

A SCRABBLE-TILE POEM

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Each tercet (three lines of iambic pentameter with ABA rhyme-scheme) in the poem below is formed from the set of 100 Scrabble tiles.

Through sentient, gauzy flame I view life's dread,
quixotic, partial joke. We're vapour-born,
by logic and emotion seen as dead. d,e blank tiles

Plain cording weds great luxury ormate,
while moon-beams rise to die in Jove's quick day;
I navigate the puzzle-board of fate. d,z blank tiles

Wait! squeeze one hundred labels into jibes,
grip clay and ink to form your topic--rage;
await the vexing mandate of our lives. n,t blank tiles

I rush on, firm, to raid my aged tools,
but yet I touch an eerie, vain blank piece,
as oxide grown among life's quartz-paved jewels. m,s blank tiles

Once zealous Bartlebooth, a timid knave,
portrayed griefs clam upon a jigsaw round;
yet now he lies, fixed quiet in his grave. h,s blank tiles

Just so we daily beam our pain-vexed soul
with fiery craze to aim large, broken core
and quest in vain to find the gaping hole. h,n blank tiles

Bartlebooth is the jigsaw-puzzling main character of Georges Perec's *La Vie Mode D'emploi* (Life, a User's Manual). Perec's novel consists of one hundred chapters with one blank (missing). Scrabble has 100 tiles with two blanks. The near-coincidence of ideas was the inspiration for this poem.