

Jamila Osman
Sunday School

A semi colon is the distance
between two closely related
independent clauses

;

d = st

;

A semicolon can be replaced
by a conjunction and a comma.

They say grammar is intuitive(colon)
a thing you can pick up and pocket
like a penny off a sidewalk(period)

I have my doubts(period)

What punctuation mark denotes
the distance between certainty
and uncertainty(questionmark)

According to grammarians, the semicolon
is the most misunderstood punctuation mark,
and the declarative is the most common type of
sentence in the English language.

;

Shahadah, the declaration of faith, is the first pillar of Islam.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

;

There is no God but God and Mohammed is his messenger.

Mohammed is not a prophet(commma)
the Arabs declared(period)

Shall we give up our Gods
for a mad poet(questionmark)

Quran class was always on Sunday afternoons.
If we were lucky there would be a nikah on the same day.
While the sheikh led the ceremony, and the adults were
distracted, we would sneak into the masjid kitchen,
gorging ourselves on sheet cake, frosting staining
our fingers and tongues.

If we were unlucky our class would coincide with a janazah
and we'd press our faces to the partition that separated
us from the men to catch a glimpse of the dead body.
The rest of the day would be tainted by what our
desperation had wrought.

Ramadan was the best month of the year
because our parents had more to repent for than we did.
While they were bent over in prayer we would congregate
in the parking lot, laughing louder than we should have been
for how late the hour was.

Ramadan, for those of us with pious parents,
meant we could see the boy we liked for thirty days in a row,
thirty-one if the moon wasn't spotted. If we were careful,
we could even get in his car and drive around the block,
our girl hearts flailing in our small chests.

Once I wore my nice shoes to the masjid and they disappeared,
and I had to walk home in a pair of oversized bathroom slippers,
still damp from the last person who made wuthu in them.

Once all the aunties in the masjid
knew me by name, first my mother's and then my own.

;

Prophet Mohamed

(صلى الله عليه وسلم)

said the Muslim has six rights he can count on Believers to fulfill:

- 1) When you see him, give him the greeting of peace
- 2) If he invites you, accept his invitation
- 3) If he seeks your advice and council, give him sincere advice
- 4) If he sneezes and praises Allah, say: "May Allah have mercy on you"
- 5) If he gets sick, visit his sickbed
- 6) If he dies, pray at his funeral

In this country, the responsibility one feels
to their individual dreams and desires outweighs
whatever responsibility they feel towards the collective,
and yes, this is a declarative sentence.

;

My language is prayerful even if
I haven't prayed in months.

إن شاء الله

before making plans.

ماشاء الله

when I am moved by beauty.

Once crowds gathered to see the Prophet's
newborn child. He put a rock under the blanket
where the baby was assumed to be.

Mama left Somalia and learned Arabic
during her first exile, English during her second.

I exchange one word for another
and a woman is lost in translation.

;

In physics, distance refers to how much ground
an object has covered while in motion.

A daughter bikes home from the
masjid at a speed of 4m/h.
The trip home takes her 3 hours.
How far does she ride?

Keep in mind, her mother has come a long way.
Keep in mind, the daughter still has a long way to go.

$$\begin{aligned}d &= st \\ d &= 4 * 3 \\ d &= 12\end{aligned}$$

The girl bikes 12 miles.

The simplicity
of the equation belies
the treachery of the journey.

Every girl has a secret with no known
unit of measurement.

A girl can be
a prophet of God in one language,
and a heretic in another.

;

My mouth is a balloon.
My mouth is a whoosh of air?

My mouth is a fishhook.
My mouth is a caught silver carp?
My mouth is wet ink.
My mouth is a smear across a face?
My mouth is a mother.
My mouth is a stillborn?
My mouth is a flood.
My mouth is a levee?

a door(comma) ajar(period)
A door, ajar.

;

I tongue the lock

I tongue the lock

I tongue the lock