

The Style Invitational

WEEK 112: POOP FICTION

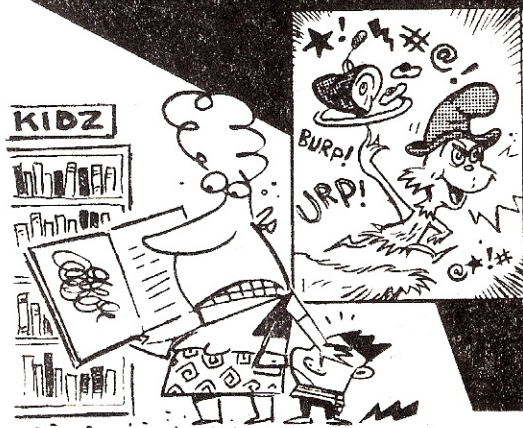
From a do-it-yourself craft book:
"So you want to make wedding presents out of pipe cleaners, egg cartons and toilet paper rolls?"

From a Science Fiction Potboiler:

"The surface of the planet was forbidding, with the general color and texture of sour cream that had been kept well beyond its optimum 'sell-by' date ..."

This Week's Contest is to come up with the opening lines of a book so bad it will compel you to stop reading immediately. Maximum, 50 words. Be sure to indicate the genre of the book (gothic romance, celebrity biography, etc). The contest was proposed by Jessica Steinhice of Washington, who we are pretty sure stole it from an old New York magazine, though we are not prepared to make that allegation officially at this time. Jessica wins a pirate flag. It must be noted that Jessica has now "hit for the cycle;" that is, she has 1) won a contest outright, 2) been a runner-up, 3) received an honorable mention and 4) proposed a contest idea that has been accepted. The only Style Invitational milestone she has yet to achieve is to be mentioned by name in someone else's winning entry. More on this as it develops. First-prize winner receives a festive baseball cap with long

From a children's book:



I am Sam,
 Damn I am.
 I can cuss like
 a strumpet,
 I can burp like
 a trumpet...

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stringy gray hair attached, making the wearer look like an extremely colorful person with dubious personal hygiene. It is worth \$30. Runners-up, as always, get the coveted Style Invitational losers' T-shirts. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper stickers. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to the Style Invitational, Week 112, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, fax them to 202-334-4312, or submit them via the Internet to this address: losers@access.digex.net. Internet users: Please indicate the appropriate Week Number in the "subject" field. Entries must be received on or before Monday, May 15. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced in three weeks. Editors reserve the right to alter entries for taste, appropriateness or humor. No purchase necessary. Still accepting entries for new slogans for the Style Invitational bumper sticker. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate families are not eligible for prizes.

REPORT FROM WEEK 109,

in which we asked you for funny examples of fractured English. But first, a confession. We failed to indicate whether we wanted made-up examples of unfortunate foreign-sounding efforts at English (which we did, but which proved hugely difficult to do well) or real examples of bad English you have seen in your travels (which we didn't, but which proved much funnier than anything you could make up). So those real ones are the winners, despite some worthy fictional efforts by Elden Carnahan of Laurel ("**Our staff goes out with trash every night!**"), John Kammer of Herndon ("**Fine to not flush after using toilet!**"), Robin D. Grove of Washington, ("**Do not consume if your date has expired!**"), Jerry Pannullo of Chevy Chase, ("**Dogs must walk on tightropes!**") and Karyn LaCroix of Wheaton: ("**Bus driver will not stop unless buzzed!**"). All the rest of the items below are real, or purportedly real. Most were accompanied by photographs or photocopies, or were otherwise verified.

◆ Third Runner-Up, on a menu in Ljubljana, Slovenia:

"Beef broth with home-made insertion ... 30c"

"Serbian spit ... 65c" (Don J. Donchi, Potomac)

◆ Second Runner-Up, under Fish and Seafood selections on a menu of the Bae Lu Restaurant in Liaoning Province, People's Republic of China:

"Juicy Yellow River Crap" (A.J. Richardson, Waynesboro, Va.)

◆ First Runner-Up: A sign on a cable car in Fengdu, China:

"For your safety the following people don't take the cable car please:

"1. Drunkard.

"2. Neuropath, idiot and easily dizzy people.

"3. Very old and deformed man whose action is inconvenient." (Marian Sullivan, Silver Spring)

◆ *And the Winner of the book on bodily fluids:*

In a letter I received from Russia after visiting my pen pals:

"Going home, we were speaking of you and thinking of warm meet." (Cissie Owen, Leesburg)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

From a doorway in Seoul: "NOTICE: No more whore house! In the future we try to be laundry house. Thank you." (Allan Galfund, Chevy Chase)

From a sign in the garden of a Thai temple at Chang Mai: "Handsome is as handsome dogs" (Jimmie Market, Warrenton)

From a brochure for a small Russian airline: "Any failure to keep an order and infringement of on-board regulations may cause unpredictable consequences. Crew's actions to suppress the possible incident will be urgent and drastic up to fulfillment of the expensive forced landing. Besides the juridical consequences, infringer will be obliged to pay an impressive fine to compensate the waste." (Rick and Nancy Grimes, Bowie)

From a Chinese restaurant in Florence: "Spring volls; Fried toast with springs; Za za soup with park filet; Fans soup with chicken; Za zai with bear cuva soup; Veal with green popers; Dessert vools." (Mikko Aurela, Arlington)

From a menu at a Chinese restaurant in Italy: "Chopped Suzy." (Maria Wainer Yaffe, Silver Spring, who notes: "We assume they meant Chop Suey, but ordered another dish, anyway.")

Outside a Freiburg, Germany, bakery: "Get your buns in here." (Kevin Wolf, Arlington)

◆ And Last:

From the YMCA in Huntington, W.Va., circa 1980: "Please do not leave stools in showers." (Bob Sprague, Alexandria)