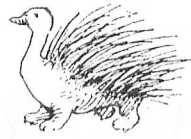
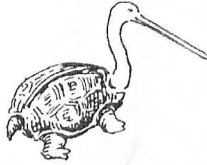
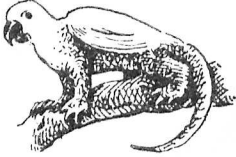


THE SELECT NONSENSE OF
SUKUMAR RAY

Translated by
SUKANTA CHAUDHURI

With an Introduction by
SATYAJIT RAY

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HOTCH-POTCH

A pochard and a porcupine, defying the grammarians,
Combined to form a porcochard, unmindful of their variance.

A stork upon a tortoise grew, exclaiming 'What a hoot!
A very handsome storkoise, now, we jointly constitute.'

A parakeet its features lent unto the lowly lizard,
In puzzle whether flies or fruit would better suit its gizzard.

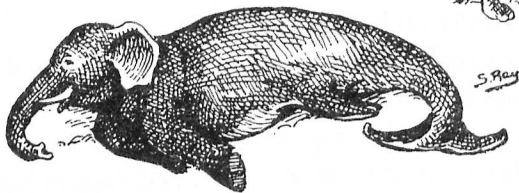
The very goat began to feel impatient of its state :
It leapt upon a scorpion's back, and grew incorporate.

The tall giraffe refused to roam its ancestral savannah,
But tried to don a locust's wings, and glide in graceful manner.

The cow was led to view itself, and staggered from the shock :
Its noble form had been usurped by some designing cock.

And rent by schizophrenia the whalephant we view :
The open seas, the forest trees are tearing it in two.

The lion longed for antlers, and was doomed to dwell in care
Until a stag supplied it with a truly splendid pair.



S. Ray.

SUPER-BEAST

A very weird creature, of no proper breed,
Went grumbling all day out of envy and greed.
He wailed on the meadows and wept by the streams
With sulking demands and exorbitant dreams.
You scarcely could tell why he kept up his whine,
Forever complaining, 'I wish it were mine.'
He wanted a voice like the cuckoo's refrain;
So practised his crooning, but warbled in vain.
He envied the birds as they soared in the sky,
And wished he had wings, and could learn how to fly.
With trunk and with tusk see the elephant tread :
So why should he settle for less on his head?
He viewed the lithe kangaroo bounding along,
And longed for his legs to be lanky and strong.
For the lion's proud mane he would also make suit,
The long scaly tail of the lizard to boot.
He called on all creatures to please all his whims,
And moaned to the world for his maladroit limbs.
When lo and behold! On the fifth of July
He suddenly gained all he'd wanted to try!
But once the excitement was utterly over,
He found that he wasn't quite living in clover.
Should elephants prance in such lolloping manner?
Or kangaroos feed off a stalk of banana?
If Squat-Head cried 'Cuckoo', would people be rapt?
Would an elephant's trunk on that torso be apt?
Supposing they jeered at a jumbo that flew,
Or tweaked his poor ears and guffawed and cried 'Boo'?
Supposing they challenged him, right to his face,
'You nameless old boob, you're a proper disgrace.'

He couldn't reply, for he'd have no defence,

So burst out at last in his anguish intense :

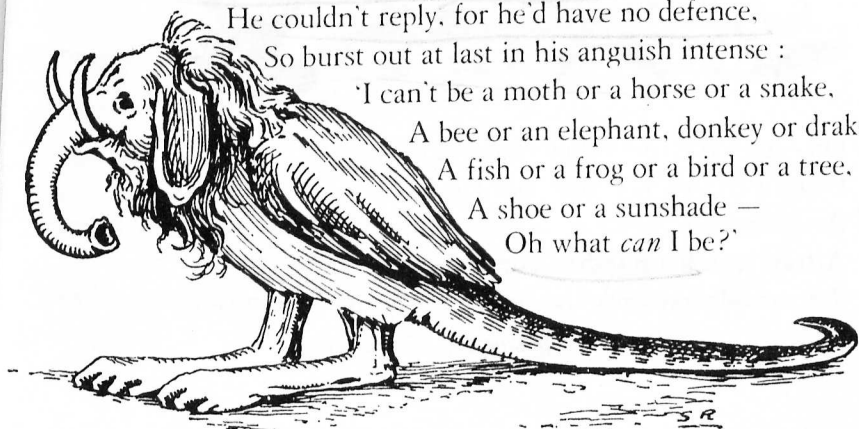
'I can't be a moth or a horse or a snake,

A bee or an elephant, donkey or drake,

A fish or a frog or a bird or a tree,

A shoe or a sunshade —

Oh what *can* I be?'



WAR AND PEACE

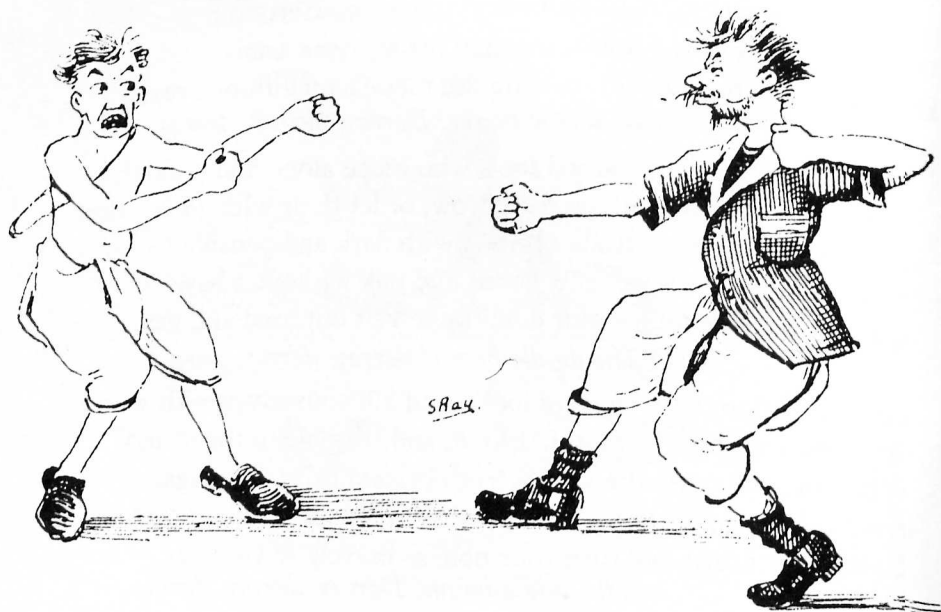
'Hullo there! Is it true you said
The other day that white was red?
And also that last night at three
You snored completely out of key?
And even your cats all screech and howl
Like dreadful toms upon the prow!
And none of you, the neighbours jeered,
Have learnt to grow a proper beard?
So what's all this, you stupid lout?
I'll thrash you till you're inside out.'

'Now if just once I see you glare
Or try my patience if you dare,
Or once again I hear you brawl
Like that for no excuse at all ...'

'I couldn't care two pewter pence :
I know my art of self-defence.'

'So that's your trick? Oh well, all right,
Come'n'fight — just come'n'fight.'

'You don't know what you're in for, mate :
You'll find out soon, but just too late.'



'If Uncle could be here, I know
He'd thrash you to a lump of dough.'

'Hit me, would you? You'd better stop,
Or else I'll call the nearest cop.'

'What's that? Now, now, let's not be rash :
Why don't we talk before we clash?'

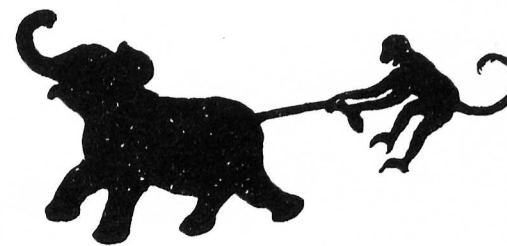
'Of course — the very thing to do!
You know I'd never bully you.'

'Here, have some spice, and make an end.
My dear chap, you're my oldest friend!'

'Shake hands, old man — it's time I went.
Don't take offence where none was meant.'

'Now there's a sport! So that's all right.
It's getting late — good night, good night.'

* * *



Oh aunty I'm all in a fix —
There are beans on the mulberry stalks.
The jumbos wear toadstools as wigs,
And the jackdaws go hatching wee storks.
In Hooghly I saw only recently —
You mustn't repeat what I've said —
Three porkers all dressed very decently,
But none with a cap to his head.

*A more
sentimental
recollection
(peace) in
the translation
(rearranged)
compared
to the
detached
narration
in the
original
(Beyl's
version /
original
text /
Ray's Beroli
version/text)*