



Let a Simile Be Your Umbrella

William Safire

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William Safire, America's favorite writer on language, offers a new collection of pieces drawn from his nationally syndicated "On Language" column. Laced with liberal (a loaded word, but apt) doses of Safire's wit, these pieces search culture (high and low), politics, entertainment, and the word on the street to explore what the old but livelier-than-ever English language has been up to lately.

With a keen wit and a sure grasp of usage, Safire dissects trends and traces the origins of colloquialisms that have become second nature to most Americans. He examines everything from whether one delivers "a punch on or in the nose" when offended to whether a disgraced politician should "step down," "step aside," or "stand down." Safire gives us the answers to these and many more quandaries, questions, and complexities of our contemporary lexicon.

As always, Safire is aided by the Gotcha! Gang and the Nitpickers League--readers who claim to have found the language maven making flubs of his own. His comments and observations create a spirited, curious, and scholarly discussion showing that William Safire and his readership are wise in the way of words.

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