

Etymological Dirge

Calm comes from burning.
Tall comes from fast.
Comely doesn't come from come.
Person comes from mask.

The kin of charity is whore,
the root of charity is dear.
Incentive has its source in song
and winning in the sufferer.

Afford yourself what you can carry out.
A coward and a coda share a word.
We get our ugliness from fear.
We get our dangers from the lord.

—Heather McHugh, *The Father of the Predicaments*, 1999

Etymological: Gr. *Etymon*, literal sense of a word, neuter of *etymos*, true, lit. origin and development of a word, here used as an adjective, implying principles of etymology; Dirge: L. *dirige*, imperative of *dirigere*, to direct, lit. a funeral hymn or requiem mass, a song, poem or musical composition of grief, memory, lament.

Calm comes from burning: Osp. and Pg. *calma*, lit. heat of the day, L. *cauma*, lit. burning heat, fever heat.

Tall comes from fast: OE. *ge-tael* (pl. *ge-tale*), lit. swift, prompt, OHG. *gizal*, MHG *gezal*, lit. quick.

Comely doesn't come from come: OE. *cýme*, *cýmlic*, lit. beautifully constructed, fine, handsome. Come is an intransitive verb of motion, expressing movement toward, but to flow from a source (*the* source), to emmenate (comeliness and pun on L. *cum*, with, combined with or plus, or more probably on slang word for sexual orgasm, come)

Person comes from mask: L. *persona*, lit. a mask used by a *dramatis personæ*, lit. a character in a drama.

The kin of charity is whore, / the root of charity is dear: L. *caritas*, in NT Christian love, God's love for man, man's love for God; L. *carus*, lit. dear, OI. *Cara*, lit. friend, and *caraim*, lit. love, Kin, kindred, kind, resemblance in quality, Gk. *Kinein*, lit. to move.

Incentive has its source in song / and winning in the sufferer: L. *incentiv-us*, lit. setting the tune, OE. *win(n)*, labour, strife, conflict.

Afford yourself what you can carry out: lit. to yield naturally, to supply or furnish your own resources, to have the means, L. *carricare*, to cart, to convey, to transport (the mind) in an ecstasy of devotion, to conduct duly to completion or conclusion to carry into practice or to logical consequences or inferences, to carry out a sentence.

A coward and a coda share a word: L. *cauda*, OF *coe*, tail, lit. to turn so as to see the tail, and the ending (in a musical composition, the beginning of the ending) that stands alone and brings movement to a final close.

We get our ugliness from fear: ON *ugglig-r*, to be feared or dreaded, frightful or horrible, esp. of deformity or squalor (two senses of the word now merged).

We get our dangers from the lord: L. *dominium*, lordship, sovereignty, F. *dominus*, lord, master.