From time to time, Word Ways receives a variety of short poems related to recreational linguistics, some original, others previously published. As poetic output cannot be easily predicted, these will be presented on an irregular basis.

In the first poem, Willard Espy of New York shows that the English language is full of unanticipated surprises for a literal-minded reader (or, perhaps, for a computer trying to parse a sentence):

Stop, Esther, stop! I quite concur:
Comparatives are suffixed -er.
Comparative of cow is cower;
Comparative of bough is bower.

And I agree it's manifest
Superlatives are suffixed -est.
Digest means "dig excessively,"
And zest is maximum of z.

Yet er- can prefix, too, my doe;
Thus, ergo means "one up on go;"
And ermine's easy to define:
"Another's fur that's more than mine."

As prefix, est- retains its touch;
Estate comes out as "ate too much."
You, Esther dear, I long have prized
As woman apotheosized.

The following two poems are inspired by the energy shortage. The first, by James Rambo of San Francisco, is a palindrome into which everyone can read his own underlying meaning:

An era's lion in oil as atoner?
A fine pose.
Yes, moods are pacific
In a placid Arab Oman,
Oil an idyl.

Oh nuts, Omanis, no!
It omened dustups,
Put sudden emotions
In a most unholy din.
A lion,  
A mob,  
A radical panic.

If I caper as doom's eyes open,  
I fare not as a lion  
In oil's arena.

The second, again by Willard Espy, is an acrostic which uses initial words instead of initial letters to spell out the message:

- Time befriends
- For brief space --
- Warm days sends;
- Clothes in grace

- Man and maid.
- This I wot:
- Looks must fade,
- Like or not.

- One is not here
- 'Long, my chums;
- Cold from hot, here
- Winter comes.

A transdeletion is a sequence of words in which each word is formed out of the rearranged letters of the previous word, with one new letter added. The initial words in each line of Willard Espy's poem below illustrate this idea:

- I into my mirror peeked.
- "IS this horror me?" I shrieked.
- "SIT down, mirror; say what glue
- TIES fair me to ugly you.
- TIRES about my turn you loop;
- SISTER tires from eyes you droop.
- TIGRESS' mate am I! What error
- GRITLESS shows me in my mirror?
- SLIGHTERS cite your glass to prove me
- LESS BRIGHT than they hope who love me."

In her review of Howard Bergerson's new book, Palindromes and Anagrams, Jezebel Q. Xixx commented on the sensual, erotic currents that often run through palindromes; an outstanding example is provided by J. A. Lindon's dialogue between Adam and Eve in the November 1970 Word Ways, reprinted in the book. Ramon T. Cibille (a pseudonym for Bonita C. Miller, in the mathematics department at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas) demonstrates that the same sensual currents run through a charade poem. This poem recalls J. A. Lindon's pairs of charade sentences in the February 1969 Word Ways. It can be viewed as the heteronymic analogue of Willard Espy's homo-
nymic pair of poems "Not To, Not For, One I Adore" in the May 1973 Word Ways:

The Cynic's Soliloquy

Wit: howl on, gibe; rate the semen
Of thy men "waste." Stedfast -- be low.
Be foul, men, ever. No moralist and
Ho! nor able to go do good.

Her Version

With ow! long I berate these men.
Oft hymen was tested fast below.
Befoul me never. No: moral I stand,
Honorable to God. O, good.

Not content to rest on her laurels, she streaked to her typewriter to produce the following as an encore:

Of lute's maker I sing, music's well;
Hermes sage. Sweet lyre sound,
hero pale -- yes, a Muse.
His the arch, O Iris; ay,
chords of air did string.

O flutes, make rising music swell:
her message sweetly resound,
her opal eyes amuse.
Hist! hear choir, I say --
chord so fair didst ring.

Finally, Ramon T. Cibille presents the Charandrome, an orthographic olio of the charade, the anagram and the palindrome:

Oth: End of All

Moor's room:
hello to Othello.
Has he plotted
(eh, halt, despot!)
tiny Desdemona
a demon destiny?

X-TE