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Style Invitational Week 1445: Put it in bee-verse

Write a spelling word into a poem or joke. Plus songs summed up as limericks.



(Bob Staake for The Washington Post)

By Pat Myers

July 15, 2021 at 10:11 a.m. EDT



(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winners of our contest to sum up a song as a limerick)

**NEROLI OIL** (*pronounced NERoli*)  
Neroli, we roll it on,  
That oil so redolent of orange.  
Your scars (they say) will soon be gone!  
That's fine, but it can't make this rhyme.

Delayed for a year and then a couple of months, the latest Scripps National Spelling Bee — as always — provided a nail-biting showdown and a display of astonishing feats of memory, knowledge, concentration and poise among a passel of middle-schoolers who'll, alas, never have a chance to see almost any of these words used outside the competition hive.


WAIT! They will! Thanks to The Style Invitational.



Stressed out by your bathroom scale? You can vent on this prize squeeze toy.

This week: Write a humorous poem of eight lines or fewer that includes at least one of the words used in Round 8 or later of this year's bee, as in the example above from Round 17.

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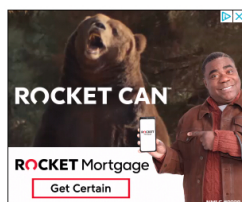
OR: Write a joke in Q&A form that uses at least one of the words.

At least for the poems, **you must use the word with its real meaning and pronunciation**; you can't pretend it's something else. You may use a slightly different form of the word, such as a plural, adding "-ing," etc. **You may add a title**, and the word might appear only in the title.

**To see the words:** Go to [spellingbee.com/round-results](https://spellingbee.com/round-results), then click on any of the rounds from 8 to 18. **Or just**, if you don't want to look up those words and then their meanings and pronunciations, see my list of 25 of the words at the bottom of this page.

**Submit up to 25 entries at [wapo.st/enter-invite-1445](https://wapo.st/enter-invite-1445)** (no capitals in the Web address). **Deadline is Monday, July 26**; results appear Aug. 15 in print, Aug. 12 online.

**Winner gets the [Clowning Achievement](#)**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a **"stress reliever" squeeze toy in the shape of a bathroom scale**. So if your real scale makes you cranky, you squeeze the toy instead of smashing the scale into your bathtub. Donated by Dave Prevar.



**Other runners-up** win their choice of our ["For Best Results, Pour Into Top End" Loser Mug](#) or our ["Whole Fools" Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, ["No 'Bility"](#) or ["Punderachiever."](#) 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](https://wapo.st/InvRules). The headline "Rick and roll" was submitted by Great Minds Kevin Dopart, Chris Doyle and Jesse Frankovich; Jeff Contompasis and William Kennard sent 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](https://bit.ly/inkofday); and 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. See this week's (published late Thursday afternoon, July 15), in which the E shares some earlier spelling bee poems, at [wapo.st/conv1445](https://wapo.st/conv1445).

**The "You're Invited" podcast:** More than a dozen half-hour episodes, including dish from the Empress and Czar, and tips from top Losers. See [bit.ly/invite-podcast](https://bit.ly/invite-podcast).



And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .

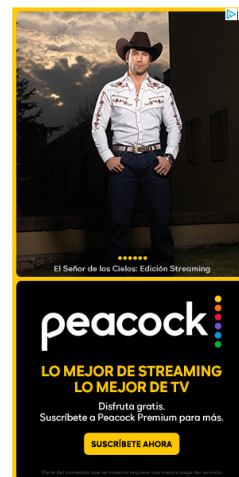
## 'Rick and roll: Song lyrics recast as limericks

In Week 1441 we asked you to recast or comment on the lyrics to a well-known song as a limerick. Click on the title for a link to the actual lyrics.

### 4th place:

#### Jesus Take the Wheel

Though I truly am glad I'm alive,  
I need guidance to help me to thrive.



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Please, my Savior and Lord,  
Take the wheel of my Ford  
(Which I trust that you know how to drive). *(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)*

3rd place:

Puff the Magic Dragon

Puff the dragon was king of the hill.  
Jackie loved him immensely — until  
Like a typical boy  
He grew bored with the toy,  
And poor Puff ended up at Goodwill. *(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)*

2nd place

and the finger-shaped wall hooks:

It's a Small World

We humans are too apt to fight;  
Let's work out a way to unite.  
There's a song we all hate,  
So no need for debate!  
Now that's a small world, am I right? *(Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.)*

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

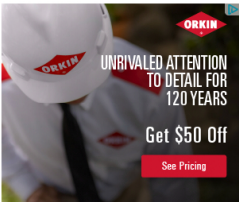
The Star-Spangled Banner

'Twas our second time fighting the British  
They had hoped we'd be fatally skittish  
But we stayed through the night  
And we won the last fight —  
Now of despots we're finally rid (ish) *(Emma Daley, Greenfield, Mass.)*

Hickory dickory dorks: Honorable mentions

Over the Rainbow

Poor Dorothy asks with a cry,  
"If birds can fly, why then can't I?"  
How sweetly she sings!  
But she doesn't have wings,  
And to answer her question: that's why. *(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)*



The Alphabet Song

When it comes to reciting my letters,  
I'm one of my preschool's go-getters!  
From A straight to Z,  
I am loud and on key!  
Come and sing with me, fellow bed-wetters!  
*(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)*

American Pie

We mourned the defunct music's parting,  
As Chevys to levees were darting.  
Boys drank booze there, you know,  
A long, long time ago,  
Like, way back when this song was just starting.  
*(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)*

Louie, Louie


After all of the trouble it took  
Giving lyrics a listen and look,




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It started with a mock 'slave trade' and a school resolution against racism. Now a war over critical race theory is tearing this small town apart.
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He refused to give up his coveted Twitter handle. Then he was 'swatted' and died of a heart attack.

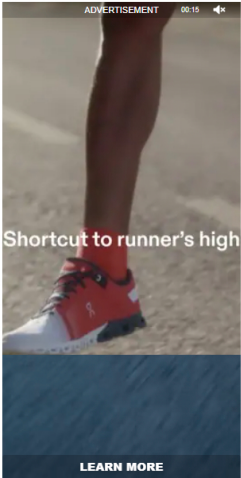

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- 5

**Analysis**  
U.S. men's basketball is out of wake-up calls after late-game collapse in loss to France







A contrite FBI  
Told us “Louie, Louie”  
Was in fact simply gobbledygook. *(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)*

#### That’s Amore

When a lunar light lands in your eyeball  
Like DiMaggio’s hardest-hit flyball,  
To compare it to love  
Coming down from above  
Is at best (like this rhyme) barely viable. *(Coleman Glenn, Huntingdon Valley, Pa.)*



#### The Christmas Shoes

In December, a boy in a store  
With a gift for his mom to adore  
Said he needed it quick  
As his mother was sick  
And that Jesus might care what she wore. *(Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.)*

#### My Shot

Rise up for the U.S. of A.  
Spell my name 'cause you'll know it someday  
King George is so crappy  
I'm hungry and scrappy  
My shot I will not throw away *(Neal Phillips, Wyndmoor, Pa., a First Offender)*

#### (You're) Having My Baby

That she's pregnant you clearly can see  
And she's glowingly thrilled, you agree  
And it's certain — not maybe —  
She's having my baby  
Since of course it is all about me. *(Kevin Dopart, Washington)*

#### The Star-Spangled Banner

Keeping watch through a long night of peril and  
The firing proved not to be sterile and  
Inspired a ditty  
Of our flag waving, pretty,  
O'er some ramparts near Baltimore, Maryland.  
*(Beryl Benderly, Washington)*



#### Joy to the World

“Is it sensible? Well, that depends,  
But I'll say till my very life ends  
That the world's made for joy!”  
Well of course you would, boy,  
Having oenophile bullfrogs for friends.  
*(Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)*

#### Stairway to Heaven

Of this stairway, we've heard since our teens:  
There's a lady with gold who spring-cleans.  
Yes, there's two paths or so



And to heaven they go . . .  
But still no one knows what it all means.  
(George Thompson, Springfield, Va.)

#### Baby Shark

If your child is younger than 2,  
A familiar song in your queue  
Will get stuck in your head,  
Haunt you late nights in bed:  
Baby shark, doo doo doo doo doo doo. (Bryana Neff, Warrington, Pa., a First Offender)

#### Every Breath You Take

If you really are trying to sweep her  
Off her feet 'cause you think she's a keeper,  
Don't sing her this song!  
It's so lyrically wrong!  
(Unless you, too, are kind of a creeper.) (Craig Dykstra, Centreville, Va.)



#### Uptown Funk

All my marvelous moves are top-notch  
As I wiggle and jiggle my crotch.  
Uptown funk, it is true,  
Gonna give it to you —  
If you do not believe me, just watch!  
(Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

#### Both Sides, Now

Are clouds angel hair as they flow?  
Illusions for life as we grow?  
I've cried and I've laughed;  
Now friends think I'm daft!  
I really don't know life no mo'.  
(Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

#### Baby's Got Back

My *dream* woman? She's callipygian;  
You might say that that's my religion.  
An amply grown rear —  
No dieting here —  
Full-size and complete — no abridgin'  
(Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.)

#### Que Será, Será

Here's a phrase that permits us to banish  
Any thought that is overly plan-ish —  
Just the future tense, *viz.*,  
Of "It is what it is,"  
But it sounds so much better in Spanish. (Melissa Balmain)



#### Teen Angel

We had stalled on the tracks — what a pain!  
And we had to get out — that was plain.  
~ ~ ~ ~ ~

But my ring you forgot,  
You ran back like a shot,  
Only not quite as fast as the train. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

#### **These Boots Are Made for Walkin'**

See these boots? They are clearly the best!  
And you DON'T want them put to the test.  
If you're telling me lies  
(And that wouldn't be wise!)  
You'll have footprints all over your chest. (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

#### **Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star**

When a star in the sky has begun  
To look twinkly, I always have fun  
Asking, "What is this thing,  
So high up, bright as bling?" —  
Though I've known it's a star since Line 1. (*Melissa Balmain*)

#### **The Devil Went Down to Georgia**

For the Devil in Georgia, the goal  
Was a quick trip to steal someone's soul.  
But the fiddler he bet  
Made him seethe with regret  
(With a recount beyond his control). (*Mark Raffman*)

#### **Always Look on the Bright Side of Life**

Life is hard, it is quite often said,  
But you'll find, if you whistle instead,  
That you'll see there's a light —  
Life is cheery and bright!  
(For the next couple hours, till you're dead) (*Josh Feldblyum, Springfield, Pa.*)

#### **Backstabbers or Smiling Faces Sometimes** (and, no doubt, many others)

In your life, people come and they go,  
And throughout, here is what you must know:  
If a person's all smiles,  
That may simply be wiles.  
It's a struggle to tell friend from faux. (*Seth Tucker, Washington*)

#### **El Paso**

My love life had run out of gas, so  
I tried some new moves with a lass. Oh,  
Tried ticklin' Felina  
South of the cantina  
But she cut me off at El Paso. (*Jon Gearhart, Des Moines*)

#### **Home on the Range**

Where the deer and the antelope play,  
And the buffalo roam 'round all day,  
And the skies are cloud-free,  
That's the homeplace for me,  
So you Natives, get out of the way. (*Mark Raffman*)

#### **On Top of Spaghetti**

A sneeze blew my food to the soil.  
It got mushy but still didn't spoil.  
Then a meatball tree sprouted  
(And science was flouted).  
The thought makes some folks want to hoil. (*Stephen Gilberg, Silver Spring, Md.*)

#### **The Long and Winding Road**

This road — can I follow its vector?  
At the end, is there brimstone or nectar?  
I'm hoping it brings  
Me away from those strings  
That were way overdone by Phil Spector. (*Duncan Stevens*)

#### **Don't Cha** ("wish your girlfriend was hot like me")

I can tell that you think that I'm hot  
And that sadly, your girlfriend is not.  
I guess you can wish  
She were more of a dish  
But that won't change matters one jot. (*Jennifer Martin Broadway, Marquette, Mich.*)

#### **Stan**

"Hey, Slim. Me again, your top fan.

Wassup? I ain't heard from you, man.  
Drank a fifth of Grey Goose.  
Drivin' fast. It's no use.  
Yo, you shoulda wrote back to me." — Stan (*Chris Doyle*)

**WAP** (warning: original lyrics are extremely crude)

My small cat is exceedingly damp,  
So dive in, a great place to encamp.  
While you're hopping on top,  
Bring a bucket and mop,  
'Cause it's worth your whole bank account, champ. (*Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.*)

*And Last:* **Be Our Guest**

"Be Our Guest"! "Be Our Guest"! "Be Our Guest"!

It's the song that is simply the best,

As a matter of course,

As a parody source

For a Style Invitational jest. (*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing Mich.; the song has been used in more than 25 parodies published in the Invite*)

## Words from Rounds 8-18 of the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee

Here are 25 of the words used in the later rounds of this year's bee, along with pronunciations and very short definitions. For Week 1445, you may write a poem using any of these, or you can see all the words at [spellingbee.com/round-results](https://spellingbee.com/round-results). Either way, you can find definitions at M-W.com, Merriam-Webster's website, but you're likely to better understand the meaning if you Google the word and find it used in its real context. I'll take any meaning or pronunciation that you find in an online dictionary.

**Ancistroid:** *AN-sis-stroid*, hook-shaped

**Aphyllous:** *AY-FILL-us*, lacking leaves, said of a plant

**Athantor:** *ATH-anor*, a furnace that was used by alchemists

**Bathyal:** *BATH-y-al*, relating to the deepest part of the ocean

**Batrachian:** *ba-TRAY-ke-an*, relating to frogs and toads

**Dissentience:** *dis-Sentience*: the quality that a dissenter has

**Dysphotie:** *dis-PHO-tic*; poorly illuminated; the deep ocean is dysphotie

**Fewtrils:** *FEW-trils*, trifles, little unimportant things

**Fidibus:** *FIDibus*, a spill (paper roll) used for lighting a pipe to smoke

**Gewgaw:** *GOO-gaw or GYOO-gaw*, a showy trifle, a trinket

**Nematode:** *NEM-ma-tode*, an elongated cylindrical worm

**Nepeta:** *NEP-et-a*, the genus of mint that includes catnip

**Neroli oil:** *rhymes with "merrily,"* a fragrant pale yellow essential oil obtained from flowers chiefly of the sour orange and used especially in cologne and as a flavoring

**Paravane:** *PAR-a-vane*, a toothed device to clear underwater mines in front of ships

**Psychagogic:** *SIKE-a-GAH-jick*, related to psychagogy: a psychotherapeutic method of influencing behavior by suggesting desirable life goals. More broadly, attractive, persuasive, inspiring

**Regolith:** *REGG-olith*, loose deposits above solid rock; the moon surface is regolith; on earth, soil is.

**Saxicolous:** *sax-ICK-olous*, growing on rocks; some lichens are saxicolous

**Scabious:** *SCAY-bious*, scabby or crusty; also, as a noun, an herb of the teasel family

**Shedu:** *SHAY-du*, one of various semidivine beings represented by ancient Assyrian sculptors as colossal human-headed bulls or lions (plural *shedim*); also a demon in Jewish lore

**Sloe:** *slow*, a plumlike fruit that's used in sloe gin

**Solidungulate:** *solid-ungulate*, an animal with an single-toed hoof. A horse is a solidungulate.

**Thanatophidia:** *THANN-ato-FID-ia*, plural noun meaning venomous snakes. Old book title: "The Thanatophidia of India. Being a description of the Venomous Snakes of the Indian Peninsula."

**Trochiline:** *TROCK-a-line or TROCK-a-lin*, relating to hummingbirds

**Trophallactic:** *TRAH-filactic*, sharing regurgitated food, as in ants and bees



**Vrille:** *Vrill*, the nose-first spinning descent of an airplane deliberately induced as a maneuver

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**Still running — deadline Monday night, July 19: our contest to alter the name of a sport and make a new one. See [wapo.st/invite1444](https://wapo.st/invite1444).**

**DON'T MISS AN INVITE!** Sign up [here](#) to receive a once-a-week email from the Empress as soon as The Style Invitational and Style Conversational go online every Thursday, complete with links to the columns.

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By Pat Myers

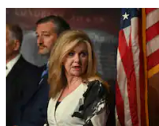
Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page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

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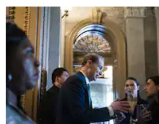
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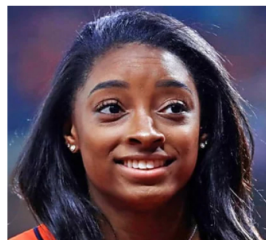
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