KICKSHAWS

DAVID MORICE
Iowa City, Iowa

~ UPPING THE ANTE

Bill Brandt read somewhere that the word “up” is one of the most versatile words in the English language. Here is his write up about it:

“I started thinking about how many ways “up” can be used. Sometimes it comes at the start of a phrase, such as “up and coming”, but in most cases it acts like a suffix, such as “catch up.” Sometimes it acts as a directional modifier, such as in “stand up.” Sometimes it acts an intensifier, such as in “fix up.” (Is fixing up a car any different from just fixing it?) While other times it creates an unrelated meaning, such as in “what have you been up to?” There are even some redundancies, such as “raise up.” For some words it provides different meanings, for example “wind”. To “wind up” a toy is different from to “wind up” a speech. The word “strike” is even more versatile. You can “strike up” a conversation, “strike up” a deal, and “strike up” the band. I began compiling a list of how “up” can be used besides as a direction indicator. When I reached a little over 200 examples I stopped. I am sure the total list could be much longer. Instead, I made up the following story that used as many variations of up as I could squeeze in.”

What’s Up

This morning, since I feel UP to it, I will face UP to it and drop you a line to let you know what I have been UP to so you can catch UP on what has happened.

It clouded UP this morning and started to rain but it is supposed to clear UP and brighten UP this afternoon. After things dry UP I will hurry UP and try to start UP the car so I can be UP and about and get something to eat and maybe a Seven-UP. I seemed to have worked UP quite an appetite. Last week I had it UP to here with my old beat UP pick UP
truck. When I went to warm it UP, I discovered the gas line was stopped UP. The local mechanic did a bang UP job when he fixed UP the truck and gave it a tune UP, but when I saw the bill he wrote UP it raised UP my blood pressure. I was burned UP and thinking of suing him but I don’t think my case would hold UP in court.

I do not know if this is the right time to bring it UP, but there is a young upstart here who popped UP out of nowhere and is always dressed UP to the nines. He thinks he is an UP and coming politician but I don’t know where he dreamed UP that idea. He is very UP front about it and seems to think that office is UP for grabs. I don’t think he is UP to snuff or UP to the task; nevertheless, he is UP for election. UP to now he has been trying build UP his reputation and lock UP the votes by making a lot of speeches. His style is to stand UP, speak UP, speed UP, and then shut UP. It makes some people sit UP and take notice. He seems to have a lot of campaign money, but if you look close UP it doesn’t appear to be on the UP and UP. Some people here are UP in arms about it. They plan to team UP and call UP their friends. I don’t think they want to stir UP any trouble, they just want people to wise UP and wake UP about what is going on.

I may have messed UP and screwed UP earlier because the last endeavor I cooked UP has gone belly UP. Now I am UP in the air and UP against it as to what to do next. I certainly don’t want to give UP. I guess it is UP to me to shape UP and think UP what to do next. One idea I came UP with is if I can line UP a good location and can strike UP a deal I can open UP a small shop. I want to create something that is UP to date, but which does not take UP a lot of time. One idea I came UP with is to sell wind UP toys for one dollar and UP. I think if there is a market for something like that I could rack UP some dough and really clean UP.

Listen UP, I know this is not a long letter, but it is time for me to wrap it UP. Now don’t get riled UP and don’t start UP with me. I would like to write more but my time is UP and I have to pack it UP. I am off to see the movie “UP”.

---

F.Y.I. – This is a partial list of “up” uses.

And up                   The flowers cost one dollar and up.
Brighten up              The weather has started to brighten up.
Back up                  Be sure to back up your computer files.
Bang up                  he worked hard and did a bang up job
Batter up                You are the next batter up.
Beat up                  The car wasn’t that old but it sure looked beat up.
Beef up                  I think we should beef up the castle’s defenses.
Belly up                 His auto repair business has gone belly up.
Blow up                  When he hears the bad news he is going to blow up.
Break up                 They were a nice couple so I don’t see why they had to break up.
Bring it up              Why didn’t you bring it up during the meeting?
Brush up                 My French is a little rusty so I will have to brush up.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Buck up</th>
<th>Buck up son, things are not that bad.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build up</td>
<td>You can’t build up your muscles if you don’t exercise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burn up</td>
<td>The house burned up in less than an hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust up</td>
<td>The police arrived and busted up the card game.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butter up</td>
<td>He is trying to butter up the boss and ask for a raise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Button up</td>
<td>It is cold outside so be sure to button up your coat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buy up</td>
<td>They tried to buy up all the surrounding properties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Call up</td>
<td>Call up your friends and tell them about the party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Came up</td>
<td>We were just chatting when the topic came up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canned up</td>
<td>He was canned up in that room for 48 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch up</td>
<td>I have been away and need to catch up on my mail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caught up</td>
<td>He was on the run but the law finally caught up with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheer up</td>
<td>Cheer up, things could be a lot worse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chin up</td>
<td>Keep your chin up and don’t be discouraged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choke up</td>
<td>He became emotional and got all choked up about it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clam up</td>
<td>He decided to clam up and not to say anything.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clean up</td>
<td>When I sold that stock I really cleaned up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear up</td>
<td>We think the weather will clear up tomorrow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climb up</td>
<td>You better climb up out of that hole.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Come up with</td>
<td>What did you come up with during your research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close up</td>
<td>If you look close up you can see it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close up</td>
<td>It’s getting late so we better close up the store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloud up</td>
<td>The weather started to cloud up in the afternoon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook up</td>
<td>What kind of crazy idea did he cook up now?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooped up</td>
<td>I was cooped up in that house all day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cough up</td>
<td>He said I owed him the money so I had to cough up ten dollars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crack up</td>
<td>He was driving too fast and he cracked up the car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddle up</td>
<td>Come a little closer and let’s cuddle up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cut up</td>
<td>In history class he was a real cut up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dig up</td>
<td>Look through the old newspapers and see what you can dig up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draw up</td>
<td>I asked the lawyer to draw up a new will.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dream up</td>
<td>I wish I could dream up a better way to do it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dress up</td>
<td>She was all dressed up for the party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drive up</td>
<td>I am going to drive up to his place tomorrow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry up</td>
<td>The rain is going to dry up in another hour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry up</td>
<td>You talk too much and I just wish you would dry up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dust up</td>
<td>It started as argument and ended up in a dust up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ease up</td>
<td>You should ease up on him and not be so hard nosed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eat it up</td>
<td>She gets a lot of flattery and she just eats it up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face up</td>
<td>Face up to it you have a real problem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fed up</td>
<td>I am fed up with all your excuses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling up</td>
<td>I was feeling sick and was not feeling up to it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fess up</td>
<td>It is time to fess up and admit you did it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fix up</td>
<td>He said he could fix up my car for less than five hundred dollars.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flare up</td>
<td>He has quite a temper and it could flare up at anytime.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fog up</td>
<td>He is just trying to confuse everyone and fog up the issue.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Follow up   You should follow up on that lead for your story.
Frame up   It was a frame up because I didn’t take anything.
Gang up   It wasn’t a fair fight because they all ganged up on me.
Geared up   We were geared up and ready to go by noon.
Get up   I have to get up at 6 AM.
Get up   Where did that get up she’s wearing come from?
Give up   This is not the time to give up.
Ginned up   He ginned it up with spare parts from other cars.
Grow up   It’s about time you grow up and start to act like an adult.
Gum up   If he is not careful he is going to gum up the operation.
Ham it up   He was a good actor but he liked to ham it up.
Hard up   I am pretty hard up these days and sure could use a loan.
Head up   She was picked to head up the new office.
Heat up   It didn’t take long for the argument to heat up.
High up   His house was located high up in the mountains.
Hoist up   It’s time to hoist up the anchor and set sail for Jamaica.
Hold up   It was a weak case and it wouldn’t hold up in court.
Hold up   There is a hold up going on at the bank right now!
Hopped up   He was acting as if he was hopped up on drugs.
Hurry up   Hurry up or you are going to be late.
Jig is up   If they catch him cheating the jig is up.
Keyed up   He was so keyed up he couldn’t eat.
Lay up   We need to lay up some supplies for the winter.
Lift up   Lift up the lid on the pot and see if the water is boiling.
Line up   See if you can line up his vote.
Listen up   Listen up I am only going to tell you once.
Lock up   Before you leave on your trip lock up the door.
Lock up   Start going door to door and see if we can lock up some votes.
Look up   You can look up the word in the dictionary.
Made up   That is the truth and not something I just made up.
Mark up   You can mark up the contract with your comments.
Match up   It was quite a match up since they were both good players.
Meet up   Where did you meet up with Tom?
Mess up   On my first day at work I messed up.
Mix up   There was a big mix up at the stadium and we couldn’t find him.
Mount up   Find your horse and mount up.
Move up   He got a promotion and was able to move up.
Offer up   He offered up his resignation.
On the up and up   I don’t think his actions are on the up and up.
Open up   What time does your shop open up?
Open up   Let’s open up a bakery.
Pack it up   It’s time to pack it up and leave.
Paid up   As of today all my bills are paid up.
Pent up   She’s harboring a lot of pent up emotions.
Pick up   He wants to buy a new pick up truck.
Pile up   You better pay those bills before they start to pile up.
| Pipe up     | Don’t be afraid to pipe up if you have something to say. |
| Pop up      | No one knew where he was, he just popped up out of nowhere. |
| Pull up     | Pull up to the curb. |
| Put up      | He didn’t put up with it. |
| Put up      | They put up the house in ten days. |
| Rack up     | When I play poker I usually rack up a lot of money. |
| Raise up    | He sure doesn’t know how to raise up his children. |
| Raise up    | At sunrise we usually raise up the flag. |
| Ratchet up  | Ratchet up the pressure and see if he will talk. |
| Read up     | You can read up about it in the newspaper. |
| Rest up     | After I rest up I will get started again. |
| Riled up    | He got all upset and riled up about it. |
| Ring up     | See if you can ring him up on the phone. |
| Ripped up   | The newspaper was pretty well ripped up after the dog got it. |
| Roll up     | Be careful when you roll up the ancient scroll. |
| Round up    | I need you to help me round up the horses. |
| Runner up   | He was hoping to win but he was only the runner up. |
| Scrape up   | Do you think you can scrape up that much money? |
| Scare up    | Can you scare up some eggs because I am really hungry. |
| Scrounge up | See if you can scrounge up some eggs. |
| Scoop up    | Use your mitt to scoop up the ball. |
| Screwed up  | His mistake screwed up everything. |
| Shake up    | Business was bad so there will be a big shake up in the office. |
| Shape up    | If you don’t shape up and start working you’ll be fired. |
| Sharpen up  | You will have to sharpen up your offer if you want me to sell it. |
| Shoot up    | The cowboy got drunk and then began to shoot up the bar. |
| Shut up     | Shut up before you say something stupid. |
| Sign up     | Where do I sign up to enlist? |
| Sit up      | It’s time to sit up and take notice. |
| Size up     | I can size up that guy just by looking at him. |
| Slip up     | Do it right this time and don’t slip up. |
| Snap it up  | Snap it up or we are going to be late. |
| Start up    | Be sure to fasten your seat belt before you start up the car. |
| Start up    | I am tired now so don’t start up with me. |
| Speak up    | Speak up or you won’t be heard. |
| Speed up    | If you don’t speed up we won’t catch him. |
| Stack up    | I don’t know how he will stack up against the competition. |
| Stand up    | It is time to stand up and be counted. |
| Stick up    | I don’t know why you always have to stick up for him. |
| Stir up     | He tried to use his speech to stir up the crowd. |
| Stood up    | I went to the church to be married but I was stood up at the alter. |
| Stopped up  | The drain was stopped up all day. |
| Straighten up| It is time for you to straighten up your room. |
| Strike up a conversation | It is not easy to strike up a conversation with strangers. |
| Strike up a deal | If we can come to an agreement we can strike up a deal. |
| Strike up the band | We are waiting for the conductor to strike up the band. |
Stuck up She is both stuck up and arrogant.
Stock up We are getting low so be better stock up on supplies.
Summon up Just summon up your courage and jump in.
Sweep up After you dust the furniture you can sweep up the garage.
Take up I hope I did not take up too much of your time.
Take up Take it up with the judge.
Talk up Try to talk up his good points.
Team up If we team up we can beat him.
Tear up I was hoping the policeman would tear up the ticket.
Think up It is time to think up some new ideas.
Throw up He was feeling seasick and about to throw up.
Thumbs up He was OK and gave us the thumbs up.
Tidy up I think it is about time for you to tidy up your room.
Tie up That accident is going to tie up traffic for hours.
Tie up Can you tie up that package for me?
Time is up The time is up for you to answer my question.
Toughen up He will toughen up when he goes to boot camp.
Trumped up The charges against him were trumped up.
Tune up My car is in serious need of a tune up.
Turn up Let's just keep going and see what will turn up.
Up against it The problem got worse and now I am up against it.
Up ahead Up ahead there is a fork in the road.
Up and about It is time for me to be up and about.
Up and coming He is an up and coming actor.
Up and down He knew the subject up and down.
Up and quit He just up and quit his job.
Up and up His election was not on the up and up.
Up close If you look up close you can see it.
Up coming He will be a candidate in the up coming election.
Up for discussion That topic is not up for discussion.
Up for election He is up for election.
Up for it He is ready and he is up for it.
Up for grabs There is not much competition so it is up for grabs.
Up front He was very honest and up front about it.
Up in arms They are up in arms about the new taxes.
Up in the air After the accident he was up in the air about what to do.
Up the ante During the negotiation he decided to up the ante.
Up the creek After that mistake he was up the creek without a paddle.
Up through the ranks He was a colonel who came up through the ranks.
Up to What have you been up to these days?
Up to date His resume is not up to date.
Up to here I have had it up to here with his excuses.
Up to his eyeballs He is up to his eyeballs in trouble.
Up to me It's up to me to do it.
Up to now Up to now everything was fine.
Up to scratch This article is not up to scratch.
Up to snuff  His writing is not up to snuff.
Up to speed  You only have two weeks to come up to speed.
Up to the minute  When you call give me the up to the minute information.
Up to the task  He is new but he is up to the task.
Use up  For the picnic we used up all the paper plates.
Wait up  Don't wait up for me I won't be home until very late.
Wake up  It's time to wake up and smell the roses.
Walk up  I live in a four story walk up apartment.
Warm up  It is cold outside so you better warm up the car.
Wash up  Wash up before you come in for lunch.
Washed up  His career is all washed up.
What's up  Just thought I would call and let you know what's up.
Whip up  Can you whip up a new story for me?
Wind up  After four hours it was time to wind up the speech.
Wind up  Don't wind up the toy too tight.
Wise up  You better wise up because nobody likes a smarty pants.
Worked up  After working all day he worked up an appetite.
Wrap up  The work is done so let's wrap it up and go home.
Wrap up  Can you wrap up this package for me?
Write up  Can you write up the report by tomorrow?
Zip up  Zip up your sweater because it is getting cold.

~ ANSWERS THEN QUESTIONS

Bill “saw some new ‘Answers then Questions’ in the latest Word Ways which got me to thinking about some of the ones I had heard before. If any of these seem “new”, please consider them as a Kickshaws submission.” [They all seem new to me—DM.]

**Answers**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fig-newton</td>
<td>What type of tree is that, Peter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gingersnaps</td>
<td>If your dog Ginger does not bite, what does she do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plum-bob</td>
<td>What is that purple fruit you are eating, Harriet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toulouse-Lautrec</td>
<td>What caused the Paris subway to derail?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Irving</td>
<td>Who was our first president, Harry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hornbill</td>
<td>What is more important the horn or the break, Bob?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eskimo</td>
<td>What are your two favorite letters in the alphabet,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curley?</td>
<td>What is your favorite condiment, Paul?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt peter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dr. Livingston I presume. What is your full name, Dr. Presume?

forensics What two numbers add up to six?

~ ACCORDIAN WORDS REVISITED

Bill says “I enjoyed Rich Lederer’s article on Accordion Words and have some questions about the concept.

“Can nouns where the plural and singular forms are the same be considered as Accordion Words (similar to the Accordion Word “man”)? Examples would be “sheep” and “fish.” As in (1) all sheep have wool, (2) those sheep are blocking the road, (3) my pet sheep “Hamlet” won first prize at the county fair.

Can “law” be considered as an Accordion Word? For example (1) the law of the land, and (2) what law did he break.

How about the word “Yankee”?
In the world, a Yankee is someone from the United States.
In the United States, a Yankee is someone north of the Mason Dixon Line.
North of the Mason Dixon Line, a Yankee is someone from New England.
In New England, a Yankee is someone from Vermont.
In Vermont, a Yankee is someone who has apple pie for breakfast.
And in Cooperstown, New York, a Yankee is someone who pays for the American League.”

~ THREE’S A CROWD

Anil wants to know if you can solve this timely rebus:

Eee!

~ BINGO LINGO

Susan Thorpe has come up with a form of poetry based on one of the most well-known and widely-played games of all. As she describes it, “Here is a collection of Bingo calls pasted together in verse form. The Bingo numbers they represent are shown in brackets.”

Two fat ladies (88), over weight (28),
Knock at the door (4). Make them wait! (58)

Dirty Gertie (30), clean the floor (54).
Dirty knee (33) – red raw (64).

Two little ducks (22) up to tricks (46)
Get up and run (31) between the sticks (86).

Tickle me (63) one more time (79).  
Cup of tea (3), rise and shine (29).

Man alive (5), stuck in the tree! (53)  
Time for fun (41), thee and me (23).

Clickety click (66), garden gate (8).  
Gateway to heaven (27), heaven’s gate (78).

Coming of age (18), young and keen (15),  
Goodbye teens (19), dancing queen (17).

Down on your knees (43), strive and strive (75).  
Old age pension? (65) Staying alive! (85)

Heinz varieties (57), more than eleven (37).  
Half a century (50) + lucky seven (7).

~ WALKING ~

“I do a lot of walking here in the rolling Chiltern hills near Chequers, the Prime Minister’s residence,” Susan writes, “and this prompted a thought... when is a walk not a walk? The answer, of course, is when you do it two days running, on the trot!”

~ MORE PHONETIC VOWEL ROTATIONS ~

Jeremy Morse comments on Susan’s “Phonetic Vowel Rotations” on p155 of the previous Word Ways:

“The classic example without spelling variance is MATE-METE-MITE-MOTE-MUTE. Equivalent examples for short vowels include the 3-letter BAG-BEG-BIG-BOG-BUG and 7-letter PATTING-PETTING-PITTING-POTTING-PUTTING (golf). At the opposite extreme BAIT-BEET-BIGHT-BOAT-BEAUT-BYTE has six varieties of spelling. I can’t find a complete matching example with short vowels, but... -WHEN-WIN-WAN-WON has four varieties. Standing the exercise on its head, MORTAR – TIMER-TAPIR-TUTOR-MURMUR-MARTYR shows all six vowels producing the same (unstressed) sound.”

~ ANOTHER SILLY LOVE SONG? ~

I’ve made up fewer than 10 jokes in my life. Recently, I came up with the 10th, which is slightly off-color:
Singer Paul Simon was lying in bed waiting for his wife to join him. She surprised him by dressing in a very skimpy pair of red panties with a white ruffle around them, which she’d bought from Victoria’s Secret. “How do you like my new nighty, honey?” she asked seductively. Paul replied, “Oh, that’s just another frilly love thong.”

~ WORD WAYS WRITER SCAMMED

I received a strange email from the email address of a regular Word Ways writer. The email was obviously a scam by someone who’d gotten a hold of the writer’s address book. I haven’t heard from the writer since the email exchange below (and thus I’m keeping the writer’s name anonymous). Meanwhile, here is how the correspondence went between the scammer and me.

SCAMMER:

I'm writing this with tears in my eyes, my fam and I came down here to London, England for a short vacation unfortunately we were mugged at the park of the hotel where we stayed, all cash, credit card and cell were stolen off us but luckily for us we still have our passports with us.

We've been to the embassy and the Police here but they're not helping issues at all and our flight leaves in less than 3hrs from now but we're having problems settling the hotel bills and the hotel manager won't let us leave until we settle the bills.

DAVE:

This is terrible. Was anyone hurt? It's a good thing you still have your passports. Things would be much worse without them. The last time I was jumped, I got punched in the face three times, and my jaw hurt for a month. I hope you get your flight.

Ironically, when I read your email, I kept waiting for a punch line that would tie everything together, as you do sometimes in your writing. But this time, it was for real!

Best of luck to you, and let me know what happens.

SCAMMER:

Am freaked out at the moment. Glad you replied back, I have nothing left on me right now and am lucky to have my life and passport with me it would have been worse if they had made away with my passport.

Well all i need now is just $2,350 you can have it wired to my name via Western Union I'll have to show my passport as ID to pick it up here and i promise to pay you back as soon as i get back home. Here's my info below. [Scammer included the address of a hotel in London.]
DAVE:

I'll wire you $3000. I'm going to the local Hy-Vee, which has Western Union, and get it off to you. I'll come back here and let you know after we wired it.

SCAMMER:

As soon as it has been done, kindly get back to me with the confirmation number. Let me know if you are heading to the Western Union outlet now??.

I owe you alot

DAVE:

(I waited 20 minutes and then continued the conversation.) We're going in two minutes. The WU is 5 blocks away! It's next to my bank. Which makes everything very convenient. The next email you get from me will be the Western Union confirm #.

SCAMMER

Omg, So sad Coming to read your mail now and getting to find out the transfer have not yet been made across to us. Am really full of panic right now that i can't think of any thing presently but to save my family. Please call the Hotel manager and tell him to stop treating my family like a slave. (Scammer sent a phone number to a hotel in London.)

DAVE:

Don't really be full of panic right now. We'll save your family. I'm going down to Western Union and get that money, and I might even call the Hotel manager and I'll tell him, "Hey, Mr Hotel Manager, stop treating family like slave. Don't be mean. This man is good man. He no like be in danger. He want help. so help. so sad no help isn't there yet. I will get $5,000 and send to you. I hope it gets fast there.

I do want to help. I have a jar of silver dollars, but I have to get it down to the bank. It is very heavy. I have to get help from someone to lift it and take it to the bank. Maybe I might have to put it in a wheelbarrow and get my landlord to help me push it to the bank. I would push, and he would pick up any dollars that fell off. I think we could make it to my bank in an hour. Is that good enough time for you? I could try calling a cab, but I don't trust cabs. Plus I might find more money on the sidewalk. If you could give me your address, I'll have the bank send the silver dollars to you. They're worth a lot more than face value. So what is your home address?
SCAMMER:

(The scammer sent an address.)

DAVE:

The police are going to be checking out the address you gave. Here's some advice you might wish to have before pulling a stupid scam like this again. First of all, use good English, dumbshit.

SYNONYM TRANSDELETION PYRAMID

Anil constructed a complicated piece of wordplay, which is “a transdeletion pyramid of all synonyms (loosely speaking), real, coined, or slurred. Quite forced in part, but has anything like it ever been attempted before?”

Here's a transdeletion pyramid of all synonyms (loosely speaking), real, coined or slurred. Quite forced in part, but has anything like it ever been attempted before?

BEING (ABSENT) AND NOTHINGNESS

an ill "no sum"
lo, a nil sum
minus all
nullism
nil sum
minus (ie, missing)
mis'n (or, "is un-")
Isn'
i'n
'n

The last three lines are dialect, increasingly slurred or lazy renderings of "isn't". Can readers extend it upwards or otherwise improve it? Or find another pyramid of all synonyms or affinities?

~ SHORT VERSE

Jeff Grant sent a three-word poem—“a variant on the old 'Hired. Tired? Fired?' short verse. In this one the internal letters are changed rather than those at the start of the words. No Google hits, so it may be original!”

Visiting the Clinic

Inspection
Infection
Injection.
~ NEW NEW YORK PALINDROME

"Strange how the brain works," Jeff comments. "I was lying in bed listening to the rain this morning when this popped into my head. It may be original this time too! No hits on Google anyway."

Back Roy went; safe, fast - NEW YORK cab!

~ OSAMA'S LAST PALINDROME

~ When 9-11 occurred, I was with my son and a friend of his, and we were watching the continual videos of the planes hitting the buildings. The announcers kept referring to "terrorist" and "retaliation," and in the midst of it all, I made up a palindrome in my head. It appears in an issue of Word Ways that came out after the tragedy. When Osama was killed, I thought about that palindrome again, and I realized I could extend it to include his name. Here is the original, written on 9-11, followed by the new one.

NO, I TAIL A TERRORIST, SIR, OR RETALIATION.

A MASON? O, I TAIL A TERRORIST, SIR, OR RETALIATION: OSAMA.

~ RHYME TIME

Here are a few rhymed poems to conclude this Kickshaws. I need more material, gang! For some reason, there weren't many submissions this time.

*

TREASURE HUNTER

I'd like to travel
Around the world
From pathways of gravel
To roads that are pearled,

From highways of silver
To cities of gold,
Where sunlight bedazzled
In days of old.

Yet here I stand
On an asphalt street
With broken bottles
Under my feet.
*  

HOW TO COOK A BOOK

Skin the book, remove the spine.  
You'll hear a brittle crack.  
Pluck the pages line by line  
Proceeding front to back.

Grate the cover, salt it up,  
Baste the paper in ink.  
Butter the words in a measuring cup,  
And set it down on the sink.

Peel a ripened ballpoint pen,  
A Bic Banana will do.  
Slice a pencil, dice the lead,  
And sprinkle it over the stew.

Spice erasers with paper clips,  
Powder them on a roll.  
Pour liquid paper onion dips  
Upon the casserole.

Preheat the oven, grease the pan,  
Cook at a thousand degrees.  
Brown and serve to all your critics:  
It's guaranteed to please.

*

THE LINE AT THE BANK

'Twas at the silent, solemn bank  
Where cash and credit meet:  
I stood in line for half an hour  
Upon my own two feet.

And then the line inched up a bit.  
The teller, Mrs. Quext,  
Was telling tales to Miss O'Toole  
Before me. I was next.

But Miss O'Toole, who toiled on tile
All day to earn her dough,  
Was telling tales in single file  
While standing on my toe.

Then Mrs. Quext commenced to tell  
Another tale or two,  
While I was trying not to scream  
About my flattened shoe.

And Miss O’Toole (upon my toe)  
Was toying with her tie.  
“Excuse me, Miss,” I said to her,  
And she said to me: “Why?”

“Because,” I gasped and wheezed a bit  
And gestured to the floor,  
“Because your weight is on my foot:  
It’s quite hard to ignore.”

She ground her shoe into my toe  
And turned to tell a tale  
To Mrs. Quext about the time  
Her husband went to jail.

Although my toe was fully numb  
And I was getting vexed,  
Dear Miss O’Toole told two more tales  
To dear old Mrs. Quext.

And so it seemed that hours passed  
Until sweet Mrs. Quext  
Said, “Good-bye, Miss O’Toole, good-day.  
Young man, I think you’re next.”

When Miss O’Toole removed her heel  
From my poor throbbing toe,  
I tried to walk, I tried to kneel:  
My foot just wouldn’t go.

I tumbled to the floor, that’s right,  
And I began to whine,  
And Mrs. Quext said, “Sorry, sir,  
You’ve lost your place in line.”

*

275
DOUBLE TROUBLE

Tom-Tom Smith Smith, double agent,
Double-crossed the street

Where Bill-Bill Jones-Jones, double agent,
Waited there to meet

Their double-talking lady friend
The gorgeous Lulu Lou,

Who double-dated both of them,
Then double-dumped them, too.

*

YOUNG CLOCKS IN LOVE

At the antique store
I bought a box.
Within it were
Two bedroom clocks
Asleep upon
A bed of socks.

The first one woke
And chimed to say,
“We’re married, sir,
We’d like to stay
Alone in here.
Please go away.”

The second tolled
In bolder tones:
“If you don’t leave,
I’ll break your bones
And make them into
Telephones!”

I said, “Don’t be
Alarmed, young clocks.
I’ll close the lid
And put on locks.”
Then all I heard
Were ticks and tocks.
THE HAND

The hand
Is the land
Where a finger
May linger
And a thumb
Can come.

FISHY LOVE STORY

A little piranha,
Whose name was Donna,
Swam in a lake
Near a copperhead snake.

The copperhead snake,
Whose name was Jake,
Adored little Donna
And said, “Do you wanna
Be my dear wife
For the rest of your life?”
And Donna Piranha
Said, “Yes I wanna.”

So Jake the Snake
Decided to take
The plunge from the tree
Where he hung peacefully.

“I love you, dear Donna,”
He sighed, “and we’re gonna
Be married today
By the manta ray

Who lives down the shore
Just a mile or more.”
Then Donna cried, “Dear,
We can’t, I fear!”
“I really do wanna,”
Said sweet little Donna,
“But only last night
I took a small bite

Of the manta ray—well,
There’s not much to tell.
Oh, don’t think me vicious,
But he was delicious.”

Then swiftly, wise Jake,
The Copperhead Snake,
Slithered to shore
And saw Donna no more.

*

~ THE PET AMOeba

I had a tame amoeba,
A single cell at that!
I called her “Little Sheba.”
She slept inside my hat.

I got her at the pet shop.
The price was pretty fair.
She didn’t cost a cent to feed—
She ate what’s in my hair.

She frolicked like a collie
And barked—that’s why I bought her.
She learned to sit and fetch, play dead,
And other tricks I taught her.

She ran away last weekend.
I almost gave up hope,
But found her in my laboratory
Under the microscope.

Then yesterday, guess what?
Little Sheba split in two!
I named the one half Phoebe,
And the other Amy Lou.

Now if they keep on splitting,
You know what I might do?
I’ll open up a germ shop
Or start a microbe zoo.

*

COSMIC NIGHT AT THE BAR

My life seemed a little unreal
And my world was out of place,
So I found my way to the local bar
Where I sat down face to face
With a robot, an android, a clone,
And an alien from deep space.

The android was talking genetics
With the clone, who had three lips.
The alien mumbled excitedly
About the lunar eclipse,
The robot was oiling his joints
And scratching his microchips.

I showed them a trick I learned
From my mutant neighbor’s son:
I made a quarter disappear
From the napkin it was on.
The clone and the android smiled.
The alien said, “How’s it done?”

The robot was coming the wires
In the cabinet in his chest.
From the look he gave me I could tell
He wasn’t very impressed.
I said, “Want to see it again?”
He answered, “Surely you jest.”

At that remark, I slugged him
And just about busted my fist.
He laughed a harsh metallic laugh
And said, “I think you missed.”
The clone asked, “Why did you punch hijm?”
I said, “I’m a humorist.”

“A humorist?” said the robot;
“So that was one of your pranks?
I wish I’d laughed as loud as I could
And given you many thanks.
I, too, have lots of jokes:
They’re stored in my humor banks."

I shouldn’t have opened my mouth.
I should’ve just walked out the door.
Instead, I stayed there at the tavern
Listening to that bore.
He spent the night reciting
A thousand jokes or more.

The clone took off by midnight,
The android left at one,
And the alien flew away at two,
Saying, “Hope you’re having fun.”
By three o’clock, I passed out
From some mechanical pun.