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Style Invitational Week 1343: We plead no contest

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The Empress is going to tour her realm. But we have winning song parodies!



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post/“Twelve Items” — sing it to “Maria” — got an honorable mention this week for 400-time Loser Gary Crockett.)

By Pat Myers
August 1

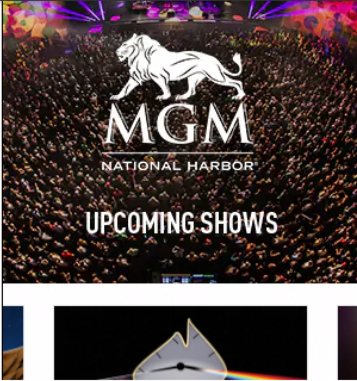
(Click [here to skip down](#) to this week’s winning parodies)

It’s been a couple of years, but the Empress gives you a break this week from your sacred obligation to submit Style Invitational entries every seven days ad infinitum: Later this month the E will be progressing through the Midwestern portion of her realm with the Royal Consort (and meeting up with some Losers along the way). And so in four weeks we’ll have a column, prepared in advance, featuring robbed-of-ink entries from earlier contests — including, surely, many extra parodies from Week 1339. So if the song you entered didn’t get ink this week, don’t despair — just wait four weeks. *Then* despair.

Meanwhile, the **Week 1342 contest for combined abbreviations** is still running: Deadline is midnight on Monday, Aug. 5. See [wapo.st/invite1342](#)

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The headline “Trouble in Parodies” was submitted by both Jon Gearhart and William Kennard; Gary Crockett wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. 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](https://twitter.com/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, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

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

TROUBLES IN PARODIES: WINNING SONGS OF ‘MODERN WOES’

In [Week 1339](#) we sought songs about “**modern woes**,” a gapingly broad topic encompassing both frivolous “First World problems” and serious issues — and how could that category exclude current politics? The Empress received a litany of laments set to some 300 different songs — from “I’m a Little Teapot” to “Louie, Louie” to “Shallow,” along with seven versions of “Yesterday,” four “Major-General’s Songs” and of course a slew of show tunes. Not familiar with some of the melodies for the songs below? Click on the link in the title for a video clip — in some cases performed by the inking writers (including a couple with visuals).

4th place:

To “*Some Enchanted Evening*”:

Sung by the writer's daughter, Lily FitzPatrick, [here](#).

Some distracted morning, you won't see that stranger,
You won't see that stranger beside you at the beach
Who looks like a cross between Pitt and Cruise
Except for his twinkling McConaughey blues.

Some distracted morning, you'll be reading email
Even as that he-male reclines in easy reach —
Then maybe you'll check your Instagram likes,
Or watch a new film clip of goats riding bikes.

Who needs a boyfriend when you're not alone,
When you are going steady with your phone?
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

3rd place:

To “*The Streets of Laredo*”

As I was out walking the streets of Seattle,
I craved me a coffee and entered a shop;
I asked the barista for a tall cappuccino
With two packets Splenda and whipped cream on top.

He said, “That’s four fifty”; I reached for my wallet,

Stream: [reimag on the bus?](#)
Behold, the ways we watch TV now.



2 Perspective

More actors of color are being cast in roles traditionally played by whites — while feeling extra pressure to succeed



3 Perspective

I've seen plenty of beautiful artworks. But the Matisse Chapel overwhelmed me.



4 Analysis

Who should play the Democratic presidential candidates on 'Saturday Night Live'?



5 Review

Welcome home, 'Dear Evan Hansen.' You're back where you belong.



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Help

Policies and Standards

Extracted a fiver and started to pay;
He looked at me squarely, said, "Stranger, you're new here.
Just fold up that greenback and put it away.

"We don't accept cash here, just Mastercard, Visa,
Or bitcoin they spin out of moonbeams and dust,
And Google Pay, Apple Pay, Venmo and PayPal,
But never that stuff that reads 'In God We Trust.'"

Extracted a fiver and started to pay;
He looked at me squarely, said, "Stranger, you're new here.
Just fold up that greenback and put it away.

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But never that stuff that reads 'In God We Trust.'"

I said, "I've no smartphone and don't carry plastic:
My currency's always been honored before."
He called me a deadbeat and sent for the sheriff,
And that's why I sing from behind a cell door.

I sit now and ponder how fast the world changes;
This Digital Age is rewriting the book:
Our money's now backed by the full faith and credit
Of Mark Zuckerberg, Sergey Brin and Tim Cook.
(*Elliott Shevin, Oak Park, Mich.*)

2nd place and the 'Mr. President' wig:

To "Maria," as sung by Donald Trump:

Korea! I've just stepped inside North Korea!
My new best friend is Kim,
I'm sure he'll write a hymn — to me!

Korea! I've just shaken hands in Korea;
I showed the world who's boss;
I strolled across the DMZ!

Korea, all it took was a tweet on Twitter!
Now the Dems are all jealous and bitter!
Korea (I bask in the glitter!), Korea!

What a beautiful photo op it was . . . Ko-ree-ah!
(*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

To "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas":

Have yourself a gerrymandered district,
Draw some artful lines;
Make it look like 12 exploding porcupines.
Have yourself a gerrymandered district,
Slice and dice the votes:

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Safe seat, even if they catch you screwing goats.

Once we'd choose folks who stood for us;
"Go do good for us," we said —
Threw out those who were abusing us.
Now they're choosing us instead.

Draw it up so you can't be defeated,
Be you saint or heel,
'Cause John Roberts says that this is no big deal,
So have yourself a seat no one can ever steal.
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

Unsound of music: Honorable mentions

Stuck in Twitter Prison,

to "Folsom Prison Blues" (sung on [this video](#) by musician Mike Whitney,
who does an excellent Johnny Cash)

I know those twitters flutter billions on their way
But I ain't been on Twitter since midnight yesterday.
I'm stuck in Twitter Prison, and Facebook's so, so slow
While those tweetstorms sweep on by on topics I don't know.

When I was just a newbie, my mentor told me, "Girl,
Always keep it light, now — don't join the name-call whirl."
But I cursed a Trump supporter just to watch him squirm.
Now they tweet on organizin' another four-year term.

I bet rich folks contribute to their dark-web PAC campaigns
And laugh at how us poor ones don't have capital gains.
Well, I know I had it comin', I know I acted dumb
And those wing-nuts keep on talkin' while I just sit here mum.

When they free me from this prison, when I'm tweeting back online,
I'll warn my allies not to make the same mistake as mine.
Don't go to Twitter Prison, stay loud in good renown.
Don't let those Mister Falcons* shut your Twitter down.
(Marcus Bales, Cleveland) *"Mister Falcon" was the famously
nonsensical replacement for another MF epithet that censors had
dubbed into the TV version of "Die Hard 2"

To "You're So Vain":

I walked into the potty like I was living without a care;
The Post strategically tucked below one arm,
I lowered my derriere.
It was then I saw the toilet roll, and I just stopped to stare
'Cause it was hung with the paper draped under, paper draped under,
You're a pain — you probably think your way is the right way!
You're a pain — I bet you think your way is the right way, don't you,
don't you?

Oh, you moved in several years ago, and I should have read the clues
When you said, as a guy, that you didn't care which brand or what ply
we'd use,
And you never brought home Angel Soft — though that's what experts
choose.

Oh, you moved in several years ago, and I should have read the clues
When you said, as a guy, that you didn't care which brand or what ply
we'd use,
And you never brought home Angel Soft — though that's what experts
choose.
I want to scream, "Just stay out of my bathroom, out of my bathroom!"
It's my domain! You probably think this all doesn't matter
My domain! I bet you think it all doesn't matter, don't you, don't you?
(Bob Kruger, Rockville, Md.)

To "Maria":

Twelve items!
The fast lane's for only 12 items!
But my cart has 13, don't want to make a scene, you see?
Twelve items! Do they really count all my items?
The cashier has to know — if I get busted woe is me!

Twelve items,
Any more and the lines are endless,
So I'll put back this small box of Splendas . . .
It's worth it, it's worth it to have just twelve items!
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

To "Another Brick in the Wall"

My kids need to clean their toys up;
My kids need some mess control.
It's dark; I'm walking down the hallway . . .
Dammit, what's that on the floor?
Ouch! Dammit! What's that on the floor?
All in all, it's just another brick in the sole. (Jesse Frankovich, Grand
Ledge, Mich.)

To "Comedy Tonight"

If we get lucky,
We'll flood Kentucky.
Everyone there will take their opioids tonight!
Wall Street is singing,
Money's ka-chinging,
All Appalachia's taking opioids tonight!

To "Comedy Tonight"

If we get lucky,
We'll flood Kentucky.
Everyone there will take their opioids tonight!
Wall Street is singing,
Money's ka-chinging,
All Appalachia's taking opioids tonight!

Pushers and pills, profits and pain
From Mississippi straight up to Maine.
We'll keep it going!
We'll keep it flowing!
Who cares what Post reporters write?
Litigate tomorrow, opioids tonight!
(Barbara Sarshik and Andy Pike, McLean)

To Willie Nelson's "You Were Always on My Mind,"
[performed by Baltimore Symphony musician Jonathan Jensen](#)

Maybe I didn't tell you all the things that I could have.
Maybe I didn't make you pay attention like I should have.
Spending time with you would make me feel just as if I were alone.
You were always on your phone. You were always on your phone.

Maybe I can't compete with Facebook, Instagram and Twitter,
Playful kittens on YouTube; I won't sulk or be bitter.
Still, it hurt when I'd proclaim my love In a warm and tender tone.
You were always on your phone. You were always on your phone.

Tell me, tell me why our sweet love had to die.
Give me your attention now and look me in the eye.
What was there that enthralled you on that tiny, tiny screen?
Like a siren it called you. I was left unheard, unseen.

When you pass away, these simple words will be carved upon your
stone:
"She was always on her phone. She was always on her phone."
(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

To "Knock Three Times"

Yes, your call's important to us. Sorry, we're helping -the people who
phoned in before you.
Maybe you can phone back later
When the waiting times are greater;
That way we'll spare you the fact that we care to ignore you.
Oh you dummy!

Press 1 twice (beep beep!) if you'd like to hear more choices,
Stay on the line (cricket chirps) to connect to a droid,
What a sucker!
"Click click click" means you won't hear human voices.
"Transferring now!" sends you off to the void.

(Frank Mann, Washington)

To “I Get a Kick Out of You”:

(Inspired by industry arguments that airline passengers shouldn't complain about bad seating, etc., because they could have chosen to pay for better options)

I'm getting kicked on this plane;
Parents behind have a kid who won't mind.
So tell me how it came to pass
That I'm in economy class.

I'm in a whole lot of pain:
Trying to squeeze in this seat hurt my knees.
Tell me please, someone, why I'm, alas,
Ticked off in economy class.

I'm getting sick of the folks I see dawdling there before me,
Trying to stick something under a seat as they casually ignore me.

I'm one who likes to complain;
Thus I will keep buying tickets so cheap
I'm with sheep piled deep and en masse
Back here in economy class.

(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

To “Going Up the Country”

performed by John Shea with a nice Canned Heat imitation; with visuals

I'm screwing up the country, payin' off the 1 percent.
I'm screwing up the country, payin' off the 1 percent.
I can do what I want, 'cause I'm the president.

I don't show my taxes 'cause Russia's got a part of me.
~~I don't show no taxes — the Saudis got a part of me.~~
Trying to stick something under a seat as they casually ignore me.

I'm one who likes to complain;
Thus I will keep buying tickets so cheap
I'm with sheep piled deep and en masse
Back here in economy class.

(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

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I can do what I want, 'cause I'm the president.

I don't show my taxes 'cause Russia's got a part of me.
I don't show no taxes — the Saudis got a part of me
And my greatest friend was in the KGB.

I don't care about pollution, I let businesses run free,
I don't care about consumers — what they ever do for me?
We might even sell the U.S.A.
Well, it's a brand-new game that I just love to play.

I love all my women — treat 'em like a piece of beef . . .

I can do what I want, . . . I'm the Predator-in-Chief.

There's lots of people, but really I prefer them white . . .

I tell a million lies, but don't you know I'm always right.

(John Shea, Philadelphia)

To **"Thriller"**

It's after midnight, and someone evil's posting on his phone.

Inside the House White he's tweeting in the bathroom all alone.

You want to scream, but then you wonder if it's even worth it.

It's not a dream; the horrors haven't even been disguised —

ALL CAPITALIZED!

'Cause this is Twitter! Twitter night!

And no one's gonna save us from this troll who loves to fight.

You know it's Twitter! Twitter spite!

He's starting up again another Twitter battle tonight . . . *(Jesse*

Frankovich)

To **"Suddenly Seymour" from "Little Shop of Horrors"**

Shaking my head at this hi-def era.

Thanks to these screen specs, zoomed in all the way.

Whoa, and that face! Please, give a warning!

Those nose hairs are bad, so coarse and astray!

I suddenly see more than I'd ever want to,

The more they blow up, the more they offend.

I suddenly see more, than I'd ever want to,

Ever expanding, hi-def's no friend!

(Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick, Md.)

To **"Oklahoma"**

Performed by J. Larry and Connie Schott

Toe-oe-oe-oenail fungus! I think I might have caught it at the gym.

Now my stinky feet, sure don't smell sweet

And I keep the lighting kind of dim.

Toe-oe-oe-oenail fungus! Every night my sweetie pie and I

Wear white socks to bed, so it won't spread.

Can it climb our legs up past our thighs?

We know we belong to the gym

And the gym is a grand place to swim!

But in the shower at the end of your hour

I'm telling you that you will be fine: "Wear protection!"

Rubber flip-flops, okay!

(J. Larry and Connie Schott, West Plains, Mo.)

To **"The Letter"**

Gimme your favorite special character;

Add a number just to be sure.

Lowercase alone? Nope, that's hacker-prone —

Your password needs a capital letter.

We don't care it's doubtful you'll remember it;

Got to select a good string that is fit.

~~~~~



Lowercase alone, that we can't condone —

Your password needs a capital letter.

Yes, a capital letter; sir, you can't proceed without it in place.

Listen, mister, can't you see you gotta include one that's in uppercase,

Right away, yeah . . .

*(Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)*

#### **To “[Be Our Guest](#)”**

Cheat the test! Cheat the test! Using stand-ins is the best!

Though your scores aren't really yours, they'll leave the colleges  
impressed!

Lowercase alone? Nope, that's hacker-prone —

Your password needs a capital letter.

We don't care it's doubtful you'll remember it;