

献给我的妈妈。

《无聊的幽默》(Amphigorey)收入了我在1955~1965年之间首次出版的图书。如今，那些书已经很难找到而且价格不菲，因此我想将它们重新结集出版。集子的标题取自“amphigory”或“amphigouri”，意为滑稽而无意义的呖语组成的诗集或文集。

爱德华·戈里

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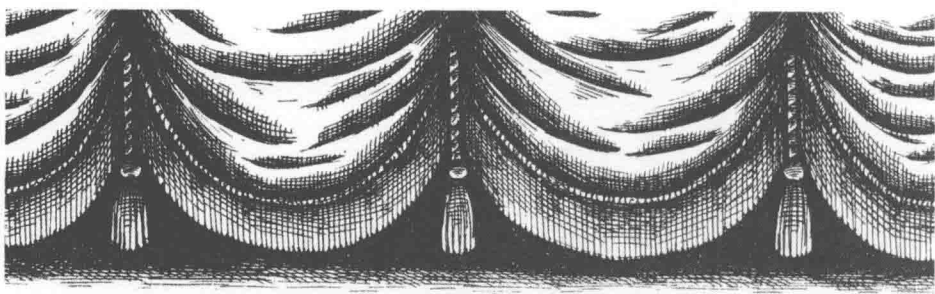
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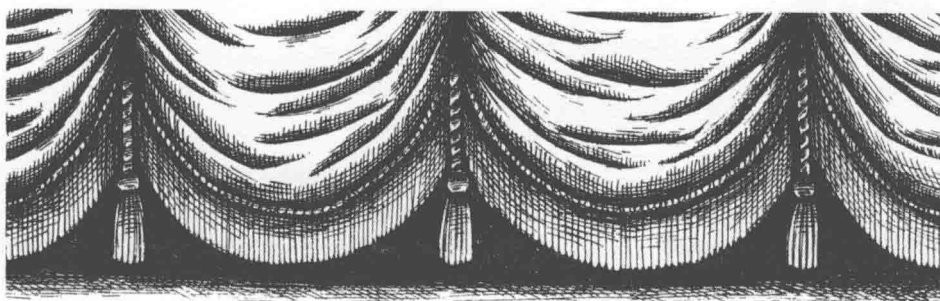
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Mr Gorey, Mr Earbrass, and a Knowledgeable Friend.

戈里先生、铜耳先生和一个知识渊博的朋友。



or, Mr Earbrass Writes a Novel.

(铜耳先生写小说)



伟大的C(克拉维斯)·F(弗雷德里克)·铜耳先生当然是一位著名的小说家。而他最受赞美的几部小说当属《品行端正的垃圾桶》《无声的链条堆》《真的有希望?》和“深度忧郁三部曲”。铜耳先生的家位于莫特郡的克拉朴斯·普丁<sup>①</sup>附近一个叫做霍比斯·奥德<sup>②</sup>的地方。而他正站在他家的草坪上琢磨着夏末那场槌球比赛的残局。

Mr C(lavius) F(rederick) Earbrass is, of course, the well-known novelist. Of his books, *A Moral Dustbin*, *More Chains Than Clank*, *Was It Likely?*, and the Hipdeep trilogy are, perhaps, the most admired. Mr Earbrass is seen on the croquet lawn of his home, Hobbies Odd, near Collapsed Pudding in Mortshire. He is studying a game left unfinished at the end of summer.

①克拉朴斯·普丁：地名，原文Collapsed Pudding意思是“倒塌的布丁”。

②霍比斯·奥德：地名，原文Hobbies Odd意思是“奇怪的爱好”。

每隔一年的11月18日都是铜耳先生着手写新小说的日子。铜耳先生有一个小小的绿色笔记本，里面记着很多他平日里写下的只字片语。几个礼拜前，他从这里面随机挑出了今年这部新小说的名字。可是直到11月17日的下午茶时间，他都没有为《空弦竖琴》想到合适的剧情。他的脑海里警钟连连，提醒他集中注意力构思小说内容，可思绪却不断游移到盘子里的最后那一块饼干上。

On November 18th of alternate years Mr Earbrass begins writing his new novel. Weeks ago he chose its title at random from a list of them he keeps in a little green note-book. It being tea-time of the 17th, he is alarmed not to have thought of a plot to which *The Unstrung Harp* might apply, but his mind will keep reverting to the last biscuit on the plate.



铜耳先生醒来的时候，窗外在下雪。于是他用“天空开始飘起一片一片的雪”作为《TUH》<sup>①</sup>的开头。与现实不同的是，铜耳先生书里的这场雪连绵不断，纷飞了整个下午，形成一场声势浩大的紫色暴风雪，直到夜幕低垂，才圆满落下帷幕。铜耳先生喜欢穿着他那件运动毛衣写小说。他不记得这毛衣打哪儿来的，也不知道有啥纪念意义，而且他总是前后反着穿。

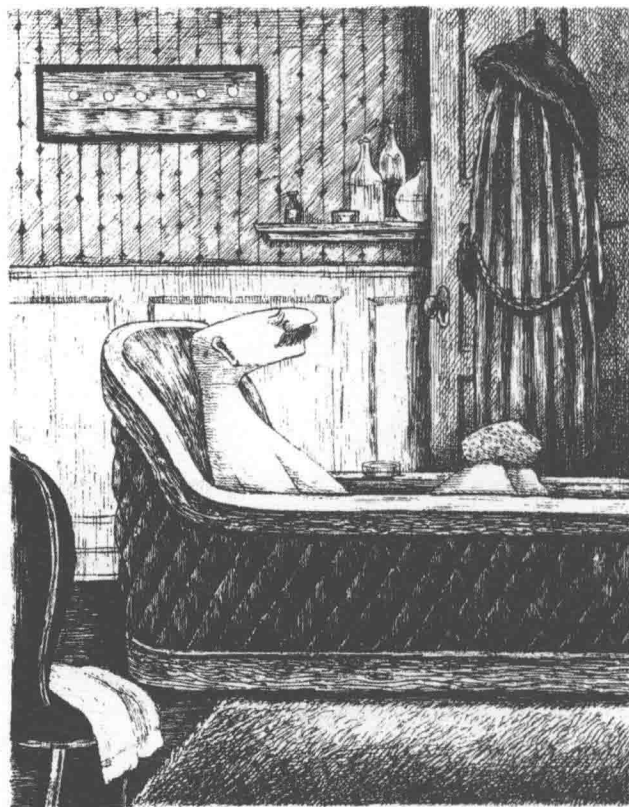
Snow was falling when Mr Earbrass woke, which suggested he open *TUH* with the first flakes of what could be developed into a prolonged and powerfully purple blizzard. On paper, if not outdoors, they have kept coming down all afternoon, over and over again, in all possible ways; and only now, at nightfall, have done so satisfactorily. For writing Mr Earbrass affects an athletic sweater of forgotten origin and unknown significance; it is always worn hind-side-to.

①《TUH》：即《空弦竖琴》，是其英文名称缩写。



几个礼拜一晃而过，铜耳先生靠在浴缸里，丝瓜络里的液体顺着他的膝盖往下流。他仔细考虑着如何在小说第二章里安插那段尴尬的回忆。放在哪里好呢？即便是能主宰一切剧情的作者，也很难将这段与西藏的直贡梯寺有关的轶事突兀地插入书中，因为它似乎与小说情节毫不相干。此刻，他书中的主角们正狂热关注着蒂斯威尔别墅门口的池塘是否要填平的问题。

Several weeks later, the loofah trickling on his knees, Mr Earbrass mulls over an awkward retrospective bit that ought to go in Chapter II. But where? Even the voice of the omniscient author can hardly afford to interject a seemingly pointless anecdote concerning Ladderback in Tibet when the other characters are feverishly engaged in wondering whether to have the pond at Disshiver Cottage dragged or not.





铜耳先生写书的时候总是处于游荡的状态，他不会像其他一些作者，无论思考和写作都坐不离桌。他只有在需要写字的时候才会坐在书桌前。而在其他时候，他总是带着模糊不清的写作思绪，从房间的这头游荡到那头；或是随手拿起屋子里的小物件，把玩一会儿又放下；抑或是凝望窗外的景物，如此这般，从不停止思考。大多数时候，普丁顿赞美颂的旋律总在他脑海中萦绕，他时常还会哼上两句。

Mr Earbrass belongs to the straying, rather than to the sedentary, type of author. He is never to be found at his desk unless actually writing down a sentence. Before this happens he broods over it indefinitely while picking up and putting down again small, loose objects; walking diagonally across rooms; staring out windows; and so forth. He frequently hums, more in his mind than anywhere else, themes from the Poddington Te Deum.

在某个灵感较为充盈的日子里，铜耳先生一写就是好长时间，挡不住的文思如泉涌，以至于当他停笔的时候会感到一阵阵的晕眩。他只好站起来，把身子探出窗外几分钟，让强劲的寒风冷却身体的每一根神经。随后他带着书稿去厨房吃点东西恢复活力。他边吃边看已经写完的部分。看到自己描述李尔普180度转身瞬发的飞镖准确地击中酒瓶树<sup>①</sup>的那段情节，他不禁觉得，这真是一个不错的构思。他洋洋得意，三明治里夹着的果酱都快溢满他的每根手指头了，他却毫无察觉。

It was one of Mr Earbarss's better days; he wrote for so long and with such intensity that when he stopped he felt quite sick. Having leaned out a window into a strong wind for several minutes, he is now restoring himself in the kitchen and rereading *TUH* as far as he has gotten. He cannot help but feel that Lirp's return and almost immediate impalement on the bottle-tree was one of his better ideas. The jelly in his sandwich is about to get all over his fingers.

<sup>①</sup>酒瓶树：又叫格雷戈里猴面包树，整个树干像瓶子的形状。



铜耳先生已经写完了第七章。很显然，在全身心地投入到细节描写之前，他必须事先构思好情节走向和随之而来的剧情发展。他通过画图的方式来进行大纲整理。在草拟了小说情节发展的几个可能方向和不同的结局后，铜耳先生意识到他不应该太草率地处理李尔普这个角色。因为在小说第三章的结尾，有一些前后呼应的情节与他有关。截至目前为止，书中没有其他角色能胜任这些情节。

Mr Earbrass has finished Chapter VII, and it is obvious that before plunging ahead himself he has got to decide where the plot is to go and what will happen to it on arrival. He is engaged in making diagrams of possible routes and destinations, and wishing he had not dealt so summarily with Lirp, who would have been useful for taking retributive measures at the end of Part Three. At the moment there is no other character capable of them.



晚饭是牡蛎和葡萄酒蛋糕。在这之前，铜耳先生开着车出去兜了一小圈。当他把车停在萨默森沃夫<sup>①</sup>外面的一家废弃烟花工厂附近的时候，他看到夕阳沉入天边后余下昏黄色的光，空气中弥漫的气息荒凉而悲伤。铜耳先生用笔匆匆记下所见所感。他觉得当《TUH》的书中场景切换到卑鄙小人纪念馆的时候，可以用当下这种基调来展开剧情。

Out for a short drive before a supper of oysters and trifle, Mr Earbrass stops near the abandoned fireworks factory outside Something Awful. There is a drowned sort of yellow light in the west, and the impression of desolation and melancholy is remarkable. Mr Earbrass jots down a few visual notes he suspects may be useful when he reaches the point where the action of *TUH* shifts to Hangdog Hall.



<sup>①</sup>萨默森沃夫：地名，原文Something Awful，意思是“邪门歪道”。

铜耳先生思绪涣散快要睡着的时候，几行诗句悠悠地滑过脑海，随即他睡意全消。这对《TUH》来说肯定是最完美的引语：

潮湿幽暗的花园深处，一只可怕的怪物放慢了脚步。

它察觉到人们的麻木，最初的想法有些被困住……

这些诗句是他至少五年前看过的一本书中出现的引文，依稀记得那是一本橄榄绿的线装书。没记错的话，这段话应该在某一右手页的倒数第三行。他心想，等他千辛万苦把这本书找出来了，却发现这段引文没有注明出处，那该是多么郁闷的一件事啊。

Mr Earbrass was virtually asleep when several lines of verse passed through his mind and left it hopelessly awake. Here was the perfect epigraph for *TUH*:

*A horrid? monster has been [something]  
delay'd*

*By your/their indiff'rence in the dank  
brown shade*

*Below the garden...*

His mind's eye sees them quoted on the bottom third of a right-hand page in a (possibly) olive-bound book he read at least five years ago. When he does find them, it will be a great nuisance if no clue is given to their authorship.

铜耳先生开车去奈瑞米尔斯通<sup>①</sup>寻找反季节的青梅子<sup>②</sup>。途中经过一家书店，他决定改变行程，去这家书店逛逛。在一堆廉价处理的宗教小册子和私人印刷的回忆录里翻找了一阵子，他无意中看到了他写的第二部小说——《房子的意义》。这书怎么会出现在这里呢？铜耳先生感到不解。（为什么要廉价处理呢？要是我，就算再高的价钱我都愿意买下来。多好的一本书啊。）他发现书的扉页上写着：“致安格斯——你永远不会忘记腌熏鲱鱼吧？”腌熏鲱鱼？安格斯？

Mr Earbrass has driven over to Nether Millstone in search of forced greengages, but has been distracted by a bookseller's. Rummaging among mostly religious tracts and privately printed reminiscences, he has come across *The Meaning of the House*, his second novel. In making sure it has not got there by mistake (as he would hardly care to pay more for it), he discovers it is a presentation copy. *For Angus-will you ever forget the bloaters? Bloaters? Angus?*

①奈瑞米尔斯通：地名，原文Nether Millstone，意思是“铁石”。

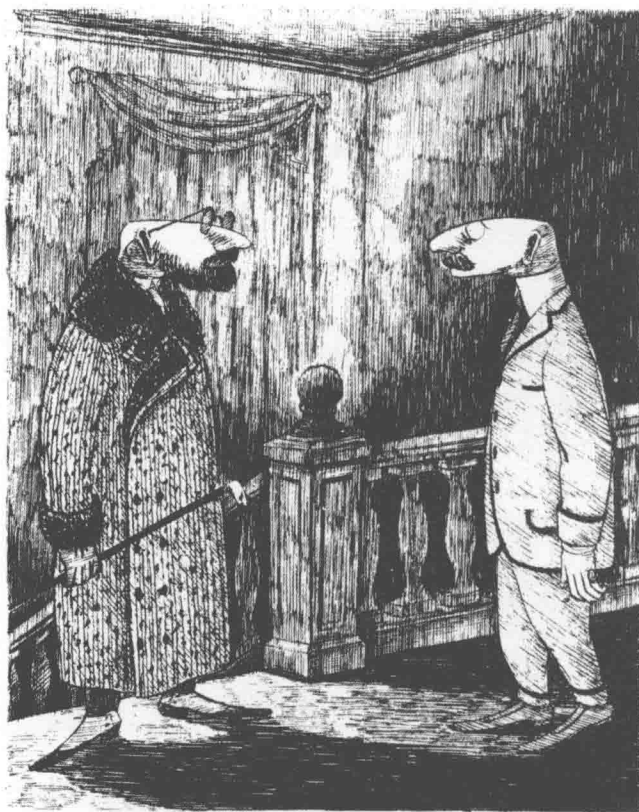
②青梅子一般是在每年的四五月份成熟。



当《TUH》的初稿写了一大半，铜耳先生整个人都魔怔了。最近这几周，书中的人物时而会像幽灵一样出现。比如现在，铜耳先生正准备下楼去吃晚饭，那个叫葛拉斯格路<sup>①</sup>的配角就活生生地站在楼梯口，穿着厚厚的大衣，戴着淡蓝色镜片的眼镜。铜耳先生倒没去注意对方的眼镜，目光却停留在对方大衣上的那些让人生厌的斑点上。葛拉斯格路嘴里咕哝着一些让人听不清楚的话，在与铜耳先生擦肩而过的瞬间，消失了。

The first draft of *TUH* is more than half finished, and for some weeks its characters have been assuming a fitful and cloudy reality. Now a minor one named Glassglue has materialized at the head of the stairs as his creator is about to go down to dinner. Mr Earbrass was aware of the peculiarly unpleasant nubs on his greatcoat, but not the blue-tinted spectacles. Glassglue is about to mutter something in a tone too low to be caught and, stepping sideways, vanish.

①葛拉斯格路：原文Glassglue，意思是“玻璃胶”。



铜耳先生飞速浏览着先前的章节。他已经几个月没看过这前面的章节了。这都是些什么剧情啊。糟糕，糟糕啊，简直糟糕透顶。《TUH》怎么会写成这样，写了这么久的内容现在看来都是些废话。他一定是疯了才去忍受写作这种极度粗劣文字的痛苦。真的疯了。为什么书中那个谁没成为一个间谍？要怎样才能成为一个间谍？他真想一把火烧掉这糟糕的手稿。可是火呢？为什么这里没有火？为什么这儿没有打火的工具？我怎么跑到三楼这个空着不用的房间来了？

Mr Earbrass has been rashly skimming through the early chapters, which he has not looked at for months, and now sees *TUH* for what it is. Dreadful, *dreadful*, DREADFUL. He must be mad to go on enduring the unexquisite agony of writing when it all turns out drivel. Mad. Why didn't he become a spy? How does one become one? He will burn the MS. Why is there no fire? Why aren't there the makings of one? How did he get in the unused room on the third floor?





铜耳先生散步回来，就看到一个大纸箱子挡住了大厅的门口。他花费了好一番工夫才拆开那大量的牛皮纸以及薄棉纸的层层包装。一个镀银的大分枝烛台式餐盘映入眼帘，寒意逼人。铜耳先生想起他一周前收到的那封匿名书迷的信件，似乎有提到这份一大早就来添堵的礼物。信中提到，这烛台式餐盘以一种不同却十分相似的形式，栩栩如生地展示着铜耳先生作品里所表达的一种心比天高的渴望。铜耳先生却只能得出这样的结论：书迷们是因为小说看得太少了，才忽略了他书中那些低调人物的刻画，以至于他们会有如此片面的感受。

Mr Earbrass returned from a walk to find a large carton blocking the hall. Masses of brow paper and then tissue have reluctantly given up an unnerving silver-gilt combination epergne and candelabrum. Mr Earbrass recollects a letter from a hitherto unknown admirer of his work, received the week before; it hinted at the early arrival of an offering that embodied, in a different but kindred form, the same high-souled aspiration that animated its recipient's books. Mr Earbrass can only conclude that the apathy of the lower figures is due to their having been deprived of novels.

比开篇更痛苦的是收尾，至少对铜耳先生来说是这样的。小说里的一个个角色现在看来都让他烦透了。他仿佛从前天起就一直被困在这些角色的聚会里，一天又一天地折磨着他。剧情编织中的各种疏忽和漏洞四处可见，等着他来一一处理。脑海里的动词都枯萎了，而形容词却都在漫无边际地肆意生长。更糟糕的是，在这种状态下，他不可避免地失眠了。即便再读一遍《松露种植园》（他的第一部小说）也无法带来任何睡意。天空泛起的蓝光意味着夜晚结束，铜耳先生感到一阵恐慌，他似乎看到地毯上的藤蔓花纹开始生长，缠绕上他的脚踝。

Even more harrowing than the first chapters of a novel are the last, for Mr Earbrass anyway. The characters have one and all become thoroughly tiresome, as though he had been trapped at the same party with them since the day before; neglected sections of the plot loom on every hand, waiting to be disposed of; his verbs seem to have withered away and his adjectives to be proliferating past control. Furthermore, at this stage he inevitably gets insomnia. Even rereading *The Truffle Plantation* (his first novel) does not induce sleep. In the blue horror of dawn, the vines in the carpet appear likely to begin twining up his ankles.



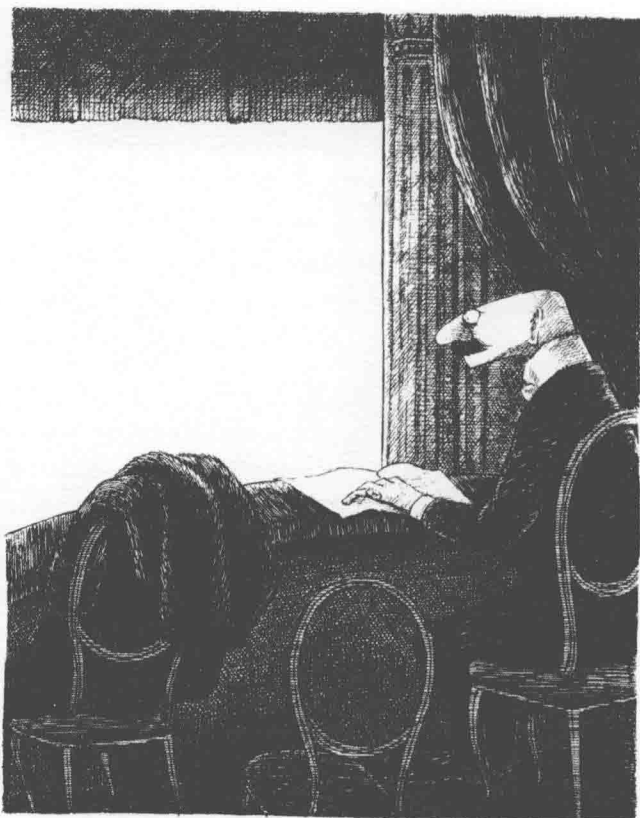
《TUH》还有不到一章就写完了，铜耳先生觉得作为一名有教养的良好市民，还是有义务去 Lying-in-the-Way<sup>①</sup> 观看普罗尼的《外甥的悲剧》。这出表演说不定还能给自己带来一些启发呢。这是该剧自 17 世纪初以来，第一次被莫特郡西区一群业余的悲剧狂热爱好者搬上舞台。遗憾的是，整个演出共五场，铜耳先生一场也没看进去，因为他的脑海里一直在思考《TUH》的最后结尾部分，挥之不去。

Though *TUH* is within less than a chapter of completion, Mr Earbrass has felt it his cultural and civic duty, and a source of possible edification, to attend a performance at Lying-in-the-Way of Prawne's *The Nephew's Tragedy*. It is being put on, for the first time since the early seventeenth century, by the West Mortshire Impassioned Amateurs of Melpomene. Unfortunately, Mr Earbrass is unable to take in even one of its five plots because he cannot get those few unwritten pages out of his mind.

①Lying-in-the-Way: 地名，意思是“躺在地上挡路”，这里暗喻去观看表演影响铜耳先生的写作进程。

在昼夜交替的某一瞬间，铜耳先生写下了《TUH》的最后一句话。在这时，似乎一切都静止了。他看起来很冷静，房间也是一片整洁，不过这些都是假象。右手边的抽屉里满满的都是乱糟糟的初稿，而铜耳先生自己则心不在焉，任由各种念头像燎原之火不着边际地疯狂肆虐。他的脚已经失去知觉，左耳朵背后隐隐抽痛，胡子也不舒服，有一种仿佛把别人的胡子黏在自己脸上的感觉。

In that brief moment between day and night when everything seems to have stopped for good and all, Mr Earbrass has written the last sentence of *TUH*. The room's appearance of tidiness and Mr Earbrass's of calm are alike deceptive. The MS is stuffed all anyhow in the lower right-hand drawer of the desk and Mr Earbrass himself is wildly distraught. His feet went to sleep some time ago, there is a dull throbbing behind his left ear, and his moustache feels as uncomfortable as if it were false, or belonged to someone else.



第二天，铜耳先生感觉自己涣散的意识有那么一点点恢复。他在屋子里漫无目的地游荡。门也懒得关，空茶杯摆在地上也懒得收拾。他时不时在想，自己真该换身衣服出去透气。他懒洋洋地站起来，磨蹭了几分钟，又懒洋洋地坐回了那张椅子。他想等精神状态完全恢复好了再去做一些有意义的事情，他就这样无所事事地，让一周里最为美好的时光悄然而逝。

The next day Mr Earbrass is conscious but very little more. He wanders through the house, leaving doors open and empty tea-cups on the floor. From time to time the thought occurs to him that he really ought to go and dress, and he gets up several minutes later, only to sit down again in the first chair he comes to. The better part of a week will have elapsed before he has recovered enough to do anything more helpful.



几周以后，带着极其不情愿，铜耳先生开始修改《TUH》的初稿。地上散落着钢笔、墨水、剪刀、浆糊，还有一瓶雪利酒。大部分时候，这种收尾工作意味着另一场兵荒马乱。首先，要更换章节，或者调整其中的段落顺序，亦或是懊恼地把太糟糕的稿子揉成一团，扔进垃圾桶。而后就需要重写。重写比初写麻烦多了，因为重写不仅要在原有的基础上构思许多新鲜的情节，还要尽量避免用那些丢到垃圾桶里的旧素材。在他的修改接近尾声的时候，至少有三分之一的内容和初稿完全不一样了。

Some weeks later, with pen, ink, scissors, paste, a decanter of sherry, and a vast reluctance, Mr Earbrass begins to revise *TUH*. This means, first, transposing passages, or reversing the order of their paragraphs, or crumpling them up furiously and throwing them in the waste-basket. After that there is rewriting. This is worse than merely writing, because not only does he have to think up new things just the same, but at the same time try not to remember the old ones. Before Mr Earbrass is through, at least one third of *TUH* will bear no resemblance to its original state.

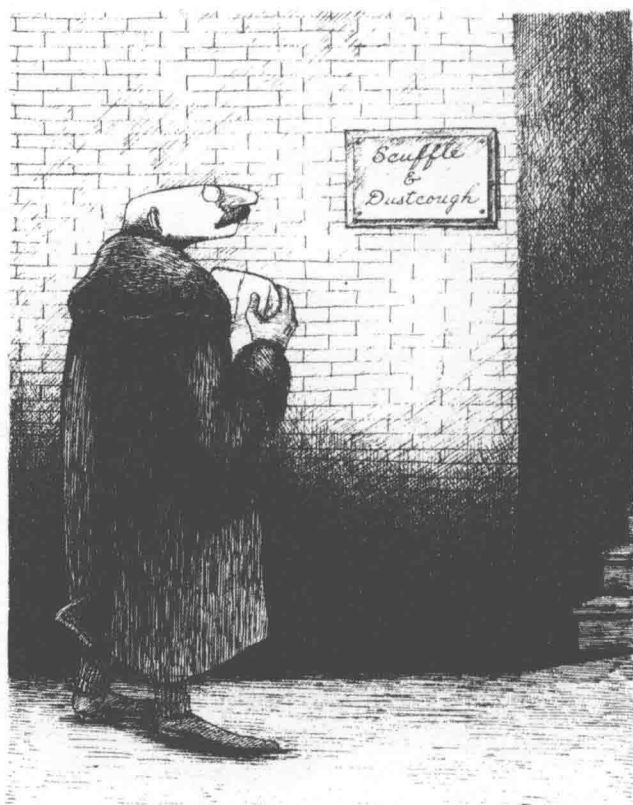
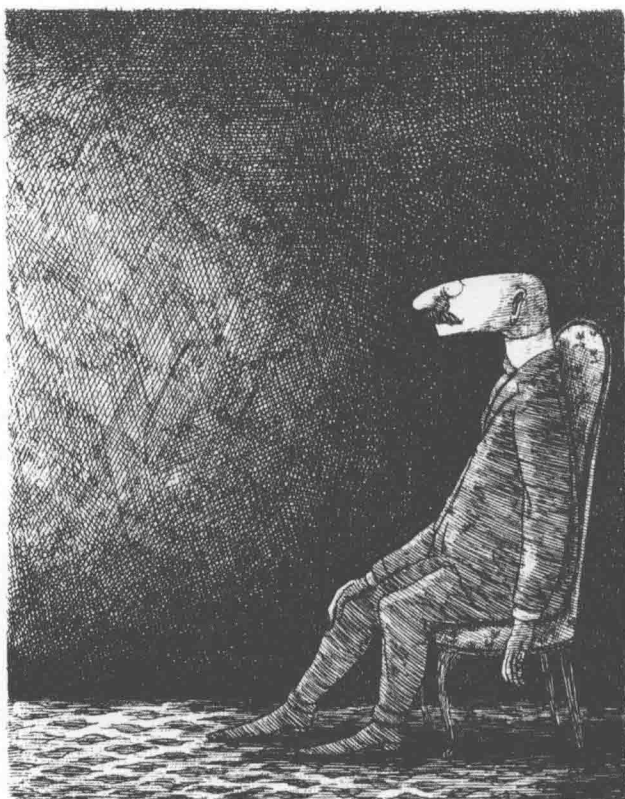


铜耳先生坐在椅子上，背对着书桌，他在聚集勇气以进行下一阶段的工作——誊抄。誊抄一份干净的手稿，这是他写作过程中最为痛苦的一个阶段。桌面上放着修改过的手稿，边缘已经破烂不堪，上面黏着不明所以的污渍，那些无意识的划痕和涂鸦，以及凌乱的补丁让人不忍直视，他真不愿触碰。而且在铜耳先生现在看来，这手稿的内容简直无聊到令人抓狂，想起来都觉得恶心。桌上新鲜的墨汁、漂亮的野鸡羽毛笔，还有那近千张昂贵的乳白色条纹书写纸，也没让他有丝毫提笔的动力。

Mr Earbrass sits on the opposite side of the study from his desk, gathering courage for the worst part of all in the undertaking of a novel, i.e., making a clean copy of the final version of the MS. Not only is it repulsive to the eye and hand, with its tattered edges, stains, rumpled patches, scratchings-out, and scribblings, but its contents are, by this time, boring to the point of madness. A freshly-filled inkwell, new pheasant-feather pens, and two reams of the most expensive cream laid paper are negligible inducements for embarking on such a loathsome proceeding.

铜耳先生来到出版社，终于要交稿了。事实上，他在家拖拖拉拉直到去往伦敦的火车快要出发了才动身。包裹《TUH》书稿的绘图纸是愚蠢透顶的粉红色，而且包得不是特别整齐。他是在出发前最后一刻，才找到这唯一能简单包裹的材料。他抱着书稿站在出版社楼下，通往出版商办公室的楼梯看起来有些狰狞，仿佛他一旦走上去就随时可能在某一个台阶踩空，掉下来摔断大腿。此刻，他觉得自己很蠢，他应该转身走掉，哪怕把这包书稿扔到随便哪里的路边，也好过一会儿面对出版商的大惊小怪，至少不会给大家带来不必要的麻烦。

Holding *TUH* not very neatly done up in pink butcher's paper, which was all he could find in a last-minute search before leaving to catch his train for London, Mr Earbrass arrives at the offices of his publishers to deliver it. The stairs look oddly menacing, as though he might break a leg on one of them. Suddenly the whole thing strikes him as very silly, and he thinks he will go and drop his parcel off the Embankment and thus save everyone concerned a good deal of fuss.





斯考夫先生<sup>①</sup>和达斯特科夫先生<sup>②</sup>想把书稿翻译成乌尔都语，他们急切地讨论着书中的细枝末节。那些内容不可避免地让铜耳先生再次感到自己实在太蠢，便借故离开了。他去拜访他的远房表亲。后者原本打算这个下午逛古玩店，于是铜耳先生决定跟他一起去。当他们逛到第18家店铺，他的表亲终于相中了一个表面光滑润泽的水壶。他认为这水壶是世间罕见的珍品，而铜耳先生却在努力把自己焦躁不安的情绪通通塞到玻璃钟里罩住。为什么每个人都必须克制自己的情绪来顾全大局？他越想越懊恼。

Mr Earbrass escaped from Messrs Scuffle and Dustcough, who were most anxious to go into all the ramifications of a scheme for having his novels translated into Urdu, and went to call on a distant cousin. The latter was planning to do the antique shops this afternoon, so Mr Earbrass agreed to join him. In the eighteenth shop they have visited, the cousin thinks he sees a rare sort of lustre jug, and Mr Earbrass irritably wonders why anyone should have had a fantod stuffed and put under a glass bell.

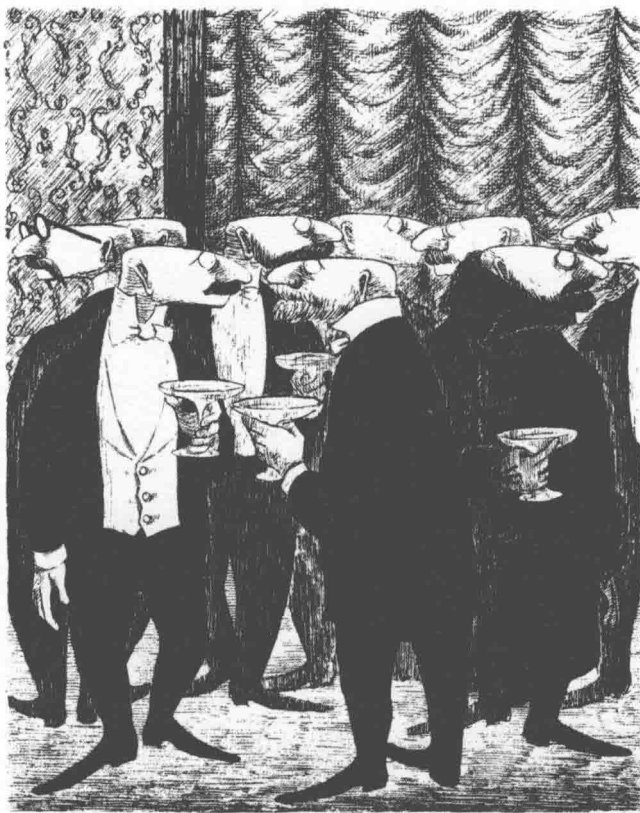
①斯考夫先生：原文Messrs Scuffle，意为“爱打架的先生”。

②达斯特科夫先生：原文Dustcough，意为“呛人的灰尘”。



回莫特郡的前夜，铜耳先生应邀参加了一场作家们的聚会，地点是在一个叫“慢行道”的酒店里的一间私人餐厅。在这些参加晚宴的同行里，他只能认出极少的几个人，比如那个叫洛克的家什，还有桑格维杰、哈珀斯、厄瓦克勒和勒贝尔大人，不过他从未和他们打过交道。那个裹着厚厚大衣，看起来脸色不太好的先生叫弗罗斯特<sup>①</sup>，是一位名不见经传的散文家。晚宴上的聊天内容和大婶们的唠嗑没什么不同，无非就是“哎呀我的书卖得好惨”、“稿费好少”、“出版商的宣传手段好白痴”、“我的书又被哪个白痴评论家批评了”、“哪几个人渣又对我的书进行了惨无人道的攻讦”、“那个谁谁谁果然江郎才尽写得一手烂文章”，以及创作过程中灵感枯竭、无法言喻的惊慌恐惧。

The night before returning home to Mortshire Mr Earbrass allows himself to be taken to a literary dinner in a private dining room of Le Trottoir Imbécile. Among his fellow-authors, few of whom he recognizes and none of whom he knows, are Lawk, Sangwidge, Ha'p'orth, Avuncular, and Lord Legbail. The unwell-looking gentleman wrapped in a greatcoat is an obscure essayist named Frowst. The talk deals with disappointing sales, inadequate publicity, worse than inadequate royalties, idiotic or criminal reviews, others' declining talent, and the unspeakable horror of the literary life.



①这些人名是作者根据其不同特征给他们取的绰号。洛克，意为“天呀不得了”；桑格维杰，意为“三明治”；哈珀斯，意为“一文不值”；厄瓦克勒，意为“慈祥大伯”；勒贝尔大人，意为“越狱犯”；弗罗斯特，意为“闷人的空气”。