

ENGLISH

Let's face it -- English is a crazy language.

There is no egg in eggplant

nor ham in hamburger;

neither apple nor pine in pineapple.

English muffins weren't invented in England

or French fries in France.

Sweetmeats are candies

while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted.

But if we explore it's paradoxes, we find that

quicksand can work slowly,

boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither

from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but

fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce

and hammers don't ham? If the plural of

tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of

booth beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one

moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices?

Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make

amends but not one amend, that you comb

through annals of history but not a

single annal? If you have a bunch of

odds and ends and get rid of all but one

of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers
praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables,
what does a humanitarian eat? If you
wrote a letter, perhaps you bote your tongue?

Sometimes I think all the English
speakers should be committed to an
asylum for the verbally insane. In what
language do people recite at a play and
play at a recital? Ship by truck and
send cargo by ship? Have noses that run
and feet that smell? Park on driveways
and drive on parkways?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance
be the same, while a wise man and a wise
guy are opposites? How can overlook and
oversee be opposites, while quite a lot
and quite a few are alike? How can the
weather be hot as hell one day and cold
as hell another?

Have you noticed that we talk about
certain things only when they are absent?
Have you ever seen a horseful carriage or
a strapful gown? Met a sung hero or
experienced requited love? Have you ever
run into someone who was combobulated,
gruntled, ruly or peccable? And where

are all those people who ARE spring chickens or who would ACTUALLY hurt a fly?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which an alarm goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race (which, of course, isn't a race at all). That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible. And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up this essay, I end it.

