

# *Winnie the Pooh*, as told by Cormac McCarthy

TOM DOIG

Note: To be performed as part of a comedic “variety night,” preferably when the audience is suitably “warmed up.” (For example, after an ‘ironic’ synchronised jazzercise dance-routine, performed to an 80s classic hit, such as Devo’s “Whip It” or Bonnie Tyler’s “Total Eclipse of the Heart.”)

Stage is empty and dark with a single spotlight, centre. NARRATOR walks into spotlight, holding a copy of *Winnie the Pooh*, by A. A. Milne.

NARRATOR opens the book and reads.

NARRATOR: It rained, and it rained, and it rained. Winnie the Pooh had never seen so much rain before. Ditches became streams, streams became rivers, and the river became an inland sea.

It was very exciting for a Bear of Little Brain.

Pooh sat in his treehouse by the window, listening to the pitter-patter of raindrops, and the distant screams of excitement. Soon, he fell asleep and began to dream. He dreamed he was a polar bear, lying on a green hill, in a green land—in Greenland. A little penguin came over the hill, then another, then another—a whole line of penguins sliding on their bellies, over the hill and into his mouth, one by one by one.

Gulp gulp gulp.

Yum yum yum.

But just as Pooh was licking his lips, he started to tremble, and wobble—the hill started to tremble, and wobble—Greenland started to tremble, and wobble, and melt! Pooh found himself falling, falling, down a dark crevasse towards the icy cold water—

Pooh woke with a start. He had slipped out of his chair and was lying in the water—silly bear!

“What a mess,” said Pooh. “Someone should really do something about this. I must have an escape.”

Pooh ran to his cupboard and grabbed a big glass jar of honey and climbed out of his treehouse onto a branch high above the water. Then he climbed back inside and escaped with another jar. When he had completed his escape, he sat on his branch, dangling his feet next to twenty jars of honey.

Two hours later, Pooh was sitting on his branch, dangling his feet next to fifteen jars of honey, when he heard a small noise from below.

“Help me Pooh!”

It was Piglet. The water was up to his neck.

“The water!” spluttered Piglet. “It’s rising! My house—it’s gone! You’ve got to help me!”

“Um, yes, well, I’d really like to, Piglet,” said Pooh, “but the thing is, it’s already quite crowded up here, what with me and all my honey, I just don’t think—”

But before Pooh could finish his sentence, a big wave came and washed Piglet away, the pig’s little tears adding to the storm surge. Pooh sighed and cracked open another jar of honey.

Two hours later, Pooh was sitting on his branch dangling his feet next to ten jars of honey when he heard another noise.

“Help me Pooh!”

It was Eyeore. The water was up to the donkey’s neck.

“Eyeore,” said Pooh. “Shouldn’t you be at home?”

“The water!” said Eyeore. “It’s rising. My house—it’s gone! You’ve got to help me!”

“Don’t you have insurance or something?” said Pooh.

“Too late!” cried Eyeore. He scratched furiously at the tree trunk with his hooves.

“Sorry Eyeore,” said Pooh, “but there’s just not enough room up here, what with all my jars of honey, besides I’m starting to run low on honey, stay away from my honey.”

But the donkey was already scrambling up the tree, determined to get his dirty hooves on Pooh’s honey. Pooh had no choice. He picked up an empty jar of honey and brought it crashing down onto Eyeore’s skull.

Eyeore gave a grunt of surprise and fell into the water, where he lay twitching and bleeding. Pooh sighed and cracked open another jar of honey.

Two hours later, Pooh was sitting on his branch dangling his feet next to his last five jars of honey when he heard another noise. “Help me Pooh!”

It was Kanga. The water was above her neck. The kangaroo bounced pitifully, trying to keep her mouth above the waterline.

“Kanga?” said Pooh. “First the pigs, then the donkeys—now you. What’s wrong with you creatures?!”

“The water!” Kanga spluttered. “It’s rising. My house—it’s gone! You’ve got to help me!”

“Look Kanga,” said Pooh, “I can’t just have every marsupial and his dog climbing up my tree, looking for a handout. I mean, I do what I can—everyone does what he can, I mean, we’ve all got to do our bit, it’s not just up to me you know Kanga.”

“Please!” said Kanga. She started inching her way up the tree. Pooh had to think fast. He broke the top off a glass jar and plunged the jagged edge deep into Kanga’s pouch. A scream came from inside. Pooh pushed the glass further in, twisted it and pulled it out. Kanga’s guts and baby roo poured from her pouch onto the tree trunk. Kanga looked at Pooh with terrified, uncomprehending eyes, and died.

Pooh tried to kick Kanga off the tree, but her silly intestines got caught on a branch and he had to cut them loose. Pooh sighed and cracked open another jar of his honey.

Two hours later, Pooh was sitting on his branch finishing the last drops of his last jar of honey. When it was all gone, he sighed and threw the jar into the rising water. Then Pooh had an idea, and for a Bear of Very Little Brain it was a very good idea.

“Time for this bear to find more... honey,” Pooh said.

Much later, a soggy, dishevelled grey tea towel of a thing hauled itself up the tree trunk and onto the branch. It was Piglet! He was not dead, but he was very weak and scrawny.

“Help me, Pooh,” he whispered. But Pooh was nowhere to be found. Piglet tried licking the honey jars, but there was nothing left. Piglet tried the pantry door, but it was locked.

“There’s a reason this is locked,” Piglet muttered. He took a run-up and charged the door with his shoulder. The door flew open and Piglet tumbled down the stairs.

It was cold and dark and it smelt very bad.

In the gloom he saw naked animals huddled against the back wall. Owl was pinned to the wall with a bicycle spoke through his chest. Tigger was tied up in a corner. On a mattress lay Christopher Robin, his legs gone to the hip and the stumps of them blackened and burnt.

“Help me,” Christopher Robin whispered. “Help me.”

“Jesus,” said Piglet, backing away. “Jesus.”

“Please,” said Christopher Robin, scratching at Piglet with fingerless hands.

Piglet turned and made for the stairs, but he heard a noise that made him stop. At the top of the stairs, there was Pooh, wearing a kangaroo fur cape and holding a red and jagged glass jar.

“Pooh!” said Piglet. “But, but...”

“Honey,” said Pooh.

**Blackout.**

**Tom Doig** is a writer, performer, and jogger. He holds an MA in Hitler Comedy and is currently a PhD candidate at Monash University, where he is researching people's lived experiences of climate change. In 2013, Allen & Unwin published his book, *Moron to Moron: Two Men, Two Bikes, One Mongolian Misadventure*. In March 2015, Penguin Australia will publish *The Coal Face: Stories from the Morwell Mine Fire*. See [www.tomdoig.com](http://www.tomdoig.com).

This story was inspired by Alan Alexander Milne's *Piglet is Entirely Surrounded by Water* (London: Methuen, 1976), and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (London: Picador, 2006).