

THE GETTYSBURG DISTRESS

MIKE MAGUIRE
Herndon, Virginia

The following was constructed by rearranging the 1154 letters of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

I needed strength.
The light was gone.
I could not see a thing.
I was frantic.
Your hand was in mine,
then it was gone,
and you were pulled from me and drowned.

Can you now, in that deep water, ever have thoughts of me?

For I have been condemned with thoughts;
of each hot and hard breath that we shared together,
of the ever-burning fire that we bore,
of our scarred, careening hearts,
of the vacant cavern that I have been left with,
of the vacant bed that I have been left with.

Drifting alone over the waves,
I needed help.

For I had lost the right to the rare, lost land.
I tore free all scorn
and attached the rights to a scarred stranger.

She came.
And she parted the roaring water
and carried me to the land,
soft barren land.

Grateful, I gave her all that I might've given you.
And despite the fact that she too tried and tried,
she could not stop the rain.

For the rain to stop,
I needed to believe;
to believe in life,
or to believe that all good hearts will care again,
or that I too can follow that sacred vow,
or that I too can cope.

When I took her soothing contact,
I believed.

End of the storm.
I now walk the devastated beach.
Fallen gull, unseeing eye cast to the sky,
reminds me of
the condition of our love.

WORDPLAY RECORDS

Chris Cole has published several articles in *Word Ways* relating to word records. He has taken this material and vastly expanded it in a marvelous new book, *Wordplay: A Curious Dictionary of Language Oddities* (Sterling, 1999), available in paperback for \$14.95 (ISBN 0-8069-1797-0). Emulating the Guinness Book of World Records, the book contains a myriad of record-setting words, from such well-known ones as DEIFIED (longest common-word palindrome) and KINNIKINNIK (longest uncommon-word palindrome) to highly-specialized ones like FILLING KNITTING (longest phrase containing no vowels but I) and PHENOMENAL (longest common reversed embedded word, containing ANEMONE in reverse).

Dmitri Borgmann once claimed that all words are interesting--an exaggeration--but Chris Cole has assembled an amazing number which can legitimately make such a claim. They are arranged in a taxonomy of wordplay types as well as in alphabetical order. A nice touch: the numerous sidebars on various topics such as hangman strategy, pangrams, lipograms, the -gry problem, impossible rhymes, crashing word lists, pangrammatic windows, the longest word, and a measure for spelling difficulty.

The book contains additions to recent *Word Ways* articles: POLDAVY THUMBSCREWING to Eric Chaikin's "The Gunpowdery Blacksmith" (Aug 1998), and SORTIES SLICKLY CONCORD TERNERY TRITONE PENSILE PRONKED CLOSENS to the editor's "Every Word-Pair in This Set Has One Crash" (Feb 1999).