

The Style Invitational

WEEK 47: CAN YOU DO VERSE?

*We are a pair, like home and hearth
We go together like wavy and fuselage
We go together like Wayne and Garth
We go together like stamp and mucilage.*

*Hail the union of me and you!
Our love, my dear, is intergalactic
Twixt sun and stars will I be true
And faithfully use a prophylactic.
Have a safe and happy Valentine's Day.*



*I think of you while on the seat
And during baths and dental flossage,
I think of you while grilling meat.
My love for you is like a sausage.*

This week's contest: Bad Valentine's Day poetry. Any rhyme scheme, any form of literary dysfunction: We will reward the clumsy, the cloying, the clunky, the just plain inappropriate. First-prize winner receives, delivered to his or her home, a grotesquely ornate Valentine's Day bouquet, a value of \$100. Runners-up, as always, get the coveted Style Invitational losers' T-shirts. Honorable Mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Published entries will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to the Style Invitational, Week 47, The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or fax them to 202-334-4312. Entries must be received on or before Monday, Jan. 31. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced on Feb. 13. No purchase necessary. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate families are not eligible for prizes.

Report from Week 44,

in which we asked you to come up with a Tom Swifty joke for the 1990s:

A huge response this week, more than 5,000 entries, of which nearly 32 were publishable. The unusable fit into three categories: 1. The unfunny (Rush Limbaugh estimated conservatively; Howard said sternly) 2. The clever but obvious: (John Bobbitt said detachedly; Jack Kent Cooke said dismissively; Les Aspin said defensively; Michael Jackson said fondly) and, 3. Ideas shamelessly recycled from the 1960s ("I am coming down from my cell now," Mike Tyson said condescendingly; "I miss my sweetie," said Donald Duck lackadaisically.)

A note to the two dozen individuals who wrote self-righteously to inform us that the joke form is a "Swifty" and not a "Swiftly": Wrong. The Tom Swifty is an exercise in adverbial excess that parodies the adolescently overwritten Tom Swift adventure novels. It carries the adverbial ending. Just because something gains legitimacy through common misuse does not make it correct. If you disagree, we could care less.

◆ Sixth Runner-Up: **"Oh yeah? Well, you try mooring this ship," Captain Hazelwood said cantankerously.** (Lee Giesecke, Falls Church)

◆ Fifth Runner-Up: **"Well, that was a great season," Richie Petitbon declared pointlessly.** (George and Karen Kirschenbauer, Middleburg, plus their leftover New Year's Eve guests from North Carolina)

◆ Fourth Runner-Up: **"Great movie," Pee-wee Herman said anticlimactically.** (William Jensen, Rockville)

◆ Third Runner-Up: **"We take stealing very seriously," Saddam Hussein said offhandedly.** (Harold Kerr, Washington; also, J. Neil Killalea, Falls Church)

◆ Second Runner-Up: **"And then there was the fact that my front line..." Mark Rypien explained incompletely.** (Robin D. Grove, Washington)

◆ First Runner-Up: **"Well, at least she didn't cut off everything," John Bobbitt said testily.** (Leonard Greenberg, Herndon; also, Tony Ditrapani, Reston, and Michael D. Jahr, Arlington.)

◆ **And the Winner of the Rubber Rat Caught in a Trap:**

"We didn't inhale," declared Bill and Hillary jointly.

(Mrs. Airey's English classes, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Bethesda)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

"It could have been worse," Lorena Bobbitt said bitingy. (Stephanie Reiss, Rockville; also, Jeff Clineff, Silver Spring)

"I think I can get it over the plate," Mitch Williams said aimlessly. (Chuck Nelson, Alexandria)

"My life is not a fairy tale," said Princess Diana grimly. (Louise G. Barnett, Chevy Chase)

"My name has been withdrawn," said Zoe Baird disappointedly. (Louise G. Barnett, Chevy Chase)

"I won't be leaving 'Jeopardy!'" Alex Trebek declared categorically. (Kurt Rabin, Arlington)

"I have to cancel the rest of my tour," Michael Jackson said disconcertedly. (Meg Sullivan, Potomac)

"I am what I am," Madonna said imprudently. (Joseph Broderick, Reston)

"Gee, these are great playoff games," Richie Petitbon said absently. (Tony Ditrapani, Reston)

"Hillary's given all my underwear away," the president chafed rashly. (Dan Trigobogg, Baltimore)

"I must be more careful," said John Bobbitt circumspectly. (Don Maclean, Burke)

"Why me?" asked Nancy Kerrigan lamely. (Don Maclean, Burke)

"It was a joke," Ted Danson said darkly. (Linda K. Malcolm, Silver Spring; also, Nadine Devay, Arlington)

"We'd better turn back, Admiral Columbus," said the first mate flatly. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

"I do not have a drinking problem," Ted Kennedy said cordially. (Christine Keiner, Columbia)

"I never done nothing to that girl," Joey Buttafuoco said penetratingly. (Kurt Rabin, Arlington)

"My, that was tasty!" Jeff Dahmer said heartily. (Stephen Bates, Silver Spring)

"There are things more important than one's physical appearance," Janet Reno asserted plainly. (Andrea and Alan Pendleton, Arlington)

"Hey, babe, what's your sign? I'm currently unattached," John Bobbitt said bluntly. (Les Greenblatt, Washington)

◆ And Last:

"What's the big deal about winning the Invitational?" Rose Stack said unwittingly. (Rose Stack, Arlington)

Next Week: Invitation to a Dual, Part II