

# SONGS OF THE POGGO



by  
**WALT  
KELLY**  
with  
**NORMAN  
MONATH**

*18 Songs*  
from the book  
SUNG BY  
**WALT KELLY**  
**FIA KARIN**  
**MIKE STEWART**  
**BOB MILLER**  
ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS  
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF  
**JIMMY CARROLL**



# SONGS OF THE POGO

The songs on this record mark the musical debut of America's foremost possum. There are 18 of them (plus bonus tracks), suitable for as many occasions—birthdays, clandestine trysts, medical checkups, elevator rides, evenings at the public library, noons when the kettle boils over, music-to-pay-last-year's-bills-by, etc. The songs range in mood from the haunting *Whence That Wince?* to the rousing *Go Go Pogo* and the world-weary *Parsnoops*. Originally scored for lute, harp, comb-with-tissue-paper, and nightingale, they are here presented in brilliant orchestral arrangements. The vocal parts are performed *con espressione* by an almost uncompromising (they did let Walt Kelly sing three of the songs) group of dedicated Pogo Singers.

1. GO-GO POGO
2. WHENCE THAT WINCE?
3. NORTHERN LIGHTS
4. SLOPOSITION
5. A SONG NOT FOR NOW
6. TWIRL, TWIRL
7. PARSNOOPS
8. THE KEEN AND THE QUING
9. MAN'S BEST FRIEND
10. DON'T SUGAR ME
11. WHITHER THE STARLING
12. WILLOW THE WASP
13. TRULY TRUE
14. MANY HARRY RETURNS
15. POTLUCKY
16. THE HAZY YON
17. EVIDENCE
18. LINES UPON A TRANQUIL BROW
  - bonus tracks:
  - 19. NO
  - 20. CAN'T
  - 21. TOMORROW (Rehearsal)
  - 22. NO (Rehearsal)
  - 23. WALT SINGING
  - 24. A WORD TO THE FORE



# SONGS OF THE POOGO





## Walt, Norman and Me by Geoff Merritt

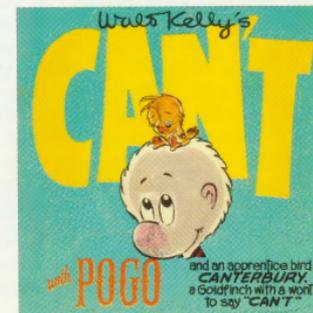
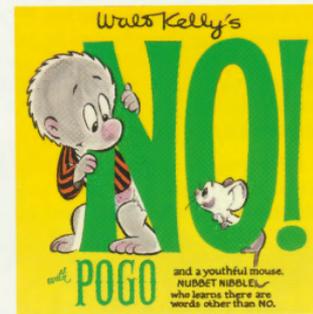
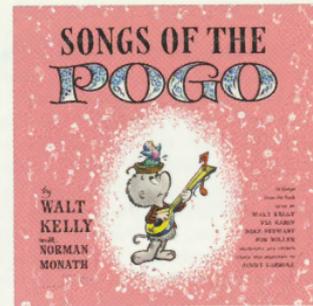
Many of my favorite things today were influenced by the stuff my mother and father had around the house when I was growing up: the Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Band, Charlie Chaplin, archy and mehitabel, Jules Feiffer, Italian food and, of course, Walt Kelly's Pogo. Over the course of my years living at home I managed to take (and make my own) most of these treasures (and Italian food is still my favorite). Included in the loot were well worn copies of *Pogo*, *I Go Pogo*, and *The Pogo Party*. When I finally had money of my own (and already being an obsessive collector of all sorts of things) I knew I had to have everything Pogo.

I soon learned of the vast array of Pogo items in the world -- not just my treasured books but figures, cups, comic books, buttons, posters, and even a mobile. This Pogo guy was very special. Over the years I have met, traded with and corresponded with Pogo fans around the world. What started as a collection of three dog-eared books has turned into a room full of wonderful things. One of those things is a scratchy copy of *Songs of the Pogo*, a great collection of Walt Kelly songs put to music by Norman Monath. This CD compiles that record (from 1956), two subsequent 7" singles (from 1969), some undated rehearsals and a spoken word bit (the preface from *The Pogo Papers* as read by Walt Kelly).

Pogo is as important today as he was when he first introduced the Okefenokee Swamp and all of his friends to us in the comics pages. In the same way that Chauncey Gardner (the main character in *Being There* played by Peter Sellers) was hailed as a genius for solving difficult problems with simple solutions, Pogo can be hailed as a visionary who sees through the muck and chaos, and then fixes the problem so he can go sit under a tree. Pogo's "simple" outlook on life is as valid today (if not more so) as it was decades ago. I think (and hope) we can all learn a few lessons from him; (our political leaders might also do well to revisit some of the Pogo strips).

When Ric and I first decided to work on re-releasing *Songs of the Pogo* our initial thought was "How are we ever going to get this done?" As it turned out, it was as easy as making a phone call. Once we took the first step the rest started to fall into place. Over the last few months I have been amazed at the number of people who have contacted me offering to write liner notes, send scans of Pogo items from their collections (or send the actual items for me to look at) or just to say "Thanks for doing this."

I hope you will read through these liner notes, listen to the record, and enjoy what many of us have loved for years. If you like what you read and hear, search out some of the Pogo books at your local bookstore. You will be glad you did. I am proud to have been able to work on this project with everyone involved and to be able finally to re-release this great work by Walt Kelly and Norman Monath. Thanks everyone - for everything.



## A Short Biography Of Walt Kelly by R.C. Harvey

Born August 25, 1913, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the son of Walter Crawford Kelly, a theatrical scene painter, and Genevieve MacAnnula, Walter Crawford Kelly, Jr., squandered only two years of his infancy in the City of Brotherly Love and then moved with his parents to Bridgeport, Connecticut, where he eventually enrolled in Warren Harding High School, publishing cartoons in the school newspaper and yearbook as well as in the *Bridgeport Post*, for which he also reported school news and sports. Graduating in 1930, he worked in a women's garment factory for three years and then joined the *Post* as a reporter. While there, he also produced his first regularly printed comic strip, an illustrated life of the city's most famous hometown boy, P.T. Barnum. It was an assignment that threatened to be prolonged into a life's work, Kelly said: "Every time the writer got Barnum to the death bed, old P.T. would get a flash and his entire life would [start to] pass again before his eyes" for another six-month run of the strip.

After a year or so of this, Kelly left the paper and worked for a short time as a clerk and inspector for the Department of Public Welfare and then as a clerk in an art store. But he was proudest of his experiences as a working newspaperman, and throughout his life, his closest friends were journalists.

In 1935, Kelly left Bridgeport to try freelancing his art in New York City, where, he said, he "starved quietly" but did some drawing for the embryonic comic book industry. Late in the year, he moved to Los Angeles because his inamorata in Bridgeport had been transferred there. On January 6, 1936, Kelly joined the growing staff at Walt Disney Studios, working first in the story department, then in animation, on such features as *Fantasia*, *Dumbo*, *Pinocchio*, and *The Reluctant Dragon*. In September 1937, he married Helen Delacy, his Bridgeport sweetheart; they had three children.

Although Kelly's later work bore none of the earmarks of the Disney style, he doubtless acquired much technical skill under the rigorous Disney training program. But he

was not happy in the assembly-line work of animated cartooning, and so he seized the opportunity to leave that was afforded by the notorious labor dispute at the Studio in the spring of 1941.

The Kellys returned to Connecticut, settling in Darien, from which Walt made frequent forays into New York City to find work, often in comic books produced by Dell. By late 1942, he had landed a regular assignment, drawing for Oskar Lebeck's *Animal Comics*, the first issue of which carried Kelly's feature about a voracious alligator named Albert and some other animals in a southern swamp. In the cast were an opossum named Pogo (who played, Kelly said, "a sort of Jeff to Albert's Mutt") and a black kid named Bumbazine (a kind of Christopher Robin for the menagerie). Bumbazine soon disappeared, however, because, as Kelly put it, "being human, he was not as believable as the animals."

Kelly worked in comic books for most of the decade, creating material for several Dell titles, and he illustrated some children's books for Julian Messner, Inc., using the pseudonym Tony Maclay. During World War II, he was exempt from active military service because of childhood rheumatic fever, but as a civilian, he illustrated dictionaries and language guidebooks for the Foreign Language Unit of the Army Service Forces.

In June 1948, Kelly was hired as art director for the *New York Star*, a short-lived revival of Ralph Ingersoll's crusading liberal journalistic experiment, *PM*. During the *Star's* meteoric seven-month run, Kelly produced editorial cartoons (in which he represented Thomas E. Dewey as a mechanical man in the Presidential race against Harry Truman) and all the other art in the paper, including, from October 4 on, a daily comic strip. For the strip, he resurrected the swampland characters he'd created for *Animal Comics*, but now Pogo had the star billing. This incarnation of the feature lasted only until January 28, 1949, when the *Star* folded. During the next months, Kelly offered Pogo to several syndicates before Post-Hall decided to take a chance on "a talking animal strip." The national distribution of Pogo started on May 16, 1949.

To the vaudevillian humor of the strip, Kelly eventually added political as well as social satire, sharpening the edge of his barbs with caricature: his animals' features were plastic and often rearranged themselves to resemble personages high in government. One consequence of Kelly's satirical technique was that words and pictures were perfectly, inseparably, wedded, the very emblem of excellence in the art of the comic strip: neither meant much when taken by itself, but when blended, the verbal and the visual achieved allegorical impact and a powerful satiric thrust, high art indeed.

In the last years of Kelly's stewardship of the feature, his political satire seemed sometimes a little strained, but his graphics matured into a dazzling display of decorative technique, and he reached for new allegorical heights in a curious long sequence set outside the swamp in "Pandemonia," a venue of the Australian outback that Kelly populated with prehistoric characters and features reminiscent of the work of T. S. Sullivant, an early 20th century cartoonist whose work he fiercely admired.

Kelly divorced his first wife in 1951, and later the same year, he married Stephanie Waggon, with whom he had three children. She died of cancer in late 1969, and by then Kelly's diabetes and heart condition were creating fatal complications. He was virtually an invalid the last two years of his life; a gangrenous leg was amputated in October 1972, but he continued to produce the strip, even from a hospital room, and worked on an animated cartoon of his creation. He married his animation assistant Selby Daley (Margaret Selby) in 1971, and she supervised the production of the strip following Kelly's death in Hollywood on October 18, 1973, discontinuing the feature on July 20, 1975, after paying all the medical bills. It was hard enough to "be Kelly," she said at the time, but it was impossible with the steadily shrinking size of comic strips. At its best, Pogo was a masterpiece of comic strip art, an Aesopian tour de force -- humor at each of two levels, one vaudevillian, the other satirical -- and it opened to a greater extent than ever the possibilities for political and social satire in the medium of the newspaper comic strip.





### A Shorter Biography Of Norman Monath by Ric Menck

During his long and illustrious career Norman Monath has, among other things, founded Cornerstone Library, a book-publishing company that became a highly profitable division of Simon & Schuster, Inc, invented a best-selling word game, authored best-selling books on how to play piano and guitar, and written and published many popular songs.

His first exposure to music came during his childhood through his neighbors, who had a record player and one record album -- Cesar Franck's *D Minor Symphony* -- which they played over and over again. At first he found the music revolting. However, after a few months he began to enjoy the symphony and became interested in classical music. The same neighbors had a copy of the George Gershwin songbook, and this made him want to learn the piano.

After school he spent a great deal of time at the renowned Brill Building in New York City, which housed a music publishing division, and it was there that he was befriended by the successful songwriter Mack David, who asked Norman if he would be interested in writing songs with his kid brother, Hal. He and Hal eventually ended up writing together, and remain best of friends to this day.

Norman met Pogo creator Walt Kelly while working at Simon & Schuster. In his book *Know What You Want And Get It* he writes:

*Walt Kelly happened to visit his editor at Simon & Schuster, and as usual, the company rolled out the red carpet for him. His Pogo cartoon strip was widely syndicated and his books were national best sellers. I used to wish I could meet him, but that didn't seem likely given my menial position within the firm. However, on this visit Walt had a question about music that his editor was unable to answer. So his editor posed the question to me over the phone (I used to supplement my income in those days by writing songs for Golden Records, the music division of Simon & Schuster, and so people in the office thought I knew something about music.) Walt's question related to doing some musical research and I quickly told his editor what resources were available. Then I hung up the phone.*

Realizing he had a chance to make his dream of meeting Walt Kelly come true, Norman picked up the phone and called the editor back. He remembers, "With some trepidation I called Kelly's editor back and volunteered to

do the research for Mr. Kelly if he so desired. The result was that Walt Kelly invited me for a drink at his home, which began a relationship that led to our collaboration on a book and album, each entitled *Songs Of The Pogo*."

Via e-mail from his home in Palm Beach, Florida, Norman recounts their working method:

*I used to meet Walt at his townhouse on East 89th Street at 9:00pm and work on the songs with him until 10:30. The way I composed was with Walt at my side telling me what characters, etc. he had in mind. Then we would go to Bleak's -- a bar/diner near the Herald Tribune and New York Times buildings, or Costello's on 3rd, where we would meet Walt's friends, people like Tom Brophy (whose brother Edward used to play an Irish cop in the movies) and John Lardner, son of Ring. Walt kept big rolls of cash in his pockets and always paid for everybody. We'd drink until about 1:00am, at which time we would all go back to Walt's where I would play the song, or songs, we'd written that day. I used to get home at about 5:00am, and my wife would wake me at about 7:00 so that I could get to work at Simon & Schuster. The funny thing is, I don't ever recall feeling tired.*

When asked about the *Songs Of The Pogo* recording sessions, Norman recalls:

*Mitch Miller worked for Golden Records. He was the one who got Jimmy Carroll to make the orchestral arrangements for the album, although it was Mitch who actually led the orchestra. The recording was done in the evening and there were two spontaneous events: Mitch asked Walt to sing "Go Go Pogo" instead of one of the male singers, and I was asked to sing Slopposition but was afraid to. (They liked my singing on the demo of the song.)*

While reminiscing about the sessions something else pops into Norman's memory:

*Walt picked Fia Karin to do the singing, and asked me my opinion. Since I felt that Walt was giving me a break considering the fact that I hadn't done much songwriting at that time, I did not think it appropriate for me to stand in the way of Fia, whom I didn't know. When we arrived at the studio for the recording Mitch said that Walt and I blew it. Fia had never done any recording before, and Mitch said that if we would have allowed him to select the singer, he could have guaranteed us to be high up in the Hit Parade. In fact he said that we probably would find it hard to get any disc jockey to even play the record. Somehow I hope that Walt and I will be rewarded for giving Fia a chance.*

Today Norman still feels deeply emotional about *Songs Of The Pogo*. "Working with Walt was one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life," he says, and thanks to their amazing efforts we now have this incredible music to enjoy.

## "Three Little Maids: Walt Kelly and the Nonsense Tradition" by Mark Burstein

One often hears Walt Kelly's praises deservedly sung to the skies for his work as a humorist, illustrator, and satirist. He is also the creator of one of the two perfectly realized *mise-en-scènes* of the American Comic Strip -- the Okefenokee Swamp inhabited by Pogo Possum and friends. The other, of course, is the equally sublime Coconino County of George Herrimann's "Krazy Kat." However, less is heard about his talent as a "nonsense" poet, where he ranks among the greatest practitioners of that art.

### I: The Tradition of Nonsense

But whosoever without the madness of the Muses comes to knock at the doors of poesy, from the conceit that haply by forced art he will become an efficient poet, departs with blasted hopes and his poetry, the poetry of sense, fades into obscurity before the poetry of madness.

- Plato, *Phaedrus*

There are two schools which help to form the background for Kelly's work -- first, the playful *absurdist*s, which would include certain works of Shakespeare and Flaubert and the collected *oeuvre* of Jarry, Kafka, Ionesco, Beckett, Pinter, Gertrude Stein, William Burroughs, and Tom Stoppard. Second, there is also the *modernists'* language-play, of neologisms and making up words which "sound" like English -- Edward Lear, W. S. Gilbert, Ezra Pound, Mallarmé (in French), Mervyn Peake, John Lennon (*In His Own Write, A Spaniard in the Works*), even the philosopher Alan Watts (*Nonsense*) are a few of the authors who have written poetry in this genre. A few examples follow.

But stay; - O spite!  
But mark; - poor knight,  
What dreadful dole is here?  
Eyes, do you see?  
How can it be?  
O dainty duck! O dear!

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594)

Edward Lear, perhaps the first name one thinks of when discussing nonsense poems, had an extended output which included limericks, short poems, and long epics

often with intertwining characters:

And the Golden Grouse came there,  
And the Pobble who had no toes, -  
And the small Olympian bear, -  
And the Dong with a luminous nose.  
And the Blue Baboon, who played the flute, -  
And the Orient Calf from the land of Tute, -  
And the Attery Squash, and the Bisky Bat, -  
All came and built on the lovely Hat  
Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.

(1875)

Carolyn Wells's *A Nonsense Anthology* (1902) and *A Whimsy Anthology* (1906) collected some of the best of the genre. Witness these Kellyesque gems:

Oh weak Might Be!  
Oh, May, Might, Could, Would, Should!  
How powerless ye  
For evil or good!  
In every sense  
Your moods I cheerless call,  
Whate'er your tense,  
Ye are imperfect, all!  
Ye have deceived the trust I've shown  
In ye!  
Away! The mighty Must alone  
Shall be!

- W. S. Gilbert (of Gilbert & Sullivan fame)

When a twiner a twisting will twist him a twist  
For the twining his twist he three twines doth entwist  
But if one of those twines of the twist do untwist,  
The twine that untwisteth, untwisteth the twist  
Untwirling the twine that untwisteth between,  
He twists with his twister the two in a twine;  
Then twice having twisted the twines of the twine,  
He twisteth the twines he had twisted in vain.

- Dr. Wallis

Although these are but few examples from the plethora of poems and poets, we will be concerned here with a particular trio -- three writers whose creative careers span over a century and who all (in a nonsensical sort of way) happen to have as patronymics the first names of Irish schoolgirls: Carroll, Joyce, and Kelly.

### II: Three Little Maids

Their works are best read aloud. They appeal to the "other" mind (the "right brain" in current jargon) -- the one rich in metaphor and myth: the "collective unconscious," deeply intuitive, childlike, spontaneous, and humorous.

"Meanings are dislocated, hidden in unexpected places, multiplied and split, given over to ambiguity, plurality, and uncertainty..."

- Margot Norris

Elusive, ambiguous, undefinable, but clearly present. "However, somebody killed something, that's clear at any rate" was Alice's comment on the "Jabberwocky." To explain their workings would be to mitigate their power.

"These are but wild and whirling words, my lord"

- *Hamlet*

But there are strong links between these three creative "mad poets," and it is time to examine them. Although, as to whether it's the Muse come knocking at the door of poesy, or the Sailorman from Turkestan...

### Carroll

When Lewis Carroll committed the first stanza of "Jabberwocky" to paper in 1855, he little realized the Pandora's box he was opening. Freeing language from its prison of accepted words, he was the first to touch that part of the mind that had been hidden away in nurseries and dreams and never mentioned in polite society. What Freud called the "royal road to the subconscious" had been found. Unfortunately, although Carroll's writing career later encompassed the *Alice* books and the nonsense epic "The Hunting of the Snark," this particular modernist kind of nonsense (neologisms, half-English words) found its expression in only this one poem. Some of the words, such as "chortle," have even become proper English.

His greatest contribution to the field was the invention of the "portmanteau," a word combining elements of two or more words. A "portmanteau" is a kind of suitcase. Humpty Dumpty explained that "slithy," for example, was "lithe and slimy." Walt Kelly was brilliant at them -- "ignoromnibus" and "phenonemonster" spring to mind.

Although "Jabberwocky" is arguably the most well-known nonsense poem in English, there are many works of his at the tip of many people's tongues -- "The Walrus and the Carpenter," "Beautiful Soup," and the "Lobster Quadrille." Others are relatively unknown, having been buried in his less popular works like *Sylvie and Bruno* and *Phantasmagoria*. Some examples:

Little Birds are feeding  
Justices with jam,  
Rich in Frizzled ham:  
Rich, I say, in oysters  
Haunting shady cloisters-  
That is what I am.

I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls,  
And each damp thing that creeps and crawls  
Went wobble-wobble on the walls.  
Faint odours of departed cheese,  
Blown on the dank, unwholesome breeze  
Awoke the never-ending sneeze.

Walt Kelly was very fond of Carroll,<sup>1</sup> by the way, and illustrated him often. The dedication of *The Pogo Stepmother Goose* reads, "For Lewis Carroll and the Children." *Songs of the Pogo* contains a setting of Carroll's "Evidence." In the Afterword to *The Pogo Stepmother Goose*, Kelly says that in the *Alice* books Lewis Carroll "reported on the frailties of the human race, disguising most of his material as zoological research," a quote equally applicable to Walt Kelly himself.

### Joyce

It is *Ulysses* that most people think of when the name of James Joyce is invoked, and certainly there are marvelously executed pieces of nonsense writing in it (the end of the "Oxen of the Sun" episode and the "Circe" chapter). It is his *Finnegans Wake* that is more relevant here, however. Itself based on an Irish nonsense ballad "Finnegan's Wake," Joyce molded the ballad, and the voluminous contents of his hypereducated mind, into a feverishly overgrown tropical jungle of words written in a language loosely based on English. Perceived initially as *glossolalia* ("talking in tongues"), it is a linguistic *tour-de-force* that attempts to render the world of dreams and nightmares into literature through radical linguistics. Meanings are found in the phonetic, morphological,

etymological, rhythmic resemblance to words in "proper English" and dozens of other languages. An (apocryphal?) tale has Joyce being asked, "Why do you need to make up words when English has so many of them?," to which he replied, "Ah, yes, but they're the wrong ones, you see." Here is an example of the style in which the 700 pages of the "novel" are written:

...and the gulls laughing lime on his natural **skunk**, blushing like Pat's **pig**, begob. He's not too timid well ashamed to carry out onaglibtgrabakelly in his **showman's** sinister the testymonials he gave his twenty annis orf, showing the three white feathers, as a home cured emigrant in Paddyouare far below on our sealevel. Bearer may leave the **church**, signed, Figura **Porca**, Lictor Magnaffica. [emphases added]

*Finnegans Wake* can be read in many ways, on many levels. One (Joyce's favorite) is pure musical "sound," without any regard for meaning. Second is for references. The above passage, for example, has references to bird droppings, a coin-making machine, the heraldic badge of the Prince of Wales, the Irish question, Padua, Walter Scott, and a very obscene pun in Latin among a host of others. At the third level, something magical happens -- a synergy which interacts the twin minds of the reader with those subliminal cues provided by the text.

The immanence of a revelation that is not yet produced is, perhaps, the aesthetic reality.

- Jorge Luis Borges

For instance, the cited passage might seem to refer to many of the denizens of the Okefenokee Swamp and their author, if you follow my boldfacing of key words. Now, *Finnegans Wake*, having been completed in 1939, could obviously not contain references to Kelly's world. It did contain a few deliberate allusions to the popular "Thimble Theater" strip (with Popeye and Olive Oyl) however, and the degree of serendipity and coincidence in this work is typical.

## Kelly

In an essay "Stuff and Nonsense" printed in *Metamagical Themas*, Pulitzer-prize winning author Douglas Hofstadter calls Kelly "a unique writer of ingenious and charming nonsense," and lovingly recalls his own childhood memories of the *Songs of The Pogo*, quoting

the onomatopoeic ballad "Twirl, Twirl."

Poems would often show up in a daily strip, recited most often by Churchy, or occasionally by Porkypine, Albert, or the educated worm (in the famous "Poetry Contest"). They would often be reworked or reillustrated, and then printed in poetic form in one of the "Sunday" anthologies. An honored few were set to music, printed in *Songs of the Pogo*, and recorded by Walt Kelly and others. One of his wittiest poems appeared as the chapter titles in *The Pogo Party*:

1	Three at Bats	17	Sakes Alive
2	And Two at Bay	18	And Two Is Ten
3	Rheostats	19	Two Arrive
4	The Play by Play	20	Four Gotten Men
5	One by Night	21	Tithe Me Knots
6	And Night Be Won	22	In Morning Number
7	One Benighted	23	Nimble Squats
8	Nine Be None	24	Acute Cucumber
9	None by Noon	25	Quizzical Leary
10	Nigh Noon by Nine	26	Lyrical Quiz
11	Mind the Moon	27	Physical Theory
12	And Rune the Rhine	28	Etherical Fizz
13	Fear Before	29	Fair They Go
14	The Four by Five	30	And Fie They Do
15	Five by Four	31	Friday's Foe
16	The Six Alive	32	A Fried Adieu

Some of his poems, like those of Lewis Carroll, were rewording of popular songs, as the parodies "Deck Us All With Boston Charlie," or "Pick a Pock of Peachpits".

This is a poetic form that has come to be known as "Anguish Languish" (an "anguished" English Language) and popularized by Howard L. Chase in his book of the same title in 1956. It is the substitution of words which, when read silently make no literal sense, but when read aloud take on the sounds and rhythms of another work. His "Ladle Rat Rotten Hut" (Little Red Riding Hood), which starts out "Wants pawn term dare worsted ladle gull..." is a well-known classic of this genre. It was occasionally practiced by Joyce (calling himself "Germ's Choice"). But Walt Kelly was its greatest master:

Conifers stay of Crispness  
MacTruloff sentimie  
A parsnip Anna Pantry

Honor Sick an' Davey Criss-Cross  
MacTruloff said to me,  
Tutor Killduffs  
Anna Pottage inner pair threes  
Under Thrusday of Crystal Ball  
MacTruloff Sanity  
Three Friends' Wens,  
Tuber-Kalosis,  
Anger cartridge widow pastry

Kelly has few peers in the realm of unadulterated nonsense:

The Prince and the Princess  
Were plaiting the plates  
And prating quite primly the peer  
And that's why the Duchess  
Stuck ducks on the Duke  
For no one was over to seer.

He often decimated Mother Goose, as in this example by Albert from the comic book "Pogo Possum" #2 (1950):

Oh! Simple Simon meet a pimon  
Tutti Frutti fair!  
Say Oi 'Sinkle Si  
'Let's taste yo' pie"  
'Cause Pie is three are square

He could be, by turns, sardonic, philosophical, hilarious. There was a darker side, too. Porky's poetry was often sad and strangely moving:

Evening is dawn;  
And night unknown.  
But here in the morn  
The mists are grown;  
And only the loon  
Will laugh alone  
And only the lone  
Are lorn

It is difficult to say whether, with the exception of Lewis Carroll, Walt Kelly was ever directly "influenced" by other nonsense poets. He drew his creativity from the smoky and boozy atmosphere of the journalists' bars of New York City, where one can imagine his gravelly baritone belting out:

Briskly brasting  
brackish brine  
brazenly we bray  
Simmering songs  
of swimming swine  
scattering Saturday

through the wee hours. He was, and is, a unique genius, and not exactly unsung. He certainly deserves to be recognized more fully among the last century's most delightful nonsense poets.

\* \* \* \* \*

A longer version of this essay was originally published in *The Walt Kelly Collector's Guide* (Spring Hollow Books, 1988)

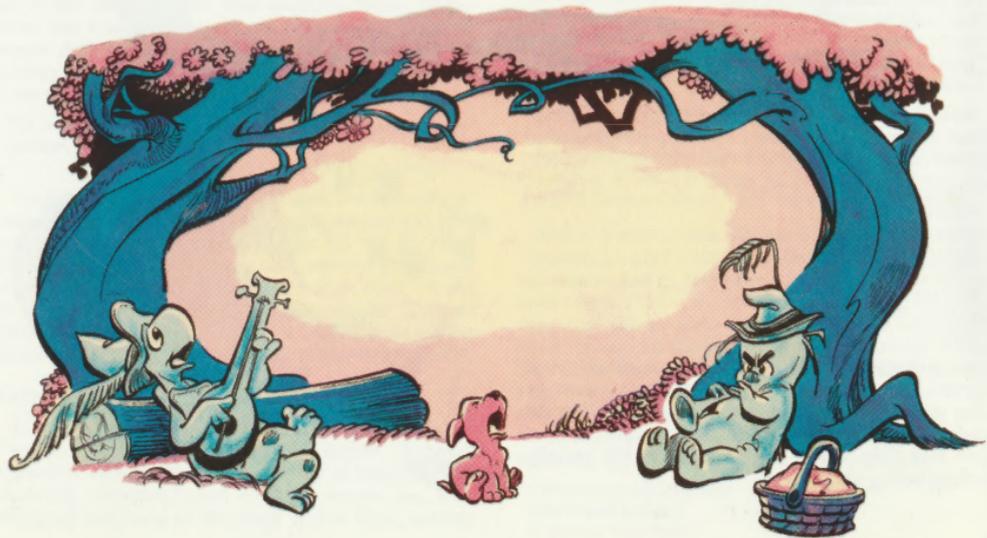
1. See *Much Ado: The Pogofenokee Trivia Book* (Eclipse Books, 1992) for a complete listing.



## Testy-monial by Mark Burstein

I have been reading, collecting, and adoring Walt Kelly's Pogo since I was a mere chile, eight years old in the International Geophysical Year of 1958. Although not carried in my local newspaper (for shame!), whenever a bit of extra cash showed up for a birthday or whatnot, I would hastily jump on a bus going Downtown to plunk down my \$1.25 for the latest paperback from Simon and Schuster.

Looking back now, I think I recognized in his work the first clue (aside from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*) that perhaps growing up might Not Be So Bad, since some Grownup was producing this thing which made me laugh and, occasionally, think about something outside my little world. One of the great pleasures of my life now is re-reading the strips I have grown up with, and finding new levels of meaning, previously incomprehensible puns and erudite references, and a deeper appreciation of Kelly's illustrative artistry.



I have been very lucky to be able to continue my long love for all things Pogonian, first by writing *Much Ado: The POGOfenokee Trivia Book*, editing *The Complete Pogo Comics* for Eclipse, and becoming Selby Kelly's representative in her dealings with the original art works left to her by Walt. I have also been an active participant in the video release of *We Have Met the Enemy and He is Us* and the CD you now hold in your hands. My collection also continues to flourish. Along the way I have met wonderful Pogophiles, including Selby, her son Scott Daley, Steve Thompson, Malcolm Whyte, Steve Leialoha and Trina Robbins, Carlo Ferrari (in Italy!) and so many others.

The walls of my house, bedecked in Pogo art, look like what I dreamed of when I was eight, which, all in all, isn't such a bad thing. Thank you, Walt, for being the best kind of genius -- the kind that allows us to laugh at ourselves and to stay in touch with the best parts of having once been children.

## The Pogofenokee Family Sing-Along by Steve Thompson

The *Songs of the Pogo* record, as well as the book of the same name, is one of the most highly sought-after Pogo collectibles. The reason for this rests on the reason that most people fall in love with the "nature's screechers" in the Pogofenokee Swamp.

Many comics readers who are aware of Pogo, after muttering "Oh, yeah, we have met the enemy and he is us," will define the strip as political and satirical in nature. This is true to some extent, and the reason it often made headlines elsewhere in the paper. In the long run, however, they aren't the elements that make the strip popular and put it in almost every list of Top Ten Comic Strips ever made. Almost all of the political caricatures and events portrayed in the strip have become hazy over the years, and for those who didn't live through those times, are often incomprehensible. While some of the social satire is still relevant (people don't change all that much), the Pogofenokee obviously portrays a pre-video, pre-electronic game, pre-internet society.

In the final analysis, the primary focus of the strip is really the family, and therein lies its long-term appeal. Almost every adventure or story arc in Pogo ends in a public fish-fry and perloo party, at which the Swamp denizens celebrate life in general and their community in particular. And an important part of any community celebration is singing.

Back in "olden times," when people made their own entertainment, singing, especially public singing, was an accepted part of any gathering. Whether solo, small group or entire audience, musical performances were expected and encouraged. In some communities, such as small pubs in Ireland, people would be surprised and disappointed if there wasn't group singing at some point every evening. Nowadays, such activity is usually described as "folk singing" and considered quaint if not obsolete.

For Walt Kelly, incorporating music into the life of his Swamp creations was as natural as the trees or multi-named skiffs. Of course, given the convoluted and sometimes confusing language of the Swamp, it's to be expected that the *Songs of the Pogo* would not be your



typical tunes. Words are mis-heard, poorly remembered or otherwise modified, as in the perennial classic "Deck Us All With Boston Charlie." Likewise, when Churchy sings:

My bonnie lice soda devotion  
My boony life saver DC  
McBoniface soda commotion,  
Oh brickbat Mahoney Toomey!

it somehow seems to make sense. We've all been there, and we've all got our own favorite mis-heard lyrics.

Jimmy Carroll, who arranged the music on this recording, worked with Mitch Miller on the popular television program "Sing Along With Mitch." It's evident that Kelly intended *Songs of the Pogo* to be sung in groups, whether large or small, so he was a logical choice for director. Lyrics were included in both the original record and the 1968 re-release. The book included piano music, under the assumption that most homes had a piano. When the book was reissued along with the record, guitar chords were added to accommodate the then-popular trend toward guitar accompanied folk songs.

With the possible exception of "Go, Go, Pogo," these songs are non-political, non-ethnic and nonsensical. They are sung with exuberance on the recording, and we should not sit back as dispassionate academics taking part in music appreciation. The lyrics are here and the tunes are either familiar or easily learned. Wherever you are, join in, and invite your friends and neighbors as well.

## GO GO POGO

As Maine go o so Pogo go Key Largo,  
Otsego to Frisco go to Fargo,  
Okeefenokee playin'  
Possum on a Pogo  
Stick around and see the show go over

Landalive a band o' Jive will blow go Pogo  
I go you go who go to go Polly voo go,  
From Caravan Diego,  
Waco and Oswego,  
Tweedle de he go she go we go me go Pogo.

Atascadero Wheeler Barrow,  
Some place in Mexico,  
Delaware Ohio and you  
Don't need the text to go.  
Wheeling, West Virginia  
With ev'rything that's in ya,  
Down the line  
You'll see the shine  
From Oregon to Caroline,

Oh, eenie meenie minie Kokomo go Pogo.  
Tishimingo, sing those lingo, whistling go.  
Shamokin to Hoboken  
Chenango to Chicongo  
It's golly, I go goo goo goin' go go Pogo.

## WHENCE THAT WINCE?

I was stirrin' up a stirrup cup  
In a stolen sterling stein,  
When I chanced upon a ladle  
Who was once my Valentine.

"Oh whence that wince, my wench?" quoth I;  
She blushed and said, "Oh sir,  
Old daddy isn't stirrin'  
Since my momma's been in stir."

## NORTHERN LIGHTS

Oh, roar a roar for Nora,  
Nora Alice in the night,  
For she has seen Aurora  
Borealis burning bright.

A furore for our Nora  
And applaud Aurora seen!  
Where throughout the summer has  
Our Borealis been?



## SLOPOSITION

Oh, once the opposition was completly opposed  
To all the suppositions that was gen'rally supposed  
An' now the superstitions that were tho't to be imposed  
Are seen by composition to be slightly decomposed.

## A SONG NOT FOR NOW

A song not for Now  
You need not put stay,  
A tune for the Was  
Can be sung for today,  
The notes for the Does-not  
Will sound as the Does,  
Today you can sing  
For the Will-be that was.

## TWIRL, TWIRL

Twirl! Twirl! Twinkle between!  
The Tweezers are twist in the twittering twain.  
Twirl! Twirl! entwiningly twirl  
'twixt twice twenty twigs passing platitudes plain.

Plunder the Plover and Rover rides round.  
Ring all the rungs on the brassily bound,  
Billy, swirl! Swirl! Swingingly swirl!  
Sweep along swoop along sweetly your swain.

## PARSNOOPS

Oh, the Parsnips were snipping their snappers  
While the parsley was parceling the peas,  
And parsing a sentence from handle to hand  
Was a hornet who hummed with the bees.

The Turnips were passing the time of the day  
In the night of the moon on the porch,  
With the shade from the shadows so shortfully shrift  
That the scallions were screeched in the scorch.

## THE KEEN AND THE QUING

The Keen and the Quing were quirling at Quoits  
In the meadow behind of the mere  
Tho' mainly the meadow was middled with mow,  
An heretical hitherto here.

The Prince and the Princess were plaiting the plates  
And prating quite primly the Peer  
And that's why the Duchess stuck ducks on the Duke  
For no one was over to seer.

(Now violin only with pizzicato)  
Plinky plinky palunkity plank  
Palunky palunky plink plink plink plink plink  
(arco) zoo-oo-oom zoomity zoom.

Skazoom weekity squeaky squeak squeaky skaweek  
(consordino) squeaky skaweek,  
(Now senza sordino) and squeak squeak squeek eek  
(Now pizzicato) plunk plunk plunk.



## MAN'S BEST FRIEND

What gentler eye, what nobler heart  
Doth warm the winter day  
Than the true blue orb and the oaken core  
Of beloved old dog Tray?

## DON'T SUGAR ME

Oh! I may be your dish of tea  
But, baby, don't you "Sugar" me!  
Don't stir me, boy, nor try to spoon.  
Don't sugar me 'cause us is THROON.

Oh! I won't sip a lip with you,  
'Less you want a granulated lump or two.  
Just roll them eyes, right out that door.  
Them saucer eyes ain't square no more.

All them things, them diamond rings,  
Them stuff you promised me  
Were Figments, Newton, sure as shootin'.  
Shootin' sure as A, B see,

The teapot pouts that the kettle's blue,  
It don't work out that spout is true  
Just boil away, boy, don't sit and brew.  
Don't sugar me 'cause us is THROON.

## WHITHER THE STARLING

Whither the Starling? And whither the Crow?  
And whither the Weather when whither the Snow?

The Weaver's wet Daughter has dampened the clothes  
With wavelets of water left over from snothes.

Left over from Snothes, left over from Snothes,  
Right over and under, and yonder she gothes.

## WILLOW THE WASP

There were some wasps in our town  
Who, with their wond'rous wives  
They suckled at the bramble bush  
In search of lovely lives;

And when they saw the bush was dry,  
Quick, each and ev're one  
They wrapped it well in wire barb  
To shield it from the sun.



## TRULY TRUE

Gamboling on the gumbo  
With the gambits all in gear,  
I daffed upon a dilly  
Who would be my dolly dear.

Oh, Dilly, I would dally  
If you'd be but truly true  
How silly, I must sally  
Off to do my duly do.

## MANY HAPPY RETURNS

Once you were two, dear birthday friend,  
Inspite of purple weather.  
But now you are three and near the end  
As we grewsome together.

How fourthful thou, forsooth for you,  
For soon you will be more.  
But 'fore one can be three be two;  
Before be five be four.

## POTLUCKY

Briskly breathing  
Brackish brine  
Brazenly we Bray  
Simmering songs  
Of swimming swine  
Scattering Saturday.

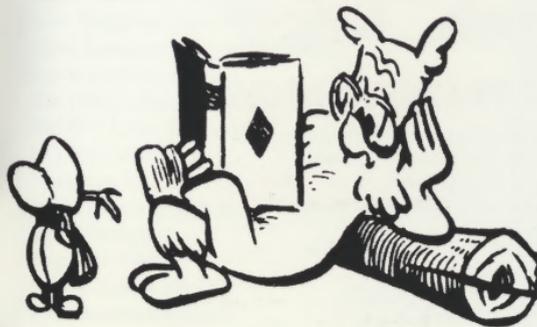
Hearts are heavy  
Clubs are trump  
Diamonds are in rough  
Spades are spotty  
Jokers jump  
Dummies are enough.

Can we eggplant?  
Can we corn?  
Can we succotash?  
String we strongbeans  
For the morn  
Masterful mustache?

Deathly dumplings  
Made of mud  
Grace our festive board  
Free fromently!  
Flees the flood  
Frightful frugal's floored.

Hear ye! Hear ye!  
Hear ye, now!  
Cup ye now an eye  
Wear, Dearie  
Kyrie cow?  
Moo and six is pie.

The speaker spokes  
The reeler wheels  
A kingdom for a hum  
Oh, rubba dubba  
Double deals,  
Oh, rubba dubba dub!



## THE HAZY YON

How pierceful grows the hazy yon!  
How myrtle petaled thou!  
For spring hath sprung the cyclotron,  
How high browse thou, brown cow?

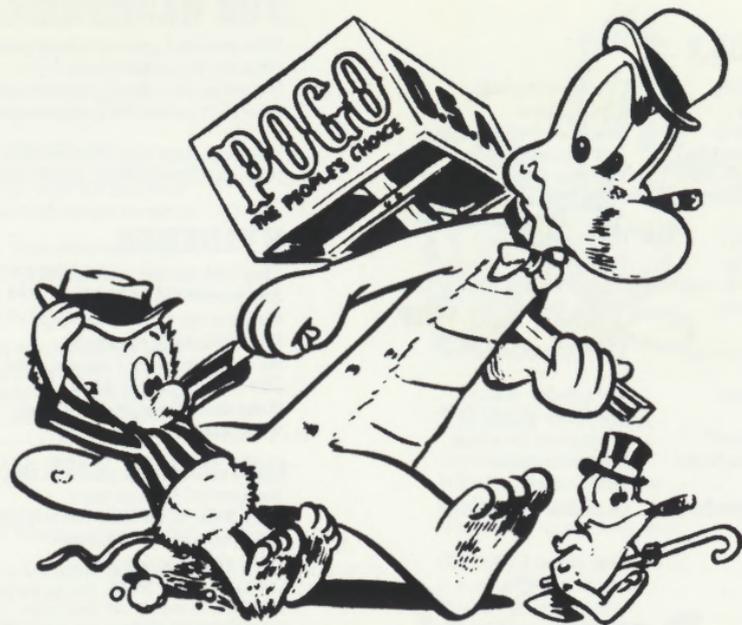
How high, how high, browse thou, browse thou,  
How high browse thou, brown cow?

## EVIDENCE

They told me that you had been to her  
And mentioned me to him.  
She gave me a good character,  
But said I could not swim.  
He sent them word I had not gone  
(We know it to be true)  
If she should push the matter on  
What would become of you?

I gave her one, they gave him two,  
You gave us three or more  
They all returned from him to you,  
Tho' they were mine before  
If I or she should chance to be  
Involved in this affair  
He trusts to you to set them free  
Exactly as we were.

My notion was that you had been  
(Before she had this fit)  
An obstacle that came between  
Him, and ourselves, and it.  
Don't let him know she liked them best.  
For this must ever be  
A secret, kept from all the rest,  
Between yourself and me.  
A secret, kept from all the rest,  
Between yourself and me.



## LINES UPON A TRANQUIL BROW

Have you ever while pond'ring the ways of the morn,  
Thought to save just a bit, just a drop in the horn;  
To pour in the ev'ning or late afternoon,  
Or during the night when we're shining the moon?

Have you ever cried out while counting the snow,  
Or watching the tomtit warble Hello...  
"Break out the cigars, this life is for squirr'ls  
We're off to the drugstore to whistle at girls"?



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Since the master tapes for *Songs Of The Pogo*, *No!* and *Can't!* have been misplaced, the producers have chosen to master this disc from the best available vinyl sources. There are audible blips and pops, but we sincerely hope this will not hinder your listening enjoyment. After all, this music was recorded long before the advent of digital technology. The Walt Kelly reading and rehearsals were transferred from one of the only existing tape copies. There are obvious sonic flaws; however, they have been included for their historical significance.

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# 18 SONGS OF THE POGO

Words by WALT KELLY; music by NORMAN MONATH (with a few exceptions which are noted below). Orchestra and chorus under the direction of JIMMY CARROLL, who also did the arrangements.

SIDE A	SIDE B
1. GO GO POGO Song by WALT KELLY (He wrote the music, too)	1. I-ON-T SUGAR ME Song by FIA KARIN
2. WHENCE THAT WINCE? Song by MIKE STEWART, FIA KARIN and chorus (Music by KELLY)	2. WHITHER THE STARLING MIKE STEWART and chorus
3. NORTHERN LIGHTS Song by FIA KARIN (Music by KELLY)	3. WILLOW THE WASP Song by FIA KARIN
4. SLOPPOSITION Song by BOB MILLER	4. TRULY TRUE Chorus
5. A SONG NOT FOR NOW Song by FIA KARIN and chorus	5. MANY HARRY RETURNS Song by FIA KARIN and chorus
6. TWIRL, TWIRL Chorus	6. POTLUCKY Chorus
7. PARSNOOPS Chorus	7. THE HAZY YON Chorus
8. THE KEEN AND THE QUING Song by FIA KARIN and chorus	8. EVIDENCE Song by MIKE STEWART (Words by LEWIS CARROLL)
9. MAN'S BEST FRIEND Chorus, with recitative (and the music) by WALT KELLY	9. LINES UPON A TRANQUIL BROW Song by WALT KELLY

## ABOUT THE SONGS

The songs on this record mark the musical debut of America's foremost possum. There are 18 of them, suitable for as many occasions—birthdays, clandestine trysts, medical checkups, elevator rides, evenings at the public library, noons when the kettle boils over, music-to-pay-last-year's-bills-by, etc.

The songs range in mood from the haunting *Whence That Wince?* to the rousing *Go Go Pogo* and the world-weary *Parsnoops*. Originally scored for lute, harp, comb-with-tissue-paper, and nightingale, they are here presented in brilliant orchestral arrangements. The vocal parts are performed *con espressione* by an almost uncompromising (they did let Walt Kelly sing three of the songs) group of dedicated Pogo Singers.

## ABOUT THE WORDS

Though the words to *Songs of the Pogo* may appear to be as simple as the libretto of *Boris Godunov* (in the original Imperial Russian, of course), on a deeper level they are really not. Therefore, so that you may feel them over in your mind, we have enclosed a complete libretto.

## ABOUT THE POGO

Just as an understanding of Niebelung lore enriches the listener's comprehension of Wagner's great operas, so a familiarity with the history of Pogo will furnish a *Weltanschauung* which cannot but enhance the enjoyment of this record (you'll like it better).

From the beginning, Pogo, a possum by trade, has had strong musical tendencies. His first appearance was in 1943, as a spear carrier in a comic book. By 1951 Pogo already had a sizable following, for a possum. They followed his adventures daily in 196 newspapers with a fervor displayed by early discoverers of A. Rimbaud or P. Rabbit.

In the ensuing years Pogo has experienced almost every possible triumph. Ten books about him have sold more than a million and a half copies. He now appears in 450 newspapers with a combined circulation of more than 50 million readers, according to reliable Pogomaticians.

Now at last the growing Pogo culture has found musical expression. These 18 songs are the first songs of the Pogo to be written, sung, played, and recorded. We have only two more words to say about these songs: Play them.



Pogophiles will also want a copy of the new SONGS OF THE POGO song book: it includes not only the words and music of the 18 songs on the record, plus 12 more, but authentic sauce material (the background of each song as well as the foreground and side view). All this plus dozens of beautifully reproduced color pictures by Walt Kelly. Price \$3.95.



# SONGS OF THE POOGOO

*18 Songs  
from the book*  
SUNG BY  
WALT KELLY  
FLA KARIN  
MIKE STEWART  
BOB MILLER  
ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS  
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF  
JIMMY CARROLL

*by*  
WALT  
KELLY  
*with*  
NORMAN  
MONATH

