

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1190: You're workin' on a chain, gang

Connect a string of up to 15 names; plus the incredible winning anagram-based poems



Climb from name to name — and back to the beginning — in the Week 1190 name-chain contest. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)







By **Pat Myers** Editor and judge of The Style Invitational August 25, 2016
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(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning poems based on the anagram of a name)

MICHAEL PHELPS, Mark Spitz, Anchor Hocking, "Anchors Aweigh," Frank Sinatra, Sean Bean, Ned Stark, "Naked Cowboy,"

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Gene Autry, Kate Smith, Katie Ledecky, MICHAEL PHELPS.

DONALD TRUMP, Donald Duck, Ryan Gosling, “Catcher in the Rye,” Holden Caulfield, Henry Huggins, Henry Higgins, Eliza Doolittle, Dr. Dolittle, Francis the Talking Mule, the Democrats, HILLARY CLINTON.

The Empress was saddened to hear of the death last month of [Mary Ann Madden](#), creator of the New York Magazine Competition, the 973-contest institution that ran from 1969 to 2000 and inspired [the Czar](#) — the E’s predecessor and a luckless NYMag entrant — to engage in the sincerest form of flattery and start up this thing right here in 1993.

Like the Invite, NYMag presented a variety of wordplay contests, with many recurring ones. As Longtime Loser and occasional Maddenite Sandra Hull reminded us, one favorite was “The Game of Dan Greenburg,” named for the humorist who suggested it; we’ve done this contest ourselves several times, this week we’ll do it a bit differently.

This week: Create a chain of no more than 15 proper nouns — names of people (real or fictional), products, places, etc. — including one title of a work — in which each name relates somehow to the previous one, as in Sandra’s examples above. New this time: You may bookend the list either with the same name, as in the first example, or with contrasting ones, as in the second. So that the Empress can make the answer when she reads the entry, but can check if she’s confused.

Submit entries at this website:
bit.ly/enter-invite-1190

Winner gets the [Inkin’ Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a **DVD of the 2010 movie “The Losers,”** which is a thriller about Special Forces operatives who seek revenge on the CIA, not a documentary about a group of overeducated newspaper readers with misplaced priorities. Donated by CIA-avenging Special Forces operative Andrew Hoenig of Rockville, Md.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#), the older-model “[This Is Your Brain on Mugs](#)” mug or our new Grossery Bag, “[I Got a](#)



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Analysis

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[B in Punmanship](#).” Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, [“Magnet Dum Laude”](#) or [“Falling Jest Short.”](#) First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). Deadline is Tuesday night, Sept. 6 (Heaven forbid you should labor on Labor Day); results published Sept. 25 (online Sept. 22). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/InvRules](#). Both “Shelley You Jest” and the honorable-mentions subhead are by many-time New York Magazine winner Chris Doyle. 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](#); follow [@StyleInvite](#) on Twitter.

The Style Conversational The Empress’s weekly online column, published late Thursday afternoons, discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at [bit.ly/conv1190](#).

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

SHELLEY YOU JEST: THE ANAGRAM-INSPIRED POEMS OF WEEK 1186

In Week 1186 we asked you to rearrange the letters of someone’s name, then write a poem about the resulting anagram. Many Losers chose a poet’s name and wrote a parody of a poem by that writer. So, so many witty verses this week that we had to cut some out. Here are a few that made the cut.

Although you shouldn’t oughter.
You’ve been around, you know that he’s
Too brazen for the bomb —
So what’s to do but prove true blue
And vote for Chelsea’s mom?
(Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

3rd place:

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON to MONTHLY, AN OLD RICH LIAR

Not a month can pass us by,
Not without some Clinton lie.
Be it of Benghazi fight
Or the latest e-mail blight.
But she’ll soon be president
Since Republican dissent
Foisted on us Donald Trump:
Tweedledemon, Tweedledump.
(Ray Gallucci, Frederick, Md.)

2nd place and the book “Butt Rot and Bottom Gas”:

ROBERT FROST to ‘TERROR’? OFT BS

[I have been one acquainted with the Right](#),
And how they whip up stories with their spin

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To scare you silly, keep you up at night
With fear we're letting nasty people in:
The sort whose creeds are not what "we" believe
And just look at those swarthy shades of skin –
"You'd have those people here? Don't be naive!
We can't trust those who love a different god,
They've got some dark intentions up their sleeve:
They're likely sleeper cells to plot jihad!"
The other pundits nod and say, "That's right;
Why do they hate us? Don't you find that odd?
They can't help they're not Protestant and white . . ."
I have been one acquainted with the Right.
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

**And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:
And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:**

EDGAR A. POE to
EGO PARADE

Once upon a dark convention, full of fear and apprehension,
After many strange and hateful speakers from the GOP—
Came the climax, pessimistic, altogether chauvinistic,
With an empty, egotistic pledge to fix things by decree:
"Only one knows how to do it, and of course that one is ME!"
Quoth the ravin' Donald T.
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

The Drab of Avon: honorable mentions

ROGER AILES to
I OGLE REARS

I. I ogle rears. If I see one
On some hot babe, I pinch a bun,
And if it leads to sex, I thank her
By making her a Fox News anchor.
But if she turns away and sneers,
It's time for her to switch careers.
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

II. I made quite a fair offer to Gretchen,
Who, like all the gals here, is quite fetchin'.
For just two or three lays
She'd have bagged a nice raise
And a gold-plated bucket to retch in.
(Max Gutmann, Cupertino, Calif.)

ROBERT FROST to
TO FOREST? BRR.

Whose woods these are I do not care.
It's too damn cold to go in there.

My little horse finds no delight
In skating icy trails tonight.
Some folks may like to freeze their nose
And lose the feeling in their toes;
That stuff's the highlight of their year.
But not me, man. I'm out of here.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

NATAL PREMIUM “by”

MELANIA TRUMP

When women marry well and, well, by “well” I just mean rich,
You have to sign a prenup, just a tiny little hitch.
As ex-wives will attest, you always get a larger share
When you deliver on your vows, delivering an heir.
You might stay wed forever; this may never matter — maybe.
But if he earns big bacon, darling, you bring home the baby. (George-Ann
Rosenberg, Washington)

RUDYARD KIPLING to

GULP DAIRY DRINK

If you can oversleep and still swill down
Your breakfast drink before the school bus shows,
If you can hear the joke from the class clown
And keep the milk from spewing out your nose,
If you can chug in contests every year
And do your udder best before they're done,
The prizes are to you who persevere
And — which is more — you'll grow man-boobs, my son. (Mary Kappus,
Washington)

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS to

I SCOWL, I WILL ALARM ISLAM

[so much depends](#)

upon

a red

button

untouched

by little

orange

fingers. (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

JOYCE KILMER to

LO, MICE JERKY

I think that I shall ne'er espouse
A morsel yummy as a mouse
That's cooked and sliced, and quickly dried —
It's tasty when it's petrified.
I'm sure it beats this liverwurst,
So let's go have some. You go first. (Duncan Stevens)

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE to

YO, CUE A STILL LARGER DOME

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure dome decree,
But no one builds a better one than Trump, believe you me. (Chris Doyle,
Denton, Tex.)

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY to

VENTS A DYNAMIC LENTIL

My candle burns at both ends, so, ah, my friends and foes,
You'll want to stand some ways away, and maybe hold your nose. (Frank Osen)

ANN COULTER to

RECTAL NOUN

I think of all the rectal nouns,
Like "sphincter," "feces," "anus,"
But none of them sounds foul enough,
Not adequately heinous.
Since all of them revolt me so,
And such supreme revolters
Deserve a name that makes me retch,
Why don't we call them "coulters"? (Robert Schechter)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEAREto

AW, I LIKE HER AMPLE ASS!

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and thou art more hot;
As thou dost shake thy darling buns, I'd say,
Beyoncé, baby, back is what thou got! (Jesse Frankovich)

MICHAEL R. PENCE to

LEPER MECHANIC

As we approach the final scrimmage,
My job's to tinker with his image
Until it's nice and righty-tighty
Instead of Archie-Bunker-whitey.
(At home, I mutter, "What's the use?
No matter what, his screws stay loose.") (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

ROBERT FROST to **TEST OF BRR, OR ...**

Some marriages combust and end in fire,
While others ossify and end in ice,
But both those paths are filled with thorns and briar,
So heed this old New Englander's advice:
You ought keep promises, don't be a liar,
But more importantly than all of that,
Swear that for love you'll shiver or perspire,
And let your spouse control the thermostat.
Be quiet, sweating, freezing, pay that price.
Though you're uncomfortable, all won't be lost.
Employ, on snowy evenings, what proved nice
And worked for me—a little touch of Frost. (Frank Osen)

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT to

OH, LET'S TOSS IRATE MAN *and* THAT IS SOME TAN LOSER!

[Let us go then, you and I,](#)

When November 8th comes by,
Like a band of lemmings upon a cliff;
Let us go, through certain rather lengthy queues,
While muttering, and choose
The lesser of two evils in that booth
Because we have to face a scary truth:
Those who follow that outrageous orange gent
Of insidious intent
Could lead us to an overwhelming outcome...

Oh, do not think, "It can't occur!"
Let us go and vote for her. (Jesse Frankovich)

EMILY DICKINSON to

MY CLONED SKIN II

Because I looked like warmed-up death —
A doctor did I see—
He promised me a brand-new face —
Grown artificially.
He tried it once — it did not take —
And so he tried anew —
Now youthful visage — mine at last!
I love "My Cloned Skin II." (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

WILLIAM BLAKE to

AWAKE, ILL 'LIMB'

[I was angry with my "friend":](#)
I popped a pill, hoped my wrath would end.
I waited, she waited, my faithful doe:
&%%\$& pill — it still didn't grow.

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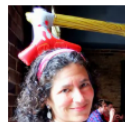
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Had I drunk too many beers?
Recalled deflating locker room jeers?
Still we plied it with her wiles.
Took a break, watched "X-Files"

Until it GREW!! as was only fair and right
Becoming a modest, yet sufficient sight.
But when my doe beheld its size,
I saw but laughter in her eyes. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Aug. 29: our annual Limerixicon limerick contest, this year featuring "ge-" words. See bit.ly/invite-1189.

 0 Comments



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 @patmyersTWP](#)

The Post Recommends

At night she suffered through searing pain, by morning it mysteriously vanished

Two doctors blamed a kayaking injury. A scan eventually revealed something much scarier.

May 26



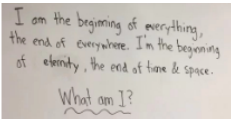
Perspective

Puzzle of the week

When a first-grader's wrong answer was better than the right one

Tweets tell the amusing story.

Jan 3



Date Lab: He questioned her choice of pants. And she questioned his.

