



Saint  
John's  

---

college school

Poetry  
2019





## Extinguish

Feather drifting over the river.  
When it falls,  
It will never fly again  
For the devouring river will swallow it  
Into the past, where  
It will lie 'in the better place'

That is what they said:  
'...in the better place'.  
I said, 'what better place?'  
Nowhere could be better than my den, then.  
They told me never to go there.  
I told them to say 'please' when they asked a question.  
I didn't get pudding that day.

My feather will soon hit the river,  
Soaking, helpless.  
Agility is the past,  
Futility the moment.  
Useless, unbearably useless.

Memories swarm,  
Glow-worms, lights in a forest  
Of darkness. A drop of water  
Touches me. I know now that  
The end will come.  
A tunnel of darkness around me.  
Next to me, thousands of glow-worms  
Are biting me.



A white shape, drifting over the river  
Is descending.

Silently, unnoticed,  
It sways there, buoyant,  
Until it breaks the  
Surface, sinking like a deflated balloon  
Into the mud.  
Mourning is only a concept.  
In the distance, in another world,  
A cuckoo calls its lament.

*Vera Edgington, aged 13*





## Procrastination

This cursor blinks at me expectantly,  
Unimpressed, impatient and judgingly.  
But still the cursor blinks at me,  
Its empty page a bleak white sea.  
Procrastination is frustration.

Still nothing comes to mind,  
But I just can't get the words in line.  
Stanzas and sonnets would flow from my keyboard.  
If only I could strike the chord  
That brings together the whole storyline,  
The magic rhyme that will redefine  
My writing; it's so unexciting.

Hmm, bit dark in here. I'll just adjust the lighting.

*Fergal Cochrane, aged 13*





## From a Bird's Eye View

As the owl flew silently above the misty fields he saw  
A shimmering pond shining like the morning sun  
A lonely old man walking with his old brown dog  
A snow-white seagull landing on an old snowy branch  
A horse galloping in the dark gloomy forest  
An old woman coming back from shopping  
A long flowing river happily gliding away into the hazy distance.

*Lola Masanes Kaoukji, aged 7*

As the owl flew silently above the stormy night he saw  
The world turning as round as a lemon  
As it got bigger and bigger by the second  
He saw mountains sobbing  
As the water scuttled down their sides  
Second by second the world got stormier and stormier  
He could see the lightning  
Ferociously shooting its bright yellow light at the dull dark floor.

*Ethan Hayes-Fernandez, aged 7*





## Sun

Across the open space  
Lies a silent sun,  
Orange, open, alone.

Stars dance and stamp,  
While the whispering sun  
Lies low, across the open.

Planets spin and sing,  
Planets sleep with dream-sheep,  
While the sun sighs.

Across the open space  
Lies a crying sun,  
Orange, open, alone.

*Tomas Fernandez Bruna, aged 11*



## Sunset

The sun sets on the seashore.  
I lie, looking at the orange banner  
Hanging across the horizon.  
Birds soar across the sea, merely skimming the water.  
The sand is like sugar under my toes.  
Waves lapping, loud enough to hear but quiet enough to rest.

The sun sets on the sea shore.  
I lie there, looking at the red banner  
Hanging across the horizon.  
The bird lands on her nest, nurturing her young.  
The sand grows cold, chilling my bones.  
Waves lapping, loud enough to hear but quiet enough to sleep.

*Jasper MacDonald, aged 12*





## Night

The night's cloak is covering the sky.  
Eyes are as dark as the bottom of the big blue sea.  
Smell of sharp mint from her breath.  
She smoothly moves through the air.  
She feels frigid, freezing you in a second.  
The night carries a spearing dagger,  
The voice of a whisper,  
Telling you you shouldn't be here out at this time.

*Isla Thompson, aged 12*





## Tree

Every day I stand, digging into the earth,  
Thinking, thinking of autumn, when  
My friends and I will shine,  
Shine with colour and life,  
All the colours from red to gold, crimson to lime.  
The people will smile when they see.  
They will dance under me  
As my leaves fall,  
Fall in a shower of golden leaves  
In autumn.

*Tamsin Loose, aged 12*



## (But only God can make a tree)

I am a tree from the outside, a normal tree, but...

I am the one, the one and only.

I have been made different by God.

Yes, he can do that, oh yes he can.

No one ever thought that he could make

A tree so different from all the others,

A tree with feelings, a special, special tree.

*Ollie Brown, aged 13*



## Sadness

Dark blue rain  
Thunder shouts from black clouds  
Like coal burning in a fire

The sound of a violin out of tune  
Filling my ears, piercing my eardrums

The squeak of the car and the burning rubber  
The feeling of sandpaper rubbing my hands  
Ice like flames burning holes through my skin

I feel a drop of freezing cold water  
Dribbling down my face like a tear

I had to hide my feelings inside a little box  
At the back of my mind and tie a ribbon  
So that no feelings could get out  
But they could still get in.

*Isabel Senior, aged 12*



## Anger

A clenched fist pounding.  
Drums. Loud and inconsistent sound.  
Sizzling, smoky aroma.  
As rough as sandpaper, grinding down.  
It tastes spicy, thick as dirt,  
Singes my tongue until I can taste it no more.  
Angry knocking on a closed door.

*Flora Smith, aged 13*





## Loneliness

The last brown leaf on a single bare tree.  
A frozen lake hidden by mountains, cold and numb.  
A stuffy room smell, gorging your nose.  
A double bass droning in the background, can't see it but it's there.  
Like cold tea left by the decaying ashes of a fire.  
An empty picture frame slumped alone on a mantelpiece.

*Lucy Pettifer, aged 13*





## Frustration

grey  
dark  
smoke drifting out of chimney tops  
rain  
showering down  
the grey clouds cruise across the sky  
midnight lies beyond the moonlight  
tiles whistle in the crystal night  
shining  
bright  
in the distance  
out of sight

*James Chesterfield, aged 12*



## Make-Up

I'm so soft,  
I cover the contours  
And the wrinkles.  
I cover reality.

I know your secrets  
And all of your lies,  
Your ins and outs.  
I hold the key to your life.

You use me,  
But when you look in the mirror,  
Your reflection, everything you hate,  
Stares you in the face,  
Mocking your efforts  
To cover them up,  
To cover your flaws.

You fool your friends,  
But I know who you are.  
All you want is to be accepted,  
So scared of being rejected.  
Take off your mask.  
Let them see you for who you are.  
You don't need me.

*Alfie Cockburn, aged 13*





## My Apple

My apple tastes juicy like an orange.

It is red like a crab.

My apple smells like flowers.

It feels curly.

*Imogen O'Reilly, aged 5*



## My First Shoes

1. They are nothing fancy, but have a stable sole. They are proud of their red smooth surface.
2. They helped me hold my balance but still I could not walk. When will I walk? I'd ask.
3. I was proud when I took a few short steps. When I fell over they'd smile and then I'd stand.
4. They watch me make progress and never say a word.
5. They miss being walked in and they are happy that I remember.

*Tess Woodhull, aged 11*





## Five Things About Tíree

1. I love him, I love him just like my own best friend. He's wonderful for his white sandy beaches and his familiar green colour.
2. I have always wanted to ask him, "Why do you have such good surf?" His normal reply is: "Crash, Smash, Whistle."
3. He is never very warm. He is windswept like my hair when I wake up.
4. He seems to cry a lot and I see he is sad. The spray from his tears soaks me from head to toe.
5. He is always waiting for me every year to come back.

*Archie McEwan, aged 11*





## Dragonía

The pure beautiful sea, twisting and curling its arms  
around animals to whisper secrets.

This is my world.

A furious raging volcano ordering flames and spiteful sparks  
to go down upon the calm and surprised river below.  
Flowers red as rubies, sprouting emerald leaves.

This is my world.

Mountains big as the sea,  
Towering above the peaceful villages and towns below.  
Mountains covered by thick snow like hail falling without care.

This is my world.

Blazing glimmering sunsets smiling with generosity,  
shining like ambers.  
The gigantic towns as noisy as a pack of bulls snorting and  
stamping away, with anger in their bones.

This is my world.

Castles colourful as rainbows, joined together,  
seen far ahead in the valley, telling faraway stories.

This is my world.

Towns big as volcanoes and icy mountains joined.  
Clouds as pink as a rose and as pale as a sheet  
but blazing with love.

This is my world.





The cold white ice rink as fun as a party  
and as big as an oversized bull.  
Beaches full of decorative pretty shells and golden sand  
throwing its arms to squeeze and hug.

This is my world.

Tree trunks as crusty as dragon pudding.  
Delicious nuts buried in the deep bright forest.  
Boats bouncing upon waves as they sail freely out to sea.

This is my world.

*Antonia Clode-Baker, aged 7*







## Dragonia

The frozen fountain spitting out glimmering water  
The whistling wind whirling around the flying flowers  
The bright red rose petals floating away  
Leaving a sweet smell in the air

Come drift with me...

The candyfloss clouds twirling gracefully  
The frosty snowflakes drift swiftly down the beautiful  
Water slide that comes off the rosy pink rainbow  
Blossom coloured balloons bobbing up and down like rubber  
ducks

Come drift with me...

The tiny fairy house scattered with glittering fairy dust  
A shining red sleigh moving joyfully leaving a trail of pure white  
snow  
The slippery slidy ice rink  
Sparkling like a diamond in the morning sunlight

Come drift with me...

*Alice Ayliffe, aged 7*









## Transformation

Shaded by a canopy of green,  
Hot sticky wind hit my face.  
My body became clear.  
The radiant sun pushed against me.  
It began to fade away every time it hit me.  
My skin cracked.  
A misty fog hit my thigh.  
Something grew in me,  
A speckled, reflecting wing.  
A ray of sunlight emerged.  
I couldn't believe it.  
I felt new.  
I could fly high and low.  
But what was I?

I swayed through the air.  
A flickering light came to me.  
It told me something.  
I could not understand what he was saying.  
But as the glinting object faded away, I flew home,  
A glaring contentment inside me.

*Isobel Morbey, aged 8*





## Transformation

I was alive.  
A lightning bolt of realisation shot down my spine.  
I was warm.  
Groping around lush warm grass  
Tickling me with its long leafy fingers,  
Reaching out I felt a long thin stem.  
Plucking it from the ground, pushing it under my nose,  
A beautiful scent drifted upwards,  
A dizzying feeling rushing through me,  
A rush of cold like diving into a freezing river.  
Nothing else...  
I woke.  
POP! POP!  
I could see! Dazzled by bright colours:  
Confusion, tug, pinch, pull like a tug of war,  
An urge to flap and stretch.  
FLAP! FLAP!  
I rose, bobbing in the warm air, gliding across the sky.  
Rolling hills, calm blue seas...

Suddenly  
I plunged towards the earth.  
I blacked out...  
I woke, throbbing.  
I lay taking in my surroundings.  
Dark, camouflage, then SCREECH! YOWL!  
Booming in my ears nearly deafening me.  
My body was overwhelmed with emotion.  
Sadness, fear, worry rushing through my body.





I was afraid.  
Longing tugging at my heart,  
I understood my purpose:  
To care for the place I was born.  
FLAP! FLUTTER!  
A happiness in this treacherous place.  
I was escaping, gliding through the cool air.  
The temperature changed as did my surroundings.  
I was home...

The most beautiful place in the world.

*Edie Ayliffe, aged 9*





## The Sea

She wrapped her cold fingers  
Around my small body  
And pulled me under  
Into a different world,  
A place  
Where monsters hide,  
A place  
Where angels sleep.

The colours are different  
Down here.  
She makes me feel at home  
Even if she is angry.  
Under here is a world of its own.

Up to the surface I float,  
For she is now calm  
And asleep.  
Now the silver moon has risen,  
And the storms will  
Come back tomorrow.

I will have to wait until then  
To see this again.

*Catriona Beaton, aged 11*





## Lapping Water

Soft, confused brown eyes stare into the lapping water.  
The swimmer glides along in the calm,  
The only movement in the whole scene.  
The surface of the water sparkles in the mid-afternoon light,  
Glistening and twinkling,  
A chandelier caught in the sun's harsh glare.  
Occasionally, a head breaking the surface,  
But the relaxed motion seems like a dream.  
Dunes of blue, disappearing and reappearing,  
The casual, fluid motion of the swimmer,  
Mesmerising.

*Amelie Matthews, aged 13*





## Kos

Dawn silence, forest-thick,  
Is broken by a rainbow of bird song,  
Indigo showers of joy.  
The morning is pierced with arrow cries  
Of children longing for the beach.  
Unbreakfasted, I pop and sizzle down to the beach.  
Across the soft, sugar sand, my feet scuttle,  
Like crabs, to meet the crystal smooth sea.  
The day expands to an orange throb of heat.  
Far off mountains, forests, all ripple like silk.  
Around the bay, bouzouki music streams dark as wine,  
Bubbling and thrumming from the cafes.  
At ground level, lemon sharp lizards dart, strike a statue pose,  
Till a transparent blue breeze sends them scurrying back to the  
underworld.  
The same transparent breeze cools me,  
And when I rush into the water, I become  
Vibrant turquoise,  
Part of my lovely island,  
Kos

*Joseph Hill, aged 13*





## Concert

The trumpets start off the piece.  
Each note wraps me in red.  
As it enters my head,  
It triggers the simple colour: red.

Next the trombones come in.  
They make me shudder every time.  
Trombones reach out and envelop me  
In complete and utter darkness.

I drop further into the pool.  
No way to get out.  
The trumpets try to fight back.  
But the trombones persist and I stay in my thoughts.

*Joseph Moshtagh-Kahnamoui, aged 13*







## My Voice

My voice can melt ice.  
It can brighten shadows.  
My voice can start a storm  
Or stop one in its tracks.  
My voice can turn heads.  
My voice can raise questions.  
My voice is from the tumbling waves  
That wash methodically across the warm sand.  
My voice hails from the top of the highest mountain.  
It is calling out to all of the world  
To make my point.

*Matilda Parsonson, aged 13*





## Circle

I am a never-ending line  
I can wrap round the world if that's fine.  
I am a ripple growing each day,  
Or I'm the raindrop falling on the hay,  
Or I'm the ring that makes the bells chime,  
For I am the best shape of all time.

*Florence Parker, aged 11*





## The Reader of this Poem is...

As angry as a nuclear bomb  
As cheeky as a sneaky thief  
As mean as a scowling teacher  
As filthy as an aged sewer  
As adorable as a sleeping baby  
As strong as a forceful typhoon  
As adventurous as an enthusiastic hedgehog  
As quiet as an instinctive fox  
As boring as a dull Maths teacher  
As talented as a thoughtful monkey  
As collaborative as a pack of vicious wolves  
As soft as a snow white wolf  
As gentle as a baby ladybird  
As filthy as a pongy pig  
As jolly as a wibbly wobbly jelly  
As adventurous as a tiger cub  
As clumsy as a newborn pup  
As strong as the mighty Thanos  
As cheerful as a laughing hyena  
As silly as a cute, fluffy puppy  
As grumpy as a grandpa snail  
As loud as a grandfather clock  
As jolly as a falling, diving jester.

*2K Class poem, based on an idea by Roger McGough*







## War

Unkind  
Dark blue sea  
Death running in our veins  
Sleeping feet as bullets run at them  
Flying pieces of metal  
Soldiers racing  
Dodging to avoid the bullets  
Terrified soldiers  
Bullets strike  
As soldiers roll their eyes  
They fall  
Die  
Riddles run through the soldiers' minds  
BANG! CRASH!  
Another bullet slams.  
Done.

*May Guttridge, aged 7*





## Beyond the Lines

Drumming thunder

Horrified men

Scared men

Terrified men

Brave men

Stampede of elephants

Bombs booming

Guns roaring

BANG BANG BANG

Explosives exploding

Hearts pumping with fear

Beyond the lines

Frozen souls

Sad memories

Letters' wishes switching

Slate coal colours

Beyond the lines.

*Dev Patel, aged 7*



## The Hardships of War

I hear the deafening gunshot echoing in my ears,  
I see the blinding lights scorching my eyes,  
I feel the sorrow of my friends,  
I taste bitterness in the air.

My feelings are mixed,  
My senses are jumbled,  
My tastes are numb.

My eyes are shrouded in a cloud of tiredness.  
The lights sweep out of the trenches,  
Penetrating the black night sky.

The mud seeps into my boots,  
The blood coats my calves,  
The smell of gunpowder fills my nose,  
The metal helmet casts a black shadow over my eyes.

The plane's drone overhead startles me,  
Then I come to my senses,  
Flattening myself into a hole.  
The shattering explosion threatens to tear me apart,  
But my temporary den protects me.

I drag my dead weight body through the thick mud.  
Eventually I reach the safety of the trench.  
I think of my lost friends,  
The things I saw,  
The black of night.  
And I remember.  
I can never forget...

*Hugh Chippington, aged 13*





## War

Waves crashing against the huge tilting sky  
Frightened gasping  
An angry sky turning dark grey  
Feeling the person next to you shaking  
Clumping of footsteps  
Sound of the banging guns  
Smell of smoke  
Burned letters lying flat, buried in the mud  
Never to be read  
Roaring of the bombs as they fall from the sky  
Barbed wire wrapping itself around you  
Thumping heart  
Soldiers starting to collapse  
War has begun....

*Clara Lynn, aged 7*





## Mud

Isn't it funny that mud is such a killer?  
It swamps, it swallows, it subdues.  
All vanishes under the consuming embrace of mud.

Rats scuttle through this blanket of brown  
And red flecks flick across a grisly sea.  
It seeps and slinks through leather leggings.

Once these mudded madlands  
Had been rolling plains of harmonious life.  
Scarred trunks silently scream, crying, begging  
For some sanity to grip a broken world.

Lice lurk in boots.  
Liquid life floods foully from many wounds.  
Love has no place in this carnival of chaos.

From today men suffer.  
Today suffers from men.

*Ben Smith, aged 12*







## Red Wobbly Hearts

I knew you were suffering,  
So I made you a card after school.  
I drew wobbly hearts,  
And I coloured them wobbly red.  
I wished you would get well soon.  
But my mother was busy;  
I couldn't talk to her  
Or post you the card.  
And then I forgot about the wobbly hearts,  
And my wish for you.

We were reading  
When we got the call  
That you were no longer suffering,  
No longer with us,  
And I cried.  
I was confused, angry, and I cried.  
You never received my card,  
Never saw my wobbly hearts,  
Or got my wish.

Six years later,  
I still remember,  
Still cry,  
Thinking of the card  
With the wobbly hearts  
That never reached you.  
I hope you know,  
Wherever you are now,  
That I have always loved you,  
Granny.

*Hannah Wicks, aged 13*





## Clockwork

I count your life away.  
Look at me. You'll see it tick  
Away in front of you.  
My hands direct you,  
Show you, slow you,  
Speed you, kill you.

You're late, on time, early...  
The responsibility is mine.  
I'm sorry I don't stop.  
But every few years,  
My hands will slow,  
Deceiving you.

Face to wall opposing me,  
My insides swinging,  
Knocking left and right.  
I'm the beating heart  
Of the household, see.  
You all rely on me.

*Nella Porritt, aged 13*



## They flash upon that inward eye

*After William Wordsworth*

They flash upon that inward eye.  
At the bottom of the brandy bottle  
And the quiet of the night,  
They lie, and I still echo the thought - the flash  
Of a grin with too much wolf to be sheepish - upon  
The mind and pen nearly drained.  
Thoughts are clouds, vanishing without notice, inward,  
Though they still stray from the head,  
And escape through the eye.

*Audrey Galbraith, aged 13*



## The Scarecrow

Heroic hat surviving  
Battling against the rain

Spooky fingers reaching  
Stretching towards the horizon

Knobbly face smiling  
Grinning like a Cheshire cat

Shabby scarf sitting  
Crawling round his neck

Inquisitive little stones  
Gleaming like the moon

*Noah Roach, aged 11*



## Fallen Leaves

The avenue lies in the dappled sunlight,  
Dripping through the leaves,  
Making abstract shapes.  
The leaves having fallen, the shapes start to change,  
Dispersing like a crowd to a new place. The leaves  
Flutter down on the easy wind  
And settle on the better path.  
They obscure its damp earth and make their claim.

Bitter cold rushes in,  
Freezing wind blowing dead leaves  
Inside; they stray into the hallway.  
No one notices,  
Until a wrong step  
Produces a crunch  
And I wish I had  
Taken heed of the space previously trodden  
And cleaned up the leaves  
That have now turned black.

*George Fell, aged 13*





## Winter

Stooping branches laden with frosty snow.  
An opaque sky blots out the feeble sun.  
The magic crystals through the wind does blow  
And soon the lifting snow will start to run.

This snow as blank as salt then falls to ground.  
The children watch in awe as up they look.  
A blue tit whistles with a sparkling sound.  
Children make snowballs with the snow they took.

BUT soon, ice on the lake shall start to melt.  
The glitt'ring snow will turn to boring sludge.  
The snow is no more like a sheet of felt.  
The summer's asking winter now to budge.

Soon winter's icy chill shall go away  
And later Spring will bring a glorious day.

*Lorenzo Granado, aged 10*







## The Coming and Going of Winter

The shadow lingers on the sparkling snow.  
The blinding sun peeps through the cold bare trees.  
The frozen stream slowly ceases to flow.  
The mouth of winter heaves out a strong breeze.

The branches glisten in the morning sun.  
The whitened hares lollop in the garden.  
The children on ice having much fun.  
The crumbly soil is starting to harden.

BUT when the snow turns into wet, grey slush,  
The cold of winter says to me 'farewell'.  
The ice melts as the stream begins to rush.  
The cheerfulness that comes from the bluebell.

And now the only thing that's left to say,  
Is Winter's disappearing day by day.

*Poppy Marr, aged 10*





## Winter Haiku

the pale silk sky is  
a wash of water colours  
dark into light blue

*Eliza Robson Brown, aged 10*

## Winter

Ice crystals crack and crunch beneath my boots.  
The cold bites my lips, covers me.  
Snowflakes sprinkle themselves through the saplings.  
A flash of coloured sunset  
And then the dark.

“Come in, come in out of the cold!”  
The fire embraces me in warm protection.  
The cookies and crackling scent the room,  
And curious colours of the Christmas tree.

This is the snowy, slippery, sliding season  
Of happiness.

*Theo Pafitis, aged 12*





## Winter

The icicles that gripped onto the edges of trees  
Screamed out at the world in a diamond-like lustre.  
The cool smooth taste of the frozen silence  
Washed over me in an invisible fog.

Shy snow lay in front of my feet.  
It sat there still, uncommunicative and quiet.  
The snow removed the punctuation from the air,  
And instead  
Let the winds of winter gently sigh overhead.

*Scarlett El Refaie, aged 12*



## Donkey

The endless plodding draws to a halt.  
My hooves encased in dust,  
I am led into an enclosing  
Space.

My tail droops with fatigue.  
My head feels like it's floating.  
I'm not asked how I am.  
All I receive is a fleeting glance from  
Kings and shepherds.

They all hurry to the main attraction:  
The baby.  
They all present gifts,  
Not that it can change the child's destiny.

They rush now,  
Then they will scatter,  
Ashamed of their knowledge.

I know what will happen.  
He won't be the first to be loved,  
And followed,  
And then  
Abandoned.

*Innes Lapraik, aged 13*





## The Day That Changed Everything

We left the sheep to follow the star.  
We crossed deserts to find him.  
We left our house to follow the light.  
We crossed whole seas to see him.

At last we got there. In the stable he lay.  
And there he was asleep on the bundle of hay.  
At last we saw them:  
Mary and Joseph and the sweet small child.  
And there they were, the three kings  
Admiring their soon-to-be king.

And there it was, the giving of gifts,  
Which went down in history.  
Gold, frankincense, and not least, myrrh:  
Presents that belong to the King of Kings.

*John Standley, aged 12*



## Christmas

Tucked up in bed; stocking by my side,  
Hoping for gifts and much more besides.  
Teddy to my left and a clock by my right,  
Timed to wake me up in the middle of the night.

When I hear on the landing a tip and a toe  
And a foot on the lawn... a crunch in the snow!  
The door slowly opens, I am under my sheet.  
Who could it be? Am I in for a treat?

A fat jolly figure dressed all in red,  
His trousers, his jacket and the hat on his head,  
A small round pink face and a nose like a berry,  
And twinkly eyes which are happy and merry.

He waits not a second; gets straight to his work.  
As he fills up my stocking, I can see a slight smirk.  
He catches my eye and gives me a wink,  
Then steps through the door and is off in a blink.

I looked through the window to the dark of the night,  
But the sky was lit up with a blazing gold light.  
As I settled to sleep, I heard on the roof  
The jumping and scraping of each Christmas hoof.

*Ellie Newitt, aged 11*





