

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Pwn stars: Winning new-word poems

BY PAT MYERS

In Week 1506 we once again asked for poems using terms newly added to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, from “adorkable” to “yeet.”

4th place:
OMAKASE: *Japanese chefs-choice menu*
 Have a seat, begin to eat whatever’s on your plate. Don’t ask for something else — the chef is known to get irate. In foodie circles, omakase dining is a winner, But back home Mom just called it “Sit your butt down and eat dinner.” (Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.)

3rd place:
PWN (*rhymes with “own”*): *To dominate an opponent*
 You pwned me — I thrpw in the tpwel.
 “Ypwzal!” “Wppt!” you rejpicce with a hpwl.
 I cpncede, you’re tpp gppd; You’re the tpast of the hppd!
 It makes me frpwn, glpwer and scpwl.
 (Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

2nd place and the Merriam-Webster mug with its ‘pumpkin spice’ definition:
SUS: *Suspect or suspicious, of dubious quality*
 Once upon an L.A. street-o, I consumed a sus burrito,
 Filled with rice and beans and cheese and meat that oozed with grease galore,
 Soon enough there came a churning — gurgling, rumbling, tumbling, turning —
 Noisy, queasy, most uneasy perturbation in my core.
 “ ’Tis the vengeance of the Aztecs,” said I as I roundly swore,
 “Food Truck Maven? Nevermore!”
 (Mark Raffman, Reston)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:
YEET: *To throw, especially with force*
 INAUGURATION DAY 2021
 “Mr. President, welcome! This way —
 Over here on a monogrammed tray
 Is the ketchup you’ll hurl at the wall,
 And — how’s that? You’ll throw nothing at all?
 But tradition, sir! Please! I entreat!
 For four years it’s been all-you-can-yeet.”
 (Melissa Balmain, Rochester, N.Y.)

Diction-awry:
Honorable mentions
JANKY: *Shoddy, faulty (plus SUS)*
 Though deals abound at Dollar Plus,
 Certain merch should still seem sus,
 For if you’re planning hanky-panky,
 Your condoms simply can’t be janky.
 (Jeff Rackow, Bethesda)

LEWK, personal fashion style (as in “look”)
 If you frequent the posh ski resorts
 And you spot a young fellow who sports
 Lightweight shorts with his parka and hat
 You might ask yourself,
 “What’s up with that?”
 “Was his luggage lost? Is he a kook?”
 Meet the snowboarder-wannabe lewk.
 (Terri Berg Smith, Rockville)

GREENWASH: To tout a company’s environmental efforts as a ploy to minimize the damage it’s actually causing
 Corporations attempting to greenwash
 Their pollution cannot get a clean wash
 Of their foul reputation,
 Which smells to the nation
 Like a private who’s done a latrine wash.
 (David Mayerovitch, Ottawa, a First Offender)

BIRRIA: A Mexican meat stew
 A Bostonian’s Critique of a Mexican Restaurant
 Their birria
 Is infirria.
 (Michael Stein, Arlington)

DAWN CHORUS: The chattering of birds as day breaks
 Monday there’s mowing at quarter to 8.
 Tuesday the train passes carrying freight.



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1510: Only U (or A, E, I or O)

An ajar clam Can stank a tad That wafts all damn day — As dank as bad shad.
 — *Univocalic poem by Bob Staake*

This week’s contest was suggested by Valerie Holt of Fort Washington, Md., who has been subjected to The Style Invitational for almost 30 years on account of being the Empress’s offspring. **This week: Write a humorous univocalic poem — one that uses only one of the vowels A, E, I, O or U — as in the ... well, we settled on “hilariously bad” one by Bob Staake, who will probably not include it in his oeuvre of more than 50 acclaimed picture books. This doesn’t mean you should strive for hilariously bad; you should try for the usual hilariously good. If you include a title, also use that one vowel.** Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1510 (no capitals in the web address). **Deadline is Monday night, Oct. 24;** results appear Nov. 13 in print, Nov. 10 online.



Have cicadas around forever (quietly!) with our second prize.

Winner gets the Clowning Achievement, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives one of the more exotic prizes we have ever offered, up there with the wine containing a coiled cobra: It’s a beautiful, old-looking box about eight inches long, covered in padded silk. Slide open the little toggle

closure that looks like a sliver of ivory, and inside you’ll see **two hefty translucent paperweights, into each of which is immersed a real, still shimmering cicada.** According to Google Lens, the label inside says it’s from the Tianqiao Social Welfare Crafts Factory, Jinan, China. Donated by Loser Marleen May, who picked it up on Freecycle.

Other runners-up win their choice of our “For Best Results, Pour Into Top End” Loser Mug or our “Whole Fools” Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, “A Small Jester of Appreciation” or “Close, but Ceci N’est Pas un Cigare.” First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/inviteFAQ. The headline “Pwn Stars” is by Jeff Contompassis; Beverley Sharp wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev; follow Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

The Style Conversational: The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week’s at wapo.st/conv1510.

Wednesday we hear from the rooster next door;
 Thursday the street cleaning happens at 4.

Friday the garbage cans bang on the street,
 Weekends, the paper goes thwump! at my feet.
 All while I’m still in my slippers and flannel;
 If this is my dawn chorus, please change the channel!
 (Sarah Walsh, Rockville)

KRATOM: A traditional psychoactive drug, pronounced either kraty’em or kratt’em
 My boss gave a harsh ultimatum:
 “Sell these meds, even though people hate ‘em.”
 So I hawked yucky drops; Though they’re normally flops,
 They all sold, ‘cause I spiked them with kratom!
 (Karen Lambert, Chevy Chase)

Kratom is a stimulant in small doses but a sedative at high doses.
 I took a little kratom, and felt a surge of joy,
 And then I took a little more — Oh, boy! Oh, boy! Oh, boy!
 Another batch went down the hatch, a quite humongous dose, And that is why you found me here, completely comatose.
 I’ve learned the truth today, forsooth, and baby, this is it: You need to split the kratom — and take just a little bit.
 (Stephen Gold, London)

LARP: Live-action role playing
 My wife loves Harry Potter LARPing;
 Could this hobby cost me more?
 She says that I should quit my

carping ...
 But her “house”? It’s Gryffin-Dior.
 (Mark Raffman)

Said a shivering guy in a tarp,
 “Dude, you know me, I don’t like to carp,
 But this role-playing game Is unpleasant and lame.
 Why’d you make a Fyre Festival LARP?”
 (Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.)

HAIRY EYEBALL: A disapproving glare
 Once upon a morning early, while I slumbered, tired and surly,
 Having stayed up much too late out partying the night before
 After snoozing for an hour, suddenly I saw a glower,
 Disapproving, rather sour glaring from my bedroom door.
 ‘Twas my mother’s hairy eyeball, and I knew what was in store ...
 Didn’t sleep a minute more.
 (Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.)

And Last: SIDE HUSTLE, a supplementary job
 A side hustle could be a good thing to do
 If you’re wanting a little more cash to accrue.
 But these poems I’ve written just aren’t the way —
 In The Style Invitational, rhyme doesn’t pay.
 (Jesse Frankovich)

More honorable mentions in the online Invite at wapo.st/invite1510.
Still running — deadline Monday night, Oct. 17: Our contest to combine two one-word movie titles. See wapo.st/invite1509.

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY PATTI VAROL AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

- “TOOL BOXES” BY GARY LARSON & AMY ENSZ
- ACROSS
- 1 Old Milwaukee brewer
- 6 Word in a very cold forecast
- 11 Bank founded in 1865
- 15 Actor Rhames
- 19 Impressive display
- 20 Sukiyaki mushroom
- 21 Soap Box Derby state
- 22 Nevada’s ___ 51
- 23 Perfect some boxing techniques?
- 25 Put off repeating some old sayings?
- 27 ___ hour
- 28 Provides lodging
- 29 Actress Falco
- 30 Role for Sally Struthers on “Gilmore Girls”
- 33 Glossy fabric
- 37 Underground org.?
- 40 Particularly revealing
- 42 Whirl
- 43 Exchanges
- 46 Broadcast episodes of a Stacy Keach detective series?
- 49 Duffer’s goal
- 50 “... there yet?”
- 51 “Washington Journal” channel
- 52 Michelle of “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon”
- 53 Will Ferrell holiday film
- 54 Glacial epochs
- 56 Avid reader
- 59 Anger
- 60 Advice from PC pros
- 63 Song of praise
- 66 Currently handling the matter
- 67 Clock the Kentucky Colonel?
- 71 Sheet of paper
- 72 Discussion group
- 74 Cuts down to size
- 75 Landmass divided by the Urals
- 77 Less alert
- 80 Pesto ingredient
- 81 Hailed car
- 83 Fly like an eagle
- 84 Board
- 87 Hearing-related
- 89 Female bear, in
- Spanish
- 90 Sample Rice Krispies treats?
- 93 Devotion
- 94 “Wheel of Fortune” category
- 96 Unpleasantry
- 99 “Get it?”
- 100 ___ question
- 101 Product lines?
- 103 Poetic
- 106 Contract
- 108 Dating profile category
- 108 Problem drivers
- 112 Rehearse some comedy routines?
- 115 Establish no-fly zones?
- 118 Auxiliary
- 119 ___ dicit
- 120 Wonderland cake words
- 121 Peruvian of old
- 122 Tie up to a pier
- 123 Airplane assignment
- 124 Roofs on some Corvettes
- 125 Round at the tavern
- DOWN
- 1 Window section
- 2 Asian lake depleted by irrigation projects
- 3 “Captain Marvel” star Larson
- 4 Balm
- 5 Used a keyboard
- 6 Protégé
- 7 Yardstick
- 8 German road
- 9 Dramatic form similar to Kabuki
- 10 “...boom-bah!”
- 11 Top seller
- 12 Biblical “will”
- 13 Barbara Kingsolver’s “The Poisonwood ___”
- 14 Pitcher Gerrit who was the 2019 MLB leader in strikeouts
- 15 Poughkeepsie campus
- 16 Nest egg initials
- 17 Mint
- 18 Fuel for some furnaces
- 24 Textbook chapter
- 26 Virtual crafts store
- 28 Grammy-winning banjoist
- 30 Insignificant disruption
- 31 Razor brand
- 32 Record portions of some musical compositions?
- 35 Underscore alternative: Abbr.
- 36 Soft ball
- 37 Actress Thurman
- 38 ___ Trench: Pacific chasm
- 39 Humming completely out of tune?
- 41 Young lady
- 42 Develop
- 44 Stereo component
- 45 Clothes line
- 47 Nearsighted person
- 48 Startled cry
- 51 Formally surrender
- 55 Chitchat
- 56 Nota ___
- 57 Sharon who won the 2013 Pulitzer in Poetry
- 58 Easter Island
- 59 Messy locks
- 60 “How hard can ___?”
- 61 Bygone autocrat
- 62 Contains
- 64 Perturb
- 65 Cultural org.
- 68 Dens
- 69 Bridle part
- 70 Phoenix NBAer
- 73 One beyond hope
- 76 Gather
- 78 “An inconvenient Truth” narrator Al
- 79 The “G” of LGBTQ+
- 80 False front
- 81 Duplicate
- 82 Stadium in Queens
- 84 Big party
- 85 Sportscaster Andrews
- 86 Addition column
- 88 Lutfefisk-making chemical
- 91 ___ hut
- 92 Fleece-lined slippers
- 95 Deer horn
- 97 Adds fuel to
- 98 Cashless deal
- 101 Take potshots (at)
- 102 Tons of
- 104 Wing it
- 105 2020 Cy Young pitcher Bieber
- 107 Grand slam quartet, briefly
- 108 Ottawa-based law gp.
- 109 Start of many fairy tales
- 110 Equipment
- 111 Digits with dashes
- 112 Three Gorges structure
- 113 Ipanema’s city
- 114 A vow avowal
- 115 Get in a pool
- 116 Delt neighbor
- 117 Nebraska native

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Answers to last week’s puzzle below.

HOROSCOPE

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

Happy Birthday | Oct. 16: You are perceptive, intelligent and observant. Your sharp mind is capable of complex analysis. You are a natural teacher who likes to inform. This year brings change and greater freedom into your world. Stay flexible, and be ready to act fast. Enjoy travel, and trust your intuition.

Moon Alert: There are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions today. The Moon is in Cancer.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
 A family member might surprise you. Or perhaps a small appliance will break down or a minor breakage will occur, because something unexpected will impact your home and private life. Stock the fridge to have food and drink on hand.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
 Pay attention to everything you say and do, because this is a mildly accident-prone day for your sign. Naturally, this includes verbal accidents as well as physical accidents. (Pulling your foot out of your mouth is the toughest yoga move.)

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
 Keep an eye on your money and possessions, because something unexpected could impact them. You might find money; you might lose money. Be smart and protect what you own against loss, theft or damage so that you have no regrets.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
 You feel independent, even rebellious. There seems to be a lot of energy in the air, which makes you feel spontaneous and very highly attuned to whatever is going on around you. You might meet new friends.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
 This is a restless day. It’s been a busy week, with appointments, errands and short trips. You’ve been full of ideas, and many of you have had the pleasure of seeing new places and meeting new faces. Even though you want to rest, it’s hard to sit still.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
 You might encounter someone interesting. Possibly someone you already know might do something that surprises you. Your involvement with a group might create feelings of independence. Perhaps you want to rebel against the status quo.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
 Fortunately, you are courteous and diplomatic by nature. This means you can use your natural skills when dealing with authority figures or the police, if they surprise you in some way or catch you off guard.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
 Travel plans might be interrupted, canceled or delayed today. Likewise, issues related to publishing, the media, the law and medicine also might be interrupted or canceled. Stay cool and observe.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
 Keep an eye on banking, inheritances, shared property or insurance matters, because something out of the blue might require your attention. (When it comes to money matters, you snooze, you lose.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
 A close friend or partner might

surprise you today by doing or saying something you least expect. Or perhaps they are suddenly in a huff or rebellious. Meanwhile, you look attractive to everyone at this time. You make a great impression on others. Is this a problem?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
 Work interruptions are likely. Some of you might have a sudden health concern. Pet owners should be vigilant and on top of things related to their pets, because something unexpected could occur. Be aware of these possibilities, especially if traveling.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
 Parents, take note: This is an accident-prone day for your kids; therefore, know where they are at all times. Meanwhile, social occasions might be canceled or changed. Sports accidents are highly likely. A sudden invitation might come your way that surprises you.

Answers to last week’s puzzle.

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A	N	N	O	A	L	U	M	S	O	O	T	H	U	N	C	L	E					
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S	E	S	A	M	E	A	K	A	T	B	A	R	A	R	P	E	E	K				
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