

Appendix 2: Young Poets Laureate poems

Isabelle Walker, Year 10, Bradford Academy – winner in the secondary school category with her poem, Muse:

Muse

*It's 5:30 in the morning and I'm out listening for her.
A year and a half ago, she would have been listening out for me
but since then things have changed
She's like a dying dog,
unwilling to show her vulnerability and pain to anyone else.
But somebody notices it.
It's me.*

*It's 5:30 in the morning and I know what she is getting out of her car.
A woman who swore she would never smoke is a chimney now.
She smokes because of me,
and I smoke because of her.
She's past the point of trying to care that the smoke doesn't just come from her.
It's me.
We are a bonfire.*

I look at our daughter -
She looks strikingly like her father,
Strikingly like you,
You
the man who robbed me of any dignity I so scarcely held on to
- And I don't recognise her anymore,
nor would I recognise you.
She reminds me of you:
how she dismisses me
how she shouts
how she doesn't care what I want.
And if she ever tried to leave as you once did
I think I'd pack her bags for her
Just to watch her fail without me
so, I could welcome her home again.

Sometimes I wish she never got better.
That she could remain
the miserable, emaciated girl
that she was year and a half ago.
Just so I could be near her again.

*I resent her for not realising that I couldn't get better in 30 days
If she cared about my eating disorder*

*as much as she cared about her image,
As much as I care about the space between my legs,
the callouses on my knuckles would tell a very different tale.
The way we speak to each other is vile, all I can taste is bile.
How has she not realised?*

*And for a woman whose CV describes her as 'pragmatic'
I often wonder why my jaw had to ache for so long.
Did you ever look into my pupils?
If there was one thing I could inherit from her
It wouldn't be her nose,
her heart murmur,
or her wheat allergy,
but the unearthly strength and courage she possesses.
She's like a female spider
Anything to protect her offspring,
Unbothered without her mate.*

She's getting older now
Like a cat dragging her hapless prey,
she meets a new boy every week.
I wonder if these boys will ever be aware
of how little they mean to her.
If anything, she is trying to fill cracks that you engraved in her
long before I could even hold her.

*Only 2 weeks ago I became somebody's show pony
for the first time.
I usually flaunt my body but the unwanted admiration of 3 middle aged men has
disembowelled me.
To those men I was their prey,
nothing more than a pretty face who wanted their harassment,
who put her body on display
But worst of all, I foolishly entertained my sick audience of aliens
Why?*

I reflect upon years of constant arguments
Time can't tear us apart
Shrieked in tongues
Two territorial female cats
Jealous
Aim for her throat
Her appearance
Why my appearance?
You share half of my genes.

We both know that the ash on the bathroom window ledge is mine,

and the cigarette butts in the recycling bin are yours.
But it's the same fire that lights them.
It's us

Alina Brdar, Year 5, Lydgate Junior and Infant School in Batley – winner in the primary school category with her poem, Mr Callaghan's Class:

Mr Callaghan's Class

Mr Callaghan's class is a vibrant hub,
Alina always has her hand up.
Jack really loves his maths,
Adam has all the laughs.
Callie is always writing her English
When will she finish?

The playtime bell rings,
And excitement begins.
Sir shouts "Stop kicking that ball!"
The boys run down the hall.
The playground is full of children
Jumping, running, forward and back
Whilst others are having their snack.

Soon it's time for the spelling test,
Faces concentrating trying their best.
This term's project is set,
Chatter of ideas and searching the Net.
Home time bell rings at three,
Tired minds are now free!