

Birthday book for Frances
prepared in June 1960

A42.2

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Frances is going to be nine very soon
She'll still be eight at the end of June,
But just two days in the month of July
And eight whole years will have gone - goodbye!

Nine is a very good age to be
When you think of it, it's three times three,
To be seven is fun, and eight is fine,
But best of all, is becoming nine.

I wonder what colour her dress will be,
And how many friends she will have to tea
And if I'm not there, will she drop me a line
To tell me how much she likes being nine?

Frances is going to be nine - remember?
She was only half-past eight in December,
To be seven is fun, and eight is fine,
But best of all is becoming nine!

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PRETORIA CENTRAL REFRAIN

It's Sunday again, and here we are, sitting
 And reading, or talking, and knitting, and knitting.
 We're up in the morning; we each make our bed;
 We eat up our breakfast of porridge and bread.
 No bacon, no toast, no kippers, no ham
 No eggs - but there's ^{what they call} coffee, and ~~plenty~~ of jam.
 Then out in the yard we go for a bit
 And under the palm tree we sit and we knit.
 Sunday papers and scones in the world that we quit;
 But here we just sit and we knit, and we knit,
 We knit, and we knit, and we knit, and we knit
 (Continued →)

PRETORIA CENTRAL

REFRAIN

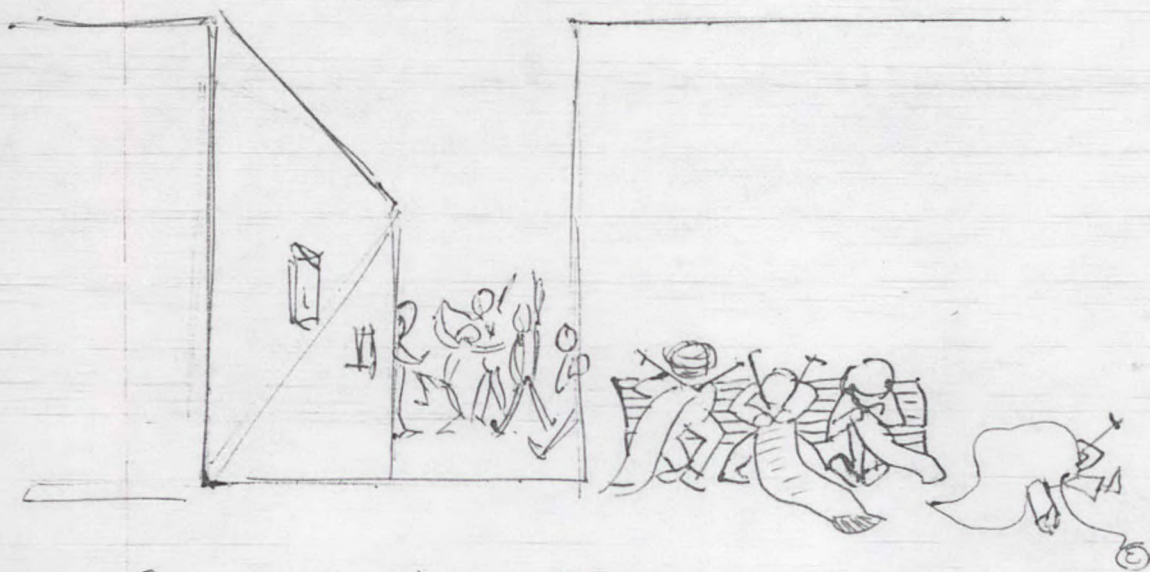
(continued)



Now Monday has come, and the children are dressed
 In shorts or in blouses, with gyms nicely pressed.
 They're ready for school, while to work folks are flitting.
 While here we are - sitting, and knitting, and knitting.
 Are the streets jammed with traffic? We don't care a bit,
 We just sit and we knit and we knit and we knit
 And we knit and we knit and we knit.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and Saturday
 Each one like the former, each one like the latter day.
 Warm days or cold days, we care not one whit,
 We just sit and read, or we read and we knit.
 At night round the table in nightgowns we sit,
 And we talk, or we read, or we sit, or we knit.
 There are earthquakes and floods - or a batsman gets hit,
 But we're quite unaware, so we sit and we knit,
 Yes, we knit and we knit and we knit and we knit!

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One day they will say: "The Emergency's over

You may pack and return to your husband or lover.
Your children are waiting; so why don't you flit?"

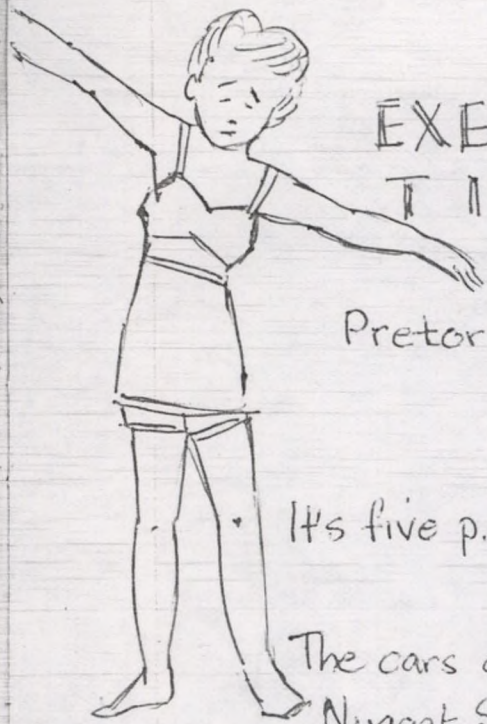
We won't even hear them. We'll sit and we'll knit.
The prison door's open, and Spengler has gone

But the women detainees sit on and sit on

And three decades later, they'll dig through the grit

And there they will find us, while we sit and knit,
While we sit and we read, or we read, or we sit,

And we knit, and we knit, and we knit, and we knit!



EXERCISE TIME

at
Pretoria Central
June. 1960



It's five p.m. and people are heading homewards
The cars are edging forwards inch by inch.
Nugget Street's overflowing with traffic northward going

And the queues at every bus stop make you flinch.

There's an accident in Louis Botha Avenue,
A scooter buckled up a Cadillac's door;
And what do you think we're doing while all this trouble's brewing?
Why, we're busy tilting up our pelvic floor!

→ continued →

EXERCISE TIME (continued)

It's five-fifteen, and in ten thousand kitchens

The women peel potatoes, wash the greens.

The pot-lids they are raising to taste the meat
that's braising

They're hulling peas, or busy stringing beans.

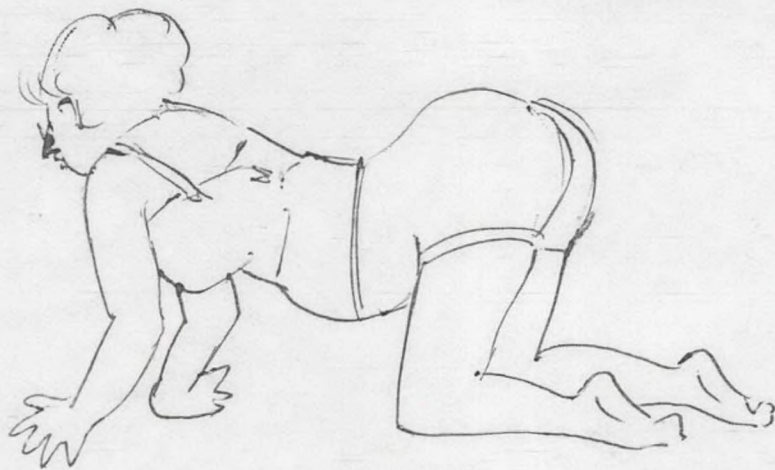
The smells of food are mingling in the evening

And down the street ~~there's~~ they're frying fish and chips

But pause a moment please to see the women detainees.

— All on their hands and knees, and wiggling hips.

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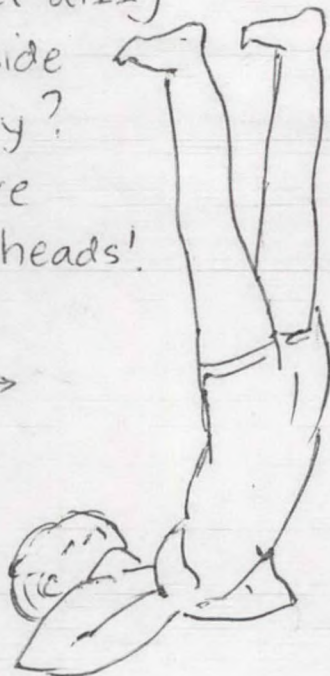
EXERCISE TIME (continued)

Five-thirty—and the children leave their playmates.
Hear how they shout "Hullo!" and bang the door.
The football game's completed, the home side was
defeated

And now it's time for homework—What a bore!
The sky is pale, the evening mist is rising
The babies have been bathed, prepared for beds
And why do we feel dizzy
while the world outside
is busy?

Because, you see, we're
standing on our heads!

(continued →



EXERCISE TIME (continued)

Our homes, our jobs, our children are without us.
Pursuing busy lives, just as before.

We find it reprehensible that we are so dispensible,
And so we swing our legs up off the floor.

Oh, for the time when we were rushed and
harassed

With getting children fed and off to bed!
Meanwhile, our satisfaction is in holding a contraction
And rolling to reduce our hip-line spread.



The Wattle Tree

We have watched the wattle tree,
Sat beneath it every day
The grey-green buds were small and tight.
Closed against a wandering bee
Spattered lightly like the spray.

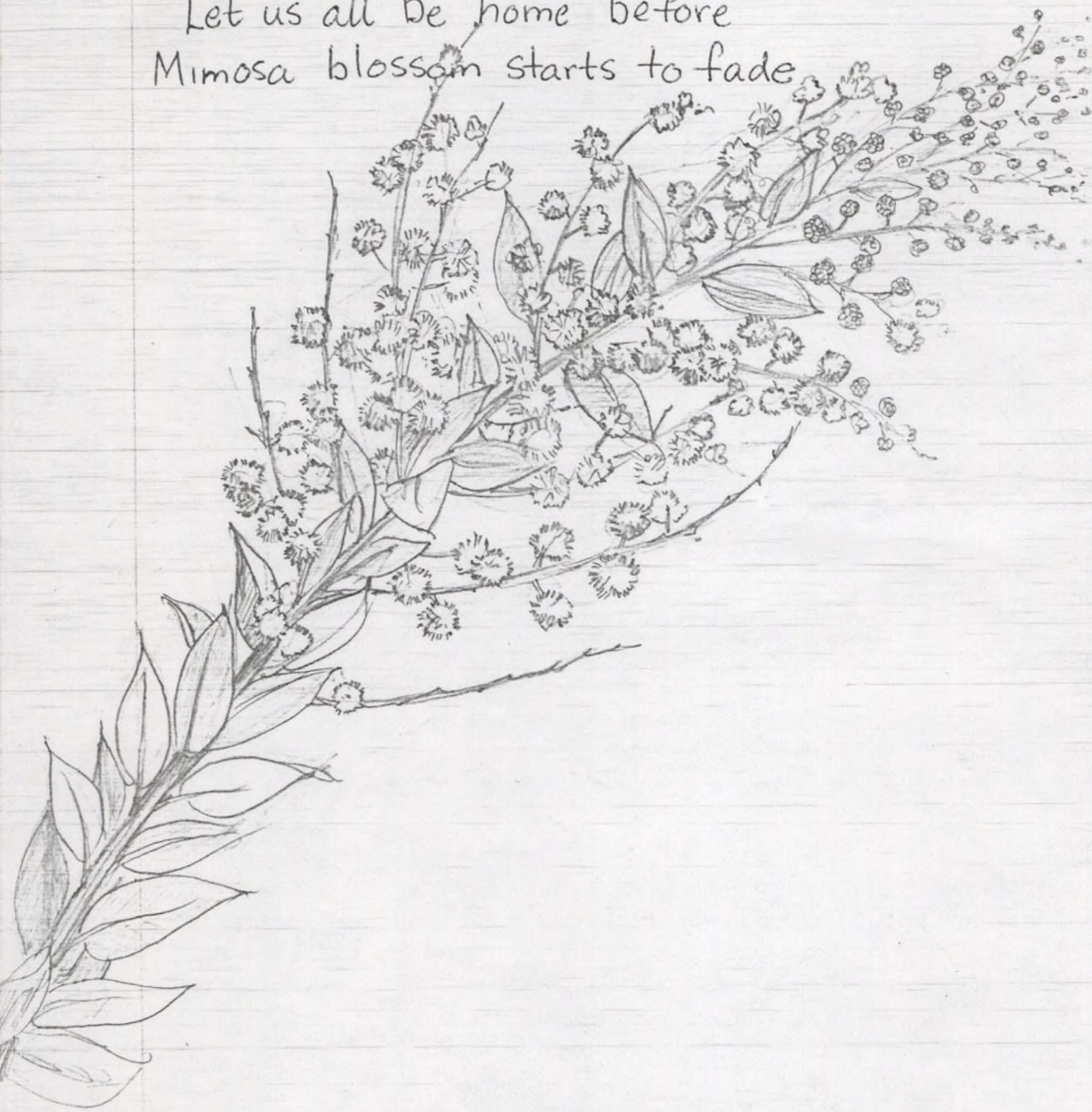
Every day the buds increased
Among the leaves, so silvery-gray.
Every day mimosa bloom
Like a new-born chick released
As we sat the hours away.

Now the bright mimosa balls
Shaken down in tiny showers
Scatter on us where we sit.
One by one upon us fall
Confetti-like, the golden flowers

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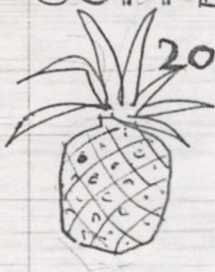
The Wattle Tree (continued)

As we watch it, more and more
We wish that Spring will be delayed
Winter, linger on a while.
Let us all be home before
Mimosa blossom starts to fade



SUPPER on MONDAY,

20th JUNE 1960



What will you have for supper tonight?

Mutton or beef in a roast?

Will you have chicken?

or chops?



or a stew?



Or tomato sauce

on toast?

I'm having eggs and bacon



Tomatoes and coffee too,



But I'd rather have

just a bit of bread



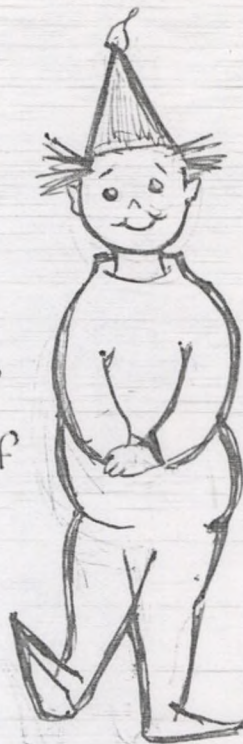
If I could only have it with you,

with you

If I could only have it with you!



There once was an elf
Who lived on a shelf
All by himself.

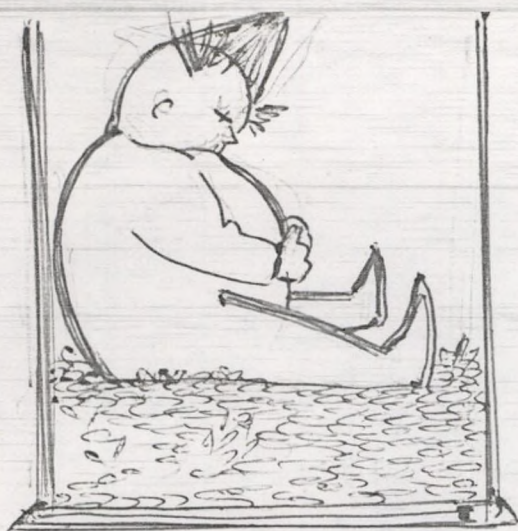


He fitted in
To a nice round tin
Up to his chin.



He lived on rice
And jam and spice
That he thought
was nice

MORE →



He sat and sat
Till his bottom
was flat
And he was fat

He said "I'm stout
I really doubt
I can get out,"



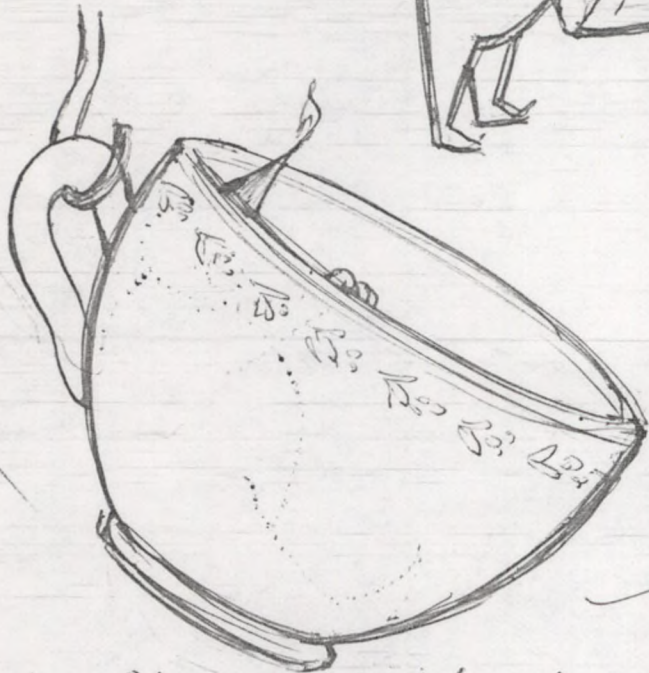
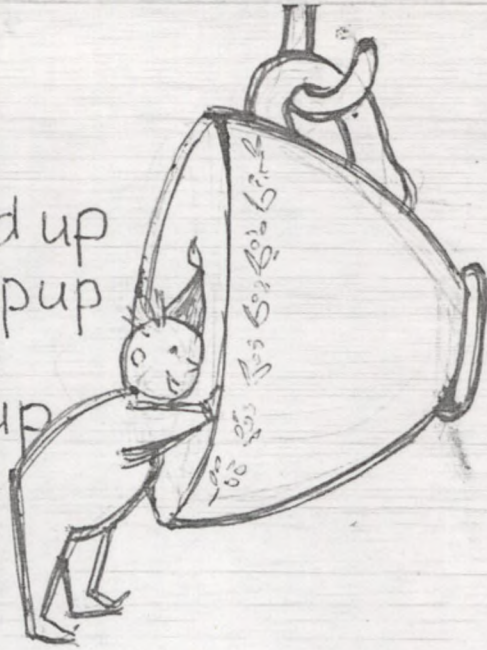
He climbed to the top,
But he couldn't stop—
— He fell down flop!

He said with a sigh,
"Oh my, oh my,
It's much too
high!"



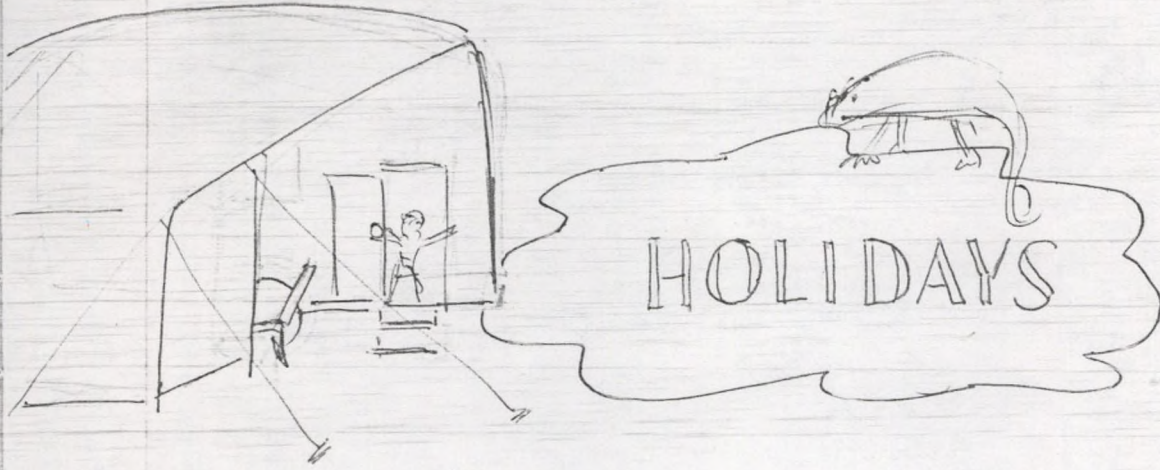
MORE →

But he cheered up
Like a little pup
When he
saw a cup



He fitted in tight
And happy and bright
He swings all night.

THE END



Do you remember Trafalgar?
 The path running down to the beach.
 There were monkeys rustling in the bushes,
 Out of sight, out of reach

Clusters of brittle-skinned lichees
 Smooth-pipped and sweet
 With flesh milky as pearls
 That we bought to eat.



Continued →

HOLIDAYS (Continued)

Mornings of sun and sea
Our feet on fire ~~in the~~ as we ran
Up the path of burning sand
To our Caravan.

Remember the Lagoon?
From its tree-dark edge we heard
Each still afternoon
A lonely rain-bird.

We will go together again
When we are free
And walk on the sands
And run shouting into the sea.



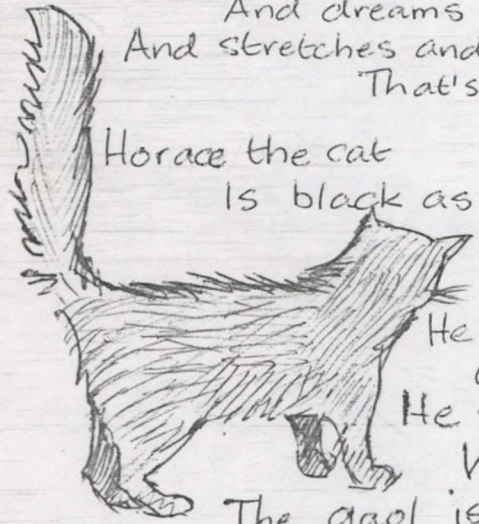


HORACE THE CAT

Horace the cat
Is furry and sleek
He likes to come visiting
All through the week
As light as a
leaf
He covers the
ground



With never a miaou,
with never a sound,
He lies on his back
And dreams of a rat
And stretches and yawns —
That's Horace the Cat



Horace the cat
Is black as the night
His eyes are like ambers,
Gleaming and bright
He cares nothing for keys
Or locks on the gate
He slips through the railings
While we stand and wait
The gaol is his home,
So he stops for a chat,
But he leaves when he chooses,
Does Horace the Cat,

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