

ABLE WAS I ERE I SAW ELBA

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The title of this article, one of the most famous palindromes of all time, was uttered by Napoleon after he had been exiled to the island of Elba. The following palindromic letter, written by the deposed emperor, makes it clear that his debility was caused by a local tart named Ada:

Seul Noel! O pang nor wo's rue is no mad idyll of Elba.
I'm a sad agnostic. Ill I live -- evil illicit song. Ada's
amiable folly did a monsieur so wrong.*

Napoleon

*Lue s

Readers of the Congressional Record may have overlooked the following testimony given by a flamboyant female witness to the Water-gate Committee in the summer of 1973. Senator Sam Ervin asked the young lady, a member of the Gemstone operation in Miami, to give her address, her name, and a statement of how far she was prepared to go in supporting the G. O. P. Before she could begin her answer, he uttered one of his famous examples of cracker-barrel humor, which she felt constrained to acknowledge:

Funnee! U. S., Sinai, Mississippi, Sam. Gemstone gal,
"Lips" Regal, pols. Yas, I'd e'en sup succus, pus, need
I say slop, lager spillage -- not smegma -- sip piss, is
simian issue. Ennuf?

Giles Selig Hales, the young editor of an avant-garde literary journal, wrote an extended account of his woes to his friend Eton Harrison. Much of his troubles are caused by a frenetic correspondent, identified only as Eva, who not only composes free verse but has a deplorable tendency to write letters while inebriated (note that she uses "says" when the first person singular is needed, which she probably would not have done if sober). "Sab" and "Saib" are variants of "Sahib", and "Sah" is the Southern-plantation pronunciation of "Sir" which Giles uses for humorous effect (obviously, he enjoys playing with words, especially in showing off for his friend Eton). I am not familiar with Sir Ron Norris' s Portsmouth (or Portland?) paper "Om" but presume that it deals with aesthetic arcana:

Saib Eton: On hubris asleep, amo, spero, ergo live on!
Lo, of late I, Iad, deliver more pap. Trop de Sir Ron
Norris' * Dada (oh wow!) -- es nada.

Giles Selig Hales has wo new, O now, Sab. Ass! Ass!
 Arcadian Eva, eheu, rue! Heed O bard, "Mad Dog" Eton
 Harrison: "Ta-ra-ra, No Gnus Sung Rondel" -- le vers
libre gone nuts, ami! Eton save me, op. cit., an ultimo
 gem!

"Ave, Lee! Fired now as in amor, I act as lever
 to prose: I reverse. We says word, Mac: cave
canem. Ye boxer dog a god? (Regal lager, pal,
 I murmur. Rot, I demur, no dam' Peel's!) As
 Damon says word:

' Evil Sparta's bassets attest now dogs are dei-
 fied, era's god won't set tastes, Sab. Satraps
 live drowsy as nomads asleep, mad on rum,
 Editor, rum, rum! (I lap Regal Lager.) Dog
 a god? Rex, obey! Menace vaccam, drowsy
 as ewes' reveries or pot revels at Cairo.'

Man is a wonder, I feel.

Eva''

Meg, omit lunatic poem, Eva's note, Ima's tune: "No
 Gerbils Revelled Nor Gnus Sung On Ararat". No sirrah!

Note goddam drab ode, eheu, rue! Heaven aid a crass ass
 a bas! Wo now enow, Sah. Selah.

Giles Selig, a danse
 (Wo, whoa, Dad!)

*Sir Ron Norris, Ed. Port. Paper, Om, reviled Dali et
al. -- fool! No evil ogre or Epsom ape. Elsa, Sir
 Buhno note bias.