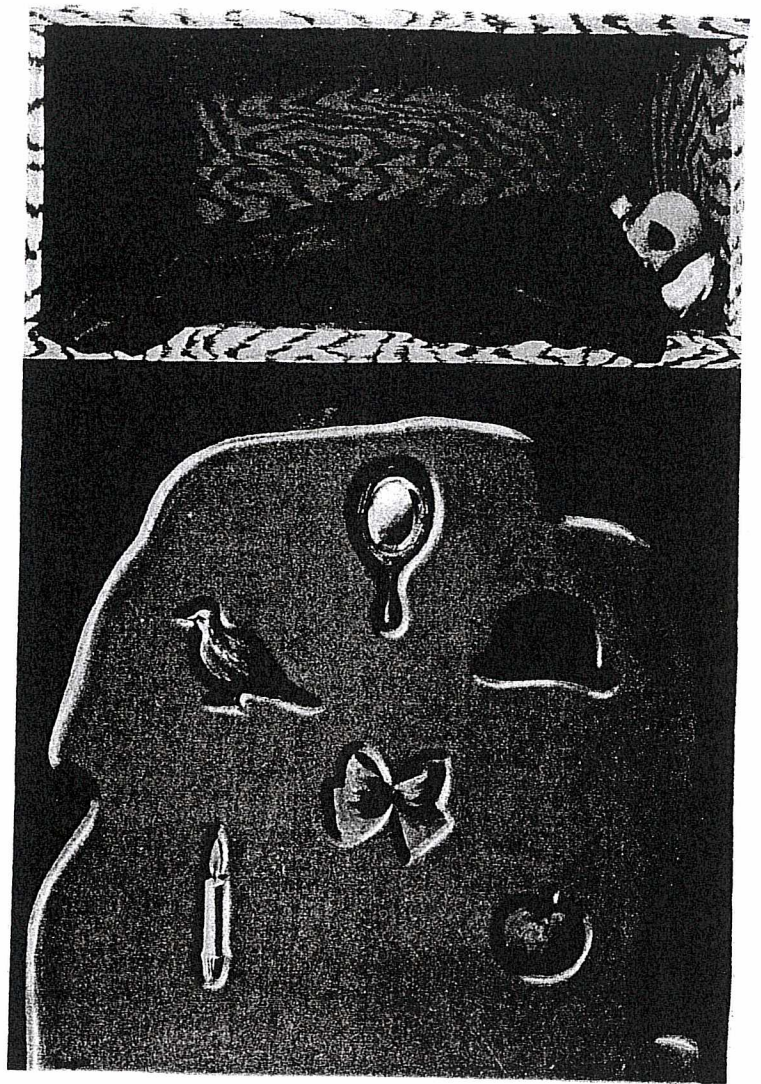


Selected
poems
from



The Mountbatten School

POETRY
FESTIVALS



The Mountbatten School's Annual Poetry Festival was started in 1973 by Isobel Butler in order to encourage pupils to take pleasure both in writing their own poetry and in performing published poems to an audience.

Eileen Betteridge then encouraged a generation of young poets to pursue poetry writing through her inspirational Poetry Workshops.

The school's English Faculty has since striven, through storms of change, to keep the ship afloat – with Sylvia Curtis ensuring that thousands of poems were safely stowed, hence our ability to publish this 'Hall of Fame' selection. My thanks also go to all the English teachers who, throughout the years, have encouraged all pupils to take part in the writing and performance of poetry in the classroom and on stage.

Above all I would like to thank all the young poets who have given us all such pleasure in reading their work over the years.

Will Jones
(Head of English 2008)

Closing Pages

CHRISTMAS IS PAST

Christmas is past, I won't see another;
Mind is too weary and bones are too frail.
Friends are now sleeping whilst I am waiting
Stone stands so cold when memory fails.

Lilac and lavender, honeysuckle moth-soft,
Shrouded by dusk are hidden from view.
The last fragrant rose from an unremembered summer
Are scents from a garden my childhood knew.

Snowdrops stand silent, as white as chip-marble
Under the cedar, untouched by the dew.
A name and a date will fade in the churchyard;
A lifetime forgotten under the yew.

Katherine Goodwin

TOMBSTONE

Tombstone, weathered by unceasing rain,
Words, names, toponyms, all indecipherable runes now.
Still standing, though bent in perpetual pain.
But as seasons turn, the cracks begin to show.
What once was can never be again.

Shadows, beyond which no superficial eye can see,
Candles flicker around this makeshift tomb,
Mourning the dreams that can never be,
All your moments spent crying in this room,
And yet no tear is really shed for me.

For I was always unknown to you,
Just a flickering reflection of an older brother,
Nothing told at this funeral was ever true,
All of these words belonged to another:
The one you saw, the one you knew.

Perhaps I am better forgotten in the back of your mind,
Condemned to be just one more newspaper cutting,
Fragments of fragments that you'll never find,
For the final screen of my life is shutting,
Always, forever, to leave you blind.

Martin Hammond

TWO OLD WOMEN SITTING IN A CAFÉ

What are you thinking of? You
Old women sitting
In a dimly-lit café
With a cold coffee
And tuna sandwich
Staring into the cup
Longing for another.
Wrinkled fingers shaking
And wishing for a roaring
Fire to warm them.

Do you wish for dreams to come true
Dreams of a warm home
And a happy family
Or dreaming back
To times when you were loved.

Your time on earth that was fun
May come back;
Just keep on dreaming.

Sarah Stewart

The Tomb of Life

The golden flower gently blooms
to light the silence of the tombs,
and with its subtle guiding light
destroys and banishes the fears of night.

Illuminates an ancient path,
which splits the tomb in perfect half,
revealing now to modern minds,
Complexities of ancient finds.

A dozen words adorn each wall
of this foreboding entrance hall,
a dozen words best left unseen,
for we cannot know just what they mean.

Yet ask we must for in our heads,
Such curiosity for things long dead.
Yet the meaning is gone, they lost all trace,
when we defiled that sacred place.

Neal Reeves

BEING OLD

Strange enough, don't like dominoes.
My veins are overly visible.
Am proud of my teeth,
For they're better than average.
Weak they are, but real enough.

Got an invite to a party laid on for me,
And others over sixty.
Watched a girl blow tunes through her trumpet
And a boy on his guitar,
Not entertaining,
But the kids knew that.

Am old. It is Christmas.
Am sat in my daughter's armchair,
Drinking my daughter's sherry,
In my daughter's house.
I would rather not accept the presents for they
Embarrass me.
Half a ton of bath salt and a tea cosy.

Kind of got into game Shows recently.
"BFH" always makes me laugh,
"Go for the car!", that kind of thing.
Like them to win – bit of friendly jealousy.
I love coming up with answers like "Canterbury".

Down a hole am spinning,
I land on a road.
I walk for er – a period of time.
A house is before me.
I knock.
Ghostly frail woman answers
And points
And shouts, "You're not dead yet,"
As I wake up on a hospital bed.

by Edmund Matthews

THE MOON IS FALLING

The man sits in his chair,
And looks at his room, where
Nothing has changed since he was a boy.
The fire is still lit, the ornaments still
Dustless on the shelf.

But outside - outside the moon is falling.
The world the man knew has gone.
Horses are warm-breathed. Now,
Clanking, roaring, alien machines
Cover the village with fumes -
Yet, the village is a town.

To ask for four and six of cigarettes
Is to demand mocking looks from the baffled shopkeeper.
To go to the picture palace is to say "Eyes down".
The moon is falling.
To touch his wife, is to reach out at the empty space beside him in the bed.
The moon is falling.

Geoffrey Moody

Sleep will not trace her somnolent circles around my eyes,
But evades me,
Idling with the moonlight
Which runs from my windowsill to the porch below.

Night reveals its nakedness,
And blushes black velvet,
Stuttering stars, herds of words.

I listen.
Sleep sits,
Chanting to herself in my bedroom corner
Breathing fables, stories of stories.
I feel her cool breath whispering through my mind.

Sleep -
Life mirrored in a million dreams.
She plugs my ears
And pulls her cloak over my eyes
As grey reality fades.

Tamsin Saxton