

Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

THE
WINNER
OF THE
INKER

Irene, a swirling hurricane,
was headed up the East,
So residents prepared to
weather out the wind and rain.
The grocery stores were
emptied as all peace and
calmness ceased,
For mobs were looting
businesses from Florida to
Maine.
In Washington, however,
politicians in their seats
Just steamed and stewed, till
one spoke up: "Though I don't
wish to fuss,
These people, for a hurricane,
will swarm and flock the streets,
So why don't our constituents
react that way for us?"
(Matt Monitto, *Elon, N.C.*)

Report from Week 935

in which we asked, in the aftermath of the Virginia earthquake and Hurricane Irene, for poems about some natural event. As befitting a contest about disasters, most among the flood of entries were at least semi-catastrophic. But there were lots of worthies as well; see the rest online.

2 Winner of the DemocraTea tea bags with cartoons of world leaders:

The Mid-Atlantic drowns in rain, while
Texas broils infernal.
You'd think that Mother Nature would
be slightly more maternal.
(Nan Reiner, *Alexandria*)

3 Let's pray for a rainstorm,
Urged Governor Perry.
Was that a great brainstorm?
God snickers. Not very.
(Edmund Conti, *Raleigh, N.C.*)

4 Humpty Dumpty sat on a ridge
Just this side of Memorial Bridge.
The earthquake struck, like a little
bomblet,
And Humpty Dumpty became an
omelet. (Mae Scanlan, *Washington*)

D.C. with services hard-prest
To pass a snow removal test;
D.C. where Pepco users pray
For power to stay up today;
D.C. that may in summer wear
West Nile mosquitoes in her hair.
If you must shake up fools like me,
Please, God, no more than 5.3.
(Gary Crockett, *Chevy Chase*)

Tropical Storm Lee

After "Gunga Din" by Kipling:
Why is it the hurricane
Doesn't hurry in the main?
It mocks its own potentiality;
Gail was just a gale,
And Hope moped on to fail,
Till this year and the storm they
named for me.
Oh it was Lee, Lee, Lee!
You soggy, squalling, sacrilegious Lee!
You did me proud, you did,
You rained in buckets, kid,
We're all the wetter — thanks,
Disastrous Lee!
(Lee Ballard, *Mars Hill, N.C., a First Offender*)

That Sinking Feeling

That storm Irene dealt me a blow:
My bank account's much tauter.
Alas, my mortgage and my car
Are now both underwater.
(Mel Loftus, *Alexandria*)

Mirthquake

I never thought I'd hear it;
I feared 'twas not my fate.
But one hot day in August,
"The earth moved!" cried my date.
(Tom Witte, *Montgomery Village*)

Anti-Invitational (an undisastrous disaster) :

A catastrophe caused by a tilt
And compounded by feelings of guilt
Came at breakfast today
With the tears of dismay
That were shed for the milk I had spilt.
(Jeff Contompasis, *Ashburn*)

**Next week: Hoho Contendere,
or Ha Propos**

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST: WEEK 939



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

MASH 2: The retread

**Please Don't Eat Miss Daisy: Hannibal Lecter lands a job
driving for a Southern spinster.** (Peter Metrinko and Laura Miller)
**Pollyanna Karenina: "Oh, my — isn't that the most beautiful
train?"** (Brendan Beary)

From the people who brought you the contest to combine two movie titles and describe the result: **This week: Combine two movie titles and describe the result**, as in the examples above from the Losing entries of Week 610 in 2005. You can see previous winners at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational, so you don't make the loser move of sending in the same entries. As in the first example, the titles don't need to have the exact word in common; what's important is that it's clear which two films are combined.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, appropriately, the sequel to a previous prize: "More Chinglish," more comically mis-translated or overly literal English-language signs found in China. (On a train: "Please count on the spot the money thing." Warning sign: "If you are stolen, call the police at once.") Donated by Kevin Dopart.

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. 10; results published Oct. 30 (Oct. 28 online). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week, a limit that would have perhaps kept the Empress from having to read more than 4,000 entries to this contest the first time around. Include "Week 939" 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 Barbara Turner.



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

Writers on the storm: honorable mentions

Augustily lustily,
Vesuvius shot off
In 79
In a plot to disrupt us.

The dust baked the populace
Archeologically,
Capturing some folks
In coitus eruptus.
(Bruce Alter, *Fairfax Station*)

San Francisco, 1989
World Series earthquake
Leaves fans running for cover.
One strike and they're out.
(Christopher Lamora, *Guatemala City*)

'Bout threescore million years ago
(Well, give or take a few),
The dinosaurs that roamed the Earth
Became extinct (it's true).
The **dust cloud from a meteor**
Had ravaging effects:
A dearth of food (and sadly, too:
Tyrannosaurus sex). (Beverley Sharp,
Montgomery, Ala.)

A warning from God or from Allah, or
was it
A strange Mayan calendar moment of
fate?
Sorry, for me, the seismology does it:
It's just a tectonic adjustment, mid-
plate. (Courtney Knauth, *Washington*)

I hope that there will never be
A stronger **earthquake** in D.C.

POP CD REVIEW

Various artists THE LOST NOTEBOOKS OF HANK WILLIAMS



After Hank Williams's death in 1953, his song notebooks disappeared into the vaults.

Decades later, the songs have been dusted off and finished by artists including Bob Dylan and Jack White — the sort of folks who should be entrusted with the task.

The result is reverential and frequently wonderful. Everyone is so determined to channel

Williams that the songs can feel like museum pieces. Only Lucinda Williams (whose "I'm So Happy I Found You" is so natural, you'd swear it was her own) escapes with her personality intact.

The songs are mournful, lightly swinging and Hank-like, a testament to the disc's near-flawless curation. An exception: Williams's granddaughter Holly shows up, but her hell-raising half-brother Hank III is, criminally, nowhere to be found.

— Allison Stewart



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Country and western singer-
guitarist Hank Williams.**

MUSIC

Sam Shepard, half of new music duo?

The success of Patti Smith's memoir "Just Kids" has led the songwriter to venture onto old friend Sam Shepard's cinematic turf, writing a screenplay based on the book. Now Shepard is entering Smith's arena.

During a New York interview promoting his film "Blackthorn," which opens in Washington on Oct. 14, the playwright and actor was asked about his days with Smith in the '70s, when the two had a brief romance and co-wrote the play "Cowboy Mouth."

After talk of the authors

Smith exposed him to, the conversation turned to music; Shepard dabbled as a drummer in the '60s. Asked how much he plays now, he admitted, "I'm doin' some stuff with Patti."

Smith is recording an album at Jimi Hendrix's Electric Lady Studios, it seems, and Shepard is "doin' some old tunes" with her. And he's singing, not playing drums.

Asked if "old tunes" means songs from Smith's early career, he laughs. "No, no — old songs, before we met," he explains.

— John DeFore