

The Invitational Week 21: Get Real, Reel.

A new contest to wring truth out of fiction — film, literature, or TV. Plus winning parodies of politicians bragging or kvetching through song.

[PAT MYERS](#)

AND

[GENE WEINGARTEN](#)

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Romantic to you, perhaps, but how about to the dogs? See today's contest.

Okay, now Week 21: Get Me Rewrite

By Gene Weingarten

Have you ever revisited a favorite work of fiction from your youth, only to discover, with crushing disappointment, that it doesn't hold up? This happened to me the other day with [“Casey at the Bat,”](#) that cautionary drama of baseball, hubris, and the frailty of hope, doled out in flawless mock-heroic iambic heptameter. As poetry, it's still good. But as baseball, uh-uh.

You remember the story: Ninth inning, the Mudville Nine behind by two runs and down to their last out. Improbably, transcending their mediocrity, the inept Flynn and the despised Blake come through with a single and double, bringing the mighty Casey up to bat with runners on second and third. Women cheer, men shout, tongues applaud, etc. The imperious batsman takes the first two pitches for strikes, then hacks and whiffs at the third, famously leaving no joy in Mudville.

Lame, lame, lame. Sure, the visiting team got lucky, but by using hopelessly old-school strategy. That's no way to manage in the modern era. To make any sense today — to give the poem even a shred of verisimilitude — I had to rewrite
the end:

*Oh, somewhere men are laughing,
And the ladies gaily talk,
But the game drones on in Mudville,
Mighty Casey — the best hitter on the team coming to the plate with the game
on the line, a two-run deficit and first-base open — drew an intentional walk.*

So for Week 21: Name a scene in a movie, a TV show, or literature, and tell us how it might be revised (perhaps less satisfyingly but far more realistically) as in the rewritten lines above. A couple more examples:

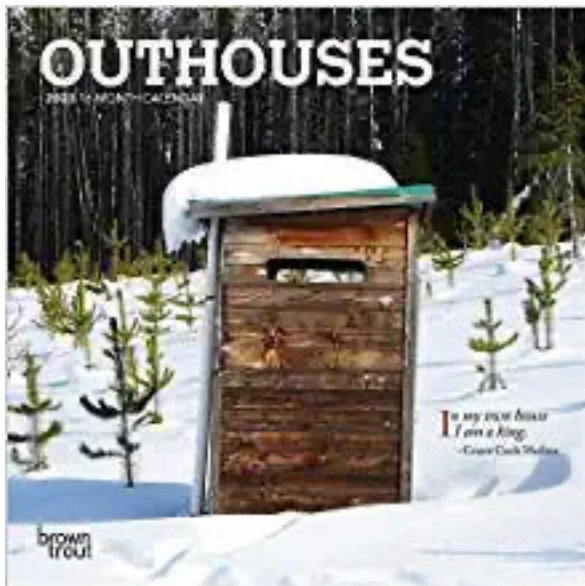
— Instead of ending [their spaghetti scene](#) with a demure kiss, Lady and The Tramp smell each other's butts.

— In “Casablanca,” Ilsa is delayed because the plane is boarding slowly by group numbers, so she and Rick are still on the ground and arrested when police arrive in time.

[Click here for this week’s entry form](#), or go to bit.ly/inv-form-21. As usual, you can submit up to 25 entries for this week’s contest, preferably all on the same entry form. See the form for formatting instructions.

Deadline is Saturday, June 3, at 4 p.m. wherever you are. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, June 8. You need to be a paying subscriber to The Gene Pool to enter; to sign up, click on the “subscribe” or “upgrade” button above (just \$5 for a month or \$50/year).

This week’s winner gets a compact but colorful 2023 calendar depicting scenic outhouses. True, we’re halfway through the year, but hey, hang it up in your, uh, inhouse and you can use the old pages for, well ... Donated by Dave Prevar.



Our double-use calendar, this week’s prize.

NEW! Since the Invitational left the cushy confines of The Washington Post with our limitedly unlimited expense account, the prizes we give the winner have been even crappier (see above) and the runners-up have gotten bupkis.

We've sensed pouting, grumping, moping, and sulking among the ranks of the Losers.

Well, that's all over now. We have figured out a way to sate you entitled ingrates. **Runners-up now will get MONEY!** The money will look like the two bills below, only there will be countless variations for you to collect, hoard, trade, sell on eBay and reap unconscionable profit, etc. They will come in many different denominations. The postage will cost us more than the bills themselves. Thanks to Jon Gearhart for the idea, Jeff Contompasis for the slogan. (Honorable mentions still get nothing, except for the famous [Fir Stink](#) [for First Ink](#) air "freshener" and a sweet email from the Empress.)





Silly .gov Songs: Politicians Voice their Feelings, from Week 19

In [Invitational Week 19](#), inspired by the South Korean president's rendition of "American Pie" at the White House, the Czar and Empress asked the Loser Community to "add a verse or two to a well-known song that a politician might humorously sing." The results were exquisite. While we were expecting comically appropriate real-song titles, many of the Loserbards instead offered zingy puns on those titles and wrote parodies from there; you'll see both kinds

below. If you don't know the tune, click on the link in the title to hear the original.

As *always* happens with with song parody contests, there are simply too many inkworthy ones to include in one list. Over the next few days, the Empress will share a few with a #parody hashtag in the [Style Invitational Devotees](#) Facebook group.

Third runner-up: President Biden singing [“Stayin’ Alive”](#) to Donald Trump

Well, you can wail about the way I'm old and frail

Say I'm senile and that I should bail

But I'm still here, yessir, yup,

And I'm holding ground instead of pushing it up.

And I'm all right, I'm okay,

I only napped three times today

And in the end I will win,

I'll make you eat more crow again

And even though I'm agin', you're the one that I'm upstagin'

By stayin' alive, stayin' alive.

Thought I'd kick the bucket but, Donnie, you can suck it

'Cause I'm stayin' alive, stayin' alive ...

(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

Second runner-up: Coal-lovin' Sen. Joe Manchin sings [“What a Wonderful World”](#)

I see filthy mines

And smokestacks, too,

That belch out dough

For me (not you!)

And I say to myself,

“What a wonderful world!”

(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

First runner-up: Rep. George Santos sings to House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, to ["Light My Fire"](#)

Sure, everything I say's untrue.
My pants have always been on fire.
Still, here's what I ask of you:
Please just let my term expire.
Come on, Kevin, back this liar.
Come on, Kevin, back this liar.
One less vote: things could get dire.

Accused of stealing public funds,
I see a looming prison door.
But why should you expel my buns?
You can wait till 2024.
Come on, Kevin, back this liar,
Come on, Kevin, back this liar.
That's the one thing I desire.
Say you won't make me retire!
(Duncan Stevens, Vienna Va.)

And the winner of the [mug from New York's Algonquin Hotel](#), site of the legendary "Round Table" of humorists:

Ron DeSantis singing ["She's Always a Woman to Me"](#) to his supporters:

All the lefties are calling religion a joke
They would stomp on our faith for a faith I call "woke"
And they all will deny what you plainly can see:
If he's born with a penis, he's never a woman to me.
[Bridge] Oh, if he puts on a dress where the children can see, we will make it a crime;
Oh, he will never get out! I will never give in! He'll be doing hard time!

Not a thing he can do is enough to convince us,
And the last thing I want is one more Disney princess.
I will lead this great land to a theocracy:

If his genes are XY, then he's never a woman to me.
(*Michael Stein, Arlington, Va.*)

Backup Zingers: Honorable Mentions

"My Way," as sung by George Santos

And now, the end is near
For my long trail of fabrication;
I've lived a life that's grand,
At least in my imagination.
I could have told the truth
And sought my goals the honest-guy way;
That path was not my own:
I took the lie way.
(*Perry Beider, Silver Spring, Md.*)

"Stouthearted Men" (from the 1928 song by Sigmund Romberg and Oscar Hammerstein II) **as sung by Sen. Josh Hawley**, author of the new book
"Manhood: The Masculine Virtues America Needs" (*lyrics, singing and video*
by Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

Joe Biden to the Republican Senate caucus: (to Rihanna's **"Bitch Better Have My Money"**)

Mitch better have my money
Y'all should know me well enough
Mitch better have my money
Please don't call me on my bluff
Hey, don't be so snarky.
Just sayin', no malarkey.
Mitch, better have my money
C'mon man. I'm serious.
Like bro, bro, bro.
(*Roy Ashley, Washington, D.C.*)

Putin to Wagner Group oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin, who [offered to tell troop locations to Ukraine](#), sung to “If I Only Had a Brain”

The ways are far too many
Of killing you, Yevgeny,
For plotting with Ukraine.
In my head I have been musin’
On a method we’ll be choosin’
That will make it look humane.

We won’t cook you on a griddle
Or slice you through the middle,
Or Novichok your brain.
No, the cost of your vainglory's
Falling ten, not forty stories,
To become a concrete stain.
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

Sen. Dianne Feinstein sees the light (to [“Sit Down, You’re Rockin’ the Boat”](#))

I’d planned to spend my whole term in California,
Far, far away from that old committee throng,
Then their calls came through: “Bad idea! We gotta warn ya!”
Yes, the senators, they knew right from wrong.

’Cause my colleagues all said, “Dianne, Dianne, you’re missin’ the vote.
No judges are gettin’ through — just watch Republicans gloat.
Now restoring judicial balance is a prospect ever so more remote.
Oh, man, Dianne, poop’s hit the fan! Dianne, you’re missin’ the vote.” (Duncan Stevens)

Kevin McCarthy singing [“Stayin’ Alive”](#) to himself

Well, you can tell by the way I lick all boots
I’m a desperate man, I’m in cahoots.
My support is thin, many Cons to please,
They’ll fire me if I dare sneeze.

And now it's all right, it's okay,
I've groveled every human way.
So just try to understand
I'm not the whip, but I'm whipped, man.

Craving power, brother, 'cause I'm a real mother,
I'm stayin' alive, stayin' alive.
My support is shakin' after all the deals I'm makin',
I'm stayin' alive, staying' alive . . .
(*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)

Donald Trump sings ["Be Our Guest"](#) to migrants at the border

Be our guest! Be our guest! Put our lawmen to the test!
Cross the river to our soil, Jose, you're subject to arrest.
Have a seat in our cage — don't you know it's all the rage?
All your children, we will mind them (pray that later we can find them).
You should know you can't stay in the good old U.S.A.
For your country isn't sending us their best,
Though we would welcome legions of those white Norwegians,
Be our guest, *si*, our guest, be our guest. (*Michael Stein*)

**Lindsey Graham singing to Donald Trump a month after Jan. 6, 2021,
to ["Hopelessly Devoted to You"](#)**

The press is prayin' you'll forsake me,
They heard me sayin', "Count me out,
Enough is enough." Not that you'd incited a coup!
I was totally misquoted 'bout you.

It's absolution I need.
To my donors I will plead
Your coffers to fill.
Publicly full-throated I'll spew
Every lie promoted by you.

I'm soullessly devoted to you.

(Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.)

Kevin McCarthy sings about raising the debt ceiling, to ["More Than a Feeling"](#)

I woke up this morning; IRS was gone.
Screwed over some students to start my day.
Clean-energy subsidies, all withdrawn.
If you're on SNAP, oh, I'll make you pay.
It's more than a ceiling (more than a ceiling),
'Cause now Joe's gotta do just what I say.
(This is appealing!) Look, now he's kneeling!
This extortion thing's more than okay!
Just say "Here comes default!" watch him obey.

Medicaid? Ha! Man, we'll make 'em work.
If I gave in, didn't hold the line.
The House Freedom Caucus would go berserk.
Yo, poor folks, get jobs. See, I'm keeping mine!
It's more than a ceiling (more than a ceiling);
No, Joe, put down that coin, buster! What the hey?
(That's double-dealing!) Let's hear you squealing!
You will *not* take my hostage away!
We've got many more debt games here to play. *(Duncan Stevens)*

Chris Christie sings ["The Impossible Dream"](#)

To dream the impossible dream,
To fight an impeachable schmo,
To reach his deplorable voters,
To stay when the pollsters say no.
To stand on the stage of debate,
To spar with that odious clown,
Stand tall when the insults start flying,
Desist from my resting-bitch frown.

This is my quest! To not be subpar!
To poll double digits! Does it seem that bizarre?
To fight for myself without stigma or shame,
I'm done kissing his ass, once and for all,
And I'm clearing my name!
(*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

Virtually any politician sings "I'll Do Anything" to voters

I'll do anything
For your vote — anything
'Cause winning's everything to me.
I know that I'd go anywhere,
I'd stoop low — I don't care,
For no low is too low for me.
Would you wear a wig? — anything!
Would you dance a jig? — anything!
Would you kiss a pig? — anything!
Do you want this gig? — with all my heart!
I would lie and hedge
If I could get an edge
Cause I'd do anything — ANYTHING to win!
(*Diana Oertel, San Francisco*)

Trump, as Jiminy Cricket, on tape to Billy Bush:

When you get to be a star, women all know who you are.
Anything your heart desires
They'll do for you.
I just move in like a bitch, kiss 'em 'cause I'm super-rich.
What seems even more bizarre,
They love it, too!

Pat behinds or squeeze what's up above?
Then I'm just guilty of some harmless longing.
I'm a magnet — handsome, too; grabbing pussy's what I do.

Now that I'm a megastar,
My dreams came true. (*Chris Doyle*)

The headline "Silly .gov Songs" is by Chris Doyle; Jeff Contompasis wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

We'll be combing your "Comments" below for reactions to the inking entries.

Still running — deadline 4 p.m. Saturday, May 27: **Our Week 20** contest to write a four-line poem about a person, in either the cleriheW or poed form. [Click here](#) or type in bit.ly/inv-week-20.

See [more about The Invitational](#), including our [2,600-member Facebook group](#), the [Losers' website](#), and [our podcast](#).