



Style

Style Invitational, Week 921: Give us the Willies; and the winning news-haiku

By Pat Myers
May 27, 2011

Little Willie, oh, so shy,
Poked a stick in father's eye,
Mother yelled, "Now don't you bawl,
You darned old fool — you've seen it all."

We found the inspiring bit of verse above at [RuthlessRhymes.com](#) as an example of a "Little Willie" poem — a venerable four-line genre in which Master W. does some nasty thing and, well, doesn't tend to learn to Be a Good Boy by poem's end. Ms. Less, whose role as her family's genealogist keeps her looking through old newspapers, found that one, by a Claude Miller, in the Nevada State Journal of Feb. 1, 1932. (You think bad taste in newspaper copy is some recent development?) We learned about these poems by busy contest-suggester Malcolm Fleschner, who remembers his grandmother telling them.

This week: Write an original Little Willie poem, perhaps reflecting our current era. Don't submit it to Ruthless Rhymes until after these results run in four weeks; we won't publish it here if it's already there.



(Bob Staake / For The Washington Post)

Winner gets [the Inker](#), the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a purple coffee mug featuring the logo of Scoop Away, "America's No. 1 Clumping Cat Litter." Donated by 110-time Loser Phil Frankenfeld.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted [Style Invitational Loser T-shirt](#) or yearned-for [Loser Mug](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-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, June 6; results published June 26 (June 24 online). Include "Week 921" 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. Complete rules at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational. The revised title for next week's results is by Andrew Hoenig; this week's honorable-mentions subhead is by 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. If you'd like an e-mail notification each week when the Invitational and Conversational are posted online, write to the Empress at



Most Read Lifestyle

- 1 Analysis**
A short investigation into Trump's claims of 'RIGGED' Google results against him
- 2 Perspective**
The perils of being a woman who's just asking to be left alone
- 3** John Goodman reveals Roseanne will be killed off in 'The Conners' spinoff
- 4** Why our culture's mild obsession with Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen may never end
- 5 Perspective**
Carolyn Hax: A kiss-and-don't-tell with an ex-boyfriend's buddy



washingtonpost.com
© 1996-2018 The Washington Post

- Help and Contact Us
- Policies and Standards
- Terms of Service
- Privacy Policy
- Print Products Terms of Sale
- Digital Products Terms of Sale
- Submissions and Discussion Policy
- RSS Terms of Service
- Ad Choices

losers@washpost.com (note that in the subject line) and she'll add you to the mailing list.

Little Willie, oh, so shy,

Poked a stick in father's eye,

Mother yelled, "Now don't you bawl,

You darned old fool — you've seen it all."

We found the inspiring bit of verse above at RuthlessRhymes.com as an example of a "Little Willie" poem — a venerable four-line genre in which Master W. does some nasty thing and, well, doesn't tend to learn to Be a Good Boy by poem's end. Ms. Less, whose role as her family's genealogist keeps her looking through old newspapers, found that one, by a Claude Miller, in the Nevada State Journal of Feb. 1, 1932. (You think bad taste in newspaper copy is some recent development?) We learned about these poems by busy contest-suggester Malcolm Fleschner, who remembers his grandmother telling them. **This week: Write an original Little Willie poem**, perhaps reflecting our current era. Don't submit it to Ruthless Rhymes until after these results run in four weeks; we won't publish it here if it's already there.

Winner gets [the Inker](#), the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a purple coffee mug featuring the logo of Scoop Away, "America's No. 1 Clumping Cat Litter." Donated by 110-time Loser Phil Frankenfled.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted [Style Invitational Loser T-shirt](#) or yearned-for [Loser Mug](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-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, June 6; results published June 26 (June 24 online). Include "Week 921" 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. Complete rules at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational. The revised title for next week's results is by Andrew Hoenig; this week's honorable-mentions subhead is by 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. 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.

Report from Week 917

in which we asked for haiku (in its loosest definition of any 5-7-5-syllable poem) referring to recent news. The contest ran in the May 1 Post. In the preceding days, some people had a big wedding and President Obama had had fun embarrassing Donald Trump. And right on May 1, the president appeared on on TV with something else to write about.

First, we'd like to show off [the second of our two new Loser magnets](#) for honorable mentions; they arrived this week at the Invitational's imperial office building, the Crumlin. We'll start sending it out, along with [our other new magnet](#), as soon as we use up the 2010-11 set — this week or next. The slogans both got ink in, but didn't win, the [contest for the slogan of the new Loser Mug](#). And both happen to be by Double Hall of Fame Loser Tom Witte. As always, the magnets were designed and created by the incredibly magnetic Bob Staake. (By the way, if you get an honorable mention and you



have your heart set on one or the other of these magnets, e-mail the Empress no later than the Sunday that the Invite runs, and she'll try to remember.)

The winner of the Inker:

Where's Hillary?

The man who edits

Photographs for [Di Tzeitung](#)

Is a son of a .

(Danny Bravman, Chicago)

2. Winner of the pair of [Fighting Granddads](#):

Joyous wedding tears

For Kate, replaced with fears of

Kids with Grandpa's ears. *(Brad Alexander, Wanneroo, Australia)*

3. Springtime in D.C.!

Two things ruin outdoor fun:

Mosquitoes and Nats. *(Mae Scanlan, Washington)*

4. When Kate wed William,

"For richer or for poorer"

Was more howl than vow. *(Howard Walderman, Columbia, Md.)*

Nice tryku: Honorable mentions

"Burial at sea":

The ultimate jettison.

But doesn't scum float? *(Elise Jacobs, Silver Spring, Md.)*

Welcome, Osama!

We hope you don't mind sharing

a room with Adolf. *(Miles Moore, Alexandria, Va.)*

That hopey-changeey

Thing, Sarah, is working out

Fine. Thanks for asking. *(Anne Paris, Arlington, Va.)*

GOP budget

Gives all [54-year-olds](#)

Cardiac arrest. *(J.S. Hedegard, Skokie, Ill., a First Offender)*

Donald Trump is rich.

But if he were president,

There'd be hell toupee. *(Lindsey Elling, Millersville, Md., an 11th-grader whose English teacher assigned the contest to her class; a First Offender)*

"Trump, as requested

I have the long form for you:

Yooooouuu aaaaarrre suuuch aaaa twiiiiittt." *(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)*

Mr. President,

Where did your mom's water break?

Show us the birth stain! *(Yvonne Yoerger, Annandale, Va., a First Offender)*

Escalator ride

Cut short by an unsealed hatch:

Metro opens floors. *(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)*

Kraken attacking?

Cruel orthodontic device?

No, it's just Bea's hat. *(Christy Tosatto, Brookeville, Md.)*

Pity football fans:

For us, unlike in baseball,

One strike and we're out. (*Craig Dykstra, Centreville, Va.*)

NFL lockout:

Expect the 'Skins to have their

Best season in years. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

BIG HEADLINES ON ICE!

A FIRST-ROUND ROMP FOR THE CAPS!

THEN . . . drat . . . lowercase.

(*"Manny Banuelos," revealed after the judging to be The Post's Gene Weingarten; he wins no prize*)

Tornadoes wiped out

Our power. Can't watch Fox News.

Don't know what to think. (*Matt Egan, Reston, Va., a First Offender*)

Newspapers' use of

"Enhanced interrogation"

Tortures the language. (*Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.*)

"We must raise taxes!"

"No, we must lower taxes!"

Budget: Can't budge it. (*Dave Prevar, Annapolis*)

Doomsday came and went.

Looks like my haiku is still

alive and kicking. (*Amanda Yanovitch, Midlothian, Va.*)

Next week: *Colt following, or Once more with foaling*



Read These Comments newsletter

The best comments and conversations at The Washington Post, delivered every Friday. Join the conversation.

Sign me up

By signing up you agree to our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

3 Comments



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](#)

The Post Recommends

President Trump blasts 'Fake News Media' after Tiger Woods is asked about President Trump

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

1 day ago



She was worried how a 'teacher of the year' treated her 5-year-old son. So she made a secret recording.

School administrators said they needed proof. So she recorded



the teacher. "Aaron y tu loser," the Florida teacher said.

Jul 6



Three people were caught in a rip tide, and a rescuer faced 'the toughest decision'

Matt Tomaszewski extended his paddleboard to the exhausted couple bobbing in the water: "If you want to survive, you need to grab this board."

