

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1261: Post mortems — our annual obit poetry contest

Plus winners from our retakes of 24 varied contests from the past year



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post/Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers January 4 [Email the author](#)

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winners of our retakes on 24 contests from the past year)

Y.A. Tittle died last year

And one thing's surely certain:

He's history's most famous guy

Whose first name was Yelberton.

Yay, we made it to 2018! Well, er, *we* did. And as inevitably as taxes (reformed or un-) comes The Style Invitational's annual top-of-the-year contest: **Write a humorous poem of no longer than eight lines about someone who died in 2017**, as in the example above by Washington Post Official Joke Poet and Pathetically Obsessive New York Giants Fan Gene Weingarten. You can find many lists of the latest retirees to the Heaven Belt — including many little-known but interesting people — Googling "deaths 2017" (without quotes). As always with our obit poems, cleverness doesn't mean cruelty; don't express joy over someone's death or

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predict a trip to the underworld because his movies were stupid or she voted the wrong way (though you may vilify Charles Manson however you like).

Your poem isn't required to rhyme, but the Empress happens to have chosen rhyming verses in all 15 of her previous obit poetry contests. Still, if you have, say, a fabulously clever, spot-on haiku, send it.

Submit up to 25 poems at the website wapo.st/enter-invite-1261 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our new Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, somewhat apropos of this contest, a pair of [stretchy low-rise socks with a foot-X-ray skeleton design](#).

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "No Childishness Left Behind" or "Magnum Dopus." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, Jan. 15;** results published Feb. 4 (online Feb. 1). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Tom Witte; Chris Doyle wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" 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 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 . . .](#)

DOUBLE QUIPPING: WINNERS OF OUR 2017 DO-OVERS, PART 1

In Part 1 of a two-week tour through the past year, in [Week 1257](#) the Empress invited readers to submit (or resubmit) entries to the varied contests from Week 1203 through Week 1229 (November 2016-May 2017). For contests that relied on that week's newspapers, we used current ones this time around. And the subject matter for any of the contests could be made more timely — as you'll see.

4th place:

[Week 1213, a haiku that includes a pun:](#)

Moore: "I just can't lose —
Alabamans, they love me!"
Turns out they dug Jones.
(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

3rd place:

Dem bones can be yours if you just miss winning this contest, the Empress said archly.

[Week 1215, "X is so Y" jokes:](#)





Trump hotel yoga studios are so loyal,
they play "Hail to the Chief" when classes do down-dogs. (Dottie Gray, Alexandria, Va.)

2nd place

[and the various novelty snacks:](#)

[Week 1214, a sentence or more using only words from Trump's inaugural address:](#)

"The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer! I

- 2 Perspective**
President Trump's power to pardon himself, as skewered by cartoons 
- 3** Celebrities, fashion insiders react to death of Kate Spade 
- 4 Review**
Sex, politics and art painted in broad strokes in 'Botticelli in the Fire' 
- 5 Perspective**
Trump's Super Bowl party without the Eagles, as mocked through cartoons 

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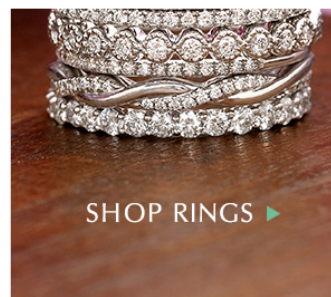


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speak of wealthy people, flush with cash in the tens of millions. They will be enriched at the expense of the little people! And that is so great!! (William Kennard, Arlington, Va.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

Week 1218, bank headlines:

Real Post headline: **Yellen leaves a solid legacy at the Fed**

Joke bank head: ***Ousted chairwoman spotted walking briskly from burning paper bag at front door*** (Ivars Kuskevics, Takoma Park, Md.)

No can do-over: Honorable mentions

Week 1204, hopeful thoughts for a never-Trumper:

— For stargazers on the West Coast, there's nothing so bright as a North Korean rocket! (Daniel Helming, Maplewood, N.J.)

— He's almost certain to leave us soon for a younger country with bigger mountains. (Kenny Moore, Rocklin, Calif., a First Offender)

— Week 1207, new clues for words in a crossword:

— **ITSATRAP:** Experienced husband's thought upon hearing, "Do I sound like my mother?" (John Hutchins, Silver Spring, Md.)

— **SELASSIE:** Scottish Ethiopian lady (Steve Honley, Washington)

Week 1208, poems about people who died in 2016:

At Henry Heimlich's funeral,

The mourners were asked, "Please:

When filing past his coffin,

Do not give him a squeeze." (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

Week 1209, false trivia about inventions:

— The modern *hospital* bears little resemblance to its predecessor, the "*house of spittle*," which was reserved exclusively for patients with consumption. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

— Late one night at Menlo Park, after having a few too many, Thomas Edison invented the lightbulb joke. (Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

— **@NapoleonB** bragging about Waterloo win? Soon he'll be a Waterloser!! Keep an eye out for Bonaparte's retweet! (Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

— **@empresscatherine:** **@gPotemkin** showed me a beautiful village on the Dnieper. Who said I wouldn't make Russia great again? Morons! (Chris

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Doyle)

Week 1212, neologisms from ScrabbleGrams "racks":

BDELOTU —> **LOBUT**: Easy yoga position. (Kyle Hendrickson, Frederick, Md.)

Week 1213, haiku with a pun:

— Donald's a yes-man,

Allowing Vladimir to

Work without a nyet. (Chris Doyle)

— A redneck doth know

That his father's cell number

Rings no telephone. — J. Foxworthy (Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)

Week 1214, using words in Trump's inaugural address: "Forget your

miseries! The pleasant flush of the behind, to free trapped movement with

grateful success, will restore your spirit. Same as I do." (Dave Prevar,

Annapolis, Md.)

Week 1217, combined businesses:

— Hairstyling school upstairs from a mortuary: You Can Do It over My Dead Body (Danielle Nowlin, Fairfax Station, Va.)

— Medical-equipment store/braiding salon: Slings & Hair Rows (Kathy El-Assal, Middleton, Wis.)

— Tea garden/ employee pension counselor: Chai and Retiring (Chris Doyle)

Week 1218, bank heads:

Real ad: Fresh cut neck bones 79 cents/lb.

Joke bank head: At Place de la Concorde while supplies last! (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

Real headline: McConnell blunt on wall payment

Joke bank head: Doobie found taped outside Sen. Collins's office was allegedly promised for yes vote (David Garratt, Silver City, N.M.)

Week 1219, "lik the bred" poems:

My name is Kirk, with many fans
Assal, Middleton, Wis.)

— Tea garden/ employee pension counselor: Chai and Retiring (Chris Doyle)

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Week 1219, "lik the bred" poems:

My name is Kirk, with many fans

But I don't like this team of Dan's

But I don't like this team of Dais.

I'll soon play for a team that wins:

My contract done, I'll shed the Skins. (Mark Raffman)

My name is Don.

My buddy Roy

Is now a pawn

In PHONY ploy!

They LIE about

His FAKE libido!

Oh, let them pout —

I back the pedo. — @realDonaldTrump (Matt Monitto)

Week 1220, pedantry:

The singular form of "cannoli" is "cannolo." The reason for the obscurity of the latter is that no sane person would ever have just one cannolo. (Bill Dorner, Indianapolis)

Week 1221, the child of any two people:

— The child of Thomas Edison and Jenny McCarthy would go on to invent the electric dim bulb. (Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

— The child of Martin Yan and Christiaan Barnard would find herself between a wok and a heart place. (Mae Scanlan)

— The child of Ben Carson and Pat Sajak would be asleep at the Wheel. (Jesse Frankovich)

Week 1222, "breed" two real racehorses and name the "foal":

— Local Hero x Convict Pike = Hoagie Pokey (Danielle Nowlin)

— American Anthem x Takeoff = Stars and Strips (David Garratt)

— Classic Rock x Sonneteer = Lynyrd Cohyn (Dave Matuskey, Sacramento)

Week 1223, juicy headlines for unjuicy news:

— Jesus to Return to Middle East!

Real news: / Abu Dhabi art collector buys Leonardo's painting "Salvator Mundi" (Mark Raffman)

— Post reporter in chains!

Restaurant critic Tom Sietsema reviews Applebee's, nine other franchises (Mark Raffman)

Week 1226, "grandfoals" from breeding Week 1222 winners:

Chinese Checkers x Congrats, Loser = You Look Marbleless (Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

Bare It Browning x Bed Bath N Bayonne = HowDo I Loofa Thee (Hildy Zampella)

Week 1228, "secret inspirations" for movie titles:

— "Of Thee I Sing": Michael Flynn (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Local crime & safety email alerts

Important breaking news alerts for crime, public safety and the courts in the D.C. area.

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— "Doctor Dolittle": Ben Carson (Kevin Dopart)

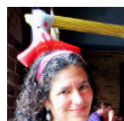
Week 1229, alphabet couplets:

C is for Copulate — meld thigh-to-thigh;

D's for the Diapers you'll soon need to buy. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 8: our contest for "year in preview" events of 2018. See wapo.st/invite1260.

3 Comments



Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. Follow @patmyersTWP

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Fredie Blom was born in 1904 in the Eastern Cape province in South Africa.

