

OPUSOPUSCULE

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This article contains excerpts from "Opusopuscule", a logological commonplace book (see Word Ways February 1978 for another example of this genre) containing a mixture of book, newspaper and magazine quotations, song lyrics (including advertising jingles), proverbs, odd signs in public places (including palindromic business names), jokes and anecdotes, and original snippets of word-play. Examples of the latter are given in this article, with editorial commentary provided in italics.

The greatest part of "Opusopuscule" is devoted to palindromes, many no doubt original or at least discovered independently of other palindromists. Robert Funt is especially devoted to the short (25 letters or less) palindromic phrase, particularly one incorporating a proper name. Old chestnuts like race car, I moan Naomi and goddam mad dog have been omitted from the examples below.

Lana Cabot in a Manitoba canal	O, Dido!
We .. flat, urban .. a brutal few	Is Aeneas 1?
Burn, Ruby, burn! Rub!	Amnion? No, in Ma
Rot a gill, alligator	See referees
Suppository rot: l sop pus	So l tap patios
Ottoman Empire: "Rip Men" (a motto)	No omen: one moon
Set a rime: bar all Arab emirates	Airy Syria
Let's! O, more, Zero Mostel!	Sinai, Cain is
Sun - a rumor from Uranus	Cain: "Am I maniac?"
No? O, rot, coon .. no octoroon	Lebanon on Abel
Rot! l, Defoe, wan, in awe of editor	Pepsi is pep
Revue name: "We Maneuver"	Snug popguns
Yell up, "No! No ton on pulley!"	Or rub a burro?
Nod: nab Adam's mad abandon	Swept pews
Tastier, eh? Where it's at	Gift fig
"Seton Hall", Allah notes	Pets nip instep
Names Ron a Norseman	Not less, Elton?
No lynxes' sex: nylon	Viva! Let's, Tel Aviv!
Madeline's senile dam	Yen? O, money
Man, a plane (venal Pan Am)	Name, Pa? Ape man
A lob, a rap .. a parabola	No parts - strap on
Draw, oh Rover (Trevor Howard)	All ebb, Bella
One lucite reticule, no?	Some memos
Laminated a cadet animal	Lear's Israel
Swap, stack cat's-paws	Nail a tin ltalian
Latin ego: genital	Red loss: solder
A suicide? Medici, U.S.A.	A war at Tarawa
"Yell!" - eh, Shelley?	See bees

Pose, Aesop	A raga in Niagara
No, Lynn - nylon	Bar Arafat, a far Arab
Drat! Suck custard!	Sure tumor from uterus
No garden: one dragon	Sir Ron Norris
Talc eclat	Tennis sin: net
I'm a last salami	Garbo's sob rag
Sit-in is sin (it is?)	Rend rag, Ava Gardner
Rot cart: tractor	Cat: no Contac

Some palindromes come with wry explanations. These might be used as party-game puzzles - find the palindrome from the clue.

No Stetson (bare-headed cowboy)
 Redeyeder (more exhausted)
 Reward drawer (possible hiding place for reward money)
 Noise lesion (sore on ear, caused by loud sounds)
 Tao banana boat (mystical Central American freighter)
 Red roe reorder (call for more caviar)
 Retsina canister (jug for Greek wine)
 Recluse's ulcer (stomach disorder common among hermits)
 A flu's on; no sulfa (medical emergency)
 Taft .. ah, that fat! (most obese president)
 Lion rock corn oil (obscure brand of cooking oil)
 Semite Times (obscure Jerusalem newspaper)
 Stole coyote toy, ocelots? (animal thievery)
 A Kanaka (a native of Hawaii)
 Lonely Tylenol (a kind of aspirin for heartache)
 Tube debut (television premiere)

And how about a list of palindromic first names and nicknames?

Abba	Ara	Bub	Hannah	Madam	Pip
Ada	Asa	Dad	ldi	Mom	Pop
Aga	Ava	Ebbe	Kook	Nan	Sis
Ana	Bab	Eve	Lil	Otto	Ulu
Anna	Bob	Gig	Mim	Pap	Viv

His sex of foxes palindrome contains a variety of centers.

Sex of foxes
 Sex of li'l foxes
 Sex of wary, raw foxes
 Sex of dumb mud-foxes
 Sex of live devil foxes
 Sex of turf-rut foxes
 Sex of pale lap-foxes
 Sex of sore hero's foxes
 Sex of damned, den-mad foxes
 Sex of red net's tender foxes
 Sex of gold log foxes

In the November 1977 issue of Word Ways, Robert Funt presented a longer palindrome poem, "Jittery Reverie". Here are three more examples to savor.

FAREWELL SPEECH, CARTHAGE

Ostia, wait ..
 (So amor here bit.)
 O to go!
 'Tis Aeneas - I, O Dido!
 Is Aeneas it?
 O go to Tiber, eh?
 Roma, Ostia waits, O ..

DIALECTICAL

Meet,
 seek college;
 Hegel,
 Locke
 esteem ..

GIDDY OLIO

Die neat, or as a rat.
 Stradivaris are Boston's -
 A wren rams Ali's net.
 (Silo re-peels mermaid.)

O Cecilia, sew! O gab, Otto (hot ogre),
 Say "Nolo contendere or face polio."

Murmur, dog, no crisis. A yogi made Tad "OM".
 Moccasin is laced, no set:
 I best ester, I flavor all odd onion omelets.

Nod, row, dastard astronaut!
 (Name: "Tailable Beryl".)

Red Leg: a Rose; Boston: a Yaz.
 Zip guns?

No, Yalta. meet a name-tag: Amiable Elba.

I'm a gate, manatee.
 Mat, lay on snug pizza, ya!
 Not so? Be so, rag-elderly rebel.
 Bali ate Mantuan orts, ad-rat.
 (Sad word on stele: "Mono".
 I nod, dollar.)

Oval-fire tse-tse bites on decal:
 "Sin is accommodated." Am I Goya?
 (Si, sir, congo-drum rum.)
 Oil, OPEC? A froe, Red; net no colony:
 As, ergo, to hot Tobago we sail!

Ice-cod, I am REM sleeper.
 O listen, Silas Marner was not sober ..
 A sir, avid art star! -
 As a rot Aeneid.

Charade sentences - sentence-pairs preserving letter order but not word spacings, such as a manslaughter / a man's laughter here - are also popular in "Opusopuscule".

Verrazano encounters a hostile tribe in the New World:
 The Narrows
 Then arrows

Sea grams vow, "Hi, sky!"
 Seagrams V.O. Whisky

O gleam, O Broadway!
 (ogle a mob roadway)

Ant is India tribe
 Anti-sin diatribe

A crony .. many, one
 Acronym, anyone?

Hoboken: sing to nine asters or a real lilac. Kiss a lad at each
 arming

Hobo, Kensington in Easter! So rare! All I lack is Salada tea;
 charming!

Poker, Under Much Stress
 Ordeal!
 Or deal..
 Draw not of ace.
 Drawn! O, to face..

Ago, this truth I sang:
 "Elba! Gladys evens out her
 Nacre sofa cover (Edwardian).
 Swerve, dice! Pick! Now sin, Diane -
 Those very thin (gin duet, I mean) dice.
 There - stone face to fat man.

A Goth I strut: his angel bag lady,
 Seven southern acres of a cove.
 "Red ward," I answer,
 "Vedic epic knows Indian ethos:
Everything in due time and ice the rest."
 (One facet of atman.)

Some charade phrases or sentences are phonetically rendered.

Eating amenities / ldi Amin I tease
 Normal comics / Nor Malcolm X
 What a bore is Carl Orff / What? A Boris Karloff?

In a variation of this, Robert Funt lists a nonsensical word series which is phonetically equivalent to a well-known phrase.

Honey sweet Molly pants
 Pin the tale on the dawn, Key
 The row on walled-in pond
 Allah gate terse end Cracow dials
 Lye fizz reel lie fez ear nest

Then there's anagrams. One, PLO lop pol, was written long before Arafat was forced out of Lebanon in late 1983.

That manna, Manhattan
 So, a giant Santiago
 Be a drum, Bermuda
 Oh, wary land (Andy Warhol)
 O our Arab Israel (aurora borealis)

STEPHEN FOSTER	POEM OF THE PELICAN	l, SADE
So fret	Pin lace	As die
Or fest --	In place -	Aides'
For set?	Can pile	Ideas:
To serf?	A pencil,	Sea id
Softer	Pelican,	ls ade,
Fortes,	Nice pal?	Sad (i.e.,
Foster,		Aside)
Forest		l, Sade!
Of rest ..		

One essay in "Opusopuscule" lauds Howard Bergerson's November 1975 automynorcagram "The Raven" (a literary work repeated in the initial letters of its words, as "Blue Lovebirds Under Evening's Large Orb Vow Eternal Byronic Imprinting ...").

I very much applaud Mr. Bergerson's choice of "The Raven" as a fitting poem to be refashioned into an automynorcagram. Only a poem of this kind - so marked by obsessiveness - seems properly suited to the infinite and wholly unmanageable thirst for verblivity which is, of course, one of the most striking aspects of this new recreational genre. The raven's stubbornly laconic trisyllable word stands in peculiar contrast to the thousands upon thousands of words which would be necessary to automynorcagrammatically magnify even a poem as brief as Poe's original. (The first six lines of "The Raven", for instance, contain no less than 260 separate letters. If nothing else, this intriguing new form may make us more sharply aware of the truly formidable literary abundance to be found in the shortest prose paragraphs and sentences.) To go on, the taunting - yet inherently necessary - incompleteness of automynorcagrams is itself suggestive of some powerfully infinite act of writing, a poetic composition which, as long as it was well begun by its temporal author, we might choose to imagine as being endlessly continued on some other, more Platonic level of existence. If Poe's despairing narrator asks, "Is there balm in Gilead?" we might inquire, with scarcely less passion, can an automynorcagram ever truly attain a state of completion? Such a thought is perhaps extravagant enough to bear a religious meaning of some kind, for a completed automynorcagram would surely be revealed only on Judgment Day ..

As a final flourish, listen to three of Robert Funt's mesmerizing chants of near-soundalikes.

bar / barb / barbell / barber / Berber / barberry / Babar /
Barbra / Barbara / barbaric / barbarian ..

lavish tippers / little nippers / Big Dippers / swim flippers /
stuck zippers / Jack the Rippers / witty quippers /
bourbon sippers / aging strippers / smoked kippers /
day trippers / glass slippers

do the dozens / dozen donuts / do Zen, do nuts / doze not / Z E N
doze / dozens / do dozens / dodo Zens / do Zens / do Zen N E Z