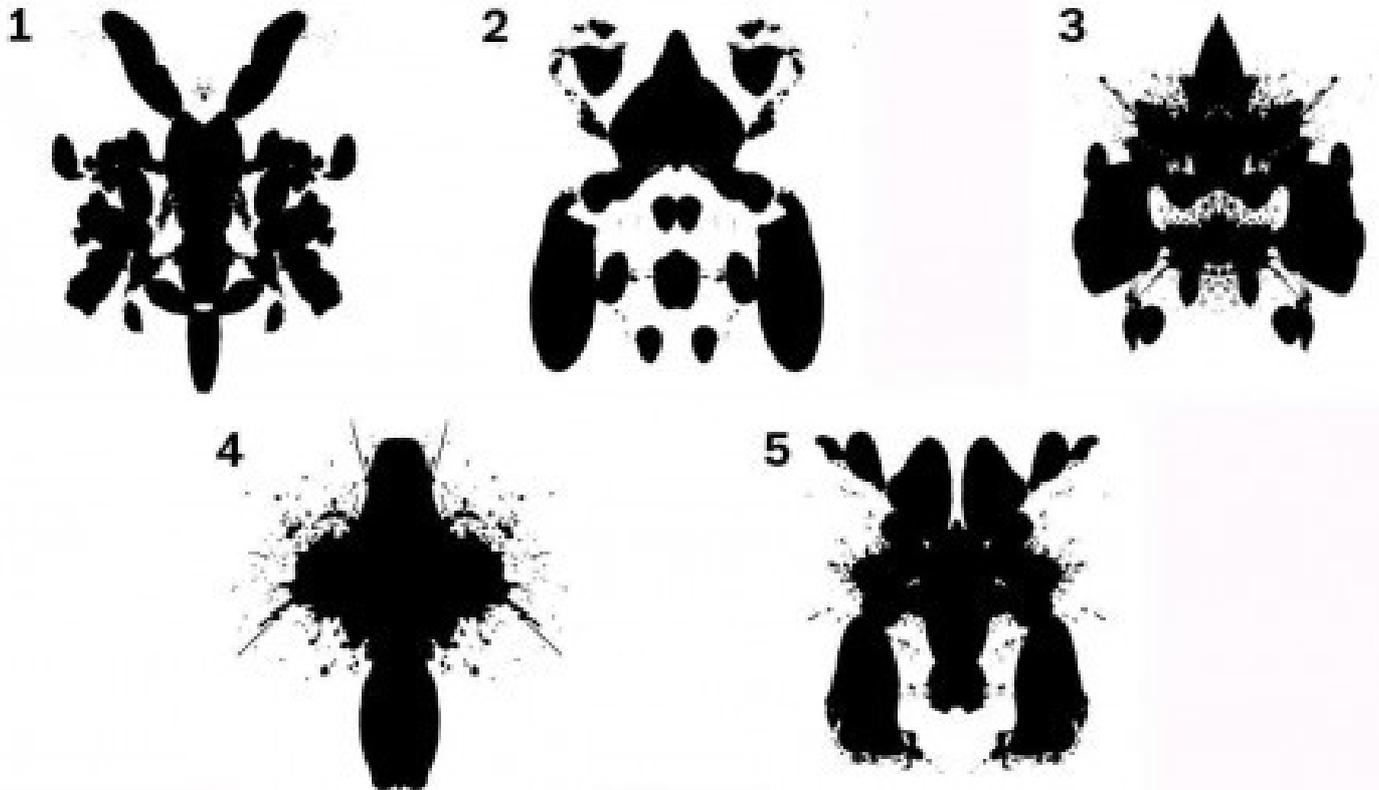


Style Invitational Week 1185: The Rorschach of the Crowd — interpret these ink blots

Plus the winning funny poems using spelling bee words like 'epistaxis' (nosebleed)



Tell us what you see in these ink blots, and we'll decide (but won't tell) what that says about you. (Inkblots personally blotted by Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers • Entertainment July 21 

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning funny poems that feature spelling bee words)

Here's a contest that the Empress's predecessor, the Czar, did three times in the 1990s, way back in Weeks 30, 77 and 148 (the last one labeled "IV." Whatever). The contest is obvious: **This week: Interpret one or more of these genuine symmetrical inkblots. You may look at them upside down or sideways**, but you need to let us know. In return, we will diagnose (but not publicly disclose) your humor affliction.

Submit entries at this website: bit.ly/enter-invite-1185 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives this utterly fabulous fuzzy spiked dinosaur/dragon hat with a train of soft spikes. Donated by Dave Prevar and modeled at a recent Loser brunch by Margaret Stevens, the adorable 6-year-old daughter of Ubiquitous Loser Duncan Stevens.



Loserling Margaret Stevens, 6-year-old daughter of Loser Duncan Stevens, modeled this week's second prize at a recent Loser brunch. Then we snatched it back from her. (Pat Myers/The Washington Post)

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. Honorable mentions get one of 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). Deadline is Monday night, Aug. 1; results published Aug. 21 (online Aug. 18). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. See contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/InvRules](#). The headline for this week's results is by Nan Reiner; the honorable-mentions subhead is by Chris Doyle. 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, 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 contest announced four weeks ago . . .](#)

BEE-MUSED: SPELLING-WORD POEMS FROM WEEK 1181

In [Week 1181](#) we gave you a list of words that were used in this year's National Spelling Bee and asked you to include one in a funny poem. Donald Trump is no doubt writing these down so he can use them in his speeches.

4th place:

Tourelle (tour-ELLE): a small tower or turret:

"The towers I build all excel,"
Boasted Trump, "and the one where I dwell
Is the pinnacle — theirs
Hardly even compares!
They should call it the Eiffel Tourelle."
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

3rd place:

Solenoglyphous (Sol-e-NOG-li-fus), having fangs that fold into the mouth:

"Your solenoglyphous fangs are spectaculah!
They are awesome (to use the vernaculah)
'Cause they fold up inside
Till you open up wide —
I asp-pire to be like you!" Signed: Dracula
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

2nd place

and the books "How Animals Have Sex" and "Humpty the Moose":

Solmizate, to sing musical notes with their letter names, as in do-re-mi (aka solfeggio):

The music teacher warbled, "This vocation can elate!
I tested all my pupils on how well they solmizate.
It warmed my heart to hear them; from each Do to So to Do,
They made my spirit sing with their divine solfeggio.
They passed with flying colors — all but little Donny T.
No matter what the music said, he just sang 'Mi, Mi, Mi.' " (Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

And the winner of the Inkin' Memorial:

Mischsprache (mish-SHPRA-cha[throat-clearing sound]), a language combining two or more languages:

In Paris, Rhett Butler knew well not to mock a
Young lady who spoke in a form of mischsprache.

“Mon English eez mal, sir; how stupide I am!”

“Franglais, my dear? Ah just don’t give a damn.” (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Mis-bee-gotten: honorable mentions

Ochlocracy (ock-LOCK-ra-see):

Ochlocracy’s

The rule by mob.

Plutocracy’s

The rule by snob.

Gerontocracy’s

The rule by grump.

[Kakistocracy?](#)

The rule by Trump. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

Sophrosyne (suh-FROSS-uh-nee): prudence, self-control:

I. If a don makes an offer you might just refuse,

Here’s advice from a guy with a leg he can’t use:

A goombah’s unlikely to practice sophrosyne

Whacking a Louisville slugger across a knee. (Chris Doyle)

II. A Modern Mantra

Wisdom, judgment, wit and sense;

Sophrosyne, intelligence;

Keep these close and you will live a life without regret.

CHAOS! BEDLAM! HAVOC! MESS!

TUMULT! TURMOIL! LAWLESSNESS!

This is what will happen if you argue on the Internet. (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

III. How can we put a person forth to be the nation’s boss, and he

Be utterly devoid of any semblance of sophrosyne? (Nan Reiner)

Strepitous (STREP-itous): noisy, boisterous:

I. Here’s why geezers aren’t strepitous:

They are, simply too decrepitous. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

II. It was placid on my street in Boise,

Till new neighbors moved in — wow, they’re noisy!

With this strepitous crew,

There's not much I can do —

Who would shush “the Sopranos, from Joisey”? (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Alpargata (AL-par-GAH-ta), a canvas slip-on shoe with a rope sole:

You wonder if I am a dork?

I think you'll see there's not a

Doubt I am — I'm wearing socks

inside my alpargata. (Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Aplustre (a-PLUS-tree), the curved ornamental stern of a Greek or Roman ship:

The Climax of “The Little Mermaid”

The Sea Witch gets speared with a broken aplustre,

Thus turning the maritime weather less blustery. (Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

Piqueur (pee-CUR), the supervisor of hounds during a hunt:

From some disagreement on when they should let the hounds out for the fox,

Two hot-tempered hunt club attendants pulled up and proceeded to box.

The huntsman, embarrassed in front of the riders all up in their saddles,

Apologetically glanced at the pair and just shrugged, “Piqueur battles.” (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

Epistaxis (epi-STAX-is), a nosebleed:

He took her to a concert, and they got there right on time;

But little did she know they'd have a monumental climb.

As up up up they made their way, down down went her affection;

He'd bought the cheapest seats up in the epistaxis-section. (Beverley Sharp)

Pilcrow (pill-crow), a paragraph symbol:

“Oh, honey,” the editor's email lamented,

“The car is [a pilcrow]” (read “slightly indented”). (Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

Myiasis (my-EYE-a-sis), maggot infestation:

Myiasis occurs when maggots make their home in you

And tunnel through your flesh like you are human barbecue.

It's thoroughly disgusting and I hope this poem's a winner

'Cause when I did the image search I nearly lost my dinner. (George-Ann Rosenberg, Washington)

Tyee (tye-ee), a large salmon:

Here's a curious case you might like to examine:

One sale, two arrivals concurrent.

Tom had run to the store: “I was first to that salmon!”

Said Jimmy, a cyclist: “You weren't!”

Very shortly, the magistrate pounded his gavel;

His verdict was clearly a stunner:

“When the gentlemen differ in manner of travel,

The tyee must go to the runner.” (Matt Monitto)

Entertainment Alerts

Big stories in the entertainment world as they break.

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Campagnol (CAM-pa-NYOL), the European field vole

I. . . In there stepped a tiny rodent, rather smaller than a mole.

Not a bit of cheddar ate he, not a bit of time would wait he,

Before, acting nice and matey, he curled up upon the sole,

Curled upon the ridged rubber of my tattered sneaker's sole.

Curled, and sniffed: a little vole.

Then this fuzzy beast a-lurking set my countenance to smirking
By the big incisors working on the footwear that it stole —
“Though my tears be all too bitter, thou,” I said, “art one cute critter.
What art thou, to choose to fritter time away in this sad hole?
Tell me what the people call thee, in this European hole!”
Quoth the rodent, “Campagnol.”
(Sarah Jay, Churchville, Md.)

II. I’d never seen a mushroom with a head
or four legs and a tail; I was distraught!
I asked to have the soup du jour instead,
and checked the menu. Ah, what I had thought
was *champignon* was campagnol, a vole
from Europe (not a tasty fungus – no)
that’s roasted slowly and you eat it whole.
“. . . No, wait! Forget the soup . . . I think I’ll go.”
(Jayne Osborn, Wellingborough. England)

Chremslach ([throat-clearing sound]rems-la[throat-clear]): pancakes made of matzah, often filled with prunes, served during Passover

When it’s Pesach, we toss out the bread,
And we eat only matzoh instead,
So some chremslach is needed
To unstick what’s impeded
‘Cause the prunes bring relief in the head. (Mark Raffman)

Still running — deadline Monday night, July 25: our contest to nominate another presidential candidate. See bit.ly/invite1184.

 **1 Comments**

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