IN DEFENSE OF THE ANACHUTTLE

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To those Word Ways readers who first noticed its appearance in the May 1969 and November 1970 issues, the Anachuttle is a display of unusual rhymes. The initial letters of each line form an acrostic, which in turn is an anagram of an internal acrostic. Were readers able to discover the internal acrostic without referring to the solution given at the end of the issue?

The Anachuttle is the brain child of Howard Bergerson, the former editor of Word Ways. He supplied the anagram and shuttle rhymes for the first one, "Night Waned", and encouraged its continuance. The difficulty in creating Anachuttles lies in finding appropriate anagrams and shuttle rhymes (sometimes called malapropisms or spoonergrams). The Anachuttle gets its designation from its three elements: AN (anagram), AC (internal acrostic), and HUTTLE (shuttle rhyme).

Due to limitations of specific letters, suitable anagrams require considerable experimentation. In those that appeared in Word Ways, THE DAWNING complemented NIGHT WANED, while CHRYSELEPHANTINE and MISOGYNIST were suitable solutions for PRINCELY HAT SHEEN and MISSING TOY, respectively. In other Anachuttles, LED A PAGAN ROLE fits EDGAR ALLAN POE, while HAUNTER CHARM suits ARTHUR MACHEN.

Shuttle rhymes are more easily found, since they only require the interchange of consonants or consonant sounds to form new words. In the Anachuttle "Night Waned", the first two letters of each word in DRAGON FLY were interchanged to form FLAGON DRY. The problem lies in finding rhymes that relate to the internal acrostic. In "Missing Toy", NO MASTIC and MONASTIC were suggestive clues. In "Vapor Fletch" (an anagram of H.P. Lovecraft), KEY RAPTURE offset one of the author’s poems, RECAPTURE, while (SHAL) LOW PARIS fitted one of his stories, POLARIS.

The main requirement for the internal acrostic is that each letter occur in the same numbered-place on each line, and usually in the same numbered word. Punctuation marks and spaces between words do not count as letters. If typed, the acrostic or solution can be read in a straight line downward. (Unfortunately this property is lost when letters have different widths, as in this typography.)

Four examples of the Anachuttle are given below. Due to its complexity, the author finds it difficult to impart emotion. However, in
the first Anachuttle below, a strong mood is evoked. The anagram and shuttle rhymes were furnished by Howard Bergerson. The solution is tricky, so be warned.

Come back to Kharalak, where cold dreary rain pours fast,
Ascend the olden bend, where, beyond bronzed doorways,
Sadly recall that madly spent year, before war days
Tragic saw the magic vanish in life's doomed stalemate;
Lornly long while throng specters of that vibrant male state,
Echoing taunt as gaunt loss in broken fane roars past.

Hope empty, nothing tempts me, as nights of no slumber
Accent portent, raw tormented years of slow number...
Under earth she dwells, mirth I once had as a matter.
No anodyne, pale wine, now soothes. Mad as a hatter,
Tomorrow bids more sorrow, as constant pain roars fast.

The second one should not be too difficult. In addition to the internal acrostic, there is another appropriate acrostic which should be easy to discern.

Horrors and delights, realm of areets and non-whites,
Arabesque and mantic, world of mosque and turban --
Zealously drawn with craft by Sir Richard Burton . .
Endangered yet suave, noble Queen, like bad gaddly,
Suspends grim finish, while tense nights of Baghdad fly:
Romances flood while slave in tragic market pales;
Enchantment runs for jinni who brings lamp's treasure;
Adventurous Ali Baba trails tramps leisure;
Cowardly knaves quiz flight as magic carpet trails.
Heart-gripping drama, mighty with wild wonderment,
Entertains her cowed host, as, with mild wonder, went
Dreaded fate. Silence ends one thousand and one nights.

Anachuttles also can be used as mystery acrostics. In addition to the internal acrostic in the third Anachuttle, another acrostic will provide the solution.

Licensed detective, with blonde hair over visor,
Argues specifics of mischance with periled backer.
Strange matters have beset six who signed tontine pact:
Tragedy advanced as truant gun-barreled packer;
Mystery confounds with one poisoned by Mormon's fare;
Also contretemps when peer, trampled by foreman's mare,
Named business comrade and greedy courtly panner.

Composed sleuth visits plant of gray portly canner,
Inspects extracts of tansy for likely crime ploy.
Rabid assassin, maddened as pleasures prime cloy,
Confronts victim, who screamed as boring knife keen slew.
Urchin complains, tells prier that he has seen clue.
Incensed, outraged sleuth nobly counts upon teen tact,
Tops scoundrel and prevents hope as last survivor.
The last could be considered an antigram. In addition to the internal acrostic, another appropriate acrostic can be discerned.

Impugn His indifference with obstinate leap of the sword.
Lament His negative attitude mocking as you fight wraith,
Limit your vanquished spirit naked while you abhor and wait . . .

Inquire or infer, Omniscience ignores while tolling hour peals;
Nobly task Omnipresence with plaint of why born sole martyr;
Assail His lassitudes whilst obliged sinners mourn soul barter;
Bemoan His apathetic languor torn not by war and hate . . .
Oppose His beatific strength, even so, His power heals.
Verify His lambent mysticism, nod in free right faith.
Exalted, be ennobled, proclaim the vast sweep of the Lord.

In the final analysis, the Anachuttle is more a challenge to create than to solve. To those hardy souls who accept the challenge, welcome, and if you need advice, write to me at P.O. Box 553, Saint Louis, Missouri, 63188.