ODE TO AN ETYMOLOGIST

ROCKY BRUNI
Fairfield, California

Dear Mr. Safire, respond from wherever
Urgent you answer, barbarians at gate.
What is a “moley” and why is it holy?
And who got away with the verbing of nouns?
(“Verb” was a noun, until someone verbed it.)
“Major League” morphed into “majorly” . . . why?
We are majorly peeved about that.
What is a product that “eats like a meal”?
God forbid it turn ravenous some Stygian night.
Also please note, we’re tired of new black
The old black is still black and that, friend, is that.
Pontificate, obfuscate, bloviate please
Bowdlerize, even, if that’s what you need
But stop turning our English into gallimaufry.
Dear Mr. Safire, respondez-vous please
Mr. Yeats’ beastie is now slouching westward
And was last seen gaining on Merriam-Webster.