

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Poetry in motionless: The obit poems of Week 1156

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1156, our annual Dead Letters (or Post Mortem) contest for poems about people who died the previous year, drew verses about not only the predictable Leonard Nimoy and Yogi Berra, but also the would-be robber of a German condom-dispensing machine, and a burglar who got stuck in the chimney.

4th place

Jean Nidetch, founder of Weight Watchers:

Arriving in Heaven, Jean murmured a greeting, Then said to Saint Peter, "It's time for a meeting. I hope that you'll help me as I make the rounds, 'Cause each of your cherubs could lose a few pounds." (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

3rd place

Mohammed Emwazi, "Jihadi John":

Jihadi John read articles about Islamic State, And soon became converted to the joys of blood and hate. But now he's only particles. More pages won't be read. His state is not Islamic. It's just ultra, ultra dead. (Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

2nd place and the "Fat of Python" and "Cobra Toxan" skin ointments: Miami Dolphins kicker Garo Yepremian:

Higgledy piggedly, Garo Yepremian, Dolphins' ex-placekicker, Ceases to be. Unceremonious Fans of the Redskins, though, Jeered at his passing in '73. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

And the winner of the Ink'n' Memorial

Woman who accidentally killed herself while adjusting her bra holster:

She got herself a push-up bra That had a single fatal flaw. It didn't just support her charms; This bra was meant for bearing arms. But holster bras should not be trusted, Since bras are always readjusted. Sad to say, dear gun-nut crazies, "Push up" now refers to daisies. (Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney, Md.)

Sorry for your loss: honorable mentions

Would-be burglar who got stuck in the chimney:

A burglar climbed to a rooftop; The chimney, he used as a door. He got stuck and nobody noticed Till the fireplace started to roar. He died, and this terrible story Has a moral that might make you flinch: Turns out 2015 was the year That Christmas stole the Grinch. (David Friedman, Arlington)

Anne Woods, "gurning" (funny-face) champion:

Anne Woods was a champion gurner, Whose facial contortions would earn her Both fame for the hideous scowls she could make And a coffin deliberately closed at her wake. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Lillian Vernon, catalogue mogul:

Lillian Vernon is gone but not buried — Oh, what a fiasco! Don't ask! It Seems nobody planned on the extra two weeks For a personalizable casket. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

Leonard Nimoy:

Knockity Spockity, Half-Vulcan alien; Watched him on "Star Trek"; my Feelings were mixed; Right there in Hollywood (Incomprehensibly!), Why did he never go Get those ears fixed? (Beverly Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Comcast founder Ralph J. Roberts:

That solemn morning after he departed, I hope his friends and family didn't swoon While waiting for his service to get started

Sometime between the hours of 8 and noon. (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Pet Rock creator Gary Dahl:



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1160: A remeaning task

Perplexed: Lost in a movie theater. (Michelle Feeley)
Rubberneckers: A couple practicing very safe sex. (Ross Elliffe)
Willy-nilly: Impotent. (Beth Benson)
Soda: Totally obvious to a teenager. (Mark Young)

Back in 1998, the Invitational ran a contest for new meanings for actual words, yielding one of the most viral Invites ever (have you ever seen that list including "coffee: a person who is coughed upon" and "lymph: to walk with a lisp"? That was Week 266). We repeated the contest in 2004, drawing another fabulous set of results. Then again in Week 749, but just for the first third of the dictionary, and in Week 925, for the second third. It took a nudge from Invite legend Chris Doyle to remind the Empress that she never covered the rest of the alphabet: **This week: Redefine an existing word or two-word term beginning with P through Z**, as in the examples above from earlier contests. The definition should differ greatly from the original; it shouldn't be a cynical interpretation of the word's actual meaning.

Winner gets the Ink'n' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives two bottles of highly novel drinks: (a) Chocolate-Covered Maple-Smoked Bacon Soda — "breakfast in a bottle"; it is brown; and Leninade, very red soda with a hammer-and-sickle logo. "Join the Party!" Both donated by Michael Cotterman, a long-ago Invite prize-mailing flunky who is now a newsroom administrator, not to mention a punk bass player.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug, the older-model "This Is Your Brain on Mugs" mug or a vintage Loser T-shirt (possibly gently used). Honorable mentions get our lusted-after Loser magnets, "Magnet Dum Laude" or "Falling Jest Short." First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). Email entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday night, Feb. 8; results published Feb. 28 (online Feb. 25). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include "Week 1160" in your email 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. The headline for this week's results is by Jeff Shirley; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Jesse Frankovich. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

THE 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.

It had no cuddly fur and couldn't bark or purr; The only trick it knew was playing dead.

Yet now, on certain days when ruin meets your gaze (A savaged running shoe or couch or bed), Or when it's 10 below and Fido has to go . . .

Admit it: you would take Dahl's pet instead. (Melissa Balmain)

Don Featherstone, inventor of the plastic flamingo:

Don Featherstone thrills as he peers through the gates, Where a freshly mowed field of lush fescue awaits.

The plastic flamingo clutched under his arm

Will bring joy to the souls now bereft its charm.

But there's good news and bad news to come from Saint Pete, Because God has a mission for Don to complete:

Yes, he'll get into Heaven, but that's been deferred

Till he first goes to Hell and gives Satan the bird. (Chris Doyle)

Don Featherstone, it would have been fantastic

If you had changed your name to Featherplastic. (Melissa Balmain)

Mario Cuomo

I'm sorry is no mo. (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

John Nash, the world-renowned mathematician, died;

Left us too early but in recognition, I'd

Put age of death on his graveside memorial:

10 squared times 2, plus 6, less 5 factorial. (Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

Yogi Berra

American as apple pie or pasta primavera —

Few people made their mark like paisan Lawrence Peter Berra.

The three-time MVP who made our pastime so much fun

Reminded us, "Keep trying! It ain't done until it's done!"

But then at 90 Yogi said: "100? I can't make it:

When someone sticks a fork in you, you really oughta take it." (Dave Zarrow, Reston, Va.)

Natalie Cole

When Natalie Cole Sang "Unforgettable"

With her dad's departed soul, The stunt was a mite regrettable.

Would Nat have looked askance? Listeners could only guess.

Now she has the chance To ask him: No or yes? (Warren Clements, Toronto)

James Horner

Since "Titanic" composer James Horner is gone,

Our spirits are sinking — his heart won't go on. (Jesse Frankovich)

Man who blew up a condom vending machine:

Dear anonymous dimwit from Germany: What could be denser

Than thinking it clever to blow up a condom dispenser?

Being struck in the skull by the shrapnel was not your best move, But you won't reproduce, so the Darwin Awards would approve. (Brendan Beary)

The Jacka, Chinx Drugz, Ezkimo, Pumpkinhead, Hussein Fatal, MC Supreme, Young Ready, etc.:

Rappers met in heaven for a medley:

For each, life wasn't silent, it was deadly. (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1160.

Still running — deadline Monday night, Feb. 1: Our contest for novel board or parlor games.

See bit.ly/invite1159.

CROSSWORD

BY MARTIN ASHWOOD-SMITH © 2016 CROSSNERGY SYNDICATE LLC

ACROSS	41 Letters on some candies	5 In store	23 Wasted time?	49 Oscar winner Hilary
1 Sweet treat	42 "Grumpy Old Men" actor Davis	6 Rinse and dry	24 It's a given	50 Apt anagram for Bart
16 In some manner	43 ___ Haute, Indiana	7 Water, chemically	25 Avoids talking, in a way	51 Bassist Phil of the Grateful Dead
17 Spans	44 Route through Fargo	8 Thing of miner concern?	27 He's a Wonder	52 "NYPD Blue" actor Morales
18 Hershiser with a Cy Young Award	45 Not a big hit?	9 Job for Poirot	28 Words with "on TV"	53 Carries the day
19 "Where America's day begins"	48 Certain bearing, briefly	10 Catapult or ass	30 Sirius or Vega	54 Gang follower?
20 Album fill, informally	50 Crowded	11 Activity center	32 Loamy deposit	55 Haberdashery buys
22 Pre-election events	59 Living room?	12 Blade handle?	34 Paul McCartney's 1982 tribute to John Lennon	56 "... ___ it just me?"
26 Candler or Gray	60 Choice words	13 Political cartoonist who created the Republican elephant	36 One of Mao's men	57 "Le ___" (Zola title that means "The Dream")
29 Woofers from the '30s	61 Benny Goodman hit of 1937	14 Some Caltech alums	46 Annoint, old-style	58 Glasgow vetoes
31 Dr. J was one		15 Soon-to-be alums	47 Five in front	
32 D-Day transports (abbr.)	DOWN	20 Jetta relative	48 Eves, to Yves	
33 Spill clumsily	1 AL East team, on scoreboards	21 Runs behind		
35 Put the kibosh on	2 CN Tower prov.			
36 Taxi map divisions	3 Certain copier supply			
37 French toast portion?	4 Debtor			
38 Came by				
39 Throw forcibly				
40 Rampaging, after "on"				

Answer to last week

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HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | JAN. 31: This year, you often respond to your intuitive senses, especially when it involves money. Verify what you think is a good bet. How you project yourself in the business world, or outside of your home, may be very different from the real you. If you are single, you will attract people who are connected to your "surface" personality. Complications could occur when they get to know the real you. Be as authentic as you can be. If you are attached, work to make your personal life as important as your business life. No one lies on his or her deathbed and wishes he or she had worked harder. Make your relationship the highest priority possible. Scorpio can be demanding.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You are imaginative and creative. Some of your wilder ideas will add to the delight of being with a special person. You relate well to this individual and have a lot of fun together. Don't hesitate to ask for some feedback from an older relative.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Allow others to make the plans. That way, all you'll need to do is say yes or no. A call from someone at a distance is likely to delight you to no end. Your willingness to break past self-imposed restrictions is admirable.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

You'll blow past self-imposed restrictions and might feel as if there's no stopping you. Unfortunately, you could overestimate your energy levels, which will be quite low by the end of the day. Indulge in a nap. You'll be a lot happier in the long run.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

You could encounter resistance when relating to a partner. A new relationship seems to flourish, as you and the other person seem to

connect on a deep level.

Someone will make an extraordinary effort to clear up a situation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You might consider asking someone else for help with a domestic matter. You are very fussy about what you need and what you desire. Your sense of humor emerges when dealing with a difficult family member. Be discreet.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You are full of energy and fun. Your ability to get past someone else's defenses emerges. Someone will find you to be lovable. Recognize what is happening in your immediate environment. Listen to what a neighbor has to share.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

You could be up for fun, and you'll be full of goodwill. You may feel insecure with what someone shares, even though this was not this person's intention. Don't assume anything from what you hear. You could be misreading his or her words.

Profanities should get you uninvited

Ask Amy

AMY DICKINSON

with our spouses and families) to her home for dinner. My cousin is creating a family tree to document our heritage. After dinner, several of us worked to identify family members from some old photos.

My cousins had never met my brother's wife or daughter before this evening. Over the course of the evening, both women consumed too much alcohol. The niece was dropping F-bombs right and left.

She and her mother ended up on the floor — almost unable to stand up. My sister and I were horrified at this behavior. My sister asked them to stop the bad language. This request fell on drunk ears.

Needless to say, my cousin said that my brother and his family would never be welcome to her home again. How should we (my

sister and I) have handled this situation?

Still in Shock

Still in Shock: You and your sister were not responsible for your sister-and-law and niece's behavior. As observers who have a relationship with the drunken women, you could (and should) have reacted honestly, which your sister did when she asked the young woman not to use profanities.

The person you leave out of your narrative is your brother, who is husband to one woman and father to the other. He should have thanked the cousins for their hospitality and apologized for the way the evening ended. (The women should, of course, apologize themselves — but they won't.)

If you are at all close to either woman, you could express your concern about their behavior. Otherwise, your cousin is wise to exclude them in the future.

Dear Amy: I feel a kinship with

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

You have been so disciplined and withdrawn lately. When you no longer need to be so reined in, you could be like a cork popping out of a champagne bottle. A lot of your loved ones will be delighted to see this display of energy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Taking a back seat may not be advisable right now; however, it is likely to work. You'll hear a lot of news and information that could surprise you. In the long run, you'll claim your power in a far more effective way if you become a skilled listener.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

What starts as a simple get-together could evolve into a fun party. Assess how often you experience tension because of what you would like to do turning into what others would like you to do. Today is a prime example of this.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

No one likes to feel judged. You know that a friend is watching your interactions, and you're likely to get feedback about them from this person. Resist claiming that you don't care, because you do. Know that this person is biased.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Allow your mind to wander to distant topics and faraway lands. You might really want to get out of town for a while. Perhaps you need to be in a different setting, or maybe you just miss certain friends. Make a spur-of-the-moment trip possible.

"Proud Mom," whose mother-in-law ignored her daughter. Like her, one of my husband's relatives was "difficult" as you would have described her; "emotionally distant and indifferent" is how I would describe her. Indifference is on the border of emotional neglect and need not be tolerated.

We offered her the proverbial olive branch more than once and were let down every time. We severed ties with her years ago, and none of us feels like we're missing out.

Be it a family member or future spouse: Don't waste your time on anyone who isn't willing to waste their time on you.

Proud (and Strong) Mom

Proud (and Strong) Mom:

Thank you for offering your perspective.

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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