

Dearest creature in creation,
study English pronunciation.

I will teach you in my verse
sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.

I will keep you, Suzy, busy,
make your head and heart grow dizzy.

Tear in eye, your dress will tear,
so shall I! Oh hear my prayer.

When you correctly say croquet.
rounded, wounded, grieve and sleeve,
scenic, Arabic, pacific,
science, conscience, scientific,
tour, but our, and succour, four,
gas and alas and Arkansas.

Sea, idea, guinea, area,
psalm, Maria, but malaria;
youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean,
neither does devour with clangour;
soul but foul, and gaunt but aunt,
font, front, wont; want, grand and grant;
shows, goes, does; now first say finger,
and then singer, ginger, linger;
real, zeal, mauve, gauze, and gauge,
marriage, foliage, mirage, age.

Query does not rhyme with very,
neither does fury sound like bury,
dost, lost, post and doth, cloth, loth,
job, Job, bosom, oath;
though the difference seems little,
we say actual but victual;
refer does not rhyme with “deaf,”
foeffer does, and zephyr, heifer;
dull bull; and George, ate, late;
mint, pint, senate and sedate,
barn but earn, and wear and tear
do not rhyme with “here” and “ere.”

Seven is right, but so is even,
hyphen, roughen, nephew, Stephen;
monkey, donkey, clerk and jerk,
ask, grasp, wasp; and cork and work;
doctrine, turpentine, marine;
dandelion with battalion;
sally with ally, yea, ye,
eye, I, ay, aye, whey, key, quay;
pronunciation—think of Psyche!

Is a paling stout and spikey?
Won’t it make you lose your wits
writing groats and saying grits!

English is
tough stuff!

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