

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER – FIRST TIME EVER 6 years

CHOICE A THE LITTLE TURTLE by Vachel Lindsay

There was a little turtle.
He lived in a box.
He swam in a puddle.
He climbed on the rocks.

He snapped at a mosquito.
He snapped at a flea.
He snapped at a minnow.
And then he snapped at me.

He caught the mosquito.
He caught the flea.
He caught the minnow.
But he didn't catch me.

CHOICE B GROWN OUT OF by Tony Mitton

My trousers are tight.
They just won't fit.

And my jumper?
I've grown out of it.

My shirt's too short.
It just won't do.

There are holes in my socks
where my toes peep through.

So it's lucky I don't
grow out of my skin.

'Cos then there'd be nothing
to put *me* in.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER – FIRST TIME EVER Age 6 years

CHOICE C THE CHRISTENING by A A Milne

What shall I call
My dear little dormouse?
His eyes are small,
But his tail is e-nor-mouse.

I sometimes call him Terrible John,
'Cos his tail goes on –
And on –
And on.
And I sometimes call him Terrible Jack,
'Cos his tail goes on to the end of his back.
And I sometimes call him Terrible James,
'Cos he says he likes me calling him names ..
But I think I shall call him Jim,
'Cos I am fond of him.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 7 years

CHOICE A GRANDPA'S GLASSES by Jane Mann

Grandpa's lost his glasses.
Wherever can they be?

We've searched the floor,
Behind the door.

We've felt each stair,
His best armchair.

We've sifted bins
And rusty tins.

We've probed through boots
And ancient suits.

We've check old socks
And even clocks.

We've combed the hedge
And garden veg.

We've scoured his shed
And under bed.

Then grandpa remembers –
They're still on his head!

CHOICE B MY PAIN by Ted Scheu

It doesn't hurt with sudden screams,
like cuts, or stings, or scrapes.
It doesn't help to cover it
with bandages and tapes.

It doesn't make me howl like
I'm waiting for a shot,
or when I touch my finger to
the stove when I should not.

It isn't like those frozen brains
you get some summer day
when ice cream burns behind your eyes
then quickly melts away.

It's more a steady soreness,
like a nasty, nagging blister.
If you have got a pain like mine,
it's probably your sister.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 7 years

CHOICE C RAINY NIGHTS by Irene Thompson

I like town on rainy nights
When everything is wet –
When all the town has magic lights
And streets of shining jet!
When all the rain about the town
Is like a looking-glass,
And all the lights are upside down
Below me as I pass.
In all the pools are velvet skies,
And down the dazzling street
A fairy city gleams and lies
In beauty at my feet.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 8 years

CHOICE A I OPENED A BOOK by Julia Donaldson

I opened a book and in I strode.
Now nobody can find me.
I've left my chair, my house, my road,
My town and my world behind me.

I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,
I've swallowed the magic potion.
I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king
And dived in a bottomless ocean.

I opened a book and made some friends.
I shared their tears and laughter
And followed their road with its bumps and bends
To the happily ever after.

I finished my book and out I came.
The cloak can no longer hide me.
My chair and my house are just the same,
But I have a book inside me.

CHOICE B ONE INCH TALL by Shel Silverstein

If you were only one inch tall, you'd ride a worm to school.
The teardrop of a crying ant would be your swimming pool.
A crumb of cake would be a feast
And last you seven days at least,
A flea would be a frightening beast
If you were one inch tall.

If you were only one inch tall, you'd walk beneath the door,
And it would take about a month to get down to the store.
A bit of fluff would be your bed,
You'd swing upon a spider's thread,
And wear a thimble on your head
If you were one inch tall.

You'd surf across the kitchen sink upon a stick of gum.
You couldn't hug your mama, you'd just have to hug her thumb.
You'd run from people's feet in fright,
To move a pen would take all night,
(This poem took fourteen years to write —
'Cause I'm just one inch tall).

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER Age 8

CHOICE C WAYS TO COME TO SCHOOL by Roger Stevens

George comes to school in a sports car
Mel comes to school on the bus

Will comes to school on his scooter
(So does Arthur and Sandy and Gus)

Billy comes to school on a snail
That's why he's always late

Miss Moss comes to school in the Tardis
She says Doctor Who's her best mate

Mr. Walton arrives on a dragon
It's his very special pet

But I'm always first to arrive at school
In my supersonic jet

(Although usually I walk...)

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 9 years

CHOICE A THE PAINT BOX by E V Rieu

'Cobalt and umber and ultramarine,
Ivory black and emerald green –
What shall I paint to give pleasure to you?'
'Paint for me somebody utterly new.'

'I have painted you tigers in crimson and white.'
'The colours were good and you painted aright.'
'I have painted the cook and camel in blue
And a panther in purple.' 'You painted them true.

Now mix me a colour that nobody knows,
And paint me a country where nobody goes,
And put in it people a little like you,
Watching a unicorn drinking the dew.'

CHOICE B MRS MATHER by Colin McNaughton

Scared stiff.
Courage flown.
On the doorstep all alone.
Cold sweat.
State of shock.
Lift my trembling hand and knock.

Thumping heart.
Chilled with fear.
I hear the witch's feet draw near.
Rasping bolts.
Rusty locks.
Shake down to my cotton socks.

Hinges creaking.
Waft of mould.
A groan that makes my blood run cold.
Cracking voice.
Knocking knees.
"Can I have my ball back, please?"

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER Age 9

CHOICE C MARKED by Eric Finney

My English book's full-
It's dead, deceased-
Curled at the corners,
The cover creased.
Name and Subject
Just a blur:
Inside, slaved over
By me and sir.
He says, 'Look it through
From front to back.
Ask yourself:
Is it good or slack?'
So I flip it through
From front to back
And read the red
Below the black.

Quite a good start.
Take more care.
Disappointing.
Only fair.
Not your best.
This is careless stuff.
You simply don't
Try hard enough.

And that's not true-
I really tried.
There's plenty more
In red beside:
Remarks that cut
Worse than a knife.
This marking's left me
Marked for life.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 10 to 11 years

CHOICE A DADDY FELL INTO THE POND by Alfred Noyes

Everyone grumbled. The sky was grey.
We had nothing to do and nothing to say.
We were nearing the end of a dismal day,
And then there seemed to be nothing beyond,
Then
Daddy fell into the pond!

And everyone's face grew merry and bright,
And Timothy danced for sheer delight.
"Give me the camera. Quick, oh quick!
He's crawling out of the duckweed!" Click!

Then the gardener suddenly slapped his knee,
And doubled up, shaking silently,
And the ducks all quacked as if they were daft,
And it sounded as if the old drake laughed.
Oh, there wasn't a thing that didn't respond
When Daddy fell into the pond!

CHOICE B SEAL-SONG by Robin Mellor

In a faintly blue-tinged crystal sea
a seal has turned to look at me,
deep-black eyes and body long,
it sings its own seal-song

"Oh, keep my waters deep and fresh
and let there be many fish,
let all my friends swim next to me
this is a seal's true wish.

And keep the poison from the waves
and poison from the air,
let gulls and cormorants dive within
our waters, while we're there.

Let our friends, who live on land,
know the sea is deep and long,
and there is room for everyone
who can hear my own seal-song."

In a faintly blue-tinged crystal sea
a seal has turned to look at me,
deep-black eyes and body long,
it sings its own seal-song.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 10 to 11 years

CHOICE C DUVET COVER by Michael Rosen

Have you ever tried to shove a
feather duvet in its cover?

My brother bet
I couldn't get
the duvet in its cover.

I thought I could
I said I would.
I tried
but the duvet seemed too wide
to go in there.
'It's not fair
the duvet's all fluffy.'
I was getting huffy.
No matter how hard I tried to stuff
the duvet in. The space wasn't big enough.
The chunks that got in were all lumpy.
You can't sleep under a duvet that's all bumpy.
I tried to crawl in like a mole
but then I got stuck right in the hole.
My brother was dead pleased, he teased:
'You're no good. You've lost the bet.
you couldn't get
your duvet in its cover.'

When I am grown up I shall invent
a way you can shove a
duvet in its cover.
I shall invent
some kind of tent.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 12 to 14 years

CHOICE A BIRDFOOT'S GRAMPA by Joseph Bruchac

The old man
must have stopped our car
two dozen times to climb out
and gather into his hands
the small toads blinded
by our lights and leaping,
live drops of rain.

The rain was falling,
a mist about his white hair
and I kept saying
you can't save them all,
accept it, get back in
we've got places to go.

But, leathery hands full
of wet brown life,
knee deep in the summer
roadside grass,
he just smiled and said
they have places to go to
too.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 12 to 14 years

CHOICE B THREE RUSTY NAILS by Roger McGough

Mother there's a strange man
Waiting at the door
With a familiar sort of face
You feel you've seen before.

He says his name is Jesus
Can we spare a couple of bob?
Says he has been made redundant
And now can't find a job.

Yes, I think he is a foreigner
Egyptian, or a Jew
Oh aye, and that reminds me
He'd like some water too.

Well shall I give him what he wants
Or send him on his way?
Ok I'll give him 5p
Say that's all we've got today.

And I'll forget about the water
I suppose it's a bit unfair
But honest, he's filthy dirty
All beard and straggly hair.

.....

Mother, he asked about the water
I said the tank had burst
Anyway I gave him the coppers
That seemed to quench his thirst.

He said it was little things like that
That kept him on the rails
Then he gave me his autographed picture
And these three rusty nails.

THE BETTY MASSIP DE TURVILLE VOUCHER - FIRST TIME EVER 12 to 14 years

CHOICE C MY NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOUR IS A WITCH by Samiya Vallee

My next door neighbour is a witch,
And she lives way down in a ditch.
Her clothing is a little strange,
Because she never wants to change.
She has a black robe and a black hat,
Green skin and a smelly black cat.
A bit fat wart grows on her nose,
And seventeen pimples on her toes.

But ... her food is EVEN worse,
Because she eats it course by course.
Her first course is seven dead bats,
Laid on top of seven rats.
Then she has twenty flies
With lots and lots of llama eyes.
Her main course is a horrible soup,
Because it's made with doggie poop.
But worst of all is her dessert.
It's little children rolled in dirt.

Last night she had a witch's feast
And turned into a greedy beast.
I think she cooked my best friend Tilly
And ate her with some peas and broccoli.

THE PARSLOW TROPHY - Verse Speaking for Girls and Boys 6 to 7 years

CHOICE A DEAR UGLY SISTERS by Laura Mucha

Bread has been baked, veggies are chopped,
salt in the pan – kitchen's been mopped,

cleared up the bathroom, cleaned up the sink,
washed all your socks – still really stink,

ironed the laundry, folded the sheets,
serviced the car – here's the receipt,

dog for a walk, cat to the vet,
married a wonderful prince that I met,

leaving tonight, so good luck with the chores,
dropping my apron and keys by the door.

FROM
CINDERELLA

CHOICE B DON'T BE SCARED by Carol Ann Duffy

The dark is only a blanket
for the moon to put on her bed.
The dark is a private cinema
for the movie dreams in your head.
The dark is a little black dress
to show off the sequin stars.
The dark is the wooden hole
behind the strings of happy guitars.
The dark is a jeweller's velvet cloth
where children sleep like pearls.
The dark is a spool of film
to photograph boys and girls,
so smile in your sleep in the dark.
Don't be scared.

THE PARSLOW TROPHY - Verse Speaking for Boys or Girls 6 to 7 years

CHOICE C MOTHER DOESN'T WANT A DOG by Judith Viorst

Mother doesn't want a dog.
Mother says they smell,
And never sit when you say sit,
Or even when you yell.
And when you come home late at night
And there is ice and snow,
You have to go back out because
The dumb dog has to go.

Mother doesn't want a dog.
Mother says they shed,
And always let the strangers in
And bark at friends instead,
And do disgraceful things on rugs,
And track mud on the floor,
And flop upon your bed at night
And snore their doggy snore.

Mother doesn't want a dog.
She's making a mistake.
Because, more than a dog, I think
She will not want this snake.

THE SABEY TROPHY - Verse Speaking for Boys or Girls 8 to 9 years

CHOICE A THE SCORPION by Roald Dahl

You ought to thank your lucky star
That here in England where you are
You'll never find (or so it's said)
A scorpion inside your bed.
The scorpion's name is Stingaling,
A most repulsive ugly thing,
And I would never recommend
That you should treat him as a friend.
His scaly skin is black as black
With armour-plate upon his back.
Observe his scowling murderous face,
His wicked eyes, his lack of grace,
Note well his long and crinkly tail.
And when it starts to swish and flail,
Oh gosh! Watch out! Jump back, I say,
And run till you're a mile away.
The moment that his tail goes *swish*
He has but one determined wish,
He wants to make a sudden jump
And sting you hard upon your rump.

CHOICE B ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR by Jeff Moss

On the other side of the door
I can be a different me,
As smart and as brave, as funny or strong
As a person could want to be.
There's nothing too hard for me to do,
There's no place I can't explore
Because everything can happen
On the other side of the door.

On the other side of the door
I don't have to go alone.
If you come, too, we can sail tall ships
And fly where the wind has flown.
And wherever we go, it is almost sure
We'll find what we are looking for
Because everything can happen
On the other side of the door.

THE SABEY TROPHY - Verse Speaking for Boys or Girls Age 8 to 9

CHOICE C LET THIS BE A WARNING TO YOU by Colin Crete

Colin Crete would drink and eat
From morning until night.
He filled his mouth so full of food
It was a horrid sight.

He shovelled up his food so fast
It wouldn't all fit in,
So bits of it were hanging out
And dripping down his chin.

One day he stuffed his mouth so full
He could not move his jaw.
Try though he might for one last bite,
He fell down on the floor.

The doctor came and looked at him
He sadly shook his head.
'Poor Colin choked on all that food.
And I'm afraid he's dead'.

So do not be like Colin Crete.
Whatever else you do,
Eat just enough and do not bite
Off more than you can chew.

THE ENID LE FEUVRE CUP - Verse Speaking for Boys or Girls 10 to 11 years

CHOICE A REMEMBER ME by Ray Mather

Remember Me?
I am the boy who sought friendship;
The boy you turned away.
I the boy who asked you
If I too might play.
I the face at the window
When your party was inside.
I the lonely figure
Who walked away and cried.
I the one who hung around,
A punchbag for your games.
Someone you could kick and beat,
Someone to call names.
But how strange is the change
After time has hurried by,
Four years have passed since then,
Now I'm not so quick to cry.
I'm bigger and I'm stronger,
I've grown a foot in height.
Suddenly I'M popular
And YOU'RE left out the light.
I could, if I wanted,
Be so unkind to you.
I would only have to say
And the other boys would do.
But the memory of my pain
Holds back the revenge I'd planned
And instead I feel much stronger
By offering you my hand.

THE ENID LE FEUVRE CUP - Verse Speaking for Boys or Girls 10 to 11 years

CHOICE B ELECTRONIC CHRISTMAS by Kenn Nesbitt

I asked for new gadgets for Christmas.
My list was a hundred lines long.
I figured I might as well try it.
Why not? I mean, what could go wrong?

My parents bought all that I wanted:
An iPod, a big-screen TV,
a camera, a laptop computer,
a Playstation, Xbox, and Wii.

I got a new Kindle, a smart phone,
an RF remote-controlled car,
a robot, a video camera,
a brand-new electric guitar.

But those things were just the beginning.
This Christmas, I had such a haul,
it took me all morning, and then some,
to finish unwrapping it all.

A hundred new gadgets to play with.
I couldn't be bothered to wait.
The moment I plugged them all in, though,
it blew every fuse in the state.

If you're spending Christmas in darkness,
and can't play your video game,
I'm sorry for all of the trouble;
it's probably me who's to blame.

I know now I shouldn't be greedy,
so, next year, I think you'll be fine.
Instead of a hundred new gadgets,
I'm asking for just ninety nine.

THE ENID LE FEUVRE CUP - Verse Speaking for Boys or Girls 10 to 11 years

CHOICE C FOOTBALL MAD by Benjamin Zephaniah

Oh no, bless my soul!
Clever Trevor's scored a goal.

So he runs up the pitch
And wiggles his botty,
He is kissed by ten men
All sweaty and snotty,
Now he's waving his fist
To the Queen who just stares
The lad's going crazy
But everyone cheers.
Now what's he doing?
He's chewing the cud!
Now what's he doing?
He's rolling in mud!
Now he is crying
I think he's in pain.
Now what's he doing?
He's smiling again.

Oh no, bless my soul
Clever Trevor's scored a goal.

He's doing gymnastics
He's doing some mime
He's kissing the ground
For a very long time.
He's now on his back
With his feet in the air
Now he's gone all religious
And stopped for a prayer.
Did he pray for the sick?
Did he pray for the poor?
No, he prayed for the ball
And he prayed to score.
No one but no one
Can re-start the game
Until Trevor has had
His moment of fame.

On no, bless my soul
Clever Trevor's scored a goal.
He kicked the ball into the net
How much money will he get?

THE TREVOR MATTHEWS' CUP - Verse Speaking for Boys and Girls 12 to 14 years

CHOICE A ABIGAIL by Kay Starbird

Abigail knew when she was born
Among the roses, she was a thorn.
Her quiet mother had lovely looks
Her quiet father wrote quiet books.
Her quiet brothers, correct though pale,
Weren't really prepared for Abigail
Who entered the house with howls and tears
While both of her brothers blocked their ears
And both of her parents, talking low,
Said, 'Why is Abigail screaming so?'

Abigail kept on getting worse,
As soon as she teethed she bit her nurse,
At three, she acted distinctly cool
Toward people and things at nursery school.
'I'm sick of cutting out dolls.' She said,
And cut a hole in her dress, instead.
Her mother murmured, 'she bold for three,'
Her father answered, 'I quite agree',
Her brothers mumbled, 'We hate to fuss,
But when will Abigail be like us?'

Abigail going through her teens,
Liked overalls, and pets and machines.
In college, hating most of its features,
She told off all her friends and teachers,
Her brothers, graduating from Yale
Said 'Really you're hopeless, Abigail'.
And when her mother said, 'Fix your looks,'
Her father added 'or else write books'
And Abigail asked 'Is that a dare?
And wrote a book that would curl your hair.

THE TREVOR MATTHEWS' CUP - Verse Speaking for Boys or Girls 12 to 14 years

CHOICE B CONVERSATION PIECE by Gareth Owen

Late again Blenkinsop?
What's the excuse this time?
Not my fault sir.
Whose fault is it then?
Grandma's sir.
Grandma's. What did she do?
She died sir.
Died?
She's seriously dead all right sir.
That makes four grandmothers this term
And all on PE days Blenkinsop.
I know. It's very upsetting sir.
How many grandmothers have you got Blenkinsop?
Grandmothers sir? None sir.
None?
All dead sir.
And what about yesterday Blenkinsop?
What about yesterday sir?
You missed maths.
That was the dentist sir.
The dentist died?
No sir. My teeth sir
You missed the test Blenkinsop.
I'd been looking forward to it too sir.
Right, line up for PE.
Can't sir.
No such word as can't. Why can't you?
No kit sir.
Where is it?
Home sir.
What's it doing at home?
Not ironed sir.
Couldn't you iron it?
Can't do it sir.
Why not?
My hand sir.
Who usually does it?
Grandma sir.
Why couldn't she do it?
Dead sir.

THE TREVOR MATTHEWS' CUP - Verse Speaking for Boys or Girls 12 to 14 years

CHOICE C FROM A DISTANCE by Lindsay MacRae

I climbed to the top of the world today
and the world looked really small.
Guns and bombs and orphans' tears
couldn't be heard at all
It all looked bright and beautiful
like a cheerful Christian hymn,
with enough green fields and shady woods
to put all the people in.

I couldn't see any fences
or signs which read 'Keep Out',
nor churned up earth where tanks rolled through
to the enemy's victory shout.
And I couldn't see the eyes of a child
who has no tears left to cry,
or numb refugees at the side of the road
watch the flames from their homes light the sky.

I couldn't see the generals' smiles
as they met to divide up the land,
or hear the lies they told afterwards
with blood still warm on their hands.
I couldn't feel the sigh which leaks
from a million broken hearts
or the thick and sickening silence
before the next war starts.

I climbed to the top of the world today
and dreamed how the future could be:
the rivers unsullied by hatred and greed
and peace stretching clear to the sea.

THE MCLOUGHLIN VOUCHER - Verse Speaking for Boys and Girls 15 to 17 years

CHOICE A DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT by Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

THE MCLOUGHLIN VOUCHER - Verse Speaking for Boys and Girls 15 to 17 years

CHOICE B GUS: THE THEATRE CAT by T. S. Eliot

Gus is the Cat at the Theatre Door.
His name, as I ought to have told you before,
Is really Asparagus. That's such a fuss
To pronounce, that we usually call him just Gus.
His coat's very shabby, he's thin as a rake,
And he suffers from palsy that makes his paw shake.
Yet he was, in his youth, quite the smartest of Cats—
But no longer a terror to mice and to rats.
For he isn't the Cat that he was in his prime;
Though his name was quite famous, he says, in its time.
And whenever he joins his friends at their club
(Which takes place at the back of the neighbouring pub)
He loves to regale them, if someone else pays,
With anecdotes drawn from his palmiest days.
For he once was a Star of the highest degree—
He has acted with Irving, he's acted with Tree.
And he likes to relate his success on the Halls,
Where the Gallery once gave him seven cat-calls.
But his grandest creation, as he loves to tell,
Was Firefrowfiddle, the Fiend of the Fell.

"I have played," so he says, "every possible part,
And I used to know seventy speeches by heart.
I'd extemporize back-chat, I knew how to gag,
And I knew how to let the cat out of the bag.
I knew how to act with my back and my tail;
With an hour of rehearsal, I never could fail.
I'd a voice that would soften the hardest of hearts,
Whether I took the lead, or in character parts.
I have sat by the bedside of poor Little Nell;
When the Curfew was rung, then I swung on the bell.
In the Pantomime season I never fell flat,
And I once understudied Dick Whittington's Cat.
But my grandest creation, as history will tell,
Was Firefrowfiddle, the Fiend of the Fell."

Then, if someone will give him a toothful of gin,
He will tell how he once played a part in East Lynne.
At a Shakespeare performance he once walked on pat,
When some actor suggested the need for a cat.
He once played a Tiger—could do it again—
Which an Indian Colonel pursued down a drain.
And he thinks that he still can, much better than most,
Produce blood-curdling noises to bring on the Ghost.
And he once crossed the stage on a telegraph wire,
To rescue a child when a house was on fire.
And he says: "Now then kittens, they do not get trained

THE MCLOUGHLIN VOUCHER - Verse Speaking for Boys and Girls 15 to 17 years

CHOICE B GUS: THE THEATRE CAT by T. S. Eliot (continued)

As we did in the days when Victoria reigned.
They never get drilled in a regular troupe,
And they think they are smart, just to jump through a hoop."
And he'll say, as he scratches himself with his claws,
"Well, the Theatre's certainly not what it was.
These modern productions are all very well,
But there's nothing to equal, from what I hear tell,
That moment of mystery
When I made history
As Firefrowfiddle, the Fiend of the Fell."

CHOICE C WAR PHOTOGRAPHER by Carol Ann Duffy

In his dark room he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,
as though this were a church and he
a priest preparing to intone a Mass.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
beneath his hands which did not tremble then
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features
faintly start to twist before his eyes,
a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries
of this man's wife, how he sought approval
without words to do what someone must
and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black-and-white
from which his editor will pick out five or six
for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick
with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.
From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where
he earns his living and they do not care.

THE AHIER FAMILY TROPHY - Prose Speaking for Boys and Girls 8 to 9 years

GEORGE'S MARVELLOUS MEDICINE by Roald Dahl

In the kitchen, George put the saucepan on the stove and turned up the gas flame underneath it as high as it would go.

'George!' came the awful voice from the next room. 'It's time for my medicine!'

'Not yet, Grandma,' George called back. 'There's still twenty minutes before eleven o'clock.'

'What mischief are you up to in there now? Granny screeched. 'I hear noises.'

George thought it best not to answer this one. He found a long wooden spoon in the kitchen drawer and began stirring hard. The stuff in the pot got hotter and hotter.

Soon the marvellous mixture began to froth and foam. A rich blue smoke, the colour of peacocks, rose from the surface of the liquid, and a fiery fearsome smell filled the kitchen. It made George choke and splutter. It was a smell unlike any he had smelled before.

THE MARY ROSE CUP Choral and Group Speaking 6 to 8 years

CHOICE A GHOST HUNTING by Jacqueline Emery

Ssh!
It's dark
Don't giggle or shout!
Just keep still,
There's a ghost about!
Down in the cellar,
Look with care,
There's a cold wind moaning,
Beware.....beware
He rattles the shelves,
He moves the bed,
He breaks the glasses
And stains the mat red!
Ooh – look out,
It's coming in here,
Closer and closer,
.....and CLOSER, I fear.
Help! Help!
Let's get out!
I'm scared; I feel sick!
Let's go while we can,
Hurry up! Quick!

It's still now, the house.
Not one stray, nosy peep!
Thank goodness that's over –
This ghost wants to sleep!

THE MARY ROSE CUP Choral and Group Speaking 6 to 8 years

CHOICE B CROC CITY by Brian Moses

Beneath the streets of New York
there are sewers that stretch for miles.
They say the sewers of New York
are filled with crocodiles
and alligators that frightened folk
have just flushed down the pan
when the creatures stopped being babies
and started snapping at their hands.

Croc City,
down below when the city sleeps,
croc city,
snapping away to a hip-hop beat,
croc city.

Pity the poor sewer worker
taking his nightly stroll,
thinking about hot coffee
at the end of his dark patrol.
Then out of the slime a snapper
raises its ugly head,
how fast can you sprint down a sewer pipe
when a crocodile wants you dead . . . ?

Croc City,
down below when the city sleeps,
croc city,
snapping away to a hip-hop beat,
croc city.

The State Department issues advice
to those who find a croc:
whatever you do, don't go after it,
don't chase it with a rock.
Don't start to think you're Dundee
out to catch a snapper.
If he opens his mouth, then you can be sure
this croc, he ain't no rapper!!

Croc City,
down below when the city sleeps,
croc city,
snapping away to a hip-hop beat,
croc city.

Croc City,
down below when the city sleeps,
croc city,
snapping away to a hip-hop beat,
croc city. . .YEAH!

THE MARJORIE MAINE CUP Choral and Group Speaking 9 to 12 years

CHOICE A SITTING BY A SUMMER POOL by Steve Turner

Sitting by a summer pool
You see no swanky suits,
No overcoats or trousers,
No Doctor Martens boots.

No one knows who's rich or poor
Or who drives what year's car;
When skin is all you have to wear
You are just what you are.

Managers of city banks
Who like their suit well pressed,
Show skin which was all crumpled up
Beneath their clean white vests.

Bellies which are proudly slapped
While drinking at The Grapes,
Are bulging like the mammoth fronts
Of hairy jungle apes.

Girls who think they're movie stars
Don't look the stuff of dreams,
When hair is flat and dripping wet
And face is washed of creams.

Tough kids lose their shoulder pads,
Their belts and buckles, too;
It's hard to look a thug in trunks
When ribs are showing through.

Policemen out of uniform
And choir boys without smocks,
Punks without their safety pins
And girl guides without socks.

Pop stars without microphones
And waiters without tips,
Nuns without their habits on
And jockeys without whips.

Queens without their studded crowns
And bakers without buns,
Tramps without their plastic bags
And soldiers without guns.

Ballet dancers without tights
And teachers without school,
Everyone is what they are
Beside the summer pool.

THE MARJORIE MAINE CUP ROSE CUP Choral and Group Speaking 9 to 12 years

CHOICE B THE TIME MACHINE by Colin Thompson

My dad has built an amazing machine
That hums and groans and sends out a beam.
It's brilliant, with wires all over the place
And a satellite dish pointing at space,
A light that flickers, and wheels that spin,
And a funnel made of an old baked bean tin.

Dad built it for months every night in his shed
And when it was finished Mum came and she said,
'So now will you fix the broken back door
And the place where the dog was sick on the floor,
And turn off that wretched circular saw
And sort out the cat. It's got a bad paw.
And build me a wardrobe. You promised me four.
And shave that stupid hair off your jaw.
And now that it's finished, what is it for?'

'Well,' said Dad as he stared at the floor,
('cause to tell the truth, he wasn't quite sure).
'You switch it on here and this bit lights up
And the spoon tips the sugar into the cup
And the bit on the top spins round very fast
And the flags get pulled up to the top of the mast
And you get in the seat, and strap yourself in,
And put in the earplugs. There's a terrible din.
And adjust the big lever, the one painted blue -'
And Mum interrupted - 'but what does it do?'

Dad said, 'I've created everyone's dream,
What you see standing there is a Time Machine.'
Mum said, 'That's useless, we've got one indoors
I know what the time is. It's a quarter to four.'
And she gave it a kick and marched out the door
And it fell to bits in a pile on the floor.

THE NEW SILVER SALVER 2006 II – Coral Speaking 13 to 17 years

CHOICE A THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

I

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

THE NEW SILVER SALVER 2006 II – Choral Speaking 13 to 17 years

CHOICE B JIM, WHO RAN AWAY FROM HIS NURSE, AND WAS EATEN BY A LION

by Hilaire Belloc

There was a Boy whose name was Jim;
His Friends were very good to him.
They gave him Tea, and Cakes, and Jam,
And slices of delicious Ham,
And Chocolate with pink inside
And little Tricycles to ride,
And read him Stories through and through,
And even took him to the Zoo –
But there it was the dreadful Fate
Befell him, which I now relate.

You know – or at least you ought to know,
For I have often told you so –
That Children never are allowed
To leave their Nurses in a Crowd;
Now this was Jim's special Foible,
He ran away when he was able,
And on this inauspicious day
He slipped his hand and ran away!

He hadn't gone a yard when – Bang!
With open Jaws, a lion sprang,
And hungrily began to eat
The Boy: beginning at his feet.
Now, just imagine how that feels,
When first your toes and then your heels,
And then by gradual degrees
Your shins and ankles, calves and knees,
Are slowly eaten, bit by bit.
No wonder Jim detested it!
No wonder that he shouted "Hi!"

The Honest Keeper heard his cry,
Though very fat he almost ran
To help the little gentleman.

"Ponto!" he ordered as he came
(For Ponto was the Lion's name),
"Ponto!" he cried with angry Frown,
"Let go, Sir! Down, Sir! Put it down!"
The Lion made a sudden stop,
He let the Dainty Morsel drop,
And slunk reluctant to his Cage,
Snarling with Disappointed Rage.
But when he bent him over Jim,
The Honest Keeper's Eyes were dim.

The Lion having reached his Head,
The Miserable Boy was dead!

When Nurse informed his Parents, they
Were more Concerned than I can say:-
His Mother, as She dried her eyes
Said, "Well – it gives me no surprise,
He would not do as he was told!"
His Father, who was self-controlled,
Bade all the children round attend
To James's miserable end,
And always keep a-hold of Nurse
For fear of finding something worse.