

**POEMS ON THE MOVE**  
**Guernsey International Competition 2015**  
**Judge: Sir Andrew Motion**

**List of Winning Poems**

**OPEN CATEGORY**

1st prize:

*IT NEVER RAINED*<sup>1</sup>, **Hugh Sullivan**, Sussex  
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £600

IT NEVER RAINED

It never rained that summer we first met,  
Or if it did I've chosen to forget.  
Each day the sun rose early, burned, and set.  
The fireflies wove their dance each sultry night.

You danced with me amongst them once - a chase  
Of teasing barefoot steps, a flash-lit face,  
A glade between the maple trees the place  
I caught you for an instant in your flight..

We came that way again, long years gone by,  
A summer morning, this time dull white sky:  
You found the glade and one lone butterfly  
That sped dark-winged across and out of sight.

No earthly Eden stays to be regained.  
I looked up. There were grey clouds now. It rained.

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<sup>1</sup> shortlisted (not published in print or online) by Poetry on the Lake XV Competition

2nd prize:

*RENOIR AT MOULIN HUET*, Paul Francis, Shropshire  
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £400  
[www.paulfranciswrites.co.uk](http://www.paulfranciswrites.co.uk)

## RENOIR AT MOULIN HUET

Not Normandy this time. Guernsey is near  
but warmer, with a golden August glow;  
a mix of greens on granite greys that fall  
incisive, slanting in the turquoise sea.  
He finds his bay and stalks it like a deer.  
Quick glimpses, as each twist along the track  
unearths his prey, allows his sights to wheel  
on to a different line, a fresh attack.  
He loves the giggling girls, the way they squeal  
galloping into waves, no hint of shame,  
young creatures in the wild running free.  
One month, and fifteen canvases. Some haul.  
He drags his bulging bag of captured game  
back to the kitchen of his studio.

3rd prize:

*SEA AIR*, Pat Borthwick, Yorkshire

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £200

[patborthwick.wordpress.com](http://patborthwick.wordpress.com)

## SEA AIR

Back then, our family was one of the few who arrived by car – an old black Morris with its silver-winged bonnet ornament. Set within it, a red enamel circle with a silver number eight – my age. The leather seats were like rows of black sausages.

On long journeys I would always be sick – something about the confined smell of petrol, the movement of the car, that warm animal leather. Nearing our destination, my father would wind his window down, claim he could smell the sea and could anybody else? I'd pretend I could, sometimes say, I can hear the waves. His quiet smile always puzzled me.

Home for the week was a caravan dripping condensation on to the table which at night would fold down to make my parents' double bunk. The calor-gas cylinder's red tubes reminded me of the dentist, his lies that nothing would hurt.

4th place:

*FOLDING*, Joanna Lilley, Canada

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

[www.joannalilley.com](http://www.joannalilley.com)

## FOLDING

When the telephone rings, I clamp  
the receiver between my shoulder and ear  
and line up the edges of a discarded napkin.  
Listening to the radio news, I concertina  
a B&Q receipt. I iron handkerchiefs  
into hot triangles. I set the wood stove  
with folded fans of newsprint. Cat hairs  
glide across the waxed oak floor,  
the bathroom mirror is blotched.  
I stand at the kitchen window and fold  
a yellow tea towel until it is as small as you  
once were. I find it on the windowsill  
later, as I watch a blackbird eating  
ivy berries, sprinkling snow.

5th place:

*SUNDAY MORNINGS*, **Richard Fleming**, Guernsey  
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions  
[redhandwriter.blogspot.co.uk](http://redhandwriter.blogspot.co.uk)

## SUNDAY MORNINGS

Those Sunday mornings in her parents' bed,  
tucked between them, tight,  
she'd wriggle down, inhale their sweaty heat:  
that smell, familiar, safe,  
suffused with warmth and yet a salty, puzzling redolence.

They were her shelter: a cleft she grew in like an alpine flower.  
Her father, red-cheeked, mountain-big,  
made the bed tumble like a boat  
when he yawned or stretched or turned;  
while mother, plump and comfy, perched  
at starboard edge, hand on the tiller, in control,

and she, snug and soft-nested between them,  
was warmly content, secure in the moment, her future unspent.

6th Place:

*SAILING BY*, Richard Fleming, Guernsey

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

[redhandwriter.blogspot.co.uk](http://redhandwriter.blogspot.co.uk)

## SAILING BY

Condensation on the window  
conceals so much. Wipe it away,  
as though it were a dark touch-screen  
that comes to life, revealing first,  
a glut of cars, then to the right  
the sea-wall, Herm, Jethou and Sark,  
the crouching waves at Belle Greve Bay  
and there, a single passing sail  
that seems a world apart from this  
bus-drowsy journey home from work.  
High on the left stand vast facades  
of multi-windowed banking halls.  
They loom like icebergs. We sail by  
as anxious speculators sigh.

## CHANNEL ISLANDS CATEGORY

1st place:

*REPLAY*, Judy Mantle, Jersey

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

### REPLAY

She walks the sunlit breakwater  
with her three bare-footed children,  
their hair, bleached halos, and the sea  
slaps against warm stone.

She sees them fall, flail and sink,  
gulp bubbles and foam; dives,  
catching the arm of one, the leg  
of another, but she has no more hands.

Always the same question:  
which should she save? Lungs bursting,  
she surfaces. Each night, that's how she wakes,  
her breath steadies, her palms dry,  
their photos in the moonlight surround her bed,  
full grown, smiling, perpetual survivors.

2nd place:

*PASSENGERS*, **Richard Fleming**, Guernsey  
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions  
[redhandwriter.blogspot.co.uk](http://redhandwriter.blogspot.co.uk)

## PASSENGERS

One sits with headphones on, swaying.  
One's sending texts, hypnotically.  
Another, eyes on his touchscreen,  
tweets and re-tweets, robotically,  
or un-friends unknown, online friends.  
One takes selfies, narcissistic:  
Me on the bus. Me looking cool.  
Another's going ballistic,  
cursing her phone, quite unaware  
of where she is, how she appears.  
Like some new species, comatose,  
that neither sees, nor smells, nor hears  
the living world, they ride the bus,  
detached from life, detached from us.

3rd place:

*THE APPEAL OF TARNISH*, Julia Meredith, Guernsey  
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

#### THE APPEAL OF TARNISH

I like to look at things and get used to them  
for a bit, before I commit:  
If they're softened by wear  
somewhat scuffed round the edges  
marked by a life beyond mine,  
I too can bare my scars  
and be myself

it's why my favourite clothes are hand-me-downs -  
my plates, acquired over time on  
different continents, don't match,  
my garden's unruly with nameless cuttings  
and why I've got room in my life  
for you

(all the more interesting for being  
a not-quite perfect fit)

4th place:  
*MOVING ON*, **Judy Mantle**, Jersey  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

## MOVING ON

My house is not my house:  
it is inhabited by others.

Other children's feet run on stairs  
where my children played.

Another cat sits beside the hearth  
where my cat should sit.

Unknown friends gather in my kitchen  
sharing a meal

and my curtains, bought in Brittany  
still hang in my bedroom window.

One night in a dream  
I sneaked in and stole them back.

5th place:

*WEIGHING THE VACUUM*, Julia Meredith, Guernsey  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

#### WEIGHING THE VACUUM

As the foxglove craves the bee  
Scabbard, the embedding knife  
Sea-cave gapes for lack of sea  
So your absence voids my life

Moulded shoe forlorn of foot  
Velvet glove sans iron fist  
Case whose vacant shape shows flute -  
not what's there, but what is missed -

Once, I filled my single bed  
and my life, as nut with meat;  
Now I drift, untenanted -  
Unpossessed, hence incomplete

6th place:  
*RAKING UP THE SUN*, Sandra Noel, Jersey  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

### RAKING UP THE SUN

Today they form a carpet  
on the drive, wafting memories  
of together.  
She'll sweep them tomorrow,  
garden-waste the summer; move on.

Somehow though, she knows they'll get left  
to wind-scuttle, play chase  
with the cat, before rotting  
in a quiet corner.

The stairs sigh on her climb to the bedroom -  
'Did you rake the leaves love?'  
her once garden proud husband asks.  
'They'll only come back'  
she whispers.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S CATEGORY

1st place:

*BEDSIDE TABLE*, Leila Dickinson, Dorset

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

### BEDSIDE TABLE

Tatters in the drawer beside me;  
I say I am too old now.  
An occasional appearance,  
nothing compared to the once permanent presence.

Sentiment snuggled  
under the ripped strands,  
memories intertwined beneath the pain,  
once curved around my fingertips.

It was a reliance,  
to comfort, reassure,  
calming the drops to a hush,  
something I must now do for myself.

And yet, in times of need, it still returns to my salty cheek,  
my childhood friend no longer lost.

2nd place:

*PARADOXICAL FREEDOM*, Lily Mae Carter, Jersey  
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

#### PARADOXICAL FREEDOM

When summer dawns and bids goodbye to spring  
The park becomes alive with laughs of glee  
For children playing run and shout and sing –  
They relish in the joy of being free.  
But sadly, some, their freedom is not clear;  
A woman watches still with empty eyes  
Her troubled past has left her fraught with fear  
As memories flood back she starts to cry  
She might as well be bound by concrete walls  
For traumas hold her firmly in her place  
If this is living, why be free at all?  
There's more to liberty than open space.  
A thirst to live, to love, but bound in time  
No longer held in chains, but in her mind.

3rd place:

*UPLIFTED*, Freya Carter, Sheffield

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

## UPLIFTED

String me a lie-  
like a kite on the wind  
whose tail I can chase.  
Let me see it aloft:  
garish and gorgeous,  
dipping and diving,  
bright and believable.

I will reach for it-  
the impossible, the imaginary,  
the tangible dream.

I will run for it-  
laughing, a child with a fantasy,  
painfully hopeful,  
trusting the breeze.

## HONOURABLE MENTION:

*ZERO DEGREES UNTIL SUMMER*, Heather Després, Guernsey

*BIRD HOWL*, Heather Després, Guernsey,

*FISH*, Lily Mae Carter, Jersey

## **POEMS ON THE BUSES**

*(listed alphabetically by poet's surname)*

*NOTE*, Sharon Black, France  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[www.sharonblack.co.uk](http://www.sharonblack.co.uk)

### NOTE

An empty house: I click the door behind me,  
hang up my coat, read your note  
    – *Gone to Ben's* –  
shake out the afternoon in front of me,  
lay it on the floor, smoothing out every crease and seam,  
righting corners, spreading acres of Egyptian cotton  
till every room's asleep, dazzling and white –  
and I'm barefooted  
padding through the silence and the light.

NIGHTLIFE, Sharon Black, France  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[www.sharonblack.co.uk](http://www.sharonblack.co.uk)

## NIGHTLIFE

You're asleep in our bed  
*a moth flustering at the kitchen window*

spread across my side of the mattress  
*walking in tight vertical circles*

your limbs twitch occasionally  
*as the pine beams creak, the modem hums*

I'll open the door, creep across the floorboards  
*a mink or badger shrieking from the riverbank*

and slip in next to you, your hot breath in my hair  
*as another moth bumps along the frame*

your arm curling loosely around my waist  
*before it disappears.*

*WHERE LIONS TREAD*, Pat Borthwick, Yorkshire  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[patborthwick.wordpress.com](http://patborthwick.wordpress.com)

#### WHERE LIONS TREAD

The barley ripples in the breeze  
like muscles under the skin  
of a prowling lion.

I've never seen the fields  
so beautiful, so softly dangerous.  
The long barley beards move  
even when the air is still.

In this dry heat, even the sun  
waits, while the lion sleeps,  
for a dainty-deer touch of rain.

*HAYBURN WYKE*, Carole Bromley, North Yorkshire  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[www.carolebromleypoetry.co.uk](http://www.carolebromleypoetry.co.uk)

HAYBURN WYKE

I've gone back to our rock,  
the one shaped like a sofa. There's a swarm  
of tiny flies on the white pebbles.

I half expect that man with the hammer  
to come along and start chipping fossils.  
In a moment I'll pick my way down

to the water's edge as we did that day.  
I have a snap of you, about to laugh,  
the sea behind you, your mouth full of wine.

I can taste it now. Bouquet of lemons,  
sweet French grape, hint of peppermint  
from the toothbrush you used to rescue a fly.

Salt tang of seaside and ferns. Me and you,  
on a rock. The first taste of your mouth.

*A CAUTIONARY TALE ABOUT YOGA FOR BIRDS,*  
Susie Gallienne, Guernsey  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

A CAUTIONARY TALE ABOUT YOGA FOR BIRDS

We find the birds with wings outstretched all lying on their backs,  
For Mr Hoot the Owl had said he'd teach them to relax.  
"Yoga" he said, it's good for you, you really mustn't mock it.  
Now twist your leg around your waist and put it in your pocket.

Then Jenny Wren stepped boldly forth, said "Watch and learn my dears,  
I'll force my feet right up my back and stick them in my ears."  
But she'd forgot, wrens don't have ears and with a great big breath,  
She tried to find them on her head and trod herself to death.

A POEM IN WHICH TS ELIOT DISGUISES HIMSELF...

Ian Harker, West Yorkshire  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[iannrh@yahoo.com](mailto:iannrh@yahoo.com)

A POEM IN WHICH T.S. ELIOT DISGUISES HIMSELF  
AS AN OCEAN LINER

*When he looked at you,  
it was like standing on a quay  
with the prow of a ship coming towards you  
very, very slowly - Ted Hughes*

He only had to stay very still  
and think thoughts as big as funnels  
and he was a floating city slotted  
into a wide-eyed harbour, tiny people  
deaf under the long roar of his welcome home.  
Smoke, miles of rivets, new paint, new wood –  
one long white splendour.

Now the tugs heave in a wake  
as big as a house, the stokers pile the coal  
white hot, he heads for mid-Atlantic thinking  
*They'll never find me!*  
*They'll never find me!*

*THE SILVER CUP*, **Jo Haslam**, West Yorkshire  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

THE SILVER CUP

Not found in a vein of rock, not dug  
from underground, not engraved or buffed  
till it shone, but unwrapped from chocolate  
or fudge and smoothed flat on the table  
then rolled round my father's finger,  
one half spiralled into a stem and shaped  
so it stood on its end; but not kept  
in a glass cabinet or locked in a cupboard,  
not brought out on Sunday or set  
on the sideboard at Christmas, and no wine  
glowing like fire inside, no water  
reflecting the light; nothing  
you'd drink from, no heirloom,  
not precious, nothing with his name on.

*BILLETTS DOUX*, Guy Hunter, Cheltenham  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[Guyzemail@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Guyzemail@yahoo.co.uk)

## BILLETTS-DOUX

fifty three invitations  
seventy two guests  
three speeches  
four vegetarians  
one celiac and a gluten free

six hired suits  
two bridesmaids  
eighty odd cup cakes  
ninety flutes of champagne  
two thousand flakes of confetti

three tantrums  
four bouquets  
one registrar  
two words

*GREEN CAFÉ, OSAKA*, Phil Madden, Wales  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[philmadden31@googlemail.com](mailto:philmadden31@googlemail.com)

*GREEN CAFÉ, OSAKA*

The ladies of a certain age,  
the ladies with a certain means  
(the widow's pension just enough),  
the ladies with uncertain steps,  
place umbrellas in the stand  
and make their way to order cakes.  
Their hair is frosted like meringues.  
They choose from tartlets and éclairs.  
Start their chat with tales of bones.  
Then something sparks and off they go,  
young lovers now, or better, girls.

*RACER*, Jonathan Mayman, Chester  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[jonathanmayman.blogspot.com](http://jonathanmayman.blogspot.com)

## RACER

A pigeon circles our yacht, wearily.  
Crash lands onto our masthead,  
keeps its grip, bobbing about up there  
as the boat rises and falls on the swell.  
Flutters down to the deck  
after we produce a saucer of bread and milk.  
We notice the bird is ringed and imagine  
the mounting concern of its trainer.  
A hunched companion for an hour or two,  
when we come within sight of land  
the pigeon perks up.  
Rejuvenated, takes to the sky again  
and with a dip of its wings  
heads for home.

*SHELL*, Laura McKee, Kent  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[lozmoz@mac.com](mailto:lozmoz@mac.com)

SHELL

once I learnt  
it wasn't the sea  
rushing in

to be listened to  
but my own blood  
trapped running

rings around  
my heart and head  
still I tasted salt

*THEODOLITE*, Julia Meredith, Guernsey  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

THEODOLITE

Strange how cliffs  
unlike skyscrapers  
feed our humility  
and not our hubris

Yet ant-like, we fill that space  
between sea and sky  
... dwindle on pavements.

*FISHING*, Andrew Munro, Guernsey  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

## FISHING

I caught the fish out by the lighthouse  
On a semi sunny day  
And after the gory gutting  
The flesh was fairly good

And though the lingering smell on my fingers  
Faded long ago  
It is the glassy-eyed frantic flap flapping of the failing  
fish that I really took away.

*EMPTINESS IN THE GARDEN*, Judith Neale, Canada  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[www.judeneale.ca](http://www.judeneale.ca)

EMPTINESS IN THE GARDEN

Your sheets are pulled back  
to reveal the small impression

you left for me to guard.

Your head laid here full  
of dreams.

I walk with disbelief around the path  
that you had worn so thick  
with your parting

Towels capture your scent  
the way moss fills chinks  
of emptiness in the garden

*WATER LIGHT II*, Linda Rose Parkes, Jersey  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[www.lindaroseonline.com](http://www.lindaroseonline.com)

## WATER LIGHT II

Again I drive you, tiny mother, to the bay,  
beyond the avenue of wintering hydrangeas.

If you could only slip away to find him...  
but for the moment we're empty of all but ocean,

and intelligent crows picking the beach clean,  
seagulls on the slipstream, spinning.

Nothing we can say, no trick of light  
or language to shore up time.

For years you've carried love.  
And now we listen to the tide breathing

*POTTEROW*, Rachel Plummer, Edinburgh  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

POTTEROW

A fabric shop on one side of the street  
Sells yards of sari silk, while opposite  
Another sells kilt tartan. Here we sit  
Below the Mosque, its brickwork bright as wheat  
Over the glass roof of the station, wheat  
That has not yet been milled. Above us it  
Swells like a breast, lays claim to skyline lit  
With cloudlight, glow behind the grey. The feet  
That pass us beat an old rhythm, and ferns  
Grow from the guttering, while birds fly clear  
Of the Mosque's pinnacle. In cobbled skies  
The road's reflection spirals outwards, turns  
Towards a town shattered by raindrops. Here  
The city opens its windows, its eyes.

*TILT*, Rebecca Watts, Cambridge  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition  
[rerebeccawatts.weebly.com](http://rerebeccawatts.weebly.com)

## TILT

I'd like to be back in your wheelbarrow,  
summer shoes dangling as we charge over  
uneven ground towards the finish-line –  
ignoring the sharp rim's burn at the backs  
of my knees, the rumble of the loose wheel  
vibrating along the length of my spine –  
clinging on to the metal sides,  
not knowing if we're going to tip.

Triple-socked and snow-booted I trudge home,  
observing that walking today demands  
an effort of mind. I want to sit down,  
shut my eyes and ride the lurch and tilt,  
doing whatever I can to maintain  
our balance, leaving the rest in your hands.

*MUSIC LESSON*, Sarah Westcott, Kent  
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

## MUSIC LESSON

The child in a room at rush hour  
turns from the music stand  
while the metronome slows.

She sings as the trucks nose back  
to their depots, empty now,  
and workers tilt their heads and stretch,

shut down their screens,  
notice how light  
the evenings are becoming.