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Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1328: Hooked on ‘classic’: A sort of do-over

This time, the stories to retell in another’s voice don’t have to be ancient



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**
April 18

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the retelling of Bible stories and other tales by other “authors”)

Chapter 10 of “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,” as told by Lou Reed:

Huckleberry came from St. Petersburg, M-O,
 Him and Jim just drifted with the flow,
 Wore a dress on the down-low,
 Jim said, honey, go, go, go,
 Said, hey, Huck, take a raft to the wild side . . .
 — Frank Osen

Four weeks ago, the Empress asked the Loser Community to “tell or describe a Bible story, or another classical or folk tale . . . in the voice of a particular author or other person.” And she got a lot of creative tellings of Testaments Old and New, Roman myths, fairy tales, nursery rhymes — the best of which you’ll see in today’s results.

But there were also retellings of “Moby Dick,” “Green Eggs and Ham,” the Harry Potter series . . . clearly, the E should have specified “ancient tale” rather than a “classical” one; the term was taken, understandably, to mean a “classic” work, old or recent.

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But we're coming into making-lemonade season anyway, and it would be awful to toss such good stuff. So **for Week 1328: Summarize a book or play by any author, or retell a scene (or even a moment) from one, in the style of some other person**, as in the example above, which was an entry in the previous contest. As in Week 1324, we're looking for a paragraph, not a page. The entries could also be in verse. If an entry you sent for Week 1324 would fit Week 1328, you may send it again.

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1328 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the [Lose Cannon](#), our Style Invitational trophy.

In this week of reverence, we offer for second place a [Spock prayer candle](#), a classic glass cylinder depicting the solemn Vulcan in front of a glowing halo, complete with a flaming Sacred Heart in front of his chest. Made in Texas and donated by the long-lived and prosperous Kevin Dopart.

Other runners-up win our ["You Gotta Play to Lose"](#) Loser Mug or our ["Whole Fools"](#) Grocery Bag. 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, April 29**; results published May 19 in print, May 16 online. See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Jesse Frankovich; William Kennard wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @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 this week's contest, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

QUIPTURE: RETOLD BIBLE STORIES & OTHER TALES FROM WEEK 1324

As we note in this week's new contest, in [Week 1324](#) the Empress asked for a Bible story or classical or folk tale retold in the style of some particular person. Lots of people imitated Heming-way, which proved not so easy.

4th place:

The Creation, as told by Garrison Keillor: "Well, it's been a quiet week in the formless void." (Roy Ashley, Washington)



3rd place:

The miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11), by Emily Dickinson:
I taste a liquor never brewed —
But how I do not know —

3 Perspective

Her 'God Bless America' is a classic. Her two racist songs, a scandal. Should Kate Smith be banned from the ballpark?



4 What to expect in 'Game of Thrones' Season 8, Episode 3



5 Analysis

Which major characters are most likely to die in 'Avengers: Endgame'?



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And then there were 20: Biden (finally) enters the race

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Isn't he sort of Jewish for this? The Spock prayer candle. (ILLUMINIDOL.COM)

I swear these urns held water —
just
A half an hour ago!
You've saved the wedding,
Nazarene —
Had we but known your flair:
We would have asked you —
months ago —
To — cater — the — affair!
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills,
Md.)

2nd place

and *"The Golfer's Prayer Book"*:

The Tortoise and the Hare, by Samuel Beckett:

Hare: Shall we race?

Tortoise: Yes, let's race.

(The hare does not move)

(Frank Mann, Washington)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

"Oedipus Rex," by Allan Sherman:

Goodbye Faddah, Hello Muddah,

I slew one and wed the uddah,

When my judgment got less hazy,

I gouged out both my eyeballs and went crazy.

(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Burnt offerings: Honorable mentions

The Creation. by Eminem:

Annoyed in the dearth of a void

God unearthed and deployed

from superior material

a spherical miracle

and thus this terrestrial ball called Earth was formed.

All in a week's worth of time

this sublime gold mine shined

and in a nugget of time

God worked; created celestial worlds and blessed it,

then Day 7 in heaven He rested.

Mic drop. Amen requested. (Will Stutzman, Millersburg, Ohio)

The Creation of Eve, by Dashiell Hammett:

Her legs didn't stop until they knocked my eyes out, and then there was

more, but I didn't have any more eyes to be knocked out. "Hey,

dumplin'," I said, "which garden are you from? 'Cause that rib looks

familiar. (Neal Starkman, Seattle)

The Creation of Eve, by Jane Austen: The operation having been performed with little inconvenience to the gentleman, as he was accustomed to dozing upon a sofa when anything disagreeable might be

going on, the woman was expertly sculpted from his rib-bone, displaying all the delicacy and loveliness one might expect in the female form. As she moved to stand before him with a lightness and alacrity in her step, the man woke abruptly and turned to observe her. He found her a good deal more than tolerable, and the two presently expressed a wish to be wed as speedily as propriety would allow. (Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md., a First Offender)

Adam and Eve as told by Edgar Allan Poe:

In the Garden known as Eden, one without a single weed in,
Grew a tree with a bad seed in: one who worked toward their downfall.
“This is the lone Tree of Knowledge. Eat and know the truth — no college!
Such a deal, you must acknowledge!” So they ate, quite in his thrall.
God appeared. “That’s it! Now get out! But before you pass the wall...”
And He handed Eve Midol. (Todd DeLap, Fairfax, Va.)

Adam and Eve, as analyzed by Robert Mueller: The investigation uncovered that Adam did meet with a snake, and fruit was consumed. The fruit was shared with Eve. Adam and Eve subsequently concluded that they were naked and hid. Through the course of the investigation, we can neither confirm or deny the snake informed any change of opinion. (Mary McNamara, Washington)

The Flood, by Marie Kondo: God had seen that humanity no longer sparked joy and decided to do a little decluttering . . . (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

Balaam’s donkey, by Jeff Foxworthy: The ass sees the angel right there and stops, so Balaam gets down and beats his ass. Right there in the middle of the road! I tell my kids this and they’re like, “Daddy, you should read the Bible more often!” An ass *talking!* I’ll tell you, the last time I saw an ass talk was after three cans of Bush’s Baked Beans. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

David and Goliath, by Dick Vitale:

Goliath is a human spaceship, folks — a primetime player! At 3 cubits and a span, a true high-riser for the Philistines. And here comes David, trying to bring a W today for the Israelites — this kid might be a bench-warmer, but he’s no knee-knocker. David lines up . . . slings the rock . . . OHHHHHHHHHHHHH BABY! I DON’T BELIEVE IT! SLAM BAM JAM!” (Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va., a First Offender)

David and Goliath, by Napoleon Dynamite: David is pretty much my favorite king. He had great skills, like slingshot skills, psalm-writing skills, stealthiness skills. But if it was me facing Goliath, I would’ve used a fricking 12-gauge. Gosh! (Paul Burnham, Gainesville, Va.)

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on the visit of the Magi: So these three rich guys saw a star. Yes, they were diverse, but ALL MEN! And they represented special interests: gold, obviously Wall Street; frankincense, the polluting fossil fuel industry; myrrh, death merchants of the funeral lobby profiting from climate change. Under the Green New Deal, they would have arrived not by air-fouling camels but by solar-powered sand vehicles. Under Medicare for All they would have not gone to a stable. but to a hospital. And under College for All the

baby would grow up to be, not a carpenter or the Messiah, but Bernie Sanders. (William Joyner, Chapel Hill, N.C.)

The miracle at Cana, by wine critic Robert Parker: Starting with virtually nothing, this vintner has crafted a tawny, luscious merlot with overtones of frankincense and myrrh that will make a believer out of even the most jaded skeptic — simply divine! A solid 95. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

The first Easter, as told by local TV news: Jesus was found missing from his tomb today — but first, how to tell if your husband is watching porn on your home computer. (Roy Ashley)

The Trojan Horse, by Ogden Nash:

The Trojans' gullibility could not have turned out worse. A shame they hadn't heard the sage advice passed down to me by my great-uncle Winthrop, namely: Beware of Greeks bearing gifts, and vice versa. (Elliott Shevin, Oak Park, Mich.)

The Odyssey, by Ernest Hemingway: It was a long journey home. He was weary in a way that drinking and fishing could not fix. His dog saw him and died. (Dan Gibson-Reinemer, Alamosa, Colo., a First Offender)

The Emperor's New Clothes, by Donald Trump:

There was this emperor who was unbelievably popular. Many people say I'm even more popular, but this guy was close, okay? He decided he could walk naked down Fifth Avenue and no one would say a word. This one kid spoke up. He was a low-IQ loser. (Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring, Md.)

Rumpelstiltskin, by Sarah Huckabee Sanders: Mr.


Rumpelstiltskin has always been a dealmaker. And yes, he believes in the gold standard, once the foundation of this country. This purposeful misleading of the people by the media has to stop; it has never been the policy of Mr. Rumpelstiltskin to take children from their mothers. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

The Pharaoh in Exodus, as told by Gilbert & Sullivan:

I am the very model of a mean authoritarian,
I rule quite iron-fisted my society agrarian.
I minimize my labor costs by holding folks in slavery,
Elicit lamentations with assorted acts of knavery.
I bring on plagues where boils grow all over the extremities,
Won't let the people go or offer any other remedies.
It prob'ly would be wiser to relent and take up gardening;
Perhaps I need a doctor, 'cause my heart is always hardening.
My captives' living quarters sure aren't Doubletrees or Marriotts,
But if they run away, I'll go right after them with chariots,
And by the time I'm finished, all my army will be carrion;
I am the very model of a mean authoritarian. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Still running — deadline Monday, April 22: our perennial bank headline contest. See wapo.st/invoke1327.

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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