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The History of the Word "Mere"

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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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