

Entertainment

Easy as 1-B-iii: 4 formats x 4 subjects x 4 limitations = this week's ink

Plus Style Invitational Week 1143: Ask Backward — our answers, your questions



Frank Osen's parody (Format 4) about a fad that is SO over (Subject D) and containing an anagram pair (Limitation ii) is a runner-up this week. We're pretty sure we'll neer have that recipe again. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers October 1 at 10:45 AM Follow @PatMyersTWP

(Click [here to skip down](#) to this week's new contest: Ask Backwards, Week 1143)

In **Week 1139**, the Empress invited you to construct your own contest from a mix-and-match menu of four formats, four subjects and four limitations — 64 potential combinations in all. One format was a song parody, and just as with every other parody contest we've ever run, we received a slew of excellent ones — with a surprising amount of duplication given the number of ways you could play: There were two very fine "Shoes, Glorious Shoes" parodies, for the subject of footwear, and three entries rhyming "tonic" and "Blahnik."

Mae Scanlan's honorable-mention parody set to "Young at Heart" has the single best line in the contest: "He is cunningly shrewd, and he's stunningly crude"; it refers to . . . you have one guess. See it farther down the page. (Second-best single line, same topic: Dave Silberstein parodied "Everyone's Gone to the Moon" to "Everyone's Drawn to the Loon"; the rest of the song isn't quite as inkable, alas.) Click on the song titles for clips of the melodies.

4th place

Format: song parody; subject: a fad that is SO over; limitation: must contain a word and its anagram (here, "on" and "no"; okay, not much of an anagram . . .)

(to the [chorus of "MacArthur Park"](#))

The cupcake store has closed on Third and Park —
No more treacly icing flowing now,
The craze for high-priced baked goods on the wane.
Now I'll just have to toughen
Up and eat an oat bran muffin,
But perhaps I'll get my pants to fit again.
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)



☒Well, he's no Lincoln — but a Cal bobblehead makes a pretty good second prize, especially when accessorized by Loser Nan Reiner with Invite-appropriate signage. (Nan Reiner)

3rd place

Format: song parody; subject: footwear; limitations: must include all 26 letters of the alphabet.

(To "Food, Glorious Food"; [sung by Nan Reiner](#))

Shoes, glorious shoes! Our trendiest tonics.
For nixing the blues, just slip on some Blahniks!
Life feel like a garbage can? Don't mope with the kvetchers.
Ease into some Louboutins or — some — Skechers!
Choose glorious Choos, Uggs, Magli or Madden.
Prime Prada in twos no girl can look bad in.
Wine Weitzmans or mint McQueens, no way you can lose! With
Shoes — Michael Kors! Shoes — Saint Laurent!
Shoes — Kenneth Cole! Shoes — L. Vuitton!

Shoes – Burberry! Shoes . . . glorious shoes!

(Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

2nd place and the mix-and-match game Dr. Lakra's Mutant Laboratory:

Format: riddle; subject: Trump campaign; limitation: must be short enough to tweet:

Q. What did Trump tell Obama supporters to win them over?

A. Orange is the new black. (Steve Honley, Washington)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Format: song parody; subject: Trump campaign; limitation: must contain a word and its anagram (limes/smile):

(To "*Be Our Guest*")

He's obsessed! He's obsessed!

"Build a wall," he says. "No jest!

There's disorder at the border

And I know what's for the best!"

"They do rapes! They do crimes!

They drink beer with sliced-up limes!

And their culture's undesired!

Don't believe me? Then you're fired!"

"It's a sport to deport

The burrito-eating sort;

If they're born here, send them back with all the rest!"

Do people think he's vile?

(Dems cast a knowing smile)

'Cause he's obsessed! He's obsessed! He's obsessed!

(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Sixty-foursaken: honorable mentions

An observation about the Trump campaign that's short enough for a tweet:

If Trump gets the nomination, which of those pathetic, ugly losers should he ask to be his running mate?

(Frank Mann, Washington)

A riddle about a fad that is so over, and could be a tweet:

Q. How are collectible Beanie Babies like kamikaze pilots?

A. Both have low rates of return. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Parody about footwear, and contains all 26 letters of the alphabet:

(To "*Girls Just Want to Have Fun*")

Extreme strain on your legs and feet;

The shoes you use abuse you till each calf moos, "Retreat!"

You trip and fall so much you're covered in bumps,

But still you're gonna wear pumps.

Dumb girls just wanna wear pumps.

Each quick turn, ankles swell and ache.

Big bunions and hammertoes, what more can you take?

You're just a hobbling ditz on two bloody stumps,
But still you're gonna wear pumps,
Dumb girls just wanna wear pumps.
(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

A tweetable observation about a fad that is so over:
Isn't twerking just like spinning a hula hoop, only without the hula hoop?
(Neal Starkman, Seattle)

A tweetable observation about the new thin Oreos:
Thin Oreos? I guess "Obese Oreos" didn't test well?
(Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.)

A Trump parody containing a word and its anagram (form/from):

To "Young at Heart":

He is out of the norm, he's another life form,
Mr. Donald Trump;
A self-centered guy who is rich as Dubai,
That is Donald Trump.
He is cunningly shrewd, and he's stunningly crude;
A strange sort of dude who with gall is imbued,
And people are astounded at the clips and blips
That emanate from Mr. Trump's protruding lips.

He's as vain as they come; though he's sly he is dumb,
Mr. Donald Trump;
Condescending, of course, but consider the source;
He is Donald Trump.
He is sneeringly snide, he is hard to abide,
Though he's daily decried, he is here for the ride,
And here is the Big Ask:
Who has the Big Task?
Who can dump him off his rump,
The Don — ald — Trump?
(Mae Scanlan, Washington)

A tweet-size riddle about thin Oreos AND Trump:

Q. What do Thin Oreos and Trump have in common?

A. Without their layers of dough, they're just American whiteness with no taste or value. (Andy Promisel, Fairfax)

An acrostic poem (the first letters of each line spell out a name) about footwear, and containing an anagram pair (now/won):

Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos were brash;
Made off with a fortune in Philippine cash.
Excessive, her footwear became quite an issue;
Led soon to their downfall — but don't grab that tissue!
Despite their disgrace, now her son's won, pursuin'
A senate career (he was prob'ly a shoe-in). (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

A tweet-size observation about the new thin Oreos:

Thin Oreos? What's next, Littler Debbies? Krispy Krumbs? (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

A Trump parody with an anagram pair (guns/snug):

To "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean":

The Donald is winning, say pollsters;
His weird popularity grows.
Right-wingers, guns snug in their holsters,
Proclaim him the cure for their woes.
Take back this quack,
Oh, bring back some sanity to the scene,
Or we might see
A President Trump in '16.
(Mae Scanlan)

Parody about a fad that is SO over, containing all 26 letters:

(To "[Hallelujah](#)")

Well, I'd heard the quick explosive roar
At soccer games when the players score,
And I'd been to many raucous World Cup galas.
But I never heard a noise so loud
As when I joined a Cape Town crowd
Of fifty thousand fans with vuvuzelas.
Vuvuzelas, vuvuzelas ...
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Parody about a fad that is SO over, with an anagram pair (cause/sauce):

(To "[Bye Bye Birdie](#)"; [sung by Nan Reiner](#))

Bye-bye, baseball. We've had our summer fling.
Second-place ball just is not our thing.
Call us "brutal" if we depart our seats,
But it's futile watching your defeats.
The Nats were all the rage, as daily you'd succeed,
But now we've turned the page, 'cause you've blown every lead!
Our romance is a sauce that's been congealed.
(How're our chances out at FedEx Field?)
(Nan Reiner)

One more Trump parody with an anagram pair (keep/peek):

(To "[Paper Doll](#)")

"I'm gonna build a big high wall to keep the bad guys out
Between the U.S.A. and Mexico;
And then the rapists and the thugs, with their babies and their drugs,
Will have to find another place to go.
When they come to the border I'll be waiting;
Just wait and see how I the tide will stem.
My wall will be so thick that they can't even sneak a peek,
And that way we won't have to deal with them." (Mae Scanlan)

[And this week's new contest: . .](#)

Week 1143: Ask Backwards

A VW gas pedal * Bei Bei's daily schedule * A platypus, a sourpuss, and pus * Somewhere over the rainbow * An icicle, a testicle and a listicle * Duck, Duck, Moose * 15 GB * 2028 C.E. * A swarm of fruit flies * Shaquille O'Rabinowitz * The Gossamer-Man Triathlon * #LoserPower * Poutine on the Ritz * L'Oreal and Hardy * 19 Ids and Counting

Ask away! It's one of our most enduring contests, dating back to Week 21 in 1993, and repeated more than 30 times since: **Above are 15 answers, separated by asterisks. You supply the questions.** Write the answer first, followed by your question. If you have several entries for a single category, please precede each one with the answer, so the Empress won't miss it when she wields her imperial Search button.

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place gets a bobblehead, too! It's a genuine Washington Nationals [bobblor of Calvin Coolidge](#), the team's newest presidential mascot. Loser Nan Reiner snagged it for us at Nats Park just last week, and then took it home and embellished it with a little sign that says, "You Lose." Which is eminently fitting on two levels: Not only is "Congratulations — you lose" the Empress's traditional compliment to ink-getters, but it also harks back to a famous Coolidge anecdote, which the unstoppable force that is Nan explained in a limerick:

"Silent Calvin" did not care to schmooze.

Spoke, at most, words in ones or in twos.

When a gal bet that he

Might bestow on her three,

She was met with this answer: "You lose."

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" [Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet designed by Bob Staake: either "[The Wit Hit the Fan](#)" or "[Hardly Har-Har](#)." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday night, Oct 12 (what, you wanted off for Columbus Day?); results published Nov. 1 (online Oct. 29). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1143" 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/InvRules. The "Easy as 1-B-iii." headline for this week's results is by Danielle Nowlin; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Nan Reiner. The last three Ask Backwards answers are Chris Doyle's. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday.

^ **The Style Conversational:** The Empress's weekly online column, published late Thursday afternoon, discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

Still running — deadline Monday night, Oct. 5: Our contest for tweets from a "hybrid" person. See bit.ly/invite1142.

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