

## THE REFRACTORY REDIVIDERDROME

JIM PUDER, Saratoga, California

*How doth the Redividerdrome  
Make tuppence from a penny?  
It saunters single from its home  
And comes back twice as many!*

Palindromic charade sentence pairs (or as they are better termed, “palindromic charade *passage* pairs,” since many a charade “sentence” is actually multiple sentences) are difficult and time-consuming to construct, and often do not seem very impressive once completed. Not surprisingly, they have seldom appeared in *Word Ways*. The infrequent challenge-seeker who *does* attempt to compose a palindromic charade passage pair encounters an intricate task in which each element of the passage under construction must be able to be read, sensibly, in four different ways: forwards and backwards in one sequence of words selected by the composer, and also forwards and backwards in an entirely different sequence of words, also selected by the composer, in which the letter sequence remains unchanged. Little wonder that logological matchmakers seldom perceive the palindrome and the charade passage pair as a promising threesome.

Charade passage pairs may be best known to wordplay fanciers of the present era from the sixteen spectacular examples presented by Howard Bergerson in his 1973 book *Palindromes and Anagrams* (ostensibly as excerpts from the libretto of a fictitious opera). However, none of his charade passage pairs is palindromic. Probably Bergerson would have at least tried to compose a few palindromic charade passage pairs for his book, but if so, he must have abandoned the attempt as being too difficult or too unproductive of worthwhile verse.

The first published palindromic charade passage pairs of which I am aware were exhibited by James Rambo in the February 1977 (in “Kickshaws”) and the November 1977 issues of *Word Ways*. Here are two of his better pairs:

**Live dastard, I drat sad evil.**

**Eros’ era spins till it snips Ares’ ore.**

**Lived, a star did? Rats — a devil!**

**Erose, rasp “In still, its nips are sore.”**

Despite Rambo’s pioneering effort, nearly four decades were to pass before palindromic charade passage pairs were once again seen in *Word Ways*. Recently Lori Wike, unaware of Rambo’s work, reinvented the form and began to publish new examples of it here, calling them “redividerdromes.” (Inasmuch as this term is obviously much shorter than “palindromic charade passage pairs,” and since no other one-word name for the form has ever existed, I will use “redividerdrome” hereinafter in preference to the longer term.)

One of Wike’s new redividerdromes, not necessarily one of her better ones but one of unprecedented length, is featured in her August 2016 *Word Ways* article “A Redividerdrome Mystery.” Cleverly presented in the context of a Walter Shedlovskyan logological whodunit, it is roughly twice as long as any previous redividerdrome, rendering it well-suited to illustrate a hitherto little-noted facet of redividerdromes. With its author’s kind permission, it is reproduced here:

**War, Diana? I demo deli repast, Ella! Ballet's a peril, Ed! O median aid, raw!**

**Ward Ian, aide: model ire, pastel lab. Al lets ape rile dome, Diana. I draw.**

Note that the letter sequence employed in this long redividerdrome is highly charade-friendly—so much so, in fact, that it could have been re-regrouped into a mostly different *third* passage:

**War, Di! An *ai*, demodé, lire past Ell-A Ballet's "A" peri led! O me! . . . Di, an ai draw!**

As this example nearly demonstrates, there is no reason to assume that redividerdromes can exist only in pairs; charade *trios* of some palindromic passages are certainly possible, the key condition being that no two of the trio's three passages can have the same word in the same place. No redividerdrome trios presently exist, but, judging by the example above, a redividerdrome trio at least a score of words in length ought to be within practicable reach.

Returning to duple redividerdromes, here is a bidirectional, orthographically isomeric (i.e., redividerdromic) pair of verbal montages tendered by a novice redividerdromist:

Snippets of passers-bys' conversations overheard by a street vendor:

**"Did I, Noel?" . . . "La, not a *rod*, rat! Ev I *con*, dig?" . . . "No Pan-Am??" . . . "A taro man, I lived rat-sad, Ian! A wonder is, I've Lyra, Cy!" . . . "A nip? It's, Reg, all I've done." "No, lad; I'd, alone, no devil lagers tip in." . . . "Ay, Cary, Levi sired no wan Aidas!" . . . "Tar devil, in a mora, 'ta!" . . . "Man: a pongid nocive." . . . "Tar, Dora, tonal Leon—I did."**

**"Didi! Noella! No taro? Drat, Evi!" . . . "Condign! O, Panama tar, Omani! Live!" . . . "Drat, Sadi! Ana won, derisively: 'Racy Ani? Pits!'" . . . "Regal live, Don—Enola did." "A lone node-villager's *tipi*? Nay, Caryl!" . . . "Evi's ired now an *ai*? Dastard! Evil inamorata!" . . . "Ma, nap on . . ." . . . "Gid? No! Civet *ardor*, atonal Leonid—*id!*"**

(A mora [Web3] is a minimal unit of speech; "ta" [Web3] is baby talk for "thanks"; "nocive" [Web3] means harmful or injurious; a *tipi* [Web3] is a teepee; an *ai* [Web3] is a three-toed sloth, and *gid* [Web3] is a behavior-affecting disease of sheep. *Lyra*, *Didi* [a boy's name], *Noella*, *Evi*, *Sadi*, *Ana* and *Ani* are all forenames which are boldface headwords in Bruce Lansky's *The Mother of All Baby Name Books*.)

The reason this redividerdrome ended up being as long as it is is that each head of this four-headed beast had its own definite ideas about where a good stopping place for *itself* would be, and it took a while to reach a unanimously acceptable end point. Overall, construction was aggravatingly slow, with promising solutions to current problems often failing to work in just one of the four necessary ways. It also became apparent that only local sensibility, at best, was feasible.

To conclude, the composition of redividerdromes may not be for everyone, but it *is* at least manageable. A redividerdromic trio of twenty words or more is likely possible, but is not yet extant. Lastly, puzzled historians have discovered this startling palindromic mention of redividerdromes in a long-lost manuscript attributed to Sir Thomas Malory (1408-1471) (Latin *videre* = "see"):

**" 'Rise! Redividerdromes o' Roman age,' began a morose Mordred, 'I "videre," sir!' "**