KICKSHAWS

DAVE MORICE
Iowa City, Iowa

~ NATIONAL SURNAMES

In the May Kickshaws, Tristan Miller came up with the idea of "national surnames," in which a head of state or head of government had a name that is the nationality of another country. The name could be in the country's native language or in English. As an example, he cited Francois Hollande, who took office as President of France (and Co-Prince of Andorra) on May 15, 2012. "Hollande" is the French word for "Holland." He noted that the UK's Benjamin Disraeli came close. He asked, "Does Hollande's ascendancy mark the first time a country's head of state or head of government was named for another country or nationality?" Recently, he answered his own question with these examples:

* Germán Suárez Flamerich, President of Venezuela from 1950 to 1952
* Germán Riesco, President of Chile from 1901 to 1906
* Arnoldo Alemán, President of Nicaragua from 1997 to 2002 ("Alemán" means "German" in Spanish)
* Miguel Alemán Valdés, President of Mexico from 1946 to 1952
* Roman, Tsar of Bulgaria from c. 930 to 997

He suggested some more examples that might or might not qualify: "There were also several historical "Roman"s who served as grand princes, voivodes, and other hereditary rulers in eastern Europe, though it seems these were all vassals to kings and emperors of other countries."

He adds, "There are also a couple more near misses":

* German Kuznetsov, Vice President of Kyrgyzstan from 1991 to 1992
* Richard de la Pole, Yorkist pretender to the English crown, 1513 to 1525

"Perhaps even more interestingly, in the 1950s France had a prime minister named Pierre Mendès France. I bet this makes France the only country to
have had one leader (Mendès France) named for itself, and another leader (Hollande) named for another country."

~ THE TWINS AND THE BELLS

Bill Brandt sent a poem that uses limericks for the stazas: "It is a poem based on an old joke that I heard, but I don't know the source. The very last line of the limerick does not rhyme, so I am hoping that my poetic license has not expired.

The twins liked to call New York home;
However, they still liked to roam.
And that being said,
They quite often fled
To Paris or London or Rome.

Then one twin at the start of the year
Went to Paris with most of his gear.
The reason he came,
To see Notre Dame
And the bells there he wanted to hear.

The Caretaker told him at four
The bells there were ringing no more.
To hear them he must
Climb the tower and trust
To be careful, not trip on the floor.

He quickly climbed up in the tower,
Was viewing the bells for an hour.
But he slipped and he fell
Hit his head on a bell
And it rang as he fell from the tower.

On the ground the crowd started to swell,
Then a cop asked the Caretaker, "Well,
His name do you know?"
Said the Caretaker, "No,
No I don't, but his face rings a bell."

At the start of the following year,
The second twin with all his gear,
To Paris he flew
For Notre Dame too,
And the bells there he wanted to hear.
The Caretaker said as before
The bells there were ringing no more.
To hear them he must
Climb the tower and trust
To be careful, not trip on the floor.

He quickly climbed up in the tower,
Was viewing the bells for an hour.
But he slipped and he fell
Hit his head on a bell
And it rang as he fell from the tower.

Said the cop to the Caretaker, “Sir,
To his name I would like to refer.”
Said the Caretaker, “Oh,
His name I don’t know,
But he’s a dead ringer for his brother.”

~ A QUARTET OF CURRENT PALINDROMIC ITEMS

Rich Lederer sent the items below, which have appeared in his “Lederer on Language” radio program. Here they are, free for use in Kickshaws.

“September 24 ushered in the Jewish New Year 5775. Note that like a letter palindrome, the four numbers read the same forward and backward. I call such a pattern a ‘calindrome.’ Hebrew, by the way, is the only example in world history of a dead language, surviving only liturgically, being revived as a national language. Hebrew had not been spoken natively by anyone for centuries. Today it is the native tongue of millions.”

***

“The winner of the U.S. Open in tennis this past September was a 6 foot 6 inch Croatian named Marin Cilic. As a rabid fan of tennis and language play, I was rooting for him because his last name is a palindrome, a word that reads the same forward and backward. And when that name is capitalized throughout as CILIC, it is composed entirely of Roman numerals.”

***

“Next month, my local library will showcase the talents of pianist Anna Savvas. I’ve never heard her play, but I’m already a fan because both her first and last names are perfect palindromes.”

***
"More and more of us are discovering that donuts are not good for us. The logological clue reposes in the name of the largest purveyor of the product, DUNKIN' DONUTS. Simply move the first letter to the back of the first words, and you get UNKIND DONUTS."

~ FROM BONNETS TO SONNETS

In the 1970s, I taught a Poetry Class for People Over 60. The students and I made up many new poetry forms. One series of forms extends the concept of SONNET by the number of lines changing the number of lines. There are 13 different forms. Each requires a different number of iambic pentameter lines based on the position of the term's name in the series. Each also uses the Shakespearan rhyme scheme, but stops when the number of lines is reached. BONNET uses one line, CONNET uses two lines, and so on, till reach RONNET which uses 13 lines. Here is the complete series of 13 with SONNET as number 14.

BONNET, CONNET, DONNET, FONNET, GONNET, HONNET, JONNET, KONNET, LONNET, MONNET, NONNET, PONNET, RONNET, and they concluded with SONNET.

Using Shakespeare's sonnet 18, here is what it would like like rewritten in the first five forms listed above:

**BONNET**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

**CONNET**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

**DONNET**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

**FONNET**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath in it hot and short a date.

**GONNET**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath in it hot and short a date:  
Sometimes to hot the eye of heaven shines.
In the poetry class, the students write their own lines instead of stealing Shakespeare's. Each student is given one of the forms. BONNET, requiring one line, is the easiest; and RONNET, using 13 lines, is the hardest.

I did a Google search to see if any of these -ONNET terms have been used to christen poetic forms, and I found listings for BONNET, DONNET, FONNET, HONNET, JONNET, and LONNET. The most intricate and specific definition is for a NONNET, which, like the LONNET, has nine lines.

A clever form, this NONNET (not the one listed in the -ONNET series above) is defined in Wikipedia as a type of poem having the following requirements:

1. It has nine lines
2. The first line has 9 syllables, the second 8 syllables, the third 7 syllables until the ninth line which has one syllable.
3. Has an iambic meter (stress every other syllable)

You may wish to look it up in Wikipedia, which has an example of a poem written in the form.

~ ON NEVER AGAIN BY DOUG NUFER

Never Again, by Doug Nufer, is a 202-page novel in which no word is repeated. A number of words use hyphens to create new words. It's quite an incredible accomplishment. Inspired by Doug's novel, I tried writing a special type of sonnet (not like the different -onnets in the preceding Kickshaw). In fact this can be called a SIMPLE SONNET. It has fourteen lines but no specific rhyme or rhythm or meaning in particular. However, it is also unique in that it requires the same non-word-repetition constraint as Doug's work.

Using Webster's 10th Collegiate Dictionary as my word pool. I started in the A's and selected words one at a time that form grammatically correct sentences. The words appear in alphabetic order, and they are bold-face main entries. Capitalized, hyphenated, and multiple word entries were excluded, but pluralization was allowed. Going through the dictionary from A to Z makes it easier to avoid accidental repetitions.

The first simple sonnet was easy to compose. There are 82 pages of words beginning with A in the dictionary. All I had to do was select one word at a time, making sure the words followed the rules set in the previous paragraph. This simple sonnet was constructed with 67 words over the first five pages of the dictionary. There were approximately 1,099 bold-face entries to choose from. Here is the first simple sonnet:

AARDVARKS ABANDON ABATEMENT
Aardvarks abandon abatement.
Abatoirs' abaxial abbbacies abbreviate abbreviations.
Abdomens abduct abcedarians abed aberrantly.
Aberations abhor abhorencies, abiding abigail's abilities.
Abiogenic, abiotic abjurations ablate aabuats.
Ablaze, abloom, ablation abnegates abnormal abodes.
Aboard aboil, abolish abominations aboriginally.
Abortifacients abound about aboveboard abracadabra.
Abrasive abreaction abridges abroad abruptly.
Abscesses abscond absentmindedly.
Absinthe absolutely absorbs abstemious abstracts.
Abstraction, abstrusely absurd, abuts abutters.
Abuzz, abysmal abysses accede accelerando.
Accelerometers accept accessible accidents.

When I finished with the A's, I decided to see how far I could go with X, the most intractable letter of all. It was much more difficult, as you might expect. I followed the same rules as for the A's, with one exception. Words that were bold-face within an entry (such as xenolithic within the main entry xenolith) were allowed, as long as the two remained in alphabetic order. I used 46 words from the 2-page X section in the dictionary. The results are more nonsensical than the results for the A's. There are no verbs that qualify, so I resorted to using an apostrophe S to mean IS or the possessive in some cases to keep to the sentence structure.

This simple sonnet used 46 words from 2 pages for an average of 23 words per page. However, the dictionary has only 2 pages devoted to X, and allowing the use of bold-face words within the entries was necessary to reach a reasonable number of X words to make a reasonable nonnet. Words starting with A wasn't allowed to have bold-face words within the entries or apostrophe S simply because the extra words weren't necessary. Here is the second nonnet.

**XANTHATE'S XANTHEN'S XANTHINE'S XANTHONE**

Xanthate's xanthen's xanthine's xanthone.
Xebec's xenia. Xenobiotic's xenodiagnosis.
Xenodiagnostic xenogeneic's xenograft's
Xenolith? Xenolithic xenon's xenophile's
Xenophobe? Xenophobic xenophobia, xenotrophic, xeric, xerographic,
xerographically. Xerophile xerophily's
xerophthalmia, xerophthalmic.
Xerophyte's xerophytic xerophytism.
Xeroradiography's xerothermic xi?
Xiphisternum's xyphoid's xu!
Xylan's xylem's xylene. Xylidine's xylitol.
Xylography's xylol's xylophagous.
Xylophone's xylophonist's xylose.

It would be possible to write a long novel in this fashion using all the listings in
the dictionary. By keeping them in alphabetic order, there would be no repeated
words. If an unabridged dictionary were used, the novel would be immense.

~ PALINDROME FOR COLUMBUS DAY

In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue and reached the West Indies. That act
of daring exploration is memorialized on Columbus Day. A few years ago, I wrote
a palindrome that contained the names of all three of the Spanish ships used by
Columbus and it included the National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
established in 1958 by President Eisenhower. Next Columbus day, read this to
your nearest exploring neighbors.

Air a mat, NASA, t' nip a nine year era. Eye Niña, Pinta, Santa Maria.

~ QUIRKINITIONS

Ray Love came up with an intriguing way to define words, a way I've never seen before.
He explains his modus operandi: "I am having fun here creating some unusual
definitions. This wordplay involves unique and quirky definitions of strangely
spelled words.

I'm still vacationing in Minnesota for another month or so, but in my spare
time I have been tapping into my creative juices and my jar is filling up."

GENII: magiical spiirits

LLAMA: a mammal that looks like a camel

MNEMONICS: mnemory imnprovememt

OODLES: lots oof

PSALMS: psared psongs

PTOMAINE: food ptoisoning

SKIING: gliiding over snow
VACUUMING: suucking up duust, louudly

VROOM: vroad vracing vracket

~ OVE'S REVIEWS

The reviews of Ove Michaeelsen's music and stagemanship are by LYDIA CHALET and THALIA CLYDE of THE DAILY CAL. (Coincidentally, the names of the critics are anagrams of the paper's name.)

"He's been known to outnumber an entire audience."

"He's living proof that the stage is where a performer can attend his own funeral."

"He HAS no following—just hostages and refugees."

"A dead ringer for George Clooney, minus the body and face."

"He took a request and yet kept right on playing."

"He was fired from his most recent job as a face model for doorknockers."

"He's played for over forty years, on and off—mainly 'off.'"

"He's not a musician, but plays one onstage."

"A phenomenal monotonist."

"He's a household name, in his household. He lives alone."

"Contents? Nonsense."

"But seriously, over a lifetime, he has earned a dozen fans and a five-figure income (thanks to the decimal point)."

~ MORE ANILE ANNALS OF ANAL ANIL

AUSTRALIANS ALL EAT OSTRICHES

"Remember mondegreens?" Anal asks. "It's a term for misheard lyrics or quotations. The term is from 'They have slain the Earl of Murray and laid him on the green' being heard as 'They have slain the Earl of Murray and Lady Mondegreen.' I recommend the book full of them entitled The Ants Are My
Friends, a misheard line from Bob Dylan’s ‘Blowing in the Wind.’ Here’s a couple more, the first being from the Macquarie Dictionary’s definition of the word, the second heard by my sister."

1. AUSTRALIANS ALL EAT OSTRICHES. This is a mishearing of the first line of the national anthem which begins "Australians all let us rejoice (for we are young and free)." There aren't enough feral ostriches here to go around but we could all eat emus, "for they are wild and free (but protected)"

2. FOURTEEN INCH BOYS. Some budding microbiologists? Or—gag—some extremely well endowed young men? This was a misheard news snip about "four teenage boys".

MATH QUIZ
What is the next number in this sequence? 9 22 24 12 3 4 _
(Answer below.)

GRAMMA SAYS YOU SHOULDN’T SPLIT ORDINALS
What if the abbreviations for first, second, etc. were read literally? You’d get this:
1-st = one-st = onced (dialect for once, as in “1st upon a time”)
2-nd = 'tooned or tuned (as in “I 2nd my second fiddle.”)
3-rd = th’ reared (as in “3rd time lucky” — meaning, “Oh to be a child again!”)
4-th = forth (as in “go 4th and multiply” — going 1st–3rd being to add, subtract and divide)
8-th = ate th’ (as in “8th apple.”)
11-th = won oneth (lisped pronunciation of won once, as in “I rolled the dice and 11th.”)
or 11-t-h = one wanty Age (ours!)
12-th = one tooth (as in “The dentist pulled 12th.” [a canine])
200-th = two owe oath (as in “200th wedding vows”)

REALTIME PUNC LIB
Punctuation Liberation (09-170) means freeing up punctuation, especially commas, to move around in sentences and change their meanings, usually humorously. Here’s a case where the Punc Lib Police were badly needed, an ad line from TV which, while spoken and not written, could clearly be heard to need a comma. It went something like this:

“If you can’t afford our premium rate, you’ll be happy with our low standard loans.”
Sounds like the 2008 low standard (junk) mortgage market before it collapsed.

Another punc lib, this from a Pinterest website cartoon:
Girl to her pets: “It’s raining, cats and dogs!”

And from the great Australian comedian Graham Kennedy, this punc lib
TELEGRAM:
“Not getting any better, come home immediately. Love, Wife” mis-sent as
“Not getting any,
better come home immediately. Love Wife”

PRONOUNS vs. PROVERBS

Are these words opposites? Or might this qualify as a pronoun proverb?
They who “we” him, “we” her. They who “we” us, “we” you.
I “we” It. (“It” is mysticism for life, the universe and everything.)

Dave, here’s an entry for your insulting US acronym sweepstakes (sic) in the August issue. Having earlier teased my home state of Kentucky, here I add injury to insult.
(NB: Kentucky is the home of, would you believe, a Creationism Museum.)

KENTUCKY = Kicking Evolution, Nincompoops Trumpet Unscientific Creationism.
(Know-nothing Yoyos!)

Math Quiz Answer: 13. It’s the English alphanumeric values of the Roman numerals IVXLCDM.

Dave, did you get it? If not (or if so), you may prefer this ALTERNATIVE, probably easier VERSION of the Math Quiz & answer:

ODD COUPLES
What are the next two numbers in this sequence? 1, 9, 5, 22, 10, 24, 50, 12...

Odd Couples Answer: 100, 3
A clue was in the words “couples” and “next two”. Each successive pair couples a Roman numeral’s English letter with its alphanumeric value, eg, “5, 22” = V & letter 22, etc. So “100, 3” = C & letter 3. (And the remaining numbers in the sequence would be “500, 4, 1000, 13.”)
~ THE SKUNK STUNK

Anil read a poem of mine to an "appreciative audience" tonight. The audience also liked his parody of it. Here my poem on the left and Anil's on the right.

TURTLE

The turtle's hide
Is thick and wide,
And one whole turtle
Fits inside.

SKUNK

The skunk stunk.
A funk slunk
My spunk sunk.

Anil explains that it will be "part of a much larger project to construct 'monotone' animal poems and it will be repeated there. Indeed, my tentative title for the collection is "THE SKUNK STUNK". It's still my fave of the ~30 I've worked up(on) so far. In my dry academic way I'm systematically searching the M-W Rhyming Dict. for animals with useful rhymes. I'm nearly 1/5 through it, which suggest I may get as many as 150, enough for a thick little matchbox type book. But I don't expect I'll use that many in the end; by judicious selection I may instead limit it to the 20-50 best and publish them in Word Ways, as a big collection article or for Jerry to use one-by-one as filler. Or I may feature them 2-5 or so at a time in my Mean Sidewalks column, or leak them 5-10 at a time to Kickshaws.

Here's a couple more to give a prelim hint at whether Skunk is a one-off success or the first of many."

GOBLER

The gobbler has no cobbler
So is forced to be a hobbler.

YAK

The yak pack lack a shack
So don't attack or wisecrack, Jack.

~ NUMBER SEQUENCES

Suggested by Anil (above), here is a Math Quiz. What is the next number in this sequence? ZERO, ONE, EIGHT, TEN, NINETEEN

The next is 90. Starting with ZERO, the next number in the series is spelled with the last letter in the previous number name; thus, ZERO, ONE. The entire series works that way, and the series doesn't go beyond NINETY because no number is spelled starting with Y.

~ LET'S MAKE A DEAL
The following appeared on the quiz show *Let's Make a Deal* many years ago. Emcee Monte Hall asked a woman in the audience, “For $100, recite the letters of the alphabet backwards from Z to A in less than a minute.” She began, carefully: “Z, Y, X...” all the way to A and finished with several seconds to spare. Monte replied, “I’m sorry, but you didn’t do what I asked. You recited A to Z backwards, but I asked you to recite Z to A backwards, and that begins A, B, C...”

~ ALPHABET PLAY

I have three t-shirts that feature comical statements about the alphabet. They are:

- Why is the alphabet in that order? Is it because of that song?
- What is your favorite color of the alphabet?
- If Plan A doesn’t work, don’t worry. There are 25 more letters in the alphabet.

Anil and I came up with four special alphabets. The first two are mine, and the last two are his.

- ABCDEFGPQRSTUWVWXYZ = a dry alphabet, missing "H to O.
- ABCDFGHJIKMNOPQRSTUWXXYZ = a pornographic alphabet
- ABCDFGHJIKMNOPQUVWXYZ = an alphabet without any LETTERS.
- ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ = an alphabet within an alphabet.

~ RECIPROCAL RIDDLES

Anil extended the alphabet play with two riddles based on the letters.

A. How many letters does it take to make an alphabet?
B. How many alphabets does it take to make a letter?

Answers (take your pick):

A.
1) Twenty-six: one to hold it and twenty-five to turn the ladder. A word ladder, of course. (I threw this in to appease humourless pedants who don’t in any way want to poison-letter us.)
2) Two: alpha and beta.
3) Seven: ABEHLPT, a lipogram of “alphabet”. (Alphabets also anagrams into “the blaps”. According to Jonathan Green’s 1998 *The Cassel Dictionary of Slang*, blaps is a So. African word for a blunder or bloop. How did they know
the alphabet was so goofy?!! On the other hand, don’t forget how often “alphabet” anagrams into “A HELP TAB”!

4) Eight, not allowing lipograms. It’s the number of letters in alphabet. This is a mere alternative but less amusing version of 3).

5) One. An alphabet can have any number of letters. The click beetle’s alphabet only has one letter, so why not so for sufficiently advanced future humans who have learned to get by without such a big number? (Or who are so totally-tarianised [or is that totalityranised?] that they’re only allowed one.)

B.

1) 0.0384615 alphabets (1+26), to get technical.
2) It depends on how long the letter is. *Letter to the Hebrews*, a book of the New Testament, needs around 35,000 letters, the equivalent of nearly 1350 English alphabets.

~ PHONIC PALINDROMES

Anal wonders, “Did you ever notice that senselessness is a phonic palindrome?” (ssenselessnes) And barring a couple of redundant S’s it’s a letteral palindrome. So let’s agree to spell it senselesnes, okay? No one should mind since it makes no sense anyway. And all those extra S’s are a squandered resource and a waste of ink. Jeff Grant told me that senselesnes is almost plausible since words ending in “-ness” were often spelt “-nes” in the old days.

A similar phonic palindrome is the etymologically related yet very different word, sensuousness. It’s even an antonym of senselessness in the sense of sensation-less. Again, spell it sensuousnes to make a letteral pal of it. As Jeff also pointed out, it (but not senselessness) is already known as a near palindrome. I would add that it’s also a circular or ostrich palindrome by folding or tucking the final letter around to the beginning. Can you think of any other long phonic but non-letteral palindrome words?

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ALL POINTS ANAGRAM

Orangeness is an odd but even and fully apt anagram of sense organ. Orange is a versatile thing able to engage any of the sense organs. It is a color, a taste, a smell, a feel, and—if you drop one or squeeze it too hard—a sound.

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NAUTONYMS

Thanks to Susan Thorpe (in Colloquy) for rising to the challenge of finding more of these anomalies. Annan, cocoa, cuscuss and entente are excellent (as is Dave’s hubbub). I would add that INCENSE is a superior substitute for and
identical in sound to her ensense, which I can guess at the meaning of but couldn't find in Web-3 or by googling. However, I'm not familiar with any dialect that would pronounce Susan's several -y ending words (lily etc) as tautonyms. To my mixed US-Australian ear, they all combine a short i with a long e sound. Please enlighten me.

~ ANAL'S AMAZING ANAGRAM

Anil discovered a unique pair of anagrams involving Roman Numerals. He tells about it: "Has anyone ever noted that REVISION is an anagram of 'I VERSION'? or 'VERSION I' (but it's actually VERSION 2; too bad there's not an extra i in REVISION so it could anagram as VERSION II). How about:

**REVISION I = VERSION II**

which is perfect and mathematically correct!"

While Anil's Roman Anagram might seem to be unique on first glance, there are actually many, many more. Anil's is the discovery piece, the perfect expression of the concept. I was enthralled by the Roman Anagram concept, and I realized that there might be others that work the same way. I tried a few. Here are four anagrams using different Roman numbers but otherwise working the same way (or not working, as noted).

- **REVISION II = VERSION III** (This works.)
- **REVISION III = VERSION IV** (This doesn’t.)
- **REVISION IV = VERSION V** (This doesn’t.)
- **REVISION V = VERSION VI** (This works.)

I soon realized that there is an equation that describes the Roman Anagrams. Here it is, with a little explanation.

**REVISION Z = VERSION Z + 1**

Note that I used Z instead of X for the variable. I wanted to avoid confusing using X to mean both a variable and a Roman numeral, so I used Z instead. To test the formula, I picked two Roman numerals at random and plugged them in. The results showed that the numbers differed and the Roman anagram was incorrect.

- **REVISION DCCX = VERSION DCCVI** (This doesn’t work.)
  
  \[(710) \quad \text{and} \quad (706)\]

- **REVISION DCCX = VERSION DCCXI** (This does work)
The traditional Roman numerals, MDCLXVI, are used in these equations. They go up to 3,999 (or MMMCMXCIX). The highest Roman Anagram pair is

\[
\text{REVISION MMMDCCLXXXVII} = \text{VERSION MMMDCCCLXXXVII}
\]

Finally, the total number of Roman Anagrams that can be made is, according to my 6 AM morning calculations. 1,300!

~ TODAY'S WORD FROM THE WEB

Today's word is ...............\text{Fluctuations} (I will never hear or see this word again without thinking of this joke.)

I was at my bank today; there was a short line.

There was just one lady in front of me, an Asian lady who was trying to exchange yen for dollars.

It was obvious she was very irritated ...

She asked the teller, "Why it change? Yesterday, I get two hunat dolla fo yen. Today I only get hunat eighty? Why it change?"

The teller shrugged his shoulders and said, "Fluctuations."

The Asian lady says, "Fluc you white people too"  

You know you're laughing ....

~ SOME FAMOUS QUOTES REQUOTED

History is made with quips that stand out and touch the heart, the soul, and the sole, which makes them great targets for parody. Here are some some parodies that I wrote using poetic muscles to make literary sound bites.

"In poems we trust."
"Four sonnets and seven haiku ago..."
"A limerick saved is a limerick earned."
"Give me poetry, or give me prose."
"You can't always write what you want."
"The only dog we have to fear is doggerel itself."
"That's one small poetic foot for a man, one giant epic poem for mankind.

~ THE STORY OF THE PUZZLE

One night a few years ago I wanted to write a story, but I wanted it to be about the story, which would have to be about the story about the story, which would—well, you get the idea. I sat down at my laptop and began writing. When I finished, several fortnights later, I realized that it was not really a story. No, it was a puzzle. You see, I made a few mistakes—at least ten—before reaching the end. Can you find them?
~ A MOMENT OF SEX

In this rebus poem, the alphabet appears many times as words or as letters. I wrote it after having a big bowl of alphabet soup into which someone had slipped one or more times as words or letters in this rebus poem. I wrote it after having a big bowl of alphabet soup into which someone had slipped some Smirnoff's vodka.

Had a moment of sex
With a cute triple X
Whose bra size was E
Or a big double D.

Her name, it is true,
Was Miss Suzy Q.
She liked to drink T
In sand by the C.

When angry, she'd say,
"Kiss my sweet royal A."
When sad, she would sigh,
"Kiss my salty wet I."

She promised she'd stay;
Then she flew like A J.
I chased her, but G,
She could sting like a B.

I found her with men
Whose names end with N.
I muttered, “Oh, hell!  
My name starts with L.”

She snapped, “Goodbye, Les.  
Kiss my sweet royal S!”
I begged, “Please don’t go.  
I love U. You O.”

She asked, “I O U?”
I replied, “Yes U do.”
“How much, boring guy,  
Do I O U, and Y?”

I turned, watched a V  
Of geese take A P.  
I said, “Look at them.  
They hum like an M.”

She laughed. “What the F!  
They honk. R U deaf?”
I said, “In A cage,  
They’d honk for an H.”

She groaned. “What you say,  
Like an O with no K,  
Is as dull as A W.  
Doesn’t that trouble U?”

We went to my car,  
And that’s where we R.  
It’s midnight, but she  
Fell asleep with A Z.