

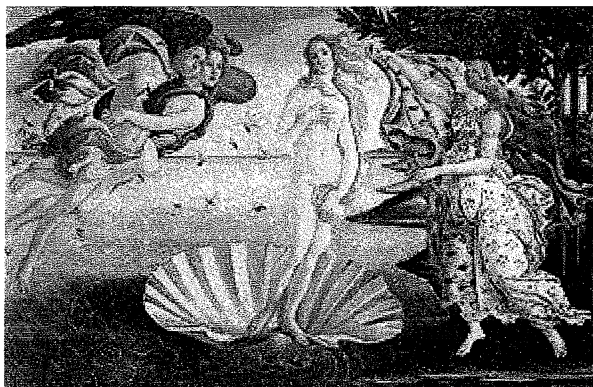
AN ANAGRAM SONNET

JANET D. HODGE
Sioux City, Iowa

I recently discovered David Shulman's anagrammed "sonnet" on "Washington Crossing the Delaware," written in 1936, in Douglas Hofstadter's review of Ross Eckler's *Making The Alphabet Dance* [*NYTimes*, 3/10/96], as well as Shulman's reply to that review [*NYTimes*, letters, 4/7/96], in which he writes: "after waiting 60 years, I find that nobody so far has equaled or surpassed it."

I wrote the following in response to Shulman's implicit challenge. Not only is every line a perfect anagram of the title, it is also a true sonnet in form, and in both coherent sense and syntax may compare favorably to Shulman's effort.

Sandro Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus"



Love is born. A thin cloud bestirs theft—
such a festive birth not to be droll sin.
No strict habits should live on bereft
of love. Blind, it throbs; truth ceases in
antic trust. Oh, love is blest, for behind
its first bother, viols enchant. Double
fret (blush) scares the volition to bind.
It finds both chaste lovers in trouble.
Love throes ache, but sit blind in frost.
The love born of bliss dictates in hurt
a nibbled truth, sloven heir of its cost.
Noble itch is hovel burn, tastes of dirt.
The bit done, not favors rise, but chills;
Best avoid, not note, such brief thrills.

I might note that the "(blush)" in line 7 arises from both the fret or discomfiture of the lovers ["The course of true love never did run smooth."] and a pun on the viols' frets.