Rhymatic Fever: A Valentine Tale

Rhyme is usually associated with poetry, but it sometimes appears in prose, as shown in this passion play for Valentine's Day:

Free, we drive. I've passed fast highways, byways - soaring, roaring. Then when we see a way, space, place for car, I try stopping, hopping out. Route shows rose flowers, towers blooming, looming over clover. Talking, walking to view tree, she holds, folds my shy hand, and squeezes, eases fingers - lingers near clear creeks, speaks:

"Those clothes, honey. Funny rags, bags; but what tacky khaki! You do need tweed. What nut tries, buys rotten cotton? Fad, bad taste! Erase your sure sense, dense buy. Try clean, green dance pants, better sweater. Choose shoes, wear pair. That hat coax jokes from some cool jewel! I'll smile, stay a bit, sit."

"My, I feel real stupid, Cupid. I'd tried - bought, thought they may please, ease. You're sure mad!"

"Lad, you do know, though. True blue. Sure, you're my guy still."

Will she flee, stand and turn, spurn kiss, miss lips' grips? Yes, dress makes, breaks warm charm. But what can man do to date mate? Travel gravel alleys, valleys, and stand out, shout "Do you love glove, zootsuit. Sigh, why do you care, wear shirts, skirts - both?"

Quoth I "My dear, hear: you do require desire. Beauty's duties come from loose truths. They say bare air pushes bushes, heaves leaves, makes quakes in thin grass, lass, while style seizes breezes, messes dresses, whacks slacks, wrecks sex. Here, Dear Valentine, Ballantine pale ale. Drink, think of love. We'll steal this kiss, where there are star-studded, budded flowers."

Hours go, flow through two hearts' darts. I spy her fur, wonder under lovers' covers. Bees' trees hold gold: more pour sunny honey by my girl's pearls, whose shoes shine fine. See? She feels, peels hose, glows by my car far from some dark park.

"Go slow, gentle lentil. Whee!" she breathes, seethes, quaking, making joy's noise. Why tie shoes, choose which stitch brightens, lights over clover, rocks? Socks stay gray, creamy, steamy. Royal soil feeds needs, and hand places laces by my tacky khaki.


David Morice
Coralville, Iowa

Readers are encouraged to send their own favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor (new address: 618 8th Avenue, Coralville IA 52241). All answers appear in the Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue. Guest editors will appear occasionally.
"Should we be here, dear?"
"Yes! Dress may lay on lawn, though."
"Go bare? Passion's fashions dare wear less?"
"Guess so."
"No bra?"
"Ah!"
Day's rays set, let moon soon loft soft light. "Night," I cry. "Lose shoes now. Wow! Yet let all fall to dew. Lie by dusk musk. Do you need..."
"Oh, no. Gee!
She hugs bugs, sees bees, hears cheers. Warm arm and hand touch much. I spy star far away, astray, where air shimmers, glimmers. Fair hair leaves, weaves down gown to view hill's thrills through two skins' sins. Exotic, erotic dancers, answers to new lust! Just lewd nude? Buff stuff? Oh, no! Night's flights carry merry time's rhymes.

**Murphy's Laws of Logology**

In reviewing Paul Dickson's *The New Official Rules* in the last issue, the editor remarked that only a few examples could be called logological. Here is an alphabet-sized collection of Murphy's Laws to help fill the void. Not all of them are laws, but then Murphy wasn't a lawyer.

* In logology, there is no problem that doesn't have a solution, and no solution that doesn't have a problem
* No one can write a lipogram without leaving something out
* The Conspiracy Theory: Editors of dictionaries have a secret agreement not to include any set of words that could form a ten-square
* Univocalics ere fer people weth e feer ef vowels
* Heisenberg's Certainty Principle: The best anagrams are floating around in unopened cans of alphabet soup, but they disperse when the cans are opened
* Every list contains at least one item that isn't necessary
* Turing's Axiom: The time saved by a computer in obtaining the answer to a logological problem is lost in the writing and debugging of the program
* On each successive reading, the clues in a crossword puzzle become more difficult
* The Heimlich Warning: Never try to say a tongue-twister with your mouth full
* The spoonerism is a worm of fordplay
* The Borges Effect: Perfect pangrams exist in several languages, none of which is spoken on earth
* Onomastics is what people do in an onomasium
* The Webster Phenomenon: The bigger the dictionary, the longer it takes to close it
Triplets

Lewis Carroll had doublets, and Peter Newby had triplets. His triplets are insertion-deletion word ladders: ones that start with a source word, add or subtract a letter, and continue forming new words till reaching the target word. All words found in Peter's examples are found in the OED. The TRIPLETS ladder itself is a minimal anagram triplet. The verb SPLITTER is defined as "to break into fragments" which is the essence of this form.

TRIPLETS-triplet-triplet-triplet
WATER-wa ster-wa ste-wa st-wa s-as-a-a i-i-in-win-WINE
WOOL-woo-oo-oe-e ae-a te-sate-sater-seater-SWEATER
RAGS-rag-rage-age ae-i e-ice-rice-rices-RICHES
FIRST-fist-fi t-i t-a it-a t-lat-LAST
HEAD-had-ad-a ai-al-TAIL

Peter suggests the triplet WORD-wor-or-o-a-ay-way-WAYS for WORD WAYS. If one is restricted to using only common words (say, those in Webster's Pocket Dictionary), the triplet becomes much longer: WORD-world-old-old-solid-slid-laid-plaid-paid-pad-pa-a-as-was-WAYS. Can anyone shorten it? Of course. a minimum-length Carrollian ladder exists: WORD-ward-wars-WAYS.

The Palindrome Ladder

Peter has also devised the palindrome ladder, which starts with one word and travels to its reversal by changing one letter at a time and passing through a palindrome at its central rung. Dort-tort-toot-trot-trod is a minimal example, but it can be expanded to form a more complicated ladder that continues reflecting revers- al pairs: word-ward-pard-part-mart-dart-dort-tort-toot-trot-trod-trad-tram-trap-drap-draw-drow. What is the longest palindrome ladder that can be made?
Leonard Gordon, who independently came up with the same idea, offers the following all-Webster examples:

guns-gins-pins-pies-pees-peep-seip-snip-snig-snug
star-sear-seer-sees-rees-raes-rats
sore-sare-sart-port-tort-toot-trot-trap-tras-eras-eros
toom-deem-deed-meed-meet
pets-pees-sees-seep-step

New Uses For Old Words

Some distinctly 20th-century words have limited meanings. In the 21st century, their meanings may multiply, giving them greater flexibility. A few projections for the year 2010:

The fly microwaved to the ant
The lion took a megabyte out of the lion-tamer
The stripper pantyhosed her lawn
The mountain climber Richter-scaled the peak
The mailman couldn’t unzipcode her lover’s dress
The athlete slipped a floppy disk
The politician miniskirted the issue
The driver gridlocked the car door

Any Friend of Herma’n’s ...

Jed Martinez sent in a collection of Hermanisms. As discussed in the November Kickshaws, a Herman is a quote followed by a punning name.

"Step on it!” said Matt / "On your knees!” said Neil / "I’m no thief,” said Rob / "I can count,” said Owen / "I can also count,” said Juan, too / "I haven’t got a clue to this puzzle,” said Sol / "Violent? I wouldn’t hurt a fly,” said Mame / "Don’t touch that stove – it’s hot.” said Bernie / "Oops, my watch alarm is beeping!” said Elsie Dee / “Let’s sing Christmas songs,” said Carol / “I’d rather sing ‘Down in the Valley’,” said Dale / "I haven’t a thing to wear,” said Buff

To the last one, the editor added “Pass me the binoculars, please,” said Seymour.

Tractatus Logologico-Philosophicus

Ludwig Wittgenstein, the 20th-century German philosopher, has suggested several logological languages in his works. In Zettel (fragments from 1929-48, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, University of California, 1970), he discusses a sentence-rebus language, a meaning-change language, a letter-shift language, and a word-unit reversal language:

147 We could of course also imagine that we had to use rules, and translate a verbal sentence into a drawing in order to get an impression from it. (That only the picture had a soul.)

148 We could of course also imagine that we had to use rules, and translate a verbal sentence into a drawing in order to get an impression from it. (That only the picture had a soul.)
Or a language in which the individual words altered every day; each day each letter of the previous day would be replaced by the next one in the alphabet (and Z by A).

149 Imagine the following language: its vocabulary and grammar are those of English, but the words occur in the sentences in reverse order. So a sentence of this language sounds like an English sentence read from the full stop back to the beginning.

In *Philosophical Investigations* (translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Macmillan, 1953), where Wittgenstein further explores what he calls "language games," he plays with negativity:

556 Imagine a language with two different words for negation, "X" and "Y". Doubling "X" yields an affirmative; doubling "Y" a strengthened negative..."X" as it were turns the sense through 180 degrees..."Y" is like a shake of the head. And just as one does not annul a shake of the head by shaking it again, so also one doesn't cancel "Y" by a second one.

But what happens if both "X" and "Y" appear in the same sentence? Do you turn 180 degrees and shake your head at the same time?

Dorothy's Quiz

Dorothy has been to Oz enough times, and now she wants to travel to other O-lands to meet their wizards. Can she find the Wizard of Oa, Ob, or Oc? In this list of 25 bigrams, 19 are cited as words, prefixes, or suffixes in Webster's Second and/or the Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary. Try matching them to the short definitional clues by writing the appropriate number in the blank space. Don't forget that six of them will remain blank. And don't accept the obvious, okay? By the way, why did L. Frank Baum name his land Oz?

OA ... OF ... OK ... OP ... OU ...
OB ... OG ... OL ... OQ ... OV ...
OC ... OH ... OM ... OR ... OW ...
OD ... OL ... ON ... OS ... OX ...
OE ... OJ ... OQ ... OT ... OY ...

1 - bone, 2 - Whig poet and dramatist Shadwell, 3 - yellow, 4 - art style, 5 - force or power alleged to produce the phenomenon of hypnotism, 6 - objection, 7 - used with chemicals, 8 - grandchild, 9 - wool, 10 - violent whirlwind of the Faroe Islands, 11 - yes, 12 - proceeding from, 13 - ough, 14 - domestic bovine, 15 - emotional expression, 16 - ached, 17 - cricket term, 18 - mantra, 19 - French ending

Palindromic Quotes

Last issue, Howard Richler presented a revolutionary history of civilization by quoting palindromes attributed to figures of the past. His selections were weighted in favor of the 20th century. Palindromic research of earlier quotable notables uncovers a few more who left their voice-prints in the sands of time:

HE PINS HAIR! 1 - AH - SNIP, EH? Delilah whispering to herself as she
gives the sleeping Samson a crewcut
KOAN: I SIN, A-OK!  Buddha zennig about his first love affair
DIALOG: I GO, LAID!  Plato bragging about his first love affair
SPLAT! I HIT ALPS!  Hannibal crashing his elephant into a snowy mountain pass
ANOMOLY? LO! MONA  Leonardo da Vinci rejoicing at successfully painting
a smile on the frowning La Giaconda
I DID DAVID AS A DIVA, D-DID I?  Michelangelo realizing that his initial
attempt at the famous statue resulted in a female
NOT, OH!  Joan of Arc commenting on her latest flame
MEN, RUDE TALES ELATE, DURN 'EM  Chaucer defending the Canterbury Tales
against obscenity charges by some of the pilgrims
SUN, O ERA, BARE ON US  Lady Godiva under the mistaken impression that
she was leading a whole parade of naked riders; when she discovered
the ride was solo work, she said "SUN O'ER A BARE ONUS!"
NAME IT AS USA? TIE MAN!  Columbus commanding that a sailor be bound
in ropes for suggesting a strange three-letter name for the New World
WOOD'LL DO. OW!  George Washington getting a splinter in his mouth from
his new false teeth
A BAD MOOD FITS ALAMO, MA, LAST IF DOOM'D!  A BA-- Davy Crockett's fi­
nal letter to his mother, ending in mid-word
INDIAN AID 'N' I  Custer's last words, referring to his mistaken belief
that the Sioux Indians were coming to help him
SO RED IS ID, EROS  Freud muttering about his subconscious

Unquotes

Everyone knows that people are often quoted out of context. That
isn't the case with the quotes that follow. They are put back into
contexts that give them fresh meanings:

Richard Nixon: "You think I am honest? I AM NOT. A CROOK would
be a better word"

John Paul Jones: "I'm too young! I HAVE NOT YET BEGUN. TO FIGHT
dangerous!"

Will Rogers: "I always surrounded myself with women. In fact,
I NEVER MET A MAN. I DIDN'T LIKE the competition"

Patrick Henry: "Cats are lucky to have nine lives. I REGRET THAT
I HAVE BUT ONE LIFE. TO GIVE FOR MY COUNTRY, I'll donate
my Siamese"

Douglas MacArthur: "Damn! This milk is sour! I SHALL RETURN it
for a full refund"

Julius Caesar: "In spite of an uncontrollable fear of the dark that
I had when I CAME, I SAW. I CONQUERED my phobia after several
sessions with my analyst"

John Glenn: "With such a tiny foot, THAT'S ONE SMALL STEP FOR
A MAN. ONE GIANT LEAP FOR MANKIND would take a size 12 shoe"

A Chill Dream Cheers Him

Michael Richard Helsem of Dallas, Texas is a logological magpie.
Here are a few samples of his collections and creations:

WORDS WITH ONLY ONE RHYME fascist-brashest, Vienna-Sienna, muscu­lar-crepuscular, talc-catafalque, cortex-vortex, astrolager-sock-

ANAGRAM literature: true-lie art

ODD NAMES Gary Airgood, Ralph Sidebottom, Myrna Mutterer, Ruby Zipperer, Rusty Straw, Ima Lamb, Dixie D. Outlaw, Bruce Bride-groom, Uranus Appel, Ole Worm

PANGRAM fight-abscessed lynx. Velasquez. work! jump! [addressed to a couch-potato pet]

PALINDROMES hair? a pariah; ruffle elf fur; muss opossum; Yahweh, chew hay; sex: every gyre taxes; ode protocol: loco torpedo; no sibyl, no senile lines — only bison

He has also composed what is perhaps the second palindrome in Esperanto (for the first, see Language on Vacation). The palindrome and its Hobbit-like translation are:

"O! ULULU LUNE, SORI EL AMO. DIDO, MALE, IROS EN ULULULULUJO
[Oh! Howl moonly, to soar out of love. Dido, on the contrary, will go into a howl-person receptacle]

Can you figure out the significance of the Kickshaws title?

Brand-name Kids

Ralston Bedge once told me that he'd like to have twins just so he could name them Murine and Visine. Baby name books, in their continual search for more possibilities, might look toward Ralston's idea of using products that we all know and love. Anacin and Bufferin would be perfect for two rambunctious little girls. Xerox would hearken back to ancient Persian names like Xerxes. And wouldn't Clorox be an excellent male version of Chloris? How would this naming affect the children in grade school? Let's visit a classroom of brand-name kids:

"Murine, why are you crying?"
"Because Anacin just hit me on the head."
"I did not!" Anacin said. "It was Bufferin."

Hearing that, Bufferin bopped Visine on the head, and she burst into tears. Before the teacher could say anything, Clorox ran into the room. He was as white as a sheet.

"Teacher!" he cried. "Romular just threw up all over Robitussin!"
"Oh, dear. I suppose they've got the flu," the teacher groaned.
"Now my stomach hurts, too," Maalox whined.

"Alright, class, quiet down and please be seated. We're going to have a spelling test. And, Xerox, if I catch you copying anyone else's answers again, you'll have to stay after school."
"I won't," Xerox promised. "I won't."

"Good. Now, everyone take out a clean sheet of paper. Today's test will be on the old-fashioned names that people had years ago. I'll read each name, and you write down the correct spelling. Okay, let's start. Tom... Annie... Jack..."

Maalox grabbed her stomach at each name. Purina gazed out the window
at a stray puppy. Murine and Visine were sobbing. Romular retched at the name "Sally" and Robitussin upchucked at the name "Bill". Xerox kept interrupting the teacher to ask her to repeat each one. Drano excused himself to go to the bathroom, where Goop was washing ink off his hands. Anacin and Bufferin dropped their pens, and when they tried to pick them up bumped heads. Ronsonol set fire to her pencil and chased Exxon around the room. As they passed, Bic threw pens at them.

At the end of the test, the teacher collected the papers. That night when she graded them she didn't find one correct answer! She asked her husband if he had any idea why the kids did so poorly.

"Maybe you have bad breath, my dear Listerine," he replied. "You're just joking, Mylar. I can see right through you."

He laughed heartily.

"Shhh!" she whispered. "You might wake up baby Sominex."

Veil Emits Apt Parental Odors

An anagram sentence is a string of words, each of which can be transposed into one or more words to form alternative grammatical sentences. How many ways can the letters in each word in the above sentence be transposed to form new grammatically-correct sentences?

The Long and the Short of It

SMILES has the schoolyard reputation for being the longest word in the English language because there is a MILE between the first and last S. What two-word phrase (non-dictionary) beginning and ending with S is much longer? What three-word phrase is much shorter?

EEEEUUUU

In Spanish, The United States is Los Estados Unidos. The abbreviation for it uses a curious plural form. The initials of the main words are simply doubled: EEUU. Other countries have been named The United States, too. You'd think the Spanish abbreviation for a bunch of countries with that name would be EEEUUUUU, but no. Which other countries were christened The United States? Which common English abbreviation forms its plural in a similar way?

Logonumerical Problems

These four problems are based on the number of letters in a number name. The standard method for number-naming the integers, as described in Webster's Collegiate, should be followed, excluding the optional use of AND and of TEN HUNDRED for ONE THOUSAND.

The first problem is an easy warm-up. Number names can be arranged in sets according to their common length, such as ONE, TWO, SIX, TEN. A self-referential set has the same number of names in it as the length of each name. Using only positive integers, can you find the smallest self-referential set? the largest?
The last three problems deal with divisible and indivisible numbers. Divisible numbers can be divided exactly, with no remainder, by the number of letters in their names; indivisible numbers can’t. FOUR is the smallest indivisible number \(4/4 = 1\), and ONE is the smallest indivisible number \(1/3 = 0\) with remainder 3. Only 17 divisible numbers occur in the first 100 integers: 4, 6, 12, 30, 33, 36, 40, 45, 50, 54, 56, 60, 70, 81, 88, 90, 100. (What is so special about 81 and 100? If ZERO is considered, what unique property does it possess?)

Now for the problems. Divide a number name by the number of letters in the name. Write the result as a new number name and repeat the process until exact division can no longer be performed. For example, SIX HUNDRED has ten letters so \(600/10 = 60\); SIXTY has five letters, so \(60/5 = 12\); TWELVE has six letters so \(12/6 = 2\); TWO has three letters, so the series ends. Nor can it go any higher. 828, 36, 4, 1 is another four-member series; can you find a longer series?

Some numbers of different lengths divide into the same result; the five-number set 50, 70, 100, 150, 170 yields 10 \((50/5 = 10, 70/7 = 10, \text{ etc.})\). Can you find a larger set having this property?

Contrariwise, some numbers of the same length divide into different results. ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-TWO, SIX HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX, SEVEN HUNDRED TWENTY, ONE MILLION SIXTY-TWO, SIX MILLION SIXTY-SIX and SEVEN MILLION TWENTY are each 18 letters long, and each yields a (different) integer when divided by 18. What is the largest such set in the range 1-100, and what unique property does it have? One set, fairly easy to build, has well over 52 members; can you figure it out?

A Nest of Palindromes

Dmitri Borgmann once wrote a long palindrome using personal names to expand the classic DENNIS AND EDNA SINNED. Doug Hoylman has taken the well-known SIT ON A POTATO PAN, OTIS in both directions, down to two words and up to forty, forming a total of 19 palindromes nested within the 20th. It would make a delightful children’s book in the manner of Dr. Seuss’s To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street. The first five lines and the last are:

Sit, Otis
Sit on Otis
Sit on a pan, Otis
Sit on a potato pan, Otis
Sit on a pot atop a potato pan, Otis ...

Sit on a pot atop a rod, a paw, a jar, a cap, a tag, a bat, a mall, a wad, a wall, a mat, a bag, a tap, a car, a jaw, a pad, or a potato pan, Otis

Fantasy Cities

Doug also has extended the idea of cheater’s palindromes in the last issue to create the names of imaginary towns inspired by the
real-life example of APOLLO PA. He wonders how many palindromes could be generated by moving cities to other states (such as OMAHA MO) or other countries (REGINA, NIGER).

Alan, Ala. Alf, Fla. Emu, Me. Hat, Utah

Archaeolinguists

In the distant future, about 50,000 AD, archeolinguists Trifs, Descon and Hirdt have found the remains of the only surviving calendar in the English-speaking world. With their expert knowledge of ancient English, they've been trying to reconstruct the names of the months.

T: The fifth month puzzles me. May? The name is somehow different than the others. I suppose it might be May.
D: No, no, Trifs, it can't be May, but it may be Might.
H: You do have a point, Descon. Might played an important role in primitive cultures. But I think it could be Will.
T: If it isn't May, it must be Will. Force of mind.
D: No, not Will. I think it should be Could.
H: Or Can. That's it. It could be Can. All those cans we've dug up indicate it absolutely ought to be Can.
T: Now there's another possibility: Ought. It should be Ought.
D: It ought to be Should, if it isn't Ought.
H: It couldn't possibly be Ought. That just doesn't fit well at all. April, Ought, June? Ridiculous! It must be Would.
T: But - but wouldn't Should come before Could, and couldn't Would come after Should? They obviously don't; April and June disprove that theory.
D: Aha! Suppose April and June were only the names of deities honored on those months. We all know they worshipped many gods, like the inscrutable Toyota, the thunderous Chevrolet, and the majestic Cadillac.
H: But they wouldn't name the months after their gods!
D: I'm not saying they would - or should - or could. They may've put their gods' names on the calendar as a sign of respect. I go with Trifs' theory: Should, Could, and Would.
H: But what about the other nine months?
T: They're also the names of gods! We've got to figure out the real names of those months. Descon's got three of them. Let's see. The first month has to be Is, or Does.
D: Wrong! Is and Does don't seem logical. Why name a month Is, when soon after it isn't?
H: Good point! I think I've got it. May is out of place! The first six months are May, Might, Could, Should, Would, Must, and then - hmmm?
T: And then they go backwards through the negatives! The last six are Mustn't, Wouldn't, Shouldn't, Couldn't, Mightn't, Mayn't.
D: What makes you think that?
H: Well, the first six move toward the middle, when the year seems to be achieving permanency.
T: And the last six move toward the end — impermanency.

Wilde

A woman, she said, mainly the new red.

Sex Change

A woman, she said, mainly the new red.

Never

Instinct, couple! Simpson's certain certain certain certain effort....

The

A man, he said, Who his. He a. If she. She his. I'd. Provost. Not To
D: It may be Might, it could be Should, and it would be Must, but it 
mustn't be Wouldn't, it shouldn't be Couldn't, and it mightn't be 
Mayn't! You're both jumping to conclusions.

H: Always the cynic, eh, Descon? If anything, the ancients were logical. 
When the old year was over, it Mayn't exist anymore so that the new 
year May!

T: I agree. It's settled. Whew, that was even more difficult than decid­
ing that the days of the week were Whatday, Whoseday, Whensday,Where­
sday, Whiday, Whateverday, and Whichday.

D: Wait a minute! I thought we agreed that they were called Inday, On­
day, Today, Ofday, Upday, Byday, and Atday.

H: No, no! We decided they were simply Oneday, Twoday, Threeday, Four­
day, Fiveday, Sixday, and Sevenday.

T: Heresay and heresy! You're both wrong. This meeting is adjourned 
until next Whensday, the third of Must!

Wilde Words

Was Oscar Wilde a sexist? Unscramble the following text, which 
Peter Newby prescrambled from The Importance of Being Earnest, 
and you can draw your own conclusions:

Hewn a nam dose tex-clay thaw a now-ma cept-sex mhi ot od 
est stoned knith chum fo mhi. Eon houlds say-law od thaw a 
now-ma stoned cep-tex, juts sa eon houlds ays thaw he's stoned 
red-and-nuts.

Sex Change Operation

A woman ran a business that catered mostly to females. When 
she sold the place, the new owner converted it to a business aimed 
mainly at males. He doubled one letter on the store's sign to change 
the name. What kind of establishments were they?

Never Rest on Everest

Instead of conventional rhyme, this poem scales the peaks with 
couplets of unrhymed insertion-deletion pairs inspired by Fraser 
Simpson's lists in the last Word Ways. The narrative stars a moun­
tain climber who wants to achieve eternal fame with a last-ditch 
effort at scaling Mt. Everest alone, but he can't afford the equip­
ment.

The fellow was limber, 
A mountain climber, 
Who tried to finagle 
His rocky finale. 
He asked his fiance 
If she would just finance 
His quest with her money. 
She said "You big monkey, 
I'd never be found 
Providing a fund 
Not even a dram, 
To pay for your dream."

He tried to appeal 
And not to appall. 
"I belong to a breed," 
He said, "that was brewed 
In a mountainous vista. 
I don't have a Visa. 
To pay the great price 
For the fame of a prince 
With hundreds of thrones. 
I suffer the throes 
Of life. I exist!"

But, turning to exit,
She said, "That's the moral: You're busted and mortal."

The Great Qonsonant Shift

A recent Associated Press article had a sentence with three U-less Qs in a span of 49 letters: "Qian was speaking first with Iraqi foreign minister Tarak Aziz..." What's more Qian of China sports the surname Qichen, as in "If you qian't stand the heat, get out of the qichen." We may be witnessing the beginning of the Great Qonsonant Shift, the liberation of Q from the tyranny of U. Clearly, Q is coming into its own. Q has class. With every tick of the clock, it makes further claims to its own corner of the English language. Can you find a sentence with a greater collection of U-less Qs in it than the Associated Press's clever composition? Send it in to Qiqshaws. Thanks.

The Greatest Word in English

Christopher McManus has found a word to beat all words. In his own words: "While visiting a grade-school classroom recently, I noticed a large placard with the word ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ written on it. I assume it is a word because they were trying to teach it to the students, and besides it had no spaces within it. I asked the teacher what it was, and he said the 'alphabet.' Of course! A is pronounced 'alpha,' the B, E and T are pronounced as expected, and all the other letters are silent, so the word is pronounced 'alphabet.' At one crack we have the longest isogram, the shortest pangram, the longest word whose letters are in alphabetical order, the longest word using all the vowels in order, the longest word using all the consonants in order, the longest word with the most letters in alphabetical place, the longest word with the most consecutive letters in order, and the two longest sequences of silent letters!"

Love Triangles

Can you figure out the geometric structure governing the different arrangements of fifteen words in the following three Valentine's Day poems? (Hint: 1, 3, 6, 10, 15,... are known to mathematicians as triangular numbers.)

You will love time always.
1, your kiss, talk quickly.
Dream because fast lives burn.

Burn quickly, lives.
1 talk fast, love always.
Kiss, because you will time your dream.

Dream because your fast kiss, time, lives.
Talk always will burn quickly.
1 love you.