

ULTRAPALINDROMES

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Sometimes, the first example one sees of a given type of wordplay becomes the ideal for all that follow. I showed a collection of palindromes to a friend who somehow had never encountered them before. In addition to ABLE WAS I ERE I SAW ELBA and RATS LIVE ON NO EVIL STAR, the collection included TEN ANIMALS I SLAM IN A NET and A MAN, A PLAN, A CANAL--PANAMA.

It was the first two that caught his eye. Not only were they letter-unit palindromes, but the word-divisions were not changed in the second half of the palindrome. He averred that he wanted more like that. Possibly they satisfied some kind of desire for super-symmetry!

Such palindromes are not easy to come by, but not totally unheard-of, either. Without too much effort I found SPOTS BOB SEES--BOB STOPS.

It occurred to me that one could go even further. SPOTS and STOPS are not themselves palindromes, unlike BOB and SEES. Is it possible to write anything remotely sensible if the whole thing is a palindrome and each word is as well? Such creatures would be both letter-unit and word-unit palindromes. The main problem, I found, was a desperately short supply of verbs'

Peep, Bob, peep! Wow, Mom, wow! Peep, Bob, peep!

Bob sees radar. Radar sees Bob.

Madam detartrated Otto. Hannah sees radar; radar sees Hannah. Otto detartrated Madam.

Madam sees Sis. Sara's mom sexes Dad. Dad sexes Mom. Sara's Sis sees Madam.

Did pup poop? Pup did.

Bob did deed--a deed did Bob.

Did I, Dad, toot? Dad, I did.

Dad deified Mom. Seve's eye sees Bob. Bob sees eye. Seve's mom deified Dad [Seve refers to the Spanish golfer, Seve Ballestros.]

Other possibly-useful verbs include DEGARAGED and DELEVELED.