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Style Invitational Week 1332: Call them Spellimericks

Write a limerick that spells out a 5-letter word or name with the first letter of each line



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers
May 16

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning Great Stories as told by other writers)

Fraud is rampant in voting, you know!
All those turbines cause cancer to grow!
Largest tax cut we've had!
Spies were tracking me! Bad!
Every migrant's a criminal foe!

Yes, we'll still have our annual Limerixicon in August. But this week the Empress was moved to add another limerick contest, approximately 1.78 seconds after reading the suggestion by Obsessive Loser Jesse Frankovich, complete with examples.

This week: Write a humorous limerick that's an acrostic: a pertinent five-letter word or name spelled out by the first letter of each line, as in Jesse's example above. Don't bother to use



Most Read Entertainment

1 Leslie Jones leads the charge against Alabama's election law

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boldface or a special format to highlight the word you're spelling out; even the Empress can figure that out, and the entry form won't show it anyway.

Please see wapo.st/limericks-1332 for our fairly strict rules on limerick rhyme and meter (in a nutshell: "perfect" rhyme, and a strong "hickory-dickory-dock" rhythm in Lines 1, 2 and 5; a "dickory-dock" in Lines 3 and 4; extra unaccented syllables on either side are fine.

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1332 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a smaller, less unwieldy, but still alarming version of a prize we've given twice before: It's a **ceramic mug in a rattlesnake motif**, with a little ceramic rattlesnake head hissing at you from inside. Donated as before by Not a Loser Mary Ellen Stroupe.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "Too-Weak Notice" or "Certificate of (de)Merit." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, May 27;** results published June 16 in print, June 13 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Rewordsmiths" is by Jesse Frankovich; Jesse also wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. 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](https://twitter.com/StyleInvite) on Twitter.

The Style Conversational: The Empress's online column returns in a couple of weeks.

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

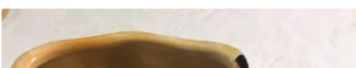
REWORDSMITHS: WINNERS FROM WEEK 1328

In **Week 1328** we asked you to retell or summarize a book or play, or a scene from it, in the voice of someone else. The Empress was not shocked that many of the best entries honored the two most influential writers in English: William Shakespeare and Dr. Seuss.

4th place:

Hamlet's soliloquy, as told by Dr. Seuss

Today there's a thing that I'm dying to know,
A question that haunts me wherever I go:
A person's a person, no matter how small,
But is it worth being a person at all?
With all the bad things in the world that I'm seeing,
It may be that being is worse than NOT being.
But nobody knows. There's the rub: we must dread
That maybe it will not be fun to be dead,
And hard as we find it to be a live person,
Once we are gone all our problems may worsen.
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)



3rd place:

against Alabama's abortion ban in the SNL season finale



2 A guide to how Daenerys went from Khaleesi to Mad Queen



3 Arnold Schwarzenegger unhurt after taking a flying kick in the back from a 'mischievous fan'



4 **Analysis**
What to expect in 'Game of Thrones' Season 8, Episode 6



5 Phoebe Waller-Bridge has said goodbye to 'Fleabag.' But her trademark unpredictability lives on.



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You only have to drink a few ounces of coffee before this mug will wake you up good. This week's second prize. (Pat Myers/The Washington Post)

“A Tale of Two Cities,” by Donald Trump

It was the best of times, it was the best of times, it was the greatest time you’ve ever seen, believe me, it was a beautiful time, it was really great, most people don’t know this but it was the best of times, it was huge, not like those times that weren’t so great, it was

incredible, a lot of people are saying it was the best of times, except for the Fake News, but it was the best of times, NO COLLUSION! (Laurie Brink, Cleveland, Mo.)

2nd place

and the Spock prayer candle:

“A Tale of Two Cities,” by Ogden Nash:

It was the best of times, yet also not so hot,
When lots of Bourbons got guillotined by the sans-culottes,
Which technically means “without breeches,”
But at that point meant “a bunch of folks whose revolutionary zeal sort of overreaches,”
Led by Madame Defarge,
Who ordered blood spilled like she was spreading a croissant with marge,
Meaning plenty of martyrdom, so someone had to do the martyn’,
Namely Sydney Carton.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

“Green Eggs and Ham,” by William Shakespeare

O friend! I prithee! Let us take a ride,
For truly, sir, thy life is incomplete
’Til viridescent ovum thou hast tried
Together with a slice of glaucous meat!
O! Wouldst thou in a locomotive train?
Perhaps aboard an airplane in the skies?
Or wouldst thou in a boat upon the main?
Thou shouldst! For ’tis a dish that thou wouldst prize!

When travel I on land or sea or air,
By any mode of transport I may go,
However thou mayst urge this bill of fare,
Wouldst sample I this dish? I tell thee no!
I liketh not the egg of greenish hue,
Nor care I for thy cut of proffered ham,
So, verily, if to myself be true,
I shall not eat thy dish, Sir Sam-I-Am.
(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Rewriter's block: Honorable mentions

Polonius’s advice to Laertes in “Hamlet,” by Donald Trump

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Never a lender, but a borrower be!
Let no man see thy purse's content,
Claim it too exhaustive for any to comprehend.
Give no man thy ear, but all thy voice;
Allow no time for judgment, speak boldly beyond the point of vulgarity.
Make thy name into a brand and brand into fortune

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Allow no time for judgment, speak boldly beyond the point of vulgarity.
Make thy name into a brand and brand into fortune
By constantly proclaiming thyself and thy works great.
This above all: regardless of fact, declare thy words true!
(Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.)

Hamlet's soliloquy, by Dr. Seuss

To be — or be not? — that's the thing that I ask,
For when life gets so hard that to live is a task,
And your luck is so bad that there's no way to win,
There's an easy way out! You can do yourself in!
But wait! Are you sure? Do you feel just a shred
Of that dread in your head to be deader than dead?
Could it be that self-killing is not right for you?
(More a thought that you think than a thing that you do . . .)
(Mark Raffman)

"Charlotte's Web" by Internet pioneer Tim Berners-Lee:

People will believe what you post on the Web.
(Kevin Doherty, Washington)

"2001: A Space Odyssey," as told by Cheech and Chong

Dave: Open the pod bay doors, HAL.
HAL: Who is it?
Dave: It's Dave, man. Open up, I couldn't save Frank.
HAL: Who is it?
Dave: Dave. It's Dave, man! C'mon, I don't have my helmet with me.
HAL: Dave?
Dave: Yeah, Dave.
HAL: Dave's not here, man.
(Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.)

Franz Kafka's "Metamorphosis" explained by Mister Rogers

Have you ever had a bad day? Gregor Samsa had a very bad day. He turned into a giant cockroach. He had six long legs and a thousand tiny eyes; Imagine what you could see with all those eyes! *One* thing he could see was that his whole family didn't love him anymore because he was a disgusting insect. Would that make you sad? I know it would make *me* sad. (Frank Mann, Washington)

"1984": In Room 101, O'Brien finally breaks Winston Smith's will, by Dave Barry

Smith: Oh God, rats?!

O'Brien: No, Miami cockroaches.
 Smith: I can handle bugs.
 O'Brien: But can you handle THIS?! (Music builds.)
 Smith: Not "Copacabana!"
 O'Brien: And "Mandy" up next!
 Smith: Stop! I'll LOVE Big Brother!
 O'Brien: "Big Brother and the Miami Cockroaches" would be a good name for a rock band.
 (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.)

The opening of Edward Bulwer-Lytton's "Paul Clifford," as told by Peter Mark Roget

It was a crepuscular and tempestuous eventide . . .
 (Roy Ashley, Washington)
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A Christmas Carol," by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

"But then the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come took Scrooge even further into the future, where he was revered for refusing to let his clerk burn coal . . ."
 (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

"Macbeth," by Mother Goose

Lady Macbeth cried out for death,
 Her husband murdered Duncan,
 Planning to pin the bloody sin
 Upon his servants drunken.
 Noble Macduff, so brave and tough,
 Declared the false king must die.
 His weapon he drew, and cut him in two,
 And said, "What a good boy am I!"
 (Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

The Elements of Style (Strunk and White), by Emily Dickinson

A break in thought — a change of gears
 May make them grind — and clash —
 Use commas — or parentheses —
 Don't — overuse — the dash — (Duncan Stevens)

"Gone Girl," by Geico

may make them grind — and clash —

Use commas — or parentheses —

Don't — overuse — the dash — (Duncan Stevens)

“Gone Girl,” by Geico

Faking your own murder, killing your ex-boyfriend, and using frozen sperm to get yourself pregnant so your husband won't turn you in? Surprising! What's not surprising? How much money you can save by switching to ... (Mark Raffman)

“The Scarlet Letter,” as told by the writer of that [annoying commercial for Head On:](#)

The Letter A — apply directly to the bosom!

The Letter A — apply directly to the bosom!” (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

Hamlet's soliloquy, by [Joyce Kilmer](#)

I think that I should like to be.

Or not. Which is it? Let me see.

To die may be a welcome nap,

But what if it's a painful trap?

What if in that nap you dream
The Letter A — apply directly to the bosom!” (Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

Hamlet's soliloquy, by [Joyce Kilmer](#)

I think that I should like to be.

Or not. Which is it? Let me see.

To die may be a welcome nap,

But what if it's a painful trap?

What if in that nap you dream

Horrific things that make you scream?

If death does not improve on life,

There's no point falling on my knife.