**Reporting from the Frontline of the Great Dictionary Disaster**



**John Agard**

Why has the English dictionary grown so thin?

Why is it weeping between its covers?

Because today is the day

all words of foreign origin

return to their native borders.

Linguists are rioting in the streets.

Crossword lovers are on hunger strike.

But words are voting with their feet

and familiar objects across the British isles

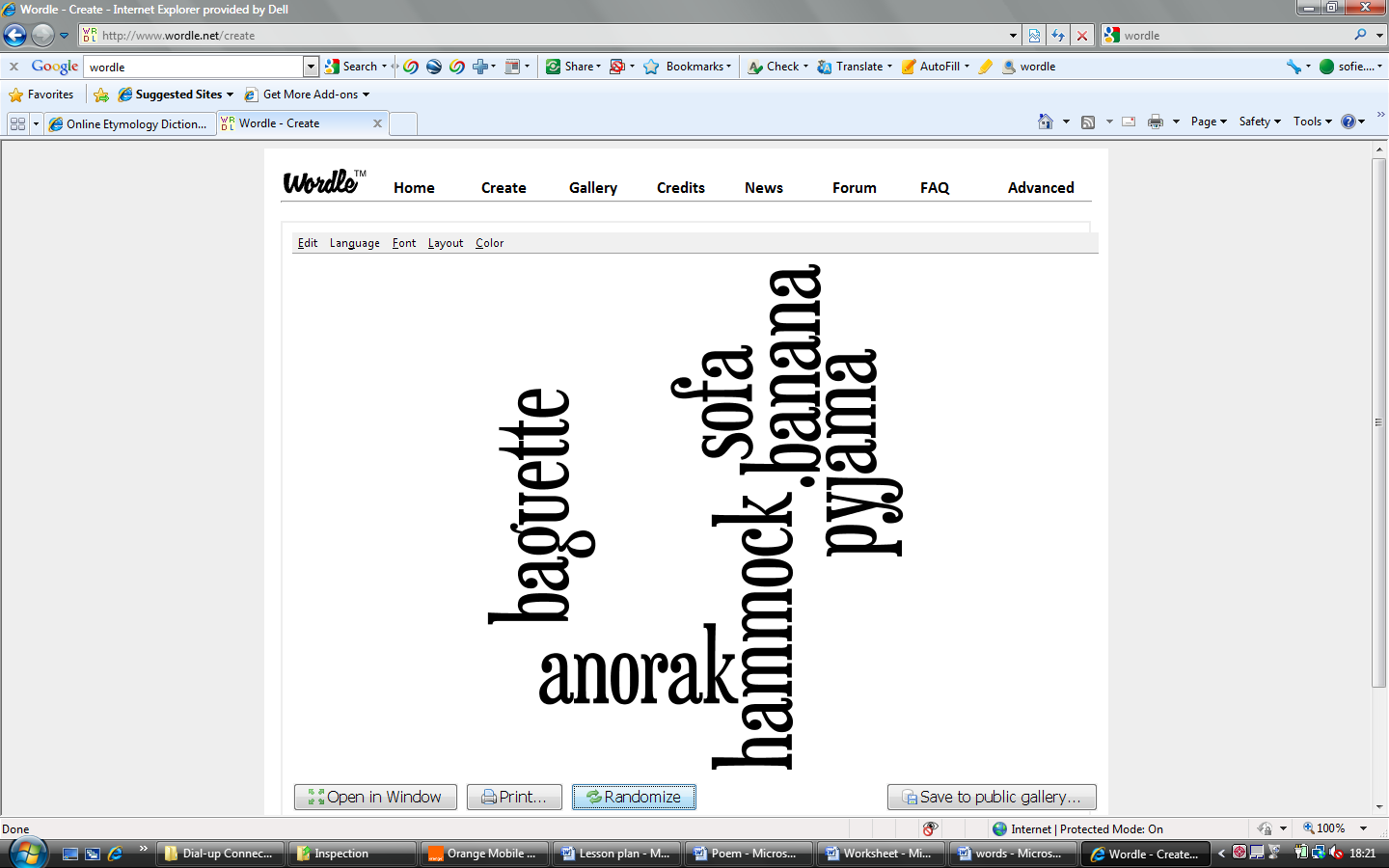
have staged a mass evacuation.

Anoraks

have been seen flying off backs

remaking their Innuit tracks.

Bananas



hands forming a queue

are now bound for a Bantu rendezvous

Hammocks

Leave bodies in mid-swing

And billow back to a Carib beginning

Pyjamas

Without regard to size or age

Take off on a Hindu pilgrimage

Sofas

huddle themselves into caravans,

their destination – the Arabian sands.

Even Baguettes

(as we speak) grab the chance

to jump the channel for the south of France.

This is a tragedy

turning into a comedy

for reports are reaching us by satellite

that in the wee hours of the night

The ghosts of ancient Greeks and Romans

have been preparing an epic knees-up

to mark the homecoming of their word-hoard.

Stay tuned for lived and direct coverage

On this day a dictionary mourns its language.