

# Style Invitational

BY PAT MYERS

## Report from Week 952

our annual contest for poems commemorating those who died in the previous year. The many hundreds of entries ranged from the obvious (bin Laden, Kim, Jobs) to the, well, less so (the creator of Doritos; a mummified horror actress). Lots more really terrific poems appear in the online Invite at [washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational](http://washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational).

THE  
WINNER  
OF THE  
INKER

### Kim Jong-Il

Dear Leader, as your spirit flies  
Through North Korea's blessed  
skies,  
Your legacy pervades our nation:  
Coercion, nukes and mass  
starvation.  
As we, your marshaled millions,  
sing,  
To memories of you we cling,  
And cannot help but feel a thrill  
That now you're dead, and not  
just I.  
(Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

**2** Winner of the Annoy-a-tron, a little  
box you hide that beeps every few  
minutes:

### "Jackass" daredevil Ryan Dunn:

When it came to wild stunts, he was  
second to none—  
So who'd have predicted that Ryan  
M. Dunn  
Would die not by catapult, cannon or  
cougar,  
Or Russian roulette with a dung-  
coated Luger,  
Or by tying himself to a runaway  
moose,  
Or snorting ground glass off a lion's  
caboose,  
But by drinking and driving? How  
could he succumb  
To something so horribly, *commonly*  
dumb?  
(Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

► See more not-so-heartbroken  
farewells to Kim online.

**3** Without any help required,  
**Jack Kevorkian** expired.  
(Danny Bravman, Chicago)

4 Atheist essayist  
**Christopher Hitchens** said  
Mother Teresa was  
Far from a saint.  
But now that he's gone,  
The believers are smiling,  
For God is still with them  
And Christopher ain't.  
(Christopher Lamora, Guatemala City)



KOREA NEWS SERVICE/REUTERS

## Cold comfort: Honorable mentions

**Al Facchiano**, Miamian mobster,  
A fan of fine seafood like scampi and  
lobster,  
Now sleeps with the fishes, aghast  
that damnation's  
Each day getting snacked on by  
vengeful crustaceans.  
(Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

### Uncle Milton's Ant Farm creator Milton Levine

Milton Levine has now danced the  
last dance,  
So bid a farewell to both Uncle and  
ants. (Craig Dykstra, Centreville)

### Elizabeth Taylor

To "rest in peace," said Elizabeth T.,  
"Is not my heart's desire.

If Heaven is Heaven, Richard B.  
will set my soul on fire."  
(Rick Lempert, Arlington)

### Scuba inventor Christian J. Lambertson

Diving tanks did you bequeath  
So we could see what lies beneath.  
With sharks we have a tete-a-tete  
(And hope that they've already et).  
But now — it doesn't quite seem fair —  
Your tank's the one that's out of air.  
(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

### Maria Schneider, co-star of "Last Tango in Paris"

Before she passed, they heard her  
mutter:  
"That's why in English it's called  
'butter.'" (Phil Battey, Alexandria)

### Amy Winehouse

Amy, in that raspy voice,  
Said, "Rehab? No, No, No!"  
But sometimes you don't have a  
choice:  
The Big Guy calls, you go.  
(Christopher Lamora)

### Mad Libs inventor Leonard Stern

Leonard Stern passed from here to  
hereafter;  
'Twas his [noun] to amuse, not  
perturb.  
And he left us with [adjective]  
laughter;  
All in all, not a bad way to [verb].  
(Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

Next week: **Clue Us In**, or **Gridiot's  
Delight**

## THIS WEEK'S CONTEST: WEEK 956



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## Give us some bad ideas

**You know it's going to be a bad cruise** when you see that the  
captain has his own private lifeboat.

**You know it's going to be a bad hotel** if they ask you if you  
want to wait for a no-bedbug room.

**You know your kid's going to have a bad day at school . . .**

**You know it's going to be a bad speech . . .**

**You know it's going to be a bad marriage . . .**

Loser bad-boy Larry Yungk suggests this week's contest: **Finish  
any of the above "You know" phrases**, as Larry does for the first  
two.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy.  
Second place receives a genuine calf-/goat-/lamb- alterer (not the  
term used on the box) — a hand tool that snaps a rubber band over  
a couple of parts of the baby-boy animal, where it's left until said  
parts eventually fall off. Found in a Vermont flea market by Loser 4  
Ever Elden Carnahan, and donated to the Empress in the middle of  
a restaurant.

**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 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, Feb. 6; results  
published Feb. 26 (Feb. 24 online). No more than 25 entries per entrant per week.  
Include "Week 956" 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 Kevin Dopart; the subhead for this week's honorable mentions is by Judy  
Blanchard. Join the Style Invitational Devotees on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev).



**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).

**CHANNELING  
AMERICA:**  
Gotye's third disc  
has distinctly  
American tastes,  
referencing  
everything from  
Elvis to classic  
rock to '90s post-  
modern pop.



WARWICK BACKER

## POP CD REVIEW

### Gotye MAKING MIRRORS



Gotye, landed a once-in-a-lifetime  
hit with "Somebody That I Used  
to Know," a subtle, eminently  
tweakable breakup song that  
launched a thousand remixes,  
and more than 10 million  
YouTube views.

Gotye sings in English —  
indeed, he's a better American

pop singer than most American  
pop singers — and "Making  
Mirrors," his restless, often  
sublime third disc, suggests he  
has distinctly American tastes: It  
references Elvis, classic rock, '90s  
post-modern pop and more.

"Making Mirrors" often seems  
like a well-thumbed compendium  
of other people's good ideas,  
which is harder to pull off than it  
seems. Often, Gotye resembles  
nothing more (or less) than a  
post-millennial, slightly more  
enthusiastic Beck, complete with  
tentative falsetto ("Easy Way  
Out"). "Smoke and Mirrors"  
borrows from '60s psychedelic  
pop, though it seems inspired as  
much by Freud ("Mother / Are  
you watching?") as by the Mamas

and the Papas.

"Making Mirrors" is heavy on  
samples and atypical pop  
instrumentation (not only does  
"Somebody" lift the guitar part  
from Brazilian guitarist Luiz  
Bonfá's "Seville," to great effect, it  
has what might now be the  
world's most famous xylophone  
solo). On its best tracks, Gotye's  
weird admixture of borrowed and  
invented makes for the warmest,  
most accessible bedroom pop  
album in memory. Its worst  
tracks seem like mere exercises in  
form: The painful "State of the  
Art," surely meant as an  
experiment in Auto-Tune  
boundary-pushing, sounds like  
the worst T-Pain song in history.

— Allison Stewart