A Poet’s Guide to Automated Testing

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Synopsis

It’s easy to write tests that a computer can understand. But can you write tests that people, even non-technical people, can understand? Will it be obvious whether or not the test is correct?

This is not a matter of dumbing things down. There is a synergy between the expressiveness of tests and the maintainability. Achieving clarity in natural language is essential for their long-term viability.
Why a poet?

What does poetry have in common with acceptance testing?
Poetry is language at its most distilled and most powerful.

-- Rita Dove
(former US Poet Laureate)
Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,
Which was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play
To see a lamb at school.
Mary had a little lamb
Mary had a little lamb
Mary had a little lamb
Mary had a little lamb
Mary had a little lamb
Given Mary had a little lamb
When Mary went to school
Then the lamb went to school
Given Mary had a little lamb
When Mary went to school
Then her lamb went to school
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.
Given Mary had a lamb
When Mary went to <place>
Then her lamb went to <place>

examples:

| place       |
| school      |
| church      |
| Sam’s Bar & Grill |
| Agile 2015  |
Given Mary had a little lamb
When her lamb went to school
Then the children laughed & played
Given Bob had a little calf
When his calf went to school
Then the children fed it chocolate
Exercise 1

Feature: Invites

Scenario: Accepting the invitation
Given I sign in as "Mary Jane"
And I visit the invitation page
And I click the "Accept invitation" button
Then I should be redirected to the group page
And I should see a notice telling me I have access
Little Miss Muffet
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey;
Along came a spider,
Who sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away.
When Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet,
And she ate her curds and whey
And along came a spider,
And the spider sat down beside her,
Then Miss Muffet was frightened away.
Given Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet,
And ate her curds and whey
And along came a spider,
When the spider sat down beside her,
Then Miss Muffet was frightened away.
When a spider sat beside Miss Muffet
Then Miss Muffet was frightened away.
Scenario: Add link

Given I am on the homepage
When I click link "Add Link"
And I fill in "title" with "title_test"
And I fill in "url" with "http://www.makersacademy.com"
And I click "add"
Then I should see "title_test" in a link
And I should see "Meme"
Feature: Library book reservations

Given I have reserved “Moby Dick”
When I visit the Reservations page
Then I should see “Moby Dick” listed as reserved
When I visit the Reservations page
When Carl, a tall young man with unsettlingly blue eyes, visits the Reservations page
When a patron visits the Reservations page

When an unknown person visits the Reservations page

When a librarian visits the Reservations page
Then I should see “Moby Dick” listed as reserved

Then I should hear “Moby Dick” listed as reserved
Then the **list of reserved** books should include “Moby Dick”

Then the notification message should state “Moby Dick” *is* my reserved book
Exercise 3

Scenario: Anonymous users cannot create content
  Given I am on "/node/add"
  Then I should see "Access denied. You must log in to view this page."
  And I should not see "Add content"

Scenario: Anonymous users cannot create groups
  Given I am on "/groups"
  Then I should not see "Create a group"

Scenario: Anonymous users cannot create events
  Given I am on "/events"
  Then I should not see "List an event"

Scenario: Anonymous users can view user profiles
  Given I am on "/user/1"
  Then I should see "admin"
HAMLET:

Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness
That I have utter'd: **bring me to the test,**
**And I the matter will re-word**; which madness
Would gambol from.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark
Act 3, Scene 4