

BY PAT MYERS

Report from Week 934

our perennial contest in which we supplied a randomly compiled list of objects and asked you to tell us how any two were alike or different:



The difference between a **toilet brush** and a **tattoo of Joe Biden**: One's a bristly Number Two tool; the other's merely the depiction of one. (Rob Huffman, Fredericksburg, Va.)

2 Winner of the of ear buds with little pink pig heads that stick out of your ears: **A Twitter hashtag** is a pound sign. **Fried butter on a stick** is a pounds sign. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

3 A **toilet brush** and **okra sorbet**: Faced with either one, most people would rather not lick the bowl. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

4 **Precious bodily fluids** and a **tattoo of Joe Biden**: Both are best kept to yourself on a first date. (Colette Zanin, Greenbelt)

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST: WEEK 938

Free and Lear

**There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, 'It is just as I feared!
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!'**
— Edward Lear, from "A Book of Nonsense," 1846

**There was an old man with a beard
Who said, "It is just as I feared!
I thought I'd seem straight
With this pretty young date,
But I still hear them calling me 'weird.' "**
— Gene Weingarten, 2011

Edward Lear never called them limericks, but the 19th-century poet is widely considered the grandfather of the form, though not its inventor. But as the example above shows, Lear's limericks tend not to be what we in the Invitational Age would call clever, and they certainly have none of the risqué humor now associated with the genre.

Loser Extraordinaire Kevin Dopart suggests that we rectify that situation. **This week: Write a limerick using the first two lines of any of Lear's 115 limericks plus your own three remaining lines**, as The Washington Post's Official Dean of Doggerel has done above. They're all easy to find online; if you Google "Lear book of nonsense," the first or second entry will lead you to the whole set.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a dignified game called Doody Head, in which one person wears a "grippy hat" while others toss "super squidgy doodies" (made of brown fabric



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

and foam) at the head of the eager-to-please victim. Donated by 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, Oct. 3; results published Oct. 23 (Oct. 21 online). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 938" 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 Chris Doyle; this week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Matt Monitto.

Beyond compare: honorable mentions

A toilet brush and **three clothespins**: If you don't use the first, it's good to have the second handy for guests. (Larry Yungk, Arlington)

Fried butter on a stick and **Misty of Chincoteague**: Even the French

won't eat fried butter on a stick. (Maria Zimmerman, Berryville, Va., a First Offender)

Three clothespins differ from a **toilet brush** because the first would be a poor rating in a perfume directory, and the second one even worse. (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Precious bodily fluids vs. **fried**

butter on a stick: Most "Twilight" fans think consuming fried butter on a stick is gross. (Pam Sweeney, Burlington, Mass.)

The Descent of Man and a **tattoo of Joe Biden**: Waving either one around could get you kicked out of Bob Jones University. (Christy Tosatto, Brookeville)

Misty of Chincoteague and a **tattoo of Joe Biden**: With Misty you get the whole horse. (Howard Mantle, Lafayette, Calif.; Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn; Ira Allen, Bethesda)

The Descent of Man and **precious bodily fluids**: Two things you regularly see on a Metro escalator. (Barry Koch, Catlett, Va.; Pam Sweeney)

Misty of Chincoteague and the **25-entry limit**: The first, lots of whinnying; the other, lots of whining. (Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

A Twitter hashtag is spaceless; **The Descent of Man** is baseless. #ItIsOnlyATheory, Dayton, Tenn. (Jeff Contompasis)

Misty of Chincoteague and a **Twitter hashtag**: Both lead readers to juvenile fiction. (Michael Reinemer, Annandale)

Fried butter on a stick and **okra sorbet**: Both are treats that Paula Deen would improve by adding a big dollop of mayo, whipped cream and a drizzle of Cheese Whiz. (Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

Three clothespins and **fried butter on a stick**: Both are related to size XXL underpants. (David Ballard, Reston)

Okra sorbet and a **toilet brush**: One's like gumbo; the other's for where your bum goes. (Erika Hoffeld, Silver Spring)

A Google+ invitation is supposed to separate the wheat from the chaff. **The 25-entry limit** is supposed to separate the wit from the chaff. (Chris Doyle)

Blue suede shoes and **precious bodily fluids**: Both should be preceded with the warning "Don't you step on my . . ." (Sheila Randall, Damascus, a First Offender)

See more honorable mentions in the online version of this week's column at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational.

Next week: The 400 Blows, or **Rhymes Against Nature**

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

Mekons
ANCIENT AND MODERN
1911-2011



The Mekons, a long-running Chicago cowpunk institution (with origins in the U.K.), have made a career out of dignified obscurity. Together since the early days of the Carter administration, they have yet to land so much as a blog hit, a streak likely to continue with the release of their latest, a time-traveling romp (as much as the stolid Mekons ever

romp) that starts in the barely-post-Edwardian era and makes its way to the restless present.

A thorny mix of antiequy folk, squalling punk and Weimar-era cabaret, "Ancient and Modern" concerns itself more with the ancient than with the modern.

"Geeshie" has its origins in a song by Geeshie Wiley, a female blues singer from the 1930s; the bumptious "Space in Your Face" is either a love song or a song about radicals or a love song about radicals; "Ugly Bethesda" doesn't have much to do with Bethesda, though its key passage ("In the middle of life / We are in death") sums up the album, and three decades of Mekons, rather nicely.

— Allison Stewart



FRANCESCA ALLEN

PERIOD PIECE: The Mekons, who will perform Oct. 6 at Iota, are all over the map — and the calendar — in the latest release of their long and obscure career.

POP CULTURE

On Twitter feeds, a win for Sheen

Ashton Kutcher and the revamped "Two and a Half Men" might have won the TV ratings war, but on the social media battlefield, Charlie Sheen is still — as he's fond of saying — winning.

A new study released by the research group Visible Technologies indicates that Sheen's Comedy Central roast Monday dominated the conversation on Twitter, with about 400,000 tweets versus about 150,000 about Kutcher's first episode of "Men."

— TheWrap.com