

BY PAT MYERS

## Report from Week 938

in which we showed you 115 limericks by Edward Lear, the 19th-century grandfather of the genre, and asked you to use the first two lines of any of Lear's poems and supply your own Lines 3, 4 and 5 to create what we now would consider a funny, clever limerick (Lear's were, to put it charitably, not). This contest drew far more entries than for any of our previous limerick contests — more than 1,500. Read lots more of them in the online version of this column at [washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational](http://washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational).



There was an Old Man of Jamaica,  
Who suddenly married a Quaker;  
For that's how it ends  
If you start off just Friends:  
She may press you one evening to take her.  
(Hugh Thirlway, *The Hague*)

## 2 Winner of the Doody Head game with the hat and the "doodies" you toss onto it:

There was an Old Person of Burton  
Whose answers were rather uncertain,  
For his words were all jumbled:  
"Know I don't, dear," he mumbled,  
"Which butt makes your fat look less skirt in."  
(Brendan Beary, *Great Mills, Md.*)

3 There was a Young Girl of Majorca  
Whose aunt was a very fast walker;  
But the girl would insist  
They instead dance the twist,  
For the girl was a very fast torquer.  
(Robert Schechter, *Dix Hills, N.Y.*)

4 There was an old man at a casement  
Who held up his hands in amazement:  
"My not wearing pants  
Explains all their rants,  
And, perhaps, what that one woman's gaze meant."  
(Frank Osen, *Pasadena, Calif., a First Offender*)

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST: WEEK 942

# Singular ideas

**A contest to come up with a new modeling clay to be endorsed by Homer Simpson. Winner: Doh.** (Ralph Kass)  
**A contest to name a medical practice that specializes in treating only elephantiasis and elephant man's disease. Winner: Pachydermatology.** (David Garratt)

It's often a gamble to put forth a new contest that a reader suggests. The way it often goes: Someone comes up with a funny joke or observation, then fires it off to the Empress, saying, "This would make a great contest!" Sometimes it does. Sometimes not so much, once you've used up that particular joke. This week, in a contest we did once before, in 1999: **Give us an idea for a contest for which there's likely only one good entry** (which you also supply, duh), as in the inking entries above from Week 317.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a deck of playing cards promoting Abell Pest Control; the faces of the numbered cards feature photos of various menacing-looking insectoid critters.

**Other runners-up** win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

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](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 31; results published Nov. 20 (Nov. 18 online). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week. Include "Week 942" 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](http://washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational). The revised title for next week is by Jeff Contompassis; this week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Gary Crockett.



**STYLE CONVERSATIONAL** Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join us at [washingtonpost.com/stylconversational](http://washingtonpost.com/stylconversational).

## Lear-misses: Honorable mentions

There was an Old Man who said, "How  
Shall I flee from that horrible cow?"  
(Though I don't mean to tattle,  
He didn't mean cattle —  
His wife was one ornery Frau.)  
(Brendan Beary)

There was an Old Man in a tree,  
Who was horribly bored by a bee;  
He carelessly slipped as  
He spelled "eucalyptus,"  
So he lost the bee due to ennui.  
(Steve Langer, *Chevy Chase*)

There was an Old Person of Ischia,  
Whose conduct grew friskier and friskier.  
When looking for sex,  
He would call up his ex  
(And her mother, which frankly, was riskier).  
(Stephen Gold, *Glasgow, Scotland*)

There was a young lady of Troy,  
Whom several large flies did annoy,  
This Helen, in fright,  
Closed the windows up tight:  
Trojan horseflies might well be a ploy.  
(Courtney Knauth, *Washington*)

There was an old man on some rocks,  
Who shut his wife up in a box.  
He would make a big deal  
Out of each morning's meal:  
He'd eat bagels and she would get locks.  
(Harvey Smith, *McLean*)

"There was an Old Person of Tartary  
Who divided his jugular artery,  
Then died on the spot.  
"I don't think, thus I'm not . . ."  
Was the man's parting shot of Descartesery.  
(Chris Doyle, *Ponder, Tex.*)

There was an old person of Tring  
Who embellished his nose with a ring.

That's not odd to me;  
Since the young folk I see  
Have embellished their, well, everything.  
(Mae Scanlan, *Washington*)

There was an Old Derry down Derry  
Who loved to see little folks merry.  
He declared, "It's such fun  
When you jog with a gun!"  
So he's planning to vote for Rick Perry.  
(Gary Crockett, *formerly of Texas*)

There was an Old Man of Coblenz,  
The length of whose legs was immense.  
But even immenser  
Was [oops, The Post's censor  
Informs me this might give offense].  
(Chris Doyle)

**Next week: Mash: The Retread, or Doubled Oeuvre**

## POP CD REVIEW

### Kelly Clarkson STRONGER



Kelly Clarkson famously broke out of record label captivity with "My December," her tepidly received '07 Alanis Morissette homage, and she's been atoning for it ever since.

Perhaps as a result, "Stronger" doesn't venture far from Clarkson's wheelhouse: punchy pop songs overloaded with drama, and resentment.

Clarkson can make anything sound good, usually without

trying very hard, and she knocks down these lightweight Top 40 anthems and mid-tempo ballads as if she were swatting flies.

"Stronger" ventures cautiously into both electro-pop (on the cringe-worthy "Einstein": "I may not be Einstein/But I know/Dumb plus dumb equals you") and Bruno Mars-ian soul (on the tepid first single, "Mr. Know It All"). Clarkson has two moods — scrappy and morose — and "Stronger" works every possible combination of both.

While it lacks a knockout track, it's familiar, comforting, and utterly unchallenging, a good album by a great vocalist who is capable of a lot more.

—Allison Stewart



GETTY IMAGES FOR CLEAR CHANNEL

**COMFORT SOUND: Kelly Clarkson knocks out some lightweight numbers in pretty fashion on her new album.**

## MOVIES

### In late change, Shakespeare drama 'Anonymous' set for limited opening

Sony Pictures has suddenly changed its plans to open "Anonymous" nationwide Friday after surveys indicated that the Roland Emmerich-directed Shakespeare drama was poised to have a weak first weekend.

Instead, in an unusual change so close to a planned launch, the studio will open the picture, about a British earl who some claim was the true author of William Shakespeare's plays, in only 250 theaters next weekend. Sony had originally

planned to launch the movie in thousands of theaters.

Tracking surveys indicated that audiences were not that interested in seeing the film and that it was likely headed for a very soft opening of less than \$5 million. Sony is hoping to generate buzz and positive reviews to boost audience excitement by opening the film only in major cities, including Washington, and then expand its run throughout November.

—Los Angeles Times