

Heads and tails

Neeraja Raghavan

This poem is an outcome of the author's attempt to explain about the curvature of the earth to her two 7-year-old nieces, who wondered why we don't fall off the earth if it is round.

Hi li'l gals, how goes your day?
If you have the time, I have something to say:
I used today this tale to coin,
With your paper and pen you, too, can join!

Once upon a time, there was a dash

That felt alone and said "Alas!"
"Will I ever find a true friend?
So together we can our time spend?"

Along came another line

That tried with dash to align,
Together they looked a bit like this

Now will you draw with me, my pretty Miss?

Just think of more and more of these
That stand together, all at ease

Did you too draw like the set above?
Now just you wait for a tale you'll love!

The lines decided to up and play
(After all, it was a sunny day)
So some stood up and some just sat
While some did this,

 others did that

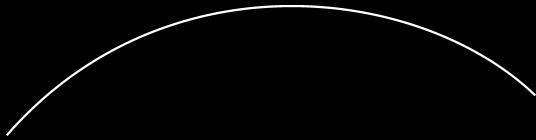
So look what happened when they got along

And oh! they sang a jolly song
And twisted and twirled as they moved along

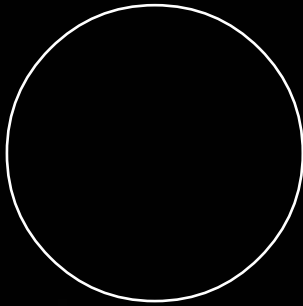
It got such fun, that their game was long.



I am sure that both of you can see
How their sharp edges they rubbed off with glee
And more and more of their kith and kin
This merry gang just welcomed in



And then it happened one fine day
That all these lines held hands to pray
"We thank thee Lord" they sang and said
"For bringing together our tail and head!"

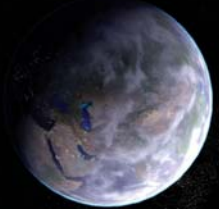


So from little lines, if a big huge round
Can form itself, so snug and sound
If we cut the round, bit by bit,
Lots of lines we'll see, isn't it?



A big huge earth, like the one we're on,
Is made up of lots of lines in song,
And even one of these lines, you see,
Is much, much bigger than you or me!

Now can you see why it is that
When we're on the earth, it seems flat?
But here's what the moon has to say:
"Oh, the earth? It's round, and far away!"



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