

**Day 1: These Are the Hands** by Michael Rosen  
*for the 60th anniversary of the NHS*

These are the hands  
That touch us first  
Feel your head  
Find the pulse  
And make your bed.

These are the hands  
That tap your back  
Test the skin  
Hold your arm  
Wheel the bin  
Change the bulb  
Fix the drip  
Pour the jug  
Replace your hip.

These are the hands  
That fill the bath  
Mop the floor  
Flick the switch  
Soothe the sore  
Burn the swabs  
Give us a jab  
Throw out sharps  
Design the lab.

And these are the hands  
That stop the leaks  
Empty the pan  
Wipe the pipes  
Carry the can  
Clamp the veins  
Make the cast  
Log the dose  
And touch us last.

© Michael Rosen, 2008

**About this poem**

This poem is included in the second edition of *Tools of the Trade: Poems for new doctors* (Scottish Poetry Library, 2016). The anthology was edited by Kate Hendry; Dr Lesley Morrison, GP; Dr John Gillies, GP and Chair, Royal College of GPs in Scotland (2010-2014); Revd Ali Newell, and Liliac Fraser.

## Day 2: In the Land of Punctuation by Christian Morgenstern

The peaceful land of Punctuation  
is filled with tension overnight

When the stops and commas of the nation  
call the semicolons "parasites"

Within the hour they form their troops,  
an anti-semicolon group

The question marks avoid the scrape  
(as always) and quietly escape

The semicolons' mournful racket  
is drowned out by surrounding brackets

And then the captured creature freezes  
Imprisoned by parentheses

The dreaded minus sign arrives  
and — slash! — ends the captives' lives

The question marks, now homeward-bound,  
pity the corpses on the ground

But, woe! A new war looms large,  
as dashes against commas charge

And cut across the commas' necks  
so that the beheaded wrecks

(the dashes delight in gore)  
as semicolons hit the floor

Both semicolon types they bury  
in silence in the cemetery

Those dashes that still remain,  
Creep blackly behind the mourning train

The exclamation holds a sermon  
with colon's help, right on the spot

Then through their comma-form free nation  
They all march home: dash, dot, dash, dot...

Christian Morgenstern, 1905

### **Day 3: Gameplay** by Kwame Alexander

on the pitch, lightning fa**St**,  
dribble, fake, then make a dash

player tries to**O** steal the ball  
lift and step and make him fall

zip and zoom to find the spot  
defense readies for the shot

**Chip**, then kick it in the air  
take off like a Belgian hare

shoot it left, but watch it **Curve**  
all he can do is observe

watch the ball b**End** in midflight  
play this game fa**R** into night

Kwame Alexander, **Gameplay** from Booked © 2016, Andersen Press

## Day 4: I Saw a Peacock with a Fiery Tail **by Anonymous (before 1665)**

### About this poem

This is a 'trick' poem: the trick is the two ways it can be understood -read a line at a time, or read from the middle of one line to the middle of the next, e.g. *I saw a peacock, with a fiery tail. With a fiery tail, I saw a blazing comet. I saw a blazing comet, drop down hail. Drop down hail...*

*These following are to be understood in two ways.*

I saw a Peacock, with a fiery tail,  
I saw a Blazing Comet, drop down hail,  
I saw a Cloud, with Ivy circled round,  
I saw a sturdy Oak, creep on the ground,  
I saw a **Pismire**, swallow up a Whale,  
I saw a raging Sea, brim full of Ale,  
I saw a Venice Glass, Sixteen foot deep,  
I saw a well, full of men's tears that weep,  
I saw their eyes, all in a flame of fire,  
I saw a House, as big as the Moon and higher,  
I saw the Sun, even in the midst of night,  
I saw the man, that saw this wondrous sight.

**pismire** is an old word for an ant

## **Day 5:** Who Has Seen the Wind? by Christina Rossetti

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither I nor you:  
But when the leaves hang trembling,  
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither you nor I:  
But when the trees bow down their heads,  
The wind is passing by.

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