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“Reading Alphomes” is the above title *in* alphomes: the letters of each word are alphabetized. The following paragraph recently made the rounds on the i-net and partly inspired this essay. (The rest of this page is translated in Answers and Solutions at the back of this issue.)

“I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonemneal pweor of the hmuan mnid. Aoccdrnig to a rsearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn’t mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? Yaeh and I awlyas thoguht slpeling was ipmorantt.”

I now use the mehotd of taht paaagprrh, with one dceeffinre, to ease you into radeing aehlmops. I kept the ccerrot first and last leertts, but I put the iaennrtl leertts in aaabcehilptl oderr raehr tahn sabclmre tehm adeegllly at radnom. I call this sltye an ‘aehlmop sacdinwh’. But I sense taht taht paaagprrh is caeistr to raed tahn this one. If so it’s not ceellmopty true. The nartue of the iaennrtl sabclmre maertts. To test taht sciiopsun on you I sahll now raecept the above paaagprrh uinsg the aehlmop sacdinwh mehohd.

“I cdlnot beeilve taht I cloud aaclltuy uadennrstd waht I was radeing. The paeehmnnol peowr of the hamun mind. Accdinorg to a raceersh at Cabdgimre Ueiinrstvy, it denost maettr in waht oderr the leertts in a word are, the olny iamnoprtt thing is taht the first and last leettr be in the rghit pacle. The rest can be a taotl mess and you can siltl raed it whiotut a pbelorm. This is bacesue the hamun mind deos not raed eervy leettr by ielstf, but the word as a whloe. Aaimnzg huh? Yaeh and I aalwys tghhout seillnpg was iamnoprtt.”

Was taht haderr? I’d say yes for the legnor wdors but pabblory not for the oehrts. Do you aegre? If yoru’e not srue, have semnooe else raed the two veinorss but raed the scenod one (mine) first. Siltl, it wloud take a mcuh laegrr pcejort to tell for srue.

Now Ill’ cemo ot eht inopt adn chistw ot aabeghiilnptz aceh dorw fluy ot ees how aabeedlr it is. Ist’ adhr at first, inst’ it? Btu aefrt a ehilw it begins ot be abcdeeehilpr fi not aaclltuy deeps-aabdeelr. Im’ deiprrssu I acn aekm it otu at all. fl I desu lony horst dorsw I hiknt it dlouw be almost aesy ot ader. Ill’ now aeeprt eht eint-eoprrt in aehlmops—now ahtt ouy aehv aaccillprty deeimmoz it!

“I cdlnotu beeeilv ahtt I cdlou aaclltuy addennrstu ahtw I asw adeginnr. ehT aeehlmmnop eoprw fo eht ahmnu dimn. Accdginor ot a aceehrrs at abCdegimr eiinrstUvy, it denost’ aemrtt in ahtw deorr eht eelrstd in a dorw aer, eht lnoy aimnoprtt ghint is ahtt eht first adn alst eelrtd be in eht ghirt acelp. ehT erst acn be a alott emss adn ouy acn illst ader it hiottuw a belmopr. hisT is abceesu eht ahmnu dimn edos not ader eervy eelrtd by efilst, btu eht dorw as a ehlow. Aagimnz, hhu? aehY adn I aalswy ghottu egillnps asw aaimnoprtt.”

alFlyni, ot eb lattylo meerxet, Ill’ own cblmazer a ectsnnee ni a yaw accelladcut ot damseli ouy yb leaderbytile schogion teterl dosrre I ejgud ot eb stale yekill earblade. nCa uyo dare shit?