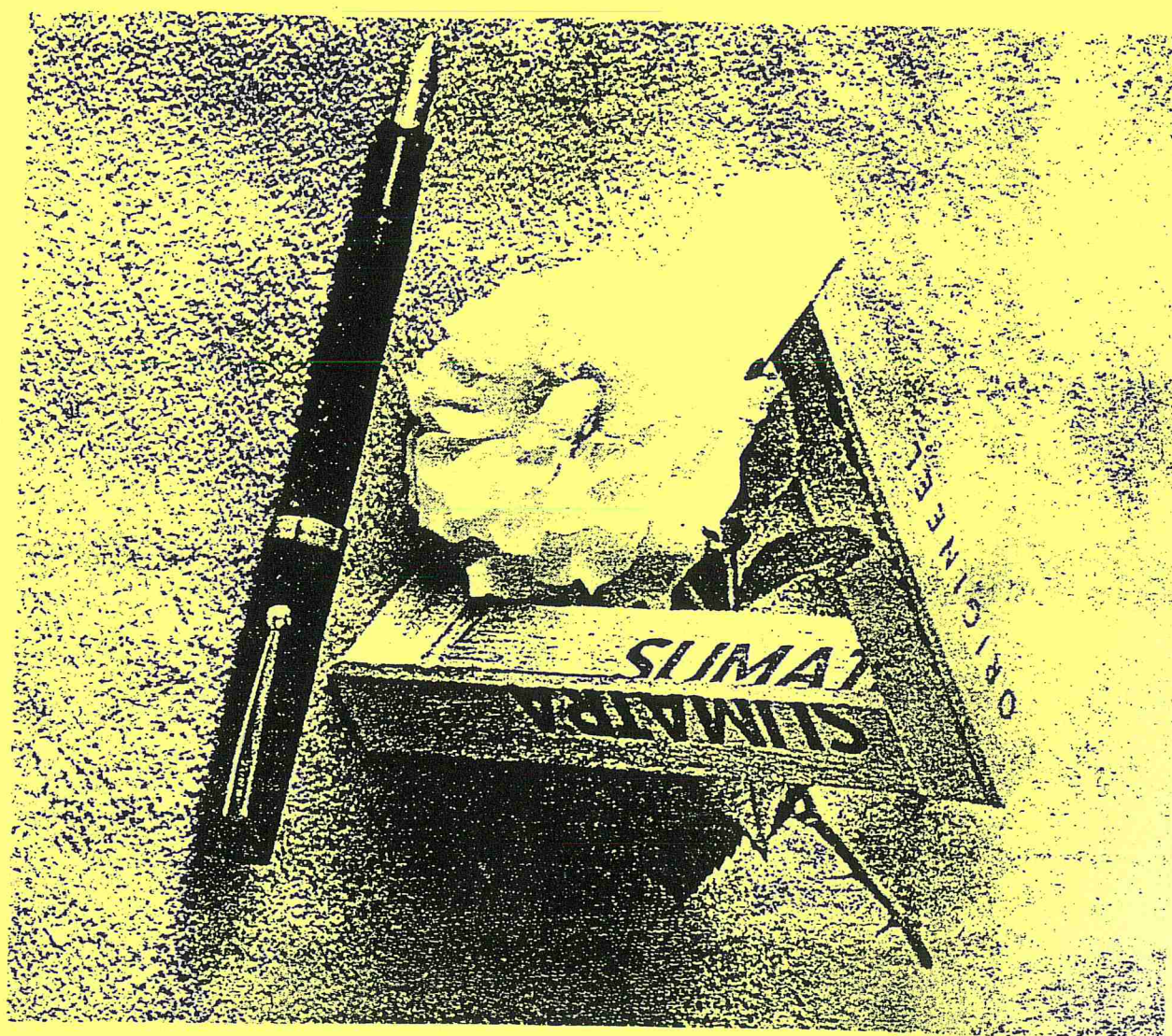


The Mountbatten  
Poetry Festival  
Anthology



1999



## THE 1999 MOUNTBATTEN SCHOOL POETRY FESTIVAL

The 1999 Mountbatten School Poetry Festival (written section) was judged by the poet Mike Jupp. He kindly provided individual advice for all of the pupils whose poems were awarded a place, as well as the more general comments herein.



## THE MOUNTBATTEN SCHOOL POETRY COMPETITION

The first thing that I should like to say to everyone who entered this competition is "Well done for having a go". You have already achieved more than those who didn't enter at all and you have all achieved something that I was not capable of when I was at secondary school. The second thing is to remind you that, although this was a competition, poetry is not like arithmetic with definite right and wrong answers. I have chosen what I believe to be the best poems, but a different judge would almost certainly have made some different choices. On another day, I might have made different choices myself because I certainly didn't find the task easy. I read every poem several times, and some of them many times. Once again, WELL DONE to everyone.

So now to some general comments about the poems that were sent to me for consideration. In doing this, I hope that any criticisms that I give will be taken in the spirit in which they are given; that is, with the intention of helping you to improve your writing. I wanted to give personal comments on every poem, because they all have something that is worthy of praise, but I just don't have the time. All I can say is "Keep writing and re-writing and re-writing, and READ, READ, READ. Then read some more. If I have suggested editing your poem, please don't be insulted by that. Professional writers have editors, and a good editor can see straight away something that it might take you a year to realise.

### PRESENTATION

You may not think it's fair for a poem to be judged by the quality of the poet's writing but, **in a competition**, you are putting yourself needlessly at a disadvantage if you present work which is difficult to read. A judge is only human (Oh yes I am!) and he or she is bound to be irritated by having to work too hard at deciphering the words. Similarly with crossings-out. If it appears that **you** don't value your entry by submitting a 'best' copy, then why should a judge value it? Having said that, these things alone would not prevent me from choosing a poem of merit. I am simply saying that such a person would have to work a bit harder to win me over.

A second aspect of presentation is that of layout on the page. One of the things that distinguishes poetry from prose is the added dimension of layout or shape. Many entrants to this competition chose to use the word processor to centre their work on the page, giving it a kind of symmetrical shape. I have very occasionally used this device myself in light verse, but it is a lazy way out, saving you the work (and denying you the opportunity) of exploring this dimension of poetry. Again, this would not stop me from choosing a particular

poem, but I'm inclined to look more favourably on someone who has thought about the layout of their work.

## RHYME

Writing verse that rhymes is fairly easy. But to write **GOOD** rhyming poetry is very difficult. It is therefore true that a rhymed piece is less likely to be successful in competition. Rhyme is fun, and is particularly suitable for comic or light verse, something which I enjoy writing myself. However, I rarely attempt to write a more 'serious' poem in rhyme. The simple reason for this is that in your desperation to find a rhyme, you can easily end up writing something that is meaningless or trivial, something that hijacks what you really want to say. It is better to write prose or unrhymed poetry than to settle for second or third best words. Your thesaurus is full of alternatives, so try to make every word *exactly* the right one. English is the richest language in the world; don't be satisfied with your first effort.

If you **do** write rhyming light verse, however it is **essential** that you establish a rhythm and keep to it; in other words, light verse must *scan*. And once you've started to rhyme in light verse, don't stop

## WORDS

THINK about the words you are using. Several people used the word 'silence', and then went on to talk about things they could hear. Silence is silence.

One person, in the middle of a very promising poem, wrote:  
*'I hope this note reaches you. If it does not I want you to know...'*  
How can the reader know, if the note doesn't reach her?

**Speak your poems out loud to yourself over and over.**

## WORDS 2

THE FEWER THE BETTER. Good poetry is more concise than prose. So see how many words you can cut out of your poems without losing anything significant.

## SUBJECTS

In unrhymed poetry, write about the things that concern you, interest you, mean something to you. Then put your own slant, your own angle, on it. In ALL poetry, please avoid those subjects that have been written to death...*Isn't Spring pretty?*.. unless you can be **really** original.

## SORRY, BUT THERE ARE SOME MORE DON'Ts

(But please try to use them positively)

- \* Don't change the ordinary order of words

*I dream of the sea* is fine.

*Of the sea I dream* is OUT (even if you want to rhyme with *stream*).

- \* Don't put in 'do' or 'did' where it wouldn't be used in normal speech.

*I cried* is fine

*I did cry* is OUT (even if it would help with the rhythm)

- \* **DON'T TRY TO BE 'POETIC'**. Byron, Keats and Wordsworth are great poets from the past, and should be read and enjoyed, but they are not role models for modern poetry. Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes and Roger McGough will teach you far more about the writing of poetry today.

- \* Don't use clichés, those phrases that have been used many times before. When you are revising your work (you **do** revise your work, don't you?), search them out and show NO MERCY. Some examples from the poems sent to me: murky depths; days gone by; deafen with silence; doom and gloom; the grass beneath my feet; a thousand violins; vibrant colours; all of a sudden; waves gently lapping; beady eyes; blood, sweat and tears; trees/flowers sway in the breeze; wind whistling/howling; gate creaking; calm and collected; torrential rain. There are others, but I hope I've made my point. See if you can find fresh ways of expressing these things. The more reading you do, the more you will recognise overused phrases.

So, those are some of the things that were in my mind when I was reading your poems. But the overall thing that I have looked for is the poet who had a clear idea of what she or he wanted to say, and said it.

Oh, and did I mention ....READ, READ, READ.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Mountbatten School for inviting me to judge your 1999 poetry competition, and all of these students who submitted poems. Not only have I enjoyed the process, but I have learnt from it too.

If anyone feels that I've been a bit mean to them, just remember that as a professional writer I have an agent and editors making judgements on the quality of my work. And they tell me straight! But I would rather have that than to have a false impression of something I've written.

Writing is more craft and graft than talent. So keep playing with words; keep sculpting your poems; and enjoy the process and the achievement.

### **Year 10 - SPECIAL NOTICE**

The entry by this year group was exceptionally strong, and I found it particularly hard to make my decisions. A number of poems were unlucky not to be included in the first four positions, and of the four I could have justified any of them gaining first position. The standard of entry was so high that I found it impossible to go on to select 'Highly Commended' poems.

**Mike Jupp**



### **Mist steriouse**

On the horizon I can see mist.  
Like lost spirits it gradually drifts  
Through the air. It winds round trees  
And rocks as it creeps up from the seas  
Where lost ships a light house seek.  
Its light into the mist it peeps  
Is mist souls of sailors gone?  
Would they have been saved if the lighthouse shone?

**By Sarah Tiroke - 7DD**

### **My Secret Friend**

I can hear you calling me.  
Even though I can't see you, I know you are there.  
You sit in your secret hiding place,  
so sweet - so lovely.  
You never let me down, and you've always been there for me -  
Cheering me up and giving me comfort  
when I feel sad.  
People say you are no good for me  
What do they know?  
I see you in my dreams and will always  
need you - you make me what I am.  
I'm coming for you now - wait for me -  
my secret friend - chocolate.

**By Stephanie Cresswell - 7JR**

## Freedom

I want to be normal  
I want to be free  
But I'm afraid that just cannot be.

Taunts from classmates.  
I'm a freak, they say.  
Lectures from mum,  
Patience from dad.

I'm riding a bike.  
I'm climbing a tree  
Oh wait a minute - it's just my dream!

At last I'm free.  
I'm climbing a tree.  
I'm going up and up  
Higher and higher!  
Hooray I'm there!  
I'm at the top  
I'm touching the sun  
I'm feeling the clouds.  
I can see the birds  
I can feel the breeze.  
I'm knocking on the door to God.  
Hi God! Hi God's Heaven!  
Look at me. I'm free!

By Chloe Jessop - 7PF  
[based on the story, 'Let the Balloon Go']

## Captivity

I walk fast round the zoo,  
Leaving the rest of the group behind,  
Eager to go home,  
Then my eyes meet yours.  
You stare blankly at me, at first,  
With a glazed expression on your dropping face.  
But then,  
Just for a short moment,  
We regard each other,  
We communicate in a way I can not explain,  
Not a communication between human and beast,  
Nor Gorilla and girl,  
But as equals.  
As one sympathetic friend,  
To another friend in a fix.  
Quickly,  
We glance away.  
No longer are my eyes attached to your mighty body,  
But your "home",  
Your surroundings,  
Your prison.  
I glance up at you once more,  
Sitting on your branch.  
You are already looking at me,  
Oblivious to anyone else gathered round your enclosure.  
I scurry off,  
Head down,  
So many thoughts buzzing through my mind.  
I go back round the zoo,  
Slowly this time.  
I look at all the animals,  
Each and everyone in turn.  
Just as I thought,  
They all look back at me,  
With the same,  
Sorrowful plea you did.

They are all lonely,  
They are all frustrated,  
They are all in captivity.

**By Rachel Finch - 7PF**

## Two Worlds

When I get home I go to my screen  
and enter a virtual world,  
of sites and bytes and disks and drives,  
And places I've never been.  
I chat to my friends on the Internet  
and I always have lots of fun,  
I'm in the States and all over the place,  
Until I hear, "Is your homework done?"  
I exit my world of virtual power  
and go into my world of sweet and sour!

**By Simon Winter - 7CPa**

## Fishing by Moonlight

Sitting by a lake in the moonlight,  
The cold wind swaying the trees,  
I can hear fish breaking the water's surface  
Wind whistling and a gate creaking.  
My only light, a lantern by my side  
And moonlight on the rippled water.  
I smell petrol from my lantern  
And wood burning miles away  
I feel calm and contented,  
Then my bite alarm sounds  
And all my thoughts blow away.

**By Christopher Swatridge - 7CE**

## **My Day My Breakfast**

The shade of the midnight sky  
Black coffee  
The Moon  
A Bowl  
A croissant when not full  
The Stars  
Sugar on my cereal  
The sun rises  
the yolk of an egg  
The hills are high and rough  
A plate piled with muffins  
The early farmer walks his fields  
A small blob of treacle  
I struggle to pull out my bike  
The bacon fat is tough and hard to break  
The wheel of my bike turns  
Like my empty plate.

**By Robin Black - 7AC**

## An Everyday Resolution?

An everyday Resolution? No more beautiful cats,  
For I think I've helped enough already including,  
Cherry, Jam and spats.  
I've played games with old Emma,  
Given her board and bed,  
It cost more than a pound a day to keep her kittens fed.  
Yes, in future I will ignore those pleading eyes.  
They say if you don't feed me,  
You will yourself despise.  
But why should I feel guilty?  
It is really quite absurd,  
To think I am responsible for every kitten, cat, or bird.  
I know if I should weaken and give only one cat food.  
Then it will be back within an hour and maybe in a mood.  
I realise that I myself would appreciate,  
If I were born a cat.  
So much for resolutions.  
I will carry on the same,  
And try to help all creatures if they be hungry,  
sick or lame.  
People say "You must be mad".  
But if I am, so be.  
For I know that I would hate myself  
If I stopped being me!

**by Charlotte Howe - 7 DD**

## **The Making of Jealously**

Look at her, just sitting there,  
Golden hair you can't help but stare.  
Look at the boys just sitting there.

Dribbling away. Your worst nightmare.  
Look at her deep, dark-centred blue eyes.  
But what you can't see  
is her brain full of lies.

She's just a snake about to give a sting.  
My heart is about the break,  
melting to nothing.

**By Natassha Murrell - 8MSt**

## **IF COPPER WAS .....**

If Copper was food, popcorn he'd be  
He leaps and he jumps and loves to be free  
He's lively and bouncy, he springs in the air  
But to me he is sweet and we make quite a pair.

If Copper was a colour, orange he'd be  
He's zippy and tangy and very juicy!  
Like the fruit he is bursting with goodness and fun  
And refreshing to see when my school day is done.

If Copper was transport, a sports car he'd be  
Forever in front, sleek, fast, at top speed  
His face in the wind, his nose in the air  
His ears flying high, he hasn't a care.

If Copper was a flower, a daffodil he'd be  
Cos he's Welsh and a Springer and lovely to see  
In spring you see daffodils, Wales' emblem as well  
But unlike the flower, our Copper can smell!

If Copper was a hero, himself he would be  
Because he's my puppy dog and very special to me  
When I call he comes running as fast as he can  
He just seems to know I'm his number one fan.

If Copper was a drink, champagne he would be  
He is fizzy and bubbly and always happy  
When I come to the door, he sits 'till I'm in  
The pop, like a cork, we create such a din!

If Copper wasn't Copper, a bird he would be  
Flying and swooping, just happy to be free  
Yet when the night came, he would look for a nest  
Somewhere warm, safe and cosy, my home would be best!

Dedicated to my Welsh Springer Spaniel Puppy  
"Copper" (Barhi Kings Copse)      Aged 9 months

**By Elizabeth Barratt - 8EBw**

## **Helping Hands**

Green the hands that hold the child,  
Protecting until, delicate and soft it emerges  
Pink and young and tender.

Red the hands that reach to the sun,  
Hiding in their midst the beginning  
Of helping hands to come.

Brown the hands that bid farewell,  
Giving their life to the future  
Leaving hope behind.

**By Jacqueline Casey - 8EBw**

## **Spiders**

Spiders,  
Creep, crawl,  
Black, beady eyes,  
Long, thin, agile legs,  
Lurk in dark shadowed corners,  
Carefully watch my every move,  
Busily make delicate silky sewn spider webs,  
They see us when we don't see them,  
But then it appears like a monster from its den!

**By Aimee Norman - 8DMs**

## The Remote

Bang, Bang,  
Another bullet fires,  
Whoosh, a fast car passes,  
CLICK...

...Sally kisses Harry  
Outside the hotel,  
And walks her up to his room,  
CLICK...

...Then, I jump from a plane,  
I land on another,  
Is shove the pilot out,  
CLICK...

...Jesse kisses Ben who is  
Mary's husband, who fancies  
her cousin's brother Joe,  
CLICK...

Then mum turns the Television off!

**By Michael Whitcher - 8RC**

## **Football**

Every Saturday from August to May  
A strange phenomenon:  
We put on uniforms for the special day.  
We go in cars, coaches, trains,  
We travel all over England,  
We sing and chant,  
Everyone knows the words,  
We go with heaps of hope, sometimes even fear,  
When ninety minutes later the final whistle blows,  
We blame the ref;  
We blame the ball,  
We blame the weather,  
We blame the pitch,  
If we win we sing,  
If we lose we moan,  
But one thing for sure,  
We'll be back for more.

**By Nick Cooke - 8TPU**

### **When I stole from a shop**

When I was little I stole from a shop,  
Mum found out, it gave her a shock.  
Well I didn't know we had to pay!  
Mum said she was very ashamed.  
I was only 2, I didn't know the law,  
Mum said it wasn't nice and she was sure!  
So we took it back and said we were sorry,  
I never stole again, honest,  
But even now I'm 12 years old and I go into the shop,  
They all look and stop,  
I think they know about when I stole from their shop!

**By Becky Hopley - 8CO**

## **A Tropical Winter's Beach**

As I walk on the soft, white sand  
I can hear no laughter, as if children were banned.  
Coconuts fall on the floor  
Piles of drift-wood on the shore  
The palm trees sway in a light, gentle breeze  
And a dog runs in and out of the clear blue sea.  
It feels like humans are extinct  
But as I walk I begin to think  
That when winter is over and the summer is here  
This beach will be packed with people playing near.

**By Alex Sharp - 8DMS**

## **Bad Behaviour**

I don't have ripplin' biceps  
Or plant the seeds of bad behaviour firmly in my mind,  
Don't like the true obsession, picking on the weak.  
Although I'm wise and know what's happening  
Down there on the street,  
I don't like people walking round and thinking drugs are cool  
When crack cocaine and heroin is just a game for fools,  
An attitude of mind I hate.  
I see so much is slack  
When access is doomed to me because my skin is black.  
I see them in the dirty streets  
Acting out the violence  
That takes away the breath of life, leaving blood and silence.  
Too many times we stand and watch,  
Observe and stand and stare  
Because we just don't give a damn -  
An option not to care.  
Alarms that deafen all our ears  
Can never stop the thief.  
The tears I see,  
The cries I hear,  
The anguish and the grief,  
When bang! bang! a gun - they're dead  
Those chosen loved ones snatched away.  
Hear the screams and moans  
Of victims of the joyrider,  
The crunch of broken bones.  
I cry inside with deep despair  
Which quickly turns to rage  
When the target for a mugger  
Is defenceless in the air.

**By Charlotte Leach - 9GJ**

## My Home

This was what was left of the land I loved.  
I lowered my stiff neck,  
Examining the dark and corrupted mud.  
This had once been my home.  
The soil was turned and rotten,  
The plants had withered and fallen to the ground,  
The grass had disintegrated along with the shattering shells.  
My head throbbing, I almost turned away,  
In the hope that if I closed my eyes this image would be engulfed,  
My old life returning in its place.  
Running happily through masses of thick green grass,  
Long walks around the village.

A cold and heavy tear trickled down my wrinkled cheek,  
My white hair blowing in the wind,  
Blocking my distorted vision.  
In my head the voices of my family echoed,  
As though they were still alive.  
I could hear the angry rattle of the guns,  
The "Boom" of exploding bombs,  
And the distant cry of abandoned children.

Even though an old woman these memories still haunted me,  
Like an uncontrollable nightmare.  
I took one last glance,  
Taking in the air....and hobbling away.  
This would be the last time.  
All the years of pain and heartbreak had brought me back,  
But again they would take me away.

**By Emma Andrews - 9GO**

## Welcome to Corfu

May I welcome you to Corfu - The Emerald Isle,  
And tell you something that will make you smile.  
Dramatic scenery, glorious beaches and the bluest of seas;  
Friendly locals, whose hospitality will put you at ease.  
But as you relax and start to unwind,  
there's a few odd things in Greece you'll find.

The tap water though safe to drink,  
is often a strange colour with a peculiar stink.  
So I recommend that you purchase a regular supply,  
of bottled water - it's very cheap to buy.  
The wastage pipes in Greece are only 2 inches thin,  
so please throw your loo paper straight in the bin.  
Taking a shower can be quite a laugh,  
oh how'll you wish you had a bath.  
No curtain and no hook on the wall.  
The water will flood out into the hall.  
As you reach for the towel - you'll wonder if it's there,  
can it really only be 12 inches square!  
You go to the kitchen and the cupboards are bare,  
no kettle, or teapot to be found anywhere.  
No toaster, or oven, just a couple of rings,  
No sink plug either - among other things.  
But the restaurants are great and eating out's cheap,  
and you only use your apartment to sleep.

You're beginning to wonder why on earth did you come?!  
Because the Greek welcome is as warm as the sun.  
Before long you will realise it's a great place to be,  
with a lot more to offer than sun, sand and sea.....

**by Ian Johnson - 9SHn**

## VOLCANO

It started.  
A towering pillar of blood, death and fire.  
Which darted.  
From the top of a mountain and keep growing higher.

It fell.  
Wreaking destruction wherever it went.  
The noise.  
The screaming of giants for life to be spent.

It stopped.  
Whole cities buried in liquid fire.  
For now,  
The terror is ended, no more to take lives.

The world.  
It started like this.  
An explosion.  
Is this really how mankind will end?

**By Ben Campion - 9SHN**

## **Please Remember**

The girl turned over as she slept  
She dreamt of widows as they wept  
Their faces full of pain and sorrows  
Dreading endless empty tomorrows.

They read a telegram which said  
That one they loved now lay dead  
Were told how bravely he had died  
Showed courage, but inside they cried.

She slept again and to her mind  
Came pictures of a different kind.  
She saw children born to people free  
And so she sent the world a plea  
Please never forget those men so true  
Who gave their all for me and you.

**By Fiona McLeod - 9EJ**

## I saw a man.....

I once looked into the death camp, which lay beside  
my house.

I saw a man,

A man robbed of dignity and pride,

A man not known by name, but number.

His face was disfigured and filled with blank fear,

Like that of a rabbit caught in a corner by a cruel  
predator.

I once knew this man,

We had laughed and talked together,

In merry days now gone by.

Now here I stand, and there he lay,

I in health, he in death.

A bitter cry flew from his mocking mouth,

His crazed eyes locked into mine.

I drew away, away from the wretched sight  
which filled my eyes,

And let myself drown in a sea of pity and misery.

**By Rafael Halpin - 9STa**

## A Walk to Freedom

The sun has no mercy,  
The ground, tired and earthy.  
The air, hot and humid,  
My skin damp with fluid.  
I walk slowly on,  
Like a slave - who can not run,  
Whose feet are dank and hard,  
Whose back is whipped and tarred.  
On I slowly walk,  
My mouth too dry to talk,  
My body weakens every step,  
And then, I reach the edge....

A sea of peaceful green,  
Relief I've never seen,  
But I've often enough felt.  
Then, on the ground I knelt.  
I heaved off my wrinkled shoes,  
Pushed away the blues,  
And step...  
And run...  
And suddenly...  
I feel the fresh and vibrant colours,  
Which wash away the shudders.  
The grass beneath my feet,  
Chases away the heat.  
Now, finally, I can be...  
Cool, alive and free!

**By Rachel Whitworth - 9STa**

## DIDGERIDOO

Deep, mellow and resonating.  
A sound that penetrates through your bones.  
Expressive like a language.  
Gentle, perfect discord, sound waves travelling forever  
Singing of warm and rhythmic memories.

Such a basic instrument considered so primitive  
But sounding to me more touching  
Than a thousand violins.  
Its notes not set in concrete  
Of regimented scores and requiems.  
This hollow wood's sound is free without direction  
Although each pounding note  
Has a definite symbolic motive.

Its distinguished sound will penetrate through a vast desert,  
Or even a suburban living room  
Where the inhabitant is playing for pure pleasure,  
Mesmerised by its emotive, enchanting song.

Its decoration does not show evidence of supreme,  
Significant or superior skill.  
But I certainly can't accept the thought of  
artists from a civilised culture  
Creating such a story with natural materials,  
Or Sitting on a rock being inspired by night and day.  
Symbolising each essential spirit of the earth,  
Using just a hollow piece of wood.

These termites have not created a vulnerable log,  
It will not decay,  
Joining its ancestors in the deep rich earth.  
It will live to play a tune.  
Tell a story very much alike our lives,  
Recondite but not rowdy or rumbustious,  
Just free, neutral and defying definition.

Yet if played without feeling  
Its impulsing sound can be destroyed forever.

Let this passion stay in my heart,  
Singing with every pulse.  
Influencing my muscles  
So I can run with the spirit of wild animals,  
Consoling my mind,  
Inspiring my innermost feelings.

Its spiritual call makes me turn in my deepest slumbers.  
Its mysterious cry stirs memories of the ancestors  
Whose tunes have roamed the earth  
For so many years.

**By Charlene Sibbons - 9CL**

## The Stalker

I see her,  
She doesn't see me.  
She just walks,  
Unaware of the danger,  
Unaware of me.  
She would have stayed home if she knew  
What today had in store for her;  
What I had in store for her.

For months I have watched her,  
Her every move,  
Her every breath.  
She is mine and I study her closely.  
Every inch of her body, I know,  
More than mine.  
I have been in her house, her room, her bed,  
But she is unaware  
Of me.  
I am her shadow.  
I am always there;  
Watching, planning, waiting.

I know her whole life.  
When it began,  
When it will end.  
If she won't accept me  
She won't accept anyone.  
I'll make sure.

**By Tom Lee - 10SPs**

## **The Model**

She turned to face her lift, and the cat walk.

Effortlessly, she floated down the white steps, a 'drug addict' stare clouding over her face.

She was on auto pilot, glaring straight ahead as the lightning flashes pierced the dark around her.

Her dark hair was tight and shiny against her head, but shot out in long, sharp spikes at the back,

Block eyeliner was smeared down her cheeks and her eyebrows rose to her hairline.

Her bony shoulders extended into skeletal arms and icicle fingers,

The paper-thin white dress dropped over her lack of a chest and sheered down to her wasp-like waist,

There it exploded into layers of frosty chiffon, a white waterfall cascading over her twiglets of legs.

Her feet were bare and the paleness of their skin was aggravated by the block ice runway.

She swung round to make her return journey, now focusing her stare on some of the flashing public eyes.

She reached the end of her flight and entered the dressing room, where vain peacocks pruned.

They pulled, twisted and fluttered their designer feathers, fixated by their own reflections.

An overwhelming sense of inferiority crept into her head and she stole into the toilets.

She had brought her emergency bag which she now opened, and devoured the sugary contents.

She guzzled water from the fountain to mix her stomach load, then crashed into a cubicle,

And vomited.

**By Stephanie Gunner - 10SHI**

## Puddle

The puddle is shining undisturbed  
Light does not pierce into its depths  
Only skims off its calm, seemingly impregnable surface  
The world beyond the puddle's shell is oblivious to us  
A world connected to ours by a shimmering portal  
A gateway to a wavey dimension.  
As our world ripples the puddle,  
The world beneath is thrown into a swirling chaos.  
The gentle lapping above  
Causes a whirlpool of destruction beneath.  
The dwellers of this world  
Are slung up only to be reclaimed  
by their watery domain.  
They hang there,  
wafting aimlessly,  
Before drifting down,  
To wait patiently for us to destroy the world  
again.

**By Andrew Parsons - 10MQ**

## **The Mechanic**

*For my father*

I sat and watched, still, silent, as he worked,  
Slowly piecing together minute cogs,  
Positioning the columns of toothed wheels,  
Like a vast puzzle without a picture.  
I leaned cautiously over the bench.  
Peering at the maze of mechanisms  
as he placed the casing over the top.  
Together we heaved the mass of metal,  
and fixed it in the network of steel tubes.  
The endless piece puzzle was finished.

**By Gary Chandler - 10SP**

## **Water Melon**

Blood flows from a perfect sphere  
Its glossy green surface parted  
For the grain of one bite.  
Soft tissues, creamy white, give way  
Revealing perfect pink flesh  
Dotted now and again by shiny black gems.  
Treasure uncovered from its tomb  
Beautiful, reflecting the pearlescent knives  
As they take a bite

**By Kyra Brown - 10DS**

## Survivor

In a battlefield of mud and blood  
On a lonely mound  
It stands.

Like a skeletal creature,  
fingers clutching at the sky  
A deadened, blockened  
Twisted figure, left alone to die.

It has been bombed and shot at,  
Shelled and gassed,  
Seen men killed, retreat,  
and advance en masse.

It has seen all the horror,  
Seen all the grief.  
Seen much bloodshed  
Since it lost its last leaf.

Now it stands in the driving rain,  
Amidst barbed wire and trench,  
Bodies lay in the mud around,  
The wind carries the horrid stench.

Branches broken, roots dried up,  
the bark is cracked and old  
But still it stands up on the mound.  
Amidst the bitter cold.

**By James Feist - 10SP**

## Survival

Gleaming eyes of night peer through,  
The swirling mass of fog overhead  
Tracks in the snow, direct and narrow  
As a tightrope punctuate the perfect whiteness.

Hunger drives the sharp-faced creature to seek the cache  
Hidden in anticipation of hardship ahead.  
Frequently looking up, every sense alert,  
White tipped brush held high,  
She scrapes and digs laboriously.  
At the unyielding surface,  
Breaking through to the forgotten soil of Autumn,  
She unearths a carcass, mercifully preserved by the cold.

Need lending her urgency she begins to devour meagre flesh.

Suddenly she stiffens, every muscle tense.  
A whisper of movement in the nearby wood,  
The sharp crack of a twig,  
A hated scent borne in on the faint breeze.  
Muzzle tattooed rust-coloured,  
Jaws fastened tight as it sprung around her trophy.

She turns and flees arrow-like.  
Into the welcoming undergrowth,  
It's tangle closing in behind the sleek fleeing form.

**By Mark McKay - 10SHI**

## An Explanation of Why Interior Designers Are Insane

So this is the kitchen is it?  
I'm sure we could do a lot with this.

You said you wanted cool colours.  
Peppermint green would be perfect on the walls  
If one pasted lilac-purple on the ceiling  
Added abstract art,  
Tiled the floor  
And chucked in a good old marble fireplace.

The main feature could be the arch  
With chrome sheets and flourishes of gleaming gold leaf.  
Hang a glitterball from it and see the effect.  
Several disco lights -  
Surround sound.  
Knock this wall down and there'll be room  
For your own bar!

Arrgh! What a vile piece of furniture!  
Remove it quick! I feel quite faint.  
Don't you people have any taste?  
Can I open my eyes yet?  
Thank you.

Oh! Oh! Behold that wondrous sight of divine light.  
Lava lamp, you say?  
Amazing!  
We must base the room on it.  
Suspend it from a blue nylon string.  
Knock down this wall for a giant perspex window  
And then bash down this wall  
Just for the extra space.  
Paint the rubble pink.  
Totem pole here.

And they said I was mad!  
Et voila!  
So. What do you think?

**By Antonia Russell-Clark - 10DS**

## **In the Coldness of Space**

In the coldness of space,  
there you lie, the green planet.  
Not green with copper rust  
or green with air horn dust  
or green with life and grace.

Who would have thought  
That it was covered with war  
combat and strife  
the vanquisher of life?

The greens, the browns  
the lights, the sounds  
all you must have  
heard  
in the coldness of space.

Who would have thought  
That it was covered in hunger  
no food and no crops  
like flies life drops.

But you keep on lying  
patiently waiting  
for more good times  
a smile on your face  
In the coldness of space.

**By Graeme Williams - 10SDN**

## DREAMING

I'd love to be an elephant,  
A giant one perhaps.  
I'd loll around the place all day,  
With the other elephant chaps.

I'd be a rock star elephant,  
I'd be an elephant punk.  
Girls would faint when they'd see me,  
So I'd catch them in my trunk.

I'd be an athletic elephant,  
I'd swim at the pool perhaps.  
I would swim for the local jungle team,  
As I could swim the most laps.

Oh what a lovely life I'd have,  
But unfortunately for me.  
Swimming and ????? is just impossible because  
I'm just an ant you see.

**By Mark Vincent-Piper - 10SHI**

### **Dinner for Shane** (my brother)

He wanders in from the cold air outside.  
His face full of joy because he is home .....  
He quickly charges to the room for his feast.  
Anxiously, eagerly his face tightens.  
Like a savage beast that waits for his prey.  
His face lightens as the banquet appears.  
Fiercely he rips it apart like a vulture.  
Then saddens at the empty plate.  
He is switched to life for the dessert.  
Face like a balloon, he shovels it down.

**By Sam Mullen - 10PR**

## Summer Dreams

Far away on a summer breeze, the bird soared  
On a current of warm delight.  
Dazzling white were the frosted tops of the peaks  
The mighty pinnacles of rock,  
Where firs grew evergreen.

On a distant river of sharp crevassed ice,  
A cloud of men like killer flies,  
Ate and were merry; and scraped the life away  
From the mountain range old as time,  
Where I am in my dream.

Now the wind stirs the delicate painted wings,  
Of a butterfly's perfect flight.  
Down in the deep green valley, parachutes soar,  
Lazily spiralling to earth  
Where many choose to stay

But I will stay with you with my memories up here,  
In this high heavenly paradise.  
In the distance cabins gracefully glide up the peaks,  
Glinting like mirrors in summer light  
That in my mind is seen.

**By Chris Foster - 10DS**

## A Tear in One Eye

Death has an everlasting waiting list,  
With old and young queuing up.  
No amounts of money or charms,  
Can hide you from it.  
Death can be your saviour or punishment.

Death comes to slaughter houses,  
Hospitals and homes.  
Finishing the lives of beast or man,  
Friend or foe.

Death starts and ends wars,  
With many a different blow.  
But the same young men dying,  
Dying for the love of their world.

Death comes to all that are living,  
Those who leak hatred or love.  
All troubles and pleasures are ended  
On the basis that your time has come.

Death comes in some ways  
Hand in hand with Love.  
Love of a family, friend or country.  
But when they come together  
Curing happiness or pain,  
They leave you feeling empty,  
Empty with a hole inside.

Death has funny way of showing  
That every body cares about you,  
With friends, relations, acquaintances  
Sitting on bare earth or pews  
All with a tear in one eye.

**By Jane Young - 11CF**

## Silence

Silence.  
Only the distant car noises  
Disturb the peace.

Silence.  
Only the shuffle of feet.  
Disturbs my thinking.

Silence.  
Is the horror of a small child  
crying out for someone -  
anything but being alone.

Silence.  
Is now what I want:  
No cars, no feet, no crying.  
I long to hear the peace and quiet.

Of silence.

**By Philippa Goddard - 11TA**





