



Entertainment

# Style Invitational Week 1365: Dead Letters, our obit poem contest

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Plus the winning (if maybe not so accurate) predictions for 2020



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers

Jan. 2, 2020 at 10:14 a.m. EST

(Click [here](#) to skip down to the winning predictions for 2020.)

## ROSIE RUIZ (1953-2019)

The Boston Marathon cheater is dead  
(No, we needn't build a shrine).  
So now it can be officially said  
That she's crossed the finish line.

As the Empress has taken to doing each January, we welcome the year with a backward glance, and with the degree of taste and propriety that has brought The Style Invitational its renown: by making joke poems about newly dead people. **This week: Write a poem of no longer than eight lines (plus an optional title) about someone who died in 2019**, as in the example above by the father of our feast, the deposed [Czar of The Style Invitational](#). Google “deaths 2019” and you’ll find all manner of lists of recent mortal-coil-slippers. **Note:** The Invite is a humor and light-verse contest, and so the Empress is not looking for flowery elegies. But neither do we want to be cruel, to do a verbal jig over the grave, to predict a residence in hell (who do you think we are, [the president?](#)).



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- Perspective**  
Reading will supposedly make you a better person. That's not the real reason to pick up a book.



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Submit up to 25 entries at [wapo.st/enter-invite-1365](http://wapo.st/enter-invite-1365) (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, Jan. 13; results will appear Feb. 2 in print, Jan. 30 online.



From a little box in your pocket, BOING up pops a little monster. This week's 2nd prize.

**Winner gets the [Lose Cannon](#)**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives something called **Sneekum Pet Pranksters**. It's a little box about the size of a pack of cigarettes, out of which suddenly pops (you can set it with a timer) a little monkey-monster head. What a big hit it would be on a first date! It doesn't even need batteries. Donated by Dave Prevar. (You can see video of this thing in this week's Style Conversational.)

**Other runners-up** win one of our new "For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mugs or our "Whole Fools" Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "Too-Weak Notice" or "Certificate of (de) Merit." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/InvRules](http://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline "Diviner Comedy" is by Tom Witte; Jesse Frankovich wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](https://on.fb.me/invdev). "Like" the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](http://bit.ly/inkofday); follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

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**The Style Conversational:** The Empress's online column, published late Thursday afternoon, Jan. 2, reviews each new contest and set of results. This week, remembering the Invite's brush with the late Don Imus. Check it out at [wapo.st/conv1365](http://wapo.st/conv1365).

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

## The Diviner Comedy: A timeline for 2020

[Week 1361](#) was our annual contest to tell us some events that will (not really) occur in the coming year. Some of the inking entries in the timeline below contradict one another. But hey, we didn't say we'd make sense of this world.

**First, a milestone:** With his honorable mention in the air-quotes contest of Week 1363, **(Kevin Dopart, Washington)** became the fourth member of The Style Invitational Triple Hall of Fame with his 1,500th blot of Invite ink, joining Chris Doyle, Russell Beland and Tom Witte. Kevin, who heads up the Transportation Department's research on automated vehicles, started Inviting in 2005 and quickly became the contest's top scorer for seven years running, and still blots up almost 100 inks each year. Meanwhile, Kevin isn't hearing footsteps; No. 5, Brendan Beary, is more than 400 blots of ink behind at 1,083.

**2 Review**  
Netflix's 'Cheer' is the documentary that hard-working cheerleaders have long deserved



**3 Review**  
'The New Pope' has all of the style but none of the substance that 'The Young Pope' had



**4 Review**  
The real mystery of HBO's 'The Outsider': Why isn't it better?



**5 Review**  
Jane Austen never finished 'Sanditon,' so PBS is happy to fluff it up and draw it out



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#### 4th place:

**April 23:** Focusing on players who will be seeing the most action, the Redskins draft punters in the first three rounds. *(Mike Gips, Bethesda, Md.)*

#### 3rd place:

**Aug. 19:** House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has double knee replacement surgery after spending day after day praying for the president. *(Jeff Hazle, San Antonio)*

#### 2nd place and the 'Good All Things to Be Happy' shirt from South Korea:

**Sept. 8:** “(Amazon founder and chief executive Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post)” appears for the 1 millionth time in The Washington Post. *(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)*

#### And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

**May 16:** Concerns about covert pressure on Ukraine flare up anew when President Volodymyr Zelensky, reading from a script, calls Elizabeth Warren "Pocahontas." *(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

#### Prophe-C's: Honorable mentions

**Jan. 7:** Members of the National Pedantic Society wrap up a week of reminding people that the next decade technically doesn't start until next January. *(Chuck Helwig, Centreville, Va.)*

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**Jan. 20:** To prove he is not prejudiced against people of color, President Trump invites this year's winners of all five major beauty pageants to the White House for a meet-and-grab. *(Jeff Shirley, Richmond, Va.)*

**Feb. 2:** The New England Patriots win another Super Bowl, aided by a mind control device surreptitiously implanted in the opposing quarterback's helmet. *(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)*

**Feb. 2:** Stephen Miller sees his shadow, realizes too late he's exposed to sunlight, and turns to dust. *(Gary Crockett)*

**Feb. 9:** Emilia Clarke brings her dragon to the Oscars and commands it to set the stage ablaze as revenge for not getting a Best Actress nomination for "Last Christmas." *(Lee Graham, Rockville, Md.)*

**Feb. 17:** Following his annual physical, President Trump reports that he weighs 180, has a BMI of 23 and had a "perfect" Pap smear. *(Jon Ketzner, Cumberland, Md.)*



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**March 21:** Trump demands an investigation into [who ate his strawberries](#). (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

**April 8:** Exactly one year after his song reached No. 1, Lil Nas X discovers that he can't no more. (*Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.*)

**April 14:** Attorney General William Barr travels to Albania, Paraguay and Burkina Faso as part of his evolving strategy to investigate the investigation of the investigators investigating the investigators of the investigated. (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

**April 21:** Instead of putting Harriet Tubman on the \$20 bill, Trump announces his plan to issue a \$3 bill featuring his own visage. (*Bert Freiman, East Amherst, N.Y.*)

**May 2:** A horse whose name was chosen from the 2017 list of [Style Invitational "foals"](#) wins the Kentucky Derby. (*Steve Fahey, Olney, Md.*)

**May 8:** On V-E Day, the Justice Department reveals that the Nazis were based not in Germany, but in Ukraine. (*Gary Crockett*)

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**June 18:** The Republican National Committee buys 300,000 copies of [Donald Trump Jr.'s new book](#), "Nepotism for Dummies." (*Mark Raffman*)

**June 27:** President Trump officially declares his son a baron, because somebody said he couldn't. (*Dottie Gray, Alexandria, Va.*)

**July 3:** Donald Trump announces that, in lieu of the U.S. Olympic team, the United States will be represented in Tokyo by Rudy Giuliani. (*Duncan Stevens*)

**July 4:** Trump's "greatest fireworks show in the history of the world" concludes with nuclear detonations offshore from Mar-a-Lago. (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

**July 7:** George and Kellyanne Conway leave each other for Mary Matalin and James Carville. (*Steve Honley, Washington*)

**July 14:** At the Democratic National Convention, Nancy Pelosi looks stunned when someone suggests that she's had enough facelifts. (*Jon Ketzner*)

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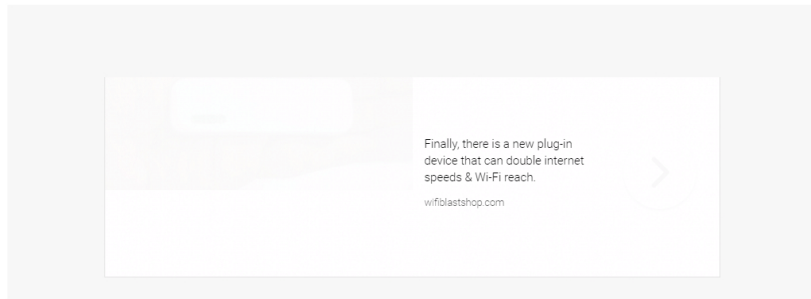
**July 16:** Phase 2 of Metro's Silver Line finally opens, but the first train tragically collides with some low-altitude airborne swine. (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

**Aug. 13:** In Chillicothe, Ohio, the first recorded use occurs of a surly eighth-grader saying "Okay, millennial" to his mom. (*Jesse Rifkin*)

**Aug. 26:** Trump arrives onstage 10 minutes late for his speech at the Republican National Convention. A campaign aide later explains that Trump was busy [flushing his toilet 15 times](#). (*Duncan Stevens*)

**Sept. 8:** Justin Fairfax is forced to resign as Virginia's lieutenant governor after yearbook photos show him wearing whiteface at a party while dressed as Michael Jackson. (*Gregory Koch, Falls Church, Va.*)

**Sept. 15:** Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez demands that Cleveland's NFL team be renamed the Persons of Color. (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.*)



**Sept. 21:** In another interview with the BBC, Prince Andrew admits to being pals with Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, R. Kelly, Roman Polanski and Jeffrey Dahmer. Andrew says again, "I admit fully that my judgment was probably colored by my tendency to be too honorable." (*Jon Ketzner*)

**Oct. 2:** Having brought peace to the Middle East, Jared Kushner moves on to finding a cure for cancer. (*Art Grinath, Takoma Park*)

**Oct. 11:** Mike Pence acknowledges that he is gray. (*David Kleinbard, Mamaroneck, N.Y.*)

**Oct. 15:** Variety announces that Tom Hanks will star in the new biopic about Tom Hanks. (*Jon Ketzner*)

**Oct. 21:** Mike Pence, accompanied by his wife, has a conference with Nancy Pelosi. (*Selma Ellis, Rolling Meadows, Ill.*)

**Nov. 13:** In an ad for Weight Watchers, [Sir Mix-a-Lot](#) admits that he can and was lying. (*Bruce Alter, Fairfax Station, Va.*)

**Nov. 26:** In an attempt at cultural diversity, the Hallmark Channel presents its first Diwali movie, about a big-city woman who tries to buy Christmas lights in a small town near Mumbai. (*Bruce Alter*)

**Dec. 8:** Trump fatally shoots a Macy's Santa on Herald Square. But the stock market hits a new high the same day, so Republicans say that while regrettable, it's not an impeachable offense. (*Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.*)


**Dec. 12:** In the fourth quarter of the Army-Navy Game, President Trump pardons the Army middle linebacker for unnecessary roughness. (*Frank Mann, Washington*)

**Dec. 26:** Press secretary Stephanie Grisham reports that, for the fourth year in a row, the White House menorah has stayed lighted for 16 days. (*Bruce Alter*)

**Still running — deadline Monday night, Jan. 6: Clues in our reverse-crossword contest. See [wapo.st/invite1364](https://wapo.st/invite1364).**

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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 Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. Follow [Twitter](#)

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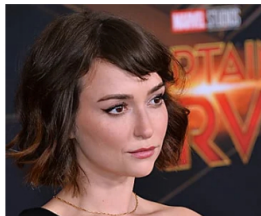
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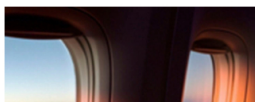
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