



Solo Verse U13 Girls and Solo Verse U13Boys ----
-Born 2012

ONLY ONE POEM TO BE PERFORMED

Ceasefire by *Michael Longley*

I
Put in mind of his own father and moved to tears
Achilles took him by the hand and pushed the old
king
Gently away, but Priam curled up at his feet and
Wept with him until their sadness filled the building.
II
Taking Hector's corpse into his own hands
Achilles Made sure it was washed and, for the old
king's sake,
Laid out in uniform, ready for Priam to carry
Wrapped like a present home to Troy at daybreak.
III
When they had eaten together, it pleased them both
To stare at each other's beauty as lovers might,
Achilles built like a god, Priam good-looking still
And full of conversation, who earlier had sighed:
IV
'I get down on my knees and do what must be done
And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son.'

Holding Hands by *Michelle Yeo*

At play, for fun
Here are kids just holding hands:
A natural handhold
That says 'I like you;'
Hands creamed with ice cream
Know only fun not stickiness.
In love, in despair,
Here behold the holding of hands:
A tender embrace,
Fingers locked in a twine;
A comforting squeeze of hands
That spells, 'I understand.'
At birth, at death,
Here we witness the holding of hands:
A baby's fingers
Clasping a mother's finger;
A hand all limp and lifeless
Lovingly held to a mourning cheek.
Holding hands is the language of man,
So profound yet simple;
Always touching, infinitely soothing,
Whatever life's precious moment:
At play, for fun
In love, in despair,
At birth, at death,
And all else in between.



**Solo Verse U14 Girls and Solo Verse U14Boys ----
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December Moon *by May Sarton*

Before going to bed
After a fall of snow
I look out on the field
Shining there in the moonlight
So calm, untouched and white
Snow silence fills my head
After I leave the window

Hours later near dawn
When I look out again
The whole landscape has changed
The perfect surface gone
Criss-crossed and written on
Where the wild creatures ranged
While the moon rose and shone

Why did my dog not bark?
Why did I hear no sound
There on the snow-locked ground
In the tumultuous dark?

How much can come, how much can go
When the December moon is bright,
What worlds of play we'll never know
Sleeping away the cold white night
After a fall of snow

Field Of Vision By Seamus Heaney

I remember this woman who sat for years
in a wheelchair, looking straight ahead
Out the window at sycamore trees unleafing
And leafing at the far end of the lane.

Straight out past the TV in the corner,
The stunted, agitated hawthorn bush,
The same small calves with their backs to wind and
rain,
The same acre of ragwort, the same mountain.

She was steadfast as the big window itself.
Her brow was clear as the-chrome bits of the chair.
She never lamented once and she never
Carried a spare ounce of emotional weight.

Face to face with her was an education
Of the sort you got across a well-braced gate –
One of those lean, clean, iron, roadside ones
Between two whitewashed pillars, where you could
see

Deeper into the country than you expected
And discovered that the field behind the hedge
Grew more distinctly strange as you kept standing
Focused and drawn in by what barred the way.



Solo Verse U15 -----Born 2010

ONLY ONE POEM TO BE PERFORMED

Because I could not stop for Death

by Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school, where children strove
At recess, in the ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us;
The dews grew quivering and chill,
For only gossamer my gown,
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Philomena's Revenge

by Rita Ann Higgins

As a teenager
she was like any other,
boys, the craic,
smoking down the backs.

Later there was talk
she broke things,
furniture and glass,
her mother's heart.

'Mad at the world,'
the old women nod,
round each other's faces.

But it was more
than that
and for less
she was punished.

That weekend
she didn't leave a cup alone
every chair hit the wall,
Philomena's revenge.

Soon after
she was shifted
and given the shocks.

Round each other's faces
the old women nod
'Treatment, treatment
they've given her the treatment.'

These days
she gets on with the furniture,
wears someone else's walk,
sees visions in glass.

She's good too
for getting the messages;
small things, bread and milk
sometimes the paper,

and closing the gate
after her father drives out,
she waits for his signal
he always shouts twice,

'Get the gate Philo,
get the gate, girl.

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2025



Solo Verse U16 -----Born 2009

ONLY ONE POEM TO BE PERFORMED

To My Mother *by Seamus Heaney*

Most near, most dear, most loved and most far,

Under the window where I often found her
Sitting as huge as Asia, seismic with laughter,
Gin and chicken helpless in her Irish hand,

Irresistible as Rabelais , but most tender for
The lame dogs and hurt birds that surround her,--
She is a procession no one can follow after
But be like a little dog following a brass band.

She will not glance up at the bomber, or condescend
To drop her gin and scuttle to a cellar,
But lean on the mahogany table like a mountain
Whom only fate can move, and so I send

Oh all my faith, and all my love to tell her
That she will move from mourning into morning

Poem from a Three year old

By Brendan Kennelly

And will the flowers die?

And will the people die?

And every day do you grow old, do I
grow old, no I'm not old, do
flowers grow old?

Old things – do you throw them out?

Do you throw old people out?

And how you know a flower that's old?

The petals fall, the petals fall from flowers,
and do the petals fall from people too,
every day more petals fall until the
floor where I would like to play I
want to play is covered with old
flowers and people all the same
together lying there with petals fallen
on the dirty floor I want to play
the floor you come and sweep
with the huge broom.

The dirt you sweep, what happens that,
what happens all the dirt you sweep
from flowers and people, what
happens all the dirt? Is all the
dirt what's left of flowers and
people, all the dirt there in a
heap under the huge broom that
sweeps everything away?

Why you work so hard, why brush
and sweep to make a heap of dirt?
And who will bring new flowers?
And who will bring new people? Who will
bring new flowers to put in water
where no petals fall on to the
floor where I would like to
play? Who will bring new flowers
that will not hang their heads
like tired old people wanting sleep?
Who will bring new flowers that
do not split and shrivel every
day? And if we have new flowers,
will we have new people too to
keep the flowers alive and give
them water?

And will the new young flowers die?

And will the new young people die?

And why?

FEILE LUIMNIGH 2025



Solo Verse U18 -----Born 2008 & 2007

ONLY ONE POEM TO BE PERFORMED

U/18 POEM 1

My Fathers Hands That Winter

By Paula Meehan

That year there was cold like no other winter.
Every morning
going out was a gymnastic affair.

Even the steps inside
the house, nearly to the door
of our flat on the third floor were iced

over. Mrs Mac broke a leg
and Harry Styx (for the first time in his life he said)
found it much too hard to beg.

We became technicians of the slide
and forward propulsion,
of throwing your body, arms wide

open, out into some zone of contract
with the air, where coming to a stop
ever ever again was taken on trust.

The city looked good enough to eat
and weathervane was a new word
I picked up from a storybook. Our feet

were always wet and numb and blue.

It's why I remember my father's hands so clearly.
He was out of work. It must have been through

desperation on the cusp of Christmas that he took
a job in Carlton's as a turkey plucker.
For buttons, he said, and I saw a frock

like the girl's in the storybook, all fuddy duddy
in ribbons and flounces with black patent shoes.
His hands were swollen, scratched raw and bloody

from the sharp ends of feather, of sinew,
of tendon, from the fourteen-hour day,
from the bite of the boss. At the window

I'd watch each morning, impatient for dawn
and ice engineering. He'd boil up
a big pot of eggs, school lunch for us children.
He'd button down the younger ones' coats
gingerly, and tie up the laces of their shoes
and tuck in our scarves at our delicate throats

- an egg in each pocket to keep us warm,
old socks on our hands to guard against chilblains.
A kiss on his forehead to keep him from harm.

The city must have thawed at last

U/18 POEM 2

When Great Trees Fall

By Maya Angelou

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,

dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold
caves.

And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.