

# KICKSHAWS

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*Readers are encouraged to send their own favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor. All answers appear in the Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue. Guest editors will continue to appear occasionally.*

## Ulysses, With a Grief and Kickshaws

The virgin at Hodges Figgis' window on Monday looking in for one of the alphabet books you were going to write...She lives in Leeson park, with a grief and kickshaws, a lady of letters...

James Joyce's **Ulysses** is the greatest example of primitive wordplay in English literature. Without the background of modern logical studies such as those in **Word Ways**, Joyce managed to riddle the novel with his own inventions. Martin Gardner examined some of the wordplay in his article "The Puzzles in Ulysses" (*Semotica* 57-3/4, 1985), and cited several instances. However, there are so many others that it would require a book to give them sufficient attention. Here are a few examples that show Joyce's obvious love of wordplay.

**PALINDROMES** Lenehan bowed to a shape of air, announcing: --Madam, I'm Adam. And Able was I ere I saw Elba.

**RIDDLE** --But my riddle! he said. What opera is like a railway line? --The Rose of Castile. See the wheeze? Rows of cast steel. Gee!

**RHYME** Mouth, south. Is the mouth south someway? Or the south a mouth? Must be some. South, pout, out, shout, drouth. Rhymes: two men dressed the same, looking the same, two by two...mouth south: tomb womb.

**CRYPTOGRAM** the transliterated name and address of the addresser of the 3 letters in reserved boustrophedontic punctuated quadrilinear cryptogram (vowels suppressed) N. IGS./WI.UU. OX/W. OKS. MH/Y. IM:

**ONOMASTICS** S. Anonymous and S. Eponymous and S. Pseudonymous and S. Homonymous and S. Paronymous and S. Synonymous...

**CHEATER'S PALINDROME** The voice of all the Damned: Htengier Tnetopinmo Dog Drol eht rof, Aiulella!...Dooooooooooooog! The voice of all the Blessed: Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!... Goooooooooooood!

**LETTER SUBSTITUTION** Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and Jinbad the Jailer and Whinbad the Whaler and Ninbad the Nailor and Finbad the Failer and Binbad the Bailer and Pinbad the Pailer and Minbad the Mailer and Hinbad the Hailer and Rinbad the Railer and Dinbad the Kailer and Vinbad the Quailer and Linbad the Yailer and Xinbad the Phthailer [read this aloud as fast as possible]

## Medical Eponyms

Chris McManus sent a list of wonderfully-misleading names from **A Dictionary of Medical Eponyms** (1987) by Firkin and Whitworth. The book contains biographies of doctors and scientists who have given their names to diseases, measurements, or laws. The Beer Law, for instance, is not about regulating alcohol usage, but a statement about light transmission by the physicist A. Beer. The following are also named after real people:

Battle Sign	Hope Murmur	Pins Sign
Bright Disease	Hunt Tremor	Quick Test
Cannon Law [sic]	Hunter Canal	Rust Phenomenon
Carriion Disease	Hurler Syndrome	Saint Triad
Christmas Factor	Ivy Method	Shaver Disease
Councilman Bodies	Legal Disease	Silver Syndrome
Curling Ulcer	Looser Zones	Sippy Diet
Darling Disease	Main Syndrome	Starling Law
Drinker Respirator	Master Test	Stickler Syndrome
Eagle Media	Minor Disease	Still Murmur
Good Syndrome	Moon Molars	Sweet Syndrome
Ham Test	Parrot Nodes	Swift Disease
Head Zones	Pepper Syndrome	Wood Lamp
Hill Sign	Pick Cells	Young Syndrome

## Brooms in the Sorcerer's Apprentice

Dorothy Lubin has found that "the palindromes keep coming at a fast clip--rather like the broom in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*." The result is a delightful selection of palindromic parodies, lines, and even some ads within explanatory verse.

CANAL CONFUSION Zeus on: A man, a plan, a canal. Panama? No, Suez!  
 SNACKS FOR HUNGRY KIDS a nut was Mom ere Mom saw tuna  
 ARTISTIC did I, Millet, draw Degas' aged ward? Tell 'im I did!  
 TENNIS a Vilas tip: spit saliva  
 PRESCRIPTION AT TAX TIME FOR: CPA's deeds: APC

If you're a foreign car promoter	Once upon an ocean liner,
Play this ditty on your zither:	The captain told his purser
A Toyota's a Toyota	Pepsi is Pep, from left to right,
Going forth or coming hither.	And also vice versa.

If lying awake aching from your head to toes  
 Makes you feel jumpy, grumpy, sad, or morose,  
 J&J's one-of-a-kind tablet or pill.  
 Lonely Tylenol, should fit the bill!

## The Slanguage of Variety

Jeff Grant sent a short glossary of expressions currently used in *Variety* magazine. My faves are those which clip off the second half of words, such as:

AD-PUB advertising and publicity, as in "he is ad-pub chief"  
 AFFIL an affiliate, a TV station not owned by but programming material from a network or other source

EXHIB exhibitor, an individual or company showing films  
FAVE favorite

EXEX is the best of all. In Jeff's words, "I was particularly intrigued with the occasional Variety plural of EXEC, namely EXEX. Presumably, former executives could be described as EX-EXEX, which as well as being a short term containing the letter X three times, is also a three-part tautonym, which may be unique in that all three parts are different, rather than simple repetition."

### Two By Two

Clifford Falk and Ron Kensek composed a pair of poems having a special property. Can you figure out what is unusual?

<p>CWM TOMB Though no man can, I try to glue Six sticks and sand In tin, to you.</p>	<p>A GAY KIWI Say, neighbor! Your kiwi laughed After her four score years. Tears slipped, dripped, and landed. Did she see too few years' fears?</p>
--	--

### Oral Palindromes

Clifford also composed lines that are palindromic when read aloud. Interestingly, they also sound like tongue-twisters.

Funny. A steep spot tops pizza enough.  
Owed a steep skate tab, bat takes pizza dough.  
Lead dame made deal.  
Chance fleshpot Mom top shelf snatch.

### Self-Referential Letter Palindromes

"It has come to my attention," Steve Chism writes, "that there are in our language at least eight self-referential letter palindromes. Like all palindromes that make any kind of sense, they are statistical anomalies; the likelihood of any word or phrase spelling the same backwards as forwards is very slight. But they also represent their own special case or genre of palindrome. They place an additional level of specificity on what is already a demanding structure to achieve intelligibility with perfect symmetry. The rules are these: a reference must be made to a letter of the alphabet which is descriptive of that letter. This must be done in such a way that the resulting phrase reads the same backwards as forwards. I have found some of the palindromes listed below in logology literature and have embellished the list. It is interesting to note that all but one come from the second half of the alphabet. Perhaps there are more. Maybe you could discover one!" The first column has Steve's letterdromes, and the second column some additional ones found by Ross Eckler. I added the third column, although some may be stretching the definition.

Loco L	Acidic A	Sad A's
Odd O	Gala G	Boffo B
Mini M	Ill I	Mere M
Petite P	Degage D [free]	No N
Rococo R	Bete B [foolish]	Peewee P

Solo S	Tenne T [brown]	Sere S
Uneven U	Cara C [dear]	Tbo T
Wee W	Fere F [sympathetic]	Voodoo V

### + Slip

Peter Newby suggests making palindromes in which the spelling of a punctuation mark or other nonalphabetic symbol occurs in the other half of the 'drome. In his example, the word SULP is a Middle English verb meaning "to defile or pollute". His other example is the simple but effective POTS. Following his lead, here are a few puncdromes. In the last one, the two words could be a name and a verb or an abbreviation for Education Literature.

/SALS	AH HAMMOCK, HAH
DO I REPAY A.	EH PORT SOP A'
DID...USE SPILLED ID	SUNI -
NO LOCK:	AND EDNA'S REP MAN & EDNA
NO LOCI ME;	ED LIT ~

To carry the idea further, some palindromes under certain conditions don't require the other half at all. Here are a half dozen. Can you figure out when the conditions would be right for each to function as a palindrome? (Note that I avoided using the term condrome for this form.)

CAPS	OH
IA [Iowa]	ON US
RID	WON

### Cheeze 'n' Crackers Got All Muddy

Peter Newby writes that his son, Maxwell, when a toddler, would conclude his day by saying the Lord's Prayer with a twist at the end: "...and deliver us from measles. Amen." For a child, measles are certainly one of the main evils. There are other accidentally-revised Christian prayers and Christmas songs. Do you know of any? The title of this kickshaw is a quote from underground comix artist R. Crumb. What does it refer to?

### Spanish-American Cuisine

Ana Lovera, a native of Venezuela, has gathered several words borrowed from English (which borrowed them from other languages) that are used in Spanish cookbooks. You'll figure out most of them, but what is PONQUE?

bifteck	coliflor	menestrone
espaghetti	mayonesa	sufle
esparragos	panquecas	
ponque	cocktel	

### Hawaiian Wordplay

Frank Rubin found the zip code directory for Hawaii to be an interesting place to search for palindromes, anagrams, and tautonyms. His inspiration was ALA NANALA Street in Honolulu. He writes

"It struck me that Hawaiian, with only 12 letters in the alphabet, would be a rich source of palindromes...There were not as many as hoped, because the majority [of Hawaiian words] start with a consonant and end with a vowel." He found one palindromic town, ELEELE; the rest are streets, places or lanes.

AMAAMA, AWAWA, ELELE; AKAKA, ALA NANALA, AMA, IKI, IWI,  
OO, UHU

ONELUA/ONEULA

HULUHULU, IHEIHE, LEHULEHU, MUUMUU; AHUAHU, AKIAKI, AOAQ,  
EAEA, HOEHOE, LAWELAWE, MAHIMAHI, OEQE, PALAPALA,  
POEPOE, UHI UHI, WILIWILI

In addition, he found many internal palindromes and tautonyms: KAMEHAMEHA, KAPUNAPUNA, aINA LANI, ALA ALOALO, ALA AMOAMO, ALA AOLOA, liPEEPPEE, naWILIWILI, OLALOA, paHOEHOE and puu ELEELE.

### Toronto Telephonics

Jay Ames has given a count of names by word length as they appear in the Toronto phonebook. Does this frequency distribution mirror that of other cities? Perhaps a general study would enable people to choose places to move based on the length of names in the phonebook. Jay found 136 two-letter names (AH to YU), approximately 1200 three-letter names (AAK to ZIS), and approximately 400 four-letter names beginning with A (AASE to AZIZ), from which he postulates in excess of 10,000 for the full alphabet.

### Against the Current

John Meyer suggests the phrase **spring-FED Creek** as an example of five alphabetic letters in reverse order. Could there possibly be a more natural-sounding phrase with more letters in reverse? Or even an unnatural one?

### Wordplay and Language Learning for Children

This is the title of a book used in a language arts class at the University of Iowa. It provides an interesting view of the type of wordplay children are familiar with. Most of the wordplay tends to be speech play—spoken rather than written. Linda Geller, the author, discusses riddles, puns, nonsense, and parody as created by children, and provides wonderful examples. Under Parody Play she includes parodies of the commercial world: DROP-A-CAN OF ORANGE JUICE, GOON'S EYES [spoon size] SHREDDED FEET, THE TOILET ZONE STARRING FLUSH GORDON, KUNG FOOL, NEWLY DEAD GAME, DIE PEPSI, and SUN PISSED ORANGES.

Some parodies have established themselves in the oral tradition of grade schools. One parody version of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, she notes, continues to be rediscovered by children of eight or nine:

Mine eyes have seen the glory  
 Of the burning of the school,  
 We have tortured all the teachers,  
 We have broken all the rules.  
 We will try to kill the principal tomorrow afternoon.  
 His truth is marching on.

The book is well worth reading, just to see how wordplay fits in with elementary school. She discusses ethnic slur jokes as a means of propagating stereotypes, and she replies to critics who argue that "bringing wordplay to the classroom means encouraging hostile and antisocial exchanges." And I thought wordplay was harmless fun! Published in 1985, it may be ordered for \$10.50 from the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana IL 61801.

### What A Deal!

WILL PAY five dollars for unsearched bag of 100 Mercury dimes, first bag full receives the money. Nicholas Shemonsky, Weatherly, PA 18255.

This ad, from a recent issue of Coin World, made me do a double take. It's a new version of the old "Send your dollar in today!" How would you answer this next ad: "Ten dollars sent free to the first person who writes with the correct answer to the question 'What is incorrect in this ad?'"?

### Money Talks

Peter Newby talks about money talking: "In the New Bybwen Counting House, according to rumour, the coins have taken to talking among themselves, and their most recent debate was on the subject of plurals. It all began, so it is alleged, when a solitary PENNY proudly announced that her plural was PENCE unlike the boring old DOLLAR who, in quantity, was merely DOLLARS, a rather obvious and uninspiring multiplicity. "My ancestor, the PENI," said Penny, "at least had the wit to spell **her** plural as PENIS, which has far more character to it than DOLLARS." At this point, one of the coins mentioned the Hebrew ZUZ and asked if the plural was ZUZSES. "No," retorted the ZUZ, "it's far more interesting than that." "Is it ZUZ, ZUZ?" asked one of the coins. "ZUZ? I'm ZUZIM!" came the unpalindromic retort.

### Who Slept Here?

HEISENBERG MAY HAVE SLEPT HERE. This bumper sticker suggests other slept-here slogans. KERMIT THE FROG LEAPT HERE. CINDERELLA SWEPT HERE. Peter Newby suggests "a plaque outside the Oval Office bearing the legend RONALD REAGAN SLEPT HERE; and in Marilyn Monroe's apartment a Kennedy Brothers plaque." Any more slept-here plaques? Sleep on it, and send 'em tomorrow!

### Clerihew Corner

Inspired by Ralston Bedge's clerihews in the last issue, Harry Partridge sent in this dynamic duo appearing first below. Peter

Newby sent the Mills clerihew, and I composed the Disney ones.

Rembrandt van Rijn	Gerard ter Borch
Never visited Spain;	Sketched himself eating pork
What I want to ask is	Out of the Prince of Orange or
Was he jealous of Velazquez?	Somebody else's porringer.

Hayley Mills  
 Swallowed some pills  
 Intended for the cat;  
 Now she purrs and chases every gnat.

Donald Duck,	Mickey Mouse
Out of luck,	bought a house,
Drove Daisy	And in he
Quite crazy.	Took Minnie.

### Nickelodeon Anagram Ad

A few kickshaws ago, Peter Newby called attention to the anagrammatical advertising of a British beer company. Recently, while watching the cable TV channel, Nickelodeon, I was surprised to see that American television is catching up with England's state-of-the-anagram sales pitch. The commercial consisted of three transposals of NICKELODEON: ICE KOLD NEON, LIKED NO CONE, COOL KEEN DIN. The third one is the best. The other two were disappointing, especially the first with its cop-out use of KOLD. The word NICKELODEON is easy to manipulate. I found several anagrams including one about Senator Bob Dole, without resorting to Scrabble tiles. LOOK: NICE END!

conned lie OK	OK, lice on Ned	coil keen nod
I nicked, loon	no oiled neck	O, kindle once
I lock on need	coiled on Ken	I lock one end
no one licked	need cool ink	O, once linked
one lone dick	deck one lion	once kin, Dole

### Word Molecules

In the last issue, Leonard Gordon and Ross Eckler presented topological ways of viewing words. A few years ago, other authors experimented with another approach--eodermdromes. Word molecules offer a third way for letters to interact.

A **word molecule** is a cluster of letters within circles that touch at strategic points. Starting at the first letter, you can trace out the word by moving from circle to touching circle. Molecule 1 (see diagram on next page) spells out WORD. If the same letter occurs twice or more, its circle is reused; however, double letters are treated as two different adjacent letters (Molecule 3).

Circles need not be of the same size. In Molecule 14, the E circle is slightly larger than the others, preventing X and R, P and C, and I and N from touching. (If the circles were of equal size, they would necessarily meet in a hexagonal array.)

# WORD MOLECULES

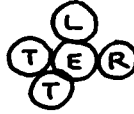
1. WORD



2. SENTENCE



3. LETTER



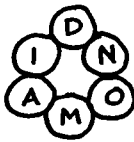
4. SETS



5. STARS



6. DIAMOND



7. TOOT



8. START



9. SIGNING



10. LEVEL



11. SPOOLS



12. NOON



13. OUTGOING



14. EXPERIENCE



15. STRATEGIES



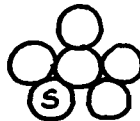
A. \_\_\_\_\_



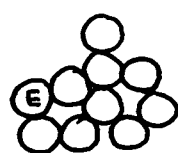
B. \_\_\_\_\_



C. \_\_\_\_\_



D. \_\_\_\_\_





All adjacent letters (including double letters) should touch; otherwise, the molecule is incorrectly drawn. By way of corollary, letters that are not adjacent should not touch. To test a molecule, trace out the word's path with a pencil. The line should cross each circle and each connection between circles. Molecule 9 is incorrect for both SIGNS and SIGNING because certain circle-tangencies have not been used.

In a **simple molecule**, each circle is linked to no more than two other circles to form a chain. An **open chain** looks like a straight line. A **closed chain** looks like a triangle (Molecules 7 and 12), a square (Molecule 5), a pentagon (Molecule 11), a hexagon (Molecule 6), or other regular polygon. In a **complex molecule** at least one circle is linked to at least three other circles (Molecules 2, 13, 14, 15). A molecule may be **symmetric** through one or more axes, or it may be **asymmetric**. All molecules in the chart but D are symmetric. However, most complex molecules are asymmetric, and the percentage of asymmetric molecules increases with word length. All simple molecules are symmetric.

Molecules can be related in different ways. With **pattern equivalence**, molecules have the same arrangement of circles but different letters within them (Molecules 4, 7, 12). They may or may not follow the same path. With **letter equivalence**, molecules have the same letters but different arrangements of circles (Molecules 5 and 8). The paths forming these words are different; the lengths of the words may also differ.

Certain logical properties influence the shapes of molecules. A palindromic word forms a molecule that uses only half the letters (plus the middle letter for a word with an odd number of letters, as in Molecule 10). An isogram forms an open chain (Molecule 1). Reversal pairs are molecular transposals whose paths go in opposite directions (Molecule 11). Letter-shift words have molecules with pattern equivalence (Molecule 12, in which DEED letter-shifts to NOON).

Try drawing some word molecules. The results can be surprising. A long word may produce a compact symmetric pattern, or it may yield an irregular cluster. The first draft may look nonsymmetric, but a little reworking can bring out the symmetry (Molecule 3 is a first draft that appears asymmetric at first sight). You'll discover words that can be represented by more than one molecule.

Some molecules are especially interesting. Molecule 13 is a rectangle representing OUTGOING, but drop off the UT, and it's a square representing INGOING. (CONTRACT and SCIENTIST can also be represented by this pattern.) Molecule 14 has three triangles connected by a common letter; Molecule 15 also has three, but they are linked like a chain.

Which molecule represents the greatest number of words (molecular transposals)? Which molecular transposal set has the greatest difference in number of letters between the shortest and the longest word? What is the largest pair of molecules with pattern equiv-

alence? with letter equivalence? Are there any words that cannot be depicted in molecular form?

Now for a test. Molecules A, B, C and D represent state names. Three state names can fit in A, two in B, and one each in C and D. Can you figure them out? Excluding the previous state names, which one-word state name has the largest simple molecule (number of circles)? the largest complex molecule? the smallest simple molecule? the smallest complex molecule?

### Politically Incollect

Len Gordon writes "In **Word Ways** Kickshaws for May 1989, Jeff Grant tells a story about a Chinese restaurant owner with a strange name. Upon reading his story I wondered how Chinese-American people would react to a story like that being published in a dignified American journal, so sent a copy to a friend. He, being polite, did not comment but sent the article to another friend. It eventually reached the headquarters of the international union of Chinese waiters in Cambridge, Massachusetts (the officers are all working their way through Harvard). After long deliberation, they have awarded Jeff Grant and Ross Eckler the title of International Big Plick. Anyone wishing to join the society and receive the lesser title, need only go to a Chinese restaurant and order flied lice."

### Beautiful Names

Ugliest words and funniest names have appeared in **Word Ways**, but what about beauty? A few people are lucky to have names that are sheer poetry. In fact, a poet I knew had the memorable name Pearl Minor, which suggests a grain of sand that has just reached its sea-change in an oyster. Each semester that I teach, the students introduce themselves one by one while I take their names down on a seating chart. Now and then a name stands out. A couple years ago, a student said her name, and instantly I had a very placid visual image of it. I don't recall ever hearing a more beautiful name, a name that had such an immediate effect: Dawn Mills. What beautiful names have you heard?

### The Unexpected Gift

One version of a well-known paradox goes like this: Next week I will give you a present. You won't be able to know which day ahead of time, no matter how hard you try to guess. The question is, can such a gift be given? The usual answer is No, because of this line of reasoning: If I haven't received the gift by Friday, I must assume it will be coming on Saturday. In that case, it won't be unexpected, so Saturday is not the day. If it doesn't come by Thursday, then it must be coming on Friday, as Saturday has been ruled out. But then it's not unexpected on either Friday or Saturday. The logic continues backwards through the days of the week, until all the days are eliminated: an unexpected gift is impossible. But there are other ways of solving the paradox. I've listed four below, but I expect that each is logically flawed.

**ZENO'S SOLUTION** As Friday winds down to the very last few seconds, you see your friend come to the door. When you let her in, she shows you the present. "Here it is, the unexpected gift." She looks at her watch, one of extreme precision. "It's not unexpected," you say, and you cite the reasoning above. "But," she says, "Friday is ending, and Saturday is about to begin. And here it is!" She hands it to you at the very instant that her watch indicates the change--the moment between Friday and Saturday. You never expected it.

**SEVEN BOXES** Your friend places seven boxes in your living room. "Promise you won't touch them until I say so," she asks. You agree, and she continues "Six are packed with weights, and one has the gift. They all look alike, and even I don't know which one has the present. You may pick one box a day when I give the word. No matter what your reasoning, your gift will be totally unexpected."

**THE QUESTION** This is the simplest. On Sunday, the first day of the gift-giving week, your friend asks "Do you expect to get the gift today?" You've reasoned it out and have reached the conclusion in the first paragraph above that the gift won't be unexpected, so you reply "No." She gives you the gift. Or--you decide to play it tricky, and you answer "Yes, today's the day." She leaves. She may now choose any of the other six days.

**THE HAT TRICK** Your friend brings over a hat with seven pieces of paper. Each has a day of the week on it. She explains that she will give you the gift on the day you drawn from the hat. You pick a piece of paper and hand it to her. Now you can't use the original argument, because you know that there is an assigned day. By guessing, you have a one-in-seven chance of expecting the gift.

### Tom Pulliam Discovers Wordplay

I became interested in words and their properties as a very young lad. Increasingly I became entranced by the countless permutations and combinations that 26 letters might enter into. I felt like a teen-age discoverer when I came upon the fact the **mho** is the opposite of **ohm**; this relegated to obscurity the fact that **em** and **en** are printers' measures! At that point it became a habit (which I still follow today) to look up the meaning of any unfamiliar word that I come across in reading or conversation. In doing so, I was opening a world more marvelous than I had imagined, currently changing as a result of contemporary usage. I must confess to a weakness...I am **far** more interested in archaic and obsolete words from past ages than I am of the new words which have been given birth by current generations. Whenever I see an expressed challenge in wordplay writings, I am always stimulated by a desire to attempt to better it. But I deplore the use of computers in establishing new wordplay boundaries, while at the same time recognizing the inevitability of computers' acceptance in the field.