



Everyone stopped, waiting.
What was Maybe creating?

Maybe stood silent, trying
to fathom who this flying snail
was and how a snail could be
an action verb.

"Sidney," Maybe said in a gentle voice,
"I want What? to be the action verb.
I've listened to the tales:
dogs are more active than snails."

The three friends gathered
in front of Maybe.
They were not smiling.

Poodle leaned closer.
"Maybe," Poodle whispered to her,
"Sidney IS an action verb.
Sidney has always been
an action verb.
Don't perturb
her."

What? said, "What-what-what!"
disturbed. He was vehement.

Maybe frowned. "But she's
a SNAIL! Be fair! How can a snail
be an action verb? It wrecks the scene.
I'm vexed! Perplexed!
How can a snail even be a WORD?"

Sidney had heard.
"You know I can hear you, right?" she said.

And *BOOOOM!* off she streaked,
zipping past the curtain and flipping past
the white wall and up to the lights,
making high flights near
the children's faces. She blasted clear
past What?, and some dog hairs
fluffed into the air,
which is what dog hairs are supposed to do,
and she whapped past Poodle, and
some white feathers puffed into the air,
and she whizzed past Maybe,
and Maybe's scarf whipped in the wind,
and *BAP!*, Sidney landed back
in her spot at the end—

BANG

—with both feet on the stage.
Not feet, exactly....



What a performance.

“THERE!” she said. “Got it?
I’m an action verb! Me.”

Maybe looked dubious but curious;
you might say studious.

“All right, Sidney,” she said
(and *all right* is two words,
as you’ve undoubtedly heard).

“Try out today for the part.
You’re fast, like a bird, but do you
know what action verbs are?
Can you speak your lines, you star?”

“Do I KNOW?” asked Sidney.
“Watch this!”

Poodle and What? ducked their
heads. They knew what was coming.
They had seen this before.

