A note on the order of the Fizzles and their titles

Does it matter in which order the Fizzles are read, or whether they have titles?

We have found that our thoughts on the intertextual character of the eight texts as a group frequently draw on the order in which they appear. But readings based on any such overall structure of the Fizzles must always be frustrated by the fact that the texts have appeared in a variety of orders. Titles, too, which, conferred on some Fizzles but not on others, suggest different degrees of completedness or importance, have also appeared in different forms, threatening any certainty attached to interpretations based on them.

The London Beckett Seminar is reading the texts of the Fizzles that are printed in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Short Prose 1929-1989*, ed. by S.E. Gontarski (New York: Grove, 1995), but the order in which they appear in this edition, and the titles some of them are given, represent only one of the three principal ways in which the texts have been organized as a group.

The eight Fizzles, all but one originally written in French, were first published together in 1976 in three separate editions: an American edition from the Grove Press called *Fizzles* (New York: Grove, 1976), a French edition from Minuit entitled *Pour finir encore et autres foirades* (Paris: Minuit, 1976), and an English edition from Calder Books with the title *For to End Yet Again and other Fizzles* (London: Calder, 1976). Prior to this some of the Fizzles had been published separately and in smaller groups, notably in illustrated editions alongside artwork by Avigdor Arikha, Jasper Johns and William Hayter (see *The Complete Short Prose*, ed. by Gontarski, pp.293-4 for details).

In the French edition of 1976, four of the Fizzles have titles, the others are numbered. The text of *Pour finir encore* is followed by the date '1975', and that of *Immobile* by the same date and the note, 'traduit par l'auteur', since this Fizzle was the only one written originally in English. A page with the words, 'autres foirades (années 60)', appears after *Pour finir encore* and *Immobile* to introduce the rest of the Fizzles. The order is as follows (titles, where a Fizzle is given one, appear in italics, otherwise the opening words of the text appear in parenthesis; English equivalents appear in square brackets):

1. *pour finir encore* [*For to end yet again*]
2. *immobile* [*Still*]
3. *I* ('Il est tete nue') ['he is barehead']
4. *II* ('J'ai renoncé avant de naître') ['I gave up before birth']
5. *III* ('Horn venait la nuit') ['Horn came always']
6. *IV* ('Vielle terre') ['Old earth']
7. *Au loin un oiseau* [*Afar a bird*]
8. *Se voir* ['Closed place']

In the English (Calder) edition, each fizzle is given a title. The words, ‘Paris, 1974’, appear after the final text, *Old Earth*. The order is as follows:

1. *For to end yet again*
2. *Still*
3. *He is barehead*
4. *Horn came always*
5. *Afar a bird*
6. *I gave up before birth*
7. *Closed place*
8. *Old earth*

The order in the American edition is the same as that in *The Complete Short Prose*:

1. (He is barehead)
2. (Horn came always)
3. *Afar a bird*
4. (I gave up before birth)
5. (Closed place)
6. (Old earth)
7. *Still*
8. *For to end yet again*

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