

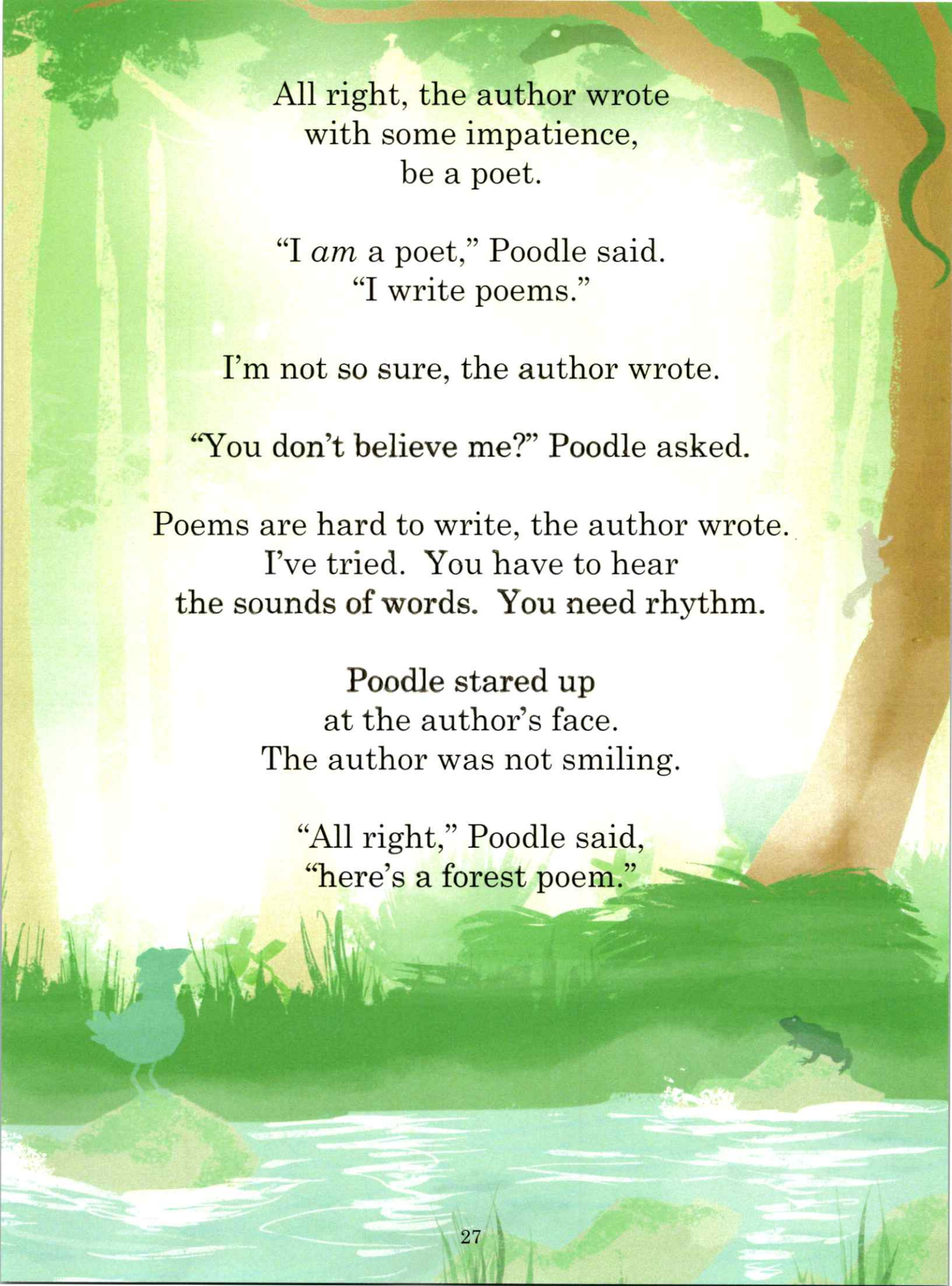


The place was crawling with life.
All about the woods,
a forest chorus caroled for us,
like a noise thesaurus,
and cheeped and chirped and squeaked
and burped and slurped and creaked
and said *eeeeee*, *ooh*, *ooooo*,
and the wind went *whoo*.
Even the creek said *trickledy-doo*.

Poodle looked back toward the east.
Blue Mountain was now far away—
just one peak on the distant range.
You had to know which one it was.

He looked around.
The forest was green and cool,
and the wind said *wh*,
and the river gurbled down.

Soft fog flowed from the river
edge of the page,
drifting over this sentence.



All right, the author wrote
with some impatience,
be a poet.

“I *am* a poet,” Poodle said.
“I write poems.”

I’m not so sure, the author wrote.

“You don’t believe me?” Poodle asked.

Poems are hard to write, the author wrote.
I’ve tried. You have to hear
the sounds of words. You need rhythm.

Poodle stared up
at the author’s face.
The author was not smiling.

“All right,” Poodle said,
“here’s a forest poem.”



And he said this:

The twiggy nest is balanced there,
amid the sighing pine,
and squeaky voices pierce the air
and munch their lunch in line.

“See?” said Poodle. “Baby birds!

That poem is a **ballad**.

It’s a four-line poem. Lines one and three
have eight **syllables** with four beats,
and lines two and four
have six syllables with three beats.

You could show it like this,
with each sound as a syllable:”

the **TWIG** / gy **NEST** / is **BAL** / anced **THERE**

a **MID** / the **SIGH** / ing **PINE**

and **SQUEA** / ky **VOIC** / es **PIERCE** / the **AIR**

and **MUNCH** / their **LUNCH** / in **LINE**