

National Poetry Day – Theme:

Refuge



R George

10/5/23

National Poetry Day

For Refuge

by

Pippa Little

Use no names. Roads
have been whited out,
redacted. Hone your oldest sense.
Learn the wind,
memorise where it goes
bearing your odours. The truck-stops
are roofless churches.
Comma-birds on power lines
swollen by rain
fall away.
Comfort yourself,
there will be stars in the dark
travelling towards you,
smaller and smaller.

Trust the earth
with your bandaged feet,
the pockets sewn shut by your mother.
Carry only such things
as snowflakes, eyelashes,
for the future may not make you out.



Pippa Little was born in Tanzania, raised in Scotland and now lives in Northumberland.

Author's note:

I wrote this poem after watching the news and reading about refugees, both those of today and those from earlier wars in other countries. I wondered how it might feel to arrive somewhere completely unknown in such circumstances. The disjuncture between the official story of the masses which appears timeless, unchanging, and individuals' urgent experiences of loss and displacement, haunted me.

A Portable Paradise

by

Roger Robinson

And if I speak of Paradise,
then I'm speaking of my grandmother
who told me to carry it always
on my person, concealed, so
no one else would know but me.
That way they can't steal it, she'd say.
And if life puts you under pressure,
trace its ridges in your pocket,
smell its piney scent on your handkerchief,
hum its anthem under your breath.
And if your stresses are sustained and daily,
get yourself to an empty room – be it hotel,
hostel or hovel – find a lamp
and empty your paradise onto a desk:
your white sands, green hills and fresh fish.
Shine the lamp on it like the fresh hope
of morning, and keep staring at it till you sleep.

About the author



Roger is a writer and educator who has taught and performed worldwide and is an experienced workshop leader and lecturer on poetry. He was chosen by Decibel as one of 50 writers who have influenced the black-British writing canon. He received commissions from The National Trust, London Open House, BBC, The National Portrait Gallery, V&A, INIVA, MK Gallery and Theatre Royal Stratford East where he also was associate artist. He is an

alumni of The Complete Works.

Beneath the Blush-violet Sky

by

Angus Wong (OPGS 10X)

Beneath the bluish-violet sky of a British night, I couldn't help but think of the scene of my first step on the English land.

The place that I have lived in since I was born, I shall leave. I miss that place and the people I love. It feels rather outrageous to see my motherland become a "habitat" for maniacs and criminals, seeing ridiculously news every day from thousands of miles away.

Night, ah yes, night, a moment for me to communicate with myself. Olive taught me to treasure moments with the people I love, sharing the stories of her father-in-law. Have I left without any regret? Have I tried my best spending time with the people I care? I began to think. "Yes, perhaps." "Yes." "Yes."

"This place is no longer safe for people to live." "Mmm, perhaps." Two voices in my head discussing. "Anyway, it doesn't really matter to me, to be honest," I mumbled. I felt sorry for my homeland, that it and its people shall not suffer this. "But what can I do?"

"Hello, I'm Angus. I'm from Hong Kong." This is my identity, and no one shall take that away from me.

I love our language, I love our culture, I love our place...

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.



About the author

Julia Catherine Donaldson is an English writer and playwright, and the 2011–2013 Children's Laureate. She is best known for her popular rhyming stories for children, especially those illustrated by Axel Scheffler, which include *The Gruffalo*, *Room on the Broom* and *Stick Man*.

Our Shared Pride and Joy

By

Favour Ochonma (OPGS 10P)

In Nigeria's embrace, a tapestry unfolds,
A land of vibrant beauty, stories yet untold.
From the savannah's golden plains to the Niger's winding flow,
A tapestry of culture and history begins to glow.

Beneath the African sun, where warmth and colors blend,
Nigeria's beauty shines, from start to endless end.
In the bustling Lagos, where life is a rhythmic dance,
To the tranquil Umuahia, where time takes a slower chance.

The people, diverse and proud, in unity they stand,
A nation's heart beats strong, across the sprawling land.
With Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa voices that sing,
A chorus of traditions, to the world they bring.

From the ancient Benin City, where bronze tales take flight,
To the Zuma Rock's majesty, a grand and mighty sight.
Abeokuta's rocky wonders, standing tall and free,
Nature's artistry and history's decree.

In marketplaces alive with spices in the air,
Flavors blend harmoniously, a culinary affair.
Jollof rice and suya, taste sensations rare,
Nigeria's cuisine, a feast beyond compare.

The attire, vibrant hues in patterns that convey,
The stories of the past and hopes for a new day.
From Gele to Agbada, in every stitch and bead,
A tapestry of fashion, for all the world to heed.

And as the night descends with drums and songs that soar,
The heartbeat of Nigeria echoes evermore.
From highlife's melodies to the Afrobeat's sway,
The music of Nigeria, a gift that lights the way.

In the heart of Africa, where cultures intertwine,
Nigeria's beauty and spirit forever shine.
A nation rich in history, diversity, and grace,
In Nigeria's embrace, we find a sacred place.

Though the United Kingdom is my birthplace I know my heart belongs,
Oceans away in the blessed motherland of food and fashion and songs.
Painted drums resound the pitter-patter of hands carried in stride,
Then my heartbeat resonates, and I know my soul with Nigeria is tied.

Sickeningly Beautiful World

By

Shayla Sutton (OPGS -Year 12JLS)

How can a piece of music heal,
yet evoke anguish of melancholy memories which our etiquette must
conceal?

As mankind steals mammals spawn,
only then we realise, nature's melody has gone.

How comes Women are the source of life and a nurturing superior,
yet their musical voices are deemed inferior?

Society says money makes the world go round as a life conclusion,
yet greed and materialism is a sinful delusion.

How can we have freedom of speech,
if it's consistently exploited and we're silenced to teach?

How can we become our own healers and create a cure,
if we are the illness ourselves and forever impure?

Even so, how can we experience ecstasy, love and bless,
without being dissatisfied with the balanced feelings of distress?

Loving hate, dying life, passionate aggression.

The world needs both good and bad to balance.
And when you take a further step back and glance-

Life is simply a piece of music on a piano:
The black keys; all the misfortunes and heartbreaks,
The white keys; all the optimism which fulfils us.
In the end, we need both notes to play the music.

And that is how the world is the most beautiful place in a sickeningly,
twisted way...