

AFTERWORD by Derek West

I read recently the suggestion that “creativity is applied imagination” and this collection demonstrates how a group of talented young people have shaped and honed their visions into a compelling sequence of poems.

I like them all, but “liking” a poem is a very subjective action and I have to confess to have some preferences! Those poems that impressed me most are those where I felt that there was a marriage of form - the shape of the verse, the language, the rhyme (or even the absence of it) - and the content.

Call Centre is a good illustration of that marriage. We all know that infuriating, disembodied voice that puts you ‘On hold’ forever. Cian Conry has picked up those programmed phrases and woven them into his satire. The rhyming is assured; the poem is witty and focused. Jack Cummins has feasted on alliteration with *Sammy Snail’s sad story* and we’re totally drawn in by the sense of verbal exuberance.

Some poems bring illumination and life to the most ordinary of things. For that reason I like *Tasty!!!* Inga Gilham has done nothing more than eat an apple, but with such relish and detailed attention to the senses of sight and taste. Anna McCarthy has a direct and vivid ‘take’ on *Candle light*. Naina Nicodemus is clearly a kitten-lover and captures it all so succinctly in *Cats*.

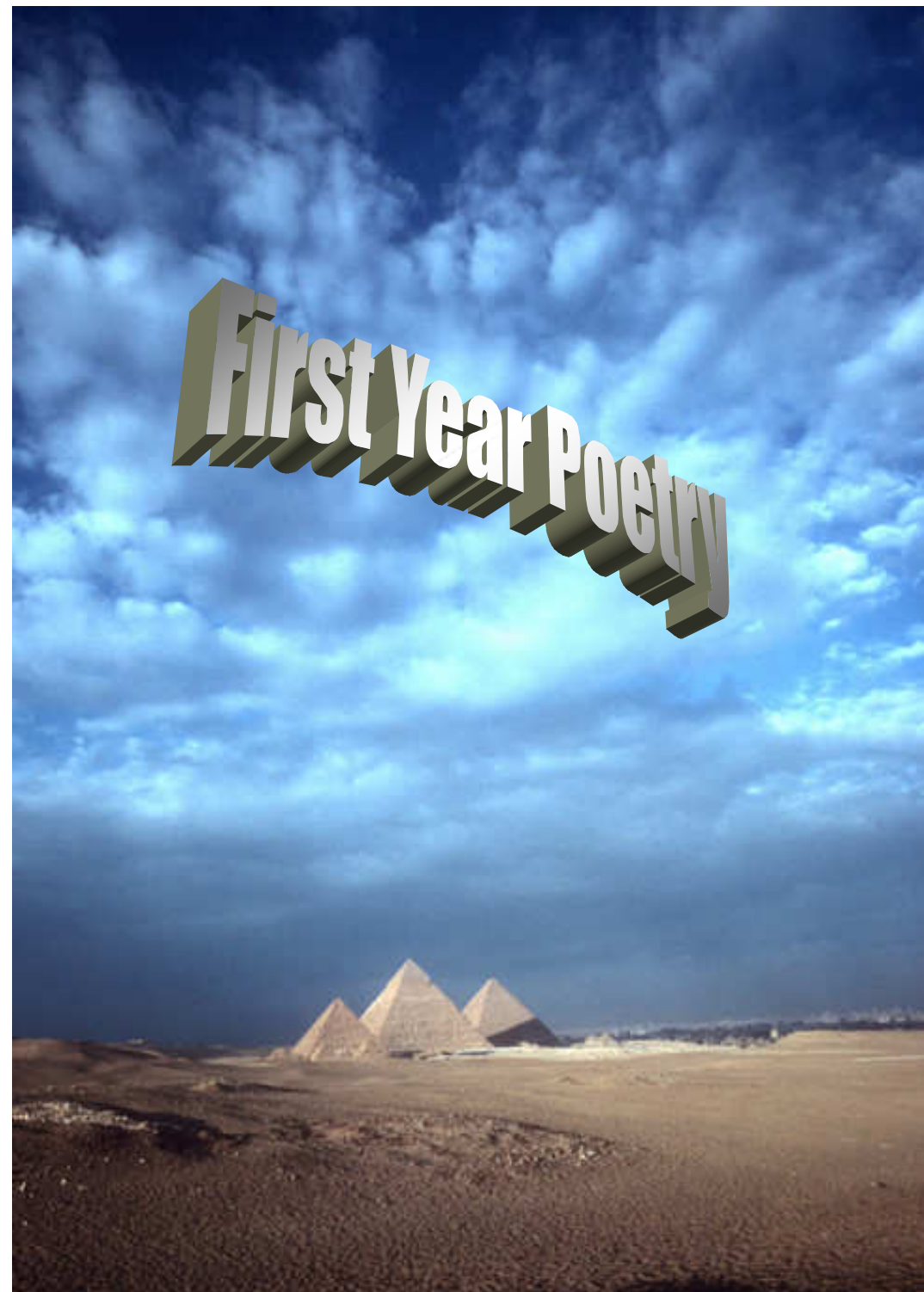
And I like those poems where the voice of the writer comes across with clarity and authenticity. Seamus Heaney has often spoken about that indivisible link between who we are and how we express our identity through our voice – whether in speech or on the page. Ironically, in her very compelling *Charade*, Niamh Fiorilla pinpoints the insincerity of words and what devastation that can bring. Siobhán Dewit captured the universal bewilderment and anger of the ‘mess’ of *Recession* and puts the politicians on warning notice about their responsibilities to the younger generation. Strong stuff. Shane Lyster’s *Bonded by Difference* is a subtle exploration of friendship. But I was most moved by the expression of grief, loss and loneliness, piercingly conveyed in Beatrice Ritzen’s *Let Go*. In its simplicity of language, repetition and rhythm it is a triumphant mix of form and content, honesty and authenticity.

I suspect the writing of this little book has generated a lot of pleasure. I’m only sorry I haven’t space to single out each and every poem. Reading them has been a joy. Even the chore Sheena McGuirk identifies in *I really don’t like writing poems* turns into a most satisfying achievement.

T.S. Eliot’s Prufrock said ‘It’s impossible to say just what I mean!’ These poems represent a darn good attempt to do just that!

Thanks to all the First Years who contributed poems for the competition. Unfortunately we could not include all sixty entries in this publication so the poems here represent some of the highlights. Many thanks to former Newpark Principal Derek West who kindly agreed to read the short-list and pick out his favourites. Congratulations to competition winner Beatrice Ritzen, and runners up Cian Conry, Niamh Fiorilla and Shane Lyster.

This publication was edited and designed by Anna Johnston and Mary Kennedy, May 2009



Hatching soldiers

In the house of eggs,
The soldiers came forward
Donning their uniforms,
Of yellow and grey
Recruited from birth
To lay bombs for their armies
How long they live,
Will be decided by their captain.

Jacob Woolf 1JB

Madness is an acquired taste

Madness is an acquired taste
That won't let go with haste
It'll hold so tight
You'll never see the light
Until it's way, way too late

Madness sucks you down
To fiendish depths
But bobs you along in the rain
Madness is the spice of life
The oh so special sauce
That lets us live without remorse

Keeps us fighting in this wind
Keeps on fighting in the wind
Keeps on shouting never give in.
Madness is an acquired taste
So hell, lets all feast!

Michael Gemmell 1GC

I really don't like writing poems

I really don't like writing poems
When the teacher says it has to rhyme,
The annoying little words never seem to fit,
It takes up so much of my time.

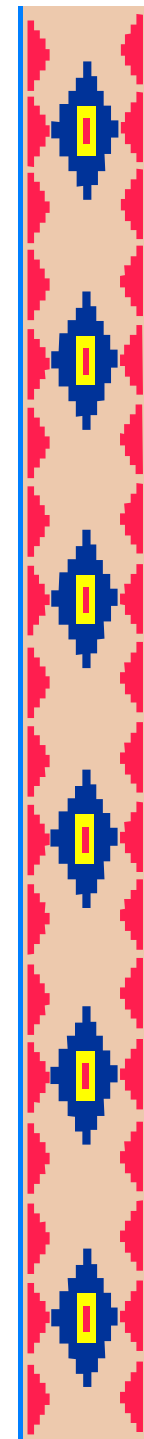
I can write an essay,
English or even history.
But shrinking down each line
To suit a poem
Just does not make me shine.
You see,
I really don't like writing poems.

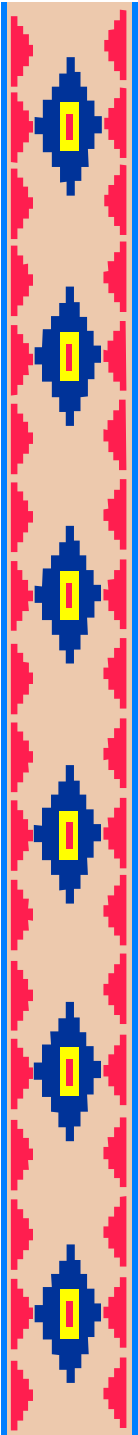
Some are long and some are short
How am I supposed to know
How my poem should be?
'What should it be about miss?'
I hope it might be animals but no,
We write about the weather
The autumn or the spring.
I ask you how this is meant to be interesting.
I really don't like writing poems.

'Read over what you have written,'
Mum says each day.
I read from verse one
And say
'This isn't so bad,
It even sounds good.'

Maybe writing a poem
Is easier than I thought,
But it's more fun,
Now that I have it done.

Sheena McGuirk 1GC





If I was

A big soft mighty lion
Roaring, pouncing and running fast.

A little sweet happy fairy
Flying, wish-granting and laughing sweetly

A cool fast stylish Porsche
Whizzing skidding and swerving down the road

A rough wavy blue sea
Crashing colliding pounding on the rocks

A small swift swallow
Sweetly singing and diving through the air.

Savanna Craib 1 GC

Let Go

You will never know the pain
You will never know the heartbreak
You will never know the disappointment
You will never know the how hard it is to let go.

You will never again see the sky
You will never again hear the birds
You will never again feel the sun
You will never again have to let go.

You won't see me grow up
You won't be there as my shoulder to cry on
You won't be able to tell me everything is going to be ok
You won't have to let go.

I will always know the heartbreak
I will always live with the pain
I will have to grow up without you
All I need to do is let go.

Beatrice Ritzen 1UB

Where once life roamed

Where once life roamed
Now nothing more than dark pale lifeless soil
Birds that dare come here
Are braver than us.

Not even twelve foot man-made trenches
Nor gas masks nor rifles
Can protect us from the horror.

The Tommies are the same
We have nowhere to hide
And we can't run.
This twelve foot pit of pestilence
Is nothing more than a mud wall.

Where once life roamed
Is nothing more than barbed wire
Craters and mines.

James Costelloe 1SF

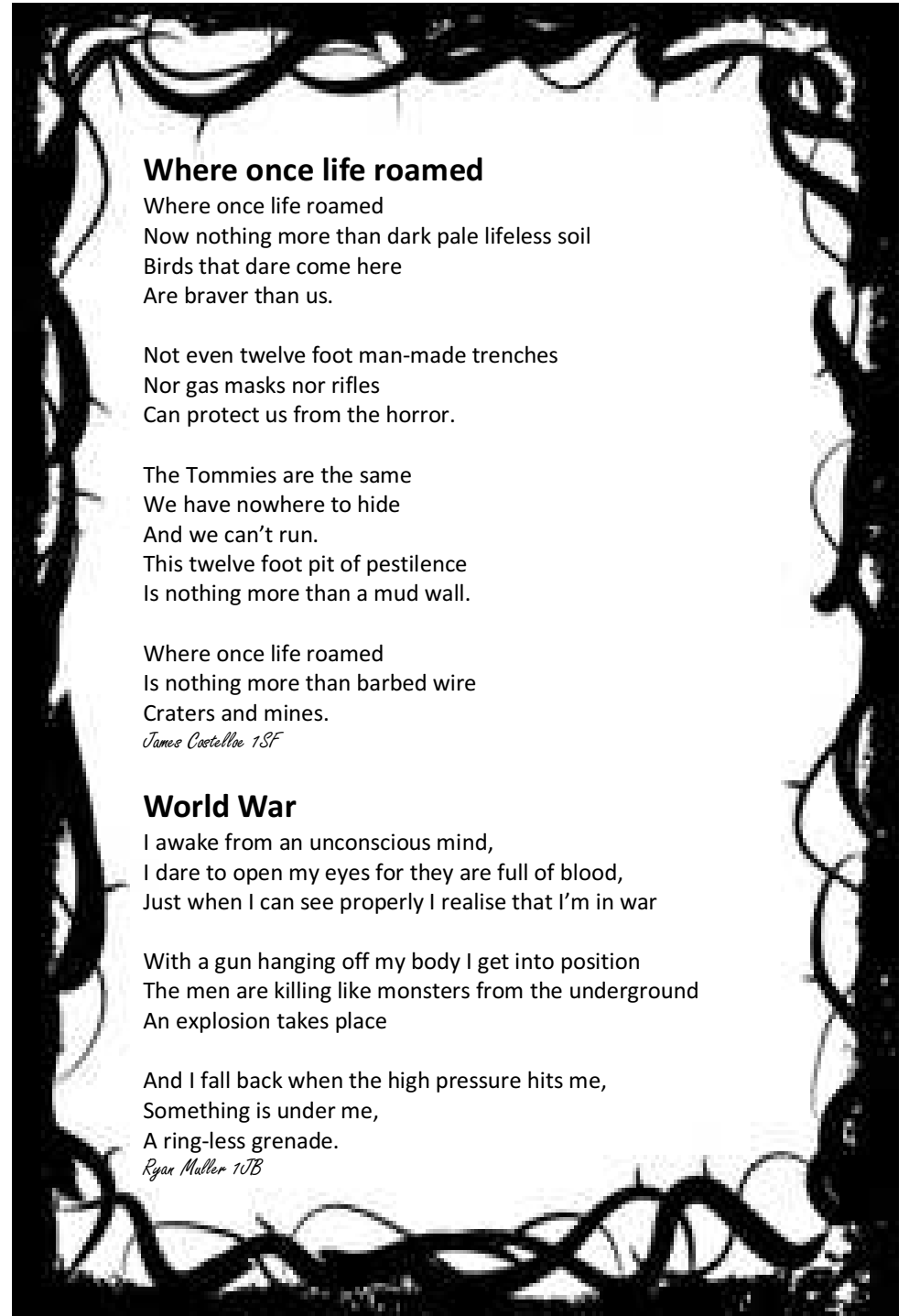
World War

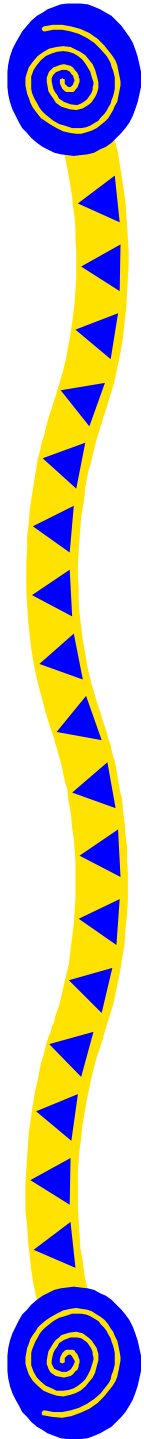
I awake from an unconscious mind,
I dare to open my eyes for they are full of blood,
Just when I can see properly I realise that I'm in war

With a gun hanging off my body I get into position
The men are killing like monsters from the underground
An explosion takes place

And I fall back when the high pressure hits me,
Something is under me,
A ring-less grenade.

Ryan Muller 1UB





Call Centre

"Hold please, can you stay on the line?"
This call is wasting all of my time,
I can't get a single word through,
'Cause the operators have something else to do.

All they do is procrastinate!
I can't feel anything other than hate.

"Hold please, can you stay on the line?"
Is what I always hear them say,
They think, "This ain't no business of mine."
Gosh, are you gonna pick the phone up TODAY!

"Your call is important to us!"
"Please stay on the line!"
"If you wanna speak to a member of staff
Please press number nine!"

"Your call has been put in a queue."
"If you hold we will soon talk to you."
Why did this have to happen to me?
And why did I call this stupid company?
Cian Conroy 1JB

People

Politically aware, pleased and displeased with decisions,
Easily entertained and annoyed
Observant and watchful, always learning,
Please and disappoint each other,
Love and loath and feel sympathy for each other,
Enjoy or envy each other's past, present, future!
Joshua Tracey 1PC

The Big Apple

The Big Apple is the place to be.
It's bitter, it's sweet, you can be anything.
You can shine like a star. Be as red as a rose.
The core is Manhattan where stars are born.
Like the serpents in the zoo, can go dark green like the scene.
The city grows as high as the sky.
The sun shines down on the city of New York to say goodbye.
Robert Wallace 1 PC

Bible of lies

Whispering ghosts
You're scared and alone

The stories are written
The lies you thought were true
Anna McCarthy 1QC

Bonded by difference

We are bonded by friendship.
Like the moon's eerie glow
And the sun's brilliant glare,
We are different.

We are bonded by friendship.
Like the desert's rough tone
And the sea's mighty anger,
We are different.

We are bonded by friendship.
Like rubies' crimson flare
And sapphires' deep blue beauty,
We are different.

We are bonded by difference.
Like me as I need you
And like you as you need me
We are friends.

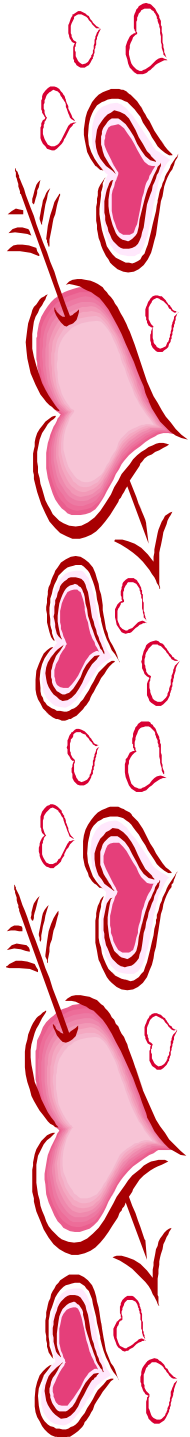
Bonded by difference
Shane Lyster, 1JB

Candle light

Dripping candle wax
Burns my skin.

The pain is pleasure

You light my way
You turn my page
Anna McCarthy 1QC



Charade

Your kisses
Fade softly
Like ripples
On water
Your touch it
Relieves me
Although
It is empty
Your love it
Goes through me
All wasted
And evil
Your hate it
Flows through me
And leaves me
Polluted
Your words they
Deceive me
And make me believe you
These tears they
Keep falling
Like a cup
Overflowing
This heart ache
Sticks to me
Knowing
You hate me
Leaving me
Wondering
When will
You leave me
One day this charade has to end.
Niamh Fiorilla 1 HQ

Love

Like an addiction to the heart, an
Opportunity to mend, a
Vital part of life, an
Everlasting friend.
Shannon Bartlett 1PC

The Island

The island just sits on a far away sea
No one goes there any more
Many people used to visit but they are all gone
The island is empty of grass and trees and people
There are ruins there too
Of a huge building, tall and colourful
But no one sees them, because
No one goes there ... any more.
Simon O'Neill 1HQ

Pointless journey

He walks by but no one notices.

Crystal clear snowflakes
fall from the sky but
he does not care.

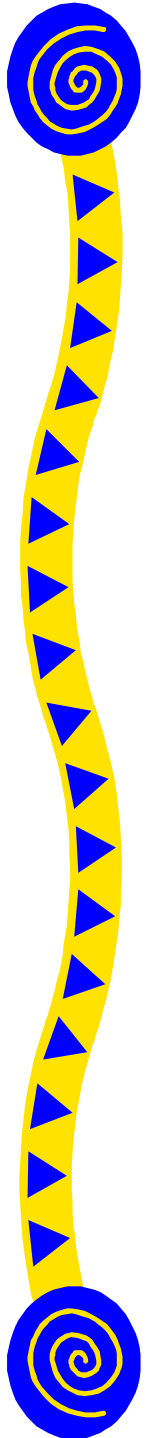
They stick to his skin
like metal on magnets.

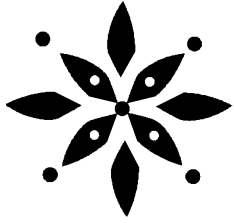
Don't walk too far as
the stony path will end
and the golden sun will fall.
Anna McCarthy 1GC

The Recession

Ah the recession
Good grief what a thought
One to make our blood boil
With anger and betrayal
The reality blinded from us
By our trust and pride

Politicians, politicians
Beware, beware
The children of today are
In YOUR care
Put away your toys
Clean up this mess.
Sabha Dewit 1JB





Seasons

Christmas trees aglow
Sparkling in the window bright
Presents all around

Sun is coming out
Animals are everywhere
Pink flowers blossom

Yellow sun shining
Children, ice-cream, beaches, shorts
Big smiles all around

Children everywhere
Pirates, devils, princesses, witch
Dark night, noon and stars.

Laura McCullagh 1SF

Tasty!!!

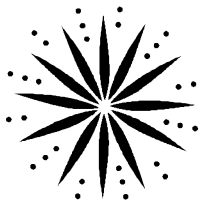
There it is my favourite fruit
sitting right in front of me an
apple!

It is bright red and looks
very juicy and the best
thing of all it is a Pink Lady!!!

Here we go my very first
bite. All I can hear is crunch
into the lovely crunchy
delicious apple. It goes
down my throat and into
my stomach. I can feel it,
it's just lovely!!

I eat right down to the core just
thinking what a lovely home it
would be for a little worm but
now I guess it's just too late.

Lena Gillham 1PC



The Seaside

The sky was as dark as a cave,
The water was as clear as crystal,
The fish were as fast as a boat,
And the sun was as hot as a sauna.

People were jumping into the water,
While thumping the ball,
Children pumping the rubber boat,
While the seagulls make a break for freedom.

The boat engines tear through the water,
After leaving the port,
While the sun sets,
People start to leave.

Emilia Kelly 1GC

Cats

Cuddly little fluffy things
A friendship for life
Tiny little
Sacks of fur!!

Naina Noodemus 1PC

Sammy Snail's sad story

Silently Sammy Snail slithered seaward and South
Sammy Snail was stopped by scoundrels with swords
Slimy scoundrels silently struck
Silent strikes severed Sammy's spleen.

Stricken, Sammy stumbled and staggered
Searching for someone or something
Sammy slipped on a sack of salt
Scary salt scorched and scalded Sammy Snail

Several seasons later:
Someone stumbled upon Sammy's skeleton
Semi-submerged in silt.

Jack Cummins 1JB

