

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Six-Hooters: The Double Dactyls of Week 1076

BY PAT MYERS

The double dactyl, a verse form invented just a few decades ago, has all sorts of rules: It has to be eight short lines; one of the lines has to be a six-syllable word; one has to include someone's name; and most important, it has to be in dactylic (DUM-da-da) meter. As in today's inking entries, the best of a stampede of a thousand or so galloping submissions. For more honorable mentions, see the online Invite at bit.ly/invite1080.

The winner of the Inkin' Memorial

Higgledy piggledy,
Ken Cuccinelli, the
Gubernatorial
Aspirant found

Preoccupation with
Transvagnalia
Wasn't, as strategies
Go, ultra sound. (Jeremy Horowitz,
Washington, a First Offender)

2nd place and the "Manneken
Pis" snow dome from Brussels:
Abraca dabraca,
Poor **Lois Lerner** has
Lost all her e-mails — oh,
Where could they be?

Why does the IRS
Incomprehensibly
Never lose track of what's
Owed them from me? (Beverly
Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

3rd place

Higgledy piggledy,
Phillipa Middleton
("Pippa," Kate's sister): it's
Clear to deduce

How you upstaged royal
Connubiality:
She had the train, but you
Had the caboose.
(Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

4th place

Hairily scarily
Donald the Trump thinks we
Don't get enough of a
View of his fame.

On all his buildings is
Egocentricity.
Vandals should tear down the
"T" from his name.
(Rick Haynes, Boynton Beach, Fla.)

Losery bluesery:
honorable mentions

Honkaway Broncaway
Orenthal Simpson, who
Bungled a burglary,
Wound up in jail.

There, from inside of his
Impenitentiary,
Sits right on top of the
Real killer's tail.
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

Upcoming Anniversaries
Crashy splashity,
Edward M. Kennedy
Drove off a bridge span in
Mid-'69.

(Armstrong and Aldrin were
Coincidentally
Manning the Eagle and
Landed just fine).

(Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)

Dandily, scandally
Lerner's computer is
Suddenly missing some
E-mails, Boo-hoo!

Ryan has dared to say
"Impossibility!"
Next year will Ryan get
Audited, too? (Claire Keeler,
Manassas, a First Offender)

Votery dotery

Eric I. Cantor was
Beaten by Tea Party
Favorite Brat,

Proving that primaries
Representational
Often exclude from the
Ring the wrong hat. (Sam Gwynn,
Beaumont, Tex., a First Offender)

Paleo, naileo

Ogg the Neanderthal
Mated with humans, our
DNA states.

Given the evident
Heterospeciety,
Stone Agers must have been
Hard up for dates.
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Nearical spherical
Buckminster Fuller, he
Never had need for a
Brush or a comb.

Egg-headed wizard who
Rectangle-phobically
Touted to all that there's
No place like dome.
(Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Hiltony wiltony,
Shooting the president,
John Hinkley Jr. thought,
"Jodie will beam!"



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1080:
McGonagall with the windiness

To the Zoo, on a Cowardly, Profit-Driven Decision
Alas, the zoo is closing the exhibit of invertebrates
(Little animals that live on plankton and frankfurter bits).
Now where can we go to see coral and octopuses?
Fie on thee, zookeepers. You are spineless wusses. — Gene Weingarten, inspired by the "poetry" of William Topaz McGonagall

The Empress was recently alerted to the oeuvre — emphasis on the *oeuvre* — of William Topaz McGonagall, a 19th-century Scotsman whose mawkish, clumsy odes on various tragic subjects prompted audiences to throw rotten fish at him, and today earns him such superlatives as "writer of the worst poetry in the English language," in the words of a Web site devoted to his life and, uh, creations (see bit.ly/mcgonagall). Such as this stanza from "The Execution of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose":

After partaking of a hearty breakfast, he commenced his toilet, Which, in his greatest trouble, he seldom did forget. And while in the act of combing his hair, He was visited by the Clerk Register, who made him stare.

Not surprisingly, such wordcraft inspired Washington Post Doggerel Laureate Gene Weingarten to pen the tragic ode above, on the occasion of the closing of the National Zoo's Invertebrate House. And inspired us to ask you to out-McGonagall McGonagall: **This week: Memorialize a modern "tragedy" in a poem burdened with hilariously overwrought verse; lame, forced rhymes; and painfully uneven meter.** While the work of the real McG typically drones on for a dozen verses, we think you can get the badness across in **one verse of no more than eight lines.**

Winner gets the Inkin' Memorial, the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives, in keeping with the quality of the verse that will earn it, a miniature key fob of an itty-bitty rubber gorilla: You squeeze it and a little brown bubble of "poop" emerges from the mini-butt; let it relax and the poop-bubble returns inside the ape. A National Zoo souvenir donated by Loser Andrea Kelly.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for Loser Mug or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" Grocery Bag. Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet, either the Po' Wit Laureate or Puns of Steel. First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). E-mail entries to losers@washpost.com or, if you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, July 21; results published Aug. 10 (online Aug. 7). No more than 25 entries per entrant per contest. Include "Week 1080." in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. This week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Danielle Nowlin. "Six-Hooters" is by Nan Reiner. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev, and click "like" on Style Invitational Ink of the Day at bit.ly/inkofday.

🗨️ **STYLE CONVERSATIONAL** The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

Warped and deluded, the
Heterosexual
Gunman had missed she was
Not on his team.
(Christopher Lamora, Los Angeles)

Ruefully; trulyfully?

Eleanor Roosevelt,
Asked by her spouse, when their
Coupling turned sham,

To be discreet in her
"Extracurriculars":
"Franklin, my dear, I just
Don't give a damn."
(Nan Reiner, Alexandria)

Jerkily, twerkily,
Hannah Montana, her
Old alter ego, must
Be all agnost:

Miley, who's older now,
Nymphomaniacally
Gyrates and strips off this
Part of her past.
(David Franks, Greenland, Ark.)

Miracle-pyrcal,
Jesus of Nazareth
Feeding five thousand: two
Fish and some bread.

"Such a proceeding is
Uneconomical."
Bakers and fishermen
Hastily said.
(Hugh Thirlway, The Hague)

Slimmy-flimmy,
Mehmet C. Oz, MD,
Flogs coffee extract as
Fat-burning fuel,

Senators recommend,
Hyper-emphatically,
That he be labeled a
Great Weight Loss Tool.
(Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

Hoitly-toitly,
Benedict Cumberbatch
(Cherished by fans as an
Arrogant sleuth)

Mines the attractions of
Sociopathically
Keeping his coolness while
Ditching his outh.
(Susan McLean, Iowa City, Iowa, a
First Offender)

Jumpy bumpity,
George Herbert Walker Bush
Strapped on a parachute,
Took a big leap;

Nobody told him most
Nonagenarians
Celebrate 90 by
Falling asleep. (Beverly Sharp)

Higgelton piggelton
Pastor **Jim Jones** was an
Egomaniacal,
Sick puppeteer.

Mass suicide, though, is
No laughing matter. So
Don't get your hopes up — there's
No punch line here.
(Niels Hoven, San Francisco)

And Last:
Pattily-scattily,
Empress of Washington
(Like Queen Victoria)
Wasn't amused.

Spurning my humor, she
Unjustifiably
Binned all my entries — why
Wasn't I choosed?
(Brian Allgar, Paris)

*Lots more double dactyls in the online
Invite at bit.ly/invite1080.*

**Still running — deadline Monday
night: Our contest for questions
that have rhyming answers. See
bit.ly/invitek1079.**

POST PUZZLER

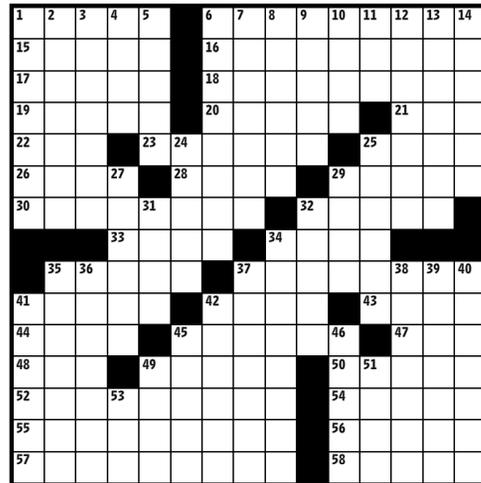
No. 223

BY TRIP PAYNE EDITED BY PETER GORDON • FIREBALLCROSSWORDS.COM

ACROSS	32 Concerns	56 Like basil leaves	9 "Malcolm in the Middle" brother	34 Yellow-podded vegetables
1 The sky, perhaps	33 Wise responses	57 "Wanna put money on it?"	10 What comes before the night before Christmas?	35 Albino's lack
6 Where you could get blitzed during a football game	34 Don't get in over your head?	58 Puddy dater	11 Mikulski or Murkowski: Abbr.	36 On the nose
15 Part of a defense	35 Feature of Wordsworth's poetry	DOWN	12 Black and tan ingredient, often	37 "The Sphinx of Delft"
16 Top 10 hit for Gloria Estefan	37 Getting out of	1 Subsequently	13 Nipple rings	38 Ranch alternative
17 Stuff in a cartridge	41 Make with "December to remember" sales events	2 Song played after the Dodgers win at home	14 "Oh?"	39 "Tea for Two" singer on Broadway
18 Turkey toucher	42 Message containing junk?	3 Film student's equipment, maybe	24 Extract graphite	40 Film execs' concerns
19 Punchbowl alternative	43 Binary half	4 Verbal equivalent of an eye-roll	25 Flat toppers	41 Thin plate
20 Blades for cutting, often	44 "The bad news is ..."	5 They hit the road	27 "GunsMoke" deputy	42 Do after dusk
21 G as in Gershwin?	45 "High School Musical" actor Bleu	6 Deep-pile coverings	29 Duchamp movement	45 Football player Dwight who caught "The Catch"
22 ___ center	47 Calendario span	7 House of Lords member, sometimes	31 Clippers' staff?	46 Big cheese
23 Composed	48 Mavericks runner	8 Offal stuff	32 Landscapers often find them hard to handle	49 Virtua Fighter company
25 High pitch?	49 Dr. Seuss's oobleck, e.g.			51 Rotten Tomatoes read, sometimes
26 "In Summer" singer in a 2013 animated movie	50 Where "The Night Café" was painted			53 Straight, for short
28 Director Meyer known as "King of the Nudies"	52 Not far off			
29 Holdup	54 Prepares for casting			
30 Items with handles on the front	55 Aquamarine relative			

Answer to last week, No. 222

A	L	A	N	F	B	O	M	B	W	A	V	E							
F	E	L	I	P	E	A	L	O	U	E	R	I	E						
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HOROSCOPE

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | JULY 13: This year you will benefit from one or several important relationships. You will prefer to relate on a one-on-one level, even if the person is a business associate. You are able to take in a lot of information and naturally nurture others. If you are single, you could meet someone when dealing with a money matter. This person reads you clearly and likes to be with you. If you are attached, the two of you bond even more, as your special time as a couple increases in importance. You have an additional strength because of this closeness.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Those around you appreciate what you say and your suggestions. If you have a matter of importance on your mind, opening up a discussion today is smart.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Reach out for what you want, and even if you get a "no" right away, don't give up. Get a head start on tomorrow.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Contact a loved one or a friend at a distance whom you rarely chat with. Consider a trip in the near future to visit each other. Good friends are few and far between.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

A loved one will want your time and attention. You might need to change plans, upsetting another person. Make a

conciliatory gesture to the person you canceled with.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Slow down and get some extra R and R. You can only push so hard before your efforts backfire. Others will feel more comfortable with you if you relate to them directly.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You have the ability to see a situation for what it is. An older relative or friend pays you an important compliment. A surprise involving a partner or loved one is likely.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Stay centered when someone does the unexpected. Kick back and watch. A child or new friend needs extra time and attention. Saying yes at times like this will build a deeper bond. Decide what would

delight this person, and do it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Have a long-overdue talk with a family member or roommate. You have been holding back your feelings. Tonight, conjure up a special meal.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Make a call and patch up a disagreement. You cannot always agree with each other. The situation is no different now, but you can respect each other's views.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You are good with money and juggle different concerns well. Explain why you make the choices you do more often. A loved one or friend would love to learn from your financial wisdom.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You feel revived and vital. Touch base with a friend who might not be feeling up to snuff. Your call will help this person feel better.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Someone you care about might want to share a secret, if you will keep it hush-hush. At this point in time, you will honor the request. Take some much-needed downtime.

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Good intentions, oafish delivery

Ask Amy

AMY
DICKINSON

Dear Amy: My cousin "Larry" was diagnosed with liver cancer. His mother, siblings and I

arranged a fundraiser benefit and opened up a bank account in his name to raise money to cover his medical costs.

Larry is a father of five school-age children, and prior to the diagnosis he was working full time. His wife, "Sally," is a stay-at-home mom.

Prior to starting the fundraiser, Larry's mother and siblings told him about it so he would be aware of it. We received a lot of support from everyone until Sally told us to stop the fundraiser immediately and said they would not accept any of the money.

Members of Sally's church are bringing meals to her every day, so it's obvious that she will accept help. Donations from members of her church are acceptable, but she is not willing to accept any donations from our family?

We are shocked and saddened by her behavior. We have never encountered someone refusing a gift. Her actions have offended my entire extended family.

All we were trying to do was to help and support a member of our family, and we wanted a way to help. Sally is now trying to

turn Larry against us by refusing our offer. How should we react to this?

Sad

You should react to this much more gracefully than you have so far.

Your offer sounds generous, but you have delivered it with a sledgehammer.

It is disrespectful to conduct a fundraiser on someone else's behalf without that person's permission. Your relative might have decided in retrospect that he did not want his health challenges announced to the world, and taking money might embarrass or offend him and/or his wife.

The thing to do is to approach the ill person and his family with an attitude of concern and openness. Offer to do practical things, such as taking the kids, doing yard or housework, or going to the grocery store. Stop blaming this family for being who they are and keep your focus on the issue at hand, which is how to assist a family member with a very tough road ahead.

Dear Amy: I'm sitting in a coffee shop next to a woman who has been on her cellphone the entire time, talking loudly and showing no respect for my privacy. I came in here to read and not be

disrupted by someone invading my space. This is no longer relaxing and I am not ready to leave.

Whose right is it? What should be done?

Linda in Michigan

The person making the call isn't respecting her own privacy. I think we've all listened to others reveal personal and business information through overhearing loud phone conversations.

I have had readers respond to me on this topic before, saying that they have written down overheard conversations and presented the transcript to the cell-talker.

Some places have rules about cellphone use — if this place does, you should ask the manager to intervene. Otherwise, I think it's acceptable to interrupt and ask the person, "Could you lower your voice, please? We can all hear you."

Amy's column appears seven days a week at www.washingtonpost.com/ advice. Write to Amy Dickinson at askamy@tribune.com or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

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