

YOUNG VOICES

*A King's School
Passion for Poetry
Anthology*

Young Voices



Poems by pupils of The King's School, Chester

Edited by Helen Lydon & Luke Howarth

Published September 2012

Preface: History of P4P

The Passion for Poetry Society, conceived two years ago by a group of Lower Sixth English Literature students, began originally as a forum for pupils to share and discuss poetry beyond the school curriculum. It soon became apparent to members however, that several among their number enjoyed writing poetry as much as reading it, and that a great number of pupils at King's shared the same passion. This realisation led to the now-familiar termly poetry writing activities and competitions, open to all year groups, which are overseen by our inspirational teacher Helen Lydon, and still judged and enjoyed by the original P4P members. This anthology comprises most shortlisted poems that have been submitted since the genesis of the society, reflecting the quality of creative writing of all ages throughout the school, and represents the final act of some of its founding members, who are leaving for university at the time of this anthology's publication.

Luke Howarth
Head of School 2011-2012

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Foreword

Welcome to this first King's School Passion for Poetry Anthology which brings together a distillation of the best poetry written by our pupils over the last two years: a diverse collection, only to be expected from imaginative young minds experimenting with form and subject.

Hard to define certainly, but we all know Poetry when we come across it on the page or aurally. It is my personal belief that, well done, poetry is an art form which offers us something very valuable, striking a deep chord with its intense mix of words and form, imagery and rhythm which affects our perceptions, alters our consciousness and prompts us to re-consider aspects of the universal human condition. That's why good poems don't date and, once bitten by the poetry bug, we go back to certain special poems again and again.

To go a step further, and write as well as read poetry is something which our pupils do very well at King's. As a teacher I am, of course, on the side of youth and cannot help admiring the voices of our teenagers struggling for self-expression; in their voices in general, and these poetic voices in particular, I think we can recognise an emotional and intellectual sincerity, an honesty of articulation and a fearless sense of humour found in young voices before the guarded and cautious self-consciousness of adulthood clouds too much of our communication.

Fuelled by a desire to express themselves, our pupil poets offer you a stimulating miscellany of subject and tonality: some light-hearted poems, others very serious; acutely observant and intensely personal poems; empathetic poems and satirical, critical ones; poems which celebrate and poems

which question, as well as ones which are simply good fun! I hope this anthology gives a lot of pleasure, and encourages our young people to keep on reading and writing poetry for years to come.

Helen Lydon

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& Simon Armitage for his professional inspiration

Young Voices



“Dear King’s School Chester,
May your poems and your poets prosper.”

Simon Armitage
2012

Hunters' Home

Tribal song and beaten drum,
Let the savage hunters come.
Howling cry and body numb,
Hear the filthy hunters come.
Blood runs hot with cold regret,
Salty wind and fearful sweat,
Misplaced shadow, spirit sold,
Flitting through the forest, bold,
Fearfully trembling as the sow,
Watching painted demons,
now:
Stalking closer childhood shed,
Ready spear that steadied head.
Lowly crouched in Heaven's Hell,
Yin to Yang as Skull to Shell.
Spear in hand of him they shun;
Let the lonely hunter come.
A silent plea...
A wish for home...
Far from trees...
Where hunters roam.

Nathan Addison

*Based on Chapter 12 of William Golding's
Lord of the Flies 'Cry of the Hunters'*

Breaker

The dawn of 1902 and the air tasted good.
An African sun showed its head over the distant
horizon, and the 'Cradle of Life' would soon see my
return.
Not as any god would have had me go, but dead
nonetheless.

Neither I nor my comrade took the blindfold they
offered, Death, after all, only shows himself once.
So I would go on my terms and my terms alone, and
look that bastard dead in the eye when he comes.

Remorse had not followed me here and had left well
alone,
It stayed by the corpses of the devils that killed him,
My best mate on earth, and if this is what it takes, I'd do
it again.
But that's not saying too much.

So go on then, hurry up pull the trigger!
Remove me from this world if my crime is so great.
And I eye the poor rifleman back down his scope:
"Shoot straight! Don't make a mess of it!"

*(Based on the execution and famous last words of Harry
'Breaker' Morant, an Australian soldier,
in the second Boer War)*

Nathan Addison

Before the Night

Timeless hope of ancient dark.
The final place light left its mark,
Would you have dared to give it name?
That which through innocence you could not know.
Before the night.

How would you describe the light,
Returning hope in dark of night?
God of dark but gone by day,
Is that a god?
Gone in light?

So how could it be as a god?
When in day, the sunlight shone.
This is found of knowledge that,
Without time is meaningless,
And lonely, as the dark of night,
Before the day.

Would it be your dream to know?
The place of where you cannot go.
Of answers that are nothing,
Without the time you do not have.
At the edge, the dawn.

And now you yearn for days gone by.
For lost innocence, for gods of sky.
And for namelessness, for hope,
Fantastic dream and greater scope,
Before the night.

Nathan Addison

The Boat

The boat was still in the calm waters,
Unmoving and silent,
The boy on board wondered if they would ever move,
They had been in the same place for over a year.

Always the same view,
Always dark or suddenly light,
Like someone had flicked a switch.

The boy wondered whether the wind would ever tousle
his hair,
Wonder whether the birds would sing overhead,
Wonder whether anything different would happen, ever.

The boy felt alone,
Isolated from everyone and everything,
Like a prisoner,
Trapped and scared.

The boy would never know that the boat would not
move,
He would not know the feeling of elation as the boat
skimmed the waves,
The boat was the boy's prison,
The boat was the boy's life.

Daniel Ardron

Ballerina

Sweeping gently across the misty stage
The Ballerina dressed in pink
Crumpled toes tightly bound in shimmering silk
Bones crack under the strain of her graceful pirouette

She knows she is watched closely from the wings
She feels the frowns with every misstep
Even though the ballerina tries
Her feet threaten to give way from her weight

The stirring music rises to a crescendo
And she collapses to the floor like a dying swan
The music comes to a sudden halt and the small
Ballerina stands and bows proudly

Her feet ache and are sore
Her toes are now misshapen
Physical pain matched by mental anguish as she
Strives for perfection on a lonely stage

Elise Back

Mrs Hitler

We sat down for dinner. The beef, garnished with a
cherry blossom honey.
Roasted, slowly in the oven. Tender.
And its rare smell filled my lungs, it blemished my skin
and tickled my lips.
Frantically clinging to the hairs in my nares.
I turned. His face was a picture.
Slouched on the couch, grinning into his hands.
The red ripe Russet, sitting between his two palms
crying for the mercy
Of the Devil's clasp, was silenced by hunger.
I perched on the stool, wiping the table's lip with a
frayed cloth,
Sweeping the fragile crumbs onto the clay tiles.
His new heavy face hung from a hinge.
The wine paint was trickling from his fingers like blood.
And dripped onto the floor leaving a trail of Black dots.
Once his career, now used as a pastime:
He used to paint Deutsch mountains, and champagne
children looking into the blue,
And plaiting their blonde...
But.
Guns are his love now. He pays no attention to me.
After all I'm a shadow in the black background of his
picture.
He adores his job, and nothing else. So I'll leave him be.
And then he can't stutter about my scones and my tea.
Now he has obligations.
Now he has duties.
Now he has a life.
And now, he has no wife.

Katey Beggan

Universal People

Amazing Aboriginal artists abseiling awkwardly;
Beautiful Belgian belly-dancers boxing with butterflies;
Colossal Canadian clowns creating a catastrophe;
Dangerous Danish devils dancing dozily;
Enthusiastic Egyptian employees eat energetically;
Fantastic French fools find frog-legs;
Ghastly Greek ghosts grin ghoulishly;
Humorous Hungarian hippies hunt for hares;
Ingenious Icelandic intellectuals include iPads;
Jolly Japanese jokers jive for jelly;
Keen Korean Kings karate kick;
Lost Libyan lunatics laugh out loud;
Magical Madagascan monks meet Mexicans;
Nasty Nigerian ninjas need nun-chucks;
Offensive Olympian oracles offer opinions;
Proud Portuguese pianists play pleasantly;
Quick Qatari queens quaintly quiver;
Reasonable Russian recitalists rap about rhinos;
Sporty Spartan sprinters spin spoons;
Traditional Tasmanian truckers trade teabags;
Unique Ugandan unicyclists undergo u-turns;
Victorious Vietnamese violinists venture to volcanoes;
Weak Welsh warriors walk weirdly;
X-rayed Xenophobians xplain the Xmas x-files;
Yellow Yankee youths yell YIPPEE! And
Zesty Zimbabwean zoologists zoom zanily.

Ally Bibby

Garden

All overflowing,
boundless bushes and free flowerbeds spill into each
other.

A tree leans in,
casting the chaos a disdainful eye.

Neighbours glare in with a haughty stare,
as colours blare out,
all shouting for attention.

The lawn mown at a time long gone and along odd lines
and at multiple levels.

A trampoline traps another kingdom,
with long unreachable and unkempt grass falling out,
tickling the fabric above.

However,
it's my perfect disorder.

Johan Bos

Nature's Daughter

(a tribute to Ophelia)

Her eyes transfix
With her melancholy gaze.
She rests among the freshly bloomed roses,
The petals swaying gently in the warm dusk breeze
With regimental precision.
Her blue veins protrude from her mauve flesh --
 beating:
Her roots.
Unzählig blühen die Rosen.¹
She absorbs the stares of the passers-by;
Offended by her dilapidated hair,
Smothered around her natural contours
Glazed by a layer of damp perspiration from the Sun's
 angry focus.
Unzählig blühen die Rosen.
It seems the Earth stands still – though not in a
 conscious sleep,
But breathless in awe
As the stars surreptitiously stare,
Heaven's poetry?
Gradually, greyness envelops her
Permeating through her bed of roses.
They yawn silently,
As the last smirk of the Golden Orb sinks below the
 horizon.
Unzählig blühen die Rosen,
Und ruhig scheint die goldne Welt²

Richard Capes

1. The roses bloom unnumbered

2. And the golden world seems to be at rest

My Hero

Always chooses the right things
Strong-willed and powerful within himself
No superpowers yet he works wonders
Not superhuman yet he is a '*Super Human*'
Hair of Superman
Mobility of Spiderman
Braveness and boldness of Batman
Everything anyone could ever want
My dad is awesome

Stephen Carter

Night-Time City

The sun slips from the sky
And the cover slips from the city,
The true sky shimmers into view, a ghostly apparition,
A torch on black marble.

By day,
The littered, cluttered wharves
Huddle into themselves,
As boisterous, foul-mouthed workers brashly
Haul crates of shipments around the polluted docks.
But by night,
The wharves unfurl and
Loom majestically over the night-time city,
Like the mansions of opulent citizens
In Athens at the height of the ancient empire,
And it makes me feel alive.

By day,
The turbid river flows by,
Its greyness dulling the spirits of the city-goers further,
Gurgle lost in the cacophony of tourists and taxis.
But by night,
The moon half-illuminates the river's path,
Ivory dappling the miniscule waves of the meandering
river,
While the rest is shrouded in dark,
Mischievously veiling a chunk of my vision;
A chill runs down my spine excitedly at the sight of the
river's ulterior side:
It whispers,
Sniggers,
Giggles gently up at the giant stern eye and clock tower
watching it,
Its laugh harp music fit for the grandeur of the
emperor's throne room,

In the heart of ancient Rome.

This is the real city,
The city no-one sees,
The night-time city.

By day, it gives itself up to tourists, businessmen and
politicians who
Traverse its depths insufferably.
But by night,
It is only the personal, private home to
Gangsters,
Thieves,
Who run its backyards and dark alleyways like they
own them,
Which they do, really;
The hoard of orange orbs and blinking traffic lights,
A dragon's hoard of iridescent gems,
Are the hints of a surprise party, just for me;
The lorries are infinite,
Trundling through the ghost-town streets,
Exhilarating my senses.

An odd peace drifts over the city,
Now this complex conundrum of culture has mostly
gone to bed,
I have it all to myself,
And I will never have enough of it.

Damayanti Chatterjee

Moving On

Summer evenings fly by too fast,
One flash of golden sun, green grass and loud laughter
And they're gone.

The dreary Michaelmas terms drag by,
The days spent in itchy new 'Back to School' gear;
The short-lived winters are flurries of snowballs
In memories, the biting cold and runny scarlet noses.
King's was your launching pad,
The take-off base,
Up to you find the blast,
One way or another,
Alone or together,
The easy way or the hard way;
You made the choices,
You took the chances,
So how could you leave all that?

One thing spurs you on
As you stand hand in hand,
On the crest of this bridge in the onslaught of evening.
One side: the life you lived, the people you loved,
(Maybe hated)
And those evenings in your memories that are
Honey-gold and scented,
You know, the ones that bring that feeling,
Of warm melting in your stomachs,
Like chocolate in your mouths.
On the other side: mystery, unexplored lands call,
There's a whole world for you to take over,
Conquer;
You've got the rest of your lives to try on for size,
Mistakes, miracles-
They're all coming your way,

We watch you in this flurry,

You set the expectations high,
For us to follow in years to come,
We'll step up and watch you now,
To see what it's like.

You fight down the fear,
That mounts of its own accord:
Fears of losing friends,
Fear of losing the firm ground you stand on;
But friends will always find a way,
If they're friends,
And losing feel of the ground is always the risk you
take,
So you can leap and touch the sky.

This is your time now,
Forget everything else,
You found yourselves here,
Now you're showing you to the world,
You need to move on to greener pastures,
But you'll never follow the herd,
We'll be hearing your names soon enough.
But don't ever forget
That it all started here.

Damayanti Chatterjee

There's nothing like the Sea

The crash of tumultuous walls of grey-green,
The spray of saltwater, sharp like the sting of a bee,
The solid walls of icy liquid water scream,
There's nothing like the sea!

Spray clings to the nearby rocks' faces like a sweaty
sheen,
The rocks sweat as they panic – they're scared of the
raging sea,
While the seabirds above harmlessly sail the winds as
they preen,
There's nothing like the sea!

Every sailor's nightmare, every sailor's dream,
To dance a deadly foxtrot with the raging sea;
To ride the torrential waves that, as they near the shore,
build their self-esteem,
There's nothing like the sea!

The crash of tumultuous waves of grey-green,
The spray of saltwater, sharp like the sting of a bee,
The solid walls of liquid, icy water raise a scream,
There's nothing like the sea!

Damayanti Chatterjee

Snowflakes

Snowflakes delicate as spider-webs,
Latch onto car and house windows,
Fault lines of white on the roofs flow and ebb,
Individual glassy symmetries dance as the wind blows;

When the traffic-light leaves fell,
And forlorn mist bedecked our sight,
Millions of miniscule water droplets, all individual,
Laid their secret plans one night;

So when the world froze over,
They emerged crisp, shivering and blanched,
Everyone was pelted with puffs of white and dived for
cover,
Our dogs sniffed incomprehensively at the tender
powder on their haunches;

The drops of water above twisted, wriggled and splayed
Themselves – ready for the transformation,
Steeling themselves, they looked down on the children
who unknowingly played,
And shattered out of the clouds, as precise as an army
formation;

Soon the children stopped their wild game and stared,
For quiet, mystic, breath-taking beauty hung in the air,
Serenely drifting down, aware of their beauty, icy teeth
bared,
Snowflakes – wintry wonders- making us befuddled and
stare.

Damayanti Chatterjee

A poem of Impossibilities

I should like to taste the shimmer of the moonlight,
Or to see the pot of gold at the end of every colourful
rainbow.
I should like to hear the apple tree sprout through the
upcoming seasons,
To touch the beam enclosing around the glistening stars.
I should like to smell the lily-pads drifting away on the
sparkling lakes,
To hear the speed of an eagle darting towards the
ground gazing for prey,
And coconuts tumbling from one unaccompanied palm
tree.
I should like to touch the gloomy shadows belonging to
twilight,
To keep the past secured inside a bronze pot,
And to hear the peacefulness in every existing soul.

Harriet Cole

I Wonder Who She Is

I wonder who she is
The girl who floats through time

I wonder if any eyes see her
except for those of mine

I wonder why she stays here
Why she never ran

I wonder why she won't leave here
Even though she can

I wonder if she knows I see
The tears in her eyes

I wonder if she used to believe
That all love never dies

I wonder who she is,
The girl who floats through time

I wonder if there's anyone out there
To save her troubled mind.

Lottie Cousins

The Rice Krispies

Snap the joyful one:
Always chuckling and laughing
A pleasure to know.

Crackle the intelligent one:
Reading books and teaching facts
Wisdom through his blood.

Pop the sad one:
Crying, deprived, upset, down
Always spoken last.

Rory Crowe

Llanddwyn Sands

*From a distance the beach gives a warm welcome,
inviting customers to stay.*

Lighthouse

Unused, white-washed

Reflecting bright, harsh sunlight

Temporarily restoring the beacon it once was.

Grass

Long, coarse, sharp

Pointing upwards accusingly

Prickling sore, spiked legs.

*Shingle crunches beneath feet treading towards the
beach.*

Wind blows into screwed up faces

bracing and refreshing.

Sand

Its salty taste dissolves in saliva, sharpening senses

Sticking to skin, creeping into shoes

Creating sand castles

Having fun.

*In the distance the beach waves goodbye as the sun sets
on its horizon.*

Tom Cuffin-Munday

He who Changed Everything

As I exited the shop I struggled with my bags
The deceptively frosty air hit my cheeks
I smiled
As I gazed at the twinkling Christmas lights in
amazement
Then I saw a man and his sleeping bag spread across the
pavement
A sense of vulnerability passed through me
I examined his face
Old, his wrinkles distinct upon his forehead
Cold, his teeth clenched as he shivered
Filthy, his cheeks ridden with dirt
Messy, his unshaven skin scarred
Discoloured, his pale complexion outlined by the dark
night
Saddened, his head hung low towards twiddling fingers
I was awoken from my gaze
He dragged his head up, as he focused his glare upon
my eyes
My emotions rapidly changing
As I re-evaluated my shopping bags
I re-evaluated my Christmas plans
I re-evaluated my weekend plans
I re-evaluated my future plans
His glare still hooked me
And as I walked away, back to the shop from which I
had come
I thanked him.

Isabel Dawson

Peek-a-Boo

Hiding behind a cracked leather sofa
A soft giggle in her voice
As she rises to stand on her tip toes
To reveal her shining blue eyes
And toothless smile
A single blonde lock of her drapes over her forehead
Her pale skin, almost seeming lifeless in the sun light
Her miniature fingers wrap around the back of the sofa
As she searches the beige room for any sign of life

Ben Duncalf

People on Earth

This is a look at the people on earth,
Some who have wisdom,
Some who have worth.

Some who are traitors, some who are cruel,
People who thoughtlessly disobey rules.

Some who are crazy, crackers and fun,
Twinkling, sparkling, bright as the sun.

Some people grasp, control and conceal,
Pinching pennies, making a deal.

Others are generous, happy and free,
Giving and caring, they are life's key.

This is a look at the people on earth,
Some who have wisdom,
Some who have worth.

Harry Edwards

Old Tree

Old Tree
Twisted Limbs and gnarled fingers
Creaks, groans, sighs
Skyward gaze towards starry night
Cool breeze on rainbow leaves
Autumn's blush
Old tree, but Nature's child

Edward Everett

The Cat of the Group

Some people in life just pass you by;
I couldn't get rid of her.
She was always there,
a fly on the wall,
to tell me when I'd done well,
or acted the fool.
Her hair is poker straight, she burns out her crinkly
locks,
she always has a grin on her face,
the same as the feline creature from her county.
Like a cat she comes and goes
as she pleases.

Sometimes I call for her and she scuttles right back,
other times I wait longer, for her never to arrive.
She idolises the nation's sweetheart,
intently watching her every move,
ignoring the fact everyone's watching her.
Her perfect hair, face, and famous cheeks.
She is idolised,
but chooses to ignore the stares,
as she pleases.

She never whispers a word of a lie,
but barely mumbles an awkward reply.
She doesn't have a bad bone in her body,
this sometimes comes back to bite her,
For others feel she's not as strong.
What they don't realise is she is the cat of the group,
the sly, clever witty one.
They can try as hard as they want but she will
outwit them all the time,
as she pleases.

Harriet Fisher

Life-Cycle Kenning

New comer
Silent sleeper
Soft gurgler
Nappy filler
Tooth cutter
Tyrant toddler
Carpet crawler
Tantrum thrower
Constant chatterer
School starter
Troublesome teenager
Social tweeter
Ipod listener
Game player
Latin learner
Uni graduator
Career starter
House buyer
Family maker
Together forever
Old age pensioner
Silver surfer
Health sufferer
Coffin dodger
Six feet under

Joe Gillett

What I Learnt from my Mother

I learned from my mother how to deal
with disappointment
To know in life you can't get everything that you wish
for
That you might not get the presents you always wanted
I learned that people deserve second chances
That money isn't everything
That sometimes you have to take a risk
That even when you get knocked down to the bottom
you can always build your way back to the top
That sometimes the people who you think are your
friends
really are not your friends,
That sometimes you may not be perfect
And
not ever to judge a book by its cover.

Charlie Gruffyd-Jones

What I Learnt from my Mother

I learned from my Mother that loss is inevitable. No matter how much you love them or how much you might grieve them.

It is inevitable, whether a pet or a person, house or a home.

I learned from my Mother that light will always beat darkness. No matter how long the tunnel. Whether the light is just a dying ember or the darkness seems to be eternal.

I learned from my Mother that I should live life to the fullest. We are free, free to take risks. To challenge ourselves and find who we are.

I learned from my Mother that you should always keep a smile on your face. No matter how hard. Not always for you but for the benefit of others, as that smile could be a curve of hope, a sign that there is still a chance for something impossible to happen.

That ember of light to beat the darkness.

Rebecca Hatton

Ryan is Eight

I told him to come down
I told him not to climb higher
Be careful
Don't fall
He said he was fine
That he knew what he was doing
Then like a boulder he tumbled
Stumbled
Down
Then I thought to myself
Just don't be dead

Max Holland

The Floor-Lamp

Misanthropy, seldom self-inclusive, was
My way. Slouched torpid, in
My seat; immersed in turbid thoughts; held
Atemporal
In a pocket of yellow light.

The floor-lamp stood
Staid beside, glowing amber
In candescence. A child
Clutching a bright red balloon sat in
My seat, the solid string gleaming gold.

Absorbed, I pushed with
Three careful fingertips,
Displacing the stand,
And the floor-lamp turned like a broken
Compass-needle or second-hand.

The shadows which shrank and swerved
With each nudge or inflection,
And the imperfect silence which attended this
Dimly lit occupation, were
Unnoticed
By my listless senses. Nothing else
Needed exist
There, but the chair
And the scarlet beacon which lingered,
Curious, above a sea
Of troubled reflection.

Solitudinarian; sustaining a swarm of wandering
Equivocations and speculations, I mused,
Delighting in flawless control
Over the floor-lamp.

Once, when wielding the silver stem,
And playfully releasing the idle grasp of
Three carefree fingertips,
The tall floor-lamp drifted, briefly
Moving, as though underwater,
In an inexorable curve
Before plummeting, strobe-like,
Its thunderous crash resounding
In the silent room. Amid splintered
Glass and sudden darkness,
I sat static.

The game had become habitual.

Nurtured by my simple pleasure
In that instant
Which saw a crimson shade
suspended
Impossibly,
Exquisitely still.

I knew that moment intimately;
Tilting precariously
Between regress and fracture,

The floor-lamp,
Inclined, is perpetual
In my mind.

Luke Howarth

Charlotte is 9 months

it felt like I was borrowing her
a warm bundle of soft bread
curling into my arms
cowering away from the biting wind
her tiny fingers entwined like flower petals
tightly balling up in my rough hands
perfectly fitting into my palm

her face is so lovely
like a pearly raindrop
fallen from the heavens
I feel out of place holding something so beautiful

I am about to give her back
when
she opens her eyes
they are so intelligent
wide
and knowing

I can't let go
I wish I hadn't

Rachel Huber

Water of Love

All night water worked without a pause
Back and forth, back then forth.
The noise was unbearable, so unbearable
Meandering in between death-defying rocks,
Swirling down through everlasting hopes.
Heaven roared with laughter and me-
I knew nothing.
While watching me struggle
My ship, once a ship, now a shipwreck.

All night water worked without a pause
Battering us and our happiness;
Depositing the hate far away
The tides rise, and then fall.
We who cry our morning call,
The sirens from our last hope,
Are attacked by sadness' jaws.
Some may label it 'survival of the fittest'
But some of the strongest break and crumble,
Even the most vivid, fade away
To nothing someday, like the ship
My ship, once a ship, now a
Shipwreck.

Holly Johnston

Tears of a Clown

Behind the painted smile,
A mouth that curves down all the while.
Behind the bright greasepaint makeup,
Invisible tears fall down into a non-existent cup.
Behind the spinning scarlet bow-tie,
A hopeless heart eagerly dreaming to fly.
Behind the massive shiny shoes,
Deformed feet with nothing left to lose.
Behind the white ghostly gloves,
Bitten nails, raw skin and flesh that nobody loves.
Behind the bright rainbow wig,
A confused mind where nothing seems real,
No matter how deep down you dig.
Behind the lonely, misunderstood clown,
Is a soul slowly falling down.

Anna Jones

Eagles have Seen a Thousand Sights

Eagles have seen a thousand sights:
the Aurora Borealis, the seasons changing;
and every year and they have flown
through the Grand Canyon multiple times.

Eagles have heard a thousand noises:
terrified screams from the busy city,
a lone wolf howling in the North Pole;
and in the desert, horses' hooves trembling.

Eagles have smelt a thousand scents:
roses growing in wild grasslands,
the smoke and fumes from industries;
and boiling steam from geyser fields

Eagles have seen thousands of years pass by-
They have a greater knowledge than you or I.

Amelia Jones

Life without death

Wandering an eternal journey
Emotions have no meaning
The family and friends I had
Lost with little mourning.

The life that I chose to live
That long time ago
I regret ever making that choice
Temptation made me go.

Ryan Kingsley

My Grandad

The last time I saw him,
Before he had to say goodbye,
The moment was as bright as the stars on a moonlit
night,
His smile a crescent moon,
His eyes stars, and his heart big and kind.
We walked together, I looked at him,
As I wished that moment could last forever.

Kieran Kumar

Poem

Because of the sun and because of the sea,
You and you were walking with me,
My friends
Mis amigos
Even
Mes amies
Together in mind and very much in soul,
So I'll take a short-lived chance to say,
This is a tribute to that day.

Rosemary Lavender

This

As I ran,
As I ran down the corridor,
Acting as I knew I should not,
As I smelled the first tang of disinfectant on the corner
of the medical room,
I stopped. I stopped and I thought to myself,
And I thought to myself,
“This, this is what school is.”

As we sat,
As we sat on the hillock,
Alone and unvoiced,
As I felt the rough-smooth of the skin on skin sensation,
I proceeded. I reached out and around and I thought to
myself,
And I said to myself,
This, this is what leisure is.

And I smiled,
I smiled as I realised,
I became aware of the fact that I would never say,
This, this is what life is.
For no matter how I might try or struggle or wish,
I will never compact life into a word as simple as ‘this’.

Joseph McKeown

Olympians

The athletes line up on the starting line,
Adrenaline darts through their veins,
The crowds encourage and roar,
As the athletes dash down the lane.

They have been training years for this,
And the moment has finally appeared,
Their hearts rush with courage,
They brush away their fear.

As you see the athletes sprint pass you,
The ground rumbles and vibrates,
When the nations see their runners,
They wait to see their fate.

And as the tape of the finish line snaps,
The winning country leaps in the air,
The commentators cheer with their nation,
The athletes see their medal – so rare.

Kaylan O'Connor

Window

I caught you unaware
Alone
Staring blankly from the emptiness of your room
Azure eyes fill with tears
Each drop holding a vivid memory
I continue to watch, mesmerised by the silence
Looking on as you swallow hard, each breath catching
 at the back of your throat
Shoulders rising and falling with your chest
Emotions kept carefully in check
Your hands complete the trio of silence and sorrow
Hands gnarled, worn with age, bones that are brittle
Blemished by the passage of time
You twist a well-worn wedding band around a finger
That it once fitted perfectly
Flesh clings to bone, unwilling to relent

In complete silence the first tear breaks free Escaping.
Trickling down your cheeks ploughed with age
It travels its course along the deep folds and creases Of
 your aging flesh.
Meandering past the flare of your nostrils
Slipping into the corner of your mouth.
Falling steadily onto the faded print of your summer
 Dress.

Matthew Oliver

ALIVE

I am the swallow that soars through the sky
The falcon diving towards its prey,
The chick falling from the nest
The eagle patrolling...

I am the snake slithering through the grass
The lizard basking in the sun
The turtle cracking its egg
The crocodile waiting...

I am the lion prowling through its pride
The hyena hysterically laughing,
The cub tumbling down the bank
The gazelle leaping...

I am the ant marching through the dirt
The dragonfly skimming over the lake,
The larvae wriggling in the undergrowth
The bee humming...

I am the redwood breaking through the canopy
The oak sheltering the crops,
The sapling bursting into bloom
The vine tangling...

For I am Mother Nature,
I am ALIVE.

Allan Prossor

The Ride

White topped hills shrouded by clouds,
Wind breezes, howls like a wolf,
Dirt skidding into icy complexions,
Valleys deep as puddles,
Frail smiles curved as meandering tracks,
Torn hurdles high as birds glare,
Droplets deposit on corroded metal,
Sugar grains flowing, oozing through warm blood,
Energy levels maxed,
Tight helmet straps rejecting air,
Stopping not an option-

Time to go.

Arjun Rao

A War within Nature

Come let us tell the weeds in ditches,
That today is the day.
The dandelion seeds blow off along the wind spreading
the word.
The sunrays
Hang from every tree,
While flowers poke out of the grain,
As majestically as a traitor
They hang and sway in the breeze.
Beautiful though they may be,
They have a filthy secret.
Come let us tell the weeds in ditches,
That they should be gone,
Ditches free of them.
The grass shall once again rule.
But they are competing with each other-
Every blade of grass against the weeds-
Every fight is the turning point from friends to enemies.
Families broken,
Friendships destroyed.
Never to be healed.
Forever in conflict.
An endless war within nature.

Zoe Rigby & class

The Pear

What would compare to the common green pear?
The rich plum painted in burgundy red?
The amber orange dress'd in golden glare?
These three fruits formed traffic lights in my head.

I stopped at the red plum, a splendid scene,
but doubted that the taste would be worthy.
I paused at the orange vitamin sheen
but doubted that I'd ever get scurvy.

The pear caught my eye and signalled to go
so I went – I went for it and ate it.
'Twas juicy and crunchy and textured, so
I became overjoyed and elated.

I finished dining and said with a sigh,
“The pear is now the apple of my eye.”

Duncan Ritchie

Being 'Civil': A satire

We built a castle of cavernous bed-chambers
with five-poster beds and splendid on-suites.
The corridors pointed to corridas. The beasts
(savaged by civilisation)
attacked those who love
to kill with mocking word.
They knew what was at steak.

The greatest hall, below the green corridas,
was
in fact
better than any coral reef, superior
to anything not built by mankind.
Coral reefs have clownfish. Petty.
We fin-ished great hammerhead sharks
served on platters
with knives and forks and spoons and chopsticks.

We hold more than sharks.
We make and keep beefburgers, hamburgers,
Hamburgers, French fries,
apple pi to billions of decimal plaices.
Places to dance,
have a ball,
under pearly glitter-balls.

Yes, we are the masters of nature. That's right. We
build castles, plural, sprawling and awesome,
antlers on walls,
our door-mats are bear-skins.
Rainforests are pointless and thus demolished under a
bloody sky.
But a tidal wave completely demolishes our petty
sandcastles.

Duncan Ritchie

Somebody Else's Problem

Beer's nauseating scent,
As recognizable to her as a bird's song,
Or her dearest toy.

She totters about the pub,
Like the drunks that surround her,
Playing what she thinks is a magnificent game:
A game of hide and seek
Where her parents would hide,
And she would seek.

One day, I wish the game would end.

Barnaby Rule

The Book

When you open, the infinite opens-
For your words hold endless bounds and chances,
For written words tower over spoken;
They hold emotion, loving romances,
To the thrilling hunts for murderous beasts;
You can steal our souls, and capture our minds,
You have the power to perform great feats,
And push beyond societies' confines.
Great men have adored and used your power,
And many have trembled in fear of it;
Yet it absorbs all for many an hour,
Every class of man has laughed at your wit,
But you have turned grown men to choke on tears,
And this power has linked us for years.

Barnaby Rude

Cricket

The sound of
leather on
willow rang
through the
air, like a
doorbell on a
concierge's
desk. The
crowds, in
t h e i r
t h o u s a n d s
filled the
s t a n d s .

The rivalry, bat versus ball, was soon apparent. The cherry glistened in the afternoon sun. As the bat and its master prepared for onslaught. Like a charging bull, the ball and its wielder stormed in. All was silent, THUMP THUMP, THUMP THUMP. The steady thump of the bat's heart was what the ball had wanted, he bayed for blood. Seconds felt like minutes, until... SMASH. Up went the cheer from the crowd as the poles flung back and lay to rest on the brittle floor. The ball sat there; still as a statue, grinning.

Matthew Rutherford

A Palestinian Christmas

Two children on a dusty street,
Fierce sunlight relentlessly scorching the nearby sand.
A rusty toy car rolls inanimately towards the gutter,
All but crushed by the hardened leather of the armed
patrols boots.
Cigarette ash flitters to desolate ground,
Grey and black snowflakes, littering the street.
The panic stricken cacophony of doors slamming shut in
the surrounding houses,
Accompanied by a very rational sense of fear.
The surrounding conflict and war bearing no weight in
the children's blissful ignorance,
Incomprehensible difference in religious belief forming
no borders between them.
Tension fills the air,
The date signifies little here but deep seated resentment.
Apathy colours the expression of the children in their
tattered clothes,
A smile so desperately tries to pass the boy's lips as his
sister rolls the toy car in his direction.
No presents are waiting for them,
No significant benevolence is around the corner.
Ironically infinitely closer to where it all began,
Infinitely further away from the celebration.
Barely visible differences between the two beliefs
bearing no weight in the boy's mind,
As they are made so abundantly obvious at this time of
year.
All the jubilation elsewhere,
Mirrored here only, by indifference.
Yet, this is home.

Matthew Spencer

Lost. Found.

4:15; inspiration remains a mystery,
Unreachable to me like a secret, locked deep inside that
impenetrable box of yours.
A glimmer of it, a shooting star across the endless night
sky
Is all I ask? But no, not even a trace. So then it's settled.
I remain a name, an innate shell.
I sit here, pen hovering above a blank page, basking in
my worthlessness.
Punch the iron walls, it does no help. My cage is sealed.
Beneath the now oh so important superficial lies
nothing, I am no-one to you.
You're not listening to one word of this. Are you?
The quiet pitter patter of footsteps drowning my mind,
A reminder that life goes on outside this pathetic pursuit
of grandeur,
So it yet remains a delusion, but it's my delusion.
Nothing can take that away from me,
Not even you.
Perhaps I am infected, like countless others.
This lust for recognition burns within me like an infinite
flame. Taunting me.
You think you're so good, sitting there upon your
throne,
Forged from the remnants of other ambitions forgotten,
dreams crushed.
My disease spreads, the throw-away scrawls of so many
others litter our streets.
Their fate is mine, to be forgotten. Lost.
You're feeling pretty happy with yourself right now
aren't you?
Oh to be like you: Remembered. Found.
I hope you're sitting pretty, enjoy it while it lasts.
For all things must end.

A star burns bright in the sky as you read this, our all-
giving sun, revelling in its golden age.
Even the heavens will fall however, so enjoy your
fifteen minutes.
For one day your fire will die. You will be lost, nothing
but dust and gas in an endless abyss.
Your silence breaks, your newfound inexistence is
flooded with a single sound.
Laughter, and it is mine.

Matthew Spencer

Hopes and Dreams

I would like to feel the wind rushing under my arm as I
fly,

And being so that no one can see me,
Feeling weightless with nothing to listen to but my own
heart.

I would like to remember being a baby, so small with no
worries.

I would like to enter the world of unknown

To enter the worlds of Heaven and Hell

And feel the stormy sky beneath my feet.

To toss and turn along with the hundreds of leaves.

To hear the buzzing bee talking to its young and
teaching them the way of life.

To touch upon the future but to listen to the past.

To have the power to see the world through other
people's eyes.

Andrew Shortall

Actors

It's hard to watch how everybody pretends
But broken people nobody here ever mends
In the end we're just all the same
Made of deep scars, and going insane
We try hard to be different from the rest
It's simply a contest; who can be the best?

Tired of faking and saying we're fine
Feeling bitter and running out of time
Dreams we bury beneath reality
And choose to ignore the brutality
We leave our daydreams far behind closed doors
Eventually we're left, damaged pieces on the floor

Feel hurt when someone else wins
But try to hide underneath our thick skins
We know we're all the same
And putting on this silly show
Is all in vain

Ruhi Singh

My Ethnic Home

Despite all the things that you may see,
Punjab is the place that is home to me.

Coloured slums Rainbow landscapes.

Soiled rivers So dull, daylight is sucked away.

Nearby Things of golden beauty.

Aromas Oriental wafts of pleasure.

Crowds Mad waves of applause.

Sun So fiery diamonds perspire.

Traffic Constant, blaring horns.

Despite all the things that you may see,
Punjab is the place that is home to me.

Hansaj Singh

The Calling

Call it fair? When those with little have less,
Our wreaths hanging in selfish vulgarity.

Call it just? How we partake in hearty feast,
Green as the holly we show not charity.

Call it tradition? The definition long lost,
In the fictitious snow we tread so gently.

Call it immaterial? Yet blind from the cost,
By fire light worth is slowly melting.

A time declining in its meaning,
Yet still we write 'with season's greetings'.

Call it sweet? Like scented pine,
But with bitter taste is all reunion.

Call it shrewd? You act unwise,
No route to purest Jerusalem.

Call it Angelic? You think not on He,
His blood ever taints our precious gold.

Call it content? Splendid nativity,
Once Infinite spirit, numbed by the cold.

A hollow Carol, Festive Rebel,
Please restore kind purpose this Noel.

Grace Taylorson-Smith Pritchard

Mood poem

I geT so **ANGRY** at My **MUM**

I wanT to **SMASH** a **drum**

ShE tries to **calm** me d

O
W
N

In The backgroun D my little **SISTER** is *mocking Me*
In the end I Give up anD go for a **SwiM** in **The** Dee.

Tom Thelwall-Jones

Tsunami

It was coming.
They would try to stop it but they would die without
even a fight.
It would crush the country and take a deathly toll on its
victims.
Thrashing,
Running,
Dancing it would come
and then the destruction, the chaos, the terror and sheer
power.
The terrible beauty of its deadly arcing peak.
Horror,
as its foaming cavalry of breakers advance toward the
shore, defenceless,
without a chance of survival.
The endless second when the whole world comes
crashing down.

Daniel Warr

A Windy Day

The wind is like the sound of a tormented flute,
Whistling ferociously in my ears,
Screaming,
Shrieking,
Crying,
Hooting.

The wind floods the cold, grey city,
And laughs menacingly, as it blows trees and plants to
the ground.
It watches people, as they flee desperately to safety.

It leaves a trail of destruction throughout the crowded
city.
The wind blows harder as it sees rain approaching,
So hard that the rain is almost falling horizontally.

Umbrellas can be seen flying across the city,
Ones that belong to poor, helpless citizens.
The wind terrorizes children,
Making them cry, and long for the comfort of their
home.

But today, the wind is my friend,
For I am flying a kite!

James Wynn-Edwards

Appendix: Haikus

~

For Japan

The ocean was calm.
Then the earthquake sought revenge.
Pacific no more.

Help the Japanese
rebuild their sandcastle lives
grain by little grain.

The ocean roared huge;
The waves came crashing lashing smashing...
Fukushima sleeps.

Deathly and deadly,
a crazed ocean waved goodbye
to nuclear power.

The waters entered
from Tohoku to haiku,
both lands and stanzas.

We worry too much
about trivial events
when others are dead.

Duncan Ritchie

Their lives are destroyed
But, united together,
They are fighting on.

Jack Peake

Christmas

Snow flakes are falling
Cold nipping children's noses
Walking to the church

Henry McEntyre

Icicles sparkle,
Trees have a mantle of snow,
The countryside sleeps.

Becky Perkins

Robins in the snow
Swooping up, and swooping down
Trying to fight frost

Stephanie Christenson

White snow is gleaming
Shining icicles shimmer
In the Christmas night.

Rhiannon Jackson

Dad's drunk on eggnog
Where's his Christmas pudding gone?
There go his legs – ouch.

Elliot King

Dashing through the snow,
On a one-horse open sleigh,
Oh! – That's odd...it fits!

Simon Parker

Carrot for my nose.
Three snow balls for my body.
Black pebbles for eyes.

Ben Samarji

I don't like Christmas:
It means writing winter poems;
Kids just want presents

Jessica Jones

Plummeting downhill,
Where are the brakes on this thing
I'm sure I'll be – CRASH!

Keir Nathan

Christmas dinner now,
A big turkey, one problem:
Vegetarian.

Natalie Metcalf



*“May your poems and your
poets prosper”*

Simon Armitage