

# FRENCH HOMOPHONES

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In the August 1969 issue of *Word Ways*, J.A. Lindon introduced the concept of a homophone -- a sentence whose sound is such that it can be written down and interpreted as regards meaning in two distinct ways. The following French homophones were proposed by Alphonse Allais:

- I. The playful proposition of an eccentric painter who wishes to lure a young lady into the crypts in order to paint her back green:

Je dis, mettons, vers mes passages souterrains  
Jeudi, mes tons verts, mais pas sages, sous tes reins.

- II. In the fearful forest of the Djinn, one fortifies oneself either with gin or with one hundred cups of cold milk:

Par les bois du Djinn, où s'entasse de l'effroi  
parle et bois du Gin ou cent tasses de lait froid.

- III. See from the Loing bridge, in oceanic style, how the gaunt bird, Dante, lays eggs with a flair:

Ah! vois au pont du Loing! De la vogue en mer. Dante,  
hâve oiseau, pondu loin de la vogue ennuyeuse.

Those who understand French will appreciate why it is better not to rhyme the second line. Finally, he describes the plight of foreman Hubert Hanz, who kills an old rabbit instead of a young one; discovering his mistake when he eats it, he consoles himself with a melody on his hunting-horn:

La protubérance  
Du prote Hubert Hanz  
Lapereau tubé, rance  
Dupe rôôt, tube et ranz.