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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.**

**Class 362**

**Girls 13 Years and Under**

**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.

**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.

**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 went 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.**