

Somerset Young Poets Competition 2017 – *Climate*

Results

As ever, this year's Somerset Young Poets competition was difficult to judge due to the high number of strong entries. 223 poems were received from 8 different schools. As is the current trend, the majority of these entries came from the younger students.

In the workshops to support this competition, we practised writing not just about climate, but about *emotional* climate. As a result, many of these poems touch on personal detail. With a few notable exceptions, many of the poems which addressed Climate Change proved to be over-general, and lacked specific details which compelled the attention. With the older classes, poems such as Sylvia Plath's *Sheep in Fog* and Simon Armitage's *Shrove Tuesday* demonstrated ways in which weather can suggest, or even embody, a narrator's state of mind.

7 – 9 Category

As ever, this age category was hard-fought, with a record 173 entries. For this reason, as well as the winners and the highly commended and commended entries which stood out from the crowd, there are a number of honourable mentions. The poems which most impressed me had an individual perspective, and did not falter. Often, a strong poem would peter out like a damp firework. This was the difference between a prize-winner and an also-ran.

Prize Winners

1st Prize

I always and always!

Ruby Hanson, Minehead First

Joint 2nd Prize

Running Through the Seasons
Colours and happiness

Ryan Reed, Parkfield School
Sophie Hough, Minehead First

Joint 3rd Prize

Tip a Tap a
What is Cloudy?

Jemima Anderson
Lucie McLannon, Minehead First

Highly Commended

Wet Easter Eggs

Martha Joanne Milton-Jenkins, Minehead First

Unusual things can change to happiness Maisie Kendall, Minehead First

Commended

The Great Barrier Reef	Keertan Natakala, Parkfield
The Ocean	Imogen Ahmet, Parkfield
Lottery Win	Zoe Lloyd, St Peter's
Bye Dad, Hello Dad	Ebony Savage, St Peter's
Untitled	William Porter, Parkfield School
Heartbreaker	Rachel Mackie, Minehead First

Honourable mentions also go to:

My dog feels sad	Aaron-lee Colin Hobbs, Minehead First
Why I'm Happy	Lennon Sinclair, Minehead First
Football	Zayed Alhusni, St Peter's First
Puppies	Lacey Gibbons, Minehead First
Storm Fright	Henry Patterson, Parkfield
Weather weather	Charles Goodridge
Bullies to Friends	Arabella Rossiter, Combe St Nicholas
Where is my Cat?	Grace Pickering, St Peter's
Lost	Amber Foley, Minehead First
The great but bad day	Chase Clausen, St Peter's
Sadness to Happiness	Rhaeya Fouracre, St Peter's First
One day...	Louis Foster, St Peter's First
When I went to Charterhouse...	Sam Dover
Changes	Charlotte Humphries, St Peter's First
Like a Lion	Ryan Loble, St Peter's First
Singing Bird	Madidah Hussain, St Peter's First

First Prize

I always and always!

Ruby Hanson

I always rise to the shiver of hands.
Not alarms, whispers, silence or breakfast
or footsteps or dogs or cats or lights
but hands on spines! My dad always shivers
my spine with his hands!

I always wake to the smell of toast.
Not fruit, juice, yoghurt or jam or
floorboards or eggs or bacon or tea
but toast! My father always gives
me toast!

I always put the dog in her bed to growls!
Not thank-yous, whimpers or silence
or hugs or byes or loud soft hums
but growls! My nan's dog always
growls!

I always speed to school to hugs!
Not gifts, words or peace
or welcomes or dances or fun
but hugs! I always go to school
to hugs!

(Joint) Second Prize

Running Through the Seasons

Ryan Reed

Running in Spring I have to dodge the showers.
They can appear from nowhere and seem to last for hours!
Daffodils are blooming in the park where I run
and the winds can be strong but it makes it more fun.

Running in summer green grass blue skies and me.
Late night runs make me feel so free.
Pouring water on my head to cool me down.
The gentle summer breeze blows through my town.

Running in Autumn crunchy leaves carpet the floor.
Red, orange, green, brown, gold and many more.
It's nearly firework night and smoky bonfires fill the air
running through muddy puddles slipping everywhere.

Running in winter breathing icy cold air
frozen ground and frozen fingers I can hardly bare
Running in the dark through hail, rain and snow.
The wind freezes my face as it starts to blow.

(Joint) Second Prize

Colours and happiness

Sophie Hough

My life is swirls of colour
lighting my life like the summer sun,
Colours give me Confidence.
Blue, red, green and yellow are all wonders
of my world inside me.

Happiness created my life and my smile
from my face to my toes tickling
from inside me. Happiness is my one sunshine.
Burning a smile on my face.

Colours and smiles the joy of my world.
Where I daydream about colours and smiles
telling me to be happy and smile.

(Joint) Third Prize

Tip a Tap a

Jemima Anderson

I was fast asleep when I heard tip a tap a.
“What was that?”
I looked out of my window.

The water trough had over flown.
I put my coat on and ran outside.
I didn’t ask.

I went to knock for Eva.
I was very sad.
“We can’t have a water fight, come over mine.”

My dog came up stairs.
He jumped on my bed.
Tip a tap a.

I heard birds coming my way
“Why are birds coming in the rain?”
When the last bird came the sun came out.

Me and Eva put our shoes on.
We ran outside.
We had a water fight.

(Joint) Third Prize

What is Cloudy?

Lucie McLannon

What is cloudy?
Sadness is cloudy
Like when my 3 rats passed away slowly
Or when I was following my granddad’s coffin.

What is sunny?
Happiness is sunny
My 3 rats climbing up the cage in the past
Or when my granddad let us throw knives at the ground.

Highly Commended Poems

Wet Easter Eggs

Martha Joanne Milton-Jenkins

In France on Easter morning,
the rain was pouring down,
Drip drop drip drop!
My sudden thought was,
“Oh no the Easter eggs.
They will all be wet.”
Without putting on my shoes or coat
I ran out of my bedroom
and on to the landing.

As quick as a flash,
I dashed downstairs to the backyard.
Of course I was right...
Their chocolate surface was melting in the rain.
The coldness on my bare feet,
shot up to my brain and made
me shiver like I was a person
in Antarctica wearing short sleeves.

I sat on the stairs crying salty little tears.
Suddenly, I saw a teeny golden bunny,
hidden in between my shoes.
Although it wasn't chocolate
it was the best present I ever had
because it was one of the easter bunny's
little tiny baby bunnies.
Its little tiny ear looked like a chocolate coin.
So I named it chocolate.

(Highly Commended)

Unusual things can change to happiness

Maisie Kendall

The unusual figure was outside in the field.

I thought it was my mum
But I took another look
She had changed in some way
She was with her mum and dad
They had a dog and were staring
My mum ran towards me
I hugged her but she disappeared
She then reappeared when I got home
I kissed her on the cheek

Suddenly, she came alive
We started a new life
I had a happy feeling in my soul
She bought me sweets
I didn't have to go to school
Like before when she was ill
We were happy and jolly together
She was very kind to me
That is why I love her
She is special to me

(Highly Commended)

First Prize

No Purpose

George Owen

My bed used to be a motor car
Cruising along straight roads
The engine humming softly
Under the smooth bonnet
Driving to a land of my own.

A piece of rope was my anchor
Holding my place in the world
Made of strong material
Almost unbreakable
Full of joyous thoughts.

My book was my salvation
Each morning I opened it
Read a page
Soon lost to the wonders
Shining with light, never forgotten.

One cold evening,
I walk slowly to my room
Storm brewing outside
I look in
Eyes full of worry.

The motor car scrap
The engine giving its last breaths
No more straight roads
No more straight answers
No more tranquil dreams.

The piece of rope snapped
Lost to strong seas
It has no place
Drifting away towards distant lands
It's got no purpose.

My old book covered in creases
Tea stains all over the ripped pages
Never read
Lost on a dusty bookshelf
It has no purpose.

Second Prize

A poem about Emotional Climate

On the phone,
All alone.
You know she's not ok.
"What's up?" you ask,
Getting her to say is a task,
But still she's not ok.
Eventually she tells you,
She's having family issues.
You know that's not it.
Then she tells you fully,
That she is being bullied.
You try to comfort her,
She said she told sir.
He said forget them,
You're a little gem.
Don't let them get to you,
Just say boo.
And get on with your life,
Don't let them give you strife.

Lyla Pike

(Joint) Third Prize

Another new school

Sarah Cawley

I stand in the bustling corridor,
A small bare tree, balanced on the concrete.
Harsh words biting flesh,
Resonating in my head.
Rusty marks stain my soul,
People rushing, stampeding the school hall.

The strong ropes which once steadied me
Are flapping in the surging storm,
Blown off course on an unstable raft,
Like sailing into uncharted mist.
The classrooms hold only fear and dread.
Pupils' words pinch and punch at me.

Emotional scars sore like trapped fingers in a door,
No escape as the storm closes in,
The safety harness unclipped and slipping.
Teachers, carers, parents
Tell me I will get used to it!
Do they not see what lies ahead?

Sent to yet another new school.
Will my ropes hold and my chains regain their gleam?
Are the harsh seas calming?
A new season bringing growth,
I feel the warm sun touch my bare branches,
Hope twinkles from the shiny clean walls.

Standing tall, blooming in the meadow,
My roots digging deep in the fertile soil.
Strong, secure, safe.
The kind words surround me,
Birds singing their welcoming tunes.
The notes draw me into the soft, comfort blanket.

I think I'm going to like this school.

(Joint) Third Prize

Wind

Charlie Kellett

The wind is a dangerous foe.
It lies among the silent leaves,
Waiting for its innocent prey,
And when it comes and sits below,
The price of freedom is not cheap.
The wind is a dangerous foe.
It can howl for years among rock or tree,
And some will never leave its grasp,
Save expelled over a dire drop,
To fall to one's doom a thousand feet below.
The wind is a dangerous foe.
Some have fought it, used it, ridden it,
On wings of silent eerie death,
But never shall they conquer the wind,
Who flies the highest of them all.
The wind is a dangerous foe.

Highly Commended Poems

The teams were raring to go...

Louisa Nelson

The teams were raring to go
Team Thunder in yellow, Team Storm in Blue.
It was a top of the table clash
This was a must win cricket game.

The weather was perfect,
Sky as blue as the ocean on a tropical island.
The smell of freshly cut grass in the air and
The new improved wicket had been ready all week.

The important game started
Thunder were batting and Storm were fielding.
Both sides showed impressive cricket skills.
The first innings finished with Team Thunder all out.

As the teams enjoyed a refreshing tea
Grey storm clouds formed in the blue sky.
A heavy rain shower dropped from the clouds
The lush green grass was flooded in minutes.

Both teams were desperate to play
But the umpires refused to follow their request
Unfortunately the game ended as a draw
The crowds were disappointed and the stands were cleared.

(Highly Commended)

Moving School

Keegan Hounsell

My diary's pages ripped scattered on the floor,
Lost in the sea like a baby shark.
The weather thundering in the background.

My goal smashed.
Pieces everywhere,
Sharp pieces in my feet.

My cricket bat has cracks in like a broken heart,
Corners ripped off.
Lost like a baby Lion in the woods.

Now my diary is shiny red and tidy,
My goal is now shiny red, everything reflecting off of it,
All pieces put together.

My cricket bat all neat and tidy,
Corners all fixed,
Now the sun is reflecting off my shiny diary.

(Highly Commended)

When I Moved House

Warren George Thorne

I had a blue pen
My pen worked. It was used a lot
It still had a lid
It was a pen that made
Me happy.

I had a gleaming shiny photo album,
All sunny days with my family
They were not ripped.

My bed was very
Comfy,
When I jumped
On it,
And it was
Very comfy,
it was not ripped.

The pen was not used as much,
The lid was snapped,
Or missing,
The pen didn't work
Anymore.

All of the photos were ripped
They fell out
Of the photo album.

My bed was all
Ripped my mattress was
Not comfy any more
The bed springs snapped.

(Highly Commended)

Bullied to Respected

Isaac Henley

Going to school storm brewing,
Excited, I'm met
By sadness and hatred, the sun turns into rain.

Sitting in the classroom,
Crying at my desk,
Not able to do my work.

Going out to break,
Pushed down by boys,
Wanting to run away.

Changing school excited and nervous,
I'm met by smiling faces,
Kind children all around me.

Sitting down once again,
Caring, helpful people around me,
I'm good at my work getting better, better.

Running in the playground,
Playing with my friends,
My cuts healed.

Hatred turned into love,
Going home happy for once,
Sleeping soundlessly in my bed.

(Highly Commended)

First Prize

Snowfall

Hannah Hay

A whole life encompassed by white
The pure blinding white of belief
Surrounding me, suffocating me with false hope
Chilling me to the bone

The blossoming flowers of my true self
Wilting under an icy blanket of lies
Changing my views of all I find good
into misguided perceptions of reality

Harsh howls of preachings
Drift into my impressionable brain
Influencing me to dedicate myself to something
That will only melt away

The constant reminder to do better, be better
Woven into my subconscious
How do I break out of this cold, brainwashed battle
And finally step into the sun

Second Prize

The Silent Breakfast

Izzy John

The table.
Full and empty at the same time.
No speech, laughter.
Nothing.

Warm coffee poured into large mugs.
Keeping us awake in the early morning.
The most we could manage.
Else we'd fall deep.

She bites into dripping bacon sandwiches.
He crunches on the toast.
No eye contact.
Still nothing.

No warmth behind the glassy eyes
of people once loved.
No smiles upon the faces
of absent beings.

Fluffy white pastries laid out in heaped piles.
Untouched and whole.
Like fallen snowflakes
waiting to be jumped in.

An abyss of nothing.

(Joint) Third Prize

A Ship in the Storm

Jacob Harris

The wind shouted, shouted towards me,
called me to a place where all is absent.
All but sinned stars, forced to obey their devils.

They dropped tears upon thee.
Figures chained to masts, so that they might float.
Seen whining at horses, brushing past souls.

The world's evil conjured around me, to form a presence.
Its paws flexed to create a subversion against all.
Fine and dug in, like barbed wire, willing to do more harm than good.

It sees me as a lesser, its lesser.
Yet I feel partnered with thee, like I always have been.
It calms me, so there's only room for dissent and adherence.

However, within thee's darkness, its children worship light.
They throw light, scatter light, shadowed light.
A beam held up by horror and forced into an undeniable state of being.

They claw and drag away my sails.
On to paths fuelled by the stories of seen lesser.
My ship is gifted a taste of the inescapable end.

And my story sinks to be a sinned star.

(Joint) Third Prize

INK

I've written the melody.
A writer in the clouds.

The spectrum will be the soft sounds
that colour me free.

The weighted keys, the weight in me.
Gone – within subtle velocity.

The modulation within a single beat.
The modulation of colour; the modulation of debris.

All the anger; the blood
that won't flow so proudly.

The rush, the adrenaline
that makes me feel alive – burningly.

The piercing cold, the blue
the wilted, faded flowers.

Frosted and encrusted in me
everything that internally surrounds.

The myriads of colour collect and condense
within the INK –

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I Now Know, this is what helps me
escape the vulture of jealousy
in our ungrateful culture.

These are the colours that
once swam in my subconscious.

The colours that rasp and howl,
and scream – unzipped at the seams,
forever whispering hoarsely,
the music that sets me
free.

Harry Paynter