

# Ⓞ let me rather... I would rather...

Shakespeare's Juliet might have uttered this first phrase (and actually did) when confronted with the prospect of marrying Paris instead of Romeo. You might express the second similar phrase when confronted with a multitude of things other than marriage that you really don't want to do. Perhaps you are thinking of homework, eating certain foods, engaging in activities you don't relish, listening to certain music, lectures, et al. Here's your chance to express your displeasure using **hyperbole**—a poetic technique involving **exaggeration**. You may feel you should write **IN CAPITAL LETTERS, BOLD WITH FIVE EXPLANATION POINTS ALONG FOR THE EFFECT!!!!** (but don't; let your words do the job)

Here are Shakespeare's lines from *Romeo and Juliet* that give you a model to work from. Juliet was young like you are; no wonder her word explosion sounds similar to the animated protests common to kids today when confronted with odious tasks. You might also recall Ogden Nash's "Kind of an Ode to Duty." Nash used satire, while Shakespeare in this piece used exaggeration. As you learned from Nash's poem, duty was not a "Venus, sweetie or cutie" but rather an "albatross" or a "Wodehouse forbiddingest aunt" or an "April post-mortem." Shakespeare's poem also contains some words that need to be figured out. You will also need to read beyond the end of the lines into the next lines to get the complete thought. The capital letters don't always mean a new sentence is beginning. Shakespeare used enjambment hundreds of years ago like Gary Soto did in his more recent poem, "Oranges," which we will read in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. (You can Google and read it now, if you wish. The orange tree in our garden is a reminder of this cool poem.)

As or after you read, be sure you can answer these questions: What action does Juliet hate? What six alternatives does she suggest? Why does Juliet refuse to marry Paris?

O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris  
From off the battlements of yonder tower  
Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk  
Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears  
Or shut me nightly in a charnel-house  
O'er covered quite with dead men's rattling bones  
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls  
Or bid me go into a new-made grave  
And hide me with a dead man and his shroud  
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble  
And I will do it without fear or doubt  
To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.



You will find several examples of these poems in back issues of *Making Waves*. Here's another:

### Mayonnaise Mania

Oh, have me sleep, rather than eat mayonnaise  
With one million creepy grand-daddy long legs  
Or take away my phone; or leave me alone  
In the dark; forbid me to eat chocolate  
Make me stay a rainy day at Disneyland  
Eliminate social life after school.  
Isolate me from all my best friends  
Make me listen to opera, or raid my closet  
And dress me like a preppy  
Things that to hear them told have made me tremble  
I would gladly do without fear or doubt  
To escape eating mayonnaise again!

