Argument: Wild Amy Tapole of the Great Way over Here (‘Here’ meaning the earth) as she calls herself is a young tadpole, wanting to explore the heavens.  She’s very practical and her mission is to build a spaceship to get here there.

I

I’m a green tadpole who didn’t follow,

Wiggling along with the others below.

I jumped off the ground and claimed as my chateau

The vault of the night sky, where I could grow

In the protection of the wandering stars

Who inspired me and healed my scars.

Up among them, as a comet I’d fly,

Comet wild Amy glowing in the night sky.

I was as earnest as the toiling bee,

Dreaming and planning diligently.

That’s to say I did mostly the former,

I’m not so organized, but I’m a dreamer.

The starlight reflected on my fair clay

And in the long nights I flickered gray,

Like a critically sick glowworm blinking

Humbly imitating the stars’ keen white twinkling.

I jumped and jumped and reached and reached;

My sticky hands grabbed the air as my arms stretched.

Back down I always fell with my soft body,

So supple and squishy, it hurt hardly.

But the heavens were out of reach for now,

But someday, little I will reach them somehow.

Before I can fly up in the azure sky,

Below in the azure deep could begin I.

As a slick, moist creature of land and sea,

I could explore the depths easily.

There train myself and my skill improve

In exploration as I thru the waves move.

Wild Amy, tail first, into the sea dove,

And the crashing currents before her drove.

Diving deeper, I thrash wildly about

So free, like a backwards swimming trout.

HE HE!  Eyes closed, I dance wildly downwards

Dashing, dashing thru the surprised fish hoards.

They scatter, as I burst in their midst ,

An erratic comet whirling the mist.

In my writhing, into a small fish I crash,

And saw red and blue before me flash:

The fish swam circling me, apparently mad,

A small red goby fish with blue stripes clad.

I wish I had two colors bright like that,

Instead of one (green) that’s kind of matte.

O dull green, the color commonplace

Of the lovely life on Earth and of my race.

Wild Amy, you squirming earthly lifeform,

Another green thing in the living swarm.

Yes, ‘tis a nice color to look upon,

Like the brown of dirt, famil’ar and calm.

Squishy green blob, the form primordial;

I have the ancient bacteria’s profile.

But you, lil’ fair fish, you’re not earthly

You’re an alien from the sea, so pretty.

HE HE! I spin and spin as she round and round

Dances, foll’wing me down and down to the ground.

On a scratchy coral ledge I land to rest,

The fish stopped too, and me thus addressed:

“Wild tapol, YOU!, how’d you get so deep here?

You wriggle up there, the sun’s fair rays near.

In the deep dark, without the guiding ray,

You see naught, and bump people on their way.

Me you hit so hard, that my book I dropped

A lib’ry book, that I just this morning got.

O! How can I my fallen book recover

From the scary deep currents that ever stir.

I’m so mad at you for doing that,

While I, reading, on the moving currents sat.

O, Tadpol, I’m so scared too because,

A deep monster probably snapped it in its jaws.

Into the very belly of the beast,

Then, must we venture to get it released.

O my poor lie-bree book. I, Gabi Fish, was

So happy to read it during my pause.

We must rescue it and read it till the end,

Very gently, the corners not to bend.

Come hurry, you, you’re obliged to help me

To atone for the harm did to me.”

She said, looking at me worriedly,

Waiting that I lead the way supposedly.

“Wait, you, Gabi Fish, don’t hurry me so.”

I said. “We’re strangers to each other so

We shouldn’t with each other anywhere go.

It’s not advised to do so, don’t you know?

Tis not an excuse to avoid helping you,

But one to tell my life story to you:

Hail you fair Gabi Fish, I’m wild Amy,

Of the great over here, as fame names me.

The heavens shall I one day explore,

Discovering warm aliens and more.

The blue sky, you’ve probably never seen,

But it’s much lovelier than you can dream.

Under its black night I look up and dream

To be up there whereof you can’t even dream.

But the means to get there, I’ve not yet found,

So I’m exploring the sea while earthbound.

This great sea, your home, is lovely too,

And deep, teeming, mysterious, and blue.

I can go deep in the sea as I please,

Swimming frantically on the wat’ry breeze.

Which is not too deep, for it’s so scary,

Down there where the monsters creep angrily.

That I can’t see? How can you say that to me?

I’ve developed stellar vision slowly:

The twinkling stars conferred to me over time

This sparkle that lights my eyes of green lime.

Even down here in them you can see

The night sky reflected permanently.

Even down here I see thus by starlight all.

I see you, bright red with blue strips, so small.

I see my dark matte green skin of my hand

So plain now, but it can glow on command.”

I closed my eyes and swallowed a bit,

The descending saliva carried with it

A green glowing starbit from my head

That did finally in my hand inbed.

Through my translucent skin, we both regard,

In my hand the small glowing star shard.

“HE HE, overall, I’m so fair too, like you.

I’m a green comet, I’m a green flower,

I’m green rainbow in the warm shower.

I’m a green blob of life, a green woman,

Just a very fair green thing I am.”

“Yes, I do like the glowing dots” Gabi said.

“Around your eye area and in your head.

How’d you push one of the dots from there

Into your hand making it look fair?”

I said, “It’s easy to do for me,

As natural as a Bee culling honey.

“But what about you? I don’t understand

How you can hold a libree book in your hand.

You’re so small and have no hands, how then,

Could you poss’bly a lib’ry book obtain?

Tis so hard for even me, Wild Amy,

A lib’ry book to get comfortably.

I’m scared when they inspect my record and see

I’ve checked out too many books from the lib’ry.

O! They think I don’t read all thoroughly,

That the lib’ry books are misused by me.

Though only one lib’ry book at a time,

Do I check out and return clean, on time.

Small Amy can’t do otherwise anyhow;

Carrying more than one, my thin arms won’t allow.

But I’m not questioning you, I just want to ask

Before we begin the dangerous task,

Of bravely seeking the lost lib’ry book

In the depths where monsters have their nook.”

Furiously ‘round several times she spun,

Swirling the water and thus to me begun:

“YOU! O! You Tadpol Amy! How could you

Question me after what you did to me do.

You hit me hard, and my lib’ry book fell

To where the scariest sea monsters dwell.

Though to you, little questioning Amy,

I’ve got nothing to prove, look here and see!”

Suddenly a lib’ry card she pulled out,

And held it close, touching slightly my snout.

HE HE. The design on the card could I,

Caref’lly observe with my curious eye:

A warm nighttime forest scene appeared,

Darkly lit, with tiny lights multicolored.

The painting seemed so vibrant and real to me,

That its very touch warmed my nose slightly.

What a lucky Fish, angry Gabi is

To have such a pretty lib’ry card as this,

With its meticulous great forest scene,

Where single blades of grass can be seen.

How’d they do that: on a libry card

Print a living world for one to regard.

As I regard the details, warmer I get.

The glowing animals’ warmth on me did set.

A bear, a mouse, a Bee, so far I’ve made out,

As I follow with my eyes the forest route.

All the animals a small light emit,

Like glowworms in a summer night moonlit.

A tiny white mouse with a golden crown

Sits next to a tree stump on the dirt ground.

Around her, scraps of food and paper lay:

A bitten piece of pizza, pork fillet

And much, much more mouldy food on display.

Hmm. On the scraps of paper I espy

Various written words fixed in black dye.

On the lib’ry card Gabi held, I press

Moving closer, making my nose compress.

(Firm Gabi Fish the pressure maintains,

Not yielding the lib’ry card ‘gainst my strains.)

Squinting, my eyeball touching the lib’ry card,

And my nose flat, I can make out a word:

‘Fox’, and the other paper scraps some more,

-‘Woes’, ‘bed’, ‘tiny’ – miniscule words bore.

One more word could I in the picture see,

Hmm. I blink and read the word, ‘Amy’!

What is the tiny mouse doing with these

Pieces of paper lying ‘round the trees?

Maybe she’s writing a poetry book.

She lies there with a very tired look.

Along the forest path my eyes continue,

Until a green blobby thing I view,

Glowing with a fair violet hue.

A strange wormy creature with slimy skin,

A long green tail, and a quiet friendly grin.

Upright it walks with its cute earnest mien.

HE HE, nice funny looking thing, so green.

I decompress my nose and exit the scene,

Which had presented before me like a dream.

In the foreground, in fancy silver font

Is printed her name, Gabi Fish-mont.

HE HE! “Fish-mont” ‘tis her lib’ry card indeed;

No further examination did I need.

So, gracefully back from the card did I glide,

Slipping into a current that pushed my stride.

I landed a short distance away,

On the current, she chased me with no delay.

Upon me again, persistent Gabi

Pressed her lovely lib’ry card into me.

As before, it gently touches my nose,

And the live forest does me yet enclose.

The scented warm dry air I inhale;

As my nose touched the animals on the trail.

My nose felt fuzzy with the contact,

On the animals who didn’t react.

Poor animals, maybe they didn’t like it,

So I decided to stop doing it.

I lean back, letting the thinnest sliver

Of water my contact with the card sever.

Swiftly, nudging the card closer once more,

Gabi restored the lightest touch as before.

With an infinitesimal move back,

(One that’s near invisible in fact)

I remove with the li’bry card contact.

Yet remained my nose so close as to feel

The phantom touch of the forest so real.

My nose, the real touch of plastic felt then

When Gabi the lib’ry card advanced again.

A very long time the duel goes on,

For each move was thin as the slice of dawn

Through touching grass blades on the morning lawn.

HE HE!  Whether Gabi Fish even knows,

That there’s no limit to my bending pose.

Without a backbone, I may lean back far,

Into an arch with my head on the floor.

In this pose, I, bending Amy, end up,

With the card following my nose closeup.

Further away, even I couldn’t bend,

So the card stayed on my nose in the end.

Satisfied and holding the card out still,

Gabi thus says with her voice sweet and shrill,

“Study exactly, Questioning Amy,

My pictor’al libree card dear to me,

And realize I’m a member of the lib’ry.

O! I’m a new member of the lib’ry,

They gave me this new lib’ry card for free.

It has the new design of the forest,

That, of all the choices, looks the very best.

Even lib’ry woman, impressed, said

I’m first to have it on my card portrayed.

O! I was so happy swimming in my lane,

Thinking how later at home, in my fish pen,

I could read my poor lib’ry book again.

At times, a bit tired, I would stop a spell

To look inside the book and pat it as well.

What a nice lib’ry book with a tale to tell.

But then you, Questioning Amy came by, YOU,

Wildly squirming, my dreams crashing thru.

You made me so sad also by questioning

(after your act!)my Libree book, the poor thing.

How, HOW could you all those things to me say?

That I’m too small to have a lib’ry book? HEY!

Please don’t say that, Amy: You are slightly

Smaller than me even, Questioning Amy.

Besides, the gentle book I cautiously chose

Was one of the smallest in the fiction rows.

O! How all the libry must I long scour,

searching and hoping hour after hour

To find (hurrah) a lib’ry book that fits

Into these tiny hand’s narrow limits.”

The libry card still in hand, she waves then

Her indeed small fore fins again and again;

Causing thus the plastic to rub my nose,

And upon me a tickling feeling impose.

HE HE!  After a bit, the motion ceased,

And more reproachful words were thus released:

“O, Questioning Amy, I was so lucky,

Leaving the lib’ry feeling most plucky.

With my lib’ry book securely by me,

I swam along, in this big fatal sea.

At the bottom by unknown monsters beset.

Everywhere else is under Amy’s threat:

A wild tadpol coursing from the surface

Through the layers, bumping all in this place.

Then questioning all that she bumps into,

Even my poor lib’ry book that didn’t wrong you.

Your acts harm innocent people, Amy, you.

Your wild swimming is dangerous

And your questioning attitude is worse.”

Still by the card uncomfortably pinned,

I wiggled to unloose my gentle wind:

“Don’t cry Gabi Fish-Mon, I’m just like you,

For I’m a member of the lie--bree too.”

Suddenly, my lib’ry card, I pulled out,

and held it there slightly touching her snout.

Thereby did I our contest equalize,

By making Gabi my card recognize.

Yet bent back so, such an effort did I

Expend to keep my card before her eye.

My stringy arms were stretched out maximally,

Bending round her own held-out card awkwardly,

As my hands, both of them, held my card tightly.

Since twas an older lib’ry card I got,

Its design was plainer and simply-wrought.

Like in an elementary school you’d see,

With hand-written name on plastic flimsy.

Muffled somewhat by her card in my face,

I tried to proceed in stating my case:

“Neither you, nor your lib’bry book I meant

To question, such was never my intent.

And now that I’ve your lib’ry card closely seen,

With its so mesmerising forest scene,

You may remove it from so near my mien.”

There a while I waited, allowing her

To retreat her card, if she’d so prefer.

Hmm.  But so was not her intent quite yet

And my suggestion didn’t change her mindset.

I had no choice, then, but to continue,

Her card hindering my voice and view:

“If you really did the lib’ry book lose

I’ll help you get it to avoid the dues.

But, while your card is pretty, it proves not,

That you’ve a lib’ry book ever had got.

This technicality I’m pointing out,

Not to question, but to put beyond doubt,

Twere vain, your card ‘fore my snout to maintain:

First, there’s no more from it I could ascertain.

The very long examination that you

Have so far obliged me (with some force) to,

Suffices excessively for me

To comprehend to more than just degree

Whatever you believe the card proves to me.

Second, it doesn’t prove, as I have said,

That you a lib’ry book in your possession had.

“Questioning Amy? How could you that say?

That it doesn’t prove it? I don’t know what to say?

You’re questioning my poor li’bry card too?

You have a mistrustful heart, Amy You.

On the outside you look soft and loveable,

But your soul is calculating and cynical.

It’s mean so coldly logical to be

When my lib’ry book’s alone in the sea.

A lib’ry book in the terrible sea lost,

By monsters threatened, and by the waves toss’d.

O! I’m so scared for the lib’ry book too,

It’s so small and helpless here in the deep blue.

Questioning Amy, we have now not the time

The logic of a human act or rhyme,

To analyze in a formal system,

Nor should our discourse need to prove a theorem.

Showing you my lib’ry card was, as they’d say,

An inductive argument anyway.

I never claimed to make a deductive one,

Amy, don’t let your assumptions wild run.”

Hmm. This fish is getting out of control,

Fear, anguish, and wrath are filling her soul.

Wild Amy, this crisis you can manage,

Using your caring rhymes to soothe her rage:

“There there, I’m scared too of what will happen,

If you lose so soon a lib’ry book then.

Such a new, new member you are, Gabi

To be losing a lib’ry book already.

O! What if the lib’reans your card suspend,

And no one will any more books to you lend.

To be in trouble with the libree…

That I’m very scared of for you Gabi.

Concerning the libry I always behave

With all my effort, earnest and grave.

Never would I a libry book let

Out of hand and face the resulting threat.

You’re in a dire spot, I believe,

And I’ll help, your lib’ry book to retrieve.

Hmm, how did the lib’ree book look like now?

Twill be hard to find for us, I avow.

How could we ever find in the ocean’s din

A so small book with so meek words within.

How could we ever find a faint birdsong,

Dispersed on the threaded wind the night along.

How could we ever find, our pain to express,

The right words from deep within that mess

Of dark whirling emotions we possess.

O our proposed quest will be long and hard,

And we’ll die in this wat’ry graveyard.

Our bitten-into, dead bodies will float

Ending up in the net of a fishing boat.

By then, all the flesh will have been decayed;

The honest fishermen will be dismayed,

As they two tiny skeletons discover,

You and me Gabi, cowering together.

Your skeleton arm my skeleton head

Hugs, for I have no bones but in my head.

O, We tried our best, but after it all,

We didn’t make it, we’re just too small.

Gigantic nature our paltry beings squished,

As we heroically to the book rushed.

Not properly composed was our party:

Just two bards, adventuring on the high sea,

No fighters to fight or healers to heal me.

Our little songs were ineffectual

‘Gainst the monsters who weren’t spiritual:

These terrors of the deep our bodies bit,

From the wounds we died, bleeding drip by drip.

Still, Worse of all, Gabi, was the fact

That the lib’ry book died too during our act.

It got bitten into, and words poured out,

From the wound it died when the words ran out.

At first were we so happy to have found

The lib’ry book hiding out, safe and sound.

In a deep sea cave it was resting alone,

Near a scary monster-infested zone.

We took it out and patted its poor head,

Carrying it between us as we swam ahead.

But the monsters were waiting there out of sight,

And attacked us, surprising us in our flight.

The horrible giants jumped into our path,

Scaring us with their ugly faces of wrath.

They were three in all, two squids and a shark,

Murky and half-hidden in the deep dark:

In and out of our sight the monsters went,

Emerging suddenly from the dark current,

To show the ugly face for a moment.

With great dread, we felt it was too late,

Yet we ran, driven by our fearful state.

Their lurid presence could we constantly feel

Touching us through the black waters’ veil.

Not being able to see them thus

Made it worse, made it eerier for us.

The rising fear did through our beings rush.

So shocked and scared were we, that we let go

The poor libry book into the watry flow.

The shark after it swam and bit it,

Then came back the words in my face to spit.

It looked at us making us uncomfortable,

I looked around, avoiding as possible,

Eye contact with the beast unbearable.

One of the squids around behind us swam,

Blocking us thus like salmons on a dam.

The fear heightend as we frantically swam.

We couldn’t run anymore, we were done for,

All was lost there on the ocean floor:

We gave up the libry book and our lives,

For nothing against these monsters survives.

The fear became too much and my head burst,

The world collapsed, and I woke in sweat immersed.

O I knew that was too scary to be real,

Safe now in bed in the sunny world real,

I laughed at my overwrought ordreal.

Hmm. It was not yet the dawn, all was dark,

And the freezing waters of the deep dark,

Filled up my bedroom in every part.

Gabi! You were there too next to me,

Crying (from a nightmare you had) softly.

I got scared again suddenly and dared not,

To look under the bed to that dark spot.

I cried: my shaking I couldn’t contain,

I screamed silently: “Let me wake again!”

I waited a moment, I was still there,

You were still there, now cyring with dispair.

Something was still there under the bed,

I sense its presense slowly outward spread.

I couldn’t wake, as much as I tried.

Our light extinguished and we died.”

For a while long, Gabi floated in trance,

As my ominous words in her mind did dance.

HE HE. A scary story in rhyme will calm

The hyper child like a warming balm.

She removed the libree card from my face

And I, too, put mine back in its place.

I wriggled a bit and stood straight and tall,

Extending up (but still looking small.)

She flopped upsidedown on the ground lying there,

Belly up and began to say with a sad air:

“Questioning Amy, I hadn’t even thought

What the libr’ee would do if they my crime caught.

For a lost book they might my card revoke,

Or worse, ban me completely in one stroke.

Will I really no longer be able to

Read any more libry books my life through?

And the lib’ree book, you ask how’s it look?

I don’t know, You! It’s a small lib’ree book!

Your questions make me so worried now,

Just look at and feel my furrowed brow.

And why did you tell me of your dream wherein

In the end, we couldn’t wake and died within?

That you and I run out of words and die?

Please tell me tadpol amy that it’s a lie.

That my Libry book becomes a skeleton?

For how could I a dry skeleton return?

The libree woman will the poor thing spurn.

Even though a libry book it once was,

Fair and with literary gravitas.

How could I the skeleton even hold?

If I lost my words and die as you have told?

And a pinkish salmon gets stuck somewhere?

You, I’m no Sal-mon, but a gobi fair.

Your stories I hate Amy; they make no sense,

And they’re too violent and make me so tense.

Those stories in my libree book I want,

Not wild Amy’s hard-to-understand rant.”

She looked up at me, looking angry and sad,

I replied trying not to make her more mad:

“Your questions about my tale of our quest

Show that your mind is confused and oppressed.

Your understanding is fragmentary;

You mixed up the elements in my story.”

“O!” She said, “how am I to understand

When I was so scared with my shaking hand?”

She put her hand for a while in my face,

Shaking it under my nose apace.

I’m in such pain Amy: my little world,

Simple and happy before, has been hurled:

My only Lib’ry book is lost and hurt,

And my libry card may be put on alert.

Then you make me listen to your stories,

Even though they my emotions don’t please.

I’m a Gobi, not a strong salman, nor

A clever wiggly tapol like you are.

Your tale I can’t really well understand,

Yet they make my hairs on end stand,

As they the humans say when they get scared,

Or when they stand in the snow wholly bared.”

She frantically shivered from side to side,

Back and forth, and so did into me collide,

Hurting me; so I moved a little back,

But could not fully avoid the attack:

For the currents, pushed by her energy,

Flurried in my near, swirling me wildy.

HE HE.  I was caught in the whirl a bit,

‘Till the grand sea absorbed all her tiny fit.

Thus out of power, to the ground she dropped,

Where she lay limply, all the motion stopped.

Cautiously, close up to Gabi I swam,

Her colorful fish body to exam.

Hmm. Very closely, the eyes and mouth I observe,

Hoping to detect there a vital reserve.

My stubby nose into her skin I pressed

Watching intently, fear rising in my breast.

O! What if my story caused her to die,

For it did her so dissatisfy:

The sensitive fish, so confused and scared,

Sustained a shock for which she wasn’t prepared

O if you only would wake little fish,

I’d be so nice to you as you could wish.

Suddenly she twitched and began to roll,

Causing me to jump back with startled soul.

The mournful motions were sad to behold:

Softly she wiggled for a bit in place,

Then she would roll a bit with a slow pace

Round and round on her belly, back, tail and face.

During the cycles of wiggling and rolling,

Her plaintive moans and cries through the waves ring.

“O I’m so happy you didn’t die Gabi,

From all your sufferings because of me.

I’m Sorry that I made you hear that story,

For (you’re right) it was bad and so scary.

I told it to warn you how fatal t’would be,

To pursue the book lost in the deep sea.

I told it attempting to divert you,

Making a tale of the loss you went thru.

One whose narrative you could listen to,

And consider calmly, justly, anew.

I know my story could never replace

A libry book story in any case.

But I hoped that it’d help you a little,

Your tiny scared beating heart to settle.

But it only beat faster and faster,

As I told of the unfolding disaster.

I am so sorry I made you listen

To that story, one of my first written.

What I just told was not new I admit;

It was one I had writ and adapted a bit:

My book, a novella, was called *Book Li-bree,*

Which I had worked on so diligently.

Never could I think so fast in order to

Create on the spot a new tale to you.

So the libry-book and monsters I got

As characters from that book’s plot.

In the present re-telling, you and me

Were added along with this scene of the sea.

My story really took place in the forest,

And a mouse and bee were on the quest,

The libry book from evil forces to wrest,

Which, then in the forest were, rather than

Squids and sharks, a gorilla and were-wolf-man.

Their quest to the book I wasn’t happy with,

So I skipped it now, and told the end forthwith.

I didn’t think the long quest was so fun.

And you wouldn’t understand it, airy one.

My tale wasn’t good enough, but I don’t know how

To make a much better one, even now.

At first I, artless Amy, thought it was so good

For it had all the elements it should:

A confused Bee, a tattered white Mouse and,

Of course, a libry book lost in the woodland.

I was so, so excited writing it,

I felt dazzled and couldn’t still sit.

You don’t know what it’s like Gaby-Fish-Mon,

I couldn’t help but write all night, on and on,

(while eating sugar) until it was done.

When the sugar was done, so was I;

I lay down to watch the stars in the sky.

So clever did I feel then; how’d I do that?

My lil’ book was like a star to marvel at:

A small light shining in the darkness,

A little spark from my mental process.

But after reading it over and over,

Quiet and composed, did I discover

That all my work was just mediocre.

Somewhat sad I felt and somewhat proud yet,

For, though the expectation wasn’t met,

I had something there to look at and hold,

A wiggling story that in the cosmos rolled,

Just like me, wild Amy Tadpol; behold!”

On the ground I lay down, too, and began,

To roll gently in a circular span,

Circling Gabi, who was spinning in place,

And wriggling while watching my revolving face.

I, while still rolling in the small circle,

(With Gabi, spinning, to watch my cycle,

Observing me closely with her sad mien.

The most woeful Gobi I’d ever seen.),

Said, “I know my story didn’t please you;

It made you very scared, and confused too.

And you listened to it against your will.

But that you listened heartens me still.

Thank you, for, without you, my poor story,

Would have been lost with me in the deep sea,

We’d be alone my lil’ story and me.

Like your libree book and you, ‘fore I came,

Knocking you two apart with my wiggly frame.”

Still circling Gabi, I continued thus,

“Hey! Gabi-Fishmont you! Let us discuss,

Before I help you your libry book to find,

How you can actually help me in kind:

Please supress if you can, your fear and pain

And listen to my rough-draft again.

Now, how to make it better, inform me,

So we can make it the best story it can be.

Since you’ll be my editor, I’ll let you know,

That my early ambition was not low:

My story, I dreamed, would be one day

A libry book itself on the shelf display.

I know it must improve greatly to earn

That happy lot that all authors yearn

For their innocent little stories.

So have sympathy and help me please.”

I proceeded straight the story to relate,

With the plot in its original state.

She listened quietly as I spun ‘round,

Telling *Book Libree* in sound surround.

She watched my face earnestly, keeping up

Spinning in place, not one bit letting up.

I finished rolling, and I finished my tale;

I waited to see what would entail.

I don’t think she’d be so scared this time,

For she has already heard the same rhyme.

“Oh I don’t know, I don’t know! Amy Tadpol,

How could you let so much pressure on me fall?

Oh I concentrated as best I could

Even when you told of monsters in the wood.

They made me so afraid, yet I didn’t hide

My ears from your words trav’ling on the tide.

I was good, and listened to it all,

Yet I couldn’t understand, Amy Tadpol.

It makes no sense: a libry book how could it

Get so deep in a forest darkly lit.

I don’t know, I don’t know how to help you!

O how can I edit a book for you,

Making it into a libry book too?

I’m so young, and I’ve just learned how to read,

My lost libry book was my first book indeed.

Hey! I didn’t even read it all yet,

When my tragic destiny yours had met.

So, I’ve never read a whole book before,

And know not the lovely worlds they may store.

Worlds with animals like you and me,

Eating and talking in the deep sea.

Worlds with animals greater than us,

Who seek the sky for a greater purpose.

The second-hand stories I’ve often heard,

Of such worlds living in the written word.

Written on a libry book available

For all to live in if they’re squishable.

Like you and I: we can easily inside

A libry book go, close the cover and hide.

Our soft bodies would melt in the pages,

As our goo makes its mark on the ages.

I didn’t inform you earlier, tis true,

So ashamed was poor I in front of you.

So worried was I about how’d you treat me,

If you knew I just learned to read, Amy.

You’d have thought me an intolerable thing,

With your confident wiggling and rhyming.”

Her red parts grew redder with shame.

For having read a whole book she could not claim.

“Yet, despite not having read a libry book,

I’ll do my best to help you write your book.

Pressuring Amy, you burden me so,

A baby fish who’s beginning to grow.

So much I’ve thought about your request;

It’s become such a weight on my small chest

That it does my further growth prevent:

I’ll be ever small, oppressed by the torment.

As you related your tale, deeply I thought

How I could edit and improve the plot,

So that it would be really good, so good

As to be a lib’ry book, lost in the wood,

Or back on the libree shelf as it should.

Pressuring Amy, to help you I’ll try,

Tho your expectation may be too high.

Well, let’s see, maybe you should name the bee,

Lala Bee and the libry book Reeby,

Or roby; and the were-wolf-man take out:

One scary monster there lurking about

Were enough the proper tensions to mount.

Why’d you put in two; I don’t get it,

That doesn’t in a libry book fit.

No I don’t think so, it doesn’t make sense;

And it adds too much suspense and pretense.

Much nicer, a lib’ry book must be,

Having none, or one monster at most, Amy.

If there be one, as you insist, then it

Must die early, in the first minute.

Including fewer monsters, you’ll have room

To add more Bees in their fuzzy costume.

Probably, three or four more of the Bees

Will be required so they’ll feel at ease.

The labouring Bees only like each other,

Thinking others lazy, working never.

They make the golden honey, wild Amy,

So a libry book should have not less than three.

More bee names I can’t think of right now;

It’ll be the hardest part of all, I avow.

But we’ll figure it out later somehow.

The one mouse is good, tho’, good job Amy!

The libree book was also done nicely.

All libry books there are have, I believe,

One libry book in them; so you didn’t decieve!

Also call your mouse protagonist

If it’s a girl, Laila Lundquist;

If it’s boy, Robo without last name;

He doesn’t need one, being known to fame.

That’s all I can think of, pressuring Amy,

After pondering long and carefully.

For now I’ve edited enough surely,

Giving you material to add promptly.

I’m very tired from the great effort,

Let me be to rest a bit in comfort.

Afterwards, I may be able to think more

On improvements to your slender lore.”

She pushed her head on the scratchy coral surface,

Rubbing her satisfied-looking face.

(With its eyes closed and its mouth smiling faintly.)

She wiggled on and on incorrectly.

Trying to imitate my wiggly style.

Watching on, I started to smile.

HE HE. She’s trying to take after me,

In movement and invention of story.

She believes she’s like me, even though,

I never lose libree books that I borrow.

Even though many libree books I’ve read,

In the ponds, in the seas and in my bed;

In my dreams as I walk through the day,

In my nightmares as I try to run away.

In my fading memory I read fragments

Of a libry book that once made sense.

Inside libry books I read, and ones I write,

I read the smaller libry books that alight.

I write libry books inside those I wrote,

To read them in a time more remote,

When all the world has to dust decayed

And all the bits of matter are disarrayed.

Gabi has not any libree books read,

Only a part of one, before it fled.

Yet so much she knows about how to compose

A proper plot whether it be verse or prose.

She is so inventive, the little thing,

It’s full of great ideas, her tiny being.

Hmm. I know not how long must she yet rest for,

Before she can edit my story more.

Though I didn’t feel I needed to rest,

My face into the coral I also pressed.

To relax and wait with my tail wiggling

Until Gabi was done with her resting.

While nestling myself bit by bit there,

My pondering thoughts drifted everywhere:

What if I now suddenly ran away,

Hiding myself like a playful fay.

Surely Gabi would be so worried then,

When she opened her resting eyes again.

No libry book to read; no Amy there

With whom she could her budding story share.

A little bud from my *Book Libree* sprouting,

More than editing, it was a re-telling.

If she ever wakes up to continue

To bring her wonderful inventions to

My story to increase thus its value,

Enough for it a libry book to become,

Then, I, fair Amy will share whate’er sum,

That our libry book out in the world would earn,

And let Gabi be co-author in turn.

Lucky Gabi, never having yet read

A book, would herself, as author, be read,

In our genuine libry book instead.

I’ve never before thought about how much

Money a libry book could make and such.

Hmm. If my libree book gets abused a lot;

If the borrowers treat it not as they ought,

Returning it too late, or hitting it

(So as to leave a mark) in a wild fit,

Then, they’d pay me the fines that would accrue

For the sufferings my book had to go thru.

That’s how libry book authors, I believe

Their modest earnings from their poor works receive.

O! What a conflicted state an author is in:

Her book must be hurt, for earnings to come in.

That’s just the lot for those, like I, who pursue

To have a lib’ry book in the gen’ral use.

It still makes me scared such things to ponder,

What if my libry book gets lost I wonder?

Just as Gabi’s, drifting alone thereunder.

Would the libry book’s entire value

Be imposed as a fine and to me be due?

I’d get the most pay in such a fatal case,

But my libry book, nothing can that replace.

It’ll be lost forever and I’d have to

The whole arduous process go through,

Another libry book to create anew!

I hope no one ever will my libry book lose,

So it’ll make money steadily with dues.

For having lost her libry book today,

Much, much money must poor Gabi pay.

At least it’ll go to the author so they

Can live, write and eat another day.

Gabi has little money, the poor small thing,

She’s just a baby still learning and growing.

I hope with enough food and rest, she will

Grow and grow like grass on the rainy hill.

Bigger than her parents, she’ll grow and grow,

Bigger and bigger like the monsters below.

I hope she finds enough food to eat,

To sustain such an amazing growing feat.

Tho’ she already said she stopped growing

Because of the pressure I did to her bring

In the request to do the editing.

Her growth process has halted merely,

I hope dearly, temporarily.

She may have no money saved up at all

To pay the fine that will soon on her fall.

Though some money she’d earn if she’d ever wake,

The last edits of my book to undertake.

I’m excited; I now do truly believe

That we can soon a libry book achieve.

“Hey you Gabi-Fish-Mon, are you awake?

How much more resting do you need to take?

To question you, or to pressure you

Isn’t my intent, but there’s left to do.”

Slowly she opened her eyes, looked at me

And said, irritable and wearily,

“Pressuring Amy, one minute more please,

Will you not allow me to rest at ease?”

“OK, keep resting as much as you need,

I was just seeing if we could proceed.

Another minute’s time will I concede.

After waiting one minute, I asked,

“I’m very worried about what you said last,

‘Bout how you stopped growing because of me;

Will you really stop growing small Gabi?

That you stopped growing: how can it be?

You’re so small yet, almost as small as me.

Is it all because you heard my story,

And had to edit it fast to help me?”

“Yes, you, Amy, I haven’t any more grown

Since you had into my wat’ry path flown.

I can’t grow at all anymore I feel,

After the pressure from the whole ordeal.

In fact, I feel the burden on my breast

(Even after resting) so strongly pressed,

That I’m getting slightly smaller even,

Slowly I’ll grow smaller than you even!

Look questioning Amy, is my body not

Smaller by a bit or maybe a lot?”

There she curled her tail to the left side,

Trying to turn into a ball to hide.

“Hmm.” I said, “You look somewhat smaller maybe,

Or, maybe you’re rolled up like a baby.

Stand straight please so I can better see

How small you have really gotten lately.

She stretched out wagging to and fro her tail,

Waiting for my judgement of her changed scale.

Very close and carefully I examined

Swimming about her many times combined;

Again and again I circled, stopping

At certain spots, now and again, peeping.

On the gills, fins and eyes I pressed my nose,

So that my eyes could inspect very close.

Compressing my nose, I touched my eye

To each body part swimming slowly by.

Over an hour, I looked but couldn’t find,

Evidence that Gabi has in size declined.

Hmm. But if I so inform her, she’ll say,

I’m questioning her in my contrary way.

“Hark Hark! Gabi Fish-mont, I’ve done at last,

With analyzing your claimed loss of mass.

My findings are most positive for you:

There’ve been no shrinkage of your tissue.

So that means I haven’t yet gravely harmed

Your development or made you deformed.

You should be very happy this to hear,

But I know you’ll be mad and severe.

For you’ll think I’m questioning you again

On growing smaller due to the great strain

That I forced you, with my request, to sustain.

I tried the best I can to look at you;

And you haven’t grown smaller in my view.”

“Is that really so, wild Amy? Tis so

That I didn’t yet any smaller grow?

That would make me so happy overall,

Even though I’m sad you questioned me at all.

If what you say is true, (and it was not

Just to question me, as you’ve done a lot),

Then I’d be so happy, like I was before,

When my libry book hadn’t fell to the sea floor.

Happy as a nightingale singing there,”

(She pointed around her everywhere.)

“Under water where dwell the mermaids fair.

Can you please examine me one more time,

Doing it much more carefully this time?

Do it not in your nonchalant way,

But take great care, before you have your say.

When I wiggle about like this, to and fro,

It feels so much that I did smaller grow.

How could you so question me when I feel so

After the burdens you made undergo?”

“Let me examine your size again then,

Hmm. Let’s see, roll up like a baby again.

Hmm. Yeah, you look somewhat smaller for sure

When you squeeze yourself in such a posture.

Hold still now and let me my measurement take.”

She squeezed herself so hard, beginning to shake.

I swam dartingly, circling Gabi

Dozens of times like a swift frantic Bee.

After that I could her concern address:

“Hmm. You do look a bit smaller now, yes.

Yes, yes, you have probably smaller grown,

By the minutest quantity, I’ll own.

With the naked eye, it is hard to tell,

But, I see it, when my eyes I so compel.”

Then, back to her normal size she unrolled,

Turning a bit, me in the eye to behold:

“Thank you for recognizing finally,

Questioning Amy, that I’m smaller lately.

It is, I know, a fact so horrible,

That even you brave Amy were unable

To see it and say it aloud until

You took a second look against your will.”

I said, “Yes, poor Gabi-Fish, it’s true

It is so bad but what can we do?

Will you rest much more before we continue?

I am even more worried now than ever,

So we must promptly something endeavor.

Hmm.  Let me alone to think a moment,

How we can expel your pressing torment.

I can hardly think, the case is so dire,

For if you keep shrinking you will expire,

Like your libry book, who’s struggled and drowned

In the black depths and won’t ever be found.

I don’t mean to scare you more, adding weight

To the woe that does your growth suffocate.

But your libry book’s gone: we must move on

To my libry book who is still pressing on.

Come on you weary Gabi, you must yet

Finish my poor libry book to edit.

Yes, come languid Gabi, tis the only way;

Tis part of the plan to help you right away.

Trust in me, trusty Amy;  I’ll save you,

From shrinking more, and my libry book too,

But not your libry book who is now dead,

Having lived its last moments in great dread.”

I said, then stopped to let her think, and

Ask me questions about what I planned.

“O! How could you say my libry book’s dead,

And we should now edit yours instead?

I don’t know how your plan could help me,

If my libry book were dead under the sea.

Please explain your plan more if you can,

Since my book’s dead I have no more my own plan.

If you really are trusty Amy, then

I have no choice; I’ll trust you again.”

On the corral on her right side she sat,

Rolling herself small like a baby cat.

From the exerted compression pressure,

A slight but constant shake did she endure.

In this painful posture, she looked up at me,

Waiting for me to relate my story.

“Listen carefully, please, it’s important,

So be still for a while like a plant.”

I said, floating slightly above her head,

Revolving round her slowly overhead.

“For you’ll have to memorize exactly

The steps of the plan I’ll recount shortly.”

Her eyes concentrated on me, and she

Spun round in place, watching me intently.

“I am so happy that you are serious,

and ready on my plan to focus.

It was so hard for me a plan to devise,

That would avoid any further demise,

Of the people remaining here, namely

You, me, and my libry book clearly.

And would be effective to deliver

Us from the long plight we’re suffering under.

Especially you, small gabi, you’re hurt

The most of all; and I’m mostly unhurt.

You’re very young, weak and small and the weight

Of our burdens you can’t much tolerate.

They oppress so your tiny troubled breast,

That you get smaller, even after rest.

I’m small too, but I’m hardy and have such

Energy even this plight doesn’t harm me much.

Most importantly, I’ve great experience,

Having read so many libry books since

My libry membership did commence.

You’ve read none, which is lamentable

In our situation, dire and unstable.

I won’t cruelly look down on you for it

And make you feel bad that you admitted it.

Tho’ it makes our plight hard and more perilous

So, so much harder and much more perilous.

If only more experience you had,

We’d be safe by now in glowing warmth clad.

We would have saved your libry book as well,

Before it to the deadly depths fell.

My plan could have been so much more if you

More experience had and more things knew.

O! It was so hard a plan to create;

But I did it and will it to you relate.”

There I circled around her spinning body

Letting her time for my tale to get ready.

“Hark Gabi Fish-Mon, here is my plan in full:

First, like I said, you must be helpful

And the editing on my book get done

So it can a libry book become.

We’ll, after my tale is perfected, next

Write down on paper the entire text.

Yes, we’ll put it together nice and neat,

Making a libry book that is complete.

With it we can go back to the libry,

And say you lost a book under the sea.

We’ll give them mine, the lost one to replace,

So they don’t fine you, or escalate the case.

I really think my libry book will be

Good enough after you edit it Gabi.

Finally the best part of all will be

That you can check out my book, made newly

A libry book itself, take it home,

And read it to your friends who round there roam.

That should make you happy enough that you’ll

Stop shrinking, start growing, and go to fish school.

My plan laid out, I stopped circling her,

Swam down and stared eye to eye at her.

I could tell she was thinking very hard,

Looking at me with her big-eyed regard.

How’d you do that Amy?; it’s so great,

The plan that you did now elaborate.

It’s so creative, though it could be better,

Much, much better if you make changes later.

What you related in the end, about

Reading the book to friends must be left out.

For I have no friends, questioning Amy;

You’re the only one I have in the great sea.

So even though you question me so much

And pressure me with great burdens and such,

I’ll follow you and do what you say,

For no one else so far will with me play.

I’m so afraid now what you’ll think of me

Knowing you’re my only friend, Amy.

I’m so ashamed, but I had to say it,

So we can edit your plan to make it fit:

The part where I read my libry book to

My friends must be changed for sure Amy, you.

What do you think wild Amy, you who’s writ

Libry books thanks to your creative wit,

And who has many friends thanks to the same,

of me who can neither things for herself claim.”

“Hmm.  Lonesome Gabi, you, I just don’t know;

This new fact is to my plan a great blow.

Because you’ve never read a libry book,

The original plan a great effort took.

It was so hard even before you let fall,

that you’re lonely, having no friends at all

except for lil’ me, wild Amy tadpol.

It’s OK though, don’t be so sad if you can,

We’ll handle later that part of the plan.”

“Good Amy, that’s very good, we can do that;

That makes me feel better now somewhat.

I have many other worries tho too

About problems we might run into.

Your libry book you’ll let me in the end

Check out and read however I intend.

However, why should I intend at all

to read it, and make myself again grow small.

The scary nature of your story was

For my present shrinking, the second main cause.

Then your plan calls for submitting me again

To the first main cause of my present pain:

Namely, the great pressure you exerted

(That such a weight in my heart inserted)

On me your coming libry book to edit.

Your plan repeats my woes, not relieves it.

O your plan isn’t so good as I first thought;

It helps me much, much less than it ought.

“I didn’t explain well enough Gabi

For you the full benefits to see.

First, when you read my book again, it’ll be

A libry book, it’ll be good and lovely.

It’ll help you grow and not hurt you anymore,

Just as any libry book we could ask for.

Second, yes it’s true that you’ll smaller grow

In the pressured time you must edit so.

But for this pain, we’ll a libry book gain,

One that atones for the one lost on the main.

Thus your hard trouble will be in double

compensated (making the sacrifice bearable):

You won’t have fines or penalties to endure

And a libry book to read that’s new and pure.”

“O, explaining Amy my only friend,

The predicament you do comprehend.

I understand your reasoning so well,

Because you did it so gently tell.

This time without any fear, I listened

Feeling the weight in my breast had softened

With this plan you’ve related in detail,

I am so hopeful of what will entail.

Let’s straight with the editing recommence:

Let’s look at the ending which makes no sense.

The ending’s very hard, so don’t feel bad.

Most endings are bad like yours, so don’t feel sad.”

With great energy she started the critique,

Augmenting the parts she considered weak.

Which were, besides the difficult ending,

Every other part in her strict reading.

From time to time, quite often actually,

She had to rest for a spell abruptly.

Though Gabi often complained otherwise,

I tried the pressure I bore to minimize,

Letting her rest amply, making the process

Of editing very long and low stress.

Always, when she from her rest did awake,

The editing work again to uptake,

Did she call me, ‘pressuring Amy’, though

I never said anything to wake her so.

In fact she was the one who woke me up,

(I fell to sleep when she did, like a pup)

Saying the work must be carried on soon

Or we won’t get done until the next moon.

Woefully she reproached I didn’t wake

Fast enough and everything did longer make.

Poor Gabi would then complain at great length

She was getting tired and had no strength,

(If the editing were to go on much more)

To finish the work; that she was done for.

After such long speeches (that she woke me up for)

She’d feel tired and fall asleep once more.

I’d then, right after, also fall asleep

Nuzzling into the scratchy coral deep.

I tried to nuzzle next to bigger Gabi,

Who, though big and soft; and colorful to see,

Emitted no warm heat at all, like me.

In the cycles of complaining and sleeping,

The work left to be done kept heaping.

The work extremely slowly proceeded

But in the end we did what was needed.

Her edits were extensive and profound

Changing my plot completely around.

If I such change at all hesitated

to make, she’d right away be frustrated.

Merely trying the revisions to discuss

Would provoke the fiery Gabi thus:

She’d call me ‘questioning Amy’ and cry

Complaining I didn’t want to comply.

So I did my best, fast as possible,

To make the changes in my book tenable.

I did my best as well to wake so fast,

As soon as she (done with her rest) asked.

She said that ultimately she’ll read it

As a libry book, so it should her tastes fit.

The work was so, so hard but it got done,

After countless revolutions of the sun.

The final version was writ down and bound

And we were so tired, we made not a sound.

The rest of the plan was executed too

Not without some trouble to go through:

II

“Now,” I said “that the writing is done,

Let us directly to the libry run.

Where is the libry you got your book from?

Where are the libries in this sea kingdom?”

“Don’t ask so many questions at once, please!”

She said, “I can’t answer so many with ease.”

Though I only had two questions stated,

And the second was just the first re-stated,

In terms more general, superceeding

The more specific question preceding.

So only she must answer only one question:

Either one, following her discretion.

This I will not say aloud however,

For she will call me names forever:

Like “questioning Amy”, or something worse,

Like “contrary Amy”, or “Amy perverse.”

“Your demand for so many answers

All at once, my burdened head more stirs.

Let me for once, you with a question press:

‘How am I to answer your questions endless?’

Then, before you can answer, another ask:

‘How am I to carry out that task?’

And if I kept asking questions, more and more?

For this and that issue, an answer impore?”

“Yes Gabi-Fish” I said. “I see it’s hard,

When I look upon your frantic regard.

It’s hard for me too, for your questions I

Can’t answer as much as I think and try.”

“Oh questioning Amy, you see, you see!

How difficult answering questions can be.

Even so, I’ll try my best to answer one,

To help you as much as can be done.

“Where’s the libry you ask?” Well I don’t know,

How am I supposed to know when it will show?

The libry swims around on its route,

Like a enormous school of swarming trout.

Around to all the locales, it goes,

Serving marine lifeform with poems and prose.

Several mermaids swim along to help keep

Order as books glide through the deep.

As I was out foraging for food,

It came near, so I dropped my food and pursued.

I caught up with the steadily moving swarm

Of books, and reading critters of diverse form.

To the mobile mass I joined myself,

To look with wonder at the books on the shelf.

I swam along browsing without haste,

Looking for a book that would please my taste,

And be small enough to be in these hands placed.

One libry book I found, as you know

The one I let go when you hit me so.

That libry book, I took and started to

Swim back to my foraging ground still in view.

A mermaid stopped me and I was so scared,

Of her amazon frame, and eyes that glared.

O mermaids are so big and I’m so small,

They could eat me whole, bones, fins and all.

She said her name was Marvelle and that she

Would help me check out the book I took with me.

I stayed quiet looking at the ground,

As she did the rules of the libry expound.

She gave me a new libry card and the book.

I swam fast away, daring but one look:

I looked back and she was watching me still,

With fierce blue eyes that gave me a chill.

I swam on, lashing my tail, side-to-side,

Getting to a safe distance on the tide.

I shook my head, tail and whole body,

Trying to shake that look off of me.

I swam and swam with my libry book so far,

Yet I could still feel the blues eyes from afar

Flashing through my semi-translucent skin,

Shining light on all my shame within.

Those watching blue eyes ever see through

This crystal of clear water and see you.

O! Those eyes, those eyes, had seen me,

When I dropped my book to the deep sea.

They even see us now, as we talk here,

Watching our lips move through the crystal clear.”

“Hmm! Let them watch us through the refracting wave,

(I said) “We’ve done nothing so wrong or grave.”

“This mobile libry, we’ll have to find somehow

“But it’s been so long since we’ve ate now.

I am getting so hungry and you are too,

So before we the mobile libry pursue,

Let’s go search as best we can over there,

In your foraging grounds for our fare.

Hurry, let’s go, much longer I won’t last,

I will die, from this long-lasting fast.

You mentioned earlier you dropped some food,

What did you drop exactly, and was it good?”

Maybe we can find it there still intact,

Ready to be eaten, sitting on the tract.

I never ate in the sea before.

I wonder what kind of food it has in store.

These foraging grounds would be a good place,

In which to sit and wait, in any case.

For we know the libry passes through

That point in its rounds in the deep blue.”

“Hmm.” She said, “that’s a nice idea Amy,

I agree with you that we’re all hungry.

And thus should to the foraging ground go,

The hidden food from the ground to pull.

I’m so happy you offer finally

Such ideas, instead of always asking me.

It’s a relief to me that you sometimes

Add useful ideas, and not just your rhymes.

It’s becoming so difficult, our plight,

Its heavy burdens pushing on me quite.

I felt you didn’t want to help as you could,

Letting on me fall more work than you should.

O questioning Amy, you asked of me

So much more than anyone has asked of me.

All your prior questions still my thoughts stir

Demanding, all at once, an answer.

All the unanswered questions, those that I

Never yet had time to answer, loudly cry.

But the many questions I did answer, those

(Even they!) too do not still lie; they circle close,

Pleading me for a better reply;

For more replies they murmuringly apply.

Your questions, I can’t forget Amy;

Even answered, they stay and haunt me.

The unanswered ones are so much worse,

They’re like you, wild Amy and coerce

Me into answering; there’re so many

Pressing questions that are hard mostly.

I’m worried about them and can’t sleep nor eat,

Though, as you tell, we are soon to go eat.

In the foraging ground where I spent my day,

Foraging and eating in my own way.

How I had no cares in those days before

I had discovered there was in the world more:

Libry books that get lost easily,

And Tapols that question one ceaselessly.”

“Yes.” I said. “Let’s go to the foraging ground

Where you can again frolick around,

Innocent and carefree as you once were,

Without libry books or questions to answer.”

She cried, shook herself, spun ‘round,

“O, follow me to the foraging ground!”

She said tearfully, gliding slowly,

Very slowly, as she whimpered lowly.

Whirling forward, we passively glided

By the heavy pushing currents guided.

I turned from Gabi, and gazed into the deep,

The dark froms there began ‘fore my eyes to creep.

I closed my eyes, but the shadowy forms

Persist, moving closer like building storms.

I got scared and turned over facing the sky.

A dim green light glowed before my closed eye,

My thin eyelid let in the watry daylight,

Which dispelled the shadows from my sight.

I floated along thus, eyes closed, but ears

Open, tracking Gabi’s low moaning and tears.

When I heard her mourning noises drift farther,

I wiggled and spurted closer towards her.

But the ancient currents most of the work did,

Carrying us in the flow as I my eyes hid.

To conserve even more energy,

(Which I was low on, being so hungry)

I reached my left hand out and grabbed Gabi’s tail,

Which act she didn’t seem to bewail.

I looked and she didn’t say anything,

In fact she stopped crying, the poor thing.

Since her tail was seized, she fluttered and spread

Her forefins at times to guide her ahead.

She did the best she could without the use

Of her main rudder which my hand did fuse.

She began to struggle, like an insect

Whose wing was cut or had a defect.

And as the insect, she complained not,

But faltered on, insensible of her lot.

At times my hand a felt vigorous jolt

Of the tail in reflexive revolt.

But my sticky palms attached like a bolt.

She stopped at a spot and said, “We made it,

To these foraging grounds where we may eat.

So you may release my tail, Amy;

It’s OK, we’re safely here now Aimeee.

Without complaining, my tail I let you hold,

For you were scared to get lost in the deep cold.”

Now she shook her tail trying to shake

My hand off as if it were a coiling snake.

Her whole body furiously twisted about,

She panicked, and began to scream and shout:

“Pressuring Amyyyyyy! Release your pressure;

In these foraging grounds you’re secure.”

I held on yet, while examining the place,

Spinning round to look here and there with grace.

It looked like any other chunk of ground

That all over this great sea can be found.

Neither did I any food in the near see:

No peaches, sugar, milk, or honey.

Her frantic shaking a slow waving became,

As she saw I’d yet her tail some time claim.

“To avoid terrible questions that I know

Impose on you the bitterest woe,

I will state my interrogative,

As a conjecture that’s speculative:

This, I suppose, is not the foraging ground,

For there is no delicious food to be found.

I suppose you’re mistaken and we’ve not yet

Reached the right spot whose location you forget.

That’s why my hand is still binding your tail,

As we’re to go on yet in this wat’ry vale.”

“I’ve spent all my few days on earth here,

Eating food there, there and there all in our near.”

She said, pointing wildly from spot to spot,

That all looked to me like one inert plot.

Just gray ocean rocks and dust, nothing

Like a red apple, or an edible thing.

“Hmm.” She said. “But I don’t know if a tadpol

Can use these foraging grounds at all.

What do you like to eat, you wild Amy?

What foods can you even eat safely?

From the ground this slimy green goo I eat.

My process of eating is slow and discrete.

If you watch me while I eat, you may frown

And think I’m just lying there with my head down.

But I’m eating at my own slow pace,

Appreciating the saltwater taste.

For hours and hours, I eat bits and bits

From the goo that the nutrients transmits.

Her tail I still grasped, but she twisted round,

Bending, her words to my face to expound.

HE HE my food looks just like you Amy,

Blobbly green goo, you, tasty Amy.

Don’t worry, I won’t eat you, I don’t need to,

There’s so much food here for me and you.

O! just let me go, let me go, so I can

To the food go and eat as was the plan.

Her tail she shook hard and I let go,

Letting her dart down to the ground below.

From there she looked up and nodded at me,

Encouraging me to come down quickly.

From the table, she watched me and waited,

With melancholy eyes dilated.

I darted down and sat properly,

(Though so hungry) ready to dine civilly

According to the customs of the land,

Which prescribe (if I didn’t misunderstand)

That I feed on food traces, without

Use of hands, the whole long day throughout.

With gaping mouth, I put my face down there

On the ground that was teaming with our fare.

“Wait!!!” she said abruptly pushing me aside,

Sending me spinning into a swirling tide.

While still spinning, I said, “HEY!!! You pushed so hard,

I’m still spinning and my skin may be scarred.

I was also nearly about to bite

My first morsel of food since the first night,

An Aeon ago when I lept into here,

The terrible Sea, without any fear.

But now I’m fearful, quite, quite fearful

That I’ll from hunger die, a death most painful.

My belly aches so much, and the pains spread

Over my small, soft body, foot to head.

With my hand, my body parts I grab,

Squeezing with my fingers the soft flab.

Then I kept squishing my belly with my paws

To prove how delicate and hungry I was.

“I’m so mad, I may now question you,

I can’t help it after what you put me through.

(I continued) “O watch out Gabi,

What I say next you’ll probly hate sorely:

How could you push me, withdrawing from me

The longed-for food for my dying belly?”

I let the question fly like an attack

That my better nature could not hold back.

She hit me and I reacted, hitting back.

“O you’re so angry little Amy

That you don’t know what you’re saying, Aimee.

“O questiontion Amy” she said, “for now

for you’re so hurt,  I’ll your questioning allow.

You’re so hurt like a hurt wild animal,

Lashing out at help medicinal.

Yes, by pushing you, I did help you

That you’ll soon see, O wild Amy, you.

You’ll be sorry when you later think

Upon how basely you did now sink.

“You said you never ate food in the sea,

So what if seafood kills or hurts you badly?

Not even you wild Amy can eat

All the many types of food that you meet.

I didn’t think of it before, but you can’t

Just copy me and your face on the ground plant.

Eating this goo (which so resembles you)

May hasten your dying, Amy, you.

That’s why I pushed you in the last moment,

When you almost ate something you could lament.

For how would I then be able to cure you?

If you were poisoned by this tasty goo?

I’d have to hold you, little Amy, so,

And put drops of medicine in your mouth so.

But how could I hold you, wild Amy, still;

You’re so wiggly and have such a will.

I’d have to hold and comfort you in my hand,

But you’ll try your hardest to withstand.

Even if i held you tenderly by me,

How’d I get you to open your mouth Amy?

To take the medicine from the dropper?

You’re so willful and don’t act proper.

You’d never open your mouth easily

And swallow the medicine peacefully.

You’ll fus and fight and close your mouth and eyes,

You’ll shake your head, wiggle and dramatize.

Even if I could get you to be good,

To be still and open your mouth as you should,

I don’t have the medicine, nor

The dropper that can it in your mouth pour.

I’m so worried, poor Amy, about you,

That you’d get sick and blame me for it too.

Then again, you’re so hungry and small,

And if you don’t eat, how’d you ever grow tadpol?

This time, I really don’t know what to do.

How am I to find a way save you?”

“I see now that you good intentions had”

I said “When you pushed me, making me mad

So my offensive question to you, I

Take back: Let it not more your thoughts defy.

I know I can’t the questioning undo now

But, please, Gabi-Fish, if you can somehow

Try to not let it bother you now.

Now that you know I asked it while hurt

Not knowing that you more pain tried to avert.

But it’s very fortunate that I’m not so

Sensitive to questions as you are so.

You’ve asked me so many questions lately,

And yet I don’t feel burdened greatly.

Even though you sharply questioned me

About medicine drops and holding me;

About how to open my mouth, and

How I may get poisoned eating off the land.

And such things that I couldn’t answer,

No matter how long I tried to infer.

No, your questioning doesn’t afflict me much,

For I am hardy (though I’m soft to touch.)

I can eat many things (though not everything)

That nature kindly would to me bring:

Fruits, honey, milk, sugar I love most,

To eat, when I travel from coast to coast.

But I have been able, so far, to eat

Every known food (but I don’t like meat).

I’m very special; it’s a great power

To be able to almost all devour.

You can only eat one thing: this sticky goo

You can’t imagine doing what I do.

“No I can’t!” she said, “Nor do I want to,

You wildy devouring Amy, you!

Only my food, nothing else, I want to eat,

Nothing else could ever be as sweet.

I can see that it could be useful that

You can eat so many foods like a rat.

Yet it sickens me to think upon it,

Tis a thing for my sensitive taste unfit.

So don’t boast of your “ability” more,

I’m trying to eat now, off the sea floor.

Well, you can also eat now too if you want

Since you can eat so much as you rant.

Please eat, then, you small Amy, you must grow

So much more, you have so long to go.”

I pressed my opened mouth on the ground,

And swept and tasted for nutrients ‘round.

I tasted some things I could eat that would

Give me energy, though they didn’t taste good.

It didn’t taste sweet at all as gabi said,

Though, not to upset her, I left that unsaid.

“Since I’m so small, even smaller than you,

You think I have to eat to grow more too.”

I said. “But I’m not growing anymore

Having grown all I need to heretofore.

My small size and fair looks I want to hold

I never want to grow big and grow old.

It’s hard for you to understand Gabi

For you’re so young, much more so than me.

It can be hard to be so small, it’s true,

Other animals can hurt me, even you.

You’re slightly bigger than me, you Gabi-Fish,

And have the power to hurt me if you wish.

That’s my lot, I’m small and won’t grow more,

As such, so small, must I plod through this vale’s war.

“O you’re in your final form wild Amy?”

She said. “You’ve high goals for one so tiny.

How can you think you can such things do:

Fly to the heavens and discover things too?

How could you breath, eat and live up there,

In the outer space where there’s no food nor air?

I thought when you planned to do all that stuff

You’d be bigger and your face more tough.

But your face is sweet and helpless-looking,

And you’re smaller than me, you tiny thing!

The spaceships are not made for one so small

It won’t be safe for you wild Amy tadpol.

You’re hardly safe even here in the sea,

Or anywhere else in the world, hardly.

You’re the smallest thing I’ve seen before

Who’s not a baby and still growing more.

But, how could you say I could hurt you?

That I couldn’t do, no matter what you do.

Not even after you have acted badly,

By questioning me, or pressuring me

Not even when you have made me so angry,

With such things that you would do, Amy.

Not even when you had sickened me

By saying you could eat so variously

All the foods on the land and in the sea.

Despite what you do, your face looks at me

It looks so sweet and innocent watching me,

With such big eyes, such cheeks and such a nose;

Your whole observant face looks at me so close.

How can I hurt you when you watch me like that?

Watching and waiting like a baby cat.”

Gabi then put her face down to eat

I watched her a while closely, taking a seat.

I watched her with my big eyes, and all my

Sweet face turned and moved to her very nigh.

I watched her thoroughly for a while long,

She didn’t mind me; she ate all along.

Staying near her, I began too, to eat,

Taking the food near, making her retreat.

She moved away simply and began

Another patch of land for food to scan.

When she started feeding again, I moved in,

To gulp down all the food there within.

I chased her thus several times, eating her food.

When I tried for the fifth time, she withstood:

She bumped me out of her zone with her head,

Looked up angrily at me and said:

“O how could you do this, devouring Amy?

You’re eating your food so close to me,

That you end up eating food that’s meant for me.

You may sit next to me, but mind yourself

And eat only from the plate meant for yourself.

I’ve ate so little, and you now so much,

So please try my food not to touch.”

Being full now, I agreed and nodded,

Pressing ‘gainst her while she for food plodded.

She scavenged and ate slowly all day,

Bumping me gently at times with her sway.

III

Up up up above the clouds I soared

On fast currents that in my ear roared.

They pushed me through the twilight atmosphere,

Up up up, the stars began to feel near.

I wriggle about beginning to panick,

Up up up the ascent went too quick.

I was pushed and pushed and off the earth fell,

I flew up towards where the local planets dwell.

I turned my head and tried to gaze upon them,

But I was rudely pushed ever on, beyond them.

Realizing I can’t breath up here in space,

I hold my throat, wiggling madly in place.

I woke and felt on my back a mass

That pushed me along in the deep watry pass.

I wriggled hectically, turned my head round

And saw a massive libry book to my back bound.

I was stuck on it and had to go with it,

Gliding forward as the currents permit.

Looking wildy in every direction,

I saw swarms of libry books in colleciton.

Some other animals were also there

Reading the libry books with a happy air.

Others sat in the books or on them,

Passively, such as I was doing then.

I did’nt know how the librys work down here;

Gabi’s brief explanation wasn’t clear.

It seems dangerous that the grand libry

Glides at such a pace through the peopled sea.

Eating or sleeping creatures like I,

Could get hit and get hurt or even die.

O I hope Gabi didn’t die colliding

With a book that crushed her in its gliding.

I swam along the aisles looking for

The missing Gabi in this varied store.

There were so many books in all directions,

I didn’t understand the layout of sections.

I touched my belly: my libry card was there,

So I could check out books after this affair.

I darted all over, searching for her,

I didn’t want to ask and cause a stir.

Finally I decided to swim fast

In a straight line all the books past;

To the edge of the libry book swarm

Where I can an picture of the whole form.

On the perimeter floating on guard

Huge human-sized mermaids with fierce regard.

There was a large company of them spread out

Patrolling the libry books on their route.

They look so intimidating on their chase

With the hard, sharp features of their face.

Looking down, I drifted with the books around,

Building courage to ask if Gabi was found.

I was just so afraid of being seen.

By the fierce eyes of their warlike mien.

Head down, I saw the tail of one pass by,

I turned, looked up to her and started to cry.

I was so scared under that haughty eye.

With all my courage, I suppressed my fear

And swam pluckily to the maid’s near.

“Ooooo hail! Amazon huntress, please hear me!

I said, squeaking the words out meekly.

The worm addressed Diana, and the goddess

Turned, looking down at the creature in distress.

“I am soft and small, You are hard and tall,

So help me if you have pity at all.”

I swam up to her fair face, ‘fore her stern eyes,

I made a sad, sweet face and whimpered cries.

In my small hands, I held my squishy head

And I shook it with overwhelming dread.

“Hmm!” She said and grabbed me in her hand.

“How did a tadpole so deep down here land?”

She clutched my body tightly, but my head

Popped up from her closed fist looking ahead.

I saw that she closely examined me;

I tried to wiggle, but couldn’t get free.

I squeezed my eyes shut, wriggled and wiggled,

Yet I didn’t move one bit as i struggled.

If her hand had squeezed any harder

My big head would have popped before her.

“What’s wrong with you, why are you crying?

She said.  “You’re safe now, and you’re not dying.

Where did you come from…?”  And more and more

Questions she asked as she scanned me more and more.

The voice rumbled softly in the background

Whirling in the waves that went my head round.

I let the curious mermaid examine my

Head, and question me with her voice so nigh.

My eyes closed and my whole body sank down

With the rising warmness of her touch ‘round.

I felt my cold blood activating

By the warm blood of her hand radiating.

I lay in a shallow tropical pond

Feeling the hot sun blazing from beyond.

A warm stone on my whole body pressed:

Into the grainy sand was I compressed.

But my head was free, it popped up from

That warm, smooth rock that held my body firm.

Thus was I stuck and might be so forever;

I didn’t get panicked however.

I woke up gently and saw again

The dark light of the deep watery main.

And felt still the squeeze of the smooth hand

That I couldn’t and didn’t want to withstand.

Now the mermaid wasn’t looking at me.

She held me down by her side where her fish part,

Below connected with her human part.

At a row of libry books she floated;

She looked at them and some things noted.

(She had a paper pad there and on it wrote

With her other hand many a note.)

She was apparently working, doing some

Important libry work in tune with her hum.

“Mmm, mhmm, mmmmmm, mhhmm, ummmm, hmmm, hmm, humm mmhhm, hum…”

Maybe she adopted me as a pet

A baby one, to be carried around yet.

I tried to wiggle and wriggle but there

Was no room to move even a hair.

I thought for a while: at least the hand was warm;

But I was born a free wiggling life form.

I couldn’t be a pet under this tight grip.

I had to find gabi and a spaceship.

Up to the mermaid I yelled, “Please let me go.

I must one day to the heavens go.

I’m wild Amy of the great way over here

You can’t keep me forever here in your near.

Though I’m small, soft and cute, I won’t be

A docile pet you can hold in the libry.

She moved me up close to her face again,

And said “O I could never one detain

Against her will, causing her strain or pain.

I held you to keep you safe while you were

Sleeping for such a long time without a stir.

Before, I held you, your head to inspect

For an injury or a defect.

Many small creatures at times get hurt

When the libry books thru their zone skirt.

I’m Alix, I work in the libry

Tending the books and patrons equally.”

She held me tightly still, not letting go

While I tried to squirm hectically, to and fro.

“Well since you want a little more to hold me

I said. “I’ll let you, if you help me.

There’s this fish called Gabi-Fish who is lost,

She might be among these books tossed.

She’s so small: just slightly bigger than I

And much weaker: she easily would cry.

Gabi was eating before this libry came

Sweeping us all up in its moving frame.”

“That worries me greatly” She said “That’s she’s

Weaker than you (meaning she could die with ease.)

As I’ve said, as we move along the sea,

We collide with animals frequently.

The small and weak ones get hurt so often

That we set up a room here to cure them.

It’s the largest room of the main libry floor;

There we keep a great medicinal store.

Your friend may be lying there among

Those other saved creatures, weak and young.

Hold still a while longer, I’ll conduct you there

Like the messenger goddess soaring through air.”

Alix did her grip pressure elevate

Making my bulging head more dilate.

The water rushed around my face and ears,

As she swiftly through the currents steers.

I felt a thrill almost unbearable

Like on a rollercoaster unstable,

Nearly running off the wooden rails,

Which shook under the loud whirling gales.

I squeezed down my globular head with a twist

Trying to hide it too in the closed fist.

It didn’t fit, I screamed, shrieked and cried,

HE HE HE! I felt a tingling on all my side.

I squeezed my eyes shut, only hoping

My head doesn’t burst as we go down the waves sloping.

I felt a slow-down, so I opened my eyes

To the sick room, from which I heard moans and cries.

We landed: the room was just a surface:

Like a white hospital floor pulled from its place.

With ropes, it was attached to and pulled by

Hundreds of libry books swimming by.

There were some beds and piles of medicine

And piles of droppers with medicine within.

Tiny hurt bodies attached to tiny

Sad faces lay as far as I could see.

Many different small life-forms of the sea

Lay suffering there in the jamboree.

Some lay on the floor, some on the beds,

Some bunched up laying on each others’ heads.

Some lay on the medicine piles, some on

The medicine droppers and some were yon,

Being held tightly in a mermaid hand,

Squirming, trying the exam to withstand.

One animal got squeezed so hard that it

Opened its mouth for a second in a fit.

In that second, the mermaid swiftly dropped

Medicine into the mouth thus propped.

The animal calmed down and the mermaid

Let go, letting it float down without aid.

He landed gently on another

Who was crying softly for her mother.

Only five healing mermaids I had seen,

And hundreds of victims with their crying mien.

Alix held me down again by her side

As she looked about, glided, and sighed.

She maintained the same grip squeezing me

Just as hard as when we were trav’ling quickly.

I wiggled: there was no room at all,

I was lucky to be breathing at all.

I view the scene of all the small hurt things

Waiting for a mermaid that medicine brings.

But when the mermaid comes, they don’t open

Their mouths to take in the drops freely then.

The mermaids must use all their art,

Squeezing vigoursly the drops to impart

To the mouth thus forc’bly pulled apart.

Two mermaids went round handing small libry books

To the small ailing creatures with sad looks.

The lucky ones a libry book received

While the others looked on surprised and grieved.

This great floating libry of the sea

Has an immense collection certainly.

Of tiny books, though, that these beings small

Could hold and read, there were not a lot at all.

As Alix drifted further into the crowd,

I heard someone call “Amyyy! AimEEEE!” aloud.

I looked to the left and saw poor Gabi there

Held in the strong hand of a mermaid fair.

I said “Alix, stop, there is my friend Gabi

On our left, being squeezed hard: she can’t get free.”

The mermaid held gabi sternly upright,

Brandishing a dropper in Gabi’s sight.

Gabi looked at me from the side and said

“Aimmeee Ammyyy!!” as we nearer tread.

Each time squished Gabi opened her mouth thus

Yelling for me by name with great fuss,

The mermaid, with the dropper ready,

Put in a drop with a hand steady.

Alix stopped before the other mermaid.

I still awkwardly down by her side stayed.

Alix addressed the other, “Marvelle,

I see Gabi is still not doing well.

Wild Amy, who is the friend of Gabi,

Says Gabi is weak and can die easily…”

“Ammmyyyyy! Amieeee! Amyy!” Gabi broke in

And Marvelle put three more medicine drops in.

Alix continued, “Therefore Gabi will need

Thirty or more drops for treatment to succeed.”

Marvelle replied “It’s been so hard to pour

The drops into Gabi’s mouth heretofor.

A few times I squeezed with extra force

So hard on her body that I had remorse.

But she doesn’t appear more hurt for it

She was already hurt before quite a bit,

When a libry book her head hit.

So I squeezed and squeezed, yet she never did

Open her stubborn mouth as I had bid.

At last when you brought her friend Amy by,

Did wilful Gabi utter a loud cry,

‘amy!, amy!’ opening her mouth thereby.”

“Aimeee!!, Ammyyyyy!” Gabi cried again

And Marvelle put in two drops without pain.

Marvelle said, “little Amy, thank you

You helped us a hard trial to get through.

I didn’t know what more to do to get,

Gabi to swallow the healing drops yet.”

She spoke looking down at me: I was still

Held there by Alix’s side against my will.

Then to Alix asked, “Does poor wild Amy need

Any medicine drops hereself indeed?”

Alix at last brought me up from her side

So I was eye to eye with all on the tide.

She held me out in front of her, close to

Marvelle and Gabi so they could me view.

For a while, they closely examined me

As my soft body was held still strictly.

Marvelle said “Hmm.” And Gabi cried out,

“Aiiimee! Aaaammmyyy!” and received no doubt,

Two more drops from the dropper during her shout.

“As you both can see, Amy is” (She said)

“Healthy with her smooth skin and big head.

To be safe we should still have her though,

Take one drop before we let her go.”

Marvelle put the dropper in front of my nose,

“Be good Amy, open your mouth, here goes!”

I looked up at the dropper and tried

Once more to squirm and wiggle side to side.

I tried to hide, I tried to turn away,

But nothing at all did I aloud say.

I closed tightly my mouth, and my eyes too,

For I did not want the drops to imbue.

“These tiny animals never behave,

Even though we’re trying their lives to save.”

Marvelle said. Alix then also addressed me

“Your friend Gabi is here, don’t you see?

Don’t you want to say hello or wish her well?

She had been waiting here for quite a spell.”

I further felt my body compressed

And I stopped breathing from the force on my chest.

My head puffed up further from the pressure,

Then everything around went obscure.

A loud peeping cry, “Aimeeee! Amyyyy!”

Startled and roused me; I opened one eye.

Marvelle rotated Gabi down so she

Was horizontal and facing me.

“There there” Marvelle said “those two the last drops were.

Rest now in my hand, you must no longer stir.”

Much calmer and happier Gabi appeared

After swallowing the last dose she so feared.

Marvelle patted Gabi’s head a bit

And Gabi wiggled and smiled a bit.

In my head the pressure continued to build,

I couldn’t breath as my lungs felt filled.

“Gabiiii! Gaabiii!” I burst out in my panick:

Instantly I felt in my mouth a prick:

A bitter drop of icy medicine

Fell on my tongue and dissolved therein.

In my blood, the drop diffused and spread out;

The tingling dots touched my body throughout.

A billion of them glowed inside me

Emitting a calm blue light blinkingly.

They cluster into constellations within

That gabi could see through my filmy skin.

The soothing contact of each cold star made

My gooey flesh relax, shrink and fade:

My heart, my lungs and head melted away

Through Alix’s fingers on the wat’ry way.

I became free, flowing there; I became

Part of the rushing ocean wave untame.

In my wild course, I run from pole to pole,

Nothing can contain wild Amy Tadpole!

Smooth human hands reached into the sea

And with palms cupped pulled out a part of me:

I wiggled and wriggled and felt again

Alix’s warm-blooded skin on my liquid frame.

She tried to hold and squeeze me as before

But I could just through her fingers pour,

As water, I felt the pressure no more.

HE HE. I opened my eyes and saw there

Gabi’s face looking with a concerned stare.

As pets or dolls, the mermaids held us out,

Me and Gabi to each other, snout to snout.

I wonder when they’d let us go free

For we’re healed by the drops already.

By holding us up facing each other.

Maybe they want us to talk together

As stuffed animals do when they’re held so

By children conducting their puppet show.

“Amy!!!” Gabi screamed in my face, “at last

You came back; I thought you had passed.

It’s really you though, wild Amy tapol ?

Your looks are different from what I recall.

Hmm. It’s something about your face I think,

Please slowly shake your head, smile and wink.

I carried those actions out slowly,

As worried Gabi watched and watched closely.

“Oh they’re so big your nose, mouth and eyes,

Your head is so big overall I realize.

Much bigger than from what I remember

Of the lil’ wild Amy (that I prefer).”

“Gabi-Fishmont!” I said “I’ve not yet died

And I’m the same Amy you love (on the inside.)

Only my soft head has even larger become

Because my soft body is being squished numb.

I’ve been held still firmly for so long:

Since Alix caught me swimming along.

Do you know how much longer they want still

To hold us in their hands against our will?”

“O Amy” She said “Alas it is you,

The questioning Amy, to her questions true.

Your new looks I’ll have to get used to though.

It’s creepy, for it’s diff’rent from what I know.

How much longer they’re to hold us you ask?

I don’t know, Amy, you! Why must you always ask?

They can hold us as long as they wish,

They’re fierce Amazons and we’re meek fish.

I didn’t dare to complain or talk back,

When Marvelle questioned me so much a while back.

About how I got hurt she questioned me:

I didn’t know what to say, Amy.

I couldn’t say anything at all,

As the pressing questions did on me fall.

I was already so hurt from being struck

By a sweeping libry book run amok.

While I was eating at the feeding ground,

And you were sleeping near me without a sound,

A low-swimming libry book in the swarm

Hit my unsuspecting head like a storm.

From my eating mouth, fell a piece of food

That I had already mostly chewed.

O do you know how it does pain and confuse

Food that’s already in your mouth to lose?

Losing my food thus was just as painful as

Getting hit by a libry book of such mass.

Dying, I was pushed along in the book swarm,

Until, almost dead, I felt something warm.

The warm touch squeezed me and lifted me up

And with my blurred dying vision I looked up:

Marvelle’s laser blue eyes looked down at me

Scanning thoroughly my head injury.

Then with the awful questions she proceeded,

So many answers she seemingly needed.

Everything about me she wanted to know:

‘Were you not the one here not long ago,

Gabi who just got her first libry card,

And who cast at me then a fearful regard?’

And ‘Does you head hurt a lot little Gabi?

‘It looks fairly serious, but not deadly.’

And she questioned and questioned, more and more

Almost as much as you had done before.

Yet I didn’t talk back to Marvelle

As I did to you when you when on me fell

Your probing questions as from an endless well.

O wild Amy, how fiercly I rebuked you,

And how much, I swear, you deserved it too.

I regret sometimes how harsh I was on you

Until I think what your questioning put me through.

But against blue-eyed Marvelle’s onslaught,

I stayed silent; I could defend myself not.

You are slightly smaller than me, Amy

Against you I could defend myself fully.

But how could I do so against Marvelle?

She is too big for me with words to compel.

I didn’t, indeed, open my mouth at all,

So she held me bringing me to this sick hall.

Ever since, Marvelle held me in her hand,

Trying medicine drops in my mouth to land.

She couldn’t though, until you came by

And I said “Aimmee, Amyy!!” to catch your eye.”

“Yes, but before you yelled, calling on me,

(I said) “Did marvelle squeeze you tightly

To try to make your mouth open forcibly?”

“Oh Amy, you. I swear, you’ll never reform

And I’ll die one day ‘fore your question storm.

I don’t know! Amy, you! How can I recall

If Marvelle squeezed me hard like a lil’ tadpol?

She held me very tightly the whole time,

But did not squeeze extra hard at any time,

To try my mouth violently to open,

To put medicine drops down it then.

No, I don’t think she did that to me,

But she held me the whole time already

So tightly that I couldn’t tell clearly.”

“Marvelle, Alix” I said, “Gabi and I

Are done talking to each other so nigh.

If you’ve listened to what we said, you’d see

That she’s sensitive to questions, poor Gabi.”

“Of course we listened, you wild Amy;

We listened to every word most closely.

I have much practice handling creatures small,

Even in this fussy lot, I don’t recall

One who’d get direly upset from being

Asked questions for her own well-being.

This I’ll note, on our enormous list

Of all the precautions that exist

For dealing with the small and touchy

Like you, wild Amy and your friend Gabi.

I thoughtfully listened to your question

And Gabi’s answer about my pression.

I did squeeze a few times, at first

Very gently, so that she wouldn’t burst.

It was futile, so I didn’t squeeze more,

And just held her normally as before.”

“Thank you Marvelle for adding that to your list!

So you’ll know with the questions to desist.

You couldn’t know the pain the pressure I go through,

When I am so questioned through and through.”

“You’re welcome, Gabi” Marvelle said.  “You see

The great effort we take for your safety.

You see how hard we must work to help all

The small creatures that come from over all.

We must save your fragile lives, which job were

Hard enough even if you didn’t so stir.

But you critters stir, oh how you stir and fuss

Weeping, bleating and crying out for us.

We move the floods to keep you comfortable,

While keeping you also alive and stable.”

There Marvelle patted Gabi’s head a bit

To keep her content, attentive and quiet.

“Most critters like you never thank me.”

Marvelle said, “They just hound and importune me.

They whine and whine until they get their way,

And when they’re cured, they swim promptly away.

They go back, carefree, to their eating and play.

Whimpering, the next day they come back

Hurt again from a libry book’s claque.

O, they always come back out of their nook,

Shrieking for healing and a libry book.

(They must all have their libry book story,

Or else they’d be more sour and contrary.)

Tirelessly, I swim to them and hold them

Which will their crying and clamoring hem.

They hold their mouth shut, sitting in my hand,

Not letting me the healing drops there land.

(They always act so, demanding aid

Of which (when it comes) they’re so afraid.)

We must then some squeezing pressure apply

Your mouths to pop open like a bursting eye.

Many squeezing techniques we had to create

You small animals to accommodate,

Depending on your size, shape and firmness,

We vary how we on your bodies press.

Yet, sometimes, as was the case with Gabi,

Despite the best squeezing employed by me.”

Marvelle described on the tasks of her job;

She paused her long speech at times to sob.

Well-behaved, listened Gabi and I;

We sat still and didn’t moan nor cry.

The mermaids still securely held us

But I was used to it and didn’t fuss.

Gabi listened with mouth and eyes wide,

Turning back to regard Marvelle from the side

With only one eye (that of her left side).

(The mermaids still held us out to each other,

So gabi had to turn to look at her.)

She twisted ‘round like a human looking

Over her shoulder at something shocking.

Gabi held that straining position,

Throughout Marvelle’s entire exposition.

When Marvelle finished, I understood

How hard it was in the libry to do good.

It was the hardest job in the sea,

To take care of small animals like me,

And to keep the books flowing freely.

Then I tried to wiggle, wiggle again:

I couldn’t move, but also felt no pain.

It’s been so long that I’ve been strictly held

That I can only feel my big head swelled.

The rest of my body is constricted and numb

Under the mermaid’s warm and strong thumb.

I said, “I’m a member of the libry

And support and thank the mermaids’ work greatly.

I’ve only before been to those libries

On land where things are less dang’rous than these.

I went to the libry almost every day

To read stories and with others to play.

Among the endless libry books I’d roll

Searching and digging like a happy mole.

When I found one I liked, I opened it

And sat myself down in the middle of it.

My friend or my mom would then on me close

The cover so that I may therein dose.

My running goo diffused the pages through

Soaking up the words into my tissue…”

“Oh! now even wild Amy thanks us too! ”

Marvelle said. “You’re welcome Amy, you!”

She interrupted a tale I was to tell,

On how I did, when young, in the libry dwell.

“Wild Amy,” Alix said. “How you inside

A libry book go to read and to hide

Is very interesting, I’ll confide.

You small creatures are a very strange lot;

A baffling bunch who behaves not as they ought.

I’ve never yet in a libry book seen

A wiggling worm with a happy mien.

If someone saw such a bookworm, she’d scream

And complain; and the libry would lose esteem.

So, wild Amy, please don’t read that way,

If you can help it, and read the normal way.”

“Yes ma’am” I said “I’ll try to do so;

I love so much my own way to read though.”

“Yes gentle Amy,” Marvelle said “You are

More reasonable than most of your kind, by far.

Always try your best, you little thing

Whether it be to improve your reading,

Or to find a way the heavens to reach,

As you’ve said you want to in many a speech.”

“Will you allow Gabi and me to go free?

Since we are now well-behaved and healthy?”

I asked, trying to wiggle vig’rously.

“O questioning Amy, how could you ask that now?

They were going to let us go anyhow.”

Gabi said.  “I had a feeling about it

They were just about to free us, I know it!

But then (how could you?) when you asked like that,

They’ll call off or delay their planned act.”

Gabi cried now bitterly as one

Whose plan to escape the cage had been undone.

Undone by my questioning inept

Which uncovered the secret we kept.

“It’s OK Gabi, unlike you, we don’t mind

Questions if they’re reasonable and kind.

Amy’s question was not hurtful to me,

And I’ll answer it, by and by, glady.

And for being such a small creature, Amy

Is fairly reasonable actually.

She speaks with correct syntax and rhyme,

Making sense with her peeping, most of the time.

She listens duly and will respond or act

Pretty logically, (tho she’ll overreact

As all of your kind by nature always do,

No matter how gently we talk to you.)

She’s slightly more reasonable than you are.

And you’re OK, you’re not the worse by far.

Both of you are also rather kind;

Amy, again, a bit more so to my mind.

In her explorations she may be kind of

Wreckless, unlike the elegant dove.

But she won’t, I’m sure, purposefully intend

Creatures small or grand to hurt or offend.

She’ll even help others if she can:

That is, if she’s not scared she’ll help fish or Man.

She helped me who at once fish and Woman is

To drop the medicine in your mouth like this.”

Marvelle opened then her own mouth wide

Pretending to drop medicine there inside.

“And Amy seems not to get scared easily,

Even though she’s so small and wiggly.

She’d be able to help quite often therefore,

All the people that would her aid implore.

She’s a helpful person, but she’s so small

That she can’t effectuate much at all.

You’re OK too in this regard, you’re not

So bad as most others of your lot.

I don’t know if you’d go so far as to

Help people as wild Amy would do.

But that would not be expected, surely not!

From the little creatures of your lot.

If they could all be as good as you Gabi,

Who thanked me! (Not to mention Amy.)

Both of you are also pretty smart

Despite your limited brain mass and art.

You try to improve yourselves commendably,

By reading libry books earnestly.

Amy is moderately smarter than you.

But you’re OK, Gabi, in my view.

You’ll learn so much more as you read and grow,

In this long, wondrous life of joy and woe.

Amy has already read quite a bit;

Her libry record is in two volumes split.

It to upkeep takes so much work, Amy!

It costs us so much time and money.

With the land libry do we our system share

So of your record we’re well aware!

A few libry books by Amy writ we

Have found and classified as well duly.

No one has checked them out yet but it’s great

That you even tried a libry book to create.

Amy tries so very hard in life, indeed

Much more than you, anyone would concede.

Amy has a very ambitious plan

To discover the heavens to advance Man.

As a little cosmonaught she must be

Very smart and brave to go boldy

Up there where no one’s gone before and where

There’re no friendly faces, milk, honey or air.

Both of you are also pretty brave

Swimming here alone on the trech’rous wave.

How you boldy set out to swim about,

As two tiny creatures on this ocean route!

You’re naturally of bigger beings afraid,

By savage nature is your instint so made.

Your history, the lives of your ancestors

Must have been filled with violence and wars,

That you innocent Gabi are so fearful now,

Automatically so, with your scared brow.

You were so scared of me from the start,

Shaking and quiet: it broke my heart.

But your reason and (Amy’s greater reason)

By and by over your fearful natures won.

Both of you are scared no longer in our near,

Being held for hours in our hand here,

Hearing our kind words, and seeing our kind acts

You were finally able to relax.

Amy’s quicker reason allowed her

To conquer her fear while you did yet stir.

Fear is instinctual, while being brave

Is a higher faculty we’re blessed to have

As creatures who can talk and reason,

And dream of flying to an alien sun.

(As Amy dreams to do, and has begun.)

Amy is somewhat braver than you Gabi

For she’s smarter and thinks more reasonably.

Marvelle looked down at crying Gabi.

“Don’t cry, we’ll let you soon enough go free

So you may continue to read, feed and play

As much as you want for the rest of the day.

Clever Wild Amy can get back then too

To her great adventure to the deep blue. ”

Hmm. I didn’t know that Marvelle me so well knew

That she could praise me so much out of the blue.

I wish she spoke on my fair looks too though;

About my pretty face and green skin aglow

With twinkling starbits that through my blood flow.

O what about my fair eyes, ears and nose?

Why didn’t she praise any of those?

Maybe I’m just too small for her to see

My small fair features (which are so lovely).

I’d be disappointed if she saw

Only a blobby worm that does lowly crawl.

She knows about the libry books I’ve writ

Tho I think of such a name they’re unfit.

The libry system much more than I thought knows;

For these books of mine I never did disclose.

They’re stored on my computer at home

Still in progress, not to be yet on loan.

Hmm.  My PC firewall is ineffective

Against the libry indexer so intrusive.

And I wish she didn’t, in complementing me,

Compare me directly to Gabi.

With Gabi, I never wanted to compete

But the way Marvelle did the topic treat,

Saying I was *better* in many ways

Will set fiery Gabi’s anger ablaze.

I tried to hide my fair head in Alix’s palm

Before the firestorm destroyed the calm.

My bobble head would not in the tight grip fit,

I’m exposed to the oncoming fit.

“Oh Amyyy! Aimmee! Amy!” Gabi cried.

“Is Amy so great inside and outside?

Oh Amy with her big, sparkling, green head,

And her big, reasonable, kind heart as you said.

Wild Amy with her great cosmic adventure

And her libry book writing venture!

O, Marvelle, is Amy so good really?

Does perfect Amy always act ideally?

What about her questioning of me in the past??

It assailed me like a strong storm-blast.

What about the pressure so great she let fall

And press on me, the pressuring tadpol!

Her latest libry book, she made me edit

Even though, I was not ready for it.

The pressure weighed so heavily on me

That, I swear, I stopped growing suddenly.

The great Amy looked, and confirmed this sadly.

In fact during my work for hard Amy

The pressure built up so much inside me

That I started to grow smaller slowly.

Oh look, Marvelle, at how I’ve smaller grown,

Am I not so much smaller than you had known?

What about when she held my tail so tight

Not letting me swim freely to my feeding site?

Brave Amy was so scared to lose me from sight.

I had to comfort Amy then like you do

With small crying creatures coming to you.

And Amy, you say, is kinder than me?

I swear, when they let us go, you, Amie!”

She said, addressing me directly.

I wiggled and tried to hide again,

But Alix’s hand didn’t move under my strain.

“What about” fiery Gabi continued,

“When the great Amy kept eating my food?

She was so confused, she would near me plop,

And eat my food ‘till I told her to stop.

Then she said she ate enough anyway!

But that wasn’t enough food for the day!

And Amy, you say, is smarter than me?

I swear, you don’t know how to eat food, Amiee!”

She made of show of bitting at me.

Now I started crying too, looking back

At Alix who still wouldn’t give me slack.

I tried desperately my big head to hide,

But the firm palm would not let me inside.

My panicked head shook, and I loudly cried

And did thereby her rant override.

Both mermaids pulled us close to them then

And shushed us gently again and again.

I calmed down to a soft constant whimper

Gabi still cried, but a bit quietter.

“I’m sorry Gabi for comparing you

To the incomparable Amy who

Is now one of my favorite small animals

With her intelligence and morales.

I thought, by the comparison, you would

Look up to her and strive to do as good.

You’re already fairly good in your own right,

But could never trace Amy’s lofty flight.”

With her forefinger she patted Gabi’s head

But Gabi kept crying as Marvelle said:

“To hear the praises of Amy made you mad,

But they didn’t imply you were bad.

I’m proud of you for helping Amy

With her libry book so earnestly.

You’re lucky, you must have learned so much

Working under Amy’s guidance so much.

Over the last few hours I’ve examined you

As thoroughly as is possible to do

And you’re not any smaller, I conclude.

You’re bigger than when I first you viewed.

Through stimulating work Amy let you do,

Mentally and physically you grew.”

Marvelle looked at me and nodded lightly,

Encouraging me; she smiled brightly.

I looked down and tried to swallow my tears

While listening for more praise with attentive ears.

But look! You’ve made poor Amy scared: she’s trying

“To hide her big head while softly crying.”

Marvelle said, “Please stop yelling at poor Amy

Who’s normally so valiant and plucky.

O look how Gabi’s outburst and threats

Have scared Amy; Look how she frets!

Alix, let me hold gentle Amy a bit

Until she gets over her fearful fit.”

Alix reached her hand (with me in it) to

Marvelle’s hand which was already outstretched too.

Marvelle’s open palm pressed Alix’s closed palm.

They handled me like I were a primed bomb:  
Deliberately and delicately

And very slowly they handled me.

They locked hands, with Marvelle squeezing hard

Alix’s fist which was squeezing me hard.

In transferring me, their operation

Was like the docking of a space station.

Their fingers and palms danced perfectly

In unison as my body lay passively.

I felt my body shift position,

And the warm, constant squeezing sensation

That never ceased in the long process

It took Marvelle me in her hand to possess.

Yes they are cautious indeed I thought

In handling our small, slippery lot.

At no time did the hold on me lessen

In Marvelle’s attainment of possession.

She held me and Gabi side by side;

Still a bit sad and mad, Gabi cried

“Aimmeee, Amy!” while looking at me

With her acute eyes focused intensely.

I hoped she would not hold me long there,

Right next to Gabi’s penetrating stare.

But she did so long me there hold,

Where Gabi could me closely behold.

Gabi looked and looked with those plaintive eyes

Making me (who couldn’t hide) agonize.

I was so uneasy, I looked all ‘round:

Up at Marvelle but mostly to the ground.

At Gabi I looked sideways from time to time:  
Her look didn’t deviate any time.

At random times, she peeped “Amiee!, Aimeee!!”  
While I sat quietly, feeling guilty.

Marvelle dropped her right hand that held gabi

To her side; and close to her nose brought me.

While descending, Gabi let out a last cry,

“Aime… A...” I heard the voice get faint and die.

Marvelle’s nose touched my head as she studied me:

Minerva was interested in the flea.

To please the goddess, I stopped crying completely

And posed my head side to side sweetly.

I opened my eyes wide and looked at her

My swelled heart was in my pressed chest astir.

“Oh Amy is feeling better already.”

Marvelle said to Alix who watched steadily.

“Yes she is good and clever and heals fast,

After she had been by Gabi harassed.

“I do feel good sitting here absorbing

Your heat that does all around me cling,

Giving me courage to do anything.

So optimistic and brave I now feel,

I want to be free to seek my life ideal.

Up there in the great mysterious sky

Where, if you’ll let me go, I’ll one day fly.

Gabi lost her libry book she just checked out

But she and I then made a new new one about

A libry book on a forrest route.

I am holding it inside my belly,

So if you’d let me just go free,

I will give it to you to replace

The one Gabi lost without a trace.”

“That book the libry already has got  
Alix said. I felt something when you were caught:

Something hard your soft body inside

That made me very concerned and surprised.

So when you fell alseep in my hand

With my finger inside you I scanned.

I poked and poked all around to see

What could this hard object possibly be.

I should have known that it would have been

A book that you were hiding there within.

I read it (it was interesting), then I

Stickered it, scanned it, and shelved it nearby.”

Hmm. The libry is more invasive to

One’s privacy than I ever knew.

First they scanned my computer and obtained

The unfinished stories therein contained,

And classified them, making them into

Libry books for everyone to read through.

Now, again without permission, they explore

Inside my delicate body for more.

It’s true, I now have libry books to my name

And received therefore some fame and acclaim.

But I wish I had known, so I could’ve done

More edits than what I’d actually done.

I shall not talk back or complain though

For if I did that they’d never let me go.

“That libry book that you took from me

Was written by both Gabi and me.

Would you please accept it as a replacement

To the one Gabi lost by accident?”

“Yes” Marvelle said, “We’ll do it for you,

I’d do almost anything for you.”

The mermaids talked to me quite a bit more

Asking ‘bout my past and what I had in store.

Gabi sat meanwhile quiet in Marvelle’s palm.

She was being very good and calm.

After they were satisfied with all those

Answers wherein I did everything disclose

Marvelle opened her hand, let me swim free

My body was numb and I swam slowly.

The mermaids let Gabi go free too

And went back to work without further ado.

With sputtering tail, Gabi swam up to me

And accidentally bumped into me.

She just looked at me then followed me

I lead the way out of the lib’ry.

~~[The libry cooperated with us,~~

~~For we both cried and made a big fus.~~

~~Everyone was alarmed too that Gabi~~

~~Was growing smaller and smaller possibly.~~

~~So they patted her head and did kindly~~

~~Do as we commanded, almost blindly.]~~

IV

~~Gabi holding her new libry book, we~~

~~Walked out of the libry into the sea.~~

“Gabi, are you happy now?  Do you feel

You’ll start to grow after this great ordeal?

“I’m not sure yet, questioning Amy, you;

I feel very slightly a growth anew.

Can you examine me closely to make sure?

I feel that I’m cured, but am unsure.”

“Hmm.” I said “You look about the same size

When I you cursorily analyze.”

“You, questioning Amy, that cannot be,

Look closer and do it seriously.”

Then I said (not to contract her will)

“Stretch out long as you can, and hold still;

I think you do look a bit bigger like that”

In addition, on her head I put a hat.

“Yes I think with the hat especially,

You look kind of bigger than previously.”

She pushed the hat off and said to me:

“O, are you sure wild amy, can it be?

Look once more please, but do it slowly.”

I picked the discarded hat off the ground;

It was a fine white sailor hat I’d found.

I puffed it up and put it on my own head,

Then, swimming near, obeyed what she said.

For a long time, I viewed the body

Which she maintained stretched-out and steady.

I executed the same routine,

Pushing against her my watchful mien,

Many, many times until all was seen.

At last, done, I placed back on her head the hat,

Swam back a bit and on the corral sat.

I said “Yes, for sure you look bigger now,

Kind of bigger, with the hat on your brow.”

She pushed in anger the hat down again;

My white sailor hat fell on the terrain.

I picked it up, shook off the the dirt specs,

Then put it on my own head next.

Hmm.  Though Gabi had great natural talent,

She was hard to work with and impatient.

Everytime we had to discuss something,

It took very long, whatever the thing.

So one time, when she closed her eyes to rest,

I swam suddenly away in distress

Escaping fast as I could towards the surface;

She woke up on the spot and gave chase.

With my sailor hat on, I swam away,

Up, up towards the blooming light of the day.

Gabi, though very young, was a strong swimmer,

Who almost grabbed me as we reached the glimmer.

Out of the water I popped onto the sand,

Where persistent Gabi would not dare land.

HE HE.  Her head up out of the water poked,

She watched me closely; her face looked provoked.

Watchful Gabi stayed there, viewing me,

As I rolled landward, away from the sea.

I saw her mouth move, yelling out,

“Aimeee!  Amyyyy!!” In a moaning shout.

HE HE.  I was so happy to evade

Gabi of whom I became more and more afraid.

Poor Gabi, she’ll be scared and alone,

But Wild Amy’s got problems of her own.

And then she has my libry book checked out

To comfort her in her mortal route.

I must still find a way to make the spaceship

That would propel me in my cosmic trip.