

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

From Week 1084: The Five-liners of Limerixicon XI

BY PAT MYERS

Our annual contest to write a limerick featuring a word from one sliver of the dictionary — this year, words beginning fi- through fo- — yielded 848 efforts, a large number of them utterly failing to follow even the mini-nutshell rule that Lines 1, 2 and 5 have to include the rhythm of “hickory-dickory-dock”; and Lines 3 and 4, “dickory-dock.” But as always, it doesn’t matter if even 800 of them stank up the joint — as long as the rest were this good:

The winner of the Inkin’ Memorial

A new horsemeat to-do! There’s no telling That it’s clear what our vendors are selling — Like the sandwich I’d bought From a truck, when I thought “Filly cheesesteak” was just a misspelling! (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

2nd place and the Pee-wee Herman doll:

Law enforcement was wrong to endorse Making SWAT teams a matter of course In the war against drugs, Since police become thugs When they make it a habit of force. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

3rd place

I recall, as we sit by the fireside, How exciting the life I’ve led by ‘er side: When my football side scored She’d make love, to reward Not just me, but each man — the entire side. (Hugh Thirlway, The Hague)

4th place

Informality’s fine among blokes, Buds and gal-pals, but everyone chokes When the dude who’s our prez Quite offhandedly sez, Yeah, too bad that “we tortured some folks.” (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Lo-fi:

Honorable mentions

The newborn colt’s life had just started When the stable boss, cruel and coldhearted, Turned the mare into glue. It’s a tale we all rue: Just a foal and his mommy soon parted. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

The middle-aged man sadly said, “I’ve been losing the hair from my head. And it seems diabolical That every last follicle Has appeared on my back now, instead!” (Christopher Lamora, Los Angeles; we can vouch for the first part but haven’t seen his back)

Mr. Jones is a **fo**p; his attire Shows the flair to which many aspire, But with haute couture tweeds From Milan, he exceeds What his ditch-digging job would require. (Brendan Beary)

Bruce Wayne gave up trying to raise Young Dick Grayson, who’d run off for days: He’d turn up at the edges Of ornate **fo**ral hedges: The ward lurks in wisteria’s maze. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

If to undo a law you connive, Don’t ask Congress — they’re barely alive. Just go straight to the clowns In the silly black gowns: All you need is to sell it to **fi**ve. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

The McDonnells, with lack of **fi**nesse, Let a pal fill their lives with largesse. In return they were skills For his nostrums and pills: Their “oblige” lacked a certain noblesse. (Dan O’Day, Alexandria)

Said the hipster, “It’s weird to behold: Vintage clothes leave today’s **fo**gies cold, From checked shirts to knit ties To those hats shaped like pies. Age is wasted, it seems, on the old.” (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Some think **fo**rnication is sin. An act they are squarely agin’. But faced with the chance For some no-strings romance, I suspect most would give it a spin. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

I’m aghest at the tasteless depiction



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New for Week 1088: Ask Backwards with our answers, your questions

*The Plunger Games • *An octopus doing the Hokey Pokey • *Rick Perry’s glasses • *A man, a plan, a cannoli • *iPad Thai • *A joyride in a Ferrari • *Not Kim Kardashian, but Kanye West • *A cross-country trip in a Miata • com.org • 14, 102 and 39,000 • *Mary had a Little Lemming • *Romeo and Juliet • *Tysons Coroner • *James and the Giant Brussels Sprout • *A Your Mama joke about a bicycle • The print version of The Washington Post

Forty contests ago, the last time we ran our perennial Ask Backwards — in which we give the answers and you supply the questions — one of the 12 categories was “An answer for the next Ask Backwards.” The Empress printed just one entry for that category in the results of Week 1048: “What will cause you to invent several genuinely funny entries while reading the results of the next Ask Backwards?” (Frank Osen). But there were lots of actual suggestions for categories — and eight of them are the asterisked items in the list above (three by Chris Doyle; two by Cheryl Davis; and one each by Howard Walderman, Alex Jeffrey and Barbara Turner). It’s the regular drill, but with a few more choices than usual: **Above are 16 answers. You supply the questions to as many of the answers as you like, up to the usual 25 entries total.** In your entry, write the answer first, then your question.

Winner gets the Inkin’ Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. And speaking of milking material from earlier contests: Second place receives one of our favorite items of promotional swag ever, courtesy of the National Pest Management Association: It’s Pest World, a set of lacquered wooden Russian-style nesting dolls with various household critters painted on them, all fitting into a pestilent little round house. We were shocked that the initial winner of this prize, in Week 1067, told us not to bother sending it. While the Empress coveted this prize for her own house, Mount Vermin, it demands to be in the home of a genuine Loser.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired “Whole Fools” Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet, either the Po’ Wit Laureate or Puns of Steel. First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Sept. 15; results published Oct. 5 (online Oct. 2). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include “Week 1088” in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. This week’s honorable-mentions subhead is by Tom Witte. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev, and click “like” on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday.

STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

Of sex in contemporary **fi**ction: Just impulsive insertion, Agitation, exertion — Hence, as reader, my hopeless addiction. (Hugh Thirlway)

I’m not lacking in charm or in wit, And my body is ripped — that’s not it — Though I’m perfectly nice Seems the girls won’t look twice At a guy who’s not **fi**scally fit. (Mark Raffman, Reston)

Flabellation just means that you fan, Though my aunt caused a scene in Spokane When the temperature flared, And at church, she declared She would flabellate any hot man. (Frank Osen)

At the loss of my hair I am placid, And my beer gut don’t raise stomach acid, But big Pharma has learned They’ll get all that I’ve earned By instilling fear that I’ll go **fi**accid. (Harvey Smith, McLean)

This Olympian showed us his mettle;



PATMYERS/THE WASHINGTON POST

We can’t get rid of ‘em! The Pest World nesting dolls and house.

For convention he just couldn’t settle.

It was over the top For the **Fosbury Flop** Also known as “arse over teakettle.” (Jeff Shirley, Richmond)

There once was a Scotsman named Smith, And his penchant for liquor? No myth.

He was traveling north On the **Firth of the Forth** When he guzzled a **fourth** of the **fifth**. (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

It’s said that one ought to **fo**rgive; It’s better to live and let live. But with **some fools** we suffer, That job might be tougher Than pushing cement through a sieve. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Since Kim K. has been **fi**scally shrewd And from time to time physically lewd, Any way you define Our Ms. K’s bottom line, There’s no doubt that much interest’s accrued. (David Swerdloff, Washington)

A **fi**asco’s a total debacle. What example will serve? Oh, Iraq’l.

Or a limerick whose rhyme Runs out ere the **fifth** line, And you **flail** around and eventually give up. (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1088

Still running — deadline Monday night: our contest for novel college courses. See bit.ly/invite1087.

POST PUZZLER

No. 231

BY FRANK LONGO EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

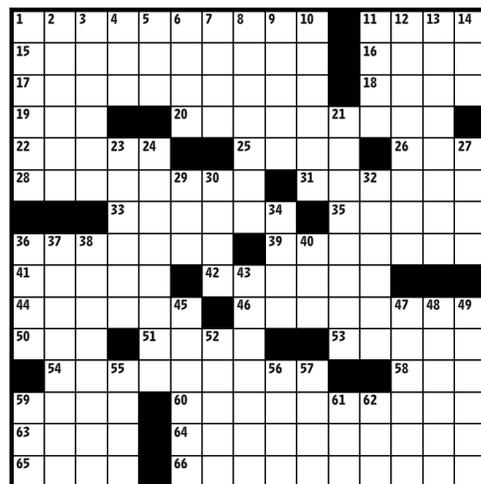
ACROSS
1 Citation termination
11 Carte part
15 Play featuring a road-rage murder
16 Singer with stars on Hollywood’s and Canada’s Walks of Fame
17 Lubbock-based Big 12 team
18 Fancy
19 Cutting and sewing places, briefly
20 Declining
22 Wolf with a feminist following
25 First thing plucked in “Alouette”
26 See 29-Down
28 On zero occasions
31 Far from loutish
33 Sweet-scented pink rose
35 Many are Gothic
36 Source of bagging rights?
39 Means of access

41 Certain Arab League member
42 Criminal Robert nicknamed “The Birdman of Alcatraz”
44 Muslim greeting
46 What a touchy topic touches
50 Its artists do many sketches, briefly
51 “Guess again”
53 One of the three subjects of the sports book “American Trumvirate”
54 Least spirited
58 They may eventually be bound: Abbr.
59 Home to white-elfant-giving kings
60 Here
63 Part of NSAID
64 Was heard
65 Common stage direction, once
66 They keep many folks up

DOWN
1 Daffodil feature
2 Check out like a wolf
3 Most likely to succeed
4 Part of a private reply?
5 Lead monitor, for short
6 Bit of repartee
7 Farm Service Agency org.
8 Member of the house of Atreus
9 In telegraphese, e.g.
10 Like some conservation of endangered species
11 ___ Pound (seating area for zealous Cleveland Browns fans)

12 Like puppy mills, to many
13 Bottoms of slopes
14 Mugger waiting in the wings, maybe
21 Dart Tag blasters, e.g.
23 Ferrari’s birthplace
24 Ferrari, per esemplot
27 Blind follower?
29 With 26-Across, Yardbirds hit of 1965
30 Insatiable gulfs
32 Sour cream brand
34 Actress Kosarin of the Nickelodeon sitcom “The Thundermans”
36 Tenet follower in the CIA
37 Like some trout and green beans

38 Food court regulars
40 These days
43 High-level branches?
45 In a blue state
47 Forward, say
48 Subordinate
49 Rides that didn’t last very long
52 Member of a noted voyaging trio
55 Overleap
56 Score steals, maybe
57 Give an order
59 Cord-making aid
61 Armored AutoGroup brand
62 Yell, to Yves



Answer to last week, No. 230

M	C	S	S	W	A	M	P			L	I	M	B
C	H	E	G	U	E	V	A	R	A	E	N	O	L
G	A	M	E	P	I	E	C	E	S	F	A	M	E
W	R	I	T	E	R	R	A	W	T	W	E	E	
I	N	N	E	R	J	A	M	E	S	B	O	N	D
R	E	A	M	J	U	M	P	S	T	A	R	T	S
E	L	L	J	A	N	E	P	O	N	D	S		
			J	E	R	K	P	E	R	K			
	S	C	O	W	L	L	E	A	K	B	C	C	
S	M	O	K	E	S	T	A	C	K	H	I	H	O
C	A	M	E	L	B	A	C	K	M	E	G	A	N
A	S	P	S	E	M	O	T	I	N	T	I	N	
T	H	A	T	R	A	N	S	O	M	N	O	T	E
H	E	R	E	G	R	I	M	R	E	A	P	E	R
E	D	E	R	I	C	O	N	S	S	A	Y		

HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | SEPT. 7: This year you exhibit endless creativity and dynamic energy. This could catch many people around you off guard. Learn to integrate this liveliness into various facets of your life. If you are single, the person you pick to date now might not be who you want to be with a year from now. Enjoy your time together, but don’t make any commitments. If you are attached, don’t be surprised if you suddenly view your sweetie in a new light. Your significant other will delight in your new energy.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
There might be a volatile quality to the day. On the other hand, a theme of friendship seems to permeate your interactions. Avoid sending mixed messages at all costs.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Friendship is likely to play a big role in your plans. You might feel as if you need to give more of your support to a loved one.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
You might want to rethink a situation involving someone you care about. You are much more visible than usual. Choose your words with care. Your mood might change in the blink of an eye.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
See what is going on with someone you care about. A partner or close loved one might

be in a thoughtful, reflective mood.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
You may be exhausted by your repeated attempts to pacify a roommate or family member. You have seen this same situation build and explode in the past, so be careful. Make peace, not war.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Venus in your sign allows greater give-and-take. You might need to move in a new direction and handle a personal matter differently. Be gracious in the face of confusion.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
An element of confusion that surrounds you might prevent you from expressing yourself and acting as you might like. Stay nurturing despite a desire to be alone.

He’s not sweet on using her name

Ask Amy
AMY DICKINSON

Dear Amy: I’ve been dating a guy for almost two years now, and he has only called me by my name twice. He usually calls me “Sweetheart.”

From day one, this is what he has called me. Is it possible that he’s talking to or seeing someone else and doesn’t want to confuse our names?

Nameless

In the movies, that’s how it’s done, especially when he’s a lonely musician and she’s an occasional “layover” stop on the road.

It is completely possible that your guy is seeing someone else or more than one other person. It is also possible that he simply doesn’t like your first name and so chooses something more comfortable for him.

You might want to run a little test the next time you’re together. Close your eyes and ask him quickly: “What’s my first, middle and last name? What color are my eyes?”

If he answers: “Your first name is ‘Sweet,’ your middle name is ‘Heart,’ your last name is ‘Irrelevant,’ and your eyes are

on the spectrum between brown and blue,” then I’d say you have a problem.

Dear Amy: A couple of years ago, my husband and I decided to have a baby. Our son was born via an emergency C-section. When my baby was born, he was septic, and there were a series of cascading events and interventions. During the delivery, when it was obvious something had gone wrong, my husband had to leave the OR. I was okay with this, since him passing out or becoming ill would create health and safety issues. Our child is doing well now and we have decided that we would like to try to have a second child. We both feel we’re ready, but my husband has stated that should I end up having another C-section, he doesn’t want to be in the room again.

How can I encourage him to change his mind? I’m also scared of this ordeal recurring, but I don’t have the luxury of not being in the operating room.

Upset

It can be much tougher to watch a loved one go through a

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Your determination might be working against you. Tap into your creativity. Understand that someone cares about you, even if he or she seems irritated.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Sit on a matter that comes across to you as unusually irritating, explosive and unmanageable. If you can take off for the day, do. You’ll recharge your batteries.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Start the day with optimism. A friend might be quite difficult, and you may want to distance yourself. You are one of the few people who can understand this person’s needs. Calm down an explosive situation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
You might see a child or loved one as demanding and unreasonable. Handle a parent with diplomacy, unless you want to see more anger directed at you. Some of you also might opt to take off for the day.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
You might not know what to do with news that heads your way. A friend’s temper might flare. Plan a calm activity for the two of you to do together.

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distressing surgery than to experience it yourself — certainly where there is a lot of blood involved. Your husband did not have the benefit of the pheromones or the anesthesia you had coursing through your body.

I hope you will be understanding about this and choose a stalwart standby who is able to tolerate witnessing surgery, just in case.

Dear Amy: As a family member of a beloved cousin who died last year of injuries because he wasn’t wearing a motorcycle helmet, I’d like to commend your answer to “Terrified,” whose mother wouldn’t wear a helmet. My cousin’s bike was just scratched up; he is gone.

Grieving

My condolences. Thank you for speaking up to advocate for helmet use.

Amy’s column appears seven days a week at www.washingtonpost.com/ advice. Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribune.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

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