

DAYS PRING



A Bahá'í Magazine for Children

Issue 76

Dayspring
Produced under the auspices of the National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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Acknowledgements & Notes

pp. 5-6. You can see a copy of Juliet's portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a book called *The Diary of Juliet Thompson*, page 312 .

p.7-8. "How the Rainbow was Made" is used here with the kind permission of S. E. Schlosser and AmericanFolklore.net 2010.

12-14. The Hand of the Cause Hasan Balyuzi. Information and photos have been taken from *The Bahá'í World* Vol. XVIII, pp.635-651 and *Lights of Fortitude* by Barron Harper (published by George Ronald, Oxford, 1997), endnote 730.

p. 15. "Art in the Rice Fields of Japan" can be found on several online sites.

p.16. "Muse Magic" is reprinted from *Brilliant Star*, May/June 1981. Copyright ©1981 National Spiritual Assemblé of the Bahá'ís of the United States, reproduced here with permission.

pp. 18-19. "The Autistic Boy Who Writes Fairy Tales" is from <web-japan.org/kidsweb/archives/life/action>.

p. 22. News and photos of "Children and the Arts around the World" is from Bahá'ís World News Service, 20 Sept. 2009. <news.bahai.org/story/730>.

p. 30. "The Kitáb-i-Aqdas". The extract from the story about Mishkin Qalam is from *Memorials of the Faithful* by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, published by the NSA of the Bahá'ís of the USA, 1971. The images of calligraphy are from the work of Larry Curtis (go to <Wikipedia.org/wiki/Mishkin_Qalam> and follow links).

July – October 2010
Issue 76

“Among the greatest of all great services is the education of children,
and promotion of the various sciences, crafts and arts.”

Bahá'u'lláh

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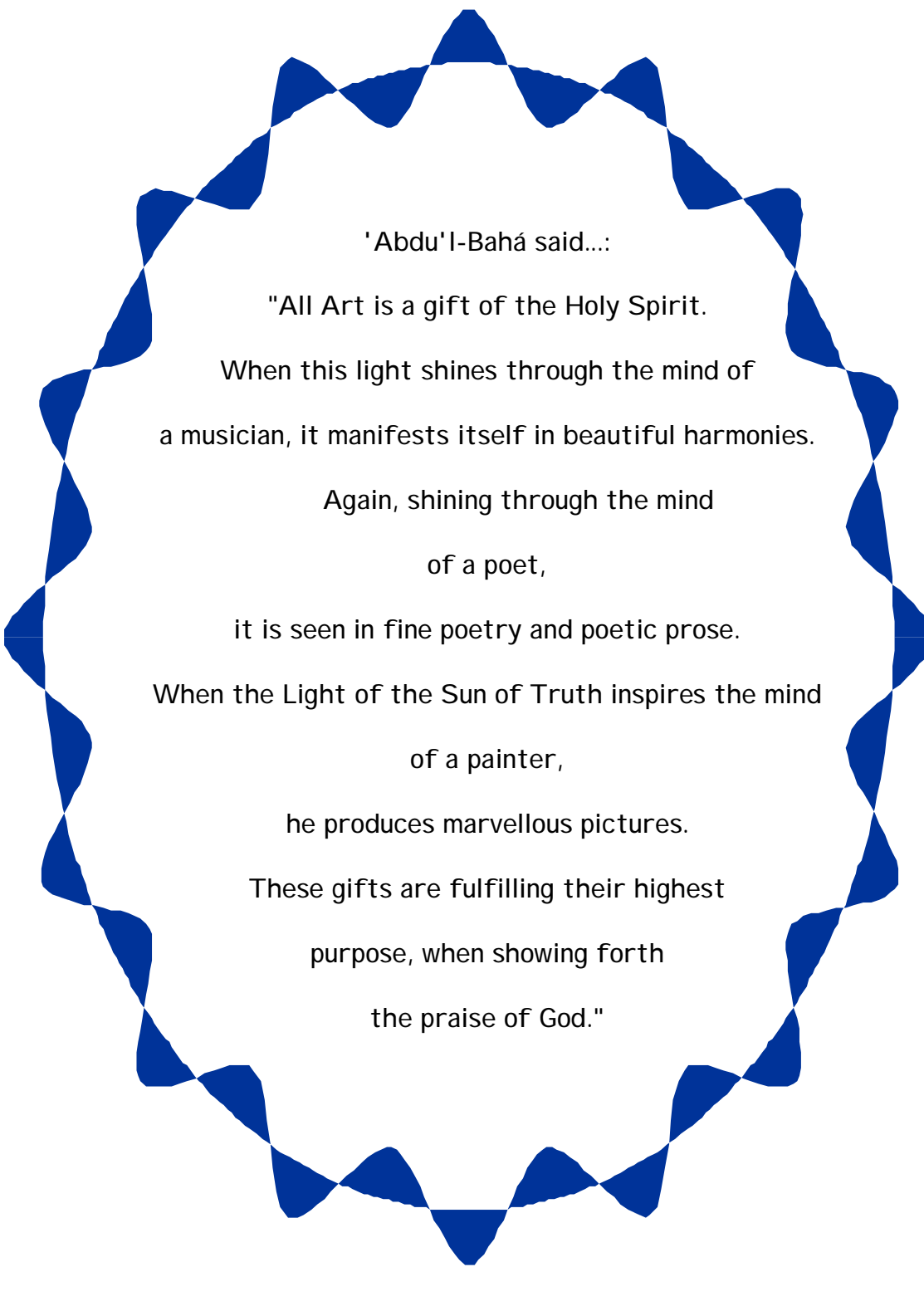
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'Abdu'l-Bahá said...:

"All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

When this light shines through the mind of
a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies.

Again, shining through the mind
of a poet,

it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose.

When the Light of the Sun of Truth inspires the mind
of a painter,

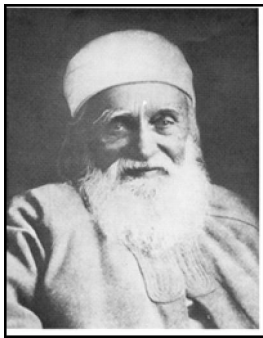
he produces marvellous pictures.

These gifts are fulfilling their highest

purpose, when showing forth

the praise of God."

Meeting `Abdu'l-Bahá



"The Portrait"

(Adapted from *The Diary of Juliet Thompson*)

Juliet Thompson was an artist who lived in America when 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited there in 1913. 'Abdu'l-Bahá liked Juliet very much and He said she had a pure heart and was always absolutely truthful. Juliet loved to be in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as often as she could.

She was a very good artist and wished with all her heart to paint a portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá was not keen on even having His photograph taken so she wondered if He would agree. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was very humble and often said that it is our character that is important, not what we look like.

But because 'Abdu'l-Bahá knew it would make Juliet happy, one day He agreed to her request to paint His portrait. He was very busy with people wanting to see Him all day long, so He asked her if she could paint Him in just half an hour.

"A half hour, my Lord?" stammered Juliet. It always took her at least two weeks to finish just part of a portrait!

"Well," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá with a smile, "I will give you three half hours...!"

And He told her to come to Him on the next Saturday morning at seven-thirty.

Juliet arrived on time and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was waiting for her.

He said, "I want you to paint My *Servitude* to God."

"Oh my Lord," cried Juliet, "only the Holy Spirit could paint Your

Servitude to God. No human hand could do it."

She asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá to pray for her so that she would be inspired, and 'Abdul-Bahá said He would.

And something amazing happened. Juliet said it was as though "Someone Else" saw through her eyes and worked through her hand. She did not feel she was the one doing the painting at all, and she felt a joy greater than she had ever felt before.

During the next two sessions, Juliet sometimes found herself just gazing at the kind face of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and having such a warm feeling of wonder and peace and love that she forgot to paint at all!

However, by the end of the third session, the painting was finished, and it was beautiful.

Juliet was so happy — not only had she been given the bounty of painting a portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but she had had the blessing of being with Him for an extra three precious half hours!



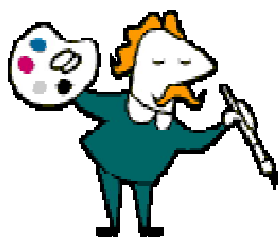
A painter asked:
"Is art a worthy vocation?"
'Abdu'l-Bahá, turning to her
impressively, said:
"Art is worship."

(An American folk story from long ago. See Acknowledgements.)

How the Rainbow was Made

Retold by S. E. Schlosser ©

One day when the earth was new, Nanbozho looked out the window of his house beside the wide waterfall and realized that all of the flowers in his meadow were exactly the same off-white colour. How boring! He decided to make a change, so he gathered up his paints and his paintbrushes and went out to the meadow.



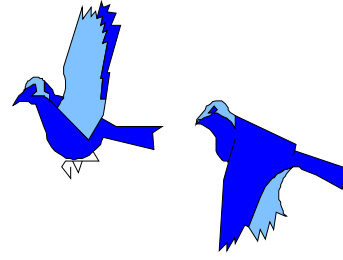
Nanbozho sat down in the tall grass and arranged his red and orange and yellow and green and blue and violet paint pots next to him. Then he began to paint the flowers in his meadow in many different colours. He painted the violets dark blue and the tiger lilies orange with brown dots. He made the roses red and pink and purple. He painted the pansies in every colour combination he could think of. Then he painted every single daffodil bright yellow. Nanbozho hummed happily to himself as he worked in the brilliant daylight provided by Brother Sun.

Overhead, two little bluebirds were playing games with each other. The first little bluebird would chase his friend across the meadow one way. Then they would turn around and the second bluebird would chase him back the other way. Zippity-zip went the first bluebird as he raced across the sky. Zappity-zing went the second bluebird as he chased him in the brilliant sunshine.

Occasionally, Nanbozho would shade his eyes and look up...up into the endless blue sky to watch the two little birds playing. Then he went back to work, painting yellow centres in the white daisies. Above him, the two birds decided to see how fast they could dive down to the green fields below them. The first bluebird sailed down and down, and then pulled himself up sharply just before he touched the ground. As he soared passed Nanbozho, his right wing dipped into the red paint pot. When the second bluebird dove toward the grass, his left wing grazed the orange paint pot.

Nanbozho scolded the two birds, but they kept up their game, diving down toward the grass where he sat painting and then flying back up into the sky.

Soon their feet and feathers were covered with paint of all colours. Finally Nanbozho stood up and waved his arms to shoo the birds away.



Reluctantly, the bluebirds flew away from Nanbozho and his paint pots, looking for another game to play. They started chasing each other again, sailing this way and that over the top of the giant waterfall that stood next to Nanbozho's house. Zippity-zip, the first bluebird flew through the misty spray of the waterfall. The first bluebird left a long red paint streak against the sky. Zappity-zing, the second bluebird chased his friend through the mist, leaving an orange paint streak. Then the birds turned to go back the other way. This time, the first bluebird left a yellow paint streak and the second left a pretty blue-violet paint streak.

As they raced back and forth, the colours grew more vivid. When Brother Sun shone on the colours, they sparkled radiantly through the mist of the waterfall.

Below them, Nanbozho looked up in delight when the brilliant colours spilled over his meadow. A gorgeous arch of red and orange and yellow and green and blue and violet shimmered in the sky above the waterfall.

Nanbozho smiled at the funny little bluebirds and said:

"You have made a rainbow!"



Nanbozho was so pleased that he left the rainbow permanently floating above his waterfall, its colours shimmering in the sunshine and the misting water. From that day to this, whenever Brother Sun shines his light on the rain or the mist, a beautiful rainbow forms. It is a reflection of the mighty rainbow that still stands over the waterfall at Nanbozho's house.

'Abdu'l-Baha says "the universe of God" is like "a wonderful theatre" where "every created thing plays its part".

"May they ... observe ... lordly processions
of infinite creatures;
they will see the blue heavens studded with luminous stars,
rivers flowing with salubrious water,
gardens bedecked with fragrant flowers,
trees adorned with blossoms and fruits,
birds singing songs of light,
humanity ever striving forward...
the universe of God a wonderful theatre upon the stage of which
every created thing plays its part."

1. From the quotation above, find the wonderful scenery on the stage of "the universe of God" and fill in the gaps below:

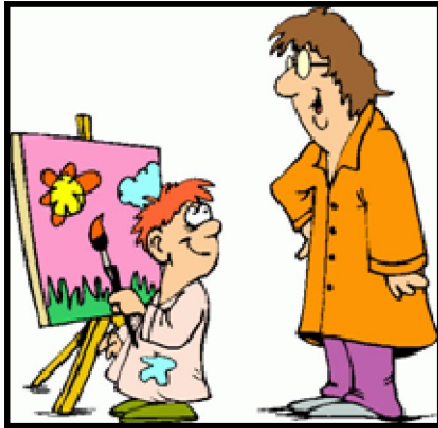
- A) "blue h..... studded with luminous s....."
- B) "r..... flowing with salubrious [good for you] w....."
- C) "g.....bedecked with fragrant f....."
- D) "t..... adorned with blossoms and f....."
- E) "b..... singing s..... of light"

2. Who are the "actors" on the stage of the universe of God?

- A) "lordly processions of infinite c....."
- B) "h..... ever striving forward"
- C) "every c..... t..... plays its part."

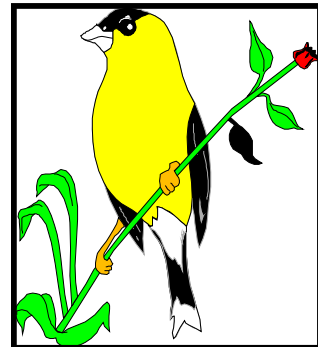
Make a Picture or Play about the Quotation on the previous page

Some Ideas

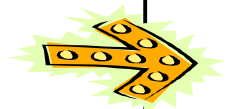


1) You may like to draw a picture about the quotation on the previous page, with curtains on either side to look like a stage.

2) Or you could cut out pictures from an old magazine or catalogue of all the things mentioned – flowers, river, stars, birds, different people, etc.– and make a collage of the scene.



3) Or you and your friends could make a short presentation or play, as in the example opposite, with each child coming forward one by one to recite a line until everyone is there. Add your own ideas. It could be performed at a Feast or children's class or for your parents.



The Theatre of God

1st child (wearing a crown made of gold or silver paper):

“Abdu'l-Baha says: May they observe lordly processions of infinite creatures”

2nd child (wearing a blue paper hat or cloak with stars stuck on it):

“they will see the blue heavens studded with luminous stars”

3rd child (making river movements with his/her hands):

“rivers flowing with salubrious water”

[note: salubrious is pronounced sal-oo-bree-us. It means very good for you!]

4th child (with flowers, paper or real, pinned to their clothes, or in their hair):

“gardens bedecked with fragrant flowers”

5th child (holding an apple in one hand and orange in another—or other fruit):

“trees adorned with blossoms and fruits”

6th child (with homemade wings pinned to shoulders):

“birds singing songs of light”

7th & 8th or more children (reciting loudly together):

“humanity ever striving forward”

1st child: “the universe of God”

2nd child: “a wonderful theatre”

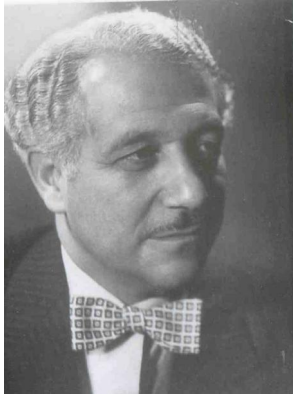
3rd child: “upon the stage”

4th child: “of which”

5th child: “every created thing”

6th child: “plays its part!”

(Everyone bows!)



Hands of the Cause of God

Hasan Balyuzi (1908-1980)

“We need poets and writers for the Cause... “
Shoghi Effendi

Hasan Balyuzi spent most of his life in England, although he was born in Shiraz, Persia. Shiraz is where the Báb had also been born, and Hasan was related to the Báb. Some famous poets of the past had also lived in Shiraz and it was said to be a very beautiful city.

Hasan had a good sense of humour but he was also a serious little boy and loved to learn new things. When he was four he began to learn English. This is important because of something he was able to do when he grew up. Later he also learnt to speak Arabic, Turkish, French and Urdu. As well as learning languages, he also liked to read about history and other subjects.

There were no free schools in those days, so poor children were unable to go, but Hasan was lucky as his father had a good job in the government and was able to pay for the best teachers for his son.

During the First World War, when Hasan was about six years old, his family moved to India, and this is where he learnt to speak Urdu. By the time he was nine, he was translating for people between Urdu and Persian. He was also practising his English and getting better at it every day. When he was ten or eleven, he and his family returned to Persia. Sadly, when he was thirteen, his father died.

In Persia, the Bahá'ís were not free to talk about their Faith because the authorities did not understand what it was all about and often put Bahá'ís in prison. Because of this, Hasan's parents had never told him much about it, and

as all the children at school were Muslims, Hasan had always thought of himself as being a Muslim too.

He continued to study hard, and when he was seventeen years old he went to a university in the Holy Land. The first thing he did was to visit Shoghi Effendi, who lived on Mount Carmel. Shoghi Effendi was the great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh and the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

Shoghi Effendi embraced Hasan and made him feel very welcome. He spoke to him alone for more than an hour and explained how God sends His Messengers to the world to guide mankind and that we should love Them all – Moses, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

Hasan had a pure heart and he became a wonderful Bahá'í. He wrote a pamphlet about Bahá'u'lláh, and when Shoghi Effendi read it, he said that one day Hasan should write three important books in English – one on the Báb, another on Bahá'u'lláh and a third on `Abdu'l-Bahá.



After he had finished his studies at the university, Hasan came to London to do further studies. Everybody loved him. He was quietly spoken, very humble and kind, and he had a lovely sense of humour. He had read so many books about the Faith and about the history of the world, he was able to explain things in a clear and interesting way. And whenever he spoke about the life of Bahá'u'lláh, those listening felt their hearts fill with love.

He became a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, served on many committees (including the youth committee), helped with the teaching work, gave talks, wrote plays, looked after his family (he and his wife, Molly,

had five boys), and he spent long hours at his job in the Persian Department at



the BBC. He was so busy, he did not have time to write the three important books mentioned by Shoghi Effendi.

Shoghi Effendi loved Hasan and appreciated all the wonderful things he was doing for the Faith. And in October 1957, he said that Hasan Balyuzi was a Hand of the Cause of God. Less than one month later, Shoghi Effendi died. Hasan was so heartbroken at the death of the beloved Guardian that he was ill for a long time afterwards.

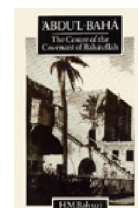
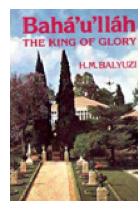
In the years that followed, Hasan at last found time to write the three books that Shoghi Effendi had asked him to write. These wonderful books on the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá are full of interesting facts and stories which most people in the West had never known before. He also wrote other books about the Faith, and all his books and notes and papers are now kept in a special library called the Afnan Library.

Hasan Balyuzi died in 1980. At his funeral the friends spoke of his warm love and humility, and what a brilliant historian he had been. One of them said:

"Dear, dear Hasan....
In time, all humanity will
treasure your memory."

The Universal House of Justice sent a message saying they were praying at the Holy Shrines that young people will be so inspired by Hasan Balyuzi's great achievements and steadfastness, patience and humility, that they will

"follow his glorious footsteps".



Art in the Rice Fields of Japan!

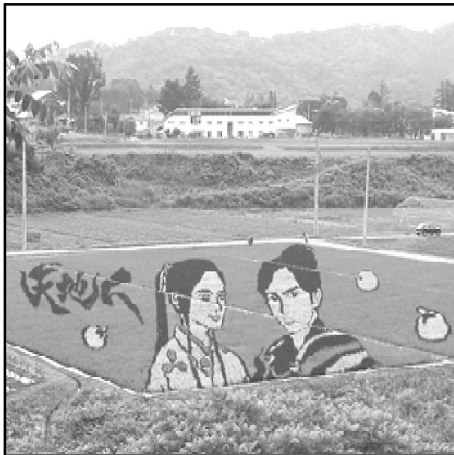
Stunning “crop art” has sprung up across rice fields in Japan.

These are pictures “planted” in the rice fields.

The pictures have not been painted but planted!

Farmers have created the large displays using no ink or dye. Instead, different colours of rice plants have been precisely arranged and grown in the paddy fields.

As summer progresses and the plants shoot up, the detailed artwork begins to appear. As you know, rice is planted in fields flooded with water, so making these pictures must have been very difficult.



These two pictures made of growing rice plants are of Japanese warriors – one with his wife, with some Japanese writing in the background, and the



other of a warrior on horseback. They are huge and hundreds of workers have helped to make them.

*

Isn't that amazing? You may like to do something more simple, like planting different flower and grass seeds in a pattern in the garden or in a seed box.

Make a pattern with them of a star, a cat or face
and watch the plants grow.

(Remember to water them.)

("Muse Magic" is "Poetry Magic" where anything can happen! A muse is a guiding spirit, a source of inspiration, or a poet. Read this poem out loud—it sounds really good!)

Muse Magic

by Debbi Bley Hampton

A poem is a wonderful, magical thing.
You can be a sky-scraper, instead of just "tall",
Or a single, white snowflake instead of just "small".
Oh, a poem is a magical thing!

Some poems are best when read right out loud,
Painting their pictures in the sounds that they make
With rat-a-tat rhythms so strong and so proud
Setting a cadence each step that they take.

Like: "My favourite thing is a midsummer's parade
With the stomp, stomp, march, march, drum and
bugle brigade."

Could you hear the feet stamping
On a hot summer street
And the drummer's boom-booming
A steady bass beat?

A poem can take us to a pretending place
Full of glittering castles and green dragon lair
Where we may win first prize in a unicorn race
And return home for supper on the backs of two
bears!

A poem uses words like paint pots and brush,
Sometimes splashing colours just to watch the
words flow.

Tugging us onward, all in a rush,
Insisting we follow where the poem wants to go.

Yet at other times a poem can mean
With a hint of a feeling, a shred of a scene
Drawing in tiny fine sable-brush mousey
word-tracks
That invite us to colour with the hues of our dreams.

A poem can make life seem realer than real,
Can bring us to tears, or make us all sing.
Yes, a poem is a magical, wonderful, funny,
Beautiful, enchanting, sad, happy thing!



The Autistic Boy Who Writes Fairy Tales

(Adapted from a News Report. Photo by Higashida Yasuhiro)



Naoki is a young author who writes enchanting fairy tales and poems. He says, "I want to write stories that give people courage." All of his works have been highly praised.

Thirteen-year-old Higashida Naoki is a student at a school for the Physically Handicapped in Japan. When he was two, Naoki suddenly stopped being able to talk. His worried mother began reading him books, teaching him proverbs and poems, and showing him English videos. It turned out that Naoki had autism, a condition that means he has great difficulty communicating verbally or interacting with other people. When Naoki was almost five, his mother noticed that he had a talent for writing, and she encouraged him to do this.

Naoki wrote one story after another. Realizing that having a goal would spur him on, he began to enter - and win - writing contests. His mother supported him by making a word chart that made it easier for him to communicate.

In September 2005, he published a book titled *To My Friends Here on This Planet: The World of Autism that I Know*. In the book, he wrote, "We are always troubled and alone. Don't laugh at me or treat my like an outcast."

Speaking of his frustration through a computer, Naoki said: "I can't say the words in my head. It's always tough and painful."

On his computer, he wrote a children's book called *The Most Beautiful Sound in the World* in just 10 days and entered it for the Grimms Fairy Tale competition. The theme was "Light", and Naoki immediately thought about the fact that light from the sun is the source of all life.

The book won first prize, and the authors who judged the contest praised Naoki's story, which is about a conversation between a young boy and a wise old man about the sound of light.

Naoki has a message for the children of the world:

"The world
that people like me
live in is the same as yours.
Live together on this earth with us.
Become our
friends."

Hello in Japanese

こんにちは。Konnichiwa. (*kon-nee-chee-WAH*)

Nature has Amazing Shapes...



The shell of a snail all made of swirls,
The head of a flower like a dozen curls.

The zig-zaggy shape of the lightning's power
Or a bee as it buzzes from flower to flower.

The soft fluffy shape of a cloud in the sky,
The meandering line of an ant passing by.

The roundness of berries, red, green and black,
The upright tail of a neighbour's cat.

The shape of raindrops and waves on the sea,
The feathery top of a bamboo tree.

The curve of the moon, a river, the sky,
The patterns on wings of butterflies.

The pointed tops of grass and leaves,
The spiky leaves of the holly tree.

The bell-like blossoms beneath the sun,
The squidgy squashed shape of a fallen plum.

The silver trail of a slug on the path,
The shape of a stone that looks like a heart!

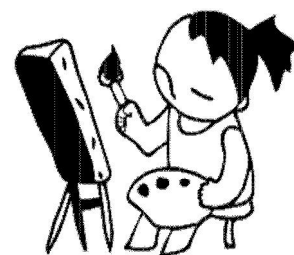


Make up another verse to add to this poem...

Things to do with Art in Nature

1. Find a snail or a shell and draw it.
2. Study the different shapes of petals or leaves and press some interesting ones between two pieces of paper and put them under a heavy book for a week or two until they dry out. Make a card for some one and stick the petals on the front.
3. What is the shape of an orange? What else is round (or nearly round?)
4. Can you find anything in nature that is made up of straight lines? (Part of a bird's leg perhaps? Anything else?)
5. What shape is the horizon? (it isn't straight!)
6. What shape is planet earth? (it isn't round!)
7. Would you say a pear is like a triangle?
8. What shape is a blackbird's wing?
9. Watch an ant and draw a wavy line on a piece of paper to show the pattern it makes as it runs across the ground.
10. Find three or four different sized smooth stones or pebbles and paint faces on them to make a family.
11. Paint (or use wax crayons) to make a picture of all the *shapes* you have found or can think of in nature (round, long, wavy, thin, fat, zig-zag, curvy, curly, triangular, oblong, twirly, feathery, sharp, soft, hard, pointed, bumpy, jagged, smooth, star-shaped etc.) Feel free and make it very colourful. (You could even try to do it with your eyes shut, just peeping now and then!)

It will look like a piece of modern art and you can call it "CREATION!"



Children and the Arts Around the World

A painting class at the Bahá'í summer school in Venezuela during a creative art project. Arts and music were part of the programme each day for all ages...



Drawing at the Academy for the Arts in England...

Reading a poem at the Bahá'í Arts Festival in the Philippines...



Your Work...



"Wildlife" by Holly Kirkpatrick (when aged 9)

Alláh-u-Abhá

I wrote this poem on the day that Issue 67 of Dayspring arrived through the post. I wrote it after reading the poem “Ten Little Seekers”. I wrote it when I was 9 years old, but I am now 11 years old.

I hope you like it!
Carmel xxx



On the Path to God

by Carmel Kalani
(when aged 9)

One small Christian
Wondering what to do,
Maybe spread unity
Then there were two.

Two small Muslims
Praying under a tree,
Thinking of God
Then there were three.

Three small Buddhists
Knocking on a door,
Ready to go to temple
Then there were four.

Four small Hindus
Preparing yogurt and chive,
With salad as well,
Then there were five.

Five small Sikhs
Working as the clock ticks,
Learning about mankind
Then there were six.

Six small Jews
Praying for those in heaven
Remembering their souls
Then there were seven.

Seven small Bábís
Having a debate
Thinking "No war!"
Then there were eight.

Eight small Zoroastrians
Standing in a line,
Wanting to learn more
Then there were nine.

Nine small Bahá'ís
Writing with a pen
To the Universal House of Justice
Then there were ten!

Religions are here to help
They bring love, peace and more,
They are what we need
To open our door

On the Path to God.



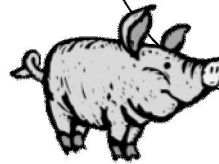
Jokes



Mary: Can you spell blind pig?

Johnny: B-I-i-n-d p-i-g.

Mary: No. It's b-I-n-d p-g. With two "i"s it would not be blind!

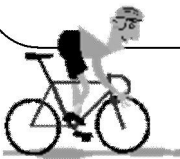


Why is an old car like a baby?

It never goes anywhere without a rattle!



Knock! Knock!
Who's there?
I sabel.
I sabel who?
Is a bell necessary on a bicycle!



Dentist:
Please stop howling. I haven't even touched your tooth yet!

Patient:
I know, but you're standing on my toe!



Boy: I think my teacher loves me!

Girl: How can you tell?

Boy: She keeps putting kisses by my sums!



$$\begin{array}{r} 1 + 1 = 3 \quad x \\ 1 + 2 = 4 \quad x \end{array}$$

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men said: "Scrambled eggs for dinner again!"



When does the alphabet have 24 instead of 26 letters?

When U and I are not there!



Amazing Stories from the Dawn-Breakers

Stories adapted by Jacqueline Mehrabi and illustrated by Malcolm Lee (published by the BPT of India)

(The story so far: The Báb has been sent to Tabriz in the far north of Persia, and from there to a bleak and lonely castle in the town of Mah-Ku. Here, the religious leaders hope that the Báb's followers will forget about Him and the new teachings He had brought from God. But they are wrong!)

Part 22

The Báb has a Visitor

When the Báb was in the mountain prison of Máh-Kú, He revealed thousands of verses explaining the new teachings from God. Many believers visited Him, and when they left, He told them to return home and tell people about this exciting new message. He also told them to be ready to recognise the great Messenger of God who would appear after Him.

Inside the castle, the Báb would loudly chant the verses of God, and the hearts of the people in the town below would leap with joy when they heard Him.

Winter came, and wind and snow swirled around the castle. There was no door to the Báb's cell and an icy draught blew into every corner. There were no fires to heat the rooms, and no beds – just a thin rug on the floor to sleep on. There was no lamp at night. And it was so cold that when the Báb washed His face before saying His prayers in the mornings, the water froze in icy droplets on His beard.

Then came spring, and the sun shone through the bars to warm His cell. Far below, the river Aras could be seen winding its way through fields of wild

flowers. And farther away still, the figure of Mullá Husayn could be seen walking towards the prison to see the Báb.

He had been walking for weeks, over 1,200 miles, all the way from his home in Mashad, and arrived just in time for Naw-Rúz. The Báb had seen him coming and was waiting for him by the castle gate.

The prison warden brought delicious food and also fruit sent by one of the believers, and they celebrated Naw-Rúz together.

Mullá Husayn stayed for nine days, and when he left, the Báb told him to visit all the believers in every town he passed through on his way home and give them His love.



(to be continued...)



The Kitáb-i-Aqdas ~ The Most Holy Book

Lesson Fourteen

Bahá'u'lláh says in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (verse 48):

"Unto every father hath been enjoined
the instruction of his son and daughter
in the art of reading and writing and in all that
hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet."

Notice that Bahá'u'lláh calls reading and writing an "art". And, of course, it is. We need to practise it before we become really good at it. Perhaps we take it for granted that we can read and write, but imagine what it would be like if you had not been taught to do either of these - never being able to read a story to yourself or write a letter or email to a friend. Even if you are very young and cannot read or write very well yet, think how exciting it will be when you do learn to do it easily.

1. It is important to be able to read because then we can read the prayers and Words of God for ourselves, wherever we may be. We can also read and study to gain knowledge and become whatever we wish in life.
2. It is important to be able to write because then we can write the Words of God, and maybe learn to do beautiful artistic writing called calligraphy. We need to write to do our schoolwork, and to write down the poems, plays, stories and thoughts we have in our heads. And, of course, to send emails or other messages...



This is a story about a Bahá'í called Mishkin Qalam who used his skill to do beautiful handwriting (called calligraphy) by writing out the Words of God in the most lovely designs. Because of his skill, he became famous throughout Persia and beyond. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

"This highly accomplished man ... set out to find Bahá'u'lláh. He crossed the great distances, measured out the miles, climbing mountains, passing over deserts and over the sea, until at last he came to Adrianople. Here he reached the heights of faith and assurance; here he drank the wine of certitude.... He spent some time under the sheltering grace of Bahá'u'lláh, and every day new blessings were showered upon him. Meanwhile he produced his splendid calligraphies; he would write out the Most Great Name, Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá, O Thou Glory of the All-Glorious, with marvellous skill, in many different forms, and would send them everywhere."

This is Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá (O Thou Glory of the All-Glorious, meaning Bahá'u'lláh) written from right to left in the Arabic way and in a style of calligraphy. (Note: The letter that looks like a heart is the letter for "h"!)



This also says Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá. Can you see how the same letters from the first picture have been made into a lovely design here? This is based on a design of the Greatest Name first made by Mishkin Qalam. Bahá'ís often have one of these in their houses.



3. In the last part of the sentence from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas quoted on the previous page, Bahá'u'lláh also says that parents should tell their children about the Holy Teachings. Write below one of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh:

.....

Important Guidance about the Arts...

*"That day will the Cause spread like wild fire
when its spirit and teachings
will be presented on the stage
or in art and literature..."*

(Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi)

Plays:

"...the Faith can certainly be dramatized, but two things must be remembered: no personal presentation of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh or the Master [‘Abdu’l-Bahá], only Their words can be used, but no figure must represent Them; great dignity must be the keynote."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian)

Paintings:

"The prohibition on representing the Manifestation of God in paintings and drawings or in dramatic presentations applies to all the Manifestations of God."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice)

Writing:

"Bahá'í authors should write in such manner as to attract the souls."

"As you know, Bahá'í authors, writing about the Faith, are requested to have their work approved for publication by the National Spiritual Assembly of the country where such work is published."

"It is hoped that Bahá'í authors will provide a constant stream of new works. Introductory books, commentaries, dissertations on various aspects of the Revelation, text books, histories, reviews, audio-visual material are all needed to stimulate study of the Faith and to promote the vital teaching work."

(Universal House of Justice)

Poetry:

A friend wrote some poems and sent them to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who replied:

"O thou bird of pleasing tones! Thy little book of poems, which were very sweet, was read. It was a source of joy, for it was a spiritual anthem and a melody of the love of God."

