

## Any Old How

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Once a student asked if, at my house,  
we discussed grammar over dinner,  
and I laughed. Not exclusively, I said.

Tonight we are talking about adverbs,  
about *anyway* and *anyhow*, whether  
they're synonyms and which better

to customize household glossolalia—  
*hallelujah*, say. My husband asks  
if I remember when Covid came

and Easter came and I outlined letters  
on sheets of paper and the boys colored  
them in. *Hallelujah*, *anyway* we taped

to the windows facing the sidewalk,  
and what we meant was *despite all this*.  
What we meant was *even so*.

Which wasn't at all like the pineapple  
someone brought to adorn the Lord's table  
this Easter—a freak among tulips

and hyacinths, stranger than daffodils,  
a stranger even to the last-minute cactus—  
that pineapple meant *hallelujah*, *anyhow*.

And, sure, when the Puritans said  
*God loveth adverbs*, no doubt they meant  
*chastely*. No doubt they assumed his favorites

were theirs, *plainly* and *strictly*, but also  
God loveth the conjunctive: *hallelujah*,  
*anyway*; *hallelujah*, *any old how*.