

# HONG KONG BUDDING POETS (ENGLISH) AWARD

2022/23



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# Acknowledgements

The **Hong Kong Budding Poets (English) Award 2022/23** and the creation of this anthology would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of many individuals. We would like to offer our special thanks to the following contributors:

**Ms Jenny Cheng** of **The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education**, who has worked closely with us at each stage of the competition and provided fantastic support. It has been a pleasure to work alongside you.

The staff of the **Department of English at The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong** who have borne most of the responsibility for adjudicating the award. We thoroughly appreciate your efforts.

All the **teachers and management staff** of participating primary and secondary schools across Hong Kong who have supported the award in their classrooms and encouraged students to submit their entries. The next generation of creative thinkers in Hong Kong will be inspired by your hard work and dedication.

Finally, **the participants** themselves deserve a special acknowledgement of their creative minds. This year’s entries demonstrated an impressively wide scope of creativity and exceptional talents. We hope this collection will take readers on an inspiring journey of imagination and excitement.

## Dr FUNG Kai Yeung, Paul (馮啟陽 博士)

Head & Associate professor,  
Department of English

The Hang Seng University  
of Hong Kong

The Department of English is pleased to be given the opportunity in adjudicating the Hong Kong Budding Poets (English) Award 2023. This year, we have received more than 1,700 entries from primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. The themes of this year's Award are: 'Diligence', 'Cherish what we have' and 'Care for Others'.

What is Diligence? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it refers to the 'constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken; persistent application and endeavour; industry, assiduity'. In Cheung Ming Ting's meticulous poem entitled 'The Spider's Will', the poet offers a thick description of the creation of a spider web. The description is marked by meticulous details and vivid imageries. The spider making the web is at war with the wind. 'The spider, powerless, fragments of the broken work scattered / The destroyer, now gone, leaving its brutal demolition'. Despite nature's destructive power, the spider returns with a stronger will. The poem teaches us the importance of accepting failures in life. The spider continues to spin the web without being discouraged by nature. 'Not fearing the deadly attacks of the wind's fatality, / Nor being washed away to nowhere by the deadly rain. / Persistence, effort, determination and assiduity, / The unbreakable web of strings it built and attained'. The poem can be seen as a beautiful commentary on Eric Carle's children's book, *The Very Busy Spider*.

Working on 'Cherish what we have', Sze Yeuk Sze wrote the poem entitled 'In a Special Assembly'. It begins with the narrator complaining about homework and not being allowed to play video games. It then moves on to a morning assembly where s/he hears the extreme condition of children suffering from poverty. The assembly has inspired the narrator of the poem: 'How embarrassed I am when listening to their sharing. / A stab of regret has forcefully seized my heart'. In 'A Lesson of Cherishing', Chung Chi Hang tells a story between two friends, one rich and the other poor. The rich man does not cherish what he possesses and ends up in starvation. At the end it is the poor man, now turned into a rich man, who offers his helping hand to his friend. The poem tells the readers that we should not only cherish our material possessions, but also our friendships with others — which often take years to come to fruition.

In Nicole Pun's 'Snapshots of Sentiments', the poet captures the expression of love and care in moments of silence. The examples she provides are diverse and powerful. A lady holding her child in her arms; a grandfather gently waking up his grandchildren; new lovers embracing each other under the moon; a soldier carrying his wounded comrades. Care is an abstract word. The poem makes it tangible using all the emotions and bodily movements associated with that very affect which invests one's energy in others. It is also a reminder for all of us: care can be expressed in many different forms. Sometimes care equates to a gentle touch and an encouraging remark, but sometimes it is expressed in angry words and complaints.

I am grateful for being part of this meaningful event where I have the chance to witness many dazzling gems. I look forward to more inspiring poems to come.

## Mr WONG Chung Po

Associate Director

The Hong Kong Academy  
for Gifted Education

Dear distinguished guests, esteemed judges, and talented student poets:

I am honoured to be standing here today as the Associate Director of the HKAGE, to celebrate the exceptional achievements of the budding poets who have participated in this year's contest.

Students, your outstanding performance has impressed us all and has left an indelible mark on the poetry landscape of Hong Kong. Your creativity, your passion, and your dedication to the art of poetry have been truly inspiring. I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the teachers and judges who have supported and encouraged our budding poets throughout this journey. You have played an essential role in nurturing their talents and helping them reach this point.

As we gather here today, I cannot help but reflect on the growing impact of technology, particularly AI, in the field of poetry. The development of AI technology has opened up new possibilities for poets to explore and experiment with language, form, and style. AI-generated poetry has demonstrated an ability to create verse that is both expressive and thought-provoking. AI has the potential to generate poems and even imitate human writing styles.

But, it is important to note that the most profound and moving poems come from the depths of the human heart and soul. Poetry is a form of art that requires empathy, introspection, and a deep understanding of the human experience. In my opinion, AI-generated poetry cannot replace the human experience of writing and reading poetry. The human mind and heart remain the ultimate source of inspiration for all poetry.

Some people even argue that AI-generated poetry lacks the emotional depth and authenticity that comes from the human experience in poetry. Teachers, let us continue to nurture the creativity and imagination of our young poets while also recognising the importance of the human element in the art of poetry.

I want to congratulate once again all the talented student poets who have participated in this contest. Your contribution to the art of poetry is invaluable, and I hope you will continue to explore the limitless possibilities that this field has to offer. Thank you for your outstanding performance, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavour.



## About the Hong Kong Budding Poets (English) Award

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### The Award

The Hong Kong Budding Poets (English) Award is a territory-wide competition open to local primary, secondary, international and ESF schools. It was organised by The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education and supported by the Gifted Education Section of the Education Bureau. The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong was commissioned to host the competition, adjudication and related training workshops for the sixth year in a row. The competition aims to provide a platform for gifted/more able students of English to extend their imagination and passion for writing and engage them in further training in poetry writing. It also serves as a channel for teachers to recognise and identify students gifted in English learning.

### Workshops

To better equip participants with some key skills that would assist them in their writing, several workshops were hosted by the academic staff of The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. Primary students could participate in *The Musicality of Poetry*, which aimed to provide students with a greater appreciation of how tone and rhythm impact meaning by focusing on song lyrics. Secondary students were offered *Poetry and Imagination*, which focused on equipping students with tools to appreciate poetry through imagination.

### Adjudication

Entries were assessed on originality, use of language, artistic qualities, expression of the theme and construction. After two rounds of preliminary and final adjudication by frontline English language teachers, poets, writers and/or academics in the field of poetry and creative writing, at most 20 entries from the Primary, Secondary and Open Sections were recommended for awards.

### Award Ceremony

On 13 June 2023, a joint award ceremony was held on the campus of The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, to crown the winners and commemorate the work of all the finalists. The award ceremony was attended by students, parents, representatives from the Education Bureau and The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education, as well as staff from The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong.

# Adjudicators

Ms. TSUI, Wing Kan, Pearl	<i>Preliminary Adjudication</i>
Ms. ZHOU, Yihuan Claire	
Ms. ZENG, Kaishan Regina	
Mr. YU, Yat Long Rhett	
Dr. WONG, Wai Lam Heidi	
Dr. FUNG, Kai Yeung Paul	
Dr. SWANN, Joel	
Dr. BOWN, Alfie	
Ms. TUNG, Ho Yiu Ophelia	
Dr. LIZADA, Miguel Antonio Nograles	
Ms. CHU, Yin Yee Sophina	
Dr. KONG, Ying Yuk Amy	
Dr. CHUNG, Ho Ying Holly	
Dr. LEUNG, Ho Yee, Chloe	<i>Final Adjudication</i>
Dr. TSO, Wing Bo, Anna	
Dr. WONG, Yuen Wing, Catherine	
Dr. Parker, Jay	
Dr. BUI, Hiu Yuet, Gavin	
Dr. SWANN, Joel	
Dr. BOWN, Alfie	
Dr. LIZADA, Miguel Antonio Nograles	

# Notes from the Editor

We have taken a 'light touch' approach to the editing of this anthology and have attempted to preserve the poems in their original form wherever possible. Where there are obvious errors that may interfere with understanding we have made sensitive changes. However, given that poetry is an artistic format, it was important to us that we lend the benefit of the doubt to our young writers for anything that could be interpreted as artistic style (even where not strictly grammatically correct). This has been a conscious choice and we hope you will read their work with this same approach.

Where necessary for practical reasons, we have condensed the spacing of some poems to allow it to present across fewer pages. Due to formatting constraints, certain poems may contain lines in a stanza which extend onto an additional line. Where this has occurred, the line has been marked with a superscript\*.



# PRIMARY SECTION

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15	<a href="#"><u><b>The Colourful World</b></u></a>
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	Chiu Sam Yue Clara
25	<a href="#"><u><b>Contentment</b></u></a>
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Kenny and Danny were schoolmates,  
Living in a different way.

Poor little Kenny,  
Lived near the gutter,  
Working for every penny,  
Throughout the whole summer.

Wealthy little Danny,  
Spent all his money,  
When he bought a Lamborghini,  
Just to drive around his doggy.

Time flew by,  
Kenny doesn't even need a tie.  
He was the head of a big company,  
Making truckloads of money.  
He still treasures every penny,  
Though he has enough for a ferry.

Time flew by,  
Danny lost his Lamborghini,  
Along with all his money.  
He didn't have a single buddy.  
He couldn't even land a job,  
Because he tried to rob.

Kenny saw Danny in a station,  
Begging for salvation.  
Danny looked like a bison,  
Covered with grime and unshaven.  
Luckily Kenny was a kind person,  
He gave him a job position.

His fortune slowly but surely grew,  
He even met a lovely girl,  
Who made delicious stew.  
His promising future was starting to unfurl.

He is now married with the girl,  
And their son is healthily growing.  
If it wasn't for his cherishing,  
His life would still be a whirl.

Now, my dear little lad,  
Do you understand that Danny is your dad?  
Don't repeat the life I had,  
Never forsake the things in your hand.

Adjudicator #1

I enjoyed reading this story about Kenny and Danny. You feature mundane details of their experiences, with a few twists and turns, and then finish with a clear lesson for us to take away. The diction is simple but effective. Your understanding of grammar is very good indeed, and you understand how to surprise the readers at the right time – well done! Looking at the form of the poem, I love that each stanza contains a small part of the story. You have given careful consideration to rhyme, and I'm really impressed with your consistency there. Sometimes your choice of words seems forced to fit the pattern; this is understandable, and I am sure you will develop this skill with time. Overall, this poem was a pleasure to read. Many thanks for your entry!

Adjudicator #2

The rhyming in this poem is meticulously crafted to enhance the contrast between the two protagonists' seemingly opposite but interweaving life trajectories. The ending is warming and unexpected, while not diminishing the theme of financial prudence. The poem strongly advocates for careful life decisions over impulsive spending, which is a simple but important message for everyone. However, it must be said that the poem has little to say about those who fall on hard times as a product of circumstance, rather than any poor decision on their part. In future writing, this promising poet could also consider the broader implications of a society which looks after those who are struggling to get by – a theme touched upon with Kenny offering help to the down-and-out Danny – but not fully explored by this poem.



Award

GOLD

Theme

Cherish what we have

Winter Breeze

Kan Hong Yin Avril

Marymount

Primary School

Leaves that shine in red, yellow, green,  
bid farewell to the big oak tree.  
Flocks of swallows together take flight,  
none remained on the branches at night.

Winter has come at last,  
the snow is falling fast.

Look out of the opened curtains,  
see the view of snow-capped mountains.  
It looks happy and youthful in summer,  
but in winter, they seem sad, yet majestic.

Day by day, the white caps over mountains melt.  
Little by little, leaves grow on the big oak trees.

Their branches welcome the cool spring breeze,  
the warmth of the sun comes out at last.  
You'll see the hardworking honeybees,  
winter has finally passed.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

The poem contains some evocative — if conventional — images, including the swallows leaving to signal autumn, the arrival of bees to signal spring. The diction is appropriate and idiomatic. It should be particularly commended for allowing the images and language to speak for themselves. The poem encourages us to cherish each season through its evocation and contrasting of what is valuable in each. The poet should work to find some more original images to evoke key ideas or emotions. Although convention has a role to play in poetry, the best writing maintains a strong personal voice which speaks through and adapts conventions for its own purposes.

Adjudicator #2

This is a beautiful portrayal of the changing seasons and their impact on nature. The transition from winter to spring is effectively conveyed through simple yet vivid imagery, which I found particularly appealing. The poet personifies nature in a highly emotive way, describing the oak tree bidding “farewell” to its leaves and the snow-capped mountains appearing “sad yet majestic.” These figures of speech breathe life and emotion into the changing seasons. The poem features a straightforward rhyming scheme of alternating rhyming couplets, which gives it a lyrical and song-like quality. The progression from winter to spring is musical and engaging. Overall, the poem conveys a message of hope and renewal, serving as a valuable reminder of the cyclical nature of life. The young author displays great promise as a budding poet.

Orange-gold fireball sets, with bright rays from high,  
Stretching across the vast horizon, beautiful hues emerged.  
Dawn approaches, from the majestic, boundless sky.  
On a greenish frond, a tiny creature crawled, unobserved.

Eight segmental legs expanded from its sternum, tickling.  
Silver strings spat out from spinnerets, the spinning nozzle.  
It scampered on the aspect by its tarsus, starting its craft-making.  
Dauntless, ignoring the obstructive impede and their jostle.

Silk soared through air, as if the spider was knitting its raiment.  
It, carefully, danced on the magical lines of finesse.  
Gradually, it affixed the last bit, euphorically triumphant,  
Gazing at its paragon, it grinned celebrating success.

A white stratified spider web formed by its perseverance.  
It was the masterpiece of its painstaking labour,  
The magnificent oeuvre of its perspiration and diligence,  
The diaphanous but inescapable insect-tangling saber.

Flawlessly symmetrical, hexagonal-structured it was,  
As perfect and ideal as a mathematician's dreams,  
Its hardness, its firmness, its rigidity, all because  
Of the unique geometrical composition, supporting beams.

As breezes of wind waved the withered leaves and gusted,  
The intrusive flare tattered the threadbare creation.  
The spider, powerless, fragments of the broken work scattered.  
The destroyer, now gone, leaving its brutal demolition.

The spider didn't cease, remaking a stronger craftwork,  
As time flew, darkness to light, night to day.  
Strings overlapping strings, the artistic hexagon was done  
In an infrangible and impenetrable way.

Not fearing the deadly attacks of the wind's fatality,  
Nor being washed away to nowhere by the deadly rain.  
Persistence, effort, determination and assiduity,  
The unbreakable web of strings it built and attained.

The wind's smile pinned in the air, fazing.  
'Not bad,' a breathless but vibrating howl popped,  
The spider sought a spot to rest, up gazing.  
Yet another turbulent troll, with gales, flocked.

### Adjudicator #1

The poem demonstrates impeccable control in terms of imagery, tone, and emotion. The use of imagery is well-balanced and measured; the readers are able to visualise the images vividly. Indeed, one of the strengths of the piece can be found in its ability to paint strong visual imagery through the use of colours. The opening line, for instance, is a delightful explosion of bright, light imagery that invites the readers into the poet's meditation. More importantly, the poet was able to elevate the image into insightful material. The choice to use a spider as the central metaphor is effective in that the poet uses the usual connotations associated with spiders (as frail creatures, often and mistakenly feared) and turns them into a meaningful vehicle for the poem's theme. Finally, I would also like to commend the poet for his/her great use of tone and rhythm. The sheer variety of syntax and structures makes this poem a pleasure to read.

### Adjudicator #2

This poem reminds me of EB White's "Charlotte's Web". It is quite impressive in its use of language and imagery. The poet has used descriptive language to paint a vivid picture of the spider's industriousness, as well as the beauty of the natural world. The use of metaphors and similes is also quite effective in bringing the spider's actions to life and conveying its determination and persistence. The poem has a consistent rhyme scheme and metre, which gives it a cohesive structure and a pleasing rhythm. This helps keep the reader engaged, and adds to the poem's overall impact. Overall, this is a well-crafted and visually stunning poem that effectively captures the beauty and tenacity of the spider and the natural world. Great job!



Award  
**GOLD**  
Theme  
**Cherish what  
we have**  
  
**In a Special  
Assembly**  
Sze Yeuk Sze  
  
Ma On Shan  
Ling Liang  
Primary School

Crazy classwork drives me to be a copycat.  
History homework about Hitler is horrible and hard.  
Exercises are endless toil to an energetic brat.  
Recently Mom's been mad and for my feelings she's no regard.  
"I'll block your YouTube, Yahoo, Roblox and Minecraft..."  
School is only fun when I can run and work is done.  
How many "meaningful" morning assemblies like this will overrun?

Who are Watoto kids singing and dancing on stage?  
Headmaster said, "Most of their parents have died of AIDS.  
At wars they once held guns at an early age.  
They now love school though there're few teaching aids."

Without a roof, daily goods or mother's food,  
Even so, they study hard and have a happy childhood.

How embarrassed I am when listening to their sharing.  
A stab of regret has forcefully seized my heart.  
Very much I'm missing Mom who's loving and caring.  
Ever so hungry I am for a book and a home-baked egg tart.

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

The chosen theme, "Cherish what we have," can be read horizontally through the first letter of each line. This is a neat feature, and though in theory this might have a negative effect on the form and cohesion of the poem, this young poet provides balance with a tidy rhyming scheme. The first-person perspective is a great choice for conveying the message, as it encourages the reader to be introspective in just the same way as the speaking "I". The poem illustrates a primary school student's struggles with every-day schoolwork, which can be boring and tiring. The Watoto kids' performance in school, however, makes the voice of the poem change their mind. The speaking "I" looks at what they already have, and feels shame in witnessing how the homeless orphans still feel able to share with each other. This is a sincere and reflective piece. Good job.

**Adjudicator #2**

This poem is an impressive effort by a primary pupil. The first part of the poem describes the speaker's frustration with schoolwork and their mother's strict response, while the second reflects on a special assembly where the speaker learns about the struggles of children in difficult circumstances. Overall, the poem is well-written and shows a mature understanding of complex themes. The use of simple language and accessible imagery makes it relatable to a wide range of readers. The poem encourages empathy and understanding, which are important values for young people to learn.

Chirp, chirp, chirp.  
The kaua'i 'ō'ō sung,  
Singing for a mate that will never come.

Chirp, chirp, pause.  
The bird waits for someone to respond.  
He waits for a response that will never come.

Pause, pause, chirp.  
The bird tried again, perhaps he was too quiet.  
He can't be the only survivor, he couldn't be an endling.

Chirp, chirp, please.  
There has to be someone else.  
He can't be the last one.

Chirp, chirp, nothing.  
And the last kaua'i 'ō'ō fades into history.  
And only his songs remain.

Buzz, buzz, chirp.  
The humans listen to the endling's final call,  
tens of years after the kaua'i 'ō'ō's fall.

Chirp, chirp, chirp.  
The robotic voice sings.  
The humans listen, knowing it's not the real thing.

Chirp, chirp, chirp.  
The bird's last song, a constant reminder  
That nothing is forever.

Adjudicator #1

The poem effectively invokes the melancholy in hearing the voice of a now-extinct Hawaiian bird, crying out for a mate that will never respond. The onomatopoeia is skillfully incorporated and repeated to build up to its transformation into the robotic reproduction in the penultimate stanza. Though effective in conveying the sadness of a doomed creature still pining for companionship, the poem says little of the causes of this tragedy. Though a sobering reminder that nothing can last forever, there is room for more commentary on modern urbanisation and industrialisation, which often results in the loss of biodiversity when ecosystems aren't given due care.

Adjudicator #2

You've chosen a very interesting topic in this poem. I'm delighted to see that the last song of the kaua'i 'ō'ō has inspired you! You explain what might be going through the bird's mind, and it's fascinating to see your perspective. The ideas are poignant: "perhaps he was too quiet" is understated and plays with the difference between the bird's perspective and the full context that the readers have, making the line especially sad. I like the way you bring this around to the general idea that "nothing is forever" — you've shown us one little creature and used it to teach the reader an important lesson in perspective. There are also some lovely sound effects: I think this poem would work very well if you were reading it out loud. For future development, just see if you can aim for some more adventurous vocabulary choices. Overall, I enjoyed this very much. Thank you for an original and interesting entry!



My mother always wears the same perfume,  
Every time she wakes me up, her scent fills the room.  
It greets me at the doorstep when I come back home from school.  
I don't remember when she started wearing it—  
The smell lingers in all of my memories.

It's a part of her, she's a part of it  
Oh, the citrusy scent of your perfume, Mom.

It's so unique, just like her—  
Words could never do it justice.  
Sort of musky, sweet and cool, but still  
Warm like her personality;  
Cool like the breezy winds  
That play with the clouds in glee.

On autumn days when she takes me out,  
Out of the house to the crimson and gold  
Carpets that crunch when we  
Dance with daftness;  
And when she brings me up  
To the vast valleys—

With the stars mapped under the glistening night  
The silence is deafening, but in a good way,  
As nature breathes on silently.  
A cricket's soft chirp, soft ripples across the lake;  
A solitary boat bobbing distantly, wading like a duck

It's just me and her  
And the scent clinging to her dress.

They say that scents are  
The most memorable; The strongest memories.

Like when I'm stuck on math  
Or when she hugged me on my graduation day.  
It has always been there in the back of my mind:  
It's always been there with me,  
And so were you.

Cherish every moment  
Because it'll turn to memories;  
Cherish every memory  
Because it won't last for centuries...

My mother made me everything that I am today.  
Her constant love, all the things I've shared with her,  
My mother, who always wears the same perfume.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

This poem feels very authentic, capturing the voice and perspective of a child at school. It develops the image of the mother's perfume through small observations, building to give the readers the sense of a pervasive, crucial presence. There are some moving descriptions here, and it's clear that the poet has actively 'cherished' the things they write about. Moreover, this poem serves as an example of how people appreciate: the love they feel for someone, whether consciously or subconsciously, seems to attach itself to everything they experience together. The perfume is a sensory manifestation of their bond, in the way "Every time she wakes me up, her scent fills the room." The persona's recollections of time spent with his/her mother are stand-ins for that love — remembrances of autumn days, and of "vast valleys... / ...under the glistening night", of "A cricket's soft chirp, soft ripples across the lake" and of "A solitary boat bobbing distantly". Small and disconnected moments that all translate to "Her [mother's] constant love". This is a maturely crafted poem from a child-like perspective.

Adjudicator #2

A very moving and touching portrayal of one's mother, that doesn't fall into the trap of excessive sentimentality. The poem is able to achieve this by instead allowing the images to speak for themselves. What results is a delightful catalogue and sequence of imagery and various forms of figurative expression that paint a complete and personal account of their relationship. The writer also demonstrates a functioning "inner ear," in that the choice of words and the structuring of stanzas has a proper and working rhythm. The poet is able to utilise various poetic auditory techniques such as alliteration ("Dance with daftness") and even simply using monosyllabic words that give the poem a delightful cadence. All in all, a highly successful and wonderful piece of work.

That night, I closed my eyes gently  
Looking forward to seeing a hope-filled tomorrow  
However, when I opened my eyes ecstatically  
I just found the everlasting night and sorrow

The Lord extinguished all lights beyond my range of vision  
And never hunted me around  
The azure sky was sunk into oblivion  
Precipitated to the blueness of a wound

Don't feel panic, guys  
The colourful world to cherish  
Was kept underneath my glassy eyes  
That never to perish

I could feel the glittery gold  
That warmed my soul  
Full sunshine blooming with marigold  
Like a veil drew over me in whole

I could touch the yellowish tender  
Slipped off my fingertips  
Rushed towards the broadness and boundlessness water  
Followed the waves to chase my championships

I could smell the bright red passion  
Lingered on my side sprightly  
Tendered love from my parents' affection  
Embraced me tightly

I could hear the greenish fresh and clean  
That were callings from the elves  
Blowing a gentle wind  
The world tirelessly played with a paeon to lives

The dark in front of me was the multi-coloured darkness  
It was the ink given by the Lord  
With the sensing of all my four senses  
I painted my own colourful future as reward

Adjudicator #1

For a primary school age poet, this poem is a remarkable achievement. There are loads of great images here and some really powerful moments. It is also impressive that you are able to use such a range of English vocabulary, and that you are already finding your own voice in a second language. The form is another strength of the poem, though you could also think about the length of the lines as well as the number of lines in each stanza. The poem responds to the theme well enough, and it is interesting that you already have such advanced thoughts on the topic. Well done on a great submission, and keep writing – you have a clear talent that will develop swiftly if you nurture it.

Adjudicator #2

The poem is filled with imagery formed through sensory language and various colours. The poet evokes colour in each stanza, along with feelings of warmth, touch, smell, and hearing. The speaking “I” of the poem is implied to have lost their eyesight, and they engage their “four senses” to paint their “own colourful future as [a] reward”. Though blindness is never mentioned in the poem, the subtle indication is powerful, and serves as a great subversion to the expectation set up by the poem’s title: “The Colourful World.” The decoupling of sight from the concept of colour draws out a mature observation: that senses are tools of perception which we use to construct our internal reality – and not reality itself. Reality can only be experienced through imagination, in a sense, and isn’t experienced directly through one’s eyesight. To take the poem to another level, perhaps the poet can also add the Romanticist notion that where sight ends, insight begins.

Award  
**SILVER**  
Theme  
**Diligence**

**The Fruits of  
Diligence**  
Lau Ching Yiu

Diocesan Girls'  
Junior School

The flipping of books hushed in dim moonlight,  
The yawning and yowling stifled to utter silence.  
A student shuffling in mountains of science,  
While the silver moon only smiles softly all night.

Page by page, hour by hour,  
The student contemplates carefully each scribbled note,  
Examining and revising every word she wrote.  
Each little piece of knowledge she would willingly devour.

Soon, shrieks of joy resound in the classroom.  
The school girl sits, beaming like rays of sunshine,  
Her dimpled cheeks show she's on cloud nine;  
She received flying colours, while others were in gloom.

A lot of renowned people worked very hard,  
Like the legendary actor from Hong Kong, Bruce Lee  
Who spent most of his time training when he was free,  
He was unafraid to confront people even when unarmed.

Or like Apple CEO Tim Cook, successor of Steve,  
Who was always an eager beaver.  
The workaholic woke up to check emails at dawn: "Dear Sir."  
And fantastic results he did achieve!

What is the secret to success?  
No doubt, it is to work hard day by day,  
To spend time wisely and not waste it on play.  
Then you'll receive the fruits of diligence, and nothing less!

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

The images in the first three stanzas of the poem are carefully and efficiently crafted. I also appreciate the build-up from focusing on everyday scenes to referencing the lives of known figures such as Bruce Lee and Tim Cook — there is a clear narrative movement. Another admirable characteristic of the poem is in the poet's ability to use various forms of figurative expressions to great effect and without making such usage appear overly random or overly catalogued. These include the clever combination of assonance and alliteration ("The yawning and yowling stifled to utter silence") and personification with alliteration ("While the silver moon only smiles softly all night.") The moralising message at the end could have been phrased better — and is arguably oversimplifying the myriad factors that lead to success — but it is a minor setback to what is otherwise a truly delightful and creative reflection on the theme.

**Adjudicator #2**

This is a well-crafted and inspirational poem that effectively conveys the message that hard work and diligence are important to success. Though it is a bit of a cliché, the narrator uses examples of successful people, such as Bruce Lee and Tim Cook, to convey the message that working hard day-by-day is key to achieving one's goals. The descriptions of their work ethic, such as Bruce Lee spending most of his time training and Tim Cook waking up early to check emails, offer inspirational and motivational images for the readers. One of the strengths of this poem is its use of vivid imagery to convey the subject's emotions and experiences. The first line of the poem is particularly strong: the image of "the flipping of books hushed in dim moonlight" is a richly poetic example of the poet's personal voice. This, coupled with "the yawning and yowling stifled to utter silence," is a vivid picture that conveys the mood and atmosphere of a student working hard through the night. Well done!



His tiny paws struggled to open the door  
Of his beloved home, where he had a mutual feeling against.  
No matter what he did, the opening never had a bore.  
I protected him when danger came that I could sense.

A smart pet he was, with talents of a different kind,  
But sadly, all he wanted to do was to open the cage.  
His tricks were deeply engraved in my mind.  
Then he played with his toys and got off his stage.

One day I let him out and he was overjoyed,  
He leaped and span when he saw the great outdoors,  
And loved it dearly as I started to get annoyed,  
I gave him a sunflower seed when he missed the tours.

After that experience he longed to get outside,  
His everwanting expression filled my inside with joy,  
And left me walking with a confident stride.  
He was always a good little boy.

On a day I could never forget,  
He became ravenous like a beast and aggressive,  
With sharp claws that made people scream with regret.  
I decided to keep him in the house to stay passive.

My parents sent him to the vet,  
And his spirit had weakened due to going out.  
It was a chilly day when he came back wet,  
And it was all my fault, no doubt.

He departed the next day,  
A free spirit who loved to explore.  
The memory of him always made me feel gray.  
He was a great pet to the core.

I missed him greatly more than ever  
And he was always a part of the family,  
Which would never change forever.  
Sadly, we couldn't avert this calamity.

Cherish, pay attention, observe,  
Or it'll be gone with a blink of an eye,  
Which is impossible to preserve,  
So remember them before the end is nigh.

Days of life are numbered without you knowing,  
Like a countdown, like a calendar hidden in mist.  
You never know when life will stop growing,  
Then wither, and dissolve according to the gods' checklist.

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

A poignant and introspective poem that explores the theme of the unpredictability of life and the inevitability of death. The pet's struggle to open the door and play with his toys gives a sense of the pet's personality and playful nature. The line "His tricks were deeply engraved in my mind" is a poignant acknowledgement of memory as a way of processing grief, of coping with life's drastic changes (as Susan Sontag writes in an essay: "Memory is, achingly, the only relation we can have with the dead."). The images of the pet's departure and the subject's feelings of grief and loss are powerful and moving. The metaphor of "a calendar hidden in mist" effectively portrays the uncertainty of the future and the mystery of death. The final lines of the poem, which suggest that we should cherish and pay attention to the people and pets in our lives, are a poignant reminder of the importance of living in the moment and appreciating the time we have. Overall, a well-crafted and emotional poem.

**Adjudicator #2**

This is an interesting poem with lots to its merit. There are some really interesting lines and you capture a sense of deep pondering and reflection, which is impressive from a poet so young. You should keep writing and developing your talent as, beyond your skill in executing on a poetic structure, you demonstrate a true perceptiveness which will certainly make you a fantastic writer in the future, should you nurture it. Remember, though, that you can say whatever you want in a poem. Don't think about what is expected of a poem, but rather what you yourself would like to say. I feel that the rigid adherence to form and rhyme detracts from the personal feeling of the poem. Sometimes speaking in your own voice, at your own pace, about your own unique perspective makes better poetry than trying to replicate what's been done before. Overall, very well done on an excellent submission that shows skill and talent.

My face turns red,  
When I see big red crosses,  
Ironed on my exam paper.  
Hot tears roll down my cheeks,  
As I bow my head in shame.

My face turns red,  
When I stare at the missing dots,  
And the foolish abcs running around the paper,  
I grit my teeth,  
I tighten my fists.

My face turns red,  
As piles of exercises scatter around the floor,  
As my sweat soaks through my shirt,  
As I run towards the light,  
That is shining in my sight.

My face turns red,  
As applause echoes in the classroom,  
As my teacher beams like the sun,  
As mom gives me a big wet kiss,  
And I savour the nectar of sweet success.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

One of the poem’s strengths can be found in the poet’s ability to cut lines with poignancy, each line building on a unit of imagery that connects to the poem as a whole. The line-cutting is also able to develop the necessary tension — the sense of heat being channelled: embarrassment and anger translating to determination and finally the overwhelming elation of success. While the images are not exactly fresh or new, the writer is nevertheless commended for having a functioning inner ear that, when developed, will make her a great and promising poet.

Adjudicator #2

In this poem, I’m especially impressed with your use of imagery. You’ve used the colour red to trace an emotional journey from your personal experiences. This gives the strong impression that the subject is giving negative emotions a positive charge, to fuel determination for change — a very mature notion. Instead of presenting anger, shame and embarrassment as simply negative, you’ve observed that they can be processed and channelled to bring about change in one’s life. In terms of form, the stanzas move us very precisely from one idea to another. The development is logical and clear, but you still surprise us at the end — this is a good thing! So overall, this is a very interesting poem, which I enjoyed reading. Well done!

Strolling through the deserted park,  
Where withered trees blossomed in my sight.  
Smoke was everywhere, painting the sky dark,  
Smothering blocks and birds in white.

I asked my mother  
If it looked the same when she was younger.  
*'No no no, honey! There were tall trees  
Birds chirping and wind caressing, carefree.'*

Loud thunder roared suddenly,  
Suffocating slashes and crashes.  
Men destroying homes sullenly,  
Forcing the woods fall in ashes.

Why must you chop the swaying trees?  
Who provides you with a soothing breeze?  
What protects and shelters you?  
Do you even have a clue?

Where will the birds nest?  
Will the animals have a home?  
Nowhere left for them to rest,  
Nowhere safe for them to roam?

Desperately, I asked,  
*'Should we move to another paradise?'*  
*'No no no, honey! Saving Mother Nature will be the task.'*  
With the last bit of faith, we hope to realise.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

This poem makes us consider important questions about the world we live in, and how we must cherish it. You have a varied and adventurous use of language, which is wonderful. And I love the way the poems move from observation, to question, to reported speech. All the time, you're using rhyme to keep everything flowing. So, there is both variety and purpose – that's wonderful! And it helps us to have a clear emotional connection with the topic. And all of your worries reach a fine climax with the “desperation” of the final stanza. Just a couple of things to think about for the future: be careful that you know how to use every word: for example, “sullenly” and “caressing” are great pieces of vocabulary, but they don't quite work in this context. Overall, this is a very good entry, with some really impressive moments. Well done!

Adjudicator #2

This poem advocates the importance of protecting trees and forests. It raises the readers' awareness towards deforestation, with a special focus on the worsening living environment for all, humans and animals alike. Besides the clear and solid theme, the poet has successfully made good use of alliteration (e.g. "blocks and birds" in line 4, "suddenly" and "suffocating" in lines 9 & 10), end rhymes with the neat rhyme scheme of ABAB CDCD EFEF GGHH IJJ KLKL), and repetition (e.g. "Nowhere left for them to rest, Nowhere safe for them to roam?" in lines 19 & 20). The poet may consider revising line 2 though. The word "blossomed" may be too cheerful for "withered trees".

Cherish is the treasure from God,  
Which accomplishes your colourful life.  
Cherishment has different methods,  
But do not use it with strife.

Family is a warm home,  
Which gives you thousands of happiness.  
We cherish the love that family share,  
It's like the summer sun at noon which shines everywhere.

Everyone needs a friend,  
The most valuable thing is the time that you spend.  
Having a friend is not an opportunity,  
But a sweet responsibility.

Keeping the body healthy,  
Thus Science said "health is wealth".  
Good health is blessed indeed,  
An essential thing every person does need.

The world is always changing,  
Nothing stays the same.  
Cherish The life we live,  
Cherish the love we have.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

This poem acts as a kind reminder for the readers to cherish the important people and things that one is enjoying. The message is simple, direct, and sincere. Figurative devices such as metaphor and simile have been employed to create a range of imagery, like the hot "summer sun" in line 8. However, the poet may also want to pay attention to the correct grammatical use of capital letters. In line 3 of the last stanza, "The" should be "the" because the article is in the middle of the line — though it's possible this is a deliberate choice to emphasise its singularity, the stamp of intent behind such a decision would've been strengthened by also capitalising "The love".

Adjudicator #2

This poem has an important message: to fully appreciate the time we have and make the most of what's around us. Though it makes some use of rhyme to carry the readers along, the text occasionally reads too prosaically — sometimes feeling more like a list of statements and affirmations than a poem. In this way, the poem would benefit from more use of metaphor. Metaphor is a powerful tool that allows for a more varied and personal interpretation of a work. This would make the poem more appealing from an emotional standpoint, and therefore strengthen its message by allowing it to adapt to the readers' own experiences. This will help the poem come across not as trite and shallow, but holistic and considered. The strongest part of this poem is the sentiment that "The world is always changing, / Nothing stays the same." This is a beautiful and profound observation to couple with the idea of "Contentment", as it implies the mature act of coming to terms with inevitable change.



Morning rays pierce through the gaps in my curtain  
It's another day to be thankful for, this much I am certain  
The glorious beginnings, of each day in my room  
Like a flower awakening, my mind starts to bloom

Every day, I find myself amazed by nature's beauty  
I often share my appreciation, excited, like it's my duty  
"Look at that butterfly! It's so bright and so pretty!"  
"Those flowers are amazing ... right here in our city"

My lovely school is nestled among the beautiful trees  
Sometimes I close my eyes for a moment and get lost with the breeze  
If you met my teachers, you'd surely be impressed  
To blossom and grow in this environment, I truly feel blessed

I think of my classmates, whose friendship I treasure  
Their impact on me is profound, so much I can't measure  
The bonding, the laughter, the moments we share  
I think of them all, for their love and their care

At my home sweet home, chaos often takes place  
But I guess that's what happens with younger siblings to chase  
A cheeky little sister and a mischievous little brother  
Shhh! Don't tell them, but I wouldn't want any other

Oh, and my parents are the sun and the water  
and I'm a little seedling, yes me, their growing daughter  
They pour in their love and knowledge, as the seasons go by  
Never wavering, always there for me ... how lucky am I

So many things to be thankful for, I've named just a few  
Learn to stop and smell the roses: just for a second or two  
I cherish my life, though it's far from perfect you'll see  
But I'm grateful for all that I have and all those close to me

Adjudicator #1

This is a sweet and charming poem. I personally love the feeling of excitement I get from every experience you recount here – you find something to appreciate and cherish in every part of the world around you. Your use of language is impressive. From the first line, you are using precise vocabulary, very clearly and effectively. And rhythm and rhyme seem to come very naturally to you: each line has a clear shape, and there is a good pattern to the endings. So, there is clearly a lot to enjoy in this poem. Perhaps I would just ask you to think: what can you do to make the readers pay attention? How can you surprise us? In the future, I think you can experiment with turning mundane experience into introspection and unique observation. Overall, this is a lovely poem that I enjoyed reading. Many thanks for your submission.

Adjudicator #2

This is a sincerely-written piece of work, and you’ve clearly given some thought to what you cherish in your own life. However, it could use some work on developing and crafting the metaphors – for instance that of the flowers, and the idea of blooming, especially since the poem begins and ends with that image. There’s also some clumsiness with form, where lines vary in their syllable length seemingly in order to reach a rhyme. Poetry is far more than its structural components; you aren’t obliged to use 4-line stanzas and AABB rhyming schemes (or any rhyming scheme at all, for that matter) in order for your work to be counted as poetry. More important is your personal voice, your sincerity, your introspection, your willingness to experiment and explore, your ability to conjure vivid images over mere allusions. There’s content here that could easily be reshaped into a far stronger poem, if you choose to dig deeper. Use metaphor to convey how you feel, rather than stating it directly: to create an example, instead of saying ‘I am thankful’, think of other ways this thankfulness could be communicated to the reader. Create pictures which the reader will understand through their own relation to gratitude, so that gratitude doesn't need to be stated outright. Finally, consider reducing the scope of your topics covered; this will make it sound less like a list, and more of a heartfelt reflection.

Award  
**Honourable  
Mention**  
Theme  
**Diligence**

**The boy who  
became diligent**  
Yin Yu Kun

S.K.H. Yan Laap  
Primary School

Drip, drop, drip, drop, splash!  
The rain splashed onto the roof of the boy's house.  
Beep, boop, beep, boop, ding!  
The boy quickly pressed the buttons on his phone game.  
He unquestionably loved playing games  
and played them everyday.  
Zzzz, pffff, zzzzz, pffff, yawn!  
His homework slept and slept sweetly in the dark room  
until it wanted to break out.  
Its owner didn't care about him.

Ring, ding, ring, ding, ring, dong, dong!  
The school bell rang to finish school,  
Sob, sniff, sob, sniff, sob, waah, wahh!  
Unexpectedly, he received an upsetting grade,  
His face was as red as a tomato,  
and he was as mad as an erupting volcano!  
Clink, clank, clink, clank, clink, padong, pandong!  
He was angry and annoyed by his disturbing device.  
He needed to be more diligent,  
The device was murdered as it dropped from his hand.

Scrape, scratch, scrape, scratch, rustle!  
After that, he worked very hard completing his homework!  
Scribble, rustle, scribble, rustle, scrape!  
He stopped playing video games and worked as hard as a farmer.  
He was now diligent  
And got a good grade.  
Flick, flip, flick, flip, rustle!  
He was as happy as a sunflower as he read different books.  
He realised that to acheive anything  
you must be diligent, hardworking and not give up.

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

This is an excellent poem with lots to its merit. The message of forgoing quick gratification to develop good habits and improve yourself is an important one, particularly for those going through school. For a poet of this extremely young age, it's remarkable to see such a fantastic range of language, a wide vocabulary and a real talent for creating powerful images. Of course, as you develop as a person and gain wider experience, you will have different things that you want to communicate – at this stage you are speaking only to your peers, and people of different ages have to work to derive meaning from this poem for their own life. There is also some space to think about the form – is there any way to use it to support your poem? The way you use sound is particularly great, and it really makes the poem resound in the mind of the readers.

**Adjudicator #2**

This poem tells the story of a boy who loves playing video games but then becomes more diligent with his schoolwork and realises the importance of hard work. The poet has used a simple and straightforward form with a consistent rhythm and a simple rhyme scheme that effectively conveys its themes of diligence and hard work through a relatable story that is easy to understand and relate to. The use of sound effects and onomatopoeia creates a sense of movement and action which is key for a poem about changing habits. The language is generally appropriate, but there are a few instances where it is somewhat simplistic and could be further developed to enhance the poem's message. The imagery used in the poem is somewhat limited, but the poet does create a few memorable mental pictures that the readers might relate to. Overall, this poem conveys the importance of diligence and hard work in a way that is easy to understand and appreciate.

The winds swept across the deserted road.  
Withered leaves carried by the open hands of Mother Nature.  
A shadow crept across the hard concrete,  
As the heartless, ruff winds scraped her fur.

The road was silent, only the howling wind was heard.  
Alone, fluffy paws absorbing the sounds she made.  
The hair, ginger and red, covered by coats of dust,  
Was dancing in the wind with her tail that swayed.

Betrayal was way too much of an understatement,  
She had experienced much you don't understand.  
The pain, was like blood, dripping from her wounds,  
Nonstop, incurable, as she sank into an endless quicksand.

Soon, the sorrow turned into hatefulness,  
A feeling so strong she couldn't outlast  
Seeking for revenge; she turned around,  
Facing the fear of many years past.

Through the mist, a human shape formed.  
She tilted her head at the sight, confused.  
An awkward stare between her and the person lasted minutes,  
Before she inevitably grew bemused.

I stepped out of the mist, sobbing,  
Kneeling down on the concrete road, alone.  
My hair messy with days of dirt and grime.  
Rivers formed from my eyes to my cheekbone.

Gone, left, never coming back,  
The undeniable truth struck me like an unnoticed stab,  
Crumbled, like a rag doll,  
Needles fell from the heavens, engulfing me in their trap.

Sometimes you never see the true value  
Of a moment until it becomes a memory.  
I used to see her as disposables,  
As only an accessory,

Now I see her as jewels.  
Yet it was too late, lost, taken.  
So cherish your treasure,  
While it's still in your possession.

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

The poem opens with an effective use of desolate (somewhat apocalyptic) imagery to signal the beginning of the poet's creative meditation. The dramatic situation is established clearly and the image is both poignant and chilling. In most parts, the poet is able to sustain the tone and the mood established earlier. The poem could have provided more imagery to sustain the creative meditation. The third and fourth stanza for instance were more telling than showing — how does betrayal (especially an understated one) look or even feel like? The poem however becomes more visually powerful in later stanzas. Finally, the moralising towards the end, while necessary, could have been presented in a less preachy kind of way.

**Adjudicator #2**

This poem is strongest when displaying comfort with ambiguity. On the whole, it is confident enough not to spell out a simple message, but rather communicates through images and impressions. The writing is at times powerfully evocative, and the poem displays evidence of real craftsmanship, with a sense of its rhyming progression mutating (road > heard > made > swayed > understand). In particular the poem should be commended for its use of metaphor in deploying strong imagery. Similes are sometimes developed, though also at times lacking creative distance. For example “The pain, like blood” seems a rather facile comparison evoking a wound (which is painful), but not telling us much about the pain of betrayal specifically. It's a shame that the final two stanzas feel the need to end on a didactic note. Surely the poem could have evoked a sense of loss and a need to cherish things before we inevitably lose them through strong images (just as it does earlier), rather than statements.

Award  
**Honourable  
Mention**  
Theme  
**Care for others**

**The Raincloud**  
Zhang Yaming

Marymount  
Primary School

The raincloud flew,  
Across the sky,  
And it watched in satisfaction  
As people fled.

The raincloud flew,  
over a barren meadow,  
And glimpsed a farmer  
Standing below.

The farmer looked up,  
and gasped, begging,  
"Please, dear cloud,  
if you may,  
shower me with your rain."

"For the crops have dried up,  
and the drought has killed my plants,  
please, dear cloud, if you may,  
shower me with your rain."

It was apparent,  
the raincloud's hesitation.  
It stopped, considering...

Then the magic began -  
A grey, misty, magical haze;  
And the rain fell,  
'Drip, drop, drip drop'.

The bare farmland,  
Wilted and sparse,  
Had awaken in the call  
Of the soothing drizzle...

Now lush and verdant,  
the meadow seemed to beam,  
As if it was an echo  
Of the farmer's shining smile.

The raincloud flew,  
Across the sky,  
And it watched in contentment  
As people smiled.

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

This is a sweet poem that advocates hope, encouraging the readers that one should never give up, no matter how hard the situation may be. Faith is important, as it helps people cope with, or come to terms with, reality. Of course, the poet has contrived the narrative such that the praying farmers receive what they need, that which they've prayed for – which in reality does not always happen. To make this poem more meaningful, you could consider how faith doesn't – and shouldn't – depend on getting what you pray for. Rather, faith is important as a means of decoupling yourself from your material circumstances, a way to attain joy and find meaning in the midst of struggle. Concerning the poet's technical skill, I observe the use of a broad range of literary devices, including personification, repetition, onomatopoeia and rhyme, which I'm very impressed by.

**Adjudicator #2**

This is a sweet and charming poem. It tells a kind of fairy tale (or myth, perhaps?) about the way that rain works. I love the way you tell the story in clear stages: this is a very effective method. You've got some lovely expressions, which demonstrate a confident use of vocabulary – the "lush and verdant" meadow sticks in my mind. So, the building blocks of your poem are really excellent. There are a couple of aspects you can work on. You can do more with rhythm: for example, you can play a little bit more with rhyme, alliteration, and sentence length. And, perhaps the last stanza needs a little work – can you express more about the effects of the sun? Overall, there's lots of great work here. Well done, and thanks for your contribution.



Award  
**Honourable  
Mention**  
Theme  
**Cherish what  
we have**

**Are You There?**  
Chan Lok Kiu Karis

Marymount  
Primary School

The wind chime is softly whispering, is that you?  
The gauze curtain is slightly floating, is that you?  
The candle light is faintly flickering, is that you?  
The gentle breeze caressing my face,  
The maple leaf falling to my palm,  
The vibrant rainbow crossing above my head,  
Is that you?

I know you are there,  
The radiant sun warming me from the sky.  
From your flaming soul beams your blazing light,  
Casting your power and love,  
Turning into my shadow and tracing me inseparably.

I know you are there,  
The glowing moon watching me from the sky.  
From your graceful spirit shines your luminescent light,  
Engulfing the darkness and wiping out any nightmares,  
Turning into the silhouette by the window and taking me to my sweet dreams.

I know you are there,  
The innumerable stars listening to me from the sky,  
From your impeccable heart of gold scintillates your incandescent light,  
Embellishing the vast canvas of the graphite night,  
Turning into gleeful genies and making all the desires brimming in my mind come true.

So are you really everywhere?  
Or only everywhere in my memories?  
Or as long as I always remember you, miss you and cherish you in my heart,  
You will always be there with me?

Then just be there, accompany me,  
Over the mountain, cross the sea, also through the crowd.  
Then just be there, lead me the way,  
Towards the triumph, to the future, also back home.  
Then just be there, save me with your invisible hands,  
From the pain, from the misery, and also out of the hazes.

But you know, there will be a day,  
I can remember nothing, not even you.  
But I know, it is also that day,  
We are bound to reunite with each other in another world,  
With your name being engraved on the epitaph of my headstone.

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

This is a well-crafted and emotional poem that effectively conveys the idea of a loved one's presence even after they are gone. The poet has used imagery to convey the subject's emotions and experiences. The images of the wind chime whispering, the gauze curtain floating, and the candle flickering draw attention to the persona's surroundings and the new meaning they have after their experience of loss. The poet has also used metaphors, such as the radiant sun and glowing moon, to convey the idea of the persona's loved one being present in the world around them. The scenes and sensations have indelibly associated themselves with a person, though they contain nothing of the person in themselves.

**Adjudicator #2**

This poem displays an impressive vocabulary, and the use of repeated questions gives the poem a strong sense of persistence. Unfortunately it sacrifices rhythm and economy in order to achieve this, stumbling or catching rhythmically without clear purpose. It feels at times like advanced vocabulary is prized over the sound of language and rhythm, whereas in poetry, stunning sound and aesthetic effect can be achieved with simple language. Visions of a gauze curtain "slightly floating" or of "stars listening," for instance, leave a far greater impression than a "heart of gold [that] scintillates your incandescent light." While far more mundane in their language, the former examples are rich with personal texture and grounded in human experience, where the latter example feels self-indulgent in its language, and passes into an overly-perfect hallucinatory space. This detracts from the sense you build in the first stanza where familiar objects take on a new meaning in the face of loss.

Knees deep in grass dyed green,  
I read under a shady tree.  
As I look up and see the birds,  
Flying away being free.

As the birds fly by,  
I let my feelings flow free.  
Singing aloud in joyful tones,  
Shouting my feelings to the tree.

I know there are some people,  
In corners of the world  
Whom have never seen  
The exact beauty of the Earth.

The fact that you can see,  
The charm of Mother Nature.  
Colourful flowers growing on a tree,  
And the vivid wings of butterflies.

The fact that you can smell,  
The fragrant fruits from the orchards.  
Fresh in the mornings,  
Hundreds of scents from yards.

Cherish and be grateful,  
For the friends around you.  
Your family has worked very hard,  
To take care of you.

Cherish what we have now,  
Because one day you might find out  
All things shall perish,  
Let alone memories to nourish.

Adjudicator #1

The first line of the poem is a good introduction: it is compact, creative with syntax, and makes excellent use of alliteration. The poem uses repetition to create a sense of structure and logical progression (The fact, Cherish). The use of rhyme is competent, and there are attempts to use it for effect (e.g. the mirroring of tree-free and free-tree in the first and second stanzas), although if the second stanza had been the last stanza, it would have created a very effective sense of closure. Additionally, the sentiment expressed by the poem is formulaic and predictable. An attempt to explore the tensions or contradictions of the sentiment “Cherish what we have” would lead to an artistically more interesting poem. Finally, it is clear that significant effort was made in crafting the first two stanzas. Later stanzas should be equally well considered, for the poem to succeed fully.

Adjudicator #2

The poet describes how she feels while reading about society and nature, from under the eaves of a shady tree. The poem is a reflection on the beauty and fragility of the natural world and the importance of cherishing the present moment. Overall, the poem encourages the readers to appreciate the beauty of the natural world and the people around them and to live in the moment with a sense of gratitude and awareness of life's fleeting nature. That said, the poem falls prey to clichéd language and a lack of originality. Lines such as "cherish what we have now" and "all things shall perish" are familiar phrases and lack the personal voice expected of poetry. Such phrases can detract from the impact of the message unless wielded with an awareness of their commonality. As a result, the poem may struggle to leave a lasting impression on its audience. It's also important to remember the implications of words — describing grass as having been “dyed green” suggests an artificiality which seemingly runs counter to your message.

You! Cat!  
Chasing little mousies all day,  
Doing nothing but getting food anyways.  
Moo!  
Look at me, ploughing with no delay,  
Only resting if there're no orders to obey.  
Why is it always me doing all the hard work every day?

You! Bee!  
Buzzing around, playing all day,  
Making sugary honey that gives you tooth decay.  
Meow!  
Look at me, trying to catch those little mice I shall slay,  
I work so hard even on my birthday!  
Why is it always me doing all the hard work every day?

You! Horse!  
No milk! No honey! Can't even catch some prey?  
What can you give to the farmer, running around all day?  
Buzz!  
Look at me, protecting our Queen,  
making honey, worths a fortune, that humans crave.  
Why is it always me doing all the hard work every day?

You! Hen!  
Sitting there, snuggling eggs for 21 days?  
Taking care of your little chickies, is it a farm or a nursery? Hey?  
Neigh!  
Look at me, running errands,  
heavy loads on my back, back and forth the market,  
Why is it always me doing all the hard work every day?

Rake! Rake! Drip! Drip!  
Look! He is the one who never complains,  
Digging, planting, watering, ploughing;  
Milking the cows, shearing the sheep.  
Twenty-four seven, doesn't he need to rest or something?

Cat, cow, bee, horse, hen,  
watching diligent farmer farming,  
earnestly, quietly, patiently, but never a word of complaint.  
Ashamed of themselves,  
finally understand the meaning of hard work.

There is no miracle in work,  
the fruit of hard work is the miracle.

Adjudicator #1

The poem creates strong and memorable images, drawing from myriad examples in nature of creatures who need to work in order to subsist. The echo of “Why is it always me doing all the hard work every day?” is a good, if simple, device to impress upon the readers that the persona feels the burden of life heavily, and resents seeing others — namely animals — who have an easier life than they do. That said, the feeling of shame comes across as rather abrupt in the penultimate stanza. Sentence structure and length seem to have been sacrificed for the sake of achieving rhyme. The poem could perhaps be improved by removing superfluous words and phrases, as this can often serve to strengthen the point being made. The final lines of the poem, “There is no miracle in work, / the fruit of hard work is the miracle” create a neat and admirable message with which to conclude.

Adjudicator #2

This is a generally well-crafted poem that uses animal characters to effectively convey a message about the value of hard work. The language and imagery are accessible to young readers, making it a great poem to introduce the concept of hard work and perseverance. I particularly like the description of animal behaviours from the point of view of a child. It reads well. That said, the poem's message about the value of hard work is somewhat simplistic and does not explore the nuances and complexities of the concept. The message is a bit too straightforward as a poem.

# SECONDARY SECTION

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A young woman holds her child in her arms,  
her calming touch comforting, caressing his head,  
awaiting, anticipating, a remarkable blooming.

A student sits up on her pillow on a late night with focused eyes,  
her nimble fingers braiding through threads, pulling them tight,  
imagining giving them to her friends, their faces perking up with delight;

A grandfather wakes up in the early morning grabbing his car keys,  
waking up his grandchildren, looking at the skies in blue,  
more than ready to drive his precious to school.

Two new lovers embrace each other under the blankets,  
looking at the beautiful moon cascading light upon them,  
swearing in their naivety they'll stay by the other's side forever;

Her brother pats her head as she weeps into her ex's sweater,  
a cup of chocolate placed down as he tugs on her sleeve's hem,  
a small smile graces her face as she holds it up and drinks it.

A wide-eyed boy runs up to a tired girl with scarred wrists,  
hugging her, fascinated by her battle scars,  
her eyes glassy, the young boy looks at her with eyes full of stars;

A shell-shocked soldier dragging his comrade across the battlefield,  
his throat aching, his scarred eyes tearing,  
shouting, crying, a pained thud sounding.

The grown up child wipes soot off his mother's grave,  
his heavy hand holds a tissue, caressing the edges with the gentleness he craves,  
unclasping, unready, a breath of grief and care.

Adjudicator #1

I enjoyed reading this poem very much. The title is excellent, and I think you have given us a good insight into the “snapshots of sentiments” that one person might experience across their lives. You use sophisticated expressions with intelligence, control, and poise: “swearing in their naivety” is a poignant example for me. I’m also impressed with the constant attention to little details, such as “fingers braiding through threads”, or the sister weeping into a sweater. You’re using your imagination as a powerful tool. As well as the ideas, you have the poetic skills to make it work. There are some good elements of rhythm – created through (for example) punctuation and repeated verbs. The overall structure (from birth to death) also works very well. Perhaps the various ideas are a little disconnected from each other – but then, perhaps that’s the point: that we can perceive life as constructed from a series of isolated moments, the “sentiments” being the subjectivity that creates the moment itself. (This would be an interesting perspective!). Overall, very enjoyable work, well done.

Adjudicator #2

A powerful and thought-provoking poem that conveys some warm and bittersweet thoughts on a journey of life, told through the snapshot moments of different people in various circumstances. There is a nuance of possible interpretation here that adds to the poem’s impact. This poem explores the different emotions and experiences of various characters, from comfort and love to grief and pain. The poet has used a free-form structure with no consistent rhyme scheme, but the use of repetition allows the readers to make free-form connections, keeping the poem coherent while enhancing the poem’s impressionistic tone. For example the line in the first stanza, "her calming touch comforting, caressing his head" creates a beautiful isolated coupling with the line in the last stanza "caressing the edges with the gentleness he craves," giving added poignancy to the contrasting contexts of birth and death.The “awaiting, anticipating” of the first stanza is heart-wrenching when compared to the “unclasping, unready” of the last.

I met a ballerina who twirled over flames  
Choreography that silently spoke waves  
Each pirouette blooms a chapter of her life  
A rose glimmering in a desert  
Tiptoeing softly through the sacred grounds  
Each fluid movement pulls from the reservoir of her experience  
She reached out and asked me to join in her pas de deux

Yet I knew nothing of pointe shoes, allegros, or arabesques  
I only wondered about the emotions behind that mask on stage  
Behind the pretty face clothed in lace  
The bruises concealed under the elegant leotards  
Calluses in contact with a block of the fabric against her foot  
Her battered soles burn and her joints scream

My mouth sealed shut, blushing a red that felt incomparable to her silent tears  
I committed memory to the cadence of her steps

Adjudicator #1

This poem shows considerable skill. There are some excellent moments, demonstrating a broad vocabulary and the clear ability to convey powerful images through it. At moments it seems the poem is taken up with elegance in its language, but this is clearly deliberate, and relevant to the poem’s theme: that elegance can be a façade which hides an ugly and painful truth. The message might yet be considered somewhat hampered though — in that, while calling out the illusion of the mask, the poem still revels in flowery Romantic language (particularly the invocation of “allegros” and “arabesques” while the persona simultaneously claims to “[know] nothing” of ballet as an art. The strongest and most poetic lines are actually those that do away with this refinement. “Calluses in contact with a block of the fabric against her foot” is an outstandingly evocative line, and already makes the readers feel the ballerina’s pain without the need for the subsequent line (describing her burning soles and screaming joints. Overall, a brilliant submission from a poet who will, as they continue to write, increasingly temper their skill with more considered control.

Adjudicator #2

The pursuit of artistic excellence requires a great deal of dedication, hard work, and sacrifice. Artists often spend years honing their skills and perfecting their craft, enduring physical discomfort, emotional challenges, and financial struggles along the way. The poem "The Ballerina" explores this theme of hidden pain and sacrifice in the pursuit of artistic excellence through retelling its persona’s encounter with a ballerina. The poem effectively conveys both the ballerina’s dedication (“Each pirouette blooms a chapter of her life”) and the hidden pain and sacrifice that goes into their pursuit (“The bruises concealed under the elegant leotards”). The poem implicitly encourages readers to see past such elegant façades as high art throws up, in order to perceive the fundamental humanity and suffering of those whose artistry we enjoy. In order to truly appreciate mastery, one must first “[commit] memory to the cadence of her steps” — that is, to understand the taxing labour that produced it.

Lamps glow  
stretching across the snow  
Nightfall floats  
The village wears diamond-inlaid coats  
Down by the village—  
I hide among the spotless white  
behind many a fruitless bright

A story sets here, like snowflakes, unfolding mysteries  
Hide, and hide, nowhere else but here to be

Researching my heart, my eyes shall remain still,  
shall not read too much into good or ill  
Shan't I pick words between words of lines  
Shan't I grow flowers between flowers of vines  
Inside the little box, just stare at the snowdrops unsent, peace is no more  
Oh! Winds roar—

From the sky  
gods carelessly dye  
From the sea  
born of peoples' cry

Will the sky know that they are sacred dyes?  
Will the sea know that they are sorrowful cry?  
Will the snowflakes know that they melted and froze?

By daybreaks,  
I shall hide no more  
what my footprints bore  
A mystery, at last, in the luminous side

### Adjudicator #1

The dream-like quality of this poem is deeply captivating. I'm drawn particularly to the unique and deliberate descriptions which balance the familiar with the unfamiliar. "Nightfall floats" for instance is a beautifully efficient line, not allowing itself to be tied to a particular literal interpretation while still invoking many strong pictures in the mind of the reader. The motif of nightfall to daybreak seems to contrast strongly with the carefully and persistently unmoving nature of the scene, as told by "unfolding mysteries / Hide, and hide, nowhere else but here to be", the eyes remaining still, the "snowdrops unsent" — to name a few examples. There's a well-executed impression of the scene being deliberately preserved by the persona. On the other hand, the poem does seem to lack a clear thread. The readers might be left confused as to why the persona has decided to "hide no more" by its conclusion as nothing seems to have provoked this change. This speaks to a desire to inject a message or character arc where it isn't strictly necessary. In my view this poet has a very adept and intuitive grasp of the strengths of poetry as a medium, and now needs only to commit their work in a direction, either leaning into impressionism, or instilling their writing with a deeper exploration of particular themes.

### Adjudicator #2

There are some breath-taking moments in this poem. I am especially impressed with the first stanza. I love the image of the diamond-inlaid coats: your use of metaphor and diction are intelligent, precise, and controlled. As we go forward in the poem, there is a good structure, in which we move from night to daylight. I can see you've really taken care with the details: the conclusive "I shall hide no more" reminds us that earlier the persona "[hid] among the spotless white" - a lovely echo and speaks to the persona's inner journey, mirrored in the passing of time. There are many excellent ideas, and it is a pleasure to read such adventurous work. For the future, there are a few things you can try to work on. Some of your phrases don't quite make sense — I'm not sure what to take from "Shan't I pick words...". Is the persona saying they won't or asking themselves whether they should? Maybe this ambiguity is your intention, but there's no clear stamp of intent here! Although you have a very good structure, the development of ideas is not so confident. What story are you trying to tell? Overall, there is so much to enjoy here. Thanks for your contribution.

Award

GOLD

Theme

Diligence

Crossroads

Lam Pui Kei

Maryknoll

Convent School

(Secondary Section)

Traveler, heed my advice:  
This sun-dappled path  
Is paved with tears and sweat,  
And the festering smell of regret.

Long have I stood here  
And watched fools embark  
With smiles and light hearts,  
Only to return, their faces ashen,  
Their hair silver,  
Never to recover  
The sleek ebony.

Those who deserted Diligence  
Endured Diligence's vengeance.  
What has withered will never bloom twice;  
What has been lost will never be reclaimed.

Embrace Diligence,  
Turn around and renounce this path  
Before it's too late,  
Before Time, flowing like a rapid brook  
Freezes over,  
Frigid and forbidding,  
And all but reflects  
Your repentant expression.

Traveler, you have been warned.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

The use of half-rhymes and almost-rhymes is effective in evoking the sense of and portent, of wisdom bestowed, that is absolutely appropriate for the voice of the poem — an oracle figure warning travellers of the dangers of forsaking the path of diligence. It's clear that you not only know English well, but are able to use it effectively. Choosing “crossroads” as your key metaphor is limiting, and it's clear that you recognise this implicitly, as you often use other imagery to strengthen your message. Unfortunately the juggling of different metaphors confuses the message, and makes it hard for readers to understand what the characteristic differences are between the paths they could take. Aside from the clumsy metaphor though, this poem is a success. My favourite depiction here is of “festering... regret” as it accurately represents how regret can worsen with the cascading results of your past decisions. Your decision to write in the 2nd-person is perfect for the poem's warning tone. The description of time freezing over, and reflecting the repentance in your face, is a poignant and painful encouragement to live well before it's too late. Overall a brilliant submission.

Adjudicator #2

This poem is a well-crafted warning. The poet has borrowed the metaphor of the crossroads to imply that life is made up of decisions, and there is no going back. In reality the wisest course of action is seldom so clear-cut, and diligence alone is not enough to prevent one's life from going awry. Arguably the poem is advocating diligence as the path to walk (rather than the path of laziness, for instance), but this makes the metaphor a bit muddy — as one could theoretically demonstrate diligence no matter which way one chooses at life's many crossroads. Moreover, one may work extremely hard, but if the direction is wrong, it is like running on empty, which will bring even more regrets. Wisdom and diligence should go hand in hand.



There is an iron smell in her sleep.  
Under her bed  
she found  
a ring  
he gave her  
when they sat on the couch  
during a sweet night  
hugging, kissing, crying,  
he said the words,  
she said thank you,  
said I love you.  
Will it last forever?  
They were happy.  
They are not happy.

The sweat she wakes up to,  
wet, warm, sad, sorry,  
old wounds from broken glass,  
broken frames,  
broken mirrors,  
broken lies,  
all over the hollow house.  
He fooled her like he was the victim.

The child is a gift —  
pretty smiles,  
lovely kisses,  
warm hugs —  
she wakes up to.

Adjudicator #1

This poem presents a poignant and emotional portrayal of a broken relationship. The imagery of the “iron smell” in the speaker's sleep and the broken objects throughout the house contribute strongly to the sense of loss and pain that permeates the poem. The use of short, fragmented lines also adds to the overall feeling of disconnection and disarray. However, the poem could benefit from more clarity and structure, as some parts seem disjointed and difficult to follow. Additionally, while the child is mentioned in the last stanza, their presence and significance in the poem could be further developed to provide a sense of hope or resolution. Overall, "Treasure" is a moving poem that effectively captures the complexities of love and loss, with ideas and poetic forms that could be further developed to strengthen its message.

Adjudicator #2

The poem starts with a very strong image, before it launches into a creative treatment of the theme, which only strays into didactic sentimentality in the final stanza. The sense of rhythm is excellent, with skilful construction that stutters and flows to match the meaning. Repetition is used effectively, and there is clear attention to the sound of words and phrases that demonstrate a good ear for language. There are stumbles, however. "Will it last forever? / They were happy. / They are not happy" is clumsy and unnecessary. The ring under the bed and excellent use of line breaks to fragment the story of the early stages of love already tells us what we need to know: this is a broken relationship. The opening of the second stanza ("The sweat she wakes up to, / wet, warm, sad, sorry,) completes the story. The final stanza is the weakest. It is highly conventional and lacks subtlety. Why not explore the difficulty of cherishing what we have? The child may be a solace, or even a reason to live, but children are not all warm hugs, smiles, and kisses. The struggle to appreciate a wondrous child, in spite of the difficulties of single-parenthood, or of seeing the treacherous father in the child, though also a trope, might have prompted a more nuanced conclusion.

Award

SILVER

Theme

Cherish what we have

Unremembered

Wong Hiu Ying

Amanda

Maryknoll

Convent School

(Secondary Section)

Bitter ashes of the forgotten stir,  
plaguing the present in waves of regret.  
Grudgingly relish the bittersweet blur,  
which scorches like burnt caramel.

The wick of a candle, aflame in fury,  
Weeps and wails in grieving amber.  
The solitary flame, so cold and dreary  
Reminiscent of its former glory.

Untold mysteries sprout distressed  
swarming the mind with estranged desires.  
Wildly relentless dreams addressed  
as pure crystalline reality.

Rise on the rush of adrenaline,  
owing to the times ever so uncertain.  
Aching for all of what has been,  
Blinded by the longing for the lost.

Yearning for a world with sorrow it lacks,  
the past shamed for what it holds;  
Craving to saunter to the moon and back  
away from routine and monotony.

Memories flock and flood in a riot,  
whistling a wistfully resentful tune  
The buttermilk song of grief and quiet,  
which too sung by a mourning lark.

A divine myriad of dreams shattered,  
Scattered sloppily, faintly aloof.  
The broken breeze, torn and battered  
rests on the shore, unmoved.

Inhale the earthy hues of the soul,  
amongst the pitter-patter of the rain.  
Let the drizzle swallow you whole  
lost in tranquility left unstained.

Muted mellow stars glow, unnoticed  
solely existing to quietly tread.  
Withheld sentiment softly amidst,  
lusterless tears silently shed.

Its diurnal drowse going awry,  
the sun burns like never before.  
Savor the present's scarlet lullaby  
before it is forgotten once more.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

The poem is rhythmically effective at times (e.g. The broken breeze, torn and battered / rests on the shore, unmoved, and many of the rhymes are effective. There has been a clear effort to communicate ideas and emotions through images and sound. The poet should have the confidence to let these images stand for themselves, rather than succumbing to the temptation to then spell out the relevant emotion (e.g. "Bitter ashes... / ...regret", "aflame in fury". There is clear linguistic flair shown here, that the poet will soon temper with maturity of expression over time, as she continues to write.

Adjudicator #2

While the poem contains rich descriptions of imagery and emotions, it has not made clear to the readers the overarching message that the poem wants to convey. What is the "former glory" mentioned in line 8, or the "untold mysteries" in line 9? What has been "lost" (line 16), and who is shedding tears (line 36)? The poem needs a clearer perspective or persona, to avoid straying into generalities that weaken the message. Also, if something can be so easily "forgotten" (line 40) again and again, is it really that important? People do remember what is precious to them, and it is only natural that unforgettable moments stay in their memories. That said, the encouragement to be mindful and appreciative of the present moment is well-made, for example through the melancholic beauty of the stars that “glow, unnoticed / solely existing to quietly tread”.

In a town lived a poor man  
A husband and and dad of a wonderful family  
Though in summer they could merely afford a fan  
They lived happily  
In a tiny house

One day he saw a house  
Which was bigger and broader  
He found it magnificent  
Since that moment  
All he wanted, merely, was the house

He worked and worked round the clock  
At the pier moving blocks  
In a store counting coins  
In a market cutting flesh  
All he wanted after, merely, was the house

Alone in the tiny dwelling  
Sobbing, crying and grumbling  
His wife demanded separation in wrath  
While the man agreed hastily  
All he cared, merely, was the house

His children grew to ten, then twenty  
They turned from urging Papa's companionship  
To urging to leave the city  
To get away from their dad in insanity  
Because all he cared, merely, was the house

The man was getting older and older  
With people around him fewer and fewer  
His coughing got more severe  
But still what he wanted after all  
Merely, was the house

He managed to buy the house eventually  
Lying solitarily  
He was somehow in sorrow  
In a vast hollow.  
After all, all he had, merely, was the house

Adjudicator #1

This piece tells a poignant story of a man who becomes obsessed with owning a bigger and grander house. The poem effectively captures the man's transformation from a contented husband and father to a lonely and isolated individual who loses everything in his materialistic pursuit. The poem's use of repetition with the phrase "All he wanted, merely, was the house" effectively conveys the men's single-minded obsession with owning the house. The use of imagery is also effective. The final image of the man lying solitarily in the vast hollow of his new house is haunting and effective. However, the language and phrasing used throughout the poem are somewhat simplistic (including some minor issues with grammar) and could benefit from more poetic language and imagery. Additionally, the poem could be more specific in its descriptions of the man's actions and emotions, which would help to create a more vivid and impactful message.

Adjudicator #2

Here we get a clear sense of the transition from aspiration to madness and isolation. You successfully depict the man forsaking more and more in the pursuit of something he saw as more important. He longs for security and comfort, but in pursuing it he forgets the reason he needed it. "In a town lived a poor man" is a great way to set the tone of a fable or fairytale, which encourages introspection and the applying of the theme to the readers' own life. I do think the poem would benefit from some more elegant metaphors, and the use of the word "merely" doesn't seem quite correct ("merely" is often used to diminish the importance of an object, where thematically you should instead be amplifying the importance of the house in the mind of the poor man.

**her kintsukuroi**  
Cheng Yi Sum  
Remie

Po Leung Kuk  
Choi Kai Yau School

dark, red-tinged ink staining her fingertips —  
the glass vial balances precariously.  
scarlet beads bleed out of the cracks like tears  
slipping past eyelids and between lashes,  
splattered at her feet like drops of blood that  
escaped hasty scrubs on bathroom tiles.

in a clear cage, a robot swivels weakly —  
no longer enthralled to wade in its blood.  
it swipes desolately, gorging down the  
traitorous fuel, but it *Can't Help Itself*.  
she and it are the same, soon to be like  
Sisyphus embodied ; endless, futile.

the mirror is sunlight to her vampire.  
her image is distorted, false contours  
warping the figure standing before her.  
it sneers in jest, not Bloody Mary, but  
inwardly destructive. closer, closer —  
she draws into the world of vanity.

in the flood of hatred and ridicule,  
her knees give way, rippling the crimson pool.

arms embrace her waist, pulling her gently  
away from the warped glass. the figure still laughs,  
but her eyes are averted, now unmisted  
by hatred and enlightened with comfort.

a fence now restricts the puddle, no longer  
an atrium where the liquid slips away —  
the machine sips much-needed fuel at last.  
hands scoop up the hydraulic fluid — not  
clawing desperately, but with intention.  
starved lurches morph into tranquil splashes.

delicate hands unravel her clenched fists,  
a linen cloth dabbing away her loss  
of control. the fragile vessel's leakage  
is drained away to reveal crescent-moon  
bites in her palm. caressing massages  
dull the ache, holding her, comforting her.

from ruins, she emerges with *victoire*,  
fading scars invisible from afar.

the gold leaf adorns her heart's fractures —  
she was not just to be fixed, but cared for.

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

A major strength of the poem is in its ability to properly and carefully pace the narrative with precise use of words and punctuations. The readers, to this effect, are able to read and savour each line or phrase as an individual unit, without necessarily losing track of the narrative thread in most places. Some of the images in the poem could have been better constructed. The introduction of the robot in the second stanza is interesting but an abrupt contrast, and it isn't clear what this robot looks like or whether the robot is even meant to be taken literally. Where the poem gives way to abstraction, such language does feel considered, but the picture still becomes less clearly focused on the persona's struggle. Nevertheless, when the images work, they truly work: the persona's suffering is vivid and the tensions are built successfully and with great effect. A good example of this is the description of the hands in the third to the last stanza. All in all, a good effort.

**Adjudicator #2**

The poem's Japanese title "her kintsukuroi" is filled with meaning. The art of repairing broken pottery is a metaphor that refers to damages, the healing process, and a full recovery. Reading the poem is healing, because the readers witness how a person who once lost control of herself gradually regains her sense due to the love and care surrounding her. It offers a message of hope and resilience, showing that even in the darkest of times, there is always the possibility of transformation and growth. To this end, it's a clever choice to write the poem from the perspective of an outside observer. This often reads as though the protagonist (so to speak) is depersonalising their inner struggle as a coping mechanism, but also works from the view of an onlooker empathising with the suffering of one close to them. The half-rhymes are very careful to never trivialise the content, but the French "victoire" seems a little indulgent.



My mom once told me,  
"Cherish with responsibility  
Nuzzle against this panorama around you  
For it is your responsibility to fortify and value it wholeheartedly'

'Cherish with realization  
Ascertain what you should endeavor in life  
For you to pick up your bags and straddle those rocky boulders.

'Cherish with readiness  
Grasp for the unforeseeable future that lies in front of you  
For readiness to fill your mind as you envision a brand new chapter'

'Cherish with relationships  
Look after all the wonderful people who have appeared in your story  
For it is your own network that paints your life with elation'

'Cherish with reacceptance  
Correct all the wrongdoings you have done in bygone days  
For it is an inevitable process while moving forward'

'Cherish with rhythm  
Move along to the melody you have been blessed to have an interest in  
For you to sail through the rhythm till you set foot on your next island"

She smiled, patting my head as I listened to her in bewilderment,

"But most importantly,  
'Cherish with an r;  
For that is your name  
Your life and existence.  
When winter passes  
And when spring welcomes itself as the year's opening mass;  
When you swallow all your tears and fears,  
And when you spread your laughters and smiles;  
Cherish everything with an r,  
Cherrish. "

Adjudicator #1

"Cherish with an r", the pun in the poem, refers to both a mother’s kind advice and the name of the speaking "I" in the poem. Having read the poem, the readers also come to understand why the speaker is named "Cherrish" with the double r. However, the poet may want to revise the second last line in the final stanza. The meaning of the line may be confusing, for not "everything with an r" is favourable. Regrets, resentment, repulsion, revulsion, etc. should be avoided rather than cherished. Also, the fourth last line in the same stanza could be reconsidered too, because swallowing one's own tears can be bitter and painful. It isn't always such a glorious moment to be cherished. Overall the sentiment of the poem is encouraging, but could be made stronger with more nuance and consideration for the reality of struggle.

Adjudicator #2

This poem gives us a series of valuable moral lessons. The poem is given in reported speech, from the mother of the poet. I like this approach, as it makes clear who is speaking, and makes each statement more authoritative. The letter “r” links everything together – although I don’t quite understand about the name “Cherrish”! I appreciate the thoughtful work you’ve put into this. There are a couple of things you can think about for the future: some language sounds inauthentic – just make sure that you are confident using every word – and although you have some good ideas about rhythm (e.g. the repeated line), you may find some more ways to emphasise the message with some more work on sentence structure, punctuation, and rhyme. Overall, there’s some very good work here – well done.

No one ever notices the road sweeper on the sidewalk.  
He begins his day's work from the break of dawn,  
Till the golden sun dimmed its light and was gone.  
His flimsy broom clutched with gnarled fingers.  
On its handles, the contours of his chapped hands imprinted with sweat.  
Frantically dodging passers-by, muttering apologies, sweeping away the dust,  
Met with insults and criticism, people flashing him looks of disgust.  
Still, he continues his labour without a word of protest.  
Each night gleaming in the moonlight, his neon-striped vest.

No one ever bothers about the old lady pushing the cart of cartons.  
Her hunched back, her bony arms, her greyish-silver hair.  
The fabric stained with filth framing her frail figure.  
The cars zoomed past her, dangerously close, as they honked at her.  
Someone bumped into her from behind, the cart flipped and she fell.  
The cartons scattered, trampled over with high heels and leather shoes.  
Again and again, wound over wound, bruise over bruise.  
But she carries on with the rusty cart, its worn-out wheels squeaking like mice  
'Cause there's a kid at home waiting for her to bring back a bit of rice.

No one ever talks to the girl sitting at the back of the classroom.  
She sits there through the entire day. Still. Silent. Serene.  
In the midst of the rowdy, tumultuous classroom scene,  
She retains her tranquill aura - the eye of the storm.  
No one noticed her lips quivered, her fists clenched onto her yellowed uniform.  
Rumours and gossip threaten to blow her down like howling gales,  
The crimson cuts clawed through, contrasting her complexion none so pale.  
Her cold, unfeeling gaze, those eyes that hold no warmth.  
The hidden sorrow beneath the placid mask she wears.

On one particularly ordinary day  
As people went about their lives,  
Someone  
Realised their existence.

The road sweeper, as usual, was brushing away debris on the cement,  
He kept his head down as pedestrians came by and went.  
But he didn't see where he was going and crashed into a man passing.  
'I'm so sorry! ' the road sweeper apologised, bracing himself for a scolding.  
'Not at all! Have a good day, sir! ' the man cheerily replied and left, whistling.  
The road speaker stood there, stunned - in his heart planted a seed of blessing.

The old lady, as usual, was picking up cartons from the rubbish bins.  
She tripped on a crack in the floor and the carton flew out of her hands.  
'Here, ' a boy picked up the carton, putting it on the cart as he grinned.  
The boy held out his small hand, ' Let me help you, ' he said.  
The old lady watched as the boy's silhouette grew farther in the distance.  
He reminded her of her son - in her heart bloomed a flower of solace.

The girl at the back, as usual, was drawing doodles in her notebook.  
There was a tap on her shoulder and she looked up, startled.  
A classmate was smiling down at her, with brown eyes that sparkled.  
'Your drawings are really beautiful, ' she exclaimed, her intentions true.  
The girl smiled for the very first time and she knew,  
The wall of ice had shattered - in her heart grew a tree of warmth.

### Adjudicator #1

This is a great poem with loads of skills and abilities on show. You are clearly a great writer and you are able to express yourself well and construct powerful images in a range of English expressions. The only point to think about for me would be – try to avoid images that might be read as cliché – it's easy to be overly concerned with sounding like poetry, but it's important to avoid this and instead find your own unique voice. You show a good vocabulary here and for a young writer, and you obviously have a talent for writing, whether in poetry or otherwise. You should keep writing (and reading): your inner voice will develop over time into something truly your own, when tempered with greater experience.

### Adjudicator #2

The poem paints vivid images and brings the characters to life. The detailed descriptions of the first part are well-written but the repetitive structure of the second part is rather predictable given the set-up in the first half. It's also worth taking a more considered approach to the humanity of these overlooked figures: everyone in the poem happens to be good-natured and kind, somewhat unbelievably so, which makes it easier to accept them – but often people can lose their joy when shunned, ignored or treated poorly by society. They can understandably become angry and bitter, as they see no way out of such a rough existence. People are still worthy of respect, even if they are brusque or impolite. Also, in the case of the road sweeper and the old lady, especially: they are more in need of a substantial change in their living conditions, than of merely a good word and a smile, don't you think? However, the overall message of empathy, mindfulness and consideration is well-told.

You used to resent all  
As cold shivers at autumn dawn  
You heard jarring alarms across school hall  
As they rob the dreams you can't recall  
You sensed sweat slowly running down your chin  
As summer sun scorched along your skin  
You wanted nothing but leave behind  
As people say their work were so divine  
You despite the days  
So you made a wish like a child  
Just you thought fairytale was mild

And perhaps godmother came  
Got you to the place you aim  
Gone are the smiles between they say  
But rigid restful screens all day  
No sight of sneer or cheers  
With funny goggles and mask always near  
No blue sky in the ceiling you see  
Let alone the trip to the sea  
No screams no noise no touch no chats  
No sense of heat nor shiver  
As your temperature is constantly measured

And now you miss the autumn chill  
Now you hope the sun glaring still  
Now you desire the warming smiles  
Now you wish you hadn't wished

Alas the third autumn's dawn  
You get to see the beauty of all  
The cool breeze on your bare cheek  
The clear view from your glasses without fog  
The limitless blue sky with burning sun  
The near conversations without blockage  
The distinct scent of bread escapes oven  
The tear in your eyes while you are wrapped in warm arms  
The screams from all when the dolphin arise from the sea

Now you view days with wonder and joy  
How precious even a fresh breath can be  
As winter brings its storm once more  
You admire every little thing

### Adjudicator #1

This poem explores the persona's journey from resentment and dissatisfaction to a newfound appreciation for life's simple pleasures. The poet has made a good attempt to use a consistent rhythm and a well-structured rhyme scheme to give the poem a sense of musicality. The use of repetition, such as in the refrain "You miss the autumn chill / You hope the sun glaring still / You desire the warming smiles / You wish you hadn't wished," reinforces the poem's themes and creates a sense of unity. It's nice to see that familiar sensations, such as the autumn chill, the summer sun, and the clear view from glasses without fog, are decoupled from metaphor such that they all provoke a similar reaction in the persona — reinforcing that what plagues them is their mindset, rather than any outward unpleasantness. Overall, this is a beautiful and thought-provoking poem. The use of repetition, vivid imagery, and figures of speech creates a sense of depth and complexity that adds to the poem's impact. The poem's structure and form add to its cohesiveness and impact. Well done!

### Adjudicator #2

Clever and measured use of the seasons as the motif for this meditation of things that stay, pass, and leave us wanting. What is also admirable in this poem is the poet's ability to deploy image after image and concept after concept without overwhelming the readers or appearing incoherent or inchoate. The poet's ability to maintain the use of imagery prevents the poem from falling into abstraction. Another admirable feature of the poem is in the poet's ability to use repetition in some stanzas to great effect. The use of monosyllabic words also provide the poem with a good cadence, which when combined with use of imagery, speaks well of the poet's ability to marry form and content together. There are a few syntactic missteps (e.g. "their work was\* so divine", "you wanted nothing but (to) leave (it) behind"), but these will surely become fewer as you continue to work with your grasp of English and become more adept at wielding it.

Oh, that phenomenal, delicious feeling  
How I wish forever I could savour.  
The paralysing scent of your greatest nightmares  
Fear, really, that you couldn't be braver.

I wonder what suffuses your mind when it comes  
To asylums and eventide and bats?  
Blooming, thorny dark petals and blades  
The gnarled gnashing teeth of rotten rats?

Cower while you can and tremble while you shall,  
Witching hours must come and death must befall.  
The great, corroded collars of bloodstained thralls:  
Inexorable, really, is fate upon all.

I wonder what may bedevil your life  
When trepidation leaves the Earth?  
When darkness flees and heroes shine  
What you make of the immortal sun's birth?

Without evil, how bright shall good dazzle?  
Without midnight, how shall stars ascend?  
Without demons, how high shall angels fly?  
Without failure, how miraculous shall reward be your friend?

What we have may be cataclysmic;  
What we have may be worthless dreams,  
But cherish the devil and cherish chaos' touch,  
For only in darkness will our scintillating hope gleam.

## Adjudicator #1

This poem is an intriguing exploration of the relationship between fear and hope, and how the two are often intertwined. The poet uses vivid and sometimes unsettling imagery to convey the idea that without darkness and evil, light and goodness would not shine as brightly. In terms of diction, the poet has a rich and evocative vocabulary. The use of descriptive language and vivid imagery is particularly effective, and helps to bring the poem's themes and ideas to life. For example, the use of phrases like "How I wish forever I could savour" and "What you make of the immortal sun's birth" adds a sense of intimacy and personal connection to the poem, while the use of more formal language in phrases like "inexorable, really, is fate upon all" adds a sense of gravity and weight. The imagery used in the poem is quite powerful, and the poet has a talent for creating vivid and sometimes unsettling mental pictures. For example, the lines "The gnarled gnashing teeth of rotten rats?" conjure up a particularly vivid and disturbing image. Overall, this is a thought-provoking and visually striking poem that effectively conveys its themes through powerful imagery and skillful use of language. Well done!

## Adjudicator #2

This is a very interesting poem by a young and talented writer with great potential. One of the key strengths of the poem is its interesting use of such a range of complex and interesting English language. There is a wide vocabulary on display and the words are used effectively and precisely to great effect. On the other hand, remember that it is not always the more complex word that is most powerful – sometimes direct and everyday language can be more moving than 'high-brow' or complex language. "Trepidation" for instance has a particular context appropriate for its use, but here is used merely as a more syllable-heavy synonym for "fear". Generally though, it still reads impressively to have this command of English at such an age. The poem is full of feeling and has some lovely images that stay with the readers after they finish. The use of repeating line forms, such as in the lines "Without evil, how bright shall good dazzle? Without midnight, how shall stars ascend?" is a good way to guide the reader toward an appropriate reading of the poem – though it is a little 'on-the-nose' in spelling out the theme. The writer shows great imagination and writing skill and I am sure they will go on to achieve much with their writing.

The peaceful Silent Night was chanted, wishes echoed like they were enchanted.  
"Just write it down one by one," She said softly to her son.  
Bundles of candies and a new toy cooker. You wrote on the sticky paper.  
Carefully hung the red stocking, tossed and turned till Santa's coming.

"Happy birthday to you." Fifteen flames flickering in eyes of blue.  
Skin to skin fingers held each other, eyes closed in front of the bright altar.  
A handful of black silk flowed over her shoulder. You wished you were the holder.  
Hand in hand you wrote your story, with the one and you'd never worry.

Got rid of the business suit, you seek freedom from the weekly route.  
Far away from the noisy city lights, it's a quiet cloudless night.  
Upon the dark endless sky, rain of glowing lights painted their trails behind.  
*Wealth and successful career*, You whispered to the shooting stars.

Put on the fluffy red jacket, wore pants with a broad buckled belt.  
Christmas hat on your head, the snow-white beard giving out gingerbread.  
"What's your wish, grandpa?", the round glistening sapphires asked.  
"All I wish is for my family, friends and health to last. "  
"My wish isn't more, just to cherish before they pass."

Adjudicator #1

This poem adds a deft twist to the theme of ‘cherish’ through the fleeting act of wish-making. The impressions and images created are simple but impactful. There’s a bittersweet tone to this poem, a maturity hidden beneath its simple language. The image of a grown person already well into the ‘real world’ – standing under the shooting stars and whispering, just the same, a little wish of their own - is very moving. There are some perspective issues here, where the identities of the third- and second-person are unclear or seem to change. This hampers the readers from placing themselves in the situations described. If the poet intends to shift perspectives and have the readers follow this seamlessly, this must be achieved by establishing the identity of the stated ‘you’ in each case (for instance, am I supposed to infer that the ‘you’ in the first stanza is the son, or not? Similarly, are the “round glistening sapphires” mine, or someone else’s?).

Adjudicator #2

The poem attempts to use a regular form with, on first sight, an unusual pattern of internally rhyming lines. Some of the half-rhymes are very nice (e.g. “other / ... altar). I wonder why you didn't just format this with line breaks after each rhyming word, since your poem is really in rhyming couplets, but with the lines combined, e.g. The peaceful Silent Night was chanted, wishes echoed like they were enchanted.” Although this does expose the clumsy metre and also the clunky rhyming of "chaned" with "en-chaned", these formal weaknesses are apparent in any case.



Award  
**Honourable  
Mention**  
Theme  
**Diligence**

**Contemplation  
in Diligence –  
From Gravel  
to Gold**

Kwok Yin Hei

Heep Yunn School

Prelude to prosperity, considered by whole,  
Is through the tainted palms of perseverance.  
The bustling lanes brought billowing dust,  
the sublime tapestry of history blessing the ground.

Through the hardships we share, the strains we bear,  
hope for the future grasped in scarred, strained hands.  
With faith we purged obstacles to progress,  
Seeds sown, the barren field yards bestowed with a tint of gold.

Adrift in the plethora of restless striding, contemplating in a trance,  
The will to rise aloft is exceedingly lustrous, yet –  
They soon sank into oblivion, like archaic frescoes  
vanquished to smithereens, not a trace left to be seen.

While some may avert this perilous labyrinth, o lonesome sojourner –  
you shan't evade this inevitable peregrination, endowed by fate.  
You are but a noctilucous jadeite encrusted with stone,  
Perchance, with honest, hard work it would be sheathed from its hide,  
Forged and carved into a magnificent piece of craftsmanship.

Dusk hues, the buoyant ember slowly tiles to nothingness.  
Coyote howls, Celestia embowers the sapphire sphere with her cloak black as tar.  
Sleep soundly, 'til the first ray of dawn-  
We shall all favour the fruits of prosperity, make merry  
and savour in heaven's grace.

What lies beyond diligence requires greater understanding, though  
the most profound solution originates from resilience and tenacity.

From ashes there bore the undying myth.

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

This poem revels in beautiful and seldom-used English words, and in several cases succeeds in creating some truly fascinating turns of phrase: “hope for the future grasped in scarred, strained hands” is heartfelt and empowering. Unfortunately, this strategy also proves to be the work's weakness. The emphasis on the use of ‘big’ words causes the poem to fall into abstraction, in that it is difficult for the reader to actually form an image. Words are meant to help develop imagery and theme, and not get in the way of forming insight and poetic vision. In certain cases, this obvious preference for the less common synonym has created some meaningless sentences: for instance, “...some may avert this perilous labyrinth...” features an objectively incorrect use of the word “avert”, and the sentence is incomprehensible until one exchanges “avert” for “avoid”. Avoid using words whose nuance you aren't confident with – a thesaurus will often mislead you into thinking synonyms are one-to-one, when this is seldom the case. Also remember how the poem will be read auditorily: that even if the poem is read silently through the eyes, it must still speak to the readers' inner ear. All in all, the poetic vision is clear, but you must allow the language to work for you- not against what you hope to establish.

**Adjudicator #2**

The poem has a rather philosophical and motivational tone as it reflects on the journey of progress from hardship to prosperity through diligence and perseverance. The metaphor of transforming "gravel to gold" effectively captures this theme. The poem uses vivid and engaging imagery, e.g. "tainted palms", "billowing dust", "sublime tapestry", "scarred, strained hands", and "barren field yards bestowed with a tint of gold" which bring the ideas to life. Some lines possess a lyrical and musical quality due to the rhythmic flow of words, e.g. "Prelude to prosperity, considered by whole." On the whole, I think the poem was beautifully written and well-constructed. It conveys a simple but deep message to be taken home.

Staring at the sky all day long in the zone  
With helicopters hovering  
People screaming and sobbing  
Thinking of the things that were once mine  
And how I took them for granted

The clothes that gave me warmth when I was cold  
The food that kept me energetic when I was tired  
The music that made me relaxed when I was tense  
The Internet that gave me inspiration when I was empty-minded  
The friends that lent me a shoulder to cry on when I was stressed  
And the family that told me I was worth it when I was struggling

Was I ever taught the lesson of cherishing?  
They are all gone in a blink of an eye  
All I can do now is  
just laying on a pile of crushed bricks  
Letting the blood on my head stroll across my face  
Listening to the siren of the ambulance not so far away  
Waiting to be rescued

Did I take them for granted?  
I think I didn't.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

This poem is a powerful reflection on the things we take for granted in life, from a captivating perspective: someone on the brink of death, “thinking of the things that were once [theirs]”. The final question of this poem is an interesting and welcome subversion of the expected response, and provokes thought on the part of the readers. We all naturally feel that we could have appreciated things more while we had them. Here though, after remembering the “warmth” and “inspiration” they received, the persona believes that those things were appreciated in their time. The poet has effectively conveyed the theme of reflection. The image of the persona staring at the sky while helicopters hover, people scream, and sob creates a powerful mental picture that effectively conveys a great contrast between the outer chaos and inner peace of the final stanza. Overall, this is a powerful and introspective poem. The poet has done an excellent job of capturing the pathos of the moment and conveying it to the readers.

Adjudicator #2

The poem begins with the imagery of a disaster — a great setting for its imaginative meditation on cherishing what we have. The setting could’ve done with some more development, to make it easier for the reader to grasp what’s happening. The picture is a powerful one though: the persona “laying on a pile of crushed bricks” in the midst of screaming and wreckage. A beautiful way to add a depth of meaning to their restful thoughts. The “stroll[ing]” blood is a good way to maintain the accepting tone of the poem’s conclusion. “Was I ever taught the lesson of cherishing?” is a fascinating and complex question that provokes the reader to consider what it means to truly appreciate something.

Award  
**Honourable  
Mention**  
Theme  
**Cherish what  
we have**

**Pondering**  
Fung Song Andrea

Maryknoll  
Convent School  
(Secondary Section)

A candle — it's slowly burning, burning out.  
Last week, it was perfect and new.  
Now, it's a puddle of wax.  
In the blink of an eye, it's gone.

*Where did the time go?*

It seems just yesterday he was born.  
Tomorrow, he will leave home for school.  
Don't blink, he will grow old before long.

*Where did the time go?*

Yet, we crave for fine luxuries  
Thinking these would leave him sweet childhood memories  
All our life without knowing  
How he felt lonely staring at the chandelier in the ceiling

*Where did the time go?*

Pondering his life ahead dark and uncertain  
No - scarier than living off a paycheck, a bargain  
A life with just materials and entrapment  
Would be a life with no fulfilment

*Live in the moment*

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

Good use of repetition to press home the poet's inner thought and meditation on the passage of time. The use of the candle as an opening metaphor is a good choice for such a creative reflection. In some parts, the images could have still been developed further. For instance, the lines "It seems just yesterday he was born / Tomorrow, he will leave home for school." could have been painted better and in a less stale way. The same goes for the line "Yet, we crave for fine luxuries." The poem demonstrates the writer's ability to create a form for their piece. If she is able hone her skills and experiment in crafting more poignant images, then they will certainly go far as a poet.

**Adjudicator #2**

The start of the poem gives us the candle as an excellent metaphor for time. This is a great way to begin — it illustrates time as something which is used up and consumed, something that can't be regained. It also has a meditative connotation that the rest of the poem leans on. When we get into the main part of the poem, you give us a series of ideas about life. You make us think about what's really important, when time is moving on so quickly. I would love to see the candle set in-situ, to give a clearer connection between it and the rest of the poem. Perhaps you could mention this image at the end — or, once or twice along the way. Overall, you have an excellent approach. Thanks for submitting such a thoughtful poem!

Award  
**Honourable  
Mention**  
Theme  
**Diligence**

**Those who are  
awakened at 5**  
Shek Tsoi Kiu  
Kayla

HKUGA College

As the clock hits 5 am,  
The morning breeze kicks in.  
It is the time not for birds to be heard,  
But for some to emerge.  
Putting on their clothes and makeup in the speed of light  
Rushing to the bus stop with red-ink-stained fingers  
Leaving behind a trail of lingering

Dark circles, heavy bags under their eyes,  
Followed with teary yawns and lengthy sighs,  
They enter the building, their offices, then their respective classrooms.  
One by one,  
Concealing their frowns with smiles resembling the sun.

Teenagers of 15 years old, starting a new chapter of English  
Introduced with a grammatical question to distinguish,  
Seated in identical rows, most of their heads leaning on desks,  
Some with their hands in their luminous drawers tapping, scrolling,  
Attempting to get a rest from the stress

All the while the voices of the ones who wake up at 5,  
Fade deeper into background noise.  
And for a second they huff and puff.  
Thinking about the perpetual cycle.

Those who are awakened at 5,  
How much more can you survive?  
How much longer until you hear the birds sing too?

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

My favourite sentiment here is “...the voices... / Fade deeper into background noise”. It brilliantly captures the sense of loss, the toll that such a burden of routine will take on those subject to it. There are a few unnecessarily exaggerated or clichéd phrases here (for instance “smiles resembling the sun”) that detract from an otherwise ponderous and atmospheric series of images. The description of “hands in their luminous drawers” is a clever way to depict students using their phones in secret while in class. There’s a strong sense in this poem of people losing themselves in the midst of routine, that leaves a strong impression. The final question appears to be goading the readers to break free.

**Adjudicator #2**

This poem captures the fatigue and stress of mundane routine. The use of sensory details, such as the morning breeze and the red-ink-stained fingers, adds depth and realism to the poem. The imagery of dark circles, yawns, sighs, tapping in drawers, etc. effectively conveys the appropriate mood. On the other hand, the language sometimes seems rather plain and prosaic. Also, it has a somewhat predictable and simplistic structure. The themes of exhaustion, monotony and longing for freedom don’t seem to go anywhere beyond a vague question of “How much longer...?” Exploring these themes in a fresher and more original manner, and finding a more concrete response to freeing oneself from the cycle, would elevate this poem. My favourite sentiment is “...the voices... / Fade deeper into background noise”. It brilliantly captures the sense of loss, the toll that such a burden of routine will take on those subject to it.

Award

Honourable  
Mention

Theme

Cherish what  
we have

Harsh Reality

Chung Ho Suet  
Veronica

Maryknoll  
Convent School  
(Secondary Section)

As we crossed the lanes of Tolo Highway  
Our car got drenched in ocean spray  
An oily slick ran down the glass  
A thick residue left in its path  
That same dark grease I'd seen before  
On busy streets... now the ocean floor

As I watched the crash of the water waves  
A billboard was placed high on display  
The Caribbean monk seal, extinct at last  
Nobody noticed, the train drove fast  
This innocent species couldn't be restored  
Soon to be forgotten, never seen anymore

As I walked close to the beach, near the bay  
Plastic and garbage made the sand ever grey  
Realisation hit me once I smelled the horrid gas  
We were the ones who destroyed the coral mass  
Who threw our trash at the ocean shore  
When we could have just recycled them all

The ocean was lively each and every day  
With fields of sea grass swaying away  
Like neighbourhoods, towns and nearby cities  
We depended on each other... what a pity  
If I could take it all back, I'd change my ways  
But alas I can't... the damage is done

We only limit the harm we have done  
And make amends like a long lost son  
Once we realise we are united  
Take responsibility; everyone is invited  
There is no more secret — and only shared  
Now the truth's out naked, bare

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

The poet expresses their concerns about pollution and environment protection within the context of Hong Kong. The tone is a bit didactic, especially towards the end, where the poet openly invites the readers to "take responsibility" for all the harm and damages already done to the ocean. On that note corporations are responsible for the overwhelming majority of pollution and damage to fragile ecosystems, so there is less benefit in speaking to individuals here than in advocating for wider systemic change. Personal responsibility has its place though, and instilling in readers the importance of caring for the planet is absolutely vital. The most eye-catching aspect of the poem is its neat rhyme scheme at the end of each line. The end rhymes invite the reader to read the poem lines in pairs, and this parallel sentence structure will make it easier for the reader to recite and remember the poem. It would be even more impressive if the lines were written in the form of heroic couplets.

Adjudicator #2

A commendable attempt to engage with a serious topic. Diction is sound overall, and the expression is mostly natural, with only slight awkwardness when trying to find rhymes. There is clear evidence of attempts to craft the poem rhythmically, although the choice to use tetrameter mismatches the topic tonally. The effect is compounded by the frequent use of rhyming couplets. All in all, though, the pain of witnessing a damaged environment is palpable here. The observation that “we only limit the harm we have done” is a particularly sobering thought, and a rebuke to a society that could be doing much more. The readers are filled with a longing to do what they can to help — which is the clear intent of the poem.



Explosions, gunshots, shrieks of agony –  
They fill my ears with a chorus so deafening.  
Bullets whizzing right beside my skin  
As I face my moment of reckoning.

A grenade detonated by my side,  
Wrenching my body against the concrete wall.  
Trapped in the inferno, bloodied and bruised,  
In my final moments, contemplating it all.

I remember her gentle smile and soft caress,  
As she struck my heart for the first time.  
I remember her enchanting sapphire eyes,  
As we donned our rings under the soft chimes.

I remember her strain, struggle, and joy,  
When she gave birth to our baby boy.  
I remember his shining and creative soul,  
When he told riveting stories of heroes and ghouls.

I remember his inherent curiosity,  
That burned boundlessly bright no matter the adversity.  
I remember our glistening tears of pride,  
That he got accepted into the college he eyed.

As I lay here prone, darkness slowly covering my eyes.  
I wonder why I didn't cherish what was left;  
Why I loved my life's lavishly luminous lot so lightly  
Before I drowsily drew my final breath.

I awoke not to the blinding, radiant light,  
But to a dashing, magnificent sight.  
I saw as her lapis eyes peered into mine:  
An amalgam of worry, relief and pride.

I saw his sobbing, teary eyed grin,  
As his arms instantly took me in.  
The universe has heard my plea!  
Awarding me with sincerity and glee.

Set ablaze, burned, charred and scarred,  
Yet rising like a phoenix from the barren ash.  
Wings alight, passion rekindled, soul roaring,  
Understanding at last, I am soaring.

A second chance I was graciously granted.  
A second chance I shall treasure and cherish.  
A second chance to right my wrongs.  
A second chance to be grateful for all who eventually perish.

### Adjudicator #1

This is a captivating poem with a twist at the end. Although the poet shows good effort to achieve an AABB rhyming rhythm throughout, I struggled to see why this rhyming pattern is necessary to convey the sentiment. The rhyming is at times too deliberate, drawing excessive attention to itself. The devastation that the persona feels is well-communicated, as they remember moments and deeds that, in their time, were not appreciated as they might have been. War-time is a poignant context for this type of thought, so well done for choosing an effective setting for your theme.

### Adjudicator #2

The poem makes effective use of repetition to create a sense of progression and flow. Literary techniques such as alliteration are used to some effect, although “my life’s lavishly luminous lot” is clumsy, lacking both in meaning and an emotional centre. The poet needs to move beyond the basic deployment of learned techniques into a more careful and considered style. To that end, only use techniques where they will enhance – not distract from – the message. To some degree the poem’s expression of sentiments and choice of imagery is quite conventional, but the powerful spiritual experience the persona undergoes as their “second chance” is granted speaks to the truly transformative nature of living mindfully.

I look into Mom's soulful eyes,  
Once young and lively,  
Now tired and wise.

I gently caress her serene face,  
Once smooth and lovely,  
Now wrinkled with grace.

I grasp her hand more tightly than ever,  
My sight turns blurry,  
Raindrops drizzle forever.

Her hand held mine,  
As we walked across roads,  
Only when the green lights shine,  
And our fingers always twine.

Her hand held mine,  
When I was unwell,  
Her care was my sunshine,  
And stayed until I'm fine.

I wiped my tears and slowly choked,  
"Mom, you held my hand when I was young,  
Now it's my turn to hold yours tight."

Adjudicator #1

This is a nice poem and it is obvious that you are a poet with talent and ability. You are able to use simple language to convey complex emotion, which is often the most difficult thing when it comes to writing poetry, and often this is more difficult than using larger and more complex vocabulary so it is lovely to read a poem in this style. In terms of the content, it's nice to write about your mother – but is there anything more unique you want to say that is specific to your own relationship with your mother, or something that you think hasn't been said about mothers before? At the moment the sentiment is great, but it could be more unique. Overall though, you should be really pleased with a great poem – and keep writing, as you have a real talent.

Adjudicator #2

This is a touching and poignant poem that effectively captures the deep bond between a mother and child, particularly where the child recognises the change that their mother has undergone over the years. Her title of 'mother' is the same, but her character is almost entirely changed. The theme of the passing of time and shifting roles between parent and child is conveyed with skill. Vivid imagery and sensory details are used to convey the speaker's emotions and memories, making the poem accessible and relatable to a broad range of readers. However, I believe that the form of the poem and the depth of its message could be improved. While the simple language contributes to accessibility, it also can make the poem feel repetitive and lacking in nuance. Developing the central metaphor of the mother's hand, for example, could be powerful. While the repetition of "Her hand held mine" emphasises the importance of their bond, exploring the metaphor and its significance in greater depth would further enhance the poem.

# OPEN SECTION

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piles of pictures, pillars of packages, exiled out the door.  
through the window, winds brushed the leaves like an old broken broom  
dragging debris across the floors of a dust-filled room.  
stubborn and still, resistant to change, the flecks of gold were forced to leave  
cold was the air when I looked back, one last time;  
a neighborhood, a street, a warm Home I could no longer call mine,  
now leaving me behind.

piles of pictures, pillars of packages, loaded onto the car.  
through the rearview mirror trees became tiny lines as I drove far.  
from evergreen mountains, little houses and seasonal flowers,  
cut to gray skies, billboard signs and skyscraping towers.  
i make-believe your voice as I dial your number on the phone,  
imagine your complexion and the warmth of your tone  
willing you not to leave me behind.

When the carnations and oak trees were growing up with me  
Out the window scarlet and crimson kites soared the sky wild and free  
Pointing at the forget-me-nots I asked you why they turned blue  
You answered in silence looked away and murmured "one day i will too"  
Warm was my Home when it was cramped of friends and family  
Eating tongue-burning baos and steaming dumplings  
Exchanging red envelopes and blessings

When I bolted across the living room after tickling your toes  
Out the window fluffy cotton flew as flurries of falling snow  
Slowly melting under the heat as you and I counted them one by one  
Warm was our memories of summer's fun  
Hopping out to scare you from behind a tree  
Jumping in puddles of rainwater as you scolded me

as the white borders of our memories reappear,  
*A Little Match Girl's* fire flickers out by my tear.  
out the window, the frozen willow tree is unable to bend to the wind,  
yet, crooking downwards, it longs to return to its roots once again.  
the deafening sound of silence drowns me in desolate nostalgia.  
no warmth of family, nor loving memories, to fill in the colorless space.  
i freeze. In the solitude. Of the Winter. Within these walls.  
for Home has left.  
me.  
behind.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

The poem successfully expresses the mood of melancholy and nostalgia without lapsing into clichés. The last stanza is powerful in the sense that it draws links between whiteness (the colour of winter), matches, and loneliness, and it brings home the image of how it is not the poet who has moved on but their Home.

Adjudicator #2

In most parts, the poem demonstrates unusual and remarkable mastery of poetic diction, imagery, and formal cadence. The writer is able to paint a picturesque scene and tell a poignant and heart-wrenching story while simultaneously demonstrating control over language and rhythm. Such measured control allows for the efficient conveying of the poet's inner thoughts without necessarily falling into sappy and over-the-top sentimentality. Some choices in terms of capitalisation however need to be justified, but all in all, the meticulously crafted work demonstrates the writer's great potential as a future writer.

a house must be taken down before it can become something better  
i drain myself of organs (like how the ancient egyptians pulled out dead people's brains)  
injecting in litres of store-bought glitter

the paint on the walls has faded and the patterns frame the cracks  
i tear down the photographs and posters (of goodbyes and forevers and something  
in between)+  
replacing them with ebony black

the foundations of the house were built to dance along to earthquakes and swim  
on top of floods+  
i don't remember my last disaster (maybe it was with noah on his ark)  
one that stained my chest with blood

the old furniture stacks like a tower of babel as i'm incoherent beneath the piles of dust  
the new couch is carried in (the one you and i bought with one look)  
leather, foam

about to combust

Adjudicator #1

This is a thought-provoking poem. You use the simple idea of a house to explore many different ideas. The title is “renovation plans”, and it seems that right now, a lot of work needs to be done! — the idea that the speaker is “incoherent beneath the piles of dust” is especially interesting. When it comes to the poetic techniques, I like the long lines, and there is a very interesting patterning with punctuation — notably, the parentheses of the middle lines. However, I think the poem could come to life with a bit more rhythm: even if that’s just stronger punctuation. Overall, there is a great deal to admire in this poem. Thanks for your submission, and please keep on writing.

Adjudicator #2

This poem captures the essence of transformation and rebuilding in a unique and powerful way. The use of metaphor and imagery is particularly effective in conveying the speaker's sense of nostalgia and desire for change. The poet's use of vivid imagery and unexpected juxtapositions adds depth and complexity, making this a memorable and thought-provoking piece of poetry. One of the most striking elements of the poem is the use of allusions to classical stories such as Noah's Ark and ancient Egyptian mummification practices. These allusions enhance the poem's meaning and add another layer of depth to the speaker's transformation. Moreover, the poem's structure, which is somewhat disjointed and fragmented, adds to the sense of scattered, unsystematic transformation and rebuilding.



The moonlight paints my battered body black and blue again  
tracing softly the edges of my frayed dream  
So I dare to cry where no one will stone me again  
with that hated voice, falling into place  
as the bane of my existence  
It's easier to survive the night when you are darkness itself  
barely a silhouette without even a shadow to guide you

Bearing a curse worth more than promise  
I bleed.  
I burst into feather and bone, my harsh voice  
a parched cry  
from the stones that pelted me  
Stoned burnt razed at the stake;  
I begged it to  
consume me.  
How ironic, how sad: it's the first light I'll ever see  
And yet all that remains  
the ashfall corroding my skin renders my life  
a literal dark comedy

To choose, between the cage and the coop  
Aren't the two the same?  
Even if I crawl my way from the depths of despair  
will I qualify for a space between the stars?  
Fearing the answer rather than the question  
I'll close my eyes once more  
Don't look back—  
the tears of yesterday  
will spill into tomorrow  
—I tell myself:  
I'm chasing that forgotten promise  
when I'm just evading the lambent streaks of dawn

If I could just steal the night from day—  
to live when the sun sinks into the sea.  
Lies left songs sung breath bargained  
Do you swear fealty to your brooding,  
baptizing your anguish with prayers?  
Amidst the unmoving cosmos I spy  
A glint. The unsated spark of your eye.

If ultimately it all comes to an end  
if I am blind anyway  
then why not brave the brightness?  
Riddled with desolation  
I stumble again into the light, forced again to perform for others'  
Laughter — yet, I'll laugh  
along with them!  
Lyricists and poets start off  
Crying out with broken voices anyway.

Adjudicators'  
COMMENTS

Again and again we will plunge into the abyss  
but surely Icarus was a beautiful sight to all who raised  
their heads as he was falling from the sky  
If this day will not return, at least  
Let me fall not from, but with grace.  
Without a candle to your name even  
Without glory or pride to call your own even so  
Soar  
for all you have suffered.  
Shedding the dark mark that sullies your name  
you can paint the world  
independent of how the moonlight painted you.  
Hear me see me remember me,  
My raw voice piercing this day—  
I wrest free of the moon.  
Now I hurtle towards the sun.

Throat scorched,  
Tears burnt,  
All igniting aflame:  
A flame that consumes the day for all it's worth.

And now, on your marks  
At the line of the horizon—

Let's race into the boundless sky, you and me.

Adjudicator #1

This poem wonderfully encapsulates one's longing for hope and freedom in the midst of pain and struggle. I'm particularly impressed with the pacing of this piece; the readers can follow the persona's journey — gradually finding the resolve from within themselves to continue — without any disconnected leaps of sentiment, and without their triumph ever feeling inevitable. The sound-play in "Lies left songs sung breath bargained" feels wonderfully heavy, communicating the persona's labour as they fight the self-pity that they feel threatens to hold them back. The reader feels their burgeoning determination: "if I am blind anyway / then why not brave the brightness?" They are shaping this resolve from merciless reality, perfectly illustrated by the "beautiful sight" of falling Icarus. This poem is a powerful affirmation: "A flame that consumes the day for all it's worth,"

Adjudicator #2

The level at which this poem feels open to interpretation feels very well-pitched. The readers are able to draw a lot of meaning without the poet resorting to overt one-to-one allegory. Permeating the text is a sense of bitter longing — the reality of one who longs to pursue their passion (or be who they feel they truly are) while grappling with their fear of failure and the judgement of those around them. The language is rich without slipping into pretension, and the form is used to great effect in accentuating certain passages: "Don't look back — / the tears of yesterday / will spill into tomorrow / —I tell myself" is a line only made more achingly vulnerable when set in such a way. This detail is of particular benefit to those reading from the page. Some frugal adjustments to certain lines, in favour of a stronger poetic rhythm, would elevate this already beautiful piece when spoken aloud.

It's coming —  
Crawling up my legs  
Twisting around my arms  
Wrapping around my neck  
Tightening its grip savagely —  
  
Before squeezing ruthlessly.  
  
It's here —  
Claws digging into skin  
Drawing waterfalls of crimson  
Icily capturing my limbs  
Breaking my frozen bones —  
  
Until I'm limp and lifeless.  
  
It's dwindling —  
Slithering down my spine  
Dragging pools of vermilion  
Puddling around my feet  
Sinking into the ground —  
  
Smoke rises from its remains.  
  
It's gone —  
Bruises scatter my body  
Cuts bleed out relentlessly  
Bone-deep aches settle  
All of me in disarray —  
  
The aftermath reveals an unrecognisable me.

Adjudicator #1

This is an introspective poem that explores how overwhelming pain can be. The persona uses vivid imagery and short, sharp sentences to convey the all-consuming nature of pain, as it crawls up their legs, twists around their arms, and wraps around their neck. The lack of consistent structure and free-form style adds to the poem's emotional impact and reveals the inner state of mind of the persona. One of the strengths of this poem is its use of vivid imagery to convey the persona's emotions and experiences. The line "Smoke rises from its remains" creates a striking image that adds to the poem's impact of spookiness and monstrosity. The use of vivid descriptions and short, sharp sentences creates a sense of urgency and emotional connection with the reader.

Adjudicator #2

The poem demonstrates careful consideration of form, using repeating structures to create a sense of narrative and progression. It uses vocabulary effectively. In particular, the poem is commendable for its consistent use of description to communicate, as opposed to didactically outlining key ideas or emotions explicitly. There is, however, an unfortunate concrete effect, which is perhaps unintentional.

Oh, I know now why the pretty flowers bloom  
Such smiles on their faces as they see the cast of doom  
A shade of light cast on the petals of red  
Such beauty, that hides the tears that've been shed

Oh, I know now why the pretty flowers bloom  
It's the cheerfulness that hides the dark of the gloom  
A façade, a mask, it seems to thrive  
Yet underneath, every day they cry

Why is it that the ones who smile are fake?  
Is the world truly only a façade?  
So dark and cursed that when decay comes  
Those broken underneath will refuse to run

Covered, covered, no longer shall they see  
The past is the past, well at least that's what they believe  
Some things bloom because of the cheerfulness they contain  
Yet at the end, the pressure builds till it's no longer a game

Oh, I know now why the pretty flowers bloom  
I know the secrets that must be taken to the tomb  
Those who wave with a joyous face  
Are only those who have nothing to lose  
And they wave to cover up the scars and the wounds  
That bleed beneath the stem, soaked up by the good

Oh, I know now why the pretty flowers bloom  
Because beautiful things are too good to be true

Adjudicator #1

This is an elegant yet cynical take on optimism and human goodness. The rhymes between "bloom" and "gloom" and between "thrive" and "cry" highlight the irony and the contrasting state between what is displayed and what things actually are. The personification is generally effective in bringing forth the idea of disillusionment. However, the central idea lacks originality and it sometimes borders on the cliché.

Adjudicator #2

This poem explores the idea that outward beauty can sometimes hide darkness and pain. It uses vivid imagery and a well-structured rhyme scheme to create a musical quality that adds to its impact. The repetition of the refrain "Oh, I know now why the pretty flowers bloom" reinforces its themes and paints a picture of someone utterly disillusioned. The poem effectively conveys the contrast between the beauty of the flowers and the darkness they hide, and the idea that things are not always as they seem. The use of personification in the line "Such beauty, that hides the tears that've been shed" creates a vivid and memorable image, and thus, adds depth and complexity to the poem. The poet has a talent for creating vivid mental pictures that convey complex emotions and ideas, and the poem's structure and form add to its cohesiveness and impact. Well done!

Three years (by Yannis YU)

Three years, three years.  
Masks, RATs, hand sanitizers,  
Self-isolate, 14-day quarantine, social gathering-ban, never leave us.  
Online-learning is always with us.  
The Bridge, the River, the Port, lie between us.  
Video calls link us.

Father, father,  
The sky is as blue as ever.  
You didn't look a bit older.  
But the days have been changed forever.  
I grow taller and look smarter.  
We can only meet through the monitor.

Father, father,  
Can you feel my love without my hug?  
Can you feel my power without my touch?  
Do you know that I have grown up?  
Do you know that I have to be tough?  
How can you let me feel your love?

Three years, three years!  
The days with the masks on are finally over!  
The days without you around are gone forever!  
Father, father!  
The days we have meals together have at last come!  
The days with your arm around my shoulder have begun!

Adjudicators'  
**COMMENTS**

**Adjudicator #1**

This is a poem that captures the pale pandemic experiences and celebrates happy post-pandemic moments. The repetition in the first line of every stanza is powerful. In the first half of the poem, the repetition makes the reader feel the discomfort and suffering the narrator felt during the three years. It certainly wasn't easy for one to study without any school life. It's painful to be separated from one's father for a long time too. In the second half of the poem, the repetition "Father, father" and "Three years, three years" emphasises hope, anticipation, and joy felt by the narrator. The child-like language in most cases succeeds in making the sentiments more moving, particularly the questions of the second-to-last stanza. There could perhaps have been more of a lead-in before the conclusion, and there was room for the poet to play around with the shared knowledge of the readers regarding what the persona doesn't yet know: that lockdown will soon end, and the son will be united with his father.

**Adjudicator #2**

This is a rhythmic and emotive poem, which reminds us about some of the most important experiences of the covid period. The first stanza starts off with a punchy list of restrictions, showing us the isolation and fear of that time. As you go on, the pace and tone changes: it becomes lyrical and plaintive when it speaks about the sky and family. The poem addresses "father, father". And then at the end, you go back to painful exclamations. These changes are great! They show a high level of emotional maturity about this topic. Along the way, I feel a little confused about the meaning at some points. For example, I feel worried that the father has passed on — but he will be reunited with the speaker. This is just a small problem — but more clarity may help readers follow the events of the poem. Overall, there is some very interesting work here. Well done!

Reborn Anew.

A star has

Crumbled,

Its bright light scattered to worlds beyond. Now, it ceases to be

A source of life. Long ago, it was only normal to see

Life, death, hopes, dreams — all bask under its radiating light. Now, it is

Wilting away.

It will be here to stay, never

To return to what it once was.

A stellar metamorphosis, never

Could resist the call of death. Through doom, it undergoes

A change. It persists, fighting through the toil, it

Clings, pushes for

Eternal life. It

Pulls all those around it, desperately hoping for

An end to its strife. It

Croaks a disjointed, majestic swan song, but no one provides

Light. It

Is useless. Through the small ring of

Hope

There is nothing but darkness.

Now read it backwards.

### Adjudicator #1

There are many things I like about this poem. You use unusual imagery to create a feeling of drama, excitement, and awe: the idea of the “crumbling star” is genuinely interesting and exciting. Throughout the poem you make use of enjambment to achieve the forwards-backwards reading of the poem, sometimes cleverly, sometimes clumsily. Keep experimenting with this technique, even when not looking to create two-direction readings, as it is a useful tool for creating different effects. I think the overall meaning of the poem is somewhat unclear. At times, I think the star is a metaphor for something — but we don’t get enough hints to understand what it might represent. Reading in reverse seems to reveal that the star is in a cycle of death and rebirth, but we don’t have a clear way of finding a mirror for this in our own lives. So, there are many great things in this poem, especially in terms of imagery, poetic form and adventurous language. If you work on the message, I think this could really fly.

### Adjudicator #2

The most interesting aspect about this creative poem is that it can be read forwards and backwards, each with an opposite meaning. When read forwards, the poem is about how a dying star struggles for survival. When read backwards, the poem talks about the rebirth of a star shining bright. As stated in line 6 of the poem, there is "life, death, hope, dreams" in the life cycle. When there is the creation of all lives (i.e. the Big Bang), there is also the black hole, the dark mysterious gravitational force that sucks in everything, even light. The theme of death and rebirth is well-captured.



Differences,  
set a bridge between appearances.  
Differences,  
parts people's preferences.  
Differences,  
kept our distances.

Skin colour changes during summer,  
although it might be a bummer.  
Faces mold to mature,  
you wouldn't be that sure.

You can have the skin of an earthquake,  
or a voice which shakes.  
You may have bright red pimples,  
or a small lumped dimple.  
You can lose a pinky toe,  
but it doesn't define you as foe.

Setting the differences apart,  
we have a chance to restart.

Adjudicator #1

This poem effectively explores the themes of individual differences and togetherness. The rhyming structure and vivid imagery give the poem a rhythmic flow and help convey its message. The central idea is that we should not judge one another based on our differences but instead embrace diversity and unite despite those differences. The poem promotes acceptance and mutual understanding, conveying a powerful message. However, the final stanza could be improved to create a more impactful conclusion. In its current form, the last stanza sounds more like a simplistic slogan rather than a meaningful message.

Adjudicator #2

This is an all-round good submission with no severe weaknesses. You are a young writer of some skill and you should keep writing and practising because there is a talent here which can develop into a great skill. The most interesting aspect of the poem is perhaps its strange half-rhyme approach and repetitions in the first stanza, which is more awkward but also more powerful than the direct rhyming used in the later stanzas of the poem. The form is also strange and, whether intentional or not, makes the poem disjointed in an interesting way. It may be that the sort of fricative tone of the first stanza is too different from the more direct moralising tone in the later ones, but other readers may appreciate that change. Overall, you should be pleased with a good submission that shows great skill for a young developing writer.

Autumn:  
When the first leaf falls yellow on pavements.  
When Autumn realises, it wants more than the vivacity of  
The springs and summers  
That comes before.  
It longs for:  
The beauty of summers and springs  
That comes before.  
The world turns golden;  
The lightest brown;  
The brightest orange; and  
The unmarked smiles glimmering with  
The radiance of the sun and  
The coldest warmth in  
The coldest winters.

Winter:  
When the harbinger: a tell-tale gelid breeze, arrives.  
When Winter recognises its gelid demeanour.  
Drives away Autumn to the  
Harsh hells of lingering excitement.  
It brings:  
The hottest flames burnt white,  
Because blurred-emptiness scorches the path in front.  
Now, only warmth fogs limpid glass,  
Only a strand of light repels infinite cold,  
Only brittle talons caress mortal skin,  
Only time passes, for the length of Winter to be replaced with a yearning for spring.  
Only each step veils each thought in blurred, static white;  
Only the hottest flames burn white, because  
Only blurred-emptiness scorches the path in front.

Vicissitude:  
The brevity of autumns, before the longest winters.

Adjudicator #1

The poem uses a broad vocabulary, with some pleasing word choices ("limpid", "brittle"). Whilst you've chosen an irregular form, it nevertheless shows evidence of clever crafting, with thought given to line endings and stanza form. At times, it seems rather in the thrall of its vocabulary, however (e.g. the repetition of "gelid", the use of "Vicissitude" as a title and subtitle).

Adjudicator #2

I think this is a remarkable poem for this age group – lots of impressive content here. There is an excellent range of vocabulary and some really nice images constructed in interesting and complicated language. There is also some experimental use of repetition which works well and gives the poem a unique disjointedness, drawing attention to some aspects over others. Most of all, I enjoyed the form - which begins as if we are dealing with seasons but then turning to Vicissitude as a final section. This was a powerful change of tone and worked really well to create atmosphere and impact the reader. On the whole, you clearly have great talent as a writer and you should be extremely happy with this submission. Keep writing and you will no doubt have a long career as a writer ahead of you.

Award  
**BRONZE**  
Theme  
**Free selection**

***I feel time***  
Chan Tai-hang

Tsung Tsin  
Primary School  
and Kindergarten

I smell time.  
Time is balmy,  
In it, flowers blossom with fragrance.

I taste time.  
Time is savoury,  
In it, chefs prepare gourmet feasts.

I see time.  
Time is dainty,  
In it, nature carves magnificent sculptures.

I hear time.  
Time is silky,  
In it, musicians compose classic masterpieces.

I touch time.  
Time is glossy,  
In it, mothers embrace their children to the gentlest.

I treasure time.  
Time is almighty,  
In it, all things on earth get soothed, healed and blessed.

## Adjudicators' COMMENTS

### Adjudicator #1

This poem presents a unique and imaginative exploration of the concept of time. The poet employs the five senses to personify time, describing how it smells, tastes, sees, hears, and touches. This anthropomorphism lends time a tangible quality, enabling the reader to perceive its abstract nature in a more visceral manner. I found this approach highly creative. One relatively minor issue is the poem's somewhat repetitive structure, as it maintains the same format throughout all stanzas without much variation. Incorporating greater depth and complexity in both content and form would serve to strengthen the poem.

Adjudicator #2

I love the idea of this poem, in which you explore time through all your different senses. This method is simple – but it gives you many opportunities for original ideas! The form is delicate and precise; the repetition of the sentence structure is an interesting approach, and one which I like. The form and structure give you many opportunities for interesting descriptive couplings. However, with a poised poem like this, the choice of every single word is vitally important. Often here, the words do not give us a clear message. In each stanza, I often don't understand how the middle line leads to the third. Overall, there is some lovely work here, and I encourage you to keep writing poetry. Many thanks for your contribution.

Winter came when we first met.  
simply a mysterious shadow, a faint whisper in the wind.  
A mere acquaintance, nothing new.  
Conversations consisted of simple greetings,  
Constantly wondering when it would be the next.

Soon the spring leaves appeared.  
My canvas splashed red, yours painted blue and grey.  
Blank was our canvas, empty as the wind.  
Till you flashed me your carefree smile,  
Showed me life's real face, took me by the hand.

On the canvas, a sapling appeared.

In autumn, the sapling grew with caresses and kisses,  
Time was our rose.  
Anticipation of your every touch,  
Butterflies fluttered with excitement.

Till, one day the canvas cracked.  
Witnessed your exact actions to another,  
Time became my enemy.  
We drifted apart, the rose began to wilt.  
Atop the canvas now laid a wilted corpse.

Perhaps Fate mocks us from above,  
Was it a coincidence of luck?  
Passing through the hallway, to meet those dark obsidian eyes.  
Paralyzed was my fate, unable to mutter a word.  
Those very eyes made me snap, to wake from the slumber  
Diving into the fiery maze of darkness.

The maze was once inescapable, travelled from one side.  
Entrance burnt to ashes, exit non-existent.  
It's quite ironic, the red rose once painted by me,  
Finally drowned and scattered along the whispers of the wind.  
The red rose I once sown finally gone,  
My mind finally clear from  
No longer scattered were my thoughts, lost was my soul.

Though the red rose that I once held vanished,  
You taught me lessons I will never forget.  
Those deceptive eyes carved into my head,  
I will never forget,  
but I will be grateful that fate mocked us,  
To allow me to see the painting that is now ash.

Adjudicator #1

This is a very detailed and sustained poem, which shows you have a great talent with language, not only a large vocabulary but also the ability to use it well. There are some really nice images here and lots of nice moments. At times, you might be aware of cliché and try to avoid it – usually the best poems are the ones with the most unique, and the least clichéd, images. The ability of the poem to create a powerful image is its strength, and it's impressive that you can sustain an image and develop it for so long. You should be pleased with this and keep writing poetry in the future because you clearly have an instinct and a talent that will develop. Congratulations on a great submission.

Adjudicator #2

The poem makes extensive use of figurative language, including the symbolic use of seasons, and the development of a canvas as an extended metaphor. It deserves praise for attempting to develop these metaphors across the poem to communicate its ideas and affects. At times this is effective, but sometimes it comes across as formulaic (the concept of a blank canvas is a somewhat played-out metaphor). Also, the poem mixes these metaphors to the detriment of its overall effect. Is the relationship like the seasons (what happened to summer?), like a canvas, or like a maze? Of course it is fine to introduce new metaphors to address new concepts, or even phases of a single relationship, but you blend them throughout, layering conflicting metaphors. The penultimate stanza suffers in particular, blending the maze, the wind (which brings back the winter metaphor), and the rose (of autumn?).

last summer,  
you traced gold glitter onto my thighs-strokes of tigress stripes  
and whispered into my ear  
(I could not remember the syllables you enunciated  
but I could still feel the roar of a true tiger it ignited  
in my chest, proud with crimson flames)  
and the python of your voice wrapped itself tight around my throat  
its tongue catching every tear that fell  
threatening to dilute the glitter  
*good days, those were, good days.*

the python stayed:  
for the smeared mascaras and spilled concealer  
the red rimmed eyes and *I hate how I Looks*  
constricting its body tight around mine.  
I gasped out for air in the safety of the suffocation,  
my skin shifting under its grip  
with a bubbling burn  
and peeled itself off with the plastic beauty  
to reveal the golden tiger stripes.  
I took off the bodysuit of my retired skin  
and folded it neatly onto the rest of the pile:  
*another battle Lost, a same, new battle beginning...*

the new skin stayed for two months and four days.

this spring,  
a distant friend, an acquaintance,  
stared hollow into her school lunch and in sobs told me  
*food looked like numbers on a scale again*  
and I saw her in the me last summer and  
cut open my skin and grafted the glitter onto hers  
(I could not remember the syllables I spat out  
in equally loud sobs  
but I hope she could feel the roar of my tiger  
awakening hers)

that night I folded my newly retired skin  
and put it apart, onto a new pile  
for the gold glitter that reproduced, that propagated.

Adjudicator #1

The author of the poem is highly skilled in using metaphors to evoke memories, reveal truths, and reflect on their past and present experiences, including those that have caused them significant distress. The poem can be understood as a representation of the tumultuous nature of a challenging romantic relationship. It metaphorically explores the emotional toll of a toxic relationship, the importance of self-resilience, and the significance of mutual support during times of hardship. The author's creativity and unique style add depth and significance to the poem. However, the language used in the poem may be difficult for some readers to understand, which could limit the poem's appeal to a broader audience. There are ways to speak about individual experiences in a way which can still speak to the more universal human condition. This would be worth exploring in future poetry – and please do keep writing; your talent is clear.

Adjudicator #2

The poem uses animalistic imagery ("tiger" and "python" ) in its meditation about identity and self-actualisation. I especially liked the tension established at the very beginning of the poem, as the “python of your voice wrapped itself tight around my throat / its tongue ... / threatening to dilute the glitter”. The poem could use some work in terms of rhyme and rhythm; the use of parentheses as well as certain word choices occasionally break the rhythmic cadence of the poem – a poem after all, also has to "sound well" even if it is read quietly. The lines, "(I could not remember the syllables you enunciated but I could still feel the roar of a true tiger it ignited in my chest, proud with crimson flames)" for instance sounded a little prosaic at first before eventually finding its rhythm at the end. The expression "[n]ewly retired skin" is repeated twice and it is not clear nor justified why the repetition happens. Nevertheless, this poem is still a heartfelt expression of camaraderie in the face of shared trauma.



**Be Grateful  
to the Nature**  
Lam Wai Hin

S.K.H. Lui Ming  
Choi Memorial  
Primary School

Be grateful to our world.  
Which has provided us water, air and food.  
How beautiful, kind and loving it is,  
Like our caring, loving parents.

The crimson sun is shining,  
While the loving birds are chirping.  
What an awesome view,  
As peaceful as the heaven.

The breeze is whispering,  
While the seagulls are screeching.  
The sea is calming,  
As restful as a millpond.

The trees are falling,  
While the mountains are crying.  
Animals are leaving,  
As saddening as a loser in the nature.

Cities are rebuilding,  
While the nature is dying.  
We should take some actions to save it up.  
Hurry up! Hurry up!

Saplings are planted.  
Green grass is speeding to grow up.  
Flowers are blossoming as soon as they do.  
While animals are returning from the distance.

**Adjudicator #1**

The repetitive form and lulling rhythm of the poem are effective in highlighting the contrast between the first three stanzas and the change of mood in stanza 4 to 6. The message and sentiment are clearly conveyed. However, the analogies used are not particularly original, especially references to "loving parents" and "heaven". The sudden shift from peace to destruction isn't foreshadowed or explained, and it would have more of an impact upon the reader if they could feel the natural and idyllic slowly giving way to the ravages of industrialisation. The concluding message of hope "returning from the distance", though welcome, is somewhat facile. Unfortunately it will take more than planting trees to offset and reverse anthropogenic damage to the environment and ecosystems. The urgency of the repeated "Hurry up! Hurry up!" is a great touch, though, prompting us that we must do more.

**Adjudicator #2**

In this poem, you give us two different perspectives on nature. On the one hand, you show your appreciation for the beauty that surrounds us. And on the other hand, there's the sadness about the destruction nature is facing. As this is a very emotional topic, you could use poetry to really emphasise the very strong feelings you may have about nature. Right now, the message is carried by direct statements, and the poet could try exchanging these with metaphors that would add texture to the emotion of the poem. With the passion you clearly feel, I think you could do more to grab our attention. You have some wonderful building blocks here: maybe there is more you can do to experiment. Overall, I found this a very interesting poem to read – thanks for your submission, and best wishes for your future writing!

Raise a glass, resist the falter  
at the round table, the makeshift altar.  
Incense over the collarbones,

on bruises born from skipping stones.  
The dynasties, of ink, of dented brass;  
stasis of static, sunken burial glass.

Show them the hyacinths, drain the colours of your eye;  
amend with the night, let the spilt wine reside.  
Trace an arc, foot in frozen dirt.

Mark the tender guts, where you'll then insert  
a shovel — novel pages of earth,  
cypress overgrown — and in fever, unearth.

Adjudicator #1

This poet shows notable skill with language; they are able to create a rich and esoteric ritual scene, while resisting the temptation to use words that are too unfamiliar. The poem occasionally dips into iambic metre, giving the poem a chant-like sense very appropriate to the scene playing out. That the metre is inconsistent is, I believe, only a strength of the poem, as it imbues the reader with a sense of unease and unfamiliarity — of not knowing the steps to the unfolding ritual. To that end, the 2nd-person perspective implies that the readers are being guided through these steps. There's an impressive level of cohesion to all the decisions you've made here. I'm not entirely sure that there's a particular theme explored by the work, but where the poem really succeeds is in the images and sensations it generates. "The dynasties, of ink, of dented brass" and the "cypress overgrown" both give a sense of heavy years, through physical representation rather than direct statement. "Show them the hyacinths, drain the colours of your eye" is a wonderfully chilling and ethereal image. I sincerely look forward to reading more of your work in the future.

Adjudicator #2

This is an interesting poem by a clearly talented writer who can handle English well and express themselves with style and grace. It's nice to see the range of vocabulary, which works well in the poem and conveys images in a memorable way. The rhyming is consistent and works well enough, though it is slightly repetitive and could stray more from perfect rhyme in order to produce different effects in the reader. By breaking from rhyme or using a different form of rhyme, different aspects of the poem can be stressed or unstressed. The form is consistent and interesting, but the same applies. Though split into three-line stanzas, the rhyme follows a traditional AABB pattern. This gives a sense of building up, and of each stanza rolling into the next. Combined with the occasional internal rhyme and half-rhyme ("a shovel — novel pages..."), I think this poem would perform well when read aloud. Overall, this is certainly a budding poet with a bright future. Congratulations on a thoughtful and interesting submission.

You like the look of the blue sky  
Magpies fly in the void  
The reeds bow their heads at the banks  
You are calm asteroid

Sunset scattered in the distance  
The world darkens too fast  
The letter sent was blown away  
Your mood is overcast

Your window opens to the sun  
Open to the blue sky  
Let a warm spring breeze slip away  
What you see in your eyes

Looking for the trace of lonely  
In front your quiet place  
How will I find your losing sight?  
Looking at your grieved face

The memory of the starry night  
Brings you worry-free sleep  
And I am like an odd stranger  
Watching you have a weep

Adjudicator #1

The idea of searching for absences (losing sight and loneliness) is tantalising. The short and choppy phrases are helpful in bringing out the mood of languidness. However, the title of the poem reduces this mood to a common trope that borders on the clich  .

Adjudicator #2

The poem has a melancholic tone, but the most intriguing aspect of the poem is the unexpected twist in the last stanza. At the beginning of the poem, the readers have the assumption that the two people mentioned in the narrative are lovers, and they are having a nice time enjoying the sunset. However, in the last stanza, the speaker "I" of the poem reveals that they are "like an odd stranger watching you have a weep". This shows there is a distance between the speaker and the one they love. The distance may be due to a communication breakdown, or a misunderstanding. The speaker may even be a peeping Tom stalking another person whom they love. The ending has given the reader room for imagination. Good job.

That day  
had been normal but  
I was feeling abnormal. my  
throat was parched, aching  
My head was feverish  
Got a covid kit  
Took the rapid test  
put a q-tip in a nostril  
mixed it with the testing solution  
waited for the verdict  
Heart beating  
hands trembling  
Two lines were appearing slowly  
my mouth opened  
thoughts spun  
seeing the result of the test  
I stood still and realised  
I had contracted  
covid

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

The poem conveys the persona’s sense of fear and anxiety as they take a rapid covid test and await the results. The short, choppy lines and uneven spacing of the words reinforce the persona’s sense of unease and discomfort. The poet creates a few memorable mental pictures, such as the image of the narrator's hands trembling and their thoughts spinning to present a sense of tension and uncertainty.

Adjudicator #2

The form itself is quite interesting but the content of the poem itself does not add much, other than it is a poem about testing positive for COVID, and the shape looks like a round version of a positive RAT (I think). Once the form is taken away, the writing appears prosaic and lacks literary experience. The writer should not be discouraged; it takes some degree of creativity and sensitivity to go for something usual. Nevertheless, it might prove useful and help to remember that when going for experimental or unusual forms, it is best to see how the form and content go hand in hand and what novelty is produced by such choices.

Award

Honourable  
Mention

Theme

Free selection

It's hard  
to Climb

Mang Suet Ching

Pooi To  
Middle School

I looked up the mountain of life,  
With a long, long way to go,  
Sensing the mountain looking down on me  
Here where the low leaves flow.

I took my first faltering steps  
Finding the going tough,  
But giving up is not a choice  
And the mountain is steep and rough.

Halfway up the high mountain I go,  
Looking back with pride and hope  
For my progress I am proud,  
Climbing with every rope.

Success is on the ridge for me,  
And my persistence is the Key.

Adjudicators'

COMMENTS

Adjudicator #1

The poem celebrates the simple yet powerful idea of persistence and it shows a thoughtful attention to rhyme and form. Climbing, however, is not a very original metaphor for enduring hardship.

Adjudicator #2

The first stanza establishes a very interesting contrast: the speaker looking up and the mountain "looking down" (which in itself can have a double meaning). The poem itself is quite short and it could have built on the tension that was established in the first stanza. It also falls into an abstract moralising tone in its conclusion – but all in all, it is a good effort. The poet should consider extending the poem some more by building on the metaphor and by highlighting the struggle and accomplishment that comes with the process of climbing through life.



Four unique seasons,  
they all play a special role.  
They're in charge of us.

Streams glisten like jewels.  
Birds celebrate by dancing.  
Leafy trees triumph.

Trees have dyed their hair.  
Colorful leaves kiss the ground.  
Crash! I slip on some leaves!

Wind howl like wolves.  
I turned into an ice cube.  
Christmas is calling.

My skin is smoking.  
I'm as stinky as some trash.  
Plants beg for rainfall.

Pink blossoms blooming,  
'Slurp!' Hungry bees drink nectar.  
Critters dance with joy.

'Hissss! ' Leaves bum in heat.  
People scurry like squirrels.  
Surfaces are fire.

Wind as cold as ice,  
My skin is as dry as sand.  
'Swish!' Leaves glide in wind.

Red leaves paint the ground.  
'Brrrrr! ' I hate cold winds.  
The ground's a mosaic.

Spring is the best one,  
it is like a butterfly.  
Which one do you like?

Adjudicator #1

This is a charming and interesting poem. I'm really impressed by the wide range of ideas and images. You find some really fascinating images – like the trees dying their hair – which really make us stop and think about the topic. For me, the overall effect of ideas is a bit confusing. Often, I would love to see you explore some of these ideas a little bit more deeply (just a little bit more!). But we move on so quickly, that I never feel settled. Overall, I think there are many strengths in this poem, and I certainly enjoyed reading it. With a bit more focus, I think it could really fly. Many thanks for your interesting contribution.

Adjudicator #2

The poem shows evidence of formal crafting, with a regular stanza form. It addresses the topic of seasons, and deploys literary techniques, including similes and personification. The use of Onomatopoeia (Slurp, Hissss, etc) might be charming in a primary category poem, but it lacks sophistication in the open category.

Shall I compare thee to an encyclopedia, filling us with smartness.  
Thy is more smart and more knowledgeable.  
Letting us thrive in the void of darkness.  
Leading us through the maze of life that is unbeatable.

A-School is a motherly figure, guiding us through our lives.  
Cares for us and protects us from the treats of society.  
Protects us with common dangers like knives.  
Saving us from our dumb idiocy.

But A-School is a corrupted dictator, forcing us to chase grades.  
Making sure we have the perfect look.  
Makes us feel that we practically have AIDS.  
Forcing us to look between the covers of a thick book.

Thy is smart and knowledgeable, grabbing us on the learning train.  
But yet you are restrictive, making us suffer from immense pain.

Adjudicator #1

The first line of the poem is a reference to Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, titled "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" The poet has in many ways adhered to the form of a sonnet: for instance, the rhymes keep relatively to the ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG structure. However the poem struggles to maintain its poetic metre, slipping out of both of iambic metre and the pentameter that is traditional for a Shakespearean sonnet. This often occurs as a result of the poet's adventurous word choice (exchanging "summer's day" for "encyclopaedia" is not a syllabic substitute), but also an issue of sentence structure. Beginning your sentences with a stress (as in "Letting", "Leading", "Saving", "Making" etc.) suggests a trochaic metre, but even this is not maintained in most cases. You've observed the tradition of the volta at line 8 by changing the tone and attitude of the persona, which shows a good understanding of the sonnet's form. However the concluding couplet would traditionally be used to resolve this turn, but here you simply restate the sentiments either side of the volta. Your main focus for improving this poem should be to pay special attention to rhythm and the stresses of each word you use. It's also worth mentioning that "Thy is" should be substituted for "Thou art".

Adjudicator #2

This is a great effort at poetry writing, especially for a writer of such a young age. There is much of merit here for a primary level student: an excellent command of English, a range of interesting uses of language, some sense of form and some quite shocking moments. The use of phrases such as "dumb idiocy" are jolting, and a fine contrast from the more elegant and romantic tone of traditional sonnets. The reference to AIDS is more edgy, and perhaps not quite what you intend. It is important for a poet to show bravery with the themes and language they use, but also important not to be flippant and careless. Here it seems you've prioritised rhyming over the use of a more applicable comparison, which takes away from the poetry of the text. All in all, you show a keen interest in poetry that you should nurture - keep writing, and with more care for themes you'll certainly become a strong poet.

Pharaohs were like ancient Egypt's kings or queens,  
But they disliked their hair to be seen.  
Pharaohs had the power to decide everything,  
They were the most powerful people, just like kings.

Soldiers were extremely important at that time,  
They protected the royal pharaohs, and ridding crime!  
Once someone approached to attack the pharaoh,  
Soldiers would come to fight them, while dodging arrows!

This person was the only one who could read and write,  
With hieroglyphics, because he was the scribe.  
Hieroglyphs were Egypt's special code to record stuff,  
They were language experts at that time, they didn't seem to be tough.

Farmers worked on the land to grow crops and wheat,  
And looked after animals, to make some delicious meat!  
They would water the crops all day and all night,  
And gave them sunlight when the blazing sun was bright!

The vizier was the second most major role,  
He would assist the pharaoh, whenever the need was told.  
The vizier helped pharaohs on major things,  
Such as supervising the country, and overseeing the production of Sphinx!

The priest looked after the religious temples,  
and he ran them with all his fundamentals!  
All the religious ceremonies were in his hands,  
Avoiding disrespect and perfecting all the ceremonies he ran.

The labourers were not free, and were perhaps captured after a war,  
They had to work for the rich, and life was tough for sure!  
Labourers even had to work in the afterlife,  
Because they would be killed also once their masters died!

The stonemason carved huge lumps of stones for artists,  
But carving rock took lots of energy, and IT should be the hardest.  
Egyptian artists would carve the sculptures of statues and monuments,  
With all the stonemason's hard work and complement.

These were all jobs in Egypt a long time ago,  
But these were just all the jobs that we know.  
Egyptians worked very hard to support the country,  
And they should deserve all their salary.

Ancient Egypt was amazing with a lot to uncover at this day,  
Just like the Rosetta Stone shown in Britain for display.  
All the legacy of ancient Egypt should be admired,  
And knowing more about it would be my desire!

Adjudicator #1

A short and delightful poem that demonstrates the poet's ability to paint various images and structure them accordingly through precise stanza writing (i.e. dividing the images into blocks and units through stanzas). The form itself could have been improved as some lines seemed longer than others – the poem could work better if the lines were evenly written in terms of syllable distribution. Your passion for the topic of ancient Egypt shines through here, and you clearly have a great ability for imagining the different roles in their respective contexts. All in all, a good and fun poem that could be read by a younger audience to learn about Egypt and Egyptian culture.

Adjudicator #2

The poem provides an overview of various occupational roles in ancient Egypt, sampling from all walks of life: pharaohs, soldiers, scribes, farmers, viziers, priests, labourers, stonemasons, artists etc. It shows the poet's knowledge and curiosity about ancient civilisations. However, the descriptions are rather superficial. The language is quite prosaic and lacking in poetry, e.g. "very important", and "second most major role". The lexical choices are inconsistent, with both very formal expressions and colloquial phrases used interchangeably. The rhyming pattern of AABB is maintained, but the rhymes seem contrived at times, e.g. "afterlife" and "died", "things" and "sphinx". Your imagination is clearly very rich, but this is hidden behind the content of the poem. Instead of prioritising the many facts that you know, give your imagination room to flourish. I would love to read another poem from you, where you hone in on one scene and develop it with rich description, perhaps exploring the feelings and surroundings of a person working a role in ancient Egypt.

# POET *of the* SCHOOL

## PRIMARY

**Wong Kwan Ki**

Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui Ming Choi Primary School

**Fok Sin Tung**

Bonham Road Government Primary School

**Chan Suet Yee**

Canossa School (Hong Kong)

**Leung Ching Hang**

Chun Tok School

**Chung Chi Hang**

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

**Shen Skyla Autumn**

Good Hope Primary School Cum Kindergarten

**Chan Hailey**

Heep Yunn Primary School

**Yau Nga Yin**

Hon Wah College

**Lie Tak Lun**

Ka Ling School of the Precious Blood

**Lo Ting Kan**

Kowloon Tong School

**Leung Wai Teng Sean**

La Salle Primary School

**Buhary Saleemah**

Li Cheng Uk Government Primary School

**Sze Yeuk Sze**

Ma On Shan Ling Liang Primary School

**Kan Hong Yin Avril**

Marymount Primary School

**Lam Ho Fung**

North Point Government Primary School

**Lee Kwok Huen**

Oblate Primary School

**Fok Ho Yee Kalie**

Pui Ching Primary School

**Ma Lik Joshua**

S.K.H. Chai Wan St. Michael's Primary School

**Yung Lok Yan**

S.K.H. Ma On Shan Holy Spirit Primary School

**Wong Hayden**

S.K.H. Tseung Kwan O Kei Tak Primary School

**Chan Shun Hei**

S.K.H. Tsing Yi Estate Ho Chak Wan Primary School

**Liu Wing Kiu**

Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Primary School

**Kwok Chin Tung**

Sham Tseng Catholic Primary School

**Chen Ngai Hin Matthew**

St. Charles School

**Lam Chi Yan Isabel**

St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School

**Li Hei Ming Athena**

St. Stephen's Girls' Primary School

**Fong Chun Ho**

Tak Sun School

**Wong Hei Laam Ennis**

The Salvation Army Lam Butt Chung Memorial School

**Liu Zixuan**

Tsuen Wan Catholic Primary School

**Choi Ting Ching Tiffy**

TWGHs Tsoi Wing Sing Primary School

**Cheung Ming Ting**

Ying Wa Primary School

## SECONDARY

**Ng Sum Ying**

Belilios Public School

**Ho Ka Wai**

Carmel Divine Grace Foundation Secondary School

**Chan Cheuk Yau**

CUHK FAA Chan Chun Ha Secondary School

**Cheung Yeung Kwong**

Fung Kai Liu Man Shek Tong Secondary School

**Lo Tsz Yan**

Good Hope School

**Wong Oi Yiu**

Heep Yunn School

**Lau Hau Ching**

Holy Family Canossian College

**Cheung Kwok Tung**

Homantin Government Secondary School

**Pun Yan Tung Nicole**

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section)

**Chan Yuen Shan**

Po Leung Kuk Laws Foundation College

**Fung Madison**

Sacred Heart Canossian College

**Wu Ki Yu**

Sing Yin Secondary School

**Fu Yan Yin**

S.K.H. Li Fook Hing Secondary School

**Leung Yat Kiu**

St. Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary and

Primary School

## OPEN

**Law Wai Ki Christy**

Cognitio College (Kowloon)

**Chan Hei Yiu Felix**

Diocesan Boys' School Primary Division

**Lee Kwan Yeung Diego**

HKUGA College

**Cheng Xu Xi**

Hong Kong Adventist Academy (Secondary)

**Hau Wing Yan**

Hong Kong Adventist Academy (Primary)

**Tai Lok Sze Reiss**

Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong

Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School

**Mak Yuk Yee Eugenie**

Marymount Secondary School

**Mang Suet Ching**

Pooi To Middle School

**Lam Wai Hin**

S.K.H. Lui Ming Choi Memorial Primary School

**Ng Suen Ching Elly**

St. Clare's Girls' School

**Kajimoto Haruna**

St. Paul's Convent School

**Chan Tai Hang**

Tsung Tsin Primary School And Kindergarten





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