



# Schools' Poetry Anthology

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**Front cover by Freya Berry, age 10**  
**Pilgrim's Way Primary School, Teacher Simon Cullen**

**Back cover by Hanna Lee, age 9**  
**Bridge and Patricxbourne CEP School, Teacher Jo Smith**

# Schools' Poetry Anthology

The 2023 Canterbury Festival Schools' Poetry Competition was inspired by this year's National Literacy Word: Refuge.

The following schools entered over 400 poems: Ashford School, Barton Court Grammar School, Blean Primary School, Bridge & Patricbourne CEP School, Canterbury Academy, Dartford Grammar School for Girls, Gravesend Grammar School, Home School, Invicta Grammar School for Girls, Kent College, Pilgrims' Way Primary School, Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys, St Anselm's Catholic School, St Peter's Methodist Primary School, The Archbishop's School, Towers School and Sixth Form Centre, Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School, The Whitstable School and Wincheap Foundation Primary School.

A huge thank you to wonderful local poet - and this years' judge - Charlotte Cornell, for leading the free schools' poetry workshops, to legendary poet, John Hegley, for leading free workshops with the shortlisted poets and for his involvement in the Schools' Poetry Showcase, to our Public Engagement Manager, Amanda Sefton Hogg, for organising the competition and associated workshop programme, and to the Gulbenkian Arts Centre for hosting these events. A special thank you to Stagecoach for their continued generous sponsorship of the Canterbury Festival Schools' Poetry Competition.

Last, but by no means least, congratulations to all the young poets who entered their poems – and to their teachers for encouraging them. You are amazing!

Enjoy!

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## Schools' Poetry Shortlist

Eleanor Simmons  
Lara Stratton-Moore  
Elvy Kirk-Relph  
Sebastian Lister  
Teo Loizides  
Adeife Fajobi  
Emily Roberts  
Tom Purcell  
Hanna Lee  
Adam Altadmri  
Vaiga Rajeev  
Lawrence Harold Lee  
Eva Baggs  
Eva Dahl  
Manjosh Dhillon  
Harriet Robson-Wood  
Lilia Stone  
Rufus King  
Tilly Jefferies  
Shanaya Choudhury  
Shire Johnson  
Frankie F Foley  
Zemzemma Fakoor  
William Gulliford  
Gideon Adong-Emiantor  
Harrison Castelino  
Ayla Conteh-Gordon  
Alicia Adefarakan

## 5-8 Years Old Category

### ***Untitled***

**By Eleanor Simmons**

I am a tree my leaves are soft as blankets  
I am a tree my bark is bumpy as wrinkled skin  
I am a tree, I am home to birds,  
I am resilient because first I was a tiny seed  
but I grew and cracked a boulder as I was growing  
I am a tree.

Age 5, Blean Primary School, Teacher Gemma Cleary

***I am a Tree***  
**By Lara Stratton-Moore**

I am a tree,  
strong and tough to protect animals' homes from getting eaten away.

I am a tree,  
safe for animals to live in me.

I am a tree,  
mighty enough to stop floods.

I am a tree,  
my bark is rough like rock.

I am a tree,  
my roots are as wiggly as a snake.

I am a tree,  
strong and sturdy like a house.

Age 6, Blean Primary School, Teacher Kara Satterley

## ***Refuge***

**By Elvy Kirk-Relph**

I'm running away to refuge,  
as refugee from war,  
like a Tapir from the Rainforest,  
I don't want any more.

My life has been a disaster,  
and I want to retreat,  
to a home of freedom,  
with plenty to eat.

I want to find protection,  
a place of peace,  
not somewhere with danger,  
where imagination can decrease.

I want happiness,  
like before all the trouble,  
where I don't always have to be,  
"there on the double."

I don't want to be unsafe,  
I just need a sanctuary,  
where there is shelter,  
and enough security.

I wonder what it'll be like,  
in twenty years or more,  
will there then be safety,  
or just another war?

# ***Home a long time ago***

## **By Sebastian Lister**

Home a long time ago

In a damp forest with fog all over  
Even a swamp is my home  
In a warm swamp full of fish, a rock is ready to eat  
Even a swamp is my home  
I am a Spinosaurus I'll eat anything meat  
Even a swamp is my home

I'm as deadly as can be  
Even a swamp is my home  
I'll win every battle  
Even a swamp is my home  
You do not want to mess with me  
Even a swamp is my home

Pointy rocks that cut open logs on the rushing waters  
Even a swamp is my home  
No grass but tall leaves  
No people or buildings  
Even a swamp is my home

My home is perfect it can't be better  
Even a swamp is my home  
It's as damp as can be my home is built for me  
Even a swamp is my home  
I do not have to get my food because it swims to me  
Even a swamp is my home

I slice my food with my teeth when it comes by  
Even a swamp is my home  
My mum used to talk to me even when I was in my egg  
Even a swamp is my home  
My babies are fine with my mate  
Even a swamp is my home



## ***My Refuge, My Home***

### **By Teo Loizides**

Maybe your refuge is calm or cosy  
Your refuge will be different to others because everyone is different

Refuge is important and hurts when you leave it behind  
Either way your family is always there for you  
Family can be hard but deep inside they always love you  
Under your house roof it feels different to anywhere else  
Go to your refuge by yourself  
Either way your family will always protect you

Maybe your home makes you, you  
Your home will always be different to others because everyone is different

Home feels different to anywhere else  
Or maybe it's your room where you can be alone and calm down  
My home is my refuge where I feel safe and protected  
Either way your family is always there for you

Age 8, Blean Primary School, Teacher Mrs Coleman

## 9-11 Years Old Category

### ***Refuge*** **By Adeife Fajobi**

Footsteps came nearer  
Behind a bush lay a little  
Girl. Her blue sapphire eyes  
Turned to streams of fire.  
Words of discouragement were swept by the wind  
Hope remained in its place.

The sky was covered in a blanket of black,  
Stars shining with hope.  
The little girl looked up,  
She knew that others who became great had to risk their  
Lives for important things.  
She walked a long way,  
Her spirits were down.  
Discouragement built its way in  
every night  
she thought of her parents gone.

Age 9, Pilgrim's Way Primary School, Teacher Simon Cullen

## ***The Bronte Sisters' Refuge*** **By Emily Roberts**

Three imaginative girls,  
They were very, very smart,  
They were Charlotte, Emily and Anne,  
And they each had a huge heart.

These girls had a very hard life,  
So they decided to make a world,  
This world was called Gondal,  
And from where this world swirled!

This world had mountains as tall as Mount Everest,  
This was kind of in-ordinary,  
It was wonderous,  
It was extraordinary!

They took refuge in their stories,  
And two hundred years on,  
We take refuge in them now,  
And their stories live on!

After two hundred years,  
Their names are still famous,  
I was named after Emily,  
And that's because mum's names us!

## ***Finding refuge in a sweltering heatwave***

### **By Tom Purcell**

The sun is burning and blistering hot.  
I need to find a shady spot.

The crusty crab scuttles under a rock,  
Just as the sundial reaches one o'clock.

The busker plays next to the helter skelter.  
When the crowds go home, he hides in the shelter.

When the temperature rises and I see 'el sol',  
I choose the safety of my parasol.

When the sun is scorching and searing hot,  
How do you find an icy spot?

Age 9, Blean Primary School, Teacher Rosie Bransfield

## ***Refuge***

### **By Hanna Lee**

Deep in the darkness, there lived lions, with wings that glowed in the night,  
But back in the day, those lions were feared because,  
apparently all they wanted was to fight.

One day, after all these rumours, the Royal Army went to see the sight,  
But not even one of them thought to do what was right.

So then, one of them fired their blunderbuss,  
But then a lion spoke up and said, "Don't hurt us!"

Age 9, Bridge and Patricbourne CEP School, Teacher Jo Smith

# ***Seeking Refuge***

## **By Adam Altadmri**

In a safe place, worries fly away,  
A cosy spot where troubles don't stay.  
A peaceful place, away from the fuss,  
Where tired hearts find calmness and hush.

Inside this spot, chaos takes a pause,  
With love and comfort, like Santa Claus.  
A comfy corner to heal and restore,  
Where broken spirits find hope once more.

Within these walls, worries just fade,  
And hope shines bright, like a sunshade.  
A place to relax, with friends close by,  
Where dreams come alive, reaching the sky.

This place is great, like a dream come true,  
Where troubles vanish, go away, shooow.  
A peaceful refuge, simple and true,  
Where dreams take flight, making wishes come through.

This place is special, it feels just right,  
Where bad things disappear, out of sight.  
A peaceful home, so cozy and nice,  
Where hopes come close, like floating on ice.

So let's seek refuge when things get rough,  
In this home, where we find enough.  
Because in this simple place, we find relief,  
A space to heal, to find inner peace, so brief.

Age 9, St Peter's Methodist Primary, Teacher Robert Horan

***Pain***  
**By Vaiga Rajeev**

My ears are dying  
The sounds are fading  
Pain is stacking up  
I clutched onto my mum  
The guns shot up my ears  
I ducked underneath  
We had to sleep on leaves.  
Bombs were flying all above us.  
"Oh lord oh lord!"

My mum felt sober  
I hid under ground  
Depression came together  
Then the weather changed  
I don't like here the only thing I have is fear.  
Smoke swirled around houses  
Will we escape?

I sprinted to a shelter  
Which was home for me  
A soldier screaming with  
a broken knee  
I was taken to home  
Home at last Pain was forgotten

Age 10, Pilgrim's Way Primary School, Teacher Simon Cullen

## ***The Remarkable Red Kite Story*** **By Lawrence Harold Lee**

The red kite soars with wings like oars,  
His colossal forked tail,  
His hooked beak as sharp as a sword,

The game keepers shot the red kites,  
The hunters stuffed the red kites,  
Until they were nearly gone forever,

Now they are protected in the sanctuary of the chilterns,  
They swoop down like fighter jets,  
They cruise like a ship in the ocean,  
And their numbers soared.

Age 10, Blean Primary School, Teacher Melissa Davies

## **We Cross Over**

### **By Eva Baggs**

We cross over the sea  
To where we hope to be  
And live in harmony.  
So cross over with me,  
Over the stormy sea,  
To drink cups of English tea  
And live in harmony.  
We cross over the sea.

We cross over the land  
To where we hope to stand  
And live hand in hand  
Beside the old brass band.  
We'll work with the land  
And share it hand from hand.  
We cross over the land.

We cross over together,  
Pulling one by one the tiller.  
The pungent smell of weather,  
As we cross over together.

Age 11, Homeschooled, Clare Kemsley



## ***My Refuge***

### **By Eva Dahl**

If I'm running away and scared,  
I run to my safe place and stay at the places I love to be,  
When there is nowhere I can cover myself,  
I run to my safe home.

Then you remind me that,  
You're always here,  
I'll hide myself in you,  
My Refuge

When I'm panicking and frightened,  
With life's expectations and responsibilities,  
When I'm grieving and worried, and depressed,  
I'm breaking, breaking and breaking.

When I fail,  
A nice big great wave,  
Washes it out of me,  
I'll hide myself in you.

Age 11, Blean Primary School, Teacher Lynda Prior

## 12-15 Years Old Category

### ***Refugees in Their Own Country*** **By Manjosh Dhillon**

They ran from the ones who was supposed to protect them  
Shot in the streets like wild dogs  
Beaten, shot or killed  
The pain of the genocide spreads  
No matter who, the strongest or weakest  
All shook with trauma  
Called impossible to respect  
Killed by the ones who were in charge  
The water of the lakes nearby painted red  
Being forced to hide or die  
Forced to run from their homes to the other side  
In search of one man  
Bhindranwale  
Some see him as a freedom fighter but some see him as a terrorist  
Ones who were safe forced to hide at night or risk being killed  
The tragedy follows the victims mentally and some physically  
Refugees in their own country leaving one state to another  
Seeking asylum in their own country in a desperate reach for safety  
A reality for many Sikhs in India

Age 12, Gravesend Grammar School,  
Teacher Ellen Colborne-Lilley

**Lost**  
**By Harriet Robson-Wood**

Lost in the shelters,  
Nowhere to go...

Sirens Screaming.

Pungent gunpowder overwhelming the air,  
Damp sandbags suffusing,  
Lingering gas passing backwards and forwards,  
The rustic smell whiffs past.

My mouth dries up with crumbs,  
The taste of dry biscuits lurks in my mouth,  
Cold bitter tea lays on my tongue  
And the bunker drips from the inside.

The ground vibrates then crumbles...  
Silence.  
I shake in fear,  
My eyes squint.

I take a step...  
Now is my chance to run and take my place  
On the boat to freedom.

The night air is cold.  
Pushing and shoving  
I get lost.  
Nervous thoughts pound in my head,  
I stay low  
Whilst the darkness haunts me I find my seat.

Age 13, Kent College, Teacher Tracy Watton

## ***Untitled***

### **Lilia Stone**

The bodies of nearly dead children began washing upon the shore,  
And the townsfolk planned to house them in the places marked for the poor,  
But the King called them different, infectious to society without a doubt  
So, he decided to build a wall to keep the children out.

Inside the wall the people feared the bangs of innocent hands on the door,  
So, they decided to raise the wall brick by brick, ignoring the anguished cries  
of the people they saw,  
Yet no matter how tall it got, they were still disturbed by the many screams  
and foreign voices,  
So, their idea was to throw the loudest parties to drown out the sound of other  
people's poor choices.

Outside the wall, the strangers spilled from rugged rafts of broken dreams,  
And stuck painted across their scared eyes were the horrific horrors they had  
seen.

Outside the wall, people tried to live finding hope in the sun, rocks and sand,  
As people searched for safe passage to this strange and hostile land.

However, inside the wall, the sun was shunned, there was not a tree, a plant or  
a flower,  
And all the time, the wall just grew and grew, until it became a daunting tower.  
So, without the sun shining down, the people shrunk and turned pale, old and  
sick,  
And yet still they thought to build on their tower brick by heavy brick.

Outside the wall, the people turned the shore into a street  
And they tried as hard and as much as possible to find their shattered feet.  
Outside the wall, street became street as more and more arrived by raft,  
And slowly people traded in goods and bads and remembered how to laugh,

But at their sleep were chemical clouds choking their will to survive,  
And the faces of the babies they couldn't save and their guilt at being alive.  
Outside the people lived and died by the light of the beaming sun,  
And those who lived would never forget the town from which they had come,

For although their makeshift seaside camp offered safety from the drones,  
They dreamt of the day that peace was won, the day they could just go home.  
Inside the tower, the people lived and died by the shadow of the wall,  
But those who lived couldn't even remember why it was built at all,

And so, they went to the ruined palace in the centre of the ruined town,  
But the King was now dead, and they were too weak to tear the tower down.

Age 13, Towers School and Sixth Form Centre,  
Teacher Jenny Kendal

### ***The Jews, according to the world*** **By Rufus King**

The Jewish refuge doesn't exist.  
We're too rich,  
Or we deserve to be poor,  
With large, hook noses,  
And beady eyes,  
All miserable Fagins,  
Stealing and making our fortune,  
The Jew moves his hands when he talks,  
The Lying Jewish Lawyer,  
With thin, spindly hands penning the defence of a criminal,  
And apparently we're woke if we make a sound,  
As people stop at nothing to drive us further  
underground.

Age 13, Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys,  
Teacher Janine Creaney

# ***Refuge***

## **By Tilly Jefferies**

Refuge is a fickle thing.  
A tent sheltering you from the battering wind,  
And the hard droplets of rain  
You sit inside wondering when it would rip  
And you would be out in the cold again

Refuge is a dangerous thing.  
A helping hand can lead to a blood soaked one  
A shoulder to cry on won't always be there  
When they come in the night,  
Searching.

Refuge is something hard for many to find  
Closed doors and slammed shutters  
Grief stricken faces when the light switches off.  
They could never take you in  
For who would protect them?

But refuge is a beautiful thing  
The first sprouting flowers after winter  
Persevering through the layers of snow  
To reach the light above.

Refuge is a kind thing  
The light at the end of the incredible long tunnel  
Every step inching towards it  
And a stranger pulling you forward

Age 14, Invicta Grammar School, Teacher Hannah Sayer

# **A Mother**

## **By Shanaya Choudhury**

Most mothers  
when they have a child  
express their love for the child  
scold them only when needed  
are sweet and accept the child for who they are  
are patient and take time to understand their child  
are open to talk and will change topics for their child  
accept all their shortcomings and apologise to the child  
will try her best to better herself for herself and the child  
will always take advice from others, including her child  
will always listen to and hear out her child

...and is her child's refuge from the world.

But some mothers  
when they have a child  
rarely express their love for the child  
constantly scold and berate their child  
are harsh and will not forgive their child for their "flaws"  
are stubborn and will not take the time to understand the child  
refuse to talk things through in favour of staying on topic and not  
"ruining the mood"  
will never accept any wrongdoing on their part, as they are doing everything  
right  
worsen with each passing day with no care for how the child feels,  
only how they feel  
will never take advice fully to heart, especially from her kid  
will never hear out the child,  
as there are always more urgent matters at hand

...and the world is the child's refuge from her.

Age 14, Dartford Grammar School for Girls,  
Teacher Wendy Mackenzie

## ***Runners high***

**By Shire Johnson**

My mind is often intoxicated;  
Overflowing with assignments,  
Corrupted by exam stress,  
Pounding from keeping up with social expectations –  
So to find peace within my mind, I run.

I run until my mind is clear.  
Until all my energy is focused on reaching the finish line  
Until my breathing is  
rhythmic and controlled.  
Until it feels like my legs are made of glass.  
Until it's just me and the path ahead.

I crave that 'runners high'.  
I am addicted to the dopamine,  
released when I run that little bit quicker.  
I Strive for the serotonin,  
released when I run that little bit further.  
The endorphins are euphoric  
And I couldn't be happier.

I am proud when I power through the struggle,  
overwhelmed with success knowing I pushed my limits,  
Satisfied when I break a new mental barrier

So to escape from reality,  
I put on my running shoes,

Tie up my hair  
And let the world disappear,  
As I run for refuge.



***Haven***  
**By Frankie F Foley**

You are there, in that place  
The place where you are drawn to  
All that surrounds you  
Sky of brilliant blue above  
Grass of genial green below  
Song of bird through the air

This will take you from  
The all too comfortable reality  
And shade you from deceit and despair  
Birthing you into light and love  
You will forget  
And you will make anew

Creating and blessing  
Cherishing and loving  
Making your home  
Your Haven

Age 15, The Whitstable School, Teacher Kara Smith

***Even If It's For Just a Moment,  
Let Me Take Refuge in You***  
**By Zemzemma Fakoor**

"Refuge" "What is to refuge?" A question you'd ask,  
I could tell you the answer, though it took a while to grasp.

I once met a boy with hopeful brown eyes,  
Too pure for this world, so keen yet fragile.  
He had left all he'd owned, for the "better" they said,  
But in a foreign world he'd never known, he found himself quite unprepared.

His journey was tough, of tears and much woe,  
But it didn't ready him for what he was to undergo.  
A country so large, a city of ambition,  
But it felt like a lie, he faced opposition.

An alien, a stranger, an external intrusion,  
He suffered all alone in silent seclusion.  
He wanted some comfort, some consolidation,  
But faced an ostracising hatred, and self-damnation.

I once met a boy with despairing brown eyes,  
Although there was hope, the lights there had died.  
He slowly grew tired of the way things had happened,  
But still persevered, in a way I just could not fathom.

The repetition he felt, it began to bore him,  
From moving around, and never quite staying.  
He saw it all from cities to hills,  
But his patience wore out, along with the years.

I once met a boy with hopeless brown eyes,  
The lights had shut out, he looked so tired.

His eyes that had wondered so innocently,  
Had lost all their hope and now grievously,  
His heart crept with a bitter pain,  
The familiar hurt of committing again.

Committing for it to be all in vain,  
Committing and leaving, to be lonely once again,  
Detached he grew, away from it all,  
So painlessly, he could move away once more.

And then one day, he came up to me,  
He looked and asked so pitifully,  
"Even if it's just for a moment, let me take refuge in you,"  
"Let me hide in arms, let me take some cover, as I already do,"

To refuge is to struggle, the desperacy to live,  
For simply existing will never suffice.  
The boy knew he'd leave, but took that moment to breathe,  
For although he'd left war, he had never found peace.

Age 15, Tunbridge Wells Girls Grammar School, Kane Tugby

## 16-18 Years Old Category

### ***An Ode to Refuge*** **By William Gulliford**

Through treacherous crags and eddies there threads  
A haggard vessel, with fragmented hull,  
Piercing onward over livid wave heads,  
Filling with murky brine, slate grey and dull.  
Mighty Triton gives the skiff no quarter;  
The squall and swell toss her as a plaything,  
Sanctuary is kept well beyond reach,  
Shattered driftwood lies exposed to slaughter,  
And the blustering gale remains scathing,  
As white horses pound and widen the breach.

Through nebulous gloom emerges faint hope,  
Foreboding asylum; a pallid cliff,  
With sheer incline, and no semblance of slope,  
Looming like some ivory monolith.  
Surely this is safe haven from the storm,  
A place to rest weary bones and to grieve  
For the many lost to exposure and cold;

Yet see this hulking alabaster form,  
It seems so hostile to any reprieve,  
Like some malevolent titan of old.  
Against all odds, a haggard vessel lands,  
On a beach of steep white cliffs and harsh stones.  
Safety lies now in bureaucratic hands,  
Sterile tedium and regretful moans.  
Hemmed in by razor wire and cruel concrete,  
Carrying dreams of a route to escape,  
From detention in a Kentish airport;  
Learn language, integrate, remain discrete,  
Working through so many miles of red tape,  
Still denied the refuge for which they fought.

Age 17, Simon Langton Grammar Schools for Boys,  
Teacher Janine Creaney

# ***Fear of The Victim***

## **By Gideon Adong-Emiantor**

There's an invasion in our home  
We are fearful of him  
He is labelled as a runner, criminal and different  
We a fearful of him  
He is a Stealer without stealing  
A Thief without thieving  
We are fearful of him  
Savaging and reckless however has the skill of patience  
We are fearful of him  
A man who has never taken is here to take A man ready to wreak all benefits  
out of our home but is independent  
We are fearful of him  
A man with all faults but none to be seen

We a fearful of him  
Cross the road without no sense of threat  
Deterred from prospering with stops and searches  
We are fearful of him  
He dresses different, smells different, looks different  
We a fearful of him  
A murderer without murdering  
Doubt begins to crack into his image  
He is fearful of him  
He sees a threat in the reflection  
Sees no way out so neglects elections  
Taught to haunt by those who haunt him  
And achieve high standards for those behind him  
He is fearful of him  
Visions of success are blurred by the media  
School becomes harder and street life becomes easier  
He is fearful of him  
A refuge to struggle only to face another kind of struggle  
So, what is he?  
A refugee with no safety  
All they know is fear  
He is fearful of him.

# ***The Key to Refuge***

## **By Harrison Castelino**

A shoulder to cry on,  
A hand to hold,  
A safe place we seek,  
But most of the time, it cannot be found,  
Behold, the falsehood of safety.

Stuck in my mind's eye,  
Just letting my dreams fly by,  
Goals of stones, built sky high,  
When someone asks, I say I'm doing just fine.  
Delusional daydreams of youth gone by,  
I must be blind in my own mind.  
Internal thoughts on rewind.

They say I'm young, that life is meant to be fun.  
But sometimes it can feel like none,  
Stuck in a cage of my own creation,  
afraid to speak, too hard to speak,  
too hard to find the words.  
In application or in a phrase,  
We hide behind truth made of lies.  
We define and redesign.  
I just roll with life's daily grind.  
No refuge from the mind.

Days blurring into one.  
Does this mean we can have fun?  
Application, graduation

One bad day doesn't mean I'm done,  
Hope. A refuge, a key in my hand,  
A key that can numb.

The loops of life,  
sometime effort can be my demise.  
Goals of stone.  
The weight of life on my mind.  
Refuge, not in my mind to find.  
Life drags you down,  
Into the ground.  
No refuge to be found.

Stuck in a cage of my own creation.  
Bounded.  
Afraid to speak, too hard to speak,  
We just want to be free from our responsibilities.

The things that hold us to this ground,  
We dream too big or dream too small,  
A cage of my creation is in my own imagination.

Behold, a falsehood of safety,  
But most of the time, Hope  
Cannot be found,  
Seeking a safe place.

A hand to hold,  
A shoulder to cry on,  
A safe place we seek,  
Can refuge be found?

Age 17, St Anselm's Catholic School, Teacher Lucy McGrath

***Save Me (a poem seeking refuge)***  
**By Ayla Conteh-Gordon**

I try being good  
The perfect daughter for you  
I am not enough

I try normalness  
I will do what is correct  
I am still myself

Will you love me still  
If she brings me happiness  
Save me from feeling

Age 17, Dartford Grammar School for Girls,  
Teacher Wendy Mackenzie

**Refuge**  
***By Alicia Adefarakan***

My daughter aged six still can't sleep alone  
She screams at the aloof sheet of darkness  
And runs to my room like a mad woman.

Tonight, however, is very different,  
She has a friend.

A miniature light, like a gift from God  
Stays close to her bed with a wooden rod  
A teacher with such lessons guides her way  
An Angel with purpose keeps her at bay

I also lay next to and hold her too

Because from what I've heard her father has been trying to be her  
"bestest friend "and has taken the initiative to protect every inch of her body

Like I said, tonight is very different  
This doesn't have to be generational  
We're driving. Just driving, nothing else.

Age 17, Barton Court Grammar School,



## Special Mentions

**Ashford School – Teacher** – Rachel Smith

Lois Pullen

**Barton Court Grammar School – Teacher** Alice Blyth

Eva Woodin

**Blean Primary School**

William Jenner - Teacher Melisa Davies

Ava Petrovici - Melisa Davies

Emma Ortega-Varela – Dawn Irons

Nicole Lawrence – Dawn Irons

Theo McCaffrey – Lynda Prior

**Dartford Grammar School for Girls – Teacher** Wendy Mackenzie

Natalie Ajagbawa

Shaince Choudhury

Lidia Nou

Emily Sarr-Butt - Melisa Davies

**Invicta Grammar School – Teacher** Hannah Sayer

Reshni Sivathevan

Alfreda Abodunrin

**Kent College – Teacher** Tracy Watton

Oscar Irwin

Elspeth Dunlop

**Pilgrim's Way Primary School – Teacher** Simon Cullen

Freya Berry

Henry Andrews

Steven Li

**Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys – Teacher** Janine Creaney

Osten Fox-Percy

**St Anselm's Catholic School – Teacher** Lucy McGrath

Sheena Ndduga

**St Peter's Methodist Primary School – Teacher** Robert Horan  
Stella Machiades

**Tunbridge Girls Grammar School – Teacher** Kane Tugby  
Ella Stevenson  
Robyn Ryder  
Isabella Ubly

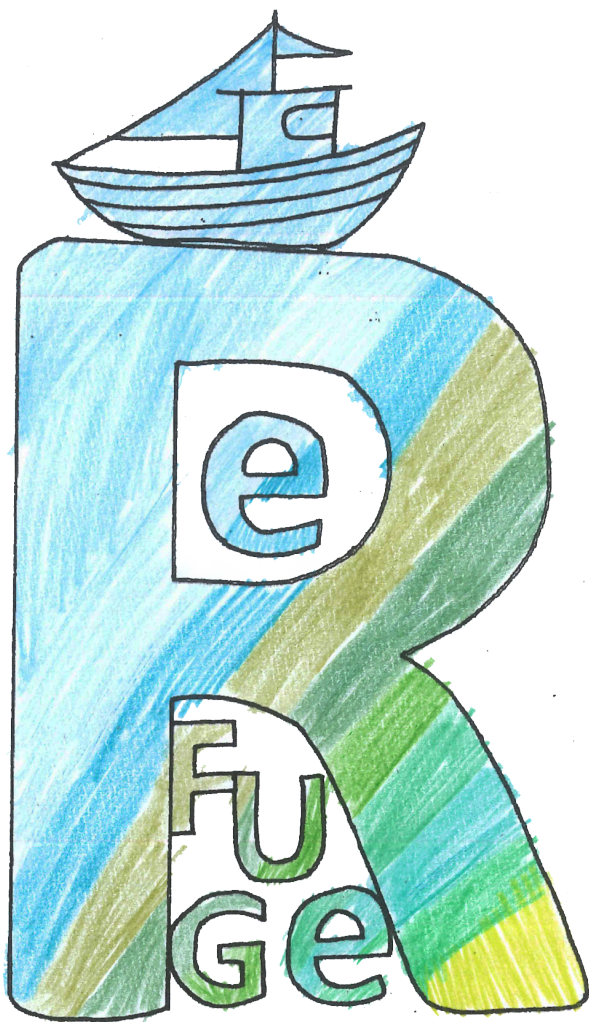
**The Whitstable School – Teacher** Kara Smith  
Matilda Possee  
Olivia Pimbley  
Nancy Keep

**Wincheap Foundation Primary – Teacher** Emma Lester  
Caitlin McDonnell

Thank you to all of the poets who entered this year's competition.

Apologies in advance for any misspelling or misinterpretation of words. Many of these poems are translated from handwriting, which we try to make as accurate as possible. We will open next year's competition in spring 2024. Teachers who would like to receive more information can contact [amandaseftonhogg@canterburyfestival.co.uk](mailto:amandaseftonhogg@canterburyfestival.co.uk)

For more information about our year-round activities and events, visit [canterburyfestival.co.uk](http://canterburyfestival.co.uk)



# Schools' Poetry Anthology

National Poetry Day Thursday 5 October 2023  
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