THE POET'S CORNER

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.

Willard Espy's light verse is well-known to readers of The Poet's Corner. Would Ernest Wright, author of Gadsby, turn over in his grave if this Univocalic Moralic were engraved on his tombstone?

THREE SPECKLED EGGS HELD EGGS WERE MEN

Three speckled eggs held eggs were men enshelled.
Egg-terms the three eschewed ('cheep,' 'peck,' 'peep,' 'nest').
Hens were the helpmeets meeker eggs felt best;
Yet these three pestered Eve herself; these yelled,
"We'll get thee . . . pet thee . . . wed thee . . . bed thee . . . meld --
Beget! We'll gender speckled men, shell-dressed --
Men egg-descended, egg-redeemed, egg-blessed!"

Eve let her sheen be seen . . .

The eggs beheld
Her tender flesh, dewed cheeks, her tresses scented,
Her sweet recesses, her resplendent swells.
These excellences left the eggs demented . . .
Defenseless . . . heedless when she peeled the shells.

Eve well knew eggs were eggs, e'en ere she met them.
She let them wheedle, squeeze her. Then she et them.

In "Men's Last Ode", Sam Edelston of Short Hills, New Jersey demonstrates that his name is exceedingly transposable:

Sleet, so damn
sad one melts.

Tess Malnedo,
molten-assed
stone damsels,
tends meals. (O
mean dolless!)

Melons, dates . . .
"Mo'e, lass! Tend!"
"Stone me lads!"

Lemons . . .

Sated,
stoned males,
sea's men, told
demons' tales;
Sots end meal;
nod, mateless.

(And Tess, mole,
demon, steals
men.) SOS dealt.

Sleet. So damn
sad, one melts.
"The Siege of Belgrade", a poem beginning "An Austrian army, awfully arrayed, / Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade..." is attributed to Alaric Alexander Watts (1797-1846), but is actually of unknown authorship according to Grainger's Poetry Index. Hector Monro of Melbourne, Australia, has utilized the same verse-form to explore a subject of contemporary interest.

ANATHEMA ALPHABETICA

Advertisers artfully agitate, alarm, 
Browbeat, bluster, bombinate, 
Coo, coax, caress, captivate, charm, 
Delicately, doucely deprecate 
(Denigrate? Desecrate?)

Examples eloquently explicate:

"Elephantine endomorphs! Emancipate! Escape, 
Free from fatness, fell, foul, fateful: 
Great girth Gargantuan (gaze, girls, gape!) 
Huge hulking hams (Heavens, how hateful!) 
I invite inspection: I introduce 
(Justly jaunty) Juvenating Juice! 
Kissably kept keeps Kitchen Kate, 
Lately lachrymosely lumpish, 
Languishing lads lasciviate 
(Miserably, morosely mumpish) 
Madcaps maidens merrily mismate 
(Nocturnal now nurses neonate) 
Over overcoming odious overweight! 
(Other offer only opiates, 
Ours obesity obliterates!"

Pious purple prose proliferates, 
Quakerish questionings quietly quelling, 
Righteousness rabidly reverberates 
(Rebellion's rentable -- reasonable rates --) 
Sermonized saccharine sanctifies selling, 
Televisioned treacle triples takings, 
Urging uglier undertakings: 
Uncouth, ululating urchins, 
Vacuous, vain, voluptuous virgins! 
Violent vulgarity's vapid void's 
What we weakly, wearily witness, 
Watching Wasplish, wog-whipping, witless 
Xenophobic xanthocroids!

Yeastier yet your youngster's yen: 
Zoolatry's zany zenith - Zen.

Xanthocroid, in case anyone is wondering, is the adjectival form of Xanthocrol, which, according to the OED, is the term (in T. H. Huxley's classification of the varieties of mankind) for a type with yellow or light-colored hair and a pale complexion.
Everyone has seen examples of the alphabetic primers of a century or two ago containing doggerel verse of the type "A is for Apple, so red and so round / If you shake the tree, it will fall to the ground". Isn't it time someone updated this concept with a series of 26 poems, one for each letter, describing the variety of things they represent? For starters, here's a T-poem written by T. Joseph Scanlon of Ottawa, Canada prior to 1969, and an X-poem of unknown authorship sent in by Maxey Brooke:

T is, for poetic semantics, a frolic,  
It stands for a ski-bar that's non-alcoholic  
As well as a beverage the English adore,  
A stand used by golfers about to cry "Fore",  
Tea goes with caddies, with berries, with cakes;  
And also with football, with quarterback fakes.  
To plumbers, Tee means a joint shaped like the letter;  
To sailors, cross T line means fire they had better:  
In fact, one can use it most any old way  
To get things done right to a "T", as they say.

X is the Roman notation for ten,  
X is the mark of illiterate men,  
X is the ruler removed from the throne,  
X is a quantity wholly unknown,  
Xmas is Christmas, a season of bliss,  
X in a letter is good for one kiss,  
X "may mean Xenon, a furious gas,  
X is a ray of a similar class,  
X is for Xerxes, a ruler renowned,  
X marks the spot where the body was found.

Walter Shedlofsky of St. Louis comments acrostically on John McClellan's "On Figures of Speech" in the November 1977 Word Ways:

CARRY THE I.L.L.O. RHETORICALLY

Choice language, Rarely phrased and metaphorically tamed,  
Astounds reader, Hinders, like text pharmacopoeia stores.  
Raucous honking Echoes, as onomatopoeia scores.  
Recondite faery Tale, how does one parry crasis phrase?  
Yammering birds, Odd words are part of paraphrase craze.

Tmesis division Rolls, while errata creases canker;  
Hypercritic oft Inveighs, deems catachresis ranker.  
Exasperation or Chill informal, a tropism pricks,  
Irritated ghouls Annoyed, carp for malapropism tricks.  
Ludicrous humor Lurks beneath paronomasia thatch;  
Long punishment Longs he for it, or euthanasia match.  
Obscure phrases Yield word-illos rhetorically framed.

The word illo is not defined as "illustration" in Webster; however, many amateur publications refer to illustrations with this neologism.