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## Department

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by Hugh Findlay

The word for today is *deportment*.

Yes, *deportment*. Not to be confused with *department* or *assortment* or even *reapportionment*, although those are three very fine words and I would expect them all to act quite rationally in any reasonable sentence, however obtuse.

Now as you know, *deportment* refers to behaving or acting with good manners while in public, and within accepted societal norms;

that is, when you are in a restaurant, on a game show, at a strip club, or a fancy dinner party hosted by your vegan lesbian niece and her pet cockatiel.

*Deportment* can also be defined as not “acting the fool” or “showing your ass,” and definitely not “talking smack about his/her/their momma.”

The problem with *deportment* these days is rooted in the idea that we are all above that sort of thing anyway, which is because our parents and teachers told us, growing up, that we are all so gosh-darned special, and each one of us deserves gold stars, pink ribbons, participation trophies, and the god-given right of opting out, not to mention extra pudding at lunch for, well, just showing up.

No, today it is perfectly acceptable to walk around in holey plastic shoes, shredded pants, exposed briefs, puffing a cloud of stank blueberry vapor, while speaking in raised tones to anyone within earshot, but actually conversing (one-sidedly) with the two squeaky mealworms hanging out of each ear socket.

So *deportment* has been both demoted and deported to more hostile climes on the fringes of society

where only the ancient gods and ghosts of civilization practice it to any degree, and even then, only amongst their barely significant selves.

May god have mercy on our precious souls, and please pass the ketchup.

**Bio:**

*Hugh Findlay's writing and photography have been published worldwide. Nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2020 for poetry, and the Best Microfiction Anthology 2024, he is in the third trimester of life and hopes y'all like his stuff. Instagram: @hughmanfindlay. Portfolio: <https://hughmanfindlay.wixsite.com/hughfindlay>*