The New Dean  
by Fred Zimmerman (in 2000)

Reginald Meyer applied to be Dean.  
Talented, experienced and very very clean.  
An impressive speaker with stunning good looks.  
An accomplished scholar with eighty-three books.  
An empathetic listener, a truly great leader  
who liked fund raising – a very good eater.  
He completed his vita and mailed it with a smile,  
then waited. He knew it would take quite a while.

At the same time, the university had another search, too.  
Some brand new animals were needed for its zoo.  
The papers for Pogo were submitted with formality.  
Pogo was a chimp. That was the reality.  
When the papers were submitted, there began a travail.  
These two applications were switched in the mail.

Eighty six people applied to be Dean.  
But eighty seven applications arrived on the scene.  
The search committee, with the usual dispatch  
perused, considered and reviewed the whole batch.

Though many candidates would fill the need,  
most were rejected with very great speed.  
Search committees have their subtler aims:  
the protection of turf, in spite of their claims.  
“Compared to us, candidates must be worse  
but different enough to be diverse.”

The committee deliberated for nearly a year  
throwing out him and her. Finding no one to cheer.  
“In spite of difficulty, our criterion must be met.  
We must find a Dean who will not be a threat.”  
Finally, Professor Jones began to mutter  
“I think I am liking Dr. Pogo better.”

It did not take long for support to swell.  
There would be many advantages, too many to tell.  
“It would be novel, innovative and brave,” they all said.  
Only one professor wished he was dead.  
“He won’t be a threat, one can easily see  
and think what he’ll do for diversity.”

Fernpepper U now has a new Dean.  
He attracts much attention. He is easily seen.  
Fund raising is up. He’s attracting great cheers.  
The most entertaining speaker we’ve had for years.  
Meanwhile, you guessed it. I am afraid it is true.  
Reginald Meyer took his place in the zoo.