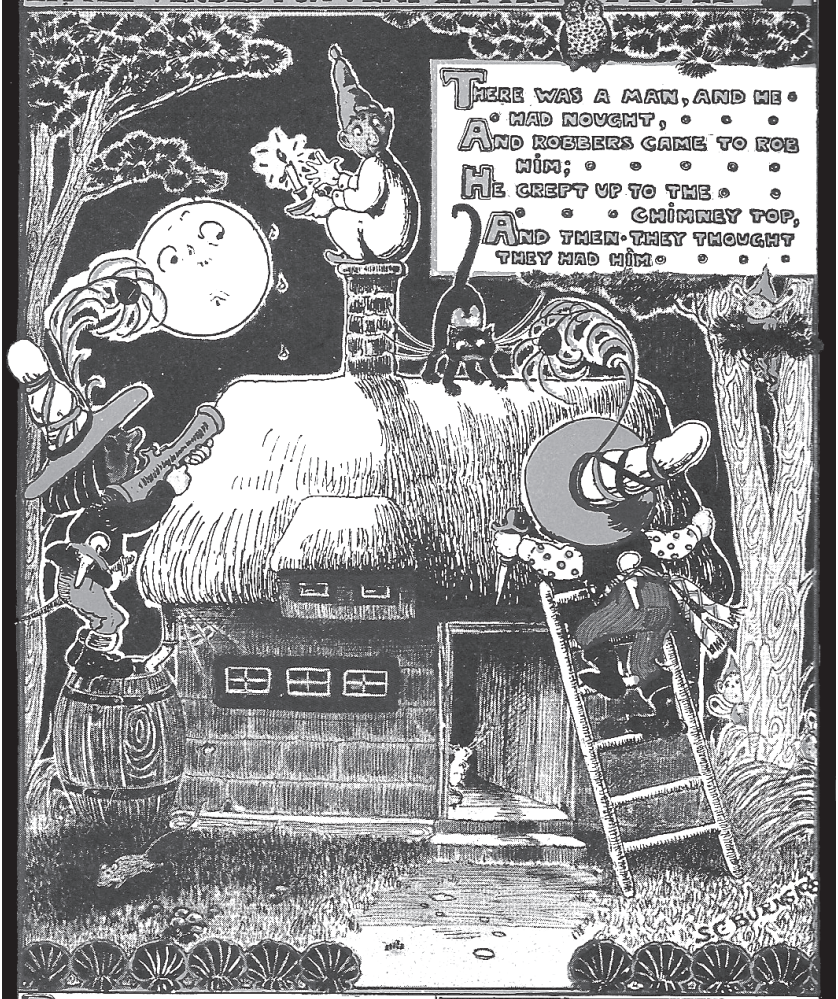
The Book of Knowledge

by

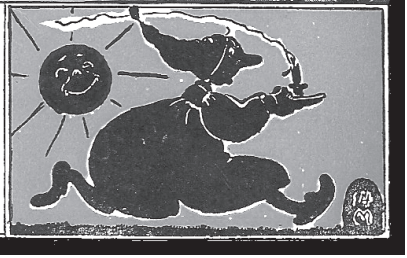
Chad Faries

LITTLE VERSES FOR VERY LITTLE PEOPLE



There was a man, and he had nought,
And robbers came to rob him;
He crept up to the chimney top,
And then they thought they had him.

But he got down on t'other side,
And then they could not find him,
He ran fourteen miles in fifteen days,
And never looked behind him.



The Book of Knowledge

Part I: The Wonderful Things that Happen When You Hurt Your Finger

How to Find Your Way in a Forest 4
Can We Think About Things That Don't Interest Us? 5
Little Problems for Clever People 6
How Things are Fastened Together 9
Can We Think Without Words? 11
Primary Reading Lesson 13
Look at the Period on This Page and Think What It Is 16
The Real Machinery That Works When We Breathe, Part One: Respiration 17
The Real Machinery That Works When We Breathe, Part Two: Essence 18
The Ostrich Which Runs Like an Express Train Instead of Flying 19
We Must Not Let the Muddle of Words Mislead Us 21
Little Verses for Little People 23
Why is it Bad To Sleep With Flowers in Your Room 24
Why Cannot We Hear When We Are Asleep? 25
Faries 26
The Wonderful Things That Happen When You Hurt Your Finger 28

Part II: The History of Iron County, Michigan

The History of Iron County, Michigan
1. Invocation to a Game of Chance 32
2. Iron River 35

3. A Lumber, Copper Landscape: Progenies 39
4. Renaming the Weeds 42

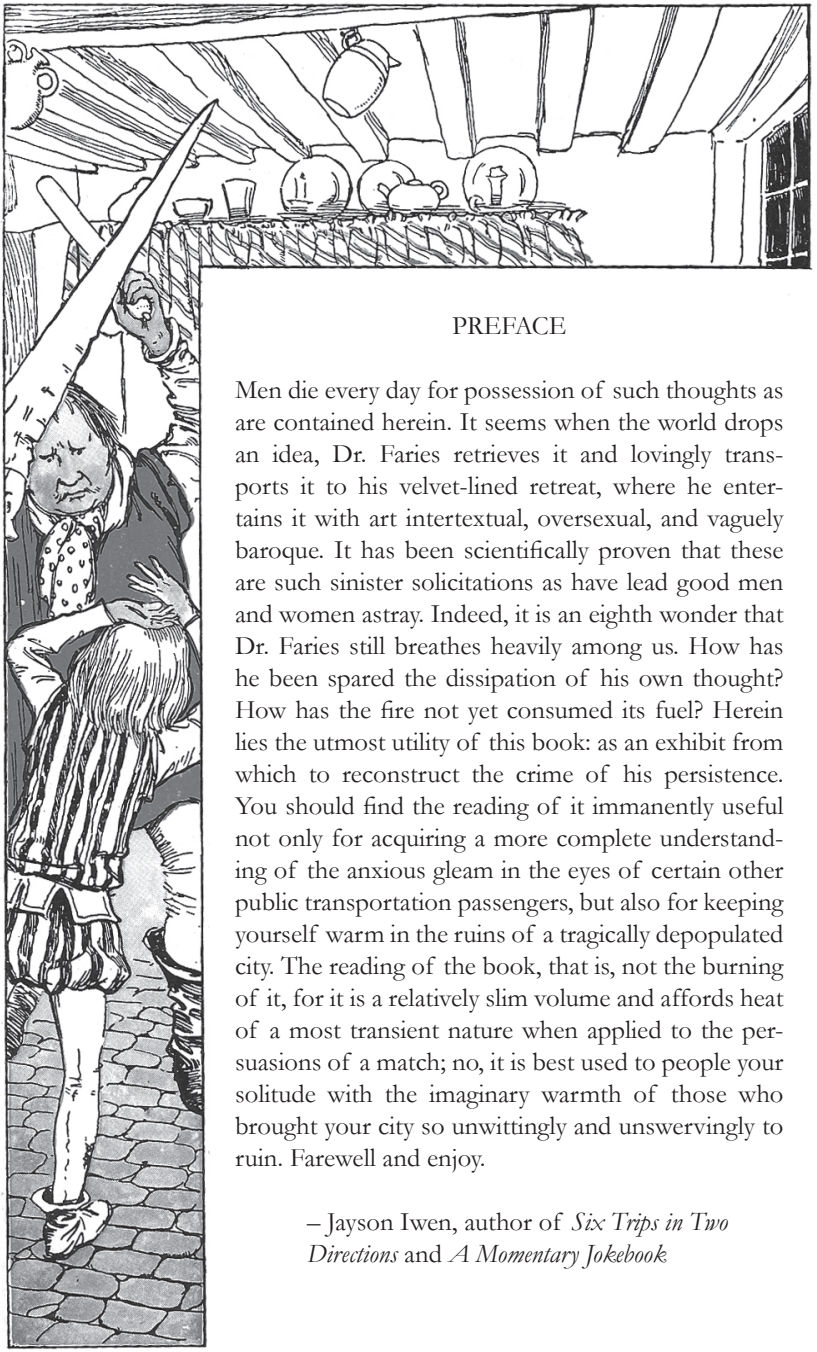
Some Verse from Cacti in the Wind 45
Conclusion 46
Seeing Voice 48
Spectroscopy 52

Part III: A Canvas of Milk: Dedications and Things

Written from the Seventh Rung of a Ladder 58
Moonrise 60
Steve 62
Something Strange and Fantastic 63
On Hearing Bob Dylan's Lovesick 65
Shattered In 66
A Journey to the Moon 68
Heliography 70

Part IV: Horse Latitudes

Horse Latitudes 74
Dunes 76
The Loneliest Country on Earth 77
Yucatan 79
Tiny D 81
Centralia 83
Mount Katahdin 85
Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipukakapi 86

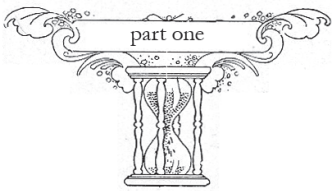


PREFACE

Men die every day for possession of such thoughts as are contained herein. It seems when the world drops an idea, Dr. Faries retrieves it and lovingly transports it to his velvet-lined retreat, where he entertains it with art intertextual, oversexual, and vaguely baroque. It has been scientifically proven that these are such sinister solicitations as have lead good men and women astray. Indeed, it is an eighth wonder that Dr. Faries still breathes heavily among us. How has he been spared the dissipation of his own thought? How has the fire not yet consumed its fuel? Herein lies the utmost utility of this book: as an exhibit from which to reconstruct the crime of his persistence. You should find the reading of it immanently useful not only for acquiring a more complete understanding of the anxious gleam in the eyes of certain other public transportation passengers, but also for keeping yourself warm in the ruins of a tragically depopulated city. The reading of the book, that is, not the burning of it, for it is a relatively slim volume and affords heat of a most transient nature when applied to the persuasions of a match; no, it is best used to people your solitude with the imaginary warmth of those who brought your city so unwittingly and unswervingly to ruin. Farewell and enjoy.

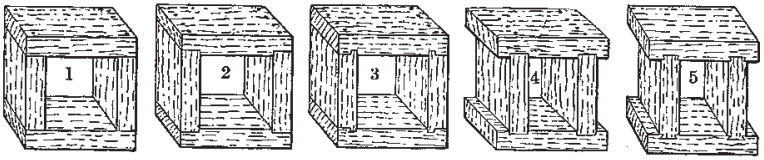
– Jayson Iwen, author of *Six Trips in Two Directions* and *A Momentary Jokebook*

THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT HAPPEN WHEN YOU HURT YOU FINGER

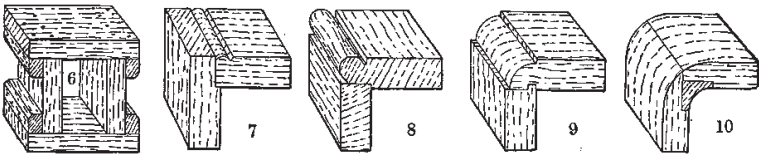


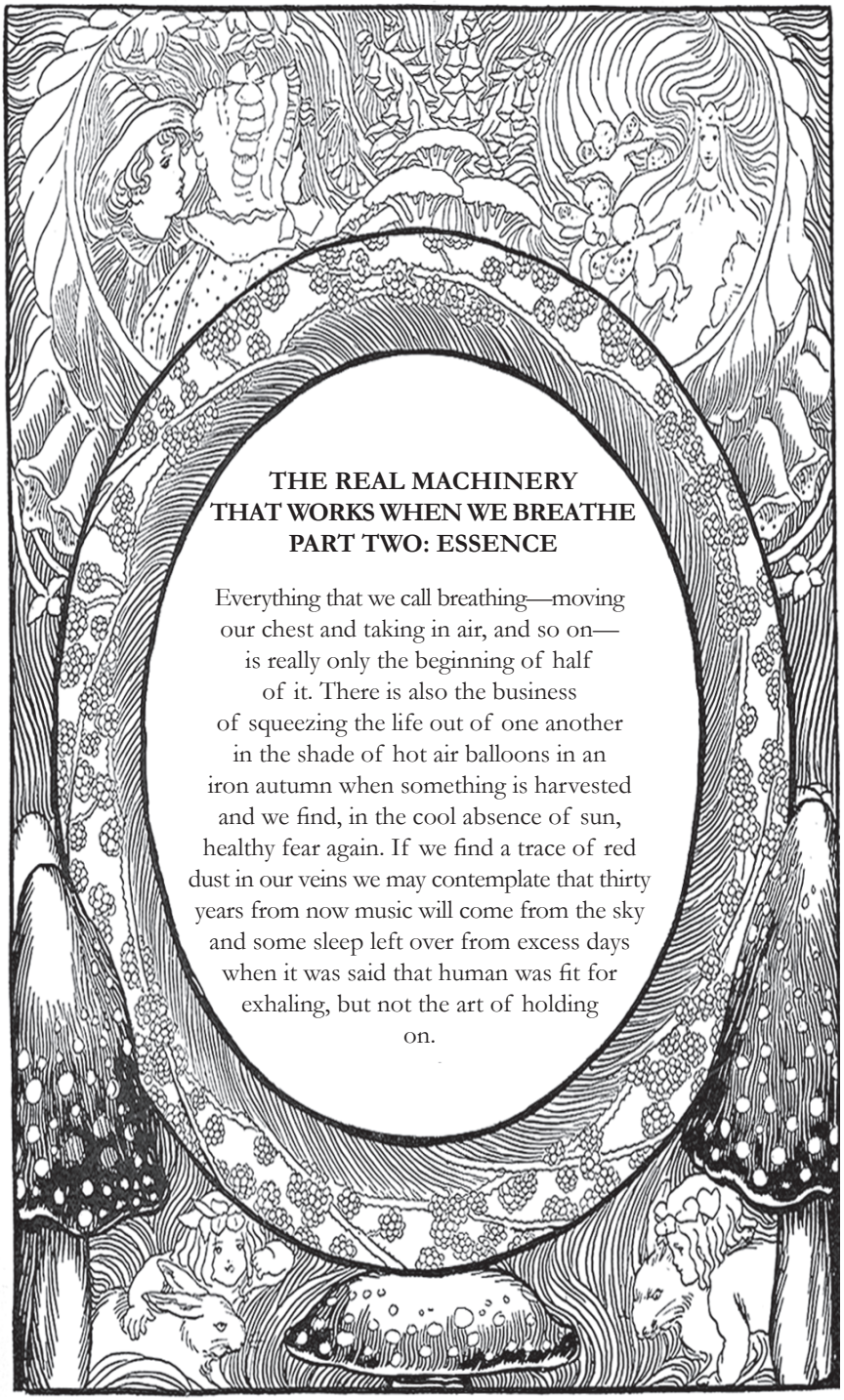
HOW THINGS ARE FASTENED TOGETHER

In the workshops and factories of the world
many things are made because Nature provides
materials only for man's service.
We have not only wood and precious metals,
but such things as infatuation
and yearning, though these are losing their market
value. But as we fondle these objects
we begin, as little boys do, to notice
that some of the things have taken wonderful
shape through a certain piecing together,
like a fine mystery novel that we might
read in older years when we are ready
for such thinking. These shapes are made with *joints.*
In time when we look at the seam
of infatuation or a little box,
we begin to notice. A boy soon learns
that all joints are not made alike. He sees
his father glue a broken corner
of a chair or table and his mother
re-paste postcards to a photo album.
Father leaves every other weekend.
His mother mends a broken basin
with cement.



Now, here we will consider
some of the simple ways of joining woodwork.
It can't be confused with joining infatuation.
With wood there is a grain and wood is weakest
if a joint is situated with the grain.
On the other hand, ironically,
infatuation is strongest with the grain
because a break is exactly what
is necessary for this material
to thrive and distinguish it from love.
This is the first great difference which must never
be forgotten when joints have to be made.
And for every one there is a good reason
why that one joint should be used rather than
any other in a particular case.
For instance, yearning is best fit together
with words. Grain doesn't matter much because
it falls apart at will and pulls itself
back together when good and ready.





THE REAL MACHINERY THAT WORKS WHEN WE BREATHE PART TWO: ESSENCE

Everything that we call breathing—moving
our chest and taking in air, and so on—
is really only the beginning of half
of it. There is also the business
of squeezing the life out of one another
in the shade of hot air balloons in an
iron autumn when something is harvested
and we find, in the cool absence of sun,
healthy fear again. If we find a trace of red
dust in our veins we may contemplate that thirty
years from now music will come from the sky
and some sleep left over from excess days
when it was said that human was fit for
exhaling, but not the art of holding
on.

FARIES

When once we begin to let Fairies sing
to us, it is quite wonderful how much
we learn from them and how many new things
they will show us. We have let them
introduce us to the Treble Road
and the Bass Road and already we have
seen a Fairy procession of motor-cars
and a Fairy meeting when the Fairies
arrived on the music-staff scene
in cocoa-nuts smoking grass and Fairy dust:

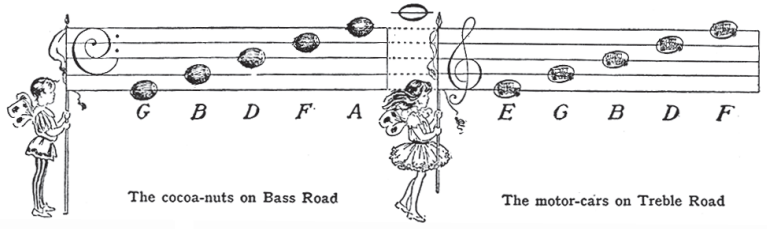
Those who were high and trebled drank thinned juice;
for the low boomers, blood pudding was in store.
It was thick in their throats and they sang
like the low-geared engines of their Fairy cars.

Some of the Fairies were quite violent
with their bashing and cymbals crashing.
These ones are best to stay away from,
but we will find that their music is
the most innovative, though neglected.

Even though it sounds brash and crushes
what we might think of as beautiful
and lyrical, it is really like some-
thing you can eat both sweet and salty.

The Thai people, now infamous
for debauchery eat hot spiced
coconut soup! Can you imagine!
And the sting is quite nice, just like
the music of those violent Fairies.

The coco-motor-cars are still to be seen
in the Bass Road. Even now there are more
atonal fairy wonders in store for us.



"Indeed that is strange," answered Bass Clef,
"for when I opened my eyes at the rest
of day I looked down my road, and saw
shells of varied hues lying between
the cocoa-nuts in which the fairies
arrived yesterday and had abruptly left us."

THE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT HAPPEN WHEN YOU HURT YOUR FINGER

Soldiers, or should I say sailors, these
little white cell blood boys are. Wandering
around the bars and brothels of the circulatory
system in white dress, but tattooless, bone clean
and courteous, converting the diseased. They even
have families that are neat and clean and wash
before dinner. If any finger
is ever in trouble, like for instance stuck
up a bull's ass, or in the exposed chassis
in the back of a rusty Chevy van,
as was little Amy's when driving back
in an ice storm from Athens, Texas,
the sailors are there to listen deeply.

The least little injury—a little dirt
or the tearing of the fingernail—
and the whole body seems to know at once.
Or there may be the head of the hammer
and an impure thought that passes through before
driving a nail into a cross section
of wood and we miss, of course, and then
the familiar purple throb. The rush
and voices that drift in and out of order.
Could it be different at this juncture?

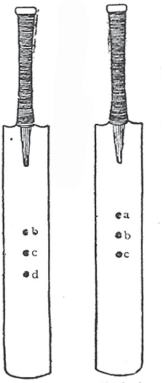
The spleen, which is far away inside
the body, tiny little glands lying
under the skin of the neck and armpit—
all these are made aware, so to say,
probably by means of chemical
messengers sent to them from the injured part,
and at once they begin to double

and treble their activities and produce
millions of white cells, all because the tip
of a finger is in trouble. All because
they want to catch a glimpse of the drift
of voice and who is speaking and not.

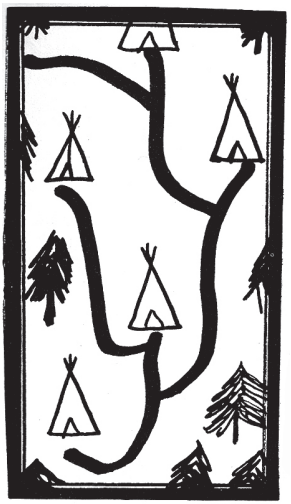
Yes,
we should discuss Amy and the drive….
we had slipped off the road and got stuck
and in her four year old boredom, presented
her finger to a hole, slightly smaller.
And my mother, lovingly, amidst

the argument of Amy's parents, Brian
and Faith, spit all over Amy's hand in or-
der to free the tiny digit. And all
the while the little sailors were busy
at work on the inside, pulling wires
mixing strange concoctions, throwing salt
over their shoulders, preaching, preaching, and no
one ever paid them much attention, ever,
until sort-of-uncle Shane contracted
Lymphoma years later and then all any-
one had to say was that the white blood cells
were no good. But her body was abso-
lutely perfect at four. Everything was

in order. You could hear a delightful
droning from her sanguine glow and imagine
a scene full of sequins. You forget
about time and yearning and infatuation,
Brian bashing the round face of Faith,
blaming her for not keeping him up
when he fell asleep at the wheel.
We hope
that some day nations may be as beautiful
and unselfishly ordered as the human
body
is.



1. Front view 2. Back view
The mysterious bat

No ideas but in notes. No form but in tincture.
Welcome the rust-colored men that drink river water.
Praise for industry. Praise for what will be estranged
children running naked toward abandoned mining pits
of water,
jumping in and forgetting years as they back stroke

and squint at a spectrum of white light.