

## St Bede's Year 7 Poetry Anthology 2018

# Foreword

What makes a good poem is difficult to put into words. It isn't just subject matter or a pleasing arrangement of language; it isn't only an ease with internal or end-line rhyme; it cannot simply be an atmosphere conjured, a sound world created or a brilliant use of imagery, metaphor or form. In my experience, there is an alchemy that happens when elements of all of these things begin to coalesce. It will usually occur when I, as poet, am able to relinquish any sense of control or ownership I may believe I have over a poem and simply let it be whatever it needs to be. When I can allow myself to access this kind of conscious dream-state, then I have arrived at the place where the magic happens, the place where my better poems begin.

With all five of the winning poems, I had a sense that the poets had given their imaginations free rein, that they each had a sense of themselves as writers and an idea they were keen to communicate through poetry. Most importantly, I could feel the pleasure each had taken in writing these poems. In 1<sup>st</sup> place, Philippa Ayamba's stunning 'Dreams' succeeds in following a complex thought about our unconscious lives from inception to a startling and satisfying conclusion, almost as though the poem itself is merely a note-taking as the poet tracks her own enquiry. In 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Daniel Cafferkey's 'The Hardest Thing to Do' is a meticulously crafted, formally inventive and ultimately uplifting pep talk about sport. In 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Luke Cowan's 'Justice' is a very well thought through argument for the importance of justice, filtered through the metaphor of Batman! In 4<sup>th</sup> place, Joseph Andrews' 'Autumn Storm' is a quirky pastoral poem that repeatedly enjoys courting cliché and then turning it on its head.

In 5<sup>th</sup> place, Mia Jewitt's 'The Dark Is...' is both a fearless list poem and a breathless riff on the poet's associations to darkness.

The poems in this anthology are evidence of a thriving community of writers at St. Bede's. They are timely, exciting, challenging and comforting, and they come to us in a moment of history when there is no better time to consider a career in poetry. Almost two hundred years ago, in his essay *A Defense of Poetry*, Shelley proclaimed 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world'. We are. By our writing, we are holding word-framed mirrors up to society, and when what is reflected back is troubling, change can start to happen. There is little money to be made as a poet, and it isn't for the faint-hearted, but the versatility of the form and the utter joy of playing with language each day pays dividends. One of my favourite poets, George Szirtes, says 'Poetry is a vocation, a delight, a discipline, a kind of necessity, an ache, occasionally a terrible pain'. I would concur with his take on things.

Kaddy Benyon, April 2018

Cambridge

## **Kaddy Benyon - Biographical Details**

Kaddy Benyon's first collection, *Milk Fever* (Salt, 2012) won the Crashaw Prize. Her second collection, *The Tidal Wife* will also be published by Salt this July. She is a Granta New Poet and has been highly commended in the Forward Prizes. Her poems have been published in various literary journals and have most recently appeared in the #MeToo & Writing Motherhood anthologies.

## FIRST PLACE

### Dreams

Some say I am a succession of images  
Some say I am a window into unconscious  
Honestly, I do not know what I am

But this is what I do know...  
I take over people's minds while inert

I am a spark too bold to be tamed  
I will fill your head with fascination or horror

I change the way you think  
I am a game-changer  
I am the master  
You are the puppet

By Philippa Ayamba

I found this poem breath-taking, fluid and entirely mature and confident.

Kaddy Benyon

## The Hardest Thing To Do.....

The hardest thing to do is a backflip  
On a trampoline  
Trying not to land on your head  
Watching someone rotate 360 degrees backwards in the air  
Is annoying  
Especially when you try – jump, half rotate –  
And  
Fall

The easiest thing to do is high jump  
It is ridiculously easy at 1m  
Same at 1.05m  
But at 1.15m  
Or 1.25m  
When you were sorted into the Under 15's group by mistake  
You jump  
And get over  
The  
Bar  
Somehow

By Daniel Cafferkey

I love this poem; it's full of  
good advice and hope!

Kaddy Benyon

# Justice

Justice is such a beautiful word  
Every hero needs it

Batman fights to keep it  
Superman flies to bring it  
The Flash runs to find it  
But the Joker is against it

The Riddler talks around it  
The League would be good with it

Justice is a great subject  
Justice is an important word

By Luke Cowan

This poem is simply  
awesome!

Kaddy Benyon

## Autumn Storm

Autumn is angry  
Darkening every day  
Sending storms and rain  
Hurling our way

Thunder is his daunting dog  
Growling through the night  
The wind is his dog's howl  
Giving everyone a fright

When the dog is shaking  
The movement pulls off leaves  
And the lightning the dog creates  
Is the flash of his white, white teeth

By Joseph Andrews

A stunning poem! It feels  
perfect and complete in  
both its story and rhyme.

Kaddy Benyon

# The Dark Is...

A goddess of nightmares  
A sea of dreams  
A blanket of stars  
The one and only

A home of the glistening moon  
A place beyond happiness  
A mystery

The end of the universe  
A place of unspoken thoughts  
An unknown world  
A chilling breeze

The fear of light  
A final step  
A spine tingle  
A future grave

The dangerous  
A deadly killing machine  
A chilling blanket of death  
A misty fog

A place where horror seeps into every corner  
Above our reach  
On the edge  
A place of the underworld

The end, the beginning  
The place where fear drags you down and draws you in

One  
    Final  
        Breath...

By Mia Jewitt

Brilliant – to be read in one  
heady breath!

Kaddy Benyon

## My Feelings

My rage is like a crashing sea  
Battering boats in all directions  
Taking lives in a violent thrash of energy

My sorrow is like a frozen glacier  
Inching forward with no course in mind

My misery is like a lake  
Murky at the surface  
But seeping deep into the soul

My feelings are like an island  
Far from the comfort of others  
But incarcerated in rage and misery  
Never knowing if it will stop

By Conor Leedham

I love the sense of sorrow  
being like a “frozen  
glacier/inching forward with  
no course”.

Kaddy Benyon



## The Building Site

The building site  
Within this crater of destruction  
The machinery growls and spits  
The drills scream as they force their way into the ground

Hammers and nails yell in a wild frenzy  
As they are clashed together painfully  
An orchestra of bangs and crashes  
That plays in symphony of crashing metal

But then the lunch break begins  
And the building site is quiet at last

By Carmela Martinez

What a great sound world in  
this poem.

Kaddy Benyon

## A Scream, A Yell and A Hooray at the pitch

With a yell of a player  
A squelch of a muddy boot  
And a thud of a player landing on the floor

I hear the noise of a rugby pitch  
But after the blow of the whistle  
It's quiet

The steps of a cleaner  
A rumble from the line painter  
And the hugs of parents congratulating their children  
I hear the sound of a rugby pitch

By Tom McGuinness

Great scene-setting in this poem; I really felt as though I was there

Kaddy Benyon

## Snow.....

She arrives from the sky  
Trailing her cloak behind her

It starts softly  
Her temper low and little

But when she realises you have not expected or prepared for her  
She flares with anger

Her hair becomes a blur so fast you can not see  
Even the ice cowers away

Her place is set and she takes control  
Of the village in which she has set foot

Only there is one who can tame her  
Only one...  
She meets him in her gown  
Calm and beautiful

Twirling on her white point shoes  
Graceful as a dancer  
Soft confetti is thrown by her bridesmaids  
Dressed in skirts with garlands of snowdrops

Her hair is tied in a braid  
Her face is jewelled with ice  
She finishes the walk  
Flings her veil back

And melts in the gaze of spring...

By Caitlin Fleming

A lovely poem that reminds  
me very much of The Snow  
Queen.

Kaddy Benyon

## Rain Drops

The drops of rain knock the window  
With a hundred hands

But inside we are rooted to the sofa  
Rejoicing in the joyful laughter of the  
Fire's leaping flames

The sky is slashed in two as the lightning  
Points towards the finish line

But we are safe and still in the winners  
Enclosure already enjoying our reward

The wind laughs manically; showing off, it pirouettes  
And leaps to the trees who can only clap

But their performance is just the background music  
For our evening's entertainment as stories sprout wings  
And transport us to new lands

By Matty Cope

I really enjoyed the sense of inside and outside in this poem, and especially liked the line about the sky being slashed in two by lightning.

Kaddy Benyon

# The Seaside

Listen to the waves  
Crashing, colossal  
Furled foam swimming on to the  
sandy shore  
Rippling water on the horizon  
Listen to the waves

See the seagulls  
Screeching squarking  
Scanning the sand  
Eyes like a hawk  
See the seagulls

Feel the wind  
Blowing, breezing  
Rushing through your hair  
Making the waves rise, up, up, up  
Feel the wind

Smell the food  
Wafting, wonderful  
Fish and chips  
Seagulls swooping, eyeing it  
hungrily  
Smell the food

See the children  
Paddling, playing  
Building sandcastles  
Energetic bundles of sunshine  
See the children

Listen to the waves  
Small, subtle  
Moonlit water rippling silently  
No-one to play, all gone home  
Listen to the waves

By Natasha Burrows

A gentle poem that entirely  
evokes a day at the beach.

Kaddy Benyon

# Snow

Sometimes snow can be a she, a small child  
Strong, determined yet can be meek and mild  
Bounding along without a care  
Shining bright in the air

And when you wake up to find the world wrapped up  
A shiver of excitement crawls up your spine

Yet also snow can be a he, evil and cruel  
You find yourself invited to a duel  
He is on a mission and feels that YOU should be an addition  
His icy fingers touch your glass and you are hypnotised by his class

Then how her gloves touch the ground  
A beautiful sight, a silent sound  
She calls for all her friends to play  
But she will be gone in a few days

He lures you out, so sophisticated  
Yet he is under-estimated  
Slowly but surely, you've fallen in his trap  
He can see you now; you're on his map

By Maya Mills

A shape shifting poem that  
recalls a novel called the  
"snow child my Eowyn Ivey"  
Kaddy Benyon

## Connington

The warm scent of the corn  
Waltzing, dancing, filling the air  
The beginning of an autumn is born  
White birch sentinel care  
Silently watching

The harvest moon hangs low  
Silhouetting, shimmering, luminous in its soft light  
The humming machines sing a lullaby to the land below

Sleeping land. Good night

Silently waiting

As daylight arrives, the garden wakes

Sniffing, snuffling, welcoming the morn  
The curious muntjac quivers and quakes  
Fellow explorers at dawn  
Noisily playing

By Maya Mills

Some lovely lines in here –  
the image of the quivering  
muntjac is wonderful

Kaddy Benyon

# She Snow

She flows, pacing through the hills  
Under the dim rays of moonlight  
Dressing the ground with the  
Embrace of her sparkled touch  
Whispering her softness  
Glistening in the darkness

She flows, sheltering the green  
Leaves on the trees  
And covering the land with a  
Million white pearls  
Shielding the earth with her blanket  
Of shimmer

Breaking the winter silence  
Falling...falling...falling...

By Carolina Santos

A brilliant, icy poem – I  
especially liked the title.

Kaddy Benyon



# The Crow

As darkness engulfs the land  
A low, menacing scream echoes  
Like a wail for help  
It could only be a crow

Like a ghost it dives  
Its sharp beak impaling victims  
No wilderness is left alive  
Leaving no trace

It finishes with a slow, mocking laugh  
And pauses to rest  
Its eyes peeled for twigs  
To make its nest

And so the cycle goes on and on  
Until all of the creatures of the earth are gone  
Finally there is nothing left  
But an evolutionary masterpiece continuing its nest

By Matthew Stone

A confident poem with a  
killer last line.

Kaddy Benyon

## October

With the first leaves fall  
A last breath of life  
The leaves go from green to red  
And, in an instant...

They've dropped

By Andrea Reyes

A lovely little poem with a  
bold use of form

Kaddy Benyon

## July Morning at the Beach

Listen...

With a clicker and a clatter

Like the horns of two stags hitting against each other

The pebbles on the beach

Are being swept around like a cat

Playing with different balls of string

By Elia Madrigano

Wonderful – the sound of  
antlers clashing really is like  
pebbles crashing together!

Kaddy Benyon

# Winter Playtime

Listen...

With young children's laughter  
Shouting and squealing  
Like an out of tune choir

The children ran outside holding onto their woolly hats  
And play until their cheeks turn rosy red

By Florence Rogers

Another lovely wintery  
image

Kaddy Benyon

## The Beauty of My Garden

The golden sun rises behind the horizon  
As the wind whistles wordlessly  
The birds hum and sing, the blade of grass dances with its rhythm

The lonely flower blossoms to leave its youth as the time passes by  
It turns its head around to face the yellow sun  
Like lemon climbing up the peachy sky

The soft mud under my bare feet crumbles as I stand above it  
The swaying trees are like gentle waves on a clear blue ocean

The smell of freshly new cut grass tickles my scrunched nose  
While staring at the floating fluffy pillows on the sky

By Maria Fernandez

Gorgeous!

Kaddy Benyon

## Majorca

See the sea coming onto the sand  
As the tide comes up the ocean sky  
Helps you to see the stars

The sticky starfish on the sand  
The small crabs climb and climb again  
But over time and time again it gets closer and closer  
But it does not succeed

As one and one give up the small one does not  
And by the end of the day  
The smallest and most frugal crab succeeds

By Vincent Munnelly

A lovely poem – it reads like  
a treasured memory.

Kaddy Benyon

## Snow and Snow

Snow is occasionally a cruel one  
Creating the illusion of beauty with a delicate, spiralling rush

As soon as you look closer  
The vision melts to slush

Smiling a sinister evil grin  
He teases you with false promises of fun  
But retreats when you come

By Mia Kangayan

A sad, small poem that really  
packs a punch with feelings.

Kaddy Benyon

## Summer's Gone

He came like a thief in the night  
And stole the warmth and light

His footsteps are cold and leave a telling trail of fallen leaves  
That get dark and shimmer under the trees

He halts cars and stops planes and trains  
For his breath is stronger than anything man made

By Sam Bradley

A great poem with a  
particularly strong first line.

Kaddy Benyon



## No! Not More Rain

No! Not more rain splashing on the window pane  
In the main, I don't complain

The fact remains that the weather vane has become insane  
It's plain to see for you and me that it has to be end of play

By Luisa Krausova

A fabulous concrete poem!

Kaddy Benyon

# My Horse

His head on my shoulder  
His mane on my face  
The love I give him  
Returned by his grace

He allows me to pat him  
To scratch his neck  
To place the blanket on his back  
His favourite with the checks

And when he fancies a walk  
He butts me gently  
I get his rein  
And put it on him gently

By Matilda Hart

A lovely poem, full of  
affection and warmth.

Kaddy Benyon

# Passion

Passionate, passionate  
Strong and sharp  
White on black  
A beating heart

P's and T's like firing guns  
S's, strong as the rising sun

Said with an accent  
Spanish or French  
If another approaches  
Fists are clenched

Passionate, passionate  
Full of desire  
Deep and embedded  
A raging wild fire

By Alfie McCullough

This is a poem to be read  
aloud. I like its playful  
atmosphere and rhyme.

Kaddy Benyon

## My Feelings

My curiosity is like a garden  
Full of strange exotic flowers  
And deadly thorn bushes  
Disguised as innocent daffodils  
Blooming cherry blossoms displaying their beauty.

My fear is like a dark winding tunnel  
Leading into the unknown gloom  
Becoming narrower the further you advance  
Suffocating any sane thoughts  
Turning the world into a grotesque array of shadows

By Maria Guzla

I love the sense of sorrow.  
Great comparisons!  
Kaddy Benyon

## Our Christmas

The snow is a big sparkling white fluffy blanket  
The festive decorations are a carnival of crepe paper  
And flowing ribbons adorning the walls and ceiling

Baubles are ruby coloured distorting mirrors  
My reflection smiles back at me in the glow of the log fire

The morning church service an oasis, calm and meaning  
In an otherwise hectic day  
My excited and boisterous cousins arrive  
and assist on a game of hide and seek  
their shrill voices rising above the low murmur of the adults

Stacks of multi-coloured presents  
Skyscrapers of delight and anticipation

The turkey arrives on the dinner table: a mighty, Tudor monarch  
taking its throne among its courtiers  
The pigs in blankets an honour guard for his majesty  
The sprouts, the emerald crown jewels cushioned on a pillow of  
swede and gravy

My sister sleeps softly tired from a brilliant day  
A tiny kitten in the arms of her mother

By Miriam Richards

Absolutely beautiful – would  
also work as a piece of  
prose.

Kaddy Benyon

## A Week of Spring Weather

Monday it rained but it was gentle and calm  
It felt like a finger brushing against my arm

On Tuesday hail dropped down like bullets  
The grass was dark, muddy and brown

On Wednesday the wind hit me in the face  
The cool air travelled all over the place

On Thursday the sun was up in the sky  
And flowers bloomed, and the birds flew by

On Friday, heat marched across the land  
Children played on the fields with flowers in hand

On Saturday snow came back to haunt me  
So, I stayed inside and sipped my tea

On Sunday the snow started to settle  
The flora stunned me with colourful petals

Spring's weather can be soft and sly  
People can't wait until summer when it's dry

By Alistair Matthew

A very successful poem!

Kaddy Benyon

## Fog

I saw fog:  
A stooped figure  
A labyrinth of wrinkles  
Skin as pale as the moon

I saw fog:  
An ancient man  
A whispering voice  
Bottomless black eyes

I saw fog:  
Bony thin hands  
Long sharp nails  
Blocking out happiness

I saw fog:  
Wispy white hair  
Clothing his body  
Hiding his secrets

I saw fog:  
A single piece of cloth  
A single ancient wanderer  
A single shadow outside

I saw fog

By Agatha Bell

Great poem, the cumulative effect of the repeated line is very powerful.

Kaddy Benyon

# The Moon

A girl, lonely and grey  
She begins to pray  
Into each window she begs for attention  
All that she wants is a conversation

A lost silver coin  
Watching people pass  
Every night getting dropped by  
As it trawls the night skies

A tired security guard  
His job is so hard  
He waits until dawn  
As he loudly yawns

A mysterious night creature  
Unknown by the world  
Because as it rises up  
We fade away

By Nhetchi Osuagnu

Wonderful use of imagery in  
this poem.

Kaddy Benyon



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Alison Denton

June 2018