

ASLEEP IN THE GARDEN OF DROMES AND DROWS

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In yonder garden palindromes
Flaunt morphemes mined from slithy tomes
As, hidden from the whiffling crows,
Dewed doublets, dreaming, drowse in drows.

Once Lewis Carroll framed a game,
And gave it doublets for a name;
Word ladders is the term today,
Though doublets took less time to say.

And words reversed are now called drows
(But does that rhyme with cows or crows?)
Semordnilap? It's sadly splay,
And isn't aptest, anyway.

But Word Ways...In the age ahead,
'Tis omened that name will be read,
For, thinking in the Roman way,
What's W(ord) W(ays) whirled? Why, Y2K!

In the February 1996 Word Ways, Peter Newby suggested that words which form other words when reversed be called drows instead of the older and more cumbersome semordnilaps. This seems a reasonable proposal, although if generally adopted it will represent another small chip spalled from the legacy of Lewis Carroll, who is thought to have coined the word in his 1889 novel *Sophie and Bruno*. In recent times another word of Carroll's devising, his name of doublets for the wordplay form he invented, has been largely supplanted by the apter if longer term word ladders.

These two Carroll-connected topics, drows and word ladders, have been combined with palindromes to create the word garden on the next page. Both the dromes (the horizontal rows and their center words) and the drows (all of the other words) are readily apparent, but can you spot those lounging ladders in their natural camouflage? If so, what letters do they delineate? (The ones at top and bottom are not too hard to pick out, but those in the center sector may be a challenge to discern.) The ladders can follow any horizontal, vertical or diagonal routes, and may make any number of turnings. For a view of the solution, see Answers and Solutions.

The garden and the verse on the preceding page both allude to the curious fact that Word Ways' initials, when inverted, denote a number of looming portent.

now dim era was lit dig new pad mug yap pup pay gum dap wen gid til saw are mid won
yak bon dew tav bur dor eta led way mot gag tom yaw del ate rod rub vat wed nob kay
pig ton lap dog leg tow dab lug sib mat bob tam bis gul bad wot gel god pal not gip
daw ten gas bag pah rep gal nut bun mar eke ram nub tun lag per hap gab sag net wad
tup ben lee gob sap nag cam pot gib jar pop raj big top mac gan pas bog eel neb put
pit bin rot cod gar bat dib yah sub par eye rap bus hay bid tab rag doc tor nib tip
mad dub pin map ban rim gat hep pat got gig tog tap peh tag mir nab pam nip bud dam
cap yam bed pan tod orb sup rat but paw nun wap tub tar pus bro dot nap deb may pac
tug pol had tin war axe yew taw don wan pip naw nod wat wey exa raw nit dah lop gut
sleep demit remit relit rebut ports parts strap strop tuber tiler timer timed peels
sleek denim knits recap debut haies warts straw selah tubed pacer stink mined keels
faced devil knaps reman repot refeed worts strow defer toper namer spank lived decaf
laced tarps snaps retap depot serif spots stops fires toped pater spans sprat decal
stool trams snips regal sward scam lever revel marcs draws lager spins smart loots
spool pools deeps saved sword notes leper repel seton drows devas speed sloop loops
tide time rime room rood mood trow trot oho tort wort doom door moor emir emit edit
dace tuba ajar wolf lair meet loot evil did live tool teem rial flow raja abut ecad
laud raps dray wonk liar trap girt pins mum snip trig part rail know yard spar dual
rank rats naps spas mils pets tins pans bib snap snit step slim saps span star knar
prod tats guns taps gals tips yaps pals ewe slap spay spit slag spat snug stat dorp
dial gats gnus nips tops wets gums paws mim swap smug stew spot spin sung stag laid
golf bats auks maps pots grub buns maws tot swam snub burg stop spam skua stab flog
gulp buts drib keep gnat garb tots taws ana swat stot brag tang peek bird stub plug
draw nuts pool reel deer seel fled yaws ere sway delf lees reed leer loop stun ward
avid bard leek neep meed ergo tram marc dad cram mart ogre deem peen keel drab diva

Protective coloration: delitescent doublets
drowsing in drows