

KICKSHAWS

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~ A DISGRUNTLED READER TRASHES WORD WAYS

While going through my files tonight, I ran across a response that I wrote to a gentleman who wanted to subscribe to Word Ways but decided to trash it instead. I replied to the guy in an essay, which I sent to him and to Ross Eckler, the editor in those days. I never heard from the guy again. I asked Ross to write an Editor's Note introducing my essay, which I wanted to publish in Kickshaws. At the last minute, the publication of the essay was postponed. It never reached the light of the printed page—never, until now. After 14 years in the dark, it's time to open the essay for all to see.

Editor's Note: The following essay—unplanned, unpolished, written between midnight and four in the morning--was Dave Morice's impassioned response to an e-mail he received in 1998 from a potential subscriber who said (in part) "I have to say how extraordinarily bad Word Ways is. The worst thing is the hideous typewriter script. Has nobody yet discovered that computers can also print in attractive typefaces? Almost equally bad is the illiterate American punctuation. Dashes are printed as double hyphens joined to the words they separate, while punctuation is placed inside quotation marks as a matter of course, whether or not it belongs there. Hack journalists may not know any better; for people who show such an interest in words, thing like that are unforgivable. Also in this category comes the obsessional insertion of commas between adjectives. Punctuation is intended to help the reader; examples such as 'hitch a ride with disheveled, annoying lumberjacks, right away' merely confuse...I certainly do not intend to take out a subscription unless the standard improves considerably."

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Regarding your comments, Word Ways has been put out on a quarterly basis since 1968. Ross has edited it since 1970, and he is not making any profit on it. The subscription rate for Word Ways has stayed lower than subs for most other magazines of similar size in any field.

As for the typescript, *Word Ways* has been typed on a typewriter for that vast majority of issues. The computer is a recent change. I'd guess Ross went to a typewriter-like script in order to make the transition as smooth as possible. Personally, I like the current and the previous typefaces. The first eight issues were typeset. To me they look too polished. I like the raw look. It's neat, clear, and user-friendly. It's the magazine's personality.

Regarding punctuation, too many commas, etc., well, it never bothered me. Punctuation may be intended to help the reader, but consider this: Ross has to edit the magazine and type it into a camera-ready form for the printer four times a year. The manuscripts he receives range from handwritten to letter-perfect computer printouts, from e-mail to typed submissions. They're written by different people in different writing and punctuation styles. Some of the styles may not be the King's or the President's English, but *Word Ways* isn't a guide to punctuation.

Ross would go bonkers if he had to comb through the issue with a Chicago Style Manual at hand. Instead he concentrates on making sure that all sorts of wordplay articles and writings have the correct data. Is x really a correct palindrome? Is y an anagram of z? I've sent Kickshaws stuff to Ross that was incorrect, and he usually catches it and fixes it. It's a huge amount of work. I know. Just doing Kickshaws takes a lot of time. If Ross were making big bucks on the magazine, then he could hire a staff to do the donkey work.

Thanks to *Word Ways* and to Ross's editorship, the English-speaking world has a richer collection of written wordplay forms and literature than any other language in history. With most fields of intellectual endeavor, one can point to several reasons for a particular field growing and advancing. A burst in magazine publishing helped modern science fiction become a field in its own right in the 1930s. The publication of sci fi novels added to the field's growth. The Hugo Award, movie contracts, big book sales, etc., all helped make the field a multi-million dollar industry. Wordplay hasn't worked that way, it doesn't and it won't. No one will ever make a film of "A man, a plan, a canal—Panama!"

In 1965, Dmitri Borgmann published *Language on Vacation*, and the era of modern wordplay (logology, as he dubbed it) began. For the first time, the randomly scattered wordplay that appeared in books and magazines before then was represented as a valid intellectual endeavor that could be codified into a coherent set of forms, terms, and types. Borgmann also began *Word Ways* in 1968, Bergerson edited it in 1969, and Eckler became editor in 1970. Through his totally consistent publication rate (not a single issue missed in the 29-going-on-30 years

that he's edited it), Eckler has provided a forum for people interested in wordplay of all forms and varieties, and that is the reason why wordplay has grown in giant steps during the past three decades—because of wordplay and Ross. Let's face it. Wordplay is for a select group of people. It rarely makes any of us millionaires. A number of great and important wordplay books have come out in the last few years, including books by Lederer, O.V. Michaelsen, Donner, Eckler and others. It's an exciting time. But none of the books did or can do what Word Ways have done.

Word Ways is extraordinary, but bad? Hardly. When Ross decides that he doesn't want to edit it anymore, that could mean the end of an era that I've come to think of as the Golden Age of Wordplay (at least in the English language).

Word Ways has only a tiny fraction of the readers that some wordplay books have, but it has left a trail, a legacy, that will be the single most important source of 20th century wordplay that will be available in the 21st century. Other important magazines have come out this century (Logophile, Verbatim, etc.), but their missions are different from the mission of Word Ways. It has charted the growth of modern wordplay (mostly of the written variety but also a good amount that deals with meaning or sound), or should I say that Word Ways is the growth of modern wordplay. Dozens of writers have contributed an incredible amount of fascinating material but most of those people, including myself, wouldn't have made their wordplay discoveries or written their wordplay poems, puzzles and articles without Word Ways. There will never be another magazine like it.

I would guess that within the next few years there will be a Silver Age of Wordplay as more wordplay heats up the web. It will probably live and thrive on the Web, but its course of development will be more fragmented. No website, magazine or periodical will represent so many different forms ever again. Wordplay websites will (and are) creating their own cyberspace tradition. However, many wordplay writers aren't on the web yet (but that will change). Instead, they rely on Word Ways as their primary source for sharing their wide-ranging interests. In doing so, they see wordplay that they might not otherwise know about or be interested in.

I suggest that you write Ross and thank him for being a truly unique individual and a giant in the field of wordplay. No one has done so much for the form; no one ever will. He's a legend in his own time, a real legend!

~ THE FIRST WORLD PALINDROME CHAMPIONSHIP

Martin Clear was one of the contestants in the World Palindrome Championship (WPC) in Brooklyn. Martin tells us about the event:

Palindroming is a fairly solitary sport. The art of constructing a sentence (or a longer piece of writing) that reads the same forwards as backwards requires hours sitting alone with pencil and paper or with a computer. Most of those of us who write palindromes do so in isolation, and often are not in contact with other palindrome writers.

The internet has seen a change in that. It is now possible to engage with a community of palindromists online, without necessarily being geographically close to them. Websites such as Mark Saltveit's The Palindromist (www.palindromist.org) and Timi Imit's www.mockOK.com are clearinghouses of palindrome creation, allowing palindrome writers to see the work of others.

The awareness of this community of palindromists led to the creation of the first ever World Palindrome Championship (WPC) in Brooklyn, New York on March 16, 2012. In order to have a ready-made audience, the competition was tied in with the New York Times' American Crossword Puzzle Tournament, and featured as part of the warm-up games and entertainment section of the tournament.

The field for the WPC was by invitation and consisted of those palindromists who had written and published palindromes recently. It included Mark Saltveit, stand-up comedian and editor of The Palindromist (a magazine and website); Jon Agee, successful author of five books of palindromes; Barry Duncan, who had recently received considerable publicity as a palindromist; John Connett, author of over 5000 published palindromes; Nick Montfort, author of the palindromic book "2002"; and myself, possibly the most prolific author of single-sentence palindromes on the MockOK site. I am from Australia; all of the other competing palindromists are American. I decided to make the long trip to America for the competition because after all, how often do you get to compete in a World Championship?

A film-maker named Michael Rossi was making a film about Barry Duncan and was keen to include input from other palindromists and to film the WPC itself. He interviewed myself and other palindromists before the event and then had us all miked up for the event itself.

At the start of the event we were introduced to the several-hundred-strong audience, and an extra competitor was chosen from that audience. This was Doug Fink, who has published palindromes on MockOK and who won a palindrome competition with “Lisa Bonet ate no basil”. The constraints for the competition were then announced. Competitors were to write palindromes (up to three could be presented) meeting any of the following three constraints:

The palindrome must contain at least one X and at least one Z.

The palindrome must be about a person or event making the news in the last 12 months.

The palindrome must be about the American Crossword Puzzle Tournament.

All seven competitors were then ushered into a closed room and had 75 minutes to write whatever palindrome or palindromes they could come up with. At the end of this time we were brought back into the ballroom to present the material we had written.

Jon Agee was first and he presented three palindromes, one for each topic. On the Event In Last 12 Months topic he addressed the Republican presidential race with:

Mitt’s art? No contrast, Tim.

He used X and Z in:

“Zoning” is Mr. Al Axe’s sex alarm sign in Oz.

He then said that if Will Shortz, convener of the Crossword Competition, were to ask him to host the event next year, he would say:

A host? No, Will, I won’t! So – ha!

I was the next competitor up and I presented three palindromes all against the XZ criterion. They were:

"Sex attacks," I rewrote, "misuse jazz if I fizz a Jesus I met, or we risk cat taxes."

Some metal boxes I fill (I wore zero) ... will I fix oblate memos?

Sexes, red, let a fez amaze fat elders' exes.

I was quite disappointed with these efforts, I have to say. I spent a lot of time trying to find a good middle for the first one, and I don't think I succeeded: it is fair to say that using "fizz" as a transitive verb is not my finest palindroming moment. The other two I scrambled together at the end having spent most of the available time on the first one.

John Connett was next to present. He addressed the Event In Last 12 Months topic with:

"Not Newt," Ron's snort went on.

And:

Yen more to vote Romney?

He addressed the XZ criterion with:

Sex Rex, Roz, or Xerxes.

Barry Duncan then presented a single long palindrome about the crossword competition:

"7, no? Do! Past I? How? Oh, now I spat! Fired, no?
Will: a foe? Not! Ah, then a fair event now (i.e., solid).
One tilt on Sat (oh!), Sun. It is "7 across: Orca."
7 sit in. Us. Hot as not. Lite. Nod.
I lose? I won't! Never!
I: a fan, eh? That one, of all.
I wonder if: Taps? I won? How?
(Oh, it's "a pod" on 7.)"

Doug Fink was next. He presented in the Event In Last 12 Months topic a palindrome about the iPhone/iPad robotic assistant Siri:

I risk row work, Siri.

And about the film Hugo:

On Hugo lists, I log, "Uh, no".

And addressed to Will Shortz, the convener of the Crossword Tournament:

Deny barb to hero Will: I wore hot bra by Ned.

Nick Montfort then presented against the XZ criterion a single long piece called “The Millenium Falcon Rescue”, consisting entirely of palindromic words:

"Wow, sagas ... Solo's deed, civic deed.

Eye dewed, a doom-mood.

A pop.

Sis sees redder rotator.

Radar sees racecar X.

Oho! Ore-zero level sees reviver!

Solo's deified!

Solo's reviver sees level: ore-zero.

Oho: X, racecar, sees radar.

Rotator, redder, sees sis.

Pop a doom-mood!

A dewed eye.

Deed, civic deed.

Solo's sagas: wow."

The final competitor was Mark Saltveit. He presented against the XZ criterion:

Devil Kay fixes trapeze part; sex if yak lived.

For the Event In Last 12 Months criterion, he produced:

I tan. I mull. In a way, Obama, I am a boy -- a wan Illuminati.

And against the Tournament criterion, he wrote a palindrome about Al Sanders, a prominent crossword puzzler in the audience who had tragically lost in a previous competition through unwittingly failing to finish a crossword:

Gal, smiles are stellar ere crossword rows sorcerer Al lets era's elim's lag.

The competitors who had presented more than one palindrome were then allowed to select their best one, and Will Shortz presented each to the audience for voting. The audience had been given placards to hold up with “Wow!” on one side, and “Huh?” on the other (both palindromic words – these placards were a nice touch

made up by Jon Agee) and they were now asked to vote for their favorite two palindromic efforts by holding up their “Wow!” cards as Will presented the palindrome. There was a sea of “Wow!” placards for John Connett and Mark Saltveit, and a considerable number for Jon Agee as well. Official vote counters had been appointed and after consultation, the results were announced: in fourth place, Nick Montfort; third place, Jon Agee; second place, John Connett; with Mark Saltveit winning the first World Palindrome Championship by a very tight 169 votes to John Connett’s 165.

Mark Saltveit was then presented with the trophy (which had been beautifully designed by Jon Agee). The trophy was a flat image of a cup, surmounted by a goose, with the letters WPC on it. In time to a pre-recorded drum-roll and orchestra stab, Mark Saltveit let fall the previously hidden lower half of the trophy, which was a mirror image of the upper half: a suitably palindromic moment to close the inaugural World Palindrome Championship.

All in all, the competition was very enjoyable, and I think the single best palindrome (Mark’s trapeze one) was a worthy winner. The audience seemed to enjoy themselves and speaking personally it was wonderful to write palindromes for a real audience: I only wish I had done a better job! Ah well, we are already discussing next time!

~ WHO IS THIS PALINDROMIC REPORTER?

At my request, Martin Clear tells us about himself and his place in the palindromic scheme of things:

Well, first some basic details about me. I'm curious about similarities with other palindromists: what factors produce us? I was born in 1965. My mother topped the state in English; my father topped the state in mathematics: I will leave better geneticists than I to work out where a palindroming gene might have come from. As a student, I was brilliant but lazy. I read precociously but way off the curriculum. Fellow students knew me as the kid who walked home while reading a book. Teachers knew me as the kid who never did his homework. I did well in school, relying on a trick memory covering for the fact that I hadn't actually studied anything I wasn't interested in. At age 7, I remember the whole class doing a book review. Most selected a Pam and Sam and Digger book. I did an adult quarto called The History Of Spaceflight. I always had an interest in word puzzles,

but only while they remained novelties. For instance, I'd do crosswords but then get a bit bored with the repetitive nature of them.

I remember being fascinated with palindromes the instant I saw them. The first palindromes I saw were in a one-page feature at the back of my mother's Women's Weekly magazine, called Simon Townsend's Wonder World. This was a half-hour TV show for kids, but the Women's Weekly had obviously commissioned Mr. Townsend to do a comic-style page of things interesting to kids on the second-last page of the mag. It usually dealt with bloodthirsty historical curios, or science experiments (i.e. blowing things up) but this one time it had a section on palindromes. "Was it a rat I saw?" was there, and "Stop, Rose, I prefer pies or pots." I was probably about 12 at the time. After that, I collected any I saw avidly, but they were hard to come by (this was in the terribly primitive time before the Web ... yes kiddies, those were dark days). Incredibly it never occurred to me to try to WRITE a palindrome, or even to investigate the mechanics of doing so. I thought of them as gems discovered rather than inventions created. Only in my thirties, when I settled into a job that had a fair bit of spare time did it occur to me to try to write one. In a spirited burst of egotism, my first-ever palindrome started with a seed word of my own name: "As I leave to help Martin act, can I trample hot Eva-Elisa?".

I then wrote about one a day for the next dozen years or so (several thousand now). Sometimes I'll stop for a month or so, but then I'll notice a word that reverses in an unexpected way, and I'm back off the wagon. It's a very solitary pleasure, as I know not a soul on this continent with even any interest in reading palindromes, let alone writing them. Tim Van Ert told me of a New Zealand palindromist once (Stephen Chism?). My friends who know about it consider it an amusing conceit, but I rarely spring one on them. I have nothing to add to the tales of palindromists who unsuccessfully try to impress girls with their Amazing Palindroming Skills ... perhaps my late start led to both the awareness that it was hardly likely to attract anyone, and also the fact that it was perfectly OK to do it anyway even though I had successfully identified it as a geek behaviour.

I have a wide range of other interests. I play bridge at a fairly high level, and have played some club-level chess. I enjoy sport and played ten years of American football, as a wide receiver and tight end, representing my state four times, including winning the inaugural Australian Gridiron National Championship in 1988. For football, I replaced my glasses with contact lenses, and I put on a lot more muscle, which fortunately relieved me of having to impress girls with my Amazing Palindroming Skills. I have also played soccer, and I continue to play volleyball, as bad knees now keep me out of running sports.

I have travelled extensively, to over 40 countries, and every continent except Africa. I lived in Vancouver Canada for a year, and I tend to take very long holidays by American standards: 18 weeks around Europe in 1993, 13 weeks in Europe and USA in 1996, 13 weeks USA, South America and Antarctica in 1998, shorter trips to Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and Thailand, and many trips to the USA, especially the magnificent National Parks of the West. I've driven a car from Boston to Los Angeles. I recently returned from a wonderful 7 week holiday in Europe.

I have recently developed a broader interest in writing in general, and I hope to finish a short story or two Any Time Now. I play guitar, I write songs. I love the way words are used in humour: I not only enjoy jokes; I enjoy picking them apart to work out what makes them tick. I continue to be a voracious reader, demolishing about 10 books a week, on a huge variety of subjects: science, history, travel, science fiction, bridge. I also write voraciously: people often get multi-page replies to a few simple questions! I like the feel of having an audience; I like to write funny lines and see what people think of them.

I've detailed how I write palindromes in 'Interview With A Palindromer' on Tim's MockOK site, and reading it now 9 years later, there's nothing I do differently. I still start with a pair of reversible chunks of text, not a pivot, which may be different to most palindromists. I pride readability above all else in palindromes, and strive to write ones that have such easy readability and unity of purpose that the reader does not suspect that it is any kind of wordplay at all (e.g. "Deliverer, as we Jews use Jesus, we Jews are

reviled.")

As a professional computer programmer, I suppose people might suspect I use some sort of high-tech tools to write palindromes but I don't. I use a word-finder (www.morewords.com) to find "all words that have 'hct' in them" or similar, but I don't limit myself to that. I have written programs that check palindromes, and I have some code squirrelled away that I will eventually use as a GUI to a database of palindromes, but the process of palindrome creation is entirely done in my head. My extensive reading has given me a solid grounding in English sentence construction which keeps me clear of a number of dead ends in palindroming, and I think it would be difficult to come up with many palindromes without that. You are probably not going to be among the palindroming elite if you think that a gerund is something Richard Gere sticks up his ass.

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see the May Kickshaws column.
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Dave Morice

~ THE GRAPHIC CANON: INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 1

*Russ Kick has created **Graphic Canon**, a mammoth three-volume work that Publisher's Weekly calls "The graphic publishing literary event of the year." I would say that this fantastic work is the event of the decade—and beyond! You can read more advance reviews of it in Library Journal, Kirkus, Booklist, and The Guardian. You can check out the **Graphic Canon** on www.graphiccanon.com and [Facebook.com/graphiccanon](https://www.facebook.com/graphiccanon). You can find out more about Russ by going to <http://about.me/russkick>, and you can get a flip-through view of Volume 1 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsoYFONRdBs>*

I am particularly interested in this publication for two reasons. First, from 1979-1981, I published a comic book called "Poetry Comics," in which I put the words of classical and contemporary poems into cartoon balloons; now I'm putting out a new "Poetry Comics," a webzine that you can check out under the domain name of poetrycomicsonline.com. Second, some poetry comics of mine are included in Russ's graphic trilogy. I asked Russ to tell Kickshaws readers more about it, and here's his reply:

We're living in a golden age of the graphic novel, of comic art, and of illustration in general. Legions of talented artists—who employ every method, style, and

approach imaginable—are creating such a flood of amazing, gorgeous, entertaining, and groundbreaking material that it’s pretty much impossible to keep up with it all. What if a bunch of these artists used as their source material the greatest literature ever written?

That was the question that occurred to me several years ago, while in the graphic novel section of a bookstore. Specifically, I saw a graphic version of *The Trial* by Franz Kafka (adapted by Mairowitz and Montellier). That was the tipping point. It fully dawned on me just how many amazing graphic adaptations of literature had been published in recent years. My instincts as an anthologist kicked in. I needed to gather the best of what had already been done, commission lots of new adaptations, and put it all in one place. It seemed like an obvious idea, yet no one had done it: create a huge, brick-like book spanning centuries, countries, languages, and genres. Include novels, short stories, poems, plays, autobiographies, the occasional speech and letter, and scientific, philosophical, and religious works.

In other words, create what would essentially be *The Norton Anthology of Literature in Graphic Form*.

I quickly found a publisher who shared my vision—Seven Stories Press—and *The Graphic Canon* started gestating in earnest. Soon it became triplets. There was too much outstanding material to cram into a single volume, even a large one, so it split into three. *Gilgamesh* kicks off the first book, and David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest* closes the third. In between, almost every A-list work of Western literature is covered, but that’s just the beginning. As I contacted more artists, the range of works expanded. Literature from the Eastern canon—Japan, China, India, Tibet. Religious/spiritual literature. Philosophy. Bawdy material. Ancient Greek drama. Medieval writings. Romanticism. Modernism and postmodernism. The Beats. Works from indigenous peoples. Fairy tales. Mystical visions. *Candide*. Poems from Emily Dickinson. *The Hasheesh Eater*. A rare, early story from Hemingway. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. And still there’s more—190 works in all, with the first 55 (taking us through the end of the 1700s) in this initial volume.

Likewise, the range of artists became staggering. Legendary cartoonists—such as Robert Crumb, Will Eisner, Sharon Rudahl, S. Clay Wilson, Roberta Gregory, and Kim Deitch—were participating. More big names joined. Artists who have drawn for Marvel and DC climbed aboard. Bright lights from the alternative comics, mini-comics, and Web-comics scenes said yes. I recruited ridiculously talented

newcomers. Artists from Brazil, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, South Korea, the UK, and Canada joined their US counterparts. And not just comics artists ... I was getting stunning work from illustrators, painters, silk-screeners, a collage artist, a radical graphic designer, and two artists who create photo-dioramas.

I asked the artists to stay true to the source material—no setting it in the future, no creating new adventures for characters, etc. Longer works would of course be represented by excerpts or extreme abridgements. But within that framework, they were given *carte blanche*. Any approach, any medium, any style. I wasn't interested in a workman-like, note-by-note transcription of the original work. The adaptations are true collaborations between the original authors/poets and the artists.

Each piece stands on its own, but taken together they form a vast, rich kaleidoscope of art and literature. A rainbow of visual approaches has been applied to the world's treasure trove of great writings, and something wondrously new has taken shape.

And this is the main point of *The Graphic Canon*. You could look at it as an educational tool, and I hope it does get used that way. You could say that it will lead people to read the original works of literature; that would make me happy. But, at its heart, this titanic, multi-volume anthology is a self-contained artistic/literary work, an end in itself.

~ RHYMESTORMING

Limericks tend to be sleazy.
Done well, they're deceptively breezy.
The fact is, they're terse.
In writing such verse,
The simple is not always easy.

Ove Michaelsen has just published *Rhymestorming: Bolts from the Blue* with JoMo Publishing. This book has a special twist to it. It's a collection of limericks, which is a rare event, but that's not what's truly unusual. Nor is it the fact that Ove wrote the book without any guarantee at all that it would be published. It was simply a dream, until recently.

Just yesterday, right before twilight,
A rainbow arc glowed in my skylight.
I followed the bend

To that long colored end
And found one tiny pot of pure pyrite.

Ove has been writing limericks for five years now. After writing each one, he would send it to me for criticism, and I am a tough critic. Especially of rhyme and rhythm. If he was off the least bit in rhythm, I told him to redo it. If he was ignoring rhyme, I told him to unignore it.

Epistemological woe:
The limit—how far can we go?
Said Joe, “As of yet,
There’s no one I’ve met
Who’s aware of how much we don’t know.”

And yet perfecting the rhyme and rhythm certainly isn’t unusual. What makes Ove’s book stand out from any other book of poetry that I know of? Is it the fact that his limericks are sometimes political?

THE RUSH LIMBAG
Among automotive concerns
I hope every teenager learns
Not to drive in a zigzag.
A Rush Limbaugh airbag
Will only inflate on right turns.

No, although most limericks aren’t political, this isn’t what makes *Rhymestorming* a book of a different color. Could it be the personality that appears in many of the poems—friendly, witty, sometimes bold, sometimes shy, sometimes crazy?

My brows were pulled up from my eyes.
These peepers now seem twice their size.
I’m back to my prime
As though frozen in time
With a permanent look of surprise.

Is this book of limericks different because they aren’t “dirty”? Well, sometimes a mild uncleanness might be hovering at the edge of the words, but nothing worth calling in the censors.

These verses are hard to resist.

I cover what many have missed.
Though not squeaky clean,
I avoid the obscene
And enjoy an unusual twist.

Is this book different because it sometimes refers to or includes wordplay? Not many limericks go beyond the immediate hit of the obscenity at the end. But what is going on in Ove's rhymes? Sometimes they're on fire.

Ucalegon lives in our town.
"I hear that your house had burnt down.
The one with the porch on it?
Hun, how unfortunate.
All you have left is that gown?"
(Ucalegon: a neighbor (or next-door neighbor) whose house is on fire.)

No, I'll tell you what it is that makes *Rhymestorming* so different. First, here's a clue: It's very difficult to publish a book. And if you do it yourself, it costs money, and you have to deal with a company such as lulu.com or Fidler-Doubleday. You have to know how to format the book. It is a truly difficult task to get it all done right.

I once knew a clean-freak named Ron.
He vacuumed his roof and front lawn,
And washed every shelf,
Then laundered himself
Until one day my buddy was gone.

A writer needs a publisher. A writer needs an editor. To find these two, a writer usually needs to send out query letters, synopses, and manuscripts to publishing houses that have tall stacks of manuscripts that arrived before yours. Or one has to be a famous person whose fame, not literary value, draws the publisher and the editor. And on top of this you usually know you're being published. You're not on Candid Camera. Well, that's exactly what happened to Ove. His book was accepted without the formality of searching for a publisher. His book was accepted before he had any idea that it would be.

Joye Chizek, the woman who set up my Poetry Comics Online website (poetrycomicsonline.com) (and a beautiful website it is), Joye got to know Ove through my knowing Ove and through the three of us on Facebook. Joye, one of

the very most creative, brilliant people I've ever met, had to format the book according to Fidler-Doubleday's computer code, assemble the text, and design the cover. Her cover design is a knock-out! Joye has published my last 4 books, my 10,000-page marathon website (iowacitypoetrymarathon.com), and my comics website, and she accomplished all of these publishing events in spite of major health problems. She is a writer, an artist, a speaker, and a literary angel.

And thus ends this epic book review.

~ A REVIEW OF MY BOOK REVIEW

After I finished writing the review of *Rhymestorming*, I emailed it to Joye. Here is her response:

"Very nice. I love the weaving in and out of the limericks. You might add that I was lurking on Ove's Facebook conversation about getting published, when I sent him a post that said, "how about having JoMo do it?" ...and one week later it was being printed. As far as Fidler, it is not so much computer code but matching their specifications that is tricky sometimes. You could throw in that the book can be found on Amazon.com."

~ COUNTING THE RICE HARVEST

a haiku

Nine million nine hun-
Dred ninety nine thousand nine
Hundred ninety nine

~ POETRY MOVEMENTS

New poetry movements crop up all the time around the country. They may last for years or for seconds, depending on their energy and its half-life. They're in the air, affecting literature in many ways. Here is a short list of some of the newest of the new, followed by a brief description of each.

(1) Quickism—The Quickist Poets can type 80 words a minute or more. They zip through poems by the dozens. The burning typewriter has become a symbol of their fervent desire to "write as fast as a cheetah, as swift as a racecar."

(2) Dreamism—Always ready to wake up, the Dreamists are professional sleepwalkers. Their typewriters are attached to the backs of their heads, with electrodes wired to their cerebral cortex. They sleep with the typewriter for a pillow, and when they dream, it clicks out their dreamy verses.

(3) Xeroxism—Each Xeroxist writes one poem at the beginning of his or her writing career. After that, all new poems are crisp, clear copies of the first. “That way it stays fresh,” they say. “That way it stays fresh,” they say. “That way it...” etc.

(4) Noisism—Any noise is fair game for these poets. Armed with tape-recorders, the Noisists seek out any and every noise they can possibly hear. Upon locating a noise—POW!—they record it and shout, “That’s my latest poem!”

(5) Nothingism—In direct opposition to Somethingism, the Nothingist poet just looks at a blank page to convert it into a poem. The epic poem, titled “The Nothingad,” consists of a 200 foot long blank roll of butcher’s wrapping paper.

(6) Poetism—An outgrowth of the popular, age-old movement called Plagiarism, Poetism is a fertile movement which draws upon many sources. The Poetist poet begins each poem with the words “I almost wrote” and follows them with any previously written poem by another poet. For instance, take this powerful Poetistic work that improves upon the famous poem about a wheel barrow by William Carlos Williams:

I almost
wrote

“so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens”

~ APPLES IN THE SAUCE

Here are two tiny tastes of Louis Phillips's Applesauce Chronicles

*

DIDACTIC ART

The muralist
Was a moralist
More or less.

**

THE SLOWEST CAR IN THE WORLD

00 MPH
No oomph.

~ THE TOOTH OF THE NUMBER

Morty Sklar added a PS to a recent email to me. Morty is a poet in Queens. His PS reveals another quirk in English:

P.S. The other day, when I changed the date in the Subject line from 20th to 21st, I almost forgot to change the th to st--which reminded me of restaurant I came across in downtown Manhattan on 2nd Avenue. I'm guessing it's owned by Chinese. Their neon sign read: 2th Avenue Diner.

~ THREESUMS

In the last Kickshaws, Ray Love presented several lists of threesomes. Carrying on with his theme, Ray sends the following sets.

THREE'S COMPANY

In the August 1988 issue of Word Ways, Richard Lederer presented in quiz form an impressive list of what he described as, "...famous triplets - threesomes that often hang around together, like red, white and blue". I have gathered another assortment of triple plays to add to this idiomatic landscape. What he probably

did in months, took me years of vigilant observation. After our combined total of almost 200 Los Tres Amigos, can there be many left to find? Herewith are my contributions to the list of these trios in the three basic patterns a, b and c; a, b or c; and a, b, c.

a, b and c

before, during and after
first, last and always
all sizes, shapes and forms
this, that and the other
beginning, middle and end
death, burial and resurrection
gold, silver and bronze
big, fat and wide
thought, word and deed
deaf, dumb and blind
strikes, spares and splits
knife, fork and spoon
dese, dem and dose
means, motive and opportunity
mind, body and spirit (soul)
face, neck and hands
free, white and 21
height, length and width
yesterday, today and tomorrow
fast, quick and in a hurry
birth, death and resurrection
trials, troubles and tribulations
blondes, brunettes and redheads
breakfast, lunch and dinner
chocolate, strawberry and vanilla
judge, jury and executioner
comedy, drama, and tragedy
stop, drop and roll
beer, wine and liquor
sick, lame and lazy
vim, vigor and vitality (Viagra)
past, present and future
depose, swear and affirm

slips, trips and spills (falls)
lie, cheat and steal
shit, shower and shave
stage, screen and song
left, right and center
morning, noon and night
sit, soak and sour
news, weather and sports
pass, punt and kick
33 1/3, 45 and 78
yours, mine and ours
truth, justice and the American way
top hat, white tie and tails
Health, Education and Welfare
Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves
Earth, Wind and Fire
Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered
Trains and Boats and Planes
Bed, Bath & Beyond
Eats, Shoots & Leaves
Sex, Lies and Videotape
Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes
Ford, General Motors and Chrysler
ABC, NBC and CBS
horses sweat, men perspire and women glow
engagement ring, wedding ring, and suffering
Jose, hose B and hose C (three pieces of Mexican fire equipment)
telephone, telegraph and tell a woman (three ways to spread gossip)
Arthur-itis, Ben-Gay and Charley horse (three men an elderly woman goes to
bed with)

a, b or c

at home, at work or at play
buy, sell or trade
cash, check or money order
coffee, tea or me
small, medium or large
fold, call or raise
either lead, follow or get out of the way

immoral, illegal or fattening
before, during or after
yes, no or maybe
any way, shape or form
rare, medium or well-done

a, b, c

lube, oil, filter
go, fight, win
duty, honor, country
woulda, coulda, shoulda
no shirt, no shoes, no service
places to go, things to do, people to see
come out, come out, wherever you are
anytime, anyplace, anywhere
no runs, no hits, no errors
turn on, tune in, drop out
been there, done that, got a T-shirt
kinda, sorta, maybe
location, location, location
hip! hip! hurrah!
I came, I saw, I conquered
the way, the truth, the life
game, set, match
duck, duck, goose
going once, going twice, sold
look sharp, feel sharp, be sharp
liar, liar, pants on fire
once, twice, three times a charm (lady)
right side, left side, sui-cide
faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive,
able to leap tall buildings in a single bound
peanuts, popcorn, crackerjack
Apples, Peaches, Pumpkin Pie
Citius, Altius, Fortius
Fidelity, Bravery, Integrity

~ THE ANNALS OF ANIL

Anil has sent several batches of Kickshavian wordplay. Without going into the details, let's let Anil take it away!

PYRAMID POWER

“Power pyramids” are sentential step-triangles; the lines run together into a single coherent sentence or statement, ideally poetic, provocative or humorous. My favourite, already presented in *up/dn* and in Kickshaws, is the “other cheek” poem, I IN FIN FIND FIEND FRIEND. Both new poems below rely on equating O with zero, a common practice in anagrams and cryptic crosswords but making for a somewhat flawed result, required for the poetry. The first is “perfect”, the second is semi-perfect (Is that a word or an oxymoron?)

CHEMICAL ENLIGHTENMENT

HER GOT
 ERGOT
 ERGO
 E GO
 GO
 O.

Ergot here represents LSD, an ergot derivative and ego dissolver.

ZEROFICATION or WHEN JOHNNY GETS CARRIED HOME

The next pyramid, an ELEGY, mixes perfect steps with transadditions.

O
On
One,
Done,

Or end,
Modern,
Mourned,

Unformed,
Uniformed,
Uninformed.

ONION PALINDROMES

REREVERER, a banananame listed in Jeff Grant's *Palindromicon II* (WW monograph 6), is my nominee as one of the most interesting words in the language. Has this been pointed out before? It's a palindrome within a palindrome within a palindrome within a palindrome. Rever is defined in the *Palindromicon* as Scots dialect for a robber or plunderer, and a rereverer of course is one who reveres again or repeatedly. The innermost "pal" is the mirror image letter V itself. If only "erevere" were a word we'd have a **perfect onion**: REREVERER

EREVERE

REVER

EVE

V.

If one considered it important enough one could coin a meaning for the void layer. I volunteer.

erevere = 1. email spelling of Paul Revere's descendant Elvis: **E. Revere**

2. to worship the internet or high tech generally: to **e-revere**

3. two competing version of a past event: **ere v. ere** (technically, ere¹ v. ere²)

Looking ahead, may the future make a word of, and *ERE REVERE RE*, *DEREREVERERED*, meaning "removed all rereverers", eg in a religious purge.

There are dozens and perhaps hundreds of perfect onions in *Palindromicon II* but it includes proper and commercial names, acronyms and other abbreviations, and foreign languages. A computer search of *PII* might quickly uncover the longest perfect onion. Using only Scrabble words I found no perfect onions with a symmetrical central letter longer than 5-letter triples, and only five of them in *Official Scrabble Words* (ANANA, DEWED, LEVEL, STATS, STOTS), and of these only LEVEL and STATS are in *Official Scrabble Players Dictionary*. (But REVER is in neither.) Can you or Jeff or other readers find a longer perfect onion of only Scrabble words? Or of Web-3 or other defined source words?

MORE PALINDROME ANAGRAMS

Tom Pulliam (89-221,222; after Darryl Francis earlier) presented a large list of long words that can be formed with the letters of the word PALINDROME, either by removing three letters and anagramming the rest or by adding increasingly larger groups of letters to “palindrome” to form increasingly longer words. Astute as he was, Pulliam surely noticed but failed to mention that many of these words, with an apt rearrangement of the other letters (which he presents only as alphomes), can make good anagrams *about* palindromes—definitives, antigrams and cognates. In tribute I present the solutions to several of his cryptic anagrams. His words are **bold**. Mine are more timid.

palindrome • in a **premod** / I pan **remold**. (I pan a camera across and back.)

• **plainer** mod **dipolar** men (men with reversible names like Bob and Judge Gduj)

• ran **implode** (self-centered, imploding from both directions)

My multi-anagram definition in *up/dn* (WW monograph 5, '02) unknowingly included variants of three of these:

“Palindrome: I’m polar end-on-mid relap, an **imploder**... drawn inward. Gain palindrome in **dipole** anagram. Palindrome’s a spin **remold**.”

• don **impaler**/nor **impaled** (weak synonym/antonym pair, symmetrically impaled at midpoint)

• Am line prod midplane, or do ‘ramp’ line. (polyanagram of “palindrome” extending previous explanation)

• **meridional parts** Is palindrome art. / **meridional** pair: I air palindrome. (symmetrical halves)

• **imponderable** be palindrome (by Francis; too often true!)

• **retrodisplacement** Palindrome set? Cert!

• **preaccommodatingly** Got my palindrome acc. (1st half of a pal makes a “reservation” for 2nd half.)

And three good ANTIGRAMS:

• **hyperdimensionality** Hip palindrome, yes? (No! Pals stubbornly stick to a single dimension.

Unless they’re meaningful, whence they do gain an extra dimension—or two if of double meaning.)

• **malproportioned** Or opt palindrome. (No, pals are perfectly, symmetrically proportioned.)

- **pseudoconglomeration** Go scout one palindrome. (No, a pal is an ordered true conglomeration.)

THE CASE FOR INCOMPLETE ARGUMENT

$$3 + 4 = 6$$

It's true! If you had three markers and added four more and I asked you if you had six, you'd have to say yes, no? Plus one more, of course, if you insist on being a "completist". (Note condescending tone.) It's like the kids' riddle, How many months have 28 days? Answer: all of them!

RIDDLES

1. What do you call a suicidal Australian stand-up comedian who bombs?
2. How many Aussies does it take to change the globe?
3. What weapon does a hit man for the establishment use?

ICE COOL HIGH SCHOOL REVISITED

Here's some more questions from students at said institution where I fail to teach, plus the best-I-could-manage answers to same.

Was Pavlov's dog a Klein bottle?

Sadly Martin Gardner isn't around to answer this tricky poser.

Was Androcles the first pussyfooter?

Yes, and pussyfooting paid!

Is "Homo" sapiens gay?

Not lately!

Is "earth" a dirty word?

Yes, whenever dirt-cheap dirt costs the earth!

Is a stillbirth still birth?

If so, it's a mere charade.

Was Adam so named because he was motherless, a-Dam?

Sounds right, but backward thinking Germans and Russians reverse the myth to *Ma da*: Dam present (G); Dam yes! (R).

Is there anyone anywhere who actually believes Japan is killing all those whales for science? Yes! All Japanese scientists who like whale meat.

Why doesn't anybody ever wage peace?

"Because the wages of peace is death," say the war wagers. (Isn't that "sin"?)

What kind of super-stupor stupid *duped* two-bit sap/sucker species are we?

(Oh-oh, what'd we do this time? Or not do?)

ALADDIN JOKES

- Aladdin wished to survive for a million years.

So the genii turned him into stone.

- Aladdin wished to sleep with many beautiful women.

So the genii turned him into a live-in harem eunuch.

- Aladdin wished for the world's biggest muscles.

So the genii turned him into a blue whale. On the spot.

- Aladdin wished for a ton of gold.

So the genii swished him off to the inner vault at Fort Knox, where he suffocated.

- Aladdin wished to own the whole universe.

So the genii did nothing, saying "You already do!" *(So do you, sleeper!)*

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

These anagrams of the Australian capital cities are old and new mixed. A, B and C are from *up/dn*, the rest new. Naturally all but Perth get abused, but that's what they get for having those letters.

state capital descriptive anagrams ____

South Australia **Adelaide** "Ale aided, I addle ea. lead idea."

Queensland **Brisbane** Be brains? Na, bribes!

nation **Canberra** barren A/C

Northern Territory **Darwin** Draw in inward!

Tasmania **Hobart** Bah! Rot!

Victoria **Melbourne** mule boner

Western Australia **Perth** Terph! *((The PR!))*

New South Wales **Sydney** Dys-yen!

Terph is a slang shortening of terrific, as in “The turf and surf in Perth are terph!”

I also recommend TERPH to logologists as a catchall term for any anagram-challenged entity.

Dys-yen Sydney means you don’t want to go there.

PALINDROPS

These are early efforts at palindroming which in the end dropped off and fell short of success.

A man, a plan, an isthmus—Panama! (The man of course was Balboa.)

Abel was I ere I saw Cain.

Sums are not set as a test on Darwin. (Erasmus Darwin?)

Dennis and Edna behaved.

Are we not drawn onwards, we Jews, drawn onward to new heights? (Golan Heights?)

Delia sailed as a sad Elias got seasick.

Ma is as selfless as I used to be.

Madame, not one man is selfless. I name not one, bitch.

Mirth, sir, a gay asset? No, don’t assay a garish homosexual.

So may Obadiah, even in Nineveh, aid a boy, Andy.

MORE DILETTANTE ETYMOLOGY ADVENTURES

Females and fetuses suck! That’s not an opinion, it’s the etymology. Both female (<*femina*, suck-person) and fetus (<*fetus*, offspring, sucker) come from <*fe-* suck (L.). *Felare*, to suck, is also related to *filius/filia* (son/daughter, suckling). Chambers Dictionary of Etymology (1988) doesn’t say so but it’s tempting to speculate on a prehistoric relationship also between *filius* etc and

filium (L., thread, string). Further, either or both may be related to the Greek *phil-* (love, <*philos*, loved one, dear, friend; earliest meaning is one's own (ie, kin, one's blood line, offspring?) and to *phylon* (phylum, race, stock, tribe, clan, line; rel. to *phyein*, be, bring into existence, produce [offspring] <Sk. *bhávati*, exists, happens, <I-E *bhew*, grow, come to be, [spring off]). There's a strong temptation to add yet another sideways entry into this group, *filly* (<foal<G *fulon*, rel. to L. *pullus*, pullet, young animal [animal offspring]). Can a reader with a deeper knowledge of etymology answer these speculations?

SIGN OF THE TIMES

I saw a TV ad shouting "AT CRAZY, FAIR PRICES!"
In other words, if you're fair, you're crazy.

IN-SIGHT JOKE

He: "You look like a million dollars!"
She: "How do a million dollars look?"
He: "Out of all those eyes in the pyramids."

A TORTURED COINCIDENCE

Torquemada, famous Inquisitor and torturer, is named for his home town in Castile, meaning "burnt tower". Quite apt, but an even more apt coincidence is the fact that *torquere* is Latin for "to torture"!

THE INDETERMINATE NUMBERS

I included a couple of terms in *How To Double..* (p.79) that might qualify if slightly modified to fit the category.

quadrillions indeterminately vast numbers of square dancers

cotillions even larger numbers of dance gatherings

SHE WAS ONLY

Here's another oldie of that genre, learned from my mother and the funniest of the lot in my opinion:

She was only a stableman's daughter, but all the horsemen knew her.

TOWNS AND CITIES

Bill Brandt, in a geographic mood, states that “I read an article about places someone had visited or wanted to visit. They wanted to go to Cahoots. But they couldn’t go there alone because apparently you have to be in Cahoots with someone. They did go to Cognito but when they were in Cognito no one seemed to recognize them. That got me to thinking about some of the places that I have visited.”

When I was in Accurate everything I had thought about it turned out to be wrong.

When I was in Capable everything I did seemed to go wrong.

When I was in Cense everything seemed to smell nice

When I was in Curable and again when I was in Operable I was diagnosed with a serious disease.

When I was in Decisive I couldn’t make up my mind what to do next.

When I was in Delible it made a lasting impression.

When I was in Different I didn’t care one way or the other.

When I was in Dulgence all I wanted to do was pig out at the restaurants.

When I was in Ebriated I often got drunk.

When I was in Edible the food at the restaurant tasted terrible.

When I was in Fantile the people there seemed to be acting childish.

When I was in Fantry I visited the military base.

When I was in Fection and also when I was in Fluenza I started to run a fever.

When I was in Ferior and when I was in Secure I started to feel the same as when I was in Adaquate.

When I was in Genuous the people did not seem very sincere.

When I was in Hospitable the folks there didn’t make me feel welcome.

When I was in Jure I broke my arm.

When I was in Opportune it didn’t seem like a good time to visit.

When I was in Nuendo every sign seemed to have a double meaning.

When I was in Quire and when I was in Quisitive people kept asking me questions.

When I was in Satible I was always hungry.

When I was in Scrutable and when I was in Explicative things there were very puzzling.

When I was in Sightful and when I was in Spriration I had some of my best new ideas.

When I was in Sipid everything seemed very bland.

When I was in Solvent I ran out of money and had to look for an ATM.
When I was in Surmountable I couldn't seem to get anything done.
When I was in Surrection a riot broke out.
When I was in Tensify everything seemed more real.
When I was in Terpret I had to ask my friend to tell me what everyone was saying.
When I was in Tervene I had to break up a fight.
When I was in Tolerant I couldn't stand the people there.
When I was in Undate I was overwhelmed by peoples' kindness.
When I was in Vective people kept shouting things at me.
When I was in Verse everything seemed to be done backwards.
When I was in Visible no one seemed to notice me.

~ OGDENASHIAN CHALLENGE

Bill sent a parody of Ogden Nash's poem about llamas. Here is Nash's poem:

The one-l lama,
He's a priest.
The two-l llama,
He's a beast.
And I will bet
A silk pajama
There isn't any
Three-l llama.

And here is Bill's parody.

The one-l lama,
He's a priest.
The two-l llama,
He's a beast.
If you go one-l higher
The three-l llama
Is a really big fire.

A few years ago I wrote a parody of Nash's poem:

The one-k baker,
He's a cook.
The two-k Bakker,

He's a crook.
And I will bet
An Indian faker
There isn't any
Three-k Bakker.

The Ogdenashian Challenge is to write parodies of the poem using different letters of the alphabet, going from one-a, one-b, etc., to one-z. To get the ball rolling, here is one-x. I found Nixxon, a musician, on Google.

The one-x Nixon,
He's a crook.
The two-x Nixxon,
He's a rook.
But I would bet
A hip-hop vixen
There isn't any
Three-x Nixxon.