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RUNO CHAP BOOKS

ALFRED KREYMBORG

MUSHROOMS

16 Rhythms

PUBLISHED BY GUIDO BRUNO IN HIS GARRET ON
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BRUNO CHAP BOOKS

Vol. I

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No. 3

Mushrooms

MUSHROOMS spring up over night, I'm told
—the truth or reason let botanists prove.
This much I know, this I can tell: that when
I go into the forest I love, I can find them every-
where. One of an exquisite hue of blue, an-
other of a passionately clamorous of red; one of
an elfish daintiness of form, and that distorted
dream of Lear's. I can find each one, I can find
them all, and still, I do not, dare not, pluck
them. The forest, so rich, so lavish, such a
king, wouldn't growl though I pluck all day.
But I do not, will not—they would die, I know.

Mushrooms spring up over night in my heart
—the reason let philosophers guess. This much
I know, this I can tell: myriads and myriads
have I found down there, but only a handfull
have I plucked so far. I plucked them, yes, the
few I could, lest they'd die with those I couldn't
reach. One was a mood of pale, frail form; an-
other a whimsical sprite; one was some black-
browed child of Lear's, another—

I carry them up to my hothouse attic, up to
my gardner for cultivation.

The Song

IT is a bit of a river that flows between—between the strip of land on this and the strip of land on that side. Thousands of honeyless hives bury the strip on this ; thousands the strip on that side—honeyless hives choked by honeyless two-legged lives—but what of these? It is night.

It is night, but a song, borne by a friendly wind, steals across the river, across from yonder side to this, across to me. It is not a song of night's ; it is not a song of Nature's ; it is not a song of the gods'. It is—but stay ! It is not for you. Your name is Profanation ; you are of the honeyless two-legs that choke the honeyless hives that bury the earth ; you are—

It is a bit of a river that flows between. It is night. A song steals across to me. And only the river 'twixt singer and me.

To-day

Dance, little garret, dance your maddest !
Come down, ceiling, dance with the floor !
Walls, a minuet chaste, the four of you !
Pictures, go you, jig it gay !
Chairs, dip, tango it, I wont see you !
You two doors, do a houchee-couchee !
As for me, Boys, loon I'll be
and kick a hole right through the sky !

Done! Now all of us form a ring around
Ma Familias, Old Mother Dream,
who each day sends up four meals to us,
through our uncle, Careless Care !
Done! Now all of us sing the food she brought,
she, herself, climbing all those stairs :
To-day, this day, this very-very day,
to-day did she our poem sell !
Done! Now dance the old girl dizzy :
To-day did she our poem sell !
To-day, this day, this very-very day,
To-day did she this poem sell !

Every Morning

Our halls are very dark.
But not so dark we cannot see,
every morning,
a bent old figure,
kneeling,
on the steps or in the halls,
scrubbing—
what you call a janitress.
Good morning, she says.
Good morning, say we.
Our halls are very dark.
But not so dark—

Nocturne.

The pantaloons are dancing,
dancing through the night,
pure white pantaloons,
underneath the moon,
on a jolly wash line,
skipping from my room,
over to Miranda,
who washed them this noon.

What can you do?

It's absurd, I know,
to be so happy.
Still worse, I know,
to be a fool:
And worst, I know,
to have no reason:
To be so happy,
without a sou.

Come search my pockets,
and you can't find one.
Still worse, my home;
you'll find me poor.
And worst, my credit:
you'll find me pauper.
To be so happy,
without a sou?

Tobacco's gone,
but I am happy.
The next meal, where?
I'm happier still:
absurd, I know
(but what can you do?)
that I'm so happy,
without a sou.

Fugue

Philosophy ?

Oh yes !

To live,
loving,
creating.

Faith ?

Oh yes!

A belief in you,
and you and you,
in spite of your you
and your you for you.

Labor?

Oh yes !

That my me and you
may become or grow
toward a you and me.

Guerdon ?

Ah yes !

Your belief in me,
and my me for you,
in spite of my me
and my me for me.

Heaven ?

Yes !

To die,
created,
living.

To a Maltese

Tell me, little cat, stop and tell me, little cat :
Wherefore is life, think you ?

You're poking that paper ball, little cat :
You're poking that paper ball.

Tell me, little cat, stop and tell me, little cat :
Wherefore is life, think you ?

You're lapping away your milk, little cat :
You're lapping away your milk.

Tell me, little cat, stop and tell me, little cat :
Wherefore is life, think you ?

You're washing your soft gray coat, little cat :
You're washing your soft gray coat.

Tell me, little cat, stop and tell me, little cat :
Wherefore is life, think you ?

You're purring and falling asleep, little cat :
You're purring and falling asleep . . .

Etching

There were seven in all,
clothed in black,
seven silent crows,
standing,
not quite vertical,
around an ebony box ;
and in the box,
an eighth,
lying quite horizontal.

Blood.

You owe a duty to your father.
But you owe a greater to your sons.

Prejudice.

Little mouse:

Are you

some rat's little child ?

I wont love you if you are.

Paradox.

Foolish Woman!

Love her—

she asketh more.

Foolish man!

Love him—

he's satisfied.

Foolish Woman!

Loves you—

she's satisfied.

Foolish Man !

Loves you—

he asketh more.

Scherzetto.

Stop, queer little dear !

Why is a kiss ?

I don't know.

You don't ?

No !

Then why do you do it ?

Love !

Love ?

Yes !

And why is love ?

I don't know.

You don't ?

No !

And why don't you know ?

Because !

Because ?

Yes !

Come, queer little dear !

Serenade.

Little wild rose in the glass:
Who was it—
Bold and inquisitive sir:
The lady.

Little wild rose in the glass:
When was it—
Bold and inquisitive sir:
At bed time.

Little wild rose in the glass:
God keep you,
Bold and inquisitive sir:
I'm lonely.

Little wild rose in the glass:
I'll bring you—
Little wild rose in the glass:
A comrade.

Bold and inquisitive sir:
Good night then.
Little wild rose in the glass:
Good night.

Self Portrait.

All of these,
and if there are more,
all of those, too,
record her.

And she ?

She

is all of these,
all of those—
and more.

I ?

The air is wine,
and I
am Bacchus.

Christian Hymn.

Nearer, my God, to Hell,
Farther from Thee.
Love, God, in Thee is well,
Blood, God, in me.
Blood-stench this earth shall smell,
This earth become a sea.
Nearer, my God, to Hell,
Farther from Thee.





