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Opening Extract from...

Could Do Better

Written by Norman McGreevy

Published by Constable

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COULD DO BETTER

Norman McGreevy

CONSTABLE • LONDON

Constable & Robinson Ltd
3 The Lanchesters
162 Fulham Palace Road
London W6 9ER
www.constablerobinson.com

First published in the UK by Constable,
an imprint of Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2010

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Illustrations by Leon Bowers, 2010

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A copy of the British Library Cataloguing in
Publication data is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-84901-359-8

Printed and bound in the EU

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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Dear Reader,

You may remember that, towards the end of the previous book, this almost Zen-like sentence, lifted from a schoolchild's essay, pops up: 'A gelding is a stallion who has his tonsils taken out so he would have more time to himself.'

That's it. But what on earth did it mean? There seemed to be *something* in there, some insight, a truth, a place where we could immerse ourselves in hours of deep and profound meditation. We don't know where it came from. It made no sense at all but for some reason it made us laugh.

And that is what this second compilation is about. Laughter. The kind of laughter that comes from the natural and uncontrived humour of schoolchildren, for whom words are just rubbery, many-sided globs of thought that can be wrestled and pummeled into all sorts of hilarious shapes. From another essay writer who

felt – 'Losing my dog was the final straw in the camel's pack' – to the religious essayist who believed that – 'When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna-Carta' – to the historically unlikely – 'Joan of Arc was condomed to death'.

In this new volume, I hope I have chosen the right howlers for you. If they remind you of some good ones you had forgotten; if they add a few more to your repertoire; above all, if they provide a few smiles and belly-laughs, this book will have achieved the purpose for which it was compiled.

Norman McGreevy

Essays

Big flies were hoovering all round the room.



Romeo and Juliet tell each other how much they are in love in the baloney scene.



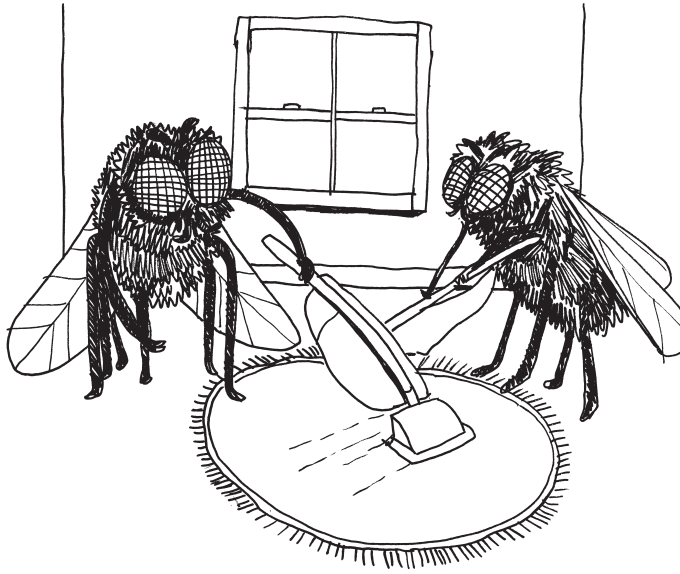
She draped her posterior over a grubby stool.



Both his legs were cut off, and both his hands, and most of his brains were hanging through the side of his head; and he was lying on his bed – crying.



I took out a book to read and settled down to read, but soon put it down because I couldn't read.



Big flies were hoovering all round the room

All walks and no play makes Jack a doll boy.

Her hair is always hanging about her moon-shaped face with horn-rimmed spectacles.

Swollen dead bodies were taken to the doctor for cross-examination.

I was given a blanket and some coffee, but I could not drink them.

To prevent head colds, use an agonizer to spray into your nose until it drops down into your throat.

People were carrying on in the quiet way to which they had been accustomed since time immoral.

A cigarette hung out of the corner of her eye.

I summed up my ailments to be double pneumonia and a weak heart. I hauled myself to my feet and began to walk again to try and keep warm and to take my mind off my stomach.

We were trapped in a blazing car, but luckily enough a river was passing by.

His mother, being immortal, had died.

The equator is a menagerie lion running around the Earth through Africa.

Some people can tell the time by looking at the sun, but I have never been able to make out the numbers.

If I pass in front of a person I have to say 'Excise me!'

My nose was stagnant, and my ears weren't in the best of health.

As she went through her wardrobe she found a scorpion in her drawers. She rose quickly.

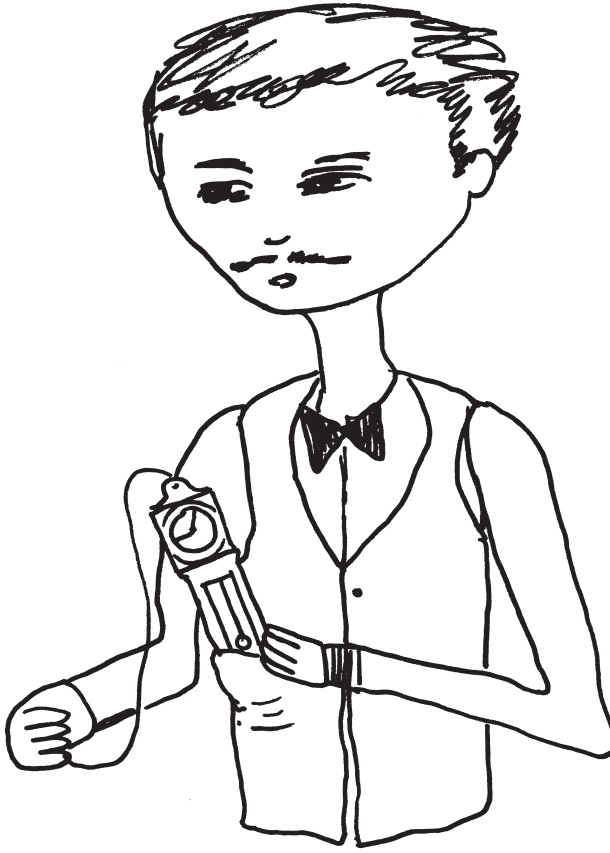
He didn't walk through the door – he crawled in; this was a precaution he always took.

One of the advantages of living in Austria is that one can hear the Matterhorn being blown.

All brutes are imperfect animals, man alone is the perfect beast.

Her appearance is made more beautiful by her wasp waist which protrudes out on the hips and breast.

There are four kinds of food – tined, jared, caned and raped.



I quickly glanced at the grandfather clock in my waistcoat pocket

I quickly glanced at the grandfather clock in my waistcoat pocket.

Many protesters have tried Gandhi's method of non-active activity.

I was nervous, but at last I gathered up my guts and spoke to him.

Clowns tie their trousers with string which, when it is pulled, shows a hair-raising scene.

When the amplifiers are turned up full-blast, everybody in the village almost evacuates.

It was about dusky when I aroused from my slumble.

Old people look back on the past, young people look back on the future.

I can't live without you she burst out in his arms. Clear drops – the jewels of her starry eyes – flowed down and soaked his shirt. He felt them, and they pierced his heart – to leave a deep cut.

Was I to be abandoned sine die in such ternicious envirolment? With this intimating thought I doozed off.

My wife has the baby, and you will never see it again; there was no name or signature written on the bottom.

At the age of seventeen I have finally been accepted by my family.

Slowly the upper deck became occupied with travellers who wished to relieve themselves.

All your responses must be oral, OK? What school did you go to? 'Oral'.

After several years his business began to flush.

Pavlov studied the salvation of dogs.



I used to leave my class and walk all over the school interfering with the children of the higher forms. Sometimes when I was not in school they came to see me.



The primary aim of education should be to equip a man to earn his own living. This is so important that it should be repeated. The primary aim of education should be to equip a man to earn his own living. Indeed, it cannot be said too often that the primary aim of education should be to equip a man to earn his own living.