

The Style Invitational

By the Empress

Style Invitational Week 829: Limericks on 'Di-' Words; and Song Parodies for Instrumentals

Saturday, August 8, 2009

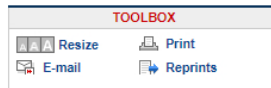
*If it's "digital," it's about RAM
Or, say, e-mail or evites or spam.
It's modern and cool --
Unless it's the tool
That is used in a prostate exam.*



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

It's not enough that we make you slog for a week, in exchange for the slim possibility of receiving a piece of junk, so that we can brag about the quality of this here feature. No, we also have to farm you out to someone else's feature. As we do every August, we'll be furthering the cause of the indefatigable Chris J. Strolin of Belleville,

Ill., founder of the online Omnificent English Dictionary in Limerick Form, which aims to include a limerick illustrating every word in the language. Actually, it's not just one giant limerick that has every word in it; Chris J. and his numerous contributors (including some Invitational Losers) have now passed the 55,000 mark: Last year at this time, they were only around 50,000 and had just reached the da- words -- but now they're all the way up to . . . **This week: Supply a humorous limerick prominently featuring any English word, name or term beginning with the letters di-**, as in the diabolical example above by Chief of Proctocol Gene Weingarten of Washington.



The Empress is picky about rhyme and meter for limericks; a link to her guidelines appears on the home page of <http://www.oedilf.com>. (In a pistachio shell: The first, second and fifth lines must contain the strong meter of BAH-bum-bum BAH-bum-bum BAH, with optional bums at the beginning and end of each line; and Lines 3 and 4 must contain BAH-bum-bum BAH, also with the optional bums. And it's best to have at least one bum between two BAHs. And "bird" rhymes with "word" but not with "words.") Once we run the results Sept. 5, you may submit your entries (getting Invitational ink or not) to the Oedilfers as well.

Advertisement Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a special gift basket (special as in invisible) of bacon-flavor dental floss, donated (unused) by Russell Beland; bacon-flavor mints, from Mike Czuhajewski; and cupcake-flavor floss, from Dave Prevar.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or Loser Mug. Honorable mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 17. Put "Week 829" in the subject line of your e-mail or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published Sept. 5. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate relatives are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. This week's honorable-mentions name is by Beverley Sharp; next week's revised title was submitted by both Dave Prevar and Tom Witte.

Report From Week 825

In which we asked you to write some lyrics (on any subject) to a piece of music that didn't originally have lyrics. We got hundreds of parodies from a wide and imaginative group of sources, from symphonies to movie themes to pop instrumentals to a Nokia ring tone. The songs themselves? Well, song parodies destined to be read rather than heard are *very* hard to write: The natural accents of the words *must* match the accents of the music, precisely, or else a reader can't follow along. You can't expect the reader to figure out, "Oh, this word will be sung as 'hope-LESS,' " especially early in the song.

The parodies on this page are set to music that we figure you have a chance of knowing. If you're still stumped, look at the online version of this column at <http://washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational>, where each parody -- along with several other winners and honorable mentions that appear only on the Web -- will contain a link to YouTube so you can sing along (or at least read along), even with music that's new to you.

The Winner of the Inker

To Fucik's "*Entrance of the Gladiators*"
(the traditional music for circus clowns)
Clowns are entering the three-ring circus,
In the center ring are scary smirkers.

Red bulbous noses, grimacing poses.
I'm in panic with a manic harlequin psychosis.
Freaky pantaloons from Barnum-Bailey,
Bozos mugging and cavorting gaily.
Run to survive. Gotta stay alive. Get in the car -- and drive!
Krusty, Clarabell or Emmett Kelly.
Doesn't matter, I'm a nervous Nellie.
Bright-painted faces, fright-wiggy aces.
Got a fear that clearly has a psychogenic basis.
Madcap zanies at the Ringling Brothers,
Merry-andrews -- if I had my druthers
I'd can the clowns.
Ban all the clowns.
Down with the clowns!
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

2. *the winner of the silkworm pupae in sauce, plus the Kelp Energy Bar:*

Sprint to the Finish
To the "*Chariots of Fire*" theme:
So out of breath running, I can't even cuss.
I'm in this condition 'cause I missed the bus.
The guy saw me coming; he heard me yell, "Hey!"
I gave him the finger as he pulled away.
My girl will be standing cold outside.
The show starts at 8.
I'm gonna be roasted, grilled and fried,
On this, our last date.
(Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

Imperfectly Pitched: Honorable Mentions

To Elgar's "*Pomp and Circumstance*" No. 1 (the graduation march):

Just got my diploma,
It took me six years.
Most days in a coma,
'Cause I majored in beers.
I'm not a go-getter,
Job markets are bad.
No life as jet-setter,
Looks like I've been had.
Wait . . . I . . . know,
Till prospects are better,
Sponge off Mom and Dad.
(Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

Brünnhilde's Lament

To Wagner's "*Ride of the Valkyries*"

I come from Valhalla,
Where there's no mall, a
Woe to befall a girlie like me.
My breastplates are tight, this
Helmet's a fright, why
Must a dead knight be
My company?
(My dad says I'm odd
Well, he thinks he's God.
I want an iPod but
He says, "No way!"
I'd trade in my spear
For bling and a beer.
There's nothing cool here,
Just death and decay . . .
(Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

Beethoven's Fit

To Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*:

Having done four, I did one more . . .
I've lost the score! I thought I'd put it in a drawer.
My cleaning lady found it lying on the floor,
And in a flash (a lightning bolt)
It hit the trash (should strike that dolt).
I told her, "This! Means! War!"
(Stephen Gold)

To the theme from "*Bewitched*":

When springtime hits, my nostrils start to twitch,
Though as a witch, I've tried to stop that itch,
I've used pills and capsules and potions and every nasal mist,
But my allergies -- snuffle, snuffle, snuffle, sniff -- they still persist!
With every sneeze, someone gets turned to cheese,
Each time I cough, the power grid shuts off.
I turned my dad into an iPod, my dachshund is now a hose,
That pollen, it messed with my nose.
(Dave Zarrow, Reston)

To the "[Raiders of the Lost Ark](#)" theme:

Indiana! He's our man!

If he can't do it, no one ca-a-an!

Indiana, he's so cool!

But that fourth film . . .

I swear that I saw Indy drool . . .

(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn)

And Last:

My doorbell chime:

"Get lost!"

(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Next Week: The Inside Word, or Def"i"nitions

Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at <http://washingtonpost.com/styleconversational>.