

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2023- U/13 Girls

Born 2010

I'm Alone in the Evening

Michael Rosen

I'm alone in the evening
when the family sits
reading and sleeping
and I watch the fire in close
to see flame goblins
wriggling out of their caves
for the evening

Later I'm alone
when the bath has gone cold around me
and I have put my foot
beneath the cold tap
where it can dribble
through valleys between my toes
out across the white plain of my foot
and bibble bibble into the sea

I'm alone
when mum's switched out the light
my head against the pillow
listening to ca thump ca thump
in the middle of my ears.
It's my heart.

The Way Through the Woods

Rudyard Kipling

They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,
(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few.)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods.
But there is no road through the woods.

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2023- U/13 Boys

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Boy at the Window

Richard Wilbur

Seeing the snowman standing all alone
In dusk and cold is more than he can bear.
The small boy weeps to hear the wind prepare
A night of gnashings and enormous moan.
His tearful sight can hardly reach to where
The pale-faced figure with bitumen eyes
Returns him such a god-forsaken stare
As outcast Adam gave to Paradise.

The man of snow is, nonetheless, content,
Having no wish to go inside and die.
Still, he is moved to see the youngster cry.
Though frozen water is his element,
He melts enough to drop from one soft eye
A trickle of the purest rain, a tear
For the child at the bright pane surrounded by
Such warmth, such light, such love, and so much fear.

The Wayfarer

Padraic H. Pearse

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

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2023- U/14 Girls

Born 2009

The Visionary

Emily Brontë

Silent is the house: all are laid asleep:
One alone looks out o'er the snow-wreaths deep,
Watching every cloud, dreading every breeze
That whirls the wildering drift, and bends the groaning
trees.

Cheerful is the hearth, soft the matted floor;
Not one shivering gust creeps through pane or door;
The little lamp burns straight, its rays shoot strong and
far:

I trim it well, to be the wanderer's guiding-star.

Frown, my haughty sire! chide, my angry dame!
Set your slaves to spy; threaten me with shame:
But neither sire nor dame nor prying serf shall know,
What angel nightly tracks that waste of frozen snow.

What I love shall come like visitant of air,
Safe in secret power from lurking human snare;
What loves me, no word of mine shall e'er betray,
Though for faith unstained my life must forfeit pay.

Burn, then, little lamp; glimmer straight and clear—
Hush! a rustling wing stirs, methinks, the air:
He for whom I wait, thus ever comes to me;
Strange Power! I trust thy might; trust thou my
constancy.

For Heidi with Blue Hair

Fleur Adcock

When you dyed your hair blue
(or, at least ultramarine
for the clipped sides, with a crest
of jet-black spikes on top)
you were sent home from school

because, as the headmistress put it,
although dyed hair was not
specifically forbidden, yours
was, apart from anything else,
not done in the school colours.

Tears in the kitchen, telephone-calls
to school from your freedom-loving father:
'She's not a punk in her behaviour;
it's just a style.' (You wiped your eyes,
also not in a school colour.)

'She discussed it with me first –
we checked the rules.' 'And anyway, Dad,
it cost twenty-five dollars.
Tell them it won't wash out –
not even if I wanted to try.'

It would have been unfair to mention
your mother's death, but that
shimmered behind the arguments.
The school had nothing else against you;
the teachers twittered and gave in.

Next day your black friend had hers done
in grey, white and flaxen yellow –
the school colours precisely:
an act of solidarity, a witty
tease. The battle was already won.

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2023- U/14 Boys

Born 2009

The Expendable

Brian Moss

Rambo was never forced to take
His baby brother to the jungles of 'Nam.

I told my mother but she wouldn't listen,
Said she was getting her hair done
And he'd have to tag along,
But he wasn't to play any violent games
Or tread in anything nasty in the park.

I told him what it meant,
Being an expendable – when we shoot,
You fall down, drop to the ground,
No messin'. Lay down and die
When we tell you, then you can play.

I'd seen them in films, the sidekicks,
The men who make up numbers,
Flanking our hero as he enters town
And you know they'll be the first to go,
The first to twitch and fall to the floor
as an opening salvo finds its mark.

And now, in the park, we play tough,
No one minds being roughed a little.
The gang won't care if you do as I say,
Play dead, stay down and concentrate,
We can't have a corpse picking daisies
Or with fingers exploring its nose.

This branch can be your gun (not that
you'll need it for long) and I'll show you how
a spectacular death could bring our game
to life. Now mind you remember what I said,
and one more thing, you're a soldier now,
leave your teddy behind.

The Tiger

William Blake

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

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

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

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

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

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

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2023- U/15

Born 2008

The Given Note

Seamus Heaney

On the most westerly Blasket
In a dry-stone hut
He got this air out of the night.
Strange noises were heard
By others who followed, bits of a tune
Coming in on loud weather
Though nothing like melody.
He blamed their fingers and ear
As unpractised, their fiddling easy
For he had gone alone into the island
And brought back the whole thing.
The house throbbed like his full violin.
So whether he calls it spirit music
Or not, I don't care. He took it
Out of wind off mid-Atlantic.
Still he maintains, from nowhere.
It comes off the bow gravely,
Rephrases itself into the air.

Who's Who

by W. H. Auden

A shilling life will give you all the facts:
How Father beat him, how he ran away,
What were the struggles of his youth, what acts
Made him the greatest figure of his day;
Of how he fought, fished, hunted, worked all night,
Though giddy, climbed new mountains; named a sea:
Some of the last researchers even write
Love made him weep his pints like you and me.

With all his honours on, he sighed for one
Who, say astonished critics, lived at home;
Did little jobs about the house with skill
And nothing else; could whistle; would sit still
Or potter round the garden; answered some
Of his long marvellous letters but kept none.

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2023- U/16

Born 2007

A Ballad of Home

Eavan Boland.

How we kissed
In our half-built house
It was slightly timbered,
A bit bricked, on stilts

and we were newly married.
We drove out at dusk
and picked our way to safety
through flint and grit and brick.

Like water through a porthole,
the sky poured in.
We sat on one step
making estimations

and hugged until the watchmen
called and cursed and swung
his waterproof torch
into our calculations.

Ten years on:
you wouldn't find now
an inch of spare ground. Children in their cots,

books, a cat, plants
Strain the wall's patience
And the last ounce of space.
And still every night

it all seems so sound.
But love why wouldn't it?
This house is built on our embrace
and there are worse foundations.

After the Titanic

Derek Mahon

They said I got away in a boat
And humbled me at the inquiry. I tell you
I sank as far that night as any
Hero. As I sat shivering on the dark water
I turned to ice to hear my costly
Life go thundering down in a pandemonium of
Prams, pianos, sideboards, winches,
Boilers bursting and shredded ragtime. Now I hide
In a lonely house behind the sea
Where the tide leaves broken toys and hatboxes
Silently at my door. The showers of
April, flowers of May mean nothing to me, nor the
Late light of June, when my gardener
Describes to strangers how the old man stays in bed
On seaward mornings after nights of
Wind, takes his cocaine and will see no one. Then it is
I drown again with all those dim
Lost faces I never understood, my poor soul
Screams out in the starlight, heart
Breaks loose and rolls down like a stone.
Include me in your lamentations.

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2023- U/18

Born 2005/2006

House of the Deaf

Harry Guest

No words. The flickering of hands.
No call up stairwell or across
a hallway. Doors slam as in a silent
film. Each room, each hammer stroke
stays blanketed in cotton-wool.

A radio has numbers, lights.
Bells sway, are soundproof.
Friends disappear behind the shoulder,
gone once they're out of touch. Water's
as quiet as ice. Tin saucepans dropped
kissed the tiled floor like feathers.

Beyond the hedges at times
Fire-engines, ambulances glide by,
Flash intermittent scarlet, twisting blue.
Lightening above opposing roofs
Plays with no consequence of thunder.

The world is clearer, submarine.
Blackbirds in the garden part beaks
Like tiny crab-claws glimpsed in a still pool.
Enclosed in some November twilight
a firework's stars give a sudden puff of sand,
golden, dispersing, noiseless.

Carol-singers enter the aquarium.
Their mute lips depict the non-existent
jingle of horses bringing the kings,
the unerring sign language of the sky,
an angel chorus mouthing joy through glass.

Broken Moon (for Emma)

Carole Satyamurti

Twelve, small as Six,
strength, movement, hearing
all given in half measure,
my daughter,
child of genetic carelessness,
walks uphill, always.

I watch her morning face;
precocious patience as she hooks each Sock,
creeps it up her foot,
aims her jersey like a quoit.
My fingers twitch;
her private frown deters.

Her jokes can sting:
'My life is like dressed crab
—lot of effort, rather little meat.
yet she delights in seedlings taking root,
finding a fossil,
a surprise dessert.

Chopin will not yield to her stiff touch;
I hear her cursing.
She paces Bach exactly,
firm rounding of perfect cadences.
Somewhere inside
she is dancing a courante.

In dreams she skims the sand,
Curls toes into the ooze of pools,
leaps on to stanchions.
Awake, her cousins take her hands;
they lean into the waves,
stick-child between curved sturdiness.

She turns away from stares,
laughs at the boy who asks
if she will find a midget husband.
Ten years ago, cradling her,
I showed her the slice of silver in the sky.
'Moon broken', she said.

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2023- Adult

Born 2004 or earlier

The Way of Words and Language

Elizabeth Jennings

When you are lost
Even near home, when you feel
The tide turning, a strange sea under you
And you are a pale, rubbed pebble, a sea ghost.

When you have lost
All the high-ways and every dimming sign-post
And the sea is far away and the moon hidden
And your watch has stopped and you have no
compass
And feel to yourself like a ghost,

All this later will seem your best
Time for there will be future and memory and the
tossed
Tide. Morning will come up and you will open your
eyes
And see in the mirror a ghost.

But day will take you and the dawn uncover
The ribbed sand foot by foot and the first light
Will stretch over the grey water and you will know
It is no longer night

But still a time of silence and light like a shielded
lamp.
Then you will shake off dreams and recover
What you know is yourself still but changed
And the new sun will come up and pass over
Your hands, your arms, your face and you will discover
A world that the night has re-arranged.

Let this time be. Let the present stay. Do not
Look back. Do not look forward. Let thought
Idle from dream into daylight, and watch, then, the
coast
Climb out to dark, to grey, and then to chalk-white
Cliffs till the grey sea goes blue
And then indeed you

Are found and safe at last
And all your thought will grow
And you will unreel it, a silk thread, a long-
Traveling, moving-everywhere line
And it will gradually, as you relax it, become a song
And you will not say "That is mine".

I Will Live and Survive

Irina Ratushinskaya

I will live and survive and be asked-
How they slammed my head against a trestle,
How I had to freeze at nights,
How my hair started to turn grey . . .
But I'll smile. And will crack some joke
And brush away the encroaching shadow.
And I will render homage to the dry September
That became my second birth.
And I'll be asked: 'Doesn't it hurt you to remember?'
Not being deceived by my outward flippancy.
But the former names will detonate in my memory -
Magnificent as old cannon,
And I will tell of the best people in all the earth,
The most tender, but also the most invincible,
How they said farewell, how they went to be
tortured,
How they waited for letters from their loved ones.
And I'll be asked: what helped us to live
When there were neither letters nor any news - only
walls,
And the cold of the cell, and the blather of official lies,
And the sickening promises made in exchange for
betrayal.
And I will tell of the first beauty
I saw in captivity.
A frost-covered window! No spyholes, nor walls,
Nor cell-bars, nor the long-endured pain -
Only a blue radiance on a tiny pane of glass,
A cast pattern - none more beautiful could be dreamt!
The more clearly you looked, the more powerfully
blossomed
Those brigand forests, campfires and birds!
And how many times there was bitter cold weather
And how many windows sparkled after that one —
But never was it repeated,
That upheaval of rainbow ice!
And anyway, what good would it be to me now,
And what would be the pretext for that festival?
Such a gift can only be received once,
And perhaps is only needed once.