

THE OAK AND THE ROSE

Shel Silverstein

An oak tree and a rosebush grew,
Young and green together,
Talking the talk of growing things,
Wind and water and weather.
And while the rosebush
sweetly bloomed
The oak tree grew so high
That now it spoke of
newer things -
Eagles, mountain peaks and sky.
'I guess you think
you're pretty great,'
The rose was heard to cry,
Screaming as loud as it
possibly could
To the treetop in the sky.
'And now you have no time
for flower talk,
Now that you've grown so tall.'
'It's not so much that I've grown,'
said the tree,
'It's just that you've stayed so small.'



THE JOURNEY OF SUCCESS

Nancy Hamel

When choosing the path to follow, I selected the road heading west.
It began in the Forest of Childhood, and ceased at the city of success.

My bag was packed full of knowledge, but also some fears and some weights.
My most precious cargo was a vision of entering the city's bright gates.

I reached an impassible river, and feared that my dream had been lost.
But I found a sharp rock, cut down a tree, and created a bridge, which I crossed.

It started to rain, and I was so cold, I shivered and started to doubt.
But I made an umbrella out of some leaves and kept all the cold water out.

The journey took longer than I had planned; I had no food left in my dish.
Rather than starve before reaching my dream, I taught myself how to fish.

I grew awfully tired as I walked on and on, and I thought of the weights in my pack.
I tossed them aside and I sped up again. Fear was all that was holding me back.

I could see the city of success, just beyond a small grove of trees.
At last, I thought, I have reached my goal! The whole world will envy me!

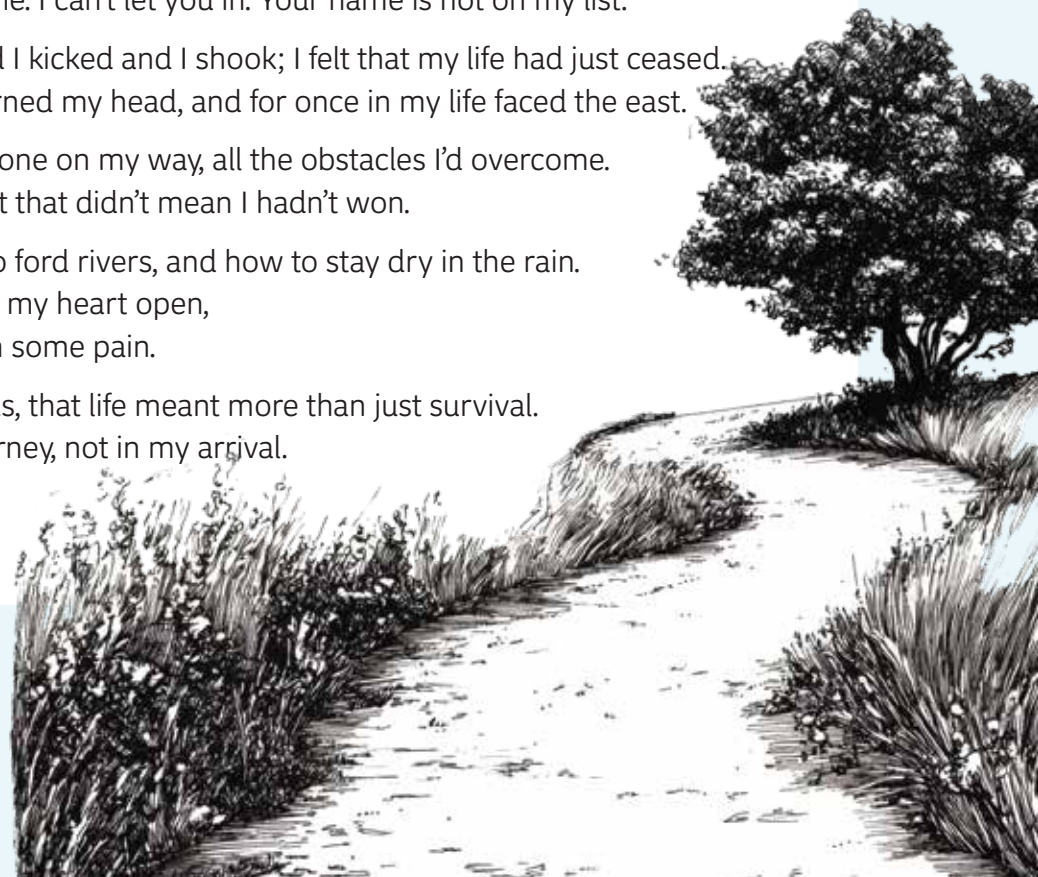
I arrived at the city, but the gate was locked. The man at the door frowned and hissed,
"You have wasted your time. I can't let you in. Your name is not on my list."

I cried and I screamed and I kicked and I shook; I felt that my life had just ceased.
For the first time ever, I turned my head, and for once in my life faced the east.

I saw all the things I had done on my way, all the obstacles I'd overcome.
I couldn't enter the city, but that didn't mean I hadn't won.

I had taught myself how to ford rivers, and how to stay dry in the rain.
I had learned how to keep my heart open,
even if sometimes it lets in some pain.

I learned, facing backwards, that life meant more than just survival.
My success was in my journey, not in my arrival.



ZEBRA QUESTION

Shel Silverstein

I asked the zebra,
are you black with white stripes?
Or white with black stripes?
And the zebra asked me,
Are you good with bad habits?
Or are you bad with good habits?
Are you noisy with quiet times?
Or are you quiet with noisy times?
Are you happy with some sad days?
Or are you sad with some happy days?
Are you neat with some sloppy ways?
Or are you sloppy with some neat ways?
And on and on and on and on
And on and on he went.
I'll never ask a zebra
About stripes
Again.

