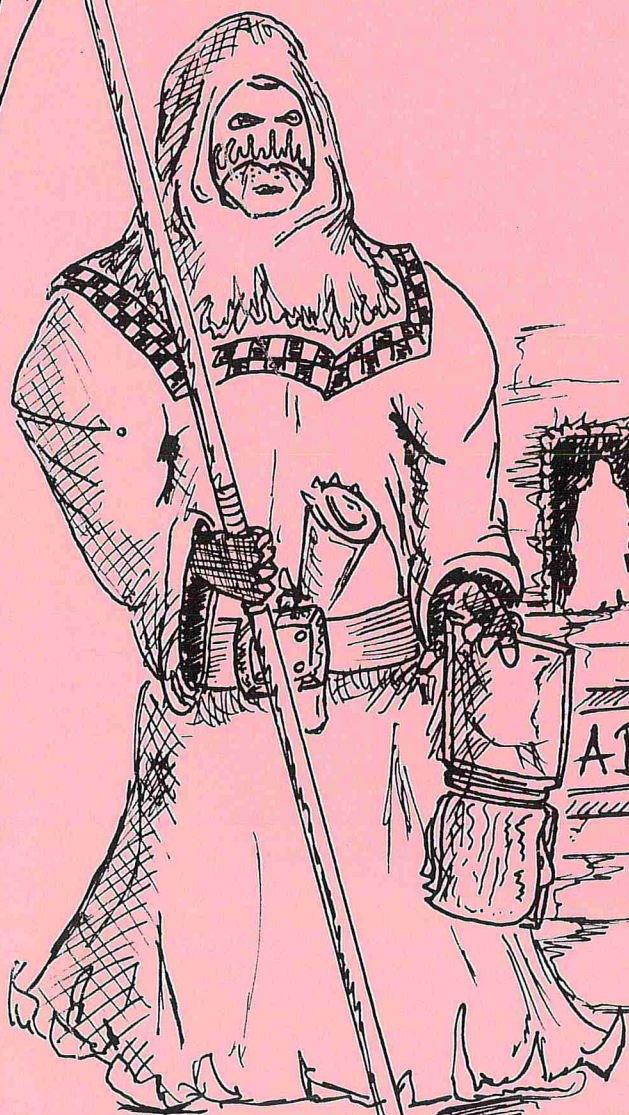


CONTRIBUTING TO THE MS

Illustrations
MARK BILLINGTON
+
DAVID BRISK

1998



ABC

POEMS COME
FROM THE
HEART

'98

LMN
PQR

Judge's Report 1998. MATTHEW FRANCES.

Poetry is a kind of game. You play it with the sound of words - when you rhyme, for example - or with the meaning of words. You play it with ideas, like pretending the sun is a gold coin or the night is a black blanket. Children are good at playing, which means they're often good at poetry, too, and the poems in this competition are a good example of that. I have been delighted by their imagination, their freshness and their sense of fun. In many cases, I felt that an adult couldn't have done it better. As you grow up, you know a lot more and you're able to think more deeply about life, but it's easy to forget how to play. That's why the poems by older children in this competition sometimes lack a little of the sparkle shown by the younger ones, though they make up for it in other ways by their knowledge and experience. The trick, if you can manage it, is to be able to think in both ways. Even when you know that the sun really is, it still *looks* like a gold coin.

All this doesn't mean that poetry isn't serious. Playing is a way of learning about the world, and poetry can help you come to terms with the problems and anxieties of life. Reading these poems, I have been reminded that children aren't automatically protected from these problems as adults sometimes think they are. There are poems here about war, illness, old age and death. Other poems are about the beauties of nature - but they don't forget that those beauties are under threat from pollution and urban development. Poetry offers no solution to problems like this, but it can help us understand them and why they matter.

Year 7

Martin Hammond's 'House Guest' came with a note on it from a teacher that said 'Delightful!' I couldn't agree more. The comparison of night is outstandingly original, and is developed with an imagination and consistency that any poet would be proud of:

'As payment he would leave the sun.
The dawn was his executioner'.

Nicola Johnson's 'Embarrassment Makes Me Go Wrong' is a witty lesson in how to play with words and ideas, which ends with a satisfying explanation for its topsy-turviness. 'Thinking smaller' by Kate Jeffrey has a similarly elegant structure and reminded me of the changing viewpoints of a film. Emma stride's 'The Giraffe' is well described and full of vitality.

Year 8

‘The Fog’ by Owen Spottiswoode is another good example of an imaginative comparison - the fog as an oldman:

‘With his cloak of moist white
And his robe torn and frayed’

Jayme Gamblin’s ‘The Horrible Mess’ is splendidly funny and gruesome. ‘The Secrets in a Fircone’ by Kirsty Fennell is magical and mysterious, while Phillip Ward’s ‘Mum, I’m Hungry’ has good dialogue and enjoyable crazy logic.

Year 9

‘War’ by Daniel Scutt has a power and energy that come partly from vivid description and partly from a very impressive use of rhyme and rhythm:

‘Across the open field of wire
The enemy crouches in the mire.
the deadly guns let loose their fire.’

The dialogue in Aziz Alzouman’s ‘The Corner Shop’ is so realistic we might be in the shop with him. ‘Oh, How I Miss You So!’ by Sally Nelson is very touching, and Gemma Pidgley’s ‘Late Love’ is a well-controlled rhyming poem.

Year 10

I was drawn to Jennifer Richard’s ‘The Sleeping Princess’ by its magical imagery:

‘Creamy dragons chasing mice
Bowls full of milk and fish.’

‘The English Numah’ by Neil Sharman is a poem with a neat structure, used to explore the viewpoints of people of different ages. Andrew Skinner-Valerio’s ‘A Poem for a Die’ is a clever treatment of an unusual subject, while Gourav Bansal’s ‘Aim’ has a relentless drive and uses its line-breaks effectively.

Year 11

'Avebury at Dawn' by Ailsa Brown captures both the magic and the commercialism of its subject:

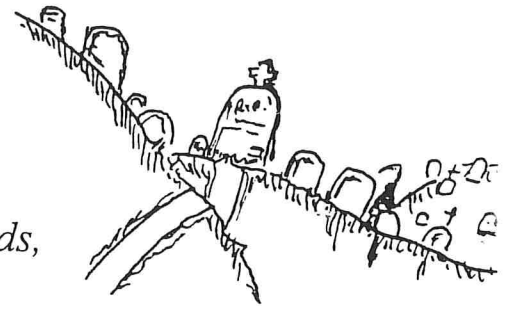
'The stones' last peace now shattered as
They watch the ice-cream bearing people come.'

Leah Gallop's 'Il Carnevale' had glamour and vividness. The fun and excitement of Andrew Olding's 'A Trip Across the Channel' came across clearly, and I liked the unsentimental sympathy of Gideon Gilbert-Johns's 'A Wolf'.

Well done to all these, and to everyone who missed out this time. Your poems have given me a lot of pleasure.

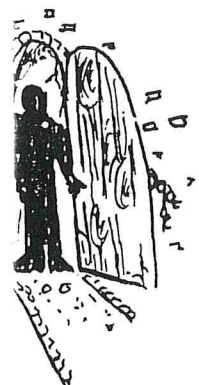
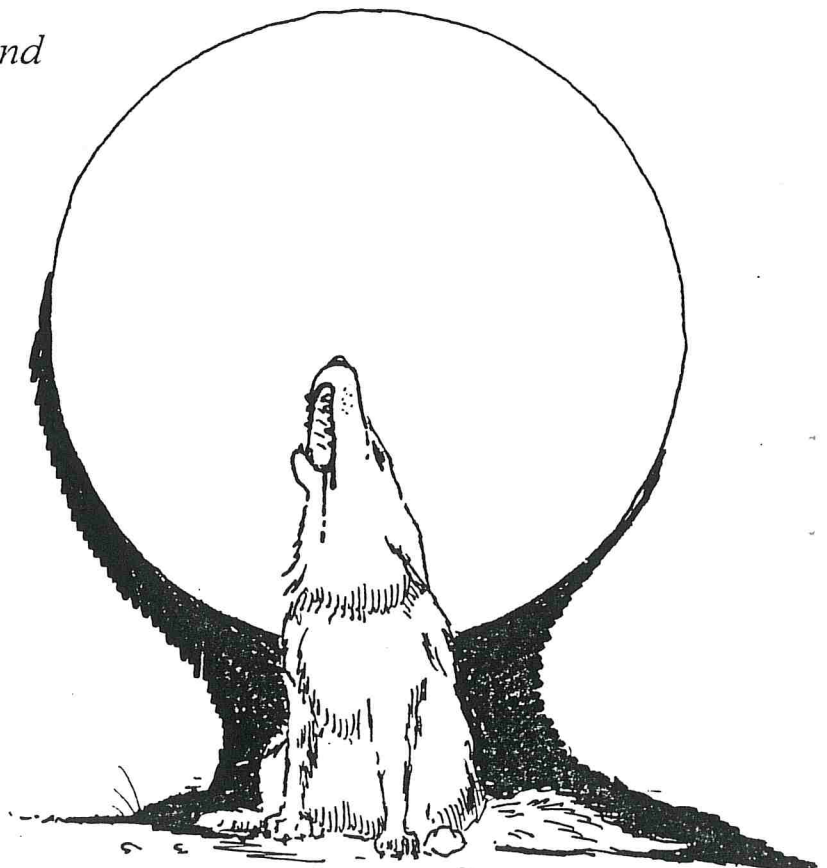
HOUSE GUEST

*Like a wolf, he stood at the door.
A sharp, toothy grin he did bear.
His eyes were as sharp as diamonds,
He had a dark suit and a tie.
He circled the room, once or twice,
Testing for rodents and such like,
Before declaring "I'll take it!"
And settling in for the night.*



*He got darker with the time,
Swallowing the earth like a sweet.
As payment he would leave the sun.
The dawn was his execution.
The alarm clock moved a half circle.
The daylight bathed the morning dew.
The landlady awoke at eight.
The dark Night had left long before.*

*Martin Hammond
7TP*



EMBARRASSMENT MAKES ME GO WRONG

*I get out of my breakfast
I eat my bed
I put on my tea
I drink my clothes
I sit on the window
I open my chair
I get ready for door
I walk out of the school
I walk in to my coat
I take off my cloakroom
I work all home
I go straight day
I take off my television
I watch my shoes
I go asleep
I fall to bed
And all of this because you made me go red.*

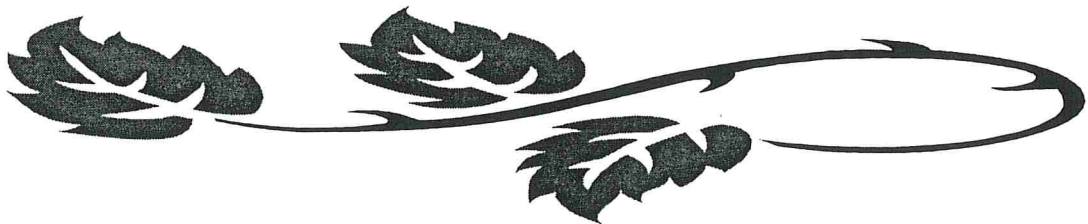
*Nicola Johnson
7RC*



THINKING SMALLER

*The wriggling maggot,
On the sharp hook,
Hanging from a new fishing rod,
In the hands of an old man,
Sitting on a blue boat,
Sailing on a sparkling river,
That runs through a busy town,
On a colourful map,
On a cotton cover,
That covers a double bed,
In a dark bedroom,
Behind a pine door,
At the top of a carpeted stair,
In a red brick house.*

*Kate Jeffery
7SL*



THE GIRAFFE

*Tall as a tree the giraffe stands,
Eating the leaves of trees in dusty lands.
Delicate lips and huge strong teeth,
Pulling off the new green leaf.*

*Spotted skin and big black eyes,
Staring up at the bright blue skies.
Long legs and tiny hoof,
Head that seems to go through the roof.*

*They gallop along the barren plain,
Hoping they'll soon see water again.
Wild and free, away from the zoo,
Looking at the wonderful view.*

*Emma Stride
7DMS*



THE FOG

*On damp and cold mornings,
The old man comes to play,
With his cloak of moist white,
And his robe torn and frayed.*

*He mopes around the garden;
He swirls around the moor;
He raps upon the window;
He whistles down the shore.*

*But then the sun comes out
And afternoon creeps in
And on his snow white steed
He gallops off again.*

Owen Spottiswoode
8EBA



THE HORRIBLE MESS

*When my dad stuck a screw driver in the back of the telly,
The sparks went up his arm and into his belly,
Which made him quiver and shake like jelly,
When my dad stuck a screw driver in the back of the telly.*

*It made him hiss; it made him roar.
His eyes popped out and fell on the floor.
Then he sort of melted into a horrible mess.
Some of him splatted on my mum's new dress.*

*As she scraped him up we heard her say,
"Now just you learn from what happened today.
If you do not want to end up this way,
Please take note and do as I tell ye.
Never stick a screw driver in the back of the telly".*

Jayme Gamblin
8CL



THE SECRETS IN A FIR CONE

*You can tell a secret to a fir cone,
As it will never tell.
It will hide within its body,
Like an invisible spell.*

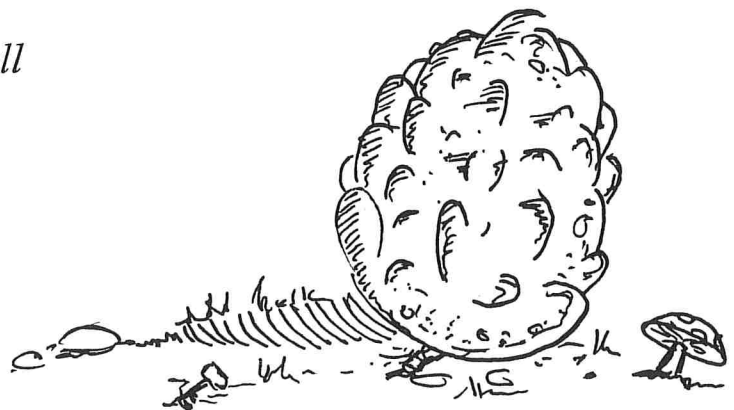
*It will never let your secret out,
Not to anyone at all.
The secret won't even drop out,
If it has a fall.*

*It will keep your secret safe,
Like water in a cup,
But please beware for
When it opens up*

*.... Secrets will be out,
Like shots from a gun,
Hurting those you told about,
Offending everyone.*

*So if you're blocked up by a Secret
And need to set it free,
don't tell a fir cone,
tell a trustworthy bee.*

Kirsty Fennell
8SHA



MUM, I'M HUNGRY

*Mum, I'm hungry,
What can I have?*

*Go eat a fly
Or have a pie,
Or maybe the pussy cat's eye!*

I don't want that!



*Mum, I'm hungry,
What can I have?*

*Go eat some chips from a dish,
Or even,
Have the goldfish!*

I don't want that!

*Mum, I'm hungry,
What can I have?*

*Have some Pedigree Chum,
Or some chewing gum,
If you want,
There is the dog,
YUM!*

No I don't want that!

*Mum! I'm hungry,
What can I have?*



*Eat some cheese,
But please, please, please,
DON'T ASK ME!*

*Yeah, that's what I'll have,
I'll have some cheese.
Oh, no I just had some of that!*

*MUM, I'M HUNGRY
WHAT CAN I HAVE!*

*PHILIP WARD
8SHN*





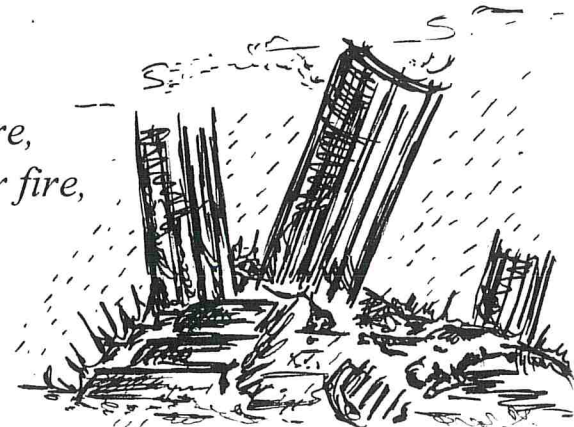
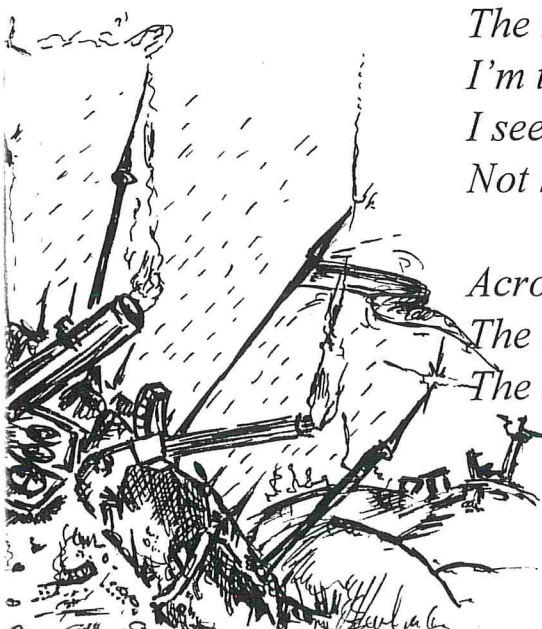
WAR

*Row on row they stand bleach white,
A gruesome memory of that fight.
When nations strove to prove their might,
Convinced each one that they were right,
And we marched into hell,
Behind us shouts of glory roared,
Our hearts rejoiced, our spirits soared,
As into the furnace each we poured.
Not hearing death's close knell.*

*Soldiers sweating on their face.
Marching at a steady pace,
Through the mud we race and race,
Pack and rifle all in place.
As we storm into hell,
The start of the battle now in sight,
Buzzing planes at dizzy heights,
To show the Hun the British might.
Will this be his death's knell?*

*Through my heart rip fear and dread,
Will the evening find me dead?
"A piece of cake" the Generals said,
Will by brain be full of lead?
And we slide into hell,
Men around me hit the ground.
The noise of guns a deafening sound,
I'm trusting I'm not heaven bound.
I see death's clutches all around,
Not hearing death's close knell.*

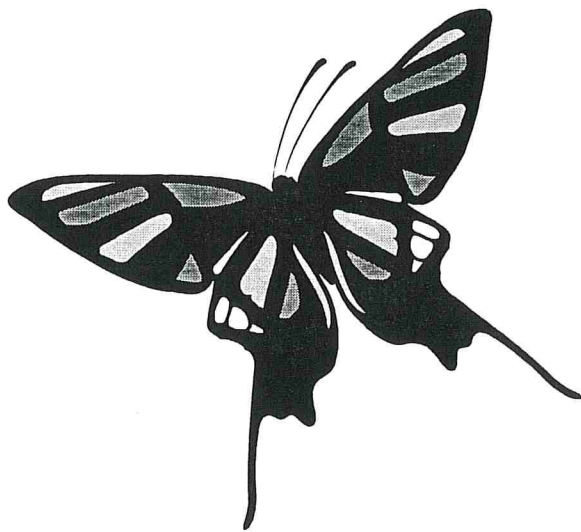
*Across the open field of wire,
The enemy crouches in the mire,
The deadly guns let loose their fire,*



Late Love

*It's easy to lock up your heart,
and try to be a world apart;
Shut out the sun, the snow, the rain,
Forsake the pleasures and the pain.
Leave all the real world far behind
And just lie quietly in your mind.
The birds, the flowers, hedgerows, streams.
No longer form part of your dreams.
No smile to smile, no tear to cry;
The light has fallen from your sky.
Your grief is strong, your sorrow great,
Alas, it seems love came too late.*

Gemma Pidgley
9DS



Sleeping Princess

*She sleeps on the floor,
Unaware of her outside admirers.
A beautiful princess is all they see,
But inside is a world of madness and joy.*

*Creamy dragons chasing mice,
Bowls full of milk and fish,
The outcome decided by the throwing of a dice,
The mice end up dead on a dish.*

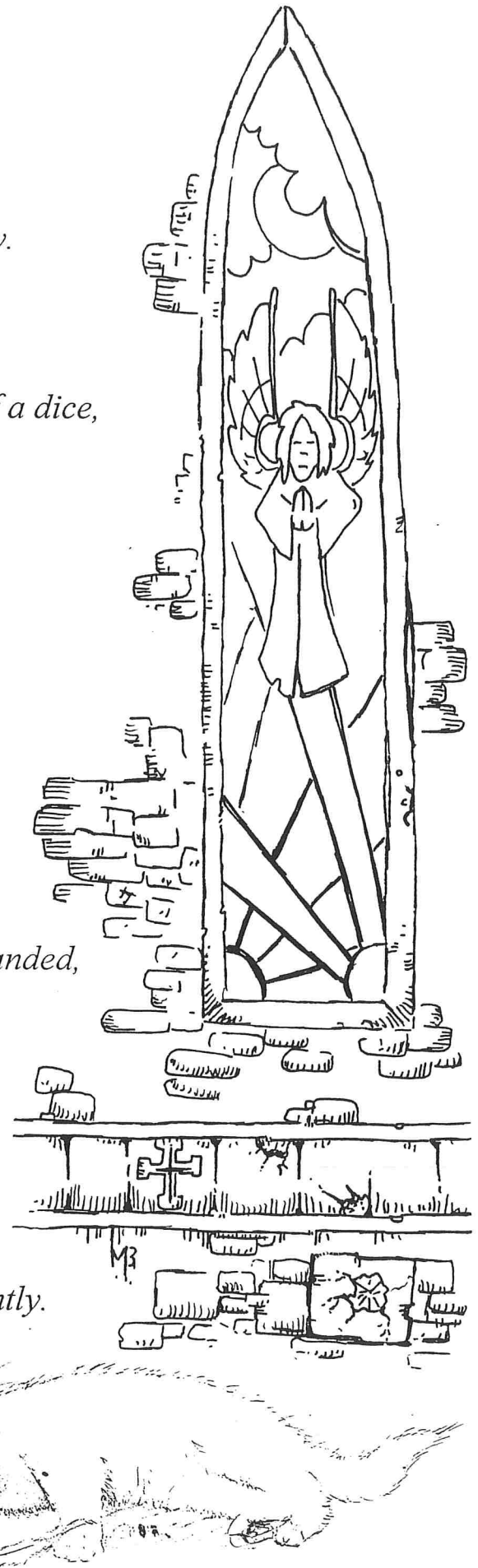
*Helpless to the human world,
She wakes and runs to escape,
Grabbed and trapped she stays,
Then all interest is lost and so is she.*

*Glaring at the golden sun,
Not amazed or thoughtful,
Just curious,
Always curious.*

*When the queen takes over, food is demanded,
The nose highers,
She thinks she rules now,
But no-one listens.*

*Dejected on the floor she sits,
Nothing to do but sleep,
She slips into her slumber,
People crowd to watch the princess silently.*

*Jennifer Richards
10AF*



The English Numah

*Wail, wail, wail, I want to have the loudest cry,
Talk, talk, talk, I want to speak.
Food, food, food, I want to eat.
Walk, walk, walk, I want not to crawl.
Sleep, sleep, sleep I want to dream.*

*Fun, fun, fun, I want to have fun,
Fashion, fashion, fashion, I want not to stand out.
Parents, parents, parents, "you're so unfair".
Tall, tall, tall, I want to be taller.
Cool, cool, cool, I want to look cool (man)!
Old, old, old, want to be older.*

*Fun, fun, fun, I still want to have fun,
Parents, parents, parents, what parents?
Walk, walk, walk, I don't want these wheels.
Talk, talk, talk, (not without my teeth!!).
Sleep, sleep, sleep, I do most of the day.
Young, young, young, I want to be younger.
Death, death, DEATH, is now upon me*

*Neil Sharman
10HW*



A Poem For A Die

*You are a roll of mystery,
Wrapped tightly within six digits.*

*Blamelessly you turn, unaware,
of the money on your head.*

*Innocent and pure,
yet satan's favourite toy.*

*Through the smoke, liquor and jostling,
you keep your beat.*

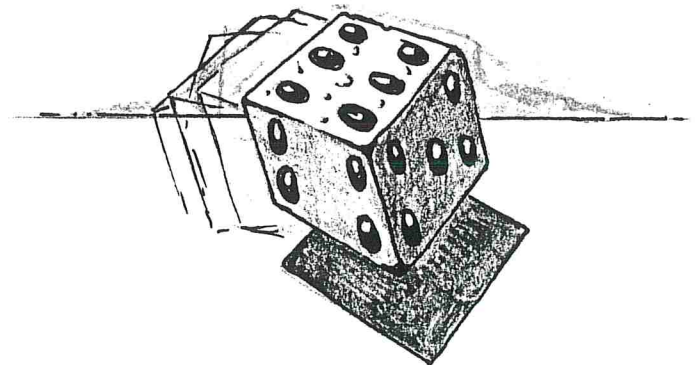
*Subjected to curses, to sacred numbers
imprinted on your back.*

*You find it laborious to keep the pace
and your roll has lost its tumble.*

*Your purpose was ephemeral,
but this does not discourage you.*

..... your role was worth much more.

*Andrew Skinner-Valerio
10CF*



AIM

*I will remain
Still.*

*I will remain
Still.*

*No one can move
Me.*

*No one can budge
Me.*

*Nothing can change
Me.*

*Nothing can stop
Me.*

*I will go in the direction
I want.*

*I will go where ever
I want.*

*That's my aim
That's my aim.*

*I will not go
Undisciplined.*

*I will not go
Purposeless.*

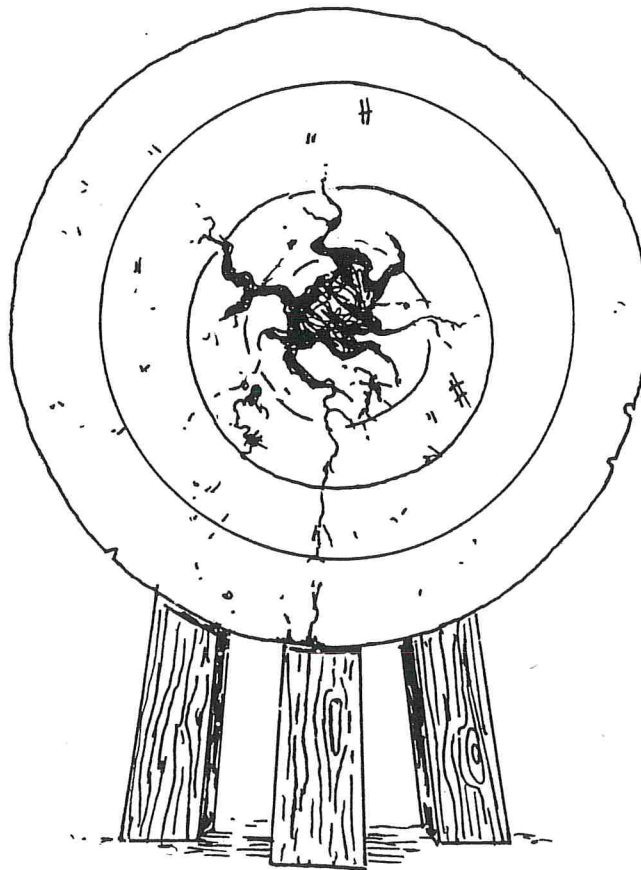
*I will not go
Unfocused.*

*I take a vow
I take a vow.*

*I see my goal
I see my target
I see my destination*

*That's my aim
That's my aim.*

*Gourav Bansal
10MG*



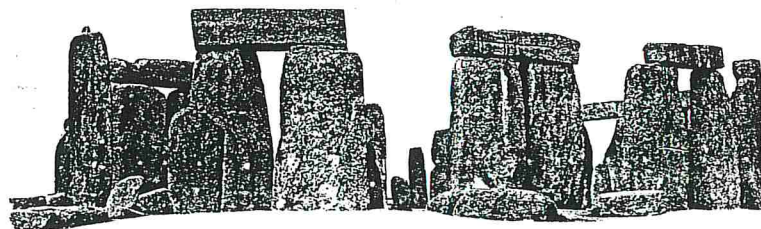
AVEBURY AT DAWN

*Megalithic monoliths rise
Like Gaias' teeth at dawn,
Piercing the crown of mist
That settles like breath of doves.*

*Empty, early earthy age
Where nothing stirs nor breathes.
Giant structures to things long gone,
Contemplating silent loss and fear.*

*The sun's rays strike sharp the day,
Golden herald of a second age,
The stones' last peace now shattered as
They watch the ice-cream bearing people come.*

*Ailsa Bown
11CE*



IL CARNEVALE

*A burst of colour
With a hint of gold
As satin skirts stroke
The steps of the Campanile.*

*The raven eyes stare
Through a visage
Without expression,
Just thoughtful and mute.*

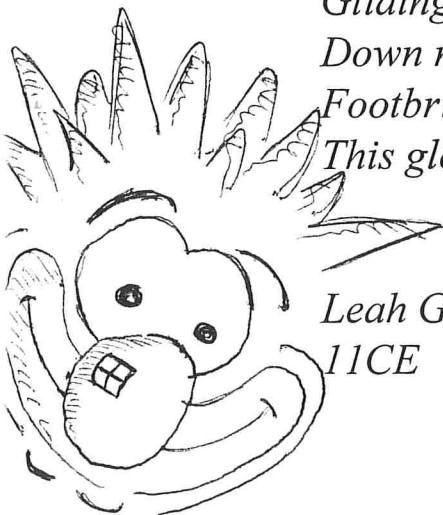
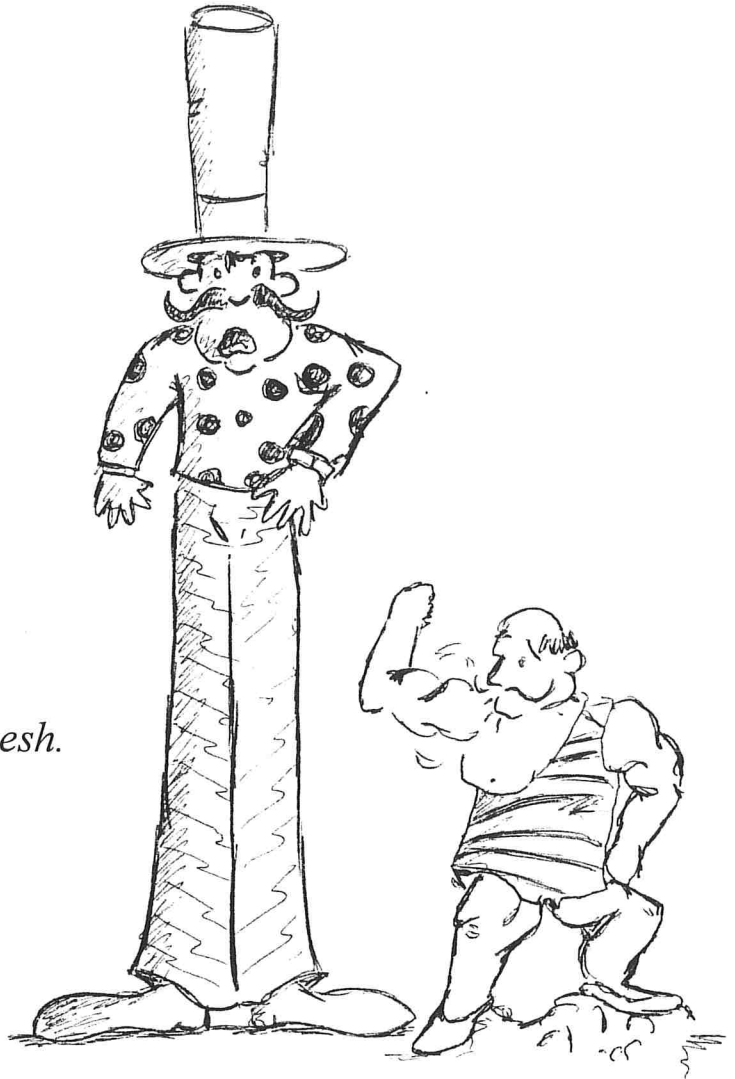
*A gloved hand clasps
It s lover's red rose
Ruffs of net, lace and silk
And a wimple covering all flesh.*

*Pearl drop beads dangle,
Sequins sparkle
As the beautiful gowns
Sweep the Venetian streets.*

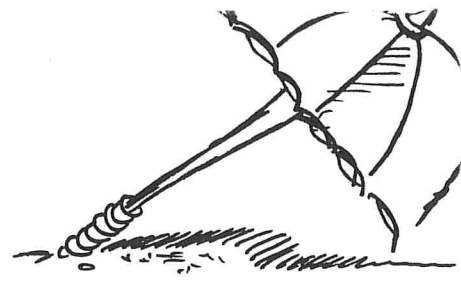
*Storm clouds and snowstorms,
Suns, moons and stars,
Glittered complexions - yet
All are blind to joy.*

*Gliding with style they disappear
Down narrow alleys and over
Footbridges which keep
This glorious city afloat.*

*Leah Gallop
11CE*



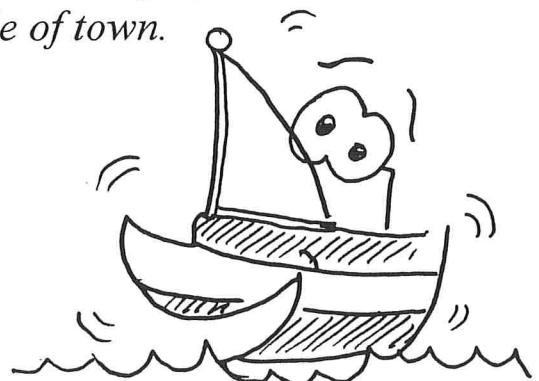
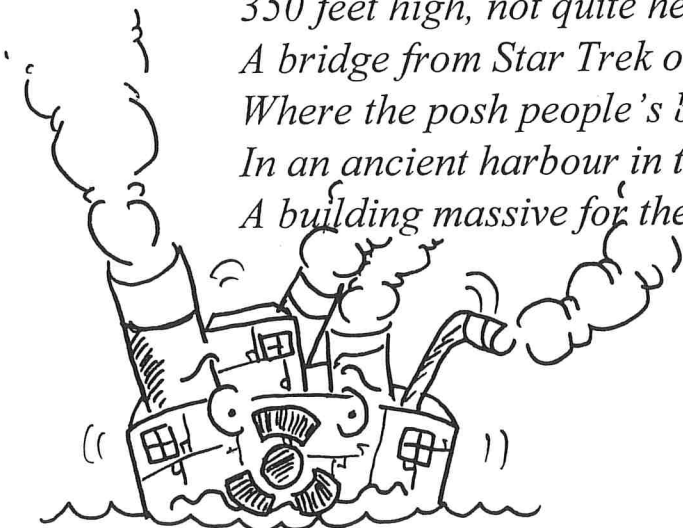
A TRIP ACROSS THE CHANNEL



*A lot of excitement - just four lads -
A trip abroad, no adults in charge
An overnight sailing making for France.
Portsmouth we left at eleven p.m.
No time for sleep, too much to explore.
Abroad the boat, The Pride of Le Havre
Casinos, arcades, three restaurants, bars
And upper class things if you've a luxury pass,
Though no pool in use on overnight trips
For shortage of staff at work elsewhere.
Talking, walking, drinking coke,
Walking the decks, no land in sight.
Our bunks not slept in even though we were tired.*

*Then there we were - Le Harve at five-thirty.
Still very dark, and now really tired.
In hard plastic chairs we slumped for three hours.
Light at last came and we started our walk.
- Surprise, surprise, McDonald's was there!
Though called McDaid's, three times as big
As any at home with meals humongous
- Too much to eat.*

*A supermarket strange - like a nuclear power station,
A great theatre like a funnel from our ship.
A church in concrete with a mighty spire,
350 feet high, not quite heaven reaching.
A bridge from Star Trek over Quai George,
Where the posh people's boats were on display,
In an ancient harbour in the middle of town.
A building massive for the EU.*

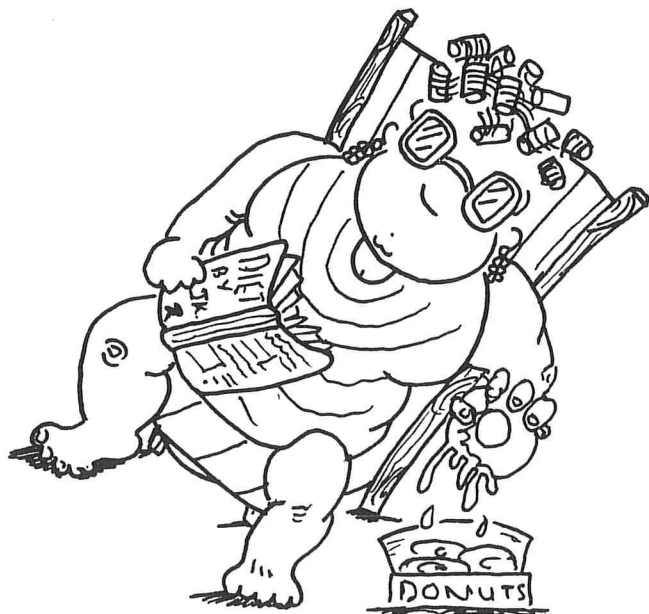


*Looked a bit like the White House, and on the lawn,
A massive iron anchor to hold it in place.
A fine fresh food market where they were selling,
Dead little birds with their feet in the air.
And which closed at noon and re-opened at three.
For people to rest in the middle of the day.
So much to see, so much to see.
Little parks, theatres, a school for jazz,
All the old harbours and fishing boats.
All the new town so very modern.
The people very friendly except very few.
Who stared a bit hard - the lot of all lads.
French driving? -
Nearly all men and some seemed to know.
That our long gone fathers were at a gin court.
But no worse than at home on the day of a match.

Then resting at a pavement cafe (more coke)
The day passed away, too soon the time.
to embark for home on The Pride of Le Harve.
Talking, talking only one hour's sleep
Till five thirty a.m. at Portsmouth we arrived
And home by car, to sleep at six-thirty.

A really great trip with three good friends
Next time it's Spain - we can hardly wait.*

*Andrew Olding
11ZE*



A WOLF

*By night I am the hunter.
By day I am the hunted.
But no one will ever get me.
No, I'll never be the prey.*

*With cold, hard eyes,
I gaze into the stars
And howl my sad song,
To all the world
and hope that someone listens.*

*For I am alone
And the feeling is too strong
For even a wolf to handle,
It must not be!
There are others!*

*But for now,
I am alone
Just me,
Lone Wolf.*

*Gideon Gilbert-Johns
11MP*



