



Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1339: Songs for a modern error

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A parody contest. Plus winning poems and jokes based on spelling bee words.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**
July 3

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning spelling bee poems and jokes)

**Tonight, tonight, a most distressing sight:
My WiFi router's light blinking red.
Such blight, this plight; it isn't working right;
Offline, I really might just be dead.
I can't log on and check my emails
Or ogle pics of females
Whose outerwear is slight.
To right this blight,
I'll call and stay on hold out of spite
All night! — Matt Monitto, channeling "West Side Story"**

It's our first song parody contest of 2019, and this week's theme comes courtesy of Loserbard Matt Monitto, complete with sample song (and even this week's headline). We'll be broad in scope. **This week: Write**



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humorous lyrics to a song about some modern woe, set to a familiar tune. It can be about a how-you-say First World problem, like Matt's lament above, or something more serious as long as your anger and bitterness don't overwhelm your wit (the Empress calls that "screediness").

We'll give you an extra week — until July 22 — to get the parodies done. If you make a video, we might feature it in the online Invite (you could even use your own tune) but it's the quality of the lyrics that matters most. See this week's Style Conversational column at wapo.st/conv1339 for more guidance about writing songs for us.

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1339 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives the **"Mr. President Wig"** worn for a minute by Loser Howard Walderman while he sang a parody of "Imagine" ("Imagine I'm the Donald") at last weekend's Flushies, the Losers' annual awards "banquet." Howard's older than the Current Occupant but in way better shape: He recently medaled in swimming in the 80-to-84 group in the Maryland Senior Olympics.

Other runners-up win our **"You Gotta Play to Lose"** Loser Mug or our **"Whole Fools"** Grocery 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, July 22;** results published Aug. 4 in print, Aug. 1 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline "Spelly Laughs" was submitted by both Jesse Frankovich and Duncan Stevens; Chris Doyle and William Kennard both suggested 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 weekly online column, published late Wednesday afternoon this week, discusses the week's new contest and results. Check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

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

SPELLY LAUGHS: THE BEE POEMS & JOKES FROM WEEK 1335

In **Week 1335** we asked for poems based on words from this year's Scripps National Spelling Bee — and we also invited some riddles.

4th place:

Omphalopsychites (AHM-fuh-lo-SIGH-kites), people who meditate by focusing on their navels

Bellery-buttony






Omphalopsychites are

Folks who can gaze at their

Navels all day.



Genesis demonstrates

- 1 Cameron Boyce, Disney Channel mainstay and 'Grown Ups' actor, dies at 20 
- 2 The best books to read at every age, from 1 to 100 
- 3 **Perspective**
N.C. Wyeth painted the world full of beauty, resilience and adventure. And full of white people. 
- 4 Six songs tell you as much about Aretha Franklin as any memoir ever could 
- 5 **Perspective**
All eight Spider-Man movies, ranked from worst to best 

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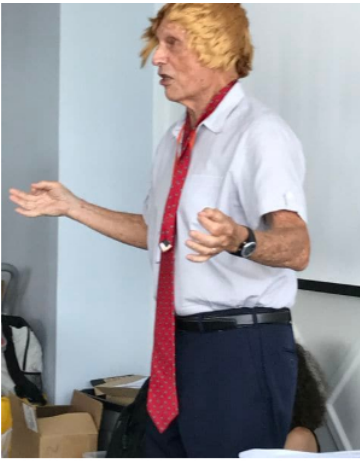
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Loser Howard Walderman wears this week's second-prize wig while singing his own parody at the Flushies. (Mark Holt)

Incontrovertibly
Abel and Cain were the
First born that way.
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

3rd place:

Badderlocks, brownish seaweed eaten in Northern Europe:

Whatever's on the Donald's
head's unsightly,
Like some dead thing he found
beneath the docks,
But if he threw some seaweed

on, you'd rightly
Say now he's even sporting badderlocks.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

2nd place and the bacon-scented soap and air 'freshener':

Fucus (FEW-kus):

A brownish type of algae is the kind that's known as fucus;
But if we mispronounce this word, they'll sure as heck rebuke us.
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)



Wigless Howard Walderman at an earlier Loser party. (Nan Reiner)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Apophysitis (uh-PAH-fuh-SIGH-tuhs), painful bone spurs:

Once upon a time of drafting,
Donald pondered, sly and crafting,
Over many dark, dishonest ways
to dodge the call to war —
Fearing far-off foes who'd fight
us, settled on apophysitis,
Blaming it without the slightest
hint of shame forevermore.
"I'd be honored," Donald
uttered, "to have served within
the Corps.
But, alas, my feet were sore."
(Jesse Frankovich, Grand

Ledge, Mich.)

Bee-flats: Honorable mentions

Seitan, flavored wheat gluten, often a meat substitute:

Said the Church Lady, "Dontcha be hatin'
On my vegan cafe — we're creatin'
Dishes tasty and new!

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After one bite or two,
You'll be wondering, could it be . . . seitan??"
(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Murrelet, a seabird

Among endangered species is the avian marbled murrelet,
It would be sad to see this species going down the turrelet.
(Dave Zarrow, Reston, Va.)

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Stakhanovite (sta-KAH-no-vite), a Soviet worker awarded for exceeding production quotas

Russia is our closest friend.
The FBI can hack you.
Trump is on an upward trend.
Vaccines are used to track you.
I tweet it all day, I tweet it at night:
I troll to be a Stakhanovite.
(Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.)

Haustellum, an insect proboscis adapted to suck blood)

Folks hate skeeters and fear the haustellum.
They can try but they cannot dispel 'em.
The poor humans outside —
They can run but not hide.
Skeeters find 'em and bite when they smell 'em.
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

“Badderlocks” jokes

Q. What might you advise someone who ate some lousy Scottish salmon?

A. Badderlocks next time.

(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Q. What European diet features full meals plus snacks of seaweed?

A. Badderlocks and the Three Squares.

(Mark Raffman)

Rhathymia (ra-THIM-mia or ra-THIGH-mia), the state of being carefree

Does current news depress me? Oh yes, plenty.
But then I picture Trump's defeat in '20;
This vision never ever fails to gimme a
Distinct, exalted feeling of rhathymia.
(Duncan Stevens)

Soon Yi fills my heart with rhathymia,
So I guess that this means it's goodbye, Mia.
(Ann Martin, Brentwood, Md.)

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(Ann Martin, Brentwood, Md.)

No job and no worries I've got,

A care in the world I have not.

I'll live in rhathymia

(Ann Martin, Brentwood, Md.)

No job and no worries I've got,

A care in the world I have not.

I'll live in rhathymia

'Cause my parents will buy me a

Rolls, a new home and a yacht.

(Hildy Zampella, Alexandria, Va.)

Jalap (JA-lupp), a laxative made from a Mexican plant

With its purgative properties, jalap

Sends you off to the loo at a gallop,

For it's quite unsurpassed —

In fact, it's a blast —

At freeing a laggardly bowel up.

(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Mondegreen, a misheard song lyric

I can see clearly now Lorraine has gone

Wrapped up like a douche, I ask what was she on?

"There's a bathroom on the right," she would unload,

"Another turnip boy, a Ford stuck in the road."

In the Garden of Eden, honey, don't you know that I'm lovin' you?

Hold me closer, Tony Danza — doughnuts make my brown eyes blue.

'Scuse me while I kiss this guy — do you know what I mean?

Can't you tell I'm just a nerd who loves a mondegreen?"

(Rick Bromberg, Fairfax, Va.)

Q. Who are the greatest supporters of an "Echo-Friendly Nude Eel"?

A. The Mondegreen Party.

(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Chelydroid, a snapping turtle

Once upon a summer, sweating, I desired a cooling wetting,

So I stepped without a care into a pond with murky floor.

With the water gently lapping, suddenly there came a snapping

Turtle with its jaws a-clapping, clapping like a carnivore —

"'Tis some chelydroid!" I hollered, "Snapping inches from the shore —

Where my big toe'd been before."

(Dave Zarrow)

Campylobacter, bacterium that causes food poisoning

Her stomach was tied up in knots

After eating two undercooked brats.

The bug that attacked her,
A campylobacter,
Turned strolls to the pot into trots.

*(Chris Doyle)
(Dave Zarrow)*

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Tathagata (Tatha-GA-ta)

Enlightened dude: when perfect truth he sees,
He's called, in Buddhist lingo, tathagata.
That means he's figured out life's mysteries;
He understands announcements on [WMATA](#).

(Duncan Stevens)

Taurokathapsia (TOR-uh-kuh-THAP-see-uh): an ancient sport in which a performer grasps the horns of a bull and somersaults over it

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