

BETJEMAN
POETRY
PRIZE
2015



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The trustees of the Betjeman Poetry Prize thank the Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation, the Getty Foundation, Eurostar and Highspeed1 for their generous support of the 2015 competition.

Welcome to the Betjeman Poetry Prize anthology, in which we celebrate fifty young poets from across the British Isles, all of whom made it onto the long list of this year's competition. Thank you to all the individual entrants, and to the teachers who sent in their pupils' poems. Thank you also to Lauren Child and AF Harrold for their thoughtful and spirited judging.

Founded on John Betjeman's centenary in 2006 by the poet's daughter Candida Lycett Green and Andrew Motion, the competition invites entries from 10-13 year olds on the theme of 'place'. Here in St Pancras, under the bower of the great blue railway shed, we are reminded of Betjeman's achievement in saving this station from demolition in the 1960s. Place is sacred, place has power, and this competition allows children to dwell in their minds on places that affect them, places that upset them, places they have been or places they only dream about.

The Betjeman Poetry Prize aims to foster creativity and confidence in young people, engaging as many children as possible in the reading and writing of poetry, whilst providing a platform for new voices from the next generation.

We hope you enjoy these poems.

*Imogen Lycett Green (Chair, Betjeman Poetry Prize)
St Pancras Station, National Poetry Day,
Thursday 8th October 2015*

'I feel very lucky to have been asked to judge this competition. Reading these poems over and over, searching out their meanings, feeling rhythms in the lines, seeing the images conjured, feeling the personality of the writer, was a genuine pleasure. Time and again I was struck by the inventiveness, originality and beauty of the verse. I have heard many wonderful new voices. There are writers of great promise here.'

Lauren Child

'I have spent 25 years writing poetry, and even longer reading it, and one of the things I find most wonderful about poetry is that poets are still always finding new ways of looking at the world. In helping to judge this competition I had great pleasure in reading the poems, almost all of which had something in them that was new or surprising, startling or funny, moving or arresting. The poems we eventually settled on as winners offer a wide range of styles, but all succeed in saying something fresh, freshly. Good jobs, well done.'

AF Harrold

🏆 **WINNER** 🏆

Home Is Where The Heart Is

I never thought
 My home would be a memory,
 An echo of a thought,
 An imprint of
 Some childhood experience.
 I never thought
 That vivid picture
 Of the dirty vinyl floor,
 The fluffy white rug,
 The blue door,
 Would fade away,
 Replaced by some new house,
 A house with blue carpets
 And white doors.
 I never thought
 My home,
 The postage-stamp garden,
 The, thick, smiling plants
 And my plastic watering can,
 Would become mere thoughts,
 Floating in forgotten regions of my mind.
 I never thought
 The little house
 With rusty hinges
 And broken cupboards,

Would become a fantasy,
 A lost dream of mine.
 I never thought,
 my love,
 My heart's dwelling,
 The place I always longed to be,
 The door I always passed into comfort,
 The house I always felt at home,
 I would never tread again.
 Some say,
 Moving house.
 I say,
 Leaving Home.

Lucy Arnold-Forster (13)

🌸 RUNNERS UP 🌸

Morocco

Squint through murky, sun-burnt air -
 Yells of a foreign language I can almost understand.
 Hunched tunnels, a sky high market.
 Bubbling vats of every colour
 stink of leather, felt, blood.
 Men swing rabbits by the ears, casual as you please
 and jackal dogs guard the doorway
 to a whole labyrinth, baking under the sun.
 Between burning canopy and trampled dirt
 hundreds of cut-glass lanterns,
 bright colours cast on muck.
 Sloping mountains of
 bursting watermelons
 ripe mangoes
 iced cherries
 are pestered by fat bluebottles.
 Clay walls are filled with untarnished, intricate locks
 like secret doors.
 A cobra sways, like it's caught in a breeze.
 And a blonde haired school girl is praised like an angel.
 Feared like a ghost.

Madeline Flaherty (12)

World War II Bomb Shelter

The lighting is dim,
 The atmosphere is dead,
 Soil falls through cracks in the ceiling
 And onto my trembling head.

Thud, thud, thud,
 Explosions all around,
 The city I know and love,
 Turned to a hole in the ground.

The dry aroma
 Blocking my nose,
 It is hot and sweaty,
 And everyone knows.

The shock and panic
 Is a lot to handle,
 The cramped little place
 Is lit by a candle.

I can taste the mud
 Filling the air,
 People are scared,
 Everywhere.

Remi Obasa (13)

🕌 **HIGHLY COMMENDED** 🕌

Columbian Conversation

Okay, so you know the big mango tree that never go ripe
and under that tree, there is an old house where people
say a hundred children live?

Uh-huh?

Well, you know that little dog, tied to a gate who never
stops barking till the sun go down?

Uh-huh?

Well , you know that smell you get when your eyes start to
water and you start to drool –

Yeah, I know that smell –

Well, if you follow that smell, right up that garden path
where the star fruit grow and the crickets hum-

Yeah, I think I know that place –

Well, when you see that house with the white paint peeling
and when you open that stiff old door-

Uh-huh? Uh-huh?

When you open that door, and you are rugby tackled to the
floor with hugs and your cheeks are red with pinching-

Uh- huh?

That's home.

Aisha Mango Borja (13)

Night Places

The night rolls down treacherous mountains,
Plunders through rivers,
Circles around fields,
Comforts, and is still.

The night listens to owl hoots,
Car horns,
Footsteps,
Delays and thinks.

The night is dark,
Cold,
Warm,
Opposite and alike.

The night speaks to trees,
Whispers to animals,
Deepens my sleep,
A place,
Where anything can happen.

Henrietta Jinivizian (10)

Oh! And What Inspired You To Write It?

This poem was written with the breath of an African jungle's lungs. Where the circle of life is sometimes a squashed oval, but slowly shifting itself out to rights. A place where slow words whisper life into the strife of God's creatures. As they lie, unaware of the small girl, hidden in the recesses of drip tips and lianas, capturing their pain with a cheap notebook and pen. scribbling letters onto a piece of the tree they used to live in.

This poem was written in the hidden alleys of a cramped neighbourhood in South London. The crust of the UK bread, that you pull apart and toss aside – you feed this borough to the pigeons,

let them feast on its piles of flats and chipped street signs. Written for the boy in the grey hoodie; the words 'drop-out' scribbled in blue Sharpie across his forehead. Unaware as the small girl with the dashiki records his hurt and lets God blot it all out.

Ink doesn't last forever, you know.

This poem was written on the back of a napkin, in a diner as greasy as the stringy strands on the waitress's head. As the wrinkled stools yawn their silvery mouths and the aching lights shut their eyes, she crinkles out, a back so weary from holding debt, the small girl can't help but exclaim, "It'll be okay."

Into the crippled ears of an off-white page.

This poem was written

in the white walled room
of a somewhat quiet teenager.
No school friends up here
for fear they'd laugh at pink cupboards and
stick-on flowers.
no school friends up here for fear
of them glancing over a mosquito-bitten
shoulder, seeing the poem
being written
At 2 and a half am, where the
silence is so thick and
raw, she almost
reached out to stuff it in her
pocket, to chew on later.
Where handwriting doesn't matter and indents file
their way in like soldiers of an army – and where the
only company is a fragment
of Heaven, written on the palms of my hands.

This poem was written
with the ink of the blood
given to me by God,
on the spare piece of paper
we all have, folded,
inside a zealous heart.

For isn't that the place where all words start?

Opefoluwa Sarah Adegbite (13)

SHORT LISTED

His Place

In a raggedy corner of the patchwork room,
In front of the chocolate box cabinet.
His place.
More special than the sun to the sky,
Than the moon to the night.

The top, covered with careful scratches from a thousand
lifetimes,
And bottles of liquor innocent hands would never dare to
touch.
And photographs.
Capturing the loudest moments and making them quiet.

As he hid behind the custard bowl sofa,
Next to the finger painted piano,
He gently pushed the key,
Into the enameled lock,
Re-entering ended lives.

Silver keys in silent drawers,
Unlocking doorways to hidden pasts,
And unyielding cameras,
With ignorant film,
Denying to ever be found out.

The smell,
Pure beauty,
Not caring about the laws of nature,
Taking him to a place,
Not of gold and diamonds,
Nor endless richness,
But of love.
For the beauty of love,
Was never ending,
Just like his love,
For the smell,
For the feeling,
For,
His place.

Indra Carigiet (11)

The Box

Some find it hard,
To say what they feel,
Keep their thoughts in a box,
And make sure it's sealed,

No one gets in,
 Nothing gets out,
 That way it's safe,
 Nothing to talk about,

There are thoughts in there,
 Though none of them said,
 You may like to preach yours,
 I'll keep mine instead,

No one can judge,
 if nobody knows,
 But I think my box,
 Is about to explode.

Ellie Pierpoint (13)

That's My Place

Came home from school,
 Tired and hungry.
 All I want to do,
 Is watch TV.
 Sitting in my chair,
 Is the place I want to be.

Get the TV turned on,
 I turn around,
 Because all I want to do,
 Is sit in my chair.

Hey...wait!
 Who's that in my place?

Cat, scat!
 That's my place.
 Shoo, boo!
 Get out of the way, you!
 That's my chair,
 And you're not being fair.

Cat won't move!

I go into the kitchen,
 Mummy is fixing dinner.
 All I want to do,
 Is get her attention.
 But she tells me...
 OUT! THIS IS MY PLACE!

I go into the garage,
 Daddy is taking his tools out.
 All I want to do,
 Is get his attention.
 But he tells me...
 OUT! THIS IS A DANGEROUS PLACE!

I go into my big brother's room,
 Brother is listening to music.
 All I want to do,
 Is get his attention.
 But he tells me...

OUT! THIS IS MY PRIVATE PLACE!

Cat still hasn't moved!

Dinner time.

No TV,

Or no chair,

Which is the place,

I want to be.

Oh well I'm hungry, there's
always later.

Dinner is finished. Yippee!

TV! The place I want to be,

The chair!

Cat is having dinner.

Hey... wait!

Who's that in my place?

Oh, no this is bad,

It's Dad.

And he won't move,

Oh well.

I'm tired, I'll go to bed.

That is my place, where I need to be.

Where is the cat?

I go into my bedroom,

Where all my toys are.

I don't want them,

I just need sleep in my own place.

Hey... wait! who's that in my place?

CAT, SCAT!

Elena Kavoura (10)

Bleak House

There was a town.

There was a street.

There was a house.

From the house came laughter,

happiness,

but there was also sadness and hatred

for all except themselves.

Maybe a girl crying,

upstairs, in a room,

perhaps they had beaten her,

beaten her with sticks.

And now they were drinking,

a stout ale,

drinking, drowning.

They were too drunk,

no care in the world.

One of them shouted,

shouted a suggestion,

FIGHT.

Finn Dineen (10)

The Bookshop

Scaffold saplings spring
 from the dusty pavement
 dappled grey with discarded gum.
 An open door spells a silent invitation.
 I enter a world of exploration.
 Stories slumber
 in the darkness between pages.

Spines stretch, covers flex,
 Bright new titles beckon.
 Silent echoes of past heroes
 promising adventure, invisible voices
 murmuring, whispering countless choices.
 Phrases float free in
 a printed paper universe.

Sleeping stars waiting
 for a stage or a dream.
 Immerse yourself in rhyming verse.
 For a few pounds ninety-nine you travel through time.
 What will you do? Play time? Find time? Choose or lose
 time?

Pirate or sleuth.
 Discover some treasure or truth.

Abigail Drennan (12)

Durban Waters

I have felt the presence of many,
 Felt the warmth of those dead, and
 The pain from those alive.
 My color is never the same.
 I have many names.
 I have lived for many years,
 And will live on
 For many years to come.
 There are many myths about me.
 I am the reason you are here, for without me,
 You would be part of me.
 No one has experienced the real force of me,
 For I have taken the largest of ships and
 The kindest of people.
 Yet, you use me as a source of life, hope,
 But what would happen if I were to dry up and die,
 What would you do then?
 All your valleys and rivers run to me.
 I roll across your coasts, against your jagged rocks.
 My taste is bitter, my touch can be cold
 I am worth no gold.
 You see me,
 Yet I feel you,
 For I am
 The Almighty Sea.

Tara Stewart (13)

Even Though School Is...

Even though school is early alarms,
 A lurching stomach, bus fares,
 A journey of giggles, monotonous voices,
 Rigid seating plans, endless rules,
 the unbreakable code of Algebra, precarious stools,
 A THUMPING heart when she PICKS ME,
 Gold, Silver, Platinum... and Mercury –
 I wouldn't change it for the world.

Even though school is boring P.E.
 Sweaty bodies, stinging feet,
 Daydreaming as colours blend and smear,
 Abstract, Picasso, Van Gogh with half an ear,
 Gruelling grid references, the subordinate clause,
 Langweilig languages with Frau Von-Fragstein,
 Genius physics, but ich bin keine Einstein –
 I wouldn't change it for the world!

Even though school is Facebook fails,
 Instant Instagram, party pics, confiscated gadgets,
 Piano recitals, expected grades, you've got mail,
 Friendships on, friendships off,
 Snail's pace lunch queues, litter pick,
 A Hindu temple, or chapel, or mosque,
 The cruel, reassuring prospect of yet more to come –
 I wouldn't change it for the world.

Kashfiah Faruque Chowdhury (12)

The Life Of Ashtead Common

Ashtead Common gets hit with Spring,
 The blossom-filled trees shimmer and shake,
 As they enjoy the dance when the bells ring.
 The ducks have a quack-off at the lake.
 Ashtead Common is born at Spring.

Ashtead Common gets the Summer treat.
 Green, bushy branches wave to passers-by.
 The winding path gets a message of feet.
 Flowers get the sweet touch from a butterfly.
 Ashtead Common gets the young Summer treat.

Ashtead Common evolves into Autumn leaves.
 On the twisted branches, crows call.
 Trees quiver their knobbly knees.
 The cinnamon and blood leaves start to fall.
 Ashtead Common has those elderly Autumn leaves.

Ashtead Common limps into the Winter snow.
 The ferocious sleet tumbles off the bare trees.
 The lonely bushes start out into the darkness, waiting for
 tomorrow.
 There's no sound, no withered leaves.
 Ashtead Common's death is in the Winter snow.

Kalila Nunns (11)

tastes the taste of loud barks,
 woofs the sound of loyalty,
 shows the sight of the noble kind.
 For there's always a puzzle piece to fit.

This extraordinary place,
 flares 12 O'clock of all nerves.
 This unique place
 has a loud rhythm of bark,
 a jumpy sense of excitement,
 a curious swarm of questions,
 mows a lawn full of chase,
 throws a ball to excite.
 For there's always a puzzle piece to fit.

This memorable place,
 has an enclosure to aback the abyss of bark.
 This beautiful place
 sought a home for its living contents,
 howls a song of "who's this?"
 spills it's furry companions to a new life.
 Charges, only for disrespect,
 voluntary work for owners of big hearts.
 For there's always a puzzle piece to fit.

This big-hearted place
 holds an extraordinary amount of coloured leashes.
 This heart-breaking place
 grasps on to loyal hairy hearts
 and holds many soul changing stories,

to make dreams form correctly.
 For there's always a puzzle piece to fit.

This bright place,
 is its own sweet continent.
 This loud rhythm-full place
 has a slow beat of kindness,
 won't ever give up to the trouble,
 plants new lives everyday.
 For no matter what bad pattern or legacy,
 There's always a puzzle piece to fit.

Niamh McCarthy (10)

LONG LISTED

Being Blind Is Part Of Me

Mum is standing next to me.
 Describing all that she can see.
 The reddy-orange sun set
 The deep blue rolling sea
 The sailboats in the distance.
 All in front of me.

The air is salty fresh.
 The rocks feel rough and worn.
 The wind against my face.
 The dew upon the lawn.

Mum is standing next to me.
 Describing all that she can see.
 The flowers in the meadow.
 The shells on yellow sand
 The silhouettes of sea gulls.
 Beauty all around.

I hear birds in conversation.
 I leave footprints in the sand.
 I am stood here with my family.
 Stood here hand in hand.

We're looking at the view.

The view I cannot see.
 But I don't wish to see it.
 Being blind is part of me.

Emily Wright (12)

My Dinner Table

The table of thoughts.
 The table of truth.
 The table of warmth.
 The table where hunger
 Is no longer a problem.
 Strong, sturdy and reliable.
 Something this table and I both like to be.

A whiff of the parsnips,
 Will send you flying.
 A taste of the horseradish,
 Will leave you crying.
 The sight of the turkey,
 Will make your tummy rumble.
 The beep of the timer,
 Will get you running.
 A provider, a supporter
 Something we both like to be.

Lots of secrets are told at the table.
 Promises are made as well.

My mother's voice, so strong, so stable,
 Calling me down to the table.
 Time to share, time to care.
 Time to chat, time to get fat.
 Time to discuss, time to make a fuss.

Our secrets.
 Our thoughts.
 Our table.

Rina Dosanjih (13)

Cherwell Garden

The garden is a jukebox of memories.
 The swing ball is a damsel in distress
 A listless object with no purpose now there are no purvey-
 ors of it
 A lulling mantra forms as it swings
 Right
 Left
 Right
 Left

Weapons of mass destruction
 Strewn about haphazardly
 Abandoned side-kicks with their grips torn
 Paddles with green invaders poking through their grids

And a broken hula hoop shattered into halves,
 Its two arcs like snow-covered rainbow
 Submerged in the undergrowth.

If golden mercury darts across the horizon
 And comes to rest upon dank towels, that are buffeted by a
 melancholic breeze
 We tear the heads off the tendrils of grass
 Emerald confetti
 Drifting down,
 Settling upon the parched terrain.

If inky blackness pollutes the blue
 We'll huddle in warm havens
 Staring through the raindrop races
 Mourning at the gravestones of our once-loved trinkets
 Wondering if in the morning
 The marks of the past night's storm
 Will leave a scar of raindrops
 Along the battered primroses.

The sun is a beacon-
 It promises us
 Of future apple-smashing tournaments
 The brick wall that encases us
 Splattered with the sweet blood of our demolished con-
 quests.

Of future contemplative sessions
 Star-gazing or sun-chasing

Searching for answers amidst the ethereal cotton contours.

Of future tennis matches held on a roof that disapproves
 Canary-bright balls thud against sturdy glass-
 Only to evade the menacing gutter
 And rebound back to Earth
 A beacon of brightness that replaces the sun.

Balancing on a tightrope
 Trapped on the hinge of a door
 Feet straddling the threshold
 A single step disturbs our constellation.

Jemima Chen (12)

The Library

The frosted-smoke windows impose
 On a flippant wind, which whistles as it goes
 Whilst behind, books line walls in solid rows.

As if they were sturdy soldiers in ranks,
 Or grim soldiers marching slowly in the flanks
 Or, floating on a sea of knowledge, a boat's planks.

One of them is a diary, the author long dead,
 Who was filled with dying hope and a painful dread
 As he wandered off into a blizzard with a sombre tread.

Another the tale of the holy creation,
 Of the ultimate goal being next life elation,
 Of mankind's duty and obligation

The pages flick back into a past thick and obscured,
 Of lands long lost and empires long conquered,
 The lover, the killer, the victim, the fool,
 All contained in a portable time capsule.

Lucas Ferrar (12)

Path of Decisions

The wreath of flowers round my head,
 Through the trees I slowly tread,
 Among the mystic myth I dread,
 The cold enclosed around me.

The knotted trees, they twist and turn,
 The faith of those I have to learn
 The memories of the past times burn
 In the bark beside me.

The mist that rolls, it sparkles white,
 Alluring, in the dark of night
 But its magic bends a person's rights,
 I turn, put it behind me.

The enchanted evil of the song

The smoke of destiny forlorn,
The bitter taste of truth along
My frozen, cursed path.

The ring of violets round my head,
A flash of gold, a splash of red,
Glory is a man's deathbed,
The frost curls round my feet.

The dying leaves above my head,
Rustle like whispers of the dead,
All their secrets were mislead,
Legend wafts around me.

The wheel of fortune turns its tide,
I'll have to choose who's on my side,
Those for truth and those who lied,
I walk into the darkness.

Linnet Drury (12)

I Know Nothing of New York

It hollers at me.
That country I now know nothing about.
The friendly firefly lights that hovered
around my head.
The cut out, black silhouette of buildings that were stuck
to the faint horizon of twilight.

The ridged corners
of glittering rectangles that pinched my skin.

The sweet cola syrup,
that oozed through my nose, that
clashed with the cloying scent of candy.
I know nothing about the smell from the hot dog stands
that bitterly meandered around the
sour stench of pollution.

The tyres that cry out in pain and the
scream of the horn that shaved the edges of my ears.
The chatter that swallowed the electric buzz
of the lights that surrounded the abundant population.
The malevolent laughter that echoed off
the many windows and walls that spilled cold water down
my spine.

I know nothing about the rough edges to
the brick walls that shaved and scraped my elbows.
Of the feel the sidewalk that scuppered the corners
of my shoes.
All the moist polluted air that gripped and clawed my skin.
I could feel all the faint reach of sunshine that
braided my hair.

The bitter sweet taste of smoke that used to
fill my mouth from all fags that lurk around.
I know nothing of the ripe taste of juice and sweat
that rained onto my tongue.

The tangy flavor of the petrol that loitered
within the cars' engines, waiting to prowl out and
fling itself into the air like a hawk leaping for prey.

I still know nothing,
these senses are indifferent to me
like a frog to flight,
or a bird to water,
I know nothing of the sensation of them,

I now know nothing of New York.

Tabitha Elmhirst (13)

Mononoke Hime no Mori

Your catharsis comes to a soundtrack of
timpani. The trees
catalyse your riverbed memory, reteaching you
the organs of the forest:

pan flute cedars that refuse to remember you,
abyss dropping beneath their roots
(trip once trip again -)

the canopy is a maze; cicadas weigh stagnant
on your throat. Branches are
swift betrayers if you let insignificance

invade -

The earth is a
savage mother. Survival is in her
nature. "Sacrifice" is a medicine she knows well -

When you bleed, you bleed green.

Eve Freeman (13)

In a World of My Own

Two boys hearts are beating for me,
I'm in a world of my own.
The wind is calling for me
the pollen is making me sneeze,
I feel sore and numb, I know who I want.
But when he comes I'm scared
to look at him,

I'm in a world of my own,

the breeze is sweet and full of joy,
my heart is bleeding out.
I feel hollow and worried
love is poison,
love is deadly.
I don't know what I'm doing
my mind is spinning,

I'm in a world of my own.

My heart is wooden
 something is missing,
 I keep stuttering
 the sun is melting my skin.
 I feel my blood circling like a race track,
 I feel their eyes watching me,
 but my mind is somewhere else.
 Let him in, but don't let him go,
 my life is a blur love has destroyed me.

I'm in a world of my own,

no one understands me
 my feelings are like puzzles,
 I'm in a world of my own.
 I'm crazy in love mend me now,
 and take this curse away from me,
 or take me underground.

I'm in a world of my own,

take me under your wing
 and make me feel happiness again,
 as I'm in a world of my own.

Jade Courteney (13)

Golden Orange in the Eyes of Brothers

It's the place
 with the thick, tangible
 air, sandwiched
 between prickly grass and
 a blazing sky.

It's the place
 with the flickering flames –
 golden orange,
 we can see, in the
 eyes of brothers.

It's the place
 with the italic letters
 huddled together
 for warmth;
 creates vague meaning.

It's the place
 where autumn leaves
 never seem to cease
 to flutter down; comforts
 crumbling soil.

It's the place
 where one contemplates
 life.
 Thoughtful irises scan.

McDonald's burger in hand.

It's the place
 where loose ends are
 tied. Hearts stitched up
 with silky thread and
 tears trodden under defiant soles.

It's that place
 down the road.
 next to the tangy newsagent's
 and the
 bustling fruit market.

yes
 It's that place

The place
 where you feel yourself

falling
 gently

into God's arms.

Opefoluwa Sarah Adegbite (13)

London Streets

Hidden down small alleys,
 Passing down the morning sun,
 Away from the smog and fog of the waking traffic coughs,
 Is the call of the market.

Hustling stalls and shops churn into life,
 As the trains, teeming with people, thunder like cheetahs
 across
 the rails,
 Vans unload in a coffee-soaked daze,
 After sleepless nights to bring in the trades.

Soon the flocks of suits and scarfs come tumbling in,
 The smell of food, wonderful hot food, drags them in with
 a scented finger,
 Samples are thrust in front of you and a misfit choir of
 stall-owners scream prices.

By evening, only a few people linger with hot heads and
 tired legs,
 Final trains, like ghosts, swoop by,
 Street lights are the only faint glow over the empty space.

This isn't a secret place only I know,
 But to me, Camden Market is my second home.

Daniel Hopper (13)

Yorkshire Mountains

Winter has come,
 Everything is white, cold yet bright,
 Wind whispers to the trees as they spectate their visitors,
 The trees chuckle at the wind's remarks.

Spring has come,
 The mountains stand up tall,
 Trees are blessed to have their leaves again,
 Mountains watch the moors like a mother.

Summer has come,
 Hawks fly above searching for food,
 Circling the sky like a merry-go-round,
 The sun reveals the beauty of the moors.

Autumn has come,
 Leaves scatter the scar.

Hugo Wernham (11)

New And Old

Wild rose and lilac,
 Bee's balm and daisy,
 The girls smile chases,
 The winter away.
 Bluebell and violet,

Foxglove and iris,
 Watch where she treads,
 Then watch the grass sway.
 Wherever her feet pass,
 White flowers part the grass,
 Whilst whiling the winters away.

Daffodil and tulip,
 Sweet grass and cowslip,
 My heart melts away as,
 Her sweet voice parts the sound.
 Buttercup and heather,
 Chamomile and thistle,
 Her pure eyes burn,
 The darkness away.
 Wherever her feet pass,
 White flowers part the grass,
 Whilst whiling the winters away.

Blossom and lily,
 Sunflower and fuchsia.
 As light as a feather her hands seem to gather,
 The words i was going to say.
 Rosemary and petunia,
 Lavender and sweet-pea,
 My body is behind me,
 Leaving your spirit to guide the way.
 Wherever her feet pass,
 White flowers part the grass,
 Whilst whiling the winters away.

Snowdrop and orchid,
 Primrose and nightshade,
 Your beauty contents me,
 At the end of my days.
 Poppy and bindweed,
 Hibiscus and pansy,
 Having you with me,
 Dancing away the pain.
 Wherever her feet pass,
 White flowers part the grass,
 Whilst whiling the winters away...

Freya Dover (12)

Write in the Window

I spend my days
 Sitting by my window
 Wondering when the sun
 will sleep,
 Writing my own happiness
 on the dented wood,
 Could I jump off the edge
 and fly? Or die?
 Then my ghost lives
 in the window and writes
 my story.

April Camber (11)

I am Ossett

I am the 127 double-decker bus which looks over the
 town.

I am the bustling Friday market, stalls overflowing with
 goods.

I am the sour lemonade, sold outside the sweet shop, quid
 for a cup.

I am the clock, staring over the town, from time to time it
 chimes.

I am the smell of smoke coming from many barbeques
 in the heat of summer; I am the orange and green lights
 coming from a Grandmother's house, the flickering flames
 from a fire in winter.

I am the schools with over-crowded classrooms and in-
 finite waiting lists. I am the pupils with pristine uniforms,
 travelling to school where fun can be found.

I am the rain which imprisons the 'young-uns' inside; I am
 the sun that releases them out into golden evenings.

I am the black bricks of the buildings, reminding us of a
 smoggy Victorian past.

I am the bridge from which incessant trains poured, with

smoke cascading from the funnels. I am also the bricks that
block up the bridge, the tracks gone, the trains forgotten
but by few.

I am the view inhaled from privileged parts of town.

I am Ossett.

Matthew Roe (12)

Heights of Solitude

How I embrace those wistful days
Upon the mountain top,
Where silence rests its finger
But sound gives not a trace.

Where rolling mists pass by
With an idle stride and a mellow pace,
Engulfing the rocky crags,
In a hazy mystical shroud.

The cry of a gull will echo
Through the void of loneliness,
A new chapter of pure bleakness
Across the empty peaks.

Emily Warner (12)

Apple

I sit on my tawny tree,
While the family sits happily,
While the pears and plums fall,
Autumn will always stand tall.

The far-fetched glimmer of the summer's sun
Is slowly maturing as autumn has begun.
The ripening fruit has been crushed to the core,
For autumn always wants more.

The leaves sit on the coated plain,
While all there is to see is rain,
The sun, the trees, the birds, the life.
Cut away with autumn's knife.

Freddie Nicholson (12)

Happy Thoughts

It's like drowning
Except everyone else is breathing
My thoughts are muddled
I can't stop grieving

My nights consist of crying
The tears make my pillow soaked
Inside I feel like dying

Falling asleep and never wanting to wake up

My special place is in my mind
 Different to all of yours
 When I'm down I try to find
 My happy thoughts

Although there are not many
 My brother, my mum, my dad
 Are worth one million pennies
 At least they care, but they are alone

For no one else seems to care
 That my arms are full of cuts
 This world is so unfair
 No one understands, no one, no one

Laying all alone
 In my happy place
 This is the night I moan
 Goodbye, heaven is calling

I stand on my chair thinking
 With the rope around my neck
 My happy thoughts are sinking, sinking
 I'm about to take a step

My mum comes running
 In the room
 'Darling, I love you. Stop!'

I burst into tears and look at the moon
 Thinking I almost died, almost

Two months later I'm still alive
 My happy thoughts are reality now
 I have friends that stand by my side
 I still have haunting dreams, creeping up on me

Everyone has their happy place
 Some peoples are inside
 In their mind, lost in their thoughts
 Depression hits like a truck, I got through it with luck.

Alexia Georgakakos (12)

Yorkshire, Oh Yorkshire

Yorkshire, Oh Yorkshire,
 What sights you behold,
 Moors and mountains,
 Create stories to be told.

Yorkshire, oh Yorkshire,
 The coastlines you have,
 Beautiful landscapes,
 And the accent you 'ave.

Yorkshire, oh Yorkshire,
 The weather is bad,

One extreme or the other,
It makes us all mad!

Yorkshire, oh Yorkshire,
Food that is fab,
Fish and chips,
With salt, just a tad.

Yorkshire, oh Yorkshire,
Even though I moan,
Yorkshire, oh Yorkshire,
You are my home!

James Stafford (11)

The Asylum

My nostrils fill with an acrid smell,
Surrounded by psychos from the fiery pits of hell,
The sounds of screams echo around the concrete box,
A mental prison built into the rocks.

The sound of sirens far away,
Harsh guards in the asylum keep the prisoners at bay,
Wearing white jumpsuits whilst cuffed to the floor,
The prisoners have a temper hotter than the earth's core.

They're fed dirt with a side of mash,
The cooks find scraps out of the trash,

They spit in the food,
They have no manners, they are just plain rude.

They scraped the patients from the bottom of the jar,
Some of them are from Russia and others from afar,
Discipline is tough; they have a strict set of rules,
Most of the prisoners aren't the smartest tools.

The asylum's location is undisclosed,
Rotting corpses lie buried, decomposed
Completely isolated, with no chance of release,
Whilst at the asylum, you'll never find peace.

Jack Ford (13)

Why Was School Invented?

Why was school invented?
To bring us misery and sorrow?
To forget your pen and pencil?
You'll have to wing it and borrow.

When you're in that dark, damp place,
Your heart just wants to whine,
So you turn around and chat, chat, chat,
Now you're coming back at lunchtime.

Next lesson your searching through your book,
For the homework it doesn't contain,

Oh joy! Another after school,
You're coming back here again.

In English you look at the question,
And decide to put up your hand,
"I didn't get it Sir, I'm rather confused",
"I'll explain and soon you'll understand".

Now I know why school was invented,
Not to bring us misery and sorrow,
Not to forget your pen and pencil,
But to learn and to get a better tomorrow.

Henrietta Rodriguez (12)

Balance

I see us
Standing on tarmac tyres
The ones that drank
When the sky wept cold.
Obedient shadows
Haunting
Our backs.

I see me
My black and white clothing
My pink size 13 trainers
The same friend

Next to me
The one
Who now swears
And bullies.

I see Mrs Clark
From two years ago
Standing
Smiling
Among delicate green leaves
And tittering daisies

The ones that coloured the
Dull
Playtime Playground

I see us
Raised on different platforms
That held our endless tilting days.

Eva Brand (12)

The Forest

Dark and black, teeming with life;
Stands this thing, dying by knife;
When the huntsman fires his shots;
All the animals die on the spot.

In the morning, when it awakes;
 All is quiet, but a few shakes;
 Then noon falls, the huntsman calls;
 But all the animals are no more.

Its green leaves protect the ground;
 From the sun, or a sound;
 But when a man comes to be
 There's no more life for him to see.

Max Weaver (12)

The Bridge

Here I bridge the gap,
 Stuck between today and
 Tomorrow.
 I can't go back;
 I can't go forward.
 I am lost in time.
 Should I have taken the opportunities
 Of yesterday to make them today?
 Here I stand
 Solo
 Nothing but the bridge.
 It's like seeing the world
 In black
 Then it flashes to white
 With confusion and abandonment

There's no way back and there's no way forward,
 So I'm going to live
 In this emptiness
 Riding solo,
 Like a lost fish learning to swim.
 I stand alone.

Charlotte Longden (12)

The Monster

The Thames is a monster
 His dull, watery skin
 Like a river
 The colour of mouldy, rusty steel,
 His jaws,
 A gaping,
 Ever-present hole,
 Luring unsuspecting swimmers
 Into his murky depths.
 He rages on,
 Crashing and smashing against the urban, concrete shore,
 Spraying foam,
 His murky skin
 Exploding
 On his steel barriers.
 The tiny sparks of life
 He cultivates,
 The algae, the weeds –

Are, too,
 Murky comrades,
 And monsters in their own right.
 He
 And his slimy comrades
 rush through the city,
 He always has places to go,
 People to see.
 Never stops for a chat.
 The people are fascinated
 They crowd around him as
 He runs,
 Staining concrete walls.
 He is always there,
 A giant, ominous presence in
 The centre of the city.
 Sometimes,
 He twinkles in the sunlight,
 The thick sludge of his skin glinting pleasantly.
 He is, cleverly, creating persuasive illusion-
 Of a sweet face,
 A smiling mouth
 A majestic, friendly beast -
 But we all know
 That underneath his slimy, shiny surface,
 The Thames is a monster.

Lucy Arnold-Forster (13)

Loch Ness

In Inverness you can see,
 A loch left without a key

A place where myth and truth are blurred,
 Where you can tread yet be unheard.

A vast lagoon untouched by man,
 Left to nature's powerful hand.

A story told over the years,
 Revealing people's darkest fears.

About a monster unseen, unknown,
 Powerful, never been overthrown.

Living in a Scottish lake
 Leaving legend in her wake.

She swirls, swishes and swims along,
 Escapes being caught but does no wrong.

It is unlikely you will ever see,
 The secrets of the loch without a key.

Olivia Townsend (13)

The Sea

The sea will always be,
 alive, a weapon, a mystery,
 an untamed animal, a silver sword,
 a merciless emperor, a powerful lord,
 a sorceress, a battle cry,
 a shipwrecked sailor might ask why.

The answer is,
 one last breath then an icy kiss,
 a raging monster, open jaws,
 it holds you tight with vice like claws,
 turning pebbles into dust,
 forming cliffs as if it must.

But on sunny days,
 the howling beast has gone its ways,
 the golden globe sends down bright light,
 this sparkling new world is quite a sight,
 the sea sings a song, a lullaby,
 almost like a gentle sigh.

As the sun sets to end the day,
 all living things have gone away,
 and the sea sits still,
 and lonely until,
 the moon comes out from behind a cloud,
 and greets the sea without a sound.

For it is the only thing that controls the sea,
 by using its silver forgery.
 The deed is done in just one sigh,
 From gentle beast to battle cry,
 Many living things shall die,
 under the moon's watchful eye.

Keri Lewis (12)

Norfolk

Holkham Bay is a soaring gull
 With wingspan of miles
 Millions of tiny yellow feet
 Decorated with Nature's jewels
 Sharp and beautiful

The sea is a giant squid
 Spurting dark ink onto
 The greying sky
 With huge hydraulic arms
 And lethal embrace

Old Hunstanton is a pale oyster shell
 Grooved by perfect winds
 Who then sigh with satisfaction
 At what they have created
 Irregular geometry

The waves are a fighting crab
 Whose shiny back swells with the tide
 Until he is a warrior
 Who plays by no rules
 The champion of time

Norfolk Coast is an old seal
 Whose age is shown by beauty
 That passes through generations
 With the touch of a grey whisker
 That will never die.

Bryony Strickland (12)

My Happy Place

A happy place is just a metaphor,
 an idea, an imagined thought,
 and yet a truth.

It's racing down the sands of time,
 through the fields of memories,
 down the lane of recollection, and beyond.

It's the cure, the armour that causes
 the fire to ricochet,
 the shield that reflects the pain,
 the elixir, the fight, the re-being, the truth.

It gives you force against the fire,
 the strength to rebel against the anger,
 The power to reflect the pain,
 It's you.

And mine is but a ball of life,
 ginger and white,
 furry,
 the most adorable force in my life.
 My happy place is my hamster.

Ella Dagenais (10)

The Beach

The sun beams down like a golden glitter ball dancing on
 the aqua ripples of the sea,
 It was my tranquil hiding spot enveloping me from the
 world of my worries.

Whoosh,

Whoosh.

The gentle breeze glided through my hair quietly whistling
 a lullaby relaxing me from head to toe.

Whoosh,

Whoosh.

Sitting on the sand catching a suntan,
 The golden grains of sand as they are sprinkled on me by
 the light breeze

are like small freckles
scattered on me.

The busy hustle and bustle of daily life is my worst idea of
fun,

The thought of judgmental stares and glares fills my body
with anxiety,

This is my dream, just me, myself and I alone with nothing
to worry me or make me panic like a
businessman late for an interview.

The sun beams down like a golden glitter ball dancing on
the aqua ripples of the sea,

It was my tranquil hiding spot enveloping me from the
world of my worries.

Whoosh,

Whoosh.

The gentle breeze glided through my hair quietly whistling
a lullaby relaxing me from head to toe.

Whoosh,

Whoosh.

This is my dream, just me, myself and I alone with nothing
to worry me or make me panic like a
businessman late for an interview.

Louise McGlennan (12)

Visit to the Art Gallery

The young soldiers holding rattling
death machines, skulls in the background,
scythe in hand. Skyscrapers stand erect
about to be showered with glass and lethal fire
sent from the devil with red burning eyes.

The twisting and turning feet in a ball of string gone
horribly wrong.
The feet are as black as a cave full of spiders weaving webs.

Cats with yellow suns for eyes
and bodies black like tar
roam about in the grim graveyard
with people hanging like suits on clothes pegs.

Men lie in a crowded heap
on the floor, their faces a rainbow
of jaw dropping colours. Their teeth are jagged and sharp.
They have a few strands of straight sticking-up hair.

The Saatchi Gallery is alive.

Max Potter (10)

California

The golden sun radiates
on the bed of sewing needles
a rust-red duvet
on a hard, compact mattress.

A sapphire torrent weaves
its way across the mountainside
crashing, thundering, roaring
like a beast unleashing its rage

The dark green pine tree
standing proud on the crest of a hill,
acts like a king,
surveying a mighty city.

A rock sticks out,
a mighty gray being,
clothed in robes of yellow and green
a jester in a crowd.

A ferocious roar echoes
from a coat of golden-brown
then, a flash of silver
and the salmon lay struggling
in the beast's giant jaw.

Luca Liautaud (12)

The Bridge

As I stand in the divide,
between man and nature.
The bearer,
Of all four seasons.
Its bricks stained like tea,
in a subtle earl grey.
The water lapping,
gently below.
Leaving me bewildered at the beauty.
This standstill object,
Yet moving people
seamlessly.

As nature takes its course,
on the defenseless.
Bridge.

Alexandra James (12)

Below is a list of the schools whose pupils are published in this anthology.

All Hallows Catholic School, Surrey
Andrews Endowed Primary School, Hampshire
Carden Primary School, Brighton
Crosfields School, Berkshire
Derby High School, Derby
The Dragon School, Oxford
Great Bedwyn Primary School, Wiltshire
The Greville Primary School, Surrey
Henrietta Barnett School, London
Kilmeen National School, County Cork, Ireland
Mearns Academy, Aberdeenshire
Nottingham High Infant & Junior, Nottingham
Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College, West Yorkshire
Oxford Spires Academy, Oxford
Queen Elizabeth's High School, East Midlands
Rydens Enterprise School, Surrey
Sir John Nelthorpe School, Lincolnshire
South Devon Steiner School, Totnes
St Bernard's High School, Essex
Trinity School, Croydon
Upton Junior School, Kent
Woldingham School, Surrey



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