

The Number 274: Timothy Pugh

by [Paul Martin Freeman](#)



Picasso at the Zoo, Warrington Colecott, 1978

Now this is the story of Timothy Pugh
Who woke up one morning in Regents Park Zoo.
He couldn't recall what had happened before,
Nor how he had boarded the 274.

He couldn't remember events on the bus,
Nor whether his buggy had caused any fuss;
Nor anything else that had happened that day,
Nor even at all how he'd managed to pay.

But there he was standing in Regents Park Zoo
And wondering now what on earth he should do.
And so he decided to call on the bears
And lay out before them his troubles and cares.

They'd listen intently, as that's what their job is,
And then when you'd finished they handed out lollies.
So Timothy thought he would find where they lived,
Remembering first he should bring them a gift.

He found some old cellophane stuck to his pocket:
It seemed to belong to an old piece of chocolate.
The chocolate had melted and left it all sticky;
Removing it therefore was really quite tricky.

But Timothy tried and at length he succeeded;
The wrapper he took (as the chocolate he needed)
And bearing it solemnly looked for the bears
To whom he would tell all his troubles and cares.

He tried at the Lion House to learn where they were;
The lions to others, though, said they'd defer:
As kings of the jungle it wasn't their task
Responding to humans and questions they ask!

So Timothy tried the Aquarium House;
A fish there suggested he question a mouse.
"For mice" (it continued) "remember addresses:"
"They cannot rely like us goosfish on guesses."

"It's really survival, according to Darwin,"
"Especially so when the neighbour's cat's starvin'."
"At moments like those they must know where to go,"
"To get to a comrade's and flee from their foe!"

So Timothy left the Aquarium House
And went on his way now in search of a mouse.
He asked at the Bird House to see where they were,
A condor confiding he'd have to confer.

The condor returned but appeared rather glum;
He'd sounded a chum of which this was the sum.
No mouse had been sighted since yesterday's dinner:
Without one tonight they'd all end up much thinner!

So once more our Timothy went on his way;
Poor chap he was having the *most trying* day!
He *tried* with the elephants; *tried* with the snakes,
As all round the Zoo he was now seen to traipse.

He sadly though never did find any bears
To whom to present all his troubles and cares.
The next thing he knew he was lying in bed;
A kindly old doctor was touching his head.

"He's still got a temperature, poor little chap,"
"But nothing so bad you need get in a flap."
"Just give him some rest: it'll soon go away,"
The kindly old doctor was then heard to say.

So Timothy Pugh, who last birthday was two,
Began to reflect on his trip to the Zoo.
He started to think it had all been a dream,
For that's what they're really, whatever they seem.

And as once again now he slips off to sleep
With whispers inside him of Little Bo-Peep,
Yet one thing he finds that he can't understand:
The cellophane wrapper he holds in his hand.