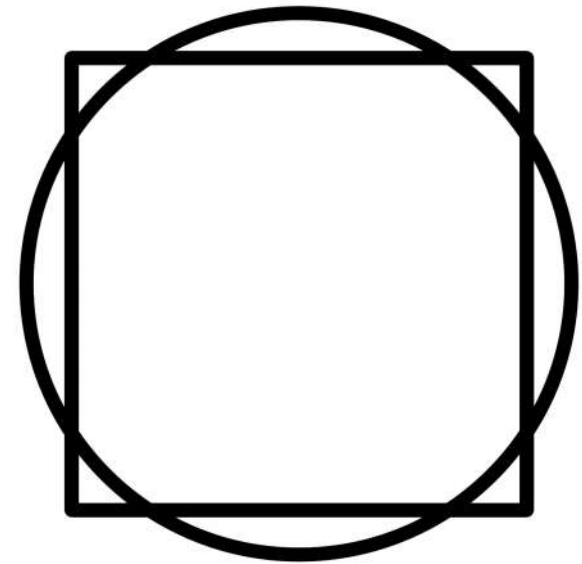


A Little Book  
of  
Admonitory Verse



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## XII

Procrastination.

The past is far too long ago;  
the future is too hard to know.  
To get things done, once you know how,  
the time to start is usually NOW.

Oh, all RIGHT! I *said* I would do it.

## I

*A word is dead when it is said,  
some say.  
I say it just begins to live  
that day.*

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Words can tell of things not there,  
Like goldfish lurking everywhere;  
and pies are treasures in a chest,  
where gold and rubies taste the best.

Each word's a gem;  
                                  choose them with care.  
Your words tell others  
  who you are.

And who told you *that*?

## II

My cat is friendly, she will stay;  
at other times, she walks away.  
When she is happy, she will purr;  
but when she's mad, her ruffled fur  
tells *me* to stay away; and then  
we make up, and can play again.

*Nice kitty.*

## XI

Today my best friend's father died.  
His mom was sad, his brother cried.  
No, life's not fair; it isn't right.  
The load gets easier, not light.

## X

### Control of the Temper.

*I was angry with my friend;  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe;  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.*

– William Blake (1757-1827)  
from *A Poison Tree* (1794)

When anger tells you what to do,  
you don't own anger; it owns you.

Stop, consider, then decide:  
unwarranted, or justified?

Not too narrow, not too wide.

*Fine.* You're right. Now what?

## III

### Patience.

I'm told that I just have to wait.  
A day's too long, a week's too late.  
Last month, last year, are history,  
but “next year” is *eternity*.

*Are we there yet?*

## IV

### A Simple Lesson in Science.

*The distant stars gaze down at us  
to tell the future, and are not amused.*

Star light, star bright,  
First star I see tonight,  
Though wish I might, or wish I may,  
Your starlight is from yesterday.

You may not even *be* there, now.  
Forgot my wishes, anyhow.

*Didn't you. Or was it me?*

## IX

### The Argument.

Really, *now*. *You think that's true?* I do.  
*Why?* Because I checked my source. Did you?

Why should I listen once again  
to what I know is wrong, and then  
explain what I already know  
*you* know, because I've told you so?

I know I'm right, and that you're wrong.  
What's that? Why did you wait this long  
to tell me? You *have tried*, but *no*,  
I *wouldn't listen to you?* Oh.

I *said* I was sorry.

## VIII

How to Look at a Painting.

*Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*

— John Keats (1795-1821),  
from *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (1819)

in a book, or on the wall,  
four inches small, or five feet tall

The colors stream across the page  
like herds of water in a rage.  
Form and motion both combine  
to defy both shape and line.  
They're often silent, stay the same.  
But, look! sometimes they leap the frame  
to utter words that have no name.

But what is it a picture *of*?

## V

Moderation.

Young Timmy thought the cake looked fun.  
He ate it all, so there was none.  
Now had he saved some, there would be  
Left-over cake tomorrow.

Isn't that *right*, Timmy?

## VI

*Sharp today, aren't we? Mind you don't cut yourself.*

– Flo Capp (by Reginald Smythe, 1917-1998)

My friend Sammy thinks he's smart,  
and so he is, at least in part.  
But he's not wiser because he  
knows a little more than me.

Now I know more than my friend Jim,  
but I would rather wait for him.  
That way, we are both weak and strong,  
and that is why we get along.

## VII

*He who feels punctured must have been a bubble.*

– Lao Tzu (6th c. BC; tr. Witter Bynner)

So Humpty-Dumpty had a fall;  
it broke his shell, and that was all;  
he didn't break an arm or leg,  
for Humpty-Dumpty's just an egg.

It might have pushed him *down* a peg.