

**“PAY NO ATTENTION TO  
THE CAN BEHIND THE MERTON”  
A Gallimaufry of New Spoonerisms**

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It isn't often that spoonerisms are in the news. But this past May, one made headlines nationally. A New Brunswick, New Jersey, bar owner won a prolonged legal battle over the right to call his establishment *Buck Foston*. The city, objecting to the name (which refers to the rivalry between the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox), denied him a liquor license. A jury decided that his First Amendment rights had been violated and awarded him \$1.5 million.

All this trouble for a nonsensical spoonerism! We can do better.

Below is a new set of original specimens. As usual, I Googled my list of candidates to determine if they were truly original or if I had been anticipated. Grudgingly, I expunged half when I discovered that one or more ingenious folks had the same ideas. (I waived this self-imposed ukase in a few cases, where my setup or pun was creatively different.)

Among the deletions: *Dove never lies, fang of gore, hawking TEDs, kings to thumb, lowly hand, PickyWeedia, The Rouse that Moored*. And two tweaked Hemingway titles: *An Airwell to Farms* and *The Run, Also Sizes*. Further, I learned that the good citizens of Hay-on-Wye really do affectionately refer to their town as *way on high*.

The above caveats having been made, here is the new batch. As a politico might exclaim: “Savor it. Fun!”

Daniel Brühl is a hunky German film actor whose most recent American starring role was in last year's *The Fifth Estate*. Imagine that when he was growing up, his parents hired a neighborhood teenager to care for their lawn. The kid would then have confided to his pals: “Sometimes you gotta rake the Brühls.”

A tourist visiting a massive hydroelectric facility was irritated by the deafening noise. “How do you stand it all the time?” he asked a nearby employee. “Not to worry,” the technician coolly replied, pointing to a nearby wall covered with dials and switches. “We have controls for that specific purpose: cutting flume roar.”

A high-powered executive in need of a new briefcase visited a store selling the expensive Gurkha brand of leather goods. He explained that his selection must be waterproof in order to withstand the rainy climates to which he routinely traveled. When the salesclerk presented one model, his reaction was enthusiastic: “Nice Gurk if you can wet it!”

In the 1960s, rock musician Tuli Kupferberg and his bandmates archly named their group The Fugs. It's too bad he never had a chance to meet Henry Ward Beecher, the renowned 19<sup>th</sup>-century clergyman and abolitionist. Had that historic encounter occurred, curious bystanders would likely have whispered, "Is it a Beecher or a Fug?"

Fashionable but uncomfortable women's footwear can pose health risks. Unsurprisingly, those suffering injuries recently initiated a spate of lawsuits against manufacturers. No wonder busy plaintiff lawyers have adopted the maxim, "Life is shoe tort."

In college, we were required to read *The Crowd*, the 1895 classic by Gustave Le Bon. The author argued that people who are seduced by mobs and collectivist movements lose their individuality and reasoning abilities and become capable of perpetrating all manner of evils. Alas, the book's thesis is still relevant today. Perhaps it should be reissued with a slightly revised title: *The Crowd: Woes, Guiled*.

A few quicker ones:

- Slogan for aerosol foot spray: *Heels like foam*.
- Why birthrates increase nine months after traditional rural folk celebrations: *Fest breeding*.
- On poker players who habitually utter witty and ironic remarks: *Hoyle wryness*.
- The final albums of beloved singer Margaret Whiting could, as a tribute, be reissued in a boxed set titled *Whiting: The Last Four*.
- Ghostbuster: *A "boo!" stick carrier*.
- Little-known Dostoyevsky novel about baptism: *The Douse of the Head*.
- A 2011 French film was released in the U.S. with the title *You Will Be My Son*. Maybe it will inspire a porno sequel called *You Will See My Bun*.
- Pop song about a slacker bemoaning the fact that his girlfriend was arrested on a marijuana charge: *Bust My Jill*.
- The familiar announcement "I see dead people" surely warrants an urgent command from law-enforcement authorities: *"I.D. said people!"*

Finally, a true story: At a family gathering years ago, I witnessed a toddler named Kyle follow a dog out of the back yard; fortunately, the child was caught in the nick of time. Seizing the opportunity, I remarked, "This must be how they came up with that old advertising slogan: 'I'd walk a Kyle for a mammal.'"