In this column, run whenever a sufficient number of poetic effusions have been collected by the editor, Word Ways readers comment on a variety of logological and grammatical topics.

DUCK, POET! HERE COMES ANOTHER SIGHT RHYME!

Willard Espy

How nicely panache - ache - Apache - would rhyme
If eyes were the judges! But ears need a chime -
Ears rhyme ache with steak and opaque; rhyme panache
With ash and rehash and bedash and abash.
Ears know that a rhyme for trochaic Apache
Has endings like scratchy, hibachi, seeatchie.
And ears know that passage can't rhyme with massage,
Which has a last-syllable stress, like barrage.
As far as I know there's just one rhyme for passage -
A word for "expenses of coinage" called brassage.
The eye sees accord between science and prescience;
The ear knows that prescience rhymes only with nescience,
While science rhymes giants, alliance, defiance,
And ten or so more, all in metric complicance.

Take naked and baked - it is wise to recall
That naked's a word having no rhyme at all.
And shallow's unable to rhyme with allow,
Since shallow rhymes hallow; allow rhymes with cow.
And finally, eat does not rhyme with hereat.
No, eat rhymes with feet, and hereat rhymes with cat.

The moral? Appearance is often deceiving.
Do not take for granted that seeing's believing.

A PARSER'S PARODY

Joseph F. Ryan

Subject-verb agreement, tend,
Otherwise, it do offend;
The comma? You've heard me shout,
"When in, doubt, leave it out."
Oops, there's another comma splice,
Everyone knows that isn't nice;
And spare me the common dash --
That kind of writing has no class.

"It's imp...
We will...
Say it can...
Exercise...
Be careful, too, of the cliche,
Avoid it as you would the plague;
Word choice, watch, as you should,
Because the point is to write good.

The semicolon is a useful tool,
Equal elements; that's the rule;
Awkward phrasing should not be used,
You'll leave no doubt the ones confused.

Disdain, of course, redundant prose,
The prose superfluous and verbose;
Be sure to watch your wordiness, or
Before you realize it, you will have gone too, too far.

Enough of this innocuous pap,
It's time to grade another stack!

**FLAUNTED GAUNTLET**

Kay Haugaard

"It's impossible!" Words such as these serve to poke us.
We will prove they are wrong - it's our passionate focus.
Say it cannot be done and I'll bet that some jerk'll
Exercise his lame brain till he finally rhymes circle.

**DISCOMBOBULATED DISCOBOLUS**

Don Laycock

When I went out to throw the discus
I went and sprained some little viscus.
Since that disruption of my viscera
I don't go out and throw the discus.

Leonard Ashley, Professor of English at Brooklyn College, recently
received from a Swedish colleague, Erik Gunnemark, a poem illustrat-
ing the pitfalls of English pronunciation. He straightened it out a little in terms of scansion and rhyme, and passed it along to Word Ways for use in The Poet's Corner. The poem is closely related to one composed by Willard Espy for his book An Almanac of Words At Play (see February 7 entry); its predecessor was devised shortly after World War II by a group of Britishers to aid NATO personnel in learning the language.

Here is for your information,
Dearest creature in creation,
English's pronunciation.
Let me teach you in my verses
Sounds of corpse, corps, horse, and hearses.
It will keep you, Susy, busy,
Make your head with heat grow dizzy...
Pray console your loving poet:
Make my coat look new, so sew it.
Just compare heart, beard, and heard,
Dies and diet, lord and word.
Sword and sword, retain and Britain.
Mind the language, how it's written.

Made has not the sound of bade;
Say, said; pay, paid; laid and plaid.
Now I surely will not plague you
With such words as vague and ague.
But be careful how to speak now:
Say bread, steak, but bleak and streak now.

Previous, precious, fuchsia, via,
Pipe, snipe, recipe and choir.
Cloven, oven, how, bough, stow, low,
Script, receipt, shoe, poem, toe, slough.
Hear me say (devoid of trickery)
Daughter, laughter; chore, terpsichore.

Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles,
Exiles, similes, reviles,
Wholly, jolly, signal, signing,
Thames, examining, combining.
Scholar, vicar, and cigar,
Solar, Micah, war and far.

Admirable from admire;
Lumber, plumber, bier but brier.
Chatham, brougham, renown but known,
Knowledge. Done but gone and tone.
One, anemone, Balmoral,
Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel.

Banquet's bouquets on the parquet
(Which is said to rhyme with darky).
Viscous, vicount, load and broad;
Toward to forward to reward.
Your pronunciation's OK
When you say correctly croquet.

Rounded, wounded, grieve and sieve.
Friend and fiend, alive and live.
Liberty, library, heavy, heaven,
Rachel, ache, moustache, eleven.
We say hallowed but allowed,
People, leopard, towed but vowed.

Suit, suite, ruin; circuit, conduit,
Rhyme with "shirk it" and "beyond it."
Muscle, muscular, gaol, iron,
Timber, climber, bullion, lion,
Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, chair,
Senator, spectator, mayor.
ivy, privy, famous, clamor
And enamor rhyme with hammer.
Pussy, hussy and possess
Desert but dessert, add address.
Golf, wolf, countenance, lieutenants
Hoist (in lieu of flags) left pennants.
River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,
Droll, soul, roll, and some and home.
Stranger doesn't rhyme with anger;
Neither does a word like hanger.

L'Envoi

From post to pillar you've been bounced.
The difficulties are pronounced!

A DICTIONARY OF DAYS

Written by the British onomastician Leslie Dunkling, A Diction-
ary of Days (Facts on File, 1988; $18.95) is a 156-page
book containing more than 850 named days. Many are specific
to a given date (such as Dec 25 for Christmas or Feb 2 for
Groundhog Day), but Dunkling also includes generic days
such as Wash Day (the day of the week washing is performed),
Halcyon Days (a period of about 14 days of calm weather
in mid-winter), or The Livelong Day (all day, the entire
length of the day). Some days, such as Insipid Day or Shav-
ing-Day, seem to be honored only in the writings of Jonathan
Swift. A more up-to-date literary example is provided by Bel
Kaufman in Up the Down Staircase, where she proposed Teach-
er for a Day Day (a day when high-school seniors run the
school). One wonders whether Dunkling should have bothered
to include a nonce-day such as Super Flush Sunday (Jan 25,
1987), a name coined by the NY Commissioner of Environmen-
tal Protection to commemorate the drop in water pressure that
occurred when people watching the Superbowl on TV all went
to the bathroom during breaks in the action. Despite caveats
such as these, the book is entertaining to browse through;
there is little doubt that Dunkling has mined a large number
of obscure references to obtain the information he presents.
Where else can one find such gems as the fact that Cussing
Day (Ash Wednesday, when one is reminded of God's anger)
is followed in two days by Kissing Day (the Friday following
Shrove Tuesday, when a girl can be kissed by any boy she
chances to meet)? Or where else can one enjoy such tongue-
in-cheek days as First Sunday After Placido Domingo, Step-
father's Day, Bash-A-Pom Day, or the Day of Miraculous Con-
ception of Germaine Greer?