Style Invitational Week 970: Couple it — rhyme a line of poetry with your own, funnier line

By Pat Myers
May 4, 2012

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view (William Shakespeare)
Are thanks to Dr. Young, Park Avenue. (Frank Oseen)

Turning and turning in the widening gyre, (W.B. Yeats)
My clothes are almost ready for the dryer. (Robert Schechter)

The examples above by two of our most poetic Losers (not Shakespeare and Yeats; those guys never won a T-shirt) are from a 2006 edition of the lightverse journal Bumbershoot, which calls them tailgaters. Robert suggested recently on the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook that we try for more. This week: Take a line from any well-known poem and pair it with your own second line to make a humorous couplet. I'm not going to say they must rhyme and have consistent meter, but my lunch is that rhyming, scanning couplets would be much funnier and cleverer. You can find innumerable poems online by Googling "famous poems" and whatnot.

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln-statue bobblehead that is the new Style Invitational trophy. Second place, in accordance with the literary theme, receives a Lil William (Shakespeare) "posable figure," if you like your human figures posed as human Transformers; he's a bit blocky. However, he is lil — about three inches tall. He also seems to be wearing a Speedo.

Donated by Loser Brunch coordinator Pie Snelson.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt, a yearned-for Loser Mug or the new, ardently desired Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lustied-after Loser magnet. First Offenders get a
smelly, tree-shaped air “freshener” (Fir Stink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 14; results published June 3 (online June 1). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 970” 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/StyleInv. The subhead for this week’s honorable mentions is by Roy Ashley; the one for the Week 962 extras is by Jeff Conomopsis; the alternative headline in the “Next Week” line is by Chris Doyle. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

Report from Week 966

In which we asked you to construct strings of words that change by one letter from the previous — adding, subtracting or substituting: Cleverness notwithstanding, there are only so many of these a body can read at once. So we offer some great entries from Week 962 that we didn’t have room for last month.

The winner of the Inkin’ Memorial

MITT: “Mutt must muss, mess less. Let’s let pet pee. See? Set? Get pet! Put pup up! Uh??? UGH!!!!” (Dave Zarow, Reston, Va.)

2. Winner of the little tin of Emergency Underpants:
CAIN, coin, corn, core, lore, lose, LOST!
PAUL, pull, poll, pole, pose, lose, LOST!
NEWT, next, text, test, jest, just, last, LOST!
RICK, risk, rise, rose, lose, LOST! (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

3. OBAMA. Bama, bam, lam, slam, ISLAM — Rufus Boggs, Backwater, Ala. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)


Badder, sadder: Honorable mentions

“CSI” (spoiler alert):
GROPE, rope, rape, tape, tap, rap, trap, trip, grip, grime, CRIME. (Amanda Yanovitch, Midlothian, Va.)

GOP got God, DoD, Dad, Mad Man; ran Ron, WON! (Mike Caslin, Round Hill, Va.)

ObamaCare, ObamaScare, ObamaScar, ObamaSpar, ObamaSpot, ObamaSplit, ObamaSplat. (David Genser, Pouey, Calif.)

WEINER, whiner, whiter, waster, taster, tester, texter, SEXTER. (Chris Doyle)

“I Didn’t Start With P”:
RICK rock; dock dock; pork; porky, perky PERRY. (Kevin Dopart)

RUSH, rash, rasp, grasp, grass, CRASS. (Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.; Larry Powers, Falls Church, Va., a First Offender)

YOUTH, mouth, south, soot, sooty, booty, hooby, boom, roomy, room, loom, loon, loopy, hooby, hoody, MOODY. (Dan Steinbrocker, Los Angeles)

NEWT, next, text, test, vest, vast, vase, case, ease, easel, WEASEL. (Veggo Larsen, Farmers Branch, Tex.)
EASTER, feaster, faster, master, masser, Mass o'er, Mass over, PASSEOVER. (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

TRUMP, rump, ump, imp, simp, sim, him, ham, sham, shame, shave, have, hare, hire, FIRE. (Matt Monitto, Elon, N.C.)

Even More of a Miracle?
WATER: later, LAGER. (Kevin Depart)

TUTU, tuts, tots, toes, toe, woe, won, win, twin, TWAIN. (Judy Blanchard, Novi, Mich.)

Market Jitters
BULL, bell, sell, yell, yelp, help, heap, hear, fear, BEAR. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

BEANS, beads, bends, wends, wands, warts, FARTS. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville, Va.)

Saturday Night
LUST, lush, bush, rush, ruse, rouse, arouse, CAROUSE. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

And Last: LOSER, loner, boner, bone, bore, sore, swore, sworn, worn, morn, MORON. (Doug Frank, Crosby, Tex.)

And Even Laster: POO, loo, look, lock, luck, suck, sick, ick, INK. (Amanda Yanovitch)

Har clippings: More honorable mentions from Week 962

in which the Losers took a sentence from that week's Posts and came up with a question it could have answered:

A. You want to keep banging on him and stop him from jumping.
Q. What's the first step in making Grasshopper Pie? (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

A. "I've taken a recent liking to 'man toy.'"
Q. Mr. President, do you have a nickname for Vice President Biden? (Melissa Yorks, Gaithersburg, Md.)

A. "I can't really pinpoint any actual conversation that we had."
Q. Did your doctor say the medical marijuana is helping you? (David Genser)

A. They were rare birds indeed.
Q. Is it true that the recent cases of food poisoning were caused by undercooked turkeys? (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

Still running — deadline Monday night — is our “grandfoals” contest: See wapo.st/StyleInv; click on “Week 969.”

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.
Eats & Drinks newsletter
The latest buzz on the D.C. area dining and bar scene, featuring restaurant critic Tom Sietsema, every Wednesday.

Pat Myers
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 @PatMyers

The Post Recommends

Mollie Tibbetts's father decries vitriol against Hispanics, saying they're 'towans with better food'
Rob Tibbetts spoke kind words about the Hispanic community during his daughter's funeral.
13 hours ago

Opinion
Possibly Trump's stupidest tweet ever
Trump's economic illiteracy is staggering
Aug 15

Amid uproar, Melania Trump placates as her husband provokes
The first lady hosted a gathering of presidential descendants for a White House tree planting as outrage swirled over President Trump's tepid tribute to John McCain.
20 hours ago