

LIMERICKSHAWS

DAVE MORICE
Iowa City, Iowa

limerack	limerickable	limerickist	limerist
limereck	limerickation	limerickize	limerix
limeric	limericked	limerickized	limmerick
limerical	limericker	limerickle	limrick
limerically	limerickest	limerickshaw	limricked
limerication	limericking	limericky	limricker
limericist	limerickism	limeriddle	limricking

(From websites found on Google)

Introduction

This **Kickshaws Special** celebrates the 100th anniversary of the 1907 British Limerick Craze, and what better way to celebrate it than to present 100 limericks, one for each year? The limerick count includes each 5-line limerick, whether it stands alone or serves as a stanza in a longer poem. It does not include the older limericks quoted in the essays or the partial limericks in which one or more lines are left out on purpose for special effects. Eighty-seven people have contributed limericks to this article. The first part has limericks by Word Ways authors and others, and the second part has limericks by writers of the Omnificent English Dictionary In Limerick Form (OEDILF).

Never before have so many different kinds of limericks appeared in a single article. Some of the limericks use puns, palindromes, spoonerisms, or charades. Some use foreign words, made-up words, unusual words, letters as words, and one uses extra-long words. One counts its own letters, and one doesn't have any letters to count. Some have only one to four lines, and two have an abundance of words in the fifth line. One is a word-unit palindrome, one is a word-unit reversal, and one is a line-unit reversal. Some have no beginning, some have no ending, and one has alternate endings. One is a riddle, some are jokes, and some are nonsense. Many are comic, and a few are tragic. But all are limericks.

Originally there was going to be one limerick per contributor. However, some people contributed multi-limerick poems or related sets of limericks that couldn't be printed separately, and some contributed two or more limericks that incorporated other forms of wordplay or used noticeably different strategies. Such "avant-garde" limericks show how far the form has come and suggest how far it can go. Creative wordplayers such as the OEDILFers and the Word Waysers are discovering that it can do as much as any poetic form—and perhaps more.

Shortly after the OEDILF started, I joined the project. I've written several limericks for it, and I've read a horde of them written by other members. What great things can be packed into small boxes! Two years ago I began rewriting Dante's *Inferno* from tercets to limericks without straying too much from the meaning of the original or excluding any parts. *Limerick Inferno* showed me that these "small boxes" can be connected one after the other in epic proportions: It resulted in 1,502 limericks, 34 of which are two-line partial limericks that end each Canto.

The limerick is the stanza of choice for rewriting classical literature, and the Bible is the most popular book to rewrite. Most of the limericked books that I've found stick to the topic, but the two longest include modern characters: *The Limerick Iliad* ends with characters from the movie *Back to the Future*, and *The Limerick Odyssey* mentions Harry Potter. Here is a list of several published or unpublished limerick rewrites of the classics that turned up in Google searches:

Boccaccio's <i>Decameron</i>	David Finley	50 limericks, 1 per story
Mary Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i>	David Finley	Limericks of the crucial dialog
<i>The Bible in Limerick Verse</i>	Christopher Godwins	120 limericks
<i>The Limerick Iliad</i>	Joe Green, Tim Smith	Almost covers the whole book
<i>The Limerick Odyssey</i>	Joe Green	Almost covers the whole book
<i>There Was a Young Girl from Verona</i> (Limericks based on Shakespeare's plays)	Max Gutmann (see below)	38 limericks, 1 per play
<i>The Five-Minute Dante's Inferno</i>	Greg Nagan	A few limericks
<i>Paradise Lost, the Limerick</i>	Carol Wyvill	1 limerick per book/chapter

What will be limericked next? *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, *The Kama Sutra*, *The Faerie Queene*, *Leaves of Grass*, *The Wasteland*, and every single one of the *Canterbury Tales* are begging to cast off their old identities, change clothes in the phone booth of literature, and fly out as 21st-century superlimericks.

Currently, I am limericking Nostradamus's prophecies, which are written in quatrains. For example, here is the well-known Hister / Hitler quatrain, translated from the French by Erika Cheetham in her comprehensive book, *The Prophecies of Nostradamus* (Berkley, 1981). Below it is my limerick version.

From *The Prophecies of Nostradamus* by Erika Cheetham

Wild beasts with hunger will cross the rivers,
The greater part of the battlefield will be against Hister.
In a cage of iron, the leader will be dragged
When the German child obeys no law.

From *The Limericks of Nostradamus* by DM

Wild beasts with great hunger will blister
And war against dread Adolph Hister.
In a cage made of metal
The leader will settle
When a German boy shouts, "Achtung, Mister!"

This column was a last-minute idea, and it was put together in about a week. It would have been impossible to assemble it that quickly without the use of email. Unfortunately, some writers who may have liked to participate didn't find out about it in time. If you are reading this and wish to be a part of the Limerickshaws Celebration of the 1907 British Limerick Craze, please mail or email your limericks for the next Kickshaws column.

Many thanks to Ove Michaelsen for coming up with the idea for this special edition of Kickshaws and for writing the first essay below, to Susan Thorpe for the second essay, and to Dr. Arthur J. Deex for the third essay and for permission to reproduce three postcard images from his

collection. Special thanks and a tip of the Alphabet Hat to Chris J. Strolin, who posted the project on the OEDILF website, contacted many of its writers, put together the entire OEDILF section, and wrote the introduction to it. And of course thanks to all of the writers for contributing their wonderful limericks. Edward Lear would be proud of you!

I leave you with a challenge for the November Word Ways: Write a limerick in which every word begins with the same letter—a “letterick.” Pick a letter, any letter, put pen to paper, and send your lettericks to the Kickshaws Editor. My contribution kicks A:

As always, an affable ass
Avoids adding artwork—alas!
And all arty artists
And all anti-artists
Ask asses, “Ah, artists amass?”

Evolution of the Limerick

by Ove Michaelsen

Limericks = Slick rime! (anagram by Hexagony, 1908)
A limerick = I lack rime. (antigram by O.M., 2007)

The limerick might be the only verse form indigenous to the English language. It was apparently first made popular in Britain by London illustrator and author Edward Lear (1812-1888) in the 1863 reissue of his 1846 work the *Book of Nonsense*. It is believed that these were not referred to as limericks until 1896 (artist Aubrey Beardsley used the word in a letter to Leonard Smithers in 1896)--eight years after Lear's death.

“The 212 that he wrote were called 'learics' by his contemporaries," wrote Dr. Crypton (Paul Hoffman) in the August 1983 issue of his *Science Digest* column "Puzzles, Paradoxes, Pitfalls." "In his declining years, Lear lamented that he would be remembered not for his splendid exact renderings of birds, but for his poem 'The Owl and the Pussy-Cat.' If it were not for the humorous illustrations in *The Book of Nonsense*, the limerick might have died there.”

In late 1907, according to Dr. Crypton’s column, the *London Opinion* ran a limerick contest that was so popular, it nearly brought down the postal service. 700 entries were submitted to complete this limerick (the final line).

There was a young lady of Ryde,
Whose locks were consid'rably dyed.
The hue of her hair
Made everyone stare--
"She's piebald, she'll DIE bald!" they cried.

Few limericks of Lear's day contained punch lines. Most of his ended with a modification of the first line. When more punch lines were written into these verses, they soon became immensely popular. Dr. Crypton added, "More limericks seem to have been written in 1907 and 1908 than in all other years combined."

According to *Pentatette*, newsletter of the Mensa Limerick SIG, the word appeared in print at least as early as 1898, and the earliest-known book of limericks (then called "nonsense verses") was *The History of Sixteen Wonderful Old Women*, author(s?) and illustrator unknown, by a London publisher in 1820.

These five lines from Shakespeare's *Othello* (1604) [Act II, Scene III, Lines 71-75] could be considered an early form of limerick:

And let me the canakin clink, clink;
And let me the canakin clink.
A soldier's a man;
O, man's life's but a span;
Why then, let a soldier drink.

[Special thanks to Wilder Bentley of Occidental, California, for very kindly bringing the column in *Science Digest* to my attention.]

The 1907 British Limerick Craze

by Susan Thorpe

According to the OED, the term *limerick* dates from 1896, although the form existed before that date. Limericks were first mentioned in *The London Times* in 1903 when there was a single reference as to their possible use for naval messages at sea. The next mention of the word in *The London Times* wasn't until 1907, when there were 12 references. This sudden change was the result of newspapers running limerick competitions. They published the first four lines and competitors had to submit a fifth line. However, it was soon claimed that the winners were being selected randomly, rather than by the quality of their entry, and that the competitions were simply a form of lottery. This claim led to questions in Parliament and to comparisons with other forms of gambling. Horatio Bottomley, owner of *John Bull* magazine, and generally a cad and bad egg, defended limericks in the House of Commons. It is not clear whether *John Bull* had joined the craze. One correspondent in *The Times* wrote that if people did not want to play the Tables at Monte Carlo, they could stay in London and write limericks! The craze extended to the theatre. In September 1907, the play *Gay Gordons*, which Seymour Hicks wrote and also appeared in, included many limericks.

The scale of the craze led to a substantial increase in the sales of 6d postal orders, the entry fee to the competition. 6 million were sold in August 1907 alone, whereas normally only a few thousand were sold. It was remarked that the public was too interested in limericks to pay attention to the all-important Navy. One judge commented that cooks were so busy entering the limerick competitions that they were ignoring their duties. The first major court case was an action by Arthur Blyth, a commercial traveller from Manchester, UK. He claimed to have been wrongly denied the winning prize. Another competitor had sent in exactly the same line "When the ring and the book shall appear" as the fifth and final line to:

He wished her a Happy New Year,
And endeavoured to make it quite clear
That her happiness lay
In naming the day...

Blyth lost the case.

The Prime Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, in 1907, said “I have seen a great deal in the papers with reference to limericks but I do not know what on earth it all means.” In 1908, a committee of Parliament, the Joint Committee on Lotteries and Advertisements, recommended that legislation should be introduced to prohibit these competitions. However, no action was taken by parliament. In 1914 just one magazine, *Answers*, voluntarily stopped the competitions.

The first reference in *The London Times* to limericks in the US was in 1908 when, in a libel action between William Randolph Hearst’s *American* and the *New York Times*, the poet-lawyer representing Hearst concluded his case with:

And now all are happy again,
Not a publisher’s name bears a stain:
Which all goes to show
How far humour will go
In smoothing a litigant’s pain.

There is a certain parallel in the date of the craze. In 2007, a hundred years later, the British people have been subjected to a craze of TV phone-in competitions some of which, it has transpired, have been dubiously run in order to raise money for the TV companies. In at least one case, however, the winner was chosen randomly, rather than by quality of entry. Does this sound familiar?

Collecting Limerick Books

by Dr. Arthur J. Deex

I’m not a limerick collector, but I do collect limerick sources—books, periodicals, and other materials that contain limericks—and my library contains well over 1,300 books. Some books, like Norman Douglas’ *Some Limericks*, have been printed by multiple publishers. *Some Limericks*, the first bawdy limerick book openly distributed, appeared in many pirated editions after it was published by Douglas in 1928; of the twenty-eight known editions, I have been able to acquire eighteen. Other books, like *Peter Pauper’s Limerick Book*, appear in at least ten slightly different versions all from the same publisher, The Peter Pauper Press. Most limerick books, however, are published in only one or two editions.

Finding limerick books is not an easy task. Both book dealers and publishers (and authors), in many cases, don’t have a clue as to what a limerick really is. After buying a few books sight unseen that contained la-de-das or quatrains, I have resorted to providing a short definition, an example, and a request for a quote of a limerick in the book before I buy. I haunt used book stores and I search the internet’s book dealers on a regular basis. Often one limerick book will lead to another and so on. To keep track of what limerick books I have and what others exist, I have developed an extensive limerick bibliography database.

Limerick book collecting is a great hobby. Non-obsessive collectors will find great pleasure adding a new book now and then to their collections, and reading and quoting them to family (perhaps not) and friends.

[Note: Dr. Deex has the largest collection of limerick books in the world. Doug Harris, whose limericks conclude "A Gathering of Limericks," has the second largest, around 800 books.—DM]

A Gathering of Limericks

Bill Brandt

Are limericks a hundred years old?
At least that's what I have been told.
A few are quite funny,
While others are punny,
And many are racy and bold.

The Experiment

A scientist with four degrees,
Started training some six legged fleas.
When he would say "Hup!"
The fleas would jump up,
Then he started a test with the fleas.

First two legs were removed from each flea,
The effect he then wanted to see.
When he would say "Hup!"
The fleas all jumped up.
He continued the test with the fleas.

Two more legs were removed from each flea,
The effect he then wanted to see.
And when he said "Hup!"
The fleas still jumped up.
He continued again with the fleas.

Last two legs were removed from each flea,
The effect he then wanted to see.
But when he said "Hup!"
Not one flea would jump up.
So he puzzled on why that would be.

The scientist scratched his left ear,
Till a thought in his head did appear.
With a satisfied look
He then wrote in his book,
"A flea without legs cannot hear!"



Ross Eckler

“Limericks have always had a ribald reputation, and one of my favorites has been: There was a young maid from Madras / Who had a most beautiful ass / Not round and pink / As you probably think / But gray, had long ears, and ate grass. (The word ‘ass’ has always beguiled me because it has two separate meanings, one ribald, one innocuous.) My contribution to the genre was a National Puzzlers' League puzzle in the May 1981 Enigma on the homonymic pair burrow-burrow:”

A FIRST carries cargo around;
In a SECOND a woodchuck is found.
If this is unclear
You cannot, I fear,
Tell your ass from a hole in the ground.

Richard Lederer (Riddler Reacher)

[Note: Richard Lederer’s book, *The Cunning Linguist* (St. Martin’s, 2003) has a chapter titled “A Leer of Limericks” featuring dozens of off-color examples from his collection.—DM]

A Rime Lick

A decrepit old logolept, Lederer,
Through word play felt better and betterer.
 What cured all his ailments?
 Beheadments, curtailments,
Puns, palindromes, pangrams, etceterer.

“What I try to do in the next one is to integrate three palindromes into a limerick, metrically and rhymingly.”

A SANTA AT NASA is par.
DRAW PUPIL'S LIP UPWARD goes far.
 But the best palindrome
 For a limerick poem
Is RATS LIVE ON NO EVIL STAR.

Jeremiah and Karen Farrell

Spelling can be sometimes quite odd.
There’s no T in China—my God!
While in each bonnet,
There’s a B on it:
And merely one P in a pod.

Jim Puder

“Sounds like a great idea—what periodical would be more appropriate to celebrate the centenary of the limerick than Word Ways? Incidentally, I think that ‘Limerickshaws’ is a clever title for

the piece—but if you post it on Word Ways' website (which might not be a bad idea), don't be surprised if search engines send you people interested in reading about lime-colored rickshaws. Here's a couple I've composed for the occasion; the second one is reversible—a word-unit palindrome.”

There once was a caveman named Dave,
Who invented word jests in his cave;
Long into the night,
He would whoop, howl and write—
“Double dactyls! Limerickshaws!...” he'd rave.

Go, limericks arch! Wherever, flow!
Alike, laughter and groans spike thy show!
Chaff thy chaff! Show thy spike!
Groans and laughter alike
Flow wherever arch limericks go!

Anil

An Icky Limerick with a Charade Chaser

Out of those poems *limerickey*
I propose to take the mickey:
 Their authors have sunk
 To a low level—drunk?
I say blame that thirteenth lime rickey!

Ove Michaelsen

“Here are 4 of my limericks from a book-in-progress, *Rhyme*, which contains over 250.”

Ucalegon must be in town.
I heard that your house had burned down.
The one with a porch on it?
Ugh. How unfortunate.
All you have left is that gown?

[Note: Ucalegon, according to *Webster's New International*, 2nd edition, means “a next-door neighbor, or a neighbor whose house is on fire.” Ross Eckler has called it the word with the strangest definition of all.—DM]

Plastered Caster (a "spoonerick")

An anchorman, fond of his booze,
Was fired while reading the news.
"They're treating me bad,"
He said. "All that I had
Was just one tini many martoos."

"In the next limerick, luck allowed me the opportunity to use eight rhymes in the five lines."

In a minster, a mister, a minister,
"Saved" a spinster, a sister, quite sinister.
Their disgust only grew
More lust in the two
On a pew with a brew. Yes, he Guinnessed 'er.

The girlfriend of Morton ("Mort") Tucker (Nice pair!)
Was stationed, or "stuck," at Fort Rucker. (No fair!)
While boarding a copter (I swear),
The rotors done chopped her (blonde hair).
The poor thing was one lousy ducker. (Beware.)

Don Hauptmann

Morris Dees knew the candidates' woes
And denounced them in vehement prose:
"All these guys look asleep.
How can *anyone* sweep?"
The headlines ran thus: "Dees: Dems Doze."

Jim Siergey

A Double Stein

One morning sweet Gertrude Stein chose
To wear six inch heels, open toes
She cried out "Oh, hell!"
As she tripped and fell
Then arose and arose and arose

One evening dear Gertrude Stein chose
To drink away all of her woes
She chugged so much that
Face first she fell flat
Then arose and arose and arose

Doug Hoylman

Hai-Limer-Cu-Ick

There was a young man from Honshu
Who tried limericks in haiku,
But

Susan Thorpe



Mary's snow-white lamb jumps and hops,
And when it's tired it normally flops.
But lamb beware,
Your end is near.
For you are destined to become lamb chops.

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch some flour from the mill.
Jack was so keen,
But Jill a bit green.
It's a good job Jill was on the pill.

The Owl and the Pussycat went to sea,
But that isn't how it was meant to be.
The Owl should be hooting
And the Pussy footing
In the tree and on the rug, respectively.

Steve Toth

There was an old man who was giddy
He moved north to Crescent City
Then down he sat
To make a limerick of that
& that's how I came up with this ditty.

Dr. Arthur J. Deex

“The first limerick is a *Beheaded Limerick*; no limerick is ever improved by explaining it (Wilkin's Rule).”

The Math Behind Global Warming

Calculating, first, heat from the Earth's core
And considering frost that is hoar,
Next rays that are cosmic,
And waves that are seismic,
Then a rhythm that's known as Al Gore.

Said the Postmaster General, “Hooray!
I have something important to say:
The letter you send
From here to South Bend
Costs less than a penny a day.”

Louis Phillips

The director with an actress rehearsed her,
Altho she frequently cursed, "Sir,
I am no prude,
But Macbeth in the nude
Will shock my parents in Worcester."

Jeff Grant

"Good idea - except it kept me awake for hours last night! Thought I'd have a go at composing an alphabetic limerick (can't remember seeing one before, but guess someone has probably done it). Quite hard to get the meter and rhyme right. It turned out a bit cryptic (or nonsensical!), but hey, that's 'poetry.'"

Alphabetic Limerick

A beauty called 'Diamond Elle' Fipps,
Got high income just kissing lips.
"My name's oddly pretty,
Quite regal." (so twitty)
Use velcro, we've xrayed your zips!

"OK, more lost sleep! This time thinking about the least words needed to compose a reasonably coherent limerick. Finally arrived at the following 4-word specimen. It's written in the style of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. I think he would have appreciated the intensive (super-) of the euphemistic 'intercoursey' (= fucking). Actually there are hits for both 'intercoursey' and 'intercoursey' on the Net. If you want me to interpret the sentiments expressed in the long-word limerick, it would be something like: 'Government initiatives to move people out of mental facilities into the community (as a cost-cutting measure) could be seen as reinforcing the estimation of those people as worthless.'"

Politicorecommendation:
Deinstitutionalization.
Superintercoursey
Profloccinauci-
nihilipilification.

Martin Gardner

Paradoxical Limericks

There was a young girl in Japan
Whose limericks never would scan.
When someone asked why,
She said with a sigh,
"It's because I always attempt to
get as many words into the last
line as I possibly can."

There was a young lady of Crewe

Whose limericks stopped at line two.

There was a young man of Verdun

“The preceding limericks, when I published them in my *Scientific American* column, prompted the British writer of comic verse, J.A. Lindon, to compose the following.”

J.A. Lindon

That things were not worse was a mercy!
You read bottom line first
Since he wrote all reversed—
He did every job arsy-versy
A very odd poet was Percy!

Found it rather a job to impart ‘em.
When asked at the time,
“Why is this? Don’t they rhyme?”
Said the poet of Chartham, “Can’t start ‘em.”

So quick a verse writer was Tuplett,
That his limerick turned out a couplet.

A three-lines-a-center was Purcett,
So when *he* penned a limerick (curse it!)
The blessed thing came out a tercet!

Absentminded, the late poet Moore,
Jaywalking, at work on line four,
Was killed by a truck.

So Clive scribbled only line five.

Joyce Holland

Invisible Limerick No. 18

Max Gutmann

“If the anniversary of the limerick craze is an appropriate time to plug a limerick book, *There Was a Young Girl from Verona: A Limerick Cycle Based on the Complete Dramatic Works of Shakespeare* is still available. (<http://ddaze.com/02aVerona/Verona.htm>)”

There was once a *jeanne fille* from Bordeaux,
Who said *oui* when she really meant *neaux*,
And said *non* to mean *oui*,
So an *homme* couldn't *soui*
If she wanted to come or to *geaux*.

Jane had visions of being a dr.,
But anatomy photographs shr.
She was last heard to say,
"Th-these people are na...!"
To this day Bellevue hasn't unl.

Fred Crane

"I'm a big fan of the beginnings of epic poems, from 'Arma virumque cano' to 'By the shores of
Gitchee Gumee,' so here's my translation of one of them." [Note: I.C. = Iowa City.—DM]

Don't miss Homer's first gig in I.C.!
Hear him rappin' and buy his CD.
How Achilles got sore,
And shed lots of Greek gore.
No kids, please--this show's not P.C.

Rick Lime

George Limerick (multiple endings)

Well, our *first* George cut fruit trees with axes,
And our second read lips and raised taxes.
George the Third warned, "Beware!
There's real evil out there:
North Koreas, Irans, and Iraqses."

alternate ending #2:

George the Third was the bane
Of that Saddam Hussein,
And a lot of third-world prophylaxis.

alternate ending #3:

Which are not, I have heard,
Things the great George the Third
Loves the most. Pulling out of world pacts is.

Doug Harris

“Spoonerick is a limerick where there’s a twist in the last line prompting a spooneristic option.”
[Note: Ove Michaelsen in a limerick above independently came up with the same term.—DM]

Said the wolf, "I don't wish to be crude,
But you're teasing could be misconstrued.
Scarlet mini-skirts, split
As yours is, leave no bit
Unobserved, little red, hiding rude".

“The following is a diminishing series on a single theme.”

There’s a sale at the limerick shop,
Two tenths off is the most they will chop.
So get down there today
And stock up I should say

There’s a sale at the limerick store,
They’re selling them cheap by the score.
Discount—40%

Pile ‘em high, sell ‘em cheap’s the intent—
They’re now offering 60%

Last Day Sale!—up to 80%....

SOLD OUT

Introduction To The Omnificent English Dictionary In Limerick Form

When did you last curl up in bed with a good dictionary? They’re useful, of course, but dictionaries aren’t the most readable of books around, are they? Well, all that’s going to change.

Allow me to introduce you to The Omnificent English Dictionary In Limerick Form, or The OEDILF ("oh-DILF") for short. The OEDILF is an international online dictionary writing project whose goal is nothing short of writing an original limerick *for every single definition of every single word in the English language!* We are writing our "limericktionary" one alphabetical section at a time, and after three years we’re only up to the CI- words. We have, however, written some 43,000 limericks.

How? Our title provides a clue: *Omnificent*--"marked by unlimited creativity." We’ve been fortunate to attract extremely creative authors to this grand and glorious project, and I truly believe our limericks will be enjoyed 200 years from now, in part because of our workshopping process. We’re not just a collection of randomly submitted limericks. No, when new writing comes in, Workshopping Editors offer suggestions as to how each piece might be improved, though all final decisions regarding limerick content rest with the author.

So if someone needs a definition for *aegyptopithecus*, will we be their first reference source? Probably not. But we do offer *three* (so far) aegyptopithecus limericks defining the word more entertainingly than Webster's ever dreamed of. Come join us at www.oedilf.com. We're having a blast!

Chris J. Strolin
Founder and Editor in Chief, The OEDILF

A Selection of OEDILF Limericks

hugh t.: " - "

I'm greatly attached to the hyphen;
you'll probably think that I'm trifling,
but splitting the syllables,
if it's done skillfully,
gives the verse rhythm and life.

Editor's Note: As you know, we're writing The OEDILF in alphabetical order. This piece on "hyphen" is in the database because the symbol "-" comes before "a" alphabetically.

Joanna Larson: "a"

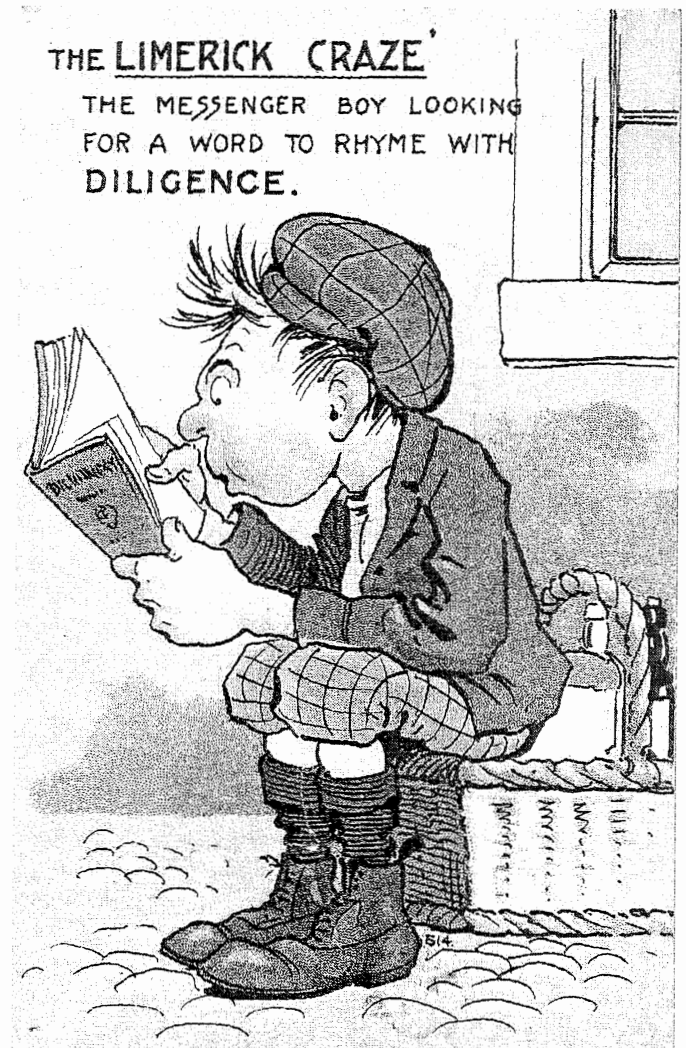
I thought I should try to convey
In five lines (without seeming *outré*)
Just how much I enjoy
(Like some kid with his toy)
Writing limericks without using *eigh*.

Bob Hale: "a cappella"

I once knew a talented fella
Who sang by himself **a cappella**.
Without breaking sweat
He'd perform a duet —
How he did it is too rude to tell-a.

PGS: "ablaut"

"Darling drink!" so she drank, and got drunk;
"Do not sink!", but she sank, getting sunk.
Triple rhyming perfection,
By **ablaut**-inflection,
But who links it to lank is a lunk!



Frank Luke: "accelerate"

Let's **accelerate**, step on gas, yo!
We dig speed and like fast more than slow.
Put the pedal to metal,
In rip-roaring fettle,
Va-va-voom, blasting off, go, go, GO!

Bill Cernansky: "ad nauseam"

Ad nauseam, ad nauseam, and then
Ad nauseam, ad nauseam, again.
Ad nauseam once more,
Ad nauseam line four,
Ad nauseam, ad nauseam (say when).

Shawn A. McBurnie: "adapt"

A religion a week is our vow,
But you took to the *koans*—and how!
Never mind; though *satori*
Is now a past glory,
Adapt: that was Zen; this is Tao.

Rachel Aubin: "adaw/aday/anight"

Most **adaw*** in the morn, or **aday**.
(*That's "to rise," in the old-fashioned way.)
Those nocturnal, like bats,
Wake **anight**, as do frats
To go party at UCLA.

J.E. Pettit: "advance directive"

Since my pain's grown too powerful, drug me;
Bring my loved ones all in here to hug me;
Tell the doctors to go;
Turn the lights way down low;
Say you love me again—then unplug me.

Author's Note: **Advance directives**, based on the theory that competent adults have the right to refuse medical treatment if they choose to do so, are documents giving direction to health care providers about medical choices to be made in certain life-or-death circumstances. One well-known type of advance directive is a so-called 'living will', a document allowing a person to state—before they become incapacitated by disease or injury—their final wishes in writing.

BobfromThirsk: "affront"

The audition for Tinker Bell's part
Was cut short by an ad-libbing start,
After which I said, "Runt!
Why'd ya cause such **affront**?"
She said, "Dad, it was only a fart."

Dr. Alphabet: "alias"

There once was a thief with a name
And an **alias**. Both were the same.
When the cops asked him why,
He replied with a sigh,
"So you wouldn't know which one to blame."

Carol June Hooker: "allée"

Twice as high as the width of the way,
Lofty reeds line the boardwalk **allée**;
Splintered, silvery board
Has this shoreline path floored
Beside Sandy Point, Chesapeake Bay.

David Franks: "American"

I'm a '**Mercan**! I'm pure U-S-A!
Say it loud! Say it proud! Hip-hooray!
By the gift of God's grace,
Number One! In your face!
(I am also a pubic toupee.)

Author's Note: How appropriate that this pronunciation is sometimes uttered by our own President Bush.

Seth Brown: "Amsterdam"

In the Hague, there's a judge I once knew
Who from **Amsterdam** came by canoe.
He said, "Clogged though it be,
It's my hometown, you see,
And I'd love to go back, wooden shoe?"

Tim Alborn: "antecessor"

I was told by my history professor
Alexander the Great's **antecessor**
Was Philip the Second
And not, as I'd reckoned,
Alexander a Little-bit Lesser.

Bob Aubin: "archness"

Well, Father, just what can I say?
I believe that your bent for rough play
Is but **archness**. So hear
My confession: I fear
That I sinned when we played in that way.

Author's Note: When used in this context, *archness* connotes inappropriate playfulness. This piece is meant to shed light on the torment of abuse victims — male and female, child and adult — who have suffered through the misdeeds of some authority figures, and is not meant to disparage those honorable people who have dedicated their lives to doing good work.

Richard English: "article"

A wordsmith, Philology Pete
Sold **articles** out on the street.
In poems or prose,
A's, an's, the's and *those* —
He's a lexicographical treat.

Pamela Greene: "asterisk"

The **asterisk**, shaped like a star,*
Means a note down below,
Kept remote so the flow
Of the text isn't vexed with a mar.

* Or a spider, when seen from afar

Brian Cairns: "audition"

My Shakespeare **auditions** were fine—
Though as Hamlet I fluffed the odd line—
But my Shylock went well,
My Othello was swell,
And my Bottom, they said, was divine!

Madeleine Begun Kane: "audition"

If a symphony job is your mission,
You'd better learn how to **audition**.
Those try-outs are trying.
Remember, no crying!
Can't hack it? Become a physician.

Jane Auerbach, "Auerbach, Red"

Former Celtics coach **Red** had just died.
"A relation?" friends asked. "Why dry-eyed?"
"Though my brother once claimed
He's our uncle (both famed
For their sports skill and red hair)—he lied."

Chris Doyle: "autogram"

Herein there are seventeen E's;
Nineteen S's, two X's and D's;
Five H's, three V's,
A's, F's, W's; two G's,
U's; four O's; six R's, I's; eight N's, T's.

Author's Note: An **autogram** is a self-referential sentence that provides a full and accurate count of the letters it contains. (In Line 4, "W's" is pronounced "DUB-yuhz")

Mephistopheles: "awful/awesome"

Though its rhymes and its meter are lawful,
People think that this limerick's **awful**
'Cuz there's nothing to cause 'em
To think that it's **awesome**
And e-mail their friends that they're ROFL.

otherwisefine: "babouche"

You can eat all my baba ghanouzh,
Or half flatten my fancy tarboosh.
You can crumple or cut
Almost anything, but
Don't you step on my blue suede **babouche**.

Author's Note:

baba ghanouzh: a purée used in Middle Eastern cookery.

tarboosh: a fez or hat worn by Muslim men, sometimes as the base of a turban.

babouche: an Oriental heelless slipper.

man from tashkent: backwards

Stuff this teach doesn't probably school.
Amusing but, possibly, cruel.
Read to cleverness needs it.
See you, **backwards** reads it?
Out this figure eventually you'll.

Jacqui Brown: "balcony"

From her **balcony**, Juliet hissed,
"Hey, Montague, dammit, I'm pissed!
Though our stars may be crossed,
Art thou totally lost?
And just how many cues hast thou missed?!"

Larry Solomon: "basilisk"

"It's too risky a venture," I groaned.
"Please don't have your pet **basilisk** cloned.
All the research has found
When these reptiles abound
We just sit round the house getting stoned."

Author's Note: Though there is a small harmless reptile called a basilisk, this limerick discusses the mythical beast, which one would be unlikely to keep as a pet. Depending on which legend you read, it's variously a serpent or lizard or dragon, whose glance can turn you to stone (or simply kill you).

SheilaB: "bass"

I am pretty much certain I'll pass
In my sophomore cookery class.
I concocted a dish
Using two kinds of fish,
And I'm calling it "porgy and **bass**."

Anthony OBrien: "bass viol/base/basis"

As I tuned my **bass viol** today,
A sousaphone started to bray.
O how vile, how **base**!
What a thundering disgrace!!
The **basis** for action, I'd say!!!

Author's Note: The sousaphone is the largest and brashest of the brass band bass instruments. The bass viol, or *viola da gamba* is the most widely used and expressive of the early stringed instruments. The largest version, the *violone* survives in the modern orchestra and jazz bands as the double bass.

turnip: "battering ram"

Your Highness, we're quite in a jam.
For when looking up *battering ram*,
Not an engine of siege
Did the sage find, my liege,
But the first step in deep-frying lamb.

SusanL: "beer"

Keep your freak hair and nose ring at home.
If you play where the buffalo roam,
Grab a Stetson and **beer**;
We drink long-necks 'round here,
Not that warm crap all covered in foam.

mike scholtes: "beg"

If your omelet has feathers and legs,
There are pertinent questions it **begs**,
Which are: whose was the cock-up
That let a cock knock up
The hens, and who candles the eggs?

Chuck Folkers: "bejeezus"

It's a foolhardy person who'll dare
To have lunch in the woods with a bear.
If you have such designs,
Then *bejeezus* defines
What he'll probably, out of you, scare.

Howard Spindel: "belly laugh"

PC Santa Claus wants you to know
That his **belly laugh**'s still good to go.
Down the chimney he'll slide,
Then he'll belt out with pride,
"Merry Christmas to all, Lady of the Evening, Lady of the Evening, Lady of the Evening."

Scott Campisi: "betray"

Ere I kill her I kiss her tonight,
Though her kiss is but treachery's bite.
If she lives she'll **betray**
Other men the same way.
Put the light out and put out the light.

Author's Note: Shakespeare's *Othello*, Act 5, scene 2: "Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men. / Put out the light, and then put out the light....I kissed thee ere I killed thee: no way but this; / Killing myself, to die upon a kiss."

David Alan Brooks: "bill"

Yes, the **bill** of the pelican relican
Hold more than his pelican belican.
People still see how welican
But not how the helican
Stock more than a pelican delican.

Author's Note: With apologies to Dixon Lanier Merritt, whose famous limerick of 1910 first used the rhyming words *belican* and *helican*. This playful tribute is perhaps the world's first "octelican" pelican limerick.

Mark Mironer: "black widow"

A **black widow's** a spider that's able
To slaughter her mate (hence the label).
Right after they mate,
It's the end of the date.
(Hey, at least he puts food on the table.)

Graham Lester and Chris Young: "blaspheme"

I've **blasphemed**: my late grandmother's home
Boasts a statue of Christ (brought from Rome).
As a statement, it's bold,
So, to get the house sold,
I have dressed up Our Lord as a gnome.

Dave Jermy: "blood"

It ran through my hands in a flood,
Turned the earth at my feet into mud.
I thought, "Help me! That knife
Put an end to my life,"
And I fell to the ground soaked in **blood**.

alkahuna: "blue cheese"

Wanting lunch, in his kitchen he sought it.
Found **blue cheese**; to the table he brought it,
Took one bite, and dropped dead!
With his last breath, he said,
"Say, that cheese wasn't blue when I bought it!"

Author's Note: *Blue cheese* or *bleu cheese* describes a class of cheeses that are made containing blue or blue-green mold. Some well-known types are Roquefort, Stilton, and Gorgonzola.

Bluebelle: "booze"

If he thinks that his partner he'll lose,
He'll be quick to forswear drinking booze,
But faced with the liquor,
He'll change his mind quicker,
'Cos the **booze**, not the boozer will choose.

Michael Redei: "boring"

I can see that my words you're ignoring.
And it's clear that you find me plain **boring**.
The plugs in your ears
And your chuckles and sneers
Don't hurt me—but please stop that snoring.

psheil: "breath"

"It's the hospital here, please come fast!"
There we sat, with our thoughts from the past.
At the side of her bed
Nothing more could be said.
One short **breath** ... then one more ... then her last.

Author's Note: At 7 AM on Saturday 29th July 2006 I got a phone call from the hospital. At 11:30 my Mum died peacefully; my sister and I were sitting with her.

Turnip Jr.: "brigand"

A pirate's a man of the sea;
He robs, for a **brigand** is he.
He steals a ship's booty
And calls it his loot. He
Then buries it under a tree.

Lanny: "brocaded"

The wardrobe of Louis Quatorze
At Versailles covered several floors.
His skivvies, I'm told,
Were **brocaded** in gold—
Too precious to wear out-of-doors.

Bob Dvorak: "buckle"

My dear spouse of three decades, white-knuckled,
Shouted, "Fasten your seatbelt!" I chuckled,
"It's just down the street."
"It's your Maker you'll meet!"
Like a dutiful husband, I **buckled**.

sigg: "Burton, Richard F."

He explored and he drew back the curtain
On regions unknown or uncertain,
On peoples exotic,
On customs erotic:
The Captain Sir **Richard F. Burton**.

Author's Note: Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821–1890) was a famous explorer and he wrote many books and articles on the lands, languages, and cultures of the peoples he encountered. His most famous journeys were to Mecca and Medina in the Arabian peninsula and to Lake Tanganyika in Africa.

As his exploration career wound down, he turned to translations and publishing. His most notorious works were early translations of *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana* and *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, often known as *The Arabian Nights*.

Chris J. Strolin: "bust"

I was feeling more terror than lust
When two breasts through my doorway were thrust.
Five feet tall, four feet wide,
They were pushing inside,
And then someone cried out, "*It's a bust!*"

sallycello: "bye-bye"

Give Grandma a kiss and wave **bye-bye**,
And thank her again for the mai tai,

And the weed that she shared;
Let's just hope she's not snared
'Fore she visits again in her tie-dye.

Graig Gigol: "Cajun"

On his birthday, King Henry the 1st,
After eating some **Cajun**-spiced wurst,
Said, "We thought for a 2nd
It was juicy; we reckoned
We would eat it to lower our 3st."

speedynail: "camouflageable"

A chameleon whose skin was inert
Tried to blend with a branch till it hurt.
As his brow sweated beads,
He announced, "What I need's
Camouflageable hide—or a shirt."

Jesse Frankovich: "cannibal"

To a **cannibal**, people are pannable,
Servable, save-in-Saran-able,
Diceable, boilable,
Sliceable, broilable,
Tasty and, fittingly, cannable.

sl8ofhand: "cannibalise"

Of Pete's hat, we took all but the ball
To make Paul a new rug for the fall.
John, the wag, he cracked wise
And said, "**Cannibalise**?
From Peter's tuque we toupee Paul."

Basingstoke: "cant"

I huff and I puff and I pant
As I slip and I slide on this slant.
This structure is built
With a permanent tilt;
So don't ask me to straighten—I **cant**.

Alberta Swan: "carfax"

Four roads formed a **carfax** where I
Stood and wondered, "Which way?", with a sigh.
So I asked Mr Frost,
Who was equally lost.
He said, "Take the one *least* travelled by."

Carfax (KAR-facks) refers to meeting of four roads. The term originates from the Latin "quadrifurcus" four-forked.

waterrocks: "carving"

He whittled the willow, beguiled
By this wood-fusion, mild mixed with wild.
As the wind and her whistle
Set whispers abristle,
He sighed, and his **carving**-child smiled.

Thomas Taylor: "cave art"

As Picasso from Lascaux departed,
'We have done nothing new,' he imparted.
This **cave art** so fine
With its pure form and line
Marks the dawn at which painted art started.

Author's Note: In 1940, as he left the famous painted cave at Lascaux in south-western France, Picasso remarked, 'We have invented nothing.'

Robert Holland: "cell/cellphone"

A pardon for Paris, I plead,
For her whimsical, heir-headed deed.
It's a shame she can't **cell**
From her **cell** and then tell
All the dish in the can until freed.

Author's Note: "Hilton launches appeal, turns to Schwarzenegger for pardon", *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 2007.

"I don't think the Founding Fathers had Paris Hilton's driving conviction in mind when they enacted the cruel and unusual punishment provision of the Constitution,' said Loyola Law School professor Laurie Levenson. She said Hilton had nothing to lose by seeking the appeal and the pardon request, which were probably designed more to garner public sympathy than achieve a legal victory." (*ibid.*)

mrsrev: "change of course"

Just after my fifteenth divorce,
I began to feel sorrow (remorse).
So I joined with a church—
Left my sins in the lurch—
I'm enjoying my new **change of course**.

Dottie: "chorus"

The soloist stands there before us.
The verses she sings often bore us—
The bit we like best
Is the end, where the rest
Of us lustily join in the **chorus**.

stella: "cinerary"

There's a **cinerary** urn that contains
All my grandmother's earthly remains.
It's a Roman pastiche
On the lawn, in a niche,
But we bring her inside when it rains.

Virge: "schema"

There once was a [person] from [place]
Who [insert more detail in this space];
When [a theme for adults
Goes in here] it results
In a [rude, yet still logical case].

Editor's Note: This one was originally written for our Home Page but it now resides in what we call our "Bottom Drawer" patiently waiting for the opening of the Sc- section of the alphabet.