



# He wrote it all down Zealously

*Edward Gorey's Interesting Lists*

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April 9 – December 27

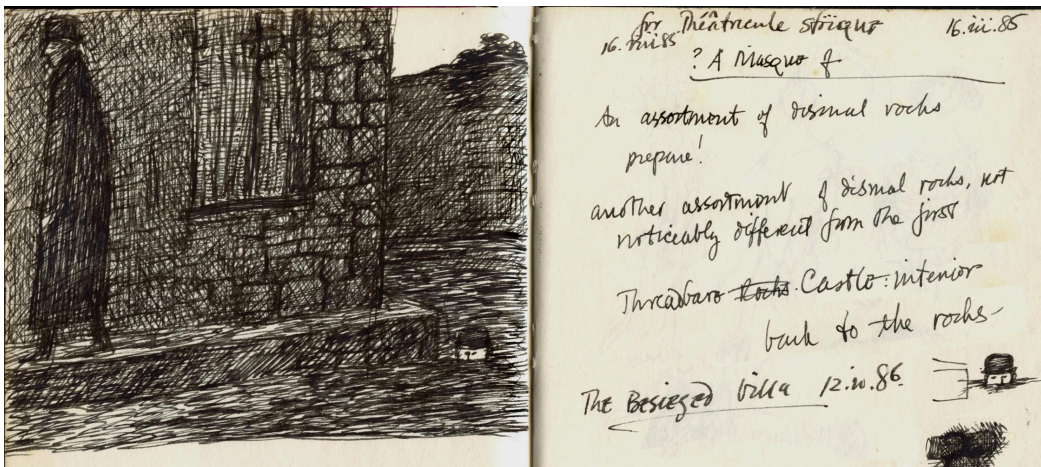
In his lifetime, Edward Gorey published 116 or so self-authored works. Some of them, like *The Doubtful Guest* and *The Gashlycrumb Tinies*, are iconic, some have small cult followings, and some are obscure rarities sought after by collectors. All of these books are an iceberg tip to his vast body of unpublished works spilling across dozens of notebooks, stuffed into file folders or neatly three-hole punched into binders. These unpublished works, never publicly displayed and made available to the House by the Edward Gorey Charitable Trust in New York, make up this year's exhibit *He wrote it all down Zealously*.

The exhibit provides both typed-out finished texts that Gorey never got around to illustrating, as well as spontaneous notebook epiphanies that captured the first flush of an idea—the 10% inspiration before the 90% perspiration that followed. Viewed together, they create a parallel universe of familiar Gorey types: misadventurous adults, doomed children, shaman-like animals, curious elixirs, and mysteriously-animated inanimate objects. These are laced throughout Gorey's dozens of notebooks with various whimsies, false starts, outlines, deadlines, costumes, sets, book lists, film lists, lists of lists, appointments, epiphanies and other marginalia. In short, they are a typical lunch conversation one might have had with Edward Gorey at Jack's Outback (admittedly one-sided and without lunch).



The notebooks that were made available primarily date from the late 1970s to Gorey's death in 2000. While there are a few set designs, costumes, and PBS material, very little of Gorey's commercial work appears in these notebooks. This gives us a particularly focused look at personal projects that intrigued him—with the illustration assignments that paid his bills noticeably absent. Smaller pocket notebooks record Gorey's daily/nightly film-watching habits in New York and Cape Cod (17 notebooks, in fact), as well as cataloging of his music collections, books, cats, pithy quotes, and odes to the nonexistent cure-all Q.R.V.

None of the partial works in this exhibit, *The Black Lobster*, *The Napkin Folders*, *The Horrid Word*, *The Interesting List*, or *The Haunted Blancmange*, evolved into finished books. While everyone likes a good outtake, our main intention is not to just show a lot of *what-ifs*, but to convey Gorey's lifelong love of words, imagery, and their interplay. These unseen works are important in shaping and honing the final works that rose to the surface. They stirred Gorey's vast internal universe, making it hard for him to sleep at night, making him pick up his pen and write them down. *Zealously* is a rare opportunity to view Gorey's ceaseless curiosity at play—but be forewarned: Gorey's work (even in their roughest first draft as they are here) is all about *what isn't said and isn't shown*. For that reason, we'll leave the visitor to interpret and analyze—that is how Gorey's work functions best. In doing so, please keep in mind that we're trespassing into material that Gorey never intended to make public in its current state. Give it your scrutiny but remember that Gorey valued inscrutability above almost anything else.



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