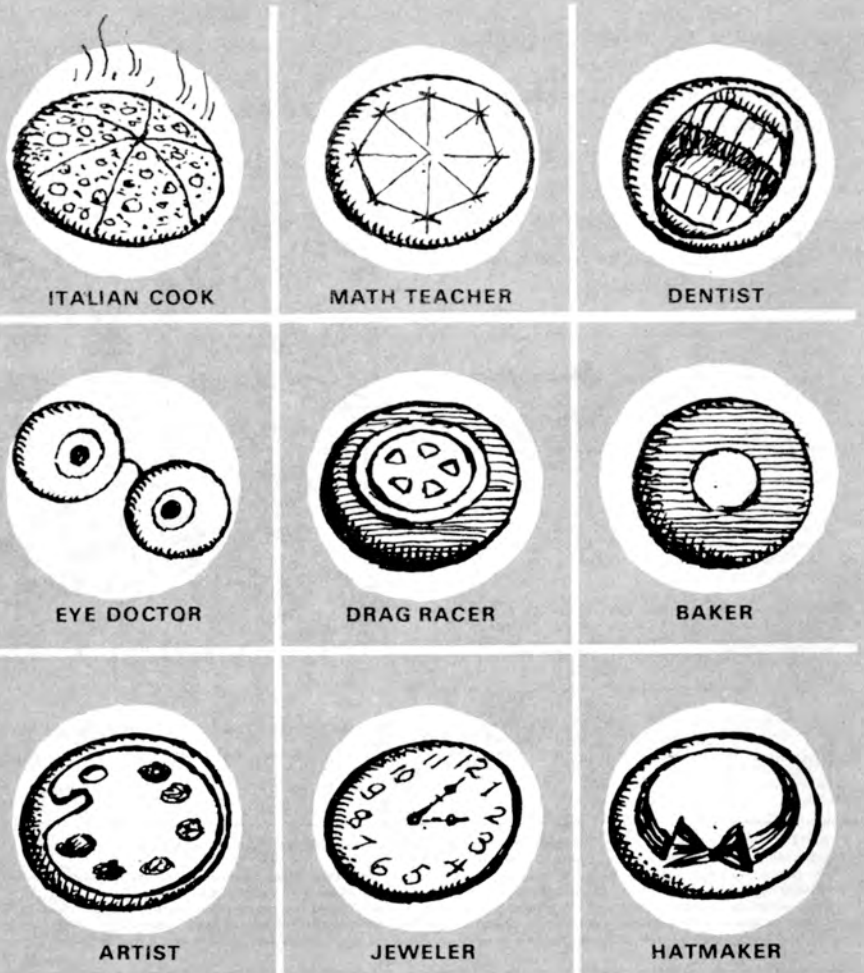
LANGUAGE AT PLAY

identified flying frisbees

What would happen if Frisbees were made to suit individual occupations? Probably the air would soon be full of Frisbees like those below. Can you think up some of your own?



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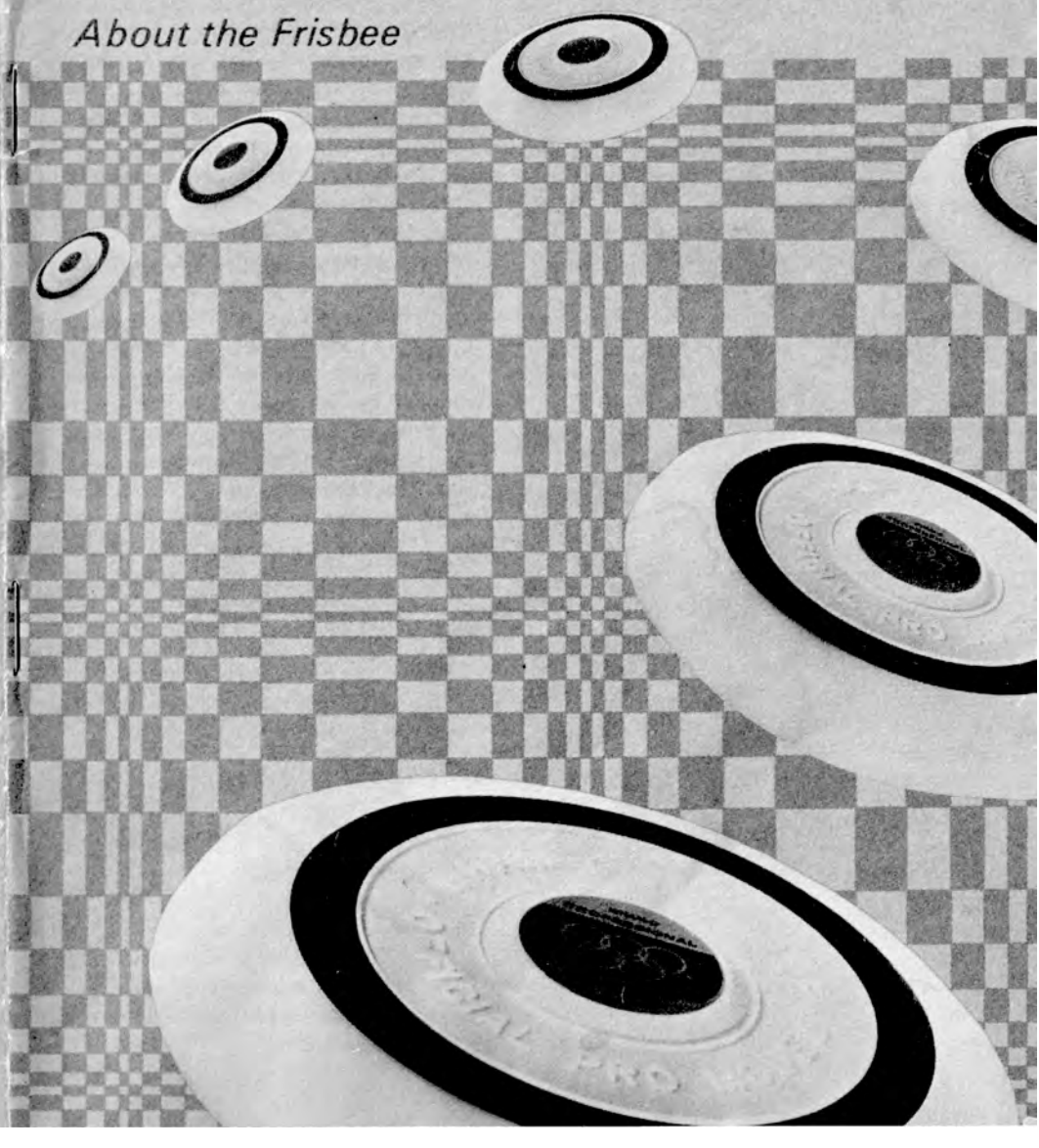
About the Frisbee



ABOUT OUR COVER

Pictured on the cover is your old familiar friend, the Frisbee. Have you ever wondered where it came from? Who invented it? Are there any rules to play? You might be surprised at some of the answers. Our Frisbee issue begins on the next page.

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Can you match up to this test?

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You need courage to play this game.

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Star Trek's Enterprise *gets lost in time.*

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Drawing conclusions is a tricky business.

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Frisbees can even inspire poetry.

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Frisbees: flying fun

What is faster than a speeding eagle? What is more powerful than a boomerang? What is able to scale tall buildings at a single swoop? No, it isn't Superman. It isn't Frisbee either. But Frisbee is at least more lovable.

"Who's Frisbee?" you might ask. Frisbee isn't a Who, it's a What. A Frisbee looks like an upside-down water dish. It sails better than a pie plate. A Frisbee is a saucer-shaped plastic whatchamacallit that has taken the country by storm. By breeze anyway.

Is there a red-blooded American young person, old person, middle-aged person who hasn't been nipped by Frisbee fever? Apparently not.

Did you know that the Frisbee is how travelers stay cool in those huge summer traffic jams? Families pack up Frisbees along with the dogs and the peanut butter. Then when the jam develops, out comes the Frisbee and down goes the blood pressure.

What's the story behind the popular platter that has whirled onto the U.S. scene?

At the University of Oregon, student Frisbee fans demanded course credit for learning to throw Frisbees with great accuracy. They said as much skill was involved as in football. Officials of the University thought otherwise and refused the demand.

But where did the Frisbee come from? Who invented it? And why is it so popular? *Read* wasn't sure of the answers, so we talked to the official historian of the International Frisbee Association, Dr. Stancil Johnson.

Dr. Johnson is a psychiatrist in Sacramento, Calif. But between office hours, he has found time to write a book on the history of the Frisbee.

For starters, *Read* asked Dr. Johnson why he thought such a book should be written and why he might be doing it.

"Well, I'm writing the book basically because there has never been one written about the Frisbee. It's a new sport, a new subject, and a new field. It's the fastest growing outdoor recreation. And we wanted an official source book to be available.

"And as for the writing, I was sort of snowed into the job. Three years ago I attended the first International Frisbee Tournament. Officials of the IFA were there, and I expressed an interest in the game. Later they allowed me to look through their files and archives. By the time I turned around, I had been elected the official historian of the IFA. But I was only too glad to do it."

Actually, Dr. Johnson is no new-

Fifteen-year-old Danny Sanders (right) executes the form that won the 1970 National Junior Frisbee Tournament in Las Vegas. He shows the right-hand-behind-the-back catch.

comer to flinging a flat disk around. He came across the idea during his tour with the Navy, tossing pie plates for recreation. He kept fooling around with plates and then with Frisbees for about ten years.

We asked Dr. Johnson how the Frisbee came about: "Well, there are several theories on that. One is that in 1827 a Yale student named Frisbee tossed a collection plate 200 feet to protest against compulsory chapel.

"Another theory is that Frisbees began in the early 1900's with Mother Frisbie's pies. The company's pie plates sailed beautifully when turned upside down."

THE MODERN FRISBEE

"But I think the modern Frisbee really started back in 1955-56 with a man named Fred Morrison. He was a building inspector who saw some Yale students tossing pie plates to one another. They yelled the word *frisbee* as a warning, using the name of the company whose pies provided the disks.

"Fred thought the sport was a great idea and began making his own first crude models out of plastic. Plastic was his original contribution to the game. Finally, he took his idea to the Wham-O Manufacturing Company in California, and it began making the plastic models we now use."

Fred's idea turned out to be a fairly good one—good enough to earn him about half a million dollars.

Dr. Johnson added that there isn't a part of the U.S. that hasn't seen a Frisbee. He has a theory on why the game is so popular:

"There is something peaceful about a Frisbee. You get a feeling you can't explain. The Frisbee seems to have a life of its own when it soars. It seems to have an identity with freedom. Young people of today see throwing a Frisbee as a sport that is not overburdened with regulations. The game has freedom to develop. It is still the only amateur sport. There are no professionals in Frisbee."

Do only young people like playing Frisbee? "Certainly not!" Dr. Johnson exclaimed. "Everyone seems to enjoy it. Frisbee bridges the generation gap. It is a group game and an individual game. Girls like it, and so do their grandmas."

FRISBEE IS EASY

Dr. Johnson explained that Frisbee is easy to learn. Anybody can toss one around with no practice at all. After several hours a player is ready to try a few trick shots. If he gets really hooked, he can try for Expert and Master ratings (see pp. 6-7) or go all out in Guts Frisbee (pp. 8-9).

According to Dr. Johnson, a small person can be just as good as a large person. The trick is in how he handles the Frisbee. And as for injuries, there is only one to worry about: Frisbee Finger. If a player doesn't catch the popular platter properly, he might end up with a fractured fingernail.

As far as statistics on the Frisbee are concerned, Dr. Johnson said that the top speed a Frisbee has been known to go is 60 mph. Distance record for Frisbee is 100 yards.

Dr. Johnson's book discusses more than just the history of the Frisbee. He has chapters on the throw and the catch. He explains what makes a Frisbee float on the air. He tells how to repair a Frisbee and how to run a tournament. There is also a glossary explaining terms used in the game.

But probably the most important chapter comes near the end: "How To Retrieve a Lost Frisbee." ■

Some Advice From a Champ

In Farmington, N.Mex., the man to see for the word on Frisbees is a 14-year-old student at Hermosa Junior High School. His name is Bob Meize (maze), and where Frisbee's concerned, they call him champ. Bob won the New Mexico State Championship (Intermediate Division) in 1969, and was first runner-up in the regional meet.

Read asked Bob how he got to be such a Frisbee whizz.

"I've had lots of practice," he said. "I began playing with a Frisbee nine years ago, after I saw one advertised on television. I tried it, and it was really fun."

Bob is good at all the Frisbee shots, but he's happiest when throwing for distance. He has hurled his Master-sized Frisbee (the heaviest) as far as 40 yards.

"That was in the state meet," he said. "I only had to throw it 15 yards, but it really traveled. And you can throw a Master Frisbee lots farther, because its weight makes it more stable and carries it farther."

We asked Bob for some tips on how to make the Frisbee do its stuff.

"The most important things are the wrist snap and the follow-through," he said. "You have to keep your wrist level with the ground as you snap it. When you let go, extend your arm straight out—sort of like in bowling."

Read wondered about harder shots. How would our readers go about doing, say, a boomerang shot?

"The boomerang requires a lot of accuracy," Bob said. "You throw the Frisbee straight up *against* the wind in a very wide curve. Snap your wrist hard for a lot of spin. If you've judged your curve right, the wind will bring the Frisbee back."

The hover is another tough shot. In this one the Frisbee seems to stop over a catcher's head and hover like a flying saucer. "I throw this one downwind," said Bob, "and try to get a lot of spin without too much forward momentum."

Bob plays baseball, too, but says that the Frisbee has some advantages over the other sport.

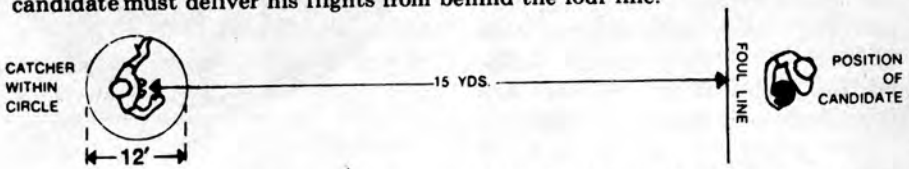
"There's a lot less danger of breaking windows with a Frisbee. And you don't need so much space. In fact, there's only one thing wrong with it—you spend so much time getting it off the roof." ■

TRY YOUR HAND AT THIS FRISBEE TEST

If you want to see how your Frisbee skill stacks up against the IFA's Amateur requirements, try the test that follows. Or, if you'd like to try for a Master or Expert standing, write the IFA for its manual and complete details. The address is Box 38428, Los Angeles, CA 90038.

CONDITIONS AND TEST AREA

A 12-foot-diameter circle should be drawn on the ground. At a distance of 15 yards from the center of the circle, a foul line is drawn on the ground. The candidate must deliver his flights from behind the foul line.



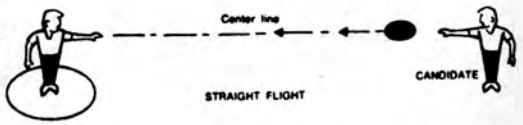
The catcher is free to move anywhere within the 12-foot-diameter circle but is prohibited from stepping outside of it during the accuracy test. The candidate may elect to take any or all of the proficiency tests within the 30-minute maximum time period allowed in each 24-hour day.

ACCURACY REQUIREMENTS

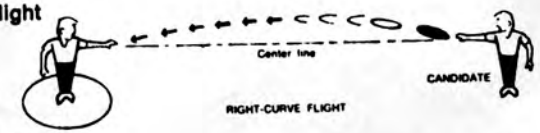
Within each of the following groups, the flights must be completed consecutively, with the method of delivery the candidate's choice. If the flight is properly executed and the catcher fails, it will be judged to be a completed flight.

The following seven flights may be scheduled in any order the candidate chooses.

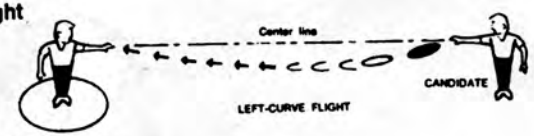
GROUP 1 — Two Straight Flights



GROUP 2 — One Right-Curve Flight

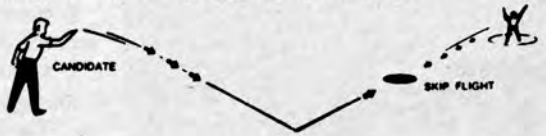


GROUP 3 — One Left-Curve Flight

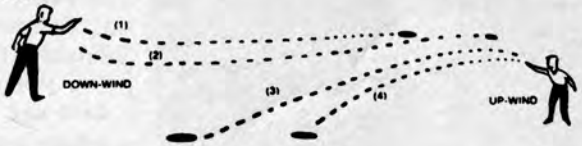


GROUP 4 — One Hover (or Floater) Flight

GROUP 5 — One Skip Flight (to be executed on any hard surface)



GROUP 6 — Distance Flight whereby the candidate must obtain an average distance, in four flights, two up-wind and two down-wind, of not less than 20 yards.



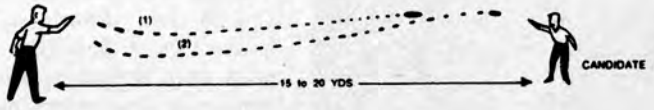
GROUP 7 — Repeat any two flights in the above Groups 1 through 5 using opposite method of delivery, i.e. if backhand was used, throw underhand.

BACKHAND DELIVERY

UNDERHAND DELIVERY

CATCHING REQUIREMENTS

The candidate must be able to catch two consecutive flights of any type thrown from a distance of 15 to 20 yards using only the right hand, and two consecutive flights of any type thrown from a distance of 15 to 20 yards using only the left hand. Note: These catches should be done consecutively. However, consideration will be allowed if the flights are not properly executed.



The Guts Game

To many people, the Frisbee is a pleasant little thing to toss around on a warm spring day. To a few people, it's the next closest thing to a hand grenade.

These few people are fans of a game known as Guts Frisbee. And if you had visited Eagle Harbor, Mich., on the right day last summer, you would have seen the Guts nuts at work. Or at war.

The event was the National Guts Frisbee Tournament. Two teams of five young men each lined up on a field and faced each other. The first server was a young man who can heave a Frisbee 85 yards. That means the disk leaves his hand at about 50 mph.

The game began with the server zinging a shot at his target, a member of the other team. The poor target either had to catch the Frisbee one-handed or at least to slow it down so that someone else on his team could catch it. This time he managed to make the catch. Then it was his turn to make a serve to the other side. The game was on.

From a distance it looked pretty wild—with bodies leaping in the air, with bodies falling, with hands reaching out to grab at the plastic disk. The whole affair suggested a weird game of football in which the teams stay 15 yards apart.

Interested? Want to have a go at the Guts game? Here's how:

To Set Up: 1. Two teams of five men face each other 15 yds. apart. Each man puts himself an arm's length away from his partners, so that the playing field is about 10 yds. wide.

2. A line drawn in front of the players is a foul line. Players who step over it lose a point. The same applies to lines along the side.

Rules: 1. Only one-handed throws and catches are allowed.

2. The proper catching position is fingers up, thumb down.

3. Any number of players may touch the Frisbee, and the third or fourth man to touch it can make the catch.

4. A catcher may not trap a Frisbee against his body. But he *can* trap it against a partner's body.

5. The first man to touch the Frisbee must throw it back. If it flies foul, any man can throw.

Scoring: 1. The Frisbee must be thrown at members of the other team. If it hits in front of the foul line, or goes wide of the sidelines, or flies too high above the receivers, the catching team gains a point.

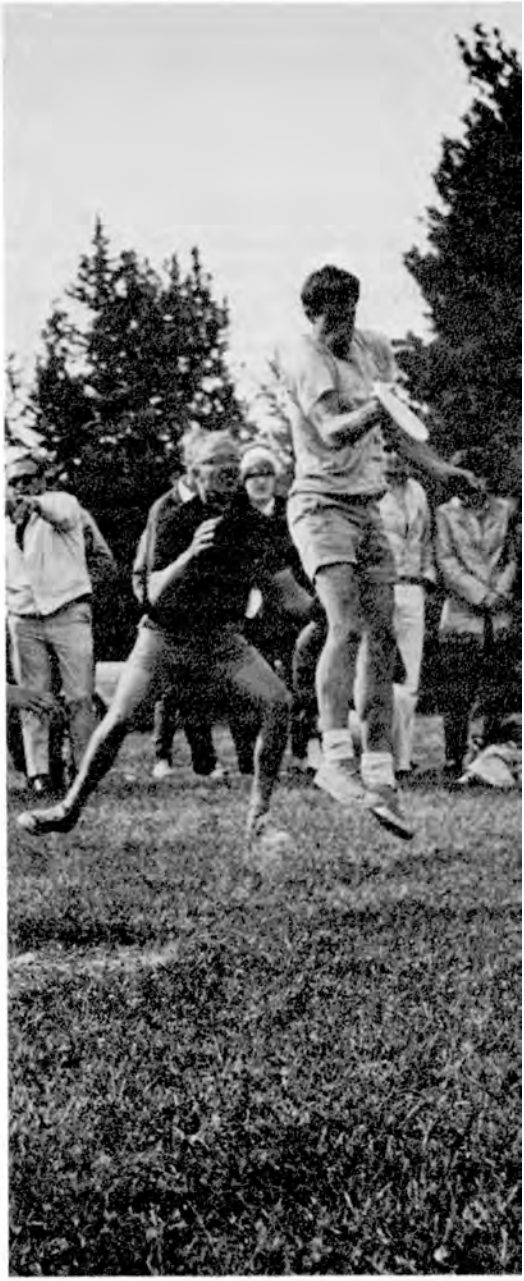
2. If the Frisbee is within reach of a player who doesn't catch it with one hand, one point goes to the throwing team. If he catches it, no point is scored.

3. If the receiving team lets the Frisbee touch the ground or uses two hands for a catch, the throwing team gains a point.

4. Scoring is counted as in table tennis. The team that reaches 21 points first is the winner. If the teams are tied at 20 points, two more points are needed to judge one team the winner.

All right, you have all you need to get a game going. Try to keep the throws low. Since the first person to touch the Frisbee must throw it back, aim for the weakest thrower on the other team.

And one other thing. While you're learning, make the two lines 20 or 25 yards apart. Even at that distance, there will be plenty of guts to go around. ■



Jay "Armstrong" Shelton (leaping) shows ballet-like movements during the Guts Frisbee game in Eagle Harbor, Mich.

6 ways of seeing a frisbee

Spring is just around the corner, and the weather's almost perfect for a brisk game of Frisbee. Just imagine that plastic platter sailing along, making arcs and curves, whirling through the air. Pretty as a picture, isn't it? Or maybe pretty as a poem?

We thought the Frisbee would be a lively subject for a few poems, so we whipped some up. You can find six different poetic looks at the Frisbee on the following pages.

Now, why don't you try *your* hand at some Frisbee poems? You can use our forms for inspiration, or you might want to try some of your own.

Or maybe you'd like to write some poetry about other "throwables." How about a baseball limerick? Or a football haiku?

Go ahead. Do some experiments with poetry in motion. And when you're finished, toss a few *Read*'s way. ■

haiku

Saucer-shaped plastic
Whirling an arc through the air
Then intercepted

acrostic

***F**un*
***R**otating*
***I**ntermediary*
***S**oaring*
***B**irdlike*
***E**lliptical*
***E**njoyment*

diamond

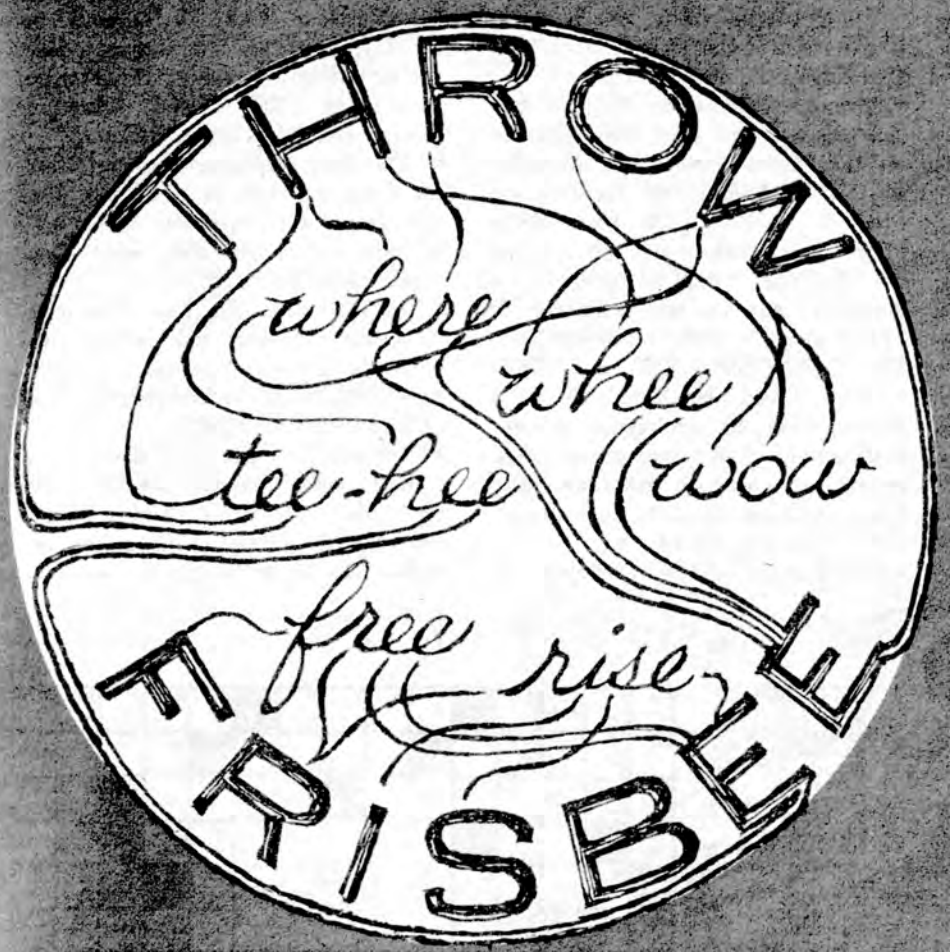
Missile
Rigid, spherical
Hurtling, charging, zooming
Saucer, disc, pie-plate, platter
Gliding, sailing, skimming
Harmless, plastic
Toy

limerick

There once was a fellow named Bisbee,
Who cried when he tried to play Frisbee;
His curve had no verve
And his swerve wouldn't serve,
Bisbee was no Frisbee Whizzbee.

(descriptive)

I am a Frisbee
Prince of the Outdoors
Air is my royal cushion
If you would know me
Throw me
But do it right
Strong but light
Set me soaring on a breeze
Nicely
Make your hand say Go
Precisely
Or else I might be forced to
Veer
And swerve down on my royal curve
If you would throw me
Steer
If you would catch me
Timing is the thing
Reach out
Accept Now!
Here is my ring.

I am a Frisbee
Prince of Spin
Treat me with gravity
Treat me lightly
I love the laughing air
I ride it brightly.

(concrete)