Style Invitational Week 1171: What’s my (next) line? Song ‘tailgaters’

Pair a line from a song with one of your own. Plus: How are tiny hands like Hillary’s emails? The Week 1167 winners.

"O say can you see" rhymes with "TP". This week’s contest is for "tailgaters" for songs. (Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

(By Pat Myers, Editor and judge of The Style Invitational April 14, 2015)

(Click here to skip down to the results of Week 1167, our perennial compare-and-contrast contest)

O say can you see, by the dawn’s early light, (Francis Scott Key)
That some kids put TP in our front yard last night? (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Where have all the flowers gone?
And why’s there crabgrass in my lawn? (Pete Seeger/Duncan)

Baby, you’re a firework (Katy Perry)
That went off prematurely — jerk. (Katy Perry/Duncan)

They’re called tailgaters: You quote a line from a poem and follow it with a line of your own. We had a tailgater contest four years ago, but this time...
we'll have a musical twist, suggested by Loser Duncan Stevens, who happened to get his first blot of Invitational ink in that contest: Take a line from any song and pair it with your own second line to make a humorous rhyming couplet; the second line should match the rhythm of the first, rather than the second line of the song itself, as in Duncan’s examples above. Be sure to include the title of the song you’re quoting. (And please don’t add your name at the end of each entry, like the ones above; the Empress tries to judge the contest without seeing who’s written what. She’ll put your name—or someone else’s name—there when she prints the entry.)

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place appropriately receives a kit called “How to Kazoo: User’s Guide & Practitioner’s Manual,” complete with “professional quality kazoo” and tips on playing songs of all genres. Best thing about a kazoo: The player can’t sing at the same time.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug, the older-model “This Is Your Brain on Mugs” mug or a vintage Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-over Loser magnets, “Magnet Dum Laude” or “Falling Jest Short.” First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink), Email entries to losers@washpost.com. Deadline is Monday night, April 25; results published May 5. or Feb. 15. You can follow us up to 5x a day @StyleInvite on Twitter.

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.

DINGDINGDING! IMPORTANT LOSER ANNOUNCEMENT!

It escaped the Empress’s notice three weeks ago that Jeff Contompasis’s joke about camel urine in the Week 1164 results was his 500th blot of ink — thereby admitting JeffCon to the den of iniquity that is the Style Invitational Hall of Fame, as its 11th member in the Invite’s 23-year existence. Jeff, who’s renowned for making fun of his own nerdiness — “Is it just me who interprets the restroom sign ‘Wet Floor’ as a command?” — tells a bit about himself, and about his weekly process of entering the Invite, in this week’s Style Conversational at bit.ly/conv1171.
And the results of the Style Invitational contest announced four weeks ago . . .

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LAUGH-LONG RELATIONSHIPS: REPORT FROM WEEK 1167

Week 1167 was one of our perennial compare-and-contrast contests in which the Empress listed 18 random items and you had to explain how any two were similar, different or otherwise linked.

4th place:

The Cat in the Hat and Hillary’s emails: In both situations you wonder where all the grownups are. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

3rd place:

The Apple Store Employee of the Month works hard to sell iPhones; tiny hands work hard to manufacture them. (Kristen Rahman, Silver Spring, Md.)

2nd place

and the winner of the “Back to the Future” manure car:
An all-you-can-eat buffet and leftover Valentine’s candy: Oh, you Match.com Casanova, you! (Kathy El-Assal, Middleton, Wis.)

AND THE WINNER OF THE INKIN’ MEMORIAL

Hillary’s emails are just like three inches of snow: not enough to keep you from running for the office, but dang’d if they don’t make the route hell. (Mike Ostapiej, Mount Pleasant, S.C.)

THEY BEGGED TO DIFFER: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Both tiny hands and Hillary’s emails: The American people are sick and tired of hearing about yer dannn . . . (Ellen Ryan, Rockville, Md.)

Both the Cat in the Hat and seventh-grade boys have an optimistic view of what your mother won’t mind at all if you do. (Dudley Thompson, Cary, N.C., and father of two sons)

Hillary’s emails vs. an all-you-can-eat buffet: The feeding frenzy brought on by the latter is somewhat more dignified. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)
An all-you-can-eat buffet vs. Hillary’s emails: It’s unlikely that anyone will end up eating crow at the buffet. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

An all-you-can-eat buffet and three inches of snow: Each can lead to a run on toilet paper. (Kevin Dopart)

An all-you-can-eat buffet and three inches of snow: In D.C., there’s a good chance that either will clog vital arteries. (Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)

At the Pentagon: rank on their shoulders; with 7th-grade boys: rank in their armpits. (Dudley Thompson)

The windchill factors in when going out in three inches of snow. A windchill factor in when getting out of President Taft’s bathtub. (Chris Doyle)

The Apple Store Employee of the Month might get free Nats tickets. Walmart mulch might come with free gnats, ticks, etc. (Danielle Nowlin)

The last Cheeto in the bag vs. Tiny Hands: One is an unnatural orange mess that leaves a bad taste in your mouth; the other one isn’t a nickname of some girl you’ve eaten out of your mouth, but rather a name for a disciple of someone running for president. (Paul Totman, Edmonton, Alberta, a First Offender)

The Pentagon vs. Scrabble tiles: You can usually get a comprehensible word out of Scrabble tiles. (Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)

For three inches of snow it’s not worth firing up the big plow, but with your tiny hands you probably don’t have a big plow anyway. (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

Bunions: Unwanted trait of the feet.

Leftover Valentine’s candy: Fate of the unwanted treat. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

Seventh-grade boys vs. the Cat in the Hat: The cat doesn’t leave your house both destroyed and smelling of Axe body spray. (John Hutchins, Silver Spring, Md.)

An all-you-can-eat buffet and embalming fluid: You belly up to get one; you’re belly up when you get the other. (Kevin Dopart)

An all-you-can-eat buffet and Hillary’s emails: In both cases, using an official server might have kept things from getting out of hand. (Hildy Zampella, Falls Church, Va.)

An octagon vs. three inches of snow: Metrobuses run through a stop sign once in a while. (Kevin Dopart)

What’s the difference between Scrabble tiles and seventh-grade boys? It takes at least a bit of skill for teenage girls to successfully manipulate Scrabble tiles. (John Hutchins)
With an octagon, you’ve got a figure that has eight sides. With an all-you-can-eat buffet, you lose your figure when you ate the sides. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

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

The last Cheeto in the bag and bunions: Both are crunchy, zesty, delicious snacks! Oh, wait, that’s Funyuns. (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

With seventh-grade boys, there’s no such thing as leftover Valentine’s candy. (George Smith, Frederick, Md.)


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 @patmyersWTP

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