

POEMS ON THE MOVE
Guernsey's International Poetry Competition 2018
Judge: Daljit Nagra



List of Winning Poems

OPEN CATEGORY

1st prize:

PTSD, **Josh Ekroy**, London

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £1000

yorkeg@yahoo.com

PTSD

Ten years on and he lives in the garden shed.
He can hear the dog barking rifle shots
but he takes it with him on his runs to muzzle him.
A dew-white spider web's a trip wire, grass
is hissing warnings but it's too late to report them.
The wind's whisper is a signal from the sniper
on the cliff and that cold-eyed seagull will detonate
the myrtle bush that lies in his path as he runs, his body
not his body. The sound he makes with his damp feet-
splashes will lead to a logjam of sodden corpses
in a sluggish river. There will be a moon that says
movement behind him in his front yard 6 o'clock.
He has a wash in dark soy sauce, rallies for combat,
face black. His good ear's a ringing cup of silence.

2nd prize:

ON HEARING YOU HAVE LOST YOUR NEW LOVE,

Jonathan Edwards, Wales

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £500

ON HEARING YOU HAVE LOST YOUR NEW LOVE

So right now girl I guess you find it hard
to eat, and sleep look now is something you
remember doing once, and memories
you have look are your memories of him,
his face is in the kettle, in the fridge,
the ceiling right above your bed, beneath
your lovely eyelids girl look when you dare
to close them – there – and any second now
he'll show up at the door you know, you know,
and bottles line up on the coffee table
like trophies for surviving one more hour,
you check your phone again and make a wish.
I guess with you that's roughly how it is.
There is a reason girl I know all this.

3rd prize:

RAIN, **Peter Wallis**, Norfolk

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £250

RAIN

Gather at roadsides if you must.
Turn to mercury on a duck's back.

Don't Keep Off the Grass.
Make windows weep. Applaud.

My woollen suit cringes at your touch,
but lob a drop in my upturned mouth.

Be Greek. Fall like little smashing plates.
Be French and kiss both cheeks.

CHANNEL ISLANDS CATEGORY

1st place:

FROM A CAR PARKED AT THE BAY,

Alexander Soulsby, Guernsey

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

FROM A CAR PARKED AT THE BAY

The windscreen makes the scene a postcard:
The swollen sea pulsing in and out, a heartbeat crowned
By teacup boats, teetering on a tray.
Seagulls circle around a granite giant;
Stagnant in the sand, it drowns.

Expired vouchers wilt in the wind of the stalling engine
While bottle-cap limpets cling and rattle,
Coating a quarry of empty cans and receipts.

A boy presses a shell to his ear;
Salt and sand pour through the open window.

Cut the engine. A sandpaper breeze
Scrubs my skin into a smooth pebble.
I take my place among the bones
Of cuttlefish and silent stones.

2nd place:

CONTRARY (Sonnet 18), **Carol Hughes**, Guernsey
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

CONTRARY (Sonnet 18)

Shall I compare thee to a winter's storm?
Thou art more fiery and more passionate.
Stiff breezes blow but you can make me warm
It's winter's chill makes you importunate.
Sometimes too rough the centre of the squall,
Too harsh and cruel the thrusting wind and rain.
In gentler times we find we can't recall
What gusts and blasts provoked this hurricane.
May this tempestuous winter never cease
May you be always stormy, savage, base;
Explosions come, we never sanction peace
But rush on headlong to a wild embrace.
Remember this when winter's bleak and raw,
Think hard of me, I'm howling at your door.

3rd place:

WHERE THE HEART IS, **Sandra Noel**, Jersey

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

WHERE THE HEART IS

72 cans of Irn Bru
jiggle through the borders of five countries
on the backseat of Jim's VW van.

Waiting at Gate 53, Pam's daughter inhales already -
the vanilla pod seeds stirring
into cake mix.

Re-strapped on the back seat outside the vets,
Martha's cat stops his caterwaul,
returns to domestic fluff.

And hanging the painting
of *The woman with sleeping Tom*,
barren walls become mine.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CATEGORY

1st place:

12:04am, A FIGURE ON THE PIER, **Lyra Davies**, Wales
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

12:04am, A FIGURE ON THE PIER

The dockyard wishes to be written out of this echo,
a dissolution which will take place in monastic silence,

the quayside hushed: its workers left decades ago
to hang their names above coffee house doorways.

One by one, the boats clawed their way back into history,
but for the insomniac crowd, an old vessel still strums its own

splintered strings, broken ribcage clutching at the ocean
for a heartbeat; buried hull scarring the midnight shore.

Under a tin moon, I think how I could slip, unnoticed,
across the marsh, leaving no impression in the sand.

2nd place:

THERE ARE DAYS, **Phuong Hoang**, Vietnam

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

THERE ARE DAYS

There are days
When I want to lean on you
And tell you I'm tired.
And I can't sleep at night, the dreams keep me wired.
And things haven't been going on well in a while,
And I'm so glad you're here, and I've missed your smile—
But I can't.
I've taken one too many chances.
But I won't.
You say you love me, but you don't.
So: there are days
When I smile, and say:
I'm just fine.

3rd place:

TWO DROPS, **E Wen Wong**, New Zealand

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

psbeaches.wordpress.com

TWO DROPS

I miss you like
a bitter orange
hangs
on sweet memories,
like chantilly cream
smears
the lips of your bowl.

Like two drops of care;
two drops of fear.
You're dry land surfing
the blue
in my ocean.

POEMS ON THE BUSES

(listed *alphabetically* by poet's surname)

ON BEACON HILL, **Claire Booker**, Brighton
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
www.bookerplays.co.uk

ON BEACON HILL

a kestrel unpleats in a patch of violet sky
its mate on the eggs somewhere brooding

you walk in silence and like the farmer
I count my stock eyes shaded

not for the man you were but for the we
we have become

feet in rhythm gradient rolling
against us

mud muffling
the ancient spine that binds these hills

some call it a trudge the unsure footwork
chalk rubble tricky as lime

but I love the climb backwards always behind us
forwards always ahead

IN THE STUDIO, **Zillah Bowes**, Wales
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
www.zillahbowes.com

IN THE STUDIO

a blue dragonfly wings through my door
and cools on the far wall

I scoop her in a clean glass
inspect for only a second

an azure so luminous
one look lasts light years

I free her by the pond
as the donkey down the hill

haws twice as she always does
before one long *hee*

LETTERS, **Lyra Davies**, Wales
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

LETTERS

Summer remains a stranger in your
grandfather's village; ruptured yolk like an axe bleeding stickily. We
exchanged the years for pocket watches; linen for clay, as a blanket
for his sodden bones. The ground is breathing –

And isn't the air a little thicker now
that spring has come and gone? This same air that catches in our
lungs of lead as thunder recalls aircraft rumble?

– As if we have wound up
our hearts like clockwork all these years, garnered endearments:
'how are you?' and 'hope you're well'.

If only you could
hear those words now – alone in the trembling street, remembering
your last hello: damp, heavy, a dusty echo peeling from a tunnel wall.

SONG, **Jonathan Edwards**, Wales
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

SONG

So everything goes forward. If I say
Now look it's already gone, is *Then*.
Today is hungry to be yesterday.
And in this city that's my city, when
I turn around, a building has gone up,
or if I blink or laugh a year has gone,
I find my little nephew has shot up,
there's some new gizmo you can read this on.
The poet used all this as metaphor
to say his words would love forevermore.
His *words* would love. I've been at this all day:
I want to see you, girl, remember how
as you walk down the street, your body says
again, again, one frail, almighty *Now*.

PAST MIDNIGHT, **Scott Elder**, France
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
www.scottelder.co.uk

PAST MIDNIGHT

Nothing but this: a night clerk looking displaced
a fish wide-eyed poking against glass
both sharing the reception desk

silence is the medium the man stares blind
iron keys on iron hooks each holding a secret

swoosh: the door a half dozen footsteps
a few broken words the jingle of #34

a staircase thunders and here just here
for the first time the man considers
alternatives: undertaker cheesemonger
perhaps even a sailor

his cigarette tip glows incandescent
his eyes: dancing

REFLECTIONS, **Carol Hughes**, Guernsey
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

REFLECTIONS

Only one mirror in our house
Over the fireplace.
Signalling to my sister and me
The dangers of vanity.

'Consider the lilies'
My father would say,
Quoting his favourite book,
'They don't need make-up'.

And now forty years on
I frown at my face in the mirror,
Wary of looking too long
In case my father is watching.

AU REVOIR, **Elizabeth Lavers**, London
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
elizabeth@lavers.com

AU REVOIR

Long drawn out doorstep farewells, and dashes indoors
For the dog's lead – forgotten toy – coat from the back door – a book.
At last, off they go, waving madly. Come again soon!
It's been brilliant! Go safely!

A calm silence falls

And at once the listening house seems to double in size,
Though the faraway clock, softly chiming, sounds clear as a bell.
Once the laundry is dealt with, the kitchen swept clean,
An unwonted neatness sets in. You can hear yourself think –
There's work to be done, plans to make and letters to write.
Peace and quiet can be good things. In moderation, of course

HELLO AGAIN, **Dorothy O'Grady**, Essex
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

HELLO AGAIN

You showed up in my dreams last night
and sat behind me on the floor
your legs laid either side,
and held me close-
folded
to the bow
of your body.

And that was all.
It felt so warm.

ONE SUMMER'S DAY, **Jo Olszewski**, Jersey
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

ONE SUMMER'S DAY

Rock pools lie glassy, shimmering with heat
Shattered to shards by tiny splashing feet
Red buckets and nets, hear children at play
Squeals of laughter by the beach for the day
Nets hoping to find a crab in their catch
From his warm seaweed bed he is snatched from his patch
Then at the campsite, he's put in a pot
Bubbling water, he starts to get hot
Boiling he feels he's being ripped at the seams
Frantically tapping and letting out screams
Out on the grass the kids play and giggle
Can't hear him scream, tap, struggle or wriggle
They're hungry for tea before it gets late
And smile as his corpse is put on their plate.

THE SUN WARNS PLUTO, **Sue Proffitt**, Devon
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

THE SUN WARNS PLUTO

On 19th March 1915, Pluto was sighted, and photographed, for the first time.

My dark child, my pock-marked changeling,
my waif encased in ice, they've spotted you
through their glass eyes, they've caught
the smear of your shadow on their lens –
my coldest and last, my echo-ball
who knows me by memory not by light,
they've spied you through the night and their voices
are raised – my tiny pulse, my almost-debris,
who pulls on the coat-tails of stars,
hide your face, little death, hide your face.

A MAN WALKED INTO A BAR, **Simon Rees-Roberts**, London
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

A MAN WALKED INTO A BAR

He sped right past security, dropped his ruck sack
and ordered a Diet Coke. When we noticed,
we all shrunk back –unattended luggage and so on.

Then Jerry said,
 it's OK, he's ordered Diet Coke.
Why's it OK?
 It means he's got a future,
worried about his weight, perhaps diabetic.
 Hence the Diet Coke.

If it had been his last he wouldn't have bothered,
would have had Regular Coke.
 Maybe he just prefers Diet,
could be he's a creature of habit.
 Well we're all still here, said Mel.

THINK AGAIN, **Anthony Watts**, Somerset
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

THINK AGAIN

Think of a girl's hair, like a buoyed sheaf of light
as she rides her horse through the heather.
Think of the heather, the ling, its wiry, spiry citadels,
heavy with scent and bees in the belfry.
Think of the honey-barrel bees, bobbing and nudging
at the threshold of pollen.
Think of the honey, clear at first, then turning
to a sparkling crush of butter at the bottom of the pot.
Think of a pot of gold launching its rainbow and the rainbow turned
to concrete – a footbridge over the motorway.
Think of the motorway – a wall of surf, a serpent
with fleas, a zip-fastener sewn in the wrong place.
Think of a place, any place, and a girl riding,
her hair a buoyed sheaf of light.