

Mr. Francis
American Studies

Trout Inventions

Short story: Eliot Rosewater laments, "Jesus--if Kilgore Trout could only write!" (Vonnegut 110). The narrator confides in his audience that "Kilgore Trout's unpopularity was deserved. His prose was frightful. Only his ideas were good" (ibid.). Choose one of the many plot synopses for Kilgore Trout manuscripts that are scattered throughout Vonnegut and present it as a short story. While you will need to invent much to flesh out the synopsis, you may not deviate from the letter or the spirit of the story as presented by Vonnegut.

Novels by Kilgore Trout include:

- The Big Board
- The Gospel from Outer Space
- The Gutless Wonder
- Maniacs in the Fourth Dimension
- The Money Tree

You may also choose Trout's novel "about a man who built a time machine so he could go back and see Jesus" (202), his unwritten invention "about a funeral for a great French chef" (171), or a synopsis you have encountered in another Vonnegut novel.

Your short story will be assessed based on appropriateness of content, composition, and creativity.

Cover: After their stint in the infirmary, Billy, Lazzaro, and poor old Edgar Derby participate in an "unconscious travesty of that famous painting, 'The Spirit of '76'" (143). Although much of Slaughterhouse-Five is concerned with written art, visual art is also of great significance. Create your own "travesty" to serve as a cover for your assignment. It must feature original--not computer generated--artwork. It should also acknowledge that the assignment has been inspired by Kilgore Trout and/or Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five.

Your bibliography must include the correct edition of the novel and any Web-sites or other resources you used during our unit on Slaughterhouse-Five. Your bibliography should appear on the reverse side of your coversheet.

Although you need not parody a known painting, the cover will be assessed based upon appropriateness of content, composition and color, and creativity. Failure to include an appropriate cover will result in a ten-point penalty.

Your proposal should be typed using MLA style and may not exceed one page. It must identify the synopsis that will inspire your story. Additionally, it must include the names for the central characters and a brief statement of the story's theme. Finally, it should provide a brief outline of the action for the story.

While it is impossible to set a qualitative requirement for this assignment, my expectations are high. A complete rough draft will be due in class for peer editing. The final draft must be stapled and accompanied by your peer-edited rough draft.

Please use standard MLA format. The story must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around. Please use a 12-point, Times New Roman font. 3-5 pages. The cover should be 8.5" x 11". It should appear on top of the manuscript, stapled once in the top left corner.

Work Cited

Vonnegut, Kurt. Slaughterhouse-Five. 1968. New York: Laurel, 1991.