

## PALINDROMIC RELATIONSHIP

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The year is 2002 and palindromic NAN is entertaining the idea of taking in a lodger again, despite the fact that her first lodger had been a disaster. His name was Rae and he'd been recommended by a friend. All credit to the friend, she did warn Nan that Rae was prone to hypochondria and somewhat of a doctor's nightmare. But, being Nan, she took pity on Rae. This very quickly proved to be a mistake and Rae didn't stay long! However, his short stay did enable us to demonstrate two types of palindromic poetry:

In *The Diagnosis* each line is a palindrome:

Relapse? He's paler  
Still. It's  
Rae's ear.  
Rae! Doc in a panic, o dear!

In *Whoops!* the whole poem is a word-unit palindrome.

Nan: Oh dear, down fall?  
Rae: *It is raw-*  
Rae: *Go, doc call.*  
Nan: Sit. Where sore?  
  
Rae: *Sore where sit,*  
Rae: *Call doc - go!*  
Nan: Raw is it?  
Nan: Fall down dear? Oh!

But now Nan was rather short of money as well as being a lonely lass. Determined to learn from her previous mistake, her immediate problem was to find a suitable new lodger.

In *The Landlady's Dilemma* each line of verse is a palindrome as in *The Diagnosis*:

Reg or Roger?  
Reg - dole lodger!  
Ron? O mad Damon, or  
Neil an alien?

I would have thought that Roger was the perfect candidate but, in the end, Nan chose a latecomer called BOB. The reason for her choice? None other than, being an aspiring logologist, she'd worked out that  $BOB + 12 = NAN$ . For her, this worked in Bob's favour whereas, for me, it labelled him a shifty individual. However, that aside, and perhaps predictably, it wasn't long

before Nan fell for Bob, but did Bob fall for Nan? In the event, both of them kindly consented to take us through their turbulent relationship by way of the niceties of more palindromic poetry.

It appears that Nan made all the running whilst Bob gave her the cold shoulder. Three of these four lines will be familiar. Each line takes the form of a word-unit palindrome:

Bob: *One for all and all for one*  
 Nan: Me for you and you for me  
 Bob: *Gone for lunch and lunch forgone*  
 Nan: Tea for two and two for tea?

A heated argument ensues which results in Bob saying that he is off to the cinema to see *The Exorcist* and that she can tag along if she wants. Charming! Nan stops crawling at last and speaks her mind. Good for her!

In *Comings and Goings* each whole verse is a word-unit palindrome:

Go must we?  
 He says so!  
 'So', says he,  
 'We must go'.

She says 'NO.  
 Go? Not me!  
 Me not go,  
 NO', says she.

At this, Bob realises that he has overstepped the mark, after all he has to keep on the right side of his landlady. So he suggests that she chooses which film they go and see. Nan is not only pacified, but interprets this to mean that he is interested in her after all. Could love be in the air? Her thoughts run wild. Silly lass. The outcome is predictable.

In *Here Today and Gone Tomorrow* the entire poem is a word-unit palindrome as in *Whoops*. Note that the two verses have opposing meanings:

Love in bloom,  
 Words in breeze.  
 Move in soon?  
 Birds and bees.

Bees and birds  
 Soon in move.  
 Breeze in words,  
 Bloomin' love!

I never did discover if Nan had any more lodgers.