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Little Wangdoo do!
And Other Poems for Children

(excerpts)

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Author's Foreword

Many years back, on my sojourn in an absolutely charming little place called The Acres Wild in Coonoor, I happened upon a collection of poetry which turned my idea of poetry for children on its head.

Poetry had been a past time always. Subjective and mood dependent. Seeking rhymes. Seeking ideas. Seeking structure. It involved a time and a place. And thought. Not any fun.

And Children! What have they to do with all that? For them poetry should be fun! It should make them giggle. Tickle the funny bone! Make them laugh! Tease their imagination. And while doing so sneak in some information! Make them think too. Ask a few questions. They do ask many. Ask a few new ones!

So no planning. No conscious rhyming. No logic. If I pre-thought, the fun was lost.

It was a new kind of challenge. If there was a thought already, it was not the time to write. So poetry became sudden, whacky, off the hat, silly, funny, curious, hilarious. And wise. Just like its readers.

The poems in this book are all drop-of-the-hat poetry. If there is rhyme, it is complete happenstance. Information, wherever afforded, yes, has been checked and assured is not wrong.

My fervent desire is that my young audience enjoy and find reading a fun exercise. And if it brings a spontaneous giggle or a burst of laughter and a curious enquiry every now and then, I would have achieved my purpose. Some of it that is.

Sudha Madhavan

2.

The naughty Sun and the lady Moon

"The sun and moon upon a morn
When the day was early on
Saw each other across the hill
Ere the birds had their morning drill!

Cocking his brow the sun said
"I thought you would be in bed!
Fancy seeing you here ma'am!
It is just about to dawn
You are up late in the night
When the stars are shining bright!"

"You are in your glory too!
And I have held it back this long
Mam, I do so love you true!
But mine is a sorry plight
For when you're up here at night
I have moved on down under
And up there though you catch my light
Of you I don't get the merest sight!
How can this courtship ever bear fruit?
How can I better express my suit?"

Said then coyly our lady Moon
"Sir! we might be light years apart,
But you dwell inside my heart!
And when sir, you've gone down under
Your light does touch me, does it not?
My heart does beat sir, true for you!
I wax and wane with your light too!
And when you are in eclipse dear sir!
I do impose myself on you
And when I do occult you sir
'tis because of my love for you
As for when we are in SYZYG
We are in perfect harmony!"

Spoke the Sun then overwhelmed

"My lady, I am left quite speechless!
What can I say but this, to you
You are a brain and a beauty too!
And as long as I am around,
I shall lend my light to you!
Wax and wane m'am as you like
And grow into a full moon too!
And as for me, my dear mam!
I'd love those eclipses with you!"

11.

Bud and buddies

Upon a very hot summer's day
The plants in the pots looked mighty gay!
Guess whatever the reason could be?
They all had tiny new leaves, golly!

Freshly watered and dressed anew
With dulcet rays and the morning dew
Young copper-green shoots all about
And new buds and their buddies to tout

Some half open...some ready to go
With mischief they smiled to each other so!

"Look! I am Jasmine, White petals have I
And my scent... ! Just smell me guys!
I'll beat you all hollow any day
I am the queen (of flowers)... they say!

"Ho ho ! Just a minute, dear girlie!
The queen of flowers? I am sorry!
I am the rose bud...just getting ready
In a couple of days I'll be all glory!
A bright red blush is the colour I chose
Have a hundred more that everyone knows!

There's my cousin in pink, there's salmon too
And the dear white ones, they're my cousins too
My second cousin there in yellow you see!
And the bunch of little ones, goodness me!
My grand aunt, the dark red, is royalty
Blue blooded, a cut above the rest is she!
Any doubt you guys, who rules the rest?
I am the queen here as I am the best!"

Spoke up one timid plant quietly
From the far corner of the large balcony
He'd just been brought in tender and small
With a couple of shoots and not very tall
He had tiny green leaves, no buds to preen
The other guys took no note of him
Clearing his squeaky throat for all to hear
He said "All this fuss ...Oh dear! Oh dear!"
Can we not live in amity?
We all have our pluses and minuses you see?
Jasmine smells great tho' she is tiny
The rose she dazzles but she's thorny!
There's marigold here who hasn't spoken yet
With all the lofty talk, she is scared I bet!

There's Lemongrass there who smells heavenly
Though he doesn't know how to flower, you see!
There's Basil, there's Sage, there's Rosemary!
And their aromas?... God Almighty!
With pretty new shoots and scents to match
They are no less than you, my ladies!"

With that little talk there was a sudden hush
The talkative rose...she'd the grace to blush
Jasmine shook hands with the rosemary
And in a small voice said she was sorry...
As for grand aunt, the dark beauty...
She smiled at them all quite graciously
She would have shaken hands but she's rather thorny!

About the Author

Sudha Madhavan is a Freelance Children's and Travel Writer and Artist based in Bangalore, India. She has been publishing her travel and opinion pieces and poetry in leading publications since 2003. Her love for children's writing can be seen in her treasure trove of poems and stories for children, a love that blossomed during her decade-long experience as an Educator and Resource Person with leading NGOs in Bangalore. She combines her passion for history and culture with her nostalgia for the story-telling sessions of her childhood when her father would regale her on rainy nights on the balcony. Her children's poetry, inspired by the style of Shel Silverstein, is a heartwarming collection of quirky poems.

Sudha is also a talented artist specializing in the classical school of art through her oil-on-canvas paintings based on her travels. She has been widely exhibited in Bangalore and Mumbai at Alliance Francaise, National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai, PL Deshpande Art Gallery in Mumbai and Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (Bangalore), under her exhibit title 'The Traveler's Eye'.

Sudha has been an Educator and Consultant with leading NGO's like MAYA, a livelihood development initiative in Bangalore, involved in developing a network of artisans, workers and micro-entrepreneurs and Shishu Mandir, a children's welfare institution founded by Hella Mundhra. Sudha attended St. Thomas School, Shimla and studied English Literature and Education at Isabella Thoburn College and Lucknow University respectively.