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Style Invitational Week 1498: Vs. is for verses

Misuse a word in a funny poem. Plus winners of our contest for poems using spelling bee words (correctly).



By [Pat Myers](#)

July 21, 2022 at 9:54 a.m. EDT



(For The Washington Post)

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the winning poems featuring words from this year's National Spelling Bee.)

**My kids used to sleep on stacked single beds,
While they dreamed and rested their sweet little heads.
But they brought in the noise and brought in the funk,
So now I'm afraid it is time to debunk.**

For the contest that produced today's *results* -- poems using spelling bee words — the Empress required that the words be used with their true meanings. But it's just the opposite for *this* week's poetry contest, at the suggestion of Loser Sarah Walsh: **Write a short (eight lines or fewer), humorous poem that uses one or more words — any words you choose — in other than their actual meanings**, as in the pun on “debunk” in Sarah's own example.

Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1498 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, Aug. 1; results appear Aug. 21 in print, Aug. 18 online.

Winner gets the [Clowning Achievement](#), our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives **an [adorable woodpecker toy](#)**: It's a little wooden bird that you lift to the top of an 18-inch pole and set in motion as it peck-peck-pecks down to the bottom, fluttering its little feather. It's really too sweet to be a Loser prize, but Loser Dave Prevar gave it to us.





If you get writer's block, at least you can play with this on your desk. This week's second prize.

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](#), “A Small Jester of Appreciation” or “Close, but Ceci N’est Pas un Cigare.” First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/inviteFAQ](#). The headline “For the Rhyme, Beeing” is by Steve Smith; the honorable-mentions subhead was submitted by both Jesse Frankovich and Jeff Rackow. 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](#); and follow [@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, July 21, at wapo.st/conv1498.

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

For the rhyme, beeing: Spelling bee poems from Week 1494

In [Week 1494](#) we once again asked our Loserbards to write poems using words from this year's National Spelling Bee. Maybe these results will add some variety to Google searches on the words — which in many cases amount to nothing but dictionary listings. (Some of the less arcane ones are from the bee's vocabulary rounds.)

4th place:

Brose, a Scottish dish made by pouring boiling water over oats

When making brose, Miss MacLehose

Is apt to add malt whisky.

It gives her zest, warms up her chest,

And keeps her feeling frisky.

Good sense may say don't start the day

By going on a bender.

But don't condemn poor wee Miss M

A cereal offender.

(Stephen Gold, London, formerly of Scotland)

3rd place:

Toquilla (to-KEY-uh), a leaf fiber used to make panama hats

“Where’s my booze?” growled a tourist named Jim

As a hat was presented to him.

“I am sorry, señor,

Did you not ask me for

‘Pure toquilla, right up to the brim’?”

(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

2nd place

and [the toy bedbug](#):

Coryza (co-RY-za), a head cold

If you think a pandemic is just a coryza

Your future’s secure as a MAGA advyza.

(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

Chimichurri, a green sauce used in Latin American cuisine

A funny-tasting chimichurri taco from a Taco Bell

Along a highway in Missouri brought me to E. coli hell:

A restroom filled with puking men where not a single stall was free.

Does misery love company? So people say, but hey, not me.

(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Bee-sides: Honorable mentions

Brose (II)

While backpacking through Scotland, a rich obnoxious fop

Had run out of his trail mix, so he went into a shop.

The keeper boiled water and he poured it over top

Of plain unsweetened oatmeal and the tourist flipped his mon

Or plain, unsweetened oatmeal and the tourist tipped his mop.
“What’s this rot supposed to be?” “It’s brose; just let it sop
While you’re hiking; it’ll mix and you can eat it when you stop.”
He bought some and then later, as he choked down every drop,
He learned a brose by any name is still a bag of slop!
(Jon Gearhart, *Des Moines*)

Brose (III)

Said the Edinburgh witch, “I suppose
Using college boys’ fingers and toes
In my porridge of oats
Adds some tasty grace notes,
And I’ll call it Fraternity Brose.”
(Kevin Dopart)

Golilla (go-LEE-yuh), a ruff-like collar worn by Spanish officials in the Renaissance

A nonbeliever, Juan Garcia,
Fixates on the white golilla,
Knows the man’s a magistrate,
And steels himself to learn his fate.
It’s Torquemada, he’s been told,
Who’s here to damn him to perdition.
Sadly, no one — young or old —
Expects the Spanish Inquisition.
(Chris Doyle)

Argillaceous (ar-gi-lacious), claylike

“He’s dead, Jim,” stated Bones, in direct, plain-spoken tones,
Which Enterprising crewfolk thought ungracious:
“This pronouncement, made so often — can we find a way to soften?
“Say, ‘Captain Kirk, our ensign’s argillaceous.’”
(Duncan Stevens, *Vienna, Va.*)

Dasypodid (da-SIP-odid), relating to armadillos

A dashing young dasypodid was setting out one day
To make his way across the road and pass the time away.

This armadillo hit a snag, so he did not get far;
He met his alter ego on the road: an armored car.
(*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

Dasypodid (II)

There once was a king who revered armadillos;
They featured in tapestries, portraits and pillows.
He wished that his knights for the battle would thirst,
But his “brave” cavaliers were, quite simply, The Worst.
On tournament day, to the king’s great chagrin,
Each one left his hauberk behind at the inn.
Fed up and enraged, the king angrily chid,
“Wear your armor all day, like the dasypodid!”
(*Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.*)

Chorine (koreen), old-time chorus girl

A Parisian chorine can recall
Being cautioned: “No leaning, stand tall!
When you kick, stay erect
So your legs will project.
In the cancan, you can’t cant at all!”
(*Chris Doyle*)

Cacoepy, mispronunciation (the word itself may be pronounced ka-CO-pee, as in the first poem below, or kaka-WEH-pee, as in the second)

While her name doesn’t rhyme with “impala,”
Some, on purpose, will call her “ka-MAL-a.”
Most regard that as dopey,
But the ploy of cacoepy
Sure makes many a MAGA type holla.
(*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

Cacoepy (II)

You munch on “sherbert” or a “crape”?
Your blunders are horrific.

Mischievously you excape!
Oh, I could get pacific.
“Your cacoepic point is mute!
Relax! It’s Febyuary!”
You’ll find me in the bridal suit
Committing harry-carry.
(*Duncan Stevens*)

**Lipofuscin (lip-oh-FUSS-in), pigments found in internal cells,
associated with aging**

Is your hair going gray? Don’t you fret.
It turns out that, the older you get,
As your cells turn to Jell-O,
Lipofuscin (brown-yellow)
Makes your insides more blond and brunette.
(*Melissa Balmain*)

**Mercator projection: a world map that exaggerates the size of
lands near the poles**

My lawmaker colleagues, you see on this globe
How the ice caps have shrunk; a correction
Is urgently needed. Instead of a globe
We should use a Mercator projection.
(*Coleman Glenn, Huntingdon Valley, Pa.*)

Ostreger, a keeper of goshawks

He’s the one with a bird in the hand
Not the one with a head in the sand.
(*Kevin Dopart*)

Torrefaction, roasting with fire or intense heat

When I’m trying to style my hair
And my Airwrap breaks as the heat goes out
blowing nothing but lukewarm air
Flatt’ning out my thoroughly drenched Mohawk
As they laugh at me out on the boardwalk ...

I can't get no torrefaction
I can't get no frizz redaction
and I dry and I dry and I dry and I dry
(*Frank Mann, Washington*)

Pigsney (sweetheart)

"Pigsney" was the word the young man used,
But his girlfriend thought she'd been abused!
Though he meant to say "my darling pet,"
Did she misconstrue this word? You bet!
If you want her for your valentine,
Never choose a term evoking swine!
(*Beverley Sharp*)

Psephomancy (divination with pebbles)

"Granity-vanity,
Seer-phrenologist,
Show me a future that
Knocks off my socks!"
"Looked at your noggin all
Psephomance-atically;
I have divined that your
Head's full of rocks."
(*Duncan Stevens*)

Psephomancy (II)

A bunch of psephomantic seers
Who see themselves as modern rebels
Break from all their stodgy peers
To prophesy with Fruity Pebbles.
(*Chris Doyle*)

Favicon, an icon associated with a certain website

(After "[*The Second Coming*](#)" by William Butler Yeats)
Swiping and swiping on my doom-scrolling feed...

The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity...
A favicon with bird body and the hue of the sky
Is spreading its slow lies, while all about it
Retweet quotes of their indignant followers...
And what rough hashtag, its hour come round at last
Slouches towards Buzzfeed to be born?
(Donald Norum, Charlottesville, Va.)

Rumbustical, boisterous and unruly

Rumbustical, the white men roared, and flowed
around the barricades, and beat the cops,
backing the blue against the walls, to goad
Congress to stop the “steal,” pull out the stops,
throw out the votes, bend knees, bow down to force:
“legitimate political discourse.”
(Donald Norum)

**Splanchnicectomy (splank-ni-kectomy), dissection of
intestinal nerves**

Ballad of the Trump-Excuser Republican
He won't stand up to Trump; on hands he sits.
His head is found inside his rectum; he
Had guts and nerves once; now they've gone to bits.
Perhaps he had a splanchnicectomy.
(Duncan Stevens)

And Last: Oculogyric, relating to eye-rolling

Stylishly smilishly,
Wannabe humorists
Rattle off entries to
Poor progeny,
All of whom sigh and say,
Oculogyrically,
“Inking or not, you're a
Loser to me.”

LOSER TO ME.

(Coleman Glenn)

***And Even Laster: Empressement (ahm-press-MONT),
demonstrative warmth or cordiality.***

Many times we call things by their opposite.

In this contest, “Loser” comes to mind.

If we look hard, are there more examples?

Well, how are “empressement” and “Empress Pat” aligned?

(Jon Gearhart)

Still running — deadline Monday, Aug. 25: Tell us a what-if scenario and its funny result. See wapo.st/invite1497.

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 the "Empress" of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post's famed contest for clever, edgy, wacky humor and wordplay. In the role since 2003 – 900 plus contests ago – she writes the column and is its only judge. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. [Twitter](#)
