

The
MOUNTBATTEN
SCHOOL



1991
POETRY
FESTIVAL
ANTHOLOGY

I was most impressed by the quality of the entries in The Mountbatten School Poetry Competition. The quality of the verses, the search for suitable similes and metaphors, and the sustaining of ideas and forms were all quite remarkable.

What is one looking for when judging such a competition? I suppose the over-riding thing is freshness. A freshness of ideas and language. An avoidance of the stale, the obvious, the tired and the commonplace.

Well, there was a deal of freshness in the entries to this competition, and I congratulate all concerned.

John Cotton

John Cotton, this year's judge, is himself a poet who has had at least four books of poems published. He is an ex-headmaster and has been chairman of The Poetry Society several times; all of which make him a very well-qualified man to pronounce upon this year's crop.

I Should Like

I should like to see the future
And to go back in time to see the world's changes.
I would like to take home the early morning
Frost from the grass and keep it forever
And gather shadows on a late summer's evening.
I should like to feel the wing of a flying bumble bee
And the soggy mist as it rises from the ground.
I should like to paint the cold wind as it
Brushes against my face
And the thoughts of a fox as its chased by the pack.
I should like to hear the music as the bees dance
In their hive
And the silent arguments of the stars in the sky.
I would like to taste the rain as it bursts from
The sky
And to taste the dreams that flow forever through
My head.

David Roberts
7LF

MY SLUG

It slithers along
Does my pet slug.
I found it in the garden
Near a hole I dug.
It leaves a silver trail
Wherever it goes,
All over the floor
And across my toes.
Mum says it's disgusting
But I don't agree.
He's my little friend
And he's stuck on me!

Katie Spooner
7WW

The Quarrel

There was just Ginger and me
In the school ground that night.
There was going to be a fight,
I knew it.
There was going to be a fight,
My eyes were full of anger,
His eyes kept staring at me,
Then a great sudden plunge,
'I'm going to kick you,' I said,
'Yeah! and I'm going to punch you!'
I was not scared of him,
His fist came down to punch me,
'You going to give in?'
'NO, NO, never!'
He punched me, then twisted my arm,
'All right, I give in.'
'Yes, I win,' he said.
That night when I went home
With all my cuts and bruises I
Felt that Ginger ruled my life.

Emma Keep 7DY

7DY

Commended by W.H. SMITH

VAMPIRES

Stronger than an elephant on steroids.

Bags under the eyes; he's come back
from holiday and forgot to unpack yet.

Teeth sharper than a crystalised opal-fruit.

Skin whiter than a petrified polar bear.

More bloodthirsty than a mad brain surgeon
on drugs.

Eyes wilder than a teacher who hasn't slept
for a month.

Battier than the England Cricket Team.

Likes dinner suits more than James Bond.

He likes kidney more than "STAKE!"

Hair greasier than John Travolta.

Robin Barnes
7DY

SEPARATE WORLDS

Within myself my inner conscience lies,
At the back of my mind;
A man with a wandering face,
Sits and turns the cogs day and night.
Making me imagine me.
One world I see,
One world I hear.
Flickering lights,
Pale faced people, Deaf, Dumb and Blind
As they pass through the night.
The wandering man, turns the wheels, that
Turn the cogs that makes my imagination work.
My perplexed eye searches the darkness,
A cold flame burns at the back of my mind.
A place, no life, sleeping forever.
The feeling is lost now. It's a secret.

Lianne Emanuel
8HT

Commended by W.H. SMITH.

THE SPACESHIP

The rockets fired - they took off like thunder.
An exploratory mission for salvation and wonder.

Alpha Centuri flashed up on the screen
And went by so quickly it was hardly seen.

Faster and faster, the stars were a blur.
The engine's vibrations were scarcely a purr.

The ship's computer logged every star,
Its sensors probing wonders afar.

Earth floated away in deepest space.
All creatures were dead as were men of each race.

The world's last survivors, fleeing away,
After the wars, the price had been paid.

Earth's second Ark, Mankind's only chance,
Sped through the void like a silvery lance!

Peter Barber
8KG

THE HUNTER

The wary fawn rabbit, halts.
Nose twitching, ears upright,
 it listens,
As the leaves settle, and stillness returns,
The rabbit scampers forward,
 finding shelter in the shadows.
Hearing nothing it moves,
Slowly, tentatively.
Always on guard.

The ground shudders,
Thud, thud.
Louder and louder,
Thud, thud.
The rabbit panics.
The sound gets nearer.
In sheer terror the frenzied bundle
Dashes towards cover,
Springing over the mossy floor it heads homeward.

A shadow of death creeps forward,
Aiming its weapon.

Shoots.

The thunderous shot echoes through the woods.
Silence.

The dumb creature cowers, terrified,
 but alive.

The hunter thinking of success,
Searches for his prey.

Unseen the rabbit darts across the ferny floor,
Running wildly towards its burrow.
Its head upright,
And legs pounding on the hollow ground.

The hunter's bloodthirsty companion traces the smell,
It leads the cruel villain along the rabbit's path.
Sniffing the strong scent,
The hound is soon close behind the rabbit.

The rabbit runs on and on,
The burrow is soon in sight.
Nearer, nearer,
Almost there.
No.

The breathless hound
Bars the way,
Its tongue flapping,
And yellow teeth grinding.
The deranged rabbit darts wildly from side to side.
Crazed with terror.

The shadow of death creeps forward,
Aiming its weapon.

Shoots.

The thunderous shot echoes through the woods.
Silence.

The dumb creature falls.
Numb, lifeless.
Its fawn fur matted with wet blood.

Almost, almost.

Zoe Sylvester 8KQ

A House
By the
C
Did have
Exactly
For what I
Guessed would
Happen.
Indented roof,
Jabbing out glass,
Kindlewood
Lying in the
Mouth of the fire.
No-one there,
Only me,
Peering,
Quivering,
Realising
SUDDENLY
The
Universe seemed to be,
Violent,
Whimpering-Raining,
X-raying through my Body,
Young as I am,
Zest.

Michael Baxter 8KZ

BUT NOBODY HEARD US

One
Went once
And travelled the skyline.
Three
Came twice
Skimming the sealane.
All the way
Nobody heard us.
All
The time
Nobody stood.

All
The love
Around the country
Spread
Its heart
Across the town.
All
The way
Nobody heard us.
All
The time
Nobody stood.

Destroy
And gather
All there ever was.
Glory
For the ones
Who murdered their culture.
All
The way
Nobody heard us.
All
The time
Nobody stood.

Peace
Is for
Another day because
Hate
For Pride
Stands in the way.
All
The Truth
That nobody heard, and
All
The time
Nobody stood.

Now
We pay
With all mankind.
This,
My friend,
Is the end of the world.

Adam Richardson 8WH

Commended by W.H.SMITH

BATTLE

Rifles rattle, rounds run out.
Re-load rapidly.
Hide down holes.
Head held low.
Hopes high.
Suddenly shells shriek.
The sky shudders.
Rain. Blood.
He hobbles then falls.
Half hidden he lies humped.
Fragile forces fumble forward.
Together they die.

Andrew Clark 8KQ

Commended by W.H. SMITH

THE GAME OF LIFE

We called it Life
And asked for abortion
We called it fair
And asked for a bigger portion
We called it Death
And judged who should die
We called it Truth
And made up a lie
We called it marriage
And asked for a divorce
We drank from a river
And polluted its source
We called it a question
But could not reply
We looked after ourselves
And left others to die
We called it love
And encouraged hate
We said there was plenty
But not everyone ate
We called it Peace
Then it became War
We messed it up
And wanted more.

Tamsin Saxton 9DJ

A BLACK GLOVE

In military terms
He considered it just
A patch of rainbow,
In a black sea.

The elegant smooth silk,
Is a black glove.
It holds the birds down,
As they flap their weighted wings.

Some birds attempt a flight,
But like badly shaped
Paper planes,
Fall miserably.

A religious man,
Fights a holy war.
Against all his oaths
And the Koran.

For it preaches,
That no creature may be harmed,
Dolphin, birds, fish
Or human.

His mistake, now, is
His twisted Pride.
In natural terms,
We consider it a disaster.

Daniel Spooner

QWH

THE BRECON BEACONS

Twilight descends,
Purple robed and glowing.
The knuckles of the land, curve,
Ominously.
As the night fist clenches.

Veiled by vapours,
Wind-lashed and beaten,
The rocks are wishing for calm.
Suit back,
Boot black.
Like negro hands praying.

Helen King
9WH

MY PLACE

Another unrelenting mouth to feed,
Another step towards destruction,
Another feather in the cap of pollution,
Another thorn in the foot of the population.
A Nobody going Nowhere
A Nothing taking Something.
Draining the world of its last lifeblood.
Hope and redeeming inspiration,
Turn bitter day by day.
Young eyes perceive corruption -
Stand by to watch the planet be cornered
And as the Time ticks,
The flame fades fast.
Ideas blow away like dust
And the will to save surrendered.
We could be among the last
Here to mourn the end.
From cot to war, to the shelters to the end,
An ultimate plan is needed,
One I have harboured so long,
But a slowly turning world
Turns my eyes away from unselfishness
And my heart towards greed.
For alone I cannot change a thing,
Without others the rivers will never run clean.
Who will give away today's computerized world
For a miserable rock,
Slowly dying in space?

Sarah Morgan 9DY

A FUNERAL AT SEA

There is no coffin.
It is a grave without a stone.
The floating flowers will die,
The sea will erode all evidence
And memories will be borne with the tide.

Rachael Loftus-Smith 10KG

UMBRELLAS

Like mushrooms,
They sprout
With inverted suction
Rapidly
In succession.
Veined canopies
Expanding
And flattening;
Black canvas
Meets raindrop.

Ian Mitchell 10LF

THE DOVE OF PEACE

I am the one
With the spirit to cry,
The spirit to live
But not to die.

I am the one
With the spirit to love,
The spirit to honour
And the spirit to leave.

You are the ones
With the spirit to hate,
The spirit to war
And the spirit to justify.

I am the one
With the spirit to care,
The spirit to comfort
And the spirit for prayer.

I am the one
with the spirit to need,
The spirit to beg
And the spirit to plead.

You are the ones
With the spirit to want
The spirit to yearn
And then, to forget.

I am the one
With the spirit to learn,
The spirit to think
And the spirit to believe.

I am the one
With the spirit to rule,
The spirit to judge
And the spirit to condemn.

You are the ones
The ones with the gun,
With the spirit to arise
And the spirit to fire.

I am the one
With the spirit so frail,
The spirit you shot,
My spirit destroyed.

I was the one,
The one that could save,
Oppressed by humanity,
With the spirit, now, to die.

Julia Horn 10KQ

THE WAITING

I squinted at the silver glint of my bayonet,
Its glassy edge split on the bright glare of the desert sky.
It threw an image of itself, blue, far across the plain.

I sat up. It was then I heard the distant thunder,
Rolling across the desert, far from the east

It came, whipping into steam the topsand, catching up the
Metal fragments, forcing them to the surface, bursting out.
Each one sang the deadened song of these brewing times. War.

Behind the gaseous blast, came the empty echo of bomb munitions,
Cracking open the cold carcass, concrete bunkers.

A man's name, on every hit.

But I could see nothing. Only stretches and stretches
Of fine, yellow powder.

I gazed back at the halo-like image,
Jutting away across the plain
Away from the turning edge of the blade.
I caught the falling stock of my rifle,
Felt its weight in my hand,
And, just, perhaps, its meaning.

The image shimmered, sliding across the desert.
It climbed an embankment towards the silent, hulking gun.
It hit one of its gear levers and shattered,
Dreamily spreading fragments of light through the workings,
An invisible hand playing with a power not meant for man.

Christopher Ng
10WK

OVER FLANDERS FIELDS

Among grey barbed coils,
Delicate petals shimmered,
White heads whispered,
Unheard words.
Silence was enjoyed.
Among tea-cups and papers,
Bald heads discussed;
Furrowed brows planned war.
A piercing shot ricocheted over Flanders Fields,
Answered by a chilling cry.
Hardened petals glowed blood-red,
Their stained heads shouted,
"We will remember them."

A paper flower,
Falls to the ground,
Is crushed.
Eyes that will never see, turn,
As he marches past the cenotaph,
He still remembers.
Tea-cups rattle,
The bald heads have forgotten.

OFTEN FELT, RARELY SEEN

A Great Mother laid her baby in a manger
And an emotion more overwhelming than any other shone.
There was purity.
When I was young, my mittens were on strings.
I stamped a little foot impatiently
Waiting for my hair to touch the ground.

I was Mary. Scott Smith was Joseph.
I didn't boast or feel smug.
There was no need.
I was innocent and unspoiled, a child,
Skin like a peach, clean and new.
Smells were comforting and familiar, soft as babies.

There was a big snake, orange and friendly, by the door.
And always cakes
And, 'Please may I eat the table?'
From childhood our worlds grow,
Our interests widen, like a droplet splashing,
Forming ever-increasing circles;
Each new ripple a different stage in our lives.

And now hairspray and sex
Pollute our once fresh and sweet friends.
Foul filthy words spew freely from rotten mouths
Like sewage from an open drain.
From talcum powder and bubble bath, they change
To lipstick and fags.
They stink of ignorance- and it angers and bewilders me:
If you do not conform to non-conformity;
If you rebel against rebelling;
If you do not live the right combination
Of child, delinquent, adolescent, adult, animal,
You are OUT.
You are nothing. You are OUT!
If you stay in at night,
If your clothes are 'wrong'
If your hair is 'wrong'
If your body is 'wrong'
You are 'wrong'
If you are right
You are 'wrong'
You are OUT.

Out cast, square, reject, alone,
Alone with all the other aliens
And don't you dare pity me!
I'm too proud to be an alien
So I change my personality:
My own self is banished, hidden,
Confined, by society's expectations, to myself.
Keeping from the shadows,
Yearning, longing, to come out to play.

My inner person is kind
And therefore unfashionable,
Is soft
And therefore 'un-cool'
Is young-spirited
And therefore undesirable.

Just as Time is eternal
And space, today, is infinite,
My anger, dismay, bitterness at injustice
Scores deep as an inner wound,
Gushing blood and fire as thick and powerful as a river.
Through mountains of pressure
And superficial emotions daily,
Often felt,
Rarely seen
Because no-one cares to look.

And I remember our footprints in the sand - my life.
Walking with the Lord along the beach.
"My precious, precious child," he said,
"I love you and I would never leave you.
During your times of suffering,
When you glance back and see
Only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."
And I wonder why I doubted,
Why I felt so alone.

And I envy not children, not youth,
But my own distant childhood,
Sweet and lost,
Gone before I realised,
Slipped through my hands.

And I cry in the dark
For ever unheard.

THE BIRTH OF LIFE

Beating,
A constant beating,
Like a tiny, crystal hammer,
The heart beats.
And life creeps warily
In that tiny body,
And embraces the mother's womb,
Life's only lifeline,
To the mother's world - another world.
The child - the unborn,
Shifts slightly,
And is content to sit,
To wait for its time,
Like the spring waits,
For its time to fade away
And let the melodies of summer
Draw in.
For it does not know,
Of the harshness of mankind.
The, the incomplete, is ignorant,
And yet still she grasps at life.
For she yearns to taste creation,
To fathom,
Her own nemesis,
Her own being,
And to fill her soul,
Like a starving child
Wishes to discover
The kingly, sweetness of apples,
And to quench his hunger,
With their succulent flesh,
The unborn desires to be born.

She pushes her way from darkness,
To the outer world, and the sun,
Something she has never seen,
Never dreamed of.
So, just as the stars bathe,
In the light of the moon,
Thus she bathes in the sunlight,
Is consumed for love of it.
And mother earth takes the fledgling
In her arms,
And the child rejoices her own being,
Like the robin
Rejoices the spring.

For, as yet, she has not seen
The cruelty,
Does not know,
That she is insignificant,
The tiniest of shimmering droplets
In a distant, rumbling thundercloud.
Does not know,
That her own life,
Is the finest of spiders' threads
Blowing in the wind.
So easily snapped,
To pass beyond, into the vaults,
Of unbeing.
She has yet to know,
For she, the youngest
Of a million newborns,
Is unexpectant of the burdens,
Upon the shoulders,
Of the Living.

Alistair Bowron 11DY

DRIFTING

The craft emerged.
Through a silent explosion
It made the transition from nothing,
To being.
Unperturbed by the planets
Locked in their endless Newtonian dance,
Torn by huge rents and tears,
It drifted.
Years passed; the craft drifted.
Reality could not deny its horror,
Its occupants lying in ambush,
They waited.
After a millenium, they came.
Unaware of the dangers.
The craft, a huge trap,
The newcomers, the trapped.

Andrew Sutton 11LT

