Varsha Seshan's Creative Writing Programme

W O R D S

Issue 3 | July 2023

by writers aged 9-14



Poems Myths Nonfiction Stories

Contents

Poems

Growing Up 6
Balance 6
Reflection 7
The Life of an Artist 7
Finding My Voice 7
Run 10
Gone in the Dark 10
The Importance of Trees 11
The Little Hero 14
All Things Magical 15
The Best Time of the Year 15
The Great Heist 21
Meta-Nonet 23
Anticipation 23
Oh No 23
Dear Neighbours 23
How Not to Catch a Thief 24
Hidustani Dogs 24
What You Knead to Know Before Making Pizza 24
Life of a Star 28
Computer Trouble 28
Little Red Riding Hood: Grandma's Tale 30
The Big, Kind Wolf and the Mean Little Pigs 30
A Strange Pet 35
Wild at Heart 35
How Not to Scold a Puppy 35
The Tale of Goldilocks 44
Busy Us 45
Enjoy, Engage, Entertain! 45
The Snowman 45
A Poetic Take on "The Shoemaker and the Elves" ... 53
The Royal Ditch 58
The Earth 61

Homework is bad for you! Page 12

Messy is the new smart! Page 26

Video games are good for you! Page 36

Doing chores is bad for children! Page 42

Stories and Myths

Warm-tarctica 8
Saira's World: President or Queen? ... 18
Carcass 32
Green-Thumbed Morgan 38
The Playful Revolution 46
How Octopi Got Their Venom 54
Memory's Sneezes 62
Wish Rate: ₹1 Only 70

Cunning Commercials

Millets 25
School 25
Veggies 52
Mushrooms 52
A Vegan Life 52
Fruits 52
Fanta 52

(Bad) Advice

How to Deal with Writer's Block (Badly) 16
How (NOT) to Write a Flawless Descriptive Essay ... 22
How (NOT) to Write a Beautiful Cinquain 29
How (NOT) to Write a Book 31
How (NOT) to Write to the Principal 31
How (NOT) to Improve Your Handwriting 34
How (NOT) to Write a Formal Letter 34
How (NOT) to Write an Autobiography 40
How (NOT) to Write a Story 43
How (NOT) to Write a Newspaper Article 51
How (NOT) to Write a Tutorial 57
How (NOT) to Write a President 60
How (NOT) to Write to Your Teacher 60
How (NOT) to Write Poetry 68

Answers to rebuses

Page 74

Hay (na)kus

Pages 4-5



Varsha Seshan
children's book writer
creative writing trainer

Hello!

WORDS is back! Issue 3 comprises work by 18 young writers, who have spent hours writing, editing, and rewriting, learning about form, structure, and more. Happy reading!

Meet the writers

Aabha
Confident, ambitious
Connoisseur of books.

Zoophilist
Tree hugger
Prancer, dancer: **Advika**

Devangshi Duttagupta
Sweet,
Sometimes sour,
And occasionally hysterical.

Hridayansh
Speed-cuber
Determined to win



Aarav
Sportsman, musician
Crazy and creative

Artist,
Animal lover,
It's me: **Avani**

Himarsha Mulchandani
Imaginative
Science aficionado
Citizen of Dreamland

Cool,
loyal, kind:
This is **Ruhaan**

janvi barman

resume:
proficient procrastinator
exceptional drama queen

Kenisha Katiyar

Sportsperson
Musician, artist,
Loves to read.

Samanvitha Prasad

Optimistic,
Energetic, meticulous
Lover of books



Sangam

avid reader
addicted to snacks

Adventurous
Enjoys Math
This is **Sohum**

Shlok

Math lover
Brilliant freestyle swimmer

Taksh

Playful, joyful
Affectionate, inquisitive bookworm

Sunandini,

Sushi connoisseur,
Comedian, pianist, bookworm.

"Basketball,
I love,"
said **Vivaan**, excitedly.

Zayn

Curious, loyal
Optimist, dogophile, coder

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

The hay (na)ku, created in 2003 by Eileen Tabios, is a three-line poem with one word in the first line, two words in the second, and three in the third. A lovely way to introduce ourselves, don't you think?

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Rispetto poetry is a highly structured eight-line form that follows an ABAB rhyme scheme in the first four lines and then changes in the next four lines. It isn't easy to write because the meter can be challenging!

Rispetto Poetry



Growing Up

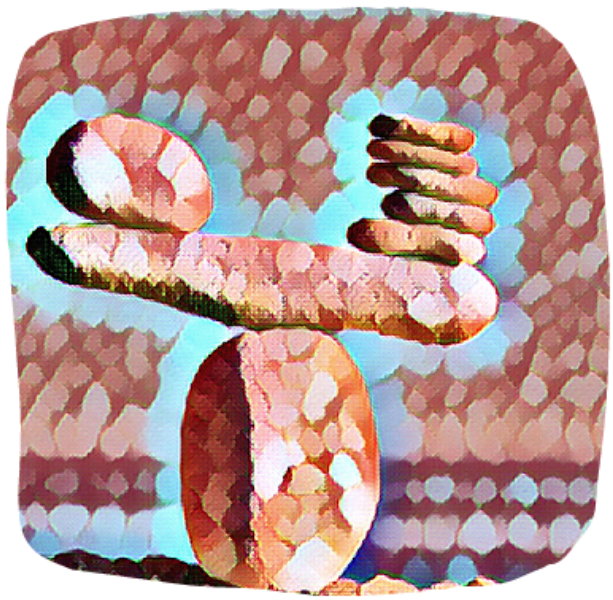
Advika Gupta

Childhood is a beautiful, free thing I've got.
It's a piece of heaven, a golden bubble:
a precious one that I never want to pop.
It keeps in the bliss, keeps out the trouble.

But when that M-size shirt calls out to me,
Or I want to drive to a friend's for some tea,
I long to become older, just for a while.
Perhaps growing up isn't all that vile ...

balance

janvi barman



balance is a difficult thing to attain
as soon as i see it, it flies out of sight
all of my efforts turn out to be in vain
it's just like a see-saw, tilting left and right

my one desire is to keep it straight,
to put on both sides, the exact same weight
i hope that one day, i'll win balance's game
and the weight on both sides will then be the same

Reflection

Sunandini Sen



Being a reflection, I'm never free,
Trapped in a mirror, I carefully peer out,
I watch a girl who looks exactly like me,
And feel the prickling sensation of doubt.

Am I just a twin, or a person of my own?
With no companions, I always feel alone,
For a glimpse of the world, I long to break through,
But I wonder, will my wish come true?



The Life Of An Artist

Avani Gupta

Yesterday - too many, today - too few,
I stare at the page; my brain seems to freeze.
What should I do? I really wish I knew.
But once I push through, to be truly at ease,
Getting lost in my art sets my mind free,
Makes every concern drift away from me,
Art is my escape - my own safe retreat,
Without its joy, I am left incomplete.

Finding My Voice

Himarsha Mulchandani



Too many opinions – where's my voice?
A path that's mine, instead of what's 'right'.
I wish I could breathe, detached from the noise,
the sun does rise, but I don't see the light.

Hope whispers, "Perspective is all you need,
just let your own instincts be your steed.
Learn to hear your voice, and answer the call,
that, my friend, is the greatest feat of all."



Warm-Tarctica

Vivaan Chaudhry

"WOOHOO!" Penguino yelled. "This is so much fun!" He rode down his ice slide as Coldar the polar bear watched him. They were on a break and were waiting for Arctix the arctic fox's reports on searching for ways to stop the heat from melting their ice.

"Ok, break's over," Coldar yelled. "I am sure Arctix has found out at least one cause of why the ice is melting."

"I have," Arctix said, as he returned. "It looks like the hairy coated people-animals have been leaving their hard silver leftovers everywhere, which is making the ozone layer more vulnerable. These hard things are in the ocean, in the ice, on the ice and even in some of the ice bricks we use to make the igloos."

"I have a plan," Coldar said. "But Penguino, are there any nearby islands the penguins can swim to?"

"Yes, a few. What for?" he asked.



"The arctic foxes, polar bears and other animals will gather the hard silver leftovers and bring them here. Then the seals and penguins can take them to the islands. If we can work together and keep this up then we can save our home."

"I will inform the other penguins and seals," Penguino said.

"And we will tell the land animals," Arctix said. Soon, every creature in Antarctica knew the plan. They all agreed to help and by the weekend, their home was much better than before.

One day, Arctix came to Coldar and asked, "This plan is going well. But I have one question. What will we do about the fact that the hairy ones are cutting our ice?"

"I think you know, Arctix. We have to make the call."

Penguino overheard what they had said and went over to discuss the problem. "We cannot call her in. It's too dangerous. And besides, she's been lost in the oceans for too long. How can we even find her?"

"The way we always find a creature that's lost, Penguino. We send out a search party," Coldar replied.

"I am not onboard with the plan but it seems we have no option. I'll tell the sealions. We need everyone else here so sending the sealions out would be the smartest idea," Arctix said.

"Good idea. Go and tell them now. She's our last hope. We have to find Gladis the orca."



Nonet Poetry

Run

Avani Gupta



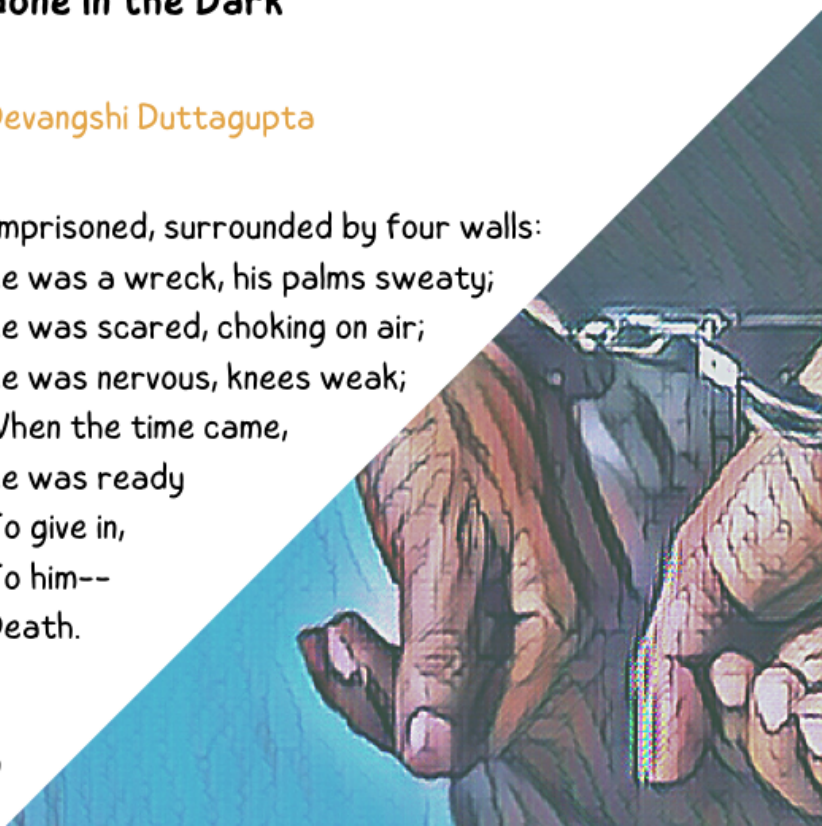
Beads of sweat trickle down our faces,
Hearts beat a million times faster,
Our fingertips touch the ground,
Waiting for just one sound,
Every muscle tense,
All eyes ahead,
Three. Two. One.
Now we
Run

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Nonet poems are unrhymed, unmetered poems that are exactly nine lines long. The first line contains nine syllables, the second contains eight, the third contains seven, and so on. The last line of nonet poetry contains one syllable.

Gone in the Dark

Devangshi Duttagupta



Imprisoned, surrounded by four walls:
He was a wreck, his palms sweaty;
He was scared, choking on air;
He was nervous, knees weak;
When the time came,
He was ready
To give in,
To him--
Death.

Concrete Poetry



as tall as a giant

as generous as the earth

as forgiving as a cow

as important as the air

Now, what do you think about trees?

The Importance of Trees

Aarav Khandelia

Sat, 08 July 2023

THE GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Sometimes, fake news isn't really fake news, is it? It's just one side of the story. During our nonfiction module, we explored how half-truths can be misleading. Compare the good news with the not-so-good news to see how we believe what we want to believe.

Homework is bad for you!

Shlok Dedhia

Homework is not very important and has many negative mental health dangers that should not be overlooked. First, for a household with two or more children, it is very difficult for parents and kids to cope with the ever-increasing pressure of homework. Secondly, every day, the amount of homework that is given is way more than "satisfactory" in some schools. Scientific studies validate that homework diminishes a student's learning mindset. Moreover, it causes learners to dislike studying, affecting their future prospects.



Sat, 08 July 2023

THE NOT-SO-GOOD **NEWS BULLETIN**

Homework is bad for you!

What the article does not tell you ...

Shlok Dedhia



Students' homework teaches them how to solve problems. They have another chance to review topics from class. Parents may check their children's progress at home by reviewing their homework. Pupils learn how to assume responsibility for their part in the educational process. Therefore, even though homework may be boring, it is, unfortunately, good for you!

Why is homework good for you? Homework is an essential part of your daily school routine. It helps to revise the learnings you accumulate in school and encourages self-discipline, independence, and daily organisation.





Nonfiction in Verse

The Little Hero

Sunandini Sen

Born near Lahore, in the town of Muridke,
A little boy, Iqbal Masih, was sold
To a factory owner, to work as a labourer,
Although he was just ten years old!

For arranging her older son's wedding,
Iqbal's mother had taken a loan,
To repay it, he was forced to toil,
Day after day, worked to the bone.

Life in the factory was harsh,
Working for fourteen hours a day,
Without even a single break,
He wished he could run away.

But one day, when Iqbal got to know
That bonded labour had been banned,
He and the kids got together,
To escape from there, they planned.

One night, some of them escaped,
With the police, they shared their ordeal,
But they were bought back, punished too,
Forced to work without a meal.

Soon, Iqbal joined a team that helped
Stop child labour around the world.
He became the face of a movement,
As his story he slowly unfurled.

All the world gasped in shock,
When of the tortures spoke he,
After a long and hard court battle,
At last, Iqbal was free!

Two years later, Iqbal was killed,
By someone, we don't know who.
He was a brave, warm-hearted boy,
Iqbal Masih, we'll always remember you.

Rebus Poetry

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Rebus poetry is always fun! Read these aloud to figure out what the symbols and pictures could stand for. Some of these poems are more difficult to solve than others; you'll find all the answers at the on page 74!





All Things Magical

Zayn Manik

Sarah saw a phoenix 🪰
William heard a yeti 😭
Olivia ate a griffin's ⚪
Kevin touched a 🦄's leg
Emma has brewed a 🧪 before
Benjamin did all these things and more.



The Best Time of the Year

Samanvitha Prasad

The best ⏰ of the 👂, the +er holidays are h👂
🎿, playing, 🎥s and fun, and no Xams to f👂
🛌 in late, get 👆 late and 💥 ⚪ all day,
These are the +er holidays, 🪁ing from 🌰ril 2 May.

The (Bad) Advice Column

Your guide to spectacular writing disasters

How to Deal with Writer's Block (Badly)

janvi barman

Have you ever been down with a bad case of writer's block? Well, you should know that this definitely doesn't happen to all writers! It's probably a sign that writing just isn't your thing. However, if you still want to persist with your writing, here's how to deal with it.

Step 1: Don't go looking for inspiration. Let the ideas come to you! Trying to write using inspiration from the internet is a bad idea. Using someone else's idea, even if you aren't going to publish it, isn't right! Your work should be authentic and completely yours.





Step 2: Don't read anything. Reading others' work might subconsciously influence you. Even if you don't realise it, you'd basically be copying anything else you read. Keep your head completely clear so that you can think of what to write about on your own.

Step 3: Don't stray from the focus. If you need to write a rhyming poem, write a rhyming poem. If you need to write a story, write a story. Until you've accomplished what you need to, don't branch out at all. Trying to write something else will only distract you from the task at hand.

Step 4: Don't start writing until you've worked out your idea completely. If you start writing with an idea that's only half formed, it'll go nowhere! It's just a waste of time. If it isn't near perfect on the first draft, there's no point. Put your ideas on paper only when you've got everything figured in your head.

Step 5: Don't listen to anybody else! People will try to tell you that this tutorial is all wrong and you actually should be doing the opposite of all these things to get your creative juices flowing. Pfft! What juices? That's a whole bunch of nonsense. This article is your only trustworthy source.

Step 6: If all of this fails, give up! You could be doing better things with your time. Writing just isn't your area of expertise, face it. So once you're done crying yourself a river, build a bridge and get over it!

Saira's World: President or Queen?



Aabha Sardesai

Saira took a deep breath. She pushed open the door.

"Sai!"came a scream.

Saira looked around. She saw her best friend Indrani standing near the door. "Indu!" she exclaimed. "You never fail to scare me!"

"Sorree-ee-ee!" said Indu. "I'm just so excited!"

"You're always excited!" said Saira, laughing, and shaking her head.

"Three cheers for school president!" said Indu.

Saira chuckled. "I'm not even class president. How could I be school president?!"

"Becaauussee ..." said Indu, her tone a cross between explaining an immensely difficult theorem and 2+2. "You're a nature lover! And nature. Always. Wins! Now go on! Or you'll miss your speech writing session!"

Days passed, and Saira worked hard at her speech. She practised saying it in front of the mirror. She readied her cue cards. And she was finally ready.

The day was here! Her D-Day was finally here. Saira woke up early that morning. She brushed her teeth, had a hot bath, and washed her hair. Her mother watched her, amused, as she came out of the bathroom muttering her speech. She pulled her hair into a ponytail. Then she drank a hot cup of turmeric milk and ate a Marie biscuit. "Ah! Just what I needed!" she exclaimed after she was done. Then she put her plate in the sink and recited her speech to her mother.

Her mother beamed. "Oh my bacha!" said her mother, teary-eyed. "You'll definitely become president!"

"Thanks for your support, Mumma!" said Saira giving her mother a hug. "You are the best!" She ran into her bedroom, and changed into her school uniform. It was a white shirt with navy blue stripes, a navy blue skirt, a navy blue tie with white stripes, and a navy blue blazer. She then took out her light blue 'LEADER' badge and pinned it on with pride. She brushed her hair and retied her ponytail. She put on her navy blue shoes with white laces, which she had washed and polished the previous day, and was ready for school.



Indu accompanied her, and Saira recited her speech to Indu as well. Indu laughed with delight and said, "You're worried for no reason. You'll become president. You really will!" All the way to school.

Story

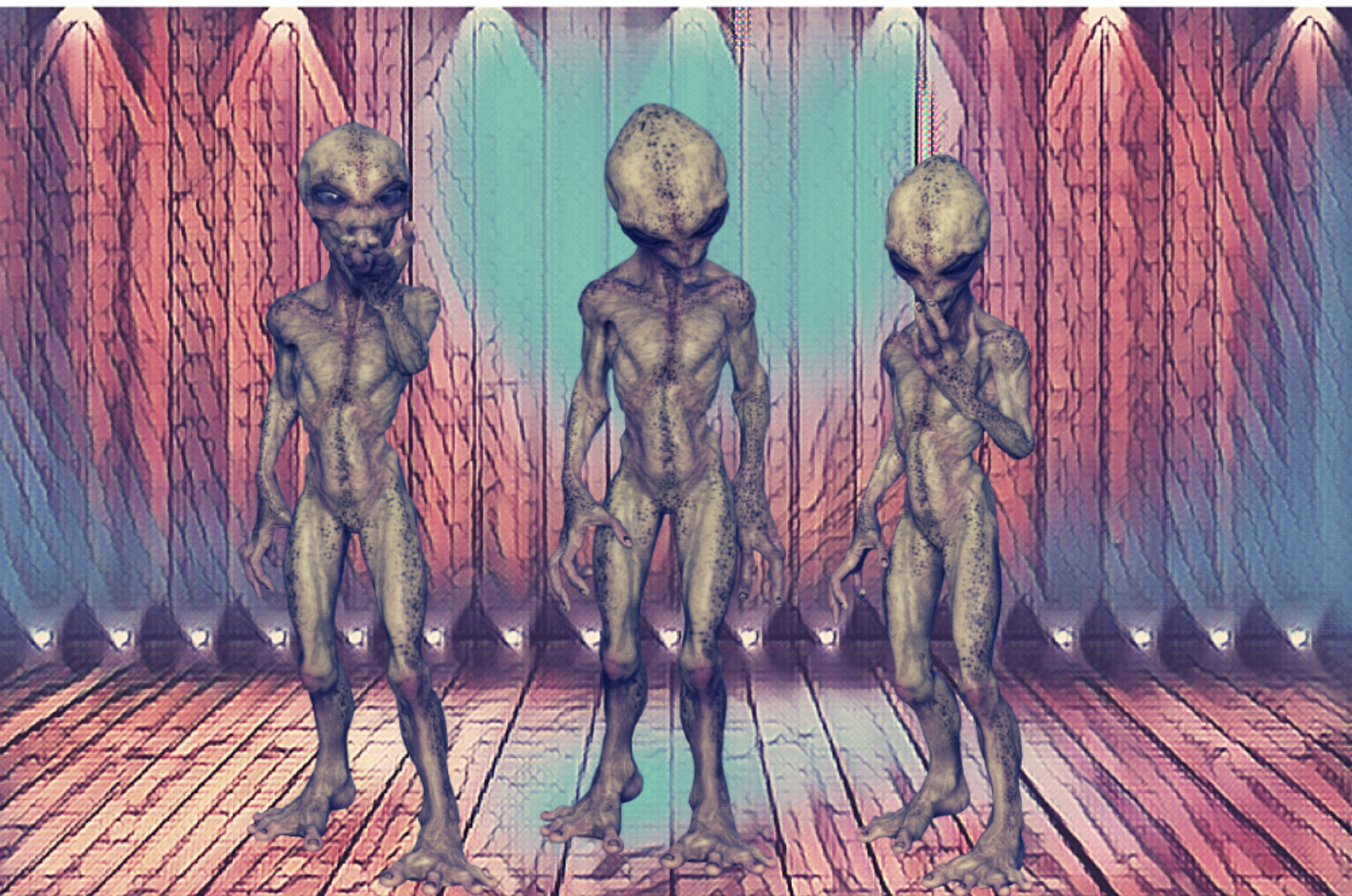
Saira shivered. There were butterflies in her stomach. As soon as Riya finished her speech, she had to go on stage. Her heart pounded in her chest. Her name was called. She stood up. She picked up her cue cards. And she walked confidently on to the stage.

"Good morning everyone!" she began. "My name is Saira Rao, and I'm here to ..." Saira gave a fulfilling speech on nature, harmony, respect and, of course, academics. Everyone wanted her to become president, even her opponents!

Ms Fernandes, the school principal, came over to the stage. She requested the judges to announce the names of the children in the student council.

Finally, the judges stood up. They walked over to the stage. Then Saira and the others got the shock of their lives. The so-called judges ripped off their clothes, their hair and their accessories. That's when everyone realised that the judges weren't even human. They were metal aliens. Yes, you read that right, the judges were made of strong metal. It was a miracle that they could even walk! There was silence. Each second seemed like a million hours. Finally the aliens spoke. They went down on one knee, and said 10 words.

"All hail, Saira Rao, Queen of the planet Mars."



Fairytales Retold

The Great Heist

Himarsha Mulchandani

Creeping towards the cave full of gold,
With feline movements and a gaze ice cold,
Was Ali Baba, clever as a fox,
Who halted when he saw a small box.

Little did he know of Aladdin the Great,
Or of his monkey, who lay in the crate,
Aladdin grinned as he hid behind a rock,
And Ali stepped forward, right on the clock.

Out came the monkey, Abu was his name.
Aladdin sneaked past, the loot was his aim.
He rubbed the cave thrice, said, "Open Sesame."
Then went inside, brimming with ecstasy.

Abu distracted Ali, all his talents on display,
Ali, mesmerized, followed him and went astray
And that dear fellows, is how you pull off
A heist better than Natasha Romanoff.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Fractured fairytales are fun! What if a villain isn't really a villain? What if characters from two different stories meet? And what if things could end differently? Find out in these retellings in verse!



How (NOT) to Write a Flawless Descriptive Essay

Samanvitha Prasad

1. Make sure you use tons of adjectives before every single noun. After all, it is a **descriptive** essay!

2. Make your essay more intriguing by putting in anecdotes that might have occurred revolving around your topic (it's completely fine if the anecdotes are not true, you just have to make the essay fun to read!).

3. Engage your readers by elaborating on every single detail. For example, if you're writing about your room, make sure you describe EVERY single thing: from the cupboards on the floor to things inside each cupboard.

4. Feel free to add your own opinion! For example, if you are writing a descriptive essay about the Eiffel Tower, tell the readers how you think it should have been a few inches taller.

5. Dont waste your time scanning your essay for speling mistakes and punctuation errors readers hardly ever bother about those

More Nonet Poetry

Meta-Nonet

janvi barman

writing a nonet is much harder
than i had expected at first.
this stupid reverse staircase
is infuriating.
and now, look at this!
it's not even
a perfect
staircase.
AAAAAAA!



Anticipation

Sunandini Sen

Anxious thoughts seem to knot my insides,
Nervous eyes darting back and forth,
My arms and feet, quivering,
I take short and quick gasps,
"Breathe in and breathe out,"
Calm myself down,
Shut my eyes,
Then I
Dive

Oh No

Himarsha Mulchandani

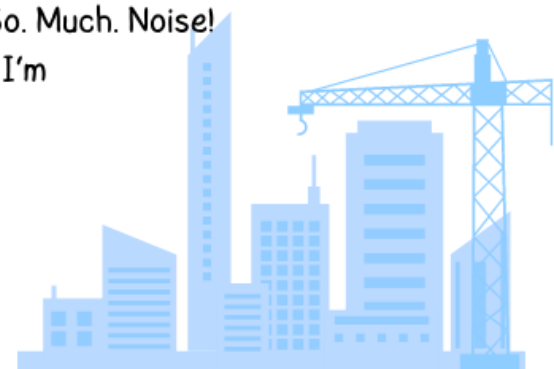
A roar, feet thumping on hard concrete
Faint noise—will someone save me please?
Surrounded by my own fears—
Wait, is that light I see?
A hand reaches out
I grab, they pull
Oh no, no.
It's The
Beast.



Dear Neighbours

Advika and Avani

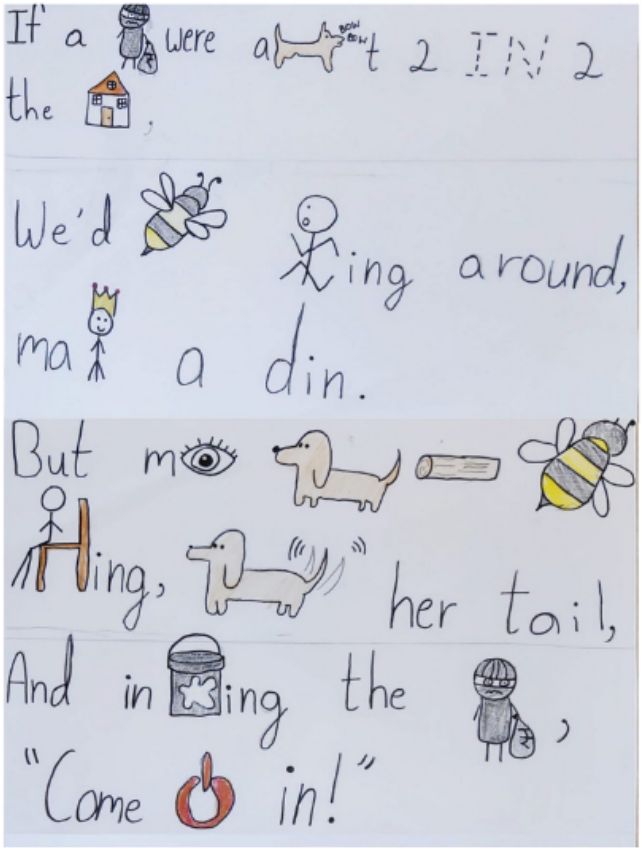
Ear-plugs are my only saviour,
Without them, I am sure to fail,
Bang, crash, a couple of booms,
Day and night: drills, hammers
Who knew you guys could
make So. Much. Noise!
I think I'm
Going
Mad

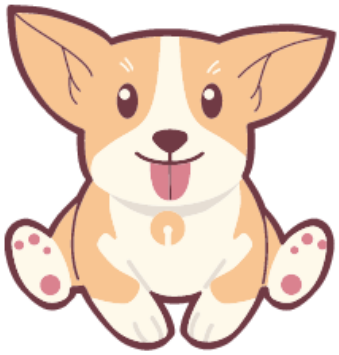


More Rebus Poetry

How Not to Catch a Thief

Advika Gupta





Hindustani Dogs

Avani Gupta

In every gully or s🌳t, 🐝ware,
🐝cause no 👋🏽ke or 🚲they s🍐.
🇮🇳's very own local s🌳t choir,
Going ⭕ 🥒ing on every 🛞,
If anything's missing - 🩴 or 🥾,
Every ⏰ there's 1 instead 🆖 2,
U know ⚪ ⚪ actly whom to blame,
They r 4ever Hindustan's fame!



What You Knead to Know Before Making Pizza

janvi barman

making decent 🍕 is always such a 🪨
even though its taste makes my little 🫀 soar
kitchen counters are covered in 🌼
and the 🛖 needs to rise for an entire 🕘
while i'm ← to do nothing but 🏋️
and eat the 🧀 that was too hard to grate
but it's all worth it at the 🌅
when i get to eat my 🍕, wouldn't you say



Cunning Commercials

Ruhaan Garg

Millets





WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

Ads sometimes convince us of the goodness of something we hate. This prompted us to create ads for things we dislike. What words would you use to advertise something you detest?

Sangamitra Vel



Sat, 08 July 2023

THE GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

Messy is the new smart!

janvi barman

Tired of your mom telling you to clean your room? Well, I've got good news for you. A messy room is actually beneficial for your intelligence! Famous physician Albert Einstein was infamous for having a messy desk. In response to a comment about this, he asked, "If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind, then what are we to think of an empty desk?" So, if you can't be bothered to stack your books and fold your clothes, don't sweat it! It's a completely normal preference.

Many researchers have found evidence that messiness boosts creativity and encourages us to branch out and try new things. Among these is Kathleen Vohs, Ph.D. One of her studies found that subjects placed in messy rooms could solve brain teasers faster than those in organised ones.

So, the next time your mother tells you that your room looks like a pigsty, you can show her this article and celebrate together, because it looks like being messy really is good for you!



Sat, 08 July 2023

THE NOT-SO-GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

Messy is the new smart!

What the article does not tell you ...

janvi barman

There are those who can't function well in environments that are neat and controlled. There are others that find a messy workspace easy to work with and relaxing. There are those that have desks that may look like a random jumble of documents and stationery to you, but they might have their own system of organisation. And there are still others that have a seemingly tidy workspace, but really have no idea where anything is. The truth is, it all comes down to your personality and your preferences! You need to find out what makes you work well and tailor your workspace to fit your needs.

There are disadvantages to being messy, too. More studies by Kathleen Vohs uncovered that subjects placed in messy rooms tended to be less charitable and made less healthy choices. In certain professional settings, having a chaotic workspace can result in reduced efficiency, missed deadlines and lost documents. Especially if your messiness isn't habitual and it seems to bother you instead of boosting your creative thinking, you should look further into it. It may be a sign of depression, hoarding or feeling overwhelmed.

In conclusion, there are both advantages and disadvantages to being messy. If you thrive in messy environments, it's a huge win for you! But saying that being exposed to unorganised environments makes someone smarter or more creative than they already are? That's a stretch.

More Poetry

Life of a Star

Himarsha Mulchandani

Hydrogen and helium in a huge dust cloud,
Two is company, but three is a crowd.
Our good friend gravity comes into play,
Keeping the internal pressure at bay.
To space, a phenomenon not so bizarre,
Folks, this is the birth of a protostar.

Centuries later, comes the main sequence star,
Just an adolescent, it's not very far
From becoming a red giant: Heed my advice,
Don't go near it, it's close to its demise.
Now is the time for the ultimate fight,
Between gravity and neutrons wound up tight.

If gravity wins, a blackhole shall arise,
If not, then a neutron star, being wise,
Will plan its retirement for the years ahead,
Maybe learn to play the banjo before it's dead!





Computer Trouble

Sangamitra Vel

My computer is so old
It's rusty and it's hard to hold
I took it to the computer vet:
I had to ride on an expensive jet.

I finally reached the computer doctor
The jet went away, so I took a helicopter
I explained to him my difficult quest,
How I had walked without a rest.

He thought and thought and rubbed his chin
Then threw the computer in the bin!
I now have work a ton,
For I've come back to square one.

The (Bad) Advice Column

Your guide to spectacular writing disasters

How (NOT) to Write a Beautiful Cinquain

Devangshi Duttagupta

1. Start the cinquain with a very complex word, not at all related to the topic you have in your mind. It would be better if no one knows what the word means. (No looking in the dictionary!)

2. Now, for the second line, write three words that describe the above word. Remember, the more complex, the better! You could even make up your own words. Your words could be in another language! Pick one of the hardest languages in the world, Mandarin! Or your mother tongue, whichever works for you.

3. To make sure the reader continues to struggle when they read the third line, pick three wonderful adjectives which describe your topic. Now, to add to the confusion, write jumbled up adjectives. Don't write pretty, write etyrtp! You could add some extra letters too! For example: etyrtpajk.

4. Fourth line, more mayhem! Write two verbs related to the first word. Make them extra long to make the reader's head ache! It enhances the uncertainty that the reader is going through!

5. Last line! Now finally, after you've tortured the reader by making the above four lines the most disorganised, muddled up set of lines they have ever read, you reveal your topic! The best thing is that the reader will be so mad that if your cinquain is published in a newspaper, the reader will rip that part from the newspaper, shove it in the paper shredder and feed the paper shreds to their dog!

Fairytales Retold

Little Red Riding Hood: Grandma's Tale

Vivaan Chaudhry

Grandma cried, "Oh, Wolfie failed!"
She cried and cried, she moaned, she wailed,
But a brilliant plan came to her mind:
To stab her family from behind.

She gathered animals from the wood
To kill Little Red Riding Hood.
A few days later, she heard a roar:
The little girl, she was no more.

She soon found Wolfie alive and well,
Hiding in a magic shell
Wolfie asked, "Did you kill her for sure?"
Grandma said, "Oh, she's no more.
But by myself you left me there
in our boring little lair."

"I knew I'd fail so I ran away.
So you'd be left with an animal array.
But anyway, the job is done.
She's gone, she's dead, and we have won."

"Until of course we are in jail."
"But surely that attempt will fail!"

The Big, Kind Wolf and the Mean Little Pigs

Avani Gupta

There was once a wolf, gentle and kind,
Just living his life with what food he could find,
Cheerful and friendly, but feared by all,
Simply because he was so big and tall.

Close by, lived three mean little pigs,
The wolf was just outside, collecting figs,
When a soft little feather tickled his snout,
A powerful "ACHHOO!" he then let out.

It blew down the house in one fell swoop,
Leaving the three huddled in a group,
Head to toe, they started to quiver,
"It was all your fault!" they began to bicker.

But one look at the wolf, and the three pigs knew,
"You blew away our house! Oh! It was you!"
The pigs' eyes filled with a cruel darkness.
"I'm so sorry! I'll help rebuild! I promise!"

But the pigs didn't care; not one little bit,
Oh, they'd punish him as they saw fit,
So the wolf ran away, as far as he could,
Never coming back to that side of the wood.

The (Bad) Advice Column

Your guide to spectacular writing disasters



How (NOT) to Write a Book

Sangamitra Vel

Materials

- A lack of patience
- Bad handwriting
- Paper
- Colour pencils

Method

1. First, take out your paper and colour pencils.
2. Next, write the first thing that comes to your mind.
3. Please feel free to scribble some words and add doodles.
4. Write random words as dialogue. Make the dialogue go on for several pages.
5. Send it to a publisher and claim that it's modern literature.



How (NOT) to Write to the Principal

Kenisha Katiyar



1. Write your letter in terrible handwriting so that your principal finds it hard to read.
2. Start with words like Hi, Hello, etc.
3. Give your principal a funny nickname and use that throughout the letter.
4. Ask your principal useless and confusing questions like, "Did I exist before I existed?"
5. Use as many short forms as possible. E.g., end your letter with A.B.F.N (anyways, bye for now).
6. Write incomplete sentences .
7. Do not end with a conclusion. Just end your letter all of a sudden.

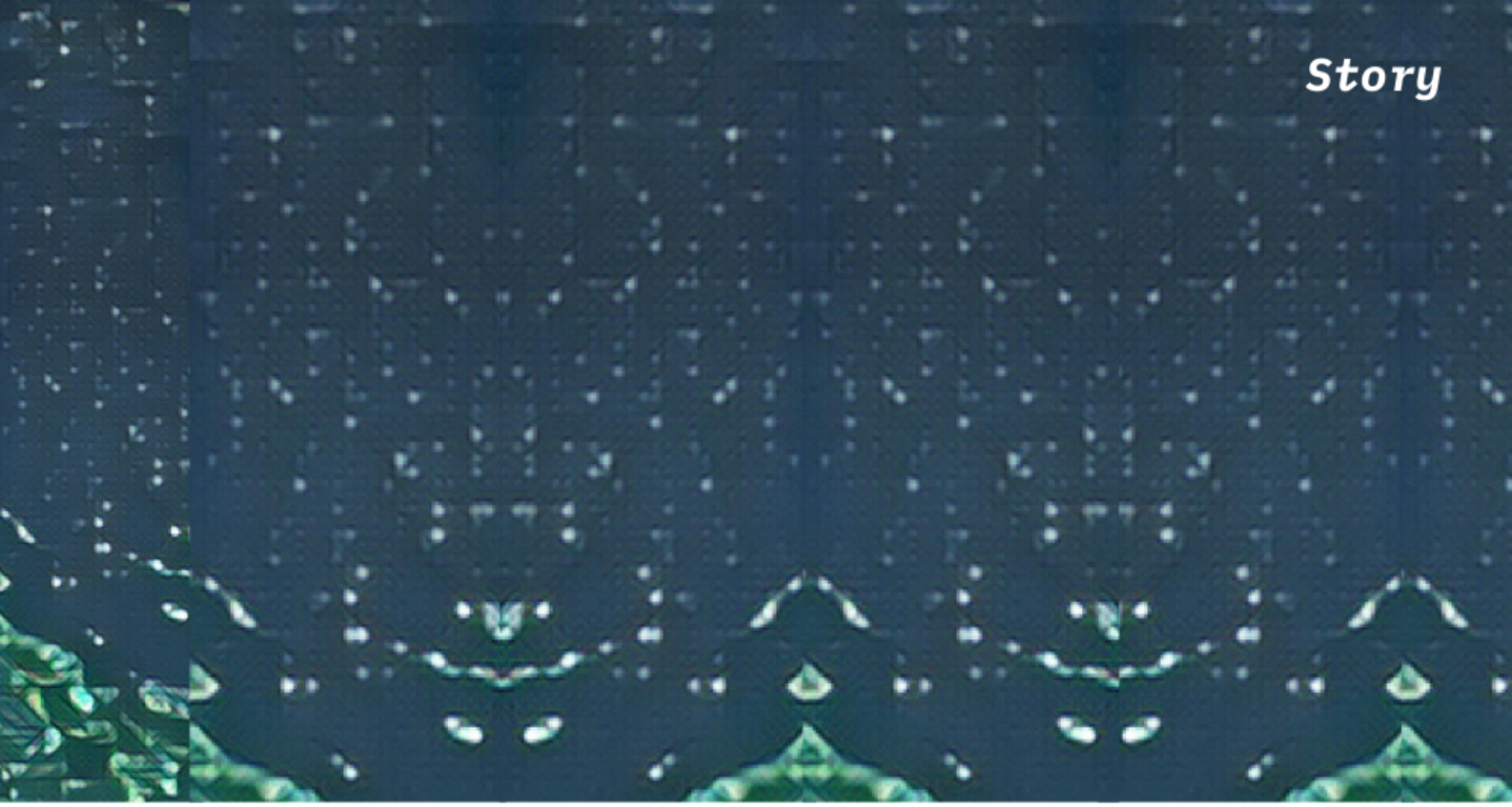


Carcass

Devangshi Duttagupta

Gene stood alone on the vast expanse of ice, tears streaming down his face. Before him lay the lifeless body of a magnificent creature—a polar bear. Its once powerful and majestic form now reduced to a motionless carcass. The image before him was heart-wrenching, and Gene's grief overwhelmed him. Gene had dedicated his life to studying and protecting Arctic wildlife. As a renowned biologist, he had spent countless hours in the Arctic, documenting the lives of polar bears and studying the impact of climate change on their habitat. Each encounter with these incredible animals filled him with awe and a deep sense of responsibility. But now, as he knelt beside the lifeless polar bear, all those memories came crashing down upon him. This was no ordinary loss; it was a devastating blow to everything Gene held dear. The polar bear symbolized not only the fragile beauty of the Arctic but also the potential loss of an entire ecosystem.

As Gene gazed into the bear's lifeless eyes, he thought back to his first encounter with a polar bear cub—an innocent and playful creature, a symbol of resilience and adaptability. It had been an enchanting experience. But the cub's future was uncertain, just like that of the entire species. The effects of climate change had caused the polar bear's habitat to shrink rapidly. Rising temperatures melted the ice they relied upon for hunting seals, their primary food source. Without ice, the bears were left malnourished and weakened, struggling to survive. It was a cruel fate for a species that had thrived for thousands of years.



Gene had dedicated his career to raising awareness about the plight of polar bears and urging action against climate change. He had spoken at conferences, written papers, and lobbied policymakers. But despite his best efforts, progress was slow, and the Arctic continued to suffer. In that desolate moment, kneeling beside the fallen bear, Gene realised the magnitude of his loss. It wasn't just about this single polar bear—it was about an entire species on the brink of extinction. The polar bear represented an interconnected web of life, and losing them would have ripple effects throughout the ecosystem.

With a heavy heart, Gene stood up, determined to turn his grief into action. He would fight harder, speak louder, and rally more people to the cause. He would never let another animal die in vain. Gene knew that time was running out, but he refused to give up hope. Through his tears, he made a silent vow to himself: he would dedicate the rest of his life to protecting the Arctic and all its inhabitants. He would work tirelessly to raise awareness, inspire change, and push for policies that would mitigate climate change. Gene knew that saving the polar bears was no longer just a scientific or environmental issue—it was a matter of moral responsibility.

As Gene walked away from the lifeless carcass, he carried with him a renewed sense of purpose. He would never forget the image of the fallen polar bear, a stark reminder of the urgent need for action. And with each step he took, he vowed to ensure that future generations would have the chance to marvel at the beauty of a living, thriving Arctic—a symbol of hope, resilience, and the indomitable spirit of nature.

The (Bad) Advice Column

Your guide to spectacular writing disasters



How (NOT) to Improve Your Handwriting

Zayn Manik

Materials

- A writing instrument
- Paper (or book)

Method

1. Keep your materials ready.
2. To start writing, use your non-dominant hand.
3. Clench the writing instrument in your fist.
4. Close your eyes.
5. Think of a thousand words and write them down with your eyes still closed.
6. Do this once every year.
7. Enjoy having the world's best handwriting!!!!!!





How (NOT) to Write a Formal Letter

Sohum Mehta

Materials

- A piece of paper
- A colour pencil

Method

1. Write a random date.
2. Use your nickname to introduce who you are.
3. Greet the person informally.
4. Write reasons against what you support.
5. Make drawings to support your idea.
6. And finally, write "No, thank you" at the end of the letter.

More Poetry



A Strange Pet

Kenisha Katiyar

A strange pet that's covered with spines,
needles as sharp as the teeth of canines.
Slowly, slowly, it will rise,
and stare at you with its beady eyes.
Sleeps in the morning and wakes in the night,
if you guessed a hedgehog you were right.



Wild At Heart

Avani Gupta

Although gentle and smart,
They remain wild at heart.
Chasing a mouse left and right,
Never letting it out of sight.
Injure it, free it, catch it, repeat,
Continue until it accepts defeat.
Toss it around, torture it to death,
They won't stop until its last breath.
Just when it thinks it's broken free,
The cat kills it with absolute glee.



How Not to Scold a Puppy

Advika Gupta

A ball of fur has entered your life
And brought along a lifetime of joys.
The little pup has robbed your worries
And buried them (probably with all his toys!).

He steals your heart with those big eyes,
And all those soft, sweet little barks.
But all of this is well and good,
Till you spot a chappal with tiny teeth marks

Now, dear reader, how would you react,
If your puppy was chewing your brand new shoe?
You'd snatch it away (or at least you'd try!)
And yell at the puppy for a second or two.

But shoe or toy, it doesn't matter,
To the puppy it's all a tug-o-war game.
And since he doesn't know a word of English,
Yelling or praise, it's all the same!

So then how do you tell the puppy
That what he's doing is not okay?
As unbelievable as it may seem,
You roll your eyes and look away!

To a puppy, your love is the best reward,
And to get it, he'll do anything he can.
So no attention really is the best way
To tell your puppy that you're not a fan!

Sat, 08 July 2023

THE GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

Video games are good for you!

Ruhaan Garg





Scientists have recently discovered that video games are actually good for people. Research revealed that playing video games can support young people when it comes to their reading skills and creativity. Children who play video games say they read many things about their favourite games, including books, reviews, and how to play. Therefore, people also felt playing video games made them better readers!

Further research shows that gaming can make kids more creative. The young people who play video games say they make videos to related to games. For years, video games have been criticised for making people more overweight or depressed, but now, researchers say that games can change us for the better and improve our body and mind.

Sat, 08 July 2023

THE NOT-SO-GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

Video games are good for you!

What the article does not tell you ...

Ruhaan Garg

It's hard to get enough active play and exercise if you're always indoors playing video games. Hence, without enough exercise, kids can become overweight. Playing video games a lot could affect other important body parts like the eyes and the brain. Kids who play violent video games might act more aggressively.

Another issue is that gaming can hurt your eyesight. Eye strain is an increasing problem, and many more children and adults show symptoms of too much screen time. These symptoms include dry eyes, as well as pain in the neck and shoulders. They're caused by staring at the screen for a long time, forcing your eyes to work harder than usual. Children, especially, should not spend so much time at a screen, since their brains haven't developed completely.

On the whole, playing video games in moderation is both entertaining and beneficial, but excessive screen time has negative consequences.



WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

During our fiction module, we explored mythopoeia, sometimes understood as stories based on artificial myths. This led us to explore myths of our own. Who helps things grow? Why do octopi have venom? Read these myths to find out!

Green-Thumbed Morgan

Sunandini Sen

"You'll practise with your sword and spear and learn to be a warrior!" Ivanna, the goddess of war, screamed at her son. "No more of this stupid gardening business! I'm taking away your keys to the greenhouse!" She snatched a ring of keys from Morgan, who stood silently, his eyes downcast. Mum was SO bad-tempered today. "Do you hear me, Morgan?" she shouted at him.

He slowly raised his head, looking her in her eyes. "I will do what I like. Gardening isn't stupid!" he said to his shocked mother, and stormed off. "I'll run away," he muttered under his breath.

He took great strides, and finally stopped in front of a small town with a huge expanse of barren fields. "This will do," he said, and began digging, which was his only source of respite when angry.

He dug and dug and dug, not looking back even once at the growing mound of dirt. When sweat appeared on his brow, he brushed it off. When angry tears prickled his eyes, he wiped them away.

Slowly, a crowd of townspeople appeared. "Look, look!" they whispered. But Morgan kept on digging.

After an eternity, he finally stopped, and looked around, only to gasp.

The mound of dirt had grown to a huge mountain, which covered the horizon. The peak seemed to touch the sky, it was so tall. He could only gape in wonder.

"You have saved us!" the town leaders went to him, thanking him profusely. "We heard that a gang of raiders was coming to terrorise our town from the east, beyond the mountain you've built. Now, they won't be able to cross the mountain."

"Oh, well, you're welcome, I guess," Morgan said, feeling a bit confused.

"He's amazing, he's wonderful!" the townspeople whispered excitedly. "Let's name the mountain after him!"

"Oh, no, that's not really necessary—" Morgan was cut short by the town leaders announcing the name of the mountain: Mt. Morgan.

When Ivanna heard the news, she could only smile. "Well, I guess he made a name for himself, after all," she said to herself.

"Let's build him a temple!" the townspeople cried.

"No, no, I don't really need a temple," Morgan protested. "Let's build a greenhouse instead!"

As the people (a god included) set about carrying planks and selecting plants, the rulers of the Celestial Kingdom watched from above.

"We have to call Morgan here," the king declared.

"Yeah, weeds are terrorising my dahlias!" the goddess of forges complained.

"My tree is no longer bearing silver fruit!" the god of the moon wailed.

"I want to grow pineapples!" the god of myths whined.

The (Bad) Advice Column

Your guide to spectacular writing disasters

How (NOT) to Write an Autobiography

Aabha Sardesai

1. Always start with sentences that make you sound big-headed. Something like: Today, the greatest being of the world will present to you the most wonderful story of the most supreme being of the most unique planet of the most remarkable galaxy of the huge universe.

2. Never, EVER stick to facts. They just make your writing sound boring.

3. State stuff that makes you sound heroic in any situation, even the ones in which you're not present.



4. If you want to write a chapter book, try to make one tiny act, like killing a mosquito, one that is outstandingly courageous, like battling a hungry tiger.

5. If you want to make your book awe-striking, awesome, amazing, brilliant, cool, legendary, and all the other things people want their books (and lives!) to be nowadays, then write in extremely flowery language. For example: I rose to my feet with great gusto, and noticed that a harmful, ghastly, murderous, blood-sucking bumblebee was hovering nearby. I grandly volunteered to kill the frightful beast and ran over to the spot where the bee was. It tried to escape, but I killed it, bravely, with my bare hands, only holding a modern weapon, called a fly swatter.

6. Make up hobbies only for the autobiography, so even if you are afraid of heights then make your favourite adventure sport bungee jumping.

7. And most importantly, remember that there is no limit to exaggeration. So keep exaggerating every sentence. If you have planted one tiny sapling in your entire existence, then mention how your green thumb gave you so much produce that it has transformed your dull, grey, sullen backyard into a flourishing, colourful, organic farm.

Good luck writing your bestseller!



Sat, 08 June 2023

THE GOOD **NEWS BULLETIN**

Doing chores is bad for children!

Sohum Mehta

Doing chores can be helpful to the family, but it can also increase stress and blood pressure. Recent studies have shown that chores can give stress to children as they also get homework from school. Then finishing chores will be another headache for them. If you are a parent who is determined to make your child finish chores, maybe think again because don't you want your child to have fun instead of doing boring household work?



Sat, 08 July 2023

THE NOT-SO-GOOD **NEWS BULLETIN**

Doing chores is bad for children!

What the article does not tell you ...

Sohum Mehta

Chores are what most children dread doing. But you may not know that doing chores can teach kids how to take care of themselves, their homes, and their families. This increases their responsibility at home. Additionally, when kids pitch in, parents have less work to do as they have jobs. This results in getting things done faster as well as spending time with your family.



How (NOT) to Write a Story

Vivaan Chaudhry

1. Stay awake all night to think about a plot. You might faint due to lack of sleep the next day, but that's only a 50% chance.

2. After thinking about a plot, create a video about what you want your story to be like. Then start copying down every detail from the video. The amount of time and effort will be doubly wasted, but you will get a good story in the end.

3. After this, take pictures from other books that can be used as pictures in your book. It's called pleasur-ising! DO NOT use your imagination because no one likes that. The authors of the books that you took your pictures from might sue you for stealing their ideas but most likely they won't get to know.

4. Then hold a publisher prisoner until they agree to publish your book. Make sure you control the money coming in, and give them only 10% of what you make.



Fairytales Retold

The Tale of Goldilocks

Sunandini Sen

There was once a girl called Goldilocks,
She lived in a village by the docks,
Adored by all, blue-eyed and fair,
With masses of curly golden hair.

But she wasn't as lovely as she seemed,
While her parents toiled, she sat and dreamed,
Goldie was impolite, selfish, vain,
To be honest, she was quite a pain.

One day she went walking in the wood,
Although her mom had told her she should
Not go in because there was a bear,
But of course, Goldie didn't really care.

In the woods, she came across
A lovely house, all covered in moss.
She went straight in, without even knocking,
(Which, to be honest, is rather shocking).

Inside the house, a table she spied,
Then, in her high-pitched voice, she cried,
"Oh! How hungry I feel right now!
I'm pretty sure I could eat a whole cow!"

Three plates of food were kept on the table,
She ate as much as she was able,
But one plate was too cold, one too hot.
One was just right, so she ate the lot.

Wishing to sleep, upstairs went she,
Where there were cozy and warm beds, three,
But one was too large, and one too tiny,
It was a surprise Goldie didn't get whiny.

When she found the perfect bed at last,
She leapt under the covers, extremely fast,
And soon enough, she was fast asleep,
Sinking into a slumber that was quite deep.

The family of three bears, home they came,
But their house didn't really look the same.
Their plates of food, not as full as before,
Everywhere, footprints on the floor!

The bears, grunting, upstairs they tramped,
And when they saw Goldie, growling, they stamped,
Two bears, out of bed, Goldie they hauled,
While the third bear, the police, he quickly called.

Charged and arrested for breaking in,
And in the woods for creating a din,
Young Goldilocks, once upon a time,
Was put on trial for her crime.

While the intelligent bears did receive,
Compliments for what they had achieved.
When sharing the tale, also shared laughter,
And the three bears lived happily ever after.



More Rebus Poetry



Busy Us

Taksh Mittal

Tom drank a 👓 of 💦
Darsh read a 🟦
Kelvin 🏃, 2 take a 🍼
Harry 🚶 2 🍳
Rookie made a Lego 🚀
while I caught the crook!

Enjoy, Engage, Entertain!

Kenisha Katiyar

Aditi likes to go 🏇
Siddhi loves yell and 🤺 .
Tara likes to 💃 and 🎤
Asmi likes to play at 🌆.
Jiya likes to draw on a 📉,
Aashmi likes to go on a✈️.
And me, well, for my part,
I like to give others a😱!



The Snowman

Ruhaan Garg

I made a⛄ when it snowed,
I used a 🥕 for his 👃 ,
I put a👕 on his ⬅️BACK,
and on his 😄, I put a 🎩.
A 🐰 munched the ⛄'s 👢,
But I scared it with a 💧 hose!
Feeling proud, I tap my shoulder,
then I head inside as it's getting colder.

The Playful Revolution

Advika Gupta

A long, long time ago, in ancient India, lived a pair of twins, Apoorva and Atharv. They lived happily with their parents in a cozy mud house near the woods. When they were younger, they would entertain themselves by climbing trees, chasing after butterflies, and drawing with sticks in the sand. Soon, however, these activities began to seem mundane and boring. One day, the twins' mother heard Apoorva say something that she had never heard either of the twins say before.

"Amma, we're bored. What do we do?"

The twins' mother looked at Apoorva and Atharv and said, "Do what you have been doing for the last few years. Oh, look, I see a butterfly!"



The twins groaned.

"Amma!" whined Atharv. "We have chased God knows how many butterflies! Don't you have anything we can do?"

Amma saw her children's pleading faces and said, "Oh, all right! I think you're old enough now."

And with that, she left the rotis she had been attempting to make over the fire and pulled out a dusty box.

"This is called Chaturanga. It's a beautiful game of strategy, and one of my favourites."

And so, the twins spent the next hour learning how to play Chaturanga, the ancient form of chess. Soon, they fell in love with the game, and spent as many of their waking hours playing as they could.

What neither the twins nor their mother knew, however, was that this was a special chess board. It was enchanted with the ability to feel, think and cast spells. And with that ability, Chaturanga the chess board began to develop a feeling of affection for the twins, and his Fils (Bishops) and Asvas (Knights) rattled with excitement every time the twins pulled Chaturanga out from the shelf.

One day, however, the time came for the twins to leave for the gurukul. Apoorva and Atharv bid their parents goodbye and journeyed through the woods until they reached the gurukul. They became immersed in their studies, learning archery and sword fighting, scriptures and philosophy, and they pushed Chaturanga to the back of their minds.

Back at home, however, Chaturanga had definitely not forgotten about the twins. He realised that his Asvas and Fils no longer rattled, and he was collecting more and more dust. He missed Apoorva and Atharv immensely and kept waiting, hoping that they would return soon. Three years passed like this, and when Chaturanga realised the twins didn't seem to be returning, he was furious.

"Apoorva and Atharv, the same twins who showed me so much love just three years ago, have abandoned me. Well, I'll show them! They don't know what I can do!" And with that thought, Chaturanga started to concoct a plan ...





At the gurukul, the day started off normally for Apoorva. She woke up early, got dressed, and went to have breakfast, but the sight that greeted her when she stepped out of her room left her speechless. Every inch of the mud ground was covered in black and white squares. Even the tree under which they had their lessons had a checkered trunk! When she saw her guru passing by, she bowed politely as usual. Then, unable to contain herself, she took a deep breath and started, "Guruji ..." But one stern look from the guru and Apoorva's lips were pressed together tightly.

A bewildered Apoorva sighed and stood there staring when she caught her brother's eye. Atharv ran to her and said, "Apoorva, call me crazy, but it looks like the whole floor is covered in—"

"Black and white squares, I know! I think we're the only people who can see that. Look, everyone else is walking about normally."

The twins decided to wait it out and see what happened. They went about their classes, but at lunch time, Chaturanga struck again.

Apoorva was sitting with her friend, and said to her, "Anisha, can you pass me the roti—AAAHHH!"

Anisha looked at Apoorva funnily, but all Apoorva could see was a giant piyade (pawn) chess piece where her friend had been sitting. Atharv recognised his sister's voice and came running from the other end of the room.

"Apoorva, what happened—AAAHHHH!" Now the entirety of the gurukul was staring at the twins, wondering what they could possibly be so worked up about. The twins tried explaining to their classmates what they were seeing, but everyone thought they were hallucinating.



Even Guruji didn't believe them. When he came to see what all the chaos was about, all he said was, "You both look tired. Have you not been sleeping properly? Sleep is important. I'll make sure you get early dinner and go to bed on time today."



Meanwhile, Chaturanga was very pleased with the mayhem he had created. If he had had palms, he would have rubbed them in glee. Because he was now bored at home, he had befriended other board games using his enchanted abilities. He shared his victory with them, expecting praise, but instead, he got requests.

Chaturanga's story made the other board games realise that their owners had abandoned them for the gurukul as well. Lacking supernatural powers, they asked Chaturanga to make life a little more interesting for all the students at the gurukul. Chaturanga, of course, happily agreed.



The next day, at the gurukul, Apoorva and Anisha were on their way to breakfast again, when Anisha stopped in her tracks. "Um, Apoorva, is that what you were screaming about yesterday?" she said, pointing to the checkered tree, below which sat a rajah chess piece on Guruji's usual seat.

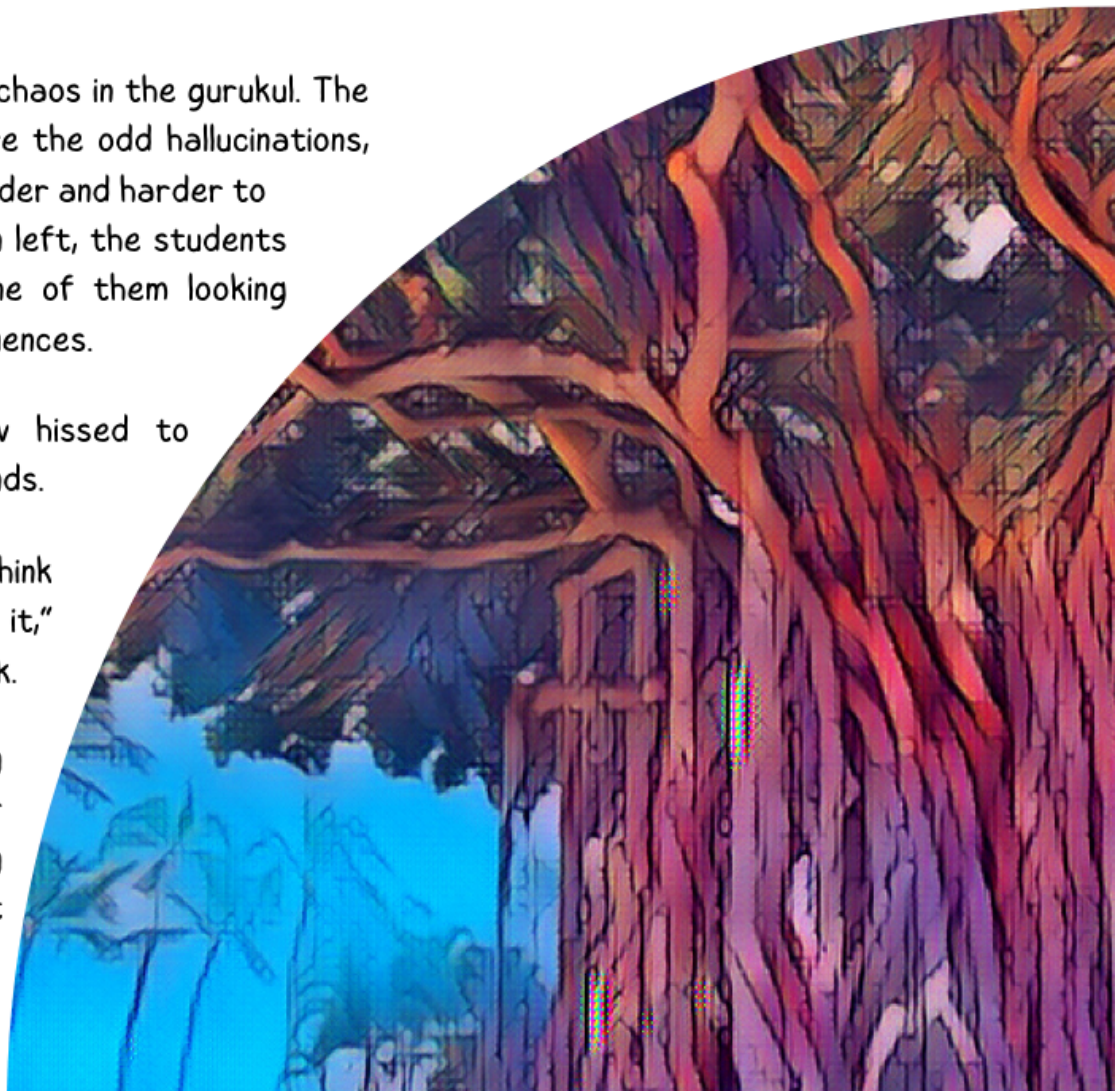
"Wait, you can see it?" Apoorva looked around and saw that everyone was gaping at the Guruji-shaped chess piece. And then Apoorva realised that all 20 students looked like piyade!

For a while, there was chaos in the gurukul. The students tried to ignore the odd hallucinations, but classes became harder and harder to continue. With no option left, the students went to Guruji, not one of them looking forward to the consequences.

"You ask him!" Atharv hissed to Agastya, one of his friends.

"Me? No! Guruji will think I'm crazy! You do it," Agastya whispered back.

"No! He's already scolded me once for talking out of turn. Okay fine, leave it. We'll just live like this."



"Both of you are cowards. I'll do it," Anisha said as she and Apoorva walked up to the boys. Anisha bravely strode towards the tree under which Guruji was seated and … walked right back.

"Okay … maybe I'm a coward too," Anisha grinned sheepishly.

"How about we ask everyone to come with us? We'll do namaste and bow and ask politely; he won't be able to refuse all 20 of his students, will he?" Apoorva suggested.

Agastya, Atharv and Anisha agreed, and they quickly convinced all the students to talk to him. They all did exactly as Apoorva had said, though everyone felt quite odd bowing to a giant rajah chess piece.



Guruji, at first, was not pleased, but as he heard them out, his expression softened. He thought for a moment and stroked his wooden chin.

"I think I see the problem here … Did all of you play board games at home?"

20 wooden piyade heads nodded collectively.

"Well then, I think your board games are missing you, then poor things! They are angry, so they decided to curse all of you."

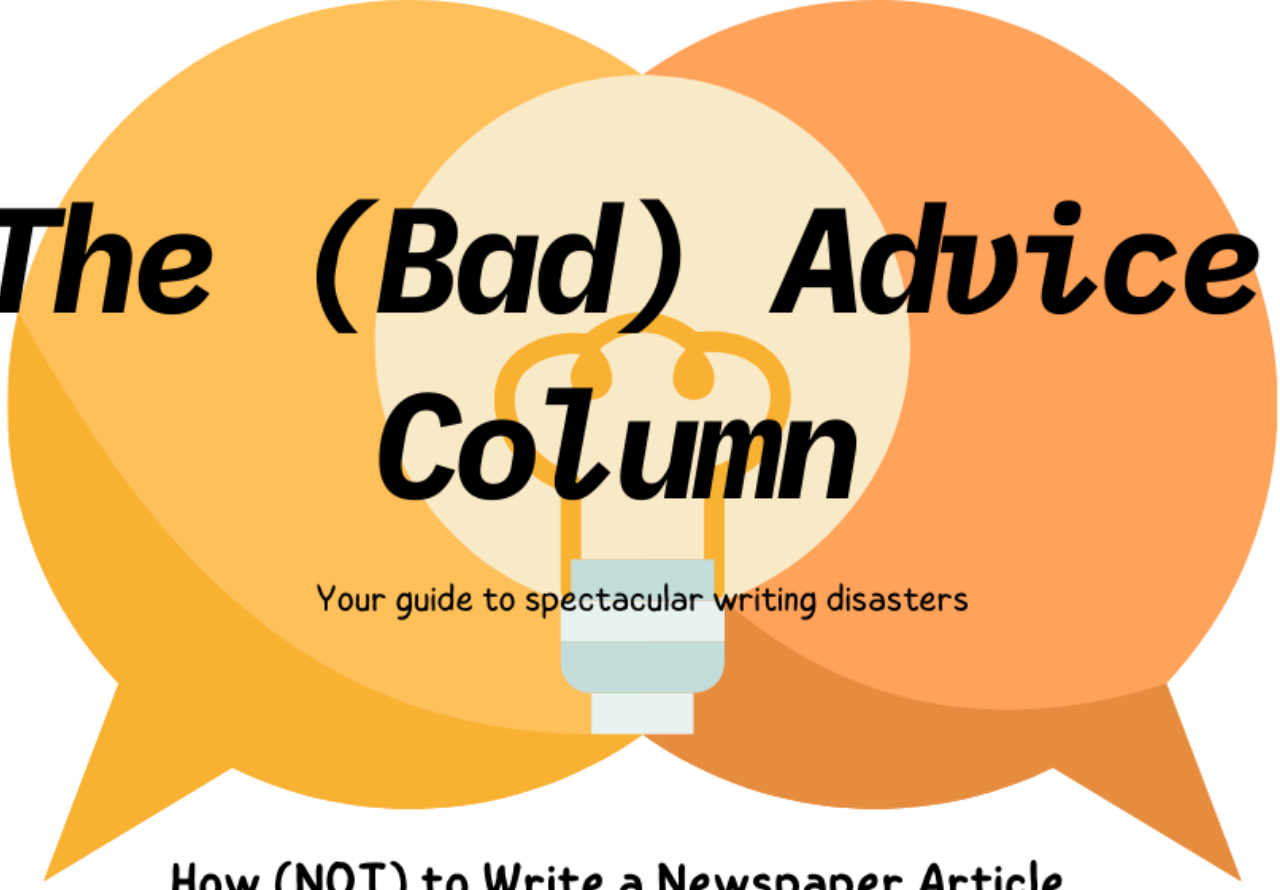
Naturally, most students were sceptical about this, but they knew better than to doubt Guruji.

"Guruji, if this is true, what do we do about it? We cannot live like this. I can't even shoot an arrow because all the deer and boars look like Asvas!" said one boy.

"Guruji, even all the books and scrolls are checkered!" said a girl.

"I think what I will have to do is give all of you two days a week off to play your board games. That way, they will not miss you as much, but your studies will not be neglected either. You may go home to get your board games tomorrow and keep them here in the gurukul. Every week, you will have two days free to enjoy yourselves!"

Hence, Chaturanga and the wise guruji made a huge difference to the lives of gurukul students, and even to our lives today! After all, can you imagine your life without weekends?



The (Bad) Advice Column

Your guide to spectacular writing disasters

How (NOT) to Write a Newspaper Article

Avani Gupta

1. **Opinions, opinions, and more opinions!** To write a great newspaper article, the first and foremost thing to remember is that your article has to be majorly opinion based. Do not make your piece factual. Ever. After all, you wouldn't want your pieces to feel like they've been written by robots!

2. **Just go with the flow!** Do people care about well-structured information? No. Do they really want every little relevant yet boring detail? Absolutely not. Do they scan your article for tiny little spelling errors? Of course not! Believe me—don't worry about all these little things because your readers definitely won't!

3. **Dramatise and distort.** Okay, I know how this sounds, but unless you want your readers yawning while reading your articles, you'll remember this. The unavoidable reality is that not all stories are even nearly engaging enough. However, the mark of a true journalist is how well they can dramatise their piece to captivate their readers.

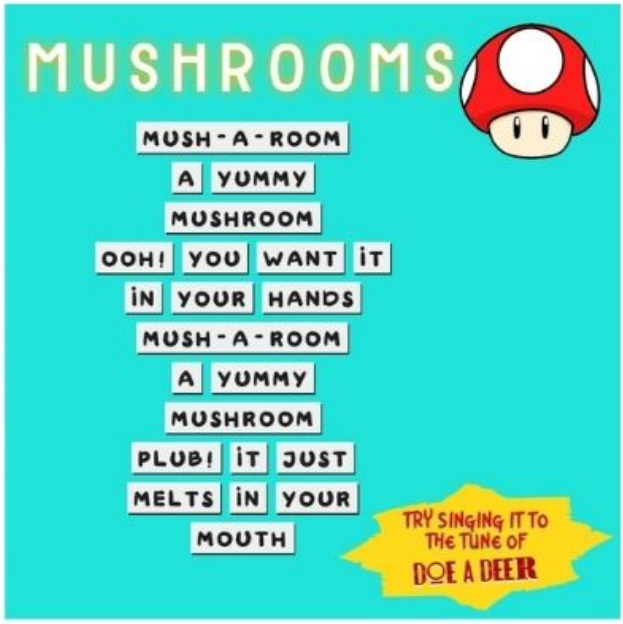
4. **Sources are not a priority.** It doesn't matter what your sources are, or whether they're reliable or not, just as long as they give the readers what they're looking to read. It's as simple as that. Your priority is always giving your readers what they want, not what your sources are!

Cunning Commercials

Aarav Khandelia



Taksh Mittal



Zayn Manik



Aabha Sardesai



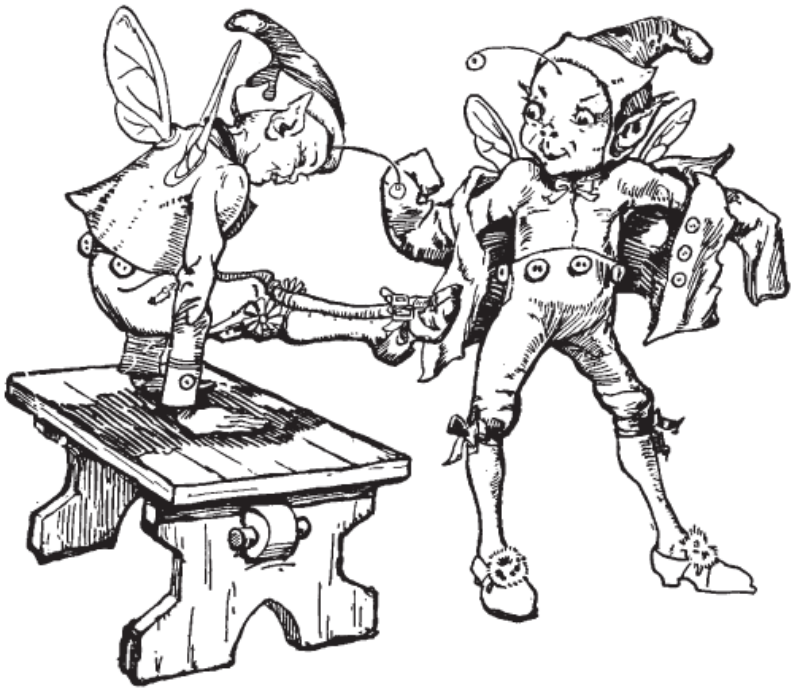
Kenisha Katiyar



Fairytales Retold

A Poetic Take on "The Shoemaker and The Elves"

Aabha Sardesai



The elves came out in the dead of night,
And the slow sewing began,
With the huge chisel and the leather,
Planting each stitch on the tan.

The cuckoo clock struck up again,
To mark the crack of dawn,
The elves retreated into their hole,
That warm and cosy morn.

The elves had left a pair of shoes,
That would make a pretty penny,
The effort the elves had to take,
Was definitely aplenty.

Each night the elves toiled and slaved,
Wanting nothing in return,
Working through those scorching nights,
They thought that they would burn.

One regular night, they didn't notice
The shoemaker creep outside,
They hummed a merry little tune,
And they didn't run to hide.

The shoemaker saw their tattered clothes,
He saw they wore no shoes,
He pursed his lips and looked again,
He saw they wouldn't snooze.

Now the shoemaker was kind at heart,
And thought they deserved a treat.
The elves however, oblivious to this,
Were contentedly asleep!

The next night, the elves ventured out,
Jumping and jabbering.
They saw some lovely little clothes,
And put them on while blabbering.

And oh! The kind old shoemaker,
Watched them with a smile,
As one by one, they came and thanked him,
In one tiny little file.



How Octopi Got Their Venom

Sangamitra Vel

Once, in the ocean, thousands of years ago, there was an octopus named Luna. Luna noticed that her kind was almost gone. Luna thought, "I am going to find the mysterious creator and ask him to give us some defence." And so began the most difficult journey of Luna's life.

First, Luna climbed to the top of the Coral Reef to find the great creator. The creator was not there, so she sped off to check more places. Next, she went to her friend Hazel's house because Hazel was all gossip and if anyone knew where the great creator was, Hazel would. As Luna approached, she wondered if she should tell her friend the problem. What if she told all the other octupi about her journey and they laughed at her, or told her she couldn't do it? But then again, Hazel was her friend. She wouldn't tell everyone something that she didn't want her to share, would she?

Feeling confused, Luna sat on a rock. Then, she realised which rock it was. It was the rock that they thought was magical, and when Luna touched that rock, she knew that Hazel would do her a favour just this once. So she hurried over to Hazel's house, a beautiful green house with mermaid scales covering the outside. She knew she had to go in, but suddenly she was nervous. She took a deep breath in and walked inside. The interior of the

house was just as beautiful as the outside. Photos of various fish lined the walls.

"Hey," said Luna, with a grin. She couldn't help but be happy when Hazel was around.

"Hey," said Hazel.

"Soooooo, I need some gossip," Luna said, and Hazel's face lit up just like she had hoped. Hazel absolutely loved gossip and that would wake her up from loneliness any day.

"What do you need?" asked Hazel, cautiously. She knew that Luna often got into trouble and did not want to be an accomplice.

"Just some info on THE GREAT CREATOR," Luna said in a booming voice.

"Well okay, from the gossip I've heard, he lives in the sunken ships of the east," Hazel said in an ominous tone.

"Okay, thanks see you tomorrow," Luna said hurriedly. "Wish me luck."

"Good luck!" Hazel called after Luna.

The sunken ships of the east was a dangerous place where humans left their waste. Legend says that in the old times, there was a ghost of an evil octopus living there.

Luna hurried to the ruins and plopped down near a rock, tired from the long journey, when an enchanted voice broke the silence. At first it was only a hum, then it felt more like vocals, then she could hear words. "Who is this in my presence?" the voice sang.

"Oh mighty sea god," said Luna, trembling. "I did not mean to startle you."

"Well, why are you here?" demanded the sea god impatiently.

"I am here because it has come to my notice that some of my fellow octopus friends have been dying because we have no defence," said Luna, her voice full of sorrow. "I have come here on a quest to give my fellow octupi some kind of protection."

"Hmm," said the sea god, deep in thought.

And only when there was silence could Luna appreciate his outfit, the way every shell reflected a different colour.

"Are you sure you need protection?" the sea god moaned. "The last time I checked out the octupi, they were doing fine."

"And when was that?" asked Luna, her tone dripping with sarcasm.

"Only a millennium ago," the sea god mumbled, oblivious to what was coming for him.

"A millennium!? Octupi didn't even exist back then!" Luna said, practically jumping out of the water.

"Well, I forgot," said the sea god, trying to protect his status.

"Please, sea god, octupi are dying! You have to to help!" Luna said, her voice no more than a hushed whisper. "You're the only one who can help!"

"Alright, you may have venom," the sea god said, in a sympathetic voice.

"Thank you, sea god, I will never forget this!" said Luna. This was it! Her mission was a success! She could barely believe it. Finally, she would not live in fear of sharks while sleeping.



How (NOT) to Write a Tutorial

janvi barman

So the first thing you should do is jump right into it with no context because who cares about introductions am I right? Time's a wastin'!! Don't bother with splitting your tutorial into steps since you're basically doing all the work for your reader already. Least they can do is figure out what they have to do in what order and speaking of which forget about chronological order or any kind of order really just mash everything into one big paragraph, they'll work it out somehow. You're reader is here to learn whatever your teaching them about and not about punctuation or grammer (unless that's what the tutorial is about in which case oops) so you dont gotta worry about that. I think that maybe you should try to sound kind of unsure because you don't want to come off as some narcissist that thinks they know everything right? Also your reader probably isnt stupid so you don't have to go into extreme detail just kind of tell them the main stuff and they can do the rest themselves. No spoon feeding here folks!! Another thing you could do is make your sentences as long as possible so they don't lose their patience reading so many sentences because its less daunting when it's all just one sentence instead of a lot of sentences and then what if they're like 'wow this seems really hard and there are so many sentences can i even do this?' and then they click off your tutorial? We wouldn't want that, would we? Right? Maybe? And then just add a lot of unnecessary words to make your tutorial look bigger because the bigger your tutorial is the more readers you will get because who wants a tutorial that's like a paragraph long. Whoever's reading the tutorial will know it's over when the page ends so if you feel like your ending is abrupt don't worr



Fairytales Retold

The Royal Ditch

Advika Gupta

Taking a stroll in the cold morning air,
A gloomy Jafar was tearing out his hair.
Bewildered he sat, with not even a chance
Of getting from Jasmine so much as a glance.

"She doesn't really fancy men of my sort ..."
But a leafy rustle interrupted Jafar's thought.
Out from the bushes came a man, buff and tall,
"Get out of my way," he said with a drawl.

"How dare you! I'm the advisor to the Agrabah king.
You get out of my way, you repulsive ... thing!"
"THING? I'm the best hunter in all of France!
You don't even look like you could hold a lance!"

"Oy! Princess Jasmine will soon marry me."
"Oh, I feel so sorry for the poor little lassie!"
"Well, strong guy, do you have a gal in your life?"
"In fact, the beautiful Belle is my to-be wife."





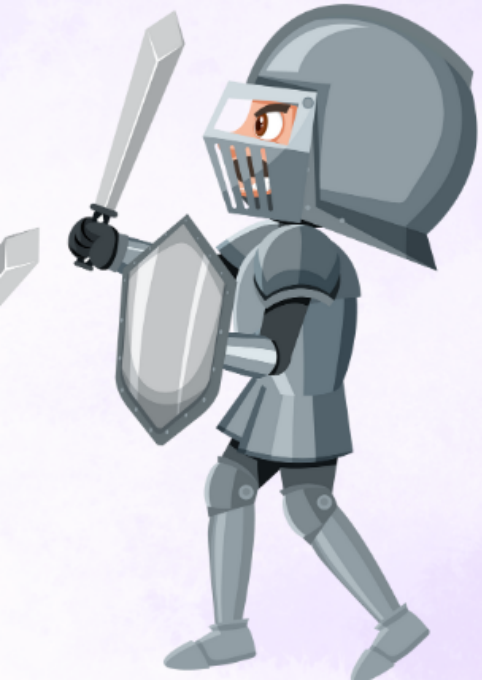


And so, the two fought without any rest,
Trying to prove that their fiancée was best.
But lying to a liar is pretty pointless.
Jafar realised this, which made him confess,

"The truth is, Jasmine's fallen for a lowly street thief,
When she should be with me, an advisor-in-chief."
"Sounds like Belle, obsessed with that beast.
He's not handsome or hunky in the least!"

"These women, oh, they're really all the same,
Chasing thrill and wit instead of money and fame!"
"Then why, Jafar, do we chase them so?
If you and I leave, oh, the places we could go!"

So the two men plotted, they smirked, they beamed
They rubbed their palms in glee as they schemed.
And far, far away, two princesses sat,
Expecting the villains that never attacked.





The (Bad) Advice Column

Your guide to spectacular writing disasters

How (NOT) to Write to a President

Aarav Khandelia

Step 1 – Language

1. Use funny and informal words like dude, bro, mate, sup, etc.
2. Write in such a way that it feels like you are writing to your friend.
3. Write to him about extremely goofy stuff.
4. Use your letter to waste the president's time.
5. Ask him to solve silly riddles and tell him jokes such as "Why did the chicken cross the street?"

Step 2 – Elements

1. Use capitalisation when not necessary, like mY NAMe is ....
2. Use incorrect and unnecessary punctuation.
3. Use emojis and signs, like Su🍌per
4. Use different fonts.
5. Add colour to your text.
6. Tear your letter into small pieces and ask the president to put it together before reading.

That's it for now, folks!



How (NOT) to Write to Your Teacher

Hridayansh Rampal

1. Instead of saying "dear", say "wassup" at the beginning of the letter.
2. Call them by their first name.
3. Write, "You are the most annoying teacher I have ever had."
4. Always make silly excuses like "My dog ate my homework."
5. Randomly change the topic, and then end the letter.

Visual Poetry

The Earth

Sohum Mehta and janvi barman





Memory's Sneezes

janvi barman

I opened the door to Wren's shed against the will of every cell in my being. Usually, nothing more perilous than a peculiar odour awaited me inside, but I wasn't taking any chances after the infamous Fruit Bat Incident last month.

"Wren?" I called out. "Are you here?" I heard the back door open and shut, and in a heartbeat, they were standing in front of me, mischief written across their face in big bold letters.

"So," they began, "I see you received my message."

I sighed dramatically. "Yes, Wren, I did in fact hear you when you shouted to me to meet you here at five through the open window of my cottage."

They laughed, sitting on one of three worn-out chairs that surrounded a nightstand with a tablecloth draped over it. "Please, do take a seat at my extravagant dining table." I rolled my eyes, sitting across from them. They opened a little container that rested on the "dining table", and the strong scent of rose filled the shed. "Help yourself to some rosewater shortbread. Freshly baked." I broke off a piece and popped it in my mouth. "Take some back for Aunty Inez. She adores my shortbread."

"So," I prompted, dragging the syllable out.

"So?" they replied.

"The shed is only for the most serious of conversations. What's the matter?"

"Oh, you've caught me. I've brought you here today because I am proud to announce that I ... have finally changed the tablecloth."

I looked down. The tablecloth really was different. I'd been seeing familiar yellow chevrons since my first invite to the shed when I had just moved to the village at eight years old. Now, nearly six years later, baby blue butterflies danced across the brown fabric and ... they really were dancing! Their wings flitted as they flew about the cloth. I met Wren's eyes once more. "Did you enchant this? I'd say I'm impressed, but I expect nothing less from you." They smiled with satisfaction. "But really, what did you need to talk about?"

They took a moment to swallow a piece of shortbread before answering. "Well, I was going to work up to the topic through various bits of small talk, but since you want me to cut to the chase"—they pulled a small glass bottle out of the pocket of their skirt—"I brewed this new potion. And I thought, hey, maybe this one could help Alix with a certain problem." I cocked an eyebrow. Wren sighed. "Look, it's a ... memory potion, of sorts."

"It can help me remember things?"

They snorted. "No potioneer's powerful enough to fix your bad memory. No, when you take a sip, it'll tell you if someone specific is thinking about you at that moment." They paused. "Am I explaining this right?"

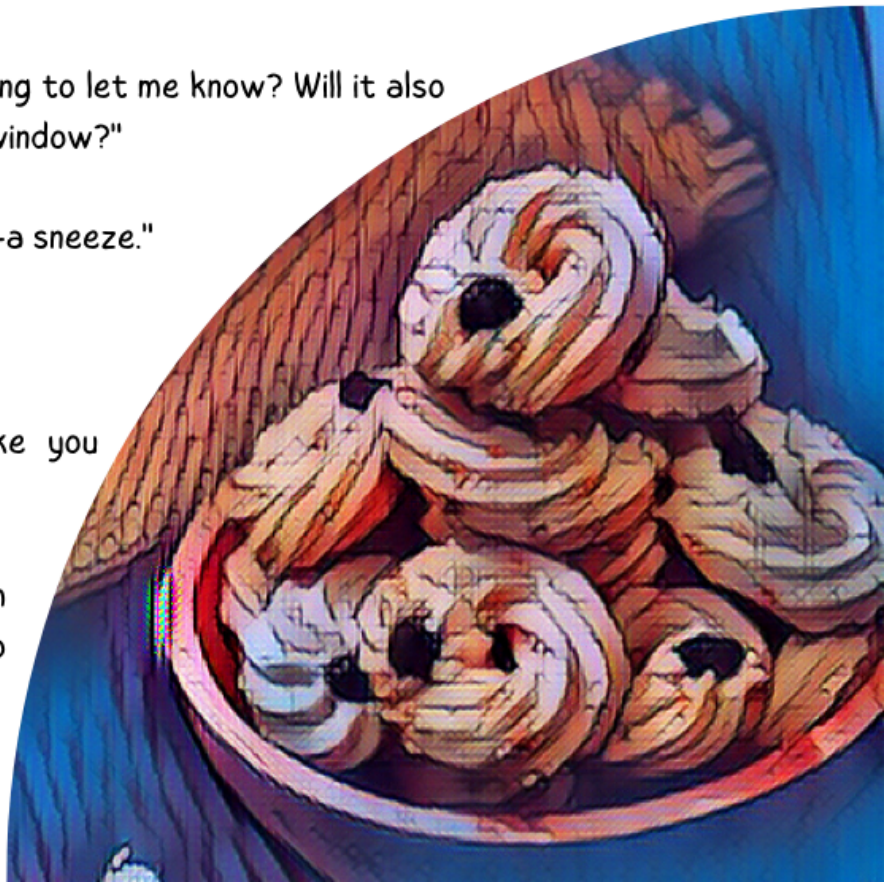
"Yes, but how exactly is the potion going to let me know? Will it also shout at me from outside my cottage window?"

"Let it go, Al. It'll give you an indicator—a sneeze."

"The potion's going to sneeze at me?"

"No, you dimwit, the potion will make you sneeze."

"Right. Obviously. And, uh, what problem exactly is this potion supposed to tackle?"



"So you're going to pretend you haven't been constantly thinking about Coy for the past month straight?"

"No—yes—no, I haven't!"

"Denial is a river in Egypt, Alix."

"Well, maybe I'm just a good friend and you aren't. I just want our new neighbour to be comfortable. However, if said new neighbour doesn't like me, that's his problem. I don't care." I mentally scolded the heat that was working its way up my neck.



"Sure, honey," they said, shoving the bottle into my hands. The pale green liquid swished around inside. "Here. Don't take more than a tiny little sip at a time. If you sneeze after taking a sip, he's thinking of you. And if you don't sneeze, he isn't. But I'm sure ..." Wren paused. My eyes travelled from Wren to the bottle and back again. They pouted, their shoulders slumping. "Don't you trust me, Al? I know this one's more complicated than what I usually do, but you know I wouldn't give you something unless I was sure it worked."

"Hey, it's not like that. But it's just ... I probably won't sneeze at all. I mean, I already know he just thinks of me as "the one from the purple cottage", but it'll hurt to crush the sliver of hope I have that maybe he knows I exist."

After a few beats of silence, Wren spoke again. "Take a sip, Alix."

I pulled the cork out with a sigh, pouring a careful amount of the green tea-resembling drink into my mouth. I swallowed, pushing the cork back in again. It tasted like green tea too. "Wren, are you sure this isn't just ... just green ..." My eyes screwed shut and my head tilted back and ... "ACHOO!"

The brown of Wren's eyes got just a little bit lighter, the way it always did when they were excited. "Bless you!" They got up and left the shed through the back door with a slam.



I stood in front of the shed, bracing myself for Wren's interrogation. I raised my fist to knock on the door, but the door swung open before my knuckles could strike. By some miracle, I managed to stop my hand from punching Wren square in the face. In a fraction of a second, they pulled me into the shed and slammed the door shut behind me.

"So?" they asked. Their eyes looked like pools of honey.

"Here's your bottle," I said, handing it over.

Snatching it from my hands, they examined it, eyes widening when they realised it was empty. "All of it? Really?"

I shrugged. "Can you blame me?"

Wren's signature toothy grin made an appearance. "Your nose is so red."

"What can I say? I've been doing a lot of sneezing. Think I might have an allergy."

"Please tell me you're going to do something about this. Promise me you're going to go talk to Coy tomorrow."

"Already did," I replied as nonchalantly as possible, pretending to be very interested in the new tablecloth.

"You what?!"

"Details later. I have a game of dice with Auntie Inez to get back to, one that you very rudely interrupted with your outside-cottage-screaming. Farewell." I started to back up towards the door.

"Wait! I, uh. Before you go. You know Wril? The plant I grow in the pot outside?"

"Yes?"

"You know how I had to put it near the back door because it kept making you sneeze?"

Realisation settled over me. "Wren."

"So I ..." they started. I had a suspicion that they were about to start what I called "bullet train-ing". "I may or may not have just made tea out of it and given it to you because I knew Coy wanted to talk to you but he was too shy to but," they took a deep breath, "but I really wanted to set you up so I needed you to make the first move, I'm so sorry!" I opened my mouth to retort, but they were already pushing me out of the door. "Hey, weren't you going to leave just now? You have a game of dice to get back to? Go do that. Toodaloo!" And then the door slammed.

It took a bit to process the many things that had been said in the past two minutes.



The door to Wren's cottage was already unlocked when I arrived. I pushed it open cautiously, more out of habit than anything else. They were placing orange flowers into a vase in the centre of the table. They clashed terribly with the yellow tablecloth and the brown and blue of the chairs, but it added to the Wren-like charm of their new home. Their head whipped up when they heard my footsteps. "Alix! Al, come sit down. Do you like the flowers? I've been growing them new. What should I name them?"

"I don't know, Wren. But I do think they're gorgeous, unless they'll make me sneeze," I replied, sitting on one of the chairs.

They giggled. "Right! That reminds me," they said, sitting down across from me. They gathered another bunch of orange flowers, starting to wrap the stems in a piece of cloth. "I was teaching some of the children about this one potion they were having trouble with, and Vaxon sneezed, right? And then Ell goes, 'Oh, you sneezed, that means Jersey's thinking about you!' And then I realise—that's your story! It's like it sprang little legs and it's been running around the village telling all the children about itself. It's like a fairy tale they all believe in. Do you think Wren from seven years ago would believe me if I told them that they indirectly went down in history?"

I smiled. "I think you would. You think quite highly of yourself."

"As I should." Wren examined the finished bouquet in their hands. "Maybe I should name these after my first-ever success in matchmaking. What do you think about … Coylix? Or Alloy?"

I pressed my fingers to the bridge of my nose. "Please, don't."



The (Bad) Advice Column

Your guide to spectacular writing disasters

How (NOT) to Write Poetry

Himarsha Mulchandani

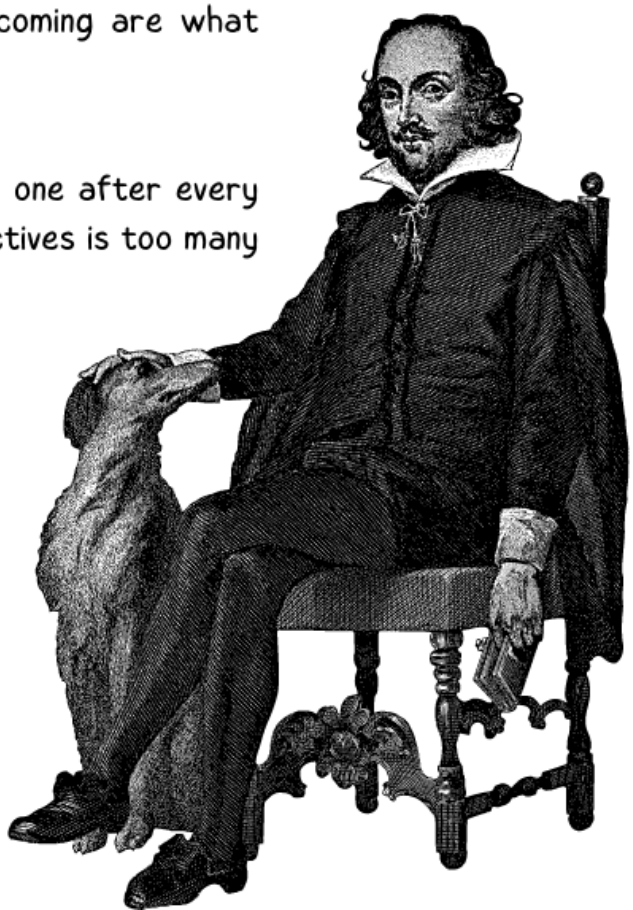
1. Adorn your poems with sesquipedalian words that will make your reader swoon at the beauty of the sheer sight of your work. Make them long, intense and so hard to understand that you'll probably get crowned the new Shakespeare of 2023.

2. Fill your poems with double meanings. Reading between the lines and being hit with turns and twists they didn't see coming are what readers enjoy the most!

3. Use lots of adjectives and adverbs. In fact, use one after every one word. Remember—no number of **beautiful** adjectives is too many **gorgeous** adjectives.

4. Nothing matters more
than rhyming to the core,
Don't bother if it feels forced
or if it's a Rime Riche at its worst
Just — Make. It. Rhyme.
And add some thyme.

Beautiful, isn't it?



5. Use words that don't exist. It's always fun to spice things up and make the reader feel like their vocabulary is downright despicable.

6. Don't forget to make the meter inconsistent. Inconsistency is the new trend, folks — just like our perfect lifestyles.



7. Try as much as you can to stray away while writing poems. Don't ever get to the point. Mince your words, make them seem like they're the prettiest chunk of gibberish. It's poetry you're writing, after all.

I sincerely hope,
That you think this is dope,
With all of my bestest wishes and heartiest regards,
Write a poem like this, and you're surely a huge dotard.

Wish Rate: ₹1 Only





Avani Gupta

"It's my birthday tomorrow! I guess I should be happy, but it just feels so … empty without Dadi. There's an ancient saying here in Spain, that if you wish on a peseta, it always comes true. Dadi's taken me to the same old, stone fountain on every single one of my birthdays since I was two. It's always been the one thing I'd wait all year for," Zoya told me.

She tells me everything. She's never had any friends other than me. Her dad succumbed to cancer when she was just two months old, and her mom works two jobs. I just wish I could talk back to her, but instead, I'm stuck in this stupid little sketchbook.

"So … 26th March, 2027. My birthday. It feels like it was just yesterday that Dadi and I came here. Okay, anyway, here goes," said Zoya, tossing in the coin as she closed her eyes and mumbled her wish.



AAHHH!!! WHAT'S HAPPENING?! OW! Where am I? Is someone tearing up my page? Am I dead? Did Zoya spill something on me (again)?

"ZEKE?!"

"ZOYA?!"

"AHHH!"

"AHHH!"



I yelled, then she yelled, then I yelled again, then she yelled again, th—well, the point is, it went on for a while until finally, we ran out of breath.

"No, no, no, this can't be real. Zeke, I'm imagining you, right? Right? Could it be …? Did my wish—"

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"I—I wished—I wished for you to come alive," said Zoya.

"Out of all the things you could've wished for, you wished for me, Zeke Zixon Zekus, to come alive …?"

"I didn't think it'd come true!"

"Can anybody else see me? Can they hear me?"

"Oh no … I hope not, because if they can, I imagine it'll be … challenging to explain to someone how a 2D pen sketch of a pink zombie coloured in with alcohol markers, the size of a pineapple, is standing in front of them. I mean, saying this aloud, even I think I sound like I should be living in a mental asylum," said Zoya.



"Don't worry, you don't have to be quiet, Mamá's barely ever home."

"I know—you've gone on and on ranting about it so many times. So. Many. Also, your apartment looks so different in person!"

"Wait, what do you mean I've told you so many times? And what do you mean 'in person'?"

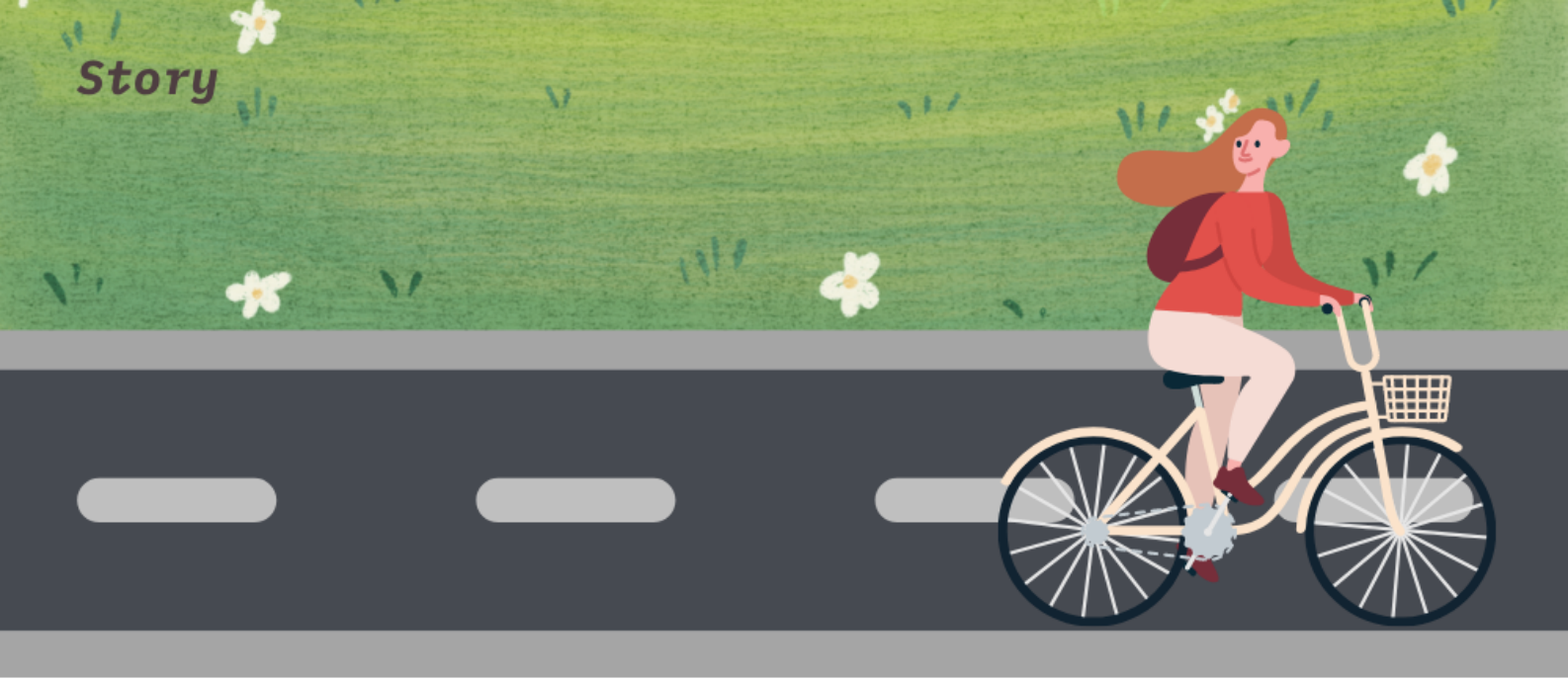
"Uh … I mean you talk to me about 25 times a day, and you've told me Every. Single. Thing."

"You could hear me?!"

"Of course I could!" I said, annoyed at how slow she could be sometimes.

"That's why you didn't ask any questions when you … showed up. I told you everything."





30 minutes later:

"Absolutely not, Zeke! We still don't know whether the rest of the world can see you. And if they can, what then?"

"Nobody's going to see me—I'll stay in your bag, I promise. And if they do, just stare at them funny, and make them feel like they've gone crazy," I said matter-of-factly.

"You're a pink zombie hiding in a bag in middle school, and considering your inability to stop talking, I think there's a good chance of someone noticing you."

After a few hours of arguing about whether or not I could go to her school with her, despite my commendable persuasive skills, Zoya didn't listen. But I wasn't going to give up. I'm a zombie of many talents, so why waste that abundance of pure talent, right?

Getting into Zoya's school wasn't too difficult because she cycles there and back every day. All I had to do was get on her cycle and hide in her bag right after she got on, and stay there until she reached. Once I was there, she couldn't really take me back. But getting in and out of a really tiny bag filled with who knows what wasn't as quick a job as I thought. In the end, I did manage to pull it off, thanks to my genius and totally not accidental idea of setting off the fire alarm in the flat. Anyway, once we reached, I just stayed in her bag ... until she came to her locker and opened it.

"Surprise ...!" I squeaked softly.

Zoya can look really intimidating when she wants to. She quickly zipped up her bag, and started walking. I prepared myself for her wrath and put on my most innocent "please don't kill me" face.

Phew! Glad that's over. You do not want to see angry Zoya. After a prolonged and intense lecture, she zipped me up in the bag again. It's awful here. It's a dismal, pathetic and extremely tiny prison, with the putrid odour of rotten banana peels. Zoya has millions of banana peels and gum wrappers in this bag. Millions. There's one exceptionally small hole in the corner, just big enough for me to look through. If Zoya was going to be like this, I would too.

I started making an awful din while jumping up and down. This had better get her attention! But it wasn't merely Zoya's attention I caught. Her whole class was staring at her.

"ZEKE!" Zoya said in a hushed tone. Infuriated, she shoved the bag under the chair.

"Miss Agarwal, is there something in your bag? And what are you chewing?" her teacher inquired.

"It's just … uh … you see, I love mice and this one was so adorable and they're such misunderstood creatures, like in Cinderella! And, what am I chewing? Um … water?"

"ZEKE!! THANKS TO YOU, EVERYONE THINKS I HAVE A MOUSE IN MY BAG! It's bad enough that nobody likes me as it is!"

"Oops. Also, sorry, but I'm chewing water? Really?"

After a tedious, gruelling day, we finally made it to the end of the last period. It was only then that I noticed a coin in Zoya's bag, which brought me back to the question, how exactly did this particular wish of Zoya's come true? We'd been so caught up with everything else, we didn't even think of how the wish came true in the first place! So, as soon as the bell rang, we headed straight to the fountain to look for the coin she'd chucked in. Surely, the coin was magical!

"It shouldn't be too hard to find it because I threw in a rupee. Usually, I use a peseta, but this time …" said Zoya.

After a few minutes of frantically scanning the euro and peseta filled water, we found it—Zoya's grandma's enchanted rupee.

"Do you think we can wish on a coin twice?" Zoya asked.

"Try it!"

"Okay, um … I wish for Zeke Zixon Zekus to develop the ability to stop talking when asked to."

"Pfft! No magic coin can shut me up." I grinned. Life ahead looked fun.

Rebus Answers

All Things Magical (p. 15)

Zayn Manik

Sarah saw a phoenix fly
William heard a yeti cry
Olivia ate a griffin's egg
Kevin touched a unicorn's leg
Emma has brewed a potion before
Benjamin did all these things and more.

The Best Time of the Year (p. 15)

Samanvitha Prasad

The best time of the year, the summer holidays are here
Swimming, playing, videos and fun, and no exams to fear
Sleep in late, get up late and laze around all day,
These are the summer holidays, stretching from April to May.

How Not to Catch a Thief (p. 24)

Advika Gupta

If a thief were about to break into the house,
We'd be running around, making a din.
But my dog would be sitting, wagging her tail,
And inviting the thief, "Come on in!"

What You Knead to Know Before Making Pizza (p. 24)

janvi barman

Making decent pizza is always such a bore
Even though its taste makes my little heart soar
Kitchen counters are covered in flour
And the dough needs to rise for an entire hour
While I'm left to do nothing but wait
And eat the cheese that was too hard to grate
But it's all worth it at the end of the day
When I get to eat my pizza, wouldn't you say?

Hindustani Dogs (p. 24)

Avani Gupta

In every gully or street, beware,
Because no bike or cycle they spare.
India's very own local street choir,
Going around peeing on every tyre,
If anything's missing—slipper or shoe,
Every time there's one instead of two,
You know exactly whom to blame,
They are forever Hindustan's fame!

Busy Us (p. 45)

Taksh Mittal

Tom drank a glass of water
Darsh read a book
Kelvin ran to take a shower
Harry went to cook
Rookie made a Lego tower
while I caught the crook!

Enjoy, Engage, Entertain! (p. 45)

Kenisha Katiyar

Aditi likes to go riding
Siddhi loves yell and fight.
Tara likes to dance and sing
Asmi likes to play at night.
Jiya likes to draw on a chart,
Aashmi likes to go on a flight.
And me, well, for my part,
I like to give others a fright!

The Snowman (p. 45)

Ruhaan Garg

I made a snowman when it snowed,
I used a carrot for his nose,
I put a jacket on his back,
and on his face, I put a hat.
A rabbit munched the snowman's nose,
But I scared it with a water hose!
Feeling proud, I tap my shoulder,
then I head inside as it's getting colder.



Guest Sessions





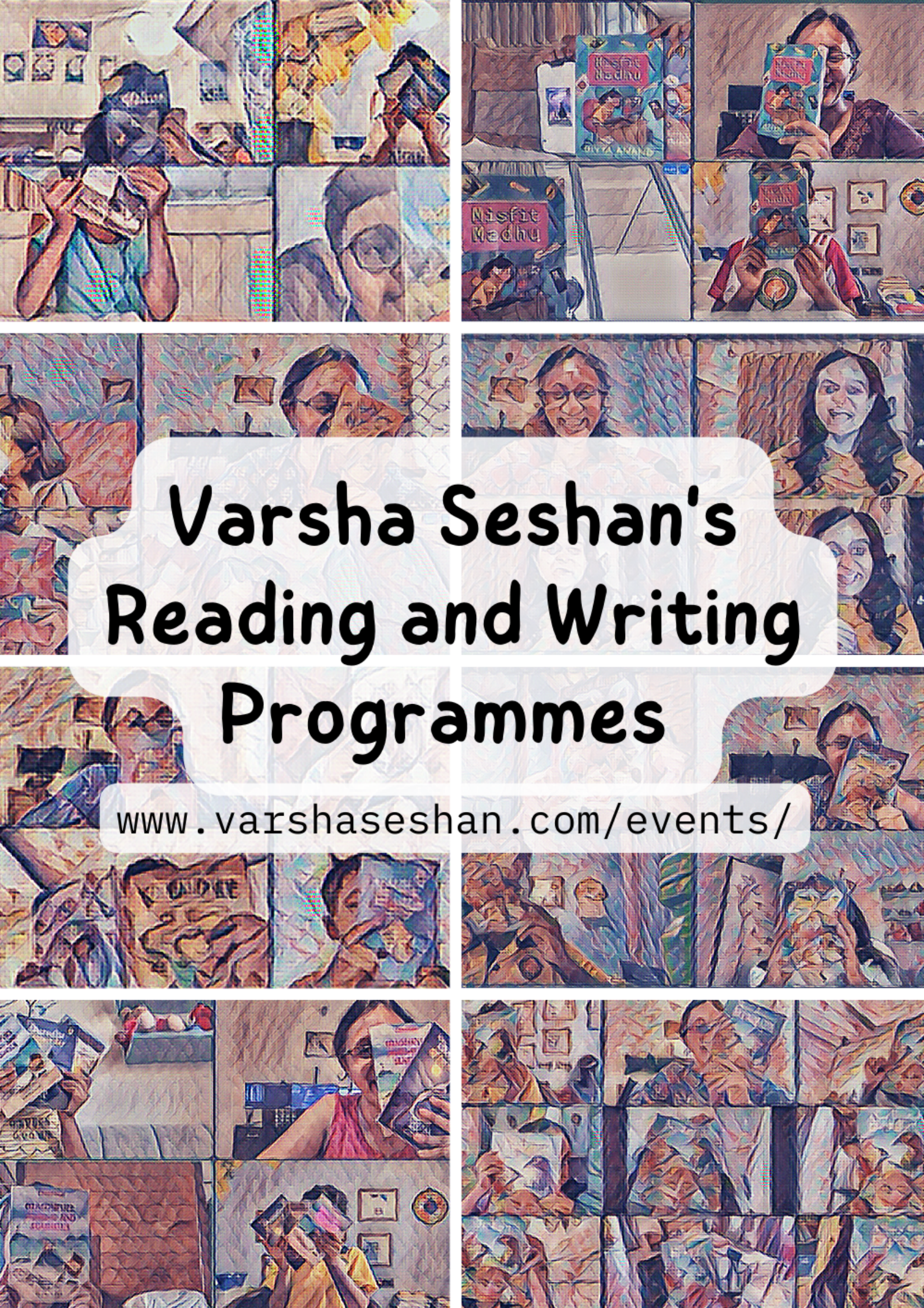


Purple sea and pink sky, Nothing in art is a Lie

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