

Here is “Amazing Grace” written by John Newton:

Amazing Grace! how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me;
 I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.

Here, the four *hemistichs* all get the same width. So extra spaces get added to get the alignment right.

In the above, we used `width=local`. Since the default *desired* inter-hemistich distance is `4em`, the two hemistichs did not fit on the line and automatically switched to the `alternative=staggered` mode.

Let's reduce that distance and see that in `alternative=auto` or `alternative=line` modes, we can also fit things in the line.

Amazing Grace! how sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me;
 I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.

This capability is the original reason I developed this module to extend what was available in the `m-hemistich` module already. We have three alternatives for typesetting a two-hemistich line of poetry:

- **line** forces typesetting of the two half-lines next to each other with the desired distance between them.
- **staggered** typesets the two half-lines on different lines with the first flushleft and the second flushright.
- **stacked** typesets the two half-lines on top of each other.
- **auto** picks between the first two modes preferring the first one.

Another capability is the `width=fit` option. Here we are not restricted to a fixed width or `width=local`. This or the fixed-width option can be combined with `location=middle` to place the whole box of poetry horizontally centered on the page.

Though this is my preferred settings, it comes with a caveat—a bug I hope to fix soon: The line may not fit the local width, and then we'd switch to `alternative=staggered`, which then reduces the maximum line width to that of one hemistich, in effect leading to an `alternative=stacked` mode.

In typesetting Persian poetry, we sometimes have alternative forms. In the *mostazad* poetry form, each line consists of two half-lines, though of different width. This

can of course be easily typeset with any table mechanism, say Natural Tables. However, we add the option of providing different `coupling` parameters for half-lines of poetry. In the case of mostazad, we use something like `coupling:right=extra`, leaving `coupling:left` to fall back on `coupling=default`.

Other types of Persian poetry (for example, Tarkib-Band) consists of different sections. Each section has a number of lines where all half lines have the same width; then the section ends with a line of different width, meter, and usually shape. For instance, the normal lines are typically typeset as `alternative=line` but the separating line is often typeset as `alternative=stacked`. Whether the width of these separator lines (SL) are also match to the normal lines (NL) may vary.

1. Some would use the same `alternative=line` and match the widths.
2. Some would use the same `alternative=stacked` and match the widths.
3. Some would use the same `alternative=stacked` and not match the widths. Specially in this case, it's possible that widths of lines from different sections are matched or not. One may even want to match the width of NLs across sections and the width of the SLs together.

There's yet another type of classic Persian poetry (called mosammat) which can consist of odd number of lines. In this case, the last half-line is usually middle-aligned.

To demonstrate these options, we use Persian poetry.

In this example, the same line of poetry is typeset with the four alternatives while using `width=fit` and `location=middle`.

میازار موری که دانهکش است	که جان دارد و جان شیرین خوش است
میازار موری که دانهکش است	که جان دارد و جان شیرین خوش است
میازار موری که دانهکش است	که جان دارد و جان شیرین خوش است
میازار موری که دانهکش است	که جان دارد و جان شیرین خوش است

We demonstrate the same poetry line with the `kashida=on` option. Note that kashida is inserted in random locations of the first half-line (because the second half-line is wider and determines the maximum width).

میازار موری که دانه‌کش است که جان دارد و جان شیرین خوش است
میازار موری که دانه‌کش است
که جان دارد و جان شیرین خوش است

Next comes an excerpt from the famous TarkibBand by Mohtasham Kashani. Here we let different sections match the width on the normal and separator lines.

باز این چه شورش است که در خلق عالم است باز این چه نوحه و چه عزا و چه ماتم است
باز این چه رستخیز عظیم است کز زمین بی نفخ صور خاسته تا عرش اعظم است
⋮
جن و ملک بر آدمیان نوحه می‌کنند گویا عزای اشرف اولاد آدم است
خورشید آسمان و زمین، نور مشرقین
پرورده کنار رسول خدا حسین
کشتی شکست‌خورده طوفان کربلا در خاک و خون تپیده میدان کربلا
گر چشم روزگار بر او فاش می‌گریست خون می‌گذشت از سر ایوان کربلا
⋮
آه از دمی که لشکر اعدا نکرده شرم کردند رو به خیمه سلطان کربلا
آن دم فلک بر آتش غیرت سپند شد
کز خوفِ خصم، در حرم، افغان بلند شد
⋮

We now demonstrate that Kashida works with diacritics as well, using the most well-known lines from Hafez.

که عشق آسان نمود اوّل ولی افتاد مشکل‌ها	ألا يا أَيُّهَا السَّاقِي أَدِرْ كَأْساً و ناولِها
ز تابِ جَعَدِ مشکینش چه خون افتاد در دل‌ها	به بویِ نافه‌ای کاخِرِ صبا زان طُرّه بگشاید
⋮	

Here's a mosammat from Naser Khosrow with three lines per section.

ای گنبد زنگارگون، ای پرجنون پرفنون	هم تو شریف و هم تو دون، هم گمره و هم رهنمون
دریای سبز سرنگون، پر گوهر بی منتهی	
انوار و ظلمت را مکان، بر جای و دائم تازنان	ای مادر نامهربان، هم سالخورده هم جوان
گویا ولیکن بی زبان، جویا ولیکن بی وفا	
که خاک چون دیبا کنی، که شاخ پر جوزا کنی	که خوی بد زیبا کنی، از بادیه دریا کنی
که سنگ چون مینا کنی، وز نار بستانی ضیا	
⋮	

And finally a mostazad by MohammadTaghi Bahar, which barring the kashida support, could have been easily typeset by any table mechanism.

این دود سیه‌فام که از بامِ وطن خاست	از ماست که بر ماست
وین شعله سوزان که برآمد ز چپ و راست	از ماست که بر ماست
جان گر به لب ما رسد، از غیر ننالیم	با کس ننگالیم
از خویش بنالیم که جانِ سخن اینجاست	از ماست که بر ماست
⋮	
