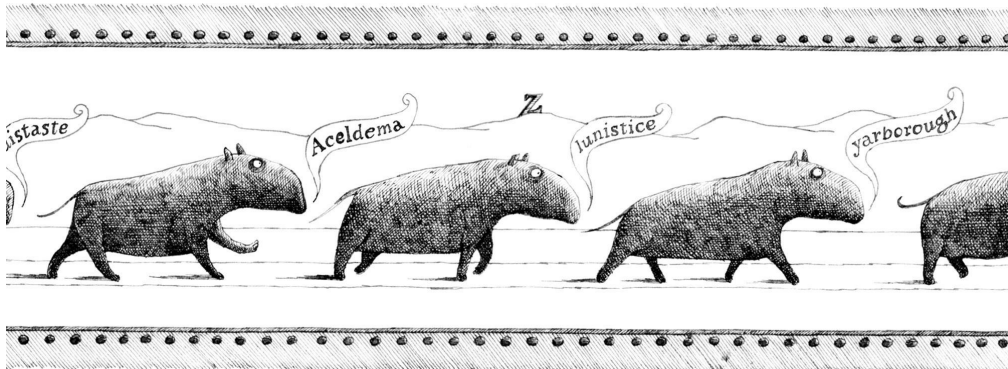


Hippity Wippity

Edward Gorey and the Language of Nonsense

April 11 – December 29

Although widely known as an influential writer/book artist/illustrator who lived and worked on Cape Cod, Edward Gorey's stature as one of the foremost creators of Nonsense literature is not generally recognized. Working off the traditions established by Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, Gorey appropriated the structures and cadences of a 19th century literary genre (yes, Nonsense is a *genre*,) and created a body of work that is uniquely *Gorey*. Incorporating fantastical creatures, secret languages, some questionable rites of passage, and falling objects, **Hippity Wippity** strives to explain the unexplainable and discovers that Nonsense takes its silliness very *very* seriously. Our 2019 exhibit features selections from Gorey's *The Wuggly Ump*, *The Nursery Frieze*, *The Untitled Book*, *The Sinking Spell*, *The Object Lesson*, and *The Raging Tide*, among others, to showcase a collection of Nonsense (both utter and partial) that is both classic in structure and shockingly contemporary.



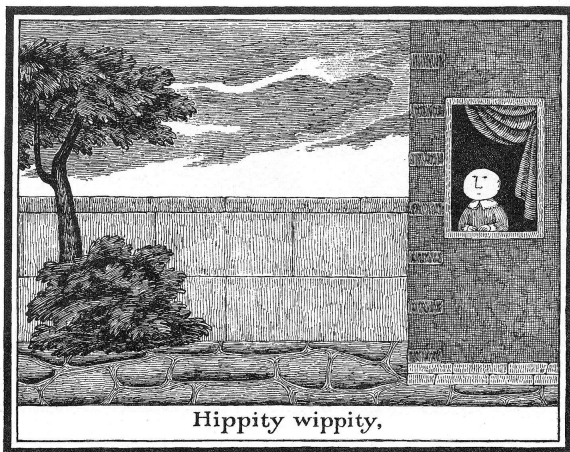
Edward Gorey is recognized as among the most influential practitioners of Nonsense Literature. As a life-long Anglophile, Gorey was profoundly influenced by the 19th Century British *Nonsensistas* Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll. With his Harvard degree in French Literature, Gorey's works also reflect the influence of French Symbolist and later Surrealist writers. Now add an infatuation with silent film (represented in Gorey's static medium-shot

black and white compositions), then add to that an interest in Taoism—the randomness and acceptance of existence—a concept just below the surface of much of his work. To all of this we include his love of dance, Agatha Christie, and wry humor. What you end up with is Nonsense pulled through the twentieth century, a journey of imagery and language that is whimsical, mysterious, and beautiful.



In Nonsense literature, as in so many other things, it is not the destination so much as the journey, it's not the *absence* of sense so much as another way of arriving at a truth. As a *genre* of literature, Nonsense is very challenging because it breaks down the expected narratives and structures, it capitalizes on the fluidity of language, it confuses you with inexplicable character actions and thrusts you, the reader, into active participation—a description in fact that could aptly be used to describe Gorey's entire oeuvre of work.

As Mark Dery remarks in his recent biography: “Gorey’s art is all about what isn’t said and isn’t shown.” **Hippity Wippity** examines the fluid nature of text and story and what Gorey passes along for the reader to consider. It suggests that everything is open to innumerable interpretations, and Gorey, in his Nonsense work, asks you to do just that. Unsettling like a funhouse mirror, his Nonsense upends the normal working of things for a chance to see, if even for just a moment, the chaos that runs beneath everything.



Other Spring 2019 Edward Gorey House Events include the April 14th premier of a new composition based on Gorey's ***The Doubtful Guest*** by the Cape Cod Chamber Orchestra composed by Francis Snyder and conducted by Matt Scinto.

Goreyosity Shop is an exhibit of works by 25 Cape artists created from repurposed materials from Edward Gorey's collections. Salvaged from objects that previously sat inert in Gorey's barn, look for beautiful new works of fabric arts, furniture, collage, jewelry, and sculpture. *Goreyosity Shop* opens at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod on May 22nd, Gala Auction on Saturday, June 1st. Tickets will be available through the Cultural Center of Cape Cod.

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Images shown, and others, are available in high res upon request. Images used should include the credit line **Courtesy of the Edward Gorey Charitable Trust**. For more information, please contact the House.

March 18, 2019