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THE MOUNTBATTEN SCHOOL  
n their long cranes  
POETRY FESTIVAL  
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ke a scolding m 1985  
eads some bobbing, bouncing l.  
hich follow closely like duck  
Yachts, swarming and darting,  
About the ships white bulk,  
come her home again,  
the dark cruel sea



The Mountbatten School Poetry Festival - 1985

I enjoyed reading the poems submitted for the annual festival. As ever, decisions about winners were very difficult. Generally, I found the 1st place poems seemed to select themselves in each year but deciding the minor places was a much greater problem. In particular, I felt that the overall quality of the fourth year entries meant that several good pieces have gone without recognition. It's perhaps invidious to select particular entries for comment but I did find two poems especially impressive: James Ravenscroft's "Biscuit" shows fine control over rhyme and rhythm in its sharply observed portrait of a cat; and Shaun Beaney's "Time Pieces" has all the sophistication and linguistic control of a practised writer - this is a poem that deserves wider publication.

Dr. Mike Benton  
Southampton University

Author of the Touchstones Poetry  
Anthologies

### The Merry-go Round Horse

The merry-go round horse shiny and new,  
Painted bright colours,  
    Red, white and blue,  
Long sleek lashes, stunning blue eyes,  
Sparkling teeth, hooves polished and dyed,  
With a pole through his middle he rides  
    Up and down,  
Leaping legs, swishing tail. Round and Round.  
    Only one problem, a small little fact,  
A heart of gold,  
        This poor horse lacks.

Anni Lee 1G

### The Sports Shop

You walk through the door,  
It's made out of new glass  
With an electronic 'Open' sign.  
The carpet is green and your  
Trainers sink into the soft texture;  
Modern music is playing.  
You look at the range of coats,  
The different sorts of prices.  
But they're astronomical.  
The smell of soft leather  
Fills your nostrils.  
You go into a dream-world  
When you look at the range  
    of tennis-rackets.  
The assistant breaks your dream  
And you remember all you came for  
Was a lace for your  
Boot.

Neil Bailey 1G

## THE MOUNTAIN

The mountain, like a giant standing watchfully  
Left a dark night like shadow over the barren land  
Only the snow covered peak gleamed brightly  
  through the clouds

Its roots burrowed down to the very bowels of the earth  
Whilst its summit reached out to the blueness of the sky.  
It has stood for hundreds of years.  
Has seen many generations come and go  
It stands there all seeing as time  
Passes by.

by Magnus Richardson  
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"Biscuit"

It's wet outside.  
She drips in through the noisy cat flap.  
A short miaow  
Tells me it's time for supper and a nap  
By the fire's warmth.  
She's a tight ball of burnished copper.  
She hears a bird  
And roars round the room. We can't stop her.  
The room's moving.  
A dark ginger streak flies startled by.  
When we're dizzy  
With heads fast spinning, she comes to lie  
On the coach back.  
Hind leg in air she licks the fur  
Of cream belly.  
Our dictator rests. We watch the telly.

James Ravenscroft 2K

What is?

What is a Tree?

A Tree is a boney hand.

What is a boney hand?

A boney hand is cracked ice.

What is cracked ice?

Cracked ice is shattered glass.

What is shattered glass?

Shattered glass is hailstones.

What are hailstones?

Hailstones are frozen tears.

What are frozen tears?

Frozen tears are rice  
being poured into a pan.

What is Rice?

Rice is nail clippings.

What are nail clippings?

Nail clippings are dead  
Fragments of the moon.

What is the moon?

The moon is a melon.

What is melon?

Melon is curved leaf  
Floating in the wind.

What is a leaf?

A leaf is a small Tree.

What is a Tree?

### THE CAT

He settled down,  
Idle and heavy,  
On the doorstep,  
And was soon motionless.

The mouse scurried round the corner,  
Nibbling impetuously,  
At the scattered crumbs.  
An eyelid opened.  
He purred softly.  
His fur bristled up.  
As he crouched ready to pounce.  
All his sleepiness had gone,  
He crept forward like a snake,  
His brow deeply lined with thought,  
His tail quivering up and down.  
The once peaceful cat had turned violent,  
Pouncing murderously at the little creature on the  
grass .....

The cat left the corpse,  
with dignified steps, and  
A perpendicular tail,  
Spreading out his whiskers with pride.

Sarah Horn 2Q



### Birds on a Winter Lake

The water has set fast,  
Varnished clear as polished goblets.  
Built up in iced layers,  
Solid, thick.

An inquisitive songster stirs,  
An alert creature who hops with caution.  
The gleaming surface enslaves his beverage.

A hesitant peck,  
Puzzling hardness bites back.  
Where will nourishment come from?  
How must he survive?

Fellow nesters descend fast  
upon compact, opaque glass.  
Sparrows stumble, starlings scoff.  
All is slippery action.

A tumbling blackbird falls on wing.  
Chaffinches constantly chatter.  
The lake is alive,  
But for how long will the jesters remain?

Rebecca Manning 3F

### My Goldfish

One thinks a goldfish leads a boring life,  
But I have a different conclusion,  
I think my goldfish must lead a most interesting life,  
Watching the humans from his sphere shaped window.  
I often sit and watch him,  
And wonder what he thinks,  
Does he think our drab beige colour -  
Boring, to his coat of red and gold?  
Our smooth skins uninteresting  
To his carefully scalloped scales?  
Each placed so accurately upon his back.  
He doesn't try to make himself all different colours.  
By wearing our odd shaped clothes.  
No! He's quite content to sit,  
And languish everlasting patience  
Watching!  
Watching!  
Watching!  
From his sphere shaped window.

Helen Ashley 3F



## TIME PIECES

In the ancient garden  
A tiny gnomon sits  
Erect.

Carrying out a  
Shadowy partnership  
With the Sun.

A mini-idol stands in the kitchen  
Ordering  
The cooking of our food

With two glass shell cases  
In a  
Wooden frame.

A strange electronic creature  
Watches over me in the  
Night

With a winking face  
It wakes me  
With a soprano solo.

God sits in my  
Living room  
On the wall

Not democratic  
But a tyrant who Commands with  
Handsignals.

Shaun Beaney 4K

### THE CLOCK

Brown photographs and old tea chests,  
And dusty books and model cars  
And letters, faded and forgotten,  
Shabby hats and pickle jars  
And then I found you buried deep  
Amidst the debris of my past  
Reflecting years of muted life  
Lost, inert where you'd been cast  
A head that slept on teddy bears  
I used to hear your tranquil tick  
that lulled my lids to languid sleep  
And rested me when I was sick.

I found you in the loft today  
And drifted back into a land  
Of gollywogs and sailing ships  
And ice cream dripping in the hand  
Of air balloons and submarines  
Of steaming kettles, strawberry jam  
And puffer trains and nursery rhymes  
Crooked streets and clanging trams.

A fragment of an era passed  
You gave back youth to me today  
But only youth at heart  
The head that slept on teddy bears  
Now sleeps, alone and grey.

Emma Crates 4T

### 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 fragment 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 4J

### The Spoils of Winter

Severed stems,  
Brought down by the weight of the ice,  
Seep thick white blood,  
From blackened vessels.  
A frog,  
Trapped within a circular prison;  
Didn't escape Winter's grasp;  
He remained embedded in the ice,  
Like a fly suspended in a lump of amber,  
Until the thaw.  
And then its translucent skin,  
As frail as a bud's sepal,  
Became swollen and wrinkled.

Lucas Marshall 4K

### Southampton Water

Majestic in all her flagged finery,  
The liner draws in.  
Tugs, like maids in waiting,  
Attend the towering lady,  
Occasionally touching her flowing wake.

She merely blows a haughty hooter,  
Turning her back on the cranes,  
The drooling cranes  
With their long hooked tongues.

Another tug,  
Like a scolding mother,  
Leads some bobbing, bouncing lighters,  
Which follow closely like ducklings.

Yachts, swarming and darting,  
About the ships white bulk,  
Welcome her home again,  
Safe from the dark cruel sea.

Robert Bowron 5D

### Domain of Darkness

In Satan's Kingdom all sleeps, save one.  
A familiar of Lucifer, the crow.  
It keeps a watch,  
A reign over silence and emptiness.  
Ever watching,  
Ever waiting.  
Doomed to reign an Eternal Kingdom,  
By his own hand a dictator of death.  
At what price had this prize been won?

In the wasted tree he sits.  
The Vessel of Life shattered below him.  
The Elixir of Life drains away unobserved.  
He stirs,  
He moves,  
He flies,  
Over the vast gulf of dreams and thought.  
Over the oceans of emptiness and silence.  
Further and further,  
Into the infinite moonless black,  
Into the endless void of darkness.

Timothy Hall 5F

WINTER BIRD

Shine ptarmigan.  
Glow in satisfaction.  
Stand up with pride.  
Transform again.

Chameleon of winter,  
Snowy feathers disguise.  
Wings tense.  
Change is complete.

Lustrous white.  
He goes unnoticed  
Amongst towering rock,  
Icy wastes.

He flies invisible,  
In blanket sky.  
No guns aimed.  
Safety prevails.

Shine ptarmigan.  
Glow in satisfaction.  
Stand up with pride.  
Feel life.

Steven Stoner 5H

CONTRAST

Our thoughts and ideas  
just don't agree.  
Black and white,  
can't you see?  
Not blue to blue  
or red to red,  
not eye to eye  
or head to head.  
You think your way  
I think mine.  
I hate, you love,  
minds not entwined.  
At things in between  
I laugh, you cry.  
You don't understand  
but I'll tell you why.  
I am Dark  
You are Light.  
Black is Black  
and White is White.  
Our notions, our dreams  
are worlds apart.  
For united feelings  
it's too late to start.  
You are the seas,  
and I the skies.  
Miles too far  
to compromise.  
Sun and shade -  
you and me  
Patterns on land,  
but what's the key?  
White and Black. Grey?  
**Sorry**  
**Not today.**

Angela Moore 5T





