

Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 929: Just sit right back

in which we asked you to write a song that told about a TV show, much as the “Gilligan’s Island” and “The Brady Bunch” themes do. The online version of this column, at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational, includes many more Losing parodies, plus links to all the tunes.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

“Kate Plus 8”

(sung to the “Brady Bunch” theme)

Here’s the story of a girl named Katie,
Who was poor and living in a trailer park.
All she wanted in her life was to be wealthy;
On this she would embark.
It’s the story of a man so shady
He would happily exploit his kids and wife.
These two kindred spirits met and formed a couple,
And so began their life.

They went out and got a multiple conception,
And resolved to get some bucks for their big bang,
So they whelped and then they hawked their cute
sextuplets:
That’s the way they all became the Gosselin Gang. (The
Gosselin Gang, the Gosselin Gang . . .)

But this fouled-up family couldn’t last forever:
Jon was restless, and his wife was quite the shrew.
When she caught him in the sack with other women,
The Gosselin Gang was through.
But the lady wasn’t gonna give up easy.
On the gravy train she’d labored to create.
She convinced the TV folks to keep it going:
That’s the way they turned it into “Kate Plus 8.”
(Nan Reiner, Alexandria) [In the end, Kate wasn’t
persuasive enough: The show was canceled Monday.]

THE
WINNER
OF THE
INKER

2 Winner of the Lunch Bugs sandwich bags with theft-detering bugs on them:

A PBS Evening (to “Wonderful World” (“Don’t know much about history . . .”))

The invasion of Normandy;
Specials on seismology;
Shows to help you make a greener house;
A performance of “Die Fledermaus.”
No one else has the shows we do,
Yeah, but first we want to hear from you,
So we need you to pick up the phone.
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.) See a longer version online.

3 “CSI” (to “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood”)

It’s a beautiful day for an autopsy!
Let’s cut this guy open so we can see
His intestines . . . and his liver.
Then let’s open his stomach, what do you say?
To see what he had with that chardonnay.
Would you hand me . . . that skull chisel?
I have always wanted to take a closer look inside,
To roll my sleeves up, dig right in, and find out how they died.
So I’ll pick up a scalpel, and you will too,
We’ll damn the torpedoes and rip right through.
Would you hand me . . . his left kidney?
Let’s just cut him open.
(Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

4 “Toddlers and Tiaras” (to the “Mary Tyler Moore” theme)

They can turn the world on with their smiles.
(Maybe not the whole wide world, but certainly turn on the pedophiles.)
With their makeup and fancy dresses
We know that they’re wearing diapers and making messes.
Toddlers and tiaras! Temper tantrums!
Phony teeth and hair! The crazy-rant moms!
Babies are told to shake their butts.
Their mothers clearly must be nuts.
(Kathy Hardis Fraeman, Olney)

See the Honorable Mentions at
washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational.

Next week: How dare we, or The Huffiness Post

THIS WEEK’S CONTEST: WEEK 933

Stories that count (to 56)

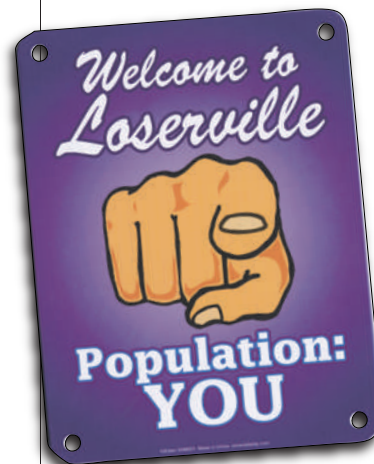
Call me Ishmael, inasmuch as I represent man’s eternal state of alienation. My boss, Ahab — bang! crash! aughh! — is battling to the death an implacable foe, inasmuch as he represents man’s powerlessness against nature and fear of confronting his inner demons — namely, that he’s secretly a vampire, inasmuch as we have to sell books. Suck. Die.

This week we “honor” the annual 55 Fiction contest sponsored by New Times magazine — for stories of 55 words or fewer — with our own version, cleverly distinguished by a vastly different number of words and a couple of other requirements. **This week: Write a humorous story in exactly 56 words**, as in the example above by Style Invitational Literary Flunky Gene Weingarten; two words joined by a hyphen count as two words. You can add a title; it won’t count toward the 56 words. It doesn’t have to be fiction, but it has to tell some sort of story (though as you can see from the example, this might be loosely interpreted; actually, don’t turn this into a contest to sum up a well-known work of literature in 56 words). This contest was suggested by Ted Weitzman, a veteran Loser who used to be credited as Paul Styrene, back before we had the no-pseudonyms rule.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second prize receives the excellent and obviously appropriate little metal sign pictured below, courtesy of Loser Nan Reiner.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet. First Offenders get a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 29; results published Sept. 18 (Sept. 16 online). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include “Week 933” in your e-mail subject line, or it may be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal

address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational. The revised title for next week’s results is by Kevin Dopart.



STYLE CONVERSATIONAL Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join us at washingtonpost.com/stylconversational.

POP CD REVIEW

Active Child

YOU ARE ALL I SEE



Active Child is the one-man project of Los Angeles-based laptop musician Pat Grossi, who

layers influences and sounds like a ladder to the heavens or, more accurately, like a New Age Bon Iver.

Grossi’s full-length debut draws from everything and everywhere: It sounds like James Blake made a record with a choir full of chanting, synthesizer-

wielding Tibetan monks and then everyone went to the chill-out tent to hang out with Beyonce.

Beautiful and richly textured and ghostly, both sacred and clubby, it’s its own genre: electro-spa. If you don’t like harp music, you might as well stop reading. It boasts one giant slayer of a song (“Playing House,” a collaboration with Tom Krell of How to Dress Well) and a host of like-minded ones, all calibrated for maximum drama, not accessibility. For all the obvious care and craft that went into it, this is music made to be admired, not loved.

— Allison Stewart



STEVEN SIMS/VAGRANT RECORDS

ELECTRO-SPA: Pat Grossi’s sound is its own genre.

MUSIC

Katy Perry ties Jackson record on Billboard

When Katy Perry first came on the scene, some dismissed her as a one-hit wonder. Three years later, she has proved she’s a multi-hit wonder, becoming the first woman to score five No. 1 songs from one album on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Her “Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)” set the precedent: It’s the latest No. 1 from her platinum album “Teenage

Dream.” Only Michael Jackson had five No. 1s from one album before Perry, from “Bad.”

But Jackson spent a total of seven weeks at the top with his “Bad” songs; Perry has been at the top perch now for a cumulative 18 weeks.

Perry’s first major hit was the song “I Kissed a Girl” in 2008.

— Billboard.com