

FRANK AND MOUSTIQUE GO BOATING

A PLAY FOR RADIO

PETER STICKLAND

77books

FRANK AND MOUSTIQUE GO BOATING

Copyright © Peter Stickland 2011

The author has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988 to be identified as the author of this work.

Printed in a limited edition of 50 books

ISBN 978-0-9560121-6-6

Published in Great Britain, 2011 by 77 books

69 Osbaldeston Road, London N16 7DL

www.77books.co.uk

A CD recording of the play is offered free with each copy of the book.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

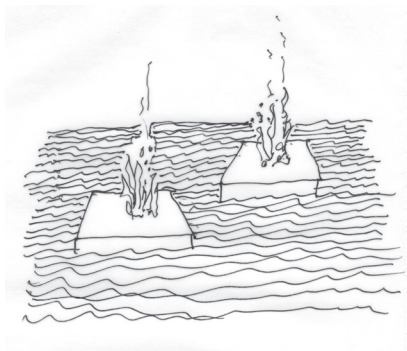
Front cover drawing by Dominique Fasse.

Book design by Christine Fasse and Dennis Mariner.

FRANK AND MOUSTIQUE GO BOATING

Dialogue and drawings by Peter Stickland

Book conceived by Christine Fasse



I am grateful to have received the enthusiasm of Christine Fasse during the writing of this play and for the delight she took in arranging and designing the publication.

This book is dedicated to Christine.

My thanks are also due to Dominique Fasse for designing and making the packaging for the book and CD to live together, and to Omar Othman, who assisted with the design and layout.

CONTENTS

ACT ONE

LIFE WITHOUT THE OTHERS

A Disused Dairy in Kentish Town

ACT TWO

BEFORE THE PARACHUTE OPENS

A Piece of Waste Ground in Hackney

ACT THREE

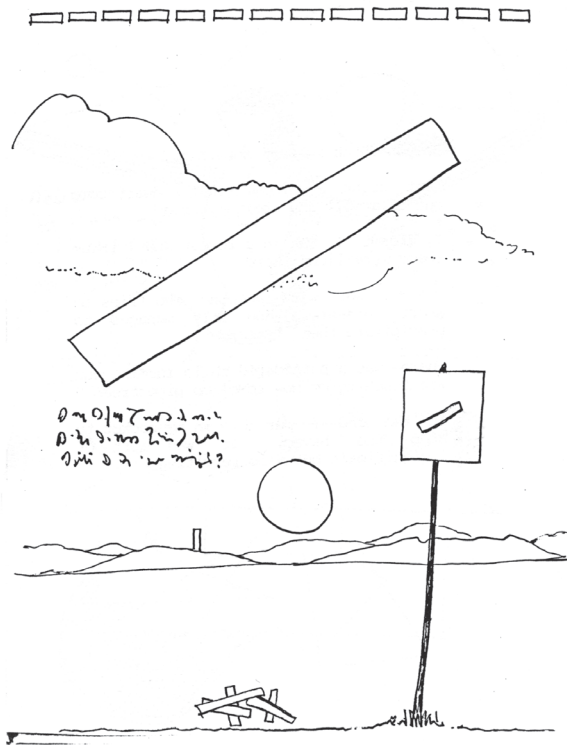
A RHAPSODY OF IMPERTINENCE

A Squat in St. John's Wood

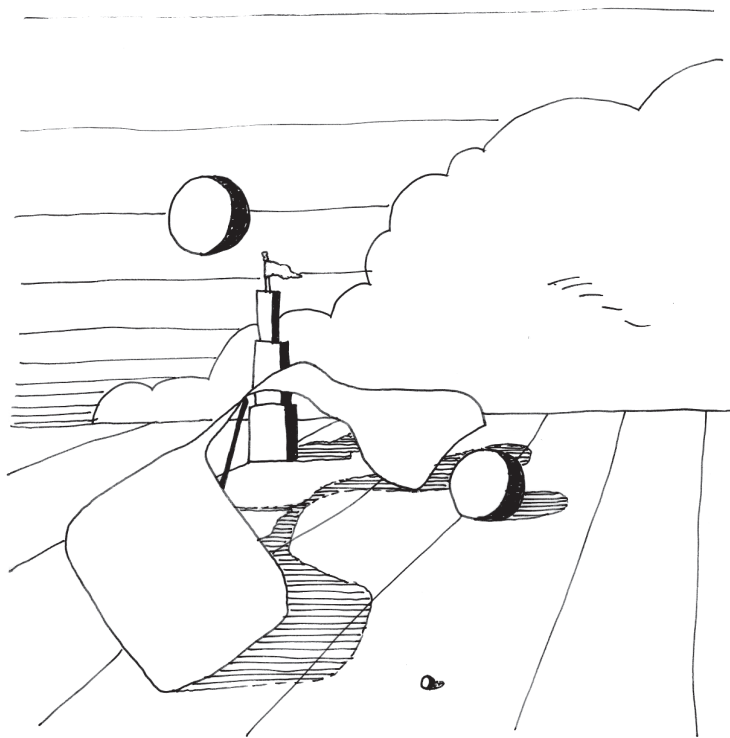
ACT FOUR

PADDLING IN PUBLIC

A Ship's Chandlers in Wapping



ACT ONE
LIFE WITHOUT THE OTHERS
A Disused Dairy in Kentish Town



Moustique. Hello, are you the play?

Frank. No, my name's Frank.

M. Frank?

F. Before you crack any jokes, I've heard them all before.

M. What kind of jokes?

F. Jokes, like, 'let's be Frank,' or 'Frankly I'm bored.'

M. Those are jokes, ça?

F. Well, there's no telling with some folk.

M. Moustique.

F. What's a mistake?

M. Rien rien, I was giving you my name.

F. Now you've lost me.

M. My name is mistake, I mean Moustique.

F. Mystique?

M. Not mist, moo, like the sound of a cow, quoi?

F. Now I'm really lost. Can we start again?

M. My name is Moustique.

F. Moustique, what kind of name is that?

M. It's not my real name; it's what my father called me.

F. So, what does it mean?

M. Mosquito.

F. Mosquito, as in, 'hello my little mosquito.'

M. Precisely.

F. How touching.

M. What did your father call you?

F. To be honest, my father was Frank.

M. Ouais, ouais, oulala. You're difficult to follow, Frank.

F. All but the most sensitive find me odd.

M. Are you here to make a play?

F. Yes, but no-one turned up.

M. Moi

F. You have, but you're late.

M. What am I late for?

F. Search me. Have you made a play before?

M. I've been in one, but I didn't make it.

F. Here's a script.

M. Is it the script for our play, ça, ce truc?

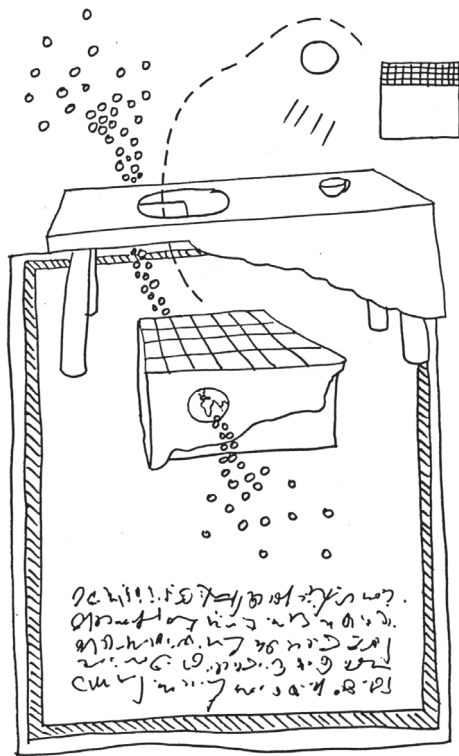
F. Who knows? I'm not doing this play.

M. What play are you doing?

F. I'm doing one about an orang-utan.

M. How are you going to do that?

F. Improvise. Do you want to join me?



M. Sure how do we start?

F. We start tomorrow.

M. Why not today?

F. It's past visiting hours.

M. We can always visit someone else.

F. Visit me; I've been eluding myself all day.

M. Was there a reason or was it just bad luck?

F. Bad luck and good luck.

M. Is it true that they'll spend millions here?

F. It will change beyond recognition.

M. Then how will we know?

F. It is earmarked for growth.

M. I'm not into earmarks.

F. What even in your own language?

M. It is possible to forget your own language.

F. We live constantly in surprised amazement.

M. Does it still count if we receive help?

F. Like leaving the door open?

M. Open or unhinged.

F. We must learn to be flexible.

M. Open mindedness works sporadically.

F. Only if it opens new doors.

M. New conditions invigorate, ça c'est sûr!

F. But not precipitation; it always brings damp.

M. And I accepted this invitation willingly.

F. It's not like answering a summons.

M. You don't fight like everyone else, do you?

F. You scratch my back and I'll scratch back.

M. I feel the imminent return of an old enemy, un vieil ennemi, oui!

F. Is this some kind of treadmill?

M. I appear to be moving.

F. Either that or it's a gesture of dismissal.

M. Maybe it's a new wave.

F. You've got off to a good start.

M. I hadn't imagined that I'd begun.

F. I'm way behind already.

M. Will you still be here while I'm gone?

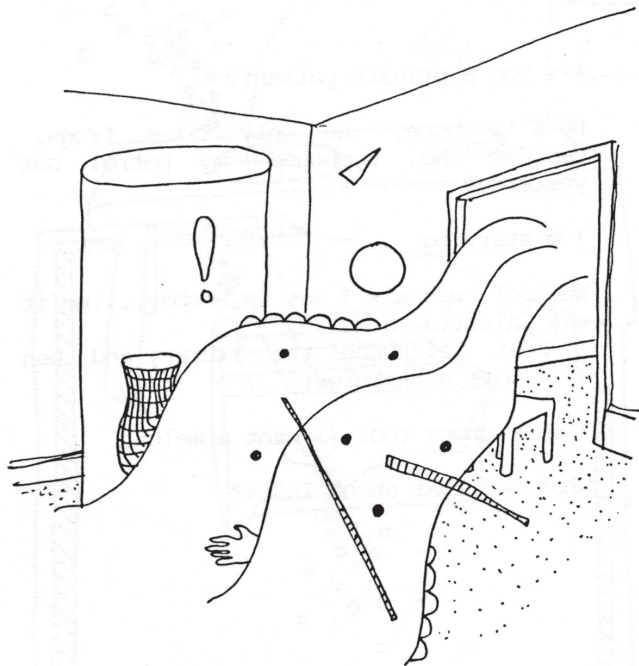
F. I might still be back there.

M. Then I'll see you when I return, d'accord?

F. Are you going back or on?

M. I had considered catching up.

F. Difficult decisions increase with age.



2. we... 2. 740... we... 1. 15:

M. You're very critical.

F. We should try to keep things on an even keel.

M. I have no idea about nautical terminology.

F. Shh ... There's someone coming.

M. That's OK c'est bon; we don't have to specialise.

F. How dispiriting. It must have been my heart.

M. It beats so loudly, I can't hear my own.

F. The need for self reference is a great solace.

M. Yes, all we need is an alibi. Un alibi et un bon!

F. Don't you mean excuse?

M. No, I try to avoid the approval of the public.

F. Damn these fleas.

M. I'm fed up with it too; world fairs, picnics, et les rodeos c'est pareil.

F. Cigarette?

M. No thanks.

F. Ha, ha, ha.

M. Why do you laugh?

F. Because this is the esoteric version.

M. Guess my profession; I keep secrets.

F. I'll tell you one. The last time I visited my dentist...

M. Stop. I recently tied my dentist to his chair. Si si je te jure!

F. Are you a private patient?

M. No, he's a bore.

F. Mine only likes frogs.

M. What was your secret?

F. I siphoned the petrol out of his car.

M. Do you think we have something? Quelque chose, un truc, je ne sais pas moi!

F. Last night a dwarf came and stole my bread.

M. There was a barefooted child in my dream.

F. The dwarf was insignificant.

M. The child taught me to climb pine trees.

F. He told me I was revolting.

M. I'm always trying to avert disasters.

F. I only manage to precipitate them.

M. How did you stop the havoc?

F. I put him in my pocket.

M. A dream can follow one through the ages.

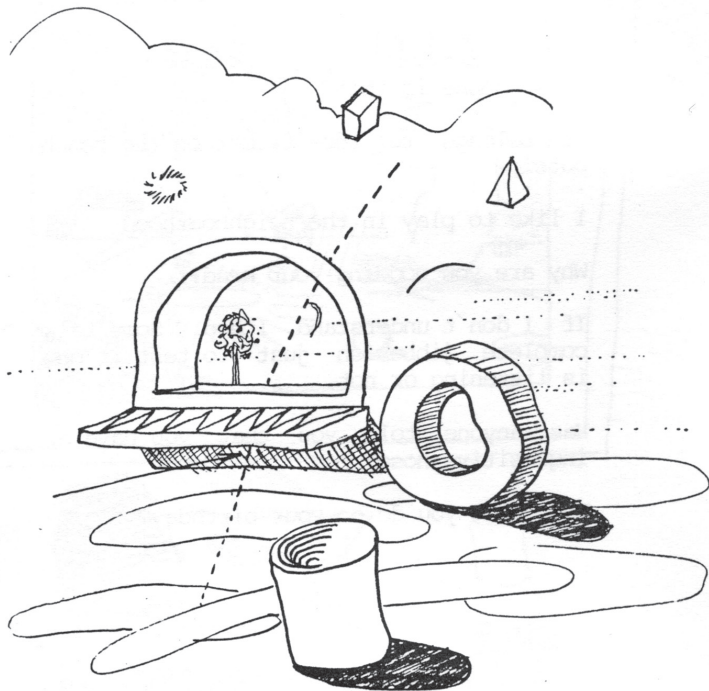
F. Waking up abruptly, one forgets.

M. It can take the ground from under you.

F. We must learn to fight from the armchair.

M. Comparisons are never on a fair and square basis.

F. Much more should be said about it.



ایک عجیب و غریب منظر

M. I've only met the victims.

F. But you're a fully fledged member.

M. Non non mais, I can still quit if I want to.

F. That's missing the point.

M. And that isn't the issue.

F. Are you practicing ancient methods?

M. I don't suspend myself in brooding. Alors ça non.

F. It helps to avoid the nagging.

M. But a sense of bondage still remains.

F. There's no point hanging around then.

M. Not without appropriating something. Non?

F. You shouldn't hedge your bets.

M. I don't bet on hedge funds, ça va pas non?

F. Don't you mean hedge funds?

M. Can a hedge fund the future?

F. In future I'll find a hedge.

M. I hope it's a hedge of the future.

F. We can never be a hedge of the future.

M. It's like the end of the rainbow.

F. Where the ladder of success begins?

M. I hope so.

F. Many are called but few are chosen.

M. Shh ... Did you hear that?

F. Sounded like a fog horn.

M. And the silhouettes of boats floated through the fog.

F. Was that a quote?

M. No; it came to me from the mists of time.

F. Does this happen often?

M. The are times when we must make the best of things. Tu crois pas?

F. Salubrious opportunities are a great boon.

M. It beats digital instrumentation.

F. We should never cover up unwillingness.

M. That happened long ago.

F. With action there's always discontinuity.

M. We must begin to record disappearance. Ça c'est sur!

F. Concealment never admits the expectation.

M. Unless it's a mirage.

F. In a certain light you look like Bergman in Casablanca.

M. You look like you're ready to chop down pine trees, ma parole!

F. Had you been called Mystique you'd have had more allure.

M. Thank you Fred.

F. Or Mystic; that would have added a spiritual dimension.

M. Don't even go there, Flambeau.

F. Flambeau, I like that; it has the call of the wild about it.

M. You're Frank.

F. You're right; until tomorrow then.

M. Until tomorrow?

F. The day after today.

M. Is that when we meet?

F. Well only if we arrange it the day before.

M. Can you do four o'clock?

F. No, how do you do that?

M. To be frank, I never tried. Non jamais.

F. I'm not listening.

M. I hear you.

F. My place then.

M. Is it a flat?

F. Quite flat, just a piece of waste ground.

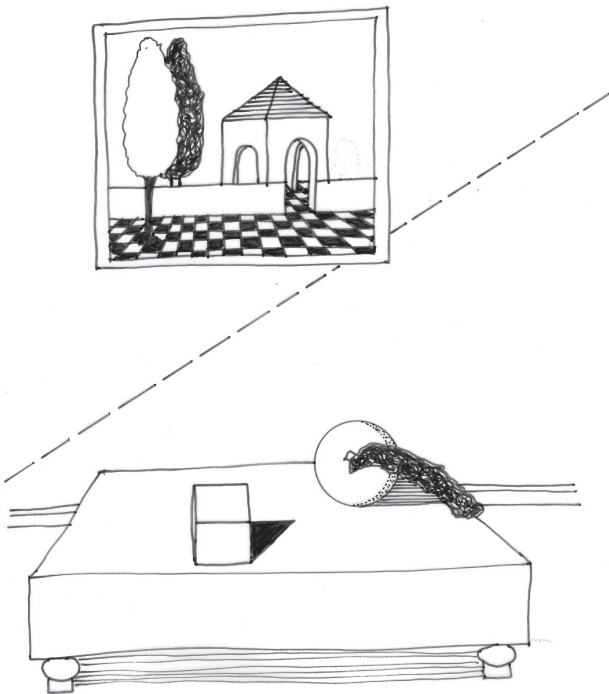




1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.



ACT TWO
BEFORE THE PARACHUTE OPENS
A Piece of Waste Ground in Hackney



F. Bonjour Mastic.

M. It's not Mastique, it's moo like a cow remember?

F. Moostick.

M. And try 'stique' rather than 'stick'.

F. As in pique, not pick.

M. Voila, precisely, like physique, not physic.

F. I think we're done.

M. Frankly, I'm relieved.

F. Do you see this quizzical expression?

M. Mais oui.

F. It indicates my confusion.

M. What are you confused about?

F. We're not talking psychology are we?

M. No, bringing so much together causes explosions.

F. Have I dragged you into things you were trying to avoid?

M. I suspect you might bungle this.

F. How disappointing that you've taken it that way.

M. Je crois que either that or you've expressed yourself badly.

F. I thought I had used my powers of persuasion.

M. Perhaps we should follow our heart, non?

F. Are you kidding? That could take years.

M. So do dreams.

F. I need to fix my indicator.

M. I bet all your thoughts are guesses.

F. I'm an atheist. All I need is a screwdriver.

M. What were you digging when I arrived?

F. Books.

M. Alors, did you find any?

F. No, I was burying them.

M. They were rotten?

F. In a manner of speaking.

M. They might eventually prove useful.

F. Did you bring a bag?

M. If I kept count of all the hundreds of...

F. Shh... Did you hear that?

M. More fog horns?

F. Sounded like a cry of alarm.

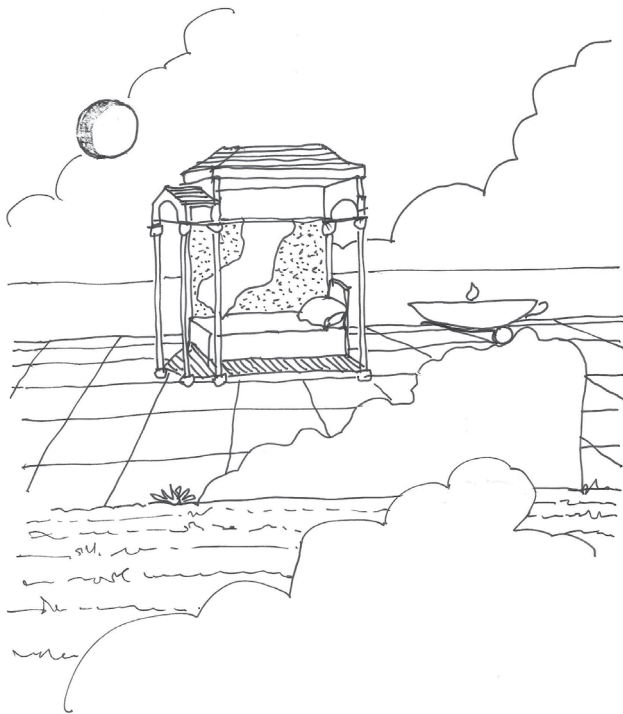
M. We're in bad shape when it comes to time.

F. Which is what?

M. I don't know, there's a remarkable sky.

F. Please don't nudge me; I might spike myself.

M. Tap it with something first. It's too firmly embedded.



F. Do you fantasise about being successful?

M. Why, do you?

F. No. I worry about acting the part of an orang-utan.

M. There we are; they are out; two privileged objects.

F. They have temper tantrums.

M. Non, non, not when I've screwed them in here they won't.

F. Things are not turning out the way I imagined them.

M. Are you prone to thinking of any kind?

F. I guess. I try to figure out what the signs say.

M. Signs read they don't speak; or maybe we are both wrong.

F. Speaking of which have you practised your lines?

M. Is that a criticism?

F. No, that was a short course in photosynthesis.

M. Good; then I've finished something at last.

F. We haven't started rehearsals though.

M. I know and I must wash my hair tonight.

F. There's a bath here somewhere.

M. Really? Whose house is this?

F. It belongs to the farmer on the bench.

M. A farmer in the city? Dans la ville?

F. Yes, he ploughs shares.

M. For the stock market?

F. I talk gibberish to test if you're listening.

M. I don't believe that's the truth.

F. But you're nodding your head.

M. If I don't understand, I nod. Ouais c'est ça, I nod.

F. Your nose is rather antagonistic.

M. I've waited years to hear that observation.

F. What will you do on your birthday?

M. I'll insult everyone I know.

F. Will that take long?

M. That may be irrelevant to the task.

F. We could go inside.

M. Do you have a phone?

F. Dim sightedness might invoke musicality.

M. Cold ears might insight hunger.

F. And insensibility, does that help?

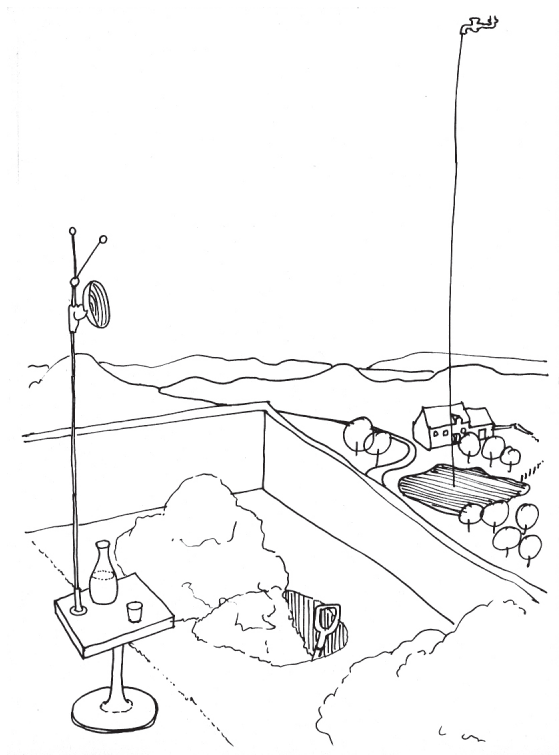
M. You don't swing your arms when you walk.

F. How can I tell if you see three-dimensionally?

M. Search me.

F. Do you believe in chiromancy then?

M. I studied my hands at breakfast today. Is that the same thing ou pas?



F. Who knows? You should concoct a plan.

M. Repeating what we know turns back from the surface.

F. I bet you pray for a moratorium on misrepresentation.

M. Oh, oulala, my shoe.

F. You should keep it on your foot.

M. Franchement Frank, it's futile to give advice.

F. I know. Good advice can be fatal.

M. Try following your nose.

F. This is called trapping and intimidating.

M. Are you popular?

F. I suspect that you are holding back another question.

M. What does, "get lost" really mean?

F. Will an answer be worth it?

M. Mon Dieu, you keep yourself so celibate.

F. I should encourage you to be always exactly as you are.

M. Don't boast about your cynicism.

F. Quite a warrior aren't you?

M. It's my profession. I dislike secret melancholy.

F. Such are the hazards commonly undertaken.

M. Do you think the stars have a malign influence?

F. Not as obviously as bad wine or a crowd of tourists.

M. Either it's raining or it isn't.

F. I feel like an astronaut.

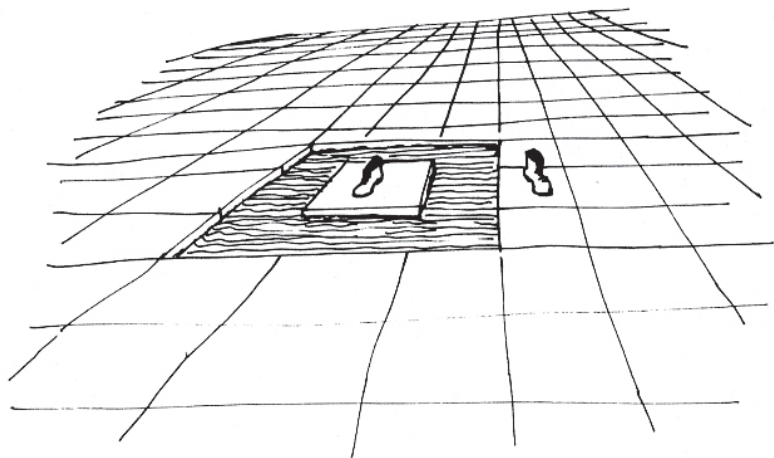
M. You look like a gorilla.

F. Have you just had a fight with someone?

M. Vraiment, I only want ruins and curiosities today.

F. I feel like a drink.

M. Do you know of any unpredictable corners?



F. Only the ones where the wind curls the leaves.

M. Good. I'm starving. How about an Indian?

F. When I was six I was in Bombay; no it was Calcutta.

M. I must telephone the library; then I will eat.

F. I must phone too. It was just before the monsoon.

M. What was that?

F. A great deluge of water from out of the sky.

M. No, that sound.

F. It's like insects before a storm.

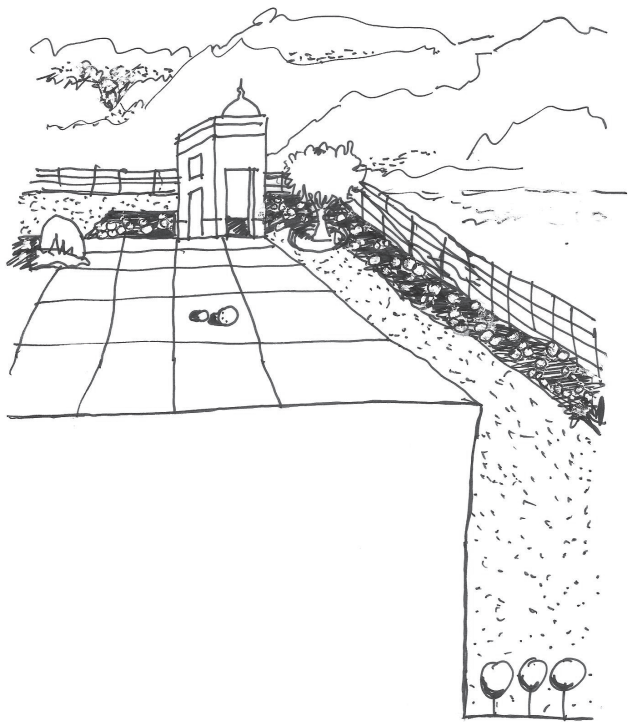
M. Are you referring to me or are you still in India?

F. No, I'm taking my hat off because the bees like it.

M. They like roses. Shouldn't you put more clothes on?

F. No, but I'll comb my hair.

M. All the world's a stage.



F. That's funny, I was just thinking of Shakespeare.

M. How now spirit, whether wander you?

F. I'm the merry wanderer of the night.

M. Then I must be your lady.

F. Then it's you who led me here.

M. Oh, faint heart, don't worry, the fairyland can't buy us.

F. I bet that cat is their ambassador.

M. Do you speak another language?

F. I can convince people that I speak Italian, but it makes me lonely.

M. Let's travel, aller.

F. I don't know whether I would be happy or sad.

M. Sometimes I cry when I'm happy.

F. Miserable people often have a whale of a time.

M. Expecting every moment to be their next.

F. Don't you mean last?

M. Be gone dull care.

F. I won't take that personally.

M. Or lying down.

F. How will I know when it's ten o'clock?

M. Là bas, là bas, try the spare room.

F. I haven't got time.

M. Oh time, it's like butterflies; all you need en fait is a net.

F. What did I expect?

M. Surely there's a clock somewhere.

F. Come to think of it, there isn't.

M. And I still don't have any money.

F. Then there's little chance of you getting any.

M. Couldn't we kidnap someone?

F. Look dear . . .

M. For Christ's sake, don't call me dear.

F. Money; why is it always money?

M. Do you think I don't know what you're doing?

F. My tongue is free to do what it likes.

M. And what about the hunched back?

F. I'm too old for that.

M. You're young enough to work.

F. So are you. I'll pay you a pound an hour to clean up.

M. I must start to think more of myself.

F. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen; that is the show.

M. What? That can't be the end can it?

F. Sure, what's wrong with that?

M. But we haven't started to make a play.

F. So what are you saying, it wasn't worth the effort?

M. Oh no, I had a lovely time. What about you?

F. Yes, I could go on forever.

M. I liked the stubborn creepy crawlies best.

F. Yes, they're like a tape recording through sleep.

M. Even the sound of them made me itch.

F. Yes, it's not just yesterday's extravagance.

M. Are you referring to mosquitoes, ou bien quoi?

F. Oh no. When in doubt, I go for colour.

M. We must fight for our right not to fall.

F. Shall we go in or go out.

M. It depends on the colour.

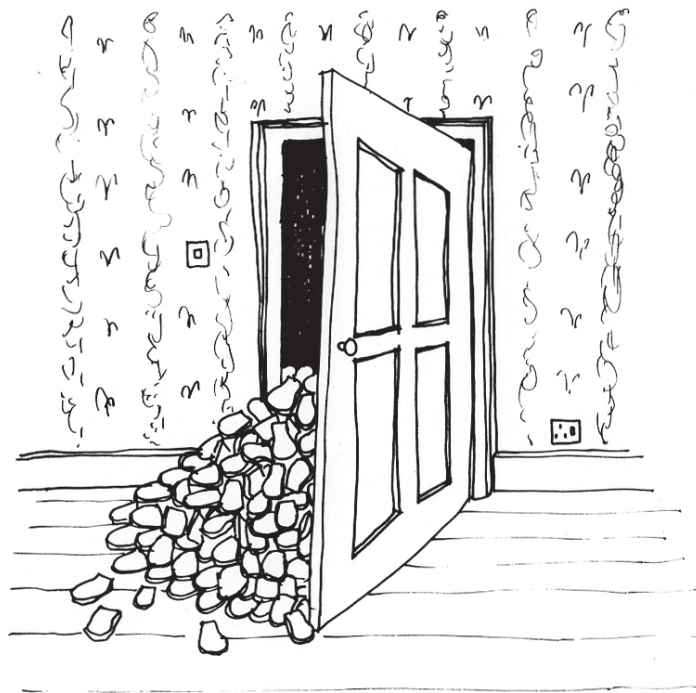
F. Is it going to rain?

M. I can honestly predict that it isn't.

F. It's nice after a storm; it's different, quieter.



ACT THREE
A RHAPSODY OF IMPERTINENCE
A Squat in St. John's Wood



F. Do it on the spur of the moment.

M. But I've spent too long trying.

F. Oh Musteek, you must try again.

M. Moosteek.

F. Maybe I should stick to mosquito.

M. Are you getting your own back for being Frank?

F. Jokes at my expense have cost me dear.

M. Please don't call me dear.

F. I meant dearly.

M. Is that the turn of phrase?

F. I don't know whose turn it is.

M. This will go down like a lead balloon

F. It may even tip the boat over.

M. It's all to do with turnover.

F. Was it only yesterday we met?

M. No it was another day.

F. Yesterday was another day.

M. As was the day before.

F. Now let me think.

M. That must wait 'til I'm back in the boat.

F. Do you remember seeing the oars?

M. Non, rien de rien.

F. You remember nothing?

M. It happened so suddenly.

F. We should concentrate on getting ashore.

M. On getting to the bank.

F. All the way to the bank and back ...

M. Arrêtez, just stop before it gets out of hand.

F. Do you have chips on both shoulders?

M. Your thoughts travel faster than I do.

F. I blame the molly-coddling.

M. Are you thinking of another woman?

F. No one mentioned a new date.

M. Oulala, slowly he sank beneath the weight of misinterpretation.

F. And you never get your feet wet, I suppose?

M. Me? Who am I, in the water, to speak of such things?

F. But you think it doesn't concern me?

M. It's unattractive to act as if you were above it all. Vraiment.

F. This could go down on record as gentle violence.

M. But I'm the one treading water.

F. What have I been trying to tell you all afternoon?

M. Then you must be bilingual after all.

F. Would that lift the blues?

M. We rarely hear two languages at the same time.

F. A little colour always helps

M. The hue, the tone, the tint, the shade, everything helps, tout.

F. Can I trouble you for more of the same?

M. Just a tinge. Will it bring me closer to hand?

F. Of course, but it won't impact on statistical charts.

M. Ecoute, I was told that being blonde was an attractive starting point.

F. The choice of cloth still has much to do with it.

M. Non, non, non, not if it's cut on the bias.

F. Why do your eyebrows rise when you say bias?

M. The acquisition of good habits is always endearing.

F. What, like clearing up behind you.

M. Oh the mess we get ourselves into.

F. Are you referring to method acting?

M. No, to you. Having tidied up you can't find yourself.

F. And you've let yourself go.

M. I will tell you something.

F. I feel that rejection is close at hand.

M. I'm only here for the rehearsal.

F. And think of me, I'm still here when you've gone.

M. You don't think of it as a play then?

F. More like a series of sentences without parole.

M. And you never get to the bank?

F. Not even to the hole in the wall.

M. So its consolation you're after.

F. I have a tendency to accept alleviation.

M. Aller aller, we must gather our things before the weather changes.

F. We mostly have more than we need.

M. Some succeed because of what they don't see.

F. Is that the old way of doing it?

M. There's more of the past ahead of us than you think.

F. There's that sound again.

M. Can you capture it?

F. I don't know where to begin.

M. Behind every successful man there's a woman.

F. I don't feel successful.

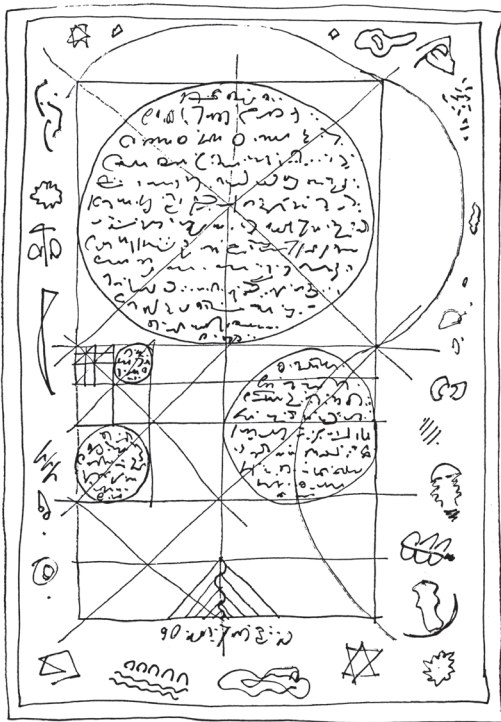
M. I wonder if anything important began with this declaration.

F. You really want to 'get on', don't you?

M. Well it beats treading water.

F. Can you row?

M. I can punt.



F. We'll just have to use our hands.

M. I need to be in the boat first.

F. It won't be long now.

M. Something about a creek and a paddle comes to mind.

F. This is definitely water and I have found the puddle.

M. Did you mean paddle?

F. Paddle.

M. Or oar.

F. Or oar. Who cares?

M. Eh bien then give me a hand.

F. Here.

M. Hold on.

F. Aghh! ...

M. One in the boat is worth two in the brink.

F. We must hold the stern and kick our legs.

M. Franchement, no other condition could have inspired such a statement.

F. It's the bank we must achieve, not a higher plane of consciousness.

M. Swimming will indeed be more effective than meditation.

F. It's idle to panic.

M. Did you mean paddle?

F. It's the suspense that's killing me.

M. What did you sing when you were young?

F. My old man said, follow the van.

M. What, and don't dilly dally on the way?

F. Yes I know; chance would be a fine thing.

M. Will you be buried in the family vault?

F. You've got me questioning causality now.

M. What with one thing and another? C'est ça?

F. Exactly.

M. I wonder if this will ever serve a purpose.

F. A grandchild is great impetus for narrative.

M. Do you imagine a career in maritime adventures then?

F. It depends on how long this one lasts.

M. Good point and the wind is getting up.

F. It's a shame you never got up.

M. It's a shame I never followed the van.

F. We'll think of something.

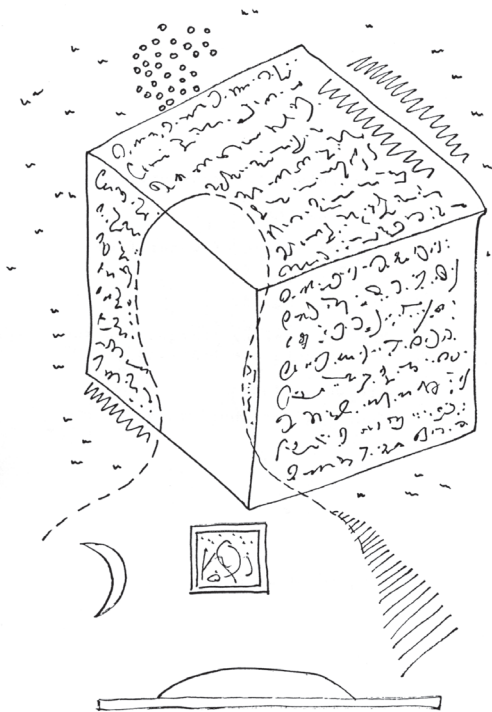
M. Are you talking collectively?

F. I'm out of my depth.

M. And no chance of a lifeline.

F. You're always there when I need you.

M. Like a lighthouse in the storm.



F. But we're getting further away.

M. We'll reach the bank eventually.

F. Not with our turnover.

M. Your jokes are like winking in the dark.

F. We must take the rough with the smooth.

M. OK, I'll wax lyrical about the moon and you get us out of here.

F. I thought it was my turn to start a scene.

M. I'm in the grip of drowning.

F. I never said it was time for light refreshments.

M. There are people on the bank.

F. Shout to them; I'll wave my arms.

M. They're laughing. They think it's a performance.

F. Help. This is not a poem, I promise you.

M. It's no use. We'll have to get there by instalments.

F. Dear bank, you are so attractive.

M. It's no use talking to the bank.

F. Then I shall pray for a life boat.

M. A rope on a tractor would be less surreal.

F. Just keep your eyes open and your mouth shut.

M. What a novel and refreshing experience you invite.

F. I'm a realist. Something will turn up.

M. That's an optimist.

F. It's always worked in the past.

M. No point changing now. How old are you anyway?

F. My only qualification is my youth.

M. But you've spent a long time getting there.

F. It should stand me in good stead.

M. Not me, my nerves are frayed.

F. Don't even think of fraying.

M. Tu veux dire, even if I go limp and ragged with cold and exhaustion?

F. Anyone passing would think this a pastoral scene.

M. Can you reach the branches of that tree?

F. I've got it. I'll just swing my leg over.

M. Tu sais quoi? You were born for this role my dear orang-utan.

F. Just watch out for the temper tantrums.

M. Shall we stop here? I can't extemporize any longer.

F. I thought we were improvising.

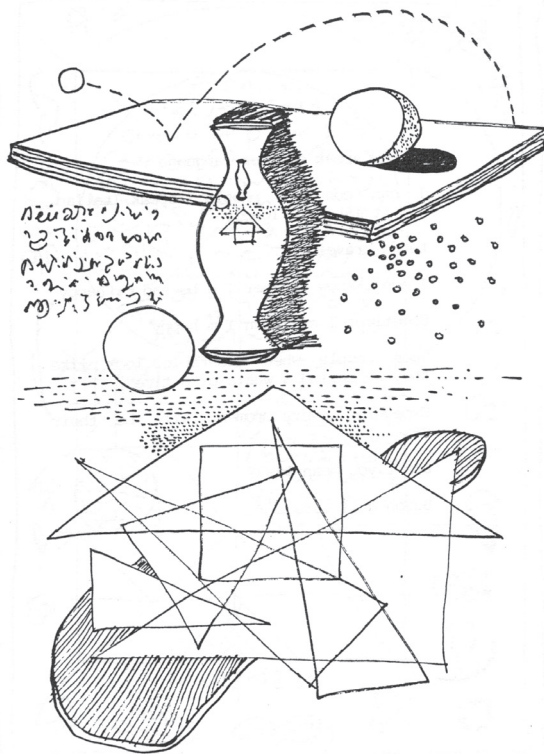
M. Whatever, call it an impromptu rehearsal.

F. Do you think it will work on the stage?

M. Ibsen will rot in his grave.

F. Don't you mean turn?

M. Non, not if he's dead.



F. Maybe it should be performed in the round.

M. Will it work best without the water?

F. Oh yes, we can't have water. Water will ruin it.

M. It's all about not having the water then.

F. Do you think the audience will laugh?

M. Only if they're nervous.

F. We'll have to make do and hope for the best.

M. I hope they like it off the cuff.

F. Is that the same as off the bone?

M. Not really. It's more like ad lib.

F. I never understand; I just play it by ear.

M. I'll come round to your way of thinking eventually.

F. Can you remember how we started?

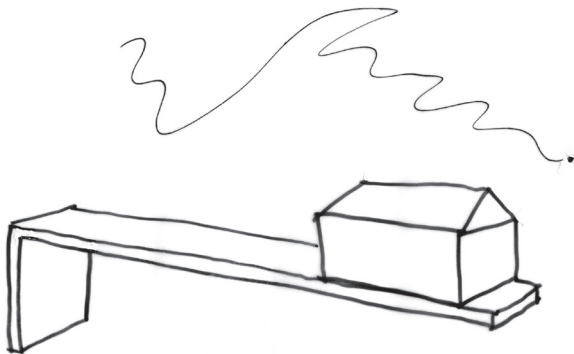
M. Funny you should ask that, I was thinking the same thing.

F. Were we in the boat or on the bank?

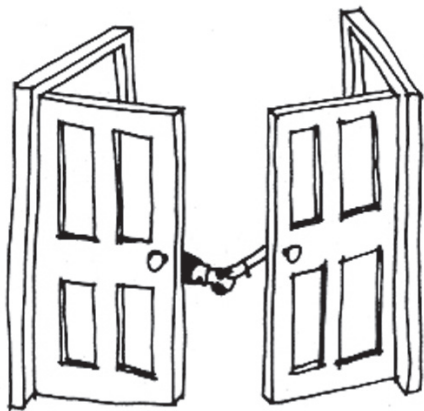
M. Or on the boat in the bank?

F. There were no tellers.

M. And no captive audience.



ACT FOUR
PADDLING IN PUBLIC
A Ship's Chandlers in Wapping



M. My name is Moustique.

F. Remind me again. Speak your peace.

M. My name is Moustique.

F. Is this a lesson in tolerance?

M. Yes and you're lengthening your stride.

F. I'm taking the air.

M. You're trying to get away with something.

F. Comes a time when a man has to make his own decisions.

M. Your awareness of the present is a reckless vision.

F. We should not waste even the smallest legacy.

M. So why are you in search of maritime knick-knacks?

F. Shopping on an empty stomach is never recommended.

M. A visit to the chandlers is hardly shopping.

F. It may be down to earth, but it's wildly relaxed.

M. Has your intransigent hardness suddenly softened?

F. There's no point getting mad about nothing at all.

M. Break a leg.

F. I hate false glamour.

M. Is this it?

F. Don't worry; I've got your back.

M. Why, are we under fire?

F. You're asking for a piece of my mind.

M. I'm not, you need everything you can get.

F. But look, it's a veritable treasure trove in here.

M. I prefer breakaway objects.

F. I can't cope with objects that break away.

M. I was referring to balsa-wood furniture.

F. So what, you're a slapstick comic now?

M. No, but I love mock-glass made of crystallized sugar.

F. Are you still thinking about your stomach?

M. Have you read the signs? – whale oil, tallow, lard.

F. I knew I should never have come.

M. It never rains but it pours.

F. Why don't you check out the food in galley supplies?

M. And now it's raining cats and dogs. Des chats et de chiens!

F. Look, truce. It's a storm in a tea cup.

M. You've got your fingers crossed.

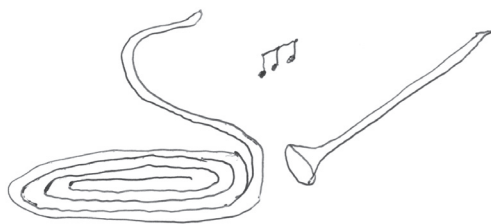
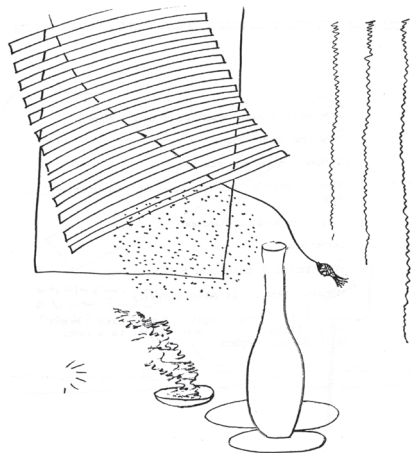
F. I do this for good luck.

M. And what do you do when you're telling lies?

F. I turn fluorescent pink and break down sobbing.

M. That would be out of keeping with your gorilla costume.

F. So humour me and look for some rope.



M. What! Are you going to hang yourself?

F. We need it as a prop. How else will we get ashore?

M. You mean to the bank.

F. Stop, just stop. We had an agreement remember?

M. I would love it if you were a snake charmer.

F. And the relevance of this is?

M. Forget it. A charmer of any kind would do.

F. And you of course would play the snake.

M. Actually, I imagined the rope as the snake.

F. Think of our quest as art rather than magic.

M. Then how do you explain the gorilla costume?

F. I'm taking the air.

M. Say that once more and you're heading for a solo career.

F. Look, here's an oar. Mark the classic, simple lines.

M. You're mistaking it for a fashion model.

F. Oh, my darling, where have you been all my life.

M. Learning the salsa so that I could dance with you.

F. And I imagined it as a striking pose.

M. Give her a frilly dress and she'll dance the flamenco.

F. Look at us from here. I'll freeze and make a tableau.

M. I think a tableau needs more than one character.

F. How about a series of suspended animations?

M. I think it will induce hibernation in the audience.

F. Look, go and buy a mars bar or you will kill everything.

M. I thought the rigor-mortis had already set in.

F. So think about the creation of living pictures.

M. After all these words you want living pictures?

F. Poses plastiques; a story through body motions.

M. Body motions? Sounds like erotic entertainment.

F. Take the plunge and find yourself a prop.

M. There are hatchets, spikes, boat hooks and caulking irons.

F. No, look over there. Take an oarlock.

M. Take a warlock?

F. Why would I suggest a warlock?

M. So that I could summon demons as my helpers.

F. Well I'm going to hold this pose.

M. There, my warlock has drained the life from you already.

F. An oarlock attaches the oar to the boat.

M. Oh, any opportunity to put your oar in, eh?

F. Afterwards we'll swop parts.

M. What? You want me to wear the gorilla suit now?

F. No way, I'm naked under here.



/// ///
 21/07/2023:00 00:00:00



M. Well I'm not being an oarlock while you play the oar.

F. You've missed the point.

M. I've got it. I'm rudderless. So what do I need?

F. A compass?

M. No you chimp, a rudder.

F. Chump. The word is chump not chimp.

M. OK, jump then.

F. Between a rock and a hard place.

M. Stop talking to yourself, this is a duet.

F. Rock bottom one minute and flights of fancy the next.

M. Oh come on, you love flights of fancy.

F. The butterfly is short lived.

M. Do you have butterflies before you perform?

F. No, I have mosquitoes.

M. I bet you do; sick to the stomach with nerves.

F. I'm a pacifist. I can't stand loud noise.

M. I can't stand the noise people make when they eat.

F. Karaoke – that has to be the worst.

M. I will very quietly go and look for a rudder.

F. Striving towards a better future she sailed off in search of accessories.

M. You make it sound like a holiday.

F. Don't talk to me about holidays.

M. When was the last time you took a holiday?

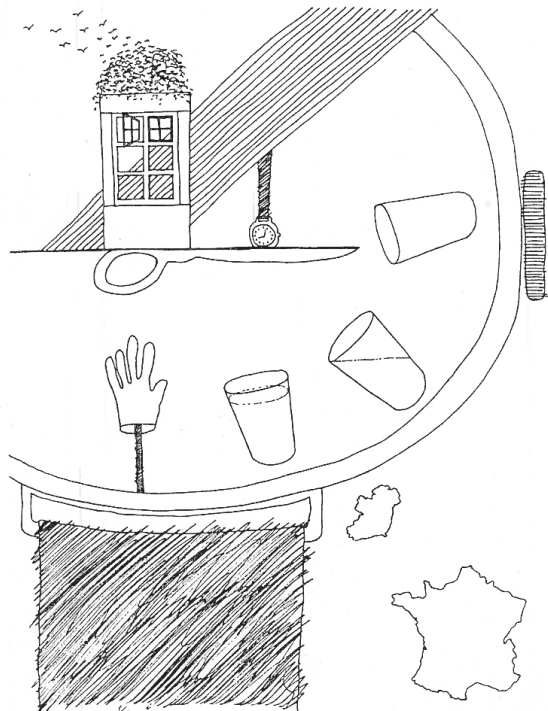
F. Holiday's are the art of practising patience under pressure.

M. Voilà. Voici un gouvernail.

F. And yet you are holding a rudder.

M. Precisely. I prescribe more holidays in France.

F. You look like a platypus with that in your mouth.



M. And you look like old father time.

F. Which is what?

M. Search me.

F. I had a moment of déjà-vu just then.

M. You see, even brief holidays in France can be beneficial.

F. Suddenly I'm peckish.

M. Aha! Oulala! And does that put you in a good mood or not?

F. We will take our rudder and oar and eat.

M. What about rope?

F. I've never eaten rope.

M. We need the rope to get ashore.

F. Or to the bank.

M. Don't let's go there.

F. But what props shall we buy.

M. The rudder and the oar will keep us going.

F. Oar, the rudder and the rope.

M. Don't give up on the oar; it lends you a certain gravitas.

F. I thought I had included the oar.

M. En fait, I only heard the rudder and the rope.

F. Without the rope we'd be without hope.

M. I'm sure we could cope.

F. Are you married?

M. No.

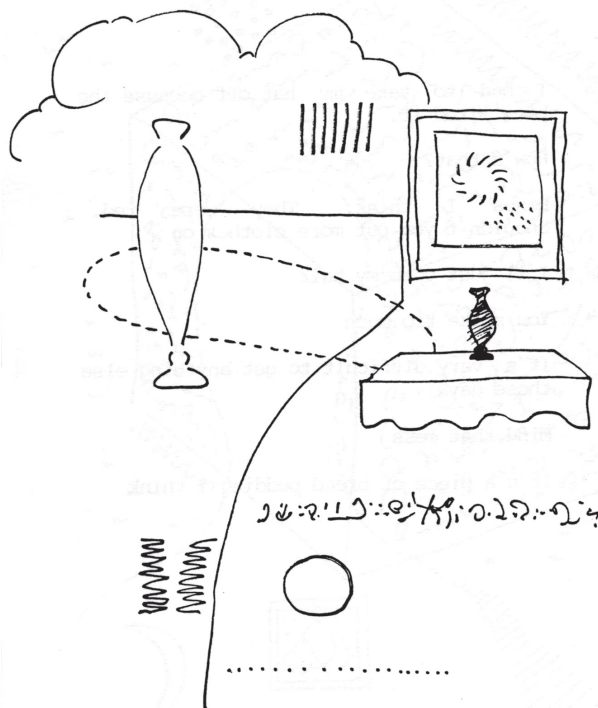
F. Then we can't elope.

M. I said cope, but I'd like to elope.

F. Will the performance suffice?

M. No, I need a honeymoon in France.

F. But I've just found my youth.



M. Oh tu vois, that comes and goes depending on how you're feeling.

F. I need the till. I must pay.

M. Do they charge for youthfulness?

F. For the rudder and the oar.

M. Now I'm behind. Shall we slow down?

F. Will a tableau vivant be slow enough?

M. Providing its quiet. I'm a pacifist too.

F. The other evening ...

M. Yes ... what? Were you about to reminisce?

F. When you left.

M. Yes.

F. And I was still there.

M. Yes.

F. After the rehearsal.

M. Phew, this is slower than suspended animation.

F. Now I've lost my thread.

M. But you bought the rope.

F. And lost my radar.

M. Did you mean rudder?

F. I think we're ready to paddle.

M. It doesn't sound very clever.

F. Come on, we're not after funding.

M. I still need approval.

F. Trust that you're welcome; you don't need the Wellcome Trust.

M. I feel quite constructive with a rudder.

F. It's the star of the show.

M. It might win an Oscar.

F. What role do you have in mind?

M. You mean it could be a tragic rudder or a comic rudder?

F. Or a rudder of suspense.

M. I'm surprised Hitchcock didn't use a rudder.

F. Now let me think.

M. You know how that holds everything up.

F. OK. Let's go boating.

