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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 themes that will urge the readers to stop and think. We hope this collection will serve as an encouragement to a new generation of budding poets.

### **Preface**

Dr Fung Kai Yeung, Paul ( 馮啟陽博士 )

Head of Department of English
The Hang Seng University
of Hong Kong

Early this year, our adjudicators received more than 2000 poem entries from primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. These poems were written under three themes: 'because', 'be grateful for' and 'family'. The poems reflect the lives and experiences of many of Hong Kong students during a truly extraordinary time, and likewise they demonstrate how life goes on even in the midst of something as earth-shaking as the COVID-19 pandemic. While many poets elected to write about the pandemic, several others chose to explore other topics with these themes.

Beginning with the theme of 'because', we saw poets grapple with the question of why the world is the way that it is, offering insight into their daily struggles and perspectives. In 'The Bane of Our Existence', Audrey So talks about the human condition in today's glamourous society. 'In our modern day society', she writes, 'we judge and are judged.' A thing we take pride in, could be in others' eyes, sin.' We love what is praised, and hate those that are not,' causing many to strive to be what they're not'. The poem depicts a society where true expression is hidden away during everyday human interactions. What is prioritised instead is other people's recognition and commendation. The poem digs into the fundamental question of who we are as individuals and how to be authentic. Why are people lost in this dire situation? The poem answers by saying: 'Because we're afraid'. What we are afraid of, the poem does not answer, but it is a sharp analysis of how to live a good life in today's performance-oriented world.

With the theme 'be grateful for', many writers naturally chose to voice their thanks for any number of sources of gratitude, but in Eyunni Naarayani Gayathri's poem entitled 'Depression', we instead see a sophisticated portrayal of a disillusioned mind. The poem does not rush to a conclusion of whether one should be grateful or not. Towards the end of the poem, the poet writes: 'Must I be grateful,' For the grey skies,' That pour black rain,' To blind my eye.' Must I be grateful,' When the world dies,' And all that remains,' Is a memory of goodbyes'. The poem is not only a description of a depressed person; it hints at the strained relationship between the individual and society. It is not only a personal account of someone who feels they have been abandoned by society; it can also be taken as a social critique.

In the Primary section, Chan Hei Tung Hayden takes a very different approach to the theme of 'be grateful for'. Her poem, entitled 'A Firefly's Glow', gives a beautiful sketch of how a firefly interacts with the natural world. The writer goes on to explain how the beauty of the firefly changes her state of mind, which is comparable to how the British Romantic poets sought solace from the Lake District two hundred years ago. Hayden writes: 'I see its glowing glare every day,' A small, bright flame in the dark.' Like a fiery stream lighting the way,' Healed by its light, my once broken heart.'

### Preface (cont.)

Dr Fung Kai Yeung, Paul ( 馮啟陽博士 )

Head of Department of English
The Hang Seng University
of Hong Kong

Finally, under 'Family', we have many lively portrayals of familial activities. Some of them are joyful, and some of them less so. 'You' by Shek Tsoi Yee Chloe, is a poem structured around a list of action verbs which characterise infants. The first line of each stanza begins with an action of the infant: 'You blink... you wail... you scream... you wait... you beam... you fume... you stare... you wave.' Then, the poem concludes by returning to the act of blinking. The poem begins with an infant looking up at his parents and ends by using the same movement of looking, but this time the infant has grown up and is now looking at their own child. The poem resembles a chronicle of a person's life, from one birth to another. The poem also celebrates continuation, a key spirit in the formation of families.

The more I read of these poems, the more I find the richness of our participants' work. These young writers are coming of age in a time of rapid change and uncertainty, yet the sharpness and wit of these poems indicate a level of presence and awareness that is difficult to achieve early in life. As a result, many of the poets express concern for the future, but this concern is often tempered with hope. Returning to 'The Bane of Our Existence', the poet concludes that, despite the flaws and hardships in our society, there is hope for the times ahead by saying, 'Only when we take the first step to a better future,' Will we save our society... And for a better future, we continue to strive.'

I sincerely hope these poems prove to be as enlightening for you as they have been for me.

# 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 and supported by the Gifted Education Section of the Education Bureau. The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong was commissioned to host the competition, adjudication and related training workshops for the fifth year in a row. The competition aims to provide a platform for gifted and more able students of English to extend their imagination and passion for writing and engage them in further training in poetry writing. It also serves as a channel for teachers to recognise and identify students gifted in English learning.

### Workshops

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

#### Adjudication

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

#### **Award Ceremony**

On 28 May 2021, a joint award ceremony was held to crown the winners and commemorate the work of all the finalists. The award ceremony was attended by students, parents, representatives from the Education Bureau and The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education, as well as staff from The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong.

#### A Note from the Editor

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

### **Adjudicators**

### Preliminary Adjudication Final Adjudication

Dr Holly Chung Dr Alfie Bown

Dr Amy Kong Dr Gavin Bui

Dr Annise Lam Dr Paul Fung

Dr Joyce Lee Dr Swann Joel

Dr Miguel Lizada Dr Charles Lam

Mr Mark Mathison Dr Jay Parker

Ms Christine Ng Dr Anna Tso

Dr Rebecca Ong Dr Catherine Wong

Mr Kyle Thorson

Dr Heidi Wong

Mr Rhett Yu

## **Primary**Section

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#### **Gold Award**

Theme: be grateful for

### A Firefly's Glow

### Chan Hei Tung Hayden

Good Hope Primary School cum Kindergarten

Black paint splashed against rosy crimson, Pure gold dripping down. Here I stand in my misery prison, In grief and guilt, I drown.

An unearthly glow courses through my eyelids, My heart alights with scalding fire. That never ceased to burn, whatever I did. Emerald, it never did tire.

As they parted, their malignant bodies reflected, Rhythmically glowing their green pulsing end. As if from the air they clawed and collected, Only one lingered, a candle lit, as my friend.

I see its glowing glare every day, A small, bright flame in the dark. Like a fiery stream lighting the way, Healed by its light, my once broken heart.

Sluggishly misery faded away, The grief of loss vanished. The darkest black turned to white, night to day, Aged was the evanescent firefly, deeply cherished.

A day when sunlight flowed as a wave, Unnoticed by anyone casually passing, Was the dim body among a grave, Unnoticed by anyone but me, sobbing.

Life twists in unpredictable ways, Every second, every minute. You never know what's in store in future days, Why not cherish our lantern that stores it?

Our ability to see and hear,
Taste, feel, and smell,
Is a gift that may sometimes tear,
Be grateful for them, rather an empty shell.

What brings us most joy, hope, and love? What is branching off a hundred doors? It's not under control from the heavens above, But a gift bursting full of optional floors.

Every nightmare, every dream, Every heartbeat, every breath, Is a reminder of our lively, running stream, That we should be grateful for, even in death.

This is a really strong poem that is one of the strongest in the competition in many ways. The poem has a nice consistent rhyme scheme and rhythm and deals in some very complex language and ideas. It contains a rather wide range of emotional thoughts and responses, and perhaps it could be more consistent in being focussed on invoking one or two key emotional ideas. However, there is a really impressive range of language used here and some really powerful creative lines which give the poem a unique style. Overall, this is a poem which shows a young writer capable of writing in the highest level English and with a bright future in creative writing and poetry. For a primary school poem, this is fantastic. Very well done.

The poem presents a powerful story of a person who finds solace from watching the fireflies. The gazing subject is able to store the wonderful memories of fireflies in the time of setback and frustration. The poem celebrates the five senses as they are the channels through which human beings can perceive beauty in the present. Note that beauty here is not defined by formula. It arises from a complex and personal interaction with the fireflies. It may look banal to others, but that is the point — the five senses are given to us to create individual meanings instead of knowing pre-existing ones.

#### **Gold Award**

Theme: be grateful for

### **Grateful Things**

#### Lam Yan Tung

Good Hope Primary School cum Kindergarten

To run around in the wild, And to feel his paws brush my knees. As I jog, under the big sunny smile, Looking down gently over me.

I need to feel more; More than the charming scenery, More than a paw against my knees; For the happiness to me, is still a mystery.

Oh, as the birds fly by, With the grass and trees colourfully dyed, I let my feelings soar sky-high, As my saliva drips on a lunch of shepherd's pie.

So many gentle memories are here, As I stood under a shade, without fear. For one, being my favourite lullaby, Making my memories very clear.

Ah, now I start to remember, As my mind escapes from the deep. Finding the cause of all my fear, As the birds, yet again, cheep.

I start to tap against a rhythmic beat, Singing and dancing on both my feet. The song in my head, is no longer discreet, As I sang it out, while feeling so complete.

I stood as still as deer, With my dog following beside me. Even though life appears to be so mere, There are things to be grateful for, wherever we may be.

A celebration of nature and a poem of gratitude for the simplicity and innocence of life. The poet uses natural imagery such as the sun, trees and birds to offer a sense of closeness to nature. This natural imagery conveys a romantic notion of the soothing and nurturing power of nature. Indeed, the poem shows the positive effect of nature on the 'I' persona: towards the end of the poem (and his jog in the wild), the persona has slowly been healed by nature and become part of nature as a deer. While the persona sets off to try to feel more, for happiness was a mystery to him before this journey, he is able to be grateful for all things even if they appear to be inadequate.

This is a very lovely poem from a primary student, who obviously is curious about the world and his/her own life, and the meaning of everything. I love the word choices that capture the somewhat simple but also growingly complex contemplation on what he/she sees. There is an immediate response for something tangible (a dog) and delayed consideration for more abstract matters, such as the cause of fear, and the meaning of life. The vivid descriptions make the thoughts of a very young kid come to life. The language and the form of the poem is commendable too.

#### **Gold Award**

Theme: because

### For Where the Crossroads Meet

### Deborah Nkemdilim Ogwu

The Church of Christ in China Tai O Primary School 'That footprint showered in wild sand, in granules and in tears, diverted by our callings, and drowned in despair, tank', Oh, when should I cease to hear, that deafening note, as if a howl from Sia?

Along the way, there were lights, flickering from nowhere, they cracked the many dawns; where broken souls lay, where none other than a walking-dead might bear,

'Go on, Go on,' I said, my face torn, our pens soaked; displaying the loudest mourn...

Alas, some walked away, haunted and somewhat petrified, 'Hold on,' the breathless yearning popped, from far across the river...They covered us in all dark masks, magnified, given us a brand new code, stars flopped, drips of crocodile tears topped,

And I dare say in a different tone, articulating the same words, walking the same road, a Joker's smile pinned in brick-red, stone'...

There I sought a place to rest, putting down the load, and trimming the sky, from the phantom's lens of a "little toad",

that's mould', in a time like this, I grabbed my mum and dad's hands, fold' so that despite the turbulent troll', we all, will have the same clear mind and soul...'

that's when they walked back to the place where they first bowed, and me, still being grate-ful, to be that overlapping crossroad'.

A soothing narrative poem with the persona retelling and confessing their own experience: despite the seeming dangers and difficulties the 'I' persona experiences in the first 4 stanzas, the poem offers readers courage and reassurance that one is never alone. The twist in the second last stanza where the persona 'grabbed my mum and dad's hands, fold' is uplifting. The poet tries to assertively reiterate a strong sense of optimism and trust, in both their parents and the future despite the turbulent troll. The poem suggests hope and strong faith in life even where the crossroads meet.

In this six-stanza free verse, the poet creates a haunting and despairing tone within the narrative. The bleak atmosphere is formed through images of wild sand, howls, flickering light, tears and broken souls. The other amazing feature of the poem is the rhyme scheme of ABABB in the first five stanzas. For example, sand rhymes with tank, tears rhymes with hear and Sia in the first stanza. Exclamations such as 'Oh' and 'Alas', as well as imperatives such as 'Go on' and 'Hold on' are also used to add more tension to the atmosphere, making the story more exciting.

#### **Gold Award**

Theme: family

### My Special Hero

#### Kum Man Hei Andrea

Good Hope Primary School cum Kindergarten

When his daughter gave birth to a girl,
He knew he would treat her like a pearl.
He held her very close to his chest,
And promised to protect her to his very best.
They walked together all the way,

With a worried heart all day.
It was her first day of school,
And they tried to play it cool.
He was so proud of his granddaughter,
Who now was a student but not a toddler.
'Grandpa, Grandpa, please don't go!
What will I do when I need you so?'
'Little Andrea, please don't cry.
You'll be fine, so dry your eyes.'
With watery eyes he let her go,
As she stepped through the entrance, and lined up, row by row.

When we knew you got sick that day, 'You would recover quickly,' we prayed. With a big grin on your face, It seemed that your pain had gone away. In a firm voice, you told us you would be okay, And we promised to visit you every day.

When you almost left this world,
On the bed I saw the way you curled.
Yet you said you felt no pain at all,
But in your eyes what I noticed after all,
Was a deep regret and even more,
Feeling sorry you couldn't take care of us anymore.
'I want to hold your hand once again',
As he murmured, after several attempts.
'Grandpa, Grandpa, please don't go!
What will I do when I need you so?'
This time he gave an answer no more,
And closed his eyes as his hand fell to the floor.

Your love is as never-ending as the sky, Like you promised to always be there by my side. Though I wonder why you left that soon, To you I am thankful and feel over the moon. I promise to spread your love all over the world, As I dedicate this to the best Grandpa in the world.

This is a really good poem full of feeling and emotion. The poem reflects on the death of a loved one and re-creates the farewell scene very powerfully. There are some nice moments of rhyme and some interesting choices of language which make this a compelling poem to read. The form is a little bit random perhaps, though it is good to see you playing with different ways you can set the words out on the page. There are some complex words, though most of the poem is expressed in quite simple terms. That said, this works really well to convey the simple and direct emotion of sadness and reflection felt on the loss of a loved one. Overall, you should be pleased with this, so well done.

This is a tender poem that expresses the sadness of a granddaughter for the death of her grandfather. The writing is detailed and expressive, recalling a small number of key moments in their lives together. I'm impressed at the use of rhyming couplets in this poem, which shows a really good grasp of language: all of the rhymes seem to come naturally from the thought expressed, and help to emphasise the most important moments (for example the rhyme of 'world' and 'curled'). Sometimes you have decided not to use rhyme, and this is a positive feature. The use of speech brings the poem to life and gives us a direct understanding of the characters. Overall, this was an enjoyable poem to read – well done.

#### Silver Award

Theme: family

### **FAMILY HIKERS**

### **Chung Ho Tung Julia**

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

Family

Is a group of hikers.

Trekking across the darkest mountains,

Ignoring the eerie whisper-whispers of the wandering wind.

Their warmth and love keep them going.

Even if one

Stumbles at the edge of the salty cliff of despair,

The others will pull him up, up, up

And he lands in the soft blankets of their arms.

Even if one

Is lost in an endless valley of confusion

The others will find the anchor

To his thrashing boat.

Even if one

Cannot grow hope in the greenest garden

The others will water him

And a wave of flowers, and joy, and love

Will blossom from his plant of heart.

And even if

One needs to stop and stay

When they are so close to reaching the cup of success

That will change their wealth and luck

The others will wait

Until he is ready

The group of brave hikers

Shall face what they deserve

Sweet love and soft care

One by one, leaf by leaf

Their bond

Will grow stronger than the roots of an ancient tree

Because they treasure family

Their hearts are free.

I really like this lovely piece by a primary pupil. The poet takes a family as a group of mutually caring hikers on a journey, properly depicting a sweet relationship along the way. Without employing a range of 'big words' (which would seem too effortful), this work reads smooth and thoughtful. I can feel the true love this student has for her family, and her own feeling of being loved. A touching piece indeed.

The long, winding and adventurous journey of the hikers is a wonderful metaphor for the ups and downs, thick and thin experiences of life within a family. Visual images of dark mountains, cliffs, valleys, green gardens, leaves and trees all form the poetic imagery that remind the readers of the growing and thriving family tree that can resist stormy weather in the darkest times. The repetition of 'even if' in the first line of stanzas 2-5 helps to construct a recurring and melodic pattern in the poem. Alliteration, such as 'sweet' and 'soft' in line 27, is also used effectively, though not too frequently.

#### Silver Award

Theme: family

### My Family

### Li On Ching Andrea

**Marymount Primary School** 

My family, the fortress of loving care, Where warmth hugs us its beautiful arms. My house, a place where evil is rare, And laden its floors with beautiful rugs.

My mum, the centre of all the attention, Sometimes so angry when I make her mad. She turns all frowns into happy smiles, And tells us stories that hugs us lads.

My dad, that pianist of songs,
That makes me smile in spite of sobs.
He is that funny clown full of gongs,
And protects me when the thieves come to rob.

My brother, that boy noisy but noticeable bright, Who shouts way more than to make mum mad. He plays video games from day till night, And doesn't mind if his eyes go bad!

I, the one who is secretive,
Whose cleverness would make one smile.
I am the one who is so creative,
That all my drawings wouldn't fit in a giant file!

These twenty - four lines that I have written, Is the secret of my family within. And notice: Your family will always glisten, Cause' they make the four strings of a violin!

This is a lovely, creative and smart piece of work on the family theme. It is difficult to be creative on this topic as so many poems have been written that cover it, but the young poet did a great job of depicting a four-member family with simple but humorous language. These are the right sort of expressions I was expecting to read from a primary student. It is naturally beautiful without too much 'polishing'. What differentiates this work from others is its use of humour, insinuating something between the lines, which is also consistent with what the poet said about herself — secretive. An interesting poem indeed!

The poem is appropriately titled 'My Family' and it tells a story of how the family is like a fortress containing several interesting characters. It takes on a cheerful tone and depicts how every member in the family lives under the same roof. The mother, being the matriarch of the family, is the 'centre of attention' and 'turns frowns into happy smiles' for everyone in the family. I appreciate the description of the father being the 'pianist' of songs in the fortress, which shows how everyone has their own individual role within the family. The self-referencing towards the end is a clever way to summarise and give a final nod to the family in the poem.

#### Silver Award

Theme: be grateful for

### Give Me Just a Little

Siu Cheuk Nam

**Marymount Primary School** 

Squats in the corner; blends with the shadows

Accompanied by the icy earth; in between the broken sunlight

Sweat trickled over; chill ran across

Hunger. Tears. Sadness. Hatred.

Jealousy. Loneliness. Howl. Despair.

The time when the sun was beaten by the haze

But all that, doesn't matter.

As long as you give me a little more

A little more courage, a bit more compassion

Grant me a dream, sing me a lullaby

A few laughs, a bit of company

A little bit of hope would be just enough

Don't dare to ask more, I'd be grateful for just a little
A little courage, a little hug
A little someone to pull me out from the deep loneliness

Hunger. Tears. Sadness. Hatred.
I'm grateful for just a little
Light on the inside

When you finally came.

I knew you were there all along.

Pull. Heal. Smile. Revive.

This is a really good poem of impressive quality for primary level. There is much of interest here, including a really impressive form and some really thoughtful and adult impressions of feeling. It's good to see you playing around with how the words appear on the page in poetry, which is an important part of developing your poetic writing skills. There are some complicated words here which show that you have a decent English vocabulary, though you keep things simple too which works well for your tone and style. The poem shows great potential and that you can develop into a creative writer who can really engage with powerful English language to create feeling and impact. Well done.

This poem gives us an original interpretation of the theme by describing how a tiny gift of light can be enough to help someone heal and be revived. The start of the poem is filled with striking images of loneliness and isolation; the sentences are short and abrupt, which emphasises the difficulty of the situation. At the end of the poem the one word sentences seemed to look forward to a better time that is to come — even if we can't experience it yet. Although the form of the poem is sometimes a little loose, I find the development of the story convincing, especially because of the rich evocative language that has been used.

#### Silver Award

Theme: because

### Why Should We Lead a Good Life?

### Ng Lok Yiu

Yaumati Catholic Primary School (Hoi Wang Road) A long loving life is important to me, A good gentle girl is what I want to be.

Smile sweetly and say 'thank you' and 'please',
Manners have value, although they are free.
Be kind and care to help the people we meet,
One day they may help us get back on our feet.

Rage is no reason for the actions you take, It neither repairs nor restores what it breaks. Pardon people who have caused you pain, For forgiveness you rule bright domains.

Sacrifice for others, don't think just of yourself, Life is lonely if your only buddy is wealth. Be honest and tell the truth you must, No wonder you've earned everyone's trust!

We should stay to be positive every day, Like a magnet, negativity repels others away. Be a brave bear and focus on your goals, Living with worries is climbing a greased pole.

Take responsibility for the things that you do, Excuses and blame bring a bad impression of you. Work as hard as ants and always try your best, Chances and choices follow challenges and tests.

Don't follow, but have the courage to lead,
Pave your path, some day you're sure to succeed.
Appreciate all the things that you've got,
Plenty of poor people do not have a lot.

Being good to ourselves is the greatest gift for all, With self-love and self-care problems of ours seem small.

The poem presents guidelines for a positive way of life. It touches on topics such as leadership ('have the courage to lead'), generosity, responsibility and emotional intelligence. It covers a broad range of life issues, each of them needs elaborating. For example, the last stanza mentions self-love and self-care, which seems to contradict stanza four, where the persona mentions the need to sacrifice one's needs. What are the dilemmas one could face when there is a need to choose between the two? What are the difficulties when one tries to achieve all that is recommended in the poem?

The poem starts with a big question of 'Why Should We Lead a Good Life' as the title for the theme of 'because'. The poem lists other reasons like 'rage' but quickly eliminates and dismisses them, for they are not productive for the common good. The contrast between 'rage' and 'pardon' is stark and compelling in the narrative. I appreciate the writer's thoughtfulness in the use of the simile of a magnet to illustrate negativity and how it repels others. The poet ended with a loving call to the readers that 'Being good to ourselves is the greatest gift for all, With self-love and self-care problems of ours seem small'. Overall, the quality of diction is good and the lines remain rhythmic throughout.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: be grateful for

### Stay Positive and Be Grateful

Lam Yat Yu

**Kowloon Tong School** 

Although life is harsh and reality is cruel,
Challenges are like a losing duel,
Days are dark and shrouded in despair,
Souls are broken beyond repair.

But always remember:

Because of the storm, there is a rainbow,

Because of the dark night, there is the bright moonlight,

Because of the mistake, there is a lesson learnt.

There is always something worth being grateful for.

Be grateful that you can see,
The white clouds and the sapphire sky,
The colorful flowers blooming on a tree,
The multi-colored wings of a butterfly.

Be grateful that you can hear,
The chirping of the birds,
The beautiful music they make,
So full of cheer.

Be grateful that you can smell,

The fragrant fruits of the orchards,

The pleasing aroma from the sea of flowers,

A hundred aromatic scents, indescribable by words.

In this world, everything has value.

There isn't a definite good or bad,

Depending only on whether you see it

As a curse or a blessing.

So, have a positive attitude,
Show appreciation and gratitude.
Remember, there is no need for sorrow,
For there is always a new tomorrow.

This is a very interesting poem. You are clearly a good writer with a good future in working with the English language. For primary level, this poem is full of good ideas and concepts. Remember that you can use your own tone and language too. Good contemporary poetry is not so much about mimicking and copying what you think is a poetic tone and style. It's more about finding your own voice, so feel free to break from this older poetic tone and speak in your own voice. That said, you have clearly read poetry and understood how it uses language to create a tone of reflection. There are some lovely repetitions and rhymes here which show that you are thinking about how to use poetry to your advantage, and it is also good to see you exploring how you can present the words on the page. The form here is nice. Overall, a very good poem which shows great potential. Well done.

A sophisticated poem. Unlike most poems in this category, this poem does not open with an overtly optimistic glorification of life and happiness. Instead, the poet draws the reader's attention to the harsh reality: 'life is harsh and reality is cruelty'. The thoughtful planning and organisation of this poem makes its message stand out. It is exactly because life is full of challenges that one needs to stay positive as the title says. Amidst the uplifting spirit of optimism, I have to say I am quite surprised to find the reference to hardship, despair and a losing duel in a poem from the primary section. It must have been a difficult year for our young generation but the poet is right, be grateful for the experience as what we suffer today will definitely be an invaluable experience that helps to fuel our future success.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: be grateful for

### THE GRATEFUL MOMENT – The Joyful ME

### Chiang Wing Tung Antonia

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

I'm grateful for my family,

They helped me attend this academy.

They give me my life-needs,

And help me with my Chinese.

I'm grateful for my friends,

They saved me when I was drowning in loneliness.

They help me with my homework,

They did not laugh at me when my mark was worse.

I'm grateful for food,

It helps me boost my mood.

It calms me down.

It chases away my frown.

I'm grateful for shopping trips,

They make me happy like winning championships.

They comfort me feel less bored,

They produce power for me to break my old record.

I'm grateful for my stationery,

So I don't have to borrow from Mary.

The pen, the eraser, the ruler...

I couldn't have named fewer.

I'm grateful for 'Miss Trouble',

She always pushes me to grow and look at things from another angle.

So even though she makes me a little nervous,

She will not give me a great disservice.

I am a piece of juicy undressed meat.

Be grateful for the unique chefy,

Add different seasonings to marinate me judiciously,

To let me taste the bittersweet and sour-spicy,

To transform me into a delicacy,

To well-present me to reality.

I'm grateful for being a unique ME.

This is a sweet poem that finds good things in many of the simple experiences a young person may encounter in their life. There is a good development of ideas, starting with the most important things (family, friends, and foods), and going on to talk about less essential things that are nonetheless vital to being happy (shopping and stationary). You have created stanzas that are short and rhythmic, with rhymes that often compliment the meaning – although some of the rhyme-words do feel forced and unusual ('fewer' or 'chefy'). The final stanza offers an interesting conclusion that summarises what has come before: I don't think the image of 'juicy undressed meat' is the perfect metaphor in this case, but it does explain the importance of everyone who helps you.

This is a really nice poem, which shows great talent for a primary student. The poem is full of complicated and interesting language and this makes it a truly pleasant read. I specifically appreciate the fact that the writer uses her own language rather than trying to speak in the poetic voice of poems she has read. A poem from a primary student can be fantastic written in their own way of thinking and feeling. There are some nice moments of complex and well-chosen vocabulary here, and some nice half rhymes which work well. I also like the use of words like 'chefy' which creates a unique feeling and insight into the speaker's internal language. The last line of the poem is slightly cliched, but nevertheless it gives the poem a direct meaning, which is great. Very well done for some great work.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: be grateful for

### The Lion Rock's Belief

#### **Cheng Cheuk Hang**

Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui Ming Choi Primary School Lying on the top of the mountain
I've witnessed this place
Transformed into the Pearl of the Orient
From an old fishing village

'Solutions are always more than difficulties'
All the time this is their motto
So during this period of adversities
Quickly they got used to the new normal

Wearing masks and practising hand hygiene
Maintaining social distance and testing on COVID-19
With a strong sense of unity
They fight the virus prudently

Working from home and shopping online
E-teaching and e-learning works fine
Everyone works hard at his position
Wholeheartedly they complete the mission

Filled with collective power

By upholding perseverance and solidarity

Being valiant and without fear

For sure they can overcome the calamity

Lying on the top of the mountain
I believe in this place
It will soon get back to normal
And create another miracle

The poem offers an optimistic picture of the COVID-19 pandemic. The reflection begins with the Hong Kong spirit which is characterised by diligence and perseverance. I doubt if the poet has actually witnessed the full transformation of Hong Kong from a fishing village to the Pearl of the Orient. These images are somehow dated and are easily seen as cliches. Whether the special arrangement in schools and offices is effective is subject to debate. A couple of thoughts: the poem could have addressed the more dire situations in some western countries. The poet could have used anecdotes to provide concrete and detailed explanations of the lion rock spirit.

The poet chooses the timely topic of the global pandemic and connects it to our own Lion Rock spirit. With the theme of being grateful for something, I appreciate the positive attitude in the poem and how it is expressed. The poem pays tribute to the perseverance and solidarity of the local community, praising how everyone plays their part in social distancing and presenting a strong sense of unity. It is also not merely empty words with nostalgia, which is an easy path to go down with the 'Lion Rock spirit'. The poet describes what has become the new norm for most: working from home, e-teaching and e-learning. I appreciate that the poet did not avoid these novel terms in the poem.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: family

### Best Friends I Didn't Choose

### Forte Chace Michael Sau Mihng

St. Charles School

I see them every day, We sometimes like to play.

Playing is not all we do, We do house chores too.

When we have problems, We rally to solve them.

Passing a test is good for school, Sometimes we celebrate by going to the pool.

Walking together in the winter time weather, Brings warmth like the sun on a bird's feathers.

Our love has the power of a super flower, It can keep our heads up during a sudden shower.

> We always make up after we fight, I hug and kiss them for a good night.

> > When we are together, We are definitely better.

My family is forever!

A good, cheerful, rhythmic nursery rhyme! A catchy title which is like a riddle for readers to think about before reading the poem. The poem is building on the motif of friendship and readers, as the poem unfolds, will have to find who are the friends the persona did not choose and yet would see every day, play with and do house chores alongside. The use of simple diction, vivid images of friendship and family life, and short but rhythmic lines helps create a joyful tone and cheerful atmosphere. Indeed, the answer to the riddle is family: the best friends one doesn't choose, but one is granted as a gift.

This cheerful poem is made up of eight 2-line stanzas and one 1-line stanza. In stanzas 1-8, 8 pairs of end rhymes are formed, and the last word of the last line also rhymes with the last two words of stanza 8. This makes the poem easy to recite and remember. Beside the end rhymes, a simile (the warm sun; line 10) and a metaphor (love's power as a super flower; line 11) have been used to describe the warm and beautiful relationship between the family members. With the everyday small happy instances described within the poem, the poet has created a charming poem that warms the heart of the readers.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Theme: family

### My Fantastic Family

### Cheung Ching Ching Oblate Primary School

You ask, 'how do we spell family?'

I say, just remember ' $\underline{\underline{F}}$ ather  $\underline{\underline{A}}$ nd  $\underline{\underline{M}}$ other  $\underline{\underline{I}}$   $\underline{\underline{L}}$ ove  $\underline{\underline{Y}}$ ou.'

I do, I swear I love my parents dearly.

For they are the best parents in the world easily.

My father is loving and loyal.

He puts in his blood, toil, tears and sweat to put food on our table.

He is also humorous, cracking hilarious jokes effortlessly.

I am captivated by his charm and wisdom, always and eternally.

My mother is an angel sent above.

She takes care of me with immense affection and love.

She teaches me virtues, kindness and morality,

So that I could contribute to our society passionately and altruistically.

To the moon and back, I love my family,
I wouldn't trade my family for the world certainly.
Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity,
To share with you my family, my fantastic family.

The poem celebrates the persona's love for his/her parents. The descriptions of the parents are very positive. The poet may consider offering specific examples to further enrich the content. For example, are there any less joyful experiences that make the persona questions his/her love for the parents? How would the persona express his/her love in action? Or is it only a feeling that the persona wants to capture in this poem? How can we feel other people's love with or without actions?

This poem reflects sweetly on the importance of a mother and father to a young person. The first stanza uses an acronym to show how central these people are to a fantastic family, and the following stanzas use ambitious and interesting vocabulary to explain how important the mother and father are. The poem is neatly laid out, and although the length of lines varies a lot, the use of adverbs as rhymes (especially with the word 'family') gives the poem a lovely sense of rhythm and shape. There was a lot to enjoy in this entry — well done on your writing.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Theme: family

### My Happy Family

### Shum Yu Yan Charmaine

Good Hope Primary School cum Kindergarten

My family, a happy place

Full of care

A place full of peace

Warm memories we share

I remember a strawberry field

Full of berries as red as a rose

The farmer's nutritious crop yield

The green carpet where flowers grow

Down a winding path, a man with snowy hair

Took us, whistling merrily

The marvellous garden was his 'heir'

He treated it like family

A bird above was flying high

We picked some juicy berries

As fresh as the blossom sky

They were sweet like candies

Not sour like lemons, the taste was refined

A feeling of floating on the clouds above

The fruit lives in the field like this family of mine,

Inseparable, their hearts together with family love

Thought and feeling in this poem are clearly defined, using a comparison between plant-cultivation and family to explore feelings of well-being and evoke a sense of belonging. The language provokes thought and reflection and communicates effectively. Structuring the poem around a suggestive anecdote, bracketed by reflective stanzas is effective, creating a natural impression. The poem balances concrete and abstract, although the choice of images could be more imaginative (e.g. 'not sour like lemons'). The rhyme scheme is formulaic without a clear sense of purpose, and some rhymes are not successful (e.g. 'hair' and 'heir'). The patterns of stress fall too frequently and heavily on end rhymed words, creating a heavy, plodding rhythmic effect.

This poem presents life with a family using the extended metaphor of a garden – full of sweet fruits and guarded carefully by an old man. The idea makes sense and it is especially useful to describe the love of the old man and the wonderful riches of family life. The rhyme of 'hair' and 'heir' shows us an especially clear link between the past, present, and the future. The fruits represent the love shared between family members and I just wonder exactly what makes these 'juicy berries' linked to family life – the poem could offer us some explanation of this. Overall, though, this is a charming poem with a delicate and appropriate rhythm.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Theme: be grateful for

# Treasure around us

So Tsz Yu Tiffany

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

Be grateful for my family, they help me every day.

Be grateful for my kind friends, they always walk my way.

Be grateful for the tall thin trees, the flowers yet to bloom.

Be grateful for the ones who have once helped you out of gloom.

Be grateful for the sunny days, the windy rainy too,

Be grateful for the dogs like friends, who are loyal to you.

Be grateful for the water, the air and also the sun,

For whom of us is going to live when life has just begun?

Be grateful for the talented ones who have given much to the world,

Like Leonardo Da Vinci or Vincent Van Gogh whose paintings simply swirled,

Be grateful for the health of yours, the work you have to do,

For there are always people more unfortunate than you.

Being grateful brings us happiness, it brightens up our lives,

It refreshes our memory, our good deeds and archives,

And what if rain is falling now and you are very sad,

Be grateful that you can remember the joys that you've had.

A poem with an uplifting spirit and encouraging message. The repetition of 'be grateful for' conveys the strong sense of forcefulness and urgency felt by the persona in getting the readers to appreciate the treasures around us. This forcefulness created through the structure has successfully enhanced the didactic tone of the poem (if this is the intent of the poet). The poem has a similar effect to a sermon and its style is a reminder of The Beatitudes in The Sermon on the Mount.

The poem titled 'Treasure Around Us' is a lovely message to the poet's, and also every reader's own family. It is a timely reminder in such a difficult time for the entire world. The poet gives many examples of things that we should be grateful for. If there is anything one could criticise this work for, it might be the quality of diction and the effort in turning the ideas into lines of a poem. The stanzas read more similar to prose (which is not necessarily bad), but it could become a stronger poem, if there had been a greater focus on using imagery to express the emotions, rather than the more prose-like narration.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Theme: be grateful for

# Let's be grateful

## Wong Shun Kiu Shanice

Good Hope Primary School cum Kindergarten

Let's be grateful for the doctors and nurses

Who have been fighting continuously against the virus

Unselfish, unconditional, unyielding they are

As shiny as the dark night's stars

Let's be grateful for the volunteers

Who have been lending their helping hands to wipe the needy's tears

Generous, giving, good-hearted they are

Sharing resources and care no matter how far

Let's be grateful for our teachers

Who have been working hard despite the tremendous pressure

Care, courage, compassion they contribute

Protecting their sheep with a shepherd's attitude

Let's be grateful for our parents

Who have been taking care of us in our haven

Never do they neglect our needs

Greatest is their love indeed

Let's be grateful for staying healthy

And pray for those who have lost their lives unfortunately

Always should we treasure the presents

Learn to share and be others' servants

The poet calls out 'Let's be grateful' from the title as well as the beginning of each stanza. In the difficult time of a global pandemic, I applaud the poet's positivity and efforts to remind everyone to remain positive and grateful for what has been done by these servants of society. The poem ends with a reminder to be grateful, not for other people, but for 'staying healthy', and 'to be others' servants', which I find to be an important lesson. Although the imagery and feeling are well presented and they read as authentic, I think there is some room for improvement in the quality of diction.

The poet has written a simple and sincere thank-you verse for all health professionals. The topic is particularly timely because doctors and nurses worldwide have been working hard to fight COVID-19 despite dangers and hardship. Another merit of the poem is for every 4-line stanza, line 1 always starts with 'Let's be grateful for', which creates the recurring effect of a prayer. The poet is also good at forming a neat rhyme scheme. Two pairs of end rhymes can be found in each stanza. Though some end rhymes are only near rhymes (e.g. 'contribute' and 'attitude' in lines 11-12), the sound play is effective enough. Last but not least, the similes and metaphors used appear to be of a Christian nature — the mentioning of 'stars', 'sheep' and 'shepherd', etc. reinforces the impression that the verse can be read as a prayer to thank God for sending the doctors and nurses to take care of the people.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Theme: be grateful for

# The Power of Gratitude

#### Lam Athena Wai-Sum

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

We mustn't neglect,

Rather we ought to reflect

The wondrous gift of being alive,

A blessing God has gifted us that we may thrive.

Express eternal gratitude

For skies, diamond studded and indigo hued,

For sunsets, ablaze with bewitching tones of vermilion,

And for incandescent stars, million after million,

For the inimitable attributes in each and every creature,

Makes the ethereal beauty and bucolic landscape of Nature.

Convey immense appreciation,

Through incessant words of thanks;

Through wordless acts of kindness, unspoken yet impactful;

Seeming insignificant but nevertheless tactful.

A brief, passing smile could brighten up a sombre room,

Just as the glimmering flame of a candle

A jet-black abyss of drab and dreary gloom.

Every moment ought to be cherished,

Dare not wait 'till the flourishing have perished.

Demonstrate gratitude whilst you still can,

For it is limited, finite, that is, our lifespan.

The poem balances concrete and abstract words, and demonstrates some sense of form and pattern. There were minimal distracting errors in language, and the language was crafted at times to achieve poetic diction. Thoughts and feelings were clearly defined and expressed, in descriptive, and on occasion figurative terms. Rhyme and rhythm were, however, clunky at times, and although there was some pattern in verse form, the choice to open stanzas with short lines over-emphasised the rhyming couplets, which had a negative effect on the poem as a whole. The third stanza dropped the couplets, creating some relief, but at the cost of coherence.

The poem presents a positive worldview with references to the wondrous gift of being alive and nature's inimitable attributes. The poem invites the readers to show appreciation through smiles and thankful words. The last stanza reminds the readers to cherish every moment in our short-lived life. The poem has a strong structure. The message about how to live is clear. A sceptical reader may question why one has to be grateful for life even though it is wondrous and beautiful. Can we simply enjoy the beauty of it without being grateful? To further justify the need for thankfulness, the poet may consider expanding the 2nd stanza to maximise the power of nature.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Theme: family

## Family Love

#### Leung Anna Petra

Yaumati Catholic Primary School (Hoi Wang Road)

I lick a lollipop
When my sibling sings hip-hop.
The infant dribbles in a cradle
As Mum makes for the door handle.

Ding-dong! Ding-dong!
We've waited so long
For this cheery chime
And Dad to be home on time.

Whatever pastimes you like, It's important your family unites. The sun does not always shine, Like life has not just good times.

Family is a peaceful place you can stay

And a safe shelter to keep danger away.

It calms you when you are in a fit of fury

And protects you when you are in a wreck and worry.

Family members are not only comforting companions, But also modest models that you can learn from. They soothe you when you are doomed and down, They give you advice that is sensible and sound.

Family love is magnificent magic you cannot miss, It is a gorgeous gift you can never resist.

Family love is eternal and imperishable,
It is unconditional and irreplaceable.

Like the sun, love is bright and warm, Yet it does not come in any form. It is as precious as art, So you should feel it in your heart.

The poem uses a wide variety of sound effects, including alliteration ('doomed and down'), half-rhyme ('fury' and 'worry'), with some lines that display evidence of sensitivity to rhythm and meter. It balances concrete and abstract, occasionally using (rather conventional) figurative language (e.g. 'Like the sun, love is bright and warm'). The language is clear and generally accurate, with some variety. The topic is clear and defined, although as the poem develops, it tends towards platitude and abstraction. Finally, the poem comes across as slightly mannered, owing to the use of rhyming couplets. That said, this matches the childish tone of the poem up to a point.

This is a merry and child-like poem. The poet has done a great job in forming a series of rhyming couplets across the seven stanzas, each with four lines. Simple words with short syllables are employed, and, most encouraging of all, liberal use of alliteration can be found in 'lick' and 'lollipop' of line 1, 'sibling' and 'sing' in line 2, 'Mum' and 'makes' in line 4, 'We've' and 'waited' in line 6, 'cheery' and 'chime' in line 7, 'like' and 'life' in line 12, 'peaceful' and 'place' in line 13, 'fit' and 'fury' in line 15, 'wreck' and 'worry' in line 16, 'comforting' and 'companions' in line 17, 'modest' and 'models' in line 18, 'doomed' and 'down' in line 19, 'sense' and 'sensible' in line 20, and 'magnificent' and 'magic' in line 21. All these successfully form a melodic sound play throughout the verse.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Theme: because

# A Better World for Us A-L-L.

## Jazz Alexandria Maria E. White

The Church of Christ in China
Tai O Primary School

'Heal the World,

Make it a better Place,'

with its deathly clench,

these are the words sung out so angelically by the legend Michael Jackson,

as his blessings towards a more liveable land for the human race,

I am delighted to live in a time where I can freely go online, and what's like 'now and then'...

As we see the rapid rise of buildings in developed areas, we in turn forgot how many green patches of nature we have destroyed, the habitats of the aboriginal men,

and home to countless animals, I think we have come too fast and damaged too much, that we haven't even thought for a second more before we act, little did we know how much we have to bear; at what cost, and such'...

Some people said in the media, it's now time for the Mother Nature to revenge, you see, the tsunami, the epic earthquakes now banging once in every few months, and the unknown pandemic, with surging infections, and tearing us apart

I think now, it's good for us to see what the world would be like, when we have all played a part to distance ourselves, and don't pollute as we have so used to, or addicted to...

Lately there have been reports of endangered animals becoming more active and daring to find a shelter themselves,

I think we have been quite selfish, and just as what I have read from the textbooks and other readers, we may have neglected those in need, and that includes the many animals that too, should have a say on this planet, and with that, I hope we can treat our global village kinder,

to see them just as a friend of ours, because 'If you care enough for the living,' we can 'Make a better place for you and for me' And to end this poem, let us take our steps and start doing, rather than merely saying, or empty-talking,

Shall we?

The poem conveys clearly defined feelings and thoughts in response to contemporary environmental issues. It is effective in its use of language, communicating ideas with emotional and conceptual clarity on the whole. It uses concrete objects to illustrate wider social issues, connecting them to personal experiences at times in meaningful ways. There is some complexity of experience conveyed, and the poem shifts pleasingly to a more reflective register, signalled by the repetition of 'I think'. Rhythm and rhyme are clunky. The rhyme used is repetitive, creating a sing-song rhythm that clashes jarringly with the longer, more prose-like lines.

This is a lovely piece of work for a primary student. The message is very clear — to protect the world in the face of nature's apparent revenge. The poet was clearly inspired by the late Michael Jackson and his song 'Heal the World', which is quite nicely included in the poem. That said, there seems to be a slight lack of poetic effect in terms of the language and the intended meaning. Things are uttered directly and explicitly where they could be more 'poetically' conveyed.

#### **Honourable Mention**

Theme: family

## My Family

## **Leung Shek Yin**

Diocesan Boys' School

Oh family, oh family,

Living with me in harmony,

Acting like eternal protectors,

Safeguarding me against opposing 'predators'.

Why shouldn't I praise my family?

Doesn't it encourage me a lot?

Oh family, oh family,

Passing time with me blissfully.

After all the hurdles we go through,

We are still one altogether.

My good old family, my cherished family,

Nourishing me with inspiration endlessly.

When all hope is lost,

My family brings me out of the frost.

I wish I can live with my family,

Forever without any cost.

The overall expression of the poem is accurate, using language to communicate ideas and emotions. Feelings and thoughts are clearly defined, and the figures of speech are varied, with a conversational idiom and rhythm that feels mostly unforced. The rhyme and stanza form involve a degree of regularity, without becoming too clunky. The poem's diction tends towards the abstract and predictable, but introduces some figurative language towards the end of the poem. Overall this is a sound effort at primary level, providing a clear engagement with the theme in a package that manages to be reasonably natural in both its execution and tone.

The poem comes across as a series of slogans rather than thoroughly thought through poetic verse. The poet has attempted to create some form of rhythm and the text has been structured into what would be recognised as a poetic form. I will give credit to the poet for his efforts, being a primary student, but on the whole, this entry does not reach the standards that we have seen elsewhere in the competition. Perhaps the poet could find some inspiration for his future writing by reading the work of some of his peers once the poems are published.



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#### Gold Award

Theme: family

## Our Wall

#### Mok Si Kei

St. Paul's Co-educational College

King of the castle, blocked from me behind solid bricks When was the last time we assembled our turrets? When did we last brew plans to defeat our nemeses And raise our swords to the sky?

Our castle is breaking down with our dust, our skirmishes and distrust Instead new walls are rising
Towering well above where our castle was
Reflecting a sullen drabness onto the sky
But your reflection I do not see
Only the wall blocking your world from mine

The buoyant sun set and rose, the serene moon rose and set But my hopes would not soar, nor would my sorrow quell For it was too late, the wall was up for too long The fury firing from your foreign eyes Unlike the brotherly innocence I vividly remember The muted trumpets that continued to puncture my ears Every time I knocked on your indifferent wall Were proving true my dreaded fears

I knew the silence had to cease
I'd rather shatter your mirror of flawed delight
Ruin your blue canvas with the darkest shades of grey
Than contemplate and grieve over my immeasurable loss
So I decided to rid that wall of its pleasure once and for all
The trumpets sounded my last warning
Above the flurry of fluttering feathers escaping from the clearing
The sky was a bloody red, an auspicious omen or a foreshadow I did not know
My cannons rolling out like the inscrutable clouds, poised with noiseless flair
At last

The silence, bled into a broken wound My heart, froze into a gaping mouth

In prolonged slow motion, the wall sank to its knees
Vainly staunching the blood from its bullet-made wounds
I glimpsed your crown peeking out of the battlements
The wall was down, crowning my misery
But the bullet did not stop

And you fell limp as the bullet bored through your heart Right beside the remnants of our wall Now I know, our wall was just an illusion Yet your wound still throbbed and had always throbbed Under your glossy robe

There is a lot of very good work in this poem. There is a really impressive range of vocabulary – with some specialist words (like 'turrets' or 'skirmishes') as well as general expressive language ('buoyant sun' or 'serene moon'), all of which are used precisely and effectively. Language techniques like alliteration are used confidently and effectively. Your grammar and sentence construction is fine, but I think it would help the readers to use a bit more punctuation (especially full stops). Overall, I felt that I wanted a bit more clarity about the story being told — I enjoyed the words very much indeed, but felt a little puzzled about the message that I was meant to get.

This is an outstanding piece of work by a secondary student. The poem shows great mastery of metaphor, creating beautiful imagery that is, unfortunately, saddening. It depicts tense family relationships, with the central reference to the 'wall', and occasional allusion to skirmishes and cold wars. All very well arranged, well understood while still leaving room for reader inferences and imagination. Well done!

#### Gold Award

Theme: because

# The Bane of Our Existence

## So Tsz Kiu Audrey

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section)

Just like an innocent insect misled into a fly trap, she struggles to escape from the suffocating grasp.

Drained from this constant turmoil our shackled prisoner lies, countless voices burn her mind as her tattered soul dies.

'It is what it is.' Those dull, monotone voices echoed, 'Conform to our absurd standards, into your mind we forced.' Miserable, our cornered prey is, for nothing could ever cease her pain, her agony, and her silent tears.

Even the bravest of faces break down sometimes, because others are just too shallow to understand the hardships they suffered, the years they forfeited, for our approval, and yet a chance they still won't stand.

Born to please us, to fulfill our expectations, it is no wonder why she feels like a clown, unable to be herself and paint her colours, We simply continue to drag her down.

She's nothing but a worn out husk with colours lost to memory, abandoned, completely vulnerable for us to carve insanity: our outdated mindsets, our extreme expectations, all into this child with no self identification.

For days on end she wonders why, she's bound and caged, unable to fly. 'How long has it been, since I've experienced this feeling, like a mindless corpse held up by others' strings?'

Shut out for her unusualness, she just wants to belong, it burns like a blaze of desperation, and so she's left with no choice. Just like the mermaid who gave up her voice to a witch for her wish, our puppet finally gives in to the tormenting voice.

Young and impressionable that fragile petal was, but as all petals do, they fall off eventually. They get tainted and stained by the impurities of life, then fall into disgrace, forgotten for eternity.

In our modern day society, we judge and are judged. A thing we take pride in, could be in others' eyes, sin. We love what is praised, and hate those that are not, causing many to strive to be what they're not.

Why? Because we're afraid.

Only when we take the first step to a better future, Will we save our society, which is confined to failure.

And for a better future, we continue to strive.

This is a very good entry in this round of the contest. The poet describes a girl (or really a young human soul) who is torn between her own volition and external expectation. Wonderful language skills and poetic arrangement. The poet demonstrates skilful use of metaphorical devices in combination with allusions. It reads very well too. The only thing that prevents me from giving it a 'perfect' rating is the theme which is quite common, if not slightly cliched.

The poem is a rich dossier of thoughts from a frustrated young person. In a way the poem is a critique of modern society, the 'we' who are afraid to acknowledge their uniqueness. The poem embeds speeches and dialogues to enrich the psychology of the frustrated person. The poet may consider including concrete experiences to further empower the voice of the protagonist. The last part of the poem is relatively more direct and definitive than the preceding stanzas. The poet may consider avoiding such direct instruction so as to leave space for the readers' own reflections.

#### **Gold Award**

Theme: because

# The Whereabouts

## Tsang Wing Tung Viann

Christian Alliance S. C. Chan Memorial College There is no reason, he thought —

The linen-suited man walked,
Gliding past the crowds on auto-pilot
Every night his sore office bum falls into an epitome
He is ordinary, mechanically glum, arms slumped
Not alone but lonely in New York's City of ennui.

The yellow-sclera man walked,
Bearing the flaky, cotton snow as it plopped
Four men in mid-20s semi-huddled at Times Square, singing
Cajón drummed, guitar strummed, holy choruses twinkling
The carols were contagious, so much he hummed along
There is no reason, but passion, he thought.

The wax-haired man walked,
Squirming into an alley where the tipsy lodged
Friends crittered round the drunk partygoer they call 'Sally'
Slack torsos and shoulders, wading towards unlucky cabbies
He bitterly laughed at the gnarly puke and dodged
There is no reason, but company, he thought.

The gaunt-faced man walked,
Averting hippies on their penny boards
A kiddo at the park, blue light saber in hand, went Coriolis
The couple smiled in favor, mittens entwined, untattered
For them, in his mind, more endorphins could he cater
There is no reason, but love, he thought.

There are mistletoes, surprisingly, framing the door.

The now light-hearted man walked

Not recalling why, his front porch is filled with mascarpone light.

'It's Christmas and ... there are no decorations in sight, You must be busy Mister, to forget the trinkets, now don't you fright.' His neighbor clarified. The man stifled a cry, with all his might He settled at the hearth with his cat, never again distraught.

There was no good reason worth being sought — Never has he been, so wrong in thought.

Starting off with the internal monologue of an anonymous persona 'he', the poem turns into a stream of consciousness that fluidly switches between the thoughts of various nameless characters 'the linen-suited man', 'the yellow-sclera man', 'the wax-haired man' as well as 'the gaunt-faced man'. This poem is an allegory presenting a story of an everyman. Who these men portrayed in the poem are is not important, what matters is that they are the representations of all of us, who are absorbed in our own world yet unknown and unrelated to people around us. With the setting of New York City, the poem highlights the loneliness and hollowness of life of the city-dweller. But one small gesture changes the world.

The poem is titled 'The Whereabouts' and tells a story about ennui and meaning. The poet has painted an image of the man in a linen suit, with yellow sclera and waxed hair. The idea of 'not alone but lonely' may not be novel, but the poem successfully creates the image of this lone wolf character who lives in his own thoughts surrounded by other people in the bustling city of New York. Some of the choices of diction might not be helping the development or build-up of the story as the poet may have intended, such as 'A \*kiddo\* at the park' and 'went Coriolis' in the 5th stanza.

#### **Gold Award**

Theme: be grateful for

## street cleaners

#### Mak Zi You Chloe

St. Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary and Primary School Water rises. The yacht knocks on the dazed, dreamdoubting shore.

They prowl the streets with metallic rattles of disturbed carts. Fluorescent orange swallows the moonlight.

They work in translucent opacity. The known unknowns, unseen because, why

have we the time to spare for the worn neon fabric of dwindling blue? Plain. Simple.

Wordlessly they lift the exhausted metropolis.
Get back on your feet, go walk your consistent streets

because time waits not for the ones that melt as forgettable flickers into the rising dawn.

Gazes behind the roughed, roughened hands reflect the faces of weary, human shadows.

In their united solitude they should hear gratified prayers for souls who roam constant depths.

Because we choose to forget, away from the warmth; a consistent heart — the streets at night are a bleak, breathing mirror of society's backbone.

This poem is a sincere piece of work dedicated to the street cleaners who work for us dutifully and quietly every day. Visual images of the moonlight, fluorescent lights, the worn neon clothing, the rising dawn, the rough hands and weary faces of street cleaners are juxtaposed together in a neat and poetic way to highlight the lonesome, tedious and tiring work of the cleaners. Some sound play can be spotted too. Alliteration is used in 'dazed', 'dream', and 'doubting' in the first stanza. It is also found in 'bleak' and 'breathing' in the last stanza. The short lines also form a consistent rhythm that reminds the readers of the floor sweeping sound.

This piece of work is built around imagery reflecting the work of street cleaners without explicitly mentioning them. The seemingly simple, undecorated sentences create a clear tempo for a recital. There is a good combination of language and message, meaning and form, and art and life. There is also a strong contrast between urban life and the street cleaners work through virtually plain but genuinely meaningful wording.

#### Silver Award

Theme: because

## Just because

## Man Aliysa

**HKUGA** College

I lived just because you carved me to be the puppet of the show. Give me an order and I'll be indestructible, Set me a goal and I must achieve, Just because you said disobeying would be naive.

I cared just because you watered me to a flower bud blooming in the wild. Attracting the bees with my gleeful glowing smile, Urging me to grow like the rest of the flowerbed, Just because you don't want me to be stepped dead.

I loved just because the touch of your hand flushed me with red. Pulling my heart away by the thickest of threads, Accepting that wrinkled letter that flooded with affection, Just because you were attracted by the slightest of connection.

I dressed just because you programmed me to be the picture perfect girl. A delicately designed doll that'll give you a swirl, Staying in the kitchen and treating you with care, Just because the guilt you'd give would be too much to bear.

I carried just because you begged for a life with greater meaning. Little ones laughing loud and intervening,
Making me embrace a household that's 'more and merrier',
Just because you convinced me that there wouldn't be a barrier.

I believed just because you cherished everything out of it. Captured every moment with snaps and clicks, But you got bored of your brand new toy, Just because its cries ended up being your breaking point.

I restrained just because you expanded my heart to a glistening galaxy, Shifting your money meteors by defying gravity, Functioning from six to nine to avoid bankruptcy, Just because I wouldn't want to see my dear in agony.

I allowed just because you reasoned with vague fragile facts, 'Just a few shots here and there won't leave impacts.'
Handled the contentious clenches and continuous choking,
Just because you made it seem like you're joking.

I committed just because you promised with our evergreen vowels, 'Just a few scars won't make me throw in the towel.'
Watching the vivid velvet drips from the caps that are not intact, Just because I signed up for this in the contracts.

And I'd die just because of a peek of your glimmer golden eyes, Even though your glare burns bright like an ember in disguise. It resembled the holy light of a saviour's halo, Just because that's what my instinct told me so.

I'd do anything that everyone couldn't, Just because of you.

In this poem I am really impressed by your use of a wide range of vocabulary to create surprising and unusual rhymes throughout the poem — this is not easy to achieve, but I think you do it well. You also start lines with powerfully descriptive words (especially verbs), which gives us a very clear feeling of direction and purpose all the way through. The parallel structure of each stanza's first line is surprisingly subtle — and I think it shows your capability with language very well. Overall, I think a more distinctive change at the end of the poem might have helped to bring out the message, but this is good work, well done.

The poem uses the puppet as a motif to show how the powerless persona is manipulated or simply has little control. While it is an image used by many, its use here matches the theme and is well executed. The poem goes on to give details of how the persona 'loved', 'dressed', and even 'believed'. This depicts a powerful image that even the personas belief came from some external reasoning or force. It is interesting to see the use of a generic 'you' here. It is not immediately clear who exactly this 'you' could be. Perhaps this is the challenge and brilliance of the poem, as it allows the readers to interpret the poem from their own perspective.

#### Silver Award

Theme: family

# The Song of Thetis – inspired by the Iliad of Homer

#### Tsui Yu Hei Iris

Heep Yunn School

They battled here with bloodied hands, subject to the gods' commands; their battle songs linger within the silence of these war-torn lands. Now they sing of shadowed tomb, of ashen spear and coming doom, but one lone voice is all I hear as I pace in the morning gloom.

I heard that voice the day I watched my son go off to war.

O my son, my sorrow, lay your sword down, I implore —

You are but one of many whom the gods with cruel fate smite —

Men cast like matches that burned so briefly and so bright.

Warriors clash beyond the walls, children laugh behind them.
Soldiers drown in tides of blood, maidens drown in satin.
My mother, deathless Thetis, do not try to change my mind,
I was born for glory, and it is glory I shall find.

His voice came ringing back to me, across the wild and untamed seas.

His anguish rent the sky apart, a grief for which there was no surcease.

It struck me to the bone — that cry, and crying out in turn —

I found him weeping in the dust as if the world would burn.

He wept for a comrade fallen, and his glorious guise was broken.

He wept in rage and vengeance for the friend whose life was stolen.

I held his hands and wept with him, and this warning to him gave —

If you return to war you will be destined for the grave.

Warriors clash beyond the walls, children laugh behind them.
Soldiers drown in tides of blood, maidens drown in satin.
Even Patroclus died, a man far greater than us all—
Patroclus, my best friend who is like all mortal men must fall.

What do his comrades see when they look into his eyes?

A pitiless, ruthless warrior from whose face the enemy flies?

But all I see within him is the child that I once bore —

a child for whom I would give my life, my spirit — even more.

At my request, the fire god wrought a gleaming, ornate shield that I laid before my son's feet for his use on the battlefield. I gazed into his comrade's face, whose death will bring his doom. And kissed it for the love he gave my son before his doom.

And now I pace this barren land where the dust at last has cleared, fire and flames still burning and a sea of unwept tears.

O my son, my sorrow — now I see you lying there — the arrow in your heel and the blood woven in your hair.

I heard that voice so long ago, and now it's ringing clear —

The voice of a man who no longer needs his mother near.

I would have given him the skies, the sun and stars and moon — but no matter now

for all I bore was doom.

This is a strong poem which shows real talent in working with English Literature and its concepts. It's clear that the poet has read significant poetry, and that she understands the style and tone used as part of a long history of poetic convention. The poem is powerful, and has a lot to say. It attempts to produce feelings about the subjects of family and war, which is of course valid. As a small downside, some of the images invoked are a bit clichéd. Even though you might be inspired by Homer, it's still a little obvious to write about 'laying down your sword'. Try to inject your own language and voice too – you are writing in 2021. Even if you like old poetry, you can combine that with a sense of the contemporary. On the whole though, I think this is a great poem. You show amazing talent as a creative writer and this is poetry writing at the highest level of English.

The use of Greek mythology in this poem is remarkable, with seamless integration, such as 'the arrow in your heel and the blood woven in your hair' for Achilles. Another creative aspect of the work is the two-column structure of the poem – the mother's voice on the left and the son's to the right. Impressive! On the other hand, I am not quite sure about the message that this poem is trying to convey. It is no doubt about the mother's love for her son, but this is quite general and even slightly cliched. The beautiful wording and innovative form have somehow overridden the spirit that lies at the crux of the piece.

#### Silver Award

Theme: because

## Persona

#### Chen Man Chin

Heep Yunn School

Because I must surpass them all from sunrise to sunset I veiled my visage Primer, Brushes, Mascara, Lip gloss... all used to make me 'sublime' in their eyes

Because I had to clinch this post my brain was racked to enthral, engross them they stabbed and slashed me, with sinister words my soul was pierced, my heart was pained but my countenance was covered, powder in powder that smile of mine, told them I was perfectly fine –

'smile'? - that's only my muscles twitched

Nothing's wrong because I was striving for what I wanted

No, they would never know the area occupied by makeup products held treasures when I was still a junior: delicate lamb engraved from glass; luminous candles glowing with zeal plenty, plenty more there were yet had long been scrapped, obliterated

I saw a dusty box enshrouding in the deepest corner of the cupboard inside lay a painting of myself: a young girl in soft, smooth white silk dress lying under the shimmering, shining sun

Beyond the canvas

I saw her encircled by the sweet scent of daisy flowers with a warm whispering summer breeze slowly, softly swirling, and tickling herchin

She dreamt of soaring, up in the sky imagining the days when the sun never set longing that the plants would never decay manifesting all the delight in her crystal clear eyes

A carefree, authentic life that's no longer mine

Which is the life I truly desire?

In a RUMBLE and TUMBLE, ROWS of cosmetics CASCADE from my vanity STRIKE the floor, SMASH into pieces not torment nor trauma hit me my volition has vanquished my impersonate self

I face the mirror there stands a girl in white dress, smiling at me.

The poem conveys a sense of the social and cultural milieu. It is thematically clear and focused, communicating depth of feeling in its engagement with appearance. The diction includes some fresh choices, and one or two strong, expressive lines, particularly in the opening stanzas. Alliteration is used to some good effect, and repetition of line structures provides a strong initial sense of crafting and structure. The attempt to break down the structure in the latter parts of the poem matches the sense, but is aesthetically unsuccessful. In particular, the use of capitalisation and kerning is rather mannered, and thus detracts from the poem's effect.

A very powerful poem functioning as an accusation of the makeup culture through an excellent choice of diction and an evident mastery of the twisting of the tone of the persona. There is successful use of an 'I' persona in making the story a first-person experience to convey a sense of persuasiveness and credibility. The poem contains a moment of poignancy when 'I' gets objectified and split into a 'she' – how aesthetic practices can threaten women is really worth our careful consideration.

#### Silver Award

Theme: family

# Fantasies of an Orphan

## Leung Yuet Ching Bernice

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section)

He sits motionlessly on the ice-cold pavement, silent with a still stare.

He hasn't a roof, nor love, nor warmth, lonely and longing for care.

Faces and faces pass by before his eyes, showing repulsion and ignorance.

No friendly smiles, not even a wink, not a soul spared a glance.

He faintly recalls a motherly face:
rosy cheeks and welcoming smiles.
But she faded and vanished through time:
'She's on a journey of a thousand miles'

Among the crowd a dozen children came, along with their mothers and fathers, merry and gay. He desired to be them, and wear a blissful grin, and hold his parents' hands all day.

The corners of his mouth bent into a beatific smile – his fantasy reverie warmed his heart.

A loud shatter of broken glass awakened him from his solace and broke his hope and happiness apart.

As he weeps for his cruel fate and harsh reality, a high-heeled lady walked to the child alone.

Rosy cheeks and welcoming smile,

offered her hand and took him home.

The poem reminds me of the story 'The Little Match Seller'. A sharp contrast between the coldness and indifference of both the environment and the passers-by towards the situation of the boy and the happiness these passers-by are absorbed in. The image of the motherly face with rosy cheeks and welcoming smiles is a powerful and striking accusation of the hypocrisy of the people. But, why a high-heeled lady? As the poem is titled 'Fantasises of an Orphan', does it mean that the happy ending is simply the imagination of the boy just like the mirages the little match seller sees when she lights the matches?

This poem presents an imaginative and interesting story of an orphan in poverty being adopted by a wealthy woman. I'm most impressed by the use of rhyme – the links between words are striking, sometimes quite original, and add to the meaning of the words (I especially like 'ignorance' rhymed with 'glance'). Likewise, when alliteration is used it helps to emphasise the most important words and ideas. So, the poet clearly has confidence with much of the language they are using – though there are some words that don't quite seem to convey the right spirit (like 'reverie' or 'beatific'). Nonetheless, overall, this was an enjoyable poem to read, well done.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: be grateful for

## The Tapestry

## Chung Chi Lun

Queen's College

In this world when I arrive
The loom starts to creak
The shuttles start to come alive
And out comes a sleek
blank tapestry which unfurled
Depicting my life in this world.

Emotional creatures we were made to be
Joy and Rage and Misery
These are strings of different hues
Steadily, steadily
Weaved into the tapestry.
Reds and yellows, greens and blues
Joys are less yet woes are rife
But I still thank sincerely
For emotions in my life

After Colour come Images and Stories
People, all of different histories
They are patterns, each unique
Steadily, steadily
Weaved into the tapestry.
Diverse people, strong and weak
Give all different hues their shape
Without image, the tapestry
Becomes a colour cacophony.

Apart from them my family
My friends in close vicinity
All our tapestries
intertwine
Cross-hatchets of fabric
combine
To form patterns, all recurring
With my tapestry unwinding
Forming Lifelong bonds
Unforgettable relationships
Until the time of departure has come.
These people I thank, for they have spun
What my tapestry has become.

Now, this tapestry, limp and soft
will NEVER stand a chance
Against the stone-cold jaws of Time
This tapestry won't advance
with a Snip
Those jaws sharp to the tip
Sever the tapestry at its end
Never letting it extend.

Looking at this piece of art
Which depicts my life from its start
Unique, colourful, and loved,
I now leave this world I arrived
I'm grateful I once was alive.

Is the form and line arrangement of the poem an imitation of the ECG and the heartbeat waves? It stops in the last stanza when the persona has departed from the world. The waviness of the structure of the poem echoes with its title – life is like a tapestry. This tapestry starts off with the moment when the persona arrives in this world and slowly unfolds itself as a tapestry is woven and ends when the persona is ready to leave this world. Life is full of ups and downs and there are bound to be difficult times but just as the persona says, life is a piece of art which depicts one's life from its start; unique, colourful, and loved – be grateful for all the experiences we have in life as it is what makes life beautiful.

This is a complex and powerful poem which shows serious talent for the age of the poet. It is a long poem which uses a whole range of poetic conventions from the history of poetry to create meaningful stanzas. There is personification of various things here, and a sense that the poet has thought about how to deploy such techniques carefully. The form is interesting, though at times it risks seeming slightly random. Nevertheless, it's good to see the poet playing with how the words on the page can be manipulated to produce meaning and feeling. Remember that you can use your own language in contemporary poetry too, rather than just imitating the language one would expect to hear in a poem. Overall, the poet should be really pleased with this complex and detailed effort.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: family

## Your Steady Hands

## Wan Ching Tung

St. Stephen's Girls' College

Your steady hands

Building trampoline to catch me as I fall

Small feet struggling to keep balance

You hands, smooth and assuring

Piling bricks made of love and using tenderness as concrete

Determined to erect chateaus, cathedrals, monuments immune to the corruption of time

All for me to grow up in

Yet I abandon them

Leaving to find more to fill

Your flailing hands

Composing the symphony of heaven and earth

To me the only listener

Your hands, elegant and lively

Playing notes of endearment and tunes of adoration

Telling the story of how forever can be found in two people

But I request to extend the harmony

Longing for more

Your tiny hands

Painting pictures to keep moments of joy alive

Depicting the life of the three of us

Your hands, wavering yet energetic

Meandering lines in crayons and markers fueled with laughter

Colouring our warmth in shades of care and concern

Yet I want to bring more paints

Splashing pages as moments linger to become life

My wrinkled hands

Planting myriads of flowers as I lie on my bed

Dozens more hands of old and young guarding me

My hands, calloused and fragile

Leaving more life behind to take my place

Cascade of petals dawning from blossoms of years of love

Accompanying me as I fall through the veil of death

Your steady hands,

hundreds of transparent pairs holding me as I falter

Of builders, of musicians, of painters and of gardeners

I find what I seek and it has always been with me

I embrace your hands, absorbing all they provide

A journey's end at family's meeting

No longer eager for more

For it will be enough

This is an interesting poem and it shows real ability for a young writer. The poem reflects on loved individuals, perhaps from across a family, using the idea of their hands as a way to explore the meaningful relationships, which works really well and conforms to some significant poetic conventions. There is a nice form, though one stanza is short without any clear sense of why that is so. There is an interesting variety of language used, ranging from the simple to the complex. This reflects a good English vocabulary that you are able to draw on. There is no doubt that there is real evidence of talent here and that you are a capable writer with much to offer. The exploration of age and youth through the hands is really good. Keep writing as you are someone with great talent who can go on to be a great creative writer.

The poem 'Your Steady Hands' is a great example that shows how memory is interwoven with visual and other sensual feelings. The hands remembered by the narrator are steady flailing, and yet tiny and wrinkled. The poem beautifully tells a story from memory and from the narrator's own first-hand experience. The poem ends with a loving note on how the narrator sees the journey of the hands' owner has come (close?) to the end: 'A journey's end at family's meeting / No longer eager for more'. I appreciate that the poet did not indulge in the inevitable, but rather focuses on the positive of how much the hands' owner has done and given.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: because

## The Snowman

#### **Tam Samuel Eliot**

**HKUGA** College

Smothered the land had the midwinter frosts, cloaked were the pines, boughs laden hoar.

Stood a snowman in fields too bleak, glum in the cold so dreary, lone he was, evermore.

For nights the snowman poised,
bided in the brutish storms, in woe awaite his pals for good.
Had desolation divest him of joy,
forsaken was the poor young lad, in affinity he trusted no more.

Yonder the fence an old man hunched,
his cheeks smitten by the gust so strong, cruelly did the honed blades gore.
Oh, wretched was the old man!
flesh laid bare beneath the rags so torn, lone he was, evermore.

But in Death's chill hands shined the beams of dawn,
hastened near a matron with fleece so warm, swathed was the man in comfort of yore.
Gazed the snowman, once forlorn,
amidst trouble goodwill was born, in solitude dwelled the man no more.

Drifted away had the harsh gales, for long pervaded the wintry still, were it not for the growls so faint. Bounds of white but a blemish spied, below the crusts heard a hare's rasp, lone she was, evermore.

But in barren grounds flowed streams of hope, sped near a hare from afar, rested the quivering critter in warmth unknown afore. Looked the snowman, tight and close, mellow was he truly, for goodness had he seen once more.

Oh, and for days the young lad poised, beheld the snowman a figure far away, strode near a lady with scarves so warm. Stared the snowman at the girl in glee, with a smile long bygone, for love he had felt once more.

Flaked the land had the midwinter frosts,
draped were the pines, boughs decked hoar.
Stood a snowman in the fields of chalk white cotton,
blithe in the warmth so snug, because lone he was, nevermore.

This is a very nice poem which shows that the poet is really able to write creatively in complex English. It has a notable rhyme scheme and some really nice moments of feeling. Its greatest strength is in being able to capture the small moments or acts which can have immense personal or symbolic significance, which is a really remarkable achievement for a young writer of this age group. Some of the phrases feel like a copy of what one might expect to read in a poem. Remember that you can also use your own voice and do not need to mimic the poets of the past in order to write good contemporary poetry. That said, it's of course good to see that the poet has a depth of knowledge of English, even many outdated terms. A really nice poem. Well done.

The poem offers a rhythmical story of a snowman who has various interactions with his surroundings. The poem is well structured. The rhymes are well designed. There is a strong tendency in the poem towards following a classical structure. The perspective is consistent: the snowman is described from a rather omnipotent persona. What is not seen is an in-depth description of the lonesome or blissful feelings of the snowman. The characters around the hero are anonymous. To pun on the word cold, I would say that the poem is about the coldness of snowy winter and the coldness of the persona's distant description. The warmth mentioned at the end could have been warmer.

### **Bronze Award**

Theme: because

# Why I wish I were a flower

Zhu Yidan

Heep Yunn School

The plum blossom buds and blooms.
Fervish [sic] against frigid air, scorching as the midday sun; like the cracking of a fiery dawn, it flares, and burns steadily, in violent, flaming shades of cerise and puce.
O midwinter blossom, how does it feel to be one who flowers in frost?

Because layers of wool and fleece
Little do shield, the bitter breath,
of arctic darkness as it bites;
Like swarms of wasps, puncture and pierce
and drill as needles sting; as frost-bitten fingers claw and rhythmically
knead
into raw wounds, flesh marred and glinting,
serrated fragments, glass and ice.

Yet when vicious winds scrub and scour and bare the branches of nearby trees; The blossom only knows that it must bear the winter.

Because shadows whirl and haunt
my sleepless nights; Hurricanes rage, rampage, and weep;
Inside, where blizzards howl and tear
at the fissures and cracks of my mind.
I take the form of the autumn leaf, shrivelled, spiralling,
Trampled, by savage, rain-soaked winds
And fall mangled, as my blood throbs, spills, and drenches
the dorst [sic] forest floor, drinks up, seeps in; Still radiating warmth.

While the petal does not fear a long and dizzying drop; And only dreams, of a sweet tomorrow.

Because if I do romanticise, the darkness crawling in my mind The shadows chewing at my flesh, as I try not to rot away I think of the plum blossom; That blooms in the harshest winters and bears its fruit in spring.

The poem offers very detailed and delicate descriptions of flowers. The second half of the poem introduces the 'I' and its relationship with the flowers. This is the most exciting part, as it begins to explain why the 'I' would like to project himself onto nature. The last part of the poem echoes the first, reiterating the image of a strong plum tree amid the harshest winter. The poem could have given more explanation of why the 'I' is weak and sleepless. It is a beautiful description in general. I would suggest that the role of the 'I' and its relation with nature need strengthening.

The flowers in winter are praised as strong warriors who endure pain, survive and keep growing in hardship. The brave flowers have inspired and encouraged the narrator to carry on in the darkest days. Though the free verse has neither employed a consistent metrical structure nor a steady rhyme scheme, some sound devices can be found across the six stanzas. For example, the consonant b has been repeated three times in 'blossom', 'buds' and 'blooms', producing alliteration. Slant rhymes can also be spotted at the end of some lines, such as 'fleece' and 'pierce' in lines 8 and 11, as well as 'bites' and 'ice' in lines 10 and 14.

Theme: because

### **Positivity**

Lo Tsz Yan

**HKUGA** College

A wrinkle, a dimple, a grin, a smile, laughter can travel a thousand miles. The golden radiance, warmth, comfort, darkness at bay, be the sun to someone's rainy day.

Her smile, her voice, her vibes, her eyes, the gleaming glow that brightens up my skies. Movies, video games, pure joy and adventures, all the things we promised each other, and so many we haven't yet done together.

Listen, feel, take a deep breath, look around you, it's nature at its best. Sunlight, trees, mountains, seas, take life one step, one run, one climb, at a time.

Look down at your hands, think of all that it could create.

Look into your heart, don't let it be filled with hate.

You are beautiful, you are loved.

Screw the unrealistic expectations, you're already enough.

Good things take time, but won't have to cost you a dime. Tomorrow will be a better day, so look up, stay strong, this won't be long.

Positivity, oh, who wouldn't want this idyllic tranquillity? So let's put everything behind us, and be happy for once.

This is a good poem which shows your strength as a writer. The poem has a clear sense of purpose as well, looking to celebrate the power of positivity. There are some nice rhymes, though many of them are fairly simple. The form is interesting – almost a villanelle – but has some smaller inconsistencies. In any case, it's great to see you playing with poetic conventions. There are some interesting moments of language use here as well, including some which show a strong vocabulary with much depth. For a poet of young age, it's great to see you are able to write consistently on a theme and you should be pleased to have produced a really promising piece of work here. Well done.

This is a six-stanza free verse that uses the voice of a first-person speaker to talk directly to you, the readers. It is as if the readers are intimate friends, and the speaker is giving the readers a word of advice on positivity. To make the readers remember the lines and ideas better, the poet uses repetitions of short phrases and sentences from time to time, such as 'A wrinkle, a dimple, a grin, a smile' in stanza 1, 'Her smile, her voice, her vibes, her eyes' in stanza 2, and 'Look down at' and 'Look into' in stanza 4, all of which form a neat rhythmic pattern. Occasionally, there are also end rhymes like 'smile' and 'miles'; and 'bay' and 'day' in lines 1-2 and 4-5, as well as 'time' and 'dime'; and 'strong' and 'long' in lines 20-21 and 23-24. The delightful imagery and sound play create a 'free-spirit' tone.

Theme: be grateful for

### Aegean

### Lun Hei Yu

Stewards Pooi Kei College

The waves flow in and out, and out and in, along a pastel shore, In search for Hidden secrets, A feast of gratitude. So the wave goes in and out, and out and in.

I yearn not for a harvest of grain,
nor the first chrysanthemum of Spring.
But listen!
The chorus of the Aegean.
Feel!
The soft caress of a dark night breeze.
So I pray,
And I pray,
To Poseidon, and faith.

The moon lies low,
filtered by melancholy mist,
The sea thrashes and swallows,
thrashes, swallows.
Trembling,
I hear not the promised lullabies,
Only the roar of injustice,
Is it greed?
Thrashes and swallows,
Thrashes and swallows.

I sit still, in warmth of candlelight, the comfort of mellow bread, And the sweet love of familiar faces. What had I been seeking?

The invisible truth has long been here.

The poem uses various syntactical and rhythmic patterns to convey a sense of the sea. The form is generally satisfying, with a combination of structure and spontaneity, to express clear, defined feelings. Engagement with classical mythology provides a sense of cultural milieu and orients the poem within a wider tradition, although the self-conscious archaism edges on jarring. Nevertheless, the theme is conveyed with some power, with effective use of cadences, and fresh diction that conveys the poem's themes sharply at times (e.g. 'The sea thrashes and swallows'). That said, the deployment of repetition to communicate the sea's motion is rather over-used.

The poem offers some very powerful images related to the Aegean, the king of Athens and the father of Theseus. We know that according to Greek mythology Aegeus drowned himself in the sea when he mistakenly thought his son to be dead. It is not easy to make the connection between this myth and the poem's content. The 'I' seems to be seeking for some kind of truth that is hidden in the sea. The pursuit of truth involves some kind of injustice. The poem ends with a calm scene where the 'I' sits still in the candlelight, suggesting that she has been reflecting, even imagining life as a sea journey. We are told the feelings and analogies of this struggle in the persona's mind. But it might be a good idea to release more information so that the overall content of the poem can be enriched.

Theme: family

# The Tale of a Sapling

Chu Sui Lam

Heep Yunn School

Once upon a time two branches intertwined Beneath its wedding arch birthed a sapling

Of the two unlike species combined

Fibrous roots from the father, gleaming green leaves like emeralds from the mother The sapling grew from the shadows of the archway

And never faced sunlight with the union that sprouted her suffering

Awestruck by her mother's drip-tip gems dangling, glistening under the sun ray
The sapling craved for her emeralds to shine under streaks of golden-yellow
'Can I soak my leaves in the sun?' The sapling asked in ecstasy
NO! Branches quivered, her foliage shuddered
Denied her place before the light, she settled for shade
She lived with her jewels dimmed, conforming to the shadow

A devastating downpour on the forest left puddles of nutrition on infertile land Like bullets, pellets of water weathered her wrinkled bark while the sapling absorbed the flood

Close to unconsciousness from overworking her roots, echoed her father's faint command:

'Perk up your leaves and straighten your bark, toil till you collapse on the soil!' A looming expectation seeped into her bark like remnants of raindrops; she awoke with refreshed exhaustion

Forced a smile in the rain, showing only the resilience her parents loved

'Evade from sunlight and embrace the rain', the sapling yearned to sing a different tune But no parents could teach her the verses of freedom So sat in the shade of the familiar arch, she hummed her dreary notes of gloom

Endless showers betumbled and scratched the sapling's coat like a tally of her age The shadow of her parents' entanglement shrunk smaller at her foot Sunlight shone through the fading sage green of her mother's foliage She towered above her father's commands of discipline So close to the light, yet so far from escaping the shade The sapling had to reach for the canopy for her emeralds to shine

So she peeked. Beyond the shade the world was brought to light.

A blaring commotion from a brattling chainsaw ruptured the horizon

One by one the emeralds from her comrades shattered like glass and met their fate
Then quiet. A moment of deafening silence for the fallen

Before the sapling saw a severed stump, and a man posing on his pedestal of pride

No roots of resilience could keep her from receding into the shadow

She questioned, 'Why did they not tell me till it was too late?'

Perhaps they were afraid that the exposure could wither
A once little sapling made in the shade
Perhaps they thought that the rain could nurture
A once little sapling made in the shade
Perhaps they wanted to shield the little sapling from the other
Side of the light beyond the facade of the shade

This is an arresting and exciting poem, which uses a wide range of language to describe the way a family grows together (and then grows apart). In some parts, it is confusing because the trees are described doing and saying many unusual things — it is perhaps hard for us to visualise this, because the behaviour is not obviously 'tree-like'. However, I do like the way the story develops through the poem, the use of reported speech, and especially the way the last few stanzas turn to describe the harsh realities that our 'little sapling' may face when they are exposed to the world.

The poem titled 'The Tale of a Sapling' tells a narrative about family, youth, and growth. In the poem, the persona goes on to describe the life experience of the sapling. Word choices, such as 'ecstasy' and 'shuddered', provide vivid imagery of the excitement and disappointment of the sapling. With 'So she peeked. Beyond the shade the world was brought to light', the final stanzas reveal the cruel world to the sapling, where there is 'a brattling chainsaw', 'deafening silence' and 'a severed stump', and prompts the sapling to question 'Why did they not tell me till it was too late'. This poem tells an interesting story that can be interpreted in many ways. It could well be taken literally as a story about protecting trees and our environment, but equally well as showing how the world at large is cruel to family and people from all walks of life. Well done.

Theme: be grateful for

# Be Grateful for Life

### Chan Hiu Wai

St. Mary's Canossian College

Be grateful for living in a world filled with imagination, And be inspired by God's marvellous creation. Be grateful for the chance to see majestic things, The sky, the trees and the bird that sings!

Be grateful for having a body full of strength,
Which lets you run tirelessly no matter the length.
Be grateful for being as healthy as a horse,
And appreciate the nutritious dishes in every course!

Be grateful for having a mind enriched with knowledge, And be amazed by how it handles art, logic and language. Be grateful for being the poet of an endless book, And fill it with words so it's as rich as it looks!

Be grateful for having a family which stays by your side, Whenever you're in trouble so you don't have to hide. Be grateful for having friends who brighten up your days, Who share with you their joys to put a smile on your face!

Be grateful for going on a journey full of wonder,
With numerous experiences for you to discover.
Feel the world's beauty, don't just give a glance,
Cherish every moment and draw the future with your hands!

A simple poem with a clear and accessible message that bears a strong resemblance to Kathleen Raine's 'Amo Ergo Sum' (and I wonder if the poet drew inspiration from Raine). Just as the title suggests, one should be grateful for everything in life. The repetition of the line be grateful for helps forcefully reiterate the central theme of the poem as well as to enhance the rhythm and musicality of it. However, the imagery of the poem does not have a clear sense of development and the repetition of the motif makes it rather like a sermon. In fact, what one needs to be grateful for seems random — the choice of diction seems to be dictated by its rhyming pattern rather than aiming at building a clear image to convey a more coherent moral message to its readers.

This poem uses the theme of 'be grateful' in a simple but effective way — repeating the words at the start of lines to introduce a wide range of positive experiences. The rhymes are generally quite carefully thought out, and add positively to the rhythmic music of the poem; you could have found stronger words to start lines with ('and' or 'the' aren't so exciting) to really give an even clearer direction to the sound of the poem. To maintain the pattern of the poem you've sometimes had to reach a little far for an image or idea ('every course', for example) — it is worth thinking about how you might make each stanza link together more coherently.

Theme: be grateful for

Are grateful for.

Yue Lok Yin Hillary

St. Paul's Convent School

Pessimism, misery, brought by COVID-19
We struggle adrift in a sea of crushed dreams
Hidden behind our masked faces we scream

Isolated from our dear family and friends With bated breath, tracking the infection trend At night, many kneel, praying for the end

Painful affliction
Economy stagnation
Missing motivation
Lost direction
Who will bring the solution, our salvation?
What will happen to our generation?
When will the suffering reach a cessation?
Where is our comfort, our consolation?

Amidst the hurled hateful epithets
Amidst the chaos we mustn't forget
To face the pandemic, our greatest asset

Gratitude, our greatest attitude Be grateful for a multitude To whom we express solicitude

Selflessness, courage, brought by COVID-19
The unbreakable spirit pushed to the extreme
Gratitude in our hearts for our heroes we esteem

Doctors, nurses, our valiant frontlines Altruistic effort we should not undermine Hence we stay home and follow the guidelines

The fortunate ones give thanks they are healthy List of things to be grateful for aplenty In love and care we are wealthy

Kindness, gratefulness, brought by COVID-19 We stay afloat in our sea of shared future dreams Sun on unmasked faces, our smiles gleam

The poet has cleverly utilised COVID-19, the headache and the source of a chain of social issues worldwide to kick start this thank-you poem. Across nine stanzas, the poet shows off her poetic skills in mastering of end rhymes (e.g. 'dreams' and 'scream' in lines 2-3), alliteration (e.g. 'family' and 'friends' in line 4 and 'bated breath' in line 5), repetition (e.g. 'brought by COVID-19' being repeated 3 times in stanzas 1, 6 and 9), and rhetorical questions (e.g. 'Who will'? 'What will'? 'When will'? 'Where is'?). The voice of the poem also addresses the readers directly by using 'we', 'our' and 'us'; a smart approach that can help create intimacy and a sense of unity between the speaker and the readers.

This poem reads nicely and works well as a piece for oral recital, with a clear message and direct expression of emotion as a response to the current pandemic. It rhymes very well, with carefully selected lexis. That said, the work slightly falls prey to its explicit expression of ideas, which may resonate less strongly with the readers. The form looks well planned, but a bit too well planned and becomes somehow artificial. On the whole there is more to learn about the tactical balance of form and meaning in a poem.

Theme: family

### Storm Clouds

### Siu Pui Yuet

**HKUGA** College

Hand's trembling, heart's pumping loud, I was almost stifled by red ovals, Which created a storm cloud, Dispirited, but filled with vocals.

The bell echoed,
It may mean the end of torture,
Or the dawn of horror,
Deep down, I bellowed.

Legs' wobbly, head down,
The amazon seized the paper,
The storm clouds commenced into layers,
As heavy cosmetics no longer shroud her frown.

Slap, Scream, Shout.

Redness slowly loomed on my face,
Rain used to moisturize as embrace,
But the enduring storm brought drought.

Sister was watching, smirking,
While her poor young sibling was howling.
She brought thunder into the storm,
Filled my fragile heart with thorn.

Shall I be less fumbling,
I would be treated differently.
My efforts in studying were redoubling,
But I was still regarded with atrocity.

Or am I born to be unloved,
A feeling even my family struggles to hide.
My crud presence caused flood,
Here I vow, storm clouds will subside,
Along with my embrace to death, with pride.

There is some fresh choice of diction in this poem, which creates one or two striking phrases (e.g. 'My crud presence') that communicate thought and emotion successfully. There is clear and defined thought and feeling, alongside some evidence of patterning, including the use of rhyme. Fourline stanzas are used until the closing stanza, where an additional rhyming line provides a sense of closure. There are some distracting errors in punctuation (e.g. 'Legs' wobbly'), alongside phrases that jar at times ('filled with vocals', 'Rain used to moisturize'). The choice of imagery oscillates between jarring or random (e.g. 'The amazon seized the paper') and rather predictable.

The poem uses storm clouds to represent the conflict between the persona and his/her family. The descriptions are subtle but powerful. They use multiple perspectives to involve other family members. The ringing of the bell may be a hint that the conflict has to do with study. The last stanza is most disquieting as the persona questions whether she is loved or not. The point that the family struggles to hide their love is subtle. This recalls the stereotype of a Chinese family. The last line is worrying, as the persona vows to embrace death. It is my hope that the speaker's conflict can be addressed, if not resolved, as soon as possible.

Theme: because

### The fire within

### Kwok Valerie Tin Wing

St. Paul's Co-educational College

A crystalline shell powerless in the dark world, shattered, broken by their judging gazes.
Because, she tells herself, she is worth nothing.

Or is that true?
A small flame glows in her,
growing brighter by the second.
She pieces herself together
but she is still fragile as fine china,
wobbling as she looks at the world
through eyes, still brimming with tears,
heart still fluttering with fear.
Because,
she cannot mend
entirely.

But the cracks help the light shine free

fluttering, dancing delicately.

A crystalline shell now with fire inside, never again will she meekly hide.
Because,
The blaze inside her burns her down, the ash swirling up like a crown
From the embers she is reborn, with emeralds her hair is adorned.
No longer made of a snowflake, no longer at one touch will she easily break
From carbon to a diamond, from seed to a tree, strong and unbreakable she will forever be.
Singing to the world her haunting story

We are culprits in this cycle of hate; we have sealed their treacherous fate. Will there be a day where labels, titles, glass ceilings will be replaced By equality and respect?

But how many others are beaten, humiliated, stripped of dignity and tied to a stake?

The answer lies with us.

as a queen, full of glory.

The poet is ambitious in forming a free verse about the story of a girl getting hurt and growing stronger with time. First, the voice of the poem compares the girl to a 'crystalline shell', 'fragile as fine china', and 'a snowflake'. Then, having experienced pain and hardship, the girl has developed self-trust and confidence. The transformation is then beautifully represented through the images of a strong tree and an unbreakable diamond. Finally, the last stanza wraps up the story and gives a moral lesson, which follows the tradition of fairy tales. Besides the imagery, the free verse has occasionally formed a few end rhymes, such as 'tears' and 'fear' in lines 15 and 16, and 'inside' and 'hide' in lines 22 and 23. The sound play could be further developed by making use of assonance, repetition and alliteration too.

The poem begins well, with effective, natural cadences. It uses figurative language that whilst not strikingly original, is effective in its communication of thought and feeling. The poem communicates a coherent range of feelings, and its overall structure, which has the air of a developing argument (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) provides a sense of purpose and direction. The gradual introduction, however, of end rhyme as the poem progresses becomes increasingly jarring and distracting. At the point where the poem breaks into rhyming couplets, the syntax and rhythm, tortured to enable rhymes that feel forced and synthetically chiming, detracts from the sense of development and impending climax set up by the opening two stanzas.

Theme: be grateful for

### Be Grateful

### Lee Alexandra Hoi Ching

St. Mary's Canossian College

I rise each morning for a glorious new day.

Over the horizon the Sun's splendour in display,

Soothing sweet chirps with the soft steady breeze,

And His every creation — as you please.

God is love, plus peace and joy,

Always forgiving and never annoyed.

Priceless and undying harmony and love,

A gift from God which shines brightly above.

Be grateful for His majestic work of art,

Don't ever grumble, but love from the heart!

In the brightest of hues I'm lingering happily,
Recalling the joyous times spending with my family.
With every one of us a family tree is created,
Not a single part of it could ever be separated.
Together we enjoy sun rays and go through storms or flames;
Branches diverge but roots remain the same.
By their side I need not worry,
'Cause with them troubles no longer make me weary.
I'm grateful for this loving family,
With their presence I'm enjoying my life so happily!

Those sparkling vibrant memories,
Make up a treasured unique masterpiece.
As friends we brave ups and downs,
When I need you you're always around.
Our friendship can't be bought or stolen,
Losing you I don't dare to imagine.
Together in spirit, together we are strong,
Standing by each other on a journey lifelong.
I'm grateful for what God sends,
Not gold or diamonds, but true and loyal friends!

How lucky I am to be oh so blessed, I'm forever grateful for all I have!

The use of language is effective in communicating the poem's meaning. The topic is clear and expressed consistently and coherently. There is evidence of crafting in relation to form, with regular ten-line stanzas in rhyming couplets, leading to a non-rhyming concluding couplet that stands alone, and is thus given significant emphasis. Effects such as sibilance reflect the intended sense. The meter, however, is sacrificed to the needs of the rhyme scheme, which itself adds little, but rather distracts from the sense of the poem. Some rhymes are rather forced. Images are rather predictable and lack specificity, leading to diction that depends upon cliché.

The poem 'Be Grateful' has effectively painted a vivid film-like imagery and narrative, much as one would expect to see in a school-themed movie, where the first shots show a bright sunny day and steady breeze. The lines read fluidly and smoothly. The ending stanza with 'How lucky I am to be oh so blessed', I'm forever grateful for all I have!' is a nice ending, continuing the overall light and cheerful tone. I appreciate the choice of diction in general. The poet's effort has successfully created a positive experience that resonates with all readers in reflecting on their own lives.



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### Gold Award

Theme: family

### You

Shek Tsoi Yee Chloe
HKUGA College

You blink, squinting upwards with your newly minted eyes A sea of faces gaze back, a blur of silver, black, snow Soon you'll forget this, as fleeting as the summer mayfly The extended hands, the cooing; above all, the delight.

You wail, shattering the veil of placid silence Are you fine? Nursing well? What's your name? It's hard to tell Your mother strokes your back as you hiccup and subside Outside, the leaves pirouette; peace is restored once more.

You scream, tumbling from the chipped monkey bars Your father picks you up, gets you going again In your eyes he sees a kaleidoscope of potentials and hopes You're a smart boy, a bright girl, a dancer, a fighter

You wait, unsure, as the door swings open It's your parents, exhausted, home from a long shift Look at you, the epitome of laziness, watching the television all day! But later on, at night, apologetic whispers, all is forgiven once more

You beam, a burnished plaque cradled in your arms The first in form: not a surprise, that one You're the apple of their eyes, you rosy-cheeked thing Pass them a glowing glance, hear their rapid applause

You fume, slamming, locking the door They don't understand, they don't, and they never have You kick the dented desk, the exams, their expectations A vicious thought crosses your mind; you sweep it out of sight

You stare, they sit across from you, eating in silence Their faces, suddenly so rugged, each line a conquest of time Look down in shame, wordless, eat your cold bowl of rice Watch the leaves, browned and curled, form a heap on the street

You wave, holding hands, luggage trailing behind like sentries They wave back, pleased, crow's feet deepen Turn your head and scan the crowd til they disappear into the sea The two of you walk ahead, cross the unnameable boundary

You blink, squinting downwards with your weather-bronzed eyes A small face gazes back, rosy face obscured by hair and mist You won't forget this, a burning in the back of your mind Brush your eyes, extend your hands to the beacon, that nameless bundle

This poem gives a very interesting and original portrait of family life. There is an impressive range of imagery and vocabulary ('the leaves pirouette'), and these techniques are deployed precisely and intelligently. At times there is a real subtlety of observation ('crow's feet deepen' or 'weather-bronzed eyes') that helps to give clear expression to the thought and feeling. In general, the form of the poem is somewhat free, and this is a positive feature: you still have a respect for the structure of lines and stanzas, with a variety of punctuation and sentence types that make the poem. Overall, this was a pleasure to read – well done.

The poem is a powerful representation of infancy. The use of 'you' is a curious strategy. It is as if the persona is telling the readers what they have forgotten about their childhood. The poem progresses as the 'you' shifts from infancy to adolescence and adulthood. The last stanza suggests that the 'you' has fathered his/her own child. There is a brilliant repetition (with a slight difference) of 'blinking' in the first line of the first and last stanzas. The poem ends with that nameless bundle, offering an open image for infinite imagination. The irregular line structure fits perfectly with the way memories work. Excellent work.

### **Gold Award**

Theme: be grateful for

### **Depression**

### Gayathri Eyunni

West Island School

Darkness.
I want to run,
Far away wherein
Solitude.
One blessing I may count.

Rays.
Not of hope,
But of satisfaction,
Simplicity,
I start to doubt.

How In this world, Of imperfections, Unforgiving. Can I stand?

If
Mercilessly,
I am thrown,
Broken,
By the devil's command.

Tears.
Not of sadness,
Of fatigue,
Abandoned.
My search decays.

One.
Element of surprise,
To lighten,
Brighten,
These tedious days.

Must I be grateful, For the grey skies, That pour black rain, To blind my eyes.

Must I be grateful, When the world dies, And all that remains, Is a memory of goodbyes.

Must I be grateful, For this fading life?

The poem uses some syntactical patterns to good effect. In particular, the transition to a more graceful, fluid meter, and the use of repetition in the first lines of the closing stanza is a relief after the deliberately jarring and stilted patterning of the earlier stanzas. This renders the poem's engagement with its themes memorable, as does the poem's inversion of the thematic category ('be grateful for'). At times, however, the early rhythms are too jarring, the use of archaisms seems forced, and some of the rhymes and half-rhymes clunky (e.g. 'command'/'abandoned'). Opening the poem with stanzas addressing darkness and light respectively seems trite.

The poem is titled 'Depression' under the theme of 'be grateful for', which immediately presents a contrast between the seemingly positive theme and the darker, but unfortunately common phenomenon. The short lines present the signs of depression with a powerful and firm rhythm. I appreciate how the poet uses contrasts like 'Rays' and 'Tears', but then gives a unique perspective to what it means to the persona. The personas goes on with 'not of hope' and 'not of sadness' to escape the cliche often used in dark themes. I appreciate the unique angle to question 'Must I be grateful' for the various clearly unpleasant things in life. It is easy to misinterpret the questioning to defeatism, but in a troubled world, the questioning itself is a much needed reminder.

### **Gold Award**

Theme: family

### **Family**

### **Chow Tsz Ching**

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School As they enter the room,
spirits uniquely become one,
They are a family,
standing side by side.

United by the sorrows,
and joys which blinds them,
They are one,
always staying together.

Through good times and bad, They'll never be sad.

They live and they laugh, always showing their care, Joy and happiness, is what they all share.

They are a family,
and always will be,
Cheering each other on,
through the worst of times.

Connected by emotions,
and the love they all know,
They'll always be there for each other,
through the years as they grow.

A powerful poem with an assertive yet simple and accessible message. The simplicity of the language and structure of the poem actually helps forcefully convey its message to the readers. Family is our everything: they are one, and always will be. The straightforwardness of the language of the poem highlights to readers that the importance of one's family is a simple fact and no flowery language is needed to explain it.

This is a free verse composed of six short stanzas, each with four lines except for stanza three. Occasionally, end rhymes can be found in pairs, such as 'bad' and 'sad' in stanza 3, 'care' and 'share' in stanza 4, and 'know' and 'grow' in the final stanza. Besides the end rhymes, the sound play is minimal, and so is the figurative language. The poem is written from a third-person perspective. When talking about the loving family relationship, the pronoun 'they' is always used, detaching the speaker from the happy family being mentioned. Can this be the special effect the poet wants to create?

### **Gold Award**

Theme: be grateful for

# Be grateful for the world

### **Aaron Huw Puhar**

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School Be grateful for the nature With its trees, leaves and branches And virescent blades of grass Where crystalline dew settles on ranches

Be grateful for a family Where you will always be cared for They provide shelter, nourishment and clothes Like never before

Be grateful for your friends Who play and laugh with you Establishing a social rapport Can be integral too!

Be grateful for the law For without it there would be bedlam And riots Across the world, said some

Be grateful for your health
As Isaak Walton famously said
'Health is a blessing that money cannot buy,'
It is true, without health, you could be dead.

Be grateful for the weekends Finally, a break from work and school to relax A stroll by the beach bazaar With a glass of lemonade, perhaps?

Be grateful for the many activities we could do A skiing trip, a cross country run, a climb up a mountain The possibilities are endless And are wonderful, like a water fountain

Be grateful for hardships And the setbacks that created who we are today They must have made you determined And more focused, in a way

Be grateful for being here
If we were not created
I would not be writing this poem
It is amazing we are here; I am elated

The poem takes on a didactic tone and asks the readers to be thankful for Nature, family, friends, law, health; basically everything that is essential to life. However, the poet appears to assume that all readers have good health, a happy family, food and shelter, good friends etc. The gratitude poem and its words of advice have thus become overly generalised, almost like cliches. Word play is rarely used, but in terms of sound play, the poem has used a number of sound devices. Repetition is effectively used at the beginning of all stanzas. End rhymes can be found in lines 2 and 4 of almost every stanza. Alliteration is also used sparingly.

An uplifting poem promoting a positive message of being grateful for everything in life. There is a thoughtful arrangement of the images: one should of course be grateful for friends, health and weekends and all the blessings in life but one should remain grateful for the blessings in disguise, the many activities, as well as the hardships. There is one thing that is intriguing in this poem: I wonder why there is just one full stop in the middle of the poem – if it is intentional, it is interesting as it seems to mean that one should be grateful until death.

### Silver Award

Theme: be grateful for

### My Appreciation

Ng Man Ka

Sacred Heart Canossian College

Gratitude, optimism, integrity,
my predecessor was no phantasm.
Future and dreams are guaranteed,
because my devotion is as deep as a chasm.

When I first met you,
I was the troublesome child.
I needed the ambition to pursue,
but I had always riled.

I was lost in my own emotions,
but you kept resurrecting me from my own implosions.
That's when I understood,
my existence was for the greater good.

My new ways of perspective have led me here,
a mature, physically and mentally strong individual.
I am no longer in the reign of fear,
I was free from my eternal struggle.

I'm so grateful that you've paid me attention, thank you so much for taking part.

Achieving the greatest heights shall be my redemption,
you are the utter importance in my heart.

This poem describes an important person in the speaker's life and the appreciation the speaker has for this person. The message is clear. The structure is good. The poem however suffers from a lack of creativity in many aspects, from the choice of words, the content, and the form. It is a bit too plain a piece to read, and there has not been a bring-home note for us to contemplate on or rethink. All is laid bare, and could be forgotten soon.

If poetry is about a spontaneous overflow of one's powerful feelings, this is a good one as I can find the genuineness of the persona in this poem. This poem, instead of showing a general gratitude towards nature and life as most poems in this category do, is written as a dedication to a 'you', someone who kept resurrecting the persona from their own implosions. The poet employs simple language and few stylistic devices to express his or her feelings. It is a simple poem which aptly expresses the most sincere gratitude of the persona through a nostalgic reminisce of the past.

### Silver Award

Theme: be grateful for

### A-School

### **Tsoi Shing Hin**

HKBUAS Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School school is an intricate computer,

downloading valuable information onto you.

Though it needs power that is effort, stronger than pewter, but never fear because it won't make you bite more than you can chew.

The teachers are grand doors, vowed to open and allow students to support their means. But to get there you have to climb a tower with many floors, and with each floor you learn something new, like a movie with many scenes.

But the stress is a ravenous leech, slowly draining your ever dwindling sanity. It's a tyrannical führer you must impeach, so if you don't keep it in check, it'll drive you to the brink of insanity.

Well six years have just flew by, but I'm always still asking the same question, why?

A reflection on school life, aptly presenting an image of the pressures of study. But isn't this poem categorised under the theme of be grateful for – the images of a 'computer', 'doors' and a 'ravenous leech' are apparently either too lifeless or intimidating to be associated with gratitude. In fact, the tyrannical 'führer' and the draining stress present an image of a concentration camp-like classroom while teachers are like Hitler torturing students to the brink of insanity. The poet seems to be making a desperate cry for help and a most anguished accusation of the education system of which purpose they are still clueless and asking the same question, 'why?' after 6 years. The poet has already given the poem a witty title to couple with the depressing image of school life: is it a school? or is it A-school?

The poem 'A-School' tells an interesting narrative that sees the school, or perhaps all institutions and organisations, to be intricate machines. The persona goes on to describes the various 'parts' of the machinery and how they work. But perhaps more importantly, the third stanza also points out the stress this computer causes on the individuals and warns that 'if you don't keep it in check, it'll drive you to the brink of insanity'. The poets ends not with an answer, but a deeper question of why the persona is asking the same question after six years in the school. I appreciate the thoughtful reflections of the poet in this short piece.

### Silver Award

Theme: because

# The meaning of life

Shih Wei Fan

**HKUGA** College

Why do sunflowers tilt their heads towards the dazzling sun,

Or honeybees hum when they smell the scent of sweet nectar?

Why does the moon shine bright in solitary,

Or shooting stars glide along the desolate skyline?

Why do deaf musicians compose music they cannot hear,

Or blind artists paint portraits they cannot perceive?

Why did Cupid launch his fervent arrows,

Or Dante devote his epic poems to Beatrice?

I do not know why the world is as it is.

But perhaps it's because the sun symbolizes a new beginning,

Or perhaps it's because the moon exists to guide lost wanderers

and shooting stars fall for dispirited souls.

Perhaps it's because we cannot stop the ingenious inventions flooding out from the passion in

our hearts,

Perhaps it's because the world is full of so much emotion that one cannot bottle it all in our tiny

bodies.

We witness, marvel at the brilliance of humanity and life,

and day by day, one by one,

slowly through a poem here and a person there,

we start to fathom our whys and unravel our own because.

The poem titled 'the meaning of life' tackles the ultimate 'why' question in everyone's life. While it is a serious question, the poet has cleverly connected it with seemingly mundane objects that are around us in our everyday life: Flowers and honeybees, the moon shining, or even extraordinary events like deaf musicians composing or blind artists making visual arts. The poet is candid about not knowing 'the answer', and goes on to give a few 'perhaps'. The poem ends on a positive tone that the 'brilliance of humanity and life' will gradually reveal the meaning of life and answer 'our whys and unravel our own because'.

The first stanza is very well written with some classical literary allusions. The poetic rhythm can be felt too. The second stanza, though corresponding to the first, appears much weaker in terms of language. I am not quite sure about this  $\Omega$  and A structure. It appears rather conventional and lacking in freshness to me.

### Silver Award

Theme: family

# To cherish, not to perish

Chan Ainod HKUGA College The moon was a shadow, waving, fading. The path was a handle, shining, misleading. The fog was a wall, defending, blocking. The hope flew down, landing, diminishing.

'I'm back,' a murmur from the soulless,
A step to my room, the whole lot flawless.
'Your exam papers brother,' there came the princess,
Perhaps graceful, but merciless.

Footsteps clanging, sweat trickling out of nowhere, Swinging in circles, her coral black hair, A treacherous smile, the arrival of a nightmare, Resigning to fate, filled with despair.

'Here you go sis,' I threw them on her face, My last resort, the overcrowding place. I collapsed to the floor, heart bumping at a faster pace, Extravagantly hoping for a moment of grace.

'Come out son!' the voice with aggression, I could feel the excessive tension, As if a tumbling wave, the entrance of the termination, I stepped out, awaiting for the determination.

'Ta-da! Surprise!' A delightful enchantment, The odour of berries, my favourite nourishment, The smile on the princess's face was consistent, Just a slight difference, with that bit of appeasement.

Standing in astonishment, my jaws dropped,
'But why? My exams are all flopped!'
My words were predictable, they weren't shocked,
Instead they rolled in the aisles, and gradually stopped.

'Dear son,' the gracious two turned to me,
'We're not expecting an apology,
Flopping exams, a cup of tea,
Don't forget that we are a family.'

This poem presents a positive message about the love a family has for all its members — even when things don't go to plan. I like the way the opening stanzas build tension about the exam papers: you give us many vivid images that tell us it is a strongly negative experience. As the first part of the poem reaches a climax, I feel like we get a little bit confused about what is going on — the idea of 'the princess' (the sister of the speaker?) is interesting, but needs some more explanation. Nonetheless, the final stanza offers a simple and effective ending, that reverses the tension and anxiety that had been described earlier.

A very vivid description of a nervous kid coming home after getting a bad examination result. Good lexical use throughout with a good rhyming scheme. The ending stanza is warm and echoes the theme — Family. On the other hand, the poem is lacking some creativity. There is a contrast between the initial uneasiness and the final relief, but that is quite anticipated. The family message is clear, but a bit too clear and too conventional.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: family

# Family in My Eyes

#### **Cen Yang Victoria**

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy

Family the word rolls off my tongue like candy,
The sweet ones that got stolen by your sister and brother.
To you it might sound like something very not handy,
The ones that got loved by your father and mother.

They are my books of advice,
The ones full of secrets about good.
They help me chase away my worry mice,
The ones that even look in my hood!

They are my lifelong private diary,
The ones I trust to tell all to.
They teach me a code in binary,
The ones that don't fake it, they really do!

They are my house in the rain,
The big strong ones I like.
They are my helpers in vain,
The ones that comfort me with a new bike!

They are my wonderful comfort zone,
The ones with all I like to do.
They are my delicious ice cream cone,
The ones that are sturdy and not full of goo!

Though we might fight, Yes its quite normal. You'll soon see at twilight, Holding a grudge is dull!

They are my bed in my room,
The ones with a cute little doves.
They are the ones that help me groom,
The ones that make me special the way I love!

I like the way this poem presents many images for the positive impact a family can have on a person's life. Every stanza introduces at least one new image – books, houses, helpers, comfort – which makes this an energetic and lively poem. Some of the images may deserve a little bit more elaboration: it is really interesting to talk about the family as a 'private diary or a 'house in the rain', and maybe it would be better to expand these ideas instead of introducing new ones. The poem has a careful form, but sometimes the effort to create rhymes has had strange effects on the meaning ('binary' or 'in vain', for example); and the poem may have been improved with a looser form that allows the sincere feeling of the words to come through more clearly. Overall, then, although there are some aspects that could be developed further, there is a great deal to like in this poem.

A cheerful and light-hearted poem with strong musicality. There is an abundant use of analogies to illustrate the importance of the personas family. The sound pattern has effectively created a joyful tone in celebrating the bliss of having a family and in conveying the personas gratitude towards their family. However, the poet seems to have put too much emphasis on the rhymes. By trying to fit all the ideas into a rhyming pattern, some of the expressions become unnatural.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: be grateful for

# Can you find the silver lining?

## Kwong Si Ching Kesha

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School Family will never fall apart

Appreciation plays a big part

Mommy and Daddy work super hard

I love them with all my heart

Little brother is annoying yet smart

You bet he likes to fart!

Teachers make sure we get things done

Each class they try to make it fun

After-all no one wants to overrun

Computer is now my number one

Hope everyone is on mute and no moms calling 'son!'

Explaining our ideas one by one

Remember to sit still and do not run

Students must pay attention to everyone!

Friends cheer me up like no other

Really want to see them sooner

I miss them and their laughter

Especially when I am having supper

Nobody likes to play but my brother

**D**oing homework alone is a suffer

**S**urely I wish Covid is over! Over! OVER!

This poem gives three rhymed acrostics to show gratitude for three important groups — 'family', 'teachers', and 'friends'. I like the way that the single word for each stanza helps to focus our attention on each of these things: although you give us lots of ideas for each section, they all come back to that word. It is interesting to choose the same rhymesound for each line in a stanza, and it definitely adds a positive rhythmic aspect to the poem, especially at the end of the poem (where 'OVER' is an especially important word!); however, you could have given yourself a bit more freedom and used different rhymes, as well as looking for more evocative ideas. Overall, well done, this is good work.

This is a fun and playful poem which shows that you are starting to work really well with English creative writing and that you can have a bright future as a writer. It's great that the poem reflects on the contemporary situation with Covid and how this relates to our relationships with computers and each other — well done on this. Poetry should be about exploring the present and you do this very well. It's also great to see that you are playing with form as a way to structure the poem and while this is simple, it's an important part of working with poetry that you try these things out. Overall, you should be really pleased with this fun poem, which shows you are developing as an interesting poet.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme: be grateful for

## A Year of Unexpected Gratitude

## Liu Adelyne Sylvania

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy

When the whole world stops: when crowds disperse, leaving empty stores, when parks and restaurants shut their doors, when schools and vacations are cancelled, postponed, when everything seems to be going wrong, Remember what a blessing it is to simply be alive, there is so much to be grateful for in my life. I am grateful to be healthy, living, breathing, to be greeted by sunlight and fresh air every morning. I am grateful for a warm bed to sleep and hot meals to eat, for my laptop and the electricity, for my parents and sister who will always protect me. I am grateful for teams that worked day and night to invent the vaccines, for medical personnel to save lives and the supporting machines, for essential workers to keep our cities functioning and clean. If there was anything that 2020 gave me, it was handfuls of time: time to be with my family, time to be adventurous to abseil, to zipline, to push myself on challenging hikes and take in the marvelous scenery, time to be flexible and adaptive with online learning, time to be creative to code, to bake, to keep on dancing. This year made me realize how, even when the world seems to fall to pieces, even when we need to reimagine our day-to-day lives,

all these little, precious moments,

will empower us to get through it always.

The poem 'A Year of Unexpected Gratitude' seemingly shows great efforts by the poet to stay strong and inspire readers to remain positive. The beginning stanza sets the stage with the entire world stopping for the global pandemic. The poet describes the gloomy and dark image of closed doors and isolation. However, the poet does not indulge in the negativity. Rather, the following stanzas go on to list what is worth feeling grateful for. I applaud the poets mindfulness in writing this timely piece. If there is anything one could be critical about, it might be the quality of diction and the rather direct reference to real life events and objects (e.g. 'vaccines' and '2020'), which veils the poetic quality of the pieces.

The poem presents a clear, powerful, positive message that we should be grateful for what we have now despite the pandemic. Instead of the common gloomy outlook that many have, the poet discovered the meaning of life during this time of difficulty, and presents his/her minute observations of the many walks of life. What remains slightly inadequate is the depth of thought and the creativity of the poetry. Readers may be easily informed by the lines, but all stay quite conventional.

#### **Bronze Award**

Theme:

because

## Soaring

## Wecker Sebastyen

Hong Kong Adventist Academy

The breeze rushing past

The weightless drifting

The incomprehensible speaking

The crowds underneath shifting

The soundless birds whistling

The clear blue sky

Oh my, oh goodness

I'm about to die

This is a short and powerful poem. The contrast between the two stanzas is the key to the poem, which turns from a reflection on a peaceful pattern of daily life to the death of the speaker. The phrase 'oh my goodness' seems slightly out of place as the linking line between these two moods, but otherwise it works well. It's hard to capture so much in a short poem of just 8 short lines, so this shows talent and an ability to think about surprise as a poetic technique. The images of movement are really powerful and it's great that the writer sticks with this throughout the poem. It perhaps deliberately contrasts with the threat of death, which has the power to stop all movement, which works well. A great poem for this age group, so very well done.

The poem offers an internal description of a dying man whose soul is possibly soaring into the clear blue sky. The description is straight forward, but it is limited to just one perspective, that is, the man looking at his physical surroundings from his own point of view. How about his inner feelings? How about his memories? One can imagine that the feelings of a man who is about to die must be quite intense. And yet, the poem did not quite capture that intensity, at least not from the inside of the man. The least appealing lines are the last two. There is little need to dramatize feelings by turning them into exclamatory speech.

Theme: family

## My Sister

#### **Chung Ho Lai Lukas**

Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui Ming Choi Primary School My sister and I look remarkably alike.

Iconic small eyes and big smiles are just the same.

I sometimes love her but sometimes dislike.

Three years younger sis, You are my demure Dame.

My sister is a slow eater,
And she has cheek pouches like a hamster.
Meat is yucky, so as Seven.
Tick-tock, tick-tock, 'Time's up!'
Oh, a weird face bearing two ping-pongs. What a monster!

My sister has a famous temper.

Her deafening scream makes you surrender.

She thinks she's right,

And yells at everyone in sight.

Her voice screeches until she feels victorious.

But...my sister always plays with me.
'You choose the game,' she may decree.
Board games, shooting,
Ball games, running.
Time flies with endless laughter, whoopee!

My sister shares treasures with me pleasurably. She lets me take them generously. From chips to sweets, And chocolate treats.

She gives them to me unconditionally.

For what may come it's hard to say. We put up with each other every day. 'Luke, time to play! Don't run away!'

This is a nice poem which reflects on the relationship between the speaker and his younger sister. It is nice to read about the positive and negative aspects of that relationship and the poem does effectively operate as a window into the world of the speaker and their daily life and relationships. There are some nice moments of English language as well as many simple phrases that work well. Sometimes it is not clear why complex language has been used, for instance with 'demure Dame', which does not actually seem to have much to do with what you are saying. Be confident in the language you use, rather than using language you are less sure about. Overall though, this is an interesting poem and you should be pleased with your progress as a writer.

The speaker brings small, joyful moments spent together with his cheeky younger sister vividly to the mind's eye of the readers. Rather than delivering long predictable speeches about love, harmony and the importance of family, the poet playfully uses the boy's first person point of view to introduce his fun sister who eats like a hamster and bosses everyone in sight around. Sweet moments of sharing sweets and playing together are shared with an innocent voice. The poet is good at mastering sound devices as well. Alliteration, onomatopoeia, end rhymes and dialogue are used effectively, and this makes reading and reciting the poem a pleasure.

Theme: be grateful for

# Siren of the Waters

**Huang Crystal**King George V School

In sunlight; glittering expanse of blues

Soft cresting waves that shine in dazzling white;
At night an endless void of darkened hues
Midnight mirror shining vivid starlight
Shallows crystal clear as daylight streaming
Through a prism; refracting rainbow patterns
Velvet seaweed forests; moonlight gleaming
In darkest ocean depths the water yearns
On stormy days the waves ravage the shores
Crashing against rocky earth in vengeance
Her restless savage disposition roars;
Followed by the song of her transcendence
Hold thy breath and dive down deeper under
Nevermore to see the skies of thunder

The poem presents an epic picture of nature. The words chosen for describing the various natural phenomena are quite intense and sometimes emotional. To what extent can we say that waves are casting vengeance on the rocky earth? The poem runs the risk of projecting unjustified emotions onto nature. Having said that, the poem is commendable in creating such a powerful image of nature. If the poet wants to introject emotion onto nature, she is suggested to provide more substantial descriptions for justification.

This poem skilfully uses the English sonnet form and deploys language, rhyme and meter appropriate to the conventions of the form. A full-stop at the end of line 12 would have maintained grammatical sense and also emphasised the volta. There is also some variation in metrical patterns to avoid repetitive rhythms and enhance the impression of naturalness and spontaneity. Figurative language is broadly effective, although lacking in strong, original imagery. Feelings are clear and defined. Syntactical patterns convey a sense of design. The first six lines feel too much like a simple list or inventory, and use of enjambment and caesura seems somewhat arbitrary; these devices might have been used to evoke the movement of the ocean, but caesura in two consecutive lines creates a halting rather than flowing rhythm.

Theme: because

## A Sense of Humour Saves The Day

Law Yu Ching

Tak Sun School

When your shoes are muddy, make mud pies.

When sand gets into your eyes, build a sand shrine.

Because... We say...

Easy-peasy, lemon squeezy,

Put it in a blender, out comes positivity.

When life gives you a hoard of lemons,

You make a grand fountain of lemonade.

When the world needs emergency first aid,

I put on my superhero underpants and

Save the day! Just kidding.

When fate lets you down like a grenade,

I will help as much as I can as a mate.

When tears fall on your face,

I can offer my puns to brighten up the day.

Huzzah, Hooray!

This piece of work conveys a clear message of being positive in life. I like the superman joke in the second stanza, which is very entertaining and fits the theme of this poem. The second stanza however seems to repeat the first as they look similar in terms of content. There are a few places where the rhyming seems to be trying too hard. While the information for the readers is clear, it nevertheless lacks room for further pondering, I think. There is an issue of depth, beyond playfulness.

This is a fun poem about how a sense of humour and positive thinking can be important in one's approach to life. It has a nice quick rhythm and reads easily, making it a great poem to get children to start engaging with poetry and experience how fun and interesting it can be. There are some nice images used here, such as the idea of making lemonade out of life's lemons which shows a familiarity with English language conventions and the ability to play around with them. There are also some really nice rhymes and half rhymes, such as grenade and mate which is pretty powerful. Overall, this is a playful poem that you should be very pleased with. Keep writing and exploring what you can do with poetic language and you will develop into an excellent creative writer. Well done.

Theme: be grateful for

# Be Grateful for God

#### **Chan Pui Tung Tonia**

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School God gives us everything we need on the Earth.

Be grateful for God because he has the highest worth.

He used seven days to create an amazing place.

He is merciful and fills the world with grace.

On the first day, he brought the first spark of light. He illuminated our world and made it bright.

On the second day, he made an important decision.

He built the sea and sky using a division.

On the third day, he produced plants with his powers.

They include trees, fruits, bushes and flowers.

On the fourth day, he warmed the Earth with the sun. Crafting the moon and sparkling stars were also done.

On the fifth day, he created magical sea animals. God also gave us flying birds that were wonderful.

On the sixth day, he sculpted a boy and a girl as friends. He also made land animals and the creation came to an end.

On the seventh day, God was tired and wanted to rest.

Thank you for constructing this world, you are the best!

Good night! Sleep tight!

This is a short poem that praises God for his Great Design and creation. Following the Christian tradition, God is personified as a male, an poetitative and all-power father figure. After the 1st stanza that sets the scene, each stanza refers to a day in Genesis. Altogether, the poem consists of eight stanzas with pairs of end rhymes, with the exception of stanza 8, where only a pair of internal rhymes can be found in 'night' and 'tight'. While the imagery and sound play are neat and easy to follow, there are a few flaws in the poem. For instance, in line 1, it should be 'God gives us everything we need on Earth'. The poet can leave out the article 'the'. Also, when using pronouns to refer to God, the letter 'h' should be capitalized. Nonetheless, the small flaws do not affect the reading experience much. The poem is a pleasure to read.

The poem is titled 'Be Grateful for God' and uses a tidy and uniform structure. The effort by the poet is clear in this uniform rhythm and phrasing. If there is anything one could complain about this work, it might be the quality of diction and the effort in turning the ideas into lines in poems. The stanzas read more similarly to prose than poetry. The use of common phrases might not be a good strategy in poetry (e.g., 'Good night! Sleep tight!'). Although it sounds familiar to the readers and the two phrases rhyme, it makes the theme too light and does not provide a strong ending to the final stanza.

Theme: be grateful for

## Be Grateful for the Beauty of Nature

#### Leung Hayden

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School The sky fills with dancing snowflakes,

Maple trees reflect in mirror-like lakes,

Light beams through the woods when the sun wakes.

Looking at nature's artwork everyday,

My sorrow will be blown away.

Crashing waves splash sunny shores,

As smoothly as syrup, the waterfall pours,

Birds sing and compose miraculous music scores.

Listening to nature's relaxing sound,

My inner peace can be found.

Cherries and strawberries smell sweet,

Fresh scent of green grass and golden wheat,

Aroma of flower blossom is a special treat.

Sniffing nature's refreshing air,

My happiness grows when I'm there.

Nature is an artist, a therapist, a musician and a magician,

My heart is filled with gratitude and admiration.

This is a nice poem on the subject of nature. You are able to write passionately about a subject you care about, which is nice to see at this stage in your writing career. The poem uses the senses to engage with the idea of nature, through taste, smell, sight, etc, which works really nicely. There are some nice rhymes and half rhymes here as well, which show that you are able to use the English language well and with confidence. The rhyme between magician and admiration is a nice half rhyme to finish the poem on. Some of the ideas are slightly on the clichéd side – the theme of nature and inner peace is an old and well-trodden idea. Is there anything slightly more unique you might be able to bring to this, rather than repeating accepted ideas? On the whole, you should be really pleased with this fantastic start to your poetic career.

Language is used to communicate a range of positive feelings about the natural environment, clearly and in a defined way. The poem balances concrete and abstract, by describing emotional responses to natural scenes. There is a sense of form and structure, with a repetitive rhyme scheme, and regular stanzas before the final rhyming couplet. Appeals are chiefly to the senses, until the end of the poem, where a series of metaphor are presented as a list. There is variety in figures of speech, although with occasionally jarring tonal shifts, between lyrical and unintentionally colloquial e.g. 'My sorrow will be blown away'.

Theme: be grateful for

# My amplifier in my heart

Wu Kasper

King George V School

You wish I could hear you calling my name with my ears, when I came into the world.

No worries.

I listened with my eyes to your genuine smile with tears, cheering, tickling, amplifying my sketch of curiosity.

I was an overjoyed sparrow who caught its first caterpillar, my favourite toy's name was my first word – Mommy.

With my tiny amplifiers on my ears, chuckling, giggling, amplifying my echoic memories.

I was an overtired puppy who rolled on the bed, awaiting for the same bedtime stories endlessly.

Until I took my tiny amplifiers off to rest, cuddling, taming, amplifying my mindful silence for clarity.

I was an over-excited turtle who swam clumsily in troughs and crests, my first musical game in well whipped brine differently.

You taught me how Mother Earth's percussion is a touch of caress, crescendos, diminuendos, amplifying my limit of inaudible melodies.

I am a brave blue jay in a sanguine canopy, nesting with knowledge and courage like others, a day of days.

Your giving on crossed worry lines is timeless beauty, cherishing, lasting, amplifying my sweetest song on your birthdays.

Sound distorted the spectrum I heard, despite,
I collected your words as gems for seamless jewellery's bright,
writing myself clues of delights.
You love me with all you might,
for learning wrong from right.
You lift me up flying like a kite...

I can speak pleasingly to the ears, hear my thankfulness for my loveliest angel — Mommy, 'You are my almighty amplifier from the depths of my heart.'

Clear and defined feelings are matched to a range of concrete images. The poem is characterised by an abundance of figurative language, used with varying levels of success. For example, the synaesthetic images in the first stanza can evoke curiosity and a sense of mystery ('I listened with my eyes'), or, at other times, stumble ('I wish I could hear you calling my name with your ears' – are 'you' calling with ears or is 'I' hearing with ears; the latter is redundant). Other images and figures of speech suffer from unfortunate and likely unintentional resonances or meanings (e.g. 'You are my almighty amplifier' suggests a godlike HiFi system).

The poem uses the image of an amplifier to connect various moments of infancy and childhood. The use of the electronic device renders some interesting oxymorons, such as the amplification of 'my limit of inaudible melodies'. The confident tone of the poem suggests that the 'I' is conscious of what she is doing when an infant. That is something the poet may need to further justify in the poem. I guess the images – puppy, turtle and jay – are imaginations generated retrospectively. Perhaps the poet wants to stress the time difference between the 'I' in the present and the 'I' in the past, and possibly the complex relations between that difference and the role of the amplifier.

Theme: because

# The Cause and Effect Disaster

#### **Agarwal Mridul**

Hong Kong Adventist Academy

The cause and effect chain is complicated. It has so many different names, such as The ripple effect,
Chain reaction,
Domino effect,
Vicious circle,
The butterfly effect,
Etc.

One small thing can
Do something completely drastic.
Such as a butterfly
Flapping its wings,
Causing a series of
Events that result
In a tornado.

Or leaving
A coffee mug
On a
Restaurant floor,
That could cause
Someone to step on it,
Sending shards
Flying everywhere,
Breaking everything,
Going into people's eyes,
Making them blind,
Them accidentally
Breaking more things,
The restaurant being destroyed
And going bankrupt.

It's crazy how it happens.
I bet after
Reading this poem,
You'd think twice before
Even playing with a ball.

The poem uses line breaks to enhance the sense of fragmentation that is described in the third stanza. This builds on the broader disjointed effect of form throughout. Form reflects meaning here, with a sense that disconnected fragments cohere into a whole that develops and builds. However, choice of images and language is predictable and clichéd: the evocation of the image of a butterfly to signify chaos theory is worn out, whilst the image in the third stanza of an accident with a coffee mug spiralling into mass-blinding combines the ghoulish and the slapstick. This hyperbolic chain of events in stanza 3, combined with the contraction in stanza 1 (Etc.) and the direct challenge to the reader in stanza 4 creates a sense that the poem is humorous or tongue in cheek. Yet this humour does not lead to a satisfying or witty conclusion, but rather the sense that it is simply unintentional.

I like the idea of this poem, which describes two contrasting examples of how 'one small thing can do something completely drastic'. There is a striking contrast between the butterfly causing a tornado and the coffee mug causing problems in a restaurant, and we are asked to question what small everyday actions might make a change in the world around us. I actually felt the poem ended too quickly – another interesting example could have helped to show a bit more range. Although the ideas are interesting in this poem, I felt that some more rhythmic techniques may help to emphasise the most important concepts.

Theme: because

## **Nature**

## Yeung Tsz Yuen

HKBUAS Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School Shall I compare nature to a mysterious treasure chest?

Birds that sing, plants that grow, how is it possible?

Once you enter it, you'll find that it's an extraordinary quest,

because besides the tiredness of walking, you'll find the beauty of your incognoscible.

Nature, you are the refreshing, heart-cooling iced drinks,
Instead, we don't taste nor drink, we watch and hear.
Sparrows soaring, cows eating, we eye them without blinks,
Leaves waving, birds chirping, the pleasant will chase away your drear.

But nature is sometimes the cruel, heartless, infamous maleficent,
Tragedies, known as 'natural disasters' arise over time.
Who would have known, we were these events' precipitant,
When will us put our wrongdoings in prime?

Currently nature is a melting ice cube, gradually changing,
Greenhouse gas, paper making made nature suffer,
To stop dystopia being reality, we should start acting,
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, do it from breakfast to supper.

This poem models itself after Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 at the beginning, but it has 16 lines instead of 14, and its rhyme pattern is ABAB CDCD EFEF GHGH, rather than following the rhyme scheme of ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. Also, the metrical structure of iambic pentameter is not well kept in the poem. The heartbeat rhythm has been broken. For readers who are expecting a sonnet, the inconsistent form of the poem can be disappointing. The poem's point of view is equally inconsistent. In the first stanza, the speaker of the poem uses 'it' to refer to nature. Then in the second stanza, nature is suddenly personified and the speaker uses 'you' to talk to nature. Afterwards, in the following two stanzas, the pronoun 'it' is used again. On the whole, the shifting point of view is a bit confusing.

The poem presents the beauty of nature and how it is damaged by human beings. The use of 'you' suggests that the poem directly addresses nature as a person, but then it shifts back to nature as a more distant object in other stanzas. The poem suggests that we should preserve nature to stop dystopia becoming reality. Do we preserve nature because we want a good living environment, or because we find harming nature an unethical act, or both? What are the difficulties encountered in the process of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'? The last stanza seems to have provided a quick fix to all the problems mentioned. It brings us to question whether poetry should be written for fixing problems or addressing them from alternative perspectives.

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Theme: be grateful for

## The Lion Rock's Belief

#### **Cheng Cheuk Hang**

Baptist (Sha Tin Wai) Lui Ming Choi Primary School Lying on the top of the mountain I've witnessed this place Transformed into the Pearl of the Orient From an old fishing village

'Solutions are always more than difficulties'
All the time this is their motto
So during this period of adversities
Quickly they got used to the new normal

Wearing masks and practising hand hygiene
Maintaining social distance and testing on COVID-19
With a strong sense of unity
They fight the virus prudently

Working from home and shopping online
E-teaching and e-learning works fine
Everyone works hard at his position
Wholeheartedly they complete the mission

Filled with collective power

By upholding perseverance and solidarity

Being valiant and without fear

For sure they can overcome the calamity

Lying on the top of the mountain
I believe in this place
It will soon get back to normal
And create another miracle

Theme: be grateful for

## God is Great

#### **Cheng Ping Ho**

Canossa School (Hong Kong)

I thank God for the bright morning light.

While walking on the beach at night,

I feel the sweet smelling breeze.

The moon over the sea,

Shining like a diamond.

The clouds in the sky,

Chasing the stars.

I thank God for the lush green trees.

See them cluster,

They give me shade.

The leaves shimmering in the wind,

Dancing so gracefully.

As the daisies grow,

I hear the buzzing bumblebee.

I thank God for the lovely animals.

See them play,

All the birds singing,

Full of lively loud laughter.

A gentle stream flow nearby,

Know the sound of water splash,

Catch its glimmer in a flash.

This is the way of nature,

To thank God

And see the truth,

It is a great pleasure for me

To live in this wonderland.

Theme: be grateful for

## The Repeated Refrains

**Leung Ching Hang** 

**Chun Tok School** 

So grateful that

After every swirling storm,

The quiet calmness comes;

After every cold winter,

The cozy spring follows;

After every dark night,

The shining sun rises

Even out of our sight;

When things seem not all right,

We can still watch out for the light.

Theme: family

## My Family

**Leung Shek Yin** 

Diocesan Boys' School

Oh family, oh family,

Living with me in harmony,

Acting like eternal protectors,

Safeguarding me against opposing 'predators'.

Why shouldn't I praise my family?

Doesn't it encourage me a lot?

Oh family, oh family,

Passing time with me blissfully.

After all the hurdles we go through,

We are still one altogether.

My good old family, my cherished family,

Nourishing me with inspiration endlessly.

When all hope is lost,

My family brings me out of the frost.

I wish I can live with my family,

Forever without any cost.

Theme: be grateful for

# The Power of Gratitude

#### Lam Athena Wai-Sum

Diocesan Girls' Junior School

We mustn't neglect,

Rather we ought to reflect

The wondrous gift of being alive,

A blessing God has gifted us that we may thrive.

Express eternal gratitude

For skies, diamond studded and indigo hued,

For sunsets, ablaze with bewitching tones of vermilion,

And for incandescent stars, million after million,

For the inimitable attributes in each and every creature,

Makes the ethereal beauty and bucolic landscape of Nature.

Convey immense appreciation,

Through incessant words of thanks;

Through wordless acts of kindness, unspoken yet impactful;

Seeming insignificant but nevertheless tactful.

A brief, passing smile could brighten up a sombre room,

Just as the glimmering flame of a candle

A jet-black abyss of drab and dreary gloom.

Every moment ought to be cherished,

Dare not wait 'till the flourishing have perished.

Demonstrate gratitude whilst you still can,

For it is limited, finite, that is, our lifespan.

Theme: family

## The Paks Family

#### Pak Hei Yee Hailey

Diocesan Preparatory School

My father is a super-duper.

He drives a mini cooper.

He drives us to school every day

and take us to eat yummy buffet.

My mother is a busy lady.

She works hard to get everything ready.

She is as busy as a bumble bee,

taking care of my brother and me.

My little brother is a happy boy.

He always shares with me his favourite toy.

He is as sweet as honey,

and as cute as a fluffy bunny.

I am a little ballerina,
and like to sing like Moana,
I am the family's little angel,
bringing them the most special.

Theme: be grateful for

## A Firefly's Glow

## Chan Hei Tung Hayden

Good Hope Primary School cum Kindergarten

Black paint splashed against rosy crimson, Pure gold dripping down. Here I stand in my misery prison, In grief and guilt, I drown.

An unearthly glow courses through my eyelids, My heart alights with scalding fire. That never ceased to burn, whatever I did. Emerald, it never did tire.

As they parted, their malignant bodies reflected, Rhythmically glowing their green pulsing end. As if from the air they clawed and collected, Only one lingered, a candle lit, as my friend.

I see its glowing glare every day, A small, bright flame in the dark. Like a fiery stream lighting the way, Healed by its light, my once broken heart.

Sluggishly misery faded away,
The grief of loss vanished.
The darkest black turned to white, night to day,
Aged was the evanescent firefly, deeply cherished.

A day when sunlight flowed as a wave, Unnoticed by anyone casually passing, Was the dim body among a grave, Unnoticed by anyone but me, sobbing.

Life twists in unpredictable ways, Every second, every minute. You never know what's in store in future days, Why not cherish our lantern that stores it?

Our ability to see and hear, Taste, feel, and smell, Is a gift that may sometimes tear, Be grateful for them, rather an empty shell.

What brings us most joy, hope, and love? What is branching off a hundred doors? It's not under control from the heavens above, But a gift bursting full of optional floors.

Every nightmare, every dream, Every heartbeat, every breath, Is a reminder of our lively, running stream, That we should be grateful for, even in death.

Theme: be grateful for

#### The inspiration of a strange dream

#### Li Charmaine

Heep Yunn Primary School

I was very choosy on food, and threw away anything taste not good. I didn't treasure my friends' companion, and treated them as my servants. Then one night I had a strange dream, I became a dog and wandering by the stream. I walked to the park, and 'woof' I barked I wanted to find something to eat, but I could not find a bit. I wanted to find my dear friends, but I could not find they in the end. I was hungry, lonely and weary, so I cried miserably. Suddenly a beam of light came from the sky, an angle stood there high. when the angle advised me to be thankful. and up from the bed I bounced.

I was very fearful 'RING, RING!' the alarm clock sounded, I learnt a lesson

that I should cherish everything I have as a precious present.

Theme: be grateful for

## Stay Positive and Be Grateful

Lam Yat Yu

**Kowloon Tong School** 

Although life is harsh and reality is cruel, Challenges are like a losing duel, Days are dark and shrouded in despair, Souls are broken beyond repair.

But always remember:

Because of the storm, there is a rainbow,

Because of the dark night, there is the bright moonlight,

Because of the mistake, there is a lesson learnt.

There is always something worth being grateful for.

Be grateful that you can see,
The white clouds and the sapphire sky,
The colorful flowers blooming on a tree,
The multi-colored wings of a butterfly.

Be grateful that you can hear,
The chirping of the birds,
The beautiful music they make,
So full of cheer.

Be grateful that you can smell,

The fragrant fruits of the orchards,

The pleasing aroma from the sea of flowers,

A hundred aromatic scents, indescribable by words.

In this world, everything has value.

There isn't a definite good or bad,

Depending only on whether you see it

As a curse or a blessing

So, have a positive attitude,
Show appreciation and gratitude.
Remember, there is no need for sorrow,
For there is always a new tomorrow.

Theme: be grateful for

## A life full of gratefulness

#### Kwok Ella Wai Man

Lui Cheung Kwong Lutheran Primary School There are so many things to be grateful for.

Listing them will just make my hands sore.

A roof above my head,

A goodnight sleep on a comfy bed.

A protective guard dog that can leap,

A warm and adoring family with love so deep.

My parents loving me deeply and unconditionally

And filling my massive giant tummy.

With honey, sweet, chilli, spices, sweet and sour beef,

My loyal friends, who bring me joy and relief

So I can use it as my life jacket to experience all my highs and lows,

Because those are the times that help me grow.

With all these blessings given by God,

It is impossible to see the glass half empty and sob.

Theme: family

#### My Fantastic Family

Cheung Ching Ching
Oblate Primary School

You ask, 'how do we spell family?'

I say, just remember '<u>F</u>ather <u>A</u>nd <u>M</u>other <u>I</u> <u>L</u>ove <u>Y</u>ou.'

I do, I swear I love my parents dearly.

For they are the best parents in the world easily.

My father is loving and loyal.

He puts in his blood, toil, tears and sweat to put food on our table.

He is also humorous, cracking hilarious jokes effortlessly.

I am captivated by his charm and wisdom, always and eternally.

My mother is an angel sent above.

She takes care of me with immense affection and love.

She teaches me virtues, kindness and morality,

So that I could contribute to our society passionately and altruistically.

To the moon and back, I love my family,

I wouldn't trade my family for the world certainly.

Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity,

To share with you my family, my fantastic family.

Theme: be grateful for

#### The Rainbow

#### **Cyrus Pang**

S.K.H. Chai Wan St. Michael's Primary School Red draws the outline, a beautiful bow.

And orange within it brings a soft glow.

Inside beams the yellows, bedazzling bright.

Next is the green, as green as grass on a field, a calming delight.

Bringing some depth is a soft shade of blue.

Over the arc of the violet hue.

With shadows of indigo closing the show.

Red, orange, yellow, green,

Blue, indigo, violet is what we see.

Rain-bow colors.

Are made with light bending you see!

I am grateful for having such a magnificent rainbow!

Theme: because

## Because COVID-19

#### **Tang Sky**

S.K.H. St. James' Primary School

Because COVID-19,

we know more about hygiene.

Because COVID-19,

we use more alcohol and chlorine.

The Earth stopped this year.

Everything was gone except fear.

People cannot go to a bar to have a beer.

Christmas Eve had no cheer.

Pharmacies sold out of all things clean.

Markets sold out of beans

Clothing shops sold out of all jeans.

All because of COVID-19.

In December, we have COVID-19 vaccine.

We can vaccinate next year.

In this year, COVID is very mean.

So we will kill it with vaccine.

Theme: be grateful for

#### Green Land, Treasure Land, My Homeland

#### Chan Shun Hei

S.K.H. Tsing Yi Estate Ho Chak Wan Primary School Choking smoke, bustling roads, I want a halt.

Running cars, crying engines, let's take a break!

Look! A crack ahead,

A breakthrough to keep one's head.

A drizzle falls, hanging down my head,
The drops washes my hands,
Leads me to walk ahead,
A walk in the mountain track.

Grasses on the ground,
Fruit trees all around!
I lie to have a rest,
Relaxing is the best!

Welcome me a friendly snail,
Greet me a nightingale.
Nature gives,
Grateful for the gift!

The crescent smiles, so I'm not alone,
Light in a distance,
Warmth in all seasons,
Heals my soul, guides me home.

Theme: family

#### My Father

#### **Au Angela Emily**

Stewards Pooi Kei Primary School Who is this so big and tall,

The one who usually goes to the mall,

He is the one who likes to be clean,

He also doesn't like to eat baked beans,

He does his work really well,

He doesn't have a dog with a bell,

He used to play American football,

He will always come to our call,

He likes to play with us,

When he's here, we don't make a fuss,

He taught me how to ride a bike,

When he's free, he'll take a hike,

He always cooks delicious steak,

After his exercise when he's taking a break,

Who is this mysterious man,

Who always does all he can?

Theme: family

#### My Family Has a Plant

#### Li Ming Chit

Tsuen Wan Catholic Primary School

Mum bought a plant which I really relished.

And then I took care of it every day.

A few days passed, the plant was still cherished.

But a bad thing happened yesterday.

The plant was getting drier and worse!

I immediately sprayed the magic spray.

I wished the magic spray will break the curse.

After that, I asked my family to pray.

The next day, a miracle happened just now.

The plant had come back to life!

It TALKED, 'You've saved me somehow!'

I was open-mouthed and holding a knife.

'I won't harm you,' said Plant,

'You prayed for me and I'm moved.'

Since then, I will sing it a chant.

My stress will be soothed.

Theme: be grateful for

#### **Amazing World**

Lee Sze Yuet

Tsung Tsin Primary School and Kindergarten

I once dreamt a dream

That I was in a forest with big, lush trees

The sound of the emerald leaves tingling

Was the sound of a thousand crystal bells ringing clearly

I once dreamt a dream

That I was swimming in the cerulean sea

The water was clear like the mirror of the skies

And the sea breeze was blowing onto me

I once dreamt a dream

That I was wandering on a beautiful flower-bed

The flowers swayed like dancing as the wind blew

And delicate flower petals were sour red

I once dreamt a dream

That I was soaring in the night sky like a swallow

The stars gleamed their shine elegantly

And the night followed

The dreams ended and I smiled to myself

The world is amazing

The world is good

Never stay at home too much

Explore like everybody else

Theme: because

# Because that's the way my life is drawn

#### **Cheng Chung Ki**

Carmel Divine Grace Foundation Secondary School Where water resides and seagull flies There lives a swimming suckling fry in his lullaby

'See you not where the bright sun dawns? There lies the site where you will spawn. Grasp your time to swim for it. Because that's the way your life is drawn.' And so that fry goes in his lullaby To the dreamland where his destiny lies.

On his way in the vast deep ocean
He met some fish during his quest for devotion
Some are friends but some are not
Still when all ask him what he sought
He answers them by his perfect lore.

'See you not where the bright sun dawns? There lies the site where you will spawn. Grasp your time to swim for it.
Because that's the way your life is drawn.'

For years he sails and sweeps his tail With his friends all gone or silently quailed. Against many odds has he prevailed And now he finally approaches his dale.

But bah! There he looks in his frustration That the land sung in the tale is now barren. And when the relentless tempest blew over, It chants a jinx that makes him shudder.

'What a fool of you to believe a mossy fable. Years have passed when the last fish trailed. Now, my dear youngling, chase your own true grail Or be rotten here to hark my wail.'

The poor juvenile flinches from feet to fin
At the fact so crude but yet foreseen
Still he knows with his mind so keen
He must find a path that he shall pin.
'Cause he's to grasp what his life should've been.

Decades after, there carolled the fish finally ripened The chorus he's ever eager to croon to his children.

'See you not where the bright sun dawns?
I was once misled by its flawless gown.
But, my kids, I grasp my time to turn for my road
Because that's the way my life is drawn.'

Theme: because

Why? Because of you!

Yiu Ho Yuet Avery

CUHK FAA Chan Chun Ha Secondary School Youth is an adventure.

It is fearless because we walk side by side.

Because of your guidance,

I can find the right direction.

I won't get lost in the unknown.

You are the compass on my smartphone.

Because of your support,

I stand up even when I am tired.

You push away the barriers on the land.

You are the hiking stick in my hand.

Because of your presence,

I feel warm and bright.

You lighten me and the countryside.

You are the campfire in my night.

Joyful to meet you on my way

Grateful to walk with you in my salad days!

Theme: because

#### Because of

#### Ha Ngo Chit

Fung Kai Liu Man Shek Tong Secondary School Because of the ambition

Force human to become a monster of competition

Compete with each other to become the best one

But these competitions are always not healthy competition

It is turned into a Cut-throat competition between the whole community.

Or say that become a war.

Because of war

The world is no longer at peace

People beg for a stable life

Beg for the ceasing of strife

Human should remember one thing

Is that mankind has the heart of love

Because of love

We know how to care about others.

Because of love

We learnt how to take care of others.

Because of love

We decided to help others with our own hands

Once we get back the sense of love

We know how to love each other

Thus the war Will be no longer to be happened once again

We will get to know how to compete with each other with 'love'

From now on

Treat the others With respect, with peace

and with love

Because of love

Theme: because

#### Australian Bush Fire 2020

Pak Hoi Tung
Good Hope School

In the warm embrace of the rising dawn,
The Trees stretch their stout branches and yawn
A gentle Breeze caresses the soft green grass
While water cascades down the boulders, as clean as glass.

The sweet fragrance of Daffodils waltzes in the air,
Dancing gracefully along Nature's music with flair
Butterflies' wings gleam under the delicate touch of sunlight
Flower buds bloom into a festive, colourful bundle of delight.
Oh what a beautiful sight!

Hark! The symphonic ensemble of Nature's unique sound
The low hum of Bumblebees echoes the twitter of Birds
The crisp chirp of Crickets harmonizes the carol of Larks
Each sound perfectly blends into a spectacular musical feast.

But all of Nature's glory perishes

When small flames burst into a wild, uncontrollable Fire,

Like a hungry predator devouring everything in his path

Until nothing is left but sizzling cinders and silent screams.

The Owls shriek like the hissing Basilisk, giving us a warning
Wheat is withering and Trees are collapsing
Woodpeckers are fleeing and Rabbits are scurrying
From the cruel Fire's wrath, escaping

Fire cackles and grins, draining life from all man's haven He roars and growls, for he knows he has won Even the Skies weep and grieve The relentless slaughter will never cease.

Theme: family

## The Tale of a Sapling

Chu Sui Lam

Heep Yunn School

Once upon a time two branches intertwined

Beneath its wedding arch birthed a sapling

Of the two unlike species combined

Fibrous roots from the father, gleaming green leaves like emeralds from the mother

The sapling grew from the shadows of the archway

And never faced sunlight with the union that sprouted her suffering

Awestruck by her mother's drip-tip gems dangling, glistening under the sun ray The sapling craved for her emeralds to shine under streaks of golden-yellow

'Can I soak my leaves in the sun?' The sapling asked in ecstasy

NO! Branches quivered, her foliage shuddered

Denied her place before the light, she settled for shade

She lived with her jewels dimmed, conforming to the shadow

A devastating downpour on the forest left puddles of nutrition on infertile land Like bullets, pellets of water weathered her wrinkled bark while the sapling absorbed the flood

Close to unconsciousness from overworking her roots, echoed her father's faint command:

'Perk up your leaves and straighten your bark, toil till you collapse on the soil!' A looming expectation seeped into her bark like remnants of raindrops; she awoke with refreshed exhaustion

Forced a smile in the rain, showing only the resilience her parents loved

'Evade from sunlight and embrace the rain', the sapling yearned to sing a different tune

But no parents could teach her the verses of freedom

So sat in the shade of the familiar arch, she hummed her dreary notes of gloom

Endless showers betumbled and scratched the sapling's coat like a tally of her age
The shadow of her parents' entanglement shrunk smaller at her foot
Sunlight shone through the fading sage green of her mother's foliage
She towered above her father's commands of discipline
So close to the light, yet so far from escaping the shade
The sapling had to reach for the canopy for her emeralds to shine

So she peeked. Beyond the shade the world was brought to light.

A blaring commotion from a brattling chainsaw ruptured the horizon
One by one the emeralds from her comrades shattered like glass and met their fate
Then quiet. A moment of deafening silence for the fallen
Before the sapling saw a severed stump, and a man posing on his pedestal of pride
No roots of resilience could keep her from receding into the shadow
She questioned, 'Why did they not tell me till it was too late?'

Perhaps they were afraid that the exposure could wither
A once little sapling made in the shade
Perhaps they thought that the rain could nurture
A once little sapling made in the shade
Perhaps they wanted to shield the little sapling from the other
Side of the light beyond the facade of the shade

Theme: because

## Ghosts of the Past

## Soriano Yarrah Danielle San Felipe HKMA David Li Kwok Po College

Ghosts of the past,
I hear the lilt of their voices.
Sometimes I wonder and ask
Why the world made her choices.

Why can't I touch the sunless sky?
The purples and greys alike.
The strings of my heart yearn
For my feet to take flight.

Why can't I see past the fog?
Our souls a stack of bricks apart.
Pivoting on the mind's eye
To manifest the time's restart.

Because past the nimbostratus,

Constellations taunting to be caressed.

But she'd want me to dive deep down

And my soles glued on the ground.

Because she believes in humanity,
Hanging on our heartfelt humility.
Spirits intertwined by love and hope,
Enough to walk a blindfolded tightrope.

Because they were ghosts of the past,
I hear the whispers of their voices.
Now I have nothing more to ask,
That's why the world made her choices.

Theme: family

## The boy you used to be

#### Ho Ka Him Kelvin

Homantin Government Secondary School I see boy you used to be,
Always yearning to be freed.
The old man, at times, forces you to sleep at nine.
Bothered, frustrated, you can't wait to escape the confines.

Now your mother is old and gray,
And your father already passed away.
You never get to see his last smile,
Because you didn't give them a number to dial.

You gaze over the good old days, Have you ever return them back for their grace? When you're hungry she serves you her cooking, When you're bored he takes you out for fishing It wasn't that bad over all, is it?

I see the boy you used to be,
Accompanied, with those who you could depend,
Now alone, and it's too late to repent.
Cherish your time with them, would you?
So that when that date is due,
You are left nothing to rue.

Theme: family

#### **Family**

#### Wu Bai Lun

Po Leung Kuk Tong Nai Kan Junior Secondary College The father ate his dinner in a hurry and answered the phone anxiously.

Mother took selfies while eating dessert until the ice cream dropped to the floor.

My father is taking it. He even forgets to eat.

When the memory came back, I was playing the game seriously.

In the bright warm morning, we went outside the door.

The burning sun tries to radiate its heat.

Enjoy delicious picnics and parents' love and care in this warm weather.

I don't want to leave my loving home.

But I don't know how to cherish this warm feeling.

So all of us can only gratitude our parents all together.

Empty family with the father to hold up the dome.

To provide support for a home reeling.

The hollow home was warmed by the kind mother.

Bring strong hope and simple love for the family.

I dragged myself into a mirage of happiness.

In this such as ephemeral life, to enjoy the hard-won family.

Theme: family

#### **Family**

#### Wong Cheuk Lam

Po Leung Kuk Yao Ling Sun College My mother is a great chef

Her cooking is the best,

Which makes me truly obsessed

My father is my best friend

He knows well of the latest trend

Which makes our secret chat never ends

My brother is my personal tutor

And also my troubleshooter

But when we start to wrangle

He often shuts down my computer

My grandfather is a happy old man

Listening to Chinese opera sticks in his daily plan

But it is too noisy that makes me ran

When I have problems

They always assist me to overcome

All I want to say is that

My family are awesome

Theme: family

## What is 'Family?'

#### Leung Yee Kiu Kacy

Rhenish Church Pang Hok-Ko Memorial College Our family
will always forgive us,
won't leave us.

See the magnificent sight, feel the greatness of the world.

When we feel sad and hopeless we argue, we shout.

But I discover our family always stand by us giving us power and courage.

As long as we stay together,

our love will be forever.

Theme: be grateful for

### Life of a Grateful But Unlucky Man

#### Mui Lok Ching

Shun Tak Fraternal Association Leung Kau Kui College Wake up the morning and feel a bit ill Get some water, and the water spills 'Water spill, that's no big deal At least I don't have to choke on a pill!'

The rain splashes and stings like needles Socks get soaking wet in a giant dirty puddle 'Someone else can use the umbrella I've lost And my socks now get a nice cold wash!'

Get fired from the job and up the rent rises The other flats in the area are all of coffin sizes 'I can practice my letter writing Life without a house would sure be exciting!'

Get a disease and identified incurable Die on the hospital bed with no one around the table 'Now I don't have to pay anything For a hot meal and a bed that's so comfortable!'

God asks him, 'Why are you so grateful?' He says, 'It is really quite simple

Life sometimes treats me well, sometimes it does not Things that I can change? There aren't a lot Why cry and think what to do When you can just smile and make it through?'

God, feeling pleased by the poor positive man Decides to make him alive again The man thanks God, sobbing But he suddenly thought of something...

'Wait, God, wait!!!'

He is back in the hospital Still with no one witnessing this amazing miracle 'Oh no, I have to pay the hospital bills now...'

But as he looks out the window
He sees what the world has for him
He sees the clear blue sky and the beautiful city below
He hears the baby crying and the hustle and bustle of the road
He remembers his charming father and mother
And all the places he went with his high school lover

He has nothing, and no reason to be optimistic But at least, his grateful heart ticks Meaning that he can discover the life's beauty To listen, to touch, to experience and to see

Theme: family

#### Your Steady Hands

#### Wan Ching Tung

St. Stephen's Girls' College

Your steady hands

Building trampoline to catch me as I fall

Small feet struggling to keep balance

Your hands, smooth and assuring

Piling bricks made of love and using tenderness as concrete

Determined to erect chateaus, cathedrals, monuments immune to the

corruption of time

All for me to grow up in

Yet I abandon them

Leaving to find more to fill

Your flailing hands

Composing the symphony of heaven and earth

To me the only listener

Your hands, elegant and lively

Playing notes of endearment and tunes of adoration

Telling the story of how forever can be found in two people

But I request to extend the harmony

Longing for more

Your tiny hands

Painting pictures to keep moments of joy alive

Depicting the life of the three of us

Your hands, wavering yet energetic

Meandering lines in crayons and markers fueled with laughter

Colouring our warmth in shades of care and concern

Yet I want to bring more paints

Splashing pages as moments linger to become life

My wrinkled hands

Planting myriads of flowers as I lie on my bed

Dozens more hands of old and young guarding me

My hands, calloused and fragile

Leaving more life behind to take my place

Cascade of petals dawning from blossoms of years of love

Accompanying me as I fall through the veil of death

Your steady hands,

hundreds of transparent pairs holding me as I falter

Of builders, of musicians, of painters and of gardeners

I find what I seek and it has always been with me

I embrace your hands, absorbing all they provide

A journey's end at family's meeting

No longer eager for more

For it will be enough

Theme: be grateful for

#### Invisible Killer

#### Fu Tsz Ki Margaret

St. Clare's Girls' School

Closed. Everything closed,
People forced to stay inside.
As death roamed the streets.
Days turned into weeks, and weeks turned into months.
I looked out the window, never thought I'd miss the sun.

Once a boring lecture,
Never could've imagined it could be worse.
No more whispers, no more passing papers,
As I look at my classmates in their 2-dimensional forms.
Never thought I'd miss detention.

<u>V</u>ideo chat was used for last goodbyes, Families mourned on the other side. So close to tears, too far to touch, As everyone's nightmare came true, And you found yourself alone and dying in a room.

Isolated from the world, Drove people insane. Where normality was too much to ask. As I am Gasping for Air.

<u>D</u>aring people walked, but most people hid. With only a cloth protection, As death conquered the streets. A murderer hidden in plain sight, Who taught us a valuable lesson: That we were blind to so many blessed days.

Theme: be grateful for

#### street cleaners

#### Mak Zi You Chloe

St. Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary and Primary School Water rises. The yacht knocks on the dazed, dreamdoubting shore.

They prowl the streets with metallic rattles of disturbed carts. Fluorescent orange swallows the moonlight.

They work in translucent opacity. The known unknowns, unseen because, why

have we the time to spare for the worn neon fabric of dwindling blue? Plain. Simple.

Wordlessly they lift the exhausted metropolis.
Get back on your feet, go walk your consistent streets

because time waits not for the ones that melt as forgettable flickers into the rising dawn.

Gazes behind the roughed, roughened hands reflect the faces of weary, human shadows.

In their united solitude they should hear gratified prayers for souls who roam constant depths.

Because we choose to forget, away from the warmth; a consistent heart — the streets at night are a bleak, breathing mirror of society's backbone.

Theme: family

#### Our Wall

#### Mok Si Kei

St. Paul's Co-educational College

King of the castle, blocked from me behind solid bricks When was the last time we assembled our turrets? When did we last brew plans to defeat our nemeses And raise our swords to the sky?

Our castle is breaking down with our dust, our skirmishes and distrust Instead new walls are rising
Towering well above where our castle was
Reflecting a sullen drabness onto the sky
But your reflection I do not see
Only the wall blocking your world from mine

The buoyant sun set and rose, the serene moon rose and set But my hopes would not soar, nor would my sorrow quell For it was too late, the wall was up for too long The fury firing from your foreign eyes Unlike the brotherly innocence I vividly remember The muted trumpets that continued to puncture my ears Every time I knocked on your indifferent wall Were proving true my dreaded fears

I knew the silence had to cease
I'd rather shatter your mirror of flawed delight
Ruin your blue canvas with the darkest shades of grey
Than contemplate and grieve over my immeasurable loss
So I decided to rid that wall of its pleasure once and for all
The trumpets sounded my last warning
Above the flurry of fluttering feathers escaping from the clearing
The sky was a bloody red, an auspicious omen or a foreshadow I did not know
My cannons rolling out like the inscrutable clouds, poised with noiseless flair
At last
The silence, bled into a broken wound

My heart, froze into a gaping mouth

In prolonged slow motion, the wall sank to its knees
Vainly staunching the blood from its bullet-made wo

Vainly staunching the blood from its bullet-made wounds
I glimpsed your crown peeking out of the battlements
The wall was down, crowning my misery
But the bullet did not stop

And you fell limp as the bullet bored through your heart Right beside the remnants of our wall Now I know, our wall was just an illusion Yet your wound still throbbed and had always throbbed Under your glossy robe

Theme: be grateful for

Are grateful for.

Yue Lok Yin Hillary

St. Paul's Convent School

Pessimism, misery, brought by COVID-19 We struggle adrift in a sea of crushed dreams Hidden behind our masked faces we scream

Isolated from our dear family and friends With bated breath, tracking the infection trend At night, many kneel, praying for the end

Painful affliction
Economy stagnation
Missing motivation
Lost direction
Who will bring the solution, our salvation?
What will happen to our generation?
When will the suffering reach a cessation?
Where is our comfort, our consolation?

Amidst the hurled hateful epithets Amidst the chaos we mustn't forget To face the pandemic, our greatest asset

Gratitude, our greatest attitude Be grateful for a multitude To whom we express solicitude

Selflessness, courage, brought by COVID-19 The unbreakable spirit pushed to the extreme Gratitude in our hearts for our heroes we esteem

Doctors, nurses, our valiant frontlines Altruistic effort we should not undermine Hence we stay home and follow the guidelines

The fortunate ones give thanks they are healthy List of things to be grateful for aplenty In love and care we are wealthy

Kindness, gratefulness, brought by COVID-19 We stay afloat in our sea of shared future dreams Sun on unmasked faces, our smiles gleam

Theme: family

You

Shek Tsoi Yee Chloe
HKUGA College

You blink, squinting upwards with your newly minted eyes A sea of faces gaze back, a blur of silver, black, snow Soon you'll forget this, as fleeting as the summer mayfly The extended hands, the cooing; above all, the delight.

You wail, shattering the veil of placid silence Are you fine? Nursing well? What's your name? It's hard to tell Your mother strokes your back as you hiccup and subside Outside, the leaves pirouette; peace is restored once more.

You scream, tumbling from the chipped monkey bars Your father picks you up, gets you going again In your eyes he sees a kaleidoscope of potentials and hopes You're a smart boy, a bright girl, a dancer, a fighter

You wait, unsure, as the door swings open It's your parents, exhausted, home from a long shift Look at you, the epitome of laziness, watching the television all day! But later on, at night, apologetic whispers, all is forgiven once more

You beam, a burnished plaque cradled in your arms The first in form: not a surprise, that one You're the apple of their eyes, you rosy-cheeked thing Pass them a glowing glance, hear their rapid applause

You fume, slamming, locking the door They don't understand, they don't, and they never have You kick the dented desk, the exams, their expectations A vicious thought crosses your mind; you sweep it out of sight

You stare, they sit across from you, eating in silence Their faces, suddenly so rugged, each line a conquest of time Look down in shame, wordless, eat your cold bowl of rice Watch the leaves, browned and curled, form a heap on the street

You wave, holding hands, luggage trailing behind like sentries They wave back, pleased, crow's feet deepen Turn your head and scan the crowd til they disappear into the sea The two of you walk ahead, cross the unnameable boundary

You blink, squinting downwards with your weather-bronzed eyes A small face gazes back, rosy face obscured by hair and mist You won't forget this, a burning in the back of your mind Brush your eyes, extend your hands to the beacon, that nameless bundle

Theme: because

## The Cause and Effect Disaster

#### **Agarwal Mridul**

Hong Kong Adventist Academy

The cause and effect chain is complicated. It has so many different names, such as

The ripple effect,

Chain reaction,

Domino effect,

Vicious circle,

The butterfly effect,

Etc.

One small thing can

Do something completely drastic.

Such as a butterfly

Flapping its wings,

Causing a series of

Events that result

In a tornado.

Or leaving

A coffee mug

On a

Restaurant floor,

That could cause

Someone to step on it,

Sending shards

Flying everywhere,

Breaking everything,

Going into people's eyes,

Making them blind,

Them accidentally

Breaking more things,

The restaurant being destroyed

And going bankrupt.

It's crazy how it happens.

I bet after

Reading this poem,

You'd think twice before

Even playing with a ball.

Theme: because

### Soaring

Wecker Sebastyen

Hong Kong Adventist Academy

The breeze rushing past

The weightless drifting

The incomprehensible speaking

The crowds underneath shifting

The soundless birds whistling

The clear blue sky

Oh my, oh goodness

I'm about to die

Theme: be grateful for

#### A-School

#### **Tsoi Shing Hin**

HKBUAS Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School school is an intricate computer,

downloading valuable information onto you.

Though it needs power that is effort, stronger than pewter, but never fear because it won't make you bite more than you can chew.

The teachers are grand doors, vowed to open and allow students to support their means. But to get there you have to climb a tower with many floors, and with each floor you learn something new, like a movie with many scenes.

But the stress is a ravenous leech, slowly draining your ever dwindling sanity. It's a tyrannical führer you must impeach, so if you don't keep it in check, it'll drive you to the brink of insanity.

Well six years have just flew by, but I'm always still asking the same question, why?

Theme: family

## The Truth of Family

Lam Ho Ka

Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club College Meet my mother, the crankiest of all,
Her voice pierces my ears, about to fall!
Her eyes wide with fury; Mine filled with dread.
'You are Mean! Mindless! Messy!' she said.

In all my life, father won't go a day,
Without having endless morals to say,
On his face, giving me a dirty look,
'Have you Immersed yourself in a book?'

Oh! How annoying it seems they are, And how their anger has gone so far! Filled am I, with contempt and outrage, Felt we were never on the same page.

'Why are you so polite, so kind?' someone asked.

And that's when I realize, the truth about me unmasked —

I possessed the virtue of kindness when,
I helped my friend through his problem back then.

Careful am I, when I speak out my thoughts.

Tidy am I, when I wash pans and pots.

Knowledge I've gained, through reading written works.

Following their words surely has its perks.

My family guides me - not forced to roam.

Finally felt that true warmth is at home.

Mother and father, I'll always treasure,

That your love was something I could never measure.

My family's love turned out to be,
An untouchable warmth, deeper than sea.
Seemingly sour but actually sweet,
Essential to life, like my own heartbeat.

Theme: be grateful for

## Be grateful for the world

#### **Aaron Huw Puhar**

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School Be grateful for the nature
With its trees, leaves and branches
And virescent blades of grass
Where crystalline dew settles on ranches

Be grateful for a family Where you will always be cared for They provide shelter, nourishment and clothes Like never before

Be grateful for your friends Who play and laugh with you Establishing a social rapport Can be integral too!

Be grateful for the law
For without it there would be bedlam
And riots
Across the world, said some

Be grateful for your health
As Isaak Walton famously said
'Health is a blessing that money cannot buy,'
It is true, without health, you could be dead.

Be grateful for the weekends Finally, a break from work and school to relax A stroll by the beach bazaar With a glass of lemonade, perhaps?

Be grateful for the many activities we could do A skiing trip, a cross country run, a climb up a mountain The possibilities are endless And are wonderful, like a water fountain

Be grateful for hardships
And the setbacks that created who we are today
They must have made you determined
And more focused, in a way

Be grateful for being here
If we were not created
I would not be writing this poem
It is amazing we are here; I am elated

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