

SECOND LIGHT POETRY COMPETITION WINNERS

My task this summer was made pleurably difficult by the high standard of entries: many of the poems which didn't make the shortlist were of publishable standard and had much to recommend them. In the end I was guided to my final choices by their technical skill and intelligence combined with a crucial audaciousness which set them apart. Congratulations to you all – reading your work has sent me away creatively fired up by the possibilities of language.



Esther Morgan

First Prize, Short Poem Category, Linda Saunders

Tresure

She will *tresure* my letter *forever*,
Bethany begins, and four pages follow
with spaces for butterflies. *Never before*
has she received a *real* letter.

In mine, I taught her PS for thoughts after the end,
and dream now of sharing a love of brackets
(words in the wings) and commas,
punctuation's breath (the spirit's symbol).

She is sorry, she says, for not adding colour
to her drawings. But she's copied butterflies
with such care that colour flashes subliminally
from tortoiseshell shadows, veined wings;

it breaks through ink and white paper, sped
by those flicked tails on her gs and ys;
through vagaries of spelling and the mail.
PS I will write allot more letters in future.

I can believe in treasure, the quark, genes,
a mirror in the heart, as her pencil attends
to the Comma's groovy wings which, she notes,
don't look pretty at all on the outside

but when they open its brehtaking.

First Prize, Long Poem Category, Nicolette Golding, for *Where Is Jill?* The winner is restricted to a single page in ARTEMISpoetry, and, though the poem is conventionally left-justified, as it does not lend itself to being presented in extract, we have – with the poet's permission – taken the liberty of setting the poem out in an unconventional manner so that it may be presented in full (next page).

Where is Jill?

Nicolette Golding, 1st Prize, Long Poem Category

Found poem: from The Children's Picture Dictionary, Collins 1951

Jack has a gun. He
will not let Jill play with it. He
will not **allow** her to play with it.

Jack **beat** Jill. He
ran much faster than Jill. Jack
has a **bow**. He puts arrows in it. He
shoots with his **bow**.

Jill has a **bow**. It is made
of ribbon. She ties the **bow** in her hair.
Jill makes a **bow**. She bends
her head down and **bows**. Jack
can dive into the water. He

is able to dive. Jill **cannot** dive.
She is not able to dive. Jack
likes to **climb** trees. He
likes **climbing**. Jill has
a red **comb**. Jill can **comb** her hair. Jack
dug a **deep** hole. Jack

dives in at the deep end of the swimming pool. Jack
likes to **dive** into the water. A man who **dives**
is called a **diver**. Jack likes to do sums. It is not **easy**
to do them. Jill does not always find them **easy**. **Everything**
in Jack's room belongs to Jack. **Everything** is Jack's. Jack
can draw the **figure** of a man. Jack can **fire** his gun. He
shoots when he **fires**. Jack can lie on his back and **float**

on the water. Jill wears one **glove** on her right hand.
She wears one **glove** on her left hand. Jill is not a bad girl.
She is **good**. She does what she is told. Jack
has a **hoop**. He owns the **hoop**. Jill is on the ground. Jack
is **high** up in the tree. Jack is **higher** than Jill. Where
is Jill? She is at **home**. **I** am a girl. **I** have a brother called Jack. Jack
can **kick** his football. Jack is flying his **kite**. Jack
is the **leader**. Jack is going to **leap** over the fence.

Jill can **lift** a jug. Jack has a **lot** of marbles. Jack
is **marching** with the soldiers. "This is **my**
snowman," says Jack. I made him **myself**. He is mine. Jack
wants to be a sailor. He will join the **navy** when he grows up.
Jill's **nose** is in the middle of her face. Jack's dog will **obey** him.
He is **obeying** Jack's orders. Jack has a pony. It belongs to him. He
owns the pony. Jill's cheeks are **pink**. She has
a **pink** ribbon in her hair. A **poem** is a piece of **poetry**. A man
who writes **poems** is called a **poet**. Jill is a **pretty** girl.

Jack's pony is **quicker**. It runs faster than Jill's. Jack
will go out. Jill will **remain** at home. Jack
has a pair of **roller** skates. He can move at great speed. Jack
has gone for a **sail** on the sea. Jack's toys
are on the top **shelf**. Jill's toys are on the bottom **shelf**. Jill has
two **sleeves** in her dress. Jack will **soon** be at the top of the tree. He
will get there **sooner** than Jill. Jack can travel through the water. He
can **swim**. Jack will **take** his spade to the beach. Jill will
take off her hat. Jill likes to **wade**. Jack is not **wading**, Jack is swimming.
Jill can **write**. She can put words on paper.

Second Prize, Pippa Little

White Afternoon

Join us in the garden, wind-blown
by laundry and hawthorn's steam.
Sometimes strange oppositions
between joy, say, or the old grief,
become the other. Today
is that kind of day. We are directed to be still
before the camera, and as I hold the warm
eleven months of him, he notices
a butterfly, ivory-veined, uncrumpling
against the sleeves and plackets on the line.
His obsidian eyes flash with waterfall
fire, turquoise, jade, more ancient
than my language, the paleness of me,
his stranger grandmother.

I think of marble, and snow, and many things
he's yet to see, fragile or stony, and how
long after he's gone I'll still be crazy
with love for him, how happiness burns
even as it falls away. The photograph
is taken and months from now will seem
anonymous. Rain will approach
later in a delicate stippling
and I'll run out, pull down into my arms
bundles and clouds and all my sad weather.

Third Prize, M R Peacocke

Coming Across

There's her trail, a crossing of night ground
hauled in chains of effort oval by oval
and here's mine, zigzag of fading patches:
tortoise in her dry garden; me.
She floats on my greyblue stare, angling her head
to balance my image in her birdly eye.

Immobile as specimens in a museum,
we're planted in sunlight in the same accident
of time. In, out, the same throb of air,
our pecking hearts imperceptible metronomes.

I begin to consider our differences,
our sameness. Our response to gravity,
five-toed feet; her manner foursquare,
mine more fickle. Under that shell
must be skin I imagine as vulnerable
as mine. Then, I have hair and she doesn't –

but what if I'd been born with her visceral
understanding of planetary shift,
emptying blood and breathing into sleep
as the world tilted and cooled? –

when my shell-less body interrupts
to warn that it's hot, hot; so I pull open
a tomato the sun has split, a piece
for me a piece for her, and leave that slow
beaking and hingeing of a toothless and wordless mouth
at work on the scarlet flesh.