**Totally Like Whatever, You Know?**   
by Taylor Mali

1. In case you hadn’t realized,
2. it has somehow become uncool
3. to sound like you know what you’re talking about?
4. Or believe strongly in what you’re, like, saying?
5. Invisible question marks and parenthetical (you knows?)s and (you know what I’m saying?)s
6. have been attaching themselves to the ends of our sentences?
7. Even when those sentences aren’t, like, questions?
8. Declarative sentences – so-called
9. because they used to, like, DECLARE things to be true, ok
10. as opposed to other things that are, like, totally, you know, not -
11. they’ve been infected by a this tragically cool
12. and totally hip interrogative tone?
13. As if I’m saying,
14. don’t think I’m a nerd just because I’ve, like, noticed this; ok
15. I have nothing personally invested in my own opinions,
16. I’m just, like, inviting you to join me on the band wagon of my own uncertainty
17. What has happened to our conviction?
18. Where are the limbs out on which we once walked?
19. Have they been, like, chopped down
20. with the rest of the rain forest? you know?
21. Or do we have, like, nothing to say?
22. Has society just become so filled with these conflicting feelings of ‘neegh’. . .
23. That we’ve just gotten to the point where we’re the most aggressively inarticulate generation
24. to come along since . . .
25. you know, a long time ago!
26. So I implore you, I entreat you and I challenge you
27. To speak with conviction.
28. To say what you believe in a manner that bespeaks
29. the determination with which you believe it.
30. Because contrary to the wisdom of the bumper sticker,
31. it is not enough these days to simply QUESTION AUTHORITY.
32. You’ve got to speak with it, too.