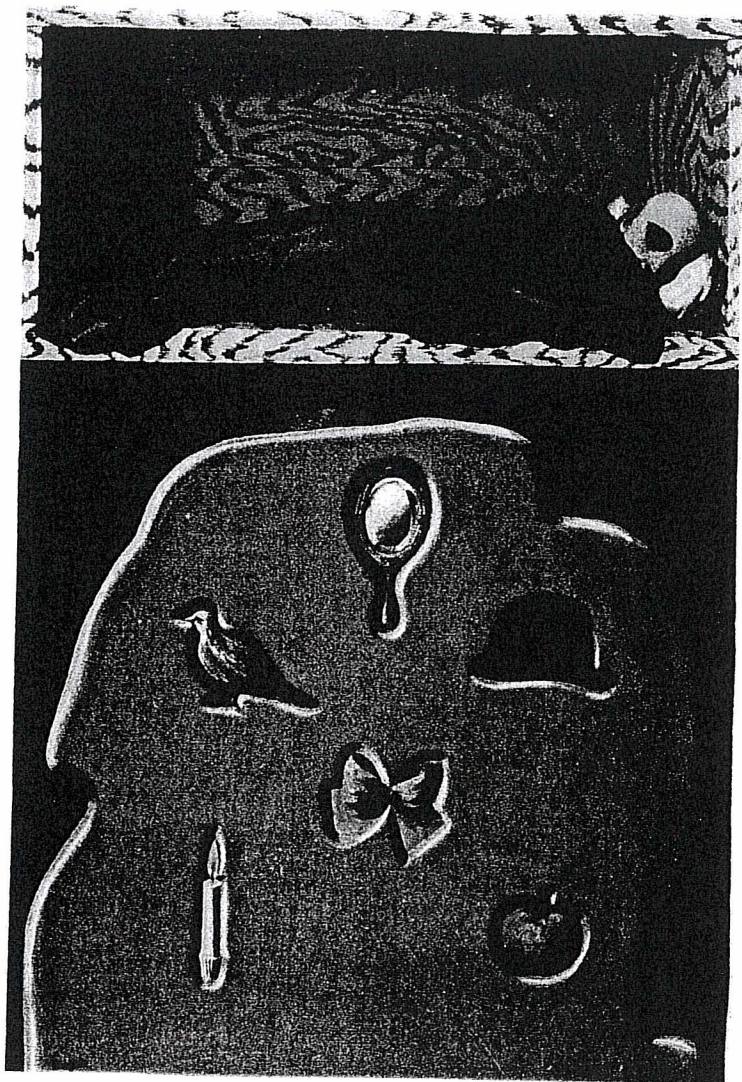


*Selected
poems
from*



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)

Charlene Sibbons

PART OF YOU (for my mother)

I found you in a box,
A sealed box under the stairs.
I dragged it out not knowing
What delicate things it contained.

I held you in my hand
Astonished
You had lived the dream
Of every little girl.

I never knew.

I saw a different beauty
So graceful and free.
Sparkling sequins and ribbon,
A tight bun, tiara and tights.

There you were balancing on the end
Of your pink satin shoes.
Such shape.
You were a swan, a dancing breeze.

I see you slowly working.
Why didn't you tell me?
I feel guilty
Did I stop you?

I am only seeing half a woman.
You have kept part of your life from me
But I am not angry
Those times belong to you.

Independence

*Please don't treat me like a child,
I've grown up lots since then,
No-more will I hold your hand
Or follow you again.*

*All those times you held me back,
Imprisoned me at home,
All the time you spent with me,
You did not see I'd grown.*

*Don't wrap me up in cotton wool,
Don't make me dresses to wear,
Don't call me poppet or sweetheart,
Or buy bobbles for my hair.*

*To you I may be just a child
I'm more than that to me,
Accept me, please, for who I am
Not what you think you see.*

*Let me do what I need to do,
My neck is in a noose,
Let me say what I want to say,
Just please, let me break loose.*

Lisa Whitfield

Father and Son

*Every morning, until the age of ten,
I could be found in the bathroom,
Perched on the side of the bath,
Watching my father.
He would stand there, strong and muscular,
His broad shoulders and arms huggable,
His smiling face loveable.
He would fill the sink with steamy hot water,
A ball of white foam would be ready in one hand,
A sharp steel razor in the other.*

*With a beard of foam,
My father would draw the razor down his face
Removing all traces of white.
The zipping sound was almost musical.
Gradually his tired, bearded face,
Came up like new.
He would wipe his face,
Then splash on some cologne.
The spicy scent would fill the room.
Then he would turn to me,
Smile, and spray me with the sweet fragrance.*

*Occasionally he would cut his face,
I would tear the tissue paper for each new cut.
My job and I was proud of it.
Hand in hand we would leave the bathroom.*

*We were so close then,
My father and I.*

Nicola Pollard

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

Stranger

*This woman is a stranger.
Her face is impassive ,detatched.
Eyes bear no echo of life or laughter;
They have turned to ice,
Leaving an empty shell.
Bitterness has rushed to fill the vacuum,
Building an insurmountable wall of resentment.*

*This woman is my mother.
She has withdrawn so far into herself
That only the wall between us remains.
She will not allow our eyes to meet.
Perhaps she fears the possibility
That my silent pleas could erode away the barrier
Which has existed for so long
It has become a lone ally in our wordless war -
Or perhaps she has forgotten who I am.*

Sarah Dawson

HOW IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN

We're going to see granny and granpa's graves today.
And there was no
Quiver of sadness in the voice,
No edge of grief.
Just serious solidness, hoping
To kindle some interest.
For we had not seen them alive.

There were no dark, heavy clouds,
Shrouding the joy from the sky.
No drizzle or biting chill.
Just the brilliant, Eastern sunshine
Bathing and warming all below.

No mourning parties, no tears.
Not even silence.
Everyone got in the stifling car,
Which wasn't even black.
We drove up the mountains,
Some short distance away.
Past the tea plantations,
Past the paddy fields,
Past the old bullock hauling the cart.
Past the peasants, the poor, the beggars.
Past the long, wide rivers,
Shaded by the overhanging trees.
Past the village and the markets
Up, onto the warm mountains,
Covered in rubber trees.

The cemetery
Was just an earthy clearing,
Surrounded by trees.
Two earth mounds lay,
Side by side, my grandparents.
A solitary stone tombstone
Stood erect, and greying with time.
The mounds were bordered
By foot high wall, once white
Accommodating peasant grasses and more,
We laid no flowers.
But lid candles placed in the wall.
Then stood around talking.
Then we put out the candle flames.
And everyone left.

So natural in emotion,
No forced feeling of grief,
It was how it should have been.

Asha Nayaka

THE CARPENTER

For my Grandad

*The man stands,
Hunched over the bench in front of him,
His brow furrowed with thought and concentration.*

*The wood in front of him lies listlessly,
Unshaped, Uncoloured,
Unrecognisable ...
Waiting to be formed.*

*He saws slowly and firmly.
The cold metal teeth sink into the wood.
The forming dust
is blown to the floor,
Before it has a chance to exist.*

*The room is full of scents and smells,
Like an oriental spice bazaar.
The floor, littered with sawdust, that
Smells fresh and new;
The varnish pot, leaking strange odours,
Across the room;
The hot smell of metal on wood,
And the smell of the perspiration from the man.*

*His rough hands sense the grain of the wood,
As it runs in curved patterns
Across the surface.*

*The plane, gliding along the wood,
Leaves a trail of golden curls behind.
The hands gently brush them away,
And they sink to the floor
Where they are crumpled to dust
Underfoot.*

Emma Williams

It's that time again

It happens too often with impending doom
when Mum says those words - 'TIDY YOUR ROOM'.

Upstairs I troop, my intentions are good
I need to be tidier, I know I should.

I open the door, well that's a start,
Don't go in my room if you've got a bad heart.

Not a single bit of carpet to be seen,
It will take me years to get this clean.

I begin by picking things off the floor,
It makes it easier to open the door.

Eventually I make it to the other side,
The pile of picked up rubbish is long and wide.

The bin is soon full, the laundry basket too,
"It's been a long time since I saw that shoe".

Next I start to hang clothes up,
"surely it's not mould in that cup".

Now the floor is clear, surfaces are too
and I look around for what next to do.

I'm spoilt for choice, should I vacuum or dust?
I don't want to do either but I know I must.

An hour later my room is done,
not at all fun.

CHILD - ADULT

Mother, release me.
I'm still caged
In the womb of bars
You use to surround me.
Let me out.
I need to breathe.
Breathe in - the world,
Breathe you - out.

Yet, I might drown.
Does drowning hurt?
Will life stain my lungs
With its poisoned air?

Mother, help me.
Pump life back into my body.
I am not yet developed.
Open the door, I want to come in.
Protect me,
Don't release me - yet.

Amanda Gale

The broken vase

*My father holds the small tube,
Between his large but delicate fingers,
Making sure all the time,
That the constant flow of glue stays,
On the sharp broken edge of the cracked vase.
His strong fingers cling carefully to the smooth surface,
Of the cold, half empty, tube.
The sticky liquid runs along the shattered edge,
As he slowly moves his hand.
Bit by bit the pieces fix together,
To reform the once beautiful vase.*

David Reeves

Mum's Magic



One by one, out come the ingredients,
Utensils clatter on the surface tops.
Gradually, sweet odours mask the stale air
As she slaves over the hot stove, smiling.

To herself. Stirring, mixing and pouring
In love. People come and people go.
But she remains constant, stirring, humming.
The windows steam and the gas flames flicker.

The clattering of blue china, the plates
Emerge. Hungry kids flock to the table.
Call it mum's magic; her creative flair.
'Anyone can', she says to me, fondly.

Pure love transformed into tasty delight,
I know each mouthful will be perfect; just right.

Hoovering

*With a gloomy expression on her face,
She pushes backwards and forwards,
In rhythm with her steps, to and fro.
As she sweeps past, I lift my legs high,
For her to vacuum underneath.
She kicks the hoover forwards, and
Pulls it towards her again,
Flicking the cable away from her.
She swings the hoover to her side,
And repeats her standard hoovering steps.*

Mark Drayton

PARENT

I've always hated him,
An open wound in my memory,
Perhaps it's a habit,
A void of unfair accusations,
Can't he see through the confused space,
See me for what I really am?
He won't look.
His sticky blocked mind,
A straight unchannelled thought,
Does he care?
I try, I try so hard,
I deliver all my "nice emotions"
To his steel door,
And when it opens,
I see something,
A faint warmth
Then it shuts hard,
A cold, loud, painful slam,
Why?
I don't care
Perhaps he's always hated me.

Elisabeth Rackham