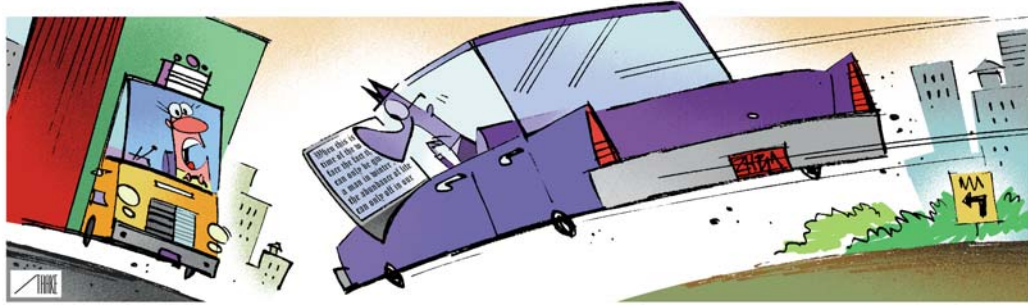


The Style Invitational

Week CLXI: Quote-idian



BY BOB STAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Reflection, perforce, plays mischief with man's eye
And objects may appeareth smaller, befool you, and you die.
—Shakespeare, writing the side-view mirror warning

This Week's Contest was suggested by Beth Archibald of Fairfax, who stole it from Basil White of Leesburg, who stole it from the Society for Technical Communication of Arlington, which probably stole it from someone else, not that we can prove this or anything. Take any extremely banal piece of familiar writing, such as a garment's laundry-care tag or instructions on how to set a VCR or a computer error message, and rewrite it in the style of a famous writer, poet or lyricist, as in the above example. Seventy-five words max. First-prize winner gets a set of shotgun-shell salt-and-pepper shakers.

First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, or by e-mail to losers@washpost.com. U.S. mail entries are no longer accepted. Deadline is Monday, March 3. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and telephone number. E-mail entries must include the week number in the subject field. Contests will be judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post.

Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published in four weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's contest is by Stephen Dudzik of Olney.

Report from Week CLVII, in which you were asked to submit late entries for any previous contest.

◆ Third Runner-Up:

Double Dactyls:
Viggery-pokery
Nabokov, Vladimir
Authors "Lolita," a
Best-selling work.
Ode to a 12-year-old
Kid who's obsessing an
Overlibidinous
Voyeur and jerk.
(Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

◆ Second Runner-Up:

Bad New Toys for Kids:
The Michael Jackson Balcony Bouncer (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)
◆ First Runner-Up:
Bad analogies:
The crazed zealot leapt from the crowd and shot the archduke like a deranged fanatic bounding from a throng and pumping lead into a member of royalty. (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)
◆ And the winner of an official Trent Lott slice of white bread:
Funny names for real towns' high school football teams:
The Weehawken (N.J.) Loogies (Helene Haduch, Washington)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

Adding something to a famous line so it lands with a thud:
"I'll have what she's having. Oh, and also, a Diet Coke." (Stephen Lead, Sydney)

Asterisked humor:

There are 10* kinds of people in the world: those who understand binary numbers and those who don't.

*In binary notation, 10 equals the number 2 (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

What TV detective always solved crimes through serendipity?* Columbo.

*Columbo is the chief city of Sri Lanka, whose Arabic name was Serendip. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Tasteless obit headlines:

Famous Amos: Goodbye, Mr. Chips (Paul Dudley, Ellicott City)

Pat Sajak: No More Mr. Nice Guy (Judith Cottrill, New York)

Mick Jagger Gathers Moss (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

Tip O'Neill Consults Grass Roots (John O'Byrne, Dublin)

Bert Lahr: End of the Lion (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Grant Wood Buys Farm (Mary Ann Henningsen, Washington)

Signs an institution has "jumped the shark":

The National Symphony Orchestra: After each movement, the audience gets to vote off its least favorite flutist.

(Greg Krakower, New York)

The New Republic Swimsuit Issue (Lindsey Durway, Austin)

Commercial products with celebrity rhymes:

Tom Ridge Fridge: Holds things for months and months and months in the cooler. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Homophones:

Extorsion: Criminal arm-twisting. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Fauxcus: To pretend to pay attention. (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

Sheikhdown: The purpose of an oil cartel. (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

Sentences containing all the letters of the alphabet:

Quick, have prom judges ban a sexy waltz. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Dave Barry fears quick, zipless sex with Ms. Jong. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Vexed, Jacques makes a goofy pun: "Brevity is the Zola wit." (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

"Air quotes":

S'lumber": Sawing logs. (Mike Genz, La Plata)

"Tiff"any's: Where to go to buy a make-up present. (Mike Genz, La Plata)

Unwise first line of a college application:

While the government might consider me an enemy combatant, I prefer to think of myself as a freedom fighter. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Children's books you'll never see:

"How to Climb Like Spider-Man" (Barry Blyveis, Columbia)

"Satan's Big Book of Curses" (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Message written only with the letters of someone's name:

Saddam Hussein: Has insane sand man hidden SAMs, mines and dead Sunnis amid dunes and his dens? (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

Isms:

Necro-ventriloquism: Projecting one's voice at a funeral so it sounds like the deceased is talking. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Name puns:

When did Los Alamos officials finally improve security? Only Wen Ho Lee hell broke loose. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

What did Popeye tell Bluto in "Casablanca"? Olive Oyl the gin joints in the world, she walks into mine. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Cynical definitions:

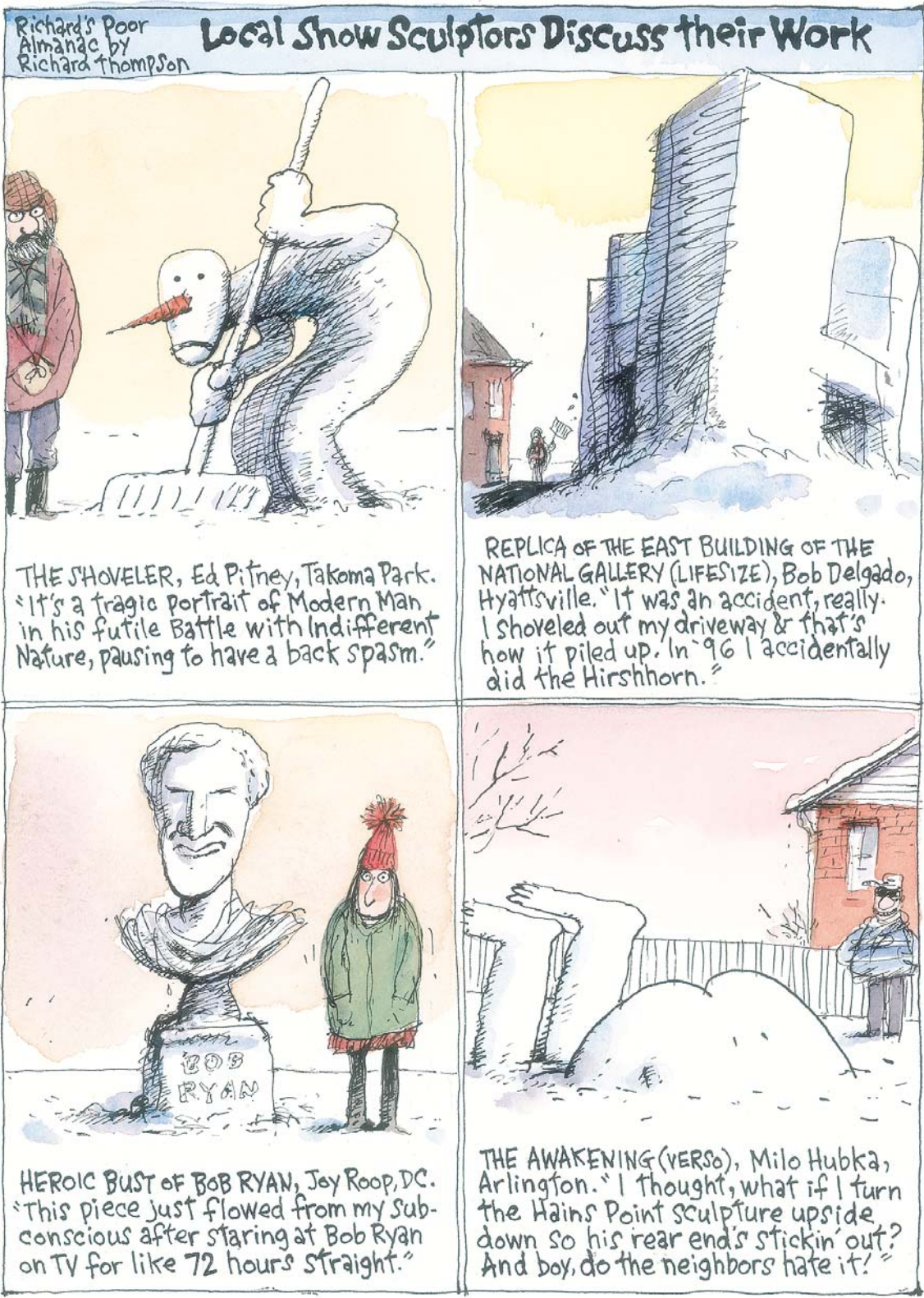
Class warfare: n., the din of inequity. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

Homonymphomania:

Docyoumeant: The letter you SHOULD have written. (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.)

Sign of an incompetent doctor:

Asks if you have an allergy to placebos. (Daniel Dunn, Bethel, Conn.)



TELL ME ABOUT IT

TELL ME, From F1

seems "genuinely happy," and even though it's messy, they seem to be cleaning it up. Back off.

Ian is a grown man. Maybe his girlfriend is manipulative, but he's the one who chose her. I have yet to see the adult relationship that isn't a two-way street, and that includes every single pairing of allegedly wonderful one with allegedly awful other.

Ian is the exact same guy he was in college. He has just gotten better at being that guy—or, at least, better-looking and no doubt better-paid. Check out how you describe him then (doormat) vs. now (overpowered by his evil girlfriend). Knock-knock.

If you have a sense of humor about yourself, keep going: To trash the drama girl, you use the following phrases: "totally brainwashed," "inducted into a cult," "while there's still time," "if I'd only gotten to him sooner," "How, oh how, can I get him to be mine?" (Exeunt. Flourish.)

You see a guy who needs you to rescue him; I see a guy who likes his women dramatic, and a girl who's conjured an elaborate rescue to justify lunging at him. Admit your own motives, stop vilifying the girlfriend, and let Ian direct his own life—whether you're starring in it or not.

Ian is going to need this: tellme@washpost.com.

Carolyn:

After recently breaking up with my boyfriend, I have employed an (admittedly juvenile) coping tactic of trying to remember every bad thing that he ever said or did. The truth is, this makes me feel better, temporarily. However, I



SINCE YOU ASKED, YES, THERE IS A WAY YOU CAN SOFTEN THE BLOW. THAT PICTURE OF YOU WHERE YOU'RE BLINKING AND CHEWING? I WANT IT.

BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

know that after a "cooling off" period to let my feelings settle down, I will want to be friends with this person. Is there a healthier way to deal with this breakup, where I could look back and smile fondly at the good times without that making me sad, instead of trying to brainwash myself into thinking I hate him since it is apparently easier for me to get over someone I don't like?

Confused

Yes. Look back and be sad. Nothing wrong with it, aside from the whole misery thing, and even that serves a purpose—as incentive to move past your grief. After the 20th viewing of a really sad movie, how many people still cry? Memories work the same way.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com

Next Week: Caricature Assassination

See RENT

Apartment Advisor.
Saturday. Real Estate.

The Washington Post



WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN WHY

... What's the difference between this show and the 24-hour flu? Twenty-three hours ...
... Where oh where is a cable outage when you really need one ...
... No, it doesn't make much sense, but maybe I wasn't paying close enough attention. Maybe I was distracted by a piece of pocket lint ...

Tom Shales | TV Critic
Writing to spare you the agony.

The Washington Post

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