



The
struggle
for
justice
begins.



**TWELVE
ANGRY MEN**

by Reginald Rose; directed by Sheldon Epps



Jan. 18-Feb. 17

Get Tickets!

Joshua M. Lynch, Tim Ziff, Michael Rosenthal, Craig Wallace
and Christopher Bloch. Photo by Scott Suchman.

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1317: Punku 2 — yup, haiku with puns

Plus the winning obit poems about various ex-people of 2018.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By **Pat Myers**

January 31

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning obit poems)

**There's a pattern where
Trump talks big, but then gives in.
SOTU with his speech.** (Duncan Stevens)

**Rich straight white men rule.
Looks like America's been
Grabbed by the passe.** (Seth Tucker)

We're back with a contest we introduced two years ago. We're still calling it Punku, though the Empress was informed last time that the name was already taken by micropoet Demi Newell ("Believe it or not/ I was addicted to soap/ But I am clean now"), who had created a #punku hashtag years earlier.

This week: Create a haiku containing a pun or similar wordplay. as in the examples above: the first is by Loser Duncan



Most Read Entertainment

Stevens, who wrote to remind the E that we hadn't punked in a while; the second is a runner-up from our 2017 contest.

By "haiku" we mean —

You purists, please chill a minute —

Just 5-7-5.

In other words: three lines, with five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, five in the third. You may also add a title. The subject matter is wide open as long as the entry is clever/funny; rhyming is welcome. Historically, references to current events tend to get more ink, though I always like to mix in some less topical humor as well.

Submit entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1317 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives **The Sorry Button**, a palm-size puck-looking electronic thing; when you push down on the top, it produces one of a dozen varied recordings of people saying "sorry" — some sincere-sounding, others sarcastically eye-rolling (as well as a sound can roll its eyes). Donated by Loser Dave Prevar to the Empress, who of course has no use for it because she is never sorry.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our "Whole Fools" Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "We've Seen Better" or "IDiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (**FirStink** for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, Feb. 11;** results published March 3 (online Thursday, Feb. 28). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results is by Bill Dorner; Chris Doyle wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" 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 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 . . .](#)






YOU GOTTA BEREAVE: THE OBIT POEMS OF WEEK 1313

Week 1313 was our annual contest to commemorate with humor (but not malice, except for the truly malice-deserving) various personages who met their expiration dates last year. Clearly many people in the Loser community discovered a list of Darwin Award contenders.

4th place:

ALAN ABEL (1924-2018), practical joker extraordinaire:

Alan Abel loved a hoax
And spent a lifetime fooling folks;
He staged his death in 1980,
Then trashed his obit with much gaiety.
So this time did the public scoff and

- 1** Jussie Smollett speaks out after alleged attack: 'My body is strong but my soul is stronger' 
- 2** The Newseum was a grand tribute to the power of journalism. Here's how it failed. 
- 3** **Perspective**
It's been decades since the Vietnam War ended, and the Smithsonian has never mounted a full exhibition. Until now. 
- 4** Ariana Grande tried to fix her Japanese tattoo. It still doesn't mean what she wanted it to. 
- 5** **Review**
Netflix's 'The Umbrella Academy' is even weirder than the comic. It's an absolute must see. 

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Demand a peek inside the coffin?
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)



You were robbed of first place? Push this button
and get an apology.

3rd place:

PRABHU BHATARA, **unwise cabdriver in India:**

Prabhu hopped outside to pee
and let the engine idle.
What followed many people see
as close to suicidal:
"He snapped a selfie with a
bear," the Indian police's
Official said of this affair. "Now
Prabhu rests in pieces."
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

2nd place

and the dried scorpions with a make-them-glow flashlight:

RICHARD DeVOS (1926-2018), co-founder of Amway:

Said Saint Peter, "Can't let you in now, Rich, alas.
Though I'm sure that you think this is urgent,
But you haven't yet reached our Cloud Nine Elite class,
So go sell some more laundry detergent."
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

STEPHEN HAWKING (1942-2018):

In heaven, maybe, Stephen Hawking
Can be found upright and walking,
Asking God with great respect,
"Was my cosmology correct?"
(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

Bring out your dud: Honorable mentions

ZAIM KHALIS KOSNAN, inexperienced snake collector:

In Selangor, Malaysia, on a morning bright and sunny,
A biker met a 12-foot snake and thought, "He's worth some money!"
He caught the thing, but in the end, the python was the victor,
'Cause poor ol' Zaim didn't know he'd captured a constrictor.
He marveled at his trophy; he was more than slightly pleased,
Until the snake attacked him! (He was more than slightly squeezed.)
A python is a deadly thing, a cousin of the boa;
So just be sure you know your snakes, 'cause Zaim is no moah.
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

AMOS OZ (1939-2018):

Amos Oz
Is . . .
Sorry. Was.
(Louis J. Phillips, New York, a First Offender)

SIR ROGER BANNISTER (1929-2010) who won the first sub-4-minute mile

SIR ROGER BANNISTER (1929-2018), who ran the first sub-4-minute mile:

When Oxford's track results were read
The single digit voiced was key
For no one cared what else was said
Apart from this: "The time was 3:..."
(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)

ANTHONY BOURDAIN (1956-2018):

Bull pizzle, cobra heart, maggot fried rice,
Anus of warthog? He didn't think twice.
There wasn't anything he wouldn't eat.
Food for the worms now, the circle's complete.
(Mark Raffinan, Reston, Va.)

German serial killer EGIDIUS SCHIFFER (1956-2018), who accidentally electrocuted himself in his cell during a solo sex act:

A self-cleaning oven is nice.
A self-driving car is a thriller.
But the most helpful device?
A self-killing serial killer.
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

PAUL ALLEN (1953-2018), co-founder of Microsoft:

Yes, you're dead — not a twitch, though we plead and entreat;
We complain of a glitch, hit Ctrl-Alt-Delete.
Now you've had your last breath, tell us, what have you seen?
Can you tell us if Death might be, say, a blue screen?
(Duncan Stevens)

STEPHEN HAWKING:

Stephen Hawking has passed (not before growing old);
Now we've lost him forever (or so we've been told).
But this genius discovered: black holes aren't so black.
So perhaps he'll surprise us and find his way back.
(Daniel Fleisher, Baltimore, a First Offender)

Rapper MAC MILLER (1992-2018):

At 26, a lost musician
Far too young to part for heaven.
A tragic way to dodge admission
To the [Club of 27](#).
(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

EDDIE CLARKE (1950-2018), Motörhead guitarist

I'm so surprised to see you go
That all I have to say is ö.
(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

WILLIAM GOLDMAN (1931-2018), author of "The Princess Bride":

When life was irretrievable,
Did you say "Inconceivable!"?
Did everything you've lived through seem
To be a dweam wiffin a dweam?

And did you meet a Spanish guy
Who told you to “prepare to die”
And took revenge (a chilly dish)?
What’s that? Shut up? Well, as you wish. (Duncan Stevens)

Southwest Airlines founder HERB KELLEHER (1931-2018):

His business acumen was never doubted.
Now he’s aloft — unless he’s been rerouted. (Frank Osen)

Actor JERRY VAN DYKE (1931-2018):

All those years of feeling second best,
As the guy next door or late-late guest.
But the Reaper came and nabbed you quick,
To finally beat big brother Dick (Steve Fahey, Olney, Md.)

Fiat chief SERGIO MARCHIONNE (1952-2018):

The Car Guys met him at the gate: “You got here much too fast:
On every course we’ve ever seen, the Fiat driver’s last.” (Frank Osen)

GEORGE H.W. BUSH (1924-2018):

In heaven, you’ll stand at a rocky Maine shore,
It’s crisp and it’s cool--keep your scarf on;
You’re gathered with family who’ve gone on before,
And lots of good friends you can [barf on](#). (Duncan Stevens)

KOFI ANNAN (1938-2018), U.N. secretary general:

When told the Ghanaian was gone,
The prez sent a tweet from the john:
"My condolences to
The people who knew
And grieve for Covfefe Annan." (Chris Doyle)

[SAM BALLARD \(1991-2018\)](#), unwise diner

On a dare, this poor young Aussie raver
Ate a slug; what was worse than the flavor
Was the illness it gave—
Now he’s gone to his grave,
Where the slugs are returning the favor. (Frank Osen)

**[JOHN BARTON \(1928-2018\)](#), eccentric co-founder of the
Royal Shakespeare Company:**

Shall I compare you to your favorite Bard?
Like him, you had a celebrated wit
(Though only you, perhaps, once tumbled hard,
While strutting on the stage, into the pit).
Like Will, you lived in England all your life,
Believed that golden writing never fades,
And found a gal named Anne to be your wife.
But you alone, it seems, chewed razor blades. (Melissa Balmain)

**ROBERT B. YOUNG (1919-2018), inventor of the product
scanner:**

Although last year he had to park it,
His legacy’s in every market.
And so it’s fitting he’s at ease,
Since he made checking out a breeze. (Frank Osen)

Comic strip cartoonist MORT WALKER (1923-2018):

His "Beetle Bailey's" long run — wow!

No rabbit, but a tortoise.

In heaven, is he drawing now?

With ample rigor, Mort is. (Mark Raffman)

DOLORES O'RIORDAN (1971-2018), lead singer of the Cranberries:

(to the Cranberries song "Zombie")

Another corpse is laid out, heart's no longer beatin',

If infected, resurrected, we might all get eaten,

So we hope your remains are not hunting for brains,

Not undead, not undead, not shambling,

Eating flanks, eating arms, eating arms, eating buns;

Please stay dead, please stay dead, no rising,

Won't get fed, won't get fed, zombie, zombie, zombie,

That's what we dread, what we dread, zombie . . . (Duncan Stevens)

Bruno Sammartino, Nikolai Volkoff, Brickhouse Brown, Jim "The Anvil" Neidhart, "The Dynamite Kid," and Big Van Vader (all died 2018):

Wrestling pros, they vied with death

Until their lives were nixed;

They battled till their final breath —

Too bad the match was fixed. (Mark Raffman)

10 PEOPLE

Twins quite a year of loss and pain

As many people died again,

Like politician John McCain,

Margot Kidder (Lois Lane),

John Mahoney (Martin Crane),

Tony "Parts Unknown" Bourdain,

Stephen Hawking (what a brain!)

And five poor folks who ate romaine.

(Jesse Frankovich, Grand Ledge, Mich.)

And Last: "LOVE" artist ROBERT INDIANA (1928-2018):

His famous work was just a word

That felt as welcome as a hug

Until a contest most absurd

Debased it for the [LOSER mug](#). (Jeff Contompasis)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Feb. 4: our bogus-statistics contest. See wapo.st/invite1316.

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Pat Myers

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