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Advanced Verse-Speaking – 16 Years and Over

a}

THE TYGER

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distance deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake.

Year of Birth: 2001 or earlier.

b} **Shakespeare:**

Female: **THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA** Act 4 Scene 3

SILVIA: O Eglamore, thou art a gentleman –
Think not I flatter, for I swear I do not –
Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplished.
Thou art not ignorant what dear good will
I bear unto the banished Valentine,
Nor how my father would enforce me marry
Vain Thurio, whom my very soul abhors.
Thyself hast loved, and I have heard thee say
No grief did ever come so near thy heart
As when thy lady and thy true love died,
Upon whose grave thou vowed'st pure chastity.
Sir Eglamour, I would to Valentine,
To Mantua, where I hear he makes abode;
And for the ways are dangerous to pass,
I do desire thy worthy company,
Upon whose faith and honour I repose.
Urge not my father's anger, Eglamour,
But think upon my grief, a lady's grief,
And on the justice of my flying hence,
To keep me from a most unholy match,
Which heaven and fortune still rewards with plagues.
I do desire thee, even from a heart
As full of sorrows as the sea of sands,
To bear me company and go with me.
If not, to hide what I have said to thee,
That I may venture to depart alone.

(Movement is permissible)

Year of Birth: 2001 or earlier.

b) **Shakespeare:**

Male:

CYMBELINE

Act 3 Scene 2

PISANIO: How? Of adultery? Wherefore write you not
What monster's her accuser? Leonatus,
O master, what a strange infection
Is fall'n into thy ear! What false Italian,
As poisonous tongued as handed, hath prevailed
On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal? No.
She's punished for her truth; and undergoes,
More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults
As would take in some virtue. O my master,
Thy mind to her is now as low as were
Thy fortunes. How? That I should murder her,
Upon the love and truth and vows which I
Have made to thy command? I, her? Her blood?
If it be so to do good service, never
Let me be counted serviceable. How look I,
That I should seem to lack humanity
So much as this fact comes to? {*Reads*} 'Do 't.
The letter
That I have sent her, by her own command
Shall give thee opportunity.' O damned paper,
Black as the ink that's on thee! Senseless bauble,
Are thou a fedary for this act, and look'st
So virgin-like without? Lo, here she comes.
I am ignorant in what I am commanded.

(Movement is permissible)

Year of Birth: 2001 or earlier.

c}

MARY CELESTE

*Only the wind sings
in the riggings,
the hull creaks a lullaby;
a sail lifts gently
like a message
pinned to a vacant sky.
The wheel turns
over bare decks,
shirts flap on a line;
only the song of the lapping waves
beats steady time...*

First mate,
off duty from
the long dawn watch, begins
a letter to his wife, daydreams
of home.

The Captain's wife is late;
the child did not sleep
and breakfast has passed...
She, too, is missing home;
sits down at last to eat,
but can't quite force
the porridge down.
She swallows hard,
Slices the top from her egg.

The second mate
is happy.
A four-hour sleep,
full stomach
and a quiet sea
are all he craves.
He has all three.

Shirts washed and hung, beds
made below, decks done, the boy
stitches a torn sail.

The Captain
has a good ear for a tune;
played his child to sleep
on the ship's organ.
Now, music left,
he checks his compass,
lightly tips the wheel,
hopes for a westerly.
Clear sky, a friendly sea,
fair winds for Italy.

The child now sleeps, at last,
head firmly pressed into her pillow
in a deep sea-dream.

*Then why are the gulls wheeling
like vultures in the sky?
Why was the child snatched
from her sleep? What drew
the Captain's cry?*

Only the wind replies
in the rigging,
and the hull creaks and sighs;
a sail spells out its message
over silent skies.
The wheel still turns
over bare decks,
shirts blow on the line;
the siren-song of lapping waves
still echoes over time.

Judith Nicholls.

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

Year of Birth: 2001 or earlier.

Sonnet Speaking – 16 Years and Over

a}

THE SPIDER

Just as my fingers close about the pen,
a spider, smaller than a grain of sand,
proceeds from nail to knuckle; pauses; then
starts the vast exploration of my hand.
Hastily tramping through warm wastes it goes
careless of curving hairs and rutted skin,
earthquakes of muscle, great volcanic throes
of blood and flesh beneath, scorning the din
of monstrous nostril-gales that blast its way
from wrist to elbow, where the white ascent
of one world-column starts. ‘Now fail!’ I say.
It does not even ponder what I meant,
but moves up through an atmosphere grown colder
towards the uncharted mountain of my shoulder.

Kenneth Mackenzie.

b}

Own Choice.

Performers speak both poems, which may be read.

Year of Birth: 2001 or earlier.

Yeats Verse-Speaking – 16 Years and Over

a}

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

b}

A Yeats' poem of own choice.

Performers speak both poems, which may be read.

Year of Birth: 2001 or earlier.

Senior Women – 18 Years and Over

a}

SECRETS

High on the branch of a tree,
a bird in its next chirped:
I grasp what I grasp.
A secret's a worm that hides
in the earth, slides about in the gloom,
sifting the whispering soil
where flowers unwrap.

Down by the bright green pond,
a frog on its lily croaked:
I ken what I ken.
A secret's a dragonfly key
locking, unlocking, the air
where silvery fish jump high
for the hooks of the fishermen.

Out in the shimmering meadow,
a bee in a flower buzzed:
I suss what I suss.
Blown on a breeze,
a secret's a dusting of pollen
carried downwind in the sunlight
to end in a sneeze.

Snug in her bed in her room,
a child in her blankets crooned:
I know what I know.
A secret's a shadow thrown on a wall,
all fingers and thumbs,
which dances, dances for me
till the darkness comes.

Carol Ann Duffy.**Year of Birth: 1999 or earlier.**

b}

THE RUINED MAID

“O’ Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!
Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?
And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?” –
“O didn’t you know I’d been ruined?” said she.

- “You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;
And now you’ve gay bracelets and bright feathers three!” –
“Yes: that’s how we dress when we’re ruined,” said she.

- “At home in the bartom you said ‘thee’ and ‘thou,’
And ‘thik oon,’ and ‘theäs oon,’ and ‘t’other’; but now
Your talking quite fits ‘ee for high compa-ny!” –
“Some polish is gained with one’s ruin,” said she.

- “Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak
But now I’m bewitched by your delicate cheek,
And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!” –
“We never do work when we’re ruined,” said she.

- “You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,
And you’d sigh, and you’d sock; but at present you seem
To know not of megrims or melaccho-ly!” –
“True. One’s pretty lively when ruined,” said she.

- “I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,
And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!” –
“My dear – a raw country girl, such as you be,
Cannot quite expect that. You ain’t ruined,” said she.

Thomas Hardy.

Performers speak both poems, which may be read.

Year of Birth: 1999 or earlier.

Senior Men – 18 Years and Over

a}

TARTARY

If I were Lord of Tartary,
 Myself, and me alone,
 My bed should be of ivory,
 Of beaten gold my throne;
 And in my court should peacocks
 flaunt,
 And in my forests tigers haunt,
 And in my pools great fishes
 slant
 Their fins athwart the sun.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
 Trumpeters every day
 To every meal would summon
 me,
 And in my courtyards bray;
 And in the evening lamps should
 shine,
 Yellow as honey, red as wine,
 While harp, and flute, and
 mandolin
 Made music sweet and gay.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
 I'd wear a robe of beads,
 White, and gold, and green they'd
 be –
 And clustered thick as seeds;
 And ere should wane the morning
 star,
 I'd don my robe and scimitar,
 And zebras seven should draw
 my car
 Through Tartary's dark
 glades.

Lord of the fruits of Tartary,
 Her rivers silver-pale!
 Lord of the hills of Tartary,
 Glen, thicket, wood, and dale!
 Her flashing stars, her scented
 breeze,
 Her trembling lakes, like
 foamless seas,
 Her bird-delighting citron-trees,
 In every purple vale!

Walter de la Mare.

Performers speak both poems which may be read.

Year of Birth: 1999 or earlier.

b}

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine-and-fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water,
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

W.B. Yeats.

Performers speak both poems which may be read.

Year of Birth: 1999 or earlier.

a}

PROCRASTINATION

It is difficult to pick up
 A thing you have let go –
 A ball – bouncing out of sight –
 The string of a kite
 That sails away in the wind,
 But most of all a friend
 Neglected, lost to view
 And almost out of mind.
 The writing pad is near at hand
 The pen invites you but
 You hesitate, it is so long –
 How can you break the barrier
 Of time you both have built?
 Your hand is on the telephone,
 It rings, and someone else’s voice
 Deters you from the link you
 Would have forged. Days go by,
 The thought still in your mind
 At intervals, but you do not
 Make the move.

Sometimes you think
 Why should I be the first
 To bridge the gap? You thrust away
 The instinct of a friend –
 Or else you fear that
 You may meet rebuff.
 And so the overture
 Is never made. How sad
 That friendships die
 For lack of nurture. So much
 Love is wasted in the air.
 It is difficult to pick up
 A thing you have let go,
 Hard to retrieve
 So delicate a thing
 Held by so tenuous a thread,
 That gone beyond recall
 It breaks –
 You only had to lift the telephone.

Enid Barraclough.

Performers speak both poems.

Years of Birth: 2000 and later.

b}

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 both poems.

Years of Birth: 2000 and later.

Class 359

“The Tracy Murphy Memorial Perpetual Cup”

15 Years and Under

EITHER:

A POISON TREE

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright;
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veiled the pole:
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

William Blake.

Year of Birth: 2002 and later.

OR:

THE BULLY ASLEEP

One afternoon, when grassy
Scents through the classroom crept,
Bill Craddock laid his head
Down on his desk, and slept.

The children came round him:
Jimmy, Roger, and Jane;
They lifted his head timidly
And let it sink again.

“Look, he’s gone sound asleep, Miss”,
Said Jimmy Adair:
“He stays up all the night, you see;
His mother doesn’t care”.

“Stand away from him, children”.
Miss Andrews stooped to see.
“Yes, he’s asleep; go on
With your writing, and let him be”.

“Now’s a good chance!” whispered Jimmy;
And he snatched Bill’s pen and hid it.
“Kick him under the desk, hard;
He won’t know who did it”.

“Fill all his pockets with rubbish –
Paper, apple-cores, chalk”.
So they plotted, while Jane
Sat wide-eyed at their talk.

Not caring, not hearing,
Bill Craddock he slept on;
Lips parted, eyes closed –
Their cruelty gone.

“Stick him with pins!” muttered Roger.
“Ink down his neck!” said Jim.
But Jane, tearful and foolish
Wanted to comfort him.

John Walsh.

Year of Birth: 2002 and later.

EITHER:

MOONLIT APPLES

At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,
And the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those
Apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes
A cloud on the moon in the autumn night.

A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scratches, and then
There is no sound at the top of the house of men
Or Mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

They are lying in rows there, under the gloomy beams;
On the sagging floor; they gather the silver streams
Out of the moon, those moonlit apples of dreams,
And quiet is the steep stair under.

In the corridors under there is nothing but sleep.
And stiller than ever on orchard boughs they keep
Tryst with the moon, and deep is the silence, deep
On the moon-washed apples of wonder.

John Drinkwater.

Year of Birth: 2003 and later.

OR:

THE DARE

*Go on, I dare you,
Come on down!*

Was it me they called?
Pretend you haven't heard,
a voice commanded in my mind.
Walk past, walk fast
and don't look down,
don't look behind.

Come on, it's easy!

The banks were steep,
the water low
and flanked with oozing brown.
Easy? Walk fast
but don't look down.
Walk straight, walk on,
even risk their jeers
and run...

*Never go near those dykes,
my mother said.
No need to tell me.
I'd seen stones sucked in
and covered with without trace,
gulls slide to bobbing safety,
grasses drown as water rose.
No need to tell me
to avoid the place.*

*She ca-a-n't, she ca-a-a-n't
Cowardy, cowardy custard!*

There's no such word as 'can't',
my father said.
I slowed my pace.
The voices stopped,
waited as I wavered, grasping breath.
My mother's wrath? My father's
scorn?
A watery death?

I hesitated then turned back,
forced myself to see the mud below.
After all, it was a dare....
There was no choice;
I had to go.

Judith Nicolls.

Year of Birth: 2003 and later.

EITHER:

THE WAYFARER

The beauty of the world hath made me sad,
This beauty that will pass;
Sometimes my heart hath shaken with great joy
To see a leaping squirrel in a tree,
Or a red lady-bird upon a stalk,
Or little rabbits in a field at evening,
Lit by a slanting sun,
Or some green hill where shadows drifted by,
Some quiet hill where mountainy man had sown
And soon will reap, near to the gate of Heaven;
Or children with bare feet upon the sands
Of some ebbled sea, or playing on the streets
Of little towns in Connacht,
Things young and happy.
And then my heart hath told me:
These will pass,
Will pass and change, will die and be no more,
Things bright and green, things young and happy;
And I have gone upon my way,
Sorrowful.

Padraic Pearse.

Year of Birth: 2004 and later.

OR:

A FEATHER FROM AN ANGEL

Anton's box of treasures held
a silver key and a glassy stone,
a figurine made of polished bone
and a feather from an angel.

The figurine was from Borneo,
the stone from France or Italy,
the silver key was a mystery
but the feather came from an angel.

We might have believed him if he'd said
the feather fell from a bleached white crow
but he always replied, "It's an angel's, I know,
a feather from an angel."

We might have believed him if he'd said,
"An albatross let the feather fall,"
But he had no doubt, no doubt at all,
his feather came from an angel.

"I thought I'd dreamt him one night," he'd say,
"But in the morning I knew he'd been there;
he left a feather on my bedside chair,
a feather from an angel."

And it seems that all my life I've looked
for that sort of belief that nothing could shift,
something simple yet precious as Anton's gift,
a feather from an angel.

Brian Moses.

Year of Birth: 2004 and later.

EITHER:

UCKG!

Once I went to the fridge –
 saw our jug in there
 and I thought:
 what's in it?
 A syrup
 what syrup?
 smell it – smells nice
 finger in – lick it –
 tastes nice
 lift the jug and drink a bit
 this is good
 this is peach syrup
 what a drink!
 so I drank the lot.

Not long after – a few days later
 I went to the fridge
 saw our jug in there
 what's in it?
 A syrup
 what syrup?
 smell it
 O yes this is the peach syrup
 again
 lift the jug and drink some
 drink some more, drink some
 more
 drank the lot.

Not long after a few days later
 I went to the fridge
 saw our jug in there
 what's in it?
 A syrup – yes!
 Here we go again
 lift the jug and fill my mouth
 with that thick sweet juice

Uckg!

this isn't peach
 this is uckg.
 my mouth is full of oil
 thick cooking oil

I wonder
 who put *that* there.

Michael Rosen.

Year of Birth: 2005 and later.

OR:

PURPLE SHOES

Mum and me had a row yesterday,
A big, exploding
How dare you speak to me like that,
I'm off to stay at Gran's ...kind of row.

It was about shoes.
I'd seen a pair of purple ones at Carters,
Heels not too high, soft suede, silver buckles;
'NO' she said.
'Not suitable for school
I can't afford to buy rubbish.'
That's when we had our row.

I went to bed longing for those shoes.
They made footsteps in my mind,
Kicking up dance dust;
I wore them in my dreams across a shiny floor,
Under flashing coloured lights.
It was ruining my life not to have them.

This morning they were mine.
Mum relented and gave me the money.
I walked out of the store wearing new purple shoes.
I kept seeing myself reflected in shop windows
With purple shoes on,
Walking to the bus stop,
Walking the whole length of our street
Wearing purple shoes.

On Monday I shall go to school in purple shoes.
Mum will say no a thousand furious times
But I don't care.
I'm not going to give in.

Irene Rawnsley.

Year of Birth: 2005 and later.

EITHER:

BREAKING THE RULES

When Nadia started at our school
Miss said she should join our table,
But she didn't, she couldn't –
She sat with us, but apart,
Nobody let her in
That would be breaking the rules.
Friends have rules to keep others out,
To let them know they're not part of things.

Nadia had an accent,
It marked her out.
Lucy said, 'People with accents can't join us,
It's against the rules.'
Gemma said, 'People who aren't from round here
Have different rules.'

But on Saturday I saw Nadia in the park,
Pushing backwards and forwards on a swing,
Her feet still on the ground – with her heart.
When she saw me I noticed her melt into nothing.
Sorry seemed a small word.
'Do you want a push?' I asked
Nadia smiled in a language I knew.
We spent all afternoon laughing and messing about.

Coral Rumble.

Year of Birth: 2006 and later.

OR:

MOTHER DOESN'T WANT A DOG

Mother doesn't want a dog.
Mother says they smell,
And never sit when you say sit,
Or even when you yell.
And when you come home late at night
And there is ice and snow,
You have to go back out because
The dumb dog has to go.

Mother doesn't want a dog.
Mother says they shed,
And always let the strangers in
And bark at friends instead,
And do disgraceful things on rugs,
And track mud on the floor,
And flop upon your bed at night
And snore their doggy snore.

Mother doesn't want a dog.
She's making a mistake.
Because, more than a dog, I think
She will not want this snake.

Judith Viorst.

Year of Birth: 2006 and later.

Class 365

Girls 10 Years Under

EITHER:

MRS MACKENZIE

Mrs Mackenzie's quite stern.
She says: 'You're not here to have fun,
You're here to learn,'
When I mess about in class.

And in the corridor, if I run
When she is passing by, she shouts
'Slow down! You're not in a race!'
Or 'More haste, less speed!'
Whatever *that* means.

I never used to like Mrs Mackenzie much.

But the other day
When my dog died
And she saw me crying
She said 'Dogs are such good friends,
Aren't they?'
And she let me stay
In the classroom with her at break time
When all the others went outside
To play.

Mrs Mackenzie's OK.

Gillian Floyd.

Year of Birth: 2007 and later.

OR: THE COMPUTER'S SWALLOWED GRANDMA

The computer's swallowed grandma
Yes, 'honestly' it's true.
She pressed 'control' and 'enter'
And disappeared from view.

It's devoured her completely
The thought just makes me squirm.
Maybe she's caught a virus
Or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched right through the recycle bin
And files of every kind.
I've even used the Internet
But nothing did I find.

In desperation I asked Jeeves
My searches to refine
The reply from him was negative
Not a thing was found 'online'.

So, if inside your 'inbox'
My grandma you should see.
Please 'scan', 'copy', and 'paste' her
In an e-mail back to me.

Valerie Waite,

Year of Birth: 2007 and later.

EITHER:**MY TEACHER ATE MY
HOMEWORK**

My teacher ate my homework,
Which I thought was rather odd.
He sniffed at it and smiled
with an approving sort of nod.

He took a little nibble -
it's unusual, but true -
then had a somewhat larger bite
and gave a thoughtful chew.

I think he must have liked it,
for he really went to town.
He gobbled it with gusto
and he wolfed the whole thing
down.

He licked off all his fingers,
gave a burp and said, "You
pass."

I guess that's how they grade you
when you're in a cooking class.

Ken Nesbitt.

OR:**I'M DISGUSTED WITH MY
BROTHER**

I'm disgusted with my brother,
I am positively sore,
I have never been so angry
With a human being before,
He's everything detestable
That's spelled with A through Z
He deserves to be the target
Of a ten pound bumblebee.

I'd like to wave a magic wand
And make him disappear,
Or watch a wild rhinoceros
Attack him from the rear,
Perhaps I'll cook a pot of soup
And dump my brother in,
He forgot today's my birthday –
Oh, how could he.....he's my
twin.

Jack Prelutsky.

Year of Birth: 2008 and later.

EITHER:

THE MONKEY

More skilful
Than any acrobat,
The monkey
Swings himself
Across the cage,
Then sits, bored,
Staring at the visitors
Who offer food
He does not need
And urge him
To perform tricks
He does not want to do.

What a performance
He would give them
In the forest's trees,
If only he was there!

John Foster.

OR:

THE MAGIC WORD

“More Jam” said Rosie to her Mum
“I want more Jam” said she.
But no one heard the Magic Word.
Mum, took a sip of tea.

“The jam, the jam, the jam” she cried
Her voice rang loud and clear
“I want to spread it on my bread”.
But... no one seemed to hear.

“Please pass the jam,” Rose said at
last.

Now that's the thing to say.
When mother heard the Magic Word
She passed it, right away.

Martin Gardner.

Year of Birth: 2009 and later.

Class 368

Girls 7 Years and Under

EITHER:

BREAKFAST IN BED

Oh, it's so lovely,
Breakfast in bed;
With tray on the sheet
And a pillow for head.

I can wriggle my toes
While I'm drinking my tea,
And balance the marmalade
Right on my knee.

'You must get better soon'
Is what Mummy said.
But who wants to get well,
When it's breakfast in bed!

OR:

SPORTS DAY

I went in for the sack race,
I was doing all right
Until Josh bumped into Lizzie
And I fell over Bill.

We almost came first in the three legged race,
Me and Daisy Peep
Then our legs got muddled up somehow,
And we landed in a heap.

But my best race was running
Bang! Went the starting gun.
I ran like the wind to the finishing line
And everyone cheered, "YOU'VE WON!"

Year of Birth: 2010 and later.

Class 369

Girls 6 Years and Under

EITHER:

DADDY’S DIET

Daddy’s on a diet,
taking care with what he eats.
So I guess I should keep quiet
That I saw him wolfing sweets.

Daddy’s on a diet,
and for me it’s turned out well!
As I’ve joined the secret feasting,
to ensure that I won’t tell.

Gareth Lancaster.

OR:

SWEET SURPRISE

Something smells good in the kitchen,
Sugary, spicy and sweet.
A pudding? A pie? What can it be?
Mum’s making a special treat.

So I peep into the kitchen
And as you all can see,
That sugary spicy, sweet surprise
Is a BIRTHDAY CAKE for me!

Year of Birth: 2011 and later.

Class 370

Girls 5 Years and Under

EITHER:

MY TEDDY HAS A FRIGHT

Sometimes, my teddy
Has a fright
When there's a squeak
Or creak at night,
So I cuddle him
And hold him tight,
Until he says
He feels alright

Charles Thomson.

OR:

MY DOLLY

My dolly's mouth is nice and red
Her teeth are very white,
She doesn't need to brush them
When she goes to bed at night.

They stay quite clean and shiny
Though she never makes them wet.
But mine will go as black as ink
If ever I forget.

Year of Birth: 2012 and later.

Class 376

Boys 14 Years and Under

EITHER:

PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds are such gobby places.
Know what I mean?
Everyone seems to have something to
Talk about, giggle, whisper, scream and shout about.
I mean, it's like being in a parrot cage.

And playgrounds are such pushy places.
Know what I mean?
Everyone seems to have to
Run about, jump, kick, do cartwheels, handstands,
fly around.
I mean, it's like being inside a whirlwind.

And playgrounds are such patchy places.
Know what I mean?
Everyone seems to
Go round in circles, lines and triangles, coloured
shapes.
I mean, it's like being in a kaleidoscope.

And playgrounds are such pally places.
Know what I mean?
Everyone seems to
Have best friends, secrets, link arms, be in gangs.
Everyone, except me.

Know what I mean?

Berlie Doherty.

Year of Birth: 2003 and later.

OR:

HOLIDAYS AT HOME

There was a family who, every year,
Would go abroad, sometimes to Italy,
Sometimes to France. The youngest did not dare
To say, "I much prefer to stay right here."

You see, abroad there were no slot-machines,
No bright pink rock with one name going through it,
No rain, no boarding-houses, no baked beans,
No landladies, and no familiar scenes.

And George, the youngest boy, so longed to say,
"I don't like Greece, I don't like all these views,
I don't like having fierce sun every day,
And, most of all, I just detest the way

The food is cooked - that garlic and that soup,
Those strings of pasta, and no cakes at all."
The family wondered why George seemed to droop
And looked just like a thin hen in a coop.

They never guessed why when they said, "Next year
We can't afford abroad, we'll stay right here,"
George looked so pleased and soon began to dream
Of piers, pink rock, deep sand, and Devonshire cream.

Elizabeth Jennings.

Year of Birth: 2003 and later.

EITHER:

THE SEA

The sea is a hungry dog,
Giant and grey.
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws
Hour upon hour he gnaws
The rumbling, tumbling stones,
And 'Bones, bones, bones, bones!'
The giant sea-dog moans,
Licking his greasy paws.

And when the night wind roars
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,
And howls and hollos long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,
When even the grasses on the dune
Play no more their reedy tune,
With his head between his paws
He lies on the sandy shores,
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

James Reeves.

Year of Birth: 2005 and later.

Class 377

Boys 12 Years and Under

OR:

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care,
We have not time to stand and stare?

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

W.H. Davies.

Year of Birth: 2005 and later.

EITHER:

JUST FANCY THAT

‘Just fancy that!’ my parents say
At anything I mention.
They always seem so far away
And never pay attention.

‘Just fancy that,’ their eyes are glazed.
It grows so very wearing.
‘Just fancy that’ is not a line
For which I’m really caring.

And so today I’m telling them
I threw a cricket bat.
I broke a windowpane at school.
They murmur, ‘Fancy that.’

I wrote a message on the fence.
I spoke a wicked word.
The way the Vicar hurried past,
I’m positive he heard.

‘Just fancy that’. Then suddenly
Their eyes are sticking out,
Their words are coming in a rush
Their voices in a shout.

‘You naughty child, you shameless boy,
It’s time WE had a chat.’
Hurrah, they’ve noticed me at last.
My goodness, fancy that!

Max Fatchen.

Year of Birth: 2006 and later.

OR:

A TENT

A tent went up on the grass:
just room enough for a boy and his brother,
who waited for day to pass –
kept wishing that day would pass –
as they'd never wished of another.

At last they got their wish.
Darkness fell and off they went
feeling quite daredevilish –
yes, really daredevilish –
to spend a night in that tent.

Night is dizzy and deep;
the wall of a tent is thin;
they were almost too scared to sleep,
but whispered each other to sleep
as stars and ghosts listened in.

And the tent flew through the night
on the back of the turning world,
which brought them home all right,
them and the tent, still upright
and now lavishly dew-pearled.

Christopher Reid.

Year of Birth: 2006 and later.

EITHER:**GOOD COMPANY**

I sleep in a room at the top of the house
 With a flea, and a fly, and a soft-scratching mouse,
 And a spider that hangs by a thread from the ceiling,
 Who gives me each day such a curious feeling
 When I watch him at work on the beautiful weave
 Of his web that's so fine I can hardly believe
 It won't all end up in such terrible tangles,
 For he sways as he weaves, and spins as he dangles.
 I cannot get up to that spider, I know,
 And I hope he won't get down to me here below,
 And yet when I wake in that chill morning air
 I'd miss him if he were not still swinging there,
 For I have in my room such good company,
 There's him, and the mouse, and the fly and the flea.

Leonard Clark.**OR:****TEABAG**

I'd like to be a teabag,
 and stay at home all day
 and talk to other teabags
 in a teabag sort of way.

I'd love to be a teabag,
 and lie in a little box
 and never have to wash my face
 or change my dirty socks.

I'd like to be a Tetly bag,
 an Earl Grey one perhaps,
 and doze all day and lie around
 with Earl Grey kind of chaps.

I wouldn't have to do a thing,
 no homework, jobs or chores –
 just lie inside a comfy box
 of teabags and their snores.

I wouldn't have to do exams,
 I needn't tidy rooms,
 or sweep the floor, or feed the cat
 or wash up all the spoons.

I wouldn't have to do a thing –
 A life of bliss, you see...
 except that once in all my life

I'd make a cup of tea.

Peter Dixon.**Year of Birth: 2007 and later.**

EITHER:

DEAR MUM,

While you were out
A cup went and broke itself on purpose.
A crack appeared in the blue vase
Your great Granddad brought back from Mr. Ming in China.
Somehow without me even turning on the tap
The sink mysteriously overflowed.
And a strange jam-stain
About the size of a boy's hand,
Suddenly appeared on the kitchen wall.
Mum, I don't think we will ever discover
Exactly how the cat
Managed to turn on the washing-machine –
Specially from the inside,
Or how sis's pet rabbit
Went and mistook
The wash-disposal unit for a burrow.
Also Mum,
I know the canary looks grubby,
But it took me age getting it out of the vacuum cleaner.
I was being good, honest,
But I think the house is haunted so,
Knowing you're going to have a fit,
I've gone over to Gran's to lie low for a bit.

Brian Patten.

OR:

FOUR O'CLOCK FRIDAY

Four o'clock Friday, I'm home at last,
Time to forget the week that's past.
On Monday, in break they stole my ball
And threw it over the playground wall.
On Tuesday afternoon, in games,
They threw mud at me and called me names.
On Wednesday, they trampled my books on the floor,
So Miss kept me in because I swore.
On Thursday, they laughed after the test
'Cause my marks were lower than the rest.
Four o'clock Friday, at last I'm free,
For two whole days they can't get at me.

John Foster.

Year of Birth: 2008 and later.

Class 381

Boys 8 Years and Under

EITHER:

WHO'S AFRAID?

Do I have to go haunting tonight?
The children might give me a fright.
It's dark in that house.
I might meet a mouse.
Do I have to go haunting tonight?

I don't like the way they scream out
When they see me skulking about.
I'd rather stay here,
Where there's nothing to fear.
Do I have to go haunting tonight?

John Foster.

OR:

KIDS

"Sit up straight,"
Said mum to Mabel.
"Keep your elbows
Off the table.
Do not eat peas
Off a fork.
Your mouth is full –
Don't try to talk.
Keep your mouth shut
When you eat.
Keep still or you'll
Fall off your seat.
If you want more,
You will say "please".
Don't fiddle with
That piece of cheese!"
If we then as kids
Cause such a fuss,
Why do you do on
Having us?

Spike Milligan.

Year of Birth: 2009 and later.

EITHER:**MISS T**

It's a very odd thing –
As odd as can be –
That whatever Miss T. eats
Turns into Miss T.;
Porridge and apples,
Mince, muffins and mutton,
Jam, junket, jumbles –
Not a rap, not a button
It matters; the moment
They're out of her plate,
Though shared by Miss Butcher
And sour Mr. Bare;
Tiny and cheerful,
And neat as can be,
Whatever Miss T. eats
Turns into Miss T.

Walter de la Mare.

OR:**KEEP A POEM IN YOUR
POCKET**

Keep a poem in your pocket
and a picture in your head
and you'll never feel lonely
at night when you're in bed.

The little poem will sing to you
the little picture bring to you
a dozen dreams to dance to you
at night when you're in bed.

So –
keep a picture in your pocket
and a poem in your head
and you'll never feel lonely
at night when you're in bed.

Beatrice Schenk de Regniers.

Year of Birth: 2010 and later.

EITHER:

AFRAID OF THE DARK

I like the day,
I fear the night,
I hate the dark,
But love daylight.

My Mum and Dad
Are not like me –
They're not afraid,
They don't agree

That ghosts and
Goblins fly about
And frighten me
When lights go out.

Tony John.

OR:

MIN

I've got a dog
Whose name is Min,
As soon as she's out
She wants to come in.
She growls,
She howls,
She bumps,
She thumps,
She paws,
She claws,
And, finally, Min gets in.

Barbara Ireson.

Year of Birth: 2011 and later.

Class 384

Boys 5 Years and Under

EITHER:

MUD

I like mud.

I like it on my clothes.

I like it on my fingers.

I like it on my toes.

Dirt's pretty ordinary

And dust's a dud.

For a really good mess-up

I like mud.

John Smith.

OR:

GHOST

I saw a ghost

That stared and stared

And I stood still

And acted scared.

But that was just

A big pretend.

I knew that ghost...

... it was my friend.

Jack Prelutsky.

Year of Birth: 2012 and later.