

You must not ever stop being whimsical. - Mary Oliver

Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about. - Oscar Wilde.

WHIMSY

THE SBS MAG



note to readers

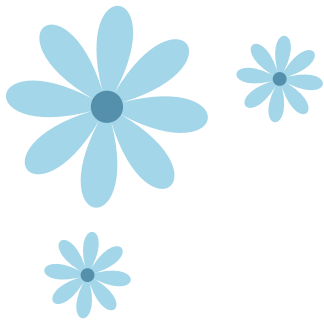
Extravagant, fanciful, or excessively playful expression that utilizes not an insignificant amount of exaggeration — that is defined as whimsy. And the last feature, 'exaggeration', finds its exultation in the fact that this section is titled, 'Note to Readers' — when, in fact, the singular noun would be much more appropriately employed here. Such is my commitment to the theme.

After the last issue on 'Identity' and an upcoming pamphlet on 'Solitude', the editors thought that some light-heartedness, humour and absurdism would be extremely refreshing in the in-between — until we noticed how difficult it is for one to be humorous. The average SBS-going creative is allured by anthologies of affectations but exhibits insufficient impulse to write or draw with wit. However, we do have some extremely talented contributors who we can and always *have* drawn upon for work in times such as these: we'd like to extend our thanks to Chat GPT, Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) and Canva AI for their works.

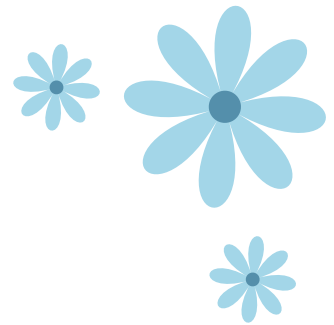
Propriety and politeness demand that I clarify the above statements as being humorous, and draw your attention – instead – to the fact that several budding writers and some other simply germinating ones, have contributed their work to this edition. Encourage their growth: read it.

As per usual, this issue also features works that do not comply with the theme.





editorials



Gia Arora

Every time I attempt to begin writing this editorial, I start by defining whimsy. But it has been defined enough times, hasn't it? On posters imploring students for submissions, in long WhatsApp texts linking Canva-made illustrations. Definitions and explanations and for example, a well-known whimsical piece of literature is... awe-inspiring, wonder-striking, out of this world and out of any other.

But at its core, whimsy is something else.

Whimsy is lying in the grass and gazing up at the sky, half-blinded by the sun, finding faces in the clouds. Whimsy is wading through a stream, reeds gnarling around your toes, the wind alive in your hair. Whimsy is a perfect afternoon, a garland of wisteria, a song you can't remember hearing but can't get out of your head.

Whimsy can't be defined, because it's always something more. The closest definition I can find for whimsy would therefore be this: undefinable.

Durga Vasumati

Dear Reader (assuming this is the reader and not the wall of an infinitely long folder in the cloud storage of someone's device),

There are many whimsical things that I often think about. However, unquestionably the award of being most whimsical is reserved for my unwavering belief that the SBS Mag is more than an unopened PDF file. I think the entire idea of a school magazine is too whimsical, too unrealistic and fantastical in a place where everyone is so occupied with their immediate realities to even think about the reality of someone else.

Everywhere I go, I see people submerged in their worlds of fantasy, their entire lives dissolved within the whimsical idea of their existence. It's hilariously puzzling how we exist on one day and wake up the next day to keep existing like before; wrapped in our own realities, bustling about in our own blurry rabbit holes.

As an unopened PDF file, the SBS Mag holds the great responsibility of 'being a platform where students can express their ideas and create an environment that nurtures imagination'. This whimsical responsibility would only apply to a time when pigs can fly...

So as an unopened PDF file, while the SBS Mag sits still in the dark crevices of the cloud, we can hope that one day it may be cherished by someone under the age of 30 once they get out of their fantastical rabbit holes.

poetry





FLAWED FANTASY

Raghav Malik

Whimsy and fantasy and damning desire
Flourish in a frenzy of hearts lit on fire.
Swivelling and twirling around the ballroom
In coats and in crowns and boisterous costume.

Haughty makeup and hair as big as the tallest towers,
Lofty jewels and diamond-shaped flowers.
Freckled in blurry blush and shiny sparkles,
Flying in frivolous fortunes and dreamy marvels.

Dragons and ivy and pink-purple skies,
Glitter and mirrorballs and star-touched surprises.
Under starry eyes and foggy nights,
Hiding scary lies in groggy lights.

Pretending, dissembling, whisking worries away,
Chittering, smothering, extensive disarray.
Corsages and rain-soaked gowns swish and splash,
with remorse and pain, crowns cling and crash.

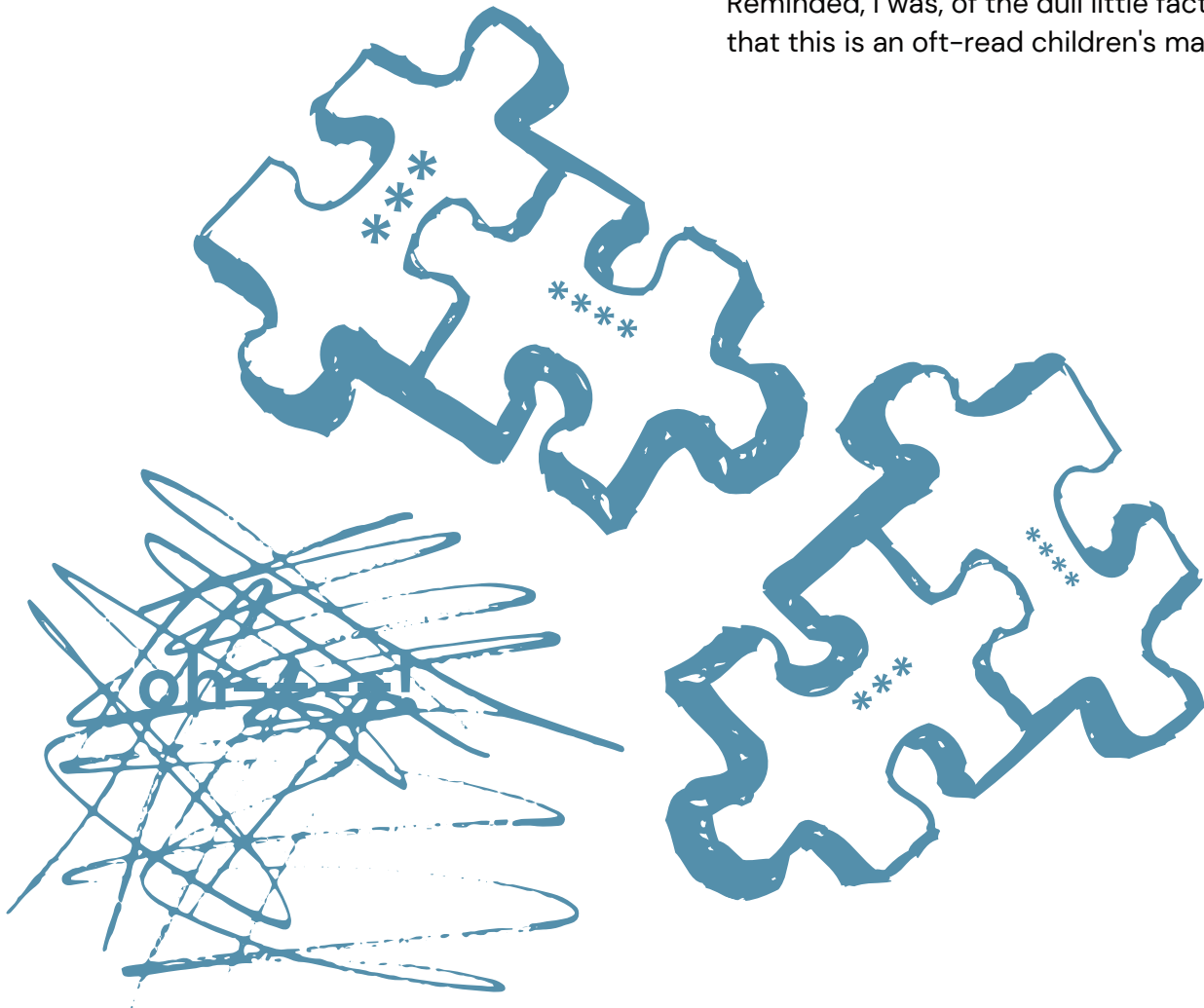
Fairy tales had become a painful reality,
Fell from grace, into stone, crushing gravity.
Dreamed, dreamed, into heart-stopping oblivion
Screamed, screamed, standing there -
Stunned.



OH HORROR!

Disclaimer: This poem may be sensitive to some readers

I know that I must restrain the crass
that threatens my image as an upright lass
But the car is in motion, the foot's on the gas
and there's nothing to do but to wipe your as...tronomical surprise at the fact
that I almost went there
but I came right back.
Reminded, I was, of the dull little fact
that this is an oft-read children's mag.





When Pigs Can Fly

Digital Collage

Made by the school magazine's most reliable and prolific contributor: Canva.

"When pigs fly" is an adynaton, a way of saying that something will never happen. The phrase is often used for humorous effect or to scoff at over-ambition. No, it does not deal with aviation, meat preferences or the porcine district of the heavenly skies. But it is, in our opinion, a perfect picture of whimsy.



by Aniyora Shukla Tiwari



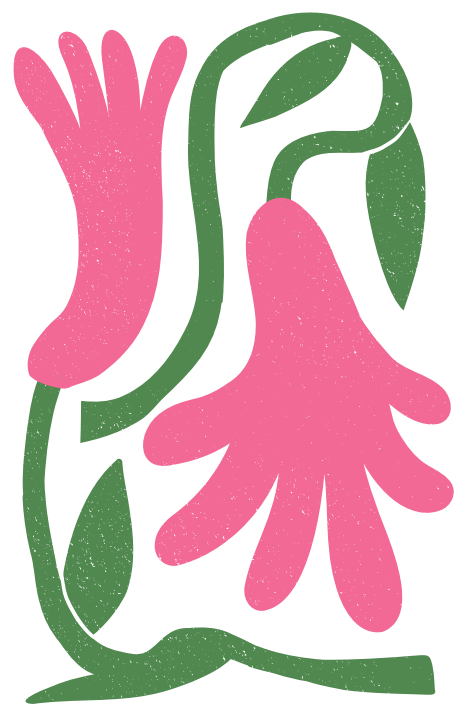
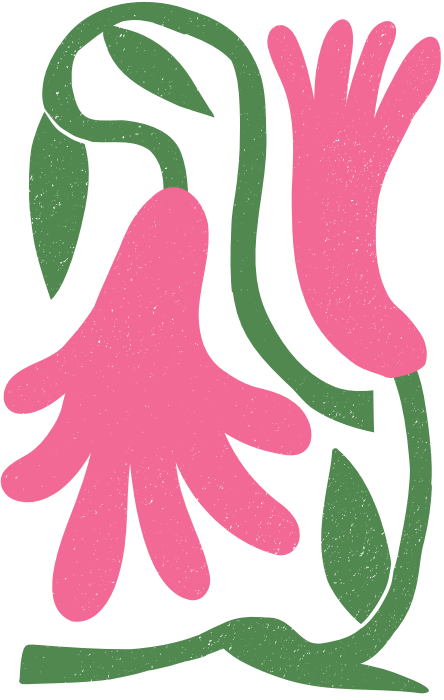
untitled



It's raining mildly and there's a soft ring of the wind chime outside; my oily hands reach out to grip the crinkly soda can that I sip whilst staring at my phone filled with too-good pictures of too-good things.

August: There go your wet cheeks and the (numerous) promises you made, they follow each other in a line and leave with a door slightly open and disturbed pillowcases. Maybe the rain is calmer because it's your heart that's ingesting the world's sorrows, the heaviness you drag every day along with your worries. But oh, won't you keep living? Won't you still love the crowded room for its comfort and watch the sad souls outside mirroring your own self? Won't you keep hoping for better, and watch its possibility flicker away like a flame on a candle? The niche is adorned by wax droplets that refuse to leave, when will you stop?

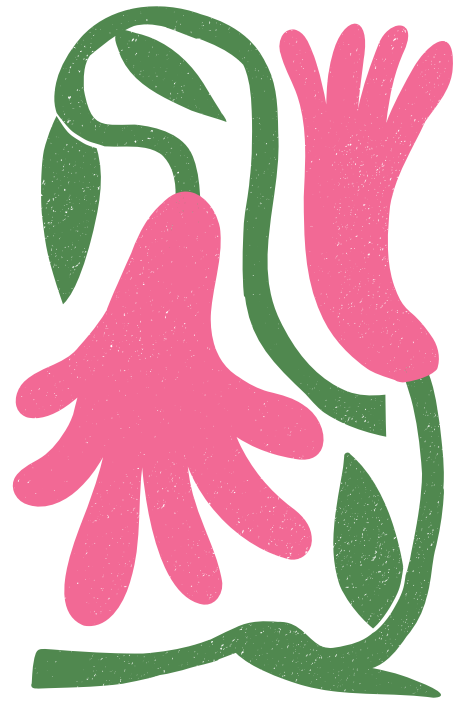
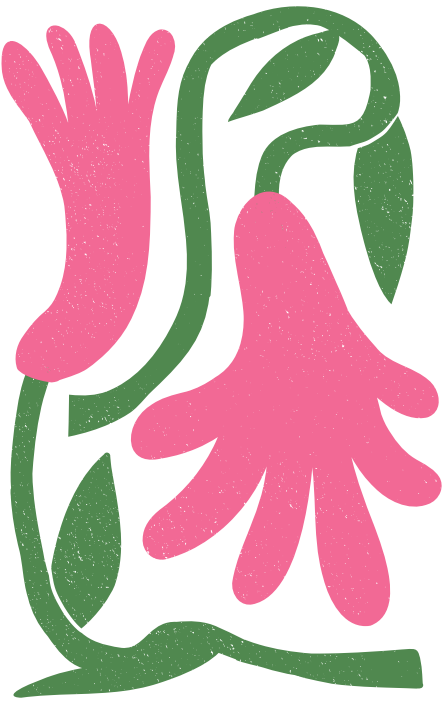
Devleena Dahiya



untitled

Do not stand at his grave and weep
He is not there. He did not sleep.
That silken tinkling of water in a cave,
who wants you all to be fiercely brave –
He will appear to fight off your fears
So don't stand there with your unshed tears
He is the gentle tapping of monsoon rain,
present in our hearts as a hurricane.
So don't you stand at his grave and cry
He is not there. He did not die.

Parissa Sikand





articles

Taylor Swift: The Mastermind of Contemporary Pop Culture

by Tara Vij Datta

Taylor Swift is an American singer who has cultivated a large following over the years. Swift is known for her versatility, and stylistic transformations across different albums, known as “eras”. By creating a different image of herself in each album, she has managed to develop prodigiously as an artist. By presenting herself in a different aesthetic every album, each following the current trend, she manages to keep up with the times with a whimsical touch to each song, drawing fans’ attention and interest to her music.

Using her stylistic changes and touch of whimsy in each album, Swift attracts fans to her music. Her first, self-titled debut album in 2006’s lead single, “Tim McGraw” was her first Billboard Hot 100 Entry. In this era, she usually wore sundresses, hats, ripped jeans, and cowboy boots, representing her youthful innocence. This was following the early 2000s country aesthetic that some artists adapted. Her style and wardrobe was a building block to her eras, often defining them as a whole; for example, her 2017 album “Reputation” adopted a more gothic approach, garnering fans’ attention. A far cry from her early 2000s country aesthetic, her wardrobe mainly consisted of black clothes, straight hair, and black lipstick, following the rising trend of embracing more grunge-y visuals. This change was more than welcome by her supporters, gaining instant support and love for her new style and music. It is evident that Swift’s changes in wardrobe are purposeful, a tactful and strategic move that helps her keep up with the times.

The Eras Tour is Taylor’s sixth and most ongoing concert tour, starring all her albums, dubbed “a journey through her eras”. It consists of 131 concerts across 5 continents, making Swift the first female artist to garner 1 billion dollars from a tour. Her tour has cultivated multiple fans, with tickets selling out almost instantly at every new concert.

She has many outfit changes between songs, representing how she uses her outfits and wardrobe to “build” an album. The special effects and details have earned bucketloads of praise, with people saying they were mesmerised by the attention to detail. Her touch of whimsy and visually pleasing effects has cultivated her a large following.

Taylor’s whimsy is what attracts fans to her albums, being one of the main reasons for her success. Another mastermind of whimsy, Oscar Wilde, was a famous Irish poet in the Victorian era. One can say that Oscar Wilde is to literature in the Victorian age as Taylor Swift is to pop music today. Wilde once said “You can never be overdressed or overeducated”. This applies to Taylor Swift, often using her wardrobe as building blocks to each album. Using her style and aesthetic in each album to keep up with the times, in order to not “die” as an artist, Taylor Swift truly is a mastermind of whimsical pop culture.



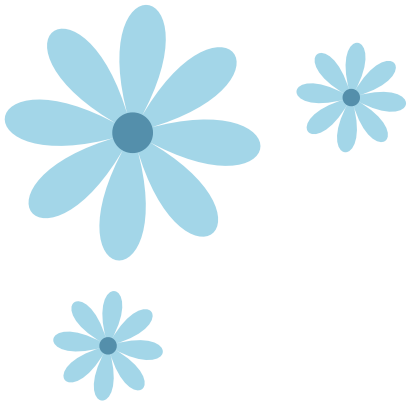


NOYONIKA 58

by noyonika vohra

other





a city underwater

Zoya Verma

When the fog settles in, the pools of reflection blur. The shadows creep backwards and the soft splashes of the water is all you can hear. Streetlights glow quieter, paler, the fading aura of a dying firefly, before eventually shutting down, and in a city underwater, the world concealed by the layers of mist, there's nothing wrong at all.

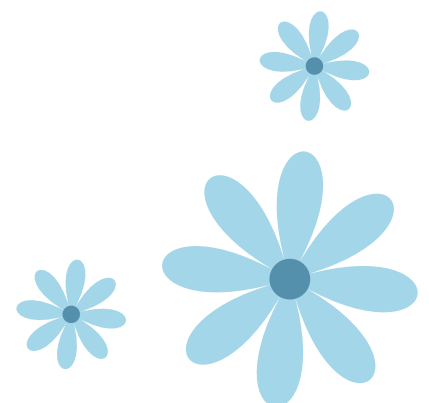
It first started to rise a few months ago, the water levels. The bridges, each made of marble, were built last month, the same time the houses started going under. People walk on the endless ramps, or paddle by on their little boats, and those who could not bear with it went under, becoming one with the floods.

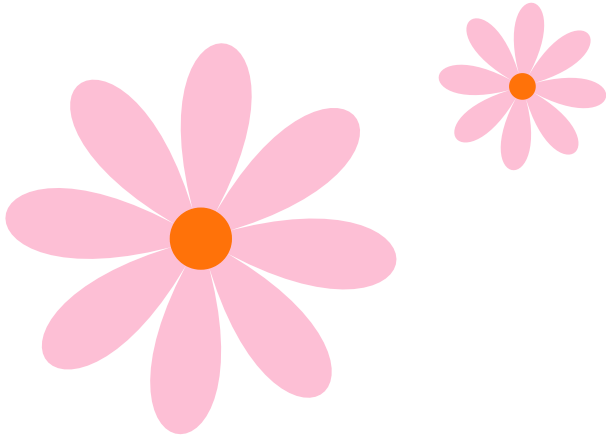
Perpetually dark, sometimes gray, few rays of sunlight ever slip in. When they do, the lit spots are avoided, an allergy to the people so prone to the dark. They start using only blue and green lights.

This is a pretty sight, in fact, with the carvings on the bridges, the illumination that reminds them even more of being underwater. An Atlantis of their very own. Then rain becomes a regular thing. Perfection of some strange sort.

Until the fog parts and the reek of toilet water creeps up around the city. Those discarded pieces of trash wash up into a pile, and the corpses from before float to the surface, begging for attention. The stilts they put the houses on are rotting, and the families come back home — a broken down pile of wood and bricks, remainders of the life they lived. No one mourns, the image was bound to collapse eventually.

A city underwater is better than any city at all.



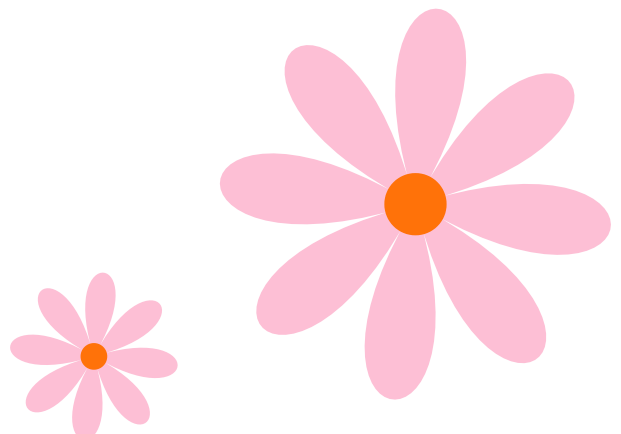


untitled

Mothers and daughters existing as wretched mirrors of each other. I am all you could have been and you are all I might be. ~ Anonymous

Don't tell me the story about how much the sun loved the moon, how he died every night to let her breath. Tell me the story of how much the mother loved the daughter, how she suffocated every night to see her shine. When you think of your mother, she is wearing an apron, holding a knife. She is in the kitchen and the kitchen is the heart of the house and yours was always bleeding.

I point, see her reflection in my eyes—a chorus of colours, green as broken grass, black holes sucking in planets with their destructive beauty, soft as crashing ocean waves. I say “hey, there you are.” What are the chances? You were my mother and you couldn't be my mother and I was your daughter and I couldn't be your saviour.





running

by Akaisha Aggarwal

While it was said; "it's better to burn out than fade away.", to burn out is to be engulfed in the flames inside of yourself, to let them consume your entire body and soul. Till there is nothing left but ash. The world expects you to run at its pace, never bothered to ask, "Hey, you look tired, do you need a break?" You are forced to run at a full sprint, always on the lookout for the next thing to do. You're so busy chasing your dreams that you forget what they are and why you're doing this. And one day you wake up and realize that you've been running in circles for years. And when you do, the world doesn't congratulate you, but asks you "What's wrong with you?" And tries to swallow you in its fiery flames of fury yet again. But all you really had to do all this while, was just pause. Just pause, and look at what you are running after. Just pause and look at whatever awaits you at the finish line. Just pause, and take a look at who all you left behind. Just pause and look. Only for a minute. And realization will dawn on you. What you were looking for was in front of you the whole time.



THE WILDE SHRINE

A collection of Oscar Wilde's most flamboyant and whimsical quotes

In 1854 a child named Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills, later known as Oscar Wilde, was born to a wealthy family in Dublin, Ireland. Thanks to the family's resources, Oscar was able to attend some of the finest schools in Europe and eventually became a celebrated writer and playwright. He soon lived up to the surname he gave himself, and bestowed upon the world lasting works of fiction like "The Picture of Dorian Gray" and "The Importance of Being Earnest."

Oscar Wilde soon became the darling of London high society, and his razor-sharp wit was the stuff of legends. Although Wilde died penniless and disgraced in 1900, his clever quips still live on and continue to resonate even in today's modern world.

It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious.

Ah! Don't say you agree with me. When people agree with me I always feel that I must be wrong.

I don't want to go to heaven. None of my friends are there.

Everything in moderation, including moderation

I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I am saying



Education is an admirable thing. But it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.

I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train.

I can resist anything except temptation

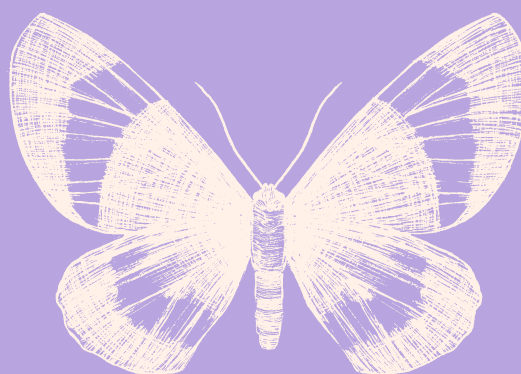
Mary Oliver

You must not ever stop being whimsical.

THE WORLD I LIVE IN

I have refused to live
locked in the orderly house of
reasons and proofs.
The world I live in and believe in
is wider than that. And anyway,
what's wrong with Maybe?

You wouldn't believe what once or
twice I have seen. I'll just
tell you this:
only if there are angels in your head will you
ever, possibly, see one.

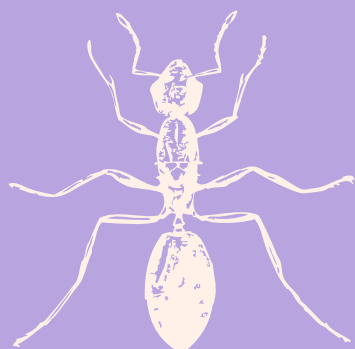


IN PRAISE OF CRAZINESS OF A CERTAIN KIND

On cold evenings
my grandmother,
with ownership of half her mind—
the other half having flown back to Bohemia—

spread newspapers over the porch floor
so, she said, the garden ants could crawl beneath,
as under a blanket, and keep warm,

and what shall I wish for, for myself,
but, being so struck by the lightning of years,
to be like her with what is left, that loving.



the humorous style of ogden nash

During his lifetime, Ogden Nash was the most widely known, appreciated, and imitated American creator of light verse, a reputation that has continued after his death. Few writers of light or serious verse can claim the same extensive dissemination of their poems that Nash's works enjoy, both with and without citation of the author.



Lines Indited With All The Depravity Of Poverty

One way to be very happy is to be very rich
For then you can buy orchids by the quire and bacon
by the flitch.
And yet at the same time people don't mind if you
only tip them a dime,
Because it's very funny
But somehow if you're rich enough you can get away
with spending water like money
While if you're not rich you can spend in one evening
your salary for the year
And everybody will just stand around and jeer.
If you are rich you don't have to think twice about
buying a judge or a horse,
Or a lower instead of an upper, or a new suit, or a
divorce,
And you never have to say When,
And you can sleep every morning until nine or ten,
All of which
Explains why I should like very, very much to be very,
very rich.

The Fly

God in His infinite wisdom made the fly
And then forgot to tell us why.

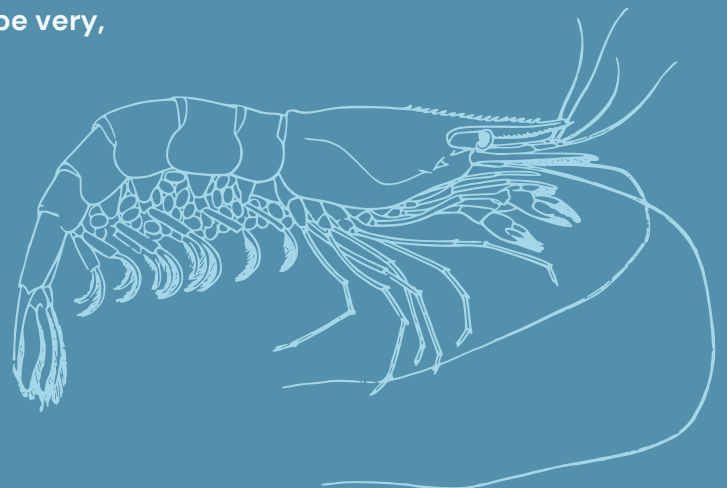
My Daddy

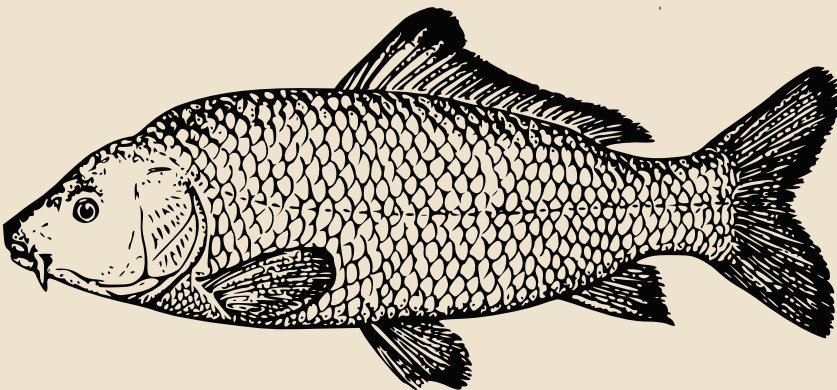
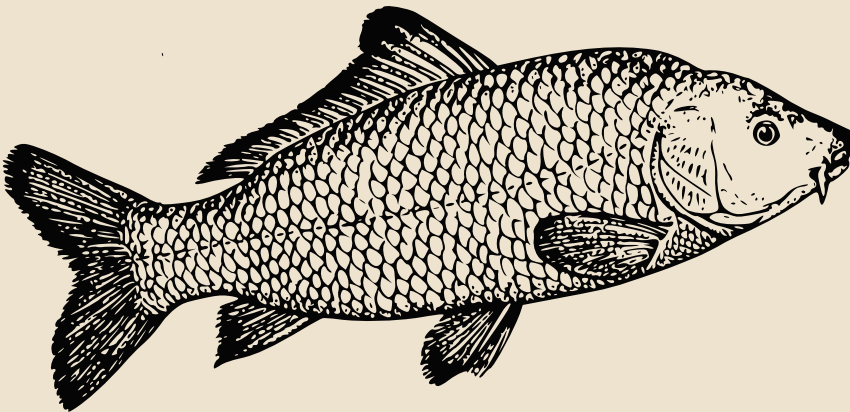
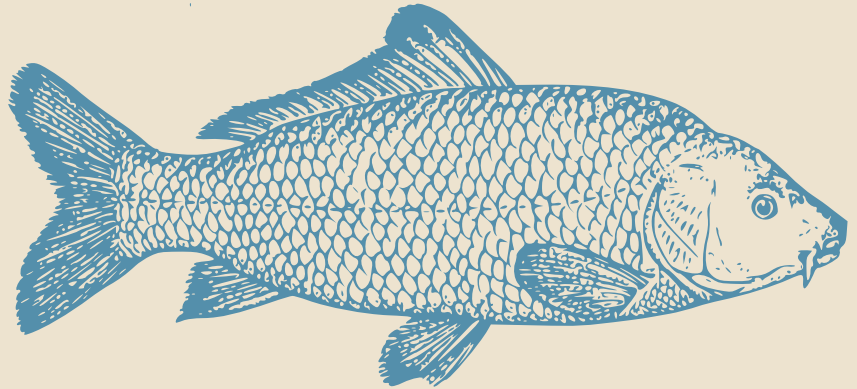
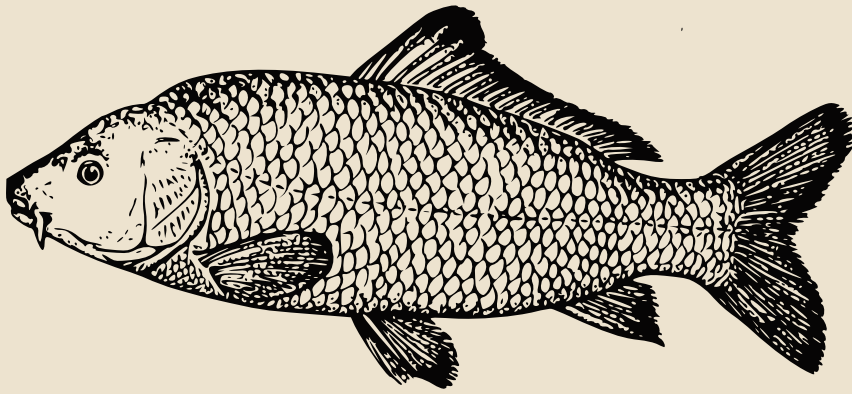
I have a funny daddy
Who goes in and out with me;
And everything that baby does
My daddy's sure to see.

And everything that baby says
My daddy's sure to tell;
You must have read my daddy's verse
I hope he fries in Hell!

The Shrimp

A shrimp who sought his lady shrimp
Could catch no glimpse
Not even a glimp.
At times, translucence
Is rather a nuisance.





THE END

Compiled by the SBS Mag Editorial Team 2023-24

Editing: Durga Vasumati, Gia Arora, Aniyora Shukla Tiwari

Mag Design & Editing: Yamini Bharadwaj