LIMERICKSHAWS: THE GRAND FINALE

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[We remind readers that Kickshaws will appear in the next issue.]

anti-limerick    faux-limerick    postlimerick    shimerick
auto-limerick    G’limerick    prelimerick    slimmerick
blimerick        glimmerick    proto-limerick    SuperLimerick
contra-limerick   Haiku/Limerick    pseudolimerick    trilimerick
counter-limerick  multilimerick    quasi-limerick    unlimerick
counterlimerick   neo-limerick    rhymerick    XLimerick
dimmerick         non-limerick    semi-limerick    Zimerick

In the last issue of Word Ways, Kickshaws became Limerickshaws, a special edition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 1907 British Limerick Craze. The column began with 28 words found using Google. Each of the words referred to limericks, and each began with an L. Similarly the words above refer to limericks, but they begin with letters other than L. Most of them are terms that writers have made up to refer to invented forms. A multilimerick is a poem made of two or more limericks. A Zimerick is a limerick about the Zimbabwe situation. A Haiku/Limerick is a combination haiku and limerick, but SuperLimerick is a character from a story written by a blogger. Some of the terms appear in several websites and are defined in more than one way.

Limerickshaws had a much greater response than any previous Kickshaws column. The “letterick” contest generated more than 26 limericks. The letter Z was the most popular, while the letter Y was left unlimericked until the very last moment. Before seeing the list, let’s look at a few more interesting things that are happening in the always surprising world of limericks.

Special thanks to Jim Sierghey for the drawings of Mr. Q that accompany the limericks. See the Kickshaws column in the next issue for a review of Edmund Conti’s Quiblets, which includes many more drawings of Mr. Q.

Limitless Limericks

David’s Limitless Limericks (limericks.davidalanbrooks.com/html/wordplay) is an one-person display of many different kinds of limericks sweetened with the salt of wordplay: Lettericks for A and B, a limerick with the word HAD repeated 8 times in the last line, a limerick that is a four-fold anagram of the first line, an alphabetic limerick like that by Jeff Grant in which the words begin with each letter of the alphabet in order, a limerick in which the letters of each word are jumbled up, and 8-elican pelican limerick, a limerick with 30 different rhyming words, a 26-word limerick that reveals the order of the letters on a QWERTY keyboard, a limerick written in boustrophedan style in which the 2nd and
4th lines are typed from right to left, and a few others limericks that incorporate wordplay constraints. Thanks to Doug Harris for finding it.

A Love Poem Made of Limericks

Empty Nest (empty-nest.contentquake.com/category/relationships) features "Emergency Room," a very funny 13-limerick love poem written by a woman whose screen name is maureen. It is about her relationship with her soccer-loving husband. Check out the whole poem! It begins like this:

EMERGENCY ROOM

There was a young man from England
With roots in a very Sconish clan
Who stole my heart
From the very start
And since then I’ve been his biggest fan

I left love notes in his school locker
Wow, he said what a shocker!
But you’ve no chance
He said with a glance
The love of my life is the great game of soccer!

No matter how many love notes were sent
This young man refused to relent
Until my flat chest
Grew big east & west
Along with all the other female equipment!

Anti-Limericks: The Avant-Garde

I just did a Google search for anti-limerick, thinking no one out there could be so avant-garde as to realize that limericks can break the rules to achieve special effects as the Dadaists did. A google search for anti-limerick turns up over 350 hits! Several limericks in this Limerickshaws column could be considered anti-limericks. What is an anti-limerick? On one website (malafide.com/blog/?cat=9&paged=2) a writer says that "Anti-limericks are anti-humor." I am anti-that-guy because he's anti-correct. The Dadaists were anti-artists, and one great tool in their repertoire was humor. However, it is important to realize that the Dadaists' anti-art was, paradoxically, art. Dada protested the uncivilized civilization that lead to Word War I. Thus it was anti-just-about-everything. When I found anti-limericks online, I was hoping that they did something that actually changed the limerick's form. One website defines anti-limerick as a limerick with altered rhyme, rhythm, line length, poem length, etc. By this definition, poems in the previous Limerickshaws that have a greater or a lesser number of lines than the limerick's usual five would be anti-limericks. However, I believe those are more properly termed
"tour de force." They are limericks with a twist on the form, but the twist works only for the limerick it appears in. It is not a general form. For instance, Martin Gardner, J.A. Lindon, and Doug Harris had provided limericks that were perfect except for one or more lines lopped off to make a joke on the limerick's form: The punchline was that there was no punchline. Such a limerick is a tour de force, but it's works like a traditional limerick, not an anti-limerick.

My definition for anti-limerick is a limerick that has one or more of the traditional elements altered, not for a special one-shot effect, but for a more general personal style. In some cases, the anti-limerick is a loose form that relaxes the tight rules that the traditional limerick requires. For instance, the writer might extend the line length in order to fit in all the information; or the rhymes might not quite rhyme because an off-rhyme works better. The writer recreates the form in his or her own image. Susan Thorpe's limericks revel in long words, and they allow for longer lines to accommodate more of the longer words. Dan Sedon's lawyericks speak tough and sometimes ignore the niceties of proper limerick society. We recognize that Susan's and Dan's works are limericks, but we know they are something different, too. They are anti-limericks in the sense that they go against the limerick to create a new limerick form. Often the anti-limerick is funny because the reader at first think it is going to follow the limerick's rules but then finds out that there are too many words, the rhythm is different, the rhyme is off, etc., and sees that it isn't in the traditional mode. This is what avant-garde limericking is all about. Creating new forms leads to creating new limericks, and creating new limericks leads to creating new forms.

Here is a poem from one of the websites, subgenius.com/bigfist/FIST2001-2/WAR4/X0074_Quote_of_the_day.html. It was written by a person screen-named nu-monet. This writer used three words that are famous for having no common rhymes—orange (sporange), silver (chilver), and purple (Hurple). Question: Is it an anti-limerick or a tour de force?

THE ANTI-LIMERICK, by nu-monet

There was a young man with an orange,
Who kept that there orange for a month,
It didn't turn silver,
It turned kinda purple,
And that there was one spoiled orange.

Limericology 101 on YouTube

YouTube, the website that enables anyone to post their own videos about anything, has a limerick show titled Limericology 101, emceed by pancake411, aka Megan. Her friend Caitlin has discovered a new talent, writing limericks, and she has dubbed herself a limericologist. As you may know, YouTube offers anyone the possibility of becoming famous overnight. A singer/actress named "Obama Girl," for instance, shook up the current presidential campaign with her sexy rendition of a song about Obama Baraka, and
she has quickly gained international fame by winning a large YouTube audience. Pancake411’s success is, sad to say, coming very slowly. About 8 months ago, she started with her reading of 7 of Caitlin’s limericks. So far, there have been 89 viewers, which is not many compared to a million or more that Obama Girl had gotten within a few days after she put her shtick on YouTube. Are you curious for more Limericology 101. Go to youtube.com/watch?v=mDlknGSwD78. But first, read this clever little trinket by pancake411’s friend Caitlin.

INTERNET JUNKY

YouTube is quite an addiction, Almost worse than fan fiction Most people talk, While some like to stalk, And others should work on their diction.

Lawyericks

When a limerick bites a lawyer, that’s normal, but when a lawyer writes a limerick, that’s news! And here is today’s news: Lawyer Dan Sedan writes limericks in his spare time. He explains his creations: “These are called ‘lawyericks.’ I make them up as I sit at my desk figuring out how best to nail people and crush my opponents.” Dan, you have the floor.

Oh we all hate lawyers, Agreed! And the innocent, they should never even have need. But when the shit hits the fan, ask anyone, man, you will need a mean slick good one, indeed!

Practicing law in the summer is lame-o, as the heat impedes me in shifting the blame-o. But crime knows no season, and that is the reason, that come August it’s on with the old justice game-o.

well, I sprang from the muck of South Jersey and I learned some things there, for sure-sy like make a tight fist and always look like your pissed had to leave though, cause’ the pine pitch gave me pleurisy!!

“Being a great lover of language myself, I am most honored by your appreciation of my screeds and would gladly grant permission for you to publish them. They only appear on the blog however, so celetus will have to forward them. I last published some stuff in Longshot magazine back in the 80’s before I went to law school, including one of the first
interviews with Abbie Hoffman after he re-emerged from fugitive status. Sadly, my creative energy since has been eaten up by this lawyering gig."

A surgeon with post drunky shakes?
A gas truck with old crappy brakes?
Call it sad, call it funny,
But justice is money.
And without it? Well thems just the breaks.

The editor was nearly hysterical,
"this verse is not truly limerical"
but it pleases my ear,
so some more I will hear
and decide then if they are good bad or chimerical

Puzzled by Limericks?

"LIMERICKS are ubiquitous," Jeremiah Farrell writes, "as even this 3x3 cross puzzle attests."

E L M
R I C
S K I

Across: Down:
1 A tree 1 Bitter vetch
2 Man's name 2 Dead body, Scot
3 Word with jump or mask 3 XXXV years after the Battle of Hastings

Acronym-Pseudonym

Doug Harris saw "somewhere in your article that limericks were once thought potentially useful for naval communications. I was reminded, when seeing your acronym-pseudonym again, that when I did a first-aid course recently, your name was used as a reminder of the order in which to carry out actions and in which to administer assistance.

Dr. ABC stands for:

Danger (check you are not putting yourself in it)
Response (does the casualty react to stimulus?)
Airway (is it clear?)
Breathing (is the chest rising?)
Circulation (is the heart beating?)
which all leads alphabetically to a Decision as to how the casualty may then best be treated. Perhaps I should forward this to some Admirals of my acquaintance?

The thought spawned this:

In a crisis - use abbrevi-ation —
Danger, Response, Airway (hold your station).
Then it's Breathing that's next;
Circulation (now fixed):
It's DR. A, B and C (concentration).

Two Jokey Limericks

"Your Limerick Inferno must have taken you an enormous amount of time," Susan Thorpe observes, "and you have obviously been working overtime with the Limerickshaws. Well done! Now, here are 2 Limericks, especially for you. They are only jokey ones and are not meant seriously."

Dave, you're hooked by the world of Limericks
And it's not just one, two, three or six,
But 100 or more,
I've lost the score.
Will we ever see the return of the Kickshaws mix?

Come now Dave, have you lost the plot?
Not just one issue but two on the trot!
What'll we all do,
Join a Kickshaws queue?
Don't you really think that's rather a lot?

Limerick

Susan proposes another type of Limerick. "I call it the LINERICK. Each line consists of words beginning with the same letter, as distinct from your Lettericks in which all the words begin with the same letter." Susan's premier linerick appears below. Be the first on your block to come up with a linerick. Even better, wow your neighbors with a linerick with lines of words that begin with the 5 least used letters in English—JQVXZ. Send 'em. They'll be in Kickshaws this time. Unless a sh*t load of limericks comes in, and then we'll have to drop Kickshaws forever and replace it with Limerickshaws. Haha, just kidding.

The tormented turtle twitches twice, then thrice.
Myrtle's meticulously masticating mice.
Sheltered she sleeps,
Preemptively peeps,
Restlessly rouses - regurgitating RICE!
Limerick Tribute to Jeff Grant

Ove Michaelson was inspired to write a tribute to one of Word Ways’ most prolific authors as well as one of the best Scrabble players in the world.

Here's to the wizard Jeff Grant,  
Achieving what most of us can't.  
His mental agility  
Makes MY ability  
Bite like a mite on an ant.

Cool Limerick on Global Warming

“Among the many witty limericks in your Limerickshaws special,” Jim Puder comments, “I particularly enjoyed the contributions of Ross Eckler and Dr. Deex, and as a tribute to the latter, I’d like to offer my own take on his ‘Global Warming’ limerick. Dr. Deex believes that no limerick is ever improved by being explained, but I’d go so far as to hint that dictionaries list two different meanings for the verb ‘prefix.’

Web factoid: Scientists estimate that about 100 million tons of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, is released into the atmosphere annually from the digestive tracts of domesticated animals, chiefly cattle.

The Math For Global Warming

Round up supposed heat from Earth’s core,  
Divide Earth’s albedo by four,  
Then puff up Earth’s stratus  
Of bovine-passed flatus  
With rhythms prefixed by Al Gore.

Letterall Limerick

“I did miss contributing to your superb Limerickshaws (even though you did give enough notice!),” Jim continues, “but here’s one now for the November issue. Note that we Aussies pronounce Z, ‘zed’). As far as I know, this is the world’s first ‘letteral limerick.’”

Z OB1 K 2 N LEN:  
'B4 UR XMNACN  
I 2 F 2 C  
S XLNC  
N QR S LENACN.'
Waste Land Limericks

Dr. Arthur Deex pointed out another example of famous poetry converted to limericks: In Making Cocoa for Kingsley Amis (London, Faber & Faber, 1986), master parodist Wendy Cope transformed T.S. Eliot’s long, multilingual, multipage masterpiece, The Waste Land, into 5 wit-ridden limericks, the last of which ends with “I hope you make sense of the notes.” Here is the first stanza, which begins by referring to the first line of Eliot’s work: “April is the cruelest month.” Cope’s limericks condense 100s of lines to a mere 25 lines, thus saving lots of reading time.

In April one seldom feels cheerful;
Dry stones, sun and dust, make me fearful;
Clairvoyantes distress me,
Commuters depress me—
Mat Stetson and gave him an earful.

A Limerick by Dylan Thomas

According to legend, the beloved Welsh poet Dylan Thomas wrote one limerick, and he read it in bars while getting smashed on his ass. When Thomas was in Iowa City, he got so drunk at Donnelly’s Bar that Charlie, the ferret-like bartender, kicked him out. Here is the limerick, but whether he really wrote it or even recited it in bars is another question.

There was an old fellow named God,
Who put a young Virgin in pod.
This amazing behavior
Produced Christ, our Savior,
Who died on the cross, the poor sod.

The Electro-Shock Limerick Machine

Speaking of Eliot, Martin Gardner believes that “the first three lines of T.S. Eliot’s ‘Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’ contain the worst metaphor ever to deface a famous English poem.” (WW, Feb 2007, p 39). I don’t mean to contradict Martin’s opinion, but I thought it was the best metaphor ever to deface a famous English poem. C.S. Lewis wrote a quatrain expressing a similar distaste for the lines. To settle this once and for all, I will put Eliot’s metaphor to the ultimate limerick test, in which all the words in Eliot’s three lines are used in a limerick with other words added to round it out. If the conversion makes an equally grotesque limerick, then there must be something poetically lasting about it. I have my Electro-Shock Limerick Machine right here on the table next to my Desktop Sonnet Guillotine and my All-Season Haiku Taser. I insert Eliot’s metaphor, put a quarter in the slot, press the little button, and stand back. The machine whirs, pops, and sparks. A little hand reaches out of the box, picks up the quarter, takes it into the box, and returns with the results. Oh, my God, Martin! Eliot’s metaphor passed the test!
THE ELECTRO-SHOCK LIMERICK MACHINE

Let us go, then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table.

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Lettericks from A to Z

Lettericks are limericks in which each word begins with the same letter of the alphabet. In the last issue of Word Ways, readers were challenged to come up with their own lettericks. The results, more than a full alphabet's worth, appear below. Because the form is tougher than normal, some of the lettericks veer from the traditional rhyme and rhythm. When you're treading on the playing fields of the avant-garde, breaking the rules is all a part of the game. As you can see, Z is the most popular, but as you can't see, what is the one letter that seemed to provide the most trouble, with at least two people saying that they tried but just couldn't come up with anything? I was going to suggest composing a letterick for the missing letter as a challenge for the next issue, but at the very last minute someone sent one. Can you figure out which letter was the last one?
Stuart Kidd gives his take, or double-take, on the form: "Regarding the lettericks that you invited readers to compose and send in, there would seem to be two distinct challenges involved in any attempt to compile a complete alphabet of such limericks. For most initial letters, the challenge is primarily the literary one of coming up with a sufficiently interesting or amusing thought or theme to base the limerick upon. For the half dozen or so letters (e.g., J, Q, X, Y, Z, etc.) that command relatively few dictionary pages, however, there is in addition the more basic struggle simply to find enough suitable rhyme-words, and usable verbs, to construct a complete limerick."

DM

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

Susan Thorpe

Bombs, barrage balloons, Britain's blazing Blitz.
Buildings blasted, blown bits by bits.
Body bags, booty,
Brilliant beauty.
Broken? Bunkum! Brave breezy Brits!

Susan Thorpe

Chef Charlie Cook's considerable corporation's
Causing clients calorific consternation.
Chips cholesterolic,
Catastrophic colic.
'Café's Closed -- Customer Constipation'.

Susan Thorpe

Divi-divi, dodo, distinctive duplication.
Digrams, doublets, double-dactyls, decapitation.
Decimating deletions.
Dictionary diversions.
Day-dreaming, doodling, drafting - DEADLINES? - damnation!'
Susan Thorpe

Exhausting English essays, extreme equations.
Each evening evoking expletives, exclamations.
Energy exuded,
Entertainment excluded.
Economics, Engineering, enslaving examinations!

Jeff Grant

Five fellows from fair Fotheringhay,
Filed forth full flashing for fray:
Feeley fought Frilley,
Fagg fought FitzWillie,
Fookes favored faster foreplay.

Susan Thorpe

Goosey, Goosey Gander’s guzzling grass.
Gluttonous Goosey’s generating gas.
Goosey gyrates,
Grazing gates.
Goddam, Goosey gasps, greenhouse glass!

Susan Thorpe

Haunted houses, hotels, heartening hospitality.
Haggis, hooch, highballs, hilarious holiday.
Helpless heiresses,
Hyperactive hostesses.
Halloween? Hardly! Historical highland Hogmanay!

Susan Thorpe

Inexplicable incidents inviting investigation.
Illegal immigrants, immense infiltration.
Instantly insecure,
Immigrants implore.
Incomprehension increases incredulous indignation.
Jeff Grant

Jet journeys jollify Joanne,
Jazzy Jo'burg, jivin' Jinjiang.
Just join jaunty Jo,
Joyriding Juneau -
Jamaica - Jakarta - Japan!

Jeff Grant

Kelly kissed kinky Kristine,
Kruger knobkerried Katrine:
Kermongous knockers!
Kool knickerbockers!
Kieran kept kippling Kathleen.

Susan Thorpe

Lettered likenesses, linguistic Lettericks.
Like letter lines, laminated Linericks.
Litlingly lexical,
Lithely logological,
Lyrical language, long live Limericks!

Susan Thorpe

Mother Maria mumbles 'Mmm Mary'.
Methinks Maria muses 'Monk Matthew, mon-as-tery'!
Meanwhile Matt's Moselle,
More midday muscatel,
Make Maria's monkey mindlessly merry!

Susan Thorpe

Naughty Nineties' nightclubs, nakedness, naivété.
Newsworthy nobles nurturing notoriety.
Nocturnal noisiness,
Neighbouring nosiness.
Nineteen nineties now, newsworthiness's no novelty!
Susan Thorpe

Peter Piper popularises pickled pork pies.
Puffy, peppery, pricey pies Peter plies.
Purposeful preoccupation
Professional presentation,
Procures Peter piggy’s porcine pie prize.

Jeff Grant

Quintillius Quimhard Qazir,
Qatar’s quirky quadrillioneer.
Quaintly quixotic,
Quasierotic,
Quite quintessentially queer!

Jim Puder

Romantic, riotous refracting rainbows.
Rooftop riders resembling round rows
Repeated reversals.
Religious rehearsals?
Raindrops’ rippling reflections rapidly repose.

Jim Puder

Quoth Quentin, “Quite quaint quean Quintrelle,
Qua quaestor, ‘quods’ quirks quirts’d quell!
‘Queen Quint’s’ quick-quoadding quill
Quashed Quebecois quadrille!”
Quipped Quincy, “Quent’s quemed Quint’s quenelle!”

Susan Thorpe

Romantic, riotous refracting rainbows.
Rooftop riders resembling rounded rows.
Repeated reversals.
Religious rehearsals?
Raindrops’ rippling reflections rapidly repose.
Susan Thorpe

She seems so slimey, so slithery, so 'snake'.
She suddenly sidles, see Sadie shake.
She's so, so slim,
Such sinewy skin.
She squeaks - seriously! - so Sadie spake.

Susan Thorpe

The tough troublemakers turn to 'terminator Tyrone'.
They 'tell' the town that Tyrone takes the throne.
True to tormentor Ty,
Their tricks terrify.
Thus, tragically, these thugs transform the town's tone.

Jeff Grant

'Take thirty, that's ten times three.'
(This tuition's totally twee!)
Those teachers they thought
The things that they taught
Transcended theology.

Susan Thorpe

Ursula's Uriah's uncharacteristically uproarious.
Usually, Uriah's unremittingly unglorious.
Unbelievably uninspired,
Universally unadmired,
Unreliable, unhelpful, Uriah's uxorious!

Jeff Grant

Vain Valentino Virrile
Voided vocabulary vile:
Vociferous views,
Verbal vindaloos -
Vacuumbrained vulgarophile!
Susan Thorpe

Wingding, woolly wigwam, wishy-washy, waylay.
Weird words woven within wonderful wordplay.
Word worms wriggling,
Word weights wrestling.
Welding words, wrapping words, welcoming words – Word Ways!

Jeff Grant

Xenicalized, Xanaxated, Xylocained, x-radiated, Xenotransplantation, Xerotic xanthation, Xena's Xtremely X-rated!

Jim Puder

Xane Xeroxed Xebec Xylography, Xanthippe, Xerxes, Xerography, Xenarthra, Xanthomas, X-Rays, Xanthosomas, Ximenez, Xylopyrography...

Bill Brandt

Yonder Yankee yapping, Yeasty yeoman yelling, Yachtsmen yammer, Yardarm yonder, Yellow yawl yet yearning.

Jim Puder

Zithering zestfully, Zahna, Zimbaloning Zizi's zenana, Zinged "zany" Zahara's "Zigzaggy" zamarras, Zelle "zippering" zealous Zigana.
Jeff Grant

Zestily, Zsa Zsa Zangoo
Zoomed Zanzibar's zany zoo:
Zebra zigzagging,
Zhomos zig-shaggjng,
Zorils zipzapping zebu.

DM

"Z-Z-Zonked?" Zippy zapped zygotene.
Zorro zombified zidovudine.
"Zip zananas?" zed Zee
Zoomorphically.
Zeppo's Zippo zoned Zen's zibeline.

HOT BUNS

WIN EMMONS
Waco, Texas

Hot buns!
I see you are baking. Well done!
Into the oven now must go,
So I say, my darling Liz,
Buns I see you feel so
Fond of. And now HIS
Hand creeps, I see. Your thigh is
But his sole desire. I see that groping,
But his sole desire. I see that groping
Hand. Creeps, I see, your thigh is
Fond of. And now HIS
buns I see you feel.
So I say my darling Liz
Into the oven now must go!
I see you are baking. Well done!
Hot buns!