KICKSHAWS

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~ SPELL OF BAD LUCK

The following sequence of limericks by Bill Brandt is full of sick words and ill lines. It's very funny, too. Is there a Logodoctor in the house?

It’s over now and I am glad,
Typhus was the first I had.
Next it was diphtheria,
Followed by pneumonia,
Then melanoma made me sad.

When tetanus came, gave it a shot,
Malaria had me in a knot.
Then hernia became a strain,
And cholera was such a pain,
But scurvy had me on the spot.
I thought sciatica was tuff,
And laryngitis sure felt ruff.
Bulimia was hard to swallow,
And salmonella left me hallow,
But colitis I did not muff.

Malaria had me in a sweat,
Jaundice I almost didn’t get.
Beriberi wasn’t sweet,

And gingivitis not a treat.
Dyspepsia was the toughest yet.

Measles and mumps were not so bad,
Tuberculosis made me mad.
Then along came hepatitis,
Followed close by meningitis,
Worst spelling test I ever had.

~ ABDELNOORS

~ Jeff Grant has found a record-breaking name that ends in an onomastic trick. He explains: "The longest dictionary word with letters in alphabetical order is usually quoted as AEGILOPS, a
genus of grasses (Webster’s 3rd). This term is capitalised so perhaps we should consider other proper names like those of places and people. Recently in the news was top British mountain runner Ben Abdelnoor, and Dr Michael Abdelnoor is a cardiovascular specialist at Oslo University Hospital in Norway. There are lots of people with this surname, in fact 47 are listed in US telephone directories (White Pages, Net). In the plural, Abdelnoors is a 10-letter word with letters displayed alphabetically. If you look up ABDELNOORS in an anagram dictionary you will find its transpososal BANDOLEROS, highwaymen (from Spanish). Can anyone find other examples with 10 letters or longer?"

~ KIWI CONNECTION

Jeff has found a bit of wordplay in a Word Ways writer's name: "Kiwi is slang for New Zealand (as in 'relating to, of, connected with, New Zealand'), and of course a Kiwi is a New Zealander. So LORI WIKE in reverse reveals the hidden word: EKIIWIROL. Lori has a logological ‘Kiwi connection’ through her name.

~ OXYPALINDROMORONS

Lori Wike combines two popular wordplay forms to get a guaranteed-to-be doubly popular "oxypalindromorons" that she came up with a few weeks ago. Let's conclude this Kickshaws column with two examples. The first is about Rex, who has an oxymoronic job:
Rex: Alert Relaxer

The second is about novelist Elle Byrd, who is fond of oxymoronic book titles:

Elle Byrd: Watery Pyre; Tawdry Belle

~ SCAM SPELLING

Mary Jo Dane and I had to get her computer fixed, and that required contacting the company in India. The guy was really a dummy, a wannabee scam artist. At one point he had to retrieve a file that he deleted by mistake. The file was from Mary Jo's sister, and it was about Hillary Clinton. She was talking on her cell phone to the "computer repairman," and she mentioned Hillary. He didn't know who Hillary Clinton was. Nor could he pronounce "Hillary Clinton" correctly..

~ THE TITLE'S THE THING

People sometimes ask me, "Dave, what kind of titles do you like?" I respond as succinctly as possible. I say, "I'm a writer who appreciates good, long, juicy titles. Long titles of books used to be popular, but now authors spend more time on the contents instead. Some critics say the shortening of titles is a sign that literature has forgotten its purpose. Others mourn the loss of literary innocence. A few believe that titles will soon disappear from the face of the earth and that, without titles to
make them memorable, literary works will vanish, too. "Untitled," they say, "is a poor excuse for a title." "The road to hell," they say, "is paved with damn short titles." In any case, the question arises: What is the longest title of a novel, a poem, a short story, a play, or any writing? For a long time I've been assembling an anthology of long titles. At this point, its working title is, "THE BOOK OF TITLES, RANGING IN LENGTH FROM NOT TOO LONG TO VERY, VERY, VERY LONG, BEING A PLEASING COLLECTION, COMPILATION, COMPENDIUM, AND CYCLOPEDIA OF WORTHY WORDY TITLES OF ALL KINDS OF LITERARY AND/OR NON-LITERARY WORKS, INCLUDING NOVELS, NOVELLAS, SHORT STORIES, SHORT SHORT STORIES, ESSAYS, AUTOMATIC WRITING, EPIC POEMS, SONNETS, HAiku, OTHER FORMS OF PROSE AND POETRY, EVEN PROSE POETRY, AS WELL AS PLAYS, BROADSIDES, SKITS, BLURBS, BELLES LETTRES, LOVE LETTERS, DEAR JOHN LETTERS, JUNK MAIL, GRAFFITI, TEXTBOOKS, TELEPHONE BOOKS, COMIC BOOKS, JOKES, CURSES, GREETING CARDS, ROCK SONGS, GREGORIAN CHANTS, HISTORIES, DICTIONARIES, BIOGRAPHIES, PORNOGRAPHIES, SKY-WRITING, AND EPHEMERA, ALL OF WHICH HAVING BEEN GATHERED, ASSEMBLED, AND ORGANIZED INTO A SINGLE VOLUME, A SMALL TOME, A MODEST THING THAT INCLUDES AN INVALUABLE APPENDIX OF FASCINATING TITLES THAT ARE LONGER THAN THE WRITINGS THEY NAME, FORMING AN INTEGRAL
PART OF THIS MUCH-NEEDED REFERENCE WORK, WHICH DEMONSTRATES ONCE AND FOR ALL TO YOU, DEAR READER, THE VAST IMPORTANCE OF HIGH-QUALITY TITLES, THE LONGER THE BETTER, SUCH AS THE TITLE OF... (continue with 'THE BOOK OF TITLES.... above)

To cap off this Kickshaw item, even though these aren't extra-long titles, here are some imaginary titles by imaginary or real authors.

FRANKENSTEIN VERSUS THE NEW YORK YANKEES
  By Mary Wollstonecraft Stengel

THE BIOGRAPHY OF ELLERY QUEEN
  By Stephen King

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED NEUMAN
  By T.S. Gaines

MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS, AND PEOPLE WHO WRITE BOOKS LIKE THIS ARE FROM URANUS
  By E.T.

MOEBIUS DICK
  By Herman Escher
LASSIE, WE HARDLY KNEW YE: THE SCANDALOUS HOLLYWOOD TRANSGENDERIZATION OF A LEGENDARY CANINE ICON
   By Dr. Rin Tin Tin, Veterinarian to the Stars

THE COMMUNIST WOMANIFESTO
   By Carla Marx, Joye Stalin, and Virginia Lenin

IN DEFENSE OF O.J.
   By the Florida Orange Growers Association

BEAUTY AND THE BEATS
   By Jack Ginsberg and Allen Kerouac

THE SUN LEAPS, TWIRLS, FALLS, JUMPS, PLUNGES, BOUNCES,
   FLIES, GLIDES, SOARS, FLIPS, DIPS, AND TRIPS.
IT ALSO RISES
   By Ernest Hummingbird

DISEASES OF THE GLUTEOUS MAXIMUS
   By Donald Rump

HOW TO TENDERIZE BUTTONS WHILE EATING COOKIES
   By Gertrude Stein

LEAVES OF GRASS--LAWN CARE MADE EASY
   By Wally Whitman
THEY DON'T STUFF HORSES, DO THEY?
   By Trigger

THE NEW BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY
   By Robert James Waller's Prosthodontist

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO CRAP
   By John Irving

• ANAGRAM LOOKING FOR A BELIEVER
  mascots = cat, moss, ...
(The cat is the mascot of many teams. Moss is the mascot of the Unrolling Stones.)

• A CONTRONYM ANAGRAM
Lurid is a contronym meaning both (1) vivid, fiery red and (2) pallid, ghastly. It makes for a double anagram (involving a zip): luridness: (1) sun reds; (2) ill (in duress?).

• ANOTHER COINCIDENTAL SELF SIMILARITY
Cow, cower and coward are not related etymologically.
cow [intimidate] <ON kuga, oppress
cower [be intimidated] <ME<MLG küren, lie in wait
   (Cower is a contronym; it can also mean one who cows, which of course is related to cow.)
coward [intimidated person] <OF couard, tail <L cauda (ie, tail between the legs)

• QUIZ (answers below)
1. What is the significance of this sequence, other than being all the odd numbers? 1 3 5 7 9 11 13...
2. What is unique about these letters: B C D G J K P Q T U V W Y Z?
3. Name all the letters that rhyme. Which letters have no rhyme?
4. Name all the books of the Bible that rhyme.
5. Name all the US states that rhyme. (The two Carolinas, Dakotas and Virginias don’t.)
6. >>> BONUS election year question <<<
   Name all the US Presidents whose surnames end in -on. There are eleven as of August 2016. How many of them rhyme?

• THREE MORSELS FROM THE NET
> "A man who views the world the same at 50 as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life."
— Muhammed Ali (RIP, 1942-2016)
> Optimists says the glass is half full. Pessimists says the glass is half empty. Engineers say the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.
> The five symptoms of laziness:
1.

• THE MILLI-HELEN (from New Scientist, 23/4/16)
  "Feedback" cites a proposed unit for human beauty, the Helen. However, as a Helen is probably an unachievable level of beauty it went on to propose the everyday unit of the milli-Helen, defined as the amount of beauty that would launch a single ship.

• IT'S ONLY LOGICAL!
Who says logic is more important than heart and spirit? Logic says!
(Oh, logic would say that. It’s totally conceited.)

• MY GENIUSITY
I was so smart I skipped a year. I went straight from being twelve years old to being fourteen.
(Or was I just being superstitious?)

• VIRTUAL VIRTUE SAVES THE WORLD
He wanted to save the world in a big way so he started collecting globes.
• N-LESS NEGATIVITY (WILL IT EVER N?)
Are there any terms lacking the letter N that mean no, none, not, nothing, nil, negative, non-, in- or un-?

The Oxford American Dict. thesaurus, under “no”, lists only one: uh-uh, which I think is more properly spelt uhn-uh like it’s pronounced. Still, uh-uh (and oh-oh or aw-aw) could qualify by meaning oops, no, a mistake. “None” ironically offers none. “Not” is not even listed. Under “negative”: opposed, dismissive, bad, adverse, refusal, veto. “Nonsense” gives many forms of denial: rubbish, gibberish, claptrap, balderdash, hogwash, rot, garbage, jive, tripe, drivel, bilge, bull, guff, bosh, BS, eyewash, piffle, poppycock, phooey, hooey, malarkey, hokum, twaddle, gobbledygook, codswallop, flapdoodle, hot air, tommyrot, bullshit, crap. “Wrong” includes imprecise, fallacious, wide of the mark, off target, faulty, out, improper, out of order, bad, amiss, awry, flawed, defective. “Nothing” gives zero, 0, zilch, zip, diddly-squat, a trifle, love (tennis).

The Macquarie Thesaurus lists many more such negative sentiments or actions, but under “no” it adds: like hell (but not like buggery, Oz slang), scarcely!, pigs!, balls!, speak for yourself, up you/upya. “Non-being” and/or “nothing” add: aught, vacuum, void, bugger all, fuck all/ F.A./s.f.a./sweet F.A., duck/duck’s egg (cricket), metempiric, theoretical, virtual, , worthless, abrogate/d, extirpate/d, wipe/d out, blot/ted out, wipe/d off the map, die/d/ out, fail/ed, melt/ed away, perish/ed,
out of whole cloth, erasure, removal, bye, immaterial, side show, cipher, obscurity, piddle, zed.

Roget's Thesaurus also has many negatives, but for "no" or "not" it adds: far from it, for the life of me. Wikisaurus adds: hardly, false.

Out of my head I would add (mostly with an !): oh-oh, aw-aw & oops (see above), ought, 0 = 0, de-, dis-, empty set, wait!, WTF?, bah, refuse, middle digit gesture, truthless, vacuous, Hoover-headed [pun], absurd, backwardized, feces theses muck mess, poop poop, turd salad, caca bread, daft, dumb, silly, dodo-oid, idiotic dolt fare, empty upstairs, mad, crazy, sow's ear, pig's arse, if pigs could fly, right-just the opposite, surely you jest, I believe you but I differ from the vast majority, go fly a kite, Fibber without Molly, you lie stupid, devoid of veracity, eh?, huh?, what?, says who?, oh yeah?, what a pile, sewage, falsies, assholery, a load of arse drops, diseased, raves of a screw-driver head, shut up, who let you out?, your psychiatrist failed you, eat my shorts, my watch stopped too, break a mirror for Christ, you reside deeply up to your ears, flush that, just what the proctologist ordered, my retarded brother would see through that, try me tomorrow with a truckload of salt, formerly perhaps, homeopathic astrology placebo, ephemeral, stuff it, store it, try to breathe deeper, trick photography, full of legumes, pickled vomit, my trousers must be too tight, please remove the barf from my ears, erasable, fu... get about it, devoid of gray matter, devoid of white matter, wisdom-impaired, late, you're a scrambled egghead, old wives' tale, a
story, duped deluded fairytale, flaky, lame, dull, you quarterwit, dope-impaired (or dope, impaired), Joe McCarthyism, Charlie McCarthyism, drivel, airhead hokery pokery jiggery piggery mumbo jumbo bakery bakery goofy, sappy, goat food, dorky, bozoid, somebody took you for a ride without a map, hoax, dupe rote, bluffed, sigmoid fraud, sham shame, an outright adulthood, bamboozled, you’re fired [Trump’s favorite], euchred, 100% miss, 180 degrees off, you’ve overstayed your welcome—and with that I think I’ve overstayed my welcome! Add your own favourites. (Dave, how about any of your collection of words meaning zero that I’ve missed and are n-less?)

I conclude that the best serious example of n-less negativity ought to be ought or aught, which brings us back to where we all started out from.

- This N question provoked the following lipogram, proving that Mary’s Lamb is a very nice, positive, almost N-less poem, suitable even for highly sheltered kids who aren’t allowed to hear negative thoughts. (N-word substitutes are bold.)

MARY HAD A LITTLE N-LESSNESS
Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as blow.* & everywhere that Mary walked the lamb was sure to go.
It followed her to school a particular day, which is disallowed by the rule.
It made the kids laugh & play to see a lamb at school.
* Blow = snow; both are slang for cocaine powder—but don't tell the kids! Tell them it means snow as in a blizzard. If the ampersands are cheating change them to "plus", "also", or "moreover".

See next for another n-less Mary's Lamb, a bare-bone minimalism.

• MARY, MARY, QUITE ABSTRACTED
Mary’s lamb shadows, schools. Illegal! Cheers. *

* All lambs are little and white fleeced. Shadows covers for "was sure to go" and "followed her to". The cheers must have come from the children as the teacher was part of the establishment forbidding animals in school.

• QUIZ ANSWERS
1. These are the intervals between successive squares. 0 1 4 9 16 25 36 49 etc. Mathematicians like our editor would have answered this handily, but what about you wordsmith types?
2. These letters have a consonant sound and are preceded by "a". The others (AEFHILMNORSX) have an initial vowel sound are preceded by "an".
4. Lamentations-Galatians-Revelations; Jeremiah (or Nehemiah)*-Obadiah-Zephaniah-Zachariah.
5. Alaska–Nebraska; Indiana (or Louisiana)*–Montana; Minnesota–N&S Dakota; Nevada–Colorado (speaking loosely).

6. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, 2xHarrison, 2xJohnson, Wilson, Nixon, Clinton.
The two tons may or may not rhyme with the nine sons (including Old Nick’s son), depending on the precise definition of "rhyme".

* Jeremiah-Nehemiah in #4 and Indiana-Louisiana in #5 don’t rhyme as each pair is preceded by the same sound before their identical accented penultimate syllables. Ditto for Isaiah-Hosea in #4.

• FORMAL SPROOF THAT 42 IS INDEED THE ANSWER
Proposition: “The Secret of Life, the Universe, and Everything is... Forty-Two!”
(Douglas Adams’ Deep Thought formulation)
I here offer four independent sproofs that the proposition is true.

SPROOF #1: Applying the gematria addition operator AO, reduce the proposition word by word to its sums: (20+8+5), (19+5+3+18+5+20), (15+6), (12+9+6+5), (20+8+5), (21+14+9+22+5+18+19+5), (1+14+4), (5+22+5+18+25+20+8+9+14+7), (9+19), (6+15+18+20+25), (20+23+15) = 33 70 21 32 33 113 19 133 28 84 58. (result 1)
Apply digital arithmetic to result 1 [33=6, 70=7, etc.] to reduce it again:
6 7 3 5 6 5 10 7 10 12 13. (result 2)
As required by symmetry, split result 2 into equal "halves" by sums. It splits equally into the
first 7 sums (6+7+3+5+6 5+10) and the last 4 sums (7+10+12+13). (result 3)
The equal result 3 sums are 42, in agreement with the
Proposition.
QED #1.
Justification and confirmation comes from the observation that
the 7/4 split in step 3 reflects the
facts that 7 is the largest prime factor of 42 and that 4 represents
LIFE, both as it's number of
letters and as its AA-SO! function (alternating add-subtract
operator function): 12−9+6−5 = 4.

SPROOF #2: Remove all the non-essential words (the, secret,
of, and, is) from the Proposition, then apply result 2 of sproof
#1 to the essential words:
Life = 5, Universe = 5, Everything = 7, Forty = 12, Two =
13). Their sum is 42.
QED #2.

The next two are more direct and were presented in earlier
Word Ways (15-170 and 14-196) but are repeated here for
completeness.
SPROOF #3: Apply gematria to the ANSWER: A–N+S+W–E+R = 1−14+19+23−5+18 = 42.
QED #3.

SPROOF #4: (This one is the least abstract and just maybe the one Adams based his formula on.) Count the total number of pips on a pair of dice. 2 x (1+2+3+4+5+6) = 2 x 21 = 42.
QED #4.
As noted in 14-196, I interpret this as Adams’ saying that at bottom it’s all a play of chance, unknowable except probabilistically.

• NEIGHBOURLY NUMBERS
Every number is the average of its next-door neighbours: 0 = (−1+1)/2; 1 = (0+2)/2; 2 = (1+3)/2; etc. Can all numbers also be defined by their neighbours with gematria? I’ve solved it for the first eleven integers. Is any number insoluble by this method? Can 100 = 99 f 101?
0 = one − one = 0
1 = zero + two = (−26+5+18–15) + (−20+24+15) = −18+19 = 1
2 = one + three = √(−15+14+5) + (20+8–18–5–5) = 2+0 = 2
3 = √(two − four) = √{[−(20+24)15] − [(6x15)−21−18]} = √(60−51) = 3
4 = three ÷ five = (20+8–18+5+5) ÷ (−6+9+22) / 5 = 20÷5 = 4
5 = four + six = {(6+15)÷21}+18 + (19–9–24) = 19–14 = 5
6 = five x seven = (−6–9+22+5) x [(19+5–22+5)÷14] = 12x0.5 = 6
7 = six x eight = [√(19+9–24)] x [(5+9+(7x8)]÷20} = 2x3.5 = 7
8 = seven x nine = \{[(−19−5+22)×5]+14\} \times \sqrt{14+9−14−5} = 4\times2 = 8 \\
9 = eight \times ten = (5+9+7+8−20) \times (20−5−14) = 9\times1 = 9 \\
10 = nine + eleven = (−14+9−14+5) + (5\times12−4−22+4−14) = −14+24 = 10.

• PALINDROMES THAT GO ALL THE WAY FROM A TO Z OR Z TO A

There's a young German tennis star named ZVEREV. If only his first name were Zephaniah or Zachariah he'd be a palindrome. Zverev, Z. But perhaps even more strange than the fiction is the fact that it's Alexander. Think of it, the first ever palindrome that runs from Z to A and back: ZVEREV, A.

Or is it the first? Here’s some goes at dethroning ZA:
"AA pot: TOPAZ!" (ad for a futuristic brand of legalised cannabis cigarettes)
Abut tub Z. (Just don’t knock it over against tub Y or the whole alphabet may fall like dominoes.)
Al biz (the science of artificial intelligence)
“A-I wiz!” (#1 braggart—but lacking the wizdom of modesty)
(3) a off Oz, a odd Oz (”A?” – Oz) (Australia, oddly admitting to “off” grammar) (What!?)
A Lapp pal, Z. (Are any Lapps named Zed, or have names that begin with Z?) or
A lap pal, Z. (pet named Zed)
"A" orb for/of Broz. (a #1 orb of influence in Croatia)
"A oil reb is I, Berlioz." (deliberate swaggering talk by the proud composer of "oil-paint music")
And finally, for Jeff and Pat Grant,
an NZ palindrome.

I sent these to the Grants and Jeff fired straight back with these [plus my add-ons]:
**a tipsy spitz** (drunk dog)  [or Mark Spitz, violating his training regime]
**a too wee wootz** (overly small steel)  [wootz: steel made by an ancient Indian process: Web3]
**a ziff fizz** (beard in the cola – yuk)  [ziff: NZ/Oz slang for a beard: Macquarie + other Dicts.]

These, unfortunately, only encouraged me to compound the felony mercilessly with a lot more.
**Ail I Liz?** (Do I make her sick to her stomach?)
**Au zus** (an ancient silver coin turned into gold by verbal alchemy)
**a ZA jazz** (ZA = ZverevA [if he plays it], or South Africa [Zud Afrika, IVR code])
**a zizz** [or] **a zzz** (a nap or sleep).
And even more running from Z to A like ZverevA:
**ZA baa** (cry of a South African sheep)
**Zaire bi: Iberia, a?** (Is there not at least one Congolese bisexual in Spain or Portugal?)
**Zamia maim AA** (Humans! We’re top of the class in harming wild plants including the cycads.)
“Zap a tap, AA!” (Alcoholics Anonymous’s war cry: “Break all beer barrels!”) – or

Zapata, tap AA. (Mexican revolutionary was asked to spy on the AA beer busters.) – or

Zati hit AA. (An alcoholic bonnet monkey attacked [or joined?] AA.)

Zapotec ace, top AA (Top American Airlines pilot is a Native American from Oaxaca, Mexico.)

Zebra car, Bea? (Did the late Bea Arthur paint her car in black and white stripes?)

Zeloso Lea (a meadow where fervent music concerts are held)

zenith tinea (the most highly evolved, or highest altitude, ringworm)

zeta tea (tea served in a small room in the church belfry)

“Zho, lar, aloha!” (Hawaiian hello or goodbye to two south Asian animals, an ox and a gibbon)

Zillion? No. ill, IA? (No, there’s not that much illness in Iowa. But...)

Zit: “I hit IA.” (...there is a plaque of pimples there.)

“Zing” is nit insignia. (It’s the logo of keen, zippy lice—or of nitwits.)

zipper-prep pia (a new method of processing arrowroot)

zobo boa (a snake that preys on male zho oxen)

Zoo A (World’s greatest animal park—still the one in San Diego?)

zorro A (an alpha male of the wild fox-like dog of South America)

ZERO MORE, A! (Still, can you add more? Add you can, still.)
But the very earliest A-Z pal (unassisted!), around long before ZverevA was born, is the flower zinnia.

And here's a true palindrome that arose from a careless error during these efforts:

*Zea bed, a bee, bade Baez.*

Singer and peace activist Joan found the cornfield and its [birds and] bees peaceful and inviting.

~ SURE KICKS

"Watching the latest episode in the Star Wars franchise," Stuart Kidd writes, "I chuckled to myself again at George Lucas's droid onomastics. Back in '73 during a siesta while he was making 'American Graffiti,' a colleague asked for Reel 2, Dialogue track 2 in the abbreviated form R-2, D-2; Lucas half-woke, mumbling "great name," then promptly fell back asleep! As for the Golden Grandiloquent, George was scanning a grid map of his home town and noticed that the Post Office was located at reference C-3 . . .

Incidentally, Anthony Daniels as C-3PO is the only actor to appear in all seven films.

Then whilst contemplating the upcoming Olympics I realized that most of us spent our adolescence training in the shower for Olympic weightlifting - clean and jerk."
And finally, wincing at my joint pain I became aware of why
tendonitis is like a good weld – one's a sore shoulder and the
other, a sure solder.

Thank you, and good night."

I had a little pony,
   His name was Dapple Gray.
I lent him to a lady
   To ride a mile away.
She whipped him, she slashed him,
   She rode him through the mire;
I would not lend my pony now
   For all the lady's hire.

Find the lady.