

# BALANCED DREAMS

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*Editor's Note: Balanced words (ones in which the sum of the letter-values divided by the word-length equals  $13\frac{1}{2}$ ) are in capitals; in addition, the reader is invited to discover a number of balanced two-word phrases.*

A TELETYPE OPERATOR, ERNEST MULLER GLOOMILY SORTED PENS and DOSSIERS in the ETON SQUARE office - a RITUAL! With BUSINESS at its LAXEST (would it REVIVE?) and the APPOINTMENTS book empty, he no longer NURSED any DOUBTS about OPTING for an UNAUTHORIZED break. He hired the APTEST "TEMP", left a NOTE for his COWORKER, another for the TELEPHONISTS (re their ROTA), and locked up SECURELY, as ALWAYS. He never FORGOT.

The weather was BLIZZARDLY, the SQUALLIEST for years. SWISHING SNOWLIKE FLURRIES at once made his EYES LACHRYMOUS and the ground UNFIRM. Would it COMPRESS? ISSUABLY better than yesterday's STILLISH SOUPLIKE SMOG! As he SHIFTILY SWOOSHED on his MYOPIC TREK stationwards ("oh PHOO, a Number 163 bus", he EXPOSTULATED IREFULLY), his TETCHY YELL attracted a CUSTOMIZED TAXI SCOUTING for BUSINESS. He LUXURIATED in its SINFUL warmth; he really was cold and tired...

...he is back in BREEZY DORSET with son RODNEY. THEY'RE at a SWAMPISH fishing site, each wearing his NATTIEST, MUDPROOF OILSKINS. ICHTHYOLOGISTS? Hardly! Their catch? PLOWFISH, KRILLS, SNAPPERS, WRITHING ELVERS and a PLIMSOLL.

...doing his HOMEWORK in the BROTHERTON (Leeds) library, SCRUTINISING the AUTHORSHIP and SUBTITLE of a CULTURAL LITERARY tome, he spots **The RIVALS**, various TREASURIES and QUANTITIES of UNDUSTED TRANSLATIONS.

...NOISES and SENSATIONS TORMENTING him, his TRAUMATISM induced by an OVERSUPPLIED TRANQUILLIZING PRESCRIPTION, he DISTINCTLY hears the STATURED MATRON CLANGOROUSLY REQUESTING the HYPERTENSE NEUROTHERAPIST.

...at the zoo with COUSIN STAN (short for STANISLAUS), our ZOOPHILITE REVELS in the QUIRKIER SUBDIVISIONS of the TAXONOMIES: WINGLESS ANTS, a VEXING CHIRONOMUS, UNCOMMON CONEYS, a PSEUDOSCORPION SUBGENUS, four marsupials and a LOOPER, TRANSITIONALLY preceding its PUPA INSTAR.

...with SPARKPROOF SPATULAR clenched in FIST, our PRETENSION of a VAUNTING WIZARD is at PLAY, and a FOUL smell ENVELOPS him as he ENTERS the UNTESTED world of COPOLYMERIZATION, AZOXYBENZENE, POLYETHYLENE, SALTPETERS, UNCRYSTALLIZED STRYCH-

## NINE and TRINITROGLYCERIN.

...his EYES on the next COURSE (he FAVORS the APPETIZERS and SKEWER SAVORIES), he SUPPED the SLOPPING OXTAIL soup, SWALLOWING UNGRATEFULLY. NEXT comes a PIPINGLY hot CUTLET, FORKFULS of SCHNITZELS with SAUERKRAUT and OVERRIPE SKINLESS TOMATOES, followed by JUNKET and, HYGIENISTS NOTE, shopworn brie.

...our ARMORPROOF VAINGLORIOUS hero, now in his THIRTIES, relives the WARTIME'S HYPE. VOLUNTEERING for the PARATROOPERS' SNIPER SQUADS with PREWAR mate SHAMUS, he UNRELAXINGLY VANQUISHES the ASSAULTERS and INTERCEPTORS as he COURAGEOUSLY RECONQUERS. VIVA VE day!

...his MUSICOLOGIST friend, TONE-deaf "BREEZY LOUISE", TRANS-FIXES the PIANOFORTIST, FLAUTIST, PERCUSSIONER and BASSISTS by OUTSINGING the CHORUSES with EXHIBITORY SHRILLNESS, each SQUEAKYISH NOTE in need of RETUNING.

...he sits in the unsloped stalls watching a COMPULSIVE PLAY (one of the SUPERB REVIVALS), a PRODUCTION of that streetwise hero, OLIVER -- and now the loquacious Marx Bros. JEST, as SLAP-STICKY Groucho UPSTAGES and DISILLUSIONS Harpo, the FUNNIEST STOOGE.

...the self-confessed "PHANTOMIST" ENTERS the YONDER SPOOKIER TRACTS of SUPRANATURAL, SEMIMYSTIC "SPOOKDOM" with its OTHER-WORLDLINESS, JINXES, EXORCISERS and DISTORTING SURREALISM.

...into LEISURES, and SCORNFUL of others, he is STARTING to PLAY TENNIS with an INSOLENT FLOURISH. Our MISOGYNISTIC "HUNK" CHURLISHLY ATTRIBUTES BERYL'S CONTORTING to TOMFOOLISHNESS, VAL'S BEVY of NETTINGS to RESENTFULNESS and LIN'S MULTIPLE FOOT-FAULTS to NUMSKULLEDNESS. Also a cricketer, he EXALTS in the SUPERB TRAJECTORY of a GOOGLY. MOUNTAINLESS PLAY apart he, and all the SKIERS, LOVE ROB'S INFAMOUSLY, SWEEPINGLY, TUMBLINGLY, SERPENTINELY, UNHOSPITABLY, UNEVEN, ZIGZAGGY COURSE, but all his OVERENTHUSIASM and OVEREXERTING end in a MUSCULAR STRAIN.

...our SHROPSHIRE lad (A.E. Housman appeared in an earlier issue of **Word Ways** as a money-lender and subsequent recipient of a note which read AE:IOU) is back in the RIVERISH places of his HOLS. He THINKS of his White Volta TREK in West Africa, the Indian KOSI in the ORIENT, the BRAZOS in Texas and the HUDSON which EFFORTLESSLY SINUATES between New York and New Jersey (and PATERSON). It is last spring now, and a STARRIER night; as he PAUSES, the SIMPLICITY of the MOONRISE over a Vermont ROOF HUMBLY OVERAWES him but, at the same time, the US of A's UNHOSPITABLY COMPULSIVE SKYSCRAPER RESURGENCY ENVELOPS and OSTRACIZES him. During his TRAVERSE of MULTIPLE TERRAS, from STEPPE to TROPIC, EQUATORWARDS and beyond to busy Montevideo, he meets SOCIOLOGISTS, a JEWESS, a NORTHERNER, a SLAV, a KURD, several POTENTATES (even THRONELESS QUEENS), SCOTSMEN, CULTUR-

AL JERSEYITES and EXERTIVE, HONEST, OUTGOING, PERSUASIVE (and sometimes INSOLENT, PERVERSE, BRAWLY, VULGAR) IOWANS.

STARTING, he WOKE RAVINGLY, his heart THUMPING as he came HAZILY to his SENSES. As he alights from the TAXI, RESENTFULLNESS RULING him, the TAVERNLESS station VICTIMIZES him. What a DUMP! Not for him the PLUSHIER, LAVISHLY RESTYLED PULLMANS. HE has to SETTLE for the RAILWAYS' UNENTERPRISING (RENOWNEDLY PUNCTUAL?) COMMUTER TRAINS...TEETOTALLY!

### THE LOGOPHILE'S ORGY

*This is the title of a delightful book written by Lewis Burke Frumkes and published in paperback by Delacorte Press in 1995 for \$17.95. It is based on a truly original idea: ask 236 well-known people, from attorney Floyd Abrams to retired naval officer Elmo Zumwalt, what their favorite word is.*

People seem to fall into two broad categories when it comes to word favoritism; some select words for their (inspirational) meaning, such as FAITH, YES (and NO), WHY or BOLD, or personal predilection such as CHOCOLATE or MONEY, while others select words according to the pleasant sounds they make. Since sound is principally carried by the consonants, it is not surprising that some people answered this in terms of their favorite initial consonants: P, V and M (this to be followed by ON). Is it possible that the sound-people would also like consonyms of their favorites - words having the same order of consonants but different vowels? If so, the one who favored AUSTERE ought to like EASTER, ASTER and STEREO as well. A very few people looked for other properties of words: oddity of meaning (CHTHONIAN, MERKIN, VELLEITY), words rich in pronouns (US, SHE, HE, HER in USHER - Richard Lederer's favorite), even words with two consecutive Is (SKIING, RADII). Besides Lederer, **Word Ways** authors Willard Espy and Don Hauptman are included. Had I been asked, I would have gone the specialized-meaning route and nominated words like UCALEGON (a neighbor whose house is on fire), SEREIN (a fine rain falling from a clear sky shortly after sunset) and QUALTAGH (the first person one sees on leaving one's house on a particular day). Your favorites?