

CAUSE AND EFFECT

and

OTHER SAWAAL SONU POEMS

Part 3



M.D.Swapna

CAUSE AND EFFECT

OTHER SAWAAL SONU POEMS'

Part 3

A collection of poems on Children

by M.D swapna

poems 1 to 52

Typesetting and Image alignment

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PREFACE

Part 1 of this series was called 'DESI DENNIS POEMS' and contained 26 titles. .Part 2 with 1 to 50 poems was named ' HOME ALONE AND OTHER SAWAAL SONU POEMS' In this part 3 there are 1 to 52 poems.

While the earlier two parts were truly 'Childish' in both content and language, in this collection some 'heavy' topics have crept in; Some were deliberately included with explanatory notes added. Please see the author's apology at the end of such poems.

I [the author] have purposely pushed in some concepts of science .These are simple observations which could be made by intelligent children. [all over the world children must have done so and told the elders around]. To help any elders who would like to explain to such children [who ask questions] brief notes are given.

Thus clear mention is made about : immunity, ecology, lateral inversion, Doppler effect, hydro energy etc.

Readers are once again requested to send suggestions, queries and such feedback. Also write for free soft or hard copies.

M.D.Swapna [pen-name]
February , 2024

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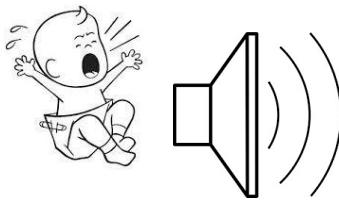
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1 ELECTRONIC NOISE

[Is there a law against recording one's own child's cries?]

1. Incessant crying of a child
is certainly a pain
like the incessant rain
No matter if the irritant
belongs to our household
or from the neighbourhood.
2. What if the continued cry
comes from a TV show?
Will you switch off and try
another channel, I want to know.
3. Could that be the choice
of the mother to record
the crying child's voice and
to play back? Oh! My lord!
4. How could a mother be playing a trick
on her child to make it more sick?
5. *Sawaal said,*
Crying or laughing; child is a child.
But electronic noise is always bad, awful.
Uncles should not treat this mild.
First stop it; then find if it is lawful.



2 HIDING IN THE HOUSE

[*Live with nature- why not?*]

1. Usually Sonu is sure
Only Sawaal has doubts.
This time on a tour
They were happy to be out.
2. Sonu was in the open, but was not
sure if she had already caught
the bugs from air or water
or due to weather which is hotter.
3. Why children, even adults
have their fears and doubts
about their health when on a trip
Extra carefulness can always help
4. Sonu and Sawaal had a session
of chatter about Sonu's obsession
Sonu: If birds and animals can drink water as it is
Why should we filter and boil water, tell me please.
5. Sawaal said: animals are tough
Like a horse, living in weather rough
I think man, hiding in his house
has become weaker than a mouse.
6. Sawaal said: Let us ask uncle
Which is better?
To live with nature
Or always cover up.

7. I do not remember
if they ever came
to me, an ignorant member
with their own family name.

8. Meanwhile I was struggling in my mind
for suitable simple words to find
to explain immunology and never mention
terms like vaccine or pathogen prevention.

9. Thank goodness they did not come
If they had come with their doubts to me,
With my half-baked theories I would have become
a liar or charlatan with jargon.

Water as a Microbial Habitat



3 SPIDER (1)

[Prank with a spider]

1. Sonu came with a doubt:
“How many legs to a spider?”
Sawaal said: “You can count eight;
To other insects he is a big brother”.
2. Sonu does not handle roaches
Thanks to elders’ reproaches.
Moths and other insects without name
are all part of her catching game.
3. But it really is a scare
To see so many in her care
and she puts one on my hand saying,
“See how it is able to stand.”
4. Soon I heard crockery crash in the kitchen
Sonu: “Come aunty, don’t be afraid;
Count the legs, it has only seven”
She was dangling a spider on a thread.

SPIDER (2)

1. The crash in the kitchen
needed some investigation
After the mess was cleaned up
and our aunty finally sat up.
2. After putting in her hand
a hot cup of tea
Sawaal, Sonu and the band
of children began enquiry.
3. “Now see aunty here
all the legs of the spider”
“Go away you devils” aunty said,



her face full of renewed fear
“Do not come anywhere near,”
holding, this time, the tea-cup tight
and both her eyes tightly shut.

4. “Look here, aunty” said Sawaal
in a level even tone
“No need to fear at all
this is only a smart phone”

5. Details of the accident scene
On the video mode could be seen
On the smart phone’s small screen
Sonu strutting around like a queen.

7. As aunty slowly opened her eyes
she could see the spider of enormous size
the most grotesque of symmetric forms
stretching and closing her slender arms.

8. Sonu said, after counting seven,
“here is number eight
Hanging from high heaven
from a loop of thread, tight.”

9. As our aunty closed with lids
on every open dish,
she said, “How I wish
for a house without any cruel kids.”

SPIDER (3)

1. Appendages arranged neat
Are they hands, are they feet?
Sonu and Sawaal deep in debate
I, the Uncle, silently observe and wait.

2. They pick up the prey
Also they are used for eating
So they are hands or arms I would say
Sonu said without hesitating..

3. The spider uses them to move
all around its web or the wall.
So, they are feet or legs, I am sure
Sawaal said, or else it would fall.

4. Uncle said “why don’t the two of you
to spider man make a call
and ask him what does he use
for fighting or climbing a wall.”

5. The duo returned and reported
with a mischievous smile
“The spiderman, said no fight
both of you smart ones are right.
” Four for hands four for feet;
The powerful body lies where all the eight meet.



4. LEAVE THE LAWN ALONE

[Lawn grass talks to children]

- 1 Sawaal was looking at the lawn
laden with dew at early dawn.
Sonu asked: "Are you talking to the dew?"
Sawaal said:
"To talk to the transient dew, I am not you."
2. Then you must have spoken
to the grass on the ground.
Did they at least show a token
of having heard, by nodding the head."
3. "I can tell you what they said;
But you are too young, I am afraid
When uncle comes you are welcome.
He will make you understand some
4. *Uncle said;*
"I am all ears
for your lawn story.
Whether or not anyone hears.
I hope it is not gory.
5. Not gory, it is a little sad;
Some acts of man done
in good faith; but turns out bad
to other species and the environ.
6. *Sawaal:*
Let me tell in the words of the grass.
"We all live hugging the ground
Along with us, you'll come across
ants, insects; all species abound.
[Notes: Sawaal -elder child ; Sonu-Younger child ; Environ – environment.]

7. Can you blow off birds from trees?
Can you lift off lichens from logs?
Won't you tell your uncles, please,
to leave each life where it belongs.
8. Ants, grasshoppers, all kinds of caterpillars
Occasional snakes under the grass
earthworms, early bird's belly fillers,
we all belong here, all of the same class.
9. We grow, we die, we emerge
we cherish, we perish, we survive
we fight, we help, we pledge
to each other we owe for us to live.
10. Human child! Our words
may go above your head.
Your uncle belongs to lords
of this earth. He would have heard.
11. Let him know; OMG! Alas!
Loading chemicals on grass
is man's choice to show off to fellow boys
which eventually leads to environ's loss.
(Note : environ = Environment)
12. We plants are like Nature's mothers
We do nurture and care for others;
We don't close-cut or manicure our hair;
You run lawn-mowers on us; Is it fair?
13. We have our own castes and creeds;
Even the ones which you call weeds
belong to botanical class of the Earth,
the mother, who to all of us gave birth.

14. *Sawaal said;*

“Uncle, the grass told me this, and more
to tell you as well as the gardener
Let him furnish manure and finish his chore
of watering and no toxic chemical ever.

15. This exchange was early at dawn

When the children wandered on the lawn.
Soon the sun came up in view
It was time to depart, for the dew.

16. As the dew went up as mist;

It said: “we got the shift and gist
of the dialogue we have heard
the message we will try to spread.

17. Sonu asked Sawaal: “Is that all?

Let uncle do what he can and will
Let us go and play in the street
Even the lawn may not mind our feet.



5 ANIMALS

[*Discussion on pet animals*]

Sonu asked

If animals can be pets
why only cats and dogs?

Sawaal said:

Since any of these gets
into our house, just like us.

Cows, horses, and donkeys
are too big; Even monkeys
or goats can be left free,
certainly not with you or me.

Why at all, animals as pets?

We have farms for domestic kind
We also provide protection by vets.
For wild ones, go to the zoo and find.

Trees and bushes are in the forest
Vegetables we produce in the field;
Each to its own habitat is the best
Ask eco, uncle if you need.

[*Note: vet-veterinary doctor for animals, domestic=tame, not wild
eco-ecology*].

Sonu said: Yes, uncle is right
I'll be full of fear and fright
if I see in your pocket, a cockroach
Not only me, no one will dare to approach.

Uncle said:

Even the zoo is a special place
So also, a snake park or aquarium

Species of each kind find solace
in their own habitat and medium.

Dog mother can tend to her pup
Human babies need human help
We need house, school, dress and money
A baby needs the help of many.

Do our pet animals need the human?
Is he keeping them for his own fun?
Did we do an opinion poll ?
Can the pets vote and tell? ..

Poor people are famished
while pets are pampered
Will the progress be diminished
or economy be hampered
if each pet owner is made
to feed one human destitute child
Or else, leave his pet, in the wild.

Uncle says, no law can be made
which the elite will not agree to.
Men have their own free will
which he uses to live his life well.

Sonu said:
Simple things become boring
We should talk only when uncle is snoring
He forgets we don't understand argument
which, only for arm-chair uncles, meant.

[Author's note: Sorry for a serious topic in a children's collection]

6 SPORTS (1)

Categories in competitive sports- children's view]

1. Sawaal said: uncle! You have a task
Sonu wants a running race
She won't get even a third place
Tell her so, or not to ask.
2. I said, yes Sawaal, you are right
Sonu's step is smaller I see
To arrange a race or fair fight
Different the distance should be.
3. Sonu said, Uncle you are nice
Sawaal: you are better than Olympics bosses
They are neither rational nor wise
They have race between hares and tortoises.
4. I saw reason in Sawaal's concern
A 100 meter dash by a 5 foot me
is equal to 120 meter, don't you see?
Who will make the authorities ever learn?

SPORTS(2)

1. Sawaal continued: Many uncles reach the top shelf
Wilson uncle wants a stool, not by himself
For changing a light bulb or plucking a mango
Height matters, not person's age or ego.
2. When Sonu's ball settles on the window sill
We call, not Wilson, but his daughter Jill
It is not age, gender, dull, or bright
For some jobs, one's height must be right.
3. Long jump, high jump or any competition
is classified by either junior or adult
Not enough, uncle, give a petition
Let them categorize also by height.

SPORTS (3)

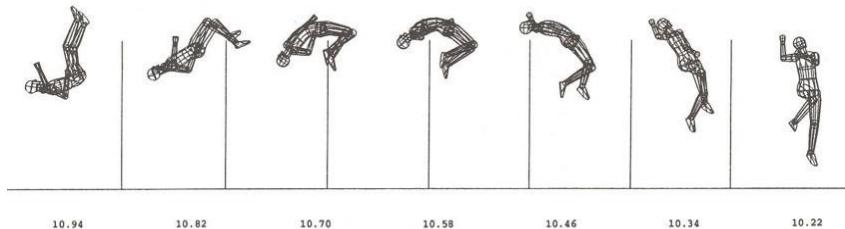
1. Sawaal was staring at a photo
in the sports pages of the paper
She reads story books; not a lot of
small prints or any reporter's caper.
2. I told her they won.
Prizes in high jump
She said, tall is this one
The other is short and plump.
3. How come they took part
in the same group, at all
They should be separate, with short
one group and another tall.
4. It is like myself cross-over
the small fence to the garden you put up
I can go one foot and another
Sonu has to jump or someone lift up.
5. Simple questions children ask
Finding the answers is a big task
More so, to give a rational reply
Explaining the rules which idiots apply.
6. Weight lifting goes by categories
based on the lifter's weight.
We have heard of heavy weight stories
in boxing too, from Ali the greatest.
7. If weight lifting goes by weight
Why not height jumping go by height?
To sawaal's question I gave a reply
to which logic or rationale does not apply.

SPORTS (4)

1. Sawaal has not come to analyse
how they give the third prize.
For gold or silver, the path is straight
For bronze the loser again has to fight.
2. If Sawaal had known
she would have asked
Why not give two, it is only bronze
Why not be generous, why miserly kanjoos?
3. Any more on sports
will make me look mean
Not worth going to courts
Will logic take away the sheen?

[Note: *Kanjoos* – miser.tight fisted person]

High jump the Fosbury flop



7 SONU AND YOGA

*[[Watching a fisherman S and S find a new yoga posture
– ANGLER POSE]]*

1. Sonu saw an angler angle
with his fishing pole, dangle,
The man was a perfect statue
Sees nothing, not even you.
2. His eyes are on the float
Outside his seat or boat
Call it concentration or focus
Sonu said: It is a lesson for us.
3. Sonu and Sawaal saw in the Yoga class
Concentration was with eyes closed.
Why struggle when open will do
Sawaal said: I can show you.
4. Then she assumed the Angler's Pose
the posture and the name she chose
With eyes focused on a fixed object
or on a laser beam Sonu projects.
5. Though their age is tender,
Sonu can see and wonder.
Sawaal can ask and comment .
Together they sure can invent.
6. 'Angler's Pose' is for concentration
'The dog and the bone' for alert action
One for yoga and contentment
The other for childish entertainment.



[Notes: 'dog and the bone' – two dogs eyeing and vying for the same piece of bone at the centre – school game.]

8 TENNIS COURT

[Pun on court in a tennis court]

1. Sometimes Sonu comes with a riddle

Like 'which is a violin, which is a fiddle"

2. TV channel was showing a tennis match

Now where to go in the heavy rain.

We were together to sit and watch

Suddenly Sonu had a flash in her brain.

3. *She said:*

Margaret Court had a complaint, where did she go?

Only one minute time. Quick, say if you don't know.

4. *I said:*

If I have a complaint I will go to a lawyer;

Law courts are meant to help all, even a player.

5. *Sonu said:*

Even grown-ups do not know

Was his answer correct? No, no.

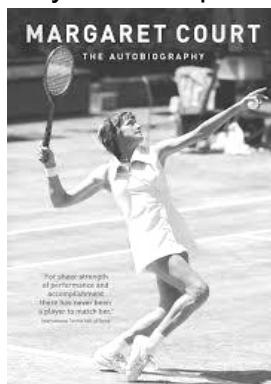
Uncle is wrong: Margaret Court

was already in the tennis court.

She wanted a new ball

She went to the umpire, that is all.

Answer: not lawyer but umpire.



9 WHAT, WHY

*[Q and A between children- rational question –
funny unexpected answer]*

1. Sona, our Desi Dennis

Used to ask, what is this?

Now that he is four feet high

He has started asking “Why”

2. Once he asked, “Why is that?”

His sister, Sawaal, “That what”

“Wait, wait, Milk is that” Why is milk white?

Sawaal had no reply

though she thought herself to be bright.

3. When they reached uncle who

they thought, being a teacher knows all

He had to confess to himself he too

did not know how to tell.

4. Poor man, how could he have

talked about absorption, casein or colour

Better to say sorry, and save

face; Surrender is better than vain valour.

5. “If you do not know, I know

Sona said: It is white like snow

so that when mother makes filter coffee

She can add just enough to make it brown.

6. Uncle is wondering if he should wait

for the next question: Why is snow white?

10 WILL

[Lawyers make a will – children are shocked]

1. Sonu and Sawaal are buddies
Sonu the younger and straight
Sawaal, elder and smart in studies
Outspoken, though a bit overweight.
2. One day, we had visitors.
Sonu said, “Funny ribbon at their neck”
“Black coats, they are solicitors”
said Sawaal craning to see and check.
3. “What is solicitor” asked Sonu.
“Lawyers, stupid” said Sawaal
“Why here not court, stupid you”
Sawaal had no answer at all.
4. Sawaal was bold, though a bit obese,
“Father, black coats, who are these?
“If they are lawyers, why are they here?”
“Call Sonu, she may also like to hear.”
5. Listen children, lawyers practice law,
work for all, thought they don’t make
new laws, they are here to draw
a will for grandpa’s sake.
6. Sonu: Though not good in sight
Grandpa can surely write.
Sawaal: I know, I know Lawyers see to it
that grandpa’s words are legally right.

7. Sonu asked what is a will ?

Sawaal : I know, I won't tell

Father then told about property.

8. Don't worry children, Grandpa is still
with us even after his will

Old people want to be right

After them, there is no fight.

9. Sonu said, "Why wait even a bit

Let him give away now"

Sawaal on Sonu's head, gently hit

"Don't talk like that, stupid cow."

10. Sawaal had a question as befits her name

"Is the law same for every age?

Will my piggy bank and video game

Will go to all of you, when I go to college?

11. Sonu started loudly crying

"Will you go to college for dying?"



Last Will and Testament

[ləst wɪl, ən(d), 'te-sta-mənt]

A legal document
communicating a person's
final wishes about what
should happen to
their possessions
when they die.

11 Z STORY

[How do you say 'Z' – a bet]

1. Some call it zed

Some call it zee.

Either way it is said

It is okay with me.

2. But not so with Sawaal and Sonu.

The rivalry between them is not new.

Challenge and a small bet is sweet as chocolate

But done with never off from being affectionate.

3. Sawaal is never lazy.

She consults a dictionary.

It is only ijed, not zee

I told you, here, you see

4. The sound of Z is unique.

Perhaps found in Latin or Greek.

It is not there in ancient Sanskrit

Nor in any old Indian script.

5. The mood is different when Sonu joins

She says, " Both of you are old copper coins.

The most recent and modern is the TV".

As you know there is a channel called Zee.

6. Sawaal closed her dictionary.

This once I lose to Sonu, what a pity!

Sonu said, this time winner gives chocolate.

If we understand each other, it is great.



12 PUG MARK

[Sawaal shows off her forest visit]

Our forest guide who is fond of children
said, “I’ll show you if you don’t run
something special you can proudly show
to your friends, and also for you to know.

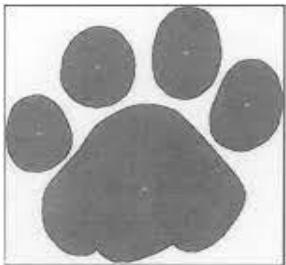
I said: “About who is first, no fight
Go with uncle and see what is shown”
Soon one was on his left and one on his right
For quite a while I was left alone.

Later when we went to the seafront
Sona was admiring his own foot print.
Sawaal was busy with fist on wet sand.
“Grandpa, see now from where you stand.”

I see some foot prints and fist prints on the side
The younger said, a man and a dog on his side.

The elder Sawaal said: No stupid ! see
the brave girl Sawaal near the sea.
Those are pugmarks of her tiger
walking on a leash, beside her.

. Now I know what the forest guide
showed when he took the children aside
away from me on the forest trail
Sawaal may be a show-off; yet it is worthwhile.



Male tiger's pugmark



Female tiger's pugmark



13 POETRY and MOOD

[A poem at breakfast ups the mood for the whole day]

1. To the breakfast cereal,
cornflakes or muesli,
Or the morning meal
Parotha, dosa or idli
Always add poetry with muesli
Everyday read a verse with idli.
2. See a wave of good mood
Sweeping around, not only you,
but the others in the neighbourhood
the source of which they never knew.
3. Bhagavad Gita or even the Bible
can sometimes sound dull;
A new thought or an old good
poem is perfect for pulling up mood.
4. On verse or music I will bet
for good moods to get
A dose of poetry daily
is like milk with muesli.

[note : Music and literature , here mainly poetry- author apologizes for putting big words in the mouth of children- Sonu and Sona like muesli a breakfast cereal with added goodies like nuts]



14 BUCKET (1)

[A bucketful of toys compared to confused priorities of adults]

With a crashing sound
things scattered around;
The cause of the noise
was Sonu's bucket of toys.
Said Sawaal: "Sonu! You jerk!
You know violence won't work;
Don't kick; you just pick
the toy you want from the bucket.

BUCKET (2)

I too have a bucket list
each one waiting to be picked
I won't know what I missed
before my bucket gets kicked
Why won't I pick just one
and see something about it done?
Why can't the oldies be wise
and follow Sawaal's advice?



- Take a spontaneous road trip
- Go thrift shopping
- Buy some new stationary
- Go to the fair
- Have a mini-reunion
- Recreate Camp
- Get matching tattoos

15 MASK

[Don't judge the book by its cover, nor Mr. Wilson by his mask]

- 1 Desi Dennis suddenly
came running and declared
I've found something;
It's not another insect; don't be scared.
- 2 Our neighbour Wilson is not at all bad
He is the best uncle we ever had
We pester him; we think he is mad
at us; But no, he waits for us well prepared.
- 3 On that day, his frig is with ice-cream stocked;
Chocolates filling his kurta's pocket;
He pretends as though he is shocked
to find us in his house, which he kept unlocked.
4. Sawaal: How did you find out so much
His face grumpy, never a smile as such.
5. Sonu:
Can I just walk up to him and ask
Mr. Wilson, are you always annoyed with us?
Auntie Wilson confidentially said: "It is a mask
which he wears just to look tough to neighbours.
6. Truly he likes every child, and you are special
His vocal and body language are just superficial
Inside, he is butter
Absolutely, nothing bitter!
7. Next time when Sawaal saw a smiling Wilson
She was surprised but gathered her wits soon
Forgive me uncle, this I have to ask
Today, did you forget to wear your mask?

16 HIBUGS

[Caution against germs]

Bugs that crawl can be seen
But there are bugs unseen
haunting water, air, anything
Certainly on your hair and skin.

Wash off dust with water
Any dust contains matter
even without bugs can harm
one's lungs, stomach, body, or skin.

Dust or any other form of dirt
do certainly damage and hurt
any machine's form and function.
Our body is no exception.

Soap and water is a must
for getting rid of dust, dirt,
Hiding bugs are everywhere
books, pencil, table, chair.

Sonu asked:

Uncle and aunt are good
Must I worry about them, too?

Uncle said:

For 'hibugs' cells are food.
They will infect Sawaal and even you.

Be watchful; you have nothing to lose
Wash vessels, plates, before use
Hibugs can't be seen by just looking
Wash vegetables before cooking

[note for elders: Hibugs - Hiding bugs -the author's word for microbes or microorganisms mainly bacteria and virus- word coined to help very young ones to imagine.]

17 BOARD

[Give children space for their talent – even on a black board]

1. Anyone who went to school
would have used pen, pencil, slate,
and also one's finger as writing tool
drawn standing-line, smile face, feel great.
That was at play-school.
2. Soon comes the board
a big blackboard on the wall
staring sternly at children all;
next only to the teacher -in blackness
in appearance, attitude and lack of slackness.
3. We are not allowed to scribble
or dare to draw or doodle
A no-no for our stick man or egg face
If we drew, we have to quietly erase.
4. Before the chappal sound draws near
Warning us that madam would be soon here
A clever fellow has a wet cloth in his hands
Nothing amiss by the time our miss lands.
5. The board is black; the chalk is white;
So the writing looks shining and bright
But madam's voice and the stick
can make it look scary and sick.
6. The ruthless board has seen many like me
This is the only bad black one daily I see
It ogles me in the class since I could not read.
From the last bench to which I often recede.

7. The board haunts me, also at night
It becomes the blue sky with stars bright
as the written letters twinkling in jest
at the stupid me; even at night I can't rest.

8. If I had my own school, the board will be colourful
with pictures to make the lessons less fearful
It will leave a lot of space at three feet height
for small kids to draw, doodle or write.



18 HYPOCRISY

[Fighting against superstition – start at home]

There was a horse shoe
in the shape similar to 'U'
fixed on the entrance at the top.
Quite visible, no need to stop.

But let us stop to behold
in letters bright and bold
written at the entrance
'Anti Superstition Alliance'.

Uncle laughed and said, "hypocrisy"
"What is that?" asked Sonu
Sawaal said:
"You are too young and a sissy
Uncle says, These people do not mean what they say".

[note if needed:

*Horse shoe is considered goodluck
The uncle in this piece [as also the author] thinks it is
superstition, hence the title.]*



19 IRONY

[Animal Lover's League]

Animal Lover's League
had a well trimmed lawn
My friend asked a colleague
Do pups play on the lawn and fawn?

“No, no” said he, “They will spoil
the beauty of the lawn and the soil;
Even our children never sat or played
on the grass on which pesticides are sprayed.

Seeing a question on the face of Sawaal
Uncle said, “This place is called A.L.L
Health for dogs, people and all
So lawn is only for show
So long, didn't you know?”

The irony was lost on the children
“Please explain if they came to you with a question.

[The author sincerely hopes that the irony is not lost on the readers]



20 NATURAL COLOURS

[learning by observing nature is not easy. As these children see]

Every colour, our teacher has told
Can be seen in nature – Lo and behold!
Blue as the sky, white as the stars
Red as rose and green as grass.

Let me start with the grass
Sonu went to see; and alas,
the patch of lawn was like glass
thanks to the dew's reflection and gloss.

Let us go see the rose, Sawaal said,
Sure our plant's flower will be red;
The buds have not bloomed and spread
all were green on top of stem's head.

Sonu said; let us go see the sky.
It has to be blue; no reason why
it cannot be; Even so, Sonu started to cry
when it began to pour, nothing seen, nothing dry.

For seeing the stars, we have to wait
for more than twelve hours for the night
Stars should be visible to find them white
* But keep the moon or mars out of sight.

Both said:
Nature and its colours are good,
Only for poets or writer's mood
When I want one, even banana is green
Cheating is its nature, Nature is mean

21 CRANE? GIRAFFE?

[harbour crane compared to zoo giraffe]

Sonu and Sawaal were in the dock;
In the harbour dockyard, stupid!
Stop your habit to joke and mock
Transfer of cargo was quite rapid.

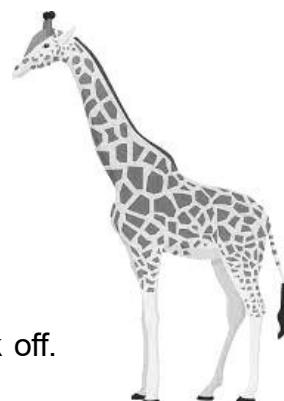
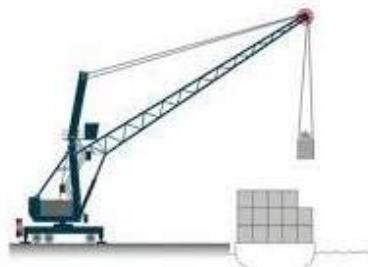
Transfer to huge machine
Like Alladins's lamp genie,
bending, grabbing, dropping
smoothly working, no hopping.

“Ah! What a great machine!
Does it have a name?”
Uncle said, “It is called a crane”
“Like the bird, is it the same?”

“Yes” said uncle. Man saw the bird
Made a machine as tall and weird;
See how it bends and turns
Feet glued to a spot, only the neck returns.

Sawaal said: Yes I see it now.
It resembles the bird, how!
Hope this won't suddenly
fold up its legs and fly.

Sonu says, do not laugh
It looks more like a giraffe;
It may not fly, but sure can walk off.



22 GOD AND PEACE

[differences in religion, gods, idols do not affect children]

It is time that all believers
Of this earth, come together
and pass a resolution to relieve us
from any hate and live like brother and brother.

My granddaughter who is young
(She can't waver or hold her tongue)
has a great idea; please hear
Her words are simple, views are clear.

If you say God is great
I also join; He is great
But in my mind, this God
will be the same as I already had.

If you say Allah is the One
I'll agree; He is the only one
But in my mind, this Almighty
Will be any, formless or with a murthy.

[murthy.- image, idol]

If you say the Greatest is the guruji
I'll join you and say "Haan..ji"
In my mind the Guruji will look
like my dear symbols or a holy book.

If the great God, you say is a dragon
I don't mind; I join the band wagon
and say, "the dragon it is I admire;
but in my mind, my own god will appear"

If someone wants as a symbol, a huge cross
I can carry one of my own across
and hand over as my humble symbol
But it can be a tree, no trouble.

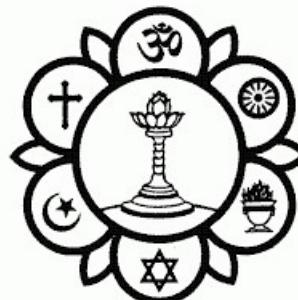
Beliefs have no rhyme or reason
You believe in whatever you want to
I agree, if it will please you, one
or a fanatic mob, all of you.

If to you, I say yes
My mind will be at rest
So saying, Sawaal had gone;
In uncle's mind, an idea was born.

Perhaps decent people do the same
as simple Sawaal had just said;
They desist from the dreaded game
of who is the greatest or who is ahead.

Violent and fanatic faiths will win
since sensible peace-lovers will submit
to those who have treacherously trooped in
since lost will be those who opted to resist.
The winner in any contest
is the one the most arrogant
He who says, "I am the greatest"
Wins the fight and the argument.

*[author apologises for a serious thought in a children's book
Religious symbols are mentioned here –whether our children know
or understand them is doubtful- hence the apology]*



[a trip to Rameswaram- highly satisfying to]

The group went to extreme down south

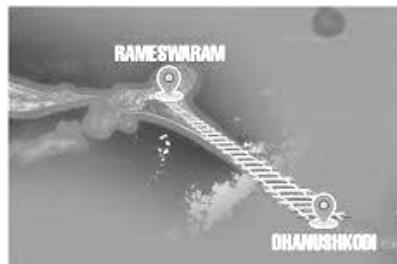
The peninsula's tip where three large seas meet
 Aunty saw Sonu with wide open mouth
 viewing the panoramic scene starting at her feet

Extending up to as far as they could see
 bright sky above and below blue sea.

Aunty said:

In cities you see only concrete blocks
 Or tops of trees or hills and rocks
 Here there is nothing to block your scene
 Blessed we are to be where Sri Ram had been.

[Kanyakumari-is at the tip of Indian peninsula. Dhanuskodi-where, according to mythology, Lord Rama of Ramayana built a bridge to Lanka].



24 COUNT CALORIES

[Diet discipline cannot be the same for the young and the old]

Aunty said: All of you had, did you forget,
ice cream, chips, the total set
of victuals for all of you as a treat
by uncle and Mr. Wilson though they don't eat.

Sonu said:

That was done and over by yesterday
Snacks and sweets are good every day.
like bathing, brushing, eating and play.
At least today can be declared a special day.

Sawaal said:

Aunty! Sometimes Sonu is like a bad apple
We are thankful to the elders for being nice
I'll talk to Sonu and bring her to her size.

Uncle walked in with a box
of assorted cakes and goodies
These are to be kept under lock
and key so it doesn't reach foodies.

Sawaal said: If you don't want to give,
don't give. We can live
without cakes; do not call
us foodies or any name at all.

Uncle said: My goal was not to scold;
It was a caution to those who are old
They should count calories. You who are young
can sure pamper your tongue.



25 DOGS (1)

[warning about doge just to avoid visitors]

‘Beware of Dogs’ the sign says
neatly hung at many gates
Sonu saw one board with a picture
of a ferocious dog on the fixture.

No words, no caution
Yet is a warning in its own fashion.
This sign is sensible and neat
to warn off stray dogs of the street.

DOGS (2)

At the gate of every bungalow
In a town strangely called Shangri-la
there was a sign ‘Dog Beware’
but there was no canine anywhere.

Sawaal asked “Where are they?”
Do the signs mean what they say?
Uncle said, the warning is false
It is to avoid unwanted callers.



26 DEER CROSSING

[Unlettered Sonu and the deer are the same- sister Sawaal]

Uncle said:

Do not cross the road here
Pedestrian crossing is ahead and near.
All of them waited at the sign
Until 'WALK' in green came again.

When they were on a forest road
Sonu was trying to read a board

Sawaal said:

"You don't know the alphabet dear!
'Deer Crossing' is written here.
"What are you looking for?" asked Sawaal

"Where are STOP and WALK signals?"
asked shrewd Sonu.

"I thought you knew,"
said Sawaal: "Deer can't read;
So, for signs, there is no need".



27 ACIDITY

[cause for acidity in adults found by the great physicians (of the future!) S and S]

1. Hyperacidity of the stomach
may be thanks to fast food and muck.
It may also be the result of mental tension
So says Ayurveda, also modern medicine
2. But Sawaal knows for sure;
Casting an eye on what others eat
brings on acidity; The only cure
is to share any simple snack or a treat.
3. She knows the local word for acidity.
It is called '**burning of the belly**'
As an idiom, it also means **jealousy**
Oldies used the phrase wisely.
4. How come acidity does not affect Sonu
While it tortures often me or you?
The answer is simple: She acts on her envy;
Snatches wholly the cause of fire in her belly.
5. Sawaal summarized:
You adults yearn for each and everything
So you complain of stomach burning
Anything good or bad which you feel
You never express
Always try to repress.
Children ask, smile, cry or appeal.

[Note : **burning of the belly**’ Direct translation of the phrase from Tamil/Kannada.
'burn'=*jalan*, envy in Hindi /Urdu].

28 ROWS AND COLUMNS

*[even children's common sense can help higher learning]
Sawaal becomes a teacher*

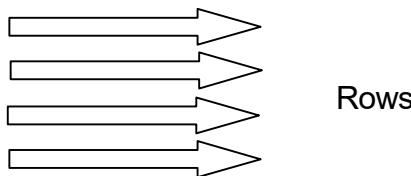
Jill from next door came to uncle to clear some doubts.
Sonu and Sawaal could hear some words.

Sawaal said " Jill! I know this . I can help you.

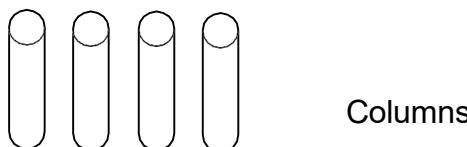
Jill: It is higher mathematics .

Sawaal said " I don't know. I think I can help you.

Jill; show me how.



What is this? It is an arrow,
What is this? It is many arrows
Yes, it is a row of arrows.



What is this? It is a pillar.
What is this? It is many pillars.
Yes, it is a column of pillars . i.e columns..

[For the readers who missed the connection:

rows and columns are used in mathematics as well as in computer use]



29 WATER BIRDS

[children's open mind and simple questions can give a bird's eye view to ornithologists]

Salim Ali Club of our town
Is small, not well-known
The members' number is just a few
One of whom our uncle knew .

We went with him to the local lake
Even a budding birdwatcher will take
his binoculars on any outing
We were told, "Quiet, no shouting"

The star of the day was the crane
Standing on one leg , a picture of patience
Like old time *rishis* performing penance
Just for a measly fish, how insane!

Sonu: One leg folded, one leg straight;
Is it always the left or the right?
Does the fellow change legs time and again
to avoid getting severe knee pain?
Is the long one under
water is a leg at all I wonder
Perhaps a perch, rock or stick
Why won't we go take a look?

Coots and ducks swim and float
Are very much like a bloated boat
Does the crane which flies above water
Swim or float, or just wade and loiter?

How about that expert diver
In the still lake or running river
Does the kingfisher swim or float
Or is she a show-off colourful gloat?

Sonu said ‘ water birds”
Uncle said “aquatic’
What Sonu called as tree birds
Uncle termed them as ‘avians’

Sawaal asked the man with binocular
Aren’t the wading ones peculiar?
Are they terrestrial or aquatic
Or just avian by general logic ?

The birder said;
Bird watching should be silent
This group is a noisy bunch
Their queries perhaps are relevant
We never asked ourselves that much

My expert birders, who can place a bird by its call
Take along with you our Sonu and Sawaal
Give work not only to your eyes and ears
But brain too, to answer their queries

[*Salim Ali – famous ornithologist (bird-man) of India*
Rishi- ascetic]



30 REMEMBER AND REMIND

[pun on the word remember]

Uncle, aunty, Sonu and Sawaal
Went to a function in the mall
Gate-man asked: are you a member?
Uncle said: I don't remember
whether I had paid the fees
Don't disappoint my nieces
I'll pay by phone, take this number
renew now and make me a re-member.

When the secretary came and greeted
And after formal talk was completed
My uncle said "do you mind
If I request you to remind
Well before the deadline
so that our relations will be fine?



31 ART CLASS

[art class for children should give room for imagination]

Teacher said

Children! Let us sketch the sun
Drawing it is fun
Use a bangle to do a round
Put sticks all around

Only a few lines on top
Add eyes and a smile
See a man with bald head
Easy to draw as I said.



Sawaal came along
and the teacher said :
You are elder you all can go ahead
Why not paint a scene?
With the theme as rain?

Let us draw a big rain drop
Let it drop .. plop plop plop
Let the water flow
And boats below
How I wish
To see some fish
Up above let there be a big cloud
Its face fierce, black and proud
Spitting huge rain drops
All over the house tops.



32 A DOZEN

[technical terms can be too much for Sonu]

Aunty asked: Why are you quarrelling?

Sawaal said : Sonu has a dozen

Let her give me one.

Sonu said : I do not have what she says.

I have two to eat now and the others for later.



$$\frac{12 + 144 + 20 + 3 * \sqrt{4}}{7} + 5 * 11 = 9^2 + 0$$

A Dozen, a Gross, and a Score,
plus three times the square root of four,
divided by seven,
plus five times eleven,
equals nine squared and not a bit more.

33 LENGTH AND TIME

[number arrangement and the objects they indicate]

Sawaal wrote 1 to 12 in a line

Sonu! Do you know what this is ?

Sonu: you tell

Sawaal : this is a scale .

it is the long one near geometry box

Then sawaal wrote 1 to 12 along a circle .

Sonu! Do you know what this is ?

Sonu was about to say “ you tell”

She just turned towards uncle.

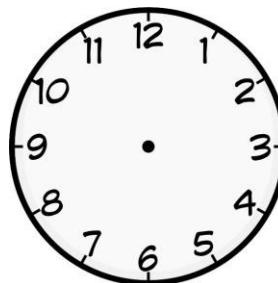
Uncle looked at his watch and said it is time to go.

Sonu said: aha! It is a clock. Thank you uncle.

Sawwaal said ; cheating, not fair.

[notes: foot scale to measure length – 1 to 12 in inches

Clock- to measure time- 1 to 12 hours in a circle, unless it is a digital clock]



34 LEFT OR RIGHT

[science helps to solve a dispute]

See aunty, Sonu brushes teeth
With her left hand; combing hair too.
Aunty said she can use either hand or both
Lefties are great, though they are only a few.
Sonu said: I may be great or not
 Sawaal is a liar
 See aunty I have got
 a comb right here.

See aunty, on this mobile's screen
Brushing teeth with left hand who is seen
Sonu said , only a witch will make
A photo like that which is a fake.

Uncle said,
Let us go to the place
Where this action took place;
All went to the wash basin mirror
Now brush teeth and show her.
Sonu said, now I know what
How the photo our witch got
A good laugh was let out by all
Except the silent mirror on the wall.

[note: in science books this is called LATERAL INVERSION in the chapter on reflection of light]



35 BIG MOUTH, BIG WORDS

[Grandpa's grand vocabulary stolen by Sawaal]

Sonu:

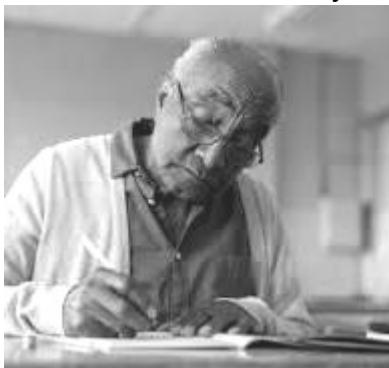
See uncle I have already stomach pain
Big mouth Sawaal comes and gives ear pain .
Uncle said: Sawaal don't speak so loud.

Sonu said: No, not loud. She whispers, so proud ,
Big big words in my ear
Ask her uncle. Let her be clear.

Uncle: Don't whisper Sawaal,
Come on, say it in front of all.
If you are sick, you are unwell.
That does not entitle you to be sickening.
If you are unwell, you are ailing.
But why this weeping and wailing?

Sawaal, did you write this
to tease your suffering sis?

*Sawaal said :*After seeing Sonu's tantrum
I saw and copied the lines from
Grandpa's grand old diary
See he had suffered daily.



36 SOUND AND SCIENCE

[Frequency change sensed by children's keen ears]

Train is coming. Train is coming
Where, where?
You can't see, but can you not hear
I can certainly see if it comes near.
I can hear boom boom like a drum
Now I can see it
It is coo- coo like a flute

Already making noise in the train
were the coo coo flutes well in
As the whistling train was moving away
Boom boom drummers began to play
Uncle said
You kids have a great ear
You can analyse tunes you hear

Once a scientist too heard
From a moving source its sound
He said hearing varied tune
is neither crazy nor absurd
He explained how and his theory
was praised as profound.
If we analyse events within our purview
We can be equal to scientist too.

[note: Doppler Effect- change in frequency of sound due to relative motion between the source and the detector- it has many applications Author apologises for big words used in a children's book]

37 SYNONYM OF CHEAT IS JILL

[elder Jill plays a hoax on the younger ones]

Jill asked:

What is the antonym of synonym?

Sawaal said:

Showing off with me is not nice

Go get a person of your size

Since you go to college you know

I do not know the answer now

But you just wait

I'll get all A's straight

And then come and sit next to you

And to every error you make I'll say boo

Uncle came and showed

How a thesaurus could

Help all, including Jill

Sawaal! You are young still

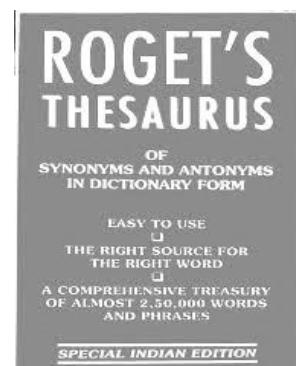
For the answer Jill thanked him

Antonym of synonym is antonym.

Sawaal said:

Jill you are a cheat; it is nothing new

You acted as if the answer you knew



38 RED BOOK

[English may be easy but sure it is funny]

Jill asked, “what is this tome
you are carrying Sawaal?”
“A book I am taking home
Will you help me read?”

This is too much even for college
You are still young in age
Here is a book on plants
With green leaves and black ants
Here is a book on fruits
Yellow mango and purple grapes

Sawaal:

Madam said “Books should be read”
This is the only one I could find
Jill saw the title
of the tome with a blood red cover
“Thoughts Of A Great Communist Leader”
Jill laughed and said
Your madam wanted you to read
Good books not just red ones
[*conjugation of the verb read Read – read (red) - read (red)]*



Quotations from
Chairman Mao Tse-
tung:
“The Little Red Book”



Mao Tse-tung

39 REST [1]

[Sonu cites baby for her own laziness]

Sonu was lying down
Even before time for lunch
“Get up you lazy clown”
Said Sawaal , “ I have a hunch
You pretend you are tired
To shirk the chores that are required
Like bringing your own plate and water
The lazy one, my mother’s daughter”

Sonu said:

See I am truly tired
I’ll get up only if required.

Sawaal said:

Did you run a mile?
Or work out for a while/

Sonu gave a lengthy reply
Although she is just five

“Lying down needs more of the same
See the fellow called Munna for a name

Confined to the cradle
he shakes only hands and feet
But sleeps sixteen hours neat
So rest needs more rest
Your body knows what is best
for itself and demands
No matter what you or mother wants”

Sawaal said:

“Munna drinks milk only
But you stuff your belly
With food, snacks , samosa, dosa
Choco, sandwich, burger and pizza

All this muck body must digest
Only work-out will help; not rest
You want to be one with nature right ?
Then take good rest only at night “

“Thank you my elder sister and guru!
The advice you gave also applies to you.
When in day time next you plump down
If I prick you blame the advice your own”



40 NOT BRAVE

[funny way of seeing day and night]

From the east comes the demon
Terribly afraid is the sun
always running westward
not brave; he is a coward

When the dark demon gets
near, the sun just ducks
and disappears
to only reappear
when the coast is clear.

40 NO FIGHT .. [only fright, flight]

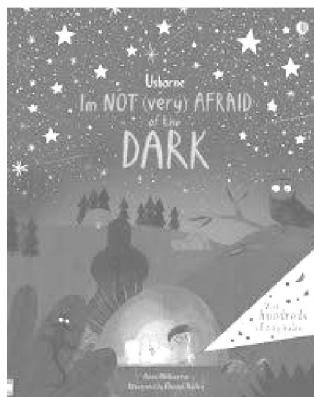
[odd way of observing the light and the dark]

The dark demon, the night.
Or the sun, bright light
Who is the winner
Who is the loser
I can never tell

When the dark hours come
The sun runs and goes down
When the sun again appears
The night slowly disappears.

Dense darkness or bright light
Neither wants a real fight
Each hates the other. The fright
results in running and flight.

After every dark night comes a.
Glorious morning of a new day.



41 SONU SEES A SULTAN

[children see a parallel between a sultan and patient in bed]

Sonu with uncle went to visit
A great man in their district
Who was seated on a padded chair
Twice his size,; an aura in the air .

Uncle said:

He is the great grandson of a sultan
Perhaps from Telengana or Rajasthan

Sonu asked:

Do I say namaskar or do pranam ?
Uncle said: "Say 'huzoor, salaam'"

Sonu's keen eyes surveyed the scene
Side table was spotless and clean
Water glass, spittoon and a big vase
Instead of flowers pipes were in place

Sonu asked Sawaal ; what is that , akka?
Sawaal; "Don't you know, it is a hookah."

*[namaskar, pranam- Hindu, Indian way of greeting to
elders*

'huzoor, salaam"- Islamic greeting with respect

Hookah- a traditional moghul smoking device]

Akka- elder sister , Kannada, Tamil]

Then they went with uncle to visit
An elderly gentleman in their district
Who was lying supine on a hospital bed
Twice his puny frame in a room like a shed

Uncle said ;

He is the grandpa of Kapil the cricketer
Now retired , in his time, a great engineer

Sonu asked

Can I say namaskar or do pranam ?
Just hold his hand, no noise, be calm

Sonu's keen eyes surveyed the scene
Side table was spotless and clean
Water glass, spittoon and paper towel
Here our grandfather is looked after well

To be like a sultan one thing is missing akka
Where could you find an affordable hookah?

[*sultan- king, general title of an Islamic ruler*]



42 MONEY LENDER KANNAPPA

[a Tamil proverb borrowed]

1. Our own Indian kid
Can be Dennis or just
Munna as a name first
called by, until one is required.
2. Desi Dennis too can be a menace
As a preschool child anywhere is
Desi Dennis too can be delightful
when he apes elders with a mouthful.
3. Big words with innocence he can speak
He will not know the meaning elders tweak.
4. Bell rings; Dennis at the door.
Dennis: "Who are you?" even before
the stranger could talk
Dennis says, go back
If you are Kannappa
My father has told all of us
"If that cursed moneylender comes
tell him, father is not at home.
5. If Kannappa had any shame left
in him, he would have quietly left.

[Note: Rough copy of a Tamil saying].

43 GAMES KIDS PLAY[2]

[English word game]

Sawaal:

- 1 Let us play a game
of equal chance to win.
I don't want any blame
I will be fair and begin.
- 2 S and T go together, how?
Snake in the Tree – Not always
Sugar in Tea – OK
Sawaal in Trouble – No, No
Sonu in Towel – Ha, Ha!

[Just then Sonu had come out from her bath, wrapped in towel]

5. I'll say R and S. You should say who or what.
1. Read and Study – student
2. Road and Safety – pedestrian (Sonu said “walker”)
3. Ringing Sound - bell.
4. Rose and Smell – nose
5. Rotten Smell – garbage.
6. Rattle Snake – run, ha! Ha!
7. Really Stupid – Sawaal; No No, Sonu.



44 AQUARIUM [2]

[fish movement and Sawaal's ideas]

Sawaal said: “ do not shout
This is aquarium, land of the fish;
To hear you a fish may come out
The poor one, will perish.

Sonu said: Try to touch one, you can't
It goes down or behind a plant
Sawaal said: See even inside a glass jail
How glad they are, how agile!

Moving, turning fins with a flourish
Solo or pair with an occasional kiss
Dancing of the fish is a delightful sight
Let us see don't switch off the light

Bubbles from their mouths
Bubbles from the sand down
Do they play ball with bubbles
Catching and spitting the elusive globes?

Uncle said;
Birds work their wings
Fish flaunt their fins
Both push what is around
Air, or water sans any sound

Sawaal asked:
We too can kick or push water
To swim ahead or just float
Exactly like a man-made boat
Why can't we make our lungs hotter?

Sonu said:

Curious sawaal! How stupid you are!
Our lungs will be cooked by hot air
Then any animal or bird of prey
Will eat us alive , won't you say?

Uncle said :

Ancient Lazarus fancied like you
Wright brothers, for a distance flew
Gliding, sky-diving are only sport
They are not any personal transport.

In air-less vacuum a body can move
if no gravity was there to pull it down
But without air we cannot live
And good gravity keeps us on the ground.

Aunt said:

Dear uncle! Children are just curious
Do not bore them with a thesis
Or any explanations, laborious
Just say what is not and what is .

[author's apology for using too much science that too physics in a children's series]



45 ANIMALS' LANGUAGE

[do animals talk ? perhaps not. But they communicate]

Can we talk to animals?

Asked Sonu to Sawaal

Usually I ask many a query

Today you do; I do worry

Let us go to college-going Jill

She is not a graduate; still

She talks of biology as if

She is already a senior prof.

Jill heard the duo

How did you think I know?

To our uncle let us all go

He is honest. If he too

Does not know he would say so.

Uncle said

In panchatantra and fairy tales, they

the animals, hear, think and say

Clever, wise adages of all kinds

Our science is yet to find

Whether they communicate

If they do how

Sawaal said

So the stories we heard are fiction

Sonu said

So they are all a bunch of lies

Jill said

Fairy tales are great

Good ones fascinate

Not only children like you

But also seniors like me. They do.

Sonu:

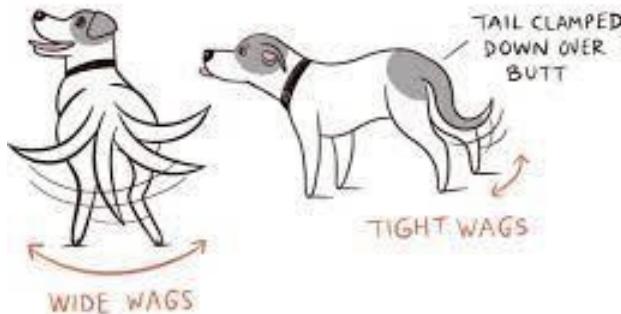
You senior? You have just grown tall
And grim, not laughing like me and Sawaal

Uncle said

Listen to me carefully
Even if a little lengthy
Communication among humans is by words and speech
But man is able to train and teach
Basic commands to his pet
A language is not developed yet

Your dog growls on seeing a biscuit in your hand
Understand it is no begging but a firm demand

After eating if it whines
And rubs its head on your shanks
Recognize that as a reasonable sign
Of your favourite pet saying “thanks”



Tail-wagging is “clearly a communication mechanism,” says animal behaviorist Nicholas Dodman, a professor emeritus at Tufts University and head of the Center for Canine Behavior Studies. In most cases, “a wagging tail is akin to waving a white flag of surrender—that is, ‘I’m happy to see you and present no threat,’” he says.

But dogs use their tail to communicate more than happiness—both to humans and other dogs. An upright tail can imply dominance, a horizontal tail can hint at neutrality and a low tail can mean submission, Dodman says. Frantic wagging implies excitement, whereas slow wagging suggests ambivalence. Dogs can also have “helicopter tail,” or “circle wag,” which is when their tail goes around like a helicopter blade—a sign of extreme joy, he says.

Dogs have only very limited vocalizations—[growls](#), whines and barks—so [they communicate with body language](#), Dodman notes. In addition to their tail,

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46 BITER BIT[TEN]

[*The elder beaten by the younger in a “challenge game”*]

I am tall, you are short
But you think you are smart
Listen to me Sonu
I challenge you

“How will you make this line shorter?”
“Sawaal! You think you are smarter
Where is the eraser?”
“No,no. Whatever you do is fine
except touching my line.”
“ I agree I do not know.

[note for foreigners:
Akka- elder sister, most Indian languages]

Promptly Sawaal drew
A long line next to AB
Sonu, come near and see
AB is shorter than CD.

A * _____ * B
C * * D

Sonu said:

I know Sawaal you are a crook
Surely you have stolen this from a book
Then she went out for a while
Returned with a sly smile
Sonu asked:

Sawaal! Are you taller than me ?

Sawaal said:

Sure, I am elder. I'll always be .

“What about now? Don’t move.”

Uncle looked to see

What Sonu wanted to prove.

There she was standing on a stool

Younger Sonu smiling and cool

Next to Sawaal with a stage like bow

Asked “Who is taller ? tell me now.”

Jill came in and saw

“It is really funny, ha ha!

Smart Sawaal lost. What a shame!

Now Sonu and Jill are same same.”

Uncle said:

Decades ago a short but smart Sonu

Must have invented the PLATFORM SHOE.”



47 COLOURED COWS

[How urban can children get?]

Sonu's sketches were super
Mom said now you can colour
Seeing the coloured cows mom said
Black, brown or white ok. Instead
You have made all of them
one of blue green or real red
where did you get the idea from?

See mom your own pouches
of milk from our city dairy
I thought people from dairy
will be seeing the cows daily

*[note: milk sold in plastic pouches come in these colours
in our city where the author lives]*



Blue



Red



Green

48 RAIN AND FORCE

[from home, science and engineering]

It was raining.

Sonu and sawaal were watching

Water falling like a pillar

From the overhead pipe

Sonu said

See rain has made a hole in the mud

Sawaal said stretch your hand

See it pushes down the palm

Jill the older girl from next door came

Aha! You have discovered FORCE

Both S and S asked what is that?

Jill said

See my hand it is resting

If I move it, it has force

It can slap Sonu

You don't dare to do it

So saying Sawaal came

She is my sister

No offence. I was just giving an example

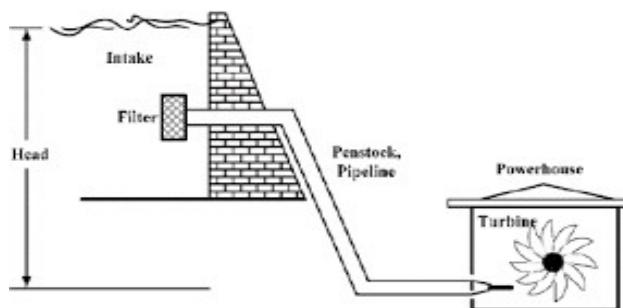
Electricity is made using this force of water

Both S and S asked

Where and how? Tell us

Jill said

When you go to college they will tell you.



49 MORE PRANKS [1]

[*S and S – pranks plenty*]

If I report what every child does
Such as hiding one shoe in the bush
Where is the fun for those who read?
Hear S and S! New tricks is what I need

Sawaal said

When imps are on hand
Yours is a simple demand
Where S and S are , there is no dearth
You don't have to go dig the earth

Hardened and painted piece of rusk
was put into the box on uncle's desk
Nice to see anger on his face:
“ Hey! This eraser does not erase”

A piece of soap nicely cut
Into Aunty's barfi pack put
Nice to hear aunty shout:
“ Even halwayees have become cheats
They put contraband even in costly sweets “
On bhaiya's ball make a pin –prick
On it a tiny piece of plaster stick
We wait to hear him loudly call :
“ What happened to my ball?”

As it goes puss puss
Uncle came and said chup
For a small thing what a fuss
Go repair and now shut up

[*NOTES :S and S – Sonu and Sawaal*

Rusk – hard bread Barfi – a nicely shaped and cut sweet

Halwayee- traditional sweet maker and vendor

Bhaiya- brother, here elder, Hindi

Chup- a scolding , silence, shut up , Hindi]

MORE PRANKS [2]

Pranks are plenty where S and S move
Plaintiffs need not have to prove .
When nobody admits to a prank
upon S ad S, I always bank,
to own what they did or didn't
They care a damn for my plaint or hint.

Did you drop the plate that broke?
Did you open the books that tore?
Did you leave the front door ajar?
Did you scatter sharp pins afar?
About books torn without being read
So also the papers missing or mislaid
S and S will keep quiet. They know
The blame will be on them
Whether they say yes or no .

*[the author was reminded of a great poem Mr. Nobody when writing about pranks – so some lines were stolen –
Relevant lines from that poem are given here.]*

Mr. Nobody BY ANONYMOUS

I know a funny little
man, As quiet as a
mouse,
Who does the mischief that is
done In everybody's house!
Every plate we break was
cracked By Mr. Nobody.

'Tis he who always tears out books,
Who leaves the door ajar,
And scatters pins afar;

The papers always are mislaid;
Who had them last, but he?
There's no one tosses them about
But Mr. Nobody.

50 RULES AND EXCEPTIONS

[raw or ripe? there is no one rule]

Sonu said, "Let us cut a mango"
She had in her hand a fairly big one
Sawaal said,
Sonu you don't know about fruits
Green ones are raw. Good for pickle
Wait for it to become yellow

Uncle brought some watermelons
Some were dark green
Some were striped
Like zebras but white and green



Uncle said,
Let us cut and share
Sonu said
uncle does not know
even as much as Sawaal
The fruits are all green
Wait and let them ripe



Sawaal said, "You stupid Sonu,
How dare you insult our uncle?
One rule does not apply to all
There are exceptions.
Sonu
What is exception?

Uncle . some are special not go by rules
Melon does not follow mango rule
Sonu said
Now I know. Like Sawaal
Among fruits also
There are bad apples
[bad apple – an idiom , elders pl. explain]

51 CAUSE AND EFFECT

[*Science and philosophy . beyond children*]

If you see a top spinning

Someone must have made it spin.

Who? bhaiya

If the teacher says the globe is spinning
someone must have made it spin.

Who? Not bhaiya

[*note for foreigners: :the globe – the earth*

Bhaiya- elder brother, Hindi]

If you see a big balloon floating
someone must have blown it big

Who? bhaiya

If the wind is wildly blowing
someone must have mde it blow.

Who? Not bhaiya

If the stacks of waste pile up and grow
someone must have made it grow.

Who? bhaiya

If a seed became a tree and still growing
someone must have made it grow.

Who? Not bhaiya

If the tap is open and water is flowing
someone must have made it flow.

Who? Bhaiya

If the sky opens and rivers are flowing
someone must have made it flow.

Who? Not bhaiya

If the lights are on and it is bright
someone must have made it glow.

Who? Mom

If the day is on and there is light
someone must have made it glow.
Who? Not mom.

Sawaal said

You are going to college Jill
If you know please tell

Jill said

I do not know enough science
I don't like any philosophy

Uncle said

I will ask you a simple question
If you see S and S eating chocolate
Someone must have made them eat.
Who?
Jill said ; no one ; S and S! Do not feel
bad If I say sweets you are used to steal.

If Mrs. Wilson bakes cakes for all of us
Did someone tell her to make thus?
Who?

No one. She likes making and giving
Such is the nature of her living .

Sonu and sawaal had silently left
Elders' talk is always boring they felt.
If the duo wanted to go
Did anyone make them do so?
Who? In this case we know well
It is the bores , anyone can tell.

*[The author apologises for including innocent looking but tough
questions in a children's work]*

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