

## Building a poem

How do we build a poem from a small idea? Here's a poem by Yazan El Fares. Let's look at it step by step.

1. *Here's the small starting poem*

### My family

We sit outside under the grape vines and eat and drink.  
Sometimes we put the TV outside and watch some programmes.  
We sit or lie down or talk or listen, and when we get excited we get louder.  
At the end it takes five minutes to say good bye.

2. *Let's create some little pictures in the reader's head by adding some details. The changes are in red.*

### My family

We sit in the courtyard under the grapevines.  
**We put mats on the floor and we have tea and fruit.**  
Sometimes we bring the TV outside and we all watch **our favourite drama.**  
We sit or lie down or talk or listen and when we get excited **our voices go up.**  
At the end **when we finish** it takes five minutes to say good bye.

3. *Let's add some more details, and get more rhythm into the poem by adding some words, and changing how the lines are broken up.*

### My family

We sit in the courtyard  
in the shade of the grapevines.  
We put mats on the floor,  
we have tea and fruit  
– **grapes and watermelon.**  
Sometimes we bring the TV outside  
And we all watch our favourite drama.  
**Some are sitting, some are lying,**  
**some are talking, some are listening.**  
**They get into the talk, they discuss,**  
**they get exciting about their talking,**  
**and when there are two sides, their voices go up.**  
At the end when we finish  
it takes five minutes to say good bye.

4. *Let's give it a better title, and add some repetition at the end.*

### **When my family is all together**

We sit in the courtyard  
in the shade of the grapevines.  
We put mats on the floor,  
we have tea and fruit

– grapes and watermelon.  
Sometimes we bring the TV outside  
And we all watch our favourite drama.  
Some are sitting, some are lying,  
some are talking, some are listening.  
They get into the talk, they discuss,  
they get exciting about their talking,  
and when there are two sides, their voices go up.

At the end when we finish  
it takes five minutes to say good bye  
and another five minutes  
and another five minutes  
and another five minutes.

Here's the poem as it was published in *More of Us* (Landing Press 2019) with the bio note from Yazan. It was also published in *North and South* magazine.

Yazan El Fares

I am a year 12 student at Mana College in Porirua. I have been a part of the student council in 2018, and I enjoy playing football. I am interested in going to university in the future to do dentistry. I am from Syria and have been in New Zealand for two years.

***When my family is all together***

We sit in the courtyard  
in the shade of the grape vines.  
We put mats on the floor,  
we have tea and fruit –  
grapes and watermelon.  
Sometimes we bring the TV outside  
and we all watch our favorite drama.  
Some are sitting, some are lying,  
some are talking, some are listening.  
They get into the talk, they discuss,  
they get excited about their talking,  
and when there are two sides, their voices go up.

At the end when we finish  
it takes five minutes to say goodbye,  
and another five minutes  
and another five minutes  
and another five minutes.