

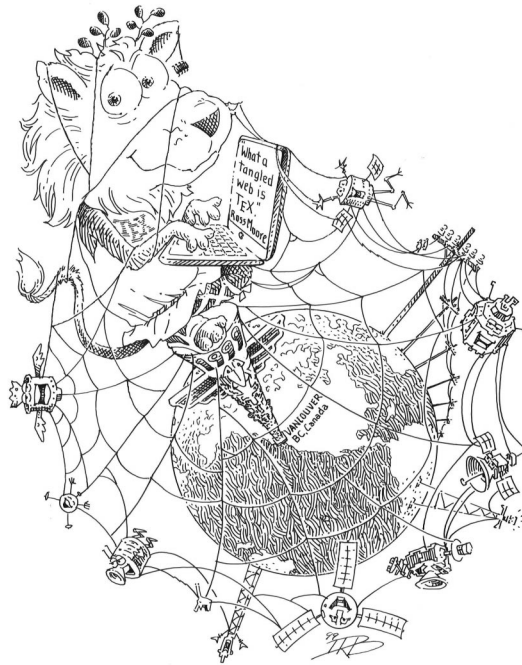
# TUG '99: Poetry Reading in the Rose Garden. . . . .

edited by  
Ross Moore, Wendy McKay, and Sebastian Rahtz



Discover your **wit**, **wisdom**, and **way** with words  
in verse on the TUG'99 theme

## TeX Online: Untangling the Web and TeX



from the quotation

**“Oh, what a tangled web is  $\TeX$ ”**

—ROSS MOORE  
(with apologies to SIR WALTER SCOTT [1771-1832],  
“Oh, what a tangled web we weave . . . ”  
Marmion, canto vi, stanza 17)

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## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Borrowings</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	The Rape of the Package .....(Sebastian Rahtz)	2
2.2	The Journey of the TeXies .....(Sebastian Rahtz)	2
2.3	To TeX or not to TeX .....(Fred Bartlett)	3
2.4	Purple haze .....(Don Deland)	3
<b>3</b>	<b>Doggerel</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1	The Young Lady of Stanford .....(Sebastian Rahtz and Patrick Ion)	3
3.2	The TUG conference .....(Christina Thiele)	4
3.3	The Young Man of Vancouver .....(Sebastian Rahtz)	4
3.4	The macros called LaTeX .....(Fred Bartlett)	4
3.5	Love, Again .....(Richard Kinch)	4
3.6	The Young Woman of TeX .....(Christina Thiele)	4
3.7	Under the volcano .....(Christina Thiele)	4
<b>4</b>	<b>Haikus</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1	A TeX Haiku .....(Sebastian Rahtz)	5
4.2	A TeXnician's Haiku .....(Michael Downes)	5
<b>5</b>	<b>TeX musings</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1	Musings from the Bard .....(Ross Moore)	6
5.2	TeX-cess .....(Peggy Kempker)	6
5.3	The Hidden Passions of Mathematicians .....(Debra Kaufman)	7
5.4	Sonnet from the ill-at-ease .....(Joseph Haubrich)	7
5.5	A TeX Thesis .....(Stephen Fulling)	8
<b>6</b>	<b>Conference reflections</b>	<b>9</b>
6.1	Ode to a <code>\special</code> .....(Sebastian Rahtz)	9
6.2	TUG'99 musings .....(Pierre McKay)	9
6.3	(untitled) .....(Donald Arseneau)	10

# 1 Introduction

I suppose it happens to all of us. Most days we just go through our drab lives, writing LaTeX code, running dvips, staring at laser-printer output, arguing about XML; but then something cracks, our brain spins, and we pretend for whole moments at a time that we are, after all, the rightful poetic heirs to Shakespeare and Goethe. Luckily, we do not often get our masterpieces onto paper, but at the TUG'99 conference delegates were treated to a rare display of collective insane poetasting.

Ross Moore and Wendy McKay started it all, by setting up a poetry competition before the meeting, but they had the idea that people would take it *seriously*, and compose 'masterpieces of the poetic art'. When it came to the line, though, entries were thin on the ground, so what to do? Appeal to people's worst instincts, of course, by reading doggerel to them between talks! This was proving amusing enough by the Wednesday of the conference that we had the idea of a public reading in the Rose Garden of the University Campus, overlooking the sea. It seemed an innocent enough idea.

TeX people are, however, nothing if not perfectionists. No, not just a reading, it had to be a proper party; no, we could not just read poetry, we had to dress up in bardic uniform; no, not just any uniform, but like that wretched lion in The Book; yes, with the laurel twigs.*sigh*, as they say on the Internet. Worst of all, people brought cameras!

The results, poetic and photographic, follow. Great art it ain't, mostly, but we hope you'll be a little amused by it all. Myself, I think the beer (illegal in a public place in Canada) helped; about the local mango cider, I am less sure. I wonder what the bemused passers-by made of it all?

Prizes? Yes, we had some winners. For unadulterated audacious stealing, [Fred Bartlett's](#) Hamlet bore away a token; for pure cool *style*, [Michael Downes'](#) haiku gained the wreath; for poetic talent, [Pierre MacKay](#) probably came as near art as anyone; and for his out-and-out politically incorrect (but hideously funny) 'goodness gracious me' readings, [Kaveh Bazargan](#) surely got the most applause.

—Sebastian Rahtz

## 2 ‘Borrowings’

### 2.1 The Rape of the Package

WHAT dire options from am’rous macros springs,  
What mighty errors rise from a Trivial `\special`,  
I sing—This Verse to Don Knuth, Muse! is due;  
This, ev’n **Carlisle** may vouchsafe to view:  
Slight is the markup, but not so the PDF,  
If Frank inspire, and Chris approve my docstrip.  
Say what strange catcodes, Fine! cou’d compel  
A well-bred **hacker** t’assault a gentle **LaTeX**?  
Oh say what stranger keyword value, yet unprogramm’d,  
Cou’d make **CTAN** reject a **non-free** package ?  
And dwells such power in active characters then?  
And do XML and XSL excite so much?  
—stolen by Sebastian Rahtz

### 2.2 The Journey of the `TeX`s

“A cold coding we had of it,  
Just the worst package from `TeXLive`  
For a document, and such a long document:  
The macros long and the braces many,  
The very pits of `TeX`.”  
And the tables hard, badly aligned, refractory,  
Misplaced `omit` in every `\multicolumn`.  
There were times we regretted  
The dependence on `longtable`, the use of `pdfmark`,  
And the `hyperref` macros breaking our `\cite s`.  
Then the authors cursing and grumbling  
And using Macintoshes, and wanting their Framemaker and Word,  
And the editor crashing, and the graphics corrupted,  
And the `setup.exe` hostile and CTAN unfriendly  
And the usergroups dirty and charging high prices:  
A hard time we had of it.  
At the end we preferred to work in XML,  
Validating as we went,  
With the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.  
Then at `</tei.2>` we came to the end of the process,  
valid, with all elements ended, all IDREFs satisfied,  
With an XSL stylesheet, and even a version for IE5  
And three HTML versions already on the Web.  
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.  
—stolen by Sebastian Rahtz

## 2.3 To T<sub>E</sub>X or not to T<sub>E</sub>X

To T<sub>E</sub>X, or not to T<sub>E</sub>X: that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler on the page to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous software,  
Or to write code against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? Use Word? Use Quark?  
No more! For such as they could never end  
The heartache and the thousand unnatural shocks  
That type is heir to.

LaT<sub>E</sub>Xe\*?

Devoutly to be wish'd! Or Quark to T<sub>E</sub>X?  
To T<sub>E</sub>X? Now there's a dream. And here's the rub:  
From that disguisèd T<sub>E</sub>X the dream may come  
That T<sub>E</sub>X should shuffle off this mortal coil,  
So should we pause? There's no respect  
For T<sub>E</sub>X in all of its long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of Frame,  
WordPerfect's wrong, Microsoft's contumely,  
The pangs of despis'd T<sub>E</sub>X, Incontext's delay,  
The insolence of Active T<sub>E</sub>X and the spurns  
That patient Wizards of th' WYSIWYGers take,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
In a plain T<sub>E</sub>X style? Who would authors bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after T<sub>E</sub>X,  
The undiscover'd standard from ISO  
And W3C, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather love the type we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?

T<sub>E</sub>X's enterprise of great pith and moment  
With XML its currents join anon,  
And gain the funds of moguls.

—stolen by Fred Bartlett

## 2.4 Purple haze

Purple haze is in my BRAIN  
MathML is such a PAIN  
Give me T<sub>E</sub>X, and DVI  
'Scuse me while I kiss Blue Sky.

—stolen by Don Deland

# 3 Doggerel

## 3.1 The Young Lady of Stanford

There was a young lady from Stanford  
who delighted to play with Mac Word  
she met a Don Knuth  
who told her the truth  
and now what she enjoys is absurd.

—Sebastian Rahtz and Patrick Ion

### 3.2 The TUG conference

Down the T<sub>E</sub>Xing path we go  
with a Sparc it's not so slow.  
Up the network nodes we run  
`\href` links can be so much fun.  
Round the browser wars we dodge  
**Sans** MathML—a real hodge-podge.  
Home at last—the Web is **fast**—we wait for LaT<sub>E</sub>X3  
While Frank and David trade ideas, Chris seeks terminology.  
—Christina Thiele

### 3.3 The Young Man of Vancouver

There was a young man of Vancouver  
who thought he admired Anita Hoover.  
But he looked at some macros  
which ran under Windows  
and now all he can think of is `\over` s.  
—Sebastian Rahtz

### 3.4 The macros called LaT<sub>E</sub>X

There was a package of macros called LaT<sub>E</sub>X  
whose styles produced utter Dreck.  
But some day we'll see  
that with LaT<sub>E</sub>X3  
to typographic nirvana we'll trek.  
—Fred Bartlett

### 3.5 Love, Again

A young maid desired to woo:  
'Give me T<sub>E</sub>X', she would heatedly coo.  
His code became tangled  
in her macros new-fangled  
in a passion of boxes and glue.  
—Richard Kinch

### 3.6 The Young Woman of T<sub>E</sub>X

A certain young woman learned T<sub>E</sub>X;  
her code, on occasion, was Dreck.  
Along came the Web  
—'Oh God! Now I'm dead!  
My files won't ever meet the MathML spec.'  
—Christina Thiele

### 3.7 Under the volcano

Those daring young men and their computing machines,  
All night long new code they dispute.  
All day in their dreams  
screen flow extremes  
beat the code till it pleads, 'Please reboot!'  
—Christina Thiele

## 4 Haikus

### 4.1 A T<sub>E</sub>X Haiku

```
\expandafter\def
\csname def\endcsname
{\message{farewell}}\bye
```

—Sebastian Rahtz

### 4.2 A T<sub>E</sub>Xnician's Haiku

This haiku for T<sub>E</sub>Xnicians consists entirely of T<sub>E</sub>X control sequences; furthermore, it forms a valid T<sub>E</sub>X assignment statement—provided that a certain control sequence that is normally undefined is defined in an obvious way.

*Can you identify the control sequence in question<sup>a</sup>*

```
\catcode\csname
\romannumeral\parshape
\endcsname\month
```

—Michael Downes

---

<sup>a</sup>Answer is on page 11



## 5 **T<sub>E</sub>X musings**

### 5.1 **Musings from the Bard**

Oh, what a tangled web is T<sub>E</sub>X,  
or so it seems at the outset;  
for highest quality, the best to look,  
Oh why did I choose to typeset my own book!

.....

For Macintosh users the skies are quite blue,  
with Barry to help you and Ben Salzburg too.  
With Art, Ross, and Uwe ready to assist,  
just send a short email to Gary Gray's (Textures) list.

.....

If shareware-type software is more to your taste,  
your super-fast Power-Mac need not go to waste.  
There's CMac- and Direct-T<sub>E</sub>X to lessen the sorrow,  
and that great program OzT<sub>E</sub>X, by Andrew Trevorrow.

.....

For Unix-like platforms the software's all free,  
with a teT<sub>E</sub>X installation from the T<sub>E</sub>X-Live CD,  
which collects all the pieces and orders all parts,  
Thanks to Thomas Esser, Kaja, and Sebastian Rahtz.

.....

Leslie Lamport created LaT<sub>E</sub>X nearly fifteen years ago.  
It evolved into 2-epsilon by a process rather slow.  
Improvements are numerous; results you can see.  
Thanks to Carlisle, Mittelbach and Rowley,  
It'll be even better with release LaT<sub>E</sub>X3.

.....

For PostScript Type1 fonts exquisitely drawn,  
The expert is Berthold, whose surname is Horn.  
Where the yin meets the yang in the great cosmic goo,  
Don't get this name mixed up with Louis Vosloo.

—Ross Moore

### 5.2 **T<sub>E</sub>X-cess**

Oh, what a tangled web is T<sub>E</sub>X,  
what you need to reach success.  
To make sure you don't get a reject,  
why not get some help from T<sub>E</sub>X.

—Peggy Kempker

### 5.3 The Hidden Passions of Mathematicians

Step into the garden of conjectures and see  
my Julia sets are uniformly perfect.  
Forget your nilpotence and steenrod algebras,  
my theta divisor is very ample.  
In this land of lemmata,  
you'll glide with the smoothness of Kelley  
while I, I'll gather the perverse sheaves  
and quivers, and we'll dance  
'til our zeta functions converge.  
Sipping modular moonshine, we'll reach  
the highest eigenvalue without effort.  
In this holomorphic vector field  
with totally degenerate zeroes,  
we may even discover the essence of chaos.

—Debra Kaufman <sup>a</sup>

---

<sup>a</sup>I don't have a T<sub>E</sub>X-themed poem, alas, but I do have one appropriate to another T<sub>E</sub>X theme this year- -mathematics and publishing. Here's my tribute to the unsung sexy heroes of mathematics. All phrases are bona fide mathematics terms of art. Really!

### 5.4 Sonnet from the ill-at-ease.

Oh what a tangled web we get  
when first we practice to typeset.  
And so we read T<sub>E</sub>X master Knuth  
Hoping to Obtain some truth.  
Or else we read through the book of Spivak  
but end up simply crying Alack!  
And then we go and **join** the **TUG**  
trying to make our process chug.  
Beginners know why the rhyme for T<sub>E</sub>X  
is often the frustrated Blecchh.  
I can't even get a .dvi file,  
and you think T<sub>E</sub>X to HTML will make me smile?

And yet I know if I abandon the Lion,  
With any other package I'll surely be cryin'.  
—Joseph Haubrich

## 5.5 A T<sub>E</sub>X Thesis

Breathes there the man with the eye so blind  
Who never for himself can find  
The  $\$cos\$sine$ , ‘c’ times ‘o’ times ‘s’  
The `\acronym` run on to the rest  
The sentence ending at *et al.*  
Although no verb shall yet befall  
Until a phrase two lines below  
The endquotes where the quotes should go?

If such there be, away go he  
To Delaware for a Ph.D.!  
The thesis clerk no more shall check;  
The only folks to judge his T<sub>E</sub>X  
Are senior faculty, by norm  
Concerned with content, not with form  
His approval page they’ll surely sign;  
The publisher, with wit sublime,  
His words in XML encases;  
And, should he be obscure in places,  
With sentence structure ill-prepared,  
His authorship will now be shared:

Credit will to the copy editor belong  
Grammatically correct, but scientifically wrong.  
—Stephen Fulling

## 6 Conference reflections

### 6.1 Ode to a `\special`

Oh what a tangled web we get  
When first we find `\def` and `\futurelet`.  
We turn to e $\TeX$ , we turn to Omega,  
They both look good, we start to get eager.  
But no, what's this, a misplaced `\omit`?  
Did we miss a brace, does `\vbox` still not fit?  
Help me fix my macros, bracket heroes all!  
But Pierre's font is calling, Lamport's left the hall  
Barbara says use `\downcase`, Downes just strokes his beard.  
Erik sells me 4 $\TeX$ , pretends he never heard.  
David's hacking tables, Frank is fixing floats,  
Ogawa's talking slowly, Kacvinsky wants his oats.  
Will Kaveh help me out? No, his dhoti's dirty,  
Nelson's feeding awks, Mimi's feeling flirty.  
Flynn says use a rubber, Wendy needs a hug,  
Kath has got the answer, no it's just another mug.  
Young Ross is such a hoot, he says use `xypic`  
Why not turn to Sojka, he's sure to know the trick.  
Anita, a Hoover, what use to me's a dam?  
Send me out with Kiren, we'll both go on the lam.  
Irina claims 'for us in Mir is no problem',  
TRIUMF uses `\mathcode` but `\hspace`s just one em.  
True $\TeX$  does it both ways, and you can trust the Blue Sky  
but `hyperref` the backend, oh why oh why oh why?

Active $\TeX$ , Passive $\TeX$ , what a great to-do,  
Can there be yet some way through?  
MathML has pointies, XSL can claim its templates  
ExerQuiz is **so** cute—so screw you, Billy Gates.

—Sebastian Rahtz

### 6.2 TUG '99 musings

Mr. Fine, with the eye of the sleuth  
has discovered why  $\TeX$  is uncouth,  
that its catcodes are many  
when there shouldn't be any  
Has anyone told Donald Knuth?

Mr. Flynn is now running on La-  
 $\TeX$ , and finds, when the tread starts to fray,  
he can patch up the rules  
with his vulcanize tools,  
pump them up, and be back on his way.

Though some of you authors may fret  
about how every page should be set  
and think what you see  
and what it must be  
Mr. Bazargan says what you get.

—Pierre MacKay

### 6.3 (untitled)

I thought I would never see  
poetry, written by Chimpanzee  
But given T<sub>E</sub>X and infinite time  
I'll steal it and call it mine.

—Donald Arseneau

## A TEXnicians Haiku

```
\catcode\csname
\romannumeral\parshape
\endcsname\month
```

—Michael Downes

### Answer:

The control sequence is that uniquely weird one known as `\csname\endcsname`, the no-name control sequence. What I meant by "defined in an obvious way" was that `\csname\endcsname` should be defined to have an integer value in the proper range for the first argument of a catcode statement—an <8-bit number> in the syntax rules of TeXbook Chapter 24. This could be accomplished in many different ways, but here are some of the more likely ones:

```
\expandafter \def\csname\endcsname{0}
\expandafter \let\csname\endcsname=\day
\expandafter \chardef\csname\endcsname=' \*
\expandafter \newcount\csname\endcsname
```

An example of a valid but non-obvious definition would be

```
\expandafter\def\csname\endcsname#1{#1#1}
```

Then in September the haiku statement would change the category of the tab character to 'ignore' while in October it would change the category of `^J` to 'space'. By the way, it seems to be a minor deficiency of plain TeX that is not initialized with the same definition as for `^M`, because if you try to enter ' \ ' (control-space) at the end of an error-recovery insertion, the final space gets silently discarded following TeX's normal practice of discarding whitespace at the end of a line, and the unsuspecting user gets an error message:

```
! Undefined control sequence.
1.1 Foo car \TeX
           and then
? i\TeX\
```

[In the above line I entered ' \ ' as the last thing on the line.]

```
! Undefined control sequence.
  \TeX\
1.1 Foo car \TeX
           and then
?
```

## **The TUG '99 Bulletin**

September 1999

### **TUG'99**

The 20th Annual Meeting  
of the T<sub>E</sub>X Users Group

#### **T<sub>E</sub>X Online: Untangling the Web and T<sub>E</sub>X**

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada  
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