Style Invitational Week 942: A singular contest — there’s only one entry; plus the improved-on Edward Lear limericks

By Pat Myers
October 21, 2011

A contest to come up with a new modeling clay to be endorsed by Homer Simpson. Winner: Doh. (Ralph Kass)

A contest to name a medical practice that specializes in treating only elephantiasis and elephant man’s disease. Winner: Pachydermatology. (David Garrett)

It’s often a gamble to put forth a new contest that a reader suggests. The way it often goes: Someone comes up with a funny joke or observation, then fires it off to the Empress, saying, “This would make a great contest!” Sometimes it does. Sometimes not so much, once you’ve used up that particular joke. This week, in a contest we did once before, in 1999: Give us an idea for a contest for which there’s likely only one good entry (which you also supply, duh), as in the ingenuity entries above from Week 317.

Winner gets the Inked, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a deck of playing cards promoting Abell Pest Control; the faces of the numbered cards feature photos of various menacing-looking insectoid critters.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or ear-named-for Loser Mug. Honorable mentions get a lust-dubbed Loser magnet. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 31; results published Nov. 20 (Nov. 18 online). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 942”
in your e-mail subject line or it may be ignored as spam. Include your real
name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules
and guidelines at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational. The revised title for
next week is by Jeff Coutoumpasis; this week’s honorable-mentions subhead
is by Gary Crockett.

Report from Week 938

in which we showed you 115 limericks by Edward Lear, the 19th-century
grandfather of the genre, and asked you to use the first two lines of any of
Lear’s poems and supply your own Lines 3, 4 and 5 to create what we now
would consider a funny, clever limerick (Lear’s own were, to put it
charitably, not). This contest drew far more entries than for any of our
previous limerick contests — more than 1,500. And perhaps 20 percent of
them were very good; the Empress spent large and equal amounts of time
hemming and hawing (maybe a little more hawing) to choose the ones
below. (The link on the first line of each limerick goes to the page containing
Lear’s original.

The winner of the Inker:

There was an Old Man of Jamaica.
Who suddenly married a Quaker;
For that’s how it ends
If you start off just Friends:
She may press you one evening to take her. (Hugh Thirlway, The Hague)

2. Winner of the Doody Head game
with the hat and the “doodlies” you toss onto it:

There was an Old Person of Burton
Whose answers were rather uncertain,
For his words were all jumbled:
“Know I don’t, dear,” he mumbled,
“Which butt makes your fat look less skirt in.” (Brendan Beary, Great Mills,
Md.)

3. There was a Young Girl of Majorca
Whose aunt was a very fast walker;
But the girl would insist
They instead dance the twist,
For the girl was a very fast torquer.
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

4. There was an old man at a casement
Who held up his hands in amazement:
“My not wearing pants
Explains all their rants,
And, perhaps, what that one woman’s gaze meant.” (Frank Osen, Pasadena,
Calif., a First Offender)

Lear-misses: Honorable mentions

There was an Old Man who said, “How
Shall I flee from that horrible cow?”
(Though I don’t mean to tattle,
He didn’t mean cattle —
His wife was one ornery Fran.)
(Brendan Beary)

There was a Young Lady whose eyes
Were unique as to colour and size,
And whose cheek held her nose —
So she soon got to pose
For Picasso, to no one’s surprise.
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

There was an Old Man in a tree,
Who was horribly bored by a bee;
He carelessly slipped as
He spelled “eucalyptus,”
So he lost the bee due to ennui.
(Steve Langer, Chevy Chase, Md.)

There was an Old Person of Ischia,
Whose conduct grew friskier and friskier.
When looking for sex,
He would call up his ex
(And her mother, which frankly, was riskier).
(Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

There was a young lady of Troy,
Whom several large flies did annoy,
This Helen, in fright,
Closed the windows up tight:
Trojan horseflies might well be a ploy.
(Courtney Krauth, Washington)

There was an old man on some rocks,
Who shut his wife up in a box.
He would make a big deal
Out of each morning’s meal:
He’d eat bagels and she would get locks.
(Harvey Smith, McLean, Va.)

There was an Old Person of Tartary
Who divided his jugular artery,
Then died on the spot.
“I don’t think, thus I’m not . . .”
Was the man’s parting shot of Descartesery. (Chris Doyle)

There was an old person of Tring
Who embellished his nose with a ring.
That’s not odd to me;
Since the young folk I see
Have embellished their, well, everything.
(Mae Scanlon, Washington)

There was an Old Derry down Derry
Who loved to see little folks merry.
He declared, “It’s such fun
When you jog with a gun!”
So he’s planning to vote for Rick Perry.
(Gary Crockett, formerly of Texas)

There was an Old Man of Pern,
Who never knew what he should do
Till his wife said, “D’you see,
Dear, that this bit of me
Fits together with that bit of you?” (Hugh Thirlway)
There was an Old Person of Bangor,
Whose face was distorted with anger.
Sixty years to the day
Since it had stuck that way;
His mom warned him, but he'll never thank her. (Eric Fritz, Silver-Spring, Md., a First Offender)

There was a Young Lady of Clare
Who was sadly pursued by a bear.
The end of this story
(Which could have been gory):
Their cubs have blue eyes and blond hair. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

There was an Old Lady whose folly
Induced her to sit on a holly.
She stuck there and died,
And her family cried,
But as Christmas decor she looks jolly. (Dixon Wrogg, Santa Rosa, Calif.)

There was an Old Person of Philae,
Whose conduct was scroobious and wily;
He hates people's guts,
So it drives them all nuts
When his e-mails are signed with a :). (David Goldberg, Pinekney, Mich.)

There was an Old Person of Philae,
Whose conduct was scroobious and wily;
He QBed the Skins
To a measly five wins.
And now Minnesotans aren't smiley. (Jonathan Hardis, Gaithersburg)

There was an old person from Gretna
Who rushed down the crater of Etna,
Crying, "Fire, you volcano!
Won't catch me today! No,
You want this old bird, but ain't get'n a." (Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

There was a Young Lady of Ryde,
Whose shoe-strings were seldom untied.
She'd once prayed in fun,
"Thy will be undone."
"We're a frayed knot," the voice said. "Denied." (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.)

There was a Young Person of Smyrna,
Whose Grandmother threatened to burn her
A Mozart CD,
Saying, "Now maybe we
Can hear something besides Tina Turner." (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

There was an Old Man of Pern,
Who watched his wife making a stew;
She said, "Don't be a jerk —
Have a bowl before work,
And alpaca nice lunch for you too." (Brendon Beary)

There was a Young Lady whose nose
Was so long that it reached to her toes.
When Pinocchio walked by,
He said, “Wow! What’s the lie
I must tell if I want one of those?” (Robert Schechter)

There was a Young Lady of Clare,
Who was sadly pursued by a bear;
(That’s the kind on The Street).
Her account’s now petite.
She’s rethinking the old “laissez-faire.” (Allen Clark, Arlington, Va., a First Offender)

There was an Old Man of Quebec,
A beetle ran over his neck.
“Fahrvergùen ingen!” he cried out
As the bystanders cried out
His body from under the wreck. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.)

There was an old man of Berlin
Whose form was uncommonly thin;
He looked, I won’t lie,
Like an unlaunted i.
With neither a grin nor a chin. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

There was an Old Man of Marseilles,
Whose daughters wore bottle-green veils,
Which they’d bought yesterday
Near the beach in Marseilles
Where they dined upon buttery snails. (Steve Langer)

There was an old person of Sparta,
Who had 21 sons and one darter.
EPA soon objected:
“That fish is protected!”
Now he’s jailed and a Tea Party martyr. (Courtney Knauth)

There was an Old Person of Cromer,
Who stood on one leg to read Homer;
He’s the lone man I’ve seen
Ever christened Eileen,
But in his case, it’s not a misnomer. (Brendan Beary)

There was an Old Man with a nose,
Who said, “If you choose to suppose
That its length might suggest
I am equally blessed
Somewhere else, that’s a yes. Check my toes.” (Chris Doyle)

There was an Old Person of Chili
Whose conduct was painful and silly.
He would jabber about,
But no words would come out.
(He was channeling Milli Vanilli). (Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City)

There was an Old Man of Columbia,
Who was thirsty, and called out for some beer;
The brew caused this crime
Of an idiot rhyme,
With each line getting dumbia and dumbia. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

There was an Old Man on a hill,
Who seldom, if ever, stood still.
Whence came the devotion
To perpetual motion?
His twice-daily Deseretine pill. *(Sheila Blume, Sayville, N.Y.)*

**There was a Young Lady of Parma,**
Whose conduct grew calmer and calmer;
When he said things had changed,
She replied, “You’re deranged:
There’s no second term, Mr. Obama.” *(LeRoy LaRoche, Potomac, a First Offender)*

**There was a Young Lady of Norway,**
Who casually sat on a doorway.
To each passing bounder,
She’d quip, “Quarter-pounder?
If so, come on in — have it your way!” *(David Smith, Santa Cruz, Calif.)*

**There was a Young Lady of Ryde**
Whose shoe-strings were seldom untied.
But her corset, it’s said,
Was untied instead
By young men who had come to ride Ryde. *(Bob Klocok, Fairfax Station, a First Offender)*

**There was an old man from the Isles**
Whose face was pervaded with smiles.
He spent his time merrin’
With every young virgin
In sundry positions and styles. *(Bird Warin, Larchmont, N.Y.)*

**There was an Old Man of Coblenz,**
The length of whose legs was immense.
But even immenser
Was [oops, The Post's censor
Informs me this might give offense].
*(Chris Doyle)*

Visit the online discussion group **The Style Conversational**, 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: Mash: The Retreat, or Doubled Oeuvre**

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**Pat Myers**
Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for
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School administrators said they needed proof. So she recorded the teacher. “Aaron’s a loser,” the Florida teacher said.

Jul 6

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Trump says golf legend is “very smart” for not divulging much about his feelings toward the president.

1 day ago

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19 minutes ago