

Unlikely to be  
a MAJOR FILM

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
THE SHORT AND THE OVERDRAWN

# The Big Novel

Mel Calman

"Breathtakingly brief" - Cosmopolitan



methuen



The Big Novel



*By the same author*

Bed-Sit (*Jonathan Cape*)

Boxes (*Jonathan Cape*)

Calman & Women (*Jonathan Cape*)

My God (*Souvenir Press*)

The Penguin Calman

The New Penguin Calman

This Pestered Isle (*Times Newspapers Ltd*)

Couples (*The Workshop*)

Dr Calman's Dictionary of Psychoanalysis (*W. H. Allen*)

But it's my turn to leave you . . . (*Methuen*)

How about a little quarrel before bed? (*Methuen*)

Help! (*Methuen*)

Calman Revisited (*Methuen*)



# The Big Novel

By Mel Calman



Methuen

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Designed by Philip Thompson

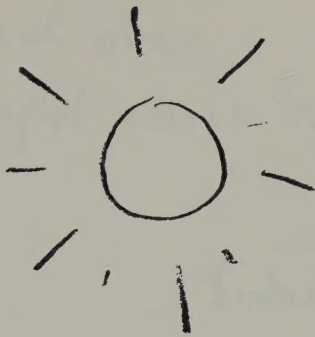
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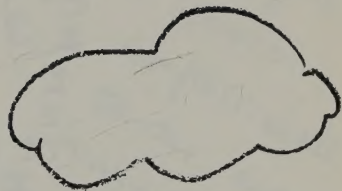
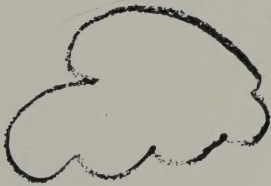
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*To Philip - in spite of working together . . .*





The  
SUN  
rose...



but he didn't...





INSTEAD -

He turned over  
and thought about THE BIG NOVEL...

it will be wonderful..

RICH..MOVING..

poetic..

insightful..

IRONIC..

Compassionate..

tender.. even

funny.. sexy..

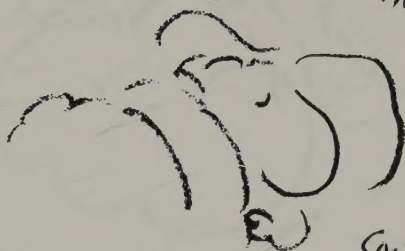
the best..

BOOKER PRIZE..

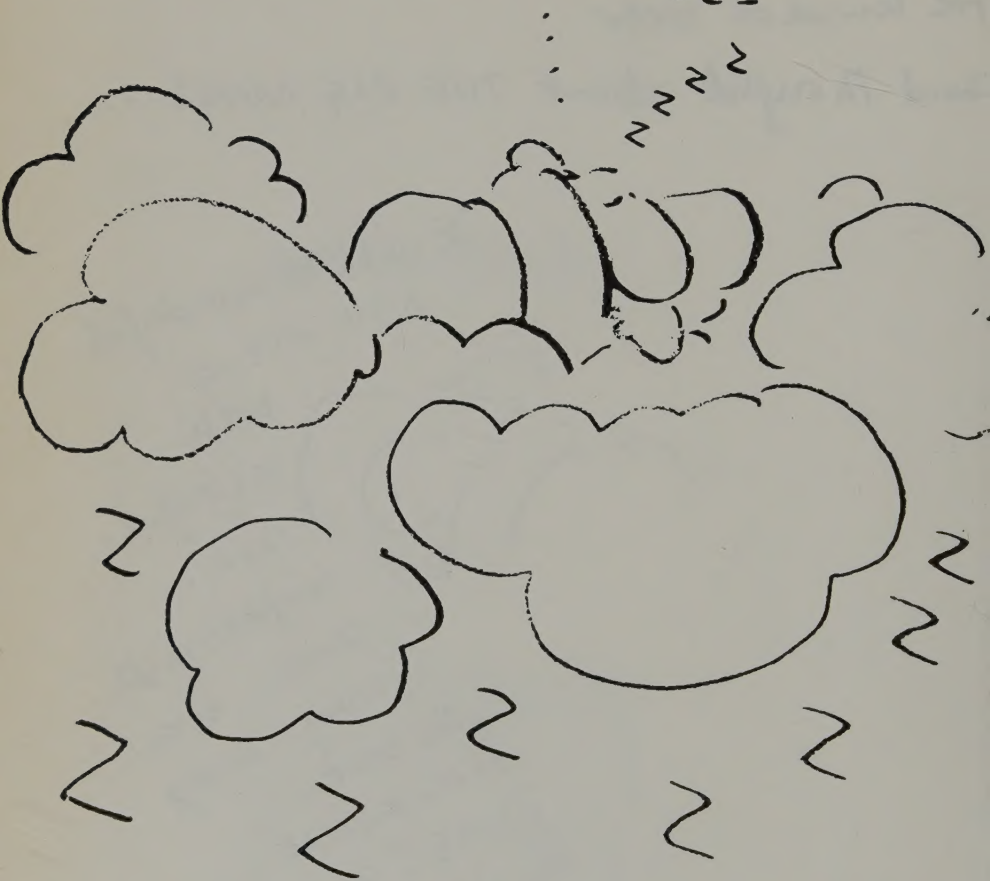
FAME! GLORY!

WOMEN! Money!

and WOMEN!



But first a little rest -



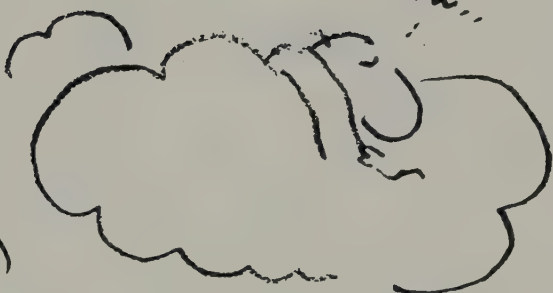
TOMORROW I will start..

TOMORROW..

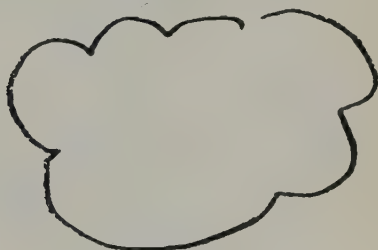
TOMORROW..

z

z



z



z

z

z

TOMORROW comes...

as TOMORROWS tend to do...

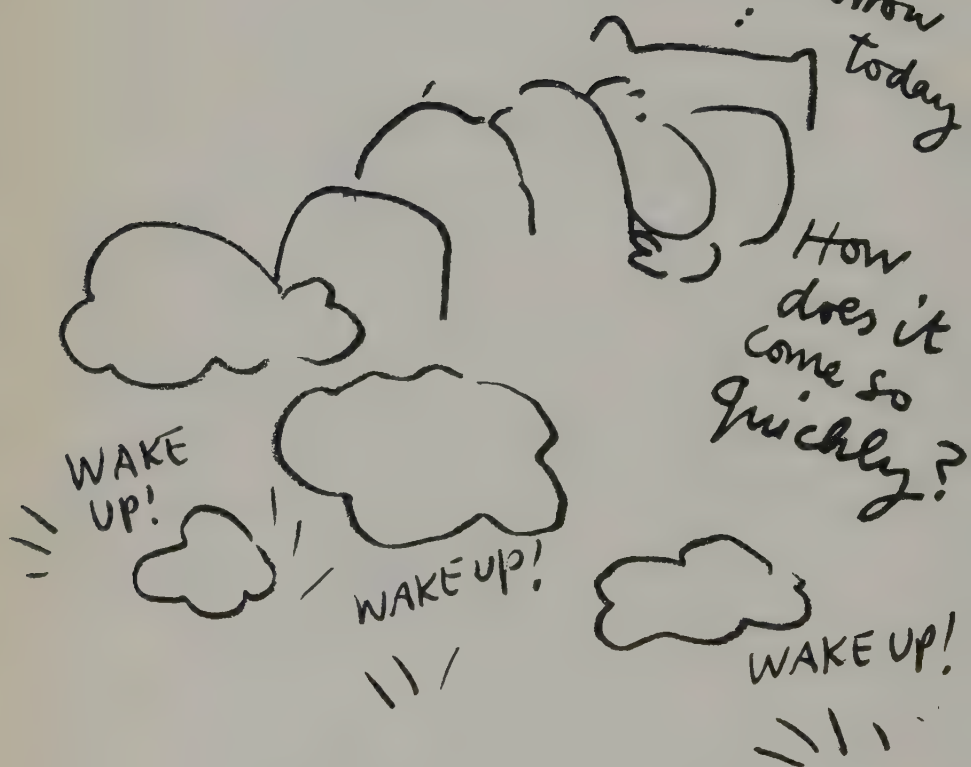
is it tomorrow  
today

How  
does it  
come so  
quickly?

WAKE  
UP!

WAKE UP!

WAKE UP!



There are so many things  
I must do TODAY.. do some  
SHOPPING (no MILK).. go to  
The LAUNDERETTE (no clean shirts)  
Take the CAR in (no exhaust)  
Phone the dentist (no gums  
soon..)



| let JANE AUSTEN  
never had to go the  
LAUNDERETTE - or TOLSTOY  
to the GARAGE to have  
his car fixed..

:



I suppose I could  
go through my old DIARIES  
and notebooks and search  
for a PLOT..

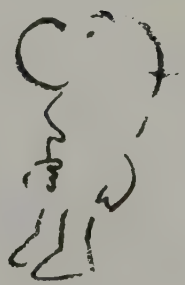
There was Helen... she was  
a NOVEL in herself..



Helen...  
let me see...  
I could write  
about...



Is this  
FLASHBACK  
time?





What's wrong with FLASHBACKS?  
I've had a VERY interesting  
life..

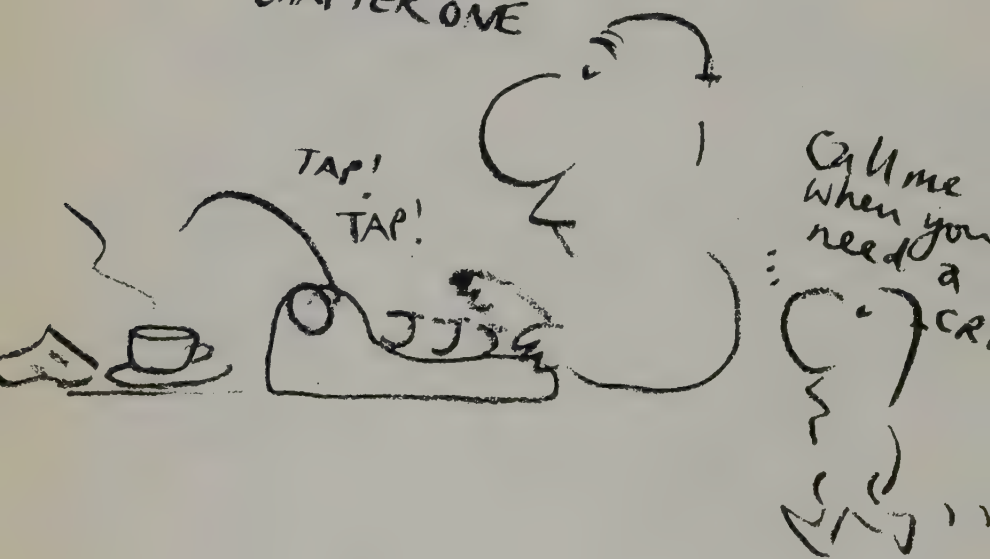


it's the OLD  
NOSTALGIA  
bit, is it?  
THE FIFTIES,  
PARIS, Youth,  
Oh dear.. dear..

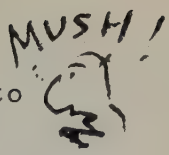


you're so hard to PLEASE..  
at least it's a start..  
it's a BEGINNING..

CHAPTER ONE



All that summer he yearned for someone to love..



It was one of those parties where people kept saying 'hello' and then moving on before he could say 'hello' back. This was the permissive sixties, he thought, and still no-one had given him permission to be permissive. The only joy that night had been a long-jawed girl who worked as a researcher for the BBC. She had pressed against him when he was trying to spoon some of the fruit punch into his glass without covering himself with pieces of orange peel. Philip knew her from some other party but before he could recollect her name she had moved on ~~and~~ and was now thrusting her long jaw up against an account executive from ~~the~~ Collett, Dickenson and <sup>Pearce</sup> ~~Pearce~~. The account executive was married to an Earth Mother who lectured in anthropology and taught the Alexander Technique in her spare time. He hated parties, but still went to them in his mad desire to meet female flesh.

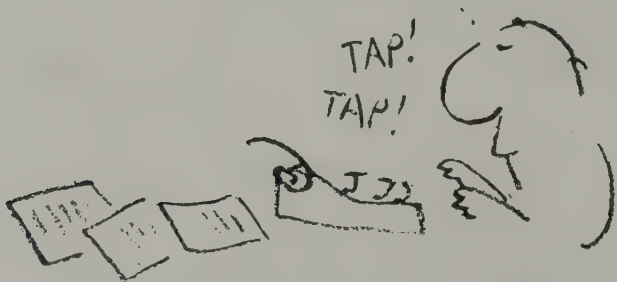
TAP! TAP!



It was a mistake. He would have just one more glass of the fruit poison and go home. A Beatles record was playing somewhere down in the basement and Philip considered moving towards the thudding sound. The host worked for The Sunday Times and had written a long profile on the Beatles.

In the far corner of the open-plan kitchen/diner Philip could see a promising novelist (his novel about a Northern footballer who had his balls transplanted from a young bullock had attracted considerable <sup>c</sup>ritical acclaim) manoeuvring his hands down the front of an actress who had once done the voice-over for a Heinz commercial.

Philip felt slightly sick. He tried to <sup>e</sup>remember where the loo was. The thought of <sup>the</sup> avocado coloured basin made him feel even sicker..



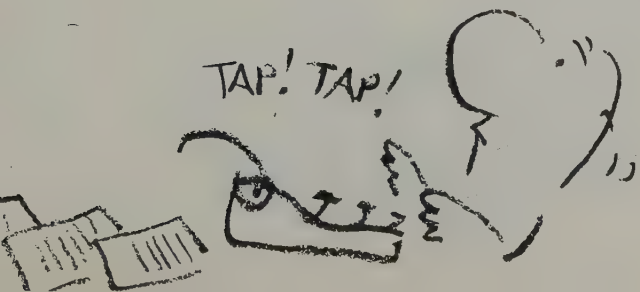


STOP! No-one will pay  
money to read this  
escapist RUBBISH!  
The world is in a frightful  
state - INFLATION!

Unemployment!  
NUCLEAR MADNESS!  
Herpes! - and you

write of sixties parties!  
Have you no sense of  
shame? Do try to be  
LESS TRIVIAL, for GOD'S SAKE!

TAP! TAP!



SORRY!  
SORRY!  
I will try to be less  
trivial - but LIFE is  
trivial - it's BILLS and  
TOOTHACHE and  
INSOMNIA.. it's NOT  
EPIC VERSE, you know -  
it's NOT TROILUS and  
CRESSIDA - it's  
PARKING TICKETS..  
..



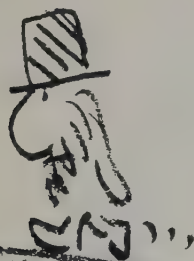


Here I am  
down in this PIT  
of DEPRESSION and  
you tell me to observe  
the STARS.. I don't  
WANT advice -  
I WANT the name  
of a good AGENT!

...



SNORT!

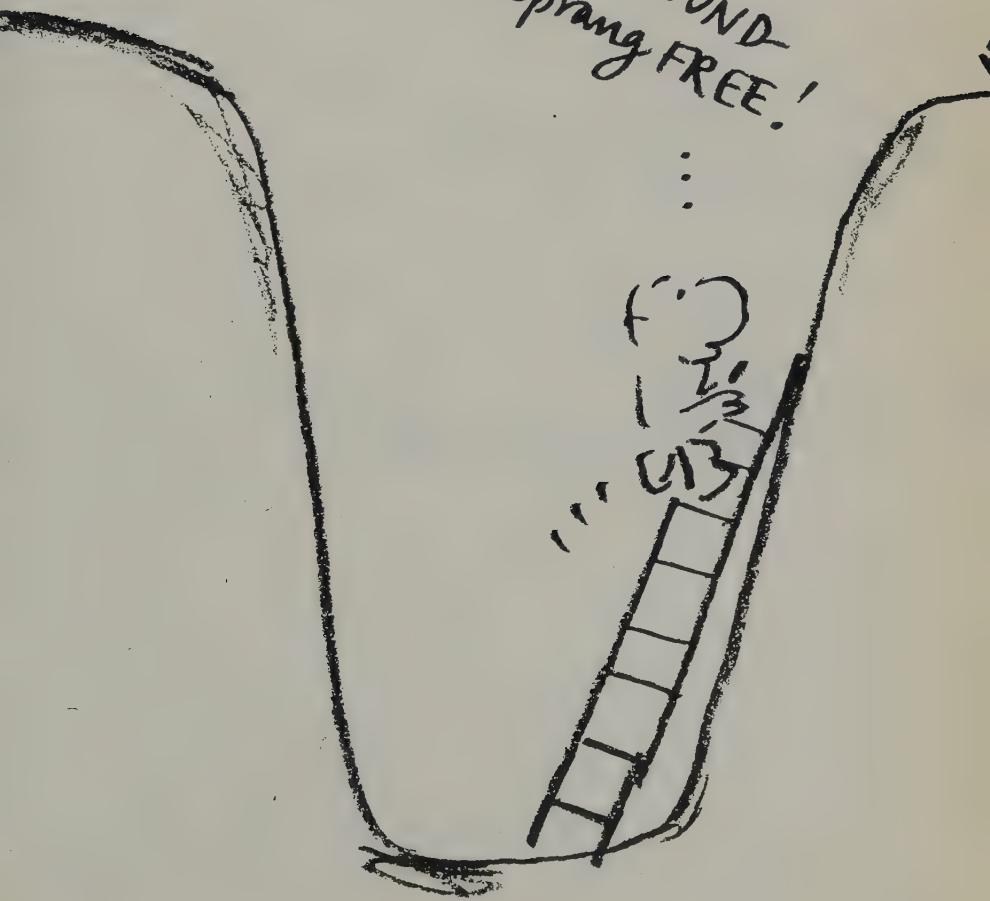


WHO NEEDS it?  
If it wasn't  
for SUPEREGOS  
like that - I would  
not be where  
I am TODAY..





And with an  
ALMIGHTY BOUND  
he sprang FREE!





There's always  
tomorrow..





The day I do my  
best writing..

⋮



The NEXT DAY...

I need to discover  
who I am before  
I can write my BIG NOVEL..  
I will visit a WISEMAN..



So he opened the YELLOW PAGES  
to see if he could find  
a WISE MAN.



WISE ACRES..  
∴ Wise guys..  
No.. here it is..  
WISE MAN (DOCTOR)  
13 ANGST DRIVE  
HAMPSTEAD..

AS GOLDWYN said -  
anyone who sees a shrink  
needs their head examined..



An appointment is made  
and the following MONDAY...  
he sits facing DR. WISEMAN..

So-what's  
the problem?  
Lie down  
and relax..



I don't want  
to RELAX -  
I feel too TENSE  
to relax!

:



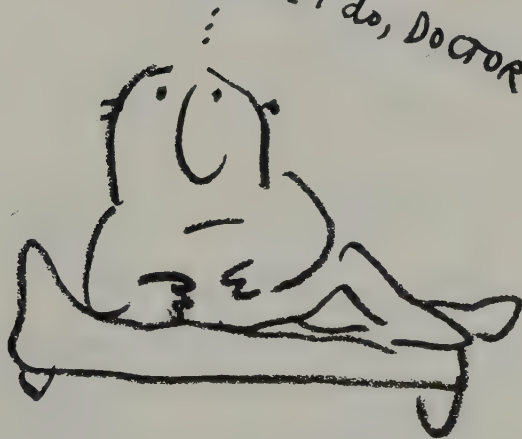
I want to know  
who I am -  
why I am -  
and when will it get better -  
and if NOT  
Why NOT?

⋮





I've tried to  
UNDERSTAND  
myself  
and the CRAZY world  
but I can't..  
What should I do, DOCTOR?



The DOCTOR  
thinks..

Mm.. mm..  
Probably OEDIPAL..  
with NEGATIVE TRANSFERENCE..  
even ANAL RETENTIVE..  
Certainly SCHIZOID.. with  
a touch of SHOE FETISHISM..  
fascinating..  
WONDERFUL..



The DOCTOR  
Speaks...

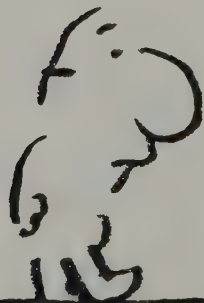
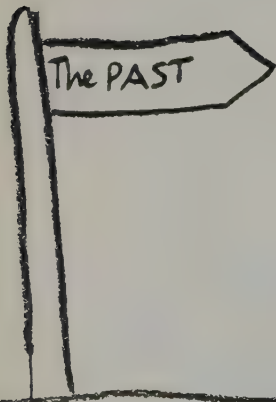
Come and see me  
for a little while..  
Stay twice a week  
(for ten years)  
While we discover  
the REAL PROBLEM..  
We need to get to the  
ROOTS of the difficulties..  
So TILL NEXT WEEK—





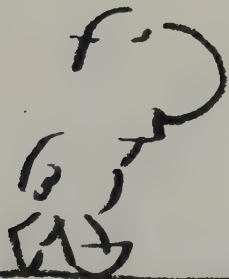
ROOTS?  
ROOTS?  
Am I a man  
or a TREE?

⋮



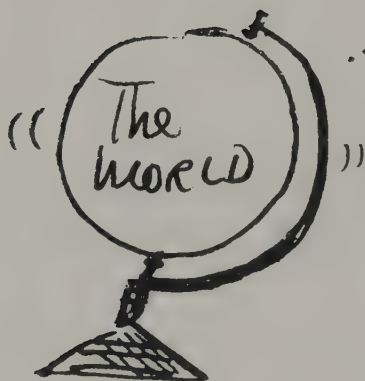


And if a TREE - shouldn't  
I see a TREE SURGEON?



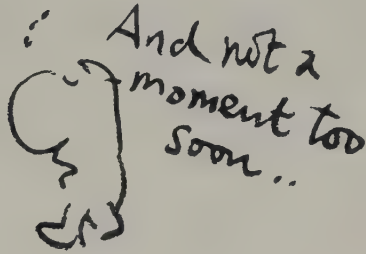
Meanwhile -  
The world  
continued spinning...

We just lost  
POLAND,  
MR PRESIDENT  
...



... Well-  
let's try for  
another TAKE!

The obligatory SEX scene  
is coming soon - DONT GO AWAY...



And not a  
moment too  
soon..

Here goes -  
"She slowly turned away  
from him..

and he noticed the  
sum thighs, the  
full rounded  
breasts, ... "

NO. JUST  
SAID THAT..



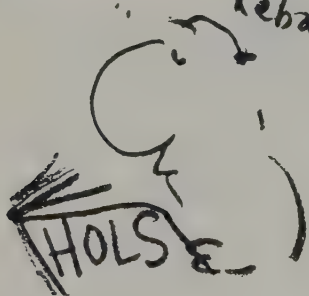
If I'm reduced to writing SOFT PORN -  
I certainly need a holiday..



BUT Where?  
BRIGHTON - TOO near..  
AFRICA -  
too far..



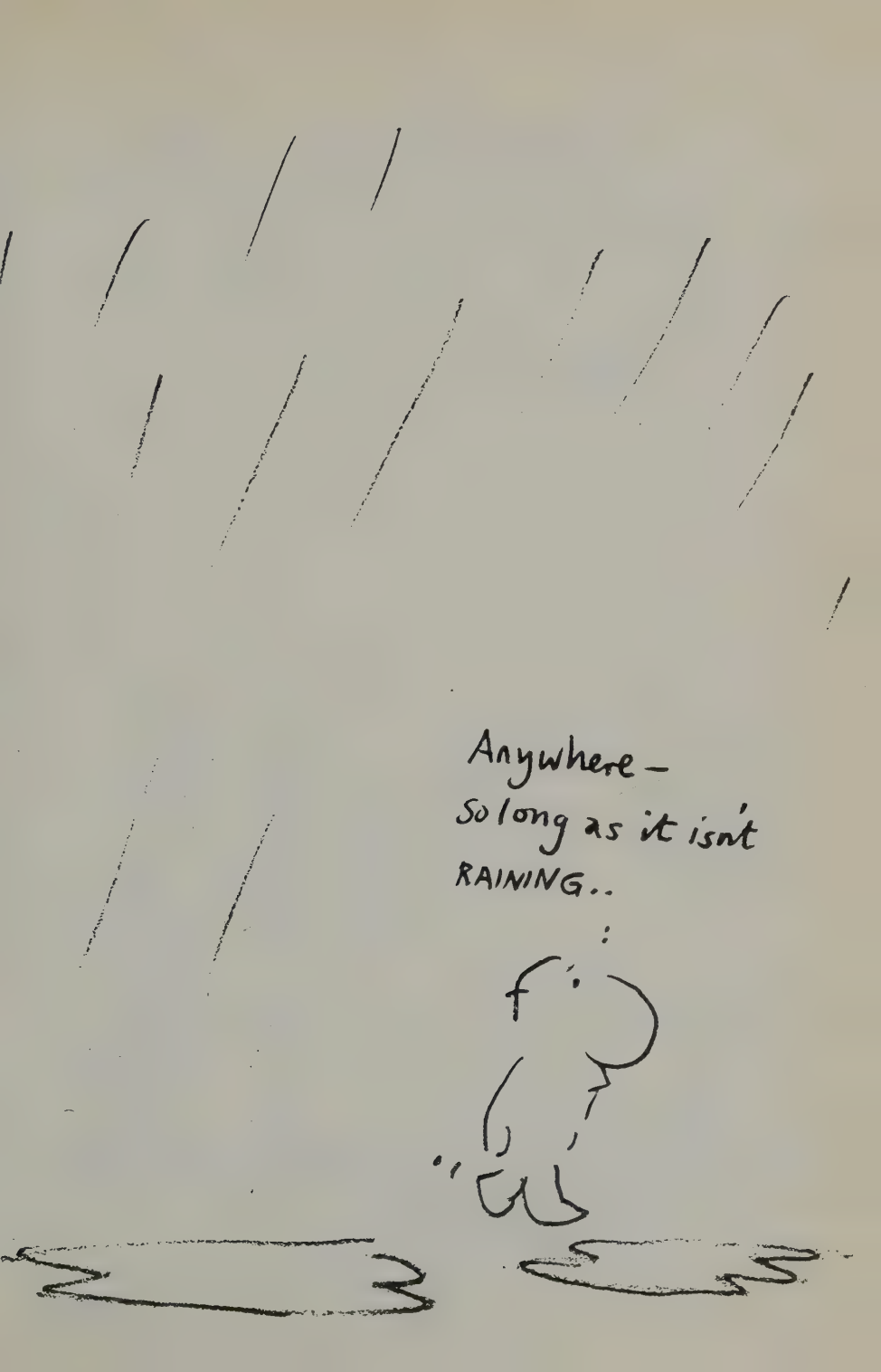
SPAIN? TOO HOT..  
CYPRUS? Too many  
kebabs..



ITALY?  
: too ITALIAN..







Anywhere -  
So long as it isn't  
RAINING..





So he cancelled all his  
appointments (both of them)  
and went to PARIS.  
In PARIS it was raining..



He unpacked his case  
and went to eat in a nearby BISTRO...

Ah-  
les Anglais...

Parlez-vous  
ANGLAIS?

May I tell you  
my PROBLEMS?



It's like this..

When I was young

I wanted to GROW UP -

and I'm GROWN UP NOW but

I feel Too old inside

To enjoy my LIFE..

So I've come to FRANCE

To rediscover

my YOUTH -

and FUN!

and JOY!

Z

Z

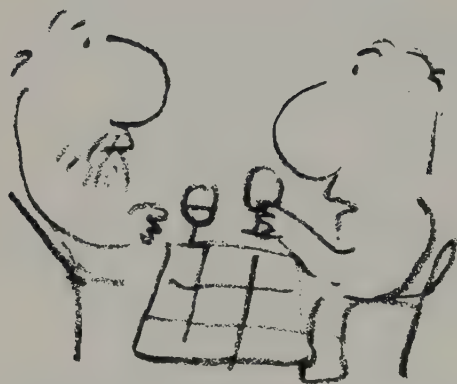
Z

Z

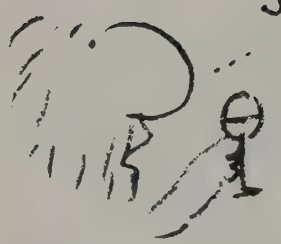
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AND SEX!



The FRENCHMAN WAKES UP!

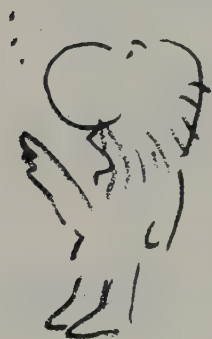


SEX!  
MON DIEU!  
ZUT ALORS!  
Let's go LOOKING  
for sex,  
MON AMI!  
Now you are talking..

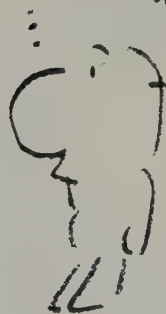
We go now..  
and CHERCHEZ la FEMME - as we say



TAXI!  
TAXI!  
TAXI! TAXI!



or CHERCHEZ  
10 TAXI - as we say..



They stop near Les Halles  
and walk along a NARROW STREET..

Hello  
Chérie!

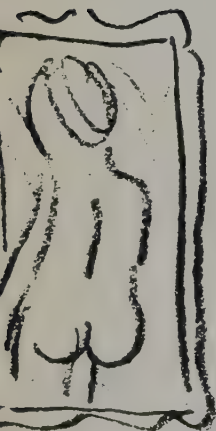


Hello Chérie!



ZUT ALORS!  
VITE, mon AMI...  
Come along!  
Not good enough  
for you!



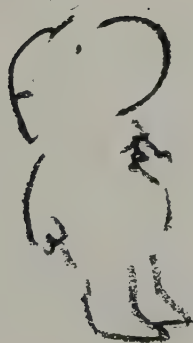


yes!  
I need a  
woman...  
and more  
LOVE..



6/15  
"EHS"

NO! You need  
LESS! LESS! LESS!  
LESS!

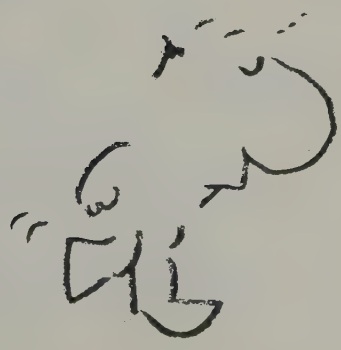


ALL THIS FUSS  
about one TINY book!  
I created the  
WHOLE WORLD  
in seven days..





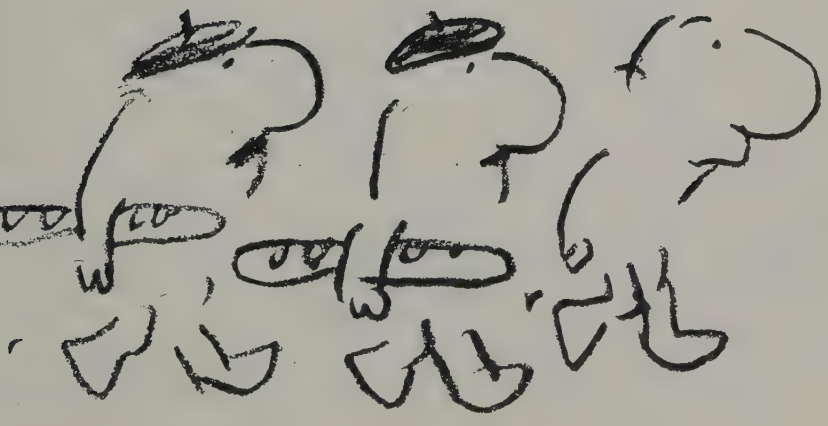
Yes- and  
LOOKING at the world  
today - perhaps you  
should have taken  
a BIT longer...



I'm WARNING you -  
if you're NOT careful  
I'll LEAVE you  
to your own FREE WILL -  
and then where  
will you be?



Where? Where I am  
NOW.. Alone in PARIS  
and HUNGRY..  
AS soon as I get  
COSMIC I know I must  
be hungry..  
So CHOLESTEROL,  
here I come..  
⋮



After a splendid DINNER  
followed by too many COGNACS,  
he dreamed that he had  
finished his NOVEL ...

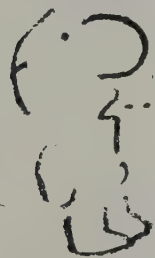




But when he woke up -  
he couldn't remember  
how it ENDED..

What happened? ?

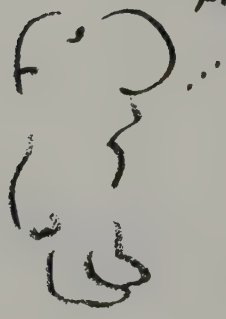
WAKE UP!  
I'm home sick... for  
EGGS and  
BACON..



The next time I dream -  
I must remember  
to stay AWAKE..



You're hopeless -  
can't even  
DREAM properly..





Why don't you  
write this  
DAMNED  
BOOK?



I will-  
who else  
is  
there?

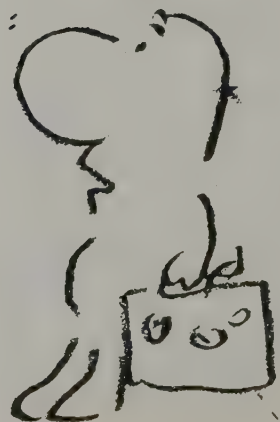
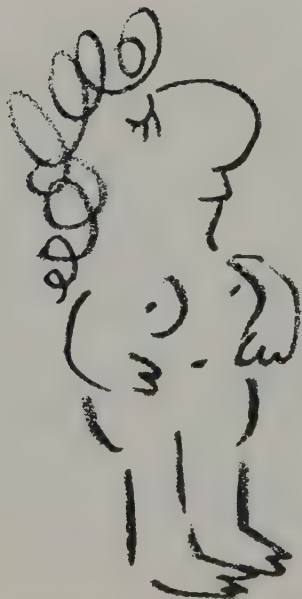


Im going home-  
I may as  
well be  
FRUSTRATED  
there- its  
cheaper..



He returned to LONDON...  
to find his FLAT occupied...

Hello! Are you a  
FANTASY? Would  
you like a part in  
my new NOVEL?  
I haven't written it  
yet but you'll  
LIKE it..



Listen you -  
I'm a HIGH-CLASS FANTASY. I can't just  
go into anyone's NOVEL -  
In fact, I'm WAITING around  
for a terrific chance to go into the  
new GRAHAM GREENE (I may have to  
become a Catholic first).. I also  
hear FAY WELDON is looking for  
someone.. I'd have to get PREGNANT  
for that..



LISTEN to me for a CHANGE!

You're my FANTASY -

and if I say you're to go into

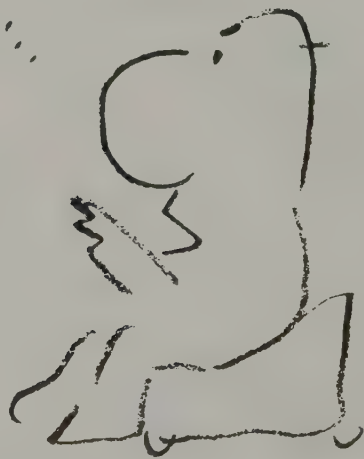
my NOVEL - you WILL and LIKE IT!

There's no question of you

going off with GRAHAM GREENE,

so forget it.

What's the point of a fantasy  
if you won't do as I say?



RUBBISH!

I've got a FREE LIFE to LIVE..

You don't own me.. I EXIST NOW

and if I don't LIKE your NOVEL  
I won't enter it. Do you really

Imagine that I do what

You WANT? I do what I FEEL

like. I'm RULED by FEELINGS -  
NOT REASON, you FOOL!

If you don't know that, then  
you had better hand in

your  
typewriter..



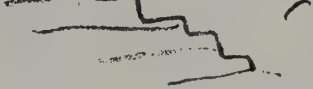
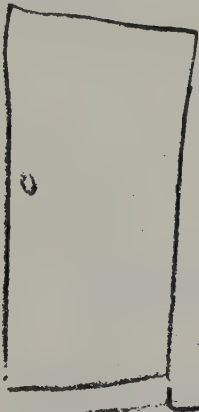
I give up!  
I'm going out to have  
a DRINK - and I hope  
when I get back -  
you've eloped with  
GRAHAM GREENE or  
even HAROLD ROBBINS  
for all I care..





GOOD GRIEF!  
I can't even get  
my FANTASIES  
to agree with me...

SLAM!



SORRY-

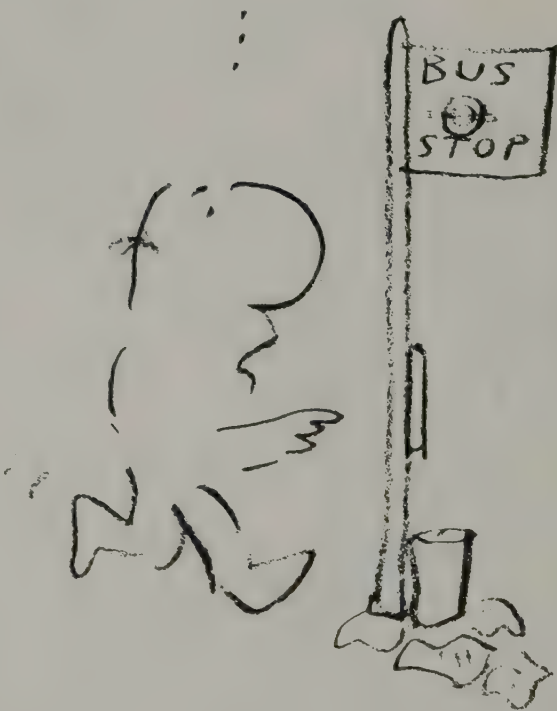
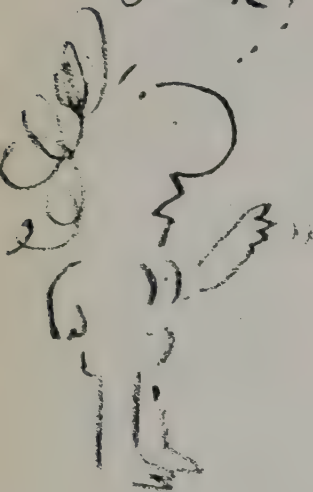
I must RUN-

There's a NO. 19 BUS-

a rare sight

not to be ignored...

WAIT  
FOR ME!



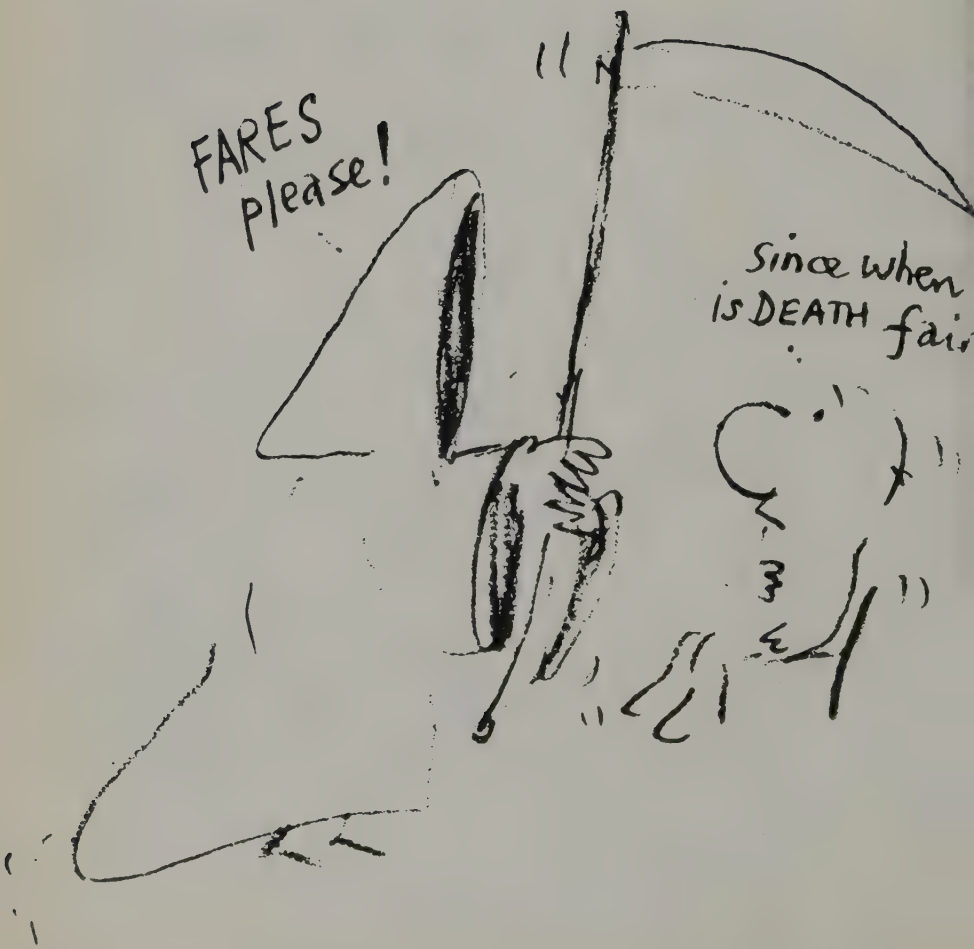
He sits quietly on the No 19 BUS-  
trying to THINK quietly about  
his NOVEL, the NATURE of ART  
and LIFE, TOLSTOY, DOSTOIEVSKY,  
DICKENS and why BUS FARES  
have gone up again..




The CONDUCTOR turns to speak  
to him ...

FARES  
Please!

Since when  
is DEATH fair





Is this the No. 19  
bus?

I know they have  
problems getting  
STAFF -  
but this is ridiculous..



Where would you LIKE  
to go, SIR?

Any destination you  
LIKE - so long as  
you don't want  
a RETURN TICKET...  
(Just my little  
Joke)...

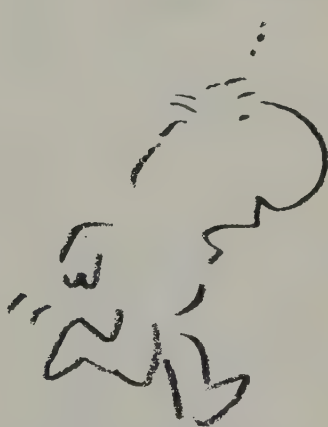


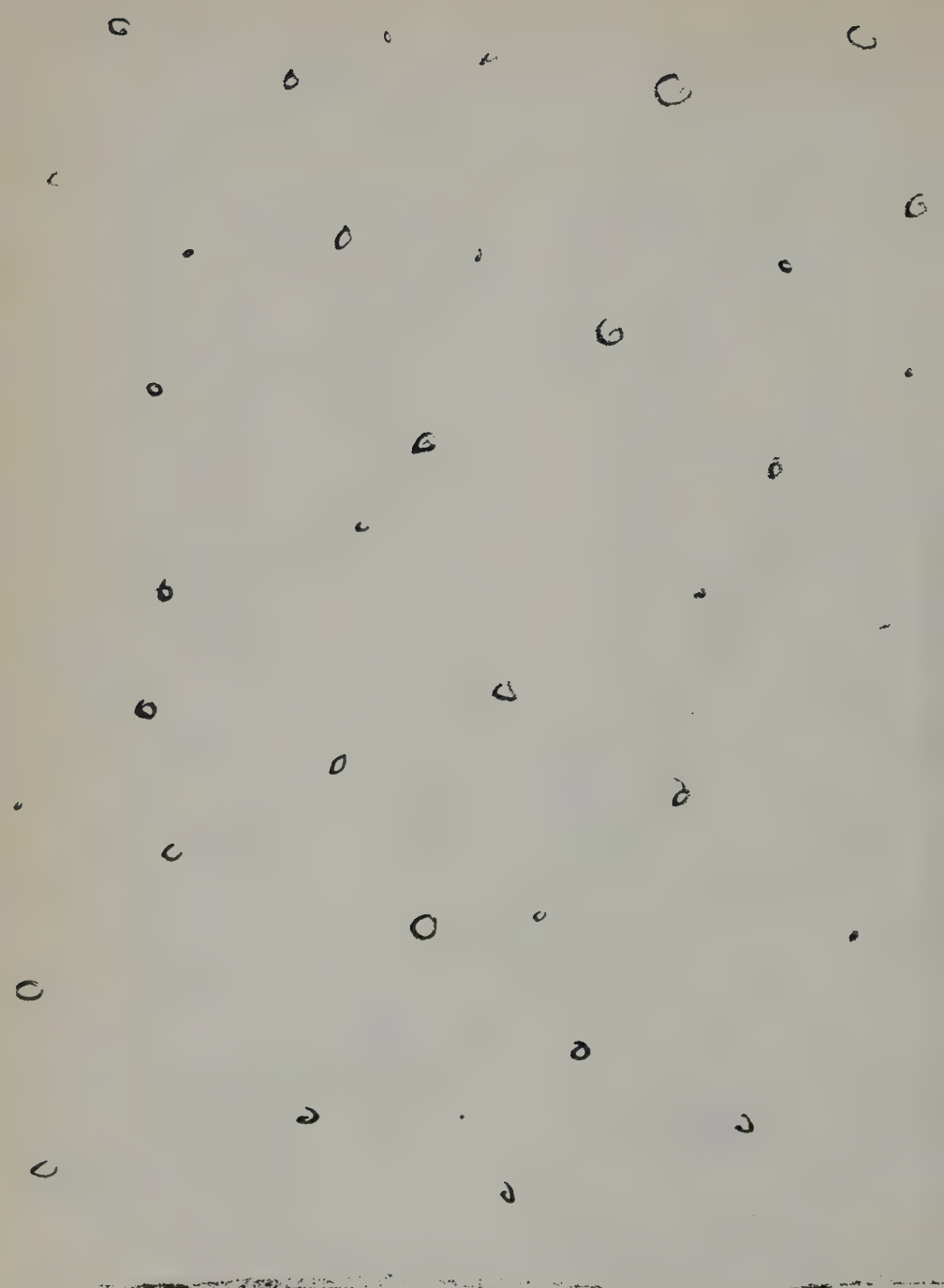
You STAY away  
from ME!  
No wonder the  
BUS  
are  
doing  
well...

People are so  
UNFRIENDLY...  
it makes one feel  
so UNLOVED..



You could  
FRIGHTEN the  
life out of  
someone!



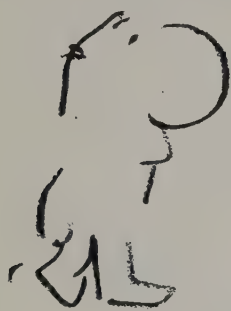




I don't want  
THE END  
before I've even begun...



The TROUBLE  
is that I'm too  
wrapped up  
in my own  
PROBLEMS  
to write a BIG NOVEL...

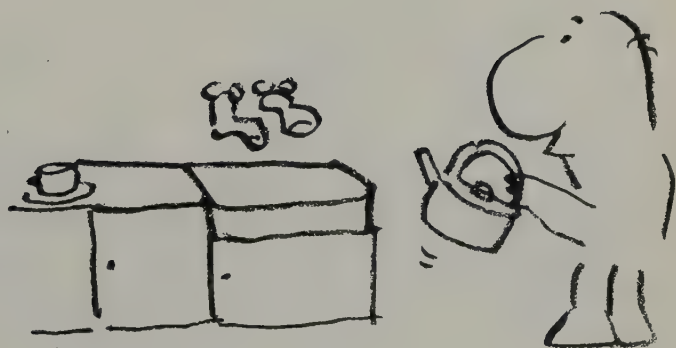


Who wants to read  
about my FEARS, my DREAMS  
my HOPES?  
Better to spin a yarn  
about old Hollywood...



and  
Sexual encounters of  
a Deviant kind -- of COKE-  
SNORTING beside LAKE-SIZED  
POOLS..  
But I don't know HOLLYWOOD --

All I know  
is my own LIFE..



Which is very BORING -  
it's cups of TEA and listening to the RADIO  
and walking to the BAKERS to  
buy two TEACAKES and a small  
wholemeal LOAF.. and cooking  
a LAMB CHOP for supper..  
(I want to leave quietly without PAIN and  
with a burst of MOZART in my ears..)



That was  
Desert  
1st 2nd Discs

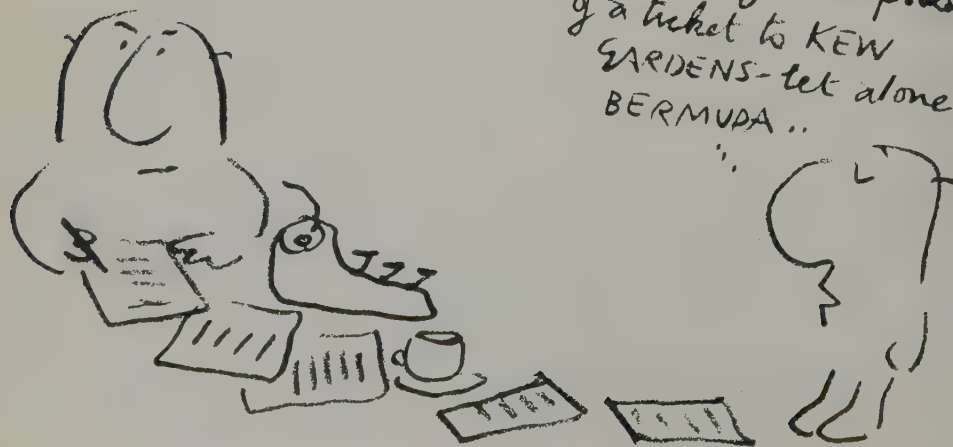
Which reminds me -  
I must go out and buy a loaf of  
BREAD. The BAKER closes  
at 4 o'clock (Why?) It's only 3.30  
and I feel TIRED.. Perhaps  
I should have a NAP now and  
wake up nice and fresh later...  
THE NOVEL will still be  
there .. LIFE needs BREAD..  
and LIFE must come before  
ART - and a SNOOZE  
comes even before  
BREAD itself ..



Why should I do all this  
scribbling when I could be  
on a beach in BERMUDA  
having my back stroked  
by a gorgeous blond  
from Virginia...?

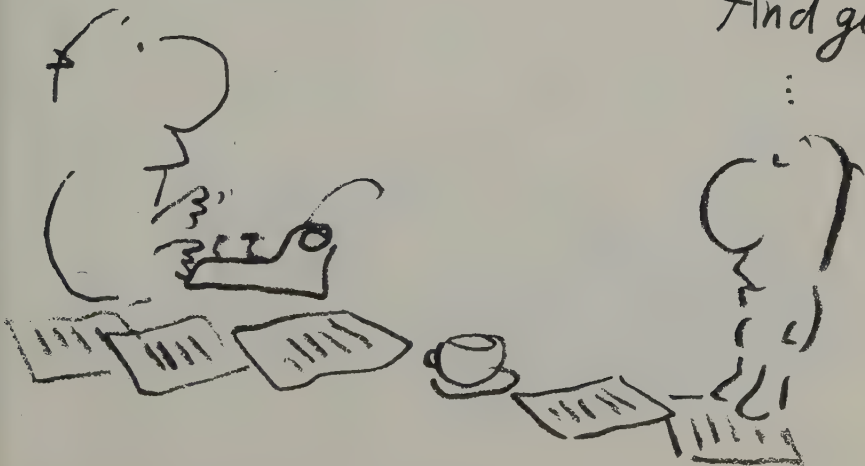
⋮

Because you  
haven't got the price  
of a ticket to KEW  
GARDENS - let alone  
BERMUDA ..



At last a motive  
for finishing this  
ACCURSED BOOK-  
MONEY!  
I'd forgotten about  
MONEY...

And girls...



GIRLS!  
GIRLS!

Is that all you  
think about?



No- I sometimes  
think about  
SEX..





How am I ever going to get  
any serious work done - if  
you keep TALKING about  
GIRLS - with their long legs  
and smooth, rounded  
THIGHS... and BREASTS...  
and LIPS... AND THIGHS...  
and THIGHS...

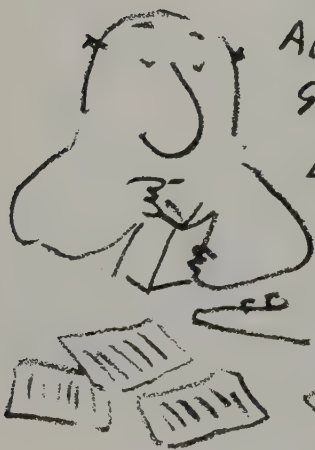
I never said  
a word about  
THIGHS, Boss.



All this talk about girls has  
unsettled me - I'd better see  
what one looks  
like...



There's JUNE - married!  
PHYLLIS - married!



Alice - Hopeless!  
GERALDINE - emigrated -  
Looks like it will  
have to be  
Caroline ..

The next evening at a SMART  
RESTAURANT in MAYFAIR.. Where  
FAMOUS NAMES eat...

How nice to see you  
again - I've MISSED  
talking to you..

He wants to  
sleep with me..

Looks  
like a lousy  
tipper..



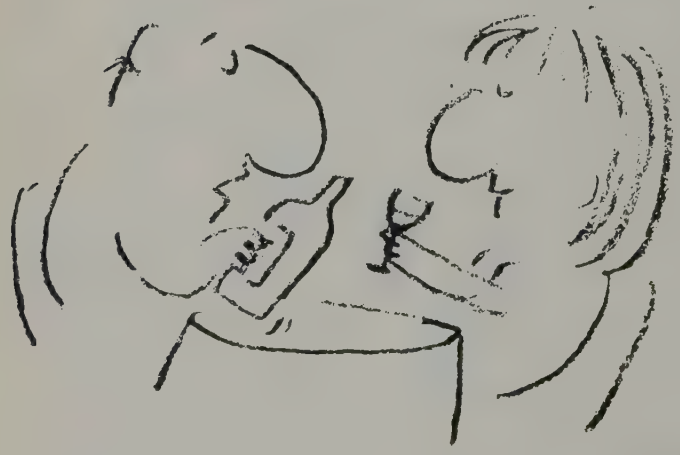
Didn't that man  
used to be  
STEWART GRANGER?  
You can have  
anything you like -  
So long as it's NOT  
in a hurry..

Excuse Me, Sir -  
but I think you  
dropped this  
NAME ..

JOAN COLLINS

Isn't that  
MICHAEL CAINE?  
Some more vino?  
It suits you to DRINK..  
I mean I love talking to you -  
Your MIND is so... so...

He BADLY  
wants to sleep  
with me.



I wish I could  
remember her  
Name - used to be  
MARRIED to someone..

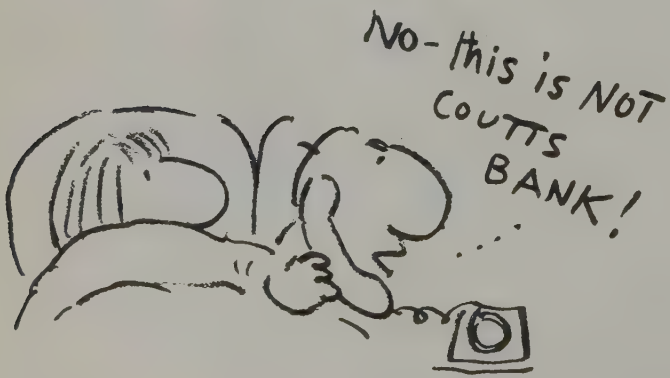
LATER...



It's too early for you  
to go home - Let's go to  
my PLACE.. a spot of BRANDY..  
and we can really TALK..  
I want to hear all about  
your NEW job..



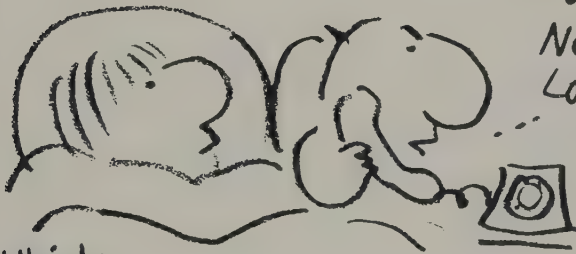
EVEN  
LATER-



NOW-  
ATLAST?

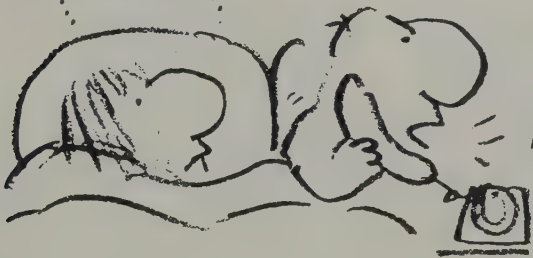


RING!  
RING!



NO- This is  
NOT the  
LONDON ZOO!

I think  
I'm getting  
a headache..



NO- this is NOT  
Anyone you WANT!  
I'm a WRONG  
NUMBER!  
MY WHOLE LIFE  
IS A WRONG  
NUMBER!!

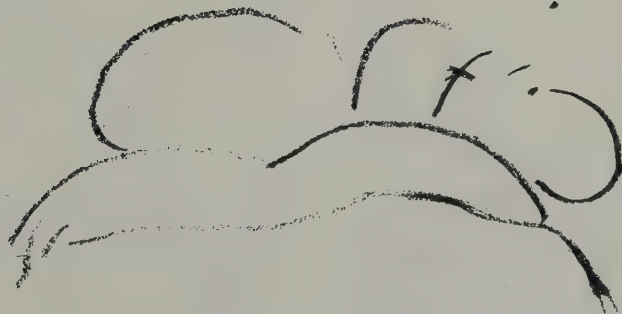
I'm going HOME -  
this place is like  
a Telephone Exchange...



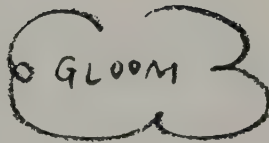
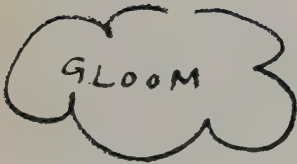


How can I use  
this episode  
in my novel?

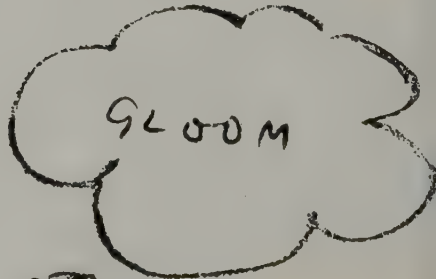
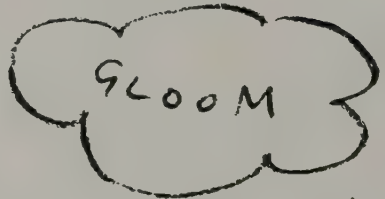
SLAM!



The NEXT DAY...



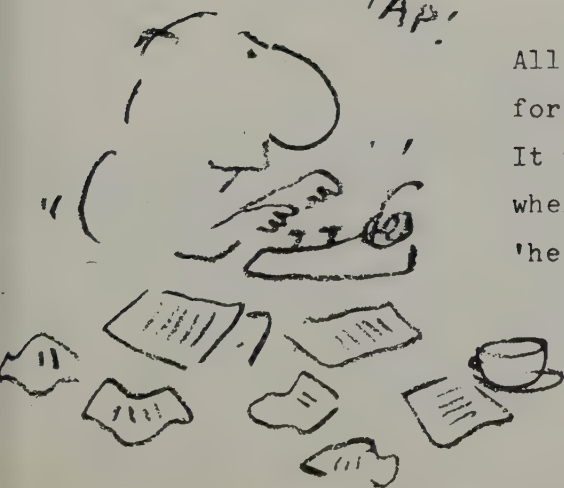
I can't go on!



NONSENSE!  
You can do it!



TAP!  
TAP! TAP!

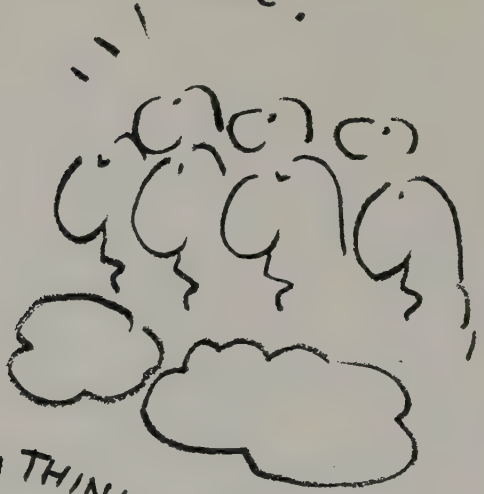


### Chapter One

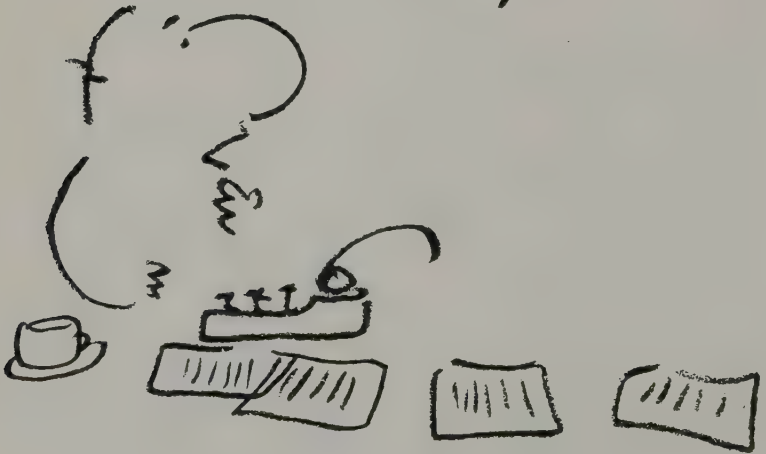
All that summer he yearned  
for sex...

It was one of those parties  
where people kept saying  
'hello' and

you can do it!



Do you really THINK so?



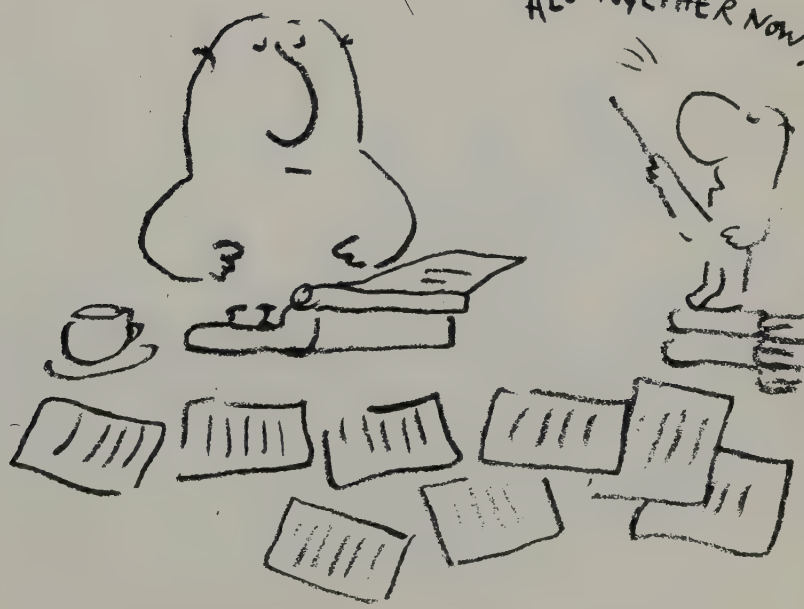
You can do it!



THINK of the  
FOYLES  
LITERARY  
'LUNCH!

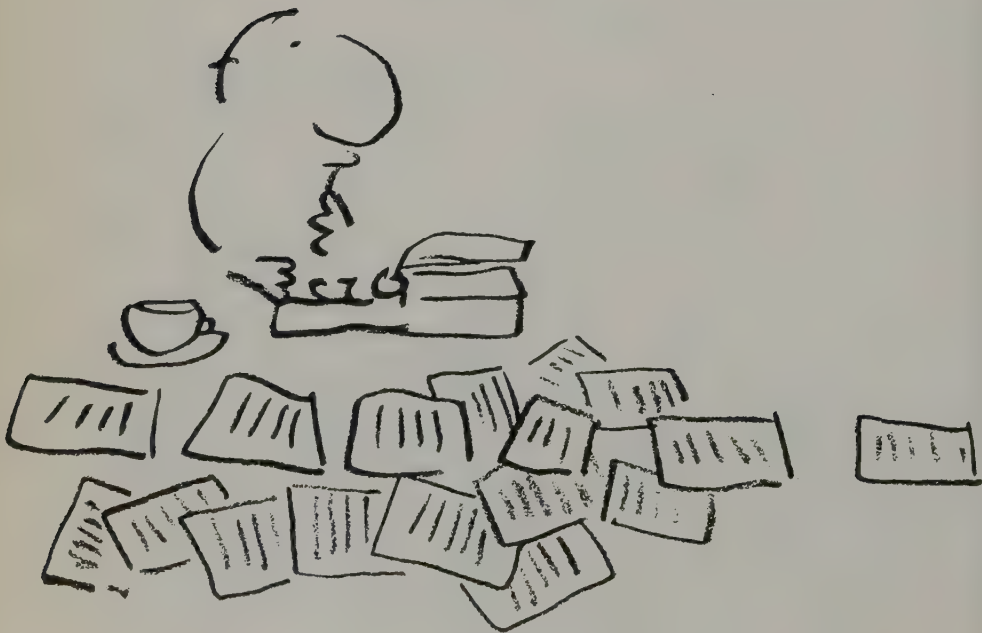
THE  
BOOKER  
PRIZE!!

JUST GO FORWARD!



ALL TOGETHER NOW!

GO FORWARD...



one page ... at a time ...



RUMBLE!

ANGST..  
etc

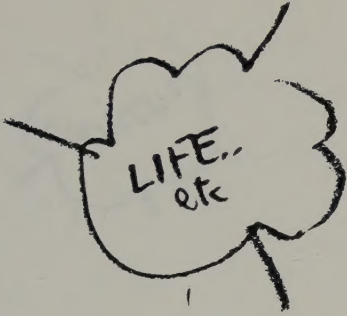
BANG!

BILLS  
TAXES  
FINES..

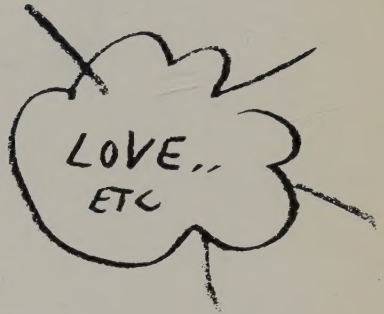


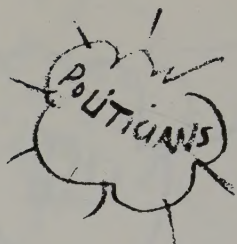
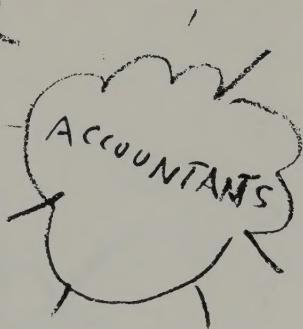
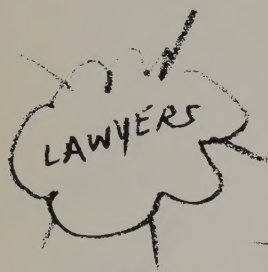


BANG!

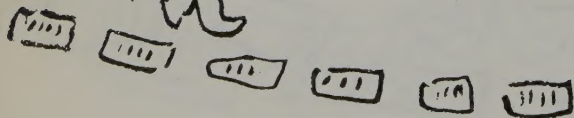
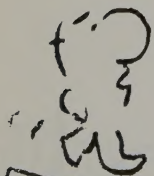


BANG!

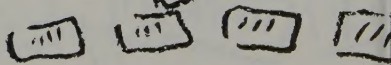




Why do we  
do this?



It's a LIVING...





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"a fleeting glory - like the sunset..."  
WOMAN MAGAZINE

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