# Suzie Bitnerwas afraid of the Drain

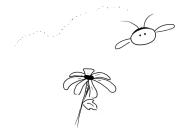


Excerpt!

Poems & Illustrations by

BARBARA R. VANCE





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# The Terrible Thing Cindy about Cindy

The terrible thing about Cindy Is she packs a powerful punch. I learned this yesterday at school When I tried to take her lunch.

I had only meant to tease her, To make her squeal and twist. The last thing I expected Was her calculated fist.

She socked me in the stomach—
She's more than slightly deft—
And sent me stumbling to my knees,
As she snatched her lunch and left.

After that I was quite sorry
I had tussled with a pro—
I wish my friends had told me
That she practiced tae kwon do.

## The Baseball Flew \* Out of the Park

The baseball flew out of the park.
It blasted clean over the fence.
It shot through the leaves
On Ms. McCrae's trees,
And no one has seen the thing hence.

The baseball lit out with a crack. It vanished in two seconds flat. And those there that day Will whisper and say They saw smoke rise up from the bat.



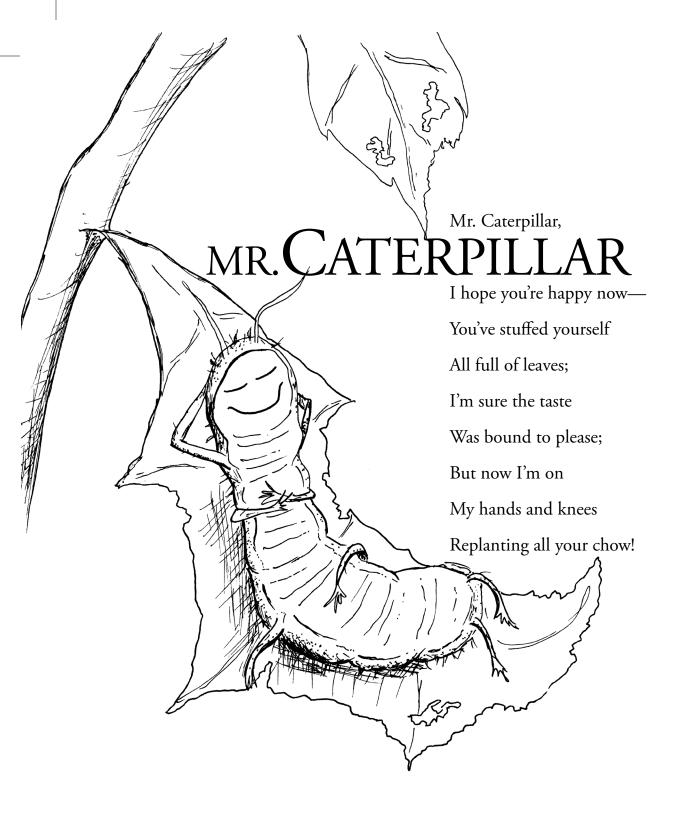






It went down in Little League fame. They say the ball's traveling still. At the rate which it flew, It is now in Peru And will soon be traversing Brazil.

I'm charting the course it will take, Providing its route stays the same. It should be back here At this time next year, And then we can finish our game.



## Your Best

If you always try your best Then you'll never have to wonder About what you could have done If you'd summoned all your thunder.

And if your best
Was not as good
As you hoped it would be,
You still could say,
"I gave today
All that I had in me."

## The Eldest

It's just so hard being the eldest; It's tough always taking the blame; The younger kids get the attention And always go first in a game.

I whine just one time and get yelled at; They do it all day and it's fine; And toys that once dwelled in *my* room, I soon find are no longer mine.

My parents' ideas about justice Are something I simply don't see— I'm battered for one misdemeanor; They commit felonies and go free.

And if they, in fact, get in trouble, I don't have much time to be smug; Somehow they're still seen as the victims, While I am observed as a thug.

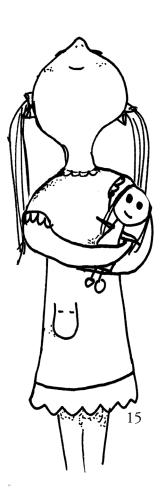


They make faces and it's "simply charming"; They mess up and it's called a "mistake"; If I blunder there'll be no redemption— For the eldest, there's never a break.

It's awful the way they must dawdle And make every errand delayed; It stinks when you must be their sitter, As you know that you'll never get paid.

They cry at the drop of a hat, An obnoxiously loud sort of noise, Which seems to exclusively stop When they're offered assortments of toys.

The younger ones' lives are just perfect; They wake up each day with such glee; The tough role is being the eldest— Would you like to trade places with me?



## **GOOD THINGS**

I once heard an old man say, Shaping vases out of clay Into subtle forms sublime,

### ( Listen, son, good things take time. ) >

All my life I've thought of this When a task was lacking bliss, When the work seemed awfully tough And I thought I'd had enough.

So I'd give a little more To what sometimes seemed a chore; And, you know, without a doubt, Good things always came about.



## I Ate a Chili Pepper

I ate a chili pepper On a lunch-time dare; Sandy said I'd burn my mouth, But I didn't care.

I ate that chili pepper—

Left not a seed to waste— And won that truly silly bet, But lost my sense of taste. 39

## Sick

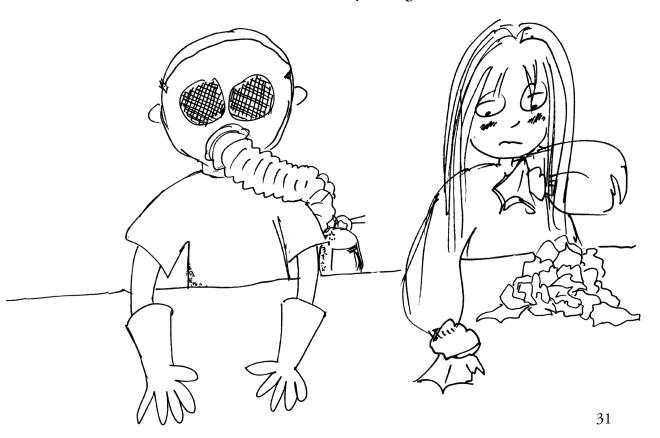
Don't breathe next to me! You might get me sick. Your nose is so red That it looks like a brick.

Your eyes are all puffy; You're sneezing a lot. I'm leaving the room; I don't want what you've got.

Don't cough when I'm here— You might pass it on. For goodness sakes, Cover your mouth when you yawn!

And don't touch my food, Lest your cooties adhere, Thus making me sick For the rest of the year. The last thing I need Is a cold or a flu, And so I am thinking I'll bid you adieu.

I'm much better off Wherever you're not— Don't breathe next to me; I don't want what you've got!



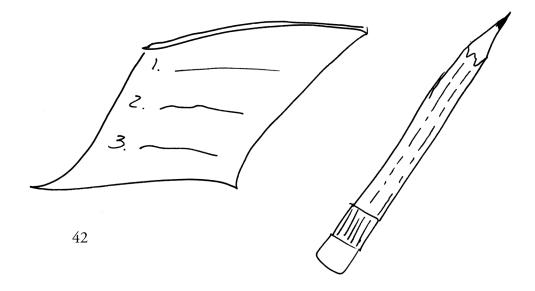
## Surprise

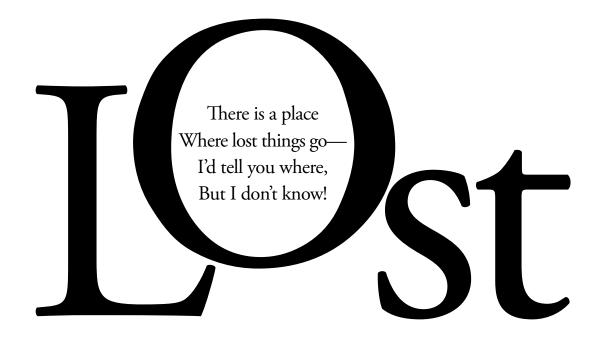
They rolled their eyes and groaned And quickly grabbed their books, Flipping through the pages For a few last, fleeting looks.

They grumbled and they cringed, And all gave evil eyes; They whispered to their neighbors; They filled the room with sighs.

"I knew that this would happen" Could be heard throughout the room; And they sharpened up their pencils, As they all foresaw their doom.

They squawked and moaned and sniveled— They made every sound there is— The day their teacher told them They'd be having a pop quiz.





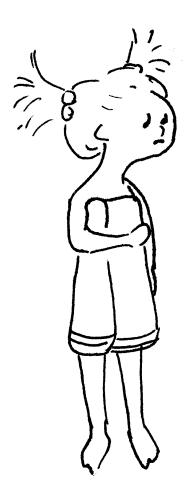
# Suzie Bitner was afraid of the Drain

Suzie Bitner was afraid of the drain, and so she never showered, And consequently smelled like milk that was left too long—and soured. "I simply won't go near the tub," she pinched her face and cried. "The moment I turn the water on, it will suck me down inside!"

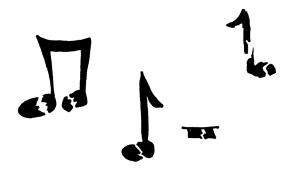
Her mother pleaded with her, but from bathing she abstained; Her father, he implored her, but her stubbornness remained. And so it came to pass that she grew dirtier by the day. And all her friends stopped calling or coming by to play.

Suzie grew quite lonely in her slimy, smelly state And finally thought her choice, she'd re-evaluate. "Okay, okay, I'll take a bath!" she sniffed through muddy tears; And, bar of soap in shaking hand, she went to face her fears. But the water felt so nice to her when steaming, piping hot That all her dismal drainage dread, Suzie then forgot; And never ever more was scared to climb into the tub And give her little body a flawless, thorough scrub.

Now she washes till her skin has a pinkish sort of glow. And everybody says that she's the cleanest girl they know.



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## My Sister Plays Piano

My sister plays piano; She's played it for three years. I hope she plans on quitting, And so do both my ears.

## White Noise

In all the world There's nothing like The sound of falling snow—

The only noise I've ever known That makes the clocks move slow;

The only sound
That sweeps away
The din of city streets;

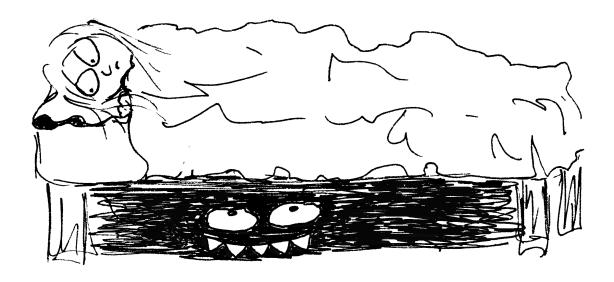
And wraps around, In soft embrace, 'Most everyone it meets;

A sound that's not A sound at all— A quiet, soft and dear,

That comforts all The sleepy souls Who sit, and watch, and hear. There's something down beneath my bed;
What it is, I'm not quite sure.
But it's only just arrived there;
I'd have noticed it before.
My mother says it's nothing,
And my father shakes his head.
I guess they don't believe in
The thing beneath my bed.

I am sure that it is waiting
Till I turn out the last light
And settle on my pillows
For a very long, dark night.
And when I'm softly drowsing
And my mind is fast asleep,
Out from underneath my bed
That something there will creep.

# Something's there



In the morning they'll be sorry
When they find my bunk empty;
They'll know they should have listened—
I was speaking truthfully.
And they'll forever mourn the day
That they simply didn't care
And will always look under the

And will always look under their bed, For a something might be there.

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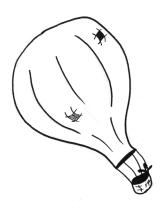
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### **Book Information**

### **Price & Availability**

- \$17.95 list price
- Available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Baker and Taylor, and www.suziebitner.com
- Free dictionary made just for Suzie accompanies all orders from the Paypal store at SuzieBitner.com

#### **Book Construction**

- Easy-to-hold book size: 8.75" x 6.75" x 1"
- Hardcover
- Smythe-sewn binding for maximum durability and ease of laying open on the lap
- Thick, bright paper
- Cover printed on actual book as well as on dust jacket
- 192 pages

#### **Book Highlights**

- Creative typography shows children how words can be art
- Poems incorporate challenging words that improve vocabulary
- Subject matter combines humor and whimsy
- Addresses real-life issues like sharing, as well as fantastic subjects like mice on roller skates
- Great for ages 5-10, but appreciated by all ages
- Over 100 fun illustrations that enhance the poems
- Indexes by title and first line

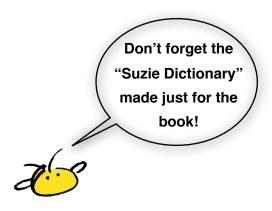


### **About the Author**

Barbara Vance is a published poet and teaches writing at the University of Texas at Dallas. She is the non-fiction editor of the literary magazine, Sojourn, and was a guest speaker at the 2009 Texas Library Association conference. She earned her MA in English from Southern Methodist University in 2005.

"I like to find the humor in things," she says about her work. "If it makes the reader laugh and feel a little better about the world, I'm happy." Much of Suzie Bitner Was Afraid of the Drain is autobiographical: "I really had some unusual pets, got stuck climbing trees, and imagined that the food in the pantry came to life when I wasn't looking. Those were the things that made childhood magical."

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