Style Invitational Week 1129: Nobody uses spelling bee words? You will.

Plus ‘Paint It Bla,’ ‘Eels on the Bus’ and more clipped song titles from Week 1125

Pyopoiesis is the thing with pus! For Style Invitational Week 1129, write a poem that uses a spelling bee word.

By Pat Myers Editor and judge of The Style Invitational

June 16, 2015

Pyopoiesis! The word is a doozy. It’s not about matters poetic. It’s all about pustules that smell and are oozy! (How’s that for a morning emetic?)

Last month’s National Spelling Bee, like last year’s, ended in a tie between the top two kids: Midwestern eighth-graders Gokul Venkatachalam and Vanya Shivashankar both correctly spelled every word put to them — 20 rounds’ worth — until the judges declared them both winners, packed up their Webster’s Thirds and went home.

While each speller gained national fame along with $37,000 in money and prizes, their shared pursuit always brings out the critics who call spelling bees a colossal waste of time and effort put into memorizing lists of words that nobody ever uses.

Nobody? That’s us! We’ll use them! This week: Write a humorous short poem (eight lines or fewer) incorporating one of the 20
short poem (eight lines or fewer) incorporating one of the 50 words listed at the bottom of this page, as in the example above by that, er, udite man of letters (usually the letter F) Gene Weingarten; each was used at some point in this year’s bee. The poems have to make sense with the words’ true meanings; you can’t just pretend they mean something else. Most of the real meanings aren’t brain-achers; they include “horseshoe-shaped,” “freckles” and “a wasp nest.” A Google search for any of these words should give you the definition and pronunciation on the first page of results. You may use the word in a different form, such as a plural or a different tense.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired “Whole Fools” Grocer Bag. Honorable mentions get a lustied-after Loser magnet designed by Bob Staake; either “The Wit Hit the Fan” or “Hardly Har-Har.” First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday night, June 29; results published July 19 (online July 16). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include “Week 1129” 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/InvRules. The headline for this week’s results is by Jeff Contompasis; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Mae Scanlan. 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.

The Style Conversational: The Empress’s weekly online column, published late Thursday afternoon, discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

And the results of The Style Invitational contest posted four weeks ago . . .

SEASON OF THE WIT[ch]: The chopped song titles of Week 1125

In Week 1125, the Empress asked you to cut the beginning or end (or both) off a song title — as if it were on an electronic readout where the whole name didn’t fit — and describe the result. Twenty-four people sent in “Stairway to Heaven[en],” and 15 offered “Light My Fire” (the Doors’ never-released Christmas album).

4th place:
SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO [Town]: Mrs. Claus sings about the aftermath of a night of excess with the eggnog. (Josh Feldblyum, Louisville)

3rd place:

ITSY BITSY TEENIE WEEENIE YELL[ow Polka Dot Bikini]: Original title of “When Doves Cry.” (Ed Flynn, Alexandria, Va.)

2nd place and the “melted” “souvenir snowman” globe from Florida:

CHANGES IN LATITUDE, CHANGES IN ATT[itude]: A song about a dude who gets bad cell coverage on spring break in Fort Lauderdale. (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

And the winner of the Inkin’ Memorial:

PAINT IT BLA[ch]: The new Sherwin-Williams jingle sings the praises of ecru. (Tom Panther, Springfield, Va.)

Main that tune: honorable mentions


[H]OLD ME NOW: Yoda ponders himself in the mirror. (David Clayton, Alexandria, Va.)

[What’s] NEW, PUSSYCAT?: The song you dread hearing on your first day of hard time. (G. Smith, Alexandria, Va.)

[E]BONY AND IVORY: The fashion industry tells what it’s looking for in runway models. (Dion Black, Washington)

[All] ABOUT THAT BASS: Okay, maybe the fish wasn’t quite three feet long... (Ben Schwalb, Severna Park, Md.)

[Priv]ATE EYES: Newly discovered single by the Zombies. (Larry Gray, Union Bridge, Md.)

[I] FEEL THE EAR[th Move]: Spinal Tap’s follow-up to “Smell the Glove” (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

[R]EFANNE: “You don’t have to turn on the light at all, actually...” (Craig Dykstra, Centreville, Va.)

[T]OUCH ME IN THE MORNING: Theme from “50 Shades of Grey.” (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DR[eam]: A college student knows how to make his Tiger Mom proud. (Dion Black)
ETERNAL FLAM[e]:

Close your eyes, stick your heads in the sand;
Voters, when your candidate's lying, everything is grand.
You won't give a damn even when they're lying,
You'll keep buying their eternal flam! (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

I'D LIKE TO TEACH THE WORLD TO SIN[g]: By the Temptations.
(Jeff Conomopasis, Ashburn, Va.)

LAY ME DO[wa]: This original Beatles song title was cleaned up to “Love”
for AM radio. (Ben Schwab)

HAZY SHADE OF WIN[ter]: By the Brady Bunch, the official song of
Super Bowl XLIX. (Jessica Mathews, Stanley, Va.)

RIVER DEEP, MO[untain High]: A song from “Exodus: The Musical.”
(Marri Penning Coleman, Falls Church, Va.)

ROLL OVER BEET[ken]: Vegan-rock remake of “On Top of Spaghetti”
(Ken Gallant, Conway, Ark.)

STREET FIGHTING MA[n]: A tribute to Toya Graham, Baltimore’s recent
“mother of the year.” (Michael Levy, Silver Spring, Md.)

THANK GOD I'M A COUNTRY [Boy]: The Vatican national anthem.
(Rob Wolf, Gaithersburg, Md.)

WHATEVER LOI[a Wants, Lola Gets]: Teens’ texts set to music. (Warren
Tanabe, Annapolis, Md.)

[F]IRE AND RAIN: This mix doesn’t play well on the Beltway. (Ellen Ryan,
Rockville, Md.)

(The Wh)[EEL'S ON THE BUS: Scary kids’ song performed by Samuel L.
Jackson. (Mark Raffman)

AIN'T TOO PRO[ud to Beg]: A more appropriate song than “Hail to the
Redskins.” (Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney, Md.)

MELLOW YE[LLow]: Donovan sings about sitting on a lit reef, (Jim
Barnes, Leesburg, Va., who got his last Invite ink in Week 180, in 1996)

UNDER THE BOAR[dwalk]: A ballad about Miss Piggy’s summer
romance. (Ed Edwards, Surrey, England)

I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKI[n]: The Fonz sings to the shark he’s
jumping. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

[ST]RANGERS IN THE NIGHT: A song from the Texas border:
Rangers in the night—look out, Hispanics!
Roaming through the night and causing panics,
Checking for IDs to make the state secure;
Doing all they can, protecting borders,
Even if it takes guns, bombs and mortars,
They will keep our race completely white and pure . . . (Neal Starkman,
Seattle)

**THE LADY IS A TRAM** ([p]: Opening number from the musical version of
“A Streetcar Named Desire.” (Bernard and Laurie Brink, Cleveland, Mo.)

**TAKE ME TO CHU** ([rch]: An alien “Jeopardy!” fan comes after the player
he hates most. (Mary Kappus, Washington)

**MY BLUE HEAVE** ([n]: Maybe tequila with blueberry pie wasn’t such a
good idea after all. (Jeff Brechlin; Edmund Conti, Raleigh, N.C.)

**AFTERNOON DELI** ([ght]:
Thinking of you’s working up an appetite
Not for you, but lox and bagel and a black-and-white ... (Jeff Shirley,
Richmond, Va.)

And Last: **CAN I GET A WIT** ([ness]: The Empress’s weekly lament. (Joy
Sibley, Fairfax, Va.; Roger Dalrymple)

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**THE SPELLING BEE WORDS FOR THE WEEK 1129 CONTEST**

acriftharch  
backfisch  
bayadere  
bouquetiere  
bruxellois  
caudillismo  
cerastes  
cibarial  
cocozelle  
collutorium  
commissurotomy  
cravenette  
ctenoid  
cypheline  
distelfink  
ephalides  
ephalism  
ghastostome  
hippocraniform  
hooresh  
iridocyclitis  
kipuka  
lulliloo  
mamaliga  
minhag  
mymotheriae  
nixtamal
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

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