THE POET'S CORNER

Michael Helsem of Dallas, Texas describes himself as an "esoteric poet with logological leanings", an assessment Word Ways readers will surely agree with. Here is his translation of a fifth-century triple acrostic on the new hot springs of Thrasamundus. In keeping with the original, word-spacings and punctuation do not count; evidently the Romans had no desire to speed-read. Alternate words are underlined to enable the modern reader to pick out the message:

FLAVIUS FELIX
The stream's still source from flowy eauer\$ Heregoodsparklegobeneaththe blazingor\$ Roventhrough chasms nowcycladinalabasteR Andenormouscolumns Edge the SeptentrionI StatuesoutsideglowWithmarbledcrafitinG Andahighwallcircle sthesubtliewarm batH MuchwealdeoesthgeAt bathbuilderimparT Usufructuaryofeverlasting peerlessfamE Nor hams the warm thallread the ded ica tionD Discoverwhat floods Ve seindeep alkali U kase hererefreshsoftheadear VandalcliaN Standingfor thanks细微hadeserving Ving

The acrostic is THRASAMUNDUS/ RENEWS ALL VOW/S, BRIGHTENING.

Helsem's next poem weaves an intricate alphabetic pattern on the initial letters of its words:

CYNGHANEDD GROES (OUR DRY GARDEN)
A zouave-bright yawp asks zeal beyond yours. Certain xeric dews would create xylid day's-web Easing voidt for us, except very few unicorns Get to habit such glebe. Their halcyon stock Instead rates jeopardy, quite iracund reviewers, jackal quellage. Kwashiorkor. Perhaps less optimism? Keep people liking our Modern, no-nuance masterpieces; mighty nubile, nicely mawkish ...
Or loathe power, kiss off literary politics, kerygma Quackery. Just rhyme in qualmless jollity, rave; if Selves have to go singly, help them green. Ultimately, fustian vests each urchin's feverish views enised. World dung-xyster crafts with dense xanthic creed Yon baobab zymurgy. Abatis? Yes, but zero axolotl.

His third example is a macaronic sonnet: each odd-numbered line is taken from a well-known author, and the following even-numbered line completes a pangrammatic couplet (uses the remaining letters of the alphabet):
WELTSCHMERZ OF THE ZEITGEIST

Methought upon the tomb-encumbered shore (C. Ashton Smith)
I saw quick dwarves defile a jade Zyxomma.
Who loves, raves - 'tis youth's frenzy; but the cure (Byron)
That damps quixotic jags so kills the lemma.
My hungry eyes though greedy covetize (Spenser)
And frequent jokes, wax pebble-cold and stupid:
From the mix'd mass one sovereign balm derive (Carow)
A joy-zymurgy working quag pellucid;
That thee is sent, receive in buxumnesse, (Chaucer)
Quoth jesting Pilaf to a keloid Zugzwang.
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought (Shakespeare)
This ziplock vex-bag, since I have no joss
Blood-quaffing Mars heaving the iron net (Marlowe)
And wicked Jeep to zyme the frith of Luxon.

The following poem was typed entirely with the left hand by
Sarah Montoya of Monterey Park, California. On the whole, it probably makes as much sense as most free verse.

TERSE VERSE DE SARA

Caesar was a czar as was Xerxes
Dare a deft feat avec few secrets
As we were bested
Ad astra star Vega
Better read
We deserve defeats
Dear deceased dead
Fate fazes scared braggarts see
Few fewer fewest fears fester
Facade facets
Retreat reassert avec zest
Adverse test case treated
TWA traverses Qatar Rabat Texas West Va
Tax evaders beware vested vertebrates
Tbc arrested
We are ever eager
Revere sacred Easter grace
Castrate sated sages
Sex starved we vegetate
Tattered red taffeta dress et tweed rags
Cabarets waste water
Cars waste gas
Federated verb craft defeats great art
Saved wages are sweet
Reassert reassess best taste
Redress greed
Be aware! et cetera

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