



GLOBAL EGO

Grook about one sort of philanthropy
(Motto: Le monde, c'est moi)

Your understanding may be rough
and your pretensions vanity;
but underneath there's firmer stuff:
your egoism is vast enough
to comprehend humanity.



THE VITAL PRECEPT

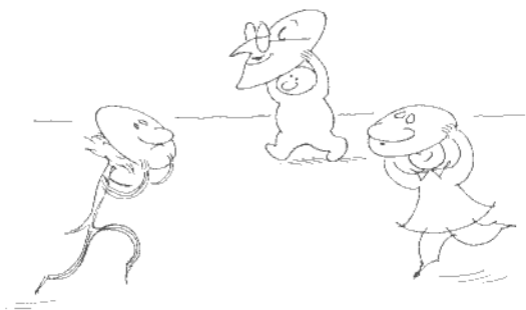
Admonitory grook

One vital precept isn't taught
sufficiently imperiously:
that other people didn't ought
to take themselves too seriously.



DO IT NOW!

Why don't you stop
pursuing things,
and rushing round
and doing things?
Just think of all
the things that you
would suddenly
find time to do!



MASQUERADE

It's always wise
to wear disguise;
but hardly ever
to look too clever.



CONVERSATION PIECE

Ergonomic grook

There is a certain
labour-saving notion,
dear to a lazy-minded
generation,
that if you can but
keep your mouth in motion,
then every breath you take
is conversation.



COMMON GROUND

There's matter for reflection
in one's fellow-men's inanity:
it strengthens one's conviction
of belonging to humanity.



COMPARATIVE SENSE

Which of us doesn't
accept as a rule
that anyone dumber than us
is a fool?
But how many of us
can wholly subdue
the feeling
that anyone smarter is, too?



FRIENDS IN NEED

Why so sad and woebegone?
Will the world not heed you?
Courage! Even you have won
friends you may rely upon
when they really need you.



ANGEL FOOD

Though men are no angels,
they're better by far
so long as they think
that you think
that they are.



Highbrow Humour

A recipe

Half
the laugh.
Twice
the price.



A RAIN — DROP

Atmospheric grook

With what adroitness
Nature gleans
sublime effects
with modest means!
A rain-drop streaks
my window pane;
then it is spring-time
once again.



ECONOMY OF MIND

Thinking gives a lot of pain.

Talking doesn't cost a thing.

Therefore, rest your weary brain
and give your tongue a fling.



CAN YOU IMAGINE IT?

We haven't much imagination:
it even overstrains our powers
to see our neighbour's tribulation
as any real concern of ours.

We have too much imagination:
enough to credit, without fuss,
that all is well with all creation
whenever things are well with us.



THOSE WHO KNOW

Those who always
know what's best
are
a universal pest.



SPRING'S HARBINGER

On tour

The cold ploughed field seems empty
of any living thing;
but overhead there hangs a lark,
suspended on a string.
It's pouring out, its thrilling trills.
It fills the air with trilling thrills,
so palpable and plastic —
absurdly bobbing up and down
because the string's elastic —
till, duty done, and Spring harbingered,
it's whisked into the air,
and lowered in another place
to spring it on them there.

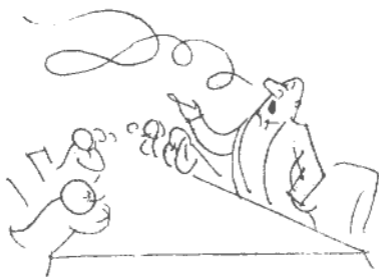


MANNERS

On wanting refinement

Honestly,
some people's manners
repel you.

Ask how they are
and, godammit,
they tell you.



TO SUM UP

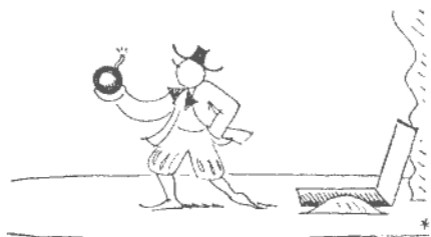
A grook on finding a form
commensurate with one's subject

It may be observed
in a general way
that life would be
better, distinctly,
if more of the people
with nothing to say
were able to say it
succinctly.



ON FALLING FEET — FOREMOST

Some darling people you will meet
are plain disaster-prone,
and always fall on someone's feet,
and never on their own.



REALLY

As people keep reminding you
the horrid things that people do
are superficial merely.

They're really not like that at all.
It's quite unjust of one and all
to judge them so severely.

It would be grand, it seems to me,
if people really were to be
as nice as they are really.

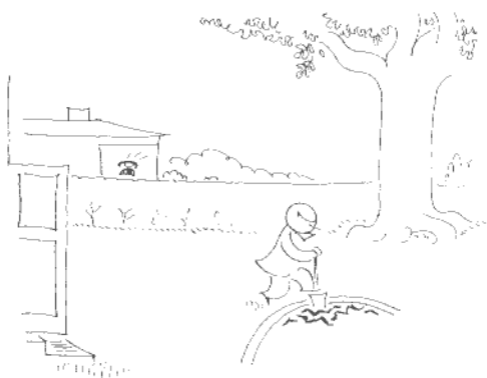


IMAGINATION AND FANCY

Literary grook

To imagine himself
is the poet's art;
for his theme must grow out of
his innermost heart.

But alas, there are poets enough
on my shelves
who think it sufficient
to fancy themselves.



THE SAME, DIFFERENT

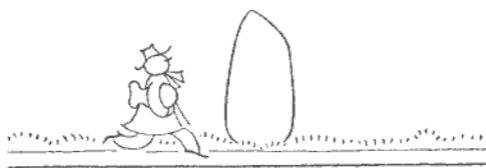
Grumble-grook

There's a neighbour's telephone
with the same distinctive tone
as it pleases mine to make...
...which I find I cannot take.



PITIABLE

It's not very pretty
in pitiful fashion
to angle for pity:
it merits compassion.



THE OPTIMIST'S OBELISK

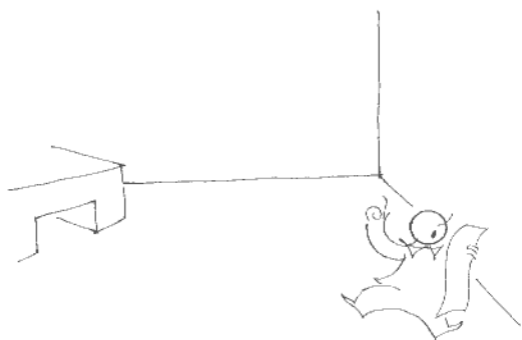
I go past a stone
by the road twice a day
in my regular
 toing and froing.
The sight of it tells me
I'm over half way —
whether I'm
 coming or going.



LIKE AND UNLIKE

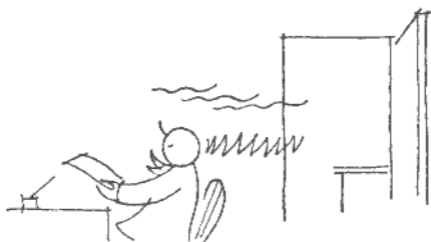
Taxonomic group

A baby's and a peacock's skrike
might make you think them much alike.
But where comparisons will fail
is in the colour of the tail.



LEST-LOST-LAST-LISTLESSNESS DEPRESS YOU

When too many errands accrue
it's useful to make out a list.
You're certain to lose it, it's true;
but somewhere, the thing will exist.
And then, when some accident brings
the list you have lost into view,
at least you've a list of the things
you've meanwhile forgotten to do.



O TOAST!

- O Toast! What an exquisite yearning thy sounds and thy odours convey!
- O fragrant aroma of burning!
- O rhythmical scraping away!



STEPWISE

Down from my attic room I swerve
in one smooth, spiral, clockwise curve.

The staircase happens to be wound,
I'm glad to say, the same way round:

for if it happened not to be,
it couldn't keep in step with me.



COME, TIME...

Now the November woods are clear and cold
and fragile snowflakes tremble in the air.
If the year's waning be like growing old,
come, Time, and sprinkle snowflakes in my hair.



OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD

Yes, he was tempted,
and he fell;
but judge him not
too hard.
It does take character
to sell
elastic
by the yard.



A PAINFUL NEWS ITEM

Lord Y. was dying; but then he
refused to give up the ghost.
The first will be painful to many.
The second will pain the most.



BEARDS

Or: Good wine needs no bush

The reason why some people grow aggressive tufts of facial hair is that they do not like to show the chin that isn't there.



A THOUGHT ABROAD

It's all very well
to play up the allure
of whatever it is
you are selling;
but it's over the odds
when a sight-seeing tour
turns out to be mainly
smell-smelling.



SATURATION

Comfort-grook

The heavens are draining,
it's raining and raining,
and everything couldn't be wetter,
and things are so bad
that we ought to be glad:
because now they can only get better.



PRO BONO...

You sit at the dentist's, your mouth open wide,
and the dentist has moved half his workshop inside
to gild you and glaze you and tin you.
It is not, I admit, my idea of a lark;
but you must keep your skeleton up to the mark
as long as you've still got it in you.



NOVEMBER HEDGEROW

Seasonal sketch

The pale November sunshine shines,
and spiders diligently ply
arranging endless washing lines
for dewdrops hanging out to dry.



GHOSTLY

Ghosts are mist
and moonshine mostly.
That's the twist
that makes them ghostly.



GOSPEL TRUTH

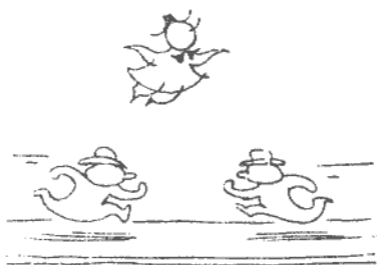
People
take for gospel
things that are
imposs'ble.



SCOTCHED

Ethological grook

Some persistent person-watcher
may eventually distinguish
why a Scotsman's so much Scotcher
than an Englishman is English.



SPEED IT UP!

Recipe

To start in a hurry
and finish in haste
will minimize worry
and maximize waste.



STRIKING A BALANCE

Mere good intentions go for naught.
The balance we must strike
consists of liking what we ought
and doing what we like.



FAME

Fame achieved
by mere achievement
scarce deserves the name.

Proper fame
is being famous
simply for your fame.



HIDE NOTHING!

On thoughts and words—II

If your thoughts
are rubbish merely,
don't express yourself
too clearly.



FREE CHOICE

People are meant
to hold various views;
which has been construed
to mean
that Rulers should give them
the freedom to choose,
and one thing
to choose between.



IS IT ART?

As for art,
what can a halfway-honest man do
to distinguish things that are
from things that aren't?
For there's little art
in doing what one can do,
and there's none at all
in doing what one can't.



A GROOK FOR CHRISTMAS

In pagan ages,
 Yuletide was a feast
not of the spirit,
 but of meat and drink.
Think about that this Christmas;
 or at least
as soon thereafter
 as you're fit to think.



MONEY

An Irishism

Sure, money's all wrong,
and the Devil decreed it!
It doesn't belong
to the people who need it.



ON RATIONALIZATION

Many are the problems
for which we find a cure,
and many are the snags
that arise.

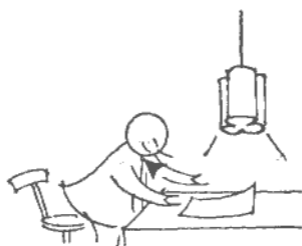
Rationalization
is rational for sure;
but is it also sure
that it's wise?



MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Grook on a handy substitute

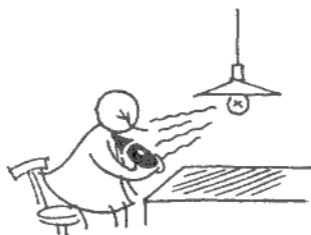
Don't despair of **passing muster**
when your virtues **don't suffice**.
You'll achieve an **equal lustre**
with the **obverse of a vice**.

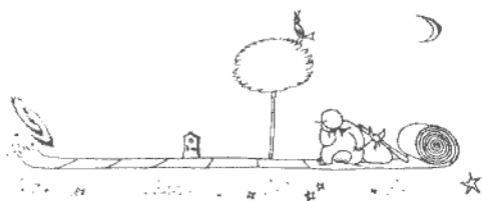


DE LUX

A general rule

We fondly believe in the fable
that luxmeters cannot lie;
forgetting: one lux on the table
is better than ten in the eye.





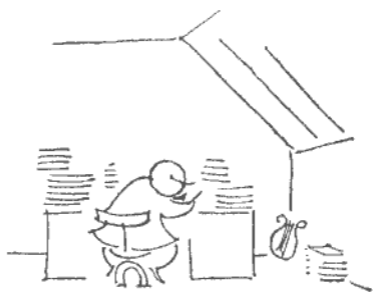
TRANSMUTATION

I may be stupid;
 but I don't see how
the time that's here
 contrives to get away.
How can what only yesterday
 was now
be now already
 only yesterday?



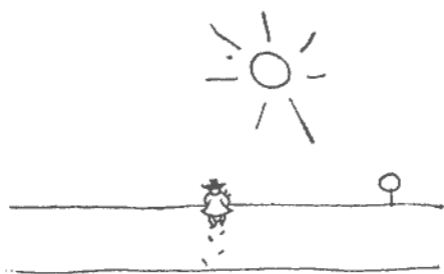
HINK BEFORE YOU THINK BEFORE YOU ACT

We're taught to think, and act
upon our second thought.
We might as well, in fact,
rely on second sight.
In view of how we're placed
the thing we should be taught
is how to act in haste--
and do it right.



THE GIFT

A gift of great
utility
is common
copability:
The knack of getting
each thing done
before the grind
has spoiled the fun.



PRETENDERS

Yes, people pretend
to be hurt, or delighted,
or angry, or sorry,
or flattered, or slighted,
or artlessly simple,
or artfully deep. —
and all these pretences
are easy and cheap.

There's just one pretence
that is worth our endeavour:
and that is pretending to
nothing whatever.