

A photograph of cherry blossoms in full bloom, with white and pink flowers on dark branches against a clear blue sky. The image is split horizontally, with a semi-transparent pink band across the middle containing the title text.

**HONG KONG
BUDDING POETS (ENGLISH) AWARD
ANTHOLOGY 2018/19**



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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, as well as running workshops and assisting in the awards ceremony. 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 notice of praise. This year's entries included a variety of unique interpretations of our suggested topics that will cause the reader to stop and think. We hope this collection will serve as an encouragement to a new generation of budding poets.

Preface

This year the Department of English continues with the theme, *Of Our Time*, asking students to generate new poetic expressions about our increasingly complex society. Under the theme, the poets are invited to write on three topics: 1) #something, 2) Cityscapes, 3) Errors/Lapses/Imperfections. Our objective is to encourage students to reflect on their unique experiences in these topics, express themselves artistically, and eventually becoming conscious of their individuality and the world.

Today, a hashtag means nothing and everything. How does the sharing culture change the way we understand our friends, teachers and parents? What kind of role can poets play in today's social networks, such as Facebook and Instagram? We want to learn from our poets the impressions and anecdotes generated under this explosion of figures and imagery. To our surprise, only a few entries this year directly address the Internet. Most of them are seemingly irrelevant anecdotes. But who knows, perhaps this is the most befitting angle to talk about the topic. For instance, one poet talks about the dissemblance and disguises in reality, poignantly capturing the disorientation of the modern world: 'Reality is a briary blue rose/ Hiding in the bushes/ So small/ So much pain' (Yeung Hei Ching).

In Cityscapes, we want our poets to articulate their unique urban experiences. It turns out that these experiences are not necessarily pleasant. Many of the entries dig into pressing issues, such as the wealth gap, space politics, work-life balance, pollution, etc. They provide a refreshing and sometimes inspiring perspective in understanding cities. One of the most powerful entries is an impressionistic Hong Kong from the point of view of a 'cardboard granny': 'she trundles through the empty streets/ with a rusty cart that groans,/ pushing past gilded buildings/ and the gates of wealthy homes' (Chew Jingyu).

In Errors/Lapses/Imperfections, we hope our poets will reflect on the ways they cope with mistakes, be they committed by themselves or others. We all make mistakes. And it is okay to talk about them. In fact, as Brené Brown, the renowned professor in social work, has demonstrated, the courage to confront our vulnerable self is the key to a successful life. We are very happy to see many 'confessions' this year, where poets share their feelings hidden in the past. Some of them are heart-rending words spoken to parents and friends. Some of the entries address mankind's 'structural guilt', the things we have done wrong as a whole, including the damage done to our environment. One of the entries aptly captures mankind's vulnerability in face of a degrading world: 'But time flies and the future is unravelling,/ Too quick, too fast, too dangerous to control./ Mankind like the rest is too, evolving,/ And soon, bowing down, I surrender my soul' (Advani Melanie).

This anthology is a collection of gems. They may not be perfect, but they are full of the potential to become masterpieces. More importantly, they represent the unique stories of many burgeoning poets. These gems resemble flame-like biographies of our time, of our youth. Congratulations to all the budding poets. We look forward to reading more inspiring pieces in the year to come.

Dr Fung Kai Yeung, Paul (馮啟陽博士)
Acting Head of Department of English
The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong

Hong Kong Budding Poets (English) Award 2018/19 Prize-giving Ceremony

Welcome Speech

Delivered by
**Dr Yeung Chung-him,
Jason**

Member of
Board of Directors,
The Hong Kong
Academy for
Gifted Education

It was in the evening, 50 years ago, that a New York senator was campaigning for the Democratic Party's Presidential Nomination in Indianapolis, Indiana. Upon arrival at a rally in the heart of an African-American ghetto, he got the news that the renowned American Baptist minister and civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr., had been shot and killed. Senator Robert Kennedy had to improvise and he delivered one of the best speeches of modern times on peace and compassion, and how not to adopt hatred, violence and lawlessness in a time of immense pain and sorrow.

In a world before blogs, Kennedy was in the awkward, yet history-making position of having to break news to his audience; this was the first the Indiana crowd had heard of King's death. What was extraordinary was how frankly, and calmly, Kennedy addressed the anger and hate that underlies irrational acts. He told what had happened and he went right in calm. He was not angry, or even emotional. The audience followed this lead. RFK was in a position to empathise. In one of the most memorable moments in the speech, he connects to his audience by reminding them that his brother was also killed - 'by a white man.'

And then Kennedy said:

"My favorite poet was Aeschylus. He once wrote: 'And even in our sleep,/ Pain which cannot forget/ Falls drop by drop upon the heart,/ Until in our own despair,/ Against our will,/ Comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.'

"What we need in the United States is not division. What we need in the United States is not hatred. What we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness, but love and wisdom and compassion toward one another, a feeling of justice to those who still suffer in our country, whether they be white or whether they be black."

Kennedy only spoke briefly, but by the end of his talk the crowd was cheering. Also, famously, Indianapolis was peaceful that night, while all around the country there were protests and fire filling the streets.

This is how powerful poetry can be.

As a medical practitioner by profession, I became involved in GE in the '90s. For the 11th World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children which took Place in HK in 1995, I played a small part. Subsequent to that, the GEF which was incorporated for that purpose, began to organise awards: '閃耀之星' for primary school students of less well off families who were nominated by their teachers.

This year is the 14th year since the HK Budding Poets (English) Award was first launched in 2005. And this is the 5th year that the HKAGE has been organising the competition. With the current theme, 'Of Our Time', I am delighted to learn that you were from more than a hundred primary and secondary schools, and you have submitted more than a thousand compositions: quite a record! On this occasion if you are going to receive a prize, congratulations. But in case you are not, do not be despair. The mere fact that your verses have been chosen by your teacher means that your talent has been recognised, and all you need is to work harder to brush it up.

Hong Kong Budding Poets (English) Award 2018/19 Prize-giving Ceremony

Welcome Speech (Cont.)

Delivered by
**Dr Yeung Chung-him,
Jason**

Member of
Board of Directors,
The Hong Kong
Academy for
Gifted Education

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the GE Section of the EDB, the Department of English of The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong and the organising committee of this award. I would like to extend my gratitude to all the judges who have put in many hours of work in reviewing the poems.

Please allow me to say how much we appreciate the unsung heroes, the teachers and the representatives from your schools, as well as the mums, dads and friends that have encouraged you, because they have fed you with ideas and thoughts that became the winning verses.

Finally, before I forget, I must thank all the young budding poets for your love for poetry and for taking part in this competition. I hope one day your writing will capture a much bigger audience, be appreciated and be respected. Let me wish you every success in your future endeavours and in particular poetry writing.

Thank you.

About the Hong Kong Budding Poets (English) Award

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 with the Education Bureau as the supporting organisation. The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong was commissioned to host the competition, adjudication and related training workshops for the third year in a row. The competition aims to provide a platform for 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 Technology*, which focused on identifying poetic elements of the modern, technology-rich world.

Adjudication

Entries were assessed on originality, use of language, artistic qualities, expression of the theme and construction. After 2 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 31 May 2019, a joint award ceremony and educational event were held to crown the winners and commemorate the work of all the finalists. The educational event comprised a specially designed poetry workshop hosted by renowned local comedian, Mr. Vivek Mahbubani. 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. The speeches in the previous section were taken from this event.

A Note on the Topics

The three chosen topics come under the theme, *Of Our Time*. The organising team felt that this theme, which was also used for the 2017/18 competition, provided the students with a broad canvas for expression, while encouraging them to reflect on their ideas in relation to a specific time. The ideas behind the individual topics are explored more fully in the Preface.

Adjudicators

Preliminary Adjudication

Dr Gavin Bui
Mr Benjamin Chadwick
Dr Holly Chung
Dr Paul Fung
Dr Amy Kong
Ms Joyce Lee
Ms Flora Leung
Ms Christine Ng
Dr Rebecca Ong
Dr Joe Swann
Dr Anora Wong
Dr Heidi Wong

Final Adjudication

Dr Alfred Samuel Bown
Dr Gavin Bui
Mr Benjamin Chadwick
Dr Paul Fung
Dr Donovan Grose
Dr Charles Lam
Dr Joel Swann
Dr Catherine Wong

Primary Section

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Gold Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

The bright night

Lau Yin Lai

Hong Kong Baptist University
Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai
Secondary and Primary School

The city lights are shining bright tonight,
stars are like lanterns, floating out of my sight.

The stars in the night sky almost invisible to the eye,
yet they light up the dark, empty sky.

Looking from a distance, the city full of light,
the contrast between the colours, the dark empty night.

Lights in the town slowly closing, yet it is never completely dark,
even if the city runs out of light, the moon shall leave its mark.

The night sky of a city is truly breathtaking,
though a sunrise, too, is soul shaking.

The sun will come tomorrow but I will

Be looking for the first star from the sill.

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a wonderful poem for a primary school student to produce. It's got some really great vocabulary and you express a very serious set of reflections about the city and its days and nights that resonates well to the Hong Kong reader. You should be really pleased with what you have done here. In future, try to think about something unique that you have to say, as the more unique your poetry is the more interesting it will be. The best line here is 'Be looking for the first star from the sill,' which is awkward and strange but also wonderful and suggestive. Overall, very well done and keep writing poetry!

A pleasant little poem to celebrate the beauty of the city! The poet has made use of an unexpected twist in this poem: instead of going for conventional praise of the cityscape, the poem uses the lighting of the city as a contrast to highlight the beauty of nature, that of the moon and of the starry night sky. Indeed, nothing can beat nature! The simple language and the cheerful tone aptly convey the joyful feelings of the persona.

Gold Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses
| Imperfections

Smile Away Imperfections

Wong Haley

Marymount Primary School

Blemishes, glitches, shoot me with worries

'I look down upon thee, patchy human'

An evil snake hisses as it hurries

My overburdened soul mourned by no one

Weep with guilt on face, tears flow down my cheeks

A leaky faucet too flawed to be fixed

A struggling girl enveloped within

Sealed with depression and remorse that pricks

Illusion and compulsion of wonder!

Perfection is sterile, go no further

To conquer the peak of every mountain

A little defect serves as the cursor

Go away! I farewell the obsession

I grin and welcome my imperfections

Adjudicators' Comments

The poem consists of a rich variety of devices to express the idea of imperfection. The dramatic voices aptly represent the internal struggle of the narrator. The piece is not only about voices, however; in the second stanza, the narrator beautifully describes the psychological state of an imperfect mind. The self is faced with criticism, pressure and uncertainty - and yet, it shuns the negativity of illusion and strides forward with courage. Well done.

This intimate piece depicts a stream of consciousness about self-image (metaphorically, but perhaps at a more physical, visible level too?) The imagery of the snake is effective as a projection of the narrator's self. The first stanza paints a clear picture of a self-loathing narrator ('My overburdened soul mourned by no one'). To see that self-loathing gradually turn around to an attitude of embracing is positive - but more importantly, one can witness the struggle and how the narrator overcomes the challenge: not in a naive, blindly positive manner, but with courage and pragmatism. The narrator realises that the pursuit of perfection and compulsion is an obsession that results in nothing. The final stanza vividly shows the peaceful joy of overcoming self-hatred with a grin.

Gold Award

Topic:

#something

From a Cockroach's Sight

**Chan Hei Tung
Hayden**

Good Hope Primary School cum
Kindergarten

As I stretched my transparent wings,
I saw a butterfly above,
Twirling as she sang,
How could I be humans' love?

To me there wasn't any peace,
For I was a flying pest,
To humans I was filthy,
To me there's nowhere I could rest.

They stomped on me and said,
'How dare you enter!'
No one would ever be welcome,
Their scornful eyes were blaring 'danger'

Any water to drink?
Any leftovers to pick?
Go away, go away...
Deafening shrieks filled my head.

Even my shadow
Would cause humans to scream.
Cursing as I fled the flat,
They wanted my race vaporized into steam.

Others of my kind were crushed
And flattened as victims in accidents,
Deprived of proper burials,
But dumped and flushed down in torrents.

No matter small or large,
One should respect creatures.
No matter dog or man,
All creations are rare as treasures.

I heard the butterfly singing
An elegy for the thieves like me.
How I wish I were a butterfly
Spreading the pollen of love and equality.

Adjudicators' Comments

I really like the idea of this poem – to see the world from the point of view of a cockroach that just wants to be loved and appreciated by humans. The different stanzas tell us about the cockroach's experience in an interesting variety of forms, using dialogue, rhetorical questions, description and memories to bring the scene to life. The last two stanzas seem to tell us slightly different messages – is it better for humanity to change their opinions, or for the cockroach to change into a butterfly? – but I can see how both options connect with the struggles the cockroach has had before. Overall, this is an interesting piece of work, well done.

This is a very good poem with moving language and thoughts from a primary school student. The butterfly lines at the beginning and the end echo each other and touch our hearts. A vivid description of scenes where cockroaches appear. We always treat them this way, but have we ever thought of all this from the perspective of the roaches? This is pure love from a young kid, so innocent and lovely. I would recommend this piece of work for an award.

Gold Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

Cityscapes of Hong Kong

Ko Kwan Ho

Pui Ching Primary School

What can you see in a crowded city?

Skyscrapers standing, many people busy

Working hard; lots of traffic

Makes city life really hectic.

Parking lots, tram and bus stops,

Wailing children with lollipops.

The sky turns dark but no one knows

Ferries hum and lampposts glow.

Lights turn on as lasers flash

Cars run slow so they don't crash.

All lights sparkle like silver and gold,
emeralds, rubies and jewels on show.

But when sunlight breaks through

The sleepy eyes of you

Newspaper ladies start stacking

And early risers go jogging

Birds tweet and cars go vroom.

Sellers shout, sites go boom.

Everybody is on the run

Another day has just begun.

Adjudicators' Comments

A poem that is full of nicely chosen images that clearly depict elements of Hong Kong. I particularly like the idea of the sky turning dark but nobody realising it - a very astute observation that creates a vivid, if somewhat exaggerated, image of city life. The second and third stanzas are certainly the strongest. The imagery is great. If the rest of the poem could have been this succinctly and powerfully written, it would have been phenomenal. The line 'Makes city life really hectic' seems particularly weak considering what follows. That being said, this is a writer with big potential, who I sincerely hope continues to hone his skills.

The poem offers a series of representative imageries in Hong Kong's cityscape, such as the newspaper ladies, lampposts, ferries, etc. The last stanza, in which we see people running on the street again in the early morning, reinforces the liveliness of the city. The question seems to suggest the importance of seeing when experiencing the city. But such a notion is not supported in the rest of the poem. The image of wailing children licking lollipops sounds dated.

Silver Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Eeryland

Lee Sai Ho

Cedric

Tsuen Wan Catholic
Primary School

Eve ate the apple and left Eden.

Even she claimed, 'I was mistaken!'

Regretted deeply what she had done,

Yet she fled, the sinner's fate to shun.

Lapses of concentration God had,

Anon, a land he wanted to add,

Not yet to Hell, Eeryland was made.

Denied the guilt and Eve stayed.

Giant amoebae and micro blue whales.

Eatable wastes and fish without scales.

Tamable t-rex and terrible mosquitoes.

Sweet bitter gourds and bitter sweet potatoes.

Never knew what's right and wrong.

Eftsoon Eve went mad whole life long.

'**A**gain? Rewrite stories from Bible, Cedric?'

'**R**hapsody, Miss, but genetics get eccentric...'

Adjudicators' Comments

A very thoughtful piece of work by a primary school pupil! The poet made good use of the Christian story of the Garden of Eden from the Bible as a metaphor of the wonders and pitfalls of the genetically-determined biology in our world. The well designed AABB rhyming scheme sounds catchy too, and it is very 'age-appropriate' for this group of young poets. The only thing that slightly worried me was the pursuit of a perfect 'form' that could get in the way of the message!

A very smart arrangement: the poem starts off with a biblical allusion to Genesis, followed in the third stanza by an unexpected change in the deixis. Suspense and surprise are instilled with the persona shifting the focal frame from the biblical world to the contemporary one. An apocalyptic message is successfully conveyed - impressive! The deployment of the form of an acrostic poem also demonstrates the poet's careful planning and effort to integrate the theme and the form.

Silver Award

Topic:

#something

#TimeAfter-Time

Lee Ka Po

The Church of Christ in China

Tai O Primary School

Today, I thought it would be but another,

another dull long-hour at school,

why? those lessons don't really matter,

I already knew them inside out maybe even more than you...

Anyways, and maybe with that scattered,

and filled up all over me; I feel like school is no longer cool

Today, I thought it would be but another,

another daunting madness at school,

Ok, and here is the thing I gonna utter,

how come every single time when I came up with something out of the blue,

all of you, would just say 'boy, save it for later,'

I mean I really had something probably great to do

Never mind then, I just was trapped in and struck by the thunder,

not the real pool,

but that blunder,

casual fool...

oh my goo-sh, mother,

motherly forging the most barbaric rule;

Never mind then, I just was caught in and steamed by the cooker,
not the well-trained zoo,
nor that tender,
wicked guru...
oh my goo-sh, father,
fatherly neglecting my words as if they are just the cows' moo;

Oh...Tomorrow will hopefully be much better,
no longer suffocated in the suspense of a rough blue,
but a collage of us, closer;
until we get rid of those our worn shoes,
& silence the teacher,
while we start a new chapter on 'Who's Who?'

Oh...Tomorrow will hopefully be much better,
no longer tied in the upscale of moods,
but a coherence in harmony of ya, warmer;
until we realize the ridiculous crooks,
& bang the liar,
then we start a new chapter on 'Me & You'

Silver Award

Topic:

#something

#TimeAfter- Time (Cont.)

Lee Ka Po

The Church of Christ in China
Tai O Primary School

Haha, I was only making up Orwell's Animal Farm into my own trailer...

though quite unexpectedly true,

while I was blowing my lightest drummer

on a new day normally just after a lesson or two...

Adjudicators' Comments

The poem is about the narrator's day-dream in school. In his dream, the narrator expresses his dissatisfaction in class and family, and eventually his wish for a better tomorrow. The poem is subjective throughout. It would fare better to include other perspectives (e.g. teacher, parent, classmate, etc). The reference to Orwell is interesting, but he only comes in the conclusion. The poem in general needs a better sense of progression and coherence, even though it is about day-dreaming.

I think the little poet must be a great technician of poetry. Seemingly plain and straightforward in wording, the poem touches my heart by very subtle use of final comments in several lines, such as: 'but a collage of us, closer; but a coherence in harmony of ya, warmer;' The poem demonstrates a true feeling of a young kid towards his current schooling and his hope for the future. Unpretentious, non-hard-selling, this work shows us how artistic work can be done with the concept of 'simplicity is beauty'.

Silver Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

Our Cherished City

Honig Cynthia

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

The city,

mysterious at night.

The caliginous sky.

Towers sigh,

yearning for light.

Weary buildings slump,

dismal and dreary.

Long dark shadows loom,

casting palls of gloom.

Streetlights flicker

On - Off, On - Off.

Thunder booms,

dread fills the dark rooms,

putrid alleys cough,

scents of past glory.

Windows rattle,

battered and bruised,

walls are abused.

But wait,

is that light I see?

Rows of pearls illuminate,

sparks of hope do they create.

Late night it may be,

a restless city,

brimming with life.

It is never asleep,

happiness does it keep.

Then,

the tapestry of black lights up

with an array of colours.

The city bustles with life,

without any civil strife.

Silver Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

Our Cherished City (Cont.)

Honig Cynthia

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

Though,

everyone knows

night will come again,

there is no reason to fear the end.

After all, no matter it be day or night,

this vibrant city will glow with might:

Pulsating with energy, pride and happiness.

Adjudicators' Comments

I like how this poem focuses on a short period of time (twilight) to think about the city – which goes from gloom to excitement when the lights come on in the evening. The rhymes (when they are used) add nice touches of emphasis and rhythm to the poem. There is some adventurous language (I had to look up what 'caliginous' means!), the majority of which works well, and conventions of grammar and expression are maintained throughout the poem. Overall, this is a varied and interesting text that presents an original point of view on its topic.

Another strong entrant painting a vivid image of Hong Kong. The poet chooses to start with the darker side of the city before transitioning into a vision of hope. There is something quite personal about this vision which perhaps represents the poet's own views or her thoughts regarding all citizens within the city. The form is interesting and follows the transitioning tone nicely, the first three stanzas creating a tall tower, followed by a short stanza that completes the transition of tone to the final stanza's positive finale. This is definitely one of the strongest works I have seen this year.

Silver Award

Topic:

#something

#Plastic- Tragedy

Tai Ka Yin

Oblate Primary School

Look around!

Our world's saddened by plastic trash,
Used toothbrushes and thrown-away straws,
Take-out iced latte escape the shores,
Chocolates packaging on the mountain trails,
Mother Nature becomes frail.

PET, PVC or Polystyrene,
Once magic now turned tragedy,
Strangled turtles that never recover.
Water birds die from plastic debris -
They howl and scream,
For their being naïve, taking plastic as a feast.

Grandma told me the other day,
How charming the ocean it used to be,
In colours of Emerald green.
Years gone by, seas became garbage bins,
With smell of stinky dead fishes;
Scraps-filled dead whales sadly in the news.

Food chains filled with micro-plastics,
From my fleece top in the wash.
Seafood platters become plastic shrimps.
How can you and I stop this?
It'll soon be too late, they say,
Where there's no more fish on our children's plate.

Are we doomed,
By plastic, that's man-made?
No, we mustn't wait,
But innovate and then replace!
There's no excuse, to be not extreme,
For our beautiful planet we must keep!

Adjudicators' Comments

I appreciate that plastic pollution has become a major issue and I like the sense of urgency here. If I could give some notes I would suggest a bit more about the sources of plastic pollution and who is responsible (McDonald's serves plastic cups with plastic straws and lids in plastic bags that are used once and then thrown away - not recycled). It's not just a matter of innovation, we have to stop what we are doing (we aren't just killing the sea turtles, we are killing ourselves). Good job.

This is a good poem with a real purpose and a great vocabulary. You are able to express your concerns about climate change in a really effective and evocative way, which is wonderful to see from a school student. Your talent for writing is certainly something you should continue to invest in. I really enjoy the tone and the personal voice that you use in the poem, and I am impressed by what seems like a genuine concern for the planet and the issues of climate change, which many in Hong Kong seem intent on ignoring. There is maybe a bit of repetition between the stanzas - try to think about saying something very different in each stanza rather than repeating the point in a different way. Overall - very well done.

Bronze Award

Topic:

#something

#Reality

Yeung Hei Ching

Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui
Ming Choi Primary School

Reality is a briary blue rose

Hiding in the bushes

So small

So much pain

Veiled till fall

Blunderingly hurts

With her hidden

Deadly claws

Tearing you into pieces

With no laws

Reality is a sparkly sapphire

Glistened because of her unique

Streak of silver

In the silent night

However gives cold shivers

Her shade

In the early morning

Fades

Like shimmering stars

Burn

Only in the darkest nights

Adjudicators' Comments

Reality turns out to be fickle and casts danger in the most unexpected manner. Such reading of reality makes the reader think of an emerging world created by the Internet. #something is meant to address the dominance of social media in our culture, and the poem aptly articulates the mesmerizing quality of virtual reality. The briary blue rose and the sparkly sapphire are familiar and unfamiliar, somehow creating an uncanny effect in the poem. The rhyme between silver and shiver works cohesively with the general mood. A very powerful piece. Well done.

This is an intriguing and provocative poem. The images of the rose and sapphire tell us about a 'reality' that is beautiful but threatening, and potentially unknown. The poem sometimes uses meditative rhythms to make its point (e.g. 'so small', 'so much pain'), and the careful line breaks of the final stanza – isolating 'fade' and 'burn' – help draw our attention to these powerful aspects of reality. The diction is often simple, and the use of more adventurous vocabulary (e.g. 'blunderingly hurts') is subtle and adds significantly to the poem. Overall, really interesting work.

Bronze Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

The View of the Victim

Leung Yuen Kiu

Kowloon Tong School

If Hope showed itself to me,
And illuminated a clear path,
I'd have taken it immediately,
And saved myself from the bully's wraths.

Looked upon with disdain and scorn,
Dangling from a thin thread.
Harmful words cut like knives on me,
Haunting me with dread.

I'd been buried alive in my own grave.
My pillow was soaked with all my tears.
Each day's horrors were unpredictable,
And school became my worst fear.
Leaving behind menacing leers.

With no one to turn to, no one to trust,
I tried to retaliate but failed.
Then succumbed and ignored the bullying,
While attacks on me increased in scale.

Wraths coiled around like pythons,
Squeezing out of me my air.
Yet I had nowhere to retreat,
Neither a shelter nor a lair.

My soul was crushed to dust,
Gushing through my veins was pure horror.
I begged whatever gods would be
To stop the unconquerable torture.

Alone and helpless,
Frightened with fear,
Horror seared through my veins,
Leaving behind menacing leers.

If only there was a staircase to escaping,
A sanctuary for my shattered soul,
I'd hate to be imprisoned forever,
And let the poison take its toll.

Adjudicators' Comments

A vivid description of bullying at school. The sense of helplessness and vulnerability are tangible, all shown in the great mastery of language use of the author. This piece of work reads well with good rhythm and rhyme. There is a good balance of language and form. It would be perfect if the poet could go beyond just 'complaining' in its current state. I was waiting for something 'more' or 'grander' but it did not come out at the end.

A powerful poem presenting anguish and despair from the point of view of a victim of school bullying. Simple and neat choice of diction effectively highlights the bluntness of the voice of helplessness of the persona. It gives a sense of poignancy and melancholy enough to crush the hearts of its readers. You can consider reviewing your outro - is there a resolution to this situation?

Bronze Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

A Pearl in the East

Yeung Kaden

Kai Shing

La Salle Primary School

There is a city in the East

Smiling and relaxing

An old-time village of fishermen

Full of relaxation and satisfaction

What a simple world!

There is a city under the Sun

Hustling and buzzing

High-rise buildings of businessmen

Full of energy and sophistication

What a busy world!

There is a city under the Moon

Sparkling and twinkling

Sky-high illuminations of commercials

Full of colours and tranquility

What a pretty world!

There is a city like a shooting Star

Rising and shining

Gold-like attractions to all walks of life

Full of people and traders

What a crowded world!

There is a city in the future

Growing and flourishing

High-speed networks of transportation

Full of potentials and possibilities

What an exciting world!

Adjudicators' Comments

Good job - but are there any roles for women in this city? There are fishermen and businessmen but what about fisherwomen (fisherfolk works to include both men and women) and business people? The world is full of potential and possibilities for sure - but only when everyone is included.

This is a poignant poem that uses simple language to express fascination and wonder with many different types of 'cityscape' around the world (and in the future). Every stanza has fresh, precise, and interesting words to attract our attention and make us think carefully about the scenes: the stanza form is repetitive, but this is very positive, as it has helped the poet think more deeply about the way he uses language. I like the way the poem overall is structured – so that it leads up from the simple city of fishermen through to the infinite possibilities of the future. Overall, well done, this was really enjoyable to read.

Bronze Award

Topic:

#something

#CafeBy- TheBay

So Yan Ki

The Church of Christ in China
Tai O Primary School

Carving a boat over the water up shore,

I went for a round trip of ripples

in circling tides,

and sheltered, in maples,

where I looked up to see,

flowering blossoms of sweetened air,

where I jumped to my highest to sing a colour,

my colour of yellow,

just like the gold drops from the tree, now being much taller,

here's to which I planted the first seed

Oh, I saw some dolphins too,

pink and grey,

one blowing an ultrasonic tune, hanging there,

while another waving its fin to say 'hey!'

all heading for some warmth under the increasingly glowing sunset

Then I heard some chatting, from the tourists,

some making orders, some still uncertain,

while for me, I would just run through the aisles to enjoy the breeze,

and the steam of the coffees climbing up the curtain,

the curtain so nicely crafted and gently scratched over the sea

Adjudicators' Comments

The title #CafeByTheBay may well be taken directly from an actual tweet or Instagram post, which I find very fitting to the topic. The experience of enjoying the seashore is shared by many, if not all. With the reference to the 'pink' dolphins and tourists in Hong Kong, one can see the poet has actually lived the experience and definitely shown genuine emotions and feelings to the experience. The final stanza creates film-like imagery, where the camera pans from the external environment with the tourists, then slowly (back) to the narrator and the coffee. The ending with the breeze gives a relaxed touch to the whole picture.

The beauty of this piece lies in its focus on seemingly insignificant things: ripples, maples, sweetened air, dolphins, etc. These images combine to create a sense of tranquillity and cheerfulness. There is little to hide from the reader. The piece is a sincere observation of the poet's life. The experience fits well into the topic of #something precisely because it is not dramatic. It is an experience that one would share on social media. And this poem manages to turn that experience into something poetic. Well done.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

A Poem

Yau Sin Yan

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

I am going to write a poem.
What should it be about?
Life? Death? Love? Or Freedom?
Can't poems talk about anything
From big affairs to little things?

I am going to write a poem.
Which form should it take?
Haiku? Sonnet? Cinquain? Or Limerick?
Can't poems be in any shape
That appeals to readers' tastes?

I am going to write a poem.
Whose poems should it sound like?
Shakespeare's? Dickinson's? Poe's? Or Wordsworth's?
Can't I have my unique voice
And a style of my own choice?

I am going to write a poem.
What devices should I use?
Simile? Alliteration? Rhyme? Or metaphor?
Can't I just not use any
But still be fun and trendy?

Poems may be confusing, but a part of someone's heart,
Their feelings, their thoughts, conveyed in a piece of art.
Writing a poem may be hard, but also extremely pleasant.
Speaking from the bottom of your heart, it's a beautiful present.

The frustration of writing my first poem I recall
Has now vanished! "A poem! Ha! Not hard at all!"
'Cause I'm now a literary whiz
Whose works no one should ever miss!

Adjudicators' Comments

I like your confidence! I also like how this is a poem about poems that uses an established structure to question the nature of that structure (and others). It also evokes the struggles of a poet trying to think of something to write (so write about writing). I could say that some of the rhyming towards the end seems a bit forced and artificial, but with the structure that you are working with it makes sense (and has the effect of pointing out that rhyming can sometimes be forced and artificial).

This is a lovely poem about the act of writing a poem itself. This is an interesting take, and it also reflects a tradition in the history of English poetry of writing poems about poems. You find your voice in the poem and the reader feels as though they are really engaging with a persona, which is wonderful. You might try to avoid cliches like 'speaking from the bottom of your heart' and try to write more unique phrases, but that's a minor issue. Overall, a great effort and a poem to be very pleased with.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Cityscapes

***The City is
Growing Faster
than a Child -
A Villanelle***

Lau Galron

Pui Ching Primary School

The city is growing faster than a child,
With trees cut down to create human's space.

Pollution is uncontrollable and wild;

Crowded situations are no longer mild.

Development is key to speed up the pace.

The city is growing faster than a child.

Noise of cars vrooming by on highways riled.

Dirty air diffuses all over the place;

Pollution is uncontrollable and wild.

New buildings are tall and modernly styled,

Old heritage – worried to be replaced.

The city is growing faster than a child.

Light boxes and waves of fluorescence tiled.

Outdoor illumination sheds on my face;

Pollution is uncontrollable and wild.

Not enough space – too many people piled.

Face to face with an endless resource race;

The city is growing faster than a child.

Pollution is uncontrollable and wild.

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a decent poem with a number of things to its merit. You are able to write well in interesting and clear English and your ideas are good. I particularly liked the last two stanzas where your ideas are developed into a clear, coherent argument. The use of repetition is really interesting, though you could think about a little more variation on that point. One great aspect is that you see poetry as a way to tackle important social issues, which is something I really encourage you to maintain in your future works. Overall, very well done.

The poem offers a novel way to look at the problems of modernisation. Indeed, it is both interesting and inspiring for the poet to compare the city with a fast-growing child - it makes readers rethink whether our city has grown into a bratty child. Structuring the poem as a villanelle is quite an accomplishment but then again, I wonder why the poet chose to use a pastoral poem to present an urban theme.

Honorable Mention

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Errors

Lam Haley

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

Error Error Error

I want to input some data,
but the computer is out of order.

I will do it later.

I want to bake a pizza,
but the oven is out of order.

I will bake it later.

I want to call Sarah, but
my phone is out of order.

I will call her later

Error Error Error

What's wrong dear?

I ask my super father

He is clever

He is a problem solver

He is a great partner

My dad is here

I have nothing to fear!

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a good poem which shows a great talent for your age. Keep up the good work and you will be a wonderful poet in no time. The words are well chosen and you have a style and structure that you should be pleased with at your age! Overall, you should try to think about original ideas. A lot of people think their father is a symbol of safety, so it might not be the best thing to express in a poem if you want to stand out. Do you have any more unusual or unique ideas that you might explore in your poetry? I like the use of repetition and the idea of computing which runs through the poem. You are clearly a talented writer and you should keep on writing - as often as you can - because you have a good skill here. Well done!

A simple, neat and playful poem aptly representing the mood and mentality of the young persona. Though the title of the poem seemingly suggests a sense of foreboding, the lighthearted, rhythmic tone and pace actually help emphasise the omnipotence of the father from the point of view of a child. I especially like the evolving imagery of this poem: how the persona is at first devastated and preoccupied by the 'error, error, error', and then starts to procrastinate 'I will do it later,' and finally has all the problems solved by her 'super father'.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Cityscapes

The Cityscape is Like a Mosaic

Kong Kok Yee

Yaumati Catholic Primary
School (Hoi Wang Road)

How does the city look when the sun does rise?

The city, like a mosaic, stands lofty proud in front of my eyes.

Colourful 'stones' come in different shapes, meted with size,

To decorate the grand picture with ev'ry different disguise.

Some 'stones' are bigger, others smaller,

All equally important, none the better.

All aspects of life make up these 'stones'.

Plants and grass wake up in the green zones.

Green leaves bud on the trees,

A kite flies in the breeze,

Butterflies dance in the air, to pass

Through the flowers, fields and landmass.

Birds hover over flowers and whizz,

Cars speed along motorways and fizz.

Grey roadways weave and wreathe a web on the ground,

Rivers slither and slide like snakes with vales as their playground.

Bridges link lands and flyovers establish an overhead crossing,

Roundabouts draw and depict delicious donuts without much glossing.

Buildings proliferate and prosper near pavements,

Historical statues pay homage to monuments.

On the street, people scythe through seething crowds

Throughout the daylight, Mother Nature enshrouds.

She holds a paintbrush to decorate each 'stone' in this landscape.

All 'stones' emboss the mosaic of this wondrous cityscape.

Adjudicators' Comments

The sunshine in the city is an interesting angle and a path rarely walked on. The poet offers a unique perspective of seeing human artefacts as stones, with their different sizes, colours and shapes. I applaud the effort to interlace the nature present in the city (plants and grass, birds and butterflies) with the human activities. It is nice to see the details of bridges, roundabouts and flyovers being seen through an interesting and playful lens. The ending stanza wraps everything up with the theme of mosaic and how the city and nature coexist. Overall, the poem shows the diligent planning of the poet, and conscious execution of their plan.

The poem provides microscopic descriptions of a cityscape. It is curious that nature seems to outnumber urban scenery to become the centre of the poem. Perhaps this is because the poet focuses on the early morning when the city is still relatively quiet. The use of mosaic stone as the material for describing the cityscape is quite interesting. Perhaps the poet can stress how the mosaic is made by piecing different stones together, just as the cityscape is constituted by disparate scenes. Roundabouts as doughnuts is fantastic!

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

Scary Nights

Han Man Yin

S.K.H. Tin Wan Chi Nam

Primary School

Endless darkness without all the light,
owls were hooting in the night.

With cold wind and scary sights,
why couldn't you feel any frights?

Witch on broom,
and her terrible fingers.

There's no use for gingers,
even if there were vampires.

So, why couldn't you feel any FRIGHTS?

Shadows of ghost,
and crawls of werewolves.

Maybe you would shiver,
but you said never!

SO, WHY COULDN'T YOU FEEL ANY FRIGHTS?

The stormy storm,
with lightning and thunder!

But all I saw,
was you roared with laughter!

SOOO, WHY COULDN'T YOU FEEL ANY FRIIIIGHTS??????

Ha! That's so easy.

It's too babyish to think of these.

I was never, **never, NEVER** scared of your horror stories, Mum.

Now, I had to go to bed, good night!

Adjudicators' Comments

The poet appears to have made a conscious choice to keep the choice of diction simpler and more direct. This has conveyed a genuine emotion and avoided clichés in painting the image of a dark scary night. It is interesting to see the creative use and experimentation of strategies to emphasise, such as boldface, all caps and even repetition of letters (as in 'FRIIIIIGHTS'). This is apparently inspired by modern texting and online communication tools. I think it is particularly appropriate for the topic #something with the hashtag. The ending gives a whimsical and warm twist of plot. The reader will probably experience an outburst of laughter or relief.

I enjoyed reading this lively poem – which tells us about horror stories from a child's point of view. I can imagine that it would be really fun to read out loud – with the repeated lines getting more and more emphatic as it goes on. The language choices are interesting and suggestive, and although the words are sometimes unconventional in their usage ('no use for gingers', for example), it helps to bring the poem to life. I enjoyed the heavily repeated rhymes of the first stanza, and it would have been nice to see more like this through the poem – however, the refrain offers an ongoing rhythm. Overall, this was a lot of fun: well done.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Cityscapes

ALL AROUND HONG KONG

Firoz Alam Jaashmin

St. Johannes College

Underneath a starless sky,

where cars and buses say goodnight,

A flicker of light from buildings tall,

Illuminate the distance, like snipers on sight.

What do I see? Coastal troubled waters,

Swimming fishes in the sea,

On the waters sail the ferries,

Where people rush home from the quay.

The roads abound, plentiful,

Snaking around the empty highways.

Shops are squeezed in between,

Moving through the dirty alleyways.

In the polluted dark, no forgiveness, no remorse,

No salvation can be got,

In their overgrown statures so deceiving,

Darkness follow us, as the shadows are sought.

Beautiful green environment,

Tourists everywhere,

Shadows all around us,

Following us, our constant companion.

Adjudicators' Comments

An interesting poem by a primary school pupil. It is a lovely piece delineating daily lives in Hong Kong, with vivid descriptions of cityscapes and citizens' activities. There are very good uses of figurative language, abundant with metaphors and similes. What remains slightly pitiful is that the poem starts very strong, but weakens towards the end. I don't actually get the message of 'shadows' in the last stanza. There was also a contrast of vibe at the beginning and the end, with the former sounding joyful and positive while the latter rather sober and negative. I am left confused.

This poem gives us a slightly darker interpretation of city life, transitioning from seemingly benign city views to a damning indictment of city living. I like the fact that we start with visions of free and open space in the form of the sky and the sea, but with some sinister foreshadowing ('starless sky' and 'troubled waters') before moving into the streets and then the alleyways of the city. This works well as a way of introducing the darker theme. However, there are some issues with language. Can people rush home from the quay while being on the ferry? Can shops move through alleyways? The shadowy darkness that enters is also somewhat lacking an explanation. What are these shadows? Overall, this is a nice piece of work with a well-executed change in tone.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

#aSeasoned-Sandwich

Chan Tsz Yu

The Church of Christ in China
Tai O Primary School

'Beating the eggs into their finest,
and grinding the butter and onion into possibly the tiniest,
then preheat the vintage oven to its highest,
remember to keep it within the time just to make the whole set the juiciest...
or else, you would probably end up seeing nothing but crumbs at the driest,
and oh, the darkest...'

Dad continued 'being such earnest,
my dearest,
is to work out the recipe of all the yummiest!'

I rolled my eyes to the widest
and maybe also, roundest,
just like two big tennis,
'yummiest?' I repeated, breathless...
'my jackpot bonus' I laughed, craziest...

I walked towards my papa but then took a step back being nervous...
He grasped my hand and gave out the tightest—
silvery rays of reassurance then flooded the oven, the warmest...

stacking up a levelled tower, the firmest,
holding on to the motto of 'simplest',
while flavours zoomed out from the gap to blend the richest,
with everything used to the fullest...
Oh, righteous, such righteous,

here's my turn to do these all over, while still being modest,
and following Dad's step-by-step not to make anything noxious,
I secretly added a few more Parmesan & Mozzarella, sliced into little pieces...
and sprinkled granules of black spices by me the Frozen princess.

What else can be more righteous, such righteous...?

'Only this #aSeasonedSandwich can out beat its chart of being the tastiest!!'

Adjudicators' Comments

I applaud the decision for a topic familiar to the poet. It is clear that the entire scenario and conversations were based on real life, which is its source of authenticity and lightness. Perhaps the choice of topic is, in some way, limiting. Many lines tend to be long and almost prose-like. This has somewhat affected the musicality of the poem. Some lines have bent grammatical rules to some extent (e.g. 'a few more Parmesan & Mozzarella', 'like two big tennis [balls]'), I personally find it acceptable in the genre, but in these cases, I fail to see what they bring to the table. In general, the greatest merit in the piece is in its effort to depict a parent-child interaction. However, the use of language is too often like prose and loses the musicality in poems.

I enjoyed this poem and its use of -est. In the second stanza, if you are following a rhythm shouldn't 'yummiest' end the third line? Wouldn't that make more sense than tennis? (I know they feel like they should rhyme when spoken aloud, but the rhythm you have going is based on the -est suffix, not just the sounds of the words. In any case, it should be tennis balls - even with the creative use of English in poetry. I also noticed that you did not use the word 'delicious'. That must have been a conscious choice; otherwise, it would fit in perfectly.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

#DoggyDog

Chan Wing On

The Church of Christ in China

Tai O Primary School

Wow, wow...

the doggy was jumping up high to plough,
ploughing her unsubstantiated owner,
her new so-called 'master',

though I don't believe in such dichotomy,
I often find myself trapped in such agony,
to explain to others,
how we love to just bond like those colours, in waters...

to becoming one,
to eradicating the brutalities that can hardly be undone,
by these our clones, the Homo sapiens,
that for long, have neglected the silence in ambience

Wuff, wuff...

the doggy was then making a puff,
puffing the thin airs out in despair,
as she was the only one left out from those original pairs,

all being dumped by the cruelest souls,
to crush every bit just for golds,
as these once mundane words shone,
& left marks in the most empty-hearted, much worn, now torn...

luckily still, some got through the residual warmth,
handed in the rarest forms,
as the righteous lights dimmed further in this our modern weirdness,
why not just tail ourselves through madness;

sway and swing,
expressing those freedom of ours in wings,
while jogging pass this long coloured field,
in those very little steps of mine, she healed,

that's my #DoggyDog,
only to be saved from yet another tragic plot...!!

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a lively, original, and curious poem. I love how we hear the unpredictable story of the dog through different episodes – jumping for the master, puffing in despair, eventually jogging through a colourful field. The poet has worked hard to use varied language, and this has led to some fascinating phrases – ‘these once mundane words’, ‘our modern weirdness’, ‘yet another tragic plot’ – however, the meaning is not always clear (even in the first stanza this is a problem). Overall there is some wonderfully creative work, here; and with some work on the meaning of the words, it could be a really effective poem.

The advanced vocabulary of this poem creates a mature tone that contrasts with the title and the onomatopoeic ‘wuff, wuff’. It is an unusual poem that I don’t really know how to interpret. From a primary school student, it is quite impressive, but at the same time, I’m not really sure what it is about. Perhaps I don’t know enough about the plight of dogs in Hong Kong and therefore it cannot speak to me, but I feel there is a little too much ambiguity to the apparent struggles of dogs that this particular puppy is being saved from. There are also images that don’t seem to make much sense, e.g. ‘expressing those freedoms [sic] of ours in wings.’ This phrase also features some language errors that are also found at other points in the poem. Overall though, I feel this is a great effort from a young writer, making use of good vocabulary and poetic devices.



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Gold Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

Towers

Kong Lap Kwan

Hanz David

St. Margaret's Co-educational
English Secondary and Primary
School

(Poem is intended to be viewed horizontally in order to illustrate the shape of skyscrapers)

Towering over us,
Piercing through layers of fluff and froth.
Illuminating in the sky,
It shadows our eyes from the sun.

Man-made monoliths of the sky
Gashing the stillness high above.
The mighty structures stand tall as
Jab after jab laid are on the horizon.

Castrated scraps of metal
Gouges scarred earthen flesh.
Fresh tissue forms on old wounds.
Only to be washed away in winds and rain.

Time capsules in a case
Are demolished. Pulverized.
Make way for the young
And ambitious! We'll take what we

Can. Yes, we can.
An almagram of one and the other.
We can blend and amend
The dissonance of our range.

The conception we hold is impossible.
The dissonance we fear is audible.
These towers define us,
A reflection of modern society.

(Poem is intended to be viewed horizontally in order to illustrate the shape of skyscrapers)

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a really nice poem and you should be very pleased with what you have achieved in your entry for this competition. I think it is, in many ways, a very powerful one and you are clearly a talented writer. It's good to see an experimental use of form as well. The fragmented style and run-on lines are great, and really are impressive at such an early stage of a potential writing career. Overall, you are clearly a really talented poet and I hope you will go on to write many more. You stand a serious chance of winning this competition.

This is a very accomplished piece of writing with a wide range of more advanced vocabulary. The form of the poem is also an interesting idea which it now seems surprising that others have not attempted when addressing this theme. The imagery is powerful and the overall tone is fairly gruesome and dark. The use of short one or two-word sentences works very well in heightening the impact, especially the use of 'pulverized'. My only qualm with this poem is how well-formulated and written it seems. There is something slightly mechanical about its inclusion of so many poetic devices. Perhaps this is actually a positive and contributes to the vision the poet wishes to create: of an artificial, man-made world. Either way, it is harsh criticism. This is an extremely well-written poem and one that deserves to do very well in the competition. A note: the word 'algram' is a misspelling of 'amalgam'.

Gold Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Last Heartbeat

Advani Melanie

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

She kneels by me every day, a book on her lap.

When the thrush calls, she shuts it with a snap.

A petite girl with freckles, who wanders in the woods.

Her heart roams wild, like lil' Red Riding Hood.

Every day she stands atop my shoulders,

Light as a feather, as she strokes my face.

Yet I'm strong enough to lift a boulder,

My roots are planted, poised underground in grace.

I can never move, nor can I talk,

Eyes hidden deep as I watch predators stalk.

The girl comes every day; I'm never lonely!

And my fellow neighbours keep me company.

The girl is pure, she has seen no danger;

Only happiness, bright as the Sun.

She studies all kinds of insects with pleasure,

And didn't see the man who shoots foxes with a gun.

I bask in the times when all is perfect,
When my willows shield harm from every object.
'Chirrup!' As robins picnic atop my head,
Footprints showing the path where prey has fled.

But times flies and the future is unravelling,
Too quick, too fast, too dangerous to control.
Mankind like the rest is too, evolving,
And soon, bowing down, I surrender my soul.

My pals keep disappearing, one by one,
Their stumps leaking blood to show who has won.
The girl clutches her teddy, afraid of her discovery,
Hoping in vain, that the forest will gain recovery.

These blokes come, tall, terrible, terrifying.
They destroy my girl's paradise
With their horrible weapons, sawing.
I only lived to see her again twice.

Gold Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Last Heartbeat (Cont.)

Advani Melanie

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

My leaves are withered, my branches have cracks.

I can guard the forest no more, judging by the number of attacks.

This is a mistake! This is wrong!

The nature will be gone, along with the faintest birdsong.

Before I died, she was the last thing I saw.

Robbed of joy, fun, memories, paradise... Tears dribbled down her jaw.

My last dying heartbeat fell on her hands. Her fist, in anger, pounded the
ground.

404 ERROR. HAPPINESS NOT FOUND.

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a really great piece of poetry which is among the best entries in this competition and should stand a good chance of winning. There is such a high level of English language use here, alongside some really wonderful conceptual ideas ranging from general issues of happiness to media issues of the digital age. For someone at school age, this is a really impressive piece of work with a lot to say to its merit. Your structure is goofy and your rhythm and rhyme is really wonderful, though you can also break from these patterns as well! Overall, a great achievement from a poet with real talent.

A very good piece of work on the fight between humans and nature, from a unique perspective of a willow tree, and an innocent girl. Within a short piece of work, the poet was able to pack in as much information as possible, unfolding a wide span of time and history, as well as a turn from harmonious co-existence of nature and mankind to the ruins of modernisation. There is a great transition from a vibe of joy and peace to a sense of melancholy. There is not much description of human cruelty toward nature but readers can all make inferences from what is written, leaving much room for the imagination and interpretation.

Gold Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Scars

Shek Hei Wan

Good Hope School

Scars on your hand,

Scars on your face.

Where are my scars?

All over the place.

'Ew, gross, get out of my way.'

Whenever I wear shorts that's what they say.

Little do they know, I do seem okay,

But inside my anxiety is at bay.

It isn't their fault, it is mine,

Unable to control my hands from scratching.

I look at myself in the mirror and ask,

'Why are you like this?' Slowly, I start weeping.

None of my clothes are devoid of my blood

That came from my rashes and itchy wounds.

My parents call me ugly while I respond with a nod

Despite them being the ones who put me in eczema's ruins.

When I bleed my mother's storm rumbles,

She shouts and yells while I panick in trembles.

Perhaps apart from those on my body's part,

I also have a scar, deep in my heart.

You might say 'Everyone's imperfect'

and that is true,

But will I feel better if I'm worse than you?

'I hate you' surely sounds real cruel,

Still I'd reply with 'I hate me too'.

Adjudicators' Comments

This poem engages with the challenging area of body image, and powerfully expresses the experience of having scars from eczema. The poem is at its best when it combines these feelings with careful and thoughtful use of form - such as the rhymes of some stanzas, which in some ways sounds like an innocent nursery-rhyme, even though it is saying something very different. Although the language is simple throughout, it is carefully chosen and expresses subtle feelings with flawless grammar. Overall, I think this poem deserves praise for combining emotional power with a high level of skill in using language.

This is a brave and wonderful poem in which you express very serious and complicated ideas and feelings - very well done! I enjoyed reading it and found it very profound, which is really the highest praise, especially given that you are just at the start of your writing career. I encourage you to pursue more poetry and I think you have a real talent and bravery that could make you a wonderful writer. There are some nice moments of rhyme and rhythm that work really well. There isn't much to critique here, and I wish you the best in this competition and beyond!

Gold Award

Topic:

#something

#Blossoming

Chang Samantha

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

sadness is a flower
it blooms right from
the root to you
unfurls between your ribs,
presses against your skin
and remains
and maybe for a while,
the flower dies,
and the relief that was so coveted
is found, for a while
but like all flowers,
it has sown its roots
into the ground,
deep, down
and it will blossom once again.

Adjudicators' Comments

The poem creates an analogy between sadness and the growth of a flower. Even though the flower will wither one day, its seed will continue to stay in the soil and germinate again. The poem offers a sophisticated view of emotion. Sadness is not just an abstract feeling, but it pierces through our skins and presses our ribs. The poem has a deliberate line arrangement that creates a distinctive rhythm. For instance, in 'into the ground /deep, down /it will blossom once again', the gravity of sadness is stressed by singling out 'deep' and 'down' in a separate line. The tone is personal and familiar (cf. the use of 'you' in line 3), making it easier to relate to the poem. The poem looks for a little truth but not the Truth about life, which suits the modern day culture of sharing on social media (#something).

I think the use of flowers to represent sadness (rather than something like a thorn) is interesting. This reminds me of Pixar's Inside Out in some ways, in the sense that sadness needs to be integrated into the rest of the personality/soul if we hope to develop as people. In this sense, flowers are positive, and seeing sadness like a flower appreciates its positive qualities (joy and anger would also bloom and fade in the same way). It separates emotions as temporary states from the person as the root. If this is the case, then ground might be replaced with something internal to a person (like self, or spirit, or soul or even guts).

Silver Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

BLURRY LIGHTS

Liu Yuen Kiu

Good Hope School

As the doors sling shut in an audio hail of warning I

take my place beside the cool glass

Unmoving. Silent.

except the low hum of an engine and

the steely thuds of metal to railway

gradually

increasing

till the Night Train propels into the open

In the pitch black darkness

moon and stars fade

beneath an indigo sky

Lights

iridescent and illuminating

irradiating the shadows of a city

of the ethereal silhouettes lurking in darkness

of the concrete bodies sprouting from the earth

Pressing against the window pane

the vague outlines evolved and

where there once were hills and meadows

Lights

fluorescent and artificial

vibrant lines and flickering dots

distorted

as the Night Train propels through the rushing wind

Now I see the towers

reaching towards the heavens

Lights

swiveling upwards till it

dissipates

into air –

Passenger, you have reached your destination

Silver Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

**BLURRY
LIGHTS
(Cont.)**

Liu Yuen Kiu

Good Hope School

As the doors sling shut in an audio hail of warning I

take my place beside the open platform

Unmoving. Silent.

Where there once were lights

now remains a shadow

and only emerging structures

under the crescent moon

and the silver tint of stars

Adjudicators' Comments

What an outstanding piece of work! Falling into the category of 'cityscapes', the speaker describes what she saw during a night journey on the MTR. With a great arrangement of language, the poem reads as if one is riding on a train peering through the window, with a great rhythm that feels like being on a train. The journey on the train may also be the journey of life. When you get off the train, the scenery is different, or, even if the city seemingly remains the same, the people have changed. This great piece of work leaves much room for readers to ponder and imagine.

Directly responding to this title, I appreciate the fragmented lines that give the stress and rhythm, highlighting and reminding readers of the 'Lights' of a cityscape. With images like 'night train' and 'fluorescent', one can feel the distant, cool touch of the city. I am particularly reminded of the sentiment of the painting by Edward Hopper and his portrayal of life and people in the city. Perhaps more important than the calm and distant description of the city is the presence of the silent observer. Not only did the observer watch the outside world, but this very same observer also watches how 'I take my place' and describes it as (once again) 'Unmoving. Silent.' I applaud the effort in painting a detailed picture, in creating an atmosphere that is all too familiar for city dwellers.

Silver Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Coca-Cola

**Cheng Brian Mikael
Dytianquin**

Delia Memorial School
(Glee Path)

Bottled, now canned, fully coated in red,

With a cursive white logo,

Original since 1886,

So simple, yet so iconic.

Drenched in bright bloody-red,

Outdated taste in font,

Zero creativity since 1886,

Conspicuously plain, yet so iconic.

The smooth blast of flavors,

With a raisiny-vanilla tang,

Quenches your thirst in summer,

That you summon for more.

Brimming with sugar from top to bottom,

Consuming leaves you bloated,

The chill freezes your body in winter,

That leaves your brain screaming no more.

Sparkling in beauty.

Soaked in sweat.

Famous worldwide.

Infamously unhealthy.

Refreshing.

Disgusting.

Irresistible.

Addictive.

Adjudicators' Comments

I don't want to defend a global brand here, but does it really taste of 'raisiny-vanilla'? I would also point out that the brand tried a new formula in the 80s that failed. Most people might have forgotten that but maybe instead of focusing on the lack of creativity, you could focus on the stagnation or lack of innovation? I like how this poem is structured to represent two opposing opinions about a very familiar product. It almost forces you to look for something in the middle (between the corporate marketing and complete rejection).

The poem shows a back-and-forth conversation, if not a debate, between two voices. The narrator is completely right in that the product is simple yet iconic. The choice of the topic/object is brilliant, because this is among the few products that everyone has tasted and experienced. The lines flush-right (and the regular flush-left) giving an experience similar to voices from speakers on two sides, representing the tempting and the sober voices that pull the reader to the opposite sides. This is a great example of form following function. I wonder if the right-hand side being the end of the back-and-forth exchange is an indication of the poet's own view, that the sober voice eventually won the debate.

Silver Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

The Inevitable Reality

Barcela Julianna

St. Margaret's Co-educational
English Secondary and Primary
School

Welcome to society,
We hope you enjoy your stay.
Feel free here to be yourself
As long as it's in the right way.

You can choose any school you want
But we'll tell you the courses you pick.
We'll let you get into jobs you want
As long as you can make money quick.

And you can have your own opinions
But they must be ones we accept
Of course, you're allowed to love yourself,
As long as you can ignore the hate you'll get

Marry whoever you wish
According to our standard traditions
You can make your own life choices
As long as they're limited to conditions

You don't have to be perfect in here.
Just make sure you succeed every time.
You can survive in a judgmental world too
As long as you know that failing is a crime.

We're the reflections, mirrors to the lies
Because hope can only be a dream.
And one more thing now that you're here
It's not as perfect as it may seem.

Adjudicators' Comments

Throughout the poem, the narrator foregrounds many imperfections and hypocritical rules imposed upon members of society. As the title states, these are all part of the inevitable reality. As the final stanza reiterates, these self-contradictions are very true, and the narrator is a mere messenger who reflects and mirrors the lies (or 'we' refers to those who set the rules). This poem ends on a somewhat dark, or perhaps sobering, note that 'It's not as perfect as it may seem'. I appreciate that the poet did not choose to rhyme at every available opportunity. As it turns out, this makes the stress and rhythm more pronounced in some lines.

This is a confident piece of writing, that carefully examines the pressures of the 'inevitable reality' that young people face - it is an excellent response to the competition topic. I'm impressed by the consistency of the ironic voice, welcoming people to society while simultaneously insisting on meeting its expectations and prescriptions. That consistency is at least part way achieved through the repetition of formulae ('you can', 'as long as') which structure the text according to a dynamic rhythm. The language is effectively deployed (if perhaps remaining unadventurous) and consistently grammatical. Overall, well done, this is good work.

Silver Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Dye

Lok Phylicia Chi Ching

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

In a world of desaturation,
To be dull would need no explanation-
Except to be normal in this generation.

Normality is nothing but a far-fetched fantasy.
Standing before you are no men. For
They have eyes, but they do not see.
They have ears, but they do not hear.
They have mouths, but they do not speak.
They have emotions, but they do not feel.

They walk aimlessly forward,
Their minds a daze, their bodies, cast in a coma
Oblivious, to their surrounding chroma.

The sky above hosts a shell of light pastel hues,
Cut out by the lines of dark jagged blues.
Behind the suffocating walls of gloom,
hides a spectrum singing brilliant truth.
Beneath the towers of red brick and stone,
Lies a barren city built on blood, sweat and bone.

To stand out, would be a crime,
A man's worst nightmare would be to dye.
As the colours erupt from black marble tiles.
It stains their lives till the ink runs dry.

Battered and bashed by bright blooming tones,
Crushed and left cold by the crimson's red glow.
They struggle and grip, but to no avail,
Drowning and trapped at an unimaginable scale.
Engulfed by the splashes of iridescence,
They fall to their knees, leaking quintessence.

T'was a perilous sight, if you could believe,
But if you were there, you'd never want to leave.
Instead, savour the taste of sweet relief-

Of finally becoming something more.
More or less.

Adjudicators' Comments

The poem starts off with a reference to the Gospel of Mark. This allusion to the Bible and the scripture to give a sense of apocalypse: the willfulness of men in contrast with their ignorance of their fate. The very short, monosyllabic final line is a powerful one: instead of offering a proper close to the poem, it ('more or less') undermines the apparent resolution suggested in the previous line '[...] of finally becoming something more'.

The poem reminds me of the idea famously referred to by Hannah Arendt as 'the banality of evil'. To stand out is a crime, but to be ordinary is dull. The poem depicts a dilemma for many of us in 'this generation', but come to think of it, this is an age-old issue. What makes it interesting is the final comment that 'if you were there, you'd never want to leave'. What an irony, and what a sight! The poem is an outstanding depiction of the struggling psychological state by a secondary school student.

Bronze Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

Again

Li Huen Yin Miriam

Heep Yunn School

Splashes of pink and orange and red

Wisps of silver mist floating

Flaming sphere sinks under the waves, soundless

Blinding yet beautiful

Against the canvas of eternal infiniteness

The people gather around

Take a seat and huddle together

Talk about their day

Playful banter and meaningless chatter

As they clinked their glasses, sipped away

Increasing volume and heated conversations

Drunk on accusations and criticism

Stubbornness shields strongly

Unprecedented hostility ensues

Air tense and heavy

And then there was a shout

a bang, a thud, a scream-

Scraping of chairs against marble tiles followed by clicking of cameras

Familiar sirens approach

Discussion subdues to indistinct murmur

The crowd disperses

Windows glisten and flicker

Wind whirls, whisks across streets

Abrupt clang and tinkle of chimes

The crickets chirping their last notes among the trees

Lights fade out

Noise die down

After the bloodshed

All that is left is lingering scent of alcohol

And the static silence of things unsaid

Bronze Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

Again **(Cont.)**

Li Huen Yin Miriam

Heep Yunn School

Paints fade to indigo and navy

The moon shines in her glory and pride

Satellites passing by occasionally

Diamonds shimmer and sparkle

Splayed across the galaxy

Cityscape of colors

Shell of neon and vibrancy

Core of a dark spiral

Until the sun truly returns

All is an endless cycle

Adjudicators' Comments

I am very impressed by the author's firm grasp of the details of city life and landscape, realised in unparalleled lexical choices. What further strikes me is the unequivocal mastery of all the finishing touches in most stanzas. I enjoyed reading it when I could feel the fragmentary urban life being pieced together, and a glowing collage emerging, through the lines. That said, it seems pitiful that there is a slight lack of a novel 'message' that could leave me contemplating an important issue in life or otherwise. To say 'all is an endless cycle' is quite weak, if not an outright cliché!

The poem reads like an impressionistic painting of a conflict. But instead of painting the conflict, the poet has decided to write about it. The typical information of a story - character, time and location - is deliberately removed from the poem, creating an abstract and transient mood. Such an approach to the event is particularly apt, considering the poem is about the dynamic of a city (Hong Kong?). The question that lingers is whether we can appreciate the city's volatility without the quarrel and alcohol. Is the city vibrant because of the conflict, or in spite of it?

Bronze Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

*my
grandmother
used to say*

Law Chor Yin Chloe

Heep Yunn School

my grandmother used to say
'always rosemary on chicken day.'
now she's dead and the kitchen's bare
even with the butler's vacant stare.

my father used to say
'aren't you done watching videos of ballet?'
his locked doors don't relieve me
from being an unwilling pioneer
to the moans of internet women with kitten ears.

my brother used to say
'soon it'll just be me and my Chevrolet.'
the family truck smells like
marijuana and regret, the green eyes of the robo-servant
silently burning holes
intensity choking our souls.

the government used to say
'give us five years,
and the city won't be any different from Marseille.'
everyday I cower beneath my sheets
twisting them into pleats
terrified of the slogans, that those posters repeat
killer drones patrolling the streets.

and long ago, my mother used to sing
of lords and ladies and the shine of a ring
a spectrum of freedom
her binary words used to string.

Adjudicators' Comments

An outstanding piece of work, so descriptive of a young kids search for freedom and dreams. It's thoughtful in that it extends its boundaries from household issues to the broader society, with a sense of passive rebellion, as indicated in the twisting of sheets at night. There is a conflict between the maturing mentality with his/her own views of the world and the sense of helplessness because of the age and status as a youngster. The struggle gives readers a feeling of intensity, which is well-knit into the lines with great rhythm!

This poem contains some strong ideas, but it is fairly disjointed. The overall message seems to be a warning about an impending dystopian future, but I'm not sure how the previous elements of the narrative fit together. I feel that this could be a great poem, but it needs some refinement to strengthen the images and create more clarity. Some of the language is great and the rhyming works well, but the impact is reduced when the level of ambiguity means that the reader cannot fully relate to the content.

Bronze Award

Topic:

Cityscapes

City Canvas

Wong Yan Chai

Christian Alliance S.C. Chan
Memorial College

As the stroke of a paintbrush glazes the city with morning hues,

The windows twinkle like blinding stars anew.

Cars rush past, bringing white streaks of motion,

While phones roar on with the city's notion.

While the winds race through the city in a flurry,

The people below continue their hurry.

There, on a coastline outlined in light,

Lampposts glowed so bright, they could ignite.

At last, on a canvas millions would see,

Lay a cityscape fit for the citizens by the sea.

Adjudicators' Comments

A very interesting analogy of the cityscape as a painting: the poet has done a very successful job in merging the animated, vibrant image of the city with the still life and tranquility of a painting. While the city-painting looks its best with its famous night scenery, the poem also suggests its other attraction with the restoration of its peace after dark: it shows the contrast between the vigorous spirit of the city and its tranquility when the city is at rest.

This is a very nice artistic depiction of Hong Kong. An ode to the city that really brings out the romance of urban life. The idea of describing the city as it may be shown on a painted canvas has allowed the poet to see Hong Kong from an alternative perspective. The rhythm drifts nicely in and out of iambic patterns, while the imagery is evocative and remains accurate. The rhyming of 'motion' and 'notion' is a little forced as I'm not sure what the 'city's notion' means and there is room for refinement in terms of the language and imagery that could make it an even stronger work. On the one hand, it feels as if there may be more to say about this view of Hong Kong, but perhaps much of the poem's strength lies in its conciseness. Nicely written.

Bronze Award

Topic:

#something

#MeToo

Mak Audrey Bernice

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

Here is a girl: sweet and yet untainted

It is a sweltering night in the middle of May

And the boy with gold-flecked eyes has just glanced her way

By his poison-sweet words and silver tongue she is so easily swayed

To the sharp-eyed hawk the white dove is easy prey

Here is the dove: struggling to survive

The hawk has pinned her down with cruel, sharp talons

His golden eyes mocking the protests that receive no attention

Her body is heavy and muscles weak as she is vilely violated

She tastes salt in her mouth as in front of her eyes her childhood is incinerated

Here is a dove with broken wings: tattered and tarnished

The hawk takes with him parts of her that cannot be replayed

Under streams of cold water she rubs at invisible stains that will never fade

Revulsion and disgust roll over her like waves crashing on the shore

She mourns the innocence that since his first touch has been no more

Here is a doll of glass: shattered beyond repair

Burned on the back of eyelids is herself paralysed and in pain

Of someone coming inside her despite her pleas — a repeated refrain

Behind her eyes lies void-like emptiness and beneath her clothes a skeletal frame

The dove builds a nest in the shadows and sews up its beak with stitches of shame

Here is a victim: disillusioned and utterly alone

When she finally breaks her silence she is asked 'What were you wearing that night?'

And is told she was asking for it because her skirt hugged her hips too tight

Their ignorance reinforces a prison from which she cannot escape

For flirting and succumbing to his charms she believes she is to blame

Here is a woman: a little unsteady, but healing

When she finds herself hanging a noose from her ceiling she finally reaches out for assistance

And finds people who support and empower instead of watching from a distance

Though the process is long and hard she learns to accept her scars

She moves her nest out of the shadows to sit beneath a sky of stars

Bronze Award

Topic:

#something

#MeToo (Cont.)

Mak Audrey Bernice

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

Here is a survivor: with a will as strong as steel

She is a raging rainstorm with a voice of booming thunder

A flap of her massive white wings sends the hawks scattering for cover

She takes powerful strikes forward hand-in-hand with her sisters-in-arms

She speaks out for the little white doves who like her were brutally disarmed

There is a hard war to be won

And until the hawks are brought out into the sun

Lord knows she is not backing down

Adjudicators' Comments

The poem depicts a traumatic experience, detailing the abuse itself and the impact it has made on the victim. The poem uses the pattern of 'here is a...' to describe the different stages of life the victim undergoes. That she is 'strong as steel' at the end of the poem reminds the reader of the speak-up philosophy behind the MeToo movement. The poem's description is highly commendable. But it will fare better to make stronger links with the movement itself and the hashtag culture in general.

I think this poem is timely (and lord knows we have been waiting for long enough!), but I have some comments about how it is structured. The stanzas begin with 'Here is a...'. I think it might work better if each 'a _____' were a single noun, especially for stanzas 3 and 4. As far as 'doll of glass', I think it would work better to use something other than a doll (something that can be shattered but that we already know is made of glass and something that can be expressed as a single noun). I would almost prefer 'here is a rainstorm' or 'here is a tempest' for stanza 7 rather than (lone) survivor because it's not just the girl/woman but all the other sisters-in-arms together. Perhaps something other than 'speaks out for' in the last line of stanza 7 as well - maybe something about defending the doves from the hawks (we want to stop sexual assault as well as help the survivors heal).

Honorable Mention

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

A Study of Scarlet

Lui On Hang Anice

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

(A Premier's Warning to his Successor)

Go not into the spiders' den
Step not within their rosy bow'rs
Corrupt with fragrant morning dew
Concealed by thornèd briars

Tread not upon the Titans' bay
Cross not betwixt the grange and moor
Lest sirens' strains lead you astray
Towards their elfen lure

For they entice with scurvy scheme
Enswathed in proud propitious tale
Immure them kings in august rave
And modest mew in quail

But you shall enter spiders' caves
And sleep endorsed by thornèd flow'rs
Your treks disgracing Titans' graves
Across the grange and moor

In scarlet streams the flesh subdue
As heaven waves a stolid hand
Imbued with rose, redolent sheen
And chasms o'er the land

Sigh not for faeries' mortal pass
Nor for the slumb'ring giants' wrath
Fret not for from your sorry stem
A Dove shall forge Her path

Bestows She grace through ev'ry realm
And mercy mild for sentient rue
Ere gules encrusts Her argent dress
And Carnage springs anew

So step forth in the spiders' den
So lie amidst their rosy bow'rs
Corrupt with fragrant morning dew
Concealed by thornèd briars

Adjudicators' Comments

I appreciate the effort to dust off archaic styles of English poetry. I would like to see 'Dove' replaced with something in the same vein (perhaps a Greek or Roman god, or other sort of spirit). I am also not sure about the imagery of the 'rosy bow'rs' - it seems like it would make more sense to have the 'fragrant morning dew' covering rather than being concealed by 'thornéd briars'.

In many ways this is a highly competent poem, which uses self-consciously archaic language to express advice about the 'spiders den' that a leader might go into. I am impressed by the poet's ability to sustain the metre, vocabulary, and rhyme throughout the piece. However, I do feel that the challenging language has often lead to a level of obscurity that does not reward closer inspection: from the third stanza onwards I'm often confused by what message I am supposed to take. As such, the poem can be marked highly for some criteria, but this comes at the expense of others.

Honorable Mention

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Life's Blues

Wong Ho Nam

Piu Kiu College

The glow of searing metal,
the cracks of burning flame.
Rings of steel on steel,
then sword was given name.
As tempered the blade was not,
it shattered when struck on plate.
He let a sigh of disappointment,
for only shards remained.

Frame and foundation both in place,
walls around with ceiling above.
Tiles are set and bricks are laid,
such pieces fit like hand in glove.
A seamless construction at first sight,
torn apart by wind and rain.
Hopes and dreams fade into darkness,
the architecture crumbled as he watched in vain.

A green table and a stack of cards,
form twenty-one whether red or black.
Millions of dollars are on the line,
for whoever draws the ace and jack.
Risk of call and not to fold,
indeed holds a price to pay.
With a word and one too much,
he gambled his life savings away.

Made of flesh we all make mistakes,
life can give but life also takes.
Build a skyscraper, play the right cards,
smith a sword or reduce it to shards.

Adjudicators' Comments

This poem is a call to rethink and reflect on humanity - the poet has successfully involved readers in a philosophical discussion of the destructiveness of mankind through the use of this controlled yet melancholic narration. The metaphors are vivid and original, but create enough ambiguity for the reader to develop their own interpretation.

I very much like the imagery of the architect and the gambler - I am just not so sure a blacksmith works as well. I think you need some sort of hand-held constructed tool here, but swords seem too medieval, especially if you are talking about skyscrapers. In the first case, you have something that was not manufactured correctly, in the second something that erodes with time and in the third loss due to chance (or a mistake). Without the reference to a skyscraper, a sword might work better. I would also change the line 'we all make mistakes' because in two of your stanzas the building was not destroyed because of human error and the gambler lost because of chance (it might have been a mistake to gamble, but he might also have won).

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

#something- beautiful

Ip Michelle

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

It's the little things in life,
That we always take for granted.

From smiling faces in the playground,
To going round and round,
On a carousel.

It can be the morning dew caught on spiderwebs,
Or just watching a baby take its first steps.

Getting a new book from the store,
Having tea in a cafe with dessert galore.
Having a pillow fight,
And a collection of songs to listen to at night.
A pat on the shoulder by a friend when you're sad,
Having half an hour to snooze in your bed.

An ice cream on a summerday,
The moment you arrive at the beach in holidays.
Finishing schoolwork a week before its due date,
Occasionally seeing a funny license plate.
Tossing something in the bin from afar,
And camping with friends under the stars.
Having an actually interesting lesson,
And slowly having progression
In your Math lesson.

It's the little things in life,
That we always take for granted.
If only we could close our eyes for a moment,
And try to savour each and every moment.

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a simple, but surprisingly effective poem. The poet picks out a range of experiences with which most people will be able to at least partially identify. When read aloud there are some elements of the rhythm that are particularly good. I particularly like the short lines 'on a carousel' and 'having a pillow fight'. They punctuate the rhythm nicely. There is a slightly moralising element to the poem, which can be off-putting, but it is simple and agreeable enough not to repel the reader. The poet also shows flexibility when it concerns rhyming, which is definitely a strength. Repeating words and using half-rhymes is the sign of a confident poet. Well done.

This poem uses simple language to illustrate the blissfulness of simplicity in life. The poet has successfully deployed an appropriate tone and diction in conveying the message of the poem. Most of the experiences are simple joys of childhood. I would love to see a second version of this poem from an adult perspective. Something for the future, perhaps.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Cityscapes

Let the wind take you to places

Man Eloise

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

The city's footsteps slow down as the sky darkened

The sun sets to comfort souls disheartened

Skies painted with a pastel palette

Sunlight hits the water and glimmers into your eyes

Golden gleam warms up icy flustered cheeks

Indigo takes over pastel streaks

The crescent moon peeks out

being the brightest light amidst the pitch darkness

Can the winter night breeze do me a favour

and carry away complicated thoughts in my head?

Let those useless thoughts fade as I take every breath.

Aren't we just space dust finding its way to the stars?

Or the dandelion drifting across the merciless winter air

lost in uncertainty,

exhausted by the never-ending journey.

I may be wandering but perhaps I am not lost,

I am on the way to an unknown destination afar.

Let my heart take me anywhere it pleases.

Perhaps I can be my own street light even on the darkest of days,

believing the path scattered with fallen crimson leaves will take me somewhere
my heart can smile again.

Someday this piece of a puzzle will find where it belongs.

Stormy seas cannot drown me.

All my faults and mistakes are a part of me,

Making up my own constellation.

I shall not smoothen my corners in order to fit in others' moulds

But let the earth, the wind take me to where I truly belong.

Adjudicators' Comments

The poem is an interesting meditation on self and city. The narrator seems to be inspired by the cityscape, reflecting on fundamental issues, such as life goals, existence, meaning of life, etc. The narrator decides to let nature take him to wherever he belongs. The source of inspiration appears to be nature, including the earth, the wind and the stormy sea, which is quite different from the theme of this poem, cityscape.

In this piece, the poet starts with an image of sunset and evening with the city gradually slowing down, when the tired souls finally rest up and ponder their lives. The narrator asks the big question 'Aren't we just space dust finding its way to the stars?', but offers an optimistic view that she is just wandering and slowly finding the way to a remote destination. This is perfectly in tune with the title. The final stanza continues this optimistic yet restrained tone, knowing that there will be challenges, but one should face or even embrace them and remain oneself ('not smoothen my corners'). I appreciate this intimate piece, offering a view of a strong, fearless and optimistic young person.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

***Dark-Skinned
Shadow
(#StopRacism)***

Tsui Yu Hei Iris

Heep Yunn School

The darkness of the musty room made of my own dwindling breath-

The chain upon my limbs and the pale curtain of death,

I'm proclaimed wicked by your voice, like a cannon blast;

You've declared I must pay the price for my race's shameful past,

So tell me, how long will this pain and inequality last?

In your history books I'm written down as a bitter, wretched slave;

But I shall stand straight and strong, a dark-skinned shadow brave.

I will rise at dusk and remain higher at dawn,

I will dance as if a shooting star has landed on my lawn,

I will not receive your chain and no longer be your pawn.

In the darkness, I will shine, a piercing star aglow,

No longer dwell mute like that dark-skinned shadow.

Did you expect to see me bowing with eyes like broken glass?

Did you wish to see a head lowering with shrinking pupil as I pass?

You want to see me broken, a clipped bird of some kind;

But I am to you a ghost, a phantom of your mind,

You will never snare a shadow, a breath you can't bind.

The pale curtain floats upon the wind's smallest sigh,

In the darkness of the room, I will lift my head up high,

Your voice is of heavy silence and I wonder why;

The chains have broken asunder and the sunlight streams through,

Lifting us into the dawn with rosy red in its hue.

In the darkness, I will shine, a piercing star aglow,

No longer abide mute like that dark-skinned shadow.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

***Dark-Skinned
Shadow
(#StopRacism)
(Cont.)***

Tsui Yu Hei Iris

Heep Yunn School

The ones forged of shadow will at long last have its form.

I will rage in the skies like the fiercest summer storm.

As I leave the room of darkness and behold the new vast land,

The wind caresses my cheeks as soft as a mother's hand.

No longer a shadow in the light of the rising sun so grand.

Hear the voice of the shadows, remove the deafness of your ears,

Hearken to the melancholy cries that have long spanned the years.

Defeat the regime that has long been the shadow's greatest fears.

Break my chains, and I will be free.

Give me hope, and I will be free.

In the darkness:

I will shine –

A piercing star aglow,

No longer

Remain mute like –

That dark-skinned shadow.

Adjudicators' Comments

As the title explicitly urges with the hashtag #StopRacism, the poem is a piece that demonstrates social awareness. This is particularly relevant for not only the context of Hong Kong, but perhaps also for the rest of the world. I appreciate the nice attempt to use the art of poetry to do what it is best for: sending messages and moving people. As a poem, some lines feel lengthy and this has somewhat affected the musicality (e.g. the two 'did you...' questions in the middle). If these are longer by design, it does not convey the sound of questioning and interrogating, as one would expect from this outcry from the oppressed. I appreciate the ending stanzas that give a more hopeful note, and urge for communication and ending racism.

This poem tackles an important and provocative theme, developed through the use of numerous engaging images and ideas. It creates formal interest through a rousing refrain: and it is important that the poem itself assertively acts out the promise to 'no longer dwell/abide/remain mute.' The language of the poem is alive with the fuller implications of this promise, especially in the later stanzas that start to consider looking beyond the darkness into an exciting world of sensory experiences. The diction is often subtle and carefully chosen, and always effective. Overall this is a very strong piece of work, well done.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

#herstory

Aimen Sadeedi

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

The world was laughing,

But she was crying

Carrying a bruised body

Teary red eyes

And only half a heart in her chest

She walked.

Wandered the streets with her head hung low

She walked and walked,

Until her feet became bruised

She was alone,

Once loved but now isolated.

She used to be perfect:

Confident, honest, beautiful,

She was every girl's dream.

She was loved, respected

Until the beast caught her,

Locked the beauty inside a cage

Years passed,

But she escaped, she broke free.

But when she came back, nobody saw her the same

Her eyes colourless orbs of darkness

Her once angelic smile, had lost its innocence,

Her skin a sickly white

It was as if her soul had been sucked out

She tried to tame the beast, to teach him love.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

#herstory (Cont.)

Aimen Sadeedi

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

He remained unchanged,

But she'd lost her glow...

She'd lost herself.

He'd shattered her.

He continued his life beaming

She stood still, lost

That day,

The skying was just wakening

She had just left, forever.

And yet the world continued to thrive.

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a powerful poem which really expresses its emotions and ideas well. The reader has a real sense of the persona speaking and the poem conveys its mood and atmosphere very well. You might think a little about the form and structure, as it can be slightly awkward at times. However, I do like the choice not to use rhyme for the most part and allow the text to speak more freely than in constrained forms of poetry. Overall, this is a really nice piece of work and you should be pleased and make sure you keep writing more poems in future as you do have a talent for this.

This is a metaphor of unhappy relationships and probably domestic violence. The 'she' used to be a perfect girl that everybody admired but she became traumatized after an unfortunate relationship. The story, i.e., 'herstory' instead of 'history', is commonplace and penetrable to the average reader. I do wonder, however, what has happened in the 'years' that have passed. The poem talks about post-relationship situations and tries to make a contrast between the 'before' and 'after'. Of course, it leaves room for readers to visualise, and keeps us curious as to why 'she' gets hurt. However, I have to say the last stanza was too weak and almost spoils the whole poem.

Honorable Mention

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Puzzle

Ngai Michael

Sing Yin Secondary School

Symphony drops, singing stops.
All bliss fades until it's bleak.
Wandering on a frozen mountain,
solely and slowly,
only accompanied by insecurity.

Led by the raging blizzard,
trekking forward with no progress,
lost in a wintry storm
of stress and mess.

Fragment in my palm,
a puzzle incomplete,
a gift from the lord,
a key to change all.

Whirling wind whispers by my ear,
Give up.
Freezing air whips my face, flips my shield,
Obey it.
Snowy storm blinds the sky and eyes,
Nowhere to escape to.

But I shout, Never.
I hold my piece of puzzle,
no more drizzling tears.
I venture through the throe,
step by step..
I collect more fragments,
Piece by piece.

At the end, the puzzle's complete,
But blank as a sheet.
As long as I want,
It can be anything in form.
At the end, I escape and embrace
the dawn after the storm.

Adjudicators' Comments

This is an interesting poem that expresses the theme of determination using imagery of weather and puzzles. I enjoyed seeing how these two types of imagery worked together: it is as if the world is trying to make you give up the 'fragment' which you hold so closely to you, all the way through these very challenging (and evocatively imagined) types of hostile climate. The rhythm is quite free, and the poem as a whole includes some moments that are more precisely emphatic (e.g. the third stanza). Overall I found this an enjoyable poem with a provocative conclusion.

The darker theme is introduced by music stopping and an image of bleak, frozen mountains. The title 'puzzle' is fitting for this abstract piece with looser overall structure, almost developing as a stream of consciousness. The imagery of the wind whispering in the ears to describe the sound is a little too familiar. Or more generally, using snow, storm and rain as the metaphor for noise and challenges in life is a well-trodden path. I appreciate the poets use of short sentences ('Give up.', 'Obey it.') to convey a cold but firm voice in the dismissive messages from the outside. The use of full stops (rather than the exclamation point) is effective in showing the restrained, matter-of-fact tone.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Cityscapes

Cityscapes of Our Time

Huang Xin Rui Joey

Carmel Divine Grace

Foundation Secondary School

Glancing out of the window,
seeing high-rise buildings' shadows.

It is seven. The sun has risen.

I learnt it from Instagram posts.

The blue sky is hardly seen.

blocked by humanity's sin.

Walking down the street,

not catching a bird's tweet.

Where are they? I can't tell.

Maybe a better somewhere else.

Yells, chats and giggles fill my head.

Scanning around,

the road is full of crowds.

Traffic light blinking, buildings encompassing,

Hustling and bustling.

Teens, adults, all kinds of people.

Taxis, buses, all kinds of vehicles.

Everyone could scarcely walk,
on their phones they secretly stalk.
Twitter, Facebook, Instagram feeds they followed.
to the train station, the tunnel, the one swallowed.

Stations, similar to the streets,
Most were feet stepping on feet.
Beep, beep, beep!
The sound of Octopus cards
and the motionless announcement repeats and repeats.
It's difficult to survive the heat.

Finally, I get on the train
but what comes are more pains.
Folks fill the carts.
Even when they exit,
there seems no decrease.
The halt of the train makes me shake
then I have to apologise for my mistake.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Cityscapes

***Cityscapes
of Our Time
(Cont.)***

Huang Xin Rui Joey

Carmel Divine Grace

Foundation Secondary School

The simmering stress

The outsiders rushing

Reminiscing the days.

Days repeat and duplicate.

It is a cycle I can't forfeit.

Can we find uniqueness in this?

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a nice, well-structured poem which shows an ability to write really well and convey feelings to the reader - well done. The poem has an interesting nostalgic tone, which works well with the content. You have a nice flow and some of the vocabulary is experimental and interesting to see. 'The outsiders rushing' is a really interesting piece of poetry that I would like to see you use again. You could take that one line and try to turn that into another poem perhaps? Some of the other ideas are a bit clichéd. My advice is that you try not to say things that you might expect to hear in a poem, and focus on your own voice. The best poetry doesn't copy what it thinks poems are, it creates its own poetry!

The grammar of the first three stanzas establishes a strong rhythm, with good diction (if sometimes imprecise) that offers fresh and balanced insights into Hong Kong life: the development of 'glancing - walking - scanning' is a really positive way to start, with the poet leading us down to the bustling streets. The second half of the poem has a slightly less clear direction, but it is still carefully constructed around a ride on the MTR. The final stanza is a good conclusion, but somewhat anticlimactic: the overall message from the poet is not entirely clear.



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Gold Award

Topic:

Free Selection

The Cardboard Granny

Chew Jingyu

West Island School

In the quiet early morning,
before swallows sing their song,
the cardboard granny starts her calling
to the city of Hong Kong.

She trundles through the empty streets
with a rusty cart that groans,
pushing past gilded buildings
and the gates of wealthy homes.

At six she stops at 7-Eleven
with a gap-toothed, cheery smile,
waiting for a cardboard package
that she knows will take a while.

At seven dawn starts to trickle in
and customers follow suit,
so she takes their siu mai cartons
and continues on her route.

Then eight nine ten and bustling eleven
means she'll stock up soon,
for roadside friends will have her back
before morning cedes to noon.

They leave cardboard on their sidewalks,
on their streets of wild delights,
on their rows of gleaming storefronts
and their city's greatest heights.

Past lunch her cart is still not full
but there's no time for frustration,
so she stacks her precious cardboard
and heads down to the station.

A dollar for each catty sold,
ten dollars for her cardboard gold.
Two heavy coins for her to keep,
but not enough to grant her sleep.

She'll have to toil and carry on,
and push and push until she's gone.
So she takes her cart and wheels along,
back in the shadows of Hong Kong.

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a fantastic poem which has really thought about Hong Kong and the kinds of inequality found there. I think it's wonderful for a school student to be able to produce a flowing piece of poetry surrounding such a politically and culturally important topic. Very well done. The poem is clearly articulated and uses some interesting poetic techniques, and it has a good structure and flow. Some of the rhyme is a bit forced, and you should feel free to break from the perfect rhyme if you want to! At this stage of a writing career, however, that is perfectly fine. Overall, a wonderful poem.

This poem finds strength in its simplicity. The rhyme scheme creates a somewhat light-hearted, childish tone that is in contrast to the slightly dour image that it describes. This creates a level of ambiguity in the reader over how we should feel about the central character. Should we pity them - or does the matter-of-fact narration mean that we should just accept this as a fact of life? We have to assume that the impact was intentional on the part of the author and not merely a glib description of an individual's struggles. There are a couple of points where the rhythm stumbles slightly due to inconsistencies in the length of the lines. If these could be ironed out, it would be a very strong piece of work.

Gold Award

Topic:

Free Selection

Sapphire Silks

Lam Kung

Yu Christie

Maryknoll Convent School

(Secondary Section)

Sapphire silks, sapphire silks,
Sacred stripes of the Augurey.
Slices of shining silvery serpents,
Shimmer in the sparks of sun,
Soaring in the sing-song sheens of sunset scenes,
Screeching sinister snake-like sounds,
Shoving away arrays of anguish auguries.

Sapphire silks, sapphire silks,
Sacred stripes of the Augurey,
Savior of soils of the bluest of bloods.
Songs of sacrifices of thy sublime predecessors
Shall scourge the scornful sights and
Shameless scorns of sinful-borns ---
Sods sans sanity sans sagacity who shall suffer
Spikes of spiteful spells of Crucios sworn.

Sapphire silks, sapphire silks,
Sacred stripes of the Augurey,
Successor of the past, present and future times.
Sparing spares beyond symmetric skies,
Scattering and sowing seeds for thy
Satiety from savories of sovereigns' seats with
Scents of sweetness in scarlet stains.

Sapphire silks, sapphire silks,
Sacred stripes of the Augurey.
Supreme symmetry of thee shall make
Stars and spirits and souls salute.
Shall thee, the heir to Salazar Slytherin
Succeed the sovereignty of thy state and
Slither to the summit for thy sake.

Adjudicators' Comments

A very beautifully written poem with great melodious rhythm and unparalleled use of allusions. That said, the message of the poem has not been clearly articulated. I am left wondering what sapphire silks actually mean. Also the use of the archaic pronouns is unnecessary as it only adds to the arduousness of comprehension. All the lexical choice and carefully designed form seem to only cover the fact that little concrete has been said.

I am a bit of a Harry Potter fan, and I got the attempt at parseltongue right away. There is also a nice rhythm to evoke the casting of spells (although this is a rhythm that Rowling does not use herself). I have a few notes about the use of thee/thy. In the last three lines, for example: to whom are 'thee' and 'thy' referring? The same person or different people? In other words, is it the heir's state and the heir's sake, or someone else's? It is not clear if 'you' is substituted for 'thee', or 'your' substituted for 'thy'. Also in the second to last line of stanza 2 you could cut out 'who'. The line would still be grammatical but all of the words would start with s or sh. Replicating parseltongue or at least evoking it using English is an interesting challenge.

Gold Award

Topic:

Free Selection

Around the Hourglass

Cheung Tung Ching

St. Paul's Convent School

Start of a day. Alarms ringing, covers thrown back, pillows tossed away, footsteps running doors banging open, the tap running. Hurry hurry. Mind whirling fast, barely awake. Tick tock tick tock. A tangle of fabric – my uniform – as I struggled, still half-drowsy changing half-dazed, still sleep-induced, mind wandering. I snatched my watch, heard her call, yelling goodbye. Dashed out of house, two steps each time, nearly tripping, down the staircase, lift left broken, eyes fixated.

Tick tock tick tock. Catching my breath, waiting for bus,

Hurry, hurry. I chant quietly. Heart pounding now.

Late, late, late. Realisation dawns, in my head.

Tick tock tick tock. I will be late. Running now.

Ticktock ticktock. Sweat dripping down, onto pavement, a thousand sounds, vibrating, into my eardrums. Not enough time.

Just one more street, I told myself.

Ticktock ticktock. Red flashing green.

Ticktock ticktock. I started to cross.

Screams faded back, over oblivion.

I looked in time. Ticktock ticktock.

Bus incoming, deafening noise, as it hits me. Blood roaring,

Paralyzed, as I stood.

And then...

.

Silence.

Time stopped.

It stopped running, stopped, its crazed race with humankind;

Stopped, fading into the background.

Imagine. The loud pulse into the hearts of men

Fading into the background. A pulse, which grows each day.

Imagine, the silence brought about, showing a baby's first cry, a child's first tears

A wedding song, a funeral march, a gentle waltz, of happiness, of grief, of love.

Imagine, the beauty in everything, in those borne to sweet delight and endless night.

Beauty, hidden but glimpsed, from joy displayed, at the simplest of delights.

Imagine, the hope from the single star, shining, brightly above darkness, blindingly bright.

Imagine, nature's strokes of paint, across rolling hills, dotted with green, wild meadows.

Imagine - ! Stirrings of love, by soft caress on wounds too deep, warmth from a blanket for two.

Imagine. The dying down of the rhythmic march of life, into a slower trickle that will last

The world, filled, with joy and hope and happiness, love blossoming from closed-off hearts, if only the impending doom and infernal noise of the ticking machine could be quieted, silenced.

Adjudicators' Comments

This poem does not rhyme but it is a very rhythmic poem – with different aspects of form (such as the length of sentences or repetition) creating a lot of interest. In the first half, the shape of the poem works effectively with the ideas – I like how the chaos of the first part reaches a dramatic silence in the very middle. The second part is more structured, with its emphasis on the imagination: the idea of the 'hour glass' shape is not so clear here, but, it gives a very lyrical statement of the poem's main message. The vocabulary use is wide and varied but there are a few slips in language conventions (e.g. 'still sleep-induced', 'Dashed out of house').

A powerful image of time and a sense of urgency are aptly conveyed in this poem. The poet successfully uses typography to visually represent time: an hourglass. The structure of the poem complements the theme by depicting a symbol of the passage of time. The first stanza suggests a sense of chaos and hastiness wherein words and ideas topple down the narrow neck of the hourglass; the second stanza captures the 'aftermath' of the fall: things are sedimenting and settling down.

Gold Award

Topic:

Free Selection

It Shattered My Heart

Jain Mudita

King George V School

Each sunrise would find me,

drinking from the same pond,

that I lapped up water from,

since the day I was born.

The same pond that,

me and my siblings would jump in when the sun threatened to set our backs on fire.

Or became a playground for me to slide on and never stop,

when winter's breath chattered our teeth.

Little did I know,

that her last cry of pain,

would forever ring in my ears.

Would be the last sound I heard from my mother.

Would be the last noise I heard before I fell into a nightmare trap.

It shattered my heart.

Little did I know,

that the last time my sister's eyes were open,

would be when a scream of help escaped her.

Would be the last time I saw the deepest eyes I had ever known.

Would be the first look I remember whenever I look into any face.

It shattered my heart.

It takes seconds for them,

To rip apart our skin and turn them into purses, wallets, keychains,

handbags, backpacks.

It takes seconds for them,

but shatters us for a lifetime.

It hurts to even think,

That one day,

my wings could glide miles above mountain peaks, and the sun's rays could pour over me.

That one day,

laughter came naturally to me, and I could end every day with a smile.

Gold Award

Topic:

Free Selection

***It Shattered
My Heart
(Cont.)***

Jain Mudita

King George V School

But now melancholy drowns those thoughts,

I don't know what a smile is,

I don't know what laughter feels like.

Because one day, a bullet took that away.

Not only sinking,

every reason that made my heart race or eyes glimmer.

But also,

leaving me to drink from a pond of pain and sorrow.

Adjudicators' Comments

An evocative piece of work depicting sorrowful memories of the 'departure' of loved ones. The 'little did I know' lines leave echoes which linger throughout the poem, while the imagery of 'pond', half-realistic and half-metaphorical, penetrates the hearts of the readers. The poem makes natural use of rhythm without having to rely on artificial 'rhyming'. I like the story-like lines, vaguely familiar but still somehow pertinent, which help the audience with their own interpretations.

From the angle of an animal-narrator, readers experience the story of losing a loved one, as the narrator talks about losing their sister and how it shattered their heart. I appreciate the details in describing the feelings of mourning and sorrow in general. The final lines about the drinking by the pond have painted a distant, cold, yet powerful image that forces the readers to observe the narrator from afar, feeling this lonely mourning animal, who has lost foundational figures in its life. Even more importantly, the narrator's traumatic experience is relatable for everyone. I applaud this novel angle to a theme that is typically thought of as inherently human.

Silver Award

Topic:

Free Selection

'All the World's a Stage'

Choi Lok Yin

St. Paul's Convent School

Act I

Kill the lights

The cast

The backstage crew

Scrap the script and start anew

Douse the props in limelight flames

Theatre is just fun and games

Until the critics taboo Scene One

Rewrite the lines and stage directions

To mould the truth for discretionary view

Act II

Makeup

Costume fitting

Dress rehearsal

Plaster grimaces, role reversal

Director's cut was never released

Acquiesced at auditions, the neophyte artiste

Entertains the full house's warped sense of humour

Billboards scream 'hello consumer'

The standing ovation drowns the stiff curtain call

Act III

Bouquets

Whistles

Cheers and applause

To his study the playwright withdraws

Self-proclaimed scholiasts and idiot savants

Inflate the egos of bon vivants

Morals twisted on the wrong side of reality

Manipulate the audience with criminal mentality

As they exalt Fool's Paradise in awe

Adjudicators' Comments

Taboo is not a verb and, even if it was, it doesn't mean what I think you want it to mean. The term 'idiot savant' is an outdated term for high-functioning people on the autism spectrum. I am sure that you did not mean it in that sense, but with its negative history, it is better to avoid that term unless you want to misdirect your reader and set off alarm bells in their heads. You seem to be struggling with the notion of drama and the theatre as art and show business. It's something we all have to tackle if we are to appreciate and create art but also as consumers of show business. Don't give up on the theatre though!

I found this poem to be a nearly 'perfect' work. I believe the poet borrowed the idea of 'all the world's a stage' from Shakespeare. While Shakespeare compared our world to a stage and human life to a play, this work seems to make a simpler comparison between life and the three acts of a play. It describes how a play is 'plotted' and replotted, how it was acted on stage, and how the playwright makes regretful reflections on his 'success'. This is a short piece of work compared with Shakespeare's, but the poet was able to instill in it as much thought and information as possible. It is a commendable work.

Silver Award

Topic:

Free Selection

This is a city

Sloyan Jennifer

West Island School

This is a city that does not sprawl
or have the joy to lounge around—

this is a city that stands, runs,
rushes, races, rages, roars—

this is a city whose ruler is time
and pencilled notes in schedulers—

this is a city that cannot sleep,
much less know how to dream.

But, night
comes anyway;

oh, city
that has never
touched the stars!

Resting on the ebony bed of the sky
the moon smiles down in silver streams,
framed by skyscrapers on every side
and mirrored in glass as a billion gleams.

One lone man in the sea of pedestrians
rises, lifting his head to the stars,
struck by the revelation of the moon
and awed by its beauty, even afar.

Entranced, he reaches a hand to the clouds
cupping forgotten celestial cheeks;
the skyscrapers hold their steely breaths
and then

he checks

the time—

The moon is forsaken, the sea surges on.
Timers are ticking, and beauty is gone.

Oh, city!

City of empty time, lost seconds, packaged hours!
Of hollow humanity, fraudulent beauty, money-manufactured men!
City, where nobody looks at the moon but the equally lonely skyscrapers!
City! Where nobody can sleep, dream, or even try to live!

This is a city where few are happy
or remember how to feel at all—

this is a city where skyscrapers cry
and electric tears form waterfalls.

Adjudicators' Comments

There is a very skilful use of changes of pace and rhythm to create a sense of urgency around the decay of the apparently prosperous city: a wake-up call for all of us, who are still wilfully turning a blind eye to the corruption of our modern world, 'hollow humanity, fraudulent beauty, money-manufactured men'. The thoughtful use of personification of the city strikingly conveys the message that while the city is suffering (where 'skyscrapers cry' like humans), mankind seems to have lost their humanistic qualities.

This is an interesting poem about the desolate experience of the modern city: In this case, not only does the cityscape have a numbing effect on the people inside it, but the buildings themselves are melancholic. It is great to see the poet use familiar phrases in a new and interesting way – this is a 'city that cannot sleep', suggesting that it is restless and uncomfortable rather than exciting. The poet makes use of numerous figurative and linguistic devices to make their point, including alliteration and ellipsis, and these fit well with the tone. Overall, this makes for a very interesting piece of work.

Silver Award

Topic:

Free Selection

Jetty Jumping

Lee Claire Wing Hei

The Independent Schools
Foundation Academy

Not very sure
to jump or not
into those blue waves
even when wearing that life jacket
which promises to keep me safe...
'You have to decide now'
Still can't choose...but then...
in a stuttering voice-'y-yes?'

Walks up
takes a deep breath
jumps
and goes
down
 down
 down
 down into the open sea,
waiting for me to come...

Looking back at the blue sky
one last time
Then a flash of white,
a deafening splash,
And lost in a cold turquoise dimension
(which seems to not have directions)
slowly turning in hundreds of angles while
sinking down to nowhere...

Then without any warning
A force
(must be the life jacket)
Turns gravity upside down for only me
Only guessing if there is up or down
in this strange place...

Just as I feel that I can't stand it
without air,
I burst from the ocean
mouth salty from the water
climb up and say
'One more time?'

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a very decent poem and you should be pleased with your work on it. Your writing is good and you have a very impressive vocabulary. The poem explores an experience that is clearly important to you and that is nice to see. However, could you expand on why this experience is important to you or to others? What does it mean in a wider sense, etc? Your rhythm is great and you have a good ability to relate to your reader. I would be very pleased with this as a young poet and I seriously encourage you to carry on working on poems and other writing in your future. Well done.

This touching poem describes nervously jumping into the sea. I really like the way the poem gradually unfolds, carefully expressing each stage of the process in turn. Each part is set apart by language, form and rhythm, so that we are fully immersed in the experience – the repeated 'down down down' especially makes us stop and think. The poet seems to avoid using personal pronouns (e.g. 'walks up takes a deep breath'), and I like how this choice adds to the mystery and uncertainty of the scene, especially in the opening stanzas. Overall, really interesting work, well done.

Silver Award

Topic:

Free Selection

Bun in the Oven

Wong Kelly Likui

German Swiss

International School

'How would you like your baby done?

We have all models types and clones'

'But is it right to pre-select?

For our new child's weight or sex?'

'Madame! It's normal - always done

To choose the model of your son!'

'My son, you say! I did not know,

I thought it was more touch and go,

That half the babies would be girls

With frizzy hair or maybe curls.'

'Ooh frizzy hair, that will not do!

We throw those genomes out for you

And swap in things that we all like

Like high IQ and super height.

Piano playing is a must

And if a girl... a swollen bust?

Although in China, most do choose

A boy for the first child or two.'

'Wait! I have frizzy hair you cad

And I don't think it looks that bad.

And what of freckles, ginger hair?

And other things that make us rare?'

'Well since He Jiankui's greatest day

We throw variety clean away.

First chop out genes to make us well

And then chop in what we can sell.

Why stop at fighting HIV

When we can change what all can see?'

'I'm not quite sure. I'm not convinced.

Is there not danger?' Mother winced.

'That if we mess around with genes

We might end up with brains like beans...

Or hidden illnesses appear

And make us grow tails from our rear?

I hear some Crispr-Cas babies

Had bushy butts and bat rabies!

Put your gene-sculpting stuff away

I'll have my kid the natural way!

I get that custom dolls are fun

But babies aren't the same. I'm done!'

Adjudicators' Comments

An intriguing poem which takes up the sensitive social issue of genetically modified children which is often discussed in South Asian media. It's great to see that you are using your poetry to engage with important political and social issues like this. The form could do with a little more work, as it reads a little erratically as things stand. Think about the rhythm and flow of the poem, and try to ensure it is smooth to read and only awkward in the right places when you want to use that as a technique to affect your reader. Overall, a really good poem - well done and keep writing.

Great thoughts here surrounding genetically modified babies. A timely piece amidst the He Jiankui scandal last year. The conversation is creative, with seemingly casual talks between 'scientists' and a to-be mother which are in fact well crafted by the author. I was amazed how the poet achieved his/her rhyming scheme for a piece of conversation. What remains less satisfactory is the unfolding of the message - I feel that key information is too overtly laid bare, and too early in the poem's development. To tell readers that Gene-crafted babies may cause danger and hidden risks of illness so explicitly is not very 'poetic'.

Bronze Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

The World Through Your Eyes

Eyunni Gayathri

West Island School

Do you see our world through the eyes of
Another?
Me?
A bird?
A horse?
You see the world like yourself, of course.

It's an unforgiving place,
Through the eyes of the starved,
From superiority and caste,
This world has been carved.

Through the eyes of the activist,
It's a world of opportunity,
From peaceful protests to wars,
It's unity in diversity.

It's a life and death situation,
For the young soldier in war,
The fear of losing loved ones,
From bloodshed and gore.

Privileges being thrown around,
Everything taken for granted,
Through the eyes of the rich, whose
Seeds of kindness haven't been planted.

Through the eyes of the differently abled,
It's an unrelenting world,
Bullies close in from the corners,
For their limbs being shriveled or curled.

The Earth is a gigantic canvas,
Through the eyes of the artist,
Conveying a story through colours,
No rules, they are anarchist!

But then there is the child,
Who sees a world of hope,
But always curious and wondering,
Why do we fight, where is the light?
Why do we shout, why do we doubt?
Why do we divide, why don't we provide?
Where is the compassion, when will we take action?
When will we find peace in our hearts?

This is the world through your eyes.

Adjudicators' Comments

There are a lot of things I really enjoy about this poem, but here are some notes. The first stanza could use a little more development (perhaps to mirror the last one). I feel that it takes the reader too far away from where they need to be for the second stanza. It asks some questions but it doesn't really attempt to answer them, while 'a bird' and 'a horse' aren't relevant to the humanity of the rest of the poem. I think any other human nouns would work better (e.g. 'a ruler' or 'a judge'). Another issue is the stanza on the handicapped and disabled. Setting aside the clunkiness of the term 'differently abled', I feel that there was a missed opportunity here. The challenges that disabled people and otherwise mentally and physically atypical people face do not always have to do with bullying and not all of these conditions are visible. The biggest challenges are limited access to conversations, to jobs, to buildings and so on. For example, how would a person in a wheelchair see stairs? And sometimes pity is more harmful than bullying and contempt. In this stanza, you describe how people with typical bodies see those with other kinds of bodies, rather than on how they see the world.

Generally, the poem is well intended, the message is clear that there is a diversity of viewpoints in the world, so probably the author is trying to promote tolerance. However, the idea that 'the world is ____ through XX's eyes' sounds less creative. This poem lacks the novelty which should lie at the heart of a work of poetry. Also, I have to say, for example, the world through the eyes of the starved may not always be unforgiving. A large population in North Korea, who have been kept hungry, may feel more content than people in Hong Kong. The spiritual world and the materialistic world are often separate. The poem sounds a little simplistic.

Bronze Award

Topic:

Free Selection

Of Ants and Picnics

Ann Jason Adrian

Diocesan Boys' School

On a sunny Tuesday we went out for a hike,

deep within the mountains, near a lake we really like.

We packed up all our food and then we set off right away,

providing that we stopped by several 'diners' on the way.

We put down our necessities at our picnic spot,

except, of course, the ketchup which my father had forgot.

The picnic would be perfect, you could tell that with a glance,

unless, of course, we ran into a colony of ants.

My dad suggested that we should all go for a run,

but I said I would take a nap until they both were done.

When they started running my dad had a thought concerned,

he told me not to eat the food until they both returned.

I lay down on the picnic mat and practiced self control

but I didn't realise our lunch was going for a stroll!!!!

I had a dream of eating almost everything I saw,

and woke up with a craving for a burger and some slaw.

Opening my eyes, I saw something really weird,
it seemed our picnic lunch had somehow disappeared.

I wondered if I'd be punished and have to pay a bill
and then I saw our picnic doing 90 up a hill!

I chased them till they lost me, I didn't have a clue,
of where on earth they were or what I was going to do.

I found a basket and jumped in it like it was a tub,
I had an idea of faking it to be someone else's grub.

The ants picked me up and I thought they fell for my fake scheme,
instead they went to a cliff and threw me in the stream!

I struggled and I staggered and I very nearly drowned,
it took a lot of swimming but I made it to the ground.

Bronze Award

Topic:

Free Selection

Of Ants and Picnics (Cont.)

Ann Jason Adrian

Diocesan Boys' School

Dad was tired after his long kilometre jog,

he came back with the rather dumb and very hungry dog.

I tried to tell him 'bout the ants who stole all of our meat,

He said a lot of angry things - it's best I don't repeat.

So there we were, many miles from a store,

quite exhausted, cold and soggy by the shore.

Dad said, 'We should go home for whatever we can find,'

I told him he should, but I would stay behind.

I went to meet the ants at a secret hiding spot,

'coz I wanted to ask them if I could join their lot.

I knew Dad wouldn't understand and neither would the pup,

'If you cannot beat an enemy, consider joining up.'

Adjudicators' Comments

This poem tells an entertaining and witty story about a picnic getting eaten up by ants. I am really impressed by the use of a consistent pattern of rhythm and rhyme throughout – this keeps the pace going and makes the story funnier. Within that reliable pattern, we get many lines that offer an unpredictable and humorous wit to the story ('doing 90 up a hill', or 'it's best I don't repeat'), demonstrating a careful control over language. The ending is a bit confusing but expresses the frustration of the situation well. Overall – well done, this is positive work.

This is an interesting narrative poem with plenty of twists in the plot. The poem is nicely structured with a very strong and consistent pattern of rhyme and rhythm which imitates not only the mood and momentum of a 'fun' Tuesday hiking but also the marching of that troop of ants. Just make sure that you are not compromising your grammar just because you need to keep up the rhythm and rhyme.

Bronze Award

Topic:

Free Selection

to write of love

Foo Yi Heng

St. Stephen's Girls' College

I am no poet, nor do I master art
but I have to capture this moment in words,
before its fleeting existence
escapes and passes my heart.

I have to write on train rides, and long nights, and wandering walks,
shying away from hands holding a heart once bitten,
shunning words slipping from my tongue
spitting vitriolic venom that soaks in poison.

Because on train rides, and long nights, and wandering walks,
I wrote, and wrote, and I wrote of you once.

The lazy trail of saliva when you wake from a nap,
the crinkles around your eyes when you smile, abashed.

But I have no right to write of that anymore
— now I can't seem to write at all.

I think of love and I think of heated days,
cherry blossoms and summer haze.

Decades-old repetition of the same clichés
blurring memories of what my mind erased.

Because I'd rather love be a picture-perfect bed of roses,
almost hard to believe,
than a crumbled portrait that deprives me of speech.

Rather sanguine and skittish, than scarred and selfish.

To write, to let go, to allow myself to heal,
and not to look back and hold on with bitterness and rue.

Rather love be silly, simple, and slow to feel,
words with which you chimed to define me as a fool,
than to be reminded of times
when love was
you.

Adjudicators' Comments

The poem is about a bygone experience of love. The narrator wants to recapture that experience through writing. It seems that the narrator considers writing as therapy for his once crumbled self. Interestingly, the narrator says he cannot write anymore. How does the trauma of love deter writing? If that is the case, how can writing be therapeutic? The poem raises many questions that are unresolved. The other question would be: how does this poem fit into the overall theme?

Bronze Award

Topic:

Free Selection

The Ageless Moon

Sit Hoi Yan Angel

Marymount Secondary School

Who composed the dance of the waves?

The tide shifts between my fingers,

The waves swirled about in passionate fouettés

And the fishes streamed away.

Above my eyes, a rippling sphere domes the

faint cries of eagles like wounds penetrating me.

The flowing robe of an angel shrieks through the water

In a deafening burn.

The bluish wash of the ocean cradles and propels

Around my heart like lingering shards of glass,

Like fragments of vague wonder.

The sky turned.

The waters darken as Charon struck his oar

Carrying the empty souls into the abyss of time.

The filtered light sleeps atop the still flood of my tears,

Saturating into a ring on the silhouette of nightfall.

Midnight falls.

May she forever rest in the shadowed light

Where the sleepless souls of the undead may not touch --

Upon the porcelain skin of the ageless moon.

Adjudicators' Comments

This poem displays a lovely range of vocabulary and some nicely composed descriptions. However, when you scratch a little deeper, some of the imagery seems fairly random or even contradictory. It also wanders so far into the abstract that it becomes incomprehensible. As a surrealist piece of poetry, it could have some merit, but I don't think that was the intention. There seems to be a vision in there, but it is very difficult to grasp for the reader. That being said, this writer certainly has a poetic sense that they should definitely be encouraged to hone. A little more precision in terms of word choice could lead to a really strong piece of work.

There are several elements of this poem that could be altered to make them fit together more naturally. For example, eagles are not active at night so there is a clash between the imagery of eagles and the moon (owls might work better in this case). In the first stanza, 'waves' in the first line and 'tides' in the second could be switched (one can feel waves, but tides are on a larger scale). I don't get the imagery of an angel underwater or the notion of a 'deafening burn'. I like the imagery of the moon and water and life/death but (in my opinion) the reference to Charon is a bit too obscure.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Free Selection

Winter

Chan Sophie

The Independent Schools
Foundation Academy

Snow and ice swirl,
Rivers stop in their tracks
White and gray churn together
Creating the colors of winter

Winds scream,
Stripping trees of leaves
Decorating them
With garlands of snow

At night, mist and snow twist together
Breathing air is breathing ice
Layering frost in the street
Winter is the season that bites back

In homes, hot chocolate is made
Served with cookies and love
As the light starts to fade
Families cuddle and share stories

Presents are exchanged
With bundles of happiness
Friendships are reforged
In the holiday of Christmas

Winter is the season
That warms everyone's heart
Songs are sung
Kindness spreads throughout the world

A homeless person
Enjoys a warm muffin
A little present
From a stranger

The colder the winter
The warmer the spring
Dormant life stirring
Slowly waking up

Adjudicators' Comments

While winter is generally depicted as gloomy and lethargic, the poet unexpectedly describes winter as warm and welcoming. The first three stanzas of the poem build on the conventional image of a snowy winter which is dominated by the mood of whiteness and solitude. The poem starts to pick up its pace from stanza four onwards: the introduction of warmth, colour, joy and company in each stanza such as 'hot chocolate', 'warm muffin', 'families', 'friendship' slowly changes the mood of the season. Is the absence of full-stops a way to suggest that 'if winter comes can spring be far behind'?

This is an interesting choice of subject from a Hong Kong-based student. Discussing winter and Christmas from what seems to be either a European or North American perspective is a little unusual. The imagery seems to be based mostly upon a somewhat clichéd view. Not that this makes them illegitimate, but rather that there is little insight to be found beyond what we already understand about this time of year. That being said, there is nice imagery of winter in the early stanzas and the language is consistently good. I also like that this poet has opted to create a poetic rhythm without the use of rhyme, which is not so common among young writers.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Free Selection

The Journey of Love

Lusk Samantha Ann

Central & Western District

St. Anthony's School

Again I try to muster the courage to tell you,

Banishing all feelings of doubt.

Carefully trying to form a sentence,

Deciding that I have waited too long.

Every single word I've been wanting to say,

Flooding out, breaking all the dams I built.

Growing bolder and bolder,

Honestly I tell you the truth, that I have longed for you since youth

I despair as you tell me your taken,

Just when I am brave enough, the truth

Kicks me in the guts, never will you love me as I do.

Leaving, feeling more distraught than ever,

Me like a bird without wings, but soon I regain hope.

No one else can make me feel so complete,

Oh you are my missing puzzle piece, it has been

Prophesied that we are meant to be.

Question my love for you I will never,

Right or wrong I don't care.

So let the journey of love begins,

Till death shall we part that is true,

Until forever shall I love you.

Vulnerable your touch makes me, dancing on my skin lightly.

Whispers flutter past my ear, sending shivers down my spine.

X-quisete life is with you,

Years after years I will wait till your ready,

Zillion confessions I have made, pay heed because they are all true.

Adjudicators' Comments

As a much older person (than the author), reading this evoked all those feelings we have of our first love. There are a few lines where the attempts to be poetic seem to get in the way of the actual poem (i.e. 'question my love for you I will never', as opposed to saying, 'Never will I question my love for you'). At the same time there are some elements that I would say could be eliminated. Things like 'prophesied' and 'pay heed' seem to remove the choice and agency of the person for whom this poem is written. I would cut out the line 'Prophesied that we are meant to be' (meant to be is a little clichéd anyway). I would also cut out 'pay heed' from the last line so that it reads 'zillion confessions I have made, because they are all true'.

In this journey, readers gradually learn how the narrator has given and sacrificed, but it seems that love is not reciprocal, as lines 'I' and 'K' suggest. Therefore, the lines of 'S' and 'T' about the beginning of the 'journey of love' and 'Till death shall we part' are for me unexpected and abrupt. It is difficult to imagine what it is supposed to refer to, other than perhaps adding some details about the psychology of the narrator. The acrostic-like, A-Z pattern is clever, and in a way, one can interpret this as reflecting the journey of love. However, it does not really add much to the substance of the poem. With a heavier topic like love, and given the more serious tone of the poem, it might not be the most fitting venue for this exercise in form.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Free Selection

#Colours- AndMe

**Abellano Micah
Jennifer**

The Church of Christ in China
Tai O Primary School

I used to swim in the monotonous blue,
where my siblings too,
glue', together just like the angelic crew;
and it just appeared too good to be true...

As I recall, we would get changed in the green,
probably saw some of the natural swirls of the grin, from the massive kin,
during which there's no need to beg for oxygen like now from the tin

And sometimes, I would enjoy being embraced by the chrome,
I mean the yellowish home,
twirled like the splendid rays in ancient Rome,
was that a mirage or some sorts of fake dome'?

such queries were never answer',
but the endless warmth from above was well-reassure',
as long as the massive energy of the ball manoeuvre',
I could still enjoy my restless tour
in yellow, orange, then darker down the contour...

Sadly...I now have to swim in the heterogeneous blue,
where my siblings too,
glue', together this time by the modern world's rule;
plastic, oil, sewage and many other cruel',
and it just appeared the old days were well graced as a mere aged taboo...!

Adjudicators' Comments

I think the writer tries to present a sense of nostalgia by comparing the past and present. There are good lexical choices and some well-planned stanzas. I like the two lines about siblings, which stand out from the whole piece of work. What does seem to be lacking is some outstanding aphorism and a more creative form. There is little surprising or particularly amusing that could touch the reader. By simply saying you miss the old days is somehow clichéd. I was expecting to see some deeper thoughts that would give me something to ponder.

I believe I understand the intended meaning, but it's a bit hard to get to. The author seems to have a great idea for a short story, but as a poem I am not sure how well it works with the attempts to rhyme. The conventions of one style of poetry seem to be getting in the way of the actual poem here. Without attempting to rhyme, using another style of poem, (or again in the form of a short story) I think this could be really powerful.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

#something

Hasn't it Been

**Fung Charlotte
Hiu Yau**

German Swiss

International School

Hasn't it been too long?

Too wrong?

To fix past mistakes

That keep flowing like a lake.

Hasn't it been too hard?

To reread the cue card?

Would it be better to leave the past

Preserved in its memory cast?

Hasn't it been too sad?

To revisit the memories we had?

Knowing we won't be happy again

Since the breakup when we were ten?

Hasn't it been too much?

To think of things as such?

To think of our time now as lonely, depressing,

Compared to the past, the once joyous blessing.

For all its worth, I would like to see us trying to be friends once more,

But would it really be better to go back

To our time

Or stay here now, separate and broken?

Adjudicators' Comments

An interesting poem based around a series of questions. I feel it has the potential to be extremely powerful but doesn't quite reach those heights. There are certain elements that weaken the impact of what would otherwise have been a fairly poignant work. The image of 'flowing like a lake' is problematic as lakes don't really flow and the idea of the breakup happening when the protagonists were ten years old trivialises the message somewhat. The final stanza presents the speakers' great conundrum and an alternative interpretation of this years theme, thinking of 'Of Our Time' not as the present day, but some time in the past. In the end, the idea and thought behind this poem seem to be stronger than the final presentation. With a better choice of images and stronger vocabulary, it could be a great piece of work.

This personal piece reflects on past mistakes, memory and friendship. I interpret the questions as ones directed not only to the narrator him/herself, but also to the readers. The poem ends with an open, uncertain question. I think this may have been too thoughtful, an almost calculated and safe ending. Since there is no right or wrong and these questions are not unique or novel, it might make the poem more interesting and thought-provoking if we, the readers, got a glimpse of what the poet has to offer on this topic. As a side note, it is unclear how the poem relates to the theme #something, other than the rather straightforward interpretation that the poem talks about 'something'. But then, it would be no different from the Free Selection theme. It is therefore reasonable to expect some (remote) connection to the chosen theme. At the very least, one would expect the hashtag to lead the poets to a more modern context. This is a missed opportunity.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Free Selection

My Adventure at the Beach

Tiffany Fong Hei Man

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

I prance in joy as I walk to the beach,

And settle down first as my dad would teach.

He says that I should learn from Mother Nature,

And widen my knowledge under her nurture.

When the waves rise,

I close my eyes.

Wide-winged birds chirp everywhere,

While the wind whistles in the air.

I hear waves rushing to the shore,

And people running up the moor.

Then there comes a loud, angry roar,

And the pelting rain starts to pour.

The hungry sea is awaiting us,

To swallow us whole without a fuss.

I try to scurry back to my dad,

But the waves drag me away like mad.

I writhe, I wriggle and I jiggle,

My witlessness makes the sea giggle.

Soon I travel to another dimension,

A place of unbelievable perfection -

The view is wonderfully magical,

The sounds of the waves so lyrical!

I am not dreaming, am I?

I don't want to say 'goodbye'.

The air is full of freshness,

Filling my soul with sweetness.

The plants and creatures there are works of art,

Their lovely appearances melt my heart.

This experience is extremely pleasant,

I thank our wonderful God for His present.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Free Selection

My Adventure at the Beach (Cont.)

Tiffany Fong Hei Man

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

Savouring every moment on the golden sand,

I gaze around this amazing piece of land.

Seabirds are flying and singing joyfully,

While dolphins are frolicking ecstatically.

I am mesmerized by the beauty of nature,

But an unforeseen twitch disrupts my portraiture.

Suddenly, I am back at the beach,

Where my dear old dad is there to teach.

He says I am awfully addicted

To the magical place he's depicted.

But again I'll close my eyes

To feel the waves when they arise

Adjudicators' Comments

This is a nicely written poem with a simple but well-conveyed premise. There are a couple of questions that arise when reading it. The idea of being at the beach, but then being transported to an imaginary world that also seems to be a beach scene is a little strange. Why is the speaker not learning from what is in front of them, but rather imagining a more perfect vision of the same thing? It creates a kind of paradox that is not explained and doesn't seem to have a particular reason for being there. Also, the second stanza has four rhyming lines, which is impressive, but breaks the pattern. Overall, the rhyming is mostly consistent and generally manages to not detract from the meaning, which is an impressive feat. A strong submission to this year's award.

The poem depicts the narrator entering into another timespace while walking on a beach. The narrator is addicted to this dreamy experience where he witnesses the beauty of nature. The poem is well-structured and has a nice climax. But it is not easy to find its relevance to the overall theme of the Award. How does the beauty of nature link to bigger issues, like global warming, anthropocene? Why is mother nature important to the poet? Why only in a dream can we discover nature's beauty? What happened to our reality?

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Free Selection

Sixth Sense

Sparrow Christopher

Hong Kong International School

Sometimes I stand there

And stare,

Doing nothing

But yet I am sitting,

Listening.

Tasting,

Smelling,

Looking.

And most of all feeling.

The feeling of the earth altering under me,

Swallowing me.

Physically, mentally.

I feel.

Regret.

Sorrow

And utter sadness

What am I doing?

I am reflecting

Daydreaming

Pondering.

Wishing I could go back in time and just make a different choice.

Or make a choice.

It is my mind

It is my sixth sense.

I am purely, so simply,

Thinking.

Going two places at once.

Our next move.

My next move.

Not physically, but mentally.

Adjudicators' Comments

I love the way this poem develops. The first stages give us a contrasting range of verbs to describe the speaker's activities and mindset; before the final stanza offers a more definite statement about how they are using their 'sixth sense'. There are many short sentences (or clauses within sentences), and these create a punchy and immediate tone of expression; the longer sentence in the penultimate stanza creates a positive contrast, and maybe it would have been interesting to include some more variety like this. Overall, though, we have a positive expression of an interesting theme with precise and evocative choices of language.

This is a nice poem which comes across as a sort of philosophical rumination about the nature of thinking. It's well written and has no errors, also showing a decent range of vocabulary. However, at times the flow is a little strange and erratic, so you might want to dedicate a little more time to thinking about the structure of the poem and how easily and rhythmically you want readers to take it in. There are some nice word choices and a sense that you are really philosophical about things, which is great to see. Overall, you should be pleased with this and keep up the good work.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Free Selection

Pinnacle from Ashes

Bai Aaron Hao Ren

The Independent Schools
Foundation Academy

In the smoke of war,
A tiny Flower grew on the floor.

It saw people wearing chiton build magnificent palaces,
And powerful kings sit on colourful mattresses.
But then a general came on a galloping horse,
Leading an army of thousands with so much force,
Razing the ancient city to the ground.

The new rulers built impressive temples of gods and kings,
And held copious banquets where everyone sings.
But then came a battalion with cannons on carts,
Which shot a lot of fiery darts,
The holy city was instantly lost,
And with an immensely terrible cost.

The new comers built towering fortresses with guns,
And iron sail ships that weighed several hundred tonnes.
But then came destructive tanks and jets,
And flying missiles that proved lethal threats.

After the worst devastation mankind has ever seen,
Brutal force succumbed to reasoning.
A new era has begun,
The city is now for people to run.
As years passed,
Towering skyscrapers bloomed,
And population boomed.
They built solar panels and windmills for renewable energy,
And thousands of artificial islands sprang in the sea.
Gorgeous gardens grew on buildings reaching to the sky,
And hypersonic cars could actually fly.
Robots were as common as men,
And there were automated restaurants and self writing pens.

The Flower lay down in its pod,
How humans can rebuild despite all odds.
Building cities each better than the last,
And making progress so very fast.

Adjudicators' Comments

The imagery of war and anti-war motifs are all part of a well-trodden path. It is often a challenge for poets to add anything new to this topic. This piece has, unfortunately, not brought a whole lot of novel imagery or ideas or angles to view the whole concept of how wars and changes are trivial compared to time. There are also minor details that can be improved (e.g. 'powerful kings' in plural, but 'a general came on a galloping horse'). It is unlikely we would see kings (of allied states) sitting together and one general marching in. Even with the suspension of disbelief, it is hard to see what details/information/sentiment this description brings to the metaphor. At some points, the lines read too generic and abstract ('Razing the ancient city to the ground'); at others, the details and imagery are specific, but it is difficult to tell what they add to the poem (iron ships that 'weigh several hundred tonnes').

The poem offers a grand narrative of a city's formation, destruction and reconstruction. The poem seems to end with praise for human power to conquer nature and adversities. The description is vivid and logical - but the poem has little to say about the value of the city's rapid development. My biggest question is: what brought about the destruction of the city, before it is rebuilt once and again? The gods, kings, robots, fortresses, guns, tanks come and go, only the flower, however small and insignificant it seems, lays consistently there.

Honorable Mention

Topic:

Free Selection

Listen to Teens

Pang Jake

Pui Ching Primary School

I don't know why do you think I'm always rude

I am not nice

I'm always in a bad mood

But I just hope people will be nice to me

I don't know why do you say I do not try

I am lazy

You break my heart and I cry

Because every day I just try try and try

I don't know why do you have to shout at me

I won't listen

Sometimes I want to be free

I wish we can talk without being angry

I don't know why my words are sharp like needles

I can't control

I don't want you to be mad

I'm still your little boy looking for cuddles

I do know I don't like it when you judge me

You don't trust me

Please understand my feelings

I hope you will learn how to listen to me

Adjudicators' Comments

This piece can be seen as advocacy for younger people, who do not meet a lot of listening ears and respect, as the narrator (rightly) questions throughout the poem. The self-focusing is also nicely captured by the repetition of 'I' or 'me' in every line. Some of the lines could use some editing. The repeating question 'I don't know why...' sometimes reads a little clumsy. You should also remove 'do' after each 'why,' to make the sentence grammatical. In poetry, perhaps one can further shorten the question, to make this outcry sharper and more poignant. The longer lines in the poem do not reflect an awareness of rhythm (which is different from merely maintaining the number of syllables).

The poem reads like a dramatic monologue. The narrator puts forth a series of 'don't knows' and ends with one thing that she does know. The last stanza balances out the intense emotions presented previously. Bad moods, heartbroken, desire for freedom, madness - all these point to the chaotic side of self, to which seemingly the 'you' here did not pay enough attention. It is an urgent, even desperate, request. The poem would fare better if the narrator's dark feelings received more elaboration. The poem seems to rush for an ending, which, alas, forecloses the undecidedness of a struggling teen mind.



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Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#Reality

Yeung Hei Ching

Baptist (Sha Win Tai) Lui Ming
Choi Primary School

Reality is a briary blue rose

Hiding in the bushes

So small

So much pain

Veiled till fall

Blunderingly hurts

With her hidden

Deadly claws

Tearing you into pieces

With no laws

Reality is a sparkly sapphire

Glistened because of her unique

Streak of silver

In the silent night

However gives cold shivers

Her shade

In the early morning

Fades

Like shimmering stars

Burn

Only in the darkest nights

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Human Error

Low Yat Lok Angus

Bonham Road Government
Primary School

Global warming no doubt we know,

Too much rubbish we should not throw.

Fumes from buses, cars and factories,

How to solve this problem are mysteries.

We all inhale bad air,

To our babies this is so unfair.

One day cold and one day hot,

Hope we won't get sick a lot.

Climate change to the Arctic home,

Melting icebergs and ice domes.

Polar bears and animals they cried,

Sooner or later no home and they died.

What a big human error,

We should be more clever.

Buy less, save more and reduce waste,

Destroy the Earth is our disgrace.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Typhoon Mangkhut

Chan Fong Yuen

Canossa School (Hong Kong)

Howling typhoon

Strong and strong

Like a monster, like a beast

He came from the sea

Whipping up waves, very high

Wee-woo, wee-woo

Fire trucks, off they go

Furious typhoon

Roar and roar

Punching anything blocks his way

Headbutting buildings, breaking giant cranes

Stomping on cars

Tearing down trees

Flooding all the streets

Leaving a devastated city for everyone to see

Wee-woo, wee-woo

Fire Trucks, come and help

Nasty typhoon

He's come and gone

Leaving debris strewn over the streets

Toppled trees onto cars

Windows shattered

Office paper scattered

Collapsed bamboo scaffolding hanging in the sky

Giant crane dangling in the air

Wee-woo, wee-woo,

Fire Trucks, clear the way

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#Our- ChristmasTime

Li Hoi Tung Katie

Chun Tok School

Christmas is almost here.

So many things to wonder.

A big tree shining so bright.

There will be beautiful decorations and shiny lights.

And more than we could ever see.

Under that tree,

There will be presents in great amounts.

A present for Karen,

And a present for me.

We will open them with happiness.

We have so much with Daddy and Mummy's love.

Christmas is really so much fun.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Our Cherished City

Honig Cynthia

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

The city,
mysterious at night.
The caliginous sky.
Towers sigh,
yearning for light.
Weary buildings slump,
dismal and dreary.
Long dark shadows loom,
casting palls of gloom.

Streetlights flicker
On - Off, On - Off.
Thunder booms,
dread fills the dark rooms,
putrid alleys cough,
scents of past glory.
Windows rattle,
battered and bruised,
walls are abused.

But wait,
is that light I see?
Rows of pearls illuminate,
sparks of hope do they create.
Late night it may be,
a restless city,
brimming with life.
It is never asleep,
happiness does it keep.

Then,
the tapestry of black lights up
with an array of colours.

The city bustles with life,
without any civil strife.

Though,
everyone knows
night will come again,
there is no reason to fear the end.
After all, no matter it be day or night,
this vibrant city will glow with might:
Pulsating with energy, pride and happiness.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

A View of Hong Kong

Tso Si Ling

Diocesan Preparatory School

Through a telescope,

I look at Hong Kong.

Don't let it be ugly, I really hope,

I've been standing for so long.

What's this? A skyscraper!

Tall buildings and speeding cars.

The Sun is setting, the lights are brightening,

Like fireflies in multiple jars.

Farther, further, some distance away,

Are boats resting by the sea.

The leaves on trees sway,

While people eat seafood joyfully.

Finally, when the whole city comes to a rest,

Though lights are still bright

Cars are still speeding, there must be less

I gaze upon Hong Kong, my beautiful city.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

From a Cockroach's Sight

**Chan Hei Tung
Hayden**

Good Hope Primary School cum
Kindergarten

As I stretched my transparent wings,
I saw a butterfly above,
Twirling as she sang,
How could I be humans' love?

To me there wasn't any peace,
For I was a flying pest,
To humans I was filthy,
To me there's nowhere I could rest.

They stomped on me and said,
'How dare you enter!'
No one would ever be welcome,
Their scornful eyes were blaring 'danger'

Any water to drink?
Any leftovers to pick?
Go away, go away...
Deafening shrieks filled my head.

Even my shadow
Would cause humans to scream.
Cursing as I fled the flat,
They wanted my race vaporized into steam.

Others of my kind were crushed
And flattened as victims in accidents,
Deprived of proper burials,
But dumped and flushed down in torrents.

No matter small or large,
One should respect creatures.
No matter dog or man,
All creations are rare as treasures.

I heard the butterfly singing
An elegy for the thieves like me.
How I wish I were a butterfly
Spreading the pollen of love and equality.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Hong Kong

Tam Cho Yan
Joanna

Heep Yunn Primary School

It's all about an old fishing village.

Which is small and crowded.

The economy that time wasn't flourishing.

Life was hard and challenging..

It's all about a modern city.

Still small and crowded but prosperous.

Economy goes well and more money we are earning.

This city is safe and more tourist are coming.

It's all about a mystery future.

I hope it will be greater.

The legend will pass on.

It's my home - Hong Kong.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

The bright night

Lau Yin Lai

Hong Kong Baptist University
Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai
Secondary and Primary School

The city lights are shining bright tonight,
stars are like lanterns, floating out of my sight.

The stars in the night sky almost invisible to the eye,
yet they light up the dark, empty sky.

Looking from a distance, the city full of light,
the contrast between the colours, the dark empty night.
Lights in the town slowly closing, yet it is never completely dark,
even if the city runs out of light, the moon shall leave its mark.

The night sky of a city is truly breathtaking,
though a sunrise, too, is soul shaking.

The sun will come tomorrow but I will

Be looking for the first star from the sill.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

The View of the Victim

Leung Yuen Kiu

Kowloon Tong School

If Hope showed itself to me,
And illuminated a clear path,
I'd have taken it immediately,
And saved myself from the bully's wraths.

Looked upon with disdain and scorn,
Dangling from a thin thread.
Harmful words cut like knives on me,
Haunting me with dread.

I'd been buried alive in my own grave.
My pillow was soaked with all my tears.
Each day's horrors were unpredictable,
And school became my worst fear.
Leaving behind menacing leers.

With no one to turn to, no one to trust,
I tried to retaliate but failed.
Then succumbed and ignored the bullying,
While attacks on me increased in scale.

Wraths coiled around like pythons,
Squeezing out of me my air.
Yet I had nowhere to retreat,
Neither a shelter nor a lair.

My soul was crushed to dust,
Gushing through my veins was pure horror.
I begged whatever gods would be
To stop the unconquerable torture.

Alone and helpless,
Frightened with fear,
Horror seared through my veins,
Leaving behind menacing leers.

If only there was a staircase to escaping,
A sanctuary for my shattered soul,
I'd hate to be imprisoned forever,
And let the poison take its toll.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

A Pearl in the East

**Yeung Kaden
Kai Shing**

La Salle Primary School

There is a city in the East

Smiling and relaxing

An old-time village of fishermen

Full of relaxation and satisfaction

What a simple world!

There is a city under the Sun

Hustling and buzzing

High-rise buildings of businessmen

Full of energy and sophistication

What a busy world!

There is a city under the Moon

Sparkling and twinkling

Sky-high illuminations of commercials

Full of colours and tranquility

What a pretty world!

There is a city like a shooting Star

Rising and shining

Gold-like attractions to all walks of life

Full of people and traders

What a crowded world!

There is a city in the future

Growing and flourishing

High-speed networks of transportation

Full of potentials and possibilities

What an exciting world!

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Smile Away Imperfections

Wong Haley

Marymount Primary School

Blemishes, glitches, shoot me with worries

'I look down upon thee, patchy human'

An evil snake hisses as it hurries

My overburdened soul mourned by no one

Weep with guilt on face, tears flow down my cheeks

A leaky faucet too flawed to be fixed

A struggling girl enveloped within

Sealed with depression and remorse that pricks

Illusion and compulsion of wonder!

Perfection is sterile, go no further

To conquer the peak of every mountain

A little defect serves as the cursor

Go away! I farewell the obsession

I grin and welcome my imperfections

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#Plastic- Tragedy

Tai Ka Yin

Oblate Primary School

Look around!

Our world's saddened by plastic trash,
Used toothbrushes and thrown-away straws,
Take-out iced latte escape the shores,
Chocolates packaging on the mountain trails,
Mother Nature becomes frail.

PET, PVC or Polystyrene,

Once magic now turned tragedy,
Strangled turtles that never recover.
Water birds die from plastic debris -
They howl and scream,
For their being naïve, taking plastic as a feast.

Grandma told me the other day,
How charming the ocean it used to be,
In colours of Emerald green.
Years gone by, seas became garbage bins,
With smell of stinky dead fishes;
Scraps-filled dead whales sadly in the news.

Food chains filled with micro-plastics,
From my fleece top in the wash.
Seafood platters become plastic shrimps.
How can you and I stop this?
It'll soon be too late, they say,
Where there's no more fish on our children's plate.

Are we doomed,
By plastic, that's man-made?
No, we mustn't wait,
But innovate and then replace!
There's no excuse, to be not extreme,
For our beautiful planet we must keep!

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

The City is Growing Faster than a Child - A Villanelle

Lau Galron

Pui Ching Primary School

The city is growing faster than a child,
With trees cut down to create human's space.

Pollution is uncontrollable and wild;

Crowded situations are no longer mild.

Development is key to speed up the pace.

The city is growing faster than a child.

Noise of cars vrooming by on highways riled.

Dirty air diffuses all over the place;

Pollution is uncontrollable and wild.

New buildings are tall and modernly styled,

Old heritage – worried to be replaced.

The city is growing faster than a child.

Light boxes and waves of fluorescence tiled.

Outdoor illumination sheds on my face;

Pollution is uncontrollable and wild.

Not enough space – too many people piled.

Face to face with an endless resource race;

The city is growing faster than a child.

Pollution is uncontrollable and wild.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Errors

Lam Haley

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

Error Error Error

I want to input some data,
but the computer is out of order.
I will do it later.

I want to bake a pizza,
but the oven is out of order.
I will bake it later.

I want to call Sarah, but
my phone is out of order.
I will call her later

Error Error Error

What's wrong dear?

I ask my super father
He is clever
He is a problem solver
He is a great partner
My dad is here
I have nothing to fear!

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

True Friendship

Au Yeung Tsz Him

S.K.H. Chu Oi Primary School

Since we met.

Our friendship was set.

I feel blessed to meet you.

Our friendship is so special and true.

You confront me when I am wrong

But will never scold me for long,

Friendship is a budding rose,
with sweetness rising from each fold .

Amid the thorns are moments dear,
as true friends lend a caring ear

A smile, a laugh, and friendly thought,
are roots that tie the friendship knot.

Friendship is like the colours of a rainbow.

Always in sight wherever you go.

It is bright and full of colours.

We close as brothers.

Money doesn't make me richer.

With the friend I have, I think that I am very rich indeed.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Beautiful city

Chan Tsz Hin

S.K.H. Ka Fuk Wing Chun
Primary School

Hong Kong is a beautiful city.

The towers are tall.

Such as ICC, IFC, Central Plaza, Bank of China Tower...

At night, the light on the towers are bright.

The night view is great.

Hong Kong is a beautiful city.

The bridges are long.

Such as Tsing Ma Bridge, Stonecutters Bridge, Ting Kau Bridge, Kap Shui Mun Bridge...

Tsing Ma Bridge is 2160 metres long.

It is the longest bridge in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is a beautiful city.

There is a big airport,

Hong Kong international airport.

It is in Chek Lap Kok

It has been named the best airport in the world eight times!

Hong Kong is a beautiful city.

There are tall towers.

There are long bridges.

There is a big airport.

I like my city.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Anonymous

Chan Ching Yi
Sophie

S.K.H. Lee Shiu Keung
Primary School

The Cityscape in my Eyes

Breathtaking.

Towers towering over trees,

Their shadows covering the light,

Like a black hole.

Strange.

Mysterious, weird and eerie.

Everyone ignoring each other.

But still they say they're friends.

Me.

Small, young and kind.

So much to learn and see.

My parents depending on me.

But still a tiny dot,

In a cityscape.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

The Cityscape of Time - Hong Kong

Man Ho Fung

Shanghai Alumni Primary School

When the sun shines high,
the people let their dreams fly.

Traffic and crowds are bright,
while streets shine no light.

When the sun dims low,
the whole city starts to glow.

Lights here, lights there, lights everywhere,
you can only stay aware.

As you try to find your way,
all you can do is not smell away.

So many delicacies but not enough time,
making a choice is like finding the right rhyme.

Past, present and future converge into one single space,
all you need is a map to get lost in this place.

What place is this? You might say,
the city of controlled chaos, I could say.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#Legendary- Cat

Lam Ting Yan Sienna

St. Paul's Co-educational
College Primary School

The legendary Felineclaw,

Was the sleekest cat of all.

Her tabby coat had Bengal spots,

And she excelled in plot and shot.

Her eyes were the perfect shade of green,

Which she closed tightly as she preened.

Those opal eyes stared out in the distance,

And she'd be ready to hunt in any instant.

She once jumped over a ten-metre wall,

And ate up a whole factory of fish balls.

She'd answer to any cat, near or far,

Even if he was trapped in a creaky car.

But the legendary Felineclaw,

Just like any cat, had her fall.

She battled a black bear with her bare claws.

Despite winning the battle, she lost the war.

Now the legendary Felineclaw,

Becomes a domestic cat who loves fish maw.

She'd answer to any human call,

With a playful smile and a friendly paw.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

PAPER AIRPLANES

Ku Ming Yi

St. Stephen's Girl's
Primary School

Airplanes airplanes pink and blue ,
flying in the sky when I saw you,
will you go to space or will you come back?
please give me an answer or I will be sad.

Airplanes airplanes white and green,
flying like the birds I have seen,
come to my home to visit soon,
I will wait until you arrive to my room.

Airplanes airplanes gold and yellow,
looking at you is always fun,
travelling through the clouds and around the sun,
is it doing good over there?

Airplanes airplanes orange and purple,
I see you come and I see you go,
I hope that I can let you go,
but I wish to see you everyday in my dreams and so.

Airplanes airplanes silver and grey,
will you leave me and fly away?
towards the blue sky and on the way,
you will fly to airplane land far, far away.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#TimeAfter- Time

Lee Ka Po

The Church of Christ in China
Tai O Primary School

Today, I thought it would be but another,
another dull long-hour at school,
why? those lessons don't really matter,
I already knew them inside out maybe even more than you...
Anyways, and maybe with that scattered,
and filled up all over me; I feel like school is no longer cool

Today, I thought it would be but another,
another daunting madness at school,
Ok, and here is the thing I gonna utter,
how come every single time when I came up with something out of the blue,
all of you, would just say 'boy, save it for later,'
I mean I really had something probably great to do

Never mind then, I just was trapped in and struck by the thunder,
not the real pool,
but that blunder,
casual fool...
oh my goo-sh, mother,
motherly forging the most barbaric rule;

Never mind then, I just was caught in and steamed by the cooker,
not the well-trained zoo,
nor that tender,
wicked guru...
oh my goo-sh, father,
fatherly neglecting my words as if they are just the cows' moo;

Oh...Tomorrow will hopefully be much better,
no longer suffocated in the suspense of a rough blue,
but a collage of us, closer;
until we get rid of those our worn shoes,
& silence the teacher,
while we start a new chapter on 'Who's Who?'

Oh...Tomorrow will hopefully be much better,
no longer tied in the upscale of moods,
but a coherence in harmony of ya, warmer;
until we realize the ridiculous crooks,
& bang the liar,
then we start a new chapter on 'Me & You'

Haha, I was only making up Orwell's Animal Farm into my own trailer...
though quite unexpectedly true,
while I was blowing my lightest drummer
on a new day normally just after a lesson or two...

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Eeryland

Lee Sai Ho Cedric

Tsuen Wan Catholic
Primary School

Eve ate the apple and left Eden.

Even she claimed, 'I was mistaken!'

Regretted deeply what she had done,

Yet she fled, the sinner's fate to shun.

Lapses of concentration God had,

Anon, a land he wanted to add,

Not yet to Hell, Eeryland was made.

Denied the guilt and Eve stayed.

Giant amoebae and micro blue whales.

Eatable wastes and fish without scales.

Tamable t-rex and terrible mosquitoes.

Sweet bitter gourds and bitter sweet potatoes.

Never knew what's right and wrong.

Eftsoon Eve went mad whole life long.

'**A**gain? Rewrite stories from Bible, Cedric?'

'**R**hapsody, Miss, but genetics get eccentric...'

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

Rainy Day

Lo Tsz Ki

Tsung Tsin Primary School
and Kindergarten

It's a rainy day.

And it's hard to say.

I am in the school,

but I want to go to the pool.

I look out of the window,

Fantasy I am sleeping on the pillow.

I try to make myself happy,

but I still feel badly.

What a HORRIBLE day!

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

The Cityscape is Like a Mosaic

Kong Kok Yee

Yaumati Catholic Primary School
(Hoi Wang Road)

How does the city look when the sun does rise?

The city, like a mosaic, stands lofty proud in front of my eyes.

Colourful 'stones' come in different shapes, meted with size,

To decorate the grand picture with ev'ry different disguise.

Some 'stones' are bigger, others smaller,

All equally important, none the better.

All aspects of life make up these 'stones'.

Plants and grass wake up in the green zones.

Green leaves bud on the trees,

A kite flies in the breeze,

Butterflies dance in the air, to pass

Through the flowers, fields and landmass.

Birds hover over flowers and whizz,

Cars speed along motorways and fizz.

Grey roadways weave and wreath a web on the ground,

Rivers slither and slide like snakes with vales as their playground.

Bridges link lands and flyovers establish an overhead crossing,

Roundabouts draw and depict delicious donuts without much glossing.

Buildings proliferate and prosper near pavements,

Historical statues pay homage to monuments.

On the street, people scythe through seething crowds

Throughout the daylight, Mother Nature enshrouds.

She holds a paintbrush to decorate each 'stone' in this landscape.

All 'stones' emboss the mosaic of this wondrous cityscape.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Cityscapes of Our Time

Huang Xin Rui Joey

Carmel Divine Grace
Foundation Secondary School

Glancing out of the window,
seeing high-rise buildings' shadows.
It is seven. The sun has risen.
I learnt it from Instagram posts.
The blue sky is hardly seen.
blocked by humanity's sin.

Walking down the street,
not catching a bird's tweet.
Where are they? I can't tell.
Maybe a better somewhere else.
Yells, chats and giggles fill my head.

Scanning around,
the road is full of crowds.
Traffic light blinking, buildings encompassing,
Hustling and bustling.
Teens, adults, all kinds of people.
Taxis, buses, all kinds of vehicles.

Everyone could scarcely walk,
on their phones they secretly stalk.
Twitter, Facebook, Instagram feeds they followed.
to the train station, the tunnel, the one swallowed.

Stations, similar to the streets,
Most were feet stepping on feet.
Beep, beep, beep!
The sound of Octopus cards
and the motionless announcement repeats and repeats.
It's difficult to survive the heat.

Finally, I get on the train
but what comes are more pains.
Folks fill the carts.
Even when they exit,
there seems no decrease.
The halt of the train makes me shake
then I have to apologise for my mistake.

The simmering stress
The outsiders rushing
Reminiscing the days.
Days repeat and duplicate.
It is a cycle I can't forfeit.
Can we find uniqueness in this?

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Will there still be a place to rest?

Tam Kiu Wai

Cheung Chuk Shan College

Flying from the remote and cold north

We arrive to this prosperous city, having

Lots of extremely high grey 'trees'

And 'beasts' releasing black smoke and howling

Having a short stay in the spectacular wetland

Only our friends're peeping

To celebrate the discovery of this oasis

With abundant food and no any human sound

By the time when my offsprings come

Will this greenland still be present?

Or a photo will become their only habitat

With all the memories fixed in a moment

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#science
#teacher

Wong Ho Wang

CUHK FAA Chan Chun Ha
Secondary School

Our science teacher was a dangerous man.

Lava in his brain was of high temperature.

He loved doing experiments,

and of course dangerous ones.

The crazy things he taught us,

bunsen burner is surely not enough.

'You must mix all the liquid together!'

shouted he, and 'BOOM!'

Our little laboratory exploded,

sadly, the school building remained.

Our science teacher,

was this actually your plan?

Oh poor, poor teacher,

we never saw him again.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#hypocrite

Wong Pak Hung

Fung Kai Liu Man Shek Tong
Secondary School

Tender word deeper cut

All you want is to spill your guts

Whatever talking to them or us

Making yourself be a crowd pleaser

Trading secrets with the newsmonger

Losing confidants and never gain

This day and ever again

All of it is such a shame

Do it and die never blame

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Nobody's Perfect

Wan Wai Yan

Good Hope School

They snicker at my flawed skin
They taunt my twitching grin
Scornful glares drilling into my eyes
Like sharp diamond plies
You're a disgrace, a misplace
They always say

They tease me with blunt malice
They jeer at my loneliness
Bitter laughter ringing through my ears
Like wasted rusty gears
You're a mistake, an ache
They always say

They abuse me in torrents
They sneer at my presence
Gruesome insults sinking into my heart
Like a small poisonous dart
You're a humiliation, an imperfection
They always say

I stay silent at their beating
I allow their bullying
Hopeful beacon staring into their heartless souls
Only to find pitch black holes
You're not perfect too
I would say

They ruin the loveliness of mirth
They destroy the humanity on Earth
They represent the whole of cruelty
Like me
You're not perfect, an imperfection
I would say

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

my grandmother used to say

Law Chor Yin Chloe

Heep Yunn School

my grandmother used to say
'always rosemary on chicken day.'
now she's dead and the kitchen's bare
even with the butler's vacant stare.

my father used to say
'aren't you done watching videos of ballet?'
his locked doors don't relieve me
from being an unwilling pioneer
to the moans of internet women with kitten ears.

my brother used to say
'soon it'll just be me and my Chevrolet.'
the family truck smells like
marijuana and regret, the green eyes of the robo-servant
silently burning holes
intensity choking our souls.

the government used to say
'give us five years,
and the city won't be any different from Marseille.'
everyday I cower beneath my sheets
twisting them into pleats
terrified of the slogans, that those posters repeat
killer drones patrolling the streets.

and long ago, my mother used to sing
of lords and ladies and the shine of a ring
a spectrum of freedom
her binary words used to string.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Harakiri

**Chan Leung Yi
Andrew**

HKMA David Li
Kwok Po College

In a city of neon lights
A glitch in society
Defined by her sobriety
Lost her dream, once in her sights.

There was hope, she thought
The photos of her dreams she could restore
But alas, a snapshot is nothing more
Than a memory that time forgot.

She was bent on perfecting her kin
It meant more to her than anything, anyone.
So when her life's work came undone
She crumbled, her sanity became thin.

One day she snapped
Her life apart, her thoughts scattered
Her reputation scorned, her dreams shattered
She became the imperfection she dreaded.

Now, like a bird without flight
She drove herself over the edge
With the very sin, against she pledged.
Lost, in the city of neon lights.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#IGotMyLetter

Choy Hoi Hang

Katia

HKUGA College

For long I thought magic was fake,
I'll never get my letter even if diamonds break.
But everything turned up on my eleventh birthday,
I woke up to something laying on the doorway!

It's THE letter! I couldn't believe it's real!
Addressed in green ink with a purple seal!
Words shot out of my mouth, 'I'M A WITCH!!'
So loud that my parents flinched.

We drove to the leaky cauldron and tapped the wall three times,
What appeared was the dream of a lifetime!
We stepped foot into Diagon Alley, into all the magical stores,
Crikey! There're so many! Ollivanders, Flourish & Blotts and more!

From that day on I was more hard-working than ever,
Trying to read and know all about that world whatsoever.
The days went by, September the first is here in a blink of an eye!
My parents sent me to King's cross and kissed me goodbye.

I dashed through the barrier and saw the Hogwarts Express,
It's so good to be a part of this world oh god I'm obsessed!
I went on the scarlet steam engine and met a boy,
'Hello, I'm Lorcan Scamander.' He said in joy.

We sat in a compartment and chatted about the first-years,
Then came the trolley witch asking, 'anything off the trolley dears?'
I've never seen such delicacies so I said 'We'll take the lot!'
Cauldron cakes, pumpkin pasties, chocolate frogs and Bertie Botts!

Then came Lysander - Lorcan's twin brother,
But deep down I knew Lorcan's like no other.
Lysander went into our compartment,
'You two better get changed, we'll be there soon.' he said like he's head
of department.

I gazed outside the window- it was already dark,
All I could see was the starry spark.
Ahead of me was a new journey,
One that's even better than beef jerky!

I don't know what the future holds,
But let's wait till it leisurely unfolds.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

The unrealizable longing of our time

Chung Ka Wing

Homantin Government
Secondary School

So difficult can we get a foothold,
in here as heavy as the workload!

Carrying on our heavy lifting,
only to afford those houses!(Oh, it's alarming)

For years the price surge,
for us, we can hardly emerge.

It is such an elusive,
To unearth one's inexpensive.

Try to develop one's endurance,
so as to grasp the extravagance.

We regard it as indispensable,
But never will it be tolerable.

Some landlords being heinous,
Making the current atrocious.
Applying nanometer-tech deliberately,
In designing marvelous flats elaborately!

That we tend to be an animal!
Attempt to pay the ceiling rental,
hoping for the chance to settle
in the well-known humble kennel!

For bricks should we pour in youth relentlessly;
For bricks should we pump in cash tirelessly;
No alternatives, but to be brick slave?
Just only from the cradle to the grave.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Last Heartbeat

Advani Melanie

Maryknoll Convent School
(Secondary Section)

She kneels by me every day, a book on her lap.

When the thrush calls, she shuts it with a snap.

A petite girl with freckles, who wanders in the woods.

Her heart roams wild, like lil' Red Riding Hood.

Every day she stands atop my shoulders,

Light as a feather, as she strokes my face.

Yet I'm strong enough to lift a boulder,

My roots are planted, poised underground in grace.

I can never move, nor can I talk,

Eyes hidden deep as I watch predators stalk.

The girl comes every day; I'm never lonely!

And my fellow neighbours keep me company.

The girl is pure, she has seen no danger;

Only happiness, bright as the Sun.

She studies all kinds of insects with pleasure,

And didn't see the man who shoots foxes with a gun.

I bask in the times when all is perfect,

When my willows shield harm from every object.

'Chirrup!' As robins picnic atop my head,

Footprints showing the path where prey has fled.

But times flies and the future is unravelling,
Too quick, too fast, too dangerous to control.

Mankind like the rest is too, evolving,
And soon, bowing down, I surrender my soul.

My pals keep disappearing, one by one,
Their stumps leaking blood to show who has won.
The girl clutches her teddy, afraid of her discovery,
Hoping in vain, that the forest will gain recovery.

These blokes come, tall, terrible, terrifying.

They destroy my girl's paradise
With their horrible weapons, sawing.

I only lived to see her again twice.

My leaves are withered, my branches have cracks.

I can guard the forest no more, judging by the number of attacks.

This is a mistake! This is wrong!

The nature will be gone, along with the faintest birdsong.

Before I died, she was the last thing I saw.

Robbed of joy, fun, memories, paradise... Tears dribbled down her jaw.

My last dying heartbeat fell on her hands. Her fist, in anger, pounded the ground.

404 ERROR. HAPPINESS NOT FOUND.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Imperfections

Siu Yan Tung

Marymount Secondary School

Imperfections are like stains on your skirt

Just a small, tiny, undetectable dirt.

A flaw isn't extraordinary or scary

Simply natural and nothing to be weary

Imperfections are like missing pieces of your puzzle

Just some bubbles spill out when drinks sizzle

A blunder won't be eternal

Simply brief and normal

Beautiful flowers blossom a day and wither away

Ugly caterpillars turning into butterflies flying away

Things reverse in a wink

Blemish fades after a blink

Nothing is perfect

There's none to expect

Because everyone is imperfect

Imperfect is perfect.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic
#something

#FlawsOf- Perfection

Lo Abbie

Po Leung Kuk Vicwood K.T.
Chong Sixth Form College

Shattered glasses tide over
seeing every part of her
- 'you're not gracile enough
so don't you dare act in a huff'.

Someone sent her oxalis,
as mumbling a pack of sour skittles.
Splash -
flooding petals drowned the tide.

Bangs grew taller than her chin
hiding behind the rabbit hut
keeping people at arms length
disfiguring her glassy blink.

Whoosh -
sprints towards her fur
desperately the binding dance she escaped
still catching her.

The canvas of rainload drifted apart
Petals McFlurry in the air.
Skins exposing to the sunbeam
eve's eyes opened wide.

Could finally she see:
reunion of the broken portrayal
rifts on the mirror
still the best of her ever seen.

The mandala painting's never full,
if pieces they might shatter.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#Stargazing

Yung Hei Tung

Qualified College

Look up the sky , stargazing

The darkest night , with lots of glittering and shooting stars .

Deep in space , into my heart , which is cold .

A darkness blanks my mind ,

depression is running through my head, these makes me think of death.

So many tears shed in the dark of night.

But now, I found the light , illuminating my darkest night.

Glowing like sun ,brighten my way.

Eyes holding galaxies in sweet captivity.

when you tell me 'please keep the faith, don't let the hope fade away.'

My heart flutters and cry.

Stars never disappear, they keep blazing .

How wonderful and beautiful are all star that I see,

and you're the prettiest one next to me ,

whose starry eye sparking up my every single night.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

City Pressure

Long Junci

Rhenish Church Pang Hok-ko
Memorial College

Pressure in Hong Kong,
pounding in my head like a
three hour English

lesson. Making me
tired, like old towering
buildings on the peak.

Monsters shadow us;
air, land, water pollution
choking at our lungs,

eroding bodies.

Tucked away in small buildings,
paying lots of rent,

passing each other
only briefly, working hard.

Each of us alone.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

Death

Ha Sumi

S.K.H. Bishop Baker Secondary
School

The day I've feared for long has come

The rusted bars squeak as they open

I walked out of the cage

That I've longed to disappear

But not for the sake of freedom

Each step along the dark corridor

Is another step closer to death

I see the rope, the key to hell

The pastor holds his bible and cross

'If you bow down to the Lord, your sins will be forgiven.

And you may enter the gates to Heaven.'

Oh Lord, I've never believe in you more

Please save me from this mess

I would start this all over again

If I had a second chance

The rope rests on my neck

I close my eyes, ready for torture

But what I see isn't darkness

It's light.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Her Silent Struggle

Ip Tsz Yui

S.K.H. Lam Kau Mow Secondary
School

The dawn's first glimmer of light
Bestows the vigour of life upon the bight.
By the whiff of vibrancy, she revives
And again she prospers and thrives.

The sun suspends steadily
While the glass curtain walls glisten up the whole city.
Under the azure sky,
The domino-like buildings soar erect and high.

These stalwart and sturdy knights
Guard their queen for days and nights.
The lightning rod, you see, is a spear,
Heading towards the gigantic sphere.

Soon the sunlight seeps into the twilight
Under the guidance of that little sprite.
From ruddy to crimson and soon plunges into darkness
Within seconds, she's brightened up and again sinks into stillness.

She is like wearing a resplendent gown
In which the myriad stars assemble as her glittery crown
How wondrous, how grand!
But have you heard her whimpered in such a wonderland?

Every time when she expands
She has to forfeit the beauty of the lands.
And every nights when she shows the magnificent skyline
The stars which are obliterated can only sob in whine

The contamination she made
Is hidden behind the cityscape
The immoderate light and the excessive waste
Racked by the guilt, she feels only disgraced.

And maybe we should start thinking?
How much cost and sacrifice we've paid?
To flaunt? To splurge?
Is developing the city such an urge?

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Changing Cityscapes

Tang Ngou Ching

Sacred Heart Canossian College

When I was young, I clinged to my mother's hand
While hopping on the Star Ferry, heading to the opposite land
I turned and gazed back at the cityscape behind me
The icons of the city, the thin, rectilinear skyline I see.

The Victoria Peak, glistening under the bright light
Standing bravely, facing the bottomless sea
Blocks of diamonds, surrounding the curvy hills
The Central Library stood, taller than the rest.

Today, I held tightly to my daughter's miniature hand
While hopping on the Star Ferry heading to the opposite land
I turned and gazed back at the cityscape behind me
The icons of the city, the narrow, crooked skyline I see.

The Victoria Peak, shaded by layers of concrete
Sh-sh-shuddering in the black, eerie shadows
Sheets of clouds, projected on its glass walls
The IFC stood proudly, against all odds.

Cityscapes change, cityscapes evolve
Some were forgotten, some have dissolved
Only through memories, and stories we tell
Can the tales of our time continue to dwell.

Poet of the School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Puzzle

Ngai Michael

Sing Yin Secondary School

Symphony drops, singing stops.
All bliss fades until it's bleak.
Wandering on a frozen mountain,
solely and slowly,
only accompanied by insecurity.

Led by the raging blizzard,
trekking forward with no progress,
lost in a wintry storm
of stress and mess.

Fragment in my palm,
a puzzle incomplete,
a gift from the lord,
a key to change all.

Whirling wind whispers by my ear,
Give up.
Freezing air whips my face, flips my shield,
Obey it.
Snowy storm blinds the sky and eyes,
Nowhere to escape to.

But I shout, Never.
I hold my piece of puzzle,
no more drizzling tears.
I venture through the throe,
step by step..
I collect more fragments,
Piece by piece.

At the end, the puzzle's complete,
But blank as a sheet.
As long as I want,
It can be anything in form.
At the end, I escape and embrace
the dawn after the storm.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

What Does the Road Lead To

Castaneda Yani
Kaye Linsangan
St. Clare's Girls' School

They say that 'All Roads Lead to Rome'

Let them know, 'All Start at the Halls of Ivy'

For this is the place which calls us.

Claims us, takes us, makes us her own.

Wise Lady Athena marks her chosen.

She opens us, trains us, shapes us anew.

Demands of us our mind and passion.

Demands of us our heart for The Mission.

What's your ambition? What's your intention?

To unearth and take what our hearts have longed.

To show the world truth and rise up beyond.

It matters not, she whispers in our ears

For we are among her future legions.

The growing heroes of aging regions.

We are dusk ravens, the omen bringers.

We are dawn butterflies, the life changers.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Towers

Kong Lap Kwan
Hanz David

St. Margaret's Co-educational
English Secondary and Primary
School

(Poem is intended to be viewed horizontally in order to illustrate the
shape of skyscrapers)

Towering over us,
Piercing through layers of fluff and froth.
Illuminating in the sky,
It shadows our eyes from the sun.

Man-made monoliths of the sky
Gashing the stillness high above.
The mighty structures stand tall as
Jab after jab laid are on the horizon.

Castrated scraps of metal
Gouges scarred earthen flesh.
Fresh tissue forms on old wounds.
Only to be washed away in winds and rain.

Time capsules in a case
Are demolished. Pulverized.
Make way for the young
And ambitious! We'll take what we

Can. Yes, we can.
An almagram of one and the other.
We can blend and amend
The dissonance of our range.

The conception we hold is impossible.
The dissonance we fear is audible.
These towers define us,
A reflection of modern society.

(Poem is intended to be viewed horizontally in order to illustrate the
shape of skyscrapers)

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#time

Chau Cheuk Yee

St. Mark's School

Fair to all walks of life,
No matter the ragged or the rich,
Adults or adolescents,
They do not have more or less.
Sometimes it is our friend or foe.
Sometimes it is pursued or pushed.
At times of merry-go-round,
Playing with stuffed toys,
We pursue it for memories,
Hoping for more time to relax, to laugh, to enjoy, happily.
At times of growing beards,
Arrivals of deadlines,
We push it for space,
Hoping for more time to work, to sob, to suffer, sarcastically.
Sometimes it is our friend or foe.
Sometimes it is pursued or pushed.
No matter in melancholy or merriment,
In tears or twinks,
As if waters in downpouring waterfalls or flowing streams.
Once passed, it's passed.
Time never returns.
We can only wave a valedictory hand
At those who have passed
From the finishing line.
At least,
That is what we thought,
Naively.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Debts of Love

Lai Ching Ue

St. Paul's Convent School

Isn't it pathetic
to inflate yourself with doses of hydrogen,
when you are a balloon that craves to soar?
Every single time,
you acknowledge the serendipity of fulminating
when ignited with your bleached white lies,
for your mournful gaze is as soft as a sponge,
letting everyone else's faults be absorbed.
Just like when the wind blows,
the autumn leaves tremble.
And you are getting used to it.

Isn't it lethargic
to hunt down the foothills for the mane of a wolf,
when you are the one who massacred innocents under the beastly skin?
Little did you know,
you are the innocent, yet at the same time you are the wolf,
for you wrecked your very own euphoria
with your sharp, fatal and clueless claws.
Just like a lamb to the slaughter,
you found yourself on the ritual's altar.
And you are, unsurprisingly, the sacrifice.

Isn't it idiotic
to mumble 'sorry' as if you deserved to do so
when you are the one aching in agony?
After all,
your silence means 'please be happy';
your tears mean 'I truly cared'.
But your smile means nothing more
than a flower that can't bloom, a dream that can't come true.
Just like blaming gravity for falling in love,
you blamed yourself for everything,
except loving yourself.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Cityscapes

Monologue of an Old Cathedral

Wan Ching Tung

St. Stephen's Girls' College

I was once a brand new cathedral

Built at the centre of a little village

Now I am nothing but a rotten building

At the corner of a metropolis

Others like me had rotted to dust

Still I stand alone trying to blend in

But those high rise buildings make me gothic

I soon start to lose track of time

I gaze into the distance and find the sea

Only to notice it has shrunk

For 200 years

The coastlines on both sides almost touching each other

Skyscrapers in blue reflect colours of the sky

At nightfall their vibrant lights shine on me

Showering me in pink, green and yellow

Such a contrast to my plain white marble

Wander the city one day

Look behind the tall buildings

Far beyond the shoreline

Here I stand

Ancient, shabby, silent

Still enjoying my solitude

Watching the city change

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

To extinguish a cigarette

Wong Sin Man

The Evangelical Lutheran Church
of Hong Kong Yuen Long
Lutheran Secondary School

In the middle of the night,
Under the hustle and bustle of the city lights,
I am sitting in my car
And light up a cigar.

Inhale quickly.
Exhale slowly.
Smoke in the air
Is like the past affairs.

You used to tell 'Little Red Riding Hood' before I sleep.
You used to buy me my favourite toy jeep.
You used to wipe my tears.
You used to ask me to go here and there.

You were my comfort zone
Until my arm is as hard as a stone.
Growth is my danger zone
That I will lose your condone.

After your death,
It's emptiness next to me on my bed.
After your death,
It has stopped my fluttering red.

I realized that I need to shake away the gloom—
Like you always said, 'Inhale the future. Exhale the past.'

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
#something

#instafamous

Man Ka Yan

Tung Wah Group of Hospitals
Lui Yun Choy Memorial College

Light the candle

Then centre it just so

Take the photo

Add a filter

Adjust the brightness

Type something trite

But seemingly deep

Add a bunch of hashtags

Tag your friends

Hit the post button

Wait to be a celebrity

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Errors | Lapses |
Imperfections

Ode to a Perfect World

Chan King Hang

Ying Wa College

Penniless as a church mouse, wandering away in town,
Pests and crickets all over me, I'm in the dumps so down.
Perhaps I'd want a decent life, to sip a tad of gin,
Poor me cursed to death, for whenever did I sin?

Eccentric as I always am, the lonely bourgeoisie
Empty to be all by myself while they all shower in glee.
Easy Street I'd die for, to be happy, to be gay,
Everything's a lost cause, as my life fades day by day.

Rodents we are considered, filthy and unrefined,
Reigned over by all others, whose minds seem to be blind.
Rationality and reason, what wishy-washy deceit
Restlessly we live and wait to see that both roads meet.

Faultlessly we work, uninvolved to what we eat and wear,
Fifteen hours day by day, there's no time left to spare.
Flounces on a satin skirt, with curtseys and enchantées,
Fantasies we'd most love to see as we gradually look away.

Eating gruel at dawn, and eating bread at dusk,
Everyone ought to get the same and live a life less brusque!
Empty-headed children, living all the life they enjoy,
Ehh, all play and no work makes Jack a mere toy.

Coal is my best mate, my eternal partner in life,
Collectively we do lots of good and that is what we strive.
Caves and undergrounds, where miserably we tread,
Can we see anything? Just the darkness far ahead.

Those, my friend, are the people with hearts of gold,
Though the way we see it, the truth could have never been told.
Through living our lives with all we would desirably need,
They're standing there, seeming to have done no good deed...

To tell this tale to all those in the city,
It'd seem so unpleasant as we lay down our pity.
So many imperfections, even harder to neglect.
Yet maybe it was they who made where we are perfect.

Years flow through and as the going comes by,
They leave behind the burdens never dared to defy.
Once with the smallest dreams for a twinkle of gift,
They softly bid adieu to the legacy they lived.

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Free Selection

Of Ants and Picnics

Ann Jason Adrian

Diocesan Boys' School

On a sunny Tuesday we went out for a hike,
deep within the mountains, near a lake we really like.

We packed up all our food and then we set off right away,
providing that we stopped by several 'diners' on the way.

We put down our necessities at our picnic spot,
except, of course, the ketchup which my father had forgot.

The picnic would be perfect, you could tell that with a glance,
unless, of course, we ran into a colony of ants.

My Dad suggested that we should all go for a run,
but I said I would take a nap until they both were done.

When they started running my Dad had a thought concerned,
he told me not to eat the food until they both returned.

I lay down on the picnic mat and practiced self control
but I didn't realise our lunch was going for a stroll!!!

I had a dream of eating almost everything I saw,
and woke up with a craving for a burger and some slaw.

Opening my eyes, I saw something really weird,
it seemed our picnic lunch had somehow disappeared.

I wondered if I'd be punished and have to pay a bill
and then I saw our picnic doing 90 up a hill!

I chased them till they lost me, I didn't have a clue,
of where on earth they were or what I was going to do.

I found a basket and jumped in it like it was a tub,
I had an idea of faking it to be someone else's grub.

The ants picked me up and I thought they fell for my fake scheme,
instead they went to a cliff and threw me in the stream!

I struggled and I staggered and I very nearly drowned,
it took a lot of swimming but I made it to the ground.

Dad was tired after his long kilometre jog,
he came back with the rather dumb and very hungry dog.

I tried to tell him 'bout the ants who stole all of our meat,
He said a lot of angry things - it's best I don't repeat.

So there we were, many miles from a store,
quite exhausted, cold and soggy by the shore.

Dad said, 'We should go home for whatever we can find,'
I told him he should, but I would stay behind.

I went to meet the ants at a secret hiding spot,
'coz I wanted to ask them if I could join their lot.

I knew Dad wouldn't understand and neither would the pup,
'If you cannot beat an enemy, consider joining up.'

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Free Selection

Peace & War

Lau Sum Yu

Evangel College

How can the world be different if
countries' leaders' start a war
If we want to save the world
then it depends on us all

oh, if we want to save the world
then why do we have no peace?

If we want to save the world
why don't wars start to cease

We must give it our attention
to make wars stop and cease
How? Just spread the message
And let's make peace!

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Free Selection

Beautiful Sea

Jong Ka Lo Carol

Holy Angels Canossian School

Beautiful water

for drinking and for living

No sea, no life

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Free Selection

Hair

Mendoza Katherine

Hong Kong Adventist Academy

Sometimes my hair looks like a bear

It looks like that because of the air

I think that is not really fair

Because that's like having a nightmare

One time I cut my own hair

I did that because of a dare

Then I ate a sweet pear

While I was sitting on a chair

I regret cutting my hair

That teaches me to never do a dare

My hair needs more care

Or else I will look like a fuzzy bear

Loosing hair is really rare

It happens when you don't take care

Thats why I'd like to share

My daily hair care

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Free Selection

My School Life

Lin Ka Yu

Hong Kong Chinese
Women's Club College

In spite of heat or rain

Students sprint to school before the bell rings

Teacher's coming, we're all rushing

Diving in the sea of knowledge

Digging deeper when learning

Teachers are gardeners

Nurture us with love, raise me up

Schoolmates meet together with kindness

Form friendships with genuineness

Close the book, tidy the bag

Twilight is upon me

So close, yet so far away

What a beautiful school day!

Poet of the
School Award

Topic:
Free Selection

The Cardboard Granny

Chew Jingyu

West Island School

In the quiet early morning,
before swallows sing their song,
the cardboard granny starts her calling
to the city of Hong Kong.

She trundles through the empty streets
with a rusty cart that groans,
pushing past gilded buildings
and the gates of wealthy homes.

At six she stops at 7-Eleven
with a gap-toothed, cheery smile,
waiting for a cardboard package
that she knows will take a while.

At seven dawn starts to trickle in
and customers follow suit,
so she takes their siu mai cartons
and continues on her route.

Then eight nine ten and bustling eleven
means she'll stock up soon,
for roadside friends will have her back
before morning cedes to noon.

They leave cardboard on their sidewalks,
on their streets of wild delights,
on their rows of gleaming storefronts
and their city's greatest heights.

Past lunch her cart is still not full
but there's no time for frustration,
so she stacks her precious cardboard
and heads down to the station.

A dollar for each catty sold,
ten dollars for her cardboard gold.

Two heavy coins for her to keep,
but not enough to grant her sleep.

She'll have to toil and carry on,
and push and push until she's gone.

So she takes her cart and wheels along,
back in the shadows of Hong Kong.



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