

COFFEE HOUSE

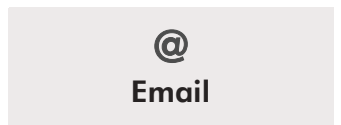
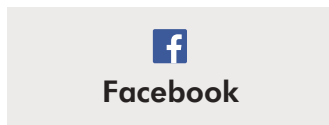
Boris Johnson wins The Spectator's President Erdogan Offensive Poetry competition



Douglas Murray

A promotional image for 'THE SPECTATOR PODCAST'. On the left, the text 'THE SPECTATOR PODCAST' is displayed in a serif font. Below it, the text 'Subscribe: www.spectator.co.uk/podcast' is shown. On the right, there is a cartoon illustration of a man with spiky blonde hair, wearing a black tuxedo and holding a microphone, appearing to be performing. In the background, a smaller cartoon figure of a man in a red cap sits on an ornate golden throne next to a Turkish flag. A large play button icon is overlaid on the center of the image.

18 May 2016 7:00 PM



I'm pleased to announce that we have a winner of The Spectator's President Erdogan Offensive Poetry competition, and here it is:

There was a young fellow from Ankara

Who was a terrific wankerer

Till he sowed his wild oats

With the help of a goat

But he didn't even stop to thankera.

The author of this winning entry is former Mayor of London and chief Brexiteer, Boris Johnson MP.

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I am sure there will be those who claim this is a stitch-up. I am aware that Boris's entry – which came via an **interview** with *Die Weltwoche* – commits two solecisms. Amid the first deluge of entries I intemperately announced (via Twitter) a unilateral ban on this rhyme for 'Ankara'. I also think Boris should have settled either on 'goats' and 'oats' or 'goat' and 'oat'. As a classical scholar himself he must know that the rhyme is not wholly perfect and that on such occasions one must find a way around the problem and simply go with the plural both times or not at all.

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Nevertheless, I am the Vizier of this competition and what I say goes. Despite trying to follow Erdogan's example I have not snaffled all the prize money for myself. And I am quite sure – though have yet to confirm with him – that the former London Mayor will happily give his prize money of £1000 to a deserving charity. There are a number of charities whose giving details I will urge on Boris in the coming days. But for myself the appeal of Boris's entry was there from the outset. Certainly there were better poems. For sure there were filthier ones (and may I take this opportunity to congratulate the person who got the term 'dirty trombone' into their entry? The discovery that something called a 'Turkey slap' already exists also inspired several readers to new poetic heights).

But this award is entirely anti-meritocratic. For myself, I think it a wonderful thing that a British political leader has shown that Britain will not bow before the putative Caliph in Ankara. Erdogan may imprison his opponents in Turkey. Chancellor Merkel may imprison Erdogan's critics in Germany. But in Britain we still live and breathe free. We need no foreign potentate to tell us what we may think or say. And we need no judge (especially no German judge) to instruct us over what we may find funny.

For those of you who haven't been following the story, here is the [link](#) which explains why we are running the competition.



The Spectator Podcast

Erdogan: the most powerful man in Europe

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The image shows a podcast player interface. At the top left is a red play button icon. The title 'The Spectator Podcast' is in a dark box, followed by the episode title 'Erdogan: the most powerful man in Europe' in a white box. On the right, there are SoundCloud icons for 'SOUNDCLOUD', a download icon, and a 'Share' button. The main visual is a cartoon illustration of President Erdogan in a red fez and black suit sitting in a golden throne, looking towards a large, close-up profile of Boris Johnson's face. A waveform is visible at the bottom of the image, and a '21:45' timestamp is on the right. A 'Cookie policy' link is at the bottom left.

TAGGED

[Boris Johnson](#), [President Erdogan](#), [The Spectator](#), [Turkey](#)

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