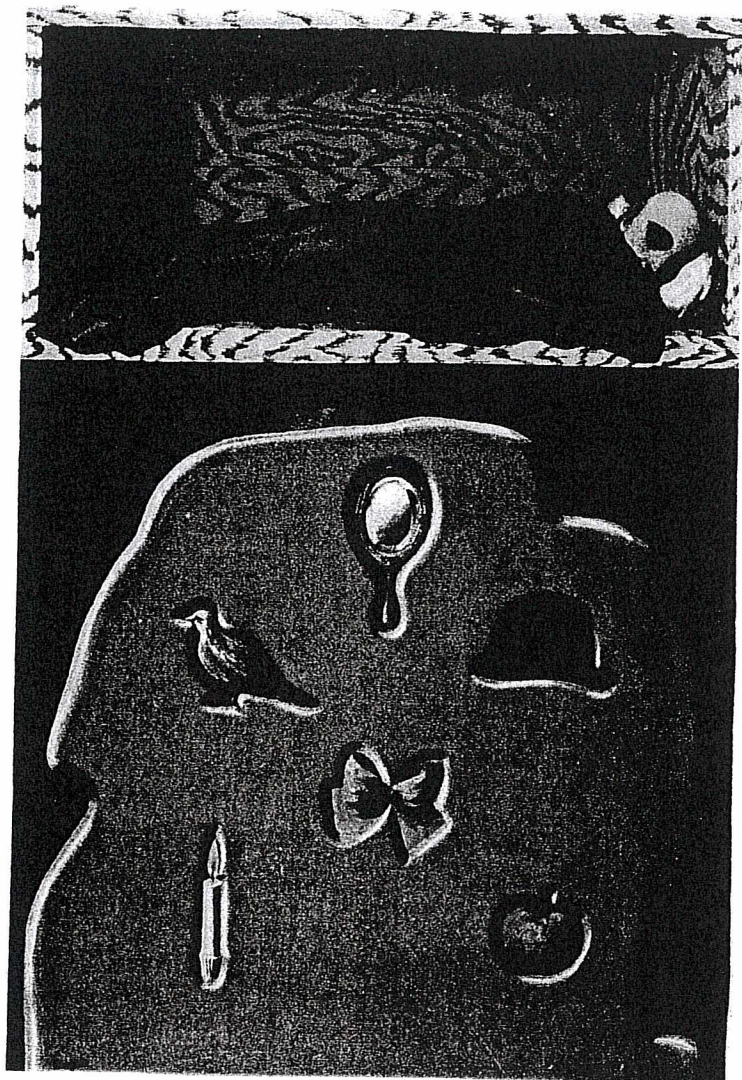


*Selected
poems
from*



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)

Inspirations

The Madman

We could have crossed the road but hesitated
And waited for the machines with dusters

Machines with polishers

Machines to keep us safe

Machines to stop the traffic

Machines to help us across

Machines to check

that the other side was safe ...

And then a man ran across With a gun

In his hand

Shouting loud and clearly

Addressing all around

Running without caution

Running without shame

Taking his own chances

Playing his own game

And he ran into the valley

And he ran on through the stream

And he shouted

While he ran

The machines would not catch him

While he shouted to the blue sky

And he called out to the birds

While he shouted to the white clouds

And he jumped and leaped and

Breathed a breath of sun, weaving through the air

with the swifts and swallows,

Green leaves on green trees sighing,

Singing, slow melodies.

He fell and lay

Resting, resting.

Until a machine caught him

And took him and put him to bed

To look after him safely and examine his head

To keep him quiet (while the machine-doctor creakened 'insane')

To let him be there until he was normal again.

But he died the next day,

The machines conducted a so-sad

Regret-a-lot forgetteral

(Hush, dear, he was mad)

And we returned home
Machines went along beside
We could have crossed the road
By ourselves. of course. But didn't.
(Remembering the madman who died)

First line by Edwin Muir
by Tamsin Saxton



The Talking Track

I remember,
the sultry afternoon heat of that late June day.
The train shuddered to a halt,
it shouldn't have stopped.

Steam hissing and spitting,
a nervous cough echoing around the carriage,
my eyes scanned the ghostly platform.
No-one entered, no one left.
The station's name Witchton West.

The sweet smell of fresh cut grass,
a carpet of wild flowers smothered my memory.
Succulent hay drying in the sun,
fluffy cotton clouds filled me with delight.

And in the hedgerows a blackbird sang,
others joining in the chorus.
Speeding through the hills of Oxfordshire
rolling into Gloucestershire.



Gemma Halliday

(Inspired by "Adlestrop" by Edward Thomas)

Cat Napping

(After reading "Hawk Roosting" by Ted Hughes)

I lie at the top of the stairs, my belly exposed.
Insolent, no falsifying dream
Between my sharp teeth and clawed feet:
Or in sleep, rehearse eat after sleep after eat.

The convenience of the high stairs,
The humans' loyalty and cat tray
Are of advantage to me,
And the food, smelly for my detection.

My claws are locked upon the soft carpet.
It took a whole two minutes
To reproduce my paw, my each tooth;
Now I hold "Arthurs" in my paw

And stand up and sit down again slowly.
I sleep where I please, making good use of my time.
There is such apathy in my body...
My purpose is resting on beds.

The pleasure of bed!
For the one path of my life, is direct through my slaves' giving.
No food escapes my sight.

My bum is beside me.
My hunger has not changed since I began.
My closed eyes have seen no pain.
I am going to keep things like this.

IAN FORWARD

Ode to Chocolate

As Romeo and Juliet were like none other;
And Petrarch and his Laura made bliss;
So it is for me and my scrumptious lover
The one I can and will not miss.
For in her heart lies total sweetness,
Her soul is closely wrapped in gold.
Yes, she, my one and only mistress,
Is my companion and comfort of old.
And oh! I look to see her waiting...
A piece of heaven so near to ground!
Every night, I sit there debating,
Should I consume with passion what I've found?
And so, with my emotions I must fight.
Seductive mistress! Milky, dark and white.

Matthew Seed

Tipidabo

*Rattling along on its rusty tracks,
It finally comes to a halt.
Warm summer air wafts through the train.
It's the middle of June.*

*A smoky waterfall gushes out of the valve.
The old wheels make a screech.
All that is heard is the silence of summer,
except for the occasional cough.*

*A crowd of wild flowers creep through the untamed
grass
Barrels of hay sit polka dotted around a distant field.
Lonely clouds roll by the sky,
as the blazing sun bounces like a ball.*

*A group of love birds park themselves on a branch
then burst into harmony.
Many birds from counties far away
join in with the choir.*

*All of this happening in 60 seconds
That should have been spent somewhere else
As my train rolled away
I only just caught the name of the unknown station ...*

Tipidabo.



Jessica Hamilton

The Winter One

(After reading "Work and Play" by Ted Hughes)

The Robin of Winter, he works all the winter,
A buffeted breast of coveted crimson,
A beautiful body of breathtaking beige.
But the toasty hot homes
Are protected from frost
The owners forgetting
Their Arctic surrounding.

The Robin of Winter, he wages through winter,
Wisps up the white
To be nested and wait there.
But the wall of a window protects from the truth
An icy glazed barrier
That blocks out the cold.

The tawdry world,
Of sherry and presents
Comes once a year
And descends as it pleases.
The Robin of Winter, a bountiful soul,
Nested at night but out in the daytime,
A pattern of paths he leaves as his trail,
The trail of the Winter One.

Simon Hammond

DRINKER

Amy Booth

The man starts stirring - a shame
To think of. All night
Booze filled his open entrails. Now a piercing headache,
A line of drool, stubbed chin,
He falls out of bed.
A confused state of numbness he stands
In position to hose the dank wall of the lavatory.

He defies caffeine and won't start.
Breath is like poison already
Wanting to suck smoke, and eyes staring blankly.
As if hiding nothing, but jumbled matter.
I think of it in pity. Beyond him.
The kettle wails - capitulates miserably
In the lonely, cold kitchen. Ringing,
The telephone aggravates the man as he pours one
More, and heads for the stairs northward.
All the time the man is drowning.
In the units of 'needed' drink.
The pleasure is now gone.

Homage to "Tractor" by Ted Hughes

Hawk Eyes

Katie Munns

I sit at the front of the class, my eyes open
Darting fiercely, no movement at all
Between the classroom door and classroom back
Or any kind of sound or laughter.

The silence of a timed exam!
The calmness and tranquility
Are of advantage to me
As I wait for the essays to be turned in for my inspection.

My feet are tapping impatiently.
It took the whole half term
To prepare for this test, my each question:
And now I hold the culmination in my hand

Or get up, and write on the board slowly -
I put red pen where I like because it is all mine,
There is no sympathy in my marking:
My manners are giving out Fs -

The allotment of detention.
For the one path of my anger is direct
Through the free time of teenagers.
No arguments assert my might:

The National Curriculum is behind me.
Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no talking.
I am going to keep things like this.

DISCOVERIES OF WHITE FANG

***After reading "White Fang" by Jack London)**

I have come a long way,
Since breaking the wall of light.
I have had many an adventure,
Finding new ways of life,
Finding the dangers and problems.

I have found fear,
Which has lived in me since we first met.
I have discovered curiosity,
Meeting objects like magnets,
As if I had a metal chest.

I have met water,
Which seemed a solid base on which to walk.
I was helplessly washed and pounded down stream,
The water made my eyes bulge, my throat throb.
Agonising injuries told me the mighty
Moving path was nothing to tangle with.

I have met fire,
Leaping red flames, dancing in front of my eyes,
As if asking me to play.
The gringe and tingle of raging heat,
It soon warned me off.

I have met meat,
The gush of blood, a taste of flesh.
It's what I live for.
Anything moving to attack,
Something to set my teeth into,
And feel the tide of blood on which I live.

Graham Backhurst

