

Milam's Dictionary of Nononyms

by

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This document is approximately 803 words long.

My essays are available on *Pharos*.

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caveat lector

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Introduction

Long ago, in my essay *The Ravings of a Mad Man*, I documented my recognition of a peculiar category of words in the English language.

I'm not aware of any previous formal discussion of this peculiar characteristic of our language. For now, I'll assume that I'm the first one to have documented it. Therefore, by right of discovery, I'm establishing a new category of words in the English language. Henceforth, words that are simultaneously homonyms and antonyms shall be called nononyms, pronounced "no-no nems."

—from *The Ravings of a Mad Man*, pages 7 - 8

I first completed that essay on Tuesday, March 28, 1989. In the essay, I suggested that readers could send me some examples of nononyms, and I'd start a list. It's been almost 30 years and nobody has ever sent me any examples. Maybe nobody's even read the essay. I don't know. You can lead a horse to water....

It's been a long time since 1989, but I've been busy. So, it wasn't until Wednesday, January 27, 2016, that I finally decided to start a list of my own. It started out as a very short list, with only two nononyms in the first version. Those two nononyms are *roam* and *tribute*. I expect that the list will get longer, especially if other people send me some examples (hint hint wink wink nudge nudge). Anyway, here it is.

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roam

1 : to go from place to place without purpose or direction

2 : to travel purposefully unhindered through a wide area

—*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
Eleventh Edition, 2011

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tribute

1 b (1) : an excessive tax, rental, or tariff imposed by a government, sovereign, lord, or landlord (2) : an exorbitant charge levied by a person or group having the power of coercion

2 a : something given or contributed voluntarily as due or deserved; especially : a gift or service showing respect, gratitude, or affection

—*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*
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