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## The History of the Word "Mere"

Michael Caufield  
*University of Washington*

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Left AIDS activists demonstrate against Reagan policies, Wall St. at Trinity Church, downtown Manhattan. [photo: Chris Huestis]

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## The History of the Word "Mere"

by Michael Caufield

shortly after the first language cooled  
and right after books appeared and humans overpopulated the fields  
it showed up  
signifying want  
against ideal abundance  
a sly understatement that more often than not  
could not differentiate between not, naught, naughty, knot  
a word used to imply intellectual subtlety and force but  
instead ended up expressing an inability to seductively resist  
routine disaster  
like girls sighing, grainbelts dying, mountainsides sliding, nimbus clouds  
cleaving and  
surf heaving retractively to pull the world out  
from under knotty stationary objects  
not unlike the spindly white legs that  
alliterate Imperial Palaces of Policy on their way to the destruction of all  
green swaying empires of the  
senses

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Committee on Social  
Theory, University of  
Kentucky, Lexington,  
Kentucky.

Michael Caufield is in  
the Department of  
English, University of  
Washington, Seattle,  
Washington.