

“Argh, mates, you’re as smart as paint,”
he said, which he didn’t mean,
and he gripped a sharp cutlass
with a fierce, gross, traitor’s smile,
and on his shoulder that odious parrot,
Captain Flint, squawked, “Pieces of eight!
Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!”
as all parrots do, and Long John
was almost upon Poodle and What?,
reaching out with his terrible hands
with the black, broken nails,
and the ship rose up the monstrous wave
that towered before the bow,
and great white foam poured over the top,
and the wind went
whawwoah whaw howwwwwffffsh
WHHHOOOOOOO!!!





And just as Long John grabbed
for Poodle's beak
with a grabbely *skreek!*,
Poodle looked at the author,
high above the howling storm, and cried,
"Do something! Get us out of here!"

No time to spare.
Quickly, the author wrote:

Pffft! Poof!

Poodle and What? popped with a flop
back to the x in the forest.

Back to the forest?
Would they ever get out of here?

It was better than the alternative,
don't you think?

Ships and storms and pirates
and wicked parrots—
who needs that?

But Poodle wondered what the author's
problem was, making them choose
between growling monsters and terrible pirates.
Anyway...the forest again.

They listened for that scary growl
from the shadow in the trees—shhh....

Nothing.

Silence.

Like this: .

But a leaf on the path quietly turned over
to the left beside them. They did not
notice that. They should have. The leaf
was *right beside them*.

Right...there.

