

THE CONFESSIONS
OF
HENRY
HOOTER
THE THIRD

POEMS FOR OWLISH CHILDREN

by
Gabriel Rosenstock

Edited by Mícheál Ó hAodha



ORIGINAL WRITING

CONTENTS

The Confessions Of Henry Hooter The Third	1
The Vertical-Take-Off Sparrow	2
Sick Canary	2
The Corkscrew-Bird	3
Goose To Greenland Going	3
Connemara Child	4
Late Again!	5
Old Frog	5
Yakity Yak	6
The Depths Of Henry Hooter	7
Waddle	9
Stick-In-The-Mud-Spud	10
An Invitation To Discuss Life With An Eel	11
National Anthem (Nearly) For Nepal	12
Larry The Locust	13
To Katawangadoo - And Back!	14
Gooseberry	15
Chopped Carrot	16
What The Weasel Painted	17
The Asparagus Is Learning French	18
Hedgy	19
What Did You Slay?	19
Polar Bear	20
Onion	20
Now It's Snowing	21

© 2011 GABRIEL ROSENSTOCK

EXPANDED EDITION 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or information storage and retrieval systems—without the prior written permission of the author.

ISBNs

PARENT : 978-1-908477-95-8

EPUB: 978-1-908477-96-5

MOBI : 978-1-908477-97-2

Published by ORIGINAL WRITING LTD., Dublin, 2011.

THE CONFESSIONS OF HENRY HOOTER THE THIRD

Pre-Marital Tension	22
Litter-Bug	23
Sos Lost Whale!	23
Miss Pear	24
The Fire-Eating Moth	26
Late Again! (Yet Again)	27
Cabbage	28
Canute	28
Wuff	29
Auld Lang Syne	30
Shady Banana	30
Sea Bee	31
Professor X Goes Splat!	32
The Cautionary Tale Of The Horseradish	33
Charles The Woodworm	33
Bully	34
Harry	34
Dolly The Donkey Dances, Again	35
Us Voles	35
Mule	36
Henry Hooter Had A Flea	37
First	38
The Return of the Dodo	39
The Duck-Billed Platypus	41
The Tale of a Rat	41
Letter from a Mouse	42
Centipede	44

Sadly the dawn light seeps from the skies
He closes his eyes

Counts black sheep
Cannot sleep.

“I am tired of being wise ...
I’m not wise. It’s all lies!

“I am just a foolish bird
My name is Henry Hooter the Third.

“With a name like that I could be clever?
What a hoot (bless my word!) - did you ever?”

He opens his eyes
Thinks: “Me? Wise?”

“I’ve a big surprise for you all:
I am as wise as a brick wall!”

Now that he’s said all he wanted to say
Henry Hooter goes to sleep for the day.

THE VERTICAL-TAKE-OFF SPARROW

The vertical-take-off sparrow -
A creature that seldom is seen;
Up he goes like an arrow -
They call him "The Flying Machine".

He whirrs when about to take off -
But how to describe it... that sound!
Say a hundred gnus were to cough
(If a hundred gnus could be found).

SICK CANARY

My canary is sick
And refuses to sing,
He turns up his nose
At the food I bring
And his eyes grow dim
Grow dim, grow dim
And nobody knows
What's the matter with him.

I wish he could speak ...
Can't you open your beak?
Poor little thing! He's far too weak.

THE CORKSCREW-BIRD

The corkscrew-bird has a very funny nose
With which it makes holes in trees,
A funny old nose which it never ever blows
Except when about to sneeze.

The corkscrew-bird is born in mid-June
(And sometimes, too, in May)
Try as it might it can't sing in tune
But it hopes to ... one fine day.

GOOSE TO GREENLAND GOING

The brent goose eyes a passing cloud:
"I'm leaving tomorrow
No cause for sorrow!"
Chill wind cries aloud.

Greenland calls to the brent goose, time to go,
Nothing has changed
Her flight is arranged
No time to lose come hail, come snow.

How I -wish she'd take me there
To Greenland through the honking air!

CONNEMARA CHILD

An insect chirps in the meadow
Like a bicycle coming down the road,
I'm not afraid of the bumble bee,
The asses cry with their heavy load.

Mama's shawl is warm,
Father's pants are wide,
If ever I'm in trouble
I know where I can hide.

Uncle is mending a currach,
How I love the smell of the tar!
The lake at the end of the breen -
Silvery as a star.

I like the cows black as turf, That stream - no depth at all;
Sheep have dye-marks, blue and red, Ponies never grow tall.

LATE AGAIN!

Lightning flashes daub the sky,
Crow is flying at his level best;
"Caw! What a storm - can hardly fly,
Hardly see ... damn, where's my nest?"

"What am I doing at this time of night,
Lightning ripping the sky in two;
I'm a fool, you know - head is gone light,
Wife will be mad. What will I do?"

OLD FROG

Down in a hole in a bog Lived an old, old, old, old frog.
He was old, he was cold, All covered in mould
And breakfasted mostly on fog.

YAKITY YAK

The yak
Carries lots of things
On his back
And as he trundles
He tumbles and mumbles
Singing
“So many bundles!
Alack!”

THE DEPTHS OF HENRY HOOTER

Henry Hooter has a pain in his head,
“Should I get up, or stay here in bed?
Should I be single, or should I be wed?”
His head feels heavy - heavy as lead.

Henry Hooter has just had a thought,
It flew out his ear and was only half caught:
“All life,” he said, “is with something fraught,
Wisdom’s a something ... something - something
bought.”

Henry Hooter opened a book,
“What a load of codswollop! Look, just look!”
With laughter and anger his whole frame
shook -
“From start to finish it’s gobbledegook!”

Henry Hooter says the world has gone mad:
“Just have a look at it! Terribly sad!
Everyone asking what’s the latest fad -
By heavens, I hope it’s not me - egad!”

Henry Hooter nods off to sleep,
Sleeping deeply he lies in a heap,
Deeply sleeping till the first stars peep,
Mumbling sweetly “How come I’m so deep?”

POEM FOUND IN A SINK

Squids spurt ink
Philosophers think
Psychiatrists shrink
Skunks stink
Owls wink
What's a fink?
 Don't know. But flamingos are pink
And lemmings fall over the brink
Into the drink:
Is it some kind of kink?
 Don't know. But foxes slink
And a chain is as weak as its strongest link.
Is it wrong to wear mink?
 Don't know. But skaters skate in a rink
Glasses clink
Coins chink
Zn stands for zinc
Some girls prink
And as far as I know fish don't blink.

WADDLE

I am a little penguin
And I waddle when I run:
Widdle wuddle waddle -
Gosh, it's so much fun!

I waddle in the morning
When the day begins to break
And I waddle in the night-time
Just to keep myself awake!

My dad's a powerful waddler -
Twice Waddler of the Year,
The judges said he must have had
A fourth or fifth gear!

STICK-IN-THE-MUD-SPUD

“That old Spud’s a proper stick-in-the-mud,”
Says red-lipped Cherry. “Not talking to him
anymore!”

Spud hears this and is hurt to the core.

Suddenly - thud!

Next thing you know he’s lying on the floor.

All the fruit and vegetables gather round to
view the scene.

“Dead or alive?” asks Parsnip. “Hmm ... let’s
see,” says Garden Pea,

“I wonder ... hmm ...what do you think Broad
Bean?”

“Nothing serious, just badly shook if you ask
me!”

“Spud! Darling! It’s me - Cherry. I’m awfully
sorry! (Can he hear?)

Said awfully sorry! Friends? So silly to fight!”

Spud opens a watery eye: “Forgive you this
time, my dear.”

“Oh, so happy!

Tell me Spud ... anything - er -
cooking tonight?”

AN INVITATION TO DISCUSS LIFE WITH AN EEL

You think because I’m just an eel
I don’t feel?

I feel! As do lizards, newts and rats
And vampire bats!
You think because you see no tears
I’ve got no hopes, no dreams, no fears?

I fear, I dream, I hope,
My dreams are slipperier than soap.

What do you think I’m made of? Jelly?
Oh, what’s the point! Go watch telly!

NATIONAL ANTHEM (NEARLY) FOR NEPAL

“I think not,”
Says the Nepalese Apricot
“I think not...”

“What?
Hey, Apricot!
Think not what?”

“No, I think not,”
Says the Apricot
“I think not...”

“That there Apricot
Sure does think a lot!”

“I think not,”
Says the Apricot
“I think not...”

LARRY THE LOCUST

Larry the Locust
Is fond of his swarm
“Keeps me warm.”

Larry the Locust
Plies here and there
“Most everywhere.”

Larry the Locust
Could never live alone
No mind of his own.

Larry the Locust
There he goes!
Which one is he?
Nobody knows.

TO KATAWANGADOO - AND BACK!

Where bananas straighten out by the hour
And the stinging coconut slowly loses its hair,
Have you been there?
I was - I swear!

Nuts there swell, shiver and grow sour,
Sad gorillas stare
At aero-bats sailing backwards through the air -
For a dare!

Swamps giggle as fish cower,
Sly crocodiles, weeping, glare
At snide parrots who don't give a care
Because there's zillions of them there.

Slimy waterfalls freeze, stumpy giraffes glower
And whistle a soft tune - so sweet and rare -
Before ... splat! They tumble into the spider's
snare:
YES, I WAS THERE!

GOOSEBERRY

I no longer want to be a gooseberry!
But wouldn't it be merry - very -
To be a duckberry, -what?
I'd like that a quacking lot!
Or a turkeyberry for that matter
And never run out of chatter.
A swanberry - yes, that would be nice.
A swanberry - cool as ice:
With cygnetberries all in a row
Waiting to turn into snow.
Anything! Anything but a gooseberry!
I'm nothing but a hairy what's-the-use-berry!

CHOPPED CARROT

The Carrot woke up
To the sound of a slicing scream;
Old Turnip spoke up:
“Young Carrot there’s having a dream.”

The following night
Carrot woke up as before;
Turnip was right
“I’m afraid you’re a bit of a bore!”

“Help! Help! It’s a rabbit!”
“Oh, shut it!” says Turnip, “this is becoming a
habit!”

WHAT THE WEASEL PAINTED

There were snails
on rails
and mice
on ice.
Dogs, hogs
and frogs
in clogs -
floundering in bogs.
Gnus
in pointed shoes
(their tootsies wall bruise).
Llamas
in striped pyjamas.
Asses
with glasses.
Chimps
with limbs -
such imps!
Cats, rats
and bats
in spats.
Yaks
in plastic macs -
(soaked to the bone,
all all alone,
they groan,
all trying to use the phone:

Hallo? Hallo? Ochone!)
Two fighting cocks
a stray fox
something rather like an ox.
A papoose
riding a moose
and a goose
with a screw loose.
And there with his easel
Wilfred the Weasel
painting a sun as small as a measle!

THE ASPARAGUS IS LEARNING FRENCH

The Asparagus is learning French
Ouil Out! and s'il vous plait;
The Jerusalem artichoke says "Mensch!
She getting crazier by the day!"

Nobody knows what she's saying,
She's been at this now for a week:
"Please stop this s'il vous plaiting
Or I'll speak Welsh!" says the leek.

HEDGY

Hedgy the Hedgehog
Is crossing the road,
I sure hope he makes it
And lives to be old:
"Come on Hedgy, hop it!"
He stops dead cold ...
"Hop it?" says Hedgy,
I'm not a bloomin' toad!"

WHAT DID YOU SLAY?

Miss Orange has a stutter,
Or, should one say a splutter?
It annoys Professor Apple
Who, as you know, is trying to grapple
With the flutterfly...
Oh my!

Stand back if you please, Miss Orange - back!
Out of my way!
Slorry, Professor Zapple, what did - what did
you slay?

POLAR BEAR

A polar bear once went to sea
On a morning as cold as could be,
“This ice-floe,’ he felt
Is unlikely to melt...”
But it did - when he went for a pee.

ONION

The onion’s eyes are streaming
The tears drip down his nose
His two little ears are beaming
And this is how his story goes:

Oh woe is me.
Oh me is woe.
Look at that bunion
On my toe.

Poor onion!

NOW IT’S SNOWING

s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s
s s s

N O W

PRE-MARITAL TENSION

Henry Hooter is tired of mice:

“Put them on ice!

Put them on ice!”

Henry Hooter won't touch a fly:

“I'd rather die!

I'd rather die!”

Henry Hooter is fed up with life:

“I need a wife!

I need a wife!”

So he puts an ad in *The Owltime Review*:

LOOKING FOR A MISSUS. COULD IT BE YOU? REPLIES IN CONFIDENCE. TO-WHIT! TO-WHO!

LITTER-BUG

Litter-bug litter-bug

Where have you been?

“Scattering rubbish -

I'm ever so keen!

Down by the waterfront

Up in the green

Searching for places

Still tidy and clean.

Well I've made such a mess

It's just got to be seen!”

Litter-bug litter-bug

You're mean

Real mean.

SOS LOST WHALE!

Far out in the sea lived a whale

With a great dashing lashing big tail.

It smashed as it bashed

And it crashed as it slashed

And it flashed - and got lost in the gale!

MISS PEAR

Miss Pear! Miss Pear!
Miss Pear is in despair
(She's really very sad!)
Miss Pear! Miss Pear!
Miss Pear - don't despair!
It can't be all that bad.

Miss Pear! Miss Pear!
Miss Pear! She doesn't care
(She's really glum!)
Miss Pear! Miss Pear!
She needs some air -
She's hopelessly in love with Mr Plum.

And this - this Plum? (Now that she has made
her heart bare).
The wretch! "But all I wanted was to peel Miss
Pear!"

GROWING PAINS IN ONE KNEE

How would you like to be
a weenshy little flea
a weenshy little flea
with a pain in one knee?

His knee is so small
he can't see it at all
"Is it growing pains I have?" says he.

Weenshy little flea
try a compress of cold tea
it works. Always worked for me.

"Hm... Maybe..."
sighs the flea.
"You see
what's worryin' me
is I'm in agony
but, golly gee,
only in the one knee ..."

Spare a little thought for the fleas ...
their little knees

THE FIRE-EATING MOTH

The fire-eating moth is a sucker for fame
And dances and jumps to applause,
“There’s nothing,” he says, “to compare with a
flame,”

(Which he chews without using his jaws).

A remarkable fellow, the fire-eating moth,
He has never been scorched, as of yet ...
Except once and he yelled: “This flame is thoo
hoth!

Geth me a drink - one that’s weth!”

LATE AGAIN! (YET AGAIN)

It’s two o’clock in the morning,
The crow has lost his way,
His wife in her sleep is turning,
Very soon it will be day!

At last he’s found his nest,
He snuggles so quietly in:
When, nestling up to her breast,
Suddenly - there’s an awful din!

“Caw Caw! He’s back! He’s back! He’s back!
Caw Caw!” They sing and jeer.
“Sorry,” he says, “night was so black!
Breakfast in bed, my dear?”

CABBAGE

I think I've got a slug, said the Cabbage,
Something's crawling over me,
Try to get it out .. can you manage?
Oh, please hurry Mr Chicory.

I'm doing my best, says Chicory. Lord above!
It's not a slug you've got - it's two!
And if I'm not mistaken, they seem to be in
 love -
No, not with one another, dear - with you!

CANUTE

"Nobody ever talks to me,"
says poor Canute Cucumber.
"Nobody takes a walk with me
or says I'm a cute Cucumber.

"What on God's earth can one do?
One feels so terribly green;
Must one wait till one's twenty-two
Before one is heard of or seen?

"Nobody ever talks to me,
I wonder is it my name?
Nobody takes a walk with me
Really, you know, it's a shame!"

WUFF

Dark...
Dogs bark ...
I hear them howl,
Growl...

WUFF!

What are they saying?
What are they baying?

Wuff! Wuff-wuff!

Wuff!

You'd think by now they'd had enough

AULD LANG SYNE

“Who is crying over there?”
“Who disturbs the evening air?”
“Pineapple, is it you?
Are you blue?”

“Tell us what’s wrong!”

“I pine ... I pine for a song..”

“Oh pineapple! Silly, silly! Why pine?
Let us all sing, *Auld Lang Syne!*”

SHADY BANANA

“Dr Spinach will see you now, Mr Banana,
Step right this way please.”
“Thank you Miss Parsley - I - I mean Anna -
Excuse me I’m going to sn- sneeze!”

“Well well, Mr Banana - let’s see how you look.
Still green with envy, poor sod:
Take to your bed and read a good book -
The Koran, the Bible - anything, by God!”

SEA BEE

There once was a small honey bee
Went out on the wide open sea,
Flying for hours
Searching for flowers -
It never came back for its tea.

PROFESSOR X GOES SPLAT!

Professor X does not agree
With either colleague, A or B:
“No no no, it cannot be ...
You see ...”

Professor B swallows a pill.
He has truly had his fill.
Professor X he'd like to kill.
“Someday I will,” he says, “I will.”

Professor A just stares ahead,
Hasn't heard a word's been said.
Got out wrong side of bed,
Only half alive, half dead ...

Professor X says: “Well, that's that...”
Goes to put on scarf and hat.
Professor A says: “Look, a rat!”
Hits him with his broom - splat!

THE CAUTIONARY TALE OF THE HORSERADISH

The Pumpkin laughed out loud:
“I don't mind being fat at all,
I sometimes feel like a cloud
Or like snow that's about to fall.”

“I see,” Horseradish replied,
“Well, that's fine for you, I suppose;
As for me, I could grow if I tried ...
Want to see? Alright - here goes!”

So he blew and he blew and he blew
And got terribly red in the face,
And he grew and he grew and he grew
And went POP! (without leaving a trace).

CHARLES THE WOODWORM

Charles the woodworm
is sitting for his exam:
“So many types of wood
all I can say is DAMN!
Coniferous... deciduous...
always mix up the two.
Oh, the world would be a forest
if we'd no exams to do.”

BULLY

The Italian tomato, Tomasi, is going around
depressed:
“Oh, what a bully, that coconut. I’ll tear all the
hair off his chest!”

“Si, si,” says the Spanish lemon, “I agree -
damn his hide.
Shall we open him up, amigo? I’m sure he is
milky and watery inside!”

HARRY

Harry the ant
He wore no clothes
No clothes
No clothes at all!
I can’t
I can’t
Said Harry the ant ...
Why? Sure nobody knows.
No clothes
No clothes
He wore no clothes
He wore no clothes at all.
What did he wear?
He wore a rose
At the Earwig’s Fancy Ball.

DOLLY THE DONKEY DANCES, AGAIN

I have trimmed my eyebrows and lashes too,
Put powder all over my nose,
Painted my lips a fashionable blue
To match my toes.
Let us dance, sweet jackass, me and you
In our best clothes:
You are fragrant and gentle - rain on a rose -
You know that I love you - I do!

US VOLES

We’re not very common, said the Vole,
In fact one might say we are rare,
Don’t expect us in any old hole -
There are few of us voles to spare.

Our club is well known - *The Élite* -
MEMBERS ONLY PLEASE!
We frown upon smelly feet
And voles that don’t know how to sneeze!

MULE

Don't call me a mool
To rhyme with a stool
I'm a mule -
Fool!
MULE!

Did I hear you say mool?
You can jump in a pool!
I'm a mule -
Ghoul!
MULE!

So you think it's real cool
To call me a mool -
Were you never at school?
Fool!
I'M A MULE!

HENRY HOOTER HAD A FLEA

Henry Hooter had a flea,
He pecked at it and hurt his knee:
"I greatly fear, I greatly fear
This flea might end up in my ear!"

Henry Hooter had a flea,
It tickled him: "Oo! Hee-hee!
Little flea, please go away
And don't come back another day."

Henry Hooter had a flea,
"Why pick on me? Flea, why me?
Where are you flea? Speak up! Where?
Damn your hide! It just ain't fair!"

Henry Hooter had a flea,
He pecked at it and hurt his knee:
"I greatly fear, I greatly fear
This flea might vanish up my rear!"

FIRST

Who was the first to blow his nose?
Who was the first to tip his toes?
Who the first to pluck a rose?
Who first scratched his head?
Who first baked bread?
Who first fell out of bed?
Who was the first to sail a ship?
Who was the first to bite his lip?
Who the first to swallow a pip?
Who first milked a cow?
Who first enquired how?
Who first learned to bow?
Who was the first to dream a dream?
Who was the first to scream a scream?
Who the first to whip cream?
Who first climbed a hill?
Who first - Jack or Jill?
Who first paid a bill?
Who was the first to never say "Blast!"
Who was the first to break a fast?
Who the first to come in last?

THE RETURN OF THE DODO

You thought I was dead!
Well I'm back,
seeing red!

Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!

I was hiding all along...
Now my friends,
Here's my song:
Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!
Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!

I hid under a rock,
I hid under a tree,
I said to myself:
'They're not going to get me!'
Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!

I hid beside a cliff,
I hid in a cave,
I said to myself,
'I must be brave!'

Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!
Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!

I hid in a gully,
I hid in a creek,
Every day
Was hide-and-go-seek.

Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!

I hid in a gutter,
I hid in a sewer,
All my companions
Getting fewer and fewer.

Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!
Dead as a dodo?
No no! No no!

THE DUCK-BILLED PLATYPUS

I'm unique,
It's my beak!
Or – if you prefer – my bill...
It gives everyone a thrill!

I may seem to be a freak
(Because of my beak)
But, actually, I'm unique.
I've even been called an antique!

Indeed – if I may dare –
I would call myself quite rare!
You see, it's my bill – or my beak –
Which I beg you not to tweak!

THE TALE OF A RAT

It's not easy being a rat,
You could end up just like that - Splat!
How hard it is to be a rat.
Why wasn't I born a fat
Cat?

And yet... I like being a rat,
Even though sometimes I'm spat
At!

LETTER FROM A MOUSE

Dear Friend,
(You can skip this and go to the end):
As you can see, I am out of breath,
This is a matter of life and death.
Please, please
Please send some cheese.

French blue would be fine
And a little drop of wine.

If you have some cheddar
All the better.

Just, please.
Send cheese.

If it has holes, I don't mind,
Oh, by the way, I'm fond of the rind.
I don't care if it's smelly!
Can't you hear my rumbling belly?
Please, please,
Send cheese.

It can be dreamy
Or soft and creamy

Swiss
Would be bliss.

I could say much
About Dutch.

From a sheep, or a goat, or a cow,
Just send it anyhow.
It can be yellow or green
(I don't care where it's been).

White?
That's alright.

Write to me soon, if you please.
(P.S. Don't forget the cheese).

CENTIPEDE

A centipede
Is not known for its speed

But she has a hundred legs
And can lay eggs

Not bad? Pretty good, I'd say!
How many eggs can you lay?

A centipede...
Indeed.

Every time a centipede wiggles
The earth giggles
And says: 'Tickle me some more!
Tickle me to the core!'

The earth needs
Its centipedes.

GABRIEL ROSENSTOCK is a poet, author/translator of over 150 books, mostly in Irish. He taught haiku at the Schule für Dichtung (Poetry Academy) in Vienna. Among his awards is the Tamgha I Kidmat medal for services to literature.

His vast output includes stage plays, plays for radio and television (RTÉ, Raidió na Life), novels and short stories, essays, criticism, travel literature, children's literature in prose and verse, including Irish versions of such classics as *The Gruffalo* and hundreds of translations of TV series such as *Spongebob* and *The Muppet Show*. Among the anthologies in which he is represented is *Best European Fiction 2012* (Dalkey Archive Press, USA).

MÍCHEÁL Ó HAODHA lectures in the Department of History, University of Limerick. He has published widely on Irish migration, the Irish diaspora, social geography and oral history. His books include American 'Outsider': *Stories from the Irish Traveler Diaspora* (2007, with T.J. Vernon); *The Turn of the Hand: A Memoir from the Irish Margins* (2010, with Mary Ward) and *'On the Run': The Diary of an Irish Republican* (2011, with Ruan O'Donnell).



Did I hear -
**free kids
Books** ,
Really?

<https://www.freekidsbooks.org>

Simply great free books -

Preschool, early grades, picture books, learning to read,
early chapter books, middle grade, young adult

Always Free – Always will be!

Legal note: This book has a standard copyright, publishing rights of this version have been provided by the author to Free Kids Books. The book may not be reposted online without the author's express permission.