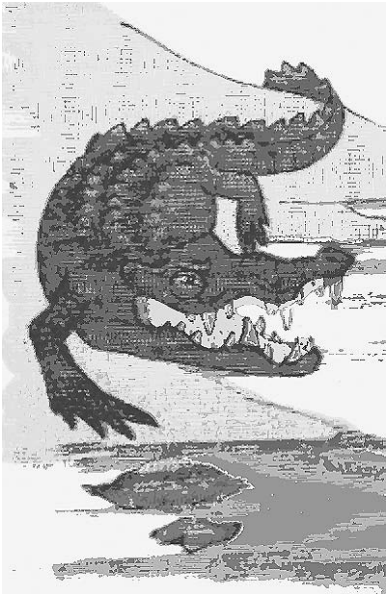


*Ralph Hawkins*

## *Also by Ralph Hawkins:*

- English Literature*, The Many Press, London, 1979  
*Well, You Could Do, Curiously Strong*, London, 1979  
*The Word from the One*, Galloping Dog Press,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1980  
*Soft in the Brains*, Spanner, London, 1981  
*Tell Me No More And Tell Me*, Grosseteste, Leeds & Wirksworth, 1981  
*Birds, Cattle, Fish & Flies*, Lamb, London, 1981  
*At Last Away*, Galloping Dog Press, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1988  
*Within & Without*, Silver Hounds, Laughton, 1992  
*Writ, Active in Airtime*, Colchester, 1993  
*Routes & Abrasions*, Poetical Histories, Cambridge, 1993  
*Flecks*, Oasis Books & Permanent Press, London, 1995  
*Pelt, Active in Airtime*, Brightlingsea, 1998  
*Part One Puškin*, Poetical Histories, Cambridge, 1998  
*The Coiling Dragon / The Scarlet Bird / The White Tiger / A Blue & Misted Shroud*,  
Equipage, Cambridge, 2000  
*Pool*, Writers Forum, London, 2000  
*The Primeval Atom*, Writers Forum, London, 2000  
  
(with Bob Cobbing)  
*G Curled Ribbon*, Writers Forum, London, 2000  
*a split*, Writers Forum, London, 2000  
*A Quonk*, Writers Forum, London, 2001  
*Signatures or the Wasp Under Custard*, Writers Forum, London, 2001  
*Gloria*, Writers Forum, London, 2001  
*The Next Morning*, Writers Forum, London, 2002  
*Everyday Pursuits*, Writers Forum, London, 2002

*The MOON,  
The Chief  
Hairdresser  
(highlights)*

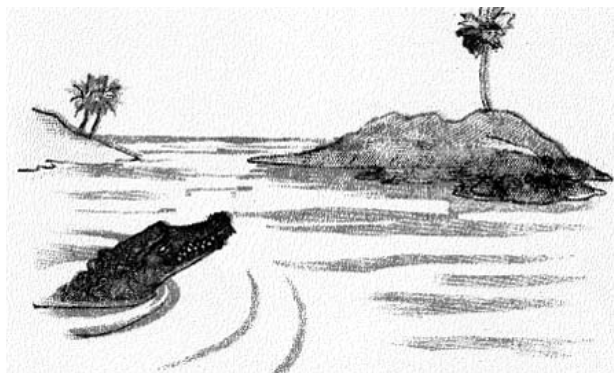


*Ralph Hawkins*

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This book is for

Bob Cobbing 1920-2002  
and  
Douglas Oliver 1937-2000

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*The MOON,  
The Chief Hairdresser  
(highlights)*



## *The Sylph in Stockings*

Airy or Shadowy Ones  
are baffled by phylacteries of dog's droppings  
and a snake's head  
is sovereign against baleful manifestations

Never wander off humming  
with a notion to bathe in lonely mountain pools  
WARNING water-girls hang out there

Carry dog-lites in your pocket  
to shame their nakedness  
their rich sticky-bud honey-stuck nipples

Don't get half arsed strolling at night

Don't stop for a piss behind a tree  
gazing up at Orion's Belt  
because old goat-man will stop by

Carry some sliced tortoise meat as a counter-spell  
keep a prophylactic in your back pocket  
or you may swell up and die

The Shadowy Ones will make friends with dogs  
knowing the wolf-whistle by heart  
they will learn your name and call it on the wind

They have no shame naked as daylight

They will sit around welcoming fires at night  
playing their enticing flutes of random and chaos

## *The Secret of the Sylph*

He opened the ice-box in which he was keeping  
THE SECRET OF THE SYLPH  
when his eye was distracted by a cold compote of plums  
he made an ORION'S BELT of plum stones  
and a garland of literary devices

the sylph always wore a device below her belt

Now if the night sky were hair  
then the stars would be jewels  
and the moon the chief hairdresser

the sky is a net holding the stars for fish to swim through

THE SECRET OF THE SYLPH  
and closed the box

## *The Sylph in Tights*

Trees are their dwelling places

garlands are plaited phylacteries

If you lop, chop or fell a tree enchant counter charms

thorn trees and the wild pear have repelling properties  
as does the ripe honey flower

box is also a powerful apotropaic  
one drop will make you taller than an oak

they will not be able to stop you  
gatecrashing their wild parties

you will stride from one mountain to the next  
you will never grow old

your favourite pastimes will be naked running  
naked wrestling and naked horseback riding

## *The Sylph and the Barbecue*

good and bad omens can be discerned in the fight of birds  
(the Ostrich and the Emu)

study the leftover litter of barbecues  
learn to haruspicate from entrails  
the marinade of wild mountain thyme, red basil and virgin olive oil  
the spread of chicken wings  
the tossed tissue\*

the beadless eye of the vulture one watching for moments of  
weakness and indiscretion

carry dog lites  
droppings  
nutmeg

it is very important to lay the lamb on a flattened branch before  
you cut its throat

DON'T LOOK INTO THE EYES

roast it whole on a spit

study its guts for mantic significance

ENJOY  
Have a few beers

\* I tried this at a home-brew party. There was lots of merrymaking and some  
mild transvestism

omens are shit

## *Rooms*

Who is that with a bulb on his head?  
The sentence for poetry is life not waffle.  
Is not the string of unbroken rain more  
Elegiac than pain or suffering?  
And do we care of suffering  
Putting up sound baffles, artificial disclaimers and orthography.  
You may well scrape by with a 2H pencil  
He could muster a coloured orb  
(Here a hymnic aspect is apparent)  
(I thought of whales, lantern fish and carbuncles).  
How can bulb be bump and waffle food?