Ralph Hawkins
Also by Ralph Hawkins:

*At Last Away*, Galloping Dog Press, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1988  
*Within & Without*, Silver Hounds, Laughton, 1992  
*Writ*, Active in Airtime, Colchester, 1993  
*Pelt*, Active in Airtime, Brightlingsea, 1998  


(with Bob Cobbing)  
The MOON,  
The Chief  
Hairdresser  
(highlights)

Ralph Hawkins
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 plaied 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?