

The Invitational Week 46: "Air" "Quotes"

A new forefinger contest, plus 'monorhyme' poems on Taylor Swift, Hamlet, and more

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New Contest: 'Air' 'Quotes'

For Invitational Week 46: Take a word, name, or phrase and put a portion of it in “air quotes,” then define it in the context of the highlighted

part. You can't change the spelling of the original but may tinker with capitalization, punctuation, and spacing. So you don't send us what we've already published: we do *not* want to see “fun'eral” or “Donald T'rump.”

Example: Satis“fact”ion: When Google proves you are right and your spouse is wrong. (*David Kleinbard*)

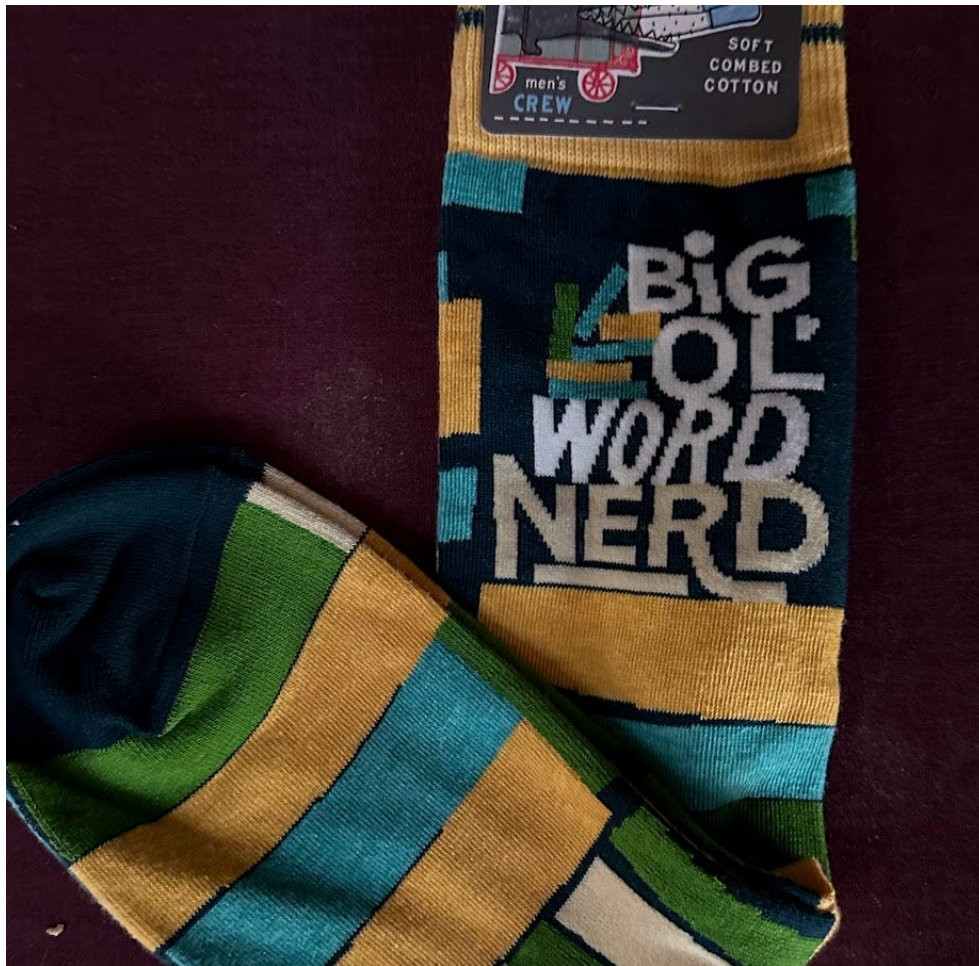
Another example: h“USB”and: Consider yourself lucky if you get it right on the first try. (*Hildy Zampella*)

This just in! Within hours after we published this column, Hall of Fame Loser Jeff Contompasis compiled a list of the hundreds of air quotes that have gotten ink in earlier Invitationals — and invited us to share it. [Here it is](#), from “Alas”ka to Z“ucch”ini.

[Click here for this week's entry form.](#) Or go to bit.ly/inv-form-46. Please see formatting instructions on the form. As usual, you can submit up to 25 entries for this week's contest, preferably all on the same form.

Deadline is Saturday, Nov. 25, at 4 p.m. ET. No need to waste your time on Thanksgiving watching football, talking with your visiting relatives, etc., when you can be doing *this*. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, Nov. 30.

The winner gets a fine pair of **socks labeled “Big Ol' Word Nerd” on the calf**, donated by Medium-Size Ol' Word Nerd Dave Prevar. These are men's size; we'll put up the women's-size ones in the future.



Of course, your pants legs will need to be high enough to show off your honorific. This week's prize.

Runners-up get autographed fake money featuring the Czar or Empress, in one of [ten nifty designs](#). Honorable mentions get bupkis, except for a personal email from the E, plus the [Fir Stink for First Ink](#) for First Offenders.

DING! With his two typically brilliant blots of ink today, Mark Raffman has [crossed the 1,000-ink line](#), ascending from the Invitational Hall of Fame to the Cozy Upstairs Nook of the Hall of Fame. Mark, a longtime corporate lawyer turned just recently to the other side — as a trial attorney for the Consumer Product Safety Commission — started Inviting in 2012, earning his first blot of ink for a contest for ways to tick people off:

“When you’re on jury duty, bring a daisy into the deliberation room and start to pull out each petal while saying “Guilty . . . not guilty . . .”

Since then, he's been mopping up ink to the tune of almost 100 entries a year, most famously for song parodies to the tune of "Be Our Guest," on themes from "Porky's" ("See a Chest!") to Obama and Netanyahu ("He's a Pest!") to Trump and the wall ("He's Obsessed") and numerous others. Delve into this collection of his first 500 blots of ink, "[Mark: His Words.](#)"

Masters of the Uni-verse: The monorhymes of Week 44

In [Week 44](#) we asked you to write a funny poem in monorhyme form — that all the lines had to have the same rhyme. And the poem had to refer to some published writing — anything from an ancient Greek play to yesterday's headlines.

Third runner-up:

More Fun News From Greenland (*article at CNN.com*)

Every last glacier
Seems bound for erasure.

(*Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.*)

Second runner-up:

War and Peace (abridged):

For a Russian,
Life is crushin'.
End of discussion.

(*Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.*)

First runner-up:

"Deer crashes through lingerie store in Michigan"

In Michigan there was a deer
That spooked a lingerie cashier.
Asked why a deer would thus appear,
She said, "I guess the buck shops here."

(*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.*)

And the winner of “The Dr. Seuss Coloring Book”:

Waiting for Godot

Beckett’s play’s a bore, I fear,
With Estragon and Vladimir
Discussing topics drab and drear
For hours on end until it’s clear
Godot himself will not appear.
So go — you might enjoy it, dear,
While I stay watching Netflix here.
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

The End of the Lines: Honorable mentions

The Old Man and the Sea

He pursues an expedition,
Out to sea to do some fishin’,
Gets his boat into position,
Then awaits an acquisition.
Is that fish an apparition?
No! An instant recognition
As it bolts in opposition!
After hours of competition
In this battle of attrition,
He attains the beast’s submission!
Heading home now his volition,
It’s a fin — an admonition ...
Cue the sharks, with repetition,
Bite by bite, a demolition.
It’s a savage exhibition,
(In his trousers, micturition?)
Yet the boat makes its transition
To the shore, in sound condition,
And old man sits there wishin’

He'd had better ammunition.
(*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

Hamlet in a nutshell:

Ghost: "Go kill your mom's new guy."
Hamlet: "No way, Dad! Must I? Why?"
Ghost: "It's the ol' 'eye for an eye'!"
Hamlet: ("ARGHH! Should I live or die?")
Then Hamlet says with a sigh,
"Okay, I'll give it a try ..."
Many acts and scenes go by;
Then finally, dead they all lie.
(*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

"The secret best week for Thanksgiving flights is coming" (*The Washington Post*)
Thanksgiving stresses? Don't despair.
Just take a trip abroad by air.
You're sure to nab a bargain fare.
You won't see tourists everywhere.
And best of all — no icy glare:
Your MAGA uncle won't be there.
(*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

Pygmalion

In G.B. Shaw's dramatic work *Pygmalion*,
A linguist who's a touch sesquipedalian
Decides to take a poor tatterdemalion
Into his life—for reasons bacchanalian?
He wanted folks who play the ukulele in?
No, no, the reason he brings in this alien,
The basis for the grind she suffers daily in:
He wants to make her sound Episcopalian,
Like someone who would have PM Disraeli in.
Bad ending, though—she leaves...for parts Australian?

You'll want to bash Shaw's head with a shillelagh in.
(*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

'Trump and allies plot revenge, Justice Department control in a second term' (*The Washington Post*)

Trump (whose hands are lilliputian)
Wants to shred the Constitution,
Starting with a new solution
To his so-called persecution:
"I will be your retribution."
(*Chris Doyle*)

Jack and Jill

To renew their H₂O supply
They climbed a path, I know not why.
Hydrology must be awry,
Since wells don't work when they're up high.
(*Kevin Dopart, Washington, D.C.*)

Lysistrata

Greek women, led by Lysistrata:
"Guys, stop this fighting, now! You gotta!
Until you cease these wars, there's not a
Chance your bedmates will allot a
Place for you, come hell, high wata!
You're persons very much non grata!"

In time (there followed some errata)
The men complied and stopped the slaughta.
Each lass and her inamorata
Went forth and banged like a piñata. (*Duncan Stevens*)

The Handmaid's Tale

Women's wombs controlled post-coup
By all the guys in charge, that's who,

To sum the Gilead worldview:

It's Speaker Johnson's dream come true. (*Kevin Dopart*)

Pap on Tap — “Amouranth Launches ‘Vaginal Yeast’ Beer” (*Philadelphia*

Weekly) When it's time for a Pap and the doc takes a smear,

You can have those bacteria turned into beer!

A yoni yeast beverage? There's nothing to fear —

And such a profound flavor profile, I hear.

(*Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.*)

“It's Taylor Swift's world and we're just living in it” (*Axios*)

Taylor, Taylor, Taylor, Taylor!

Seems that nothing can derail her.

Every time the charts unveil her

Album sales, all others trail her.

Though the jealous trolls assail her,

Say her sound has gotten staler,

Far more fans adore and mail her;

Music critics widely hail her.

Locks of blonde and skin that's paler,

Scores of suitors doomed to fail her;

Still, they hope to someday nail her.

(*Jesse Frankovich*)

The Kama Sutra (*ancient Hindu text*)

For students of erotic bliss, consider this important factor:

Interesting and new positions might initially attract 'er.

You will reach new heights of passion. But as soon as you have sacked 'er,

Both of you will need assistance from a skillful chiropractor. (*Judy Freed*)

Othello

“Desdemona seems truly demure,

But she's smitten by Cassio's allure,”

Says Iago, a boor,

To Othello, who's sure
To react. In the end, there's no Moor. (*Chris Doyle*)

***The Art of the Deal* by Donald Trump**

For the terms of a deal, I intuit
Where the cash is, and how to accrue it.
Some resistance? I push my way through it!
(Also, fraud isn't fraud when I do it.) (*Mark Raffman*)

Jane Eyre

A gothic novel: Miss Jane Eyre!
This pious lass, oft found in prayer
While serving as a poor au pair,
Meets Eddie Roch, a grumpy bear,
And falls for him—but what despair
To learn that, in an attic lair,
He's stashed a wife — a weird affair!
A fire! Wife's cooked medium rare,
While Jane, she turns her derriere
And runs away (she knows not where)
But then returns, finds disrepair.
Jane, taking Ed into her care:
“Reader, I married him!” So there.
(*Duncan Stevens*)

‘What You Need to Know About the New HV-1 Variant’ (*VeryWellHealth*)

We're done with EG.5. HV-1 we now will see,
And also JN.1 — all in the family XBB.
And on the rise this season, we've got flu and RSV.
We are completely screwed. WTF! OMG! (*Judy Freed*)

‘What Might Be Ruining Your Orgasm’ (*The New York Times*)

Do you often find yourself stuck in first gear?

Don't ask sex experts unless you want to hear
What your partner probably believes is clear:
Dude, you're really drinking way, way too much beer. (*Pam Shermeyer*)

'Pizza Hut selling snake pizza in Hong Kong' (*CNN*)

While in Hong Kong, don't ask me why,
At Pizza Hut, I chose to try
A dish on which they did apply
Some shredded serpent meat — no lie.
At first it seemed like chicken, dry,
But quickly things went all awry —
NOW HAD IT WITH THESE SNAKES HAVE I
UPON THIS MOTHERF*ING PIE!** (*Jesse Frankovich*)

The headline "Masters of the Uni-Verse" is by Kevin Dopart; Beverley Sharp wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 4 p.m. ET Saturday, Nov. 18: **Our Week 45 contest for funny ideas for items in mail order catalogs such as Hammacher Schlemmer's.** [Click here](#) for details.