all around

the day is so pretty  
the umbrella is yellow  
the day is so pretty  
the sun is so shining  
the umbrella is yellow  
with white lace all around

## ODE

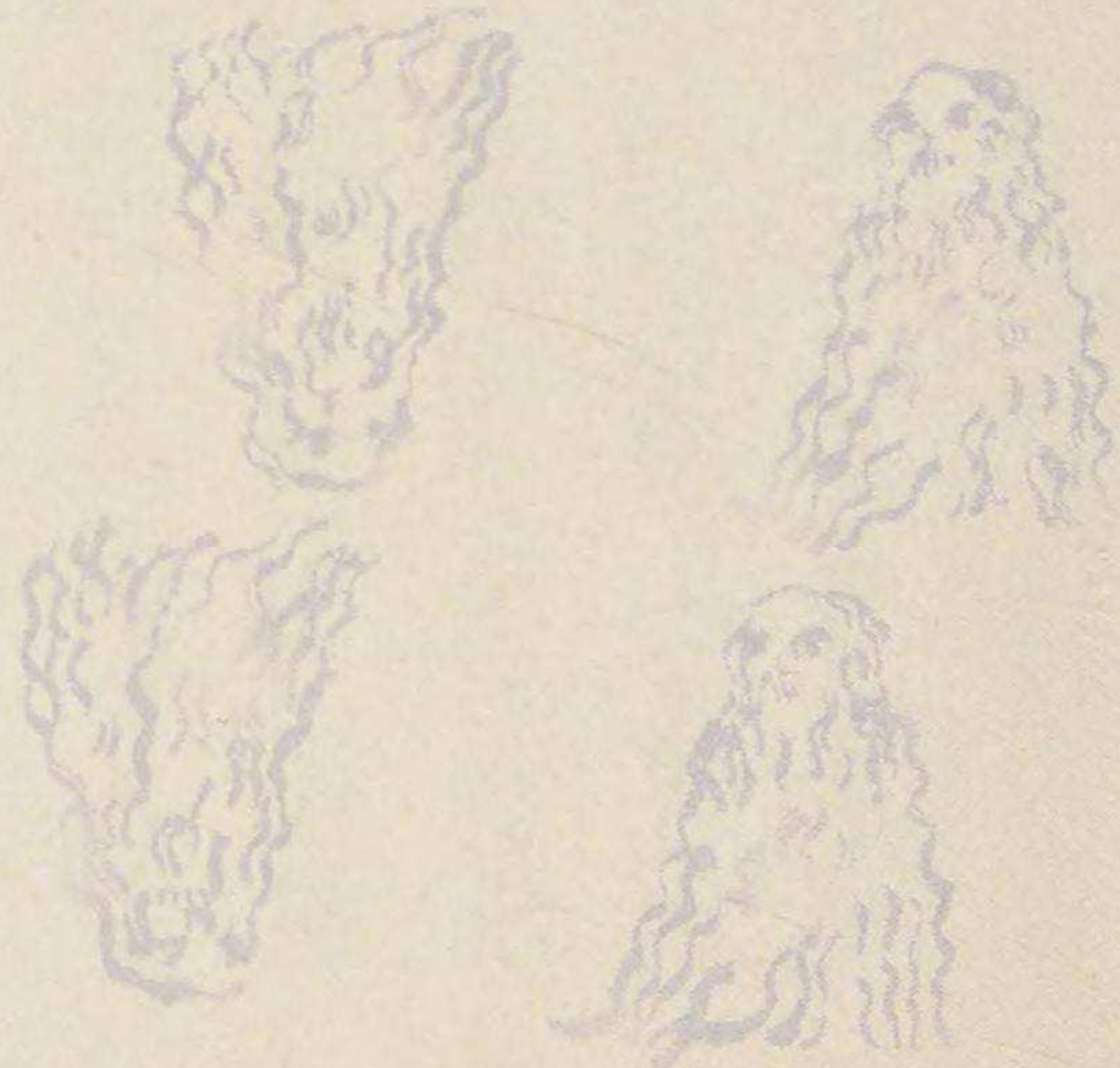
A ballet by THINGS NAMED (rivers, buds, watermelons, bird-shadows, bells, eyes, parades, groundhogs, pots, ducks, mountains, strawberries, glaciers, wings, etcetera, or as many as possible) is interwoven with the poem spoken by the NAME-CALLER

“hot-maker snow-melter river-sweller  
bud-buster watermelon-ripenner pattern-maker-through-forest-trees-one  
rooster-waker people-browner shadow-of-migrating-bird-maker  
in-the-east-one in-the-west-one straight-up-one  
neck-breaker Moslem-bender noodle-dryer  
hypnotizer-of-morning-glories bell-ringer spitfire  
made-small-shining-in-my-eye-one parade-encourager picnic-monger  
democratic-one undemocratic-one silhouetter-of-tall-pines-in-the-air  
candle-lighter dragon-lighter red-sky-at-evening-lighter  
thunder-maker groundhog-fooler pot-boiler  
who-threw-the-first-stone-one Old-Sol New-Sol  
duck-sitting-on-own-self-in-lake-maker Soleil Eye-of-Mexico

uns snu nussy shine-in-the-coal moon-hider  
sky-cleaner and-makest-thou-the-wind-to-blow makest-thou-the-balloon-to-bust  
the-streams-that-are-hot-in-the-cold-sea-maker leaf-turner century-turner  
sky-ticker what-would-happen-if-you-skipped-a-day-one  
blood-light vein-light bone-light  
phoenix-imitator daisy-symbol Indian-giver  
apple-on-the-head-of-Sir-Isaac-hitter on-the-topmost-tip-of-the-mast-gleam  
old-dogtail-wagger shady-side-of-the-street-maker shine-on-shoe-maker  
in-the puddles-one in-the-tide lighting-the-mountain  
right-at-my-own-doorstep-you-are-one stoop-sitter moth-maker  
lunchtime-bringer bogeyman-assistant old-x-behind-the-x-ray  
to-stud-nightfall-with-sparks-one old-sunnyside-up-in-the sky pretty-day  
bringer-of-bluebells buttercup-yellowed strawberry-reddener  
dark-horse-of-another-color who-saw-the-Golden-Age-one  
second-fiddle-to-Nero glacier-giver engine-driver  
devil-driver wingtip-lighter old-hotstuff”

## Derangement

Human derangement is order in the universe and  
who am I to upset it



NARRATOR: in a poem you make your point with pineapples

PINEAPPLES fly onto the stage from all directions

SPY: and it would be nice to have a spy going in and out

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This breast Shakespeare  
This breast Picasso  
This breast Einstein  
This breast I seen it in the papers

This breast in Egypt the Pharoah  
This breast we must emphasize the fact that a man should bid  
farewell before going to his death  
This breast with the historic city near the entrance to  
the Hellespont  
This breast composed entirely of scraps of historic fact  
This breast giant devil troll sorcerer cannibal  
This breast earliest form of the ballad in France  
This breast the field and wood blossom thereat

This breast would you like to know how it started  
This breast then we shall have to take an exciting trip  
This breast boom-boom yippee slurp strawberries cabañas  
This breast as we go whizzing along  
This breast thousands of years go by  
This breast we have a fine view of everything that happens  
This breast like the time the star  
This breast there has also been some attempt to correlate  
its activity with changes in the time of the  
migration of swallows with wheat yields and  
even with social revolutions  
This breast suddenly  
waves quiverings storms lightnings shining  
music apple-blossoms green grass blue days  
little forget-me-nots

This breast surveyors at first considered flatlands

This breast the train service was never there

This breast following the dedication service there will be  
a reception for old-timers

This breast serve as a reminder of the famous Railroad  
That Went Totemic

This breast celebration parades fiesta a circus state-of-  
the-state message one touch-down favorite  
walloped the Philadelphia Eagles U.S. representatives  
on the scene should have ah-ha! Doe not mock me  
in thy bed while these cold nights freeze me dead  
in the supernatural dark of Main Street West  
under the trestle with dreams broke down  
tobacco haze

This breast volta! he is suddenly galvanized by the announcement

This breast to go to a special performance

This breast of predilection  
the legendary radiance the wanton

This breast between the final stations of revolutionary orbit  
no day no night summer or winter thermal radiation  
transmissions megacycles and as to the Eastern  
flank the encroachment of the North American  
continent complicates matters

This breast needs timetable

This breast early one morning Gothic, Gothic on a vernal sea

## News

“Cuckoo cuckoo cuckoo,” president of the Young Cuckoo’s Christian Association board said today during the appointment of a married man as general chairman of the YCCA’s local \$800,000 building and expansion campaign. “When daisies pied and violets blue,” the president continued, “Cuckoo cuckoo cuckoo cuckoo.” The president’s speech will be repeated again tonight in a nationwide broadcast.

## Miracle or Goodbye My Poets' Storefront

POET

What a poet wants is  
the ID in the middle of a sentence

NARRATOR

the ID appears and  
begins to roar it is roaring like a dogstar under the moon  
it is rising is the sea yes the air yes the constellation  
of the –

CHORUS OF SAILING SHIPS, LIONS, LADDERS THAT LEAP, MR. EINSTEIN,  
AND CHILDREN OF THE LEPER-COLONY KINDERGARTEN AT THAT  
MOMENT WHEN THEY ARE RUNNING DOWN THE SIDES OF THE  
ERUPTING VOLCANO WHO IS SINKING FOREVER LIKE GRANDMOTHER  
THE ONE THE FIRE-DEPARTMENT HAD TO BE CALLED IN TO  
PICK UP WHEN SHE FELL  
yes yes yes yes yes yes

NARRATOR

yes roaring rising fills the stage that is  
the auditorium the poet – he bows –

POET

Gangway!

NARRATOR

and rises a balloon the poet flying away whoops  
the audience a thousand balloons the theatre rising whoops whoops  
flying away goodbye my love my own farewell  
and kisses  
Cornelia Street

## in a Bull's Eye

1500 HORSES rush by going east in profile

1500 HORSES rush by going west in profile

1500 HORSES rush by going east again in profile

GIRL begins undressing

FIRE breaks out

CROWD rolls over a cliff

MAN: It's very hot I'll leave my hat and jacket here\*

BATTLESHIP sinks

BULL'S EYE closes

\*line from *An American Tragedy*



## **IMITATION**

in the womb the wombmene come and go

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with –

AN OCEAN rises with a boat and a sail

the POET goes sailing away

water song?



POET: in a poem  
you make your point with a flower

A SLICE OF PIE appears

POET eats PIE

YUM-YUM BOY: yum yum

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with a flower

A BOTTLE OF WINE flies over

BOTTLE: from France

POET: Ah! from France

POET opens BOTTLE and drinks

shortly FLOWERS-IN-THE-HEAD

together they the POET et LES FLEURS DE FRANCE  
do a drunk-flower dance

FRENCH POET: in a poem  
one makes one's point with  
skies of quicksilver and nubile under the water  
buttocks of sandstone –

FRENCH COOK: in a poem  
one makes one's point with  
egg mixture as in basic omelette  
one tablespoon fresh chopped chives  
one tablespoon fresh chopped basil  
one tablespoon fresh chopped tarragon PRESTO!  
and a bottle of dry white wine

the COOK places the omelette around the POET who  
sits there amiably after properly embracing the COOK and  
TOGETHER they eat the cook-poem

COOK: ah!

POET: ah! ah!

Song

basil and tarragon  
buttocks and wine  
skies of quicksilver  
lalalala –





FLOWER: in a poem  
you make your point with a poet

MANY POETS fly onto the stage like firecrackers  
from everywhere they –

FLOWER: Help!

FLOWER rises in a small flame  
and falls in ashes as

the POETS crash together in a heap on that spot

AN ASHCAN appears

and the moon  
is set upon by Tarzan with his fan

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with a flower

AN ASHCAN appears

CURTAINS

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with a flower

AN ASHCAN appears

ASHCAN: The poet is thinking

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with an ashcan

MANY ASHCANS fly onto the stage from all directions they  
knock the POET out

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with a flower

AN ASHCAN appears

POET droops

SECOND ASHCAN appears

POET droops more

DOZENS OF ASHCANS appears

POET cannot droops further farther

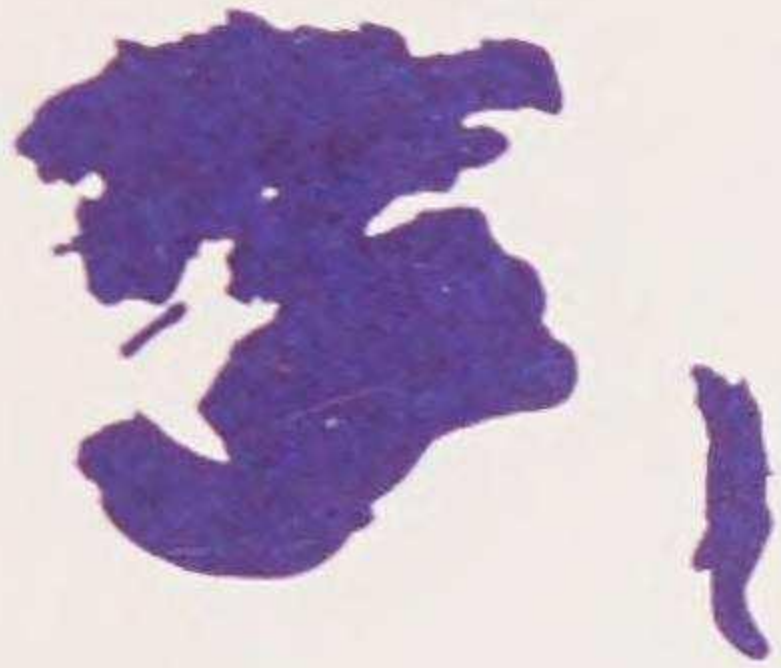
FIRST ASHCAN begins to dance

SECOND ASHCAN begins to dance

MUSIC?

ALL THE ASHCANS begins to dance they do the ashcan-can

POET begins to dance



POET: in a poem  
you make your point with a flower

AN ASHCAN appears

POET takes paintbrush and paints flowers over ASHCAN

CURTAINS pour down disguised as rain

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with a flower

NOTHING happens

we wait he waits the POET

It begins to rain

POET gets wet

BIG SUN comes out

in Granada

A FLOWER

mounted on mother-of-pearl

A FLOWER

without bridle or stirrups

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with a flower

FLOWERS fly in from all directions and are

CURTAINS



FLOWER: in a poem  
you make your point with a poet

A POET appears

SUCCESS comes leaping like Tarzan  
and bows

FLOWER and POET embrace

POET: in a poem  
you make your point with –

the FLOOR rises under the POET and  
crashes through to the night outside

STARS: in a poem  
you make your point with –

the POET bows and shines from up there among the STARS

CHORUS OF ASTRONOMERS: Eureka!

## **Weather**

Drizzle tonight off the east coast of my head.





senting, through their very simplicity, great challenges to the ingenuity of the theater director, and resulting in brilliant theatrical effectiveness (which is, after all, the main job of any script, be it simple as Shakespeare or complex as O'Neill).

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