

# The Style Invitational

WEEK 172: POEDTRY

The mail doth come and go  
Silent, speedy, gentle.  
Yellowish envelope?  
Interdepartmental!

Drip. Drop. Drip. Drop. Drip. Drop.  
Very splashy idea.  
Porcelain poetry—  
Onomatopoeia



Oh, Pain Whips Through My Gut,  
Never Fapping, Unlike  
Quarterback Unitas  
Diverticulitis.

**This Week's Contest** is something new: an entire poetic form, making its global debut in the Style Invitational. Inspired by Adelaide Crapsey's wretched cinquains, Ed Hopkins of Davidsonville has created the poetic form above, which he calls "Poeds," as in "Poems by Ed." The rules are that the first line must be contain only six words of one syllable each; the second line, three words of two syllables each; the third line, two words of three syllables each,

and the final line a single word of six syllables. At least two lines must rhyme. The general subject matter should be mundane. We love this art form. Ed wins a splendid prize: The Squirring Half-Rat Snack, which, when placed in the mouth, makes it look as though the user is devouring a live rat, head first. ("Use your tongue to move the button and the tail will wiggle and twitch! Made in Taiwan.") The best poed wins a vintage unused roll of Jimmy Carter toilet paper, circa 1978, a value of \$25.

Runners-up, as always, receive the coveted Style Invitational Loser's T-shirt. Honorable Mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor. Mail your entries to The Style Invitational, Week 172, c/o 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 week number in the "subject" field. Entries must be received on or before Monday, July 8. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced in three weeks. Editors reserve the right to alter entries for taste, humor or appropriateness. No purchase necessary. The Faerie of the Fine Print & the Ear No One Reads wishes to thank Jean Sorensen of Herndon for today's Ear No One Reads, and to acknowledge continued niggling over the results of the rock lyric contest. Ardent defenders of Cream claim Eric Clapton and Jack Bruce were singing "I'll be with you till the seas are dry," not "till my seeds are dried up," and Rod Stewart fanatics contend Rod was growling "let your imagination run wild," not "inhibitions." Folks, you think we don't check this stuff? Both lyrics, as we wrote them, were correct. And awful. Washington Post employees and their families are not eligible for prizes.

## REPORT FROM WEEK 169

in which we asked you to tell us the differences between any two of 15 items we named. David Kleinbard of Chevy Chase gets The Style Invitational's third Blind T-shirt Award. This prestigious prize celebrates "Entries Worthy of Prizes but So Unspeakingly Vile They Cannot Be Uttered Near Humans or Even Sensitive Dogs, Let Alone Printed in a Newspaper Famed for Its Distinguished Coverage of Serious Global Issues Such as International Quotas on the Production of Feldspar." Congratulations, David. We are sending you a T-shirt. When friends ask you what you won it for, you can tell them your fine joke. Then you can find new friends.

- ◆ Fifth Runner-Up: **What is the difference between Barbra Streisand's behind and the Titanic? You can't play shuffleboard on the Titanic anymore.** (Sandra Hull, Arlington)
- ◆ Fourth Runner-Up: **What is the difference between Marion Barry's brain and Barbra Streisand's behind? One has absolutely no influence on the Clinton White House.** (Harry B. Heisler, Washington)
- ◆ Third Runner-Up: **What is the difference between a 1975 AMC Pacer and Marion Barry's brain? The Pacer would be somewhat affected by local road conditions.** (Peyton Coyner, Afton, Va.)
- ◆ Second Runner-Up: **What is the difference between the Titanic and "Mission: Impossible"? The Titanic had a short cruise with a really bad end. "Mission: Impossible" has a short Cruise with a pretty darn attractive end.** (Susan Reese, Arlington)
- ◆ First Runner-Up: **What is the difference between a chain saw and Directory Assistance? 500.** (Paul Styrene, Olney)
- ◆ And the winner of the Gerald Ford commemorative plate:  
**What is the difference between Marion Barry's brain and a chain saw? With a chain saw, you can actually hear the buzz.** (David Smith, Greenbelt)

### Honorable Mentions:

- What is the difference between a chain saw and Marion Barry's brain? A chain saw cuts dead wood.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- What is the difference between Mount Everest and Joe Camel? Most third-graders have heard of Joe Camel.** (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)
- What is the difference between a horse with no name and Marion's Barry's brain? All that snorting hasn't hurt the horse.** (David Genser, Vienna)
- What is the difference between Eddie Haskell and Barbra Streisand's behind? Eddie is not Lumpy.** (Tommy Litz, Bowie)
- What is the difference between Eddie Haskell and a chain saw? You want to get a chain saw started.** (Jon Patrick Smith, Washington)
- What is the difference between a chain saw and Eddie Haskell? A chain saw makes life easier for the beaver.** (James Ascher, Alexandria)
- What is the difference between a 1975 AMC Pacer and Barbra Streisand's behind? The Pacer only seems to get wider with time.** (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)
- What is the difference between "Mission: Impossible" and Barbra Streisand's behind? "Mission: Impossible" has an unnecessary colon.** (Don White, Frederick; Bob Sorensen, Herndon)
- What is the difference between Barbra**

- Streisand's behind and Marion Barry's brain? The first is a tuchus. The second took us.** (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- What is the difference between a 1975 AMC Pacer and "Mission: Impossible"? The latter had an outstanding Landau version.** (Charlie Steinhice, Chattanooga)
- What is the difference between the Titanic and Marion Barry's brain? The Titanic only hit bottom once.** (Stephen F. Dudzik, Silver Spring)
- What is the difference between Marion Barry's brain and Mount Everest? One is considered by experts to be the highest place in the world, and the other is in the Himalayas.** (Joseph Romm, Washington)
- What is the difference between Mount Everest and Romantic Downtown Hyattsville? Mount Everest has more good restaurants.** (David Genser, Vienna)
- What is the difference between Joe Camel and a horse with no name? Joe Camel is not an anagram of "the nose hair woman."** (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)
- What is the difference between a 1975 AMC Pacer and the Titanic? It's easier to find parts for the Titanic.** (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park; Vance Greer, Sterling)
- What is the difference between Eddie Haskell and Directory Assistance? Eddie Haskell is less patronizing.** (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

Next Week: The Elements of Smile

## MISS MANNERS

### Driven Crazy

By Judith Martin

Police and automobile clubs are suddenly sending emergency crews out on the highway to rescue Miss Manners. It took long enough. She's been standing there for years, frantically trying to wave down some assistance. All around her lies the wreckage of etiquette disasters.

Since the motorcar was invented, along with those nice, long, soft, white scarves for ladies to tie their hats on with as they sped along and those nifty goggles that keep out small creatures who travel by air, Miss Manners has been sounding the alarm about roadway rudeness. Without actually lifting her skirts (to expose her ankles), she did everything she could to attract attention.

And all she got was a lot of lip service. We are, after all, a society that spends most of its discretionary time watching cars chase one another across movie and television screens.

If the driver careers through crowded cities scattering screaming pedestrians, bashing other cars without slowing down, making screeching U-turns, and finally taking a spectacular roll off a cliff and emerging whole, and still manages to elude the police, everybody cheers. If he knocks over a fruit stand whose owner shakes his fist at the retreating car while apples and oranges tumble in all directions, everybody laughs.

Automobile etiquette is thought to be for wimps. If you ask self-respecting drivers what they consider the leading cause of traffic accidents, many would say timid people who clog up the roads by driving according to the rules.

It is true that responsible authorities have always endorsed driving courtesy. But like a previous era's admonishments against smoking and in favor of exercise, such endorsements had a less-than-urgent tone. Even reformers suspect polite people of not having the imagination and nerve to do anything more exciting.

Oddly enough, even the roughest drivers have always cared deeply about driving etiquette—for other drivers, of course, not themselves. It's hard to barrel through traffic if there are other people getting in your way by doing the same.

Miss Manners has noticed that infractions of etiquette produce emotional reactions in others that flouting the law does not. If a wild speeder comes through, those obeying the limit might allow themselves a smile if the speeder is spotted by police, but they do not seem to feel real animosity. However, let someone cut them off or refuse to let them pass, neither of which is against the law, and they are wild with rage.

This rage, and the mess it leaves on the highways, is what has finally attracted serious attention. For years, drivers had been shouting insults and making obscene gestures at one another. This has now led to dueling, sometimes with bullets, but mostly with the cars as weapons.

And, finally, angry drivers have created so much carnage that it is beginning to be seen as a national problem.

Miss Manners understands that the police and others concerned with regulating driving have

enough trouble trying to get people to obey the laws of the road without monitoring violations of etiquette rules. Goodness knows she doesn't want to be out clocking speeders and chasing red-light runners.

But in this, as in other areas of civilization, law and etiquette must work together. There cannot be specific traffic laws applicable to each case of, for example, changing lanes or passing. Yet if everyone acts only legally, never allowing anyone else the courtesy to get through, none of us will get anywhere.

Now the Maryland State Police have created Operation Aggressive Driver—to discourage aggressive driving, not train people for it. Motor clubs are issuing etiquette rules about letting such drivers go on their way rather than challenging them, and about avoiding provocative behavior such as shouting, gesturing, even making eye contact.

They have thus moved from invoking laws to teaching etiquette.

Miss Manners understands that they do not do this to condemn rudeness, but only to warn of danger. People are belatedly discovering that rudeness is always dangerous, and perhaps some day they will notice that this is not true just for driving.

Rudeness always inspires resentment, and a contest of who can be ruder than who is bound to end in disaster.

Here are the two etiquette lessons Miss Manners needs help in teaching:

1. Being rude is not glamorous, original, daring or funny. It's just rude.
2. Rudeness is still rudeness when it is inspired by—and intended to punish—somebody else's rudeness.

These rules have a far wider application than to traffic. But if they can be learned and practiced in that situation alone, the world will be a better place.

Or at least we will all have a better chance of getting someplace.

### DEAR MISS MANNERS:

When it became quite hot in our packed church, my daughter-in-law picked up a small brochure about church membership and began to fan herself.

The woman seated next to her grabbed her arm and told her not to do that.

My daughter-in-law was so taken aback that it ruined the service for her. Afterward, she asked me if I thought she had committed a breach of etiquette by fanning herself.

I told her it was better than falling to the floor in a dead faint. I have often fanned myself in public places when becoming too warm. Are we wrong?

### Gentle Reader:

Miss Manners has finally found someone who has more of an uphill battle than she does.

It's your minister. One of his parishioners believes in using physical restraint to punish a quiet, ladylike gesture made in order to spare discomfort and embarrassment.

Miss Manners only has to point out that fanning is not rude and that both correcting others and manhandling them are grossly so. Your poor minister has to worry about the soul of someone who has that little human decency.

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## Bridge

By Alfred Sheinwold and Frank Stewart

When South picked up his hand, the heart honors were worth four points, pure and simple; but things changed for the better when East bid hearts. If East had the A-Q, South's K-J were worth almost as much as an A-K.

South could have leaped to three no-trump, but bid two no-trump because his hand also had a bad feature: no aces. East had a long suit to set up; and if the defense had aces for entries, South might lose the race to establish tricks.

South needn't have worried about missing game: North treated two no-trump as forcing and raised though he had no extra values. South refused the first spade, won the next in dummy and led a diamond to his king. West took the ace and led another spade; but South won and lost only two more tricks to East's aces.

South was right to worry about missing aces; if the defenders manage their aces better, they may defeat the contract. On the first diamond, West should play low as if his ace were another deuce. He must keep his entry until the spades are good.

South has guessed well to lead a diamond at trick 3 and is safe if he continues diamonds; but if he leads a club next, East wins and leads another spade. South then has only seven tricks and must let the defenders in to run the spades.

If East is an expert, South should continue diamonds at trick 5; if the position of the minor-suit aces were reversed, East would grab the first diamond to return a spade.

North-South vulnerable

NORTH (D)

- ◆ A 6
- ♥ Q 5 3
- ♦ J 5 4
- ♣ K Q J 7 3

WEST

- ◆ Q J 10 9 4
- ♥ 7
- ♦ A 8 3 2
- ♣ 5 4 2

EAST

- ◆ 7 5 2
- ♥ A 10 9
- ♦ 8 4 2
- ♣ 10 7
- ◆ A 6

SOUTH

- ◆ K 8 3
- ♥ K J 6
- ♦ K Q 9 6
- ♣ 10 9 8

The bidding:

- |       |          |       |      |
|-------|----------|-------|------|
| North | East     | South | West |
| 1♣    | 1♥       | 2NT   | Pass |
| 3NT   | All Pass |       |      |

Opening lead: ♠ Q

## Today's Horoscope

By Sydney Omarr

- **Aries** (March 21-April 19): Hard facts presented concerning proposed journey. Necessary to meet, beat deadline. Romantic liaison serious, marriage in offing. If merely playing, best to leave town. Capricorn involved.
- **Taurus** (April 20-May 20): Finally results! Inquiry made to overseas agent brings positive response. Financial arrangement scary but ultimately practical. You could encounter soul mate by attending conference.
- **Gemini** (May 21-June 20): Your cup of teal Scenario highlights originality, daring, new start, fascinating love relationship. Signed agreement requires proofreading. Partnership and marriage are involved.
- **Cancer** (June 21-July 22): Romance oozes. Whether from song lyrics or direct action, empha-

sis will be on idealism in romance. Aquarius and another Cancer native play lead roles. Do it your own way!

• **Leo** (July 23-Aug. 22): Those who attempt to remove what is valuable will be stopped. Hold tight to dreams. Diversity, entertain, display talent in dazzling manner. Sagittarian provides missing link. Articulate!

• **Virgo** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Read proofs, discern errors, revise, rewrite, rebuild. Property value figures in scenario, involves Sagittarian utilizing statistical evidence. Taurus, Scorpio persons also represented.

• **Libra** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Play your music! Focus on poetry, literature, art, ancient writings. Relative, previously skeptical, will assert belief in dramatic fashion. You'll exude personal magnetism, sex appeal.

• **Scorpio** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Some persons,

might accuse you of plagiarism. They express surprise that your compositions could be so dynamic, original, influential. Don't give up on royalties, profitable arrangements.

• **Sagittarius** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Illusion involved, refuse to give up something of value for mere whispered words. Provide room for logic, don't be taken for granted—don't be taken! Pisces figures prominently.

• **Capricorn** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Play hard ball! Those who regard you as soft touch will be dismayed, ruffled, confused, disappointed. Secrets revealed, you'll outdistance competitors in dynamic fashion.

• **Aquarius** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Impatient associates urge, "Do it, get it over with!" Be aloof to these sophomoric pleadings. Ultimately you'll win friends in high places. Aries, Libra persons figure in scenario.

• **Pisces** (Feb. 19-March 20): Light shines! Darker corners of your life receive benefit of greater light. Spells enlightenment not only for you but for those you love. Focus on creativity, romance, adventure.

• **If June 30 is your birthday:** You learned early that to do things other than in your own way was a grievous error. You are articulate, possess intellectual curiosity, are fond of travel, art, literature, capable of imbuing others with enthusiasm for learning. Gemini, Sagittarius persons play dramatic roles in your life. You are super-sensitive concerning appearance, fashion, ability to be conversant with news happenings. October your most memorable month of 1996.

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For a detailed horoscope from Sydney Omarr, phone 1-900-656-8488. The cost is \$1 a minute; average call lasts four minutes.

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