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Style

Style Invitational Week 978: A reason to rhyme the news, plus the movie/book limericks



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**
June 28, 2012

To Washington and Its Nationals

First in war and first in peace, it's said —
Worst in baseball? *That* trope now is dead.

A couple of weeks ago when I was judging the close to 1,000 limericks submitted for Week 974 (some featured on this page, more online), I found myself talking all the time in the Hickory-Dickory-Dock rhythm that forms the bulk of a limerick — “I’d LIKE a McCHICKen with FRIES;/ See, I’m LOOKing to FATten my THIGHS . . .” (This is why the Empress tends to dine alone.) Anyway, I need to get a different rhythmic earworm, so we’re switching to duple meter this month. Here’s a form called “framed couplets,” introduced to me by light-verse writer Madeleine Begun Kane and coined by poet [Hector Gutierrez](#): **Write a short verse about something that’s been in the news recently**, as in the example above by Versifier-on-Retainer Gene Weingarten. You may add a title.

1. The poem must be either a couplet (two rhyming lines, “AA”) or two couplets (“AA/BB”).
2. Each line starts with an accented syllable and runs for nine syllables in an iambic meter: BA-da-BA-da-BA-da-BA-da-BA.
3. The FIRST syllables of each couplet also rhyme with each other.

Winner gets [the Inkin’ Memorial](#), the Style Invitational trophy. Second place wins the novel [“Doctor Proctor’s Fart Powder: Bubble in the Bathtub,”](#) donated by 11-year-old Loser scion Saralinda Contompasis, who found it entirely too juvenile and clearly better suited to her father’s crowd.



Most Read Lifestyle

- 1 **Analysis**
A short investigation into Trump’s claims of ‘RIGGED’ Google results against him
- 2 John Goodman reveals Roseanne will be killed off in ‘The Conners’ spinoff
- 3 Why our culture’s mild obsession with Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen may never end

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted [Style Invitational Loser T-shirt](#), a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired [Grossery Bag](#).

Honorable mentions get a lusted-after [Loser magnet](#). First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air “freshener” (Fir Stink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, July 9; results published July 29 (online July 207. No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 978” in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/StyleInv. The subhead for this week’s honorable mentions is by Kevin Dopart; the alternative headline in the “Next Week” line is by Tom Witte. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

Report from Week 974

in which we asked for limericks about a play, book, movie or TV show: We had so many fine entries that we might also run more of them later this summer.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Why does Greece’s Odysseus roam
For so long while Penelope’s home?
It could be he won’t ask
For directions — a task
That’s too tough for his Y-chromosome. (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

2. Winner of the kangaroo-scrutum coin purse:

“Forrest Gump”

When viewed with objective lucidity,
This film is of doubtful validity
Because it’s notorious
For saying it’s glorious
To live a life based on stupidity. (*Dixon Wragg, Santa Rosa, Calif.*)

3. “Pride and Prejudice” (1995)

Miss Elizabeth Bennet’s low birth,
No connections and little net worth,
Mom a twit, sis a skank —
It’s a stretch (let’s be frank)
To suggest she could land Colin Firth. (*Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.*)

4. “Psycho”

At the end, when the cops finally come,
All the murder and gore leaves them numb.
From the way Norman’s dressed,
They can tell that he’s stressed;
Does he talk? No, he’s just keeping mum. (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

Po'wetry: Honorable mentions

“Survivor”

Contestants from Nome to Hoboken
Will vie for a totem or token.
It may defy reason —
Its 20th season!
The upshot: The tripe has now spoken. (*Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.*)

may never die



4

Perspective

The perils of being a woman who’s just asking to be left alone



5

Perspective

Carolyn Hax: A kiss-and-don’t-tell with an ex-boyfriend’s buddy



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“Showgirls”

Though it won neither plaudits nor gongs,
And for critics' acclaim it still longs,
Let those killjoys cry, “Boo!”
I'm applauding the view
Of a few of my favorite thongs. (*Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland*)

“Titanic” (I)

We've got lovers whom death cannot sever!
And a villain who's scheming and clever!
And a ship whose demise
Will bring tears to your eyes!
Oh, a script? Okay, yeah, sure, whatever. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

“The Crying Game”

A terrorist who fled the scene is
Quite drawn to a bar-singing Venus.
But the guy is dismayed
When he tries to get laid
And discovers the girl has a [DELETED BECAUSE OF SPOILER]. (*Marion Shore, Belmont, Mass., a First Offender*)

“Moby-Dick”

There once was a man from Nantucket
Whose whaling ship ran out of luck; it
Took on the white whale
And in one epic fail,
Every sailor but one kicked the bucket. (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Caltech's a big deal on TV,
And its physicist-nerds are the key.

“The Big Bang Theory” speaks

In the language of geeks:
PhD = BMOC. (*Chris Doyle*)

“Guys and Dolls”

How go things in Noo Yawk? Nicely-nicely.
Guys shoot craps; dolls perform very spicily.
Ad loves Nate; Sarah, Sky.
Each ends up with her guy.
Is that cheesy? It's Broadway. Precisely! (*Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.*)

“I Dream of Jeannie”

The love life of a brave astronaut'll
Be something a blond babe who's hot'll
Enhance. She'll entrance
If she wears harem pants,
Calls him “Master” and lives in a bottle. (*Chris O'Carroll, Pelham, Mass.*)

“Keeping Up With the Kardashians”

Do you know why the sisters Kardashian
Have a show that they're paid to look trashy in?
The answer is sad:
The world has gone mad,
And talent has grown out of fashi-on. (*Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.*)

“Gone With the Wind”

Well, the film goes its windy old way,
And it ends with a lousy cliché:
Should we laugh or feel sorrow

To learn that “tomorrow
Is a-” (would you believe?) “-nother day”? (*Brian Allgar, Paris*)

“Titanic” (II)

The Titanic, they said, was unsinkable.
But there weren’t enough lifeboats—unthinkable!
From that wreck came a flick
In the genre of “chick”. . .
It’s too bad that it wasn’t unstinkable. (*Paul VerNooy, Hockessin, Del.*)

“Charlotte’s Web”

In this timeless and heartwarming story,
A pig learns his future looks gory.
Through designs of her makin’,
A bug saves his bacon—
But alas, she gets none of the glory. (*Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.*)

“Two and a Half Men”

Charlie Sheen plays a drunk who is past
His best years, and his star’s fading fast.
As a middle-aged boozier
And skirt-chasing loser,
This actor was perfectly cast. (*Robert Schechter*)

“Jersey Shore”

There once was a starlet named Snooki
Who loved to play loose with her nooki.
But what was she thinking
When bingeing on drinking
While baking her own little cookie? (*Colleen Murphy, Kensington, Conn., a
First Offender*)

“The Godfather”

It’s Mario Puzo you’ll choose
For a novel that won’t make you snooze.
His writing’s unique —
Or in godfather-speak,
He’s an author you just can’t refuse. (*Chris Doyle*)

Now in hindsight it’s clear that they really
Could have made a superior **“Gigli”**
By replacing its actors
With aardvarks or tractors
While they did the whole thing in Swahili. (*Ken Kaufman, Derwood, Md.*)

In **“J. Edgar,”** the story line said
That the ruthlessly bare-knuckled Fed
Looked for clues from both G-men
And afternoon-tea-men,
Then pursued them wherever they led. (*Christopher Lamora, Guatemala
City*)

But the rest takes obsession to sort ’er.
Are straightforward, all right,
All the scenes black and white
Has baffled this theater supporter.
“Memento’s” unusual order. (*Stephen Gilberg, Washington*)

“Flipper”

A knock-off of “Lassie” is hell

When it's under the water you dwell.
Getting help is a bust
When you find that you must
Stay with Timmy inside of the well. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

I picked up an old [Gray's Anatomy](#),
So valued within the academy.
And there I discovered,
On each page, there hovered
A picture of each this-and-that o' me! (*Mae Scanlan, Washington*)

“The Great Gatsby”: My students have barreled
Through the text. Though I frequently herald
The writing and plot,
To each student, it's naught
But the wreck of the F. Scott Fitzgerald. (*Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.*)

“The Princess Bride”
Buttercup, Humperdinck's prize,
Thought Wesley had met his demise.
He fought for her tresses
With [R.O.U.S.es](#) —
She never saw through his disguise?!? (*Amanda Yanovitch, Midlothian, Va.*)

“Sweeney Todd”
A deranged Fleet Street barber, so nasty,
Slashed the throats of his clients so fast he
Supplied Mrs. Lovett
With morsels she'd covet
To spice up each victim-filled [pasty](#). (*Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.*)

“Groundhog Day”
A man in an unredeemed state
Whose clock never changes its date
Lays on charm with a trowel
And wins Andie MacDowell,
Which suggests that it's never too late. (*Jerome Betts, Torquay, England, a First Offender*)

“In the Line of Fire”
With a nut out there trying to shoot a
Sitting president, none would dispute a
Secret Service man's task
Is protection; don't ask
If he nailed some Colombian *puta*. (*Brendan Beary*)

“Waiting for Godot”
I'm so bored I could slash both my wrists,
Yet this infinite waiting persists.
At the second act's curtain
We're still far from certain
This Godot dude even exists. (*Andrew Burnet, Edinburgh, Scotland*)

“An Andalusian Dog”
“Un Chien Andalou” wins the prize
For cutting the smug down to size.
Just say, “Hello, Dali!”
To this Buñuel folly.
(But don't forget — [cover your eyes!](#)) (*Miles Moore, Alexandria, Va.*)

And Last: Compilations of New York Magazine Competition entries

New York Mag has its "Giant Sea Tortoise";
Why don't we have a book to record us?
We'll just print what's refined,
Cut the scat--... Never mind.
Nothing left. Best the public ignored us. (Nan Reiner)

Still running — deadline Monday night — is our Google Translate contest. See wapo.st/inv977a.

Visit the online discussion group [The Style Conversational](#) (new columns posted Fridays), where the Empress discusses today's new contest and results along with news about the Loser Community — and you can vote for your favorite among the inking entries, since you no doubt figured the Empress chose the wrong winner. If you'd like an e-mail notification each week when the Invitational and Conversational are posted online, write to the Empress at losers@washpost.com (note that in the subject line) and she'll add you to the mailing list. And on Facebook, join the far more lively group [Style Invitational Devotees](#) and chime in.

Next week's results: Going Mything, or Crocktales, a contest to add a "sixth myth" to any in a list of topics that served as recent "5 Myths" essays in The Post's Sunday opinion section, Outlook.



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Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. [Follow](#)

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Analysis

A short investigation into Trump's claims of 'RIGGED' Google results against him

Lou Dobbs of Fox discussed Google search on his show Monday.

1 hour ago



NBC announced John McCain's death — then abruptly cut to men kissing in dolphin masks

One viewer quipped: "What did I just watch? What the heck?"



2 days ago

