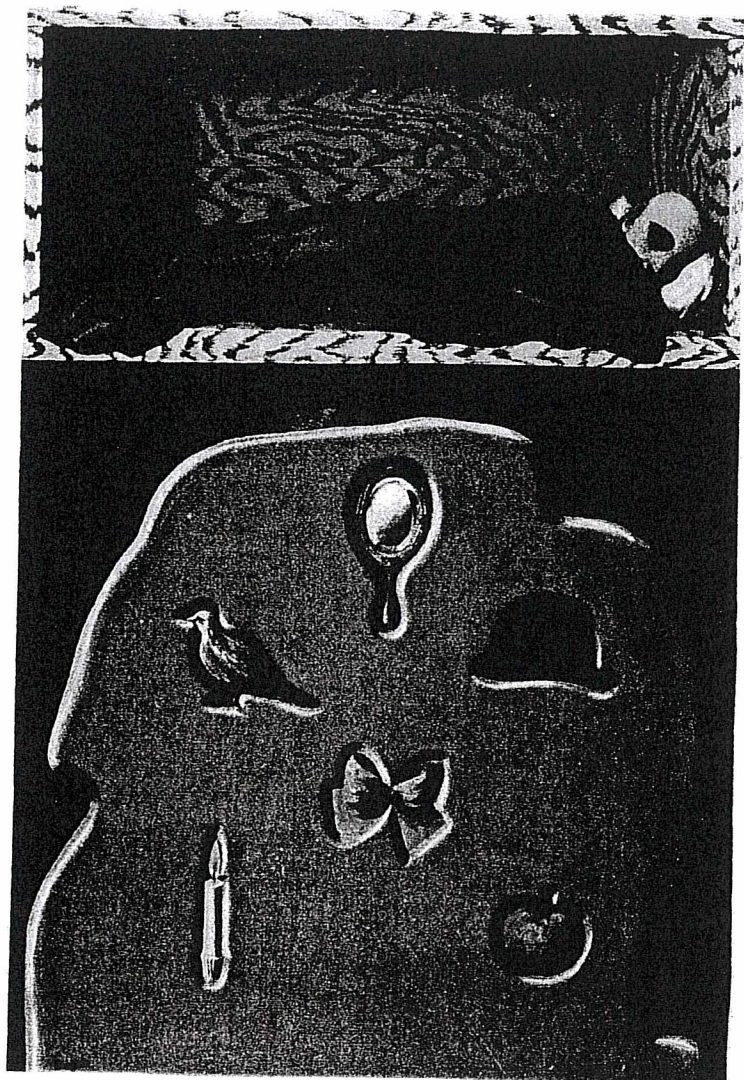


*Selected  
poems  
from*



*The Mountbatten School*

# POETRY FESTIVALS



The Mountbatten School's Annual Poetry Festival was started in 1973 by Isobel Butler in order to encourage pupils to take pleasure both in writing their own poetry and in performing published poems to an audience.

Eileen Betteridge then encouraged a generation of young poets to pursue poetry writing through her inspirational Poetry Workshops.

The school's English Faculty has since striven, through storms of change, to keep the ship afloat – with Sylvia Curtis ensuring that thousands of poems were safely stowed, hence our ability to publish this 'Hall of Fame' selection. My thanks also go to all the English teachers who, throughout the years, have encouraged all pupils to take part in the writing and performance of poetry in the classroom and on stage.

Above all I would like to thank all the young poets who have given us all such pleasure in reading their work over the years.

Will Jones  
(Head of English 2008)

***Angst***

## **CITY GENT**

**It's hard to be individual,  
When your suits come in boxes  
With white printed labels on the side  
And your umbrella comes trimmed  
To your British Standard length.**

**It's hard to work individual,  
  
When work is funnelled to you  
Through a rectangular hatch,  
And the evenly-printed green forms  
Fit exactly into your briefcase.**

**It's hard to live individual,  
When home is a shoebox in the rack,  
With pre-fitted carpets  
And a washing machine  
Neatly fitting the space beyond the sink.**

**It's hard to think individual,  
When your religion is pre-packed  
And delivered twice-weekly  
Through early-evening slots on the television.**

**It's hard to be individual  
When it doesn't occur to you to try.**

Andrew Ing



## THE CONSTANT COMPANION

When you where young I was under your bed.  
As you grew I hung over your shoulder;  
Black caped and beckoning  
To your darkest thoughts.  
The tears behind your eyes,  
The nausea that welled up inside;  
I caused them all.  
I'm the top of a building  
I'm not fitting in.  
Im a crowded lift  
I'm the thought in your head too terrible to realise.  
I lived in the school bully.  
Every time you conquered me,  
You thought you were free;  
I rested, re-established myself.  
And came back again.  
The only escape is death.

Clare Dillury

## *The World is Stone (Sonnet)*

*Stone, the world is stone; no trick of the light,  
The still of the night, the choke of the air,  
The winner's delight, the loser's despair,  
The fear of the day, the fear of the night.  
No colours of love; it's all black and white.  
It hurts me so much. I'd love not to care,  
But of evil and hate, I am aware.  
My life's full of dread; I want to take flight.  
It's cold to the touch and hard on the soul,  
In the grey streets, in the neon unknown,  
I look for a sign that I'm not alone,  
But all is frozen from North to South pole,  
Love is no more. I can't find my way home,  
In what meets the eye as a world of Stone.*

*Sally Nye*

## **The Model**

She turned to face her lift, and the cat walk.

Effortlessly, she floated down the white steps, a 'drug addict' stare clouding over her face.

She was on auto pilot, glaring straight ahead as the lightning flashes pierced the dark around her.

Her dark hair was tight and shiny against her head, but shot out in long, sharp spikes at the back,

Block eyeliner was smeared down her cheeks and her eyebrows rose to her hairline.

Her bony shoulders extended into skeletal arms and icicle fingers, The paper-thin white dress dropped over her lack of a chest and sheered down to her wasp-like waist,

There it exploded into layers of frosty chiffon, a white waterfall cascading over her twiglets of legs.

Her feet were bare and the paleness of their skin was aggravated by the block ice runway.

She swung round to make her return journey, now focusing her stare on some of the flashing public eyes.

She reached the end of her flight and entered the dressing room, where vain peacocks pruned.

They pulled, twisted and fluttered their designer feathers, fixated by their own reflections.

An overwhelming sense of inferiority crept into her head and she stole into the toilets.

She had brought her emergency bag which she now opened, and devoured the sugary contents.

She guzzled water from the fountain to mix her stomach load, then crashed into a cubicle,

And vomited.

**By Stephanie Gunner**

## *THE GAME OF LIFE*

*We called it Life  
And asked for abortion  
We called it fair  
And asked for a bigger portion  
We called it Death  
And judged who should die  
We called it Truth  
And made up a lie  
We called it marriage  
And asked for a divorce  
We drank from a river  
And polluted its source  
We called it a question  
But could not reply  
We looked after ourselves  
And left others to die  
We called it love  
And encouraged hate  
We said there was plenty  
But not everyone ate  
We called it Peace  
Then it became War  
We messed it up  
And wanted more.*

Tamsin Saxton



## Exams

The ticking of the eternal clock,  
Nothing to comfort the convulsing body;  
Only footsteps,  
And pens scrawling.  
Along with a wry smile from the paper,  
That has the brain tied in knots.

Equations that peer at you from the page,  
Answers that elude the ever remembering brain,  
All seems to no avail.  
Only panic and chaos exist.

You perspire and convulse more,  
The clock ticks in its everlasting way,  
The footsteps continue.  
The pens scrawl faster and faster,  
Until 'times up' is called.

Michael Stevens

**Hollie Wells**

**The Insomniac**

At ten o'clock she's tucked up tight  
under the duvet, turned out the light,  
she lies, with both eyes open wide  
Head on pillow, yet inside  
a million thoughts are racing around  
while sleepless eyes begin to pound.  
Midnight strikes, she twists and turns,  
Hot and sticky - how she yearns  
for that elusive wink of sleep  
And ... aren't these pillows soft and deep?  
Yet still she lies, as ever awake  
And waiting for the day to break.  
It's two am, she's in a ball,  
pressed up tight against the wall  
Legs akimbo, sheet on floor  
And more awake than ever before  
At four o'clock she still can't sleep  
She's watching dawn's grey fingers creep  
and infiltrate the still, black night  
And how she wishes that she might  
Just take a kip or steal a nap  
But now it's six, no chance of that.  
She hauls herself out of her bed  
with shaking limbs and throbbing head.  
But is it night or is it day?  
Who can tell? who can say?

## **SOMETHING STRANGE**

When I'm walking a dark road  
At night, or strolling through the park  
When the light begins to change,  
I sometimes feel a little strange,  
A little anxious. When its dark

Have you run your fingers down the wall  
And have you felt your neck skin crawl  
When you're searching for the light?  
Sometimes when you're scared to take a look  
At the corner of the room  
You've sensed that something's watching you.

*James Nightingale*

## Adolescence

Trapped in a box  
Can't seem to get free  
A mixture of feelings  
Flow constantly.  
Shouting, fighting –  
It never ends.  
I just want to escape  
Free from it all.

Deadlines, work, pressure  
Adults measuring me  
I want to give up  
I want to break free.  
Not inspired into action  
Mentally drained.  
I just want to escape  
Free from it all.

Trying to impress  
Always so vain  
An image to strive for  
Admiration to gain.  
It's more than an instinct  
It dominates your life.  
I just want to escape  
Free from it all.

Kirsty Taylor

## Roxy

My pills taste good today  
they make me smile  
my nurse is called Steve  
he likes it when I smile  
he gave me his watch.

I like it here.  
I like my friend Spunky, he's never gone  
he's not a boy.  
Maybe one day I could go to school  
but maybe I can stay here.  
I like it here today.

I tell the doctor I am ok  
I am ok  
I am ok

I like my new watch.  
It makes me look small.

Susan Roberts



## *Freedom*

*When money 'talks' for the very last time,  
When oil deals and arms sales are no longer sublime,  
When the tramps on the street have more than one dime,  
We shall be free.*

*When people can state and show how they feel,  
When the man on the street doesn't beg for hiis meal,  
When a nuclear -free world is once again real,  
We shall be free.*

*When vehicles and factories once again gleam,  
When the air and the oceans are once again clean,  
When the roofs of great forests are flamboyantly green,  
WE shall be free.*

*When we can live out our lives with whoever we choose,  
When the people in power attend to our views,  
When peace and goodwill is the only news,  
We shall be free*

*When the old in our midst are loved and respected  
When blacks in the townships are put first, not neglected,  
When the whole of mankind is at last connected,  
We shall be free.*

*When the starved in Africa are aided and fed  
When young boys and girls are no longer found dead  
When we know politicians who meant what they saidm  
We shall be free.*

*When animals and birds are not smothered by oil,  
When clouds full of acid don't ruin our soil  
When a man becomes rich through honest ,hard toil,  
We shall be free.*

*We shall be free!*

*Graeme Massie*

## **BEHIND CLOSED DOORS**

Do you really think the answer's in a tiny white pill?  
Even the whole bottle, might just make you ill.  
Even if it works, your heart never beats again.  
Do you really think it's worth it, to take away the pain?  
Every desperate breath you breathe, every tear you cry,  
Is another mourner in the wake, who has to question why.

I know you've tried before. Could be you'll try again;  
Will I be the one to push you, before I can explain?  
Tread carefully? I'm scared to tread at all,  
Scared to come near you, terrified to speak,  
To smile, to frown, to laugh or cry or scream;  
You can't face reality and you can't live on a dream.  
Torn up inside and you have to vent  
So you tear up outside, coping capacity is spent.  
But do you realise it's me you're tearing apart?  
Words forgotten in a moment, immortal position in my heart.  
And the worst is I can't tell you how I feel  
Because I know that you're for real.

Do you really think the answer's in that shiny lethal edge?  
Between you and your loved ones, just the attempt drives a wedge;  
The knife in your wrist is a knife in my heart  
Forever twisting, pulling love and sanity apart.  
The cross on your grave is my cross to bear-  
What part of the guilt is mine to share?

I know you don't like it, when they make a hullabaloo  
It's only because, year after, we still don't know what you'll do  
When you get that look upon your face, and storm up to your room  
Are you listening to your music, or are you planning doom?  
When I hear your crying in the night  
Is it something I have said, in thoughtlessness or spite?  
I see the blood, I see the scars, empty bottles, is this the last?  
Are they remnants from a war-torn past?  
Poignant reminders of the price we pay?  
Or are they a problem that lives on today?  
When you get that tension in your stance, and stumble up the stairs,  
Are you going to try to end it, because you think that no one cares?

Look down from that car park, what do you see?  
Cold concrete unforgiving, unlike me.  
The world will accept you, if you'll only learn to learn  
Trust, happiness and friendship, you can give and you can earn  
So will you give it all away, for a twenty second drop?  
The pain that you give others is the pain you thought you'd lost.

Jacki Casey

## Schizophrenia

It's strange to think  
That for all this time  
You have been there within me.  
That for all this time  
You, in plural,  
Have been hunting me.

But I cannot see  
Who I am  
Who we are  
Who they are.

Tell me,  
If you cannot agree on anything,  
Then how did you agree  
To choose me?  
Have you always argued,  
Always screamed,  
Like you scream in my ear  
And argue now?

Can you not decide  
Who I should be?  
Who we should be?  
Who they should be?

Flower.  
She spits and hisses  
Like a cat  
Claws at their hearts  
And poisons them.  
When she has finished,  
Who do you have left?

Who is there to listen  
When friends turn their backs  
After words are exchanged  
And sides have been taken?  
Peaches  
Will hold out her arms  
In a metaphorical hug  
And lends her ears.

Be silent  
And suffer.  
Or be caged  
In a Quack's institute  
For the unstable.

Robyn Whiston

## **Hannah Tree**

### **Madness**

I saw a tree well up with tears,  
I saw an eye left for years,  
I saw an apple breakdown and cry,  
I saw a mother begin to lie,  
I saw boy blossom in spring,  
I saw a daisy start to sing,  
I saw a bird flicker in the wind,  
I saw a candle shed its skin,  
I saw a snake glint in the sun,  
I saw a diamond start to run,  
I saw a fox bare for years,  
I saw a tree well up with tears.

## Mayday

Mayday! Mayday!  
Will anybody hear?  
I'm drowning in the darkness,  
I'm choking on my fear.

Mayday! Mayday!  
Is anybody there?  
Can anybody feel the wind  
Of problems in the air?

The tide of my life is turning.  
I'm being blown out to sea,  
In a vessel unprepared for,  
The troubles that I see.

My pale insignificance  
Is mirrored in the dark.,  
Impenetrable waters that  
Hold the parent shark.

Mayday! Mayday!  
There's nobody to hear  
My fading screams that echo  
In a storm that seems to leer.

Mayday! Mayday!  
There's nobody to see  
The tidal wave of growing up  
That washes over me.

Ailsa Bown



## Results Day

Pour my life into a brown envelope,  
Held between trembling hands.  
Bold, reassuring letters, which spell my name,  
Conceal my fate.  
All of my hopes, dreams and aspirations,  
Written in nine letters,  
On a flimsy, scrap of white paper.  
Nothing can be changed.  
Yet my mind cherishes its last moments  
Of blissful ignorance  
Until my fingers fumble the clumsy seal,  
And all is known.

Owen Spottiswoode

## ***This is Me***

Here in this diary,  
I write you pictures of my mind.  
Speckled sunlight  
Reaching dark corners,  
A rebirth of feelings  
Not felt for so many years.  
Leaving behind so much for so few,  
for you.

I can't pretend this is the way it will stay.  
I'm just trying to bend  
The truth.

I can't pretend to be  
who you want me to be.  
This is me.  
This is me.  
This is me.