

**BRYSON'S DICTIONARY OF TROUBLE-
SOME WORDS**
(a semi-found poem)

What, exactly, must a word do to earn the badge
 “troublesome”? I do not think it *begging the*
question to guess why this dictionary contains
barbos (‘it is not the opposite of *barbos*’) and
bebore (‘an archaic word, but still sometimes
 a useful one’). Poor *belaguered* comes from
 the French, and is spelled like it. *Belles-lettres*
 deserves its placement, tricky on the tongue
 and far too snooty. Of course we’ve all had
 our troubles with *establisoid*, that well-known
 Welsh festival of the arts. But why was
 Ullswater chosen over other more tongue-
 tangling lakes in England? And did you know
 that *affinity* denotes a mutual relationship.
 Therefore...one should not speak of some-
 one...having an affinity **for** another but
 should speak of an affinity

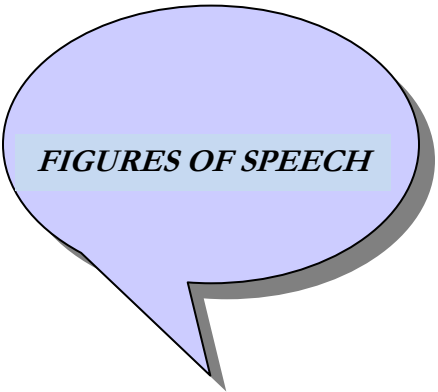
FIGURE OF SPEECH

“What a lovely figure of speech you have,” the oxy-
 moron commented to the epithet, who shot
 daggers at him from atop stiletto heels, until,
 leaking metaphors, he fled to conjunction *jun-*
ction and hopped the “A” train, not realizing it
 was only an article, not a predicate, so couldn’t
 take him anywhere. As he sat drumming his
 fingers waiting for the train to move, he sighed
 a hyperbole like a giant cartoon speech bubble,
 then grabbed hold of the tail and floated away
 from all his misery and shame into a setting
 cliché.

with or between? I was *aggravated* to learn
 that I could not be in a state of aggravation,
 since “strictly speaking...people can never be
 aggravated, only circumstances.” Moreover, I
 am cautioned, “there is no real reason to use
aggravate when *annoy* will do.” Despite my an-
 noyance, I *zoom* toward Z, where I am in-
 formed that verb is “not objectionable when
 applied to lateral movements,” but should be
 avoided when describing downward motion,
 “especially as *swoop* is available.” I drop (or
 swoop?) into a chair, my *contemptible* (not to be
 confused with *contemptuous*) history of question-
 able usage dragging behind me like toilet paper
 stuck to the shoe.

SIMILE

As tricky as a smile like a wriggle of licorice---the red,
 strawberry-flavored kind---that could mean,
 “yes, do” or just as easily, “don’t you dare,” like
 your older sister smiled at you when you bor-
 rowed clothes and that boyfriend she didn’t
 really want anymore, and in truth he was no
 good for you, either, nor you for him, feeding all
 the wrong fantasies, like oil and nectar. He was
 the oil, slippery, dark, and lovely walnut oil that
 wouldn’t blend ever with nectar piquant in the
 pipes of honeysuckle blossoms.



by
KARA PROVOST

LATE

It was one of those dreams that’s not a nightmare,
 but almost. I am getting ready to leave for my
 great-aunt’s funeral, running late as usual. But
 this time, branches and trees of extended
 family—even the extended family of ancestral
 maids and babysitters—are all waiting. How
 gauche to be late for a funeral. And it gets
 worse: On the way out the door, my mother
 reminds me I am supposed to bring some-
 thing, but my brownies are still baking. How
 unbaked and gooey in the pan, and everyone’s
 rushing me and everyone’s waiting and I know
 I can only try to atone by stopping at Star
 Market on the way and picking up a pan of
 brownies from their no-good bakery that will
 taste of sugar and nothing else.

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Origami Poetry Project
 FIGURES OF SPEECH
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