

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1265: Parody for the course — write a song about school

Plus Post Mortems: winners of our annual obit poem contest



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers February 1 [Email the author](#)

(Click [here to skip down](#) to this year's winning obit poems)

Driver's Ed (to "Tonight" from "West Side Story")

**Turn right! Turn right! My knuckles turning white
From spending the last hour in this car.
Red light! Red light! That parking spot's too tight!**

**How the hell did we make it this far?
Today I had my introduction to driver's ed instruction,
And now, half-dead of fright,
It's au revoir, I'm off to calm my nerves in the bar,
Good night!**

This week's contest was suggested by Almost to the Hall of Fame Loser Mark Raffman, who suggested a new category for song parodies: **Write a song relating to a class or course of instruction, or to school in general**, as in Mark's example above, which the Empress hopes is not about a 16-year-old. Since our last parody contest this past summer was about science

It doesn't matter what size your retirement account is,

\$500K
Michelle's Retirement Account

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your own piece on our latest parody contest, this past summer, was about science and technology, we don't want songs just about what's taught in a class, but something referring to schools/teaching/learning itself. Will this contest be free of political humor? Hmm, are there poli-sci classes?

Submit up to 25 entries at the website wapo.st/enter-invite-1265 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a natural-toned **cotton tote bag** advertising the Spanish juice bar chain Fit Food, with the slogan (in English) "Dirty mind, clean body" — imprinted with a photo of two half-lemons, their, er, perky ends bodaciously facing the camera; one of them bears a ring piercing. Donated by Roy Ashley, who picked it up in Madrid.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "We've Seen Better" or "IDiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, Feb. 19 — you get an extra week!** Results published March 4 (online March 1). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Beverley Sharp; Tom Witte wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev.

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

And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .

PERISH AND PUBLISH: THE WINNING OBIT POEMS

Week 1261 was our annual contest for poems about people (and the occasional animal) who died last year. Whoever sent the one for Don McLean: It's not his day yet.

4th place:

Moses Ndlovu (died in Plumtree, Zimbabwe)

"A selfie with that elephant would really be a coup!

"I'll drive him from the shrubbery to get a better view!"

The charging bull was happy to oblige — not only that:

It was a photo-finish (and in 30 seconds — flat.)

(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

3rd place:

At least it's a bag, not a T-shirt. This week's second prize, from a juice bar in Madrid.

Nélio José Nicolai, inventor of caller ID

Of all people, you knew how the system should work —

See the name and decide: friend or foe, gem or jerk.

A small child could do it, or even a pup!





So why, when Death called, did you ever pick up?

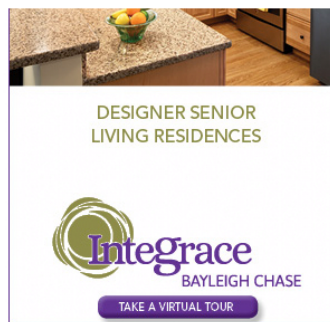
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

2nd place

and the **X-ray motif socks**:

The immigrant from Ghana who died rescuing neighbors from a Bronx apartment fire

- 2 Perspective**
President Trump's power to pardon himself, as skewered by cartoons 
- 3** Celebrities, fashion insiders react to death of Kate Spade 
- 4 Review**
Sex, politics and art painted in broad strokes in 'Botticelli in the Fire' 
- 5 Perspective**
Trump's Super Bowl party without the Eagles, as mocked through cartoons 



Our Online Games

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Emmanuel Mensah never knew
His native land was dung.
We need more "wretched refuse" just like him
And less from Donald's tongue.
(Beryl Benderly, Washington)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Hugh Hefner

The women he led astray,
Used for their T&A,
Bedded and tossed away,
Might find this funny:

Bedded and tossed away,
Might find this funny:

He's met his Maker; She
Issued an apt decree:
He'll spend eternity
Dressed as a bunny.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Fails from the crypt: Honorable mentions

Kim Jong Nam, older brother of Kim Jong Un

Said Kim Jong Un to Kim Jong Nam:
"You're not our father's heir. I am!"
Said Kim Jong Nam to Kim Jong Un:
"Who cares? I'll live abroad, have fun!
Life will be one long vacation."
(Till brotherly assassination . . .)
(Hugh Thirlway, The Hague)

Roger Ailes

Now the CEO of Fox
Does his lying in a box.
(Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

Ken Kaiser, major league umpire

This arbiter of strikes and balls was fearsome, bold and stout.
At those who dared protest his calls: "You're outta here!" he'd shout.
When fans cried, "Kill the ump!" he scoffed, ignoring their entreaties,
Until at last, his mask he doffed, done in by diabetes.
Yet now on Heaven's field of dreams, eternity he passes,
Behind the plate, with angels' screams:
"Hey, umpire! Get some glasses!"
(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Don Rickles

Based a career on the idea that it tickles
To hear really rotten things said to
Someone who isn't you.
(Max Gutmann, Sunnyvale, Calif.)

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Stanislav Petrov, missile controller who ignored a false-alarm nuclear attack

In '83, with Cold War tensions high,
A Russian, at his button, didn't use it.
Though sirens screamed to let the missiles fly,
The truly big know when they shouldn't lose it.
There wouldn't be a smithereen still left of
Our world today, if not for Comrade Petrov.
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Thomas Starzl, organ transplant pioneer

He gave a ray of hope to those
Whose chance was but a sliver.
But if he questioned "What am I?"
Of course we knew: swapped liver.
(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Joseph Nicolosi, "conversion therapy" advocate

To the man who insisted that gays could be "cured":
Although homophobes liked you a lot,
Many thousands of others just wished, rest assured,
You'd converted from bonkers to not. (Melissa Balmain)

Monty Hall (I)

The costumed contestants on "Let's Make a Deal"
Would hope that their luck didn't flee;
With choice of a door, Monty Hall would reveal
A prize or a "zonk." As for me,
I watched every day as a youngster with zeal;
I heard every joyful "Whoopie!"
To pay him my final respects, should I kneel
At Grave Number 1, 2, or 3?
(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

Monty Hall (II)

When Monty opened up his eyes, he learned that he was dead.
He found himself in paradise. And then Saint Peter said:
"Care to trade your paradise for what's behind that cloud?"
"A deal?" said Monty. "Sure, why not?" The angels cheered out loud.
Saint Peter moved the cloud aside, then Monty praised the Lord,
For who the hell needs paradise when you can drive a Ford?
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Haruo Nakajima

The actor who portrayed Godzilla

Hence shall act as coffin filla. (Jesse Frankovich)

Della Reese of "Touched by an Angel"

"Della Reese," said Saint Peter, "I think I can find
You a role that goes well with that Bible you're clutching:
You will be Heaven's first angel assigned
To watch out for and stop inappropriate touching."
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Sportswriter Frank Deford

Frank Deford swore
There was more than the score
That made sports such a wide world of wonder.
So his praises be sung,
Though his buzzer has rung,
And the final count: Frank is six under.
(Seth Tucker, Washington)



Hugh Hefner (II)

At Playboy, this was his regret:
Along came Penthouse, then the Net.
Against that great expanse of skin,
His "articles" just couldn't win.
And so, as circulation dipped,
He found his mag had been outstripped. (Mark Raffman)

Zbigniew Brzezinski, foreign affairs adviser

When you're waiting in line at those ol' Pearly Gates
To enter the kingdom of light,
And they look up your name in the Book of the Fates,
Here's hoping they've got it spelled right. (Duncan Stevens)

Johnny Hallyday, French pop icon:

France's Elvis — may he rest in peace.
Mais oui, [*il a quitté l'edifice.*](#)
(Mark Raffman)

Emma Morano (1899–2017), the last surviving person born in the 1800s:

Higgledy piggledy,
Emma Morano has
Left us, and though it was
Sad she should go,
News of her passing came
Nonunexpectedly,
Since she was born before
Nineteen-oh-oh.
(Jesse Frankovich)

Stubbs the Cat, "mayor" of Talkeetna, Alaska

For years, Alaskan tourists made a mandatory beeline
To meet Talkeetna's mayor, such a well-connected feline

to meet Alaska's mayor, such a well-connected fellow.
"Alas!" Alaskans mourn, "he could have gotten votes aplenty
If he were in the running for VP in 2020." (Beverley Sharp)

Sue Grafton planned to finish,
But she died, her goal unmet:
To name her murder mysteries
Using all the alphabet.
So sad that she completed
Only twenty-five. You see —
Her literary legacy
Is only A to Y. (Mary Erickson, Columbia, Md., a First Offender)

Adam West, TV's Batman
Battling Joker, Penguin, Riddler,
Never playing second-fiddler,
Egghead, False-Face, Mr. Freeze?
Villains he dispatched with ease!
Now, alas, his life's finito —
He can't save us from the Cheeto. (Mark Raffman)

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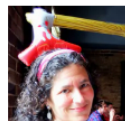
New journalism told it down and dirty:
For Jimmy Breslin, now it's finally [-30-](#).
(Ira Allen, Bethesda, Md.)

The 212 Olympians who died in 2017:

Here's to the ballers and boxers and curlers,
The cyclists and swimmers and javelin hurlers,
The ones who stood proudly while wearing a medal,
Or lost (a muffed pass, a pulled punch, a slipped pedal):
Although you're at rest under layers of lacquer,
You still make me feel like a champion slacker.
(Melissa Balmain)

**Still running — deadline Monday night, Feb. 5: our contest for
creative Yelp reviews. See wapo.st/invite1264.**

0 Comments



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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Opinion

**Why do all these criminals keep gathering
around Trump?**

It's a real head-scratcher.



21 hours ago



Analysis

Does the U.S. keep immigrant children in cages?

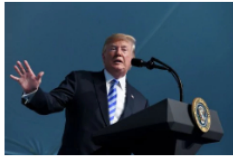
Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) said hundreds of immigrant children are locked up in cages in Texas. We investigated.



7 hours ago

A Kentucky crowd cheered a valedictorian for quoting Trump. Then he told them it was Obama.

Ben Bowling's graduation speech is one of the rare instances where electoral polling numbers can help us understand humor.



1 day ago

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