The WELL-SPOKEN Thesaurus

DON'T SAY THAT	*INSTEAD SAY THIS*
A little bit	*To some extent*
Anytime they want	*With impunity*
No way	*Far from it*
Bad-mouth	*Speak harshly of*
I'm having a brain freeze	*Allow me to collect my thoughts*
Challenge the truth of	*Call into question*
Make yourself seem	*Cast yourself as*
What happened to her	*What became of her*

The Most Powerful Ways to Say Everyday Words and Phrases

TOM HEEHLER

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On Becoming Articulate

Why Should You Care?

Words are like little gods. The pronoun "him" instead of "her," if used often enough, can dissuade a girl from science or math. The words you use determine the density of gray matter in your brain. They affect your political leanings, influence how you see reality, determine your level of confidence and thus, define what it means to be you. That's what words do.

As important as your words are in shaping your behavior, they are even more important in the way they shape the behavior of others. Your manner of speaking is, if nothing else, the central factor upon which people form assumptions about you. Whatever is your ultimate goal in life, chances are good you're going to have to communicate your way to it. And if greatness is your goal, well-spoken words are essential. Think about it. From Homer to Hemingway, Lincoln, Churchill, King, Obama—their *words* are why you know them.

The well-spoken few are viewed by others in a different way. They are thought of as more knowledgeable, more informed, and therefore expected to do more things. This law of great expectations is a powerful motivator. We all have an inherent need to meet expectations, whether they be high or low, and when expectations rise, we're inclined to rise with them. Our improvement then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: as others expect us to be better, we become so, and as we become so, they expect it further still.

How to Speak Like an Academic without Sounding Like One

The most accomplished speakers use words in ways that compliment their thoughts and ideas, not overshadow them. They are able to adopt a scholarly air of authority, but without all those pretentious scholarly words. Take Barack Obama for instance, a man for whom the well-spoken word is a major source of power. President Obama understands, obeys, and exploits the most important commandment of communication: that it's not so much the words we use, as it is the way we use them. You hear it all the time: "Barack Obama is so articulate, so eloquent, so intelligent." But has he ever used a word any child couldn't comprehend?

It's not easy becoming articulate. For most of us, the process is a never-ending exercise in trial and error. We fumble our way along with the occasional foreign word here or big word there, all the while praying we're pronouncing and using these words correctly. And when we do dare to use these words, we risk casting ourselves as pretentious, awkwardly formal, academic, or nerdy. Have you ever used a lofty word and felt embarrassed at having done so? We've all been there. We hear others use these words with ease, but when we try them for size, they don't always fit. That's because we confuse formality with what we believe to be articulate speech. We deploy such language in an attempt to present ourselves as professional when, ironically, usually the opposite effect is achieved.

The same can be said for those who attempt to impress with big professorial words. While such language may seem "indubitably" clear and appropriate to them, it strikes the rest of us as more than a bit eccentric. The trick here is to achieve the authoritative and persuasive effects of formality and intellectualism without sounding too, well, formal or intellectual. What you are aiming for is an effect: you want to be regarded as the smartest authority in the room but without the least trace of awkwardness or pretension. And to that end, I present to you this book. Whether it be for writing or speaking, I think you will find it quite helpful.

A Few Words about Me

I began writing what would become this book when I decided, in the spring of 2006, to go back to school and complete my education. It was there in Cambridge that I would come to realize just how inarticulate I really was. And because I

could find no easy way to lift my speech and prose quickly, I resolved to invent a way. It began simply enough; whenever I would happen upon an eloquent word or phrase, I would write it down and pair it with what *I* would have said otherwise. (All those common word entries you see in this thesaurus? That's me talking.) I did this for years, collecting words like butterflies, until it became increasingly apparent that my collection could be of use to others. So you could say that my authority on this subject stems not only from a determination to do something about my own predicament, but to do something about yours. My only hope is that this remarkable collection of words does as much for you in that regard as it has for me.

Rhetorical Form and Design

17 Lessons

It's not enough to replace ordinary words with the extraordinary words contained within this book. You need to know *why* these words are extraordinary, and the best way to do this is to examine the language of history's greatest writers and speakers, verbal alchemists like Margaret Atwood, Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Eliot, and Barack Obama. It is by their example that we come to know how words are powerful not in and of themselves, but in and of each other, in the way they combine to form that which they could never be otherwise.

Take for example the word, *leave*. In most contexts, such as, *when she leaves tonight*, this particular word is nothing if not ordinary and hardly the sort one would expect to find in a vocabulary builder or style guide. But take a moment to imagine how such a word might be used to improve the following sentence: *It makes me want more*.

Did you come up with, *It leaves me wanting more*? The difference is rather striking; is it not? This kind of linguistic chemistry happens not by flash of insight, but by rhetorical formula, and as you progress through this chapter, these formulas will become your own. Use them, learn from them, and apply what you learn to your everyday business correspondence, your résumés, your college papers, your novels, your news accounts, and, yes, even your casual conversation.

Lesson 1: T. S. Eliot

The Poetry of Ordinary Things

Most of us don't consider ourselves poetic, but we are. Filmmakers are keenly aware of our fascination with poetry. Why do you think so many leading men drive poetic cars like Karmann Ghias, and live in poetic places like marinas or in converted abandoned warehouses? Poetry isn't just words on a page that rhyme, it's the feeling you get from words, and the feeling you get from the actual things those words represent. Poetry is the smell of a freshly pressed white cotton shirt. Poetry is the color of lightning.

Certain everyday words are poetic too. See if you can spot one here in this line from T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock":

> ***In the room the women come and go***
> ***Talking of Michelangelo.***

While "Michelangelo" is poetic, it's hardly an everyday word. "Of" is the poetic word here. Talking *about* Michelangelo just doesn't do it for me; talking *of him* does. Try replacing your "abouts" with "ofs," as in this example:

So you see, even a no-nonsense business memo can be improved upon with a bit of poetry.

Here are ten other poetic replacements and omissions:

1. Drop "of."
   – She thinks *of* herself as an expert.
   – She thinks herself an expert.

2. Drop "is."
   – Do you think it *is* impertinent?
   – Do you think it impertinent?

3. Drop the second "is."
   – "Every look is a cordial smile, every gesture a familiar caress."—T. B. McCauley, *Machiavelli*

4. Replace "very" with "-est of."
   – It is a *very rare* event.
   – It is the *rarest of* events.

5. Replace "are" with a comma.
   – These *are* the men who stood their ground.
   – These, the men who stood their ground.

6. Replace "-able" with "a matter of."
   – It's *disputable*.
   – It's *a matter of dispute*.

7. Drop "that are."
   – I have a taste for all things *that are* classical.
   – I have a taste for all things classical.

8. Replace "that he was" with "him."
   – I thought *that he was* wise.
   – I thought *him* wise.

9. Replace "-ful" with "a source of."
   – Her continued absence is *regretful* for us all.
   – Her continued absence is *a source of regret* for us all.

10. Replace "with" with "of."
   – "They were sitting in the blind that Wanderobo hunters had built *with* twigs and branches..."
   – "They were sitting in the blind that Wanderobo hunters had built *of* twigs and branches..."—E. Hemingway

Lesson 2: Margaret Atwood

The Conversion of the Figurative

If someone were to empathize with you and say, "I know where you're coming from," they would be using a figure of speech, and so their expression would be considered *figurative*, as opposed to *literal*. If they knew where you were coming from literally, they would know where you had been an hour earlier, and that would be a little creepy.

This is the sort of thing that gives AI programers serious indigestion. Computers have a tough time drawing distinctions between the figurative and the literal. Tell a computer that you're freezing, and it's likely to call for an ambulance. Tell me that, and I'll get you a sweater. That's because I'm a person, and like all people, I inherently know what you mean. In fact, I'm so accustomed to knowing what should be figurative and what should be literal that if you were to change it up on me, I would consider that to be a breath of fresh air—and I mean that figuratively. Witness this breath of fresh air as Margaret Atwood takes what we normally accept as figurative and interprets it in a literal way a few pages into *The Handmaid's Tale*:

> ***We would exchange remedies and try to outdo each other in the recital of our physical miseries; gently we would complain, our voices soft and minor key and mournful as pigeons in the eaves troughs. I know what you mean, we'd say. Or, a quaint expression you sometimes hear, still, from older people:*** **I know where you're coming from, as if the voice itself were a traveler from a distant place. Which it would be, which it is.**

When people read that, they don't think to themselves, Margaret Atwood sure is good at converting the figurative to the literal. Instead they think, Wow, what a writer!

The trick here is to come up with a figure of speech that relates to your subject, then try to provoke your creative instincts into going literal. For instance, let's assume that you had written the following expression in rough-draft form:

> ***I remember once how I let myself fall in love; now I'm more careful with my emotions.***

Are you yawning yet? I am. So let's get to work:

There are dozens of possibilities. Here's mine:

> ***I remember once how I let myself fall in love;***
> ***now I always work with a net.***

What makes this sentence interesting is the way the second half implies a literal translation of the first—that the fall was literal.

Now see if you can convert the figurative to the literal by filling in this blank with a single word.

Your clue: It's a quote by Albert Einstein.

"_____is not responsible for people falling in love."

Lesson 3: Ernest Hemingway

Verb Displacement

Minimalism, the art of simplifying literature to its most basic form, is actually quite complicated. You can't just dumb down everything you write to a third-grade reading level and be done with it. If that's all it took, then everybody would be able to write like Hemingway, which is not the case.

What makes Hemingway remarkable is his ability to make simplicity sophisticated, to give ordinary language a timeless and poetic feel. Consider this example from the novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Pay particular attention to the last sentence of this passage, which has been altered so as to be without the Hemingway aesthetic.

> ***"Kashkin," Robert Jordan said. "That would be Kashkin."***
>
> ***"Yes," said Pablo. "It was a very rare name. Something like that. What has become of him?"***
>
> ***"He died in April."***

It's hard to imagine how one might improve upon the wording here. But in the last sentence, watch as the verb "died" is displaced by "is," and the remainder of the sentence modified to accommodate the change:

While the meaning of the expression hasn't changed, the feel is more poetic, yes? Impressively, Hemingway does this with an unaffected manner. That is, we don't get the feeling that the characters are poets reciting poetry or actors succumbing to melodrama. Instead, because the language is so simple, we accept Hemingway's poetic enhancements as perfectly natural, perhaps the broken English of everyday Spaniards. In so doing, Hemingway endows his ordinary prose—and the ordinary people who speak it—with a kind of primitive nobility that lesser writers might not think or know how to bestow.

Here's another example from Hemingway's *Green Hills of Africa*. Among the verbs in the alternate or "un-displaced" version below, only one is particularly well suited for displacement. Find it and do what Hemingway does: displace that verb with "is" or its past tense, "was."

If you were able to find the verb and make the change, or even if you could not but you now see why the latter example is a stylistic improvement on the former, then you're catching on.

This is fairly nuanced stuff, so let's try one more for good measure. Here's a passage from Hemingway's *Garden of Eden*. Find the only verb suitable for displacement and replace it with "is" or "was," then see if you can modify the sentence to accommodate the change.

Lesson 4: Cormac McCarthy

Creating Abstractions

Recall this scene from the movie *Gladiator*: the emperor Commodus stands enthralled before a scale model of the city of Rome. As he lowers his humongous head over tiny intricate buildings for a close-in look, his shadow is fallen over the Coliseum.

Now take a moment to reflect upon that. The emperor's head and shadow are actual concrete things. But they are meant instead as abstractions (things that exist only in the mind). In this case, the emperor's looming head and shadow are meant to evoke the abstraction of the fear and imperial force under which all of Rome was subjected. When a writer—or director—does this, when she compels her readers to think of concrete things in abstract ways, she becomes less a writer of one-dimensional stories and more a writer of literature.

Let's see if you can write some literature. Begin by reading this excerpt from Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men*. As McCarthy's character Llewellyn Moss scans "the desert below him with a pair of 12-power German binoculars," what he does not know is that somewhere out there is a deadly thing. (I would tell you what that deadly thing is if it wouldn't spoil the story.)

> ***The sun was up less than an hour and the shadow of the ridge and the yucca plants and the rocks fell far out across the floodplain below him. (_____.)***

At this point, try to visualize not the shadows of the plants or rocks, but Moss's shadow. Now say something about that shadow, but do it in a way that turns the

shadow to abstraction, to a harbinger of impending doom perhaps, but without using any explicit words like "impending doom."

Hopefully you came up with something like this:

> ***The sun was up less than an hour and the shadow of the ridge and the yucca plants and the rocks fell far out across the floodplain below him.*** **Somewhere out there was the shadow of Moss himself.**

Foreboding, right? McCarthy doesn't mean Moss's actual shadow, but something more akin to his own ghost, his own fate.

Shadows are easy to imagine as abstractions because of their ethereal ways. But anything can be turned to abstraction—even a murderer's eyes:

> ***"They say the eyes are the windows to the soul. I don't know what them eyes was the windows to and I guess I'd as soon not know. But there is another view of the world out there and other eyes to see it and that's where this is goin'. It has done brought me to a place in my life I would not of thought I'd of come to."*** *No Country for Old Men*

Can you transform a psychopathic killer's coin into an abstraction? Here's your clue: *Call it in the air.*

Lesson 5: John Steinbeck

Intuitive Description

If I were to ask you to describe the flowers on your window sill, chances are good that your physical description would be precisely that: physical. Color, shape, and smell. But watch how John Steinbeck describes the flowers in *East of Eden*:

> ***Then there were harebells, tiny lanterns, cream white and almost sinful looking,*** **and these were so rare and magical that a child, finding one, felt singled out and special all day long.**

Brilliant, right? That's because emotional feelings trump physical feelings every time. You say the sky is blue? That's nice. Now relate that to something human, as I do here:

> ***The sky was the kind of blue if blue could burn, blue on fire, lit by the sun blazing high above the hills in winter on a morning when there are no clouds.*** **A sky like that makes it easier for a soldier to die. It's the last thing he sees, and there is comfort in knowing some things will live forever.**

In this excerpt from Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle*, how might you relate a simple scar to a human emotion or motivation?

Ordinary description: His thick hair was combed straight down over a white scar half an inch wide that lay horizontally over his right ear.

That may not be a brilliant example of intuitive description, but the expression carries with it more impact than it would otherwise. That's because human feelings and motivations make us care about what's being described. While it's nice to know that leaves are green and flowers are pretty and hair is combed a certain way, unless you can relate those facts to a human emotion or motivation, readers will not so easily connect with your words on a personal, human, intuitive level.

Here's one more from the novel *Cannery Row*. Note how Steinbeck likes to begin his paragraph with physical description, and conclude with intuitive description:

> ***Mary Talbot, Mrs. Tom Talbot, that is, was lovely. She had red hair with green lights in it. Her skin was golden with a green under cast and her eyes were green with little golden spots. Her face was triangular, with wide cheekbones, wide-set eyes, and her chin was pointed. She had long dancer's legs and dancer's feet and she seemed never to touch the ground when she walked.*** **When she was excited, and she was excited a good deal of the time, her face flushed with gold. Her great-great-great-great-great grandmother had been burned as a witch.**

A lesser writer might have simply concluded, "Mary looked like a witch." But Steinbeck finds a way to make that point intuitively, connecting Mary's physical features to something personal to Mary.

Lesson 6: Norman Mailer

Poetic Articles

The words "the" and "a" are surely the least regarded words in the English language. But sometimes when you omit these words from where they ordinarily belong, or include them where they do not, they become quite interesting. Do what you can to enhance this passage from *The Armies of the Night* by either adding or omitting an "a."

Still not convinced that article can be poetic? Try this one from Mailer's *The Castle in the Forest*:

> **Alternate version:** I know that I will sail into a sea of turbulence, for I must uproot many conventional beliefs.

Mailer's version: I know that I will sail into a sea of turbulence, for I must uproot many *a* conventional belief.

Here's one I'm particularly fond of. See if you can either add or omit an "a" in this passage from *The Fight*:

Alternate version: In contrast, a five-punch combination in which every shot lands is certain to stampede any opponent into unconsciousness. No matter how light the blows, a jackpot has been struck. The sudden overloading of the victim's message center is bound to produce that inrush of confusion known as a coma.

Mailer's version: In contrast, a five-punch combination in which every shot lands is certain to stampede any opponent into unconsciousness. No matter how light the blows, a jackpot has been struck. The sudden overloading of the victim's message center is bound to produce that inrush of confusion known as *coma*.

And now for your final test. Add or omit an "a" or a "the" to ensure there are no clichés in this passage from Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*. For this you'll want to rely on a pronoun to accommodate the change:

Lesson 7: Edith Wharton

Objectification

Simple and clear expression is generally considered to be the hallmark of proper rhetorical form, but complicated and opaque can be so much more interesting. Take this expression for instance:

> ***He considered her to be out of his league.***

That's about as simple and as clear as one can be. But watch here as Edith Wharton uses objectification (the regarding of people as objects) to imply as much in this excerpt from *The House of Mirth*:

> ***Everything about her was at once vigorous and exquisite, at once strong and fine. He had a confused sense that she must have cost a great deal to make, that a great many dull and ugly people must, in some mysterious way, have been sacrificed to produce her.***

The first expression is direct and unambiguous. The second is nothing of the kind. But the second is vastly more interesting, yes? That's the power of objectification, a technique used to imply what people think. When one person objectifies another, it implies the level of regard between them, and because all of human interaction is a function of regard, objectification informs just about everything that goes on between two people. In this case, Lily Bart is regarded by Lawrence Selden as an *object* of excessive beauty and social standing. But Wharton never says that. Instead, she leads readers to *infer* it from the way Mr. Selden is objectifying Miss Bart. You infer his regard in the same way that you are required to

infer the feelings of everyone in life. Nobody spoon-feeds you through your daily existence, so why should it be any different in fiction? That's one reason why writers like Wharton can engage us on such a powerful level. They pull us into the story by requiring of us what real life requires of us: thought.

Let's try another. The following is a clear and simple sentiment that prevails throughout the *The House of Mirth*:

> ***Lily Bart was everything to Lawrence Selden.***

So how might you use objectification to imply as much? Here's how Wharton does it—by depicting Lily Bart as an object, in this case a heavenly body, about which her would-be suitor Mr. Selden revolves:

> ***As a spectator he had always enjoyed Lily Bart, and his course lay so far out of her orbit that it amused him to be drawn for a moment into the sudden intimacy which her proposal implied.***

Objectification doesn't get any better than that.

Lesson 8: E. B. White

Rhetorical Tension

Play in your head the first four notes to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Got that? Now play them again, only this time without the final fourth note—just the first *three*.

You don't like the way that sounds, do you? That's because the first three notes create within your mind a kind of tension that needs to be released. In the same way, if you play that fourth note of would-be release without the preceding three notes of tension, the effect is equally unsatisfying. Only when all four notes are played in series—when *released tension* is created—do you feel satisfied. But here's what's really interesting: just as released tension creates a feeling of satisfaction in song, it also creates a feeling of satisfaction in prose.

Here are two versions of the same excerpt from E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*. The first has been stripped of tension and is therefore without release:

> ***He handed her a newborn pig, a white one. The morning sun shone through its ears, turning them pink.***

Reading that is a little like listening to Beethoven's fourth note of release without the first three notes of tension. It's unsatisfying because it's monotone. Now compare that to the passage as White actually wrote it. Listen for the first few notes of tension and the subsequent notes of release:

> ***Fern came slowly down the stairs. Her eyes were red from crying. As she approached her chair, the carton wobbled, and there was a scratching noise. Fern looked at her father. Then she lifted the lid***

> ***of the carton. There, inside, looking up at her, was the newborn pig. It was a white one. The morning sun shone through its ears, turning them pink.***

What White is doing here is creating tension with a kind of rhetorical foreplay—the wobbling carton, the scratching noise from within. He then releases that tension with "*There, inside, looking up at her, was the newborn pig.*" It's instant gratification.

You may be tempted to regard rhetorical tension as a type of suspense, but there are important distinctions. While suspense is tension that goes unresolved for long periods of time, rhetorical tension is resolved quickly, usually within the same paragraph or page. It's less about uncertainty of outcome and more about provoking questions, inviting wonder or speculation, prolonging the inevitable for a few moments longer, or begging resolution. Fern already knows what's in the box, and so do we, but White manufactures the tension and release nonetheless.

Is this opening to White's *The Trumpet of the Swan* an example of suspense or of rhetorical tension?

> ***Walking back to camp through the swamp, Sam wondered whether to tell his father what he had seen.***

We're not concerned about Sam making it out of the swamp, so this is not suspense, but White does have us wondering about Sam's encounter. As the page unfolds, he keeps us uninformed for another two paragraphs before unveiling a pair of nearly extinct birds almost twice Sam's size. If White had been forthcoming about those exotic creatures from the start, the passage would not have required any wonder on our part, nor would it have provided any satisfaction from the resolution of that wonder.

Now you know why kids—and adults—love the prose of E. B. White. It sounds like music.

Lesson 9: J.M. Coetzee

Rhetorical Agency

If you were to perform an action of some kind, let's say for example that you were to *understand the irony of a situation*, then it would be you doing the understanding, and therefore you, as the *agent* of that action, would be said to have *agency*.

Unlike you, however, inanimate objects and abstractions do not have agency, because they don't do things—at least not of their own accord. But that doesn't mean we can't speak of them as though they do, as though they have *rhetorical agency*.

Read this altered excerpt from J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*. Note that "he" retains the agency in the highlighted clause.

> ***He continues to teach because it provides him with a livelihood; also because it teaches him humility, brings it home to him who he is in the world. He understands the irony; that the one who comes to teach learns the keenest of lessons, while those who come to learn learn nothing.***

Now see if you can manipulate the clause to allow "irony" to perform the action instead of "he":

> ***He continues to teach because it provides him with a livelihood; also because it teaches him humility, brings it home to him who he is in the world. The irony does not escape him; that the one who comes to teach learns the keenest of lessons, while those who come to learn learn nothing.***

In the first example, "he" is performing the action "to understand." In the second example, "irony" is performing the action "to escape"—or rather not to escape. By transferring the agency from a person (he) to an abstraction (irony) the prose becomes more interesting and engaged.

Rhetorical agency can also help to correct awkward wording. In this altered excerpt from *Disgrace*, see if you can detect a problem:

> ***In the kitchen of the flat in Green Point there are a kettle, plastic cups, a jar of instant coffee, a bowl with sachets of sugar. In the refrigerator there is a supply of bottled water. In the bathroom there is soap and a pile of towels, in the cupboard clean bed linen.***

It should be obvious that too many sentences—all of them in fact—begin with the same two words. This problem can be solved by simply extending agency to the refrigerator:

> ***In the kitchen of the flat in Green Point there are a kettle, plastic cups, a jar of instant coffee, a bowl with sachets of sugar.*** <u>The refrigerator holds</u> ***a supply of bottled water. In the bathroom there is soap and a pile of towels, in the cupboard clean bed linen.***

Lesson 10: John Steinbeck

Creative Number

The lyrics to the song "Human" by The Killers are a curious thing. For instance, what do you make of this:

Are we human, or are we dancer?

Notwithstanding the confusion in meaning, you'd think The Killers would have enough grammatical sense to change the word *dancer* to its plural form, *dancers*. I mean, really, why would anyone speak like that? Who do The Killers think they are?

But when you think about it, if we can be *human*, and not necessarily *humans*, then why can't we be *dancer*, and not necessarily *dancers*? The point is, plurality is relative. You can change it to give your prose a special feel. In this passage from John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, see if you can find a plural noun that would sound a little special if it were singular.

"Where a toad may live" is more interesting than "where the toads lived" because it is specific to a single toad. Specifics tend to carry more interest than generalities. For this reason, Steinbeck is quick to default to the singular tense when occasion permits. Here is another instance of that default to the singular in *East of Eden*. Find the plural nouns and singularize them:

Here's one more from the same novel, but this time render two singular nouns plural:

Lesson 11: Barbara Kingsolver

The Objective Correlative

Read this excerpt from Barbara Kingsolver's *The Lacuna* and see if you can identify the specific words and combinations of words that lend a certain feel to the prose. Try to define what that feel is and why you are feeling it.

> ***In the beginning were the howlers. They always commenced their bellowing in the first hour of dawn, just as the hem of the sky began to whiten. It would start with just one: his forced, rhythmic groaning, like a saw blade. That aroused others near him, nudging them to bawl along with his monstrous tune. Soon the maroon-throated howls would echo back from other trees, farther down the beach, until the whole jungle filled with roaring trees. As it was in the beginning, so it is every morning of the world.***

First, the phrases "In the beginning" and "As it was in the beginning, so it is every morning of the world" recall the Bible and give the passage a sacred feel. But in Kingsolver's beginning there is no light, only bellowing, groaning, bawling, and monstrous maroon-throated howls and roars. The effect is at once sacred *and* sacrilege, good *and* evil. It's an incongruent collage that's hard to describe but easy to feel. Can you?

That feel you get from the words you read is a consequence of the *objective correlative*. *Correlative* refers to the correlation between specific words and the feelings they inspire when we read or hear them. The correlation is *objective* because the feelings created by certain words are felt by everyone in the same way: objectively. When you understand this, you can draw upon the objective correlative to

46. I'm offended by
-I take exception to

47. get a grip on yourself
-steel yourself

48. because of
-in light of

49. I'm not likely to
-I'm less inclined to

50. become a victim
-fall victim to

51. the previously mentioned
-the aforementioned

52. heard it through the grapevine
-have it on good authority

53. without my knowledge
-unbeknownst to me

54. kind of mean way to put it
-rather uncharitable

55. a black sheep
-a pariah

56. bossy
-imperious

57. run into
-chance upon

58. you came here willingly
-you came of your own accord

59. keep it away
-keep it at bay

60. believable
-plausible

61. believe
-embrace

62. keep from us
-deprive us of

63. It's on the tip of my tongue.
-The word escapes me.

64. I can't find them.
-They are nowhere to be found.

65. I can't see her.
-I've lost sight of her.

66. can't stand it
-can't bear it

67. we really care about
-we give great importance to

68. I'll let her know you called.
-I'll leave word.

69. what's more,
-moreover,

70. on purpose
-by design

71. not used to
-unaccustomed to

72. on the condition that
-with the proviso that

73. She came across very well.
-She acquitted herself well.