lionel johnson was a better christian;  
ernest dowson had better taste in women.  
on his tour of germany he found  
the attire of the storm troopers  
more conducive to the public morals  
than marlene dietrich's stockings.  
the list of things by which he currently  
feels threatened ranges from roller skates  
to toga parties.

he continues to contribute,  
with conspicuously ineluctable success,  
to the decay of language.

ANGLO-FRENCH INGENUITY

I intend to concoct a cereal out of mushrooms  
and to advertise it as "Breakfast of  
Champignons."

FATHER OF LIES

i'm taking my daughter to get a passport  
and i ask her if it will be a hassle  
should she be late getting back to school.

"oh no," she says, "the last time i was late  
i just said that there'd been an accident  
at a corner where i was crossing the street  
and that i'd had to make a police report."

"how in the world did you think of that?"  
i ask her.

"oh, i heard one of the mothers  
at the pre-school say that once,  
so i knew it would work."

now i know my daughter is not a pathological liar,  
and i know she doesn't even like to miss school.  
i know that she takes a little more after her mother  
than after me in regard to fibs.  
i'll lie if i have to,  
but her mother positively enjoys  
putting people on.
still, i feel as if i should probably offer some sort of fatherly moral counsel.

until a conversation pops into my head that i once had with a wise and experienced friend of mine.
i had said something about saving my lies for important situations,
and he just shook his head and replied,
in the manner of sidney greenstreet in the big sleep "gerry, it is not a talent you can turn on and off at will. lie every chance you get: the more facility you develop, the more convincing you'll be when the really big lie is finally called for."
of course he was right.
i didn't follow his advice and, as just one example of honest not being the best policy, i once had my car insurance cancelled when i admitted living in actuarial sin.

so now i shut my mouth and concentrate on getting my daughter back to school on time.

-- Gerald Locklin
Long Beach CA

HOTEL FELIX

the Hotel Felix near Beverly and Vermont had many qualities including an old man in room 101 who never left his bed and always sat straight upright in his underwear and he claimed he was the F.B.I. and he arrested me almost every night we drank cheap wine together.

but Big Benny was best: the sound of him -- about once a week -- was known to all of us: he'd fall down the long stairway -- 32 steps -- slowly and with high dramatics (he had an egg-shaped head and very long legs) and every time with his last roll he'd kick out his feet and break the glass in the glass doorway -- the glass which proclaimed:

HOTEL FELIX
REASONABLE RATES