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Advanced Verse-Speaking – 16 Years and Over

a}

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? –
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending; –
I listen'd, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

William Wordsworth.

Year of Birth: 2002 or earlier.

b} **Shakespeare:**

Female: **THE MERCHANT OF VENICE** Act 3 Scene 4

PORTIA: I pray you tarry. Pause a day or two
Before you hazard, for in choosing wrong
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you, and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality;
But lest you should not understand me well –
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought –
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn.
So will I never be. So may you miss me.
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlooked me and divided me.
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say. But if mine, then yours.
And so all yours. O, these naught times
Puts bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long, but 'tis to peise the time
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

(Movement is permissible)

Year of Birth: 2002 or earlier.

b) **Shakespeare:**

Male: **THE MERCHANT OF VENICE** Act 3 Scene 4

BASSANIO: O sweet Portia.
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins. I was a gentleman,
And then I told you true. And yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should have told you
That I was worse than nothing, for indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady,
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?
Hath all his ventures failed? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbury and India?
And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

(Movement is permissible)

Year of Birth: 2002 or earlier.

c}

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost.

Performers speak (a) and (b) and recalls (c). Pieces may be read.

Year of Birth: 2002 or earlier.

Sonnet Speaking – 16 Years and Over

a}

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
“My name is Ozymandias King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

b}

Own Choice.

Performers speak both poems, which may be read.

Year of Birth: 2002 or earlier.

Class 355

“The Mollie Barker Memorial Perpetual Cup”

Yeats Verse-Speaking – 16 Years and Over

a}

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNINFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping
slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket
sings;
There midnight’s all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet’s wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart’s core.

W.B. Yeats.

b}

A Yeats’ poem of own choice.

Performers speak both poems, which may be read.

Year of Birth: 2002 or earlier.

Senior Women – 18 Years and Over

a}

A CLASSROOM

The day was wide and that whole room was wide,
The sun slanting across the desks, the dust
Of chalk rising. I was listening
As if for the first time,
As if I'd never heard our tongue before,
As if a music came alive for me
And so it did upon the lift of language,
A battle poem, *Lepanto*. In my blood
The high call stirred and brimmed.
I was possessed yet coming for the first
Time into my own
Country of green and sunlight,
Place of harvest and waiting
Where the corn would never all be garnered but
Leave in the sun always at least one swathe.
So from a battle I learnt this healing peace,
Language a spell over the hungry dreams,
A password and a key. That day is still
Locked in my mind. When poetry is spoken
That door is opened and the light is shed,
The gold of language tongued and minted fresh.
And later I began to use my words,
Stared into verse within that classroom and
Was called at last only by kind inquiry
“How old are you?” “Thirteen”
“You are a thinker.” More than thought it was
That caught me up excited, charged and changed,
Made ready for the next fine spell of words,
Locked into language with a golden key.

Elizabeth Jennings.**Year of Birth: 2000 or earlier.**

Senior Women – 18 Years and Over

b}

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

Thomas Hardy.

Performers speak both poems, which may be read.

Year of Birth: 2000 or earlier.

Senior Men – 18 Years and Over

a}

THE MAGIC SHOW

After a feast of sausage rolls,
Sandwiches of various meats,
Jewelled jellies, brimming bowls
Of chocolate ice and other treats,
We children played at Blind Man’s
Buff,
Hide-and-seek, Pin-the-Tail-on-
Ned,
And then – when we’d had just
enough
Of party games – we all were led
Into another room to see
The Magic Show. The wizard held
A wand of polished ebony;
His white-gloved, flickering hands
compelled
The rapt attention of us all.
He conjured from astonished air
A living pigeon and a fall
Of paper snowflakes; made us stare
Bewildered, as a playing card –
Unlike a leopard – changed its spots
And disappeared. He placed some
starred
And satin scarves in silver pots,
Withdrew them as plain bits of rag,
Then swallowed them before our
eyes.

But soon we felt attention flag
And found delighted, first surprise
Had withered like a wintry leaf
And, when the tricks were over, we
Applauded, yet felt some relief,
And left the party willingly.
“Good night”, we said, “and thank
you for
The lovely time we’ve had.”
Outside
The freezing night was still. We
saw
Above our heads the slow clouds
stride
Across the vast, unswallowable
skies
White, graceful gestures of the
moon,
The stars intent and glittering eyes,
And, gleaming like a silver spoon,
The frosty path to lead us home.
Our breath hung blossoms on
unseen
Boughs of air as we passed there,
And we forgot that we had been
Pleased briefly by that conjuror,
Could not recall his tricks, or face,
Bewitched and awed, as now we
were,
By magic of the commonplace.

Vernon Scannell.**Performers speak both poems which may be read.****Year of Birth: 2000 or earlier.**

Senior Men – 18 Years and Over

b}

SEA-FEVER

I must (go) down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's
 shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must (go) down to the seas again, for the call of the running
 tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls
 crying.

I must (go) down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like
 a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And (a) quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's
 over.

John Masefield.

Performers speak both poems which may be read.

Year of Birth: 2000 or earlier.

“The Gloria Joy Perpetual Cup”
17 Years and Under

a}

THE LISTENERS

‘Is there anybody there?’ said the Traveller,
 Knocking on the moonlit door;
 And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
 Of the forest’s ferny floor:
 And a bird flew up out of the turret,
 Above the Traveller’s head:
 And he smote upon the door again a second time;
 ‘Is there anybody there?’ he said.
 But no one descended to the Traveller;
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill
 Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
 Where he stood perplexed and still.
 But only a host of phantom listeners
 That dwelt in the lone house then
 Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
 To that voice from the world of men:
 Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
 That goes down to the empty hall,
 Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
 By the lonely Traveller’s call.
 And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
 Their stillness answering his cry,
 While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
 ‘Neath the starred and leafy sky;
 For he suddenly smote on the door, even
 Louder, and lifted his head: –
 “Tell them I came, and no one answered,
 That I kept my word,” he said.
 Never the least stir made the listeners,
 Though every word he spake
 Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
 From the one man left awake:
 Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
 And the sound of iron on stone,
 And how the silence surged softly backwards,
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Walter de la Mare.

Performers speak both poems.

Years of Birth: 2001 and later.

b}

GRANNIE

I stayed with her when I was six then went
To live elsewhere when I was eight years old.
For ages I remembered her faint scent
Of lavender, the way she'd never scold
No matter what I'd done, and most of all
The way her smile seemed, somehow, to enfold
My whole world like a warm, protective shawl.

I knew that I was safe when she was near,
She was so tall, so wide, so large, she would
Stand mountainous between me and my fear,
Yet oh, so gentle, and she understood
Every hope and dream I ever had.
She praised me lavishly when I was good,
But never punished me when I was bad.

Years later war broke out and I became
A soldier and was wounded while in France.
Back home in hospital, still very lame,
I realized suddenly that circumstance
Had brought me close to that small town where she
Was living still. And so I seized the chance
To write and ask if she could visit me.

She came. And I still vividly recall
The shock that I received when she appeared
That dark cold day. Huge grannie was so small!
A tiny, frail, old lady. It was weird.
She hobbled through the ward to where I lay
And drew quite close and, hesitating, peered.
And then she smiled: and love lit up the day.

Vernon Scannell.

Performers speak both poems.

Years of Birth: 2001 and later.

“The Tracy Murphy Memorial Perpetual Cup”
15 Years and Under

EITHER:

JABBERWOCKY

‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

‘Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!’

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome for he sought –
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood a while in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

‘And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!’
He chortled in his joy.

‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Lewis Carroll.

Year of Birth: 2003 and later.

Class 359

15 Years and Under

OR:

SOMETHING TOLD THE WILD GEESE

Something told the wild geese
It was time to go,
Though the fields lay golden
Something whispered ‘Snow!’
Leaves were green and stirring,
Berries lustre-glossed,
But beneath warm feathers
Something cautioned, ‘Frost!’

All the sagging orchards
Steamed with amber spice,
But each wild breast stiffened
At remembered ice.
Something told the wild geese
It was time to fly –
Summer sun was on their wings,
Winter in their cry.

Rachel Field.

Year of Birth: 2003 and later.

EITHER:

EMPTY HOUSE

I hate our house when there's no one in
I miss my family and I miss the din.
The rooms and the hallway seem cold and bare
And the silence hangs like dust in the air.
What's that sound upstairs that makes me start
Driving Fear like an icicle through my heart?
I'm imagining things, there's nobody there –
But I have to make sure so I creep up the stair.
I stand holding my breath by the bedroom door
And hear something rustling across the floor.
Then a scratching sound, a tiny cry!
I can't seem to breathe, my throat is dry.
In the silence I hear my own heart beating.
And the rumble of water in the central heating.
I should go in but I just don't dare
So I call aloud, 'Is anyone there?'
Nobody answers. I push open the door
A fluttering shadow crosses the floor.
And now I see him, now understand
And I gather him gently in my hands.
'I won't hurt you, my friend. Don't flutter, don't start.'
But his body beats wild like a feathered heart.
Out through the window, watch him wheel and fly
Carrying my fear across the sky.

Gareth Owen.

Year of Birth: 2004 and later.

Class 361

Girls 14 Years and Under

OR:

THE TOM CAT

At midnight in the alley
A Tom-cat comes to wail,
And he chants the hate of a million years
As he swings his snaky tail.

Malevolent, bony, brindled,
Tiger and devil and bard,
His eyes are coals from the middle of Hell
And his heart is black and hard.

He twists and crouches and capers
And bares his curved sharp claws.
And he sings to the stars of the jungle nights,
Ere cities were, or laws.

Beast from a world primeval,
He and his leaping clan,
When the blotched red moon leers over the roofs,
Give voice to their scorn of man.

He will lie on the rug tomorrow,
And lick his silky fur,
And veil the brute in his yellow eyes
And play he's tame, and purr.

But at midnight in the alley
He will crouch again and wail,
And beat the time for his demon's song
With the swing of his demon's tail.

Don Marquis.

Year of Birth: 2004 and later.

EITHER:

HE AND SHE

She took after their father,
Hair like a tangle of wire.
He took after their mother,
A dreamer who curled by the fire.

She chose games that were rowdy,
Borrowed his planes and his cars.
He gazed out of the window,
Riding the moon and stars.

She would rage like a tiger,
Fight him with fists and with hate.
He would smoulder in silence,
Patiently, bitterly wait.

She ran wild in the playground,
Shouting her threats at the boys.
He crept under the oak tree
Guarding his thoughts from the noise.

She was chased through the schoolyard,
Taunted and trapped till she cried.
He was a powerful stranger,
A hero who flew to her side.

She took after their father,
He took after their mother,
Both of them bloodied and smiling,
Proud to be sister and brother.

Clare Bevan.

Year of Birth: 2005 and later.

Class 362

Girls 13 Years and Under

OR:

MARMALADE

He's buried in the bushes,
with dockleaves round his grave,
A crimecat desperado
and his name is Marmalade.
He's the cat that caught the pigeon,
that stole the neighbour's meat...
and tore the velvet curtains
and stained the satin seat.
He's the cat that spoilt the laundry,
he's the cat that spilt the stew,
and chased the lady's poodle
and scratched her daughter too.

But –
No more we'll hear his cat flap,
or scratches at the door,
or see him at the window,
or hear his catnap snore.
So –
Ring his grave with pebbles,
erect a noble sign –
For here lies Marmalade
and Marmalade was MINE.

Peter Dixon.

Year of Birth: 2005 and later.

EITHER: WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO LULU?

What has happened to Lulu, mother?
What has happened to Lu?
There's nothing in her bed but an old rag-doll
And by its side a shoe.

Why is her window wide, mother,
The curtain flapping free,
And only a circle on the dusty shelf
Where her money-box used to be?

Why do you turn your head, mother,
And why do the tear-drops fall?
And why do you crumple that note on the fire
And say it is nothing at all?

I woke to voices late last night,
I heard an engine roar.
Why do you tell me the things I heard
Were a dream and nothing more?

I heard somebody cry, mother,
In anger or in pain,
But now I ask you why, mother,
You say it was a gust of rain.

Why do you wander about as though
You don't know what to do?
What has happened to Lulu, mother?
What has happened to Lu?

Charles Causley.

Class 363

Girls 12 Years and Under

OR:

THE WOMAN OF WATER

There once was a woman of water
Refused a Wizard her hand.
So he took the tears of a statue
And the weight from a grain of sand
And he squeezed the sap from a comet
And the height from a cypress tree
And he drained the dark from midnight
And he charmed the brains from a bee
And he soured the mixture with thunder
And he stirred it with ice from hell
And the woman of water drank it down
And she changed into a well.

There once was a woman of water
Who was changed into a well
And the well smiled up at the Wizard
And down down down that old Wizard fell ...

Adrian Mitchell.

Year of Birth: 2006 and later.

EITHER:

CAT

The black cat yawns,
 Opens her jaws,
 Stretches her legs,
 And shows her claws.

Then she gets up
 And stands on four
 Long stiff legs
 And yaws some more.

She shows her sharp teeth,
 She stretches her lip,
 Her slice of a tongue
 Turns up at the tip.

Lifting herself
 On her delicate toes,
 She arches her back
 As high as it goes.

She lets herself down
 With particular care,
 And pads away
 With her tail in the air.

Mary Britton Miller.

OR:

THE DARK

Why are we so afraid of the dark?
 It doesn't bite and it doesn't bark
 Or chase old ladies round the park
 Or steal your sweeties for a lark

And though it might not let you see
 It lets you have some privacy
 And gives you time to go to sleep
 Provides a place to hide or weep

It cannot help but be around
 When beastly things make beastly
 sounds
 When back doors slam and windows
 creek
 When cats have fights and voices
 shriek

The dark is cosy, still and calm
 And never does you any harm
 In the loft, below the sink
 It's somewhere nice and quiet to
 think.

Deep in cupboards, pockets too
 It's always lurking out of view
 Why won't it come out 'til night?
 Perhaps the dark's afraid of light.

James Carter.

Year of Birth: 2007 and later.

Class 365

Girls 10 Years Under

EITHER:

MEETING

As I went home on the old wood road,
 With my basket and lesson book,
A deer came out of the tall trees
 And down to drink at the brook.

Twilight was all about us,
 Twilight and tree on tree;
I looked straight into its great, strange eyes,
 And the deer looked back at me.

Beautiful, brown and unafraid,
 Those eyes returned by stare;
And something with neither sound nor name
 Passed between us there.

Something I shall not forget –
 Something still, and shy and wise –
In the dimness of the woods
 From a pair of gold-flecked eyes.

Rachel Field.

Year of Birth: 2008 and later.

OR:

WANTED – A WITCH’S CAT

Wanted – a witch’s cat.
Must have vigor and spite,
Be expert at hissing,
And good in a fight,
And have balance and poise
On a broomstick at night.

Wanted – a witch’s cat.
Must have hypnotic eyes
To tantalize victims
And mesmerize spies,
And be an adept
At scanning the skies.

Wanted – a witch’s cat,
With a sly, cunning smile,
A knowledge of spells
And a good deal of guile,
With a fairly hot temper
And plenty of bile.

Wanted – a witch’s cat,
Who’s not afraid to fly,
For a cat with strong nerves
The salary’s high
Wanted – a witch’s cat:
Only the best need apply.

Shelagh McGee.

Year of Birth: 2008 and later.

EITHER:

MY PAIN

It doesn't hurt with sudden
screams,
like cuts, or stings, or scrapes.
It doesn't help to cover it
with bandages and tapes.

It doesn't make me howl like
I'm waiting for a shot,
or when I touch my finger to
the stove when I should not.

It isn't like those frozen brains
you get some summer day
when ice cream burns behind
your eyes
then quickly melts away.

It's more a steady soreness,
like a nasty, nagging blister.
If you have got a pain like mine,
it's probably your sister.

Ted Scheu.

OR:

MIDSUMMER MAGIC

There's magic in the air tonight
As under a starry sky
A whisper of mischievous fairy
folk
Tiptoe merrily by.

There's magic in the air tonight
As from the deep sea-caves
A shimmer of silvery mermaids
Swim through the lacy waves.

There's magic in the air tonight
As under the rustling trees
A glimmer of golden unicorns
Toss their heads in the breeze.

There's magic in the air tonight
As from the moon's pale beams
A sprinkle of midsummer magic
Falls gently onto your dreams.

Cynthia Rider.

EITHER:

BREAKDOWN

Rackerty clackerty
Clickerty BONG
The washing machine
Has gone terribly wrong.

It's swallowed a button!
It's stuck in its jaw!
Do you think it will ever
Get out any more?

Hark at it spluttering
Clickerty bump –
The washing is churning
All up in a lump,

And just for a button
So shiny and small!
Oh why did we ever
Have buttons at all?

Rackety clackerty
Clickerty clack...
Hurray! THAT sounds better-
The button's come back!

Jean Kenward.

OR:

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

There's a monster haunts our house,
It's called the central heating,
From the way its stomach rumbles,
Goodness knows what it's been
eating.

It wakes us up at night-time
With its gurglings and its groanings,
Its clattering and clanging,
Its muttering and moanings.

Mum said, 'It lives on water,'
When I asked her a question.
I think it must gulp it down
To get such indigestion!

John Foster.

Class 368

Girls 7 Years and Under

EITHER:

THE MERMAID

The mermaid sat on a sandy rock
And her eyes gleamed soft and green,
“Come with me” she said
“And I’ll take you away
To the land beneath the sea”.

“We’ll ride on a dolphin,
We’ll tickle a whale
Eat sea-weed cake for our tea”,
And she held out her hand
As she dived through the waves,
“Come with me... Come with me...
Come with me”.

Theresa Heine.

OR:

NIGHTRIDE

When I can’t sleep
I shut my door
And sit on the rug
On my bedroom floor.

I open the window
I close my eyes
And say the magic words
Till my carpet flies.

Zooming over gardens
Chasing after bats,
Hooting like an owl
And frightening the cats.

They when I feel sleepy
And dreams are in my head
I fly back through my window
And snuggle down in bed.

Celia Warren.

Year of Birth: 2011 and later.

Class 369

Girls 6 Years and Under

EITHER:

ICE CONE ISLAND

Fly to Ice Cone Island
And your tongue will loop the loop,
As you savour every flavour
And explore each double-scoop.

Volcanoes splutter chocolate chips,
So don't forget your spoon,
But catch an early plane because
The Island melts at noon.

Bernard Lodge.

OR:

NIGHT FRIGHT

My hair stood on end
and I trembled with fright
when I heard a strange noise
on the stairs in the night.
“CREAK”, it went.
“EEK”, I went.
What should I do?
Then my brother
leaped into my room
and yelled, “BOO!”

Marian Swinger.

Year of Birth: 2012 and later.

Class 370

Girls 5 Years and Under

EITHER:

IN OUR ATTIC

I went up in our attic,
Climbing every creaking stair,
And looked for hidden treasure
That I knew was waiting there.
But then I started screaming.
It echoed through the house.
Instead of finding golden coins
I found a little mouse.

Clive Webster.

OR:

MY SNOWMAN

I made a fine big snowman
Beside the garden wall.
When I came back from dinner
He hadn't moved at all.
But when it came to tea-time,
The sun came out to play,
And my fat and jolly snowman
Melted right away.

Shirley Brand.

Year of Birth: 2013 and later.

Class 376

Boys 14 Years and Under

EITHER:

THE SMILE

It began with a whisper
But grew and grew
Until I felt certain
The source must be you.
Why did you smile
While I listened and then
Turn away as their faces
Fell silent again?

What had you told them?
That slammed shut their looks
Like the end of a lesson
With unpopular books?
What was the writing
Which I couldn't see
As it hid between covers
And pointed at me?

Nothing much could have happened
For by the next day
We were laughing, talking,
And managed to stay
(Well after a fashion)
Good friends for a while
But with always between us
The ghost of that smile.

John Mole.

Year of Birth: 2004 and later.

Class 376

Boys 14 Years and Under

OR:

THE DAY THAT SUMMER DIED

From all around the mourners came
The day that Summer died,
From hill and valley, field and wood
And lake and mountainside.

They did not come in funeral black
But every mourner chose
Gorgeous colors or soft shades
Of russet, yellow, rose.

Horse chestnut, oak and sycamore
Wore robes of gold and red;
The rowan sported scarlet beads;
No bitter tears were shed;

Although at dusk the mourners heard,
As a small wind softly sighed,
A touch of sadness in the air
The day that Summer died.

Vernon Scannell.

Year of Birth: 2004 and later.

EITHER: READING ROUND THE CLASS

On Friday we have reading round the class.
Kimberly Bloomer is the best.
She sails slowly along the pages like a great galleon.
And everyone looks up and listens.
“Beautiful reading, Kimberly, dear,” sighs Mrs Scott,
“And with such fluency and, such feeling.
It’s a delight to hear.”

On Friday we have reading round the class.
I’m the worst.
I stumble and mumble along slowly like a broken-down
train.
And everyone looks up and listens.
Then they smile and snigger and whisper behind their
hands.
“Dear me” sighs Mrs Scott, “rather rusty, Simon.
Quite a bit of practice needed, don’t you think?
Too much television and football, that’s your trouble,
And not enough reading.”

And she wonders why I don’t like books.

Gervase Phinn.

OR: STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know,
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost.

Class 378

Boys 11 Years and Under

EITHER: HOMEWORK! OH, HOMEWORK!

Homework! Oh, homework!
I hate you! You stink!
I wish I could wash you
away in the sink,
if only a bomb
would explode you to bits.
Homework! Oh, homework!
You're giving me fits.

I'd rather take baths
with a man-eating shark,
or wrestle a lion
alone in the dark,
eat spinach and liver,
pet ten porcupines,
than tackle the homework
my teacher assigns.

Homework! Oh, homework!
You're last on my list,
I simply can't see
why you even exist,
if you just disappeared
it would tickle me pink.
Homework! Oh, homework!
I hate you! You stink!

Jack Prelutsky.

Year of Birth: 2007 and later.

Class 378

Boys 11 Years and Under

OR:

THE PETSHOP

If I had a hundred pounds to spend,
Or maybe a little more,
I'd hurry as fast as my legs would go
Straight to the Petshop door.

I wouldn't say, "How much for this or that?"
"What kind of a dog is he?"
I'd buy as many as rolled an eye,
Or wagged a tail at me!

I'd take the hound with the drooping ears
That sits by himself alone;
Cockers and Cairns and wobbly pups
For to be my very own.

I might buy a parrot all red and green,
And the monkey I saw before,
If I had a hundred pounds to spend,
Or maybe a little more.

Rachel Field.

Year of Birth: 2007 and later.

Class 379

Boys 10 Years and Under

EITHER:

NOVEMBER NIGHT COUNTDOWN

Ten fat sausages
sizzling in the fire,
Nine fiery flames
reaching ever higher.

Eight jumping jacks
leaping on the ground.
Seven silver sparklers
whirling round and round.

Six golden fountains
fizzing in the dark.
Five red rockets
whizzing across the park

Four bright Catherine wheels
spinning on the gate.
Three wide-eyed children
allowed out very late.

Two proud parents
watching all the games.
One lonely guy
roasting in the flames.

Moira Andrew.

Year of Birth: 2008 and later.

Class 379

Boys 10 Years and Under

OR:

WELLINGTONS

I love the wild wet winter days
Of rain and slushy sleet
For it's then I fetch my Welligons
I mean my rubber Gellibongs
Oh dear I mean my Webbingtons
And pull them on my feet.

My sister Jane hates rainy days
The cold makes Mary cry
But me I've got my Wellinbots
Oh dear I mean my Bellingwots
No no I mean my Welltingots
To keep me warm and dry.

But isn't it a nuisance
Isn't it a shame
That though I love you Wellibongs
I just can't say your name.

Gareth Owen

Year of Birth: 2008 and later.

Class 380

Boys 9 Years and Under

EITHER:

THE LONELY SCARECROW

My poor old bones – I’ve only two –
A broomstick and a broken stave.
My ragged gloves are a disgrace.
My one peg-foot is in the grave.

I wear the labourer’s old clothes:
Coat, shirt, and trousers all undone.
I bear my cross upon a hill
In rain and shine, in snow and sun.

I cannot help the way I look.
My funny hat is full of hay.
O, wild birds, come and nest in me!
Why do you always fly away?

James Kirkup.

OR:

DADDY FELL INTO THE POND

Everyone grumbled. The sky was grey.
We had nothing to do and nothing to say.
We were nearing the end of a dismal day.
And there seemed to be nothing beyond,

Then

Daddy fell into the pond!

And everyone’s face grew merry and bright,
And Timothy danced for sheer delight.
‘Give me the camera, quick, oh quick!
He’s crawling out of the duckweed!’ Click!

Then the gardener suddenly slapped his knee,
And doubled up, shaking silently,
And the ducks all quacked as if they were daft,
And it sounded as if the old drake laughed.
Oh, there wasn’t a thing that didn’t respond

When

Daddy fell into the pond!

Alfred Noyes.

Year of Birth: 2009 and later.

Class 381

Boys 8 Years and Under

EITHER:

MY GRANNIES

I hate it, in the holiday,
When Grandma brings her pets to stay –
Her goat, her pig, her seven rats
Scare our dog and chase our cats.
Her budgies bite, her parrots shout –
And guess who has to clean them out?

My other Gran, the one I like,
Always brings her motor-bike,
And when she takes me for a ride
To picnic in the countryside,
We zoom up hills and whizz round bends –
I hate it when her visit ends!

June Crebbin.

OR:

THE THINGS I'D LIKE TO DO

I want to climb a mountain
I'm very sure I can
My Daddy says I'll have to wait
Until I am a man.

I want to sail a sailing ship
It's easy as can be
But Mummy says I'll have to
work
Before I go to sea.

I'd like to be a stunt man
Or drive a racing car
Or perhaps I'll be an actor
And soon become a star.

I think of these exciting things
But oh, it does annoy,
They say I can't do anything
Because I'm just a BOY.

Enid Barraclough.

Year of Birth: 2010 and later.

EITHER:

THE COW

The friendly cow, all red and white,
I love with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her
 might,
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

OR:

THE LONELY DRAGON

A dragon is sad
Because everyone thinks
A dragon is fierce and brave,
And roars out flames,
And eats everybody,
Whoever comes near his
 cave.
But a dragon likes people,
A dragon needs friends,
A dragon is lonely and sad,
If anyone knows
Of a friend for a dragon,
A dragon would be very glad.

Theresa Heine.

Year of Birth: 2011 and later.

EITHER:

TARANTULA

She's hairy,
She's scary,
She's covered in bristles.
A fighter,
A biter,
With legs like eight thistles.

A muncher,
A cruncher,
With greedy jaws gnashing.
A mawler,
A crawler...

But I think she is SMASHING!

Clare Bevan.

OR:

BEDTIME

When I go upstairs to bed,
I usually give a loud cough.
This is to scare The Monster off.

When I come to my room,
I usually slam the door right back.
This is to squash The Man in Black
Who sometimes hides there.

Nor do I walk to the bed,
But usually run and jump instead.
This is to stop The Hand -
Which is under there all night -
From grabbing my ankles.

Allan Ahlberg.

EITHER:

IF YOU SHOULD MEET
A CROCODILE

If you should meet a crocodile,
Don't take a stick and poke him;
Ignore the welcome in his smile,
Be careful not to stroke him.
For he sleeps upon the Nile,
He thinner gets and thinner;
But whene'er you meet a
 crocodile
He's ready for his dinner.

Anon.

OR:

MY PUPPY

It's funny
my puppy
knows just how I feel.

When I'm happy
he's yappy
and squirms like an eel.

When I'm grumpy
he's slumpy
and stays at my heel.

It's funny
my puppy
knows such a great deal.

Aileen Fisher.

Year of Birth: 2013 and later.