

**Stephen Robertson**

**The word**

No, the singularity is quite absurd.  
In the beginning there were many words:  
sitting, lying all around  
in bags or scattered on the ground  
waiting to be found.

Waiting for declension, conjugation,  
other morphologic variations,  
awaiting Dr Johnson's ministrations,  
waiting to discover their relations,  
find their denotations, connotations.

Roget charted their associations.  
Zipf was counting their instantiations,  
ranking, taking logs and drawing lines.  
Chomsky looked for deeper motivation  
underneath their surface combinations.  
Now Brin and Page build index tabulations  
of all the words their spiders' crawls can find.

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A writer read, a speaker heard,  
at every word a choice has made.  
Those that they choose to use  
to inform or confuse,  
elate or validate or grieve—  
these words live.