

HUMOR



Ogden Nash

(1902-1971)

Golly, How Truth Will Out (1940)

How does a person get to be a capable liar?
That is something that I respectfully inquirar,
Because I don't believe a person will ever set the world on fire
Unless they are a capable lire.
Some wise man said that words were given to us
to conceal our thoughts,
But if a person has nothing but truthful words
why their thoughts haven't even the protection
of a pair of panties or shoughts,
And a naked thought is ineffectual as well as improper,
And hasn't a chance in the presence of a glib chinchilla-clad whopper.
One of the greatest abilities a person can have, I guess,
Is the ability to say Yes when they mean No and No
when they mean Yes.
Oh to be Machiavellian, oh to be unscrupulous, oh, to be glib!
Oh to be ever prepared with a plausible fib!
Because then a dinner engagement or a contract or a treaty
is no longer a fetter,
Because liars can just logically lie their way out of it
if they don't like it or if one comes along that they like better;
And do you think their conscience prickles?
No, it tickles.
And please believe that I mean every one of these lines
as I am writing them
Because once there was a small boy who was sent to the drugstore
to buy some bitter stuff to put on his nails

to keep him from biting them,
And in his humiliation he tried to lie to the clerk
And it didn't work,
Because he said My mother sent me to buy some bitter stuff
for a friend of mine's nails that bites them,
and the clerk smiled wisely and said
I wonder who that friend could be,
And the small boy broke down and said Me,
And it was me, or at least I was him,
And all my subsequent attempts at subterfuge have been equally grim,
And that is why I admire a suave prevarication
because I prevaricate so awkwardly and gauchely,
And that is why I can never amount to anything
politically or socially.