EVERLASTING REARRANGEMENTS

HARRY B. PARTRIDGE
Manhattan Beach, California

Except for occasional pieces in "The Poet's Corner", Walter Shedlofsky has been absent from the pages of Word Ways for nearly six years; I welcome his return with "Rearrangement: The Hidden Meaning" in the August 1979 Word Ways. This article is a response to his closing challenge there: "What rearrangements can you derive from EVERLASTING or IN VINO VERITAS, and what vehicles can you create to illustrate the correlations that you find?"

I found over sixty rearrangements of EVERLASTING in two- or three-word groups, from STARVING EEL, TRAVELING S.E., to a rather nasty comment about someone (whose name is abbreviated to V) who is apparently suffering from the effects of an unwise amour: V. RAINS GLEET. There must be many, many more rearrangements.

Lacking Mr. Shedlofsky's virtuosity in acrostics and anachutures, I have had to group about a score of my EVERLASTING rearrangements into a poem of rather free rhyme and meter which each reader must interpret for himself. About the best I can say of it is that it reminds me somewhat of the aura evoked by some of W. H. Hudson's writing about Saxon England.

The second challenge, IN VINO VERITAS, did not generate nearly so many rearrangements; but the best of those that I found I have woven into a little poem which is rather more structured than the EVERLASTING poem and also more readily understandable. The phrase "rabbit-eyes" in line 2 is an echo of Alexander Blok's famous poem containing the phrase "in vino veritas".

Before proceeding to the poems I would like to say that PRIME RAGER seems to me to be a more appropriate anagram of GRIM REAPER than Mr. Shedlofsky's GRAPE RIMER. I would like to see him do something with PRIME RAGER in his inimitable style.

VERSE TALING on Theme EVERLASTING

GIRLS AT EVEN at the SILVERN GATE stand
Amid the SVELTE GRAIN; the SILENT GRAVE they see
Where REVEL GIANTS that know not the STERN GLAIVE,
From SINGLE TRAVE suspended behind the VEIL STRANGE,
Hangs hidden but to cut the GRAVEST LIEN
Of their STRANGE EVIL in its LIVEST RANGE.
STRIVE, ANGEL -- on GRAVEN TILES 'tis written --
Thou, LEAVING REST, the RESTING VALE shalt smite.
There VEERS A GLINT from far, and RAVENS GLEIT --
GLISTEN, RAVE, o glaive,
LINGER, STAVE -- away!
'Tis over now -- and, GIRLS TEN, AVE!

IN VINO VERITAS?

I STROVE IN VAIN this to refute:
He who cries with rabbits' eyes
It is in wine that his truth lies,
"IN VINO VERITAS -- in wine is truth!"
Should rather say in wine lies truth
And to this truth his voice should give:
"TER INANIS VIVO -- thrice void I live!"
O, STRIVE IN VAIN this to dispute.

All the words in my poems are found in Webster's Second and Third, except TALING (in the OED).

LETTER SQUARE PALINDROMES

This is the title of a slender (21 pages) hardcover book by Paul L. Keababian and published (for $4) by the Ababababa Press, 2 Winding Lane, Scarsdale, NY 10583. It contains 17 five-by-five palindromic squares S T O P S T A T E P O T A T O P E T A T S P O T S which can be dissected into more-or-less meaningful sentences; for example, the square at right reads 'stop state potato, pet, at spots'. As the meaning of this may be obscure to some readers, the author has thoughtfully provided an exegesis: these words were an aide-memoire to Prince Charming on how to woo Cinderella during their ride in the royal coach, fashioned out of a giant potato.

Despite the author's contention that 'until now, the English language has lacked lettersquare palindromes', Dmitri Borgmann gives several examples, including 'lived I, mad Eva, saved amidst evil' on page 207 of Language on Vacation (Scribner's, 1965). Similar constructions based on 4x4 and 5x5 palindromic squares were exhibited by J. A. Lindon in the November 1969 and November 1970 Word Ways, and more recently by M. D. McIlroy in the November 1976 issue.