

# A TART REPLY TO NAPOLEON

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In the February 1975 issue of *Word Ways*, I presented a palindromic letter from Napoleon, suggesting that a local tart named Ada was the cause of his famous ABLE WAS IERE I SAW ELBA saying. Here is Ada's reply:

Ada's Elba idol, le héro mondial:

O ha ha ho! He, he! Noël, Boney! No, liar, pas de mal -- no evil, moody m'sieur. Ada did none wrong (nor we, non!), did Ada. Rue is my doom. Live on, lamed sap! Rail on, ye noble one. Heh! O ha ha ho! Laid no more. Hell! O diabes!  
Ada

The English spelling héro instead of the correct French héros suggests that Ada was English and may indeed have wronged him by more than a case of lues (syphilis). The word laid may have been intended as French, meaning ugly or troublesome.

The February 1975 issue also introduced Giles Selig Hales, the editor of an avant-garde literary journal, and a correspondent named Eva. The following interview submitted to Giles by Eva, a frenetic, hard-drinking reporter, quotes an old man whom she takes to be Degas. He gives his opinions on life, rewards, popular literature (pap), art and human destiny. He makes occasional remarks to his (deceased?) friend Camus. Eva is, as we know, obsessed with gnus singing, and indeed seems to imagine a chorus of them to be present during the interview. Degas makes some comments on popular poetry, specifically Eva's "Gnus Sung Rondel" and reveals to her that he has written a novel or roman, which Eva mistakenly assumes to mean that the old man is a Roman. She apparently asked him something about the Bohemian life, and whether the Montmartre artists lived on rum.

Ave, Giles Selig Hales!

Sage D. : O, la! Me Roman? I, Degas? Re pap: non-amoral, les idées - seed I sell, a roman on paper. Live on rum? Rum! I murmur no evil. As God rose, we deliver rêves, Amelia. Hot manna! O Jesu! Mad idyl - damn! O gnus sung no evil illicit song. Yma Sumac? Claptrap! Opera are pop art, pal C. Top-drawer reward pot. Reward? God aloof, de rêve, fate. Yes, Albert, I am Degas, aged maître, blasé, yet a fevered fool - a dog-drawer. Top-drawer reward pot? Claptrap! Opera are pop art, pal C. (Camus, A.), my gnostic. Il, I live on. (Gnus sung on

madly, did amuse Joanna M. to hail 'em as ever-reviled  
ewes or dogs alive on rum. Rum!)

I murmur no evil. Re pap: non-immoral, les idées --  
seed I sell, a roman on papers, aged in amore, malo.

Dégas

Selah, Giles Selig

Eva

The following two palindromes are alternative translations of a religious quotation. The second gives the author credit for prescience and for a sense of humor, since it includes a pun on the name of a man of a later century.

Sin, if lived, folly did: Assisi. Semen's sensuousness'

Nemesis. Is sad idyll of devil. Finis.

Sin, if lived, Folly died. Assisi. Semen's sensuousness'

Nemesis. Is Sade idyll of devil? Finis.

The following is a newspaper item submitted by a reporter like the one in Evelyn Waugh's Vile Bodies:

Deported, report Slobmag's reporters:

Soho (ho!) had a mad idyl. Eros? No, Sibyl. Lana? No.

Dr. dear R. A. Byron (Ima's rude leer!), Camus (Amy).

Delia railed. Yma Sumac reeled. Ursa Minor, Ybarra (Ed)  
r--d on anally. Bison sorely did a mad (ah - oh - O hoss!)

retroper's gambol.

S. T. Roper

De Trop! Ed.

Unfortunately, there does not seem to be such a word as "retroper" or "troper", but of course there should be: one who uses tropes again. What better word to associate with "reporter"!

The following is a Biblical exegetic palindrome:

Alone on Ossa, aloof as Adam, lived Cain -- a maniac era.

We behold Abel, a nomad as Adam. Revered now, no Pan-

deifier, ever anon Abel saw nowhere no evil: "Late petals,

à la mode robed, ave, O good Reviver! A viva! Gloria for-

ever of moors. Room forever, O fair Olga! Viva, Reviver!

Do Ogo: evade boredom. Alas, late petal, live on!" Erehwon

was Lebanon: a rêve reified. Nap on! Wonder ever, mad as

Adam on ale. Bād: lo, he beware Cain, a maniac devil --

mad as a fool -- a ass! O no, Enola?

To lighten the mood, I submit the following palindrome which has an 18th-century robustness that appeals to me:

Nigh asleep, mad, a wan pup, rude plug, Dallas Lee, saw

wet stew was eel sallad, gulped urp! up 'n' awa, damp eels!

Ah, gin!