

## Tales of Whimsy, Verses of Woe

**Tim DeRoche**

**Daniel González, Illustrator**

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Tim DeRoche's collection of fun and morbid poems, *Tales of Whimsy, Verses of Woe*, draws on contemporary, fantastical, and history-based themes; its entries are flanked by imaginative illustrations.

A collection of unfortunate souls—complete with exploding heads, flu-causing mudshakes, chairs made of cod, talking vegetables, and a “rabbit of yore”—face strange situations with immense macabre humor. Though unkept and a tad gross, the ensuing laughter makes the entries' woeful subject matter easy to stomach. Lyrical rhyme schemes carry throughout. Full of energy and sarcasm, the poems vary in length, but all pack a punch, whether a concise five lines or spanning seven pages.

Nonsense and morals are well married in pieces like “Mary Melissa Miranda McGurk,” in which a devoted student and lover of homework has trouble with an over-enlarged brain full of facts and trivia. As a result, she only makes time to study and doesn't engage in other aspects of life—the moral being that information is great, but we need to go out into the world and live our lives, too. “A Good Morning” shares the importance of having a morning routine; however, the steps to starting the day include brushing teeth with superglue and washing one's face with soup from the trash—not the best advice, but funny just the same. And the black-and-white, pen-and-ink artwork brings the poetry to life, illustrating key points of all of the installments. In addition, pieces are showcased at the end of the collection in a section called “A Gallery of Whimsy & Woe.”

Ghoulish humor enlivens the poetry within *Tales of Whimsy, Verses of Woe*, resulting in engaging entertainment with delightful visuals.

ALEX DAILEY (January / February 2023)

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