

**MY BROTHER JACK
AWARDS 2021**

**SHORT STORIES AND
POETRY**

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Primary Poetry

Judge's Report – Ozlem Baro

Although the number of poems varies each year, there were 59 entries in the 2021 Primary Poetry Category. This is the most I have ever had to judge, and such a task was made more difficult by the exceptional quality of all the poems. I wish I could give each one a prize for their effort and skill.

As in previous years there were plenty of poems that explored the children's surroundings, sensations and experiences. They wrote about seasons, nature, pets, school, books, friends and family. Some used simple language to express themselves while others played with words and tried out different ways of capturing a particular moment. Such poems are always a pleasure to read and I would encourage all children to write about what they know.

Before reading the poems, I wondered if there were going to be any about the pandemic and lockdown life. How would they differ from last year? I noticed that the novelty of being at home had worn away and the children weren't enjoying it as much. Their poems discussed the awfulness of the situation and made references to freedom but in an abstract way, as if it was a thing that might happen in the future rather than a certainty. There were references to fear and frustration which made me realise that the children were absorbing much more than I thought.

Over the last few years there have been more and more poems about big issues such as climate change, waste, consumption, suffering, crime and politics. I'm not sure if these are being taught in school or if the children are learning about them in other ways. Their increasing awareness is disturbing but unfortunately probably necessary as these issues pervade every aspect of our existence. Some poems have an air of futility while others call out for activism. It is these pockets of resistance that give me hope.

An unexpected and sad find in this year's entries were the poems about death and despair. I thought that the first one I read was an anomaly and then I came across a few more with similar themes. In these heartbreaking poems I could see that the children were overwhelmed and grieving, they were numb and tired. This generation of primary school children have been affected in profound ways that we might not fully understand for a while yet. I'd like to think that this creative outlet has helped in a small way.

Thank you to everyone that submitted poems this year!

First Place

The Green Eyed Monster by Heidi Bhujoharry

Although the subject matter of this poem is dark, it is beautifully written and the images stay with the reader until long afterwards. It starts off as an ordinary day but the short sentences tell a rhythmic story with increasing tension until the last shocking line. The writer has created unexpected layers of emotion.

Highly Commended

Raindrop by Ava van Oosten

Summertime by Evie Ellett

The Eagle by Hadassa Vogel

Primary Poetry – *First Prize*

The Green Eyed Monster

by Heidi Bhujoharry

I smell the English breakfast cooking next door. I hear the eggs sizzling.

I turn to my bland bowl of cornflakes. A glass of water on the side.

I feel the familiar heavy touch on my shoulder. The musty smell of fur.

I turn around to meet its cold, thankless eyes. Black pools of distrust.

It is the green eyed monster, and his talons bore into my skin.

I shake him off my back, and begin the walk to school. But he isn't far behind.

I pass the house of my best friend Grace. She has a new pair of sneakers.

I look down at my tattered shoes. My blistered toe pokes out the top.

I feel his heavy hand. I smell his pungent hide. His talons dig into my skin.

This time I cannot shake him off my back. My shoulder begins to bleed.

Primary Poetry – *Highly Commended*

Raindrop

by Ava van Oosten

A
drop
of sweet
water. Cool
and fresh liquid,
flying through the air.
Moist, cold, refreshing rain.
Makes people smile, makes people
frown. Brightens people's mood, ruins
people's days. Hydrates plants, quenches
my thirst. Bangs on the roof, splatters on the
window, plops in puddles. Grey, rainy days,
harsh cold winters. Pitter patter all night
long, sparkly road in the sun. A
calm raindrop.

Primary Poetry – *Highly Commended*

Summertime

by Evie Ellett

Every day, at nine o'clock, a yellow boat comes to the dock.

Soon enough, it pulls away, from the busy, dusty quay.

An old man comes out. He casts a line.

He sits and thinks of Summertime.

Of a yellow boat on bright blue seas

And palm trees, swaying in the breeze.

When the sun is down

He steers the boat back, to the centre part of town.

Next morning he's back, by the dock.

Every day, at nine o'clock.

Primary Poetry – *Highly Commended*

The Eagle

by Hadassa Vogel

King of all birds, it soars. It flies over oceans, its blue water thrashing and foaming filled with fish the size of buses, and colourful plants and rocks. Still the eagle flies on.

It arrived at a forest, tall trees looming, ponds with rainbow coloured fish, animals of all kinds, thrashing rivers, and flowers and plants that kill. Still the eagle flies on.

It found a grassland, plain and empty with a rough tree dotting the forlorn area here and there. Dangerous animals hiding behind every bush. The eagle flies on.

It flies through the night. The sky like a dark blanket sprinkled with bright stars. An owl hooted somewhere in the vast, open space down below. Still the eagle flies on.

As morning dawned, and skies turned pink by the fading darkness and the slowly rising, golden sun, the eagle arrived. It arrived in eagle's nest, in a big tree the eagle called home.