



Poetry Anthology 2025

Foreword

Welcome to the Festival's Poetry Anthology 2025. Building on Kate Hook's inspirational idea for 2024, Claire Hines of 'Shine' gift shop, Michelle Crosby of 'B for Butterfly Books', and young poet Dylan Miller took on the challenge of organising Poetry Trail 2. They have won the support of more businesses from a wider area, created an innovative trail map (back cover) and attracted the work of poets new to the trail. The trail surprise was when poems from a class at Holy Family RC Primary School arrived and were displayed in the Corridor Gallery in Stanley Square.

Our second trail culminated in a poetry reading evening at B for Butterfly Books where poems were shared and celebrated.

Thank you to the poets and local businesses, to Class Teacher Laura Marson at Holy Family School, to Councillor Barry Brotherton for editing this anthology, to Carolyn Jackson of Bee & Bug Creations who designed the trail map, and to Claire Hines, Michelle Crosby and Dylan Miller for their commitment and expertise throughout.

Steve Hodkinson

Chair, Sale Festival CBS

Sale Festival Community Benefit Society Number 9421

What Is Happiness?

Soft pillows,
Hand cream,
Books full of poems,
Hot crumpets,
Sun rise and moon tides,
Singing birds, ebbing water, waves
The smell of the earth after rain fall,
Rainbows and clouds,
Howling wolves,
Silence, trees.
This is it for me.
All of this and more.

By Julie Cunningham

Fruit

Late at night hear the fruit bowl gang and this is
what they sang
Apples like rubies, bananas too
Blueberries like sapphires glisten in the dark
Watermelon with rainforest skin
And cherries with thick stems
Why don't you join them and dance the night away

By Beatrice Rushworth

The Plaque

I was there when they unveiled it.

The plaque.

It was stuck on the corner of a grey wall near the council office. Near the smoker's shelter.

'A fitting tribute' said the Mayor

In his speech about how hard he had fought for this.

About how it would remind us all of the sacrifice.

But as I stood there staring at your name, all dressed in it's Sunday Best.

Harold J. Evans

I didn't see your smile as you walked into the room.

Or your laugh when you teased the dog.

Or how you like your cup of tea.

Or the way you would stroke my hair.

My Harry

In the future, I will see people walk by.

Some may stop.

Some may say,

'How tragic. What a loss of life '

Never really knowing just how much life was lost.

By Ellie Lockwood

The Interview

By Anonymous

I was nervous and excited
As I was chosen to be part of a panel
There were three candidates
One who was known to you
She had eyes with a tinge of blue
Another one was so prepared
Her dress, mannerism and answers
She didn't want to miss a word
And made sure that she was heard
After every question she wrote it down
But you looked at her with a frown
Why the attitude I wonder
Then I began to ponder
When she left you couldn't wait
To tear apart this poor woman's fate
Was it because of her weave
Am I to believe
You criticised her curriculum vitae
Is this what they call the British way
There was so much scorn
Is this the norm
To discredit people behind their back
Because you don't like her. Fact
Is that OK
To find holes in her curriculum vitae
The woman tried her best and wanted to
please

She engaged in conversation so I couldn't believe
The way you spoke about her made me so mad
Then you know what, I got very sad
Actually I was quite distraught
Who would have thought
My first experience of this kind
This has really blown my mind
I've been here since 2001
And I think this has only just begun
This understanding that
If you think that her accent is funny
Then does that mean that you don't think I deserve
my money
Are we all the same to you?
Not good enough, Black people taking up space
You fooled me looking straight in my face
But now I know, cause I was there
I saw how you behaved and looked at her hair
You were in a position of power
So I had no voice, no choice.
I tried to say give her a chance
But it was like we were in a trance
The Black woman missed out
And without a doubt
You didn't like her as soon as she walked in
I was there, I saw it in your grin
Shame on you
And your woman with eyes of blue....

The London Blitz

Dread hung in the air like a cloak
Sirens slice through the stillness
Death is holding a celebration
The world floods with terror

Deafening silence
Planes soaring through the sky
Rising and falling again and again
Bombs raining on me like hail
I watch the walls bend inwards
Then burst outwards with a bang
Petrified, alarmed, horror-struck, trepidation
Mouths closed too tightly for those so young

Bleary eyed stumbled out of the sea of smoke
A cloud of dust making the air deadly
Jaws of glass kidnapping the silence
Destruction made my heart freeze
Horrifying beauty
A fountain of rubble bursting from the earth
Shaking in one's shoes
Grownups hiding their sorrows

A smile that scatters tears
A sun after the storm
A hug within my soul

By Jasmine Darrell Pearse

Porridge

By Helena Wright

My father's love births in porridge,
in piping hot cups of tea;
in carpenter sweat on a
muggy morning medium heat.

Tate & Lyle sugar granules buried
in his fingernails. The worker.
Silvertown stories
and semi-skimmed bubbling on the stove.

My father's choice is chunks of banana
and a drizzle of honey.
Me and my sisters grab for plenty:
sweet grated apple (core and all) -

Excited by chia seeds, pumpkin seeds,
pinches of cinnamon, caramelized peels.
Watching chopped fig bleed ruby syrup
through the toasting, comforting oatmeal.

My father works best with routine.
His bowl is always the same. Orange juice,
no bits, two sugars in his tea. Beloved mugs
ready by the kettle for the morning call.

Growing up the Northern mite;
rice krispie squares on a school rush,
no hot breakfast bowls - beige batches
never quite appealed to my chemical teeth.

But now I'd feel lost if I didn't smell
the warming milk, hear the kettle
sing to my father's love
on a muggy familiar medium heat.

Litter

Oh no it's coming
Faster than lightning
Coming coming here
In to the shadows he runs
Fast faster than the river
The town is saved
The litter is gone
Until the next fear
The litter is back here

By Cate Knowles



Run My Friend

Fluffy, playful and cute
As fast as Daisy's swaying to the moon
Run my friend
As fast as the wind
You are welcome to the world
Sleep, jump and run
On and on your way back home
With me I'm now your companion
Run my Friend

By Cate Knowles

My Favourite Pen

My favourite pen is black and blue,
The tip, I tap. The end I chew.
My faithful friend who writes like new,
So, sorry - I won't lend it you.

By Anonymous

My Little Earworm

I had a little earworm singing songs inside my head,
I could tell when she was wide awake and when she
went to bed.

She wriggled and she jiggled, and we tapped our
toes in time,

We enjoyed each other's company, and things were
going fine.

Now, I have a nest of earworms, singing in my head.
One is always wide awake - they take turns to go to
bed...

They burrow and they squirm and all sing a different
song,

It's getting rather loud in here - I think somethings
going wrong!

By Anonymous

Give Me A Soft Life

By Laura Harrison

Give me a soft life,
slow mornings
and soothing nights.
I want to see the sun
set and rise
and the flowers bloom
each Springtime.
I want to smile at strangers
and create genuine connections
with people I know are right for me.
Give me a soft life
because this fast-paced society
is not my reality.
This 9–5
is something I don't abide by.
I just want to indulge
in my morning coffee,
in good books
and everything else
that makes up me.
Give me a soft life,
taking each day
one step at a time
because I don't care to know
what my future holds.
I'm at peace
at this moment in time.
Give me a soft life
because I am a human being
and I just want to be.

Let The Flowers Bloom

At Stanley Square lots of fledgling plants were planted
but sadly some people took them for granted.

Sun and rain was all that was needed to help them
grow but parents allowed their children to trample on
them, oh no!

And now those poor fledgling plants are dead and all
that is left is empty soil patches instead.

So once again we have planted some more for all the
visitors to respect and adore.

We just hope and pray that children don't run over them
and this time allow the flowers to bloom without harm
and mayhem.

By Tony Martin

Today I Read A Book

Today I've read a whole book,
From the first page through to the last.
It was full of tales and escapades,
And told stories of people and places of the past.
It started with a sailing ship,
I read the chapters extremely fast.
And it ended with a pirate,
Shouting 'stop', 'cease', 'avast'.

By Vicky Williams

Jacket Spud

A jacket potato with tuna & cheese,
It's my favourite, it's the bees knees.
Sometimes I'd have it with a salad on the side,
But not with radishes for those I cannot abide.
And a huge piping hot drink of tea in a mug,
Now that's like giving myself a great big hug.

By Vicky Williams

People Are Stupid

By Anonymous

People are stupid,
There's no doubt in my mind.
Always chasing what cannot be attained,
And dismissing what is clearly kind.
Yes, people are stupid.

People are stupid,
That cannot be denied.
Tell them the truth,
And they look for a lie.
Tell them they're wrong,
And they'll look you in the eye.
Yes, people are stupid.

People are stupid,
That's the subject which matters.
Nothing can change that,
So nothing can be achieved,
When you tell them,
'The obstacle is the path,
Which we all must weave.'

So walk with me,
Talk with me.
Together we'll work it out.
That people are stupid,
Won't change the fact,
That we need to live,
In harmony with our kin,
And not to war and sin.
We weren't born with enemies,
Nor were we born to hate.
All these things are just mind.
So change your mind...
(Don't be stupid!)

Mother's Day

It was quick. Brutal. Final.

My mother, who kept me anchored, cast
me into a world neither of us asked for.
The crown of matriarchy passed on to
me, the only woman in our family now.
It's heavy.

I visit often. We talk – *I* talk – about the
days she's missed and the news she'll
never hear. "Did you know...?" I'll start.

Of course you didn't.

My voice carries over the ground,
through the trees, and out towards the
canal. I hope it reaches you.

By Eileen Haveron

Pizza Lunch!

I can't wait for my pizza lunch,
It's my favourite thing to munch!
But, while I'm out shopping,
What should I buy for my topping?

Maybe I'll get some pepperoni...
But I can't have that as the only
Topping! What other meat
Makes my pizza yummy to eat?

What about some form of fish...
Yuck, not a very tasty dish!
Maybe I'll go for cheese: stay plain.
I'm excited to eat pizza again!

By Dylan Miller

The Bar

I remember when we met
On the stool at the bar;
You wouldn't let me get
You a drink, so bizarre.
I defied: bought a lemonade
And passed it over to you.
Then, my dreams were made -
You said to me "I love you".

I'll always remember that day
When I met you at that bar.
Romantically whisked me away,
Told me that our love went far.
You made me be proud to be me,
Because I got to be with you.
Together, we were free to be
Ourselves - that's why I love you.

By Dylan Miller

DAD

You taught us how to repair and ride a bike
You taught us how to 'push-on', during a hike.
You taught us how to decorate or change a plug.
You taught us how to sing and 'cut-a-rug'.
You taught us to play darts and would shout
"where's the chalk"
You taught us how to run, around the walk.
You taught us how to look after yourself
and be mindful of your health
You taught us to work hard...
 ...and never be mard
You taught us to make the most of the sun...
...how to laugh and have lots of fun
You taught us right from wrong...
...you taught us we didn't have long.
You taught us about Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars...
...and now you lie beneath, those twinkling stars.

By Mrs K A Booth

The Tale Of Tin Bucket

"Oh Blimey!" said the bucket.
When a hole appeared one day.
"I've had it now, I'm useless,
now I'll be thrown away"
"That is not necessarily so"
said the matter of fact,
quite prudent hoe,
and calmly, to allay his fears said
"go and ask the garden shears"
Close by, agreeing, nodded the spade
"This garden's full of things she's made"
"Don't be too quick to throw in the towel"
added the wise, resilient, upstanding trowel,
"Just look at her, by the outside tap,
she was repaired, after her mishap"
Then all eyes gazed at the supple hose
splendidly arranged in her striking pose.
"I have no doubt" said the confident rake
"She's got an idea of what she'll make"
She's so creative, a pure godsend,
with her little mantra, 'make do and mend'
And so there folks, you have it,
believe me or not,
That's how rusty, Tin Bucket
became a handsome plant pot.

By Vivienne Mullen

War

By Anonymous

There's a war being waged in my name.
They are on my side,
We're not the same.
There are no borders anymore,
Only a brick wall and a door.
I knock, 'Hello, anyone home?'
As I'm greeted by the Iron Dome.
'I thought I heard you crying!' I say out loud.

It's a mystery to me,
Why they are so proud.
Proud of a future, without a friend.
No one to talk to; no Santa, no end.
'There's no one here!' was the reply.
'Well, if you'd rather die!'
Of course I jest,
This is just a test.
'Those people are a pest!
It's for the best.'
I leave the door open,
As I return to my side,
Someone to comfort me,
Someone to confide.
I don't understand, it is clear.
I don't see the benefit,
War is so dear!
A drone follows me home,
Watches, as I atone.
As I wrap a present,
For these so-called peasants.
Christmas has come early,
For a girl named Shirley.
As Santa, dressed in red and white,
I urge her to fight,
For a future where we can both agree,
For a border where we can both be free.

Now I see why,
There's a cloud in the sky.
I might be alone,
But at least it's a home.

Elsie Doyle

By Vivienne Mullen

Every day, in her armchair she constantly sits.
Swaddled in shawls, her hands clothed in mitts.
A drone of low voices, her company, the telly,
takes her mind, for a while, off her grumbling belly.
She tugs at the blanket draped over thin shoulders.
Adjusts the wool hat, pulled over thin hair.
She straightens her nightdress and hand knitted cardy.
And then heaves herself wearily from out her chair.
Slowly she shuffles, slippers scuffing the floor.
Then halfheartedly pushes to open the door.
She enters the kitchen quite sharpish
to keep draughts at bay
because she only has the heater on
a couple of hours a day
and she doesn't want the kitchen
chill to sneakily slip past,
for the little warmth that she's conserved,
she knows well that this must last.
She stretches fearful fingers towards the cupboard door
and slowly scans the scanty shelves,
then looks blankly at the floor.
Her thoughts turn to her struggle
under the weight her shoulders sink.
How these days she has to juggle
She's too hungry now to think
There's bills to pay and money's tight
She wonders if she'll make the night
So overcome now with despair
She wonders does anyone out there care?

She needs to sit and contemplate,
how long ago, since last she ate?
She feels so frail, her vigour gone
Elsie Doyle, widow of John.
She reaches for her empty purse
Elsie Doyle, retired nurse.
Is this something she can fix?
Elsie Doyle, aged eighty six.
She shuffles back into her seat
To ponder, can she heat and eat?
A life lived full, with joy and toil
She's not a statistic,
She's Elsie Doyle.

This Table

This table joined the dining room
when we were a family of four.
Each had our own particular chair,
mine, closest to the kitchen door.

This table held creative hubs
Kept small hands busy
with play doh tubs
Got splattered in glitter,
paint and glue,
was the Wild West, a war zone,
a farm yard, a zoo.

This table was the home work club
times tables, reading, spelling.
The catch up place, a quiet space,
for listening, talking, telling.
Etched in the pine soft surface,
pencil dents and pen imprints.
And the nostalgic, recollection
of small, sticky finger prints.

This table's been the gaming place
for Snakes and Ladders, Ludo,
for getting worked up and
raising voices, in card games, Monopoly, Cluedo.
Jigsaws laid out for days on end,
pop a piece in when you pass by.
It's been dumped on with piles of ironing,
that made me want to cry.

This table hosted celebrations
Christmas dinners, birthday teas
We manoeuvred extra chairs in place
elbow to elbow, touching knees
It's been dripped on
with gravy and candle wax,
and been worried around
over statements and tax.

This table's been sat at in candle light
A romantic time to dine.
This table's been drenched
in Champagne fizz
and been stained with
splashes of wine.

Now this home has been reduced,
no longer four, but two
This table is retiring,
it has far less now, to do
It's been well used, it's been well loved
now probably passed its best
But it's wooden heart
holds these memories close
and now has earned a rest.

By Vivienne Mullen

Untitled

There once was a canker
Living on the outside -
And when discovered,
It was attacked
With a near-forgotten fierceness.

When grasped,
It tried to slither away
To where it felt safe
And secure,
But somehow,
The fates managed to pinch it
Between “the truth”
And “the hope” -
Stalling it
And,
Concealed behind
A portion of this pain,
It eloped -
Entrails between its dregs.

Sloping away.

Like italics.

Cursive.

Crippled with pain.

By Hemlock



**Poems by children from
Holy Family Catholic Primary School
Sale Moor**

**Many thanks to the Children of Holy Family
Catholic Primary School in Sale Moor.**

**They worked so hard that they submitted too
many poems to be included in this printed
anthology.**

**However, you can see their work by scanning the
QR code below or by clicking on the link [HERE](#).**



Click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code below to hear Sale residents reading Phil Tongue's Poem "Sale on Sea" from the Sale Festival 2024 Poetry Trail.



Many thanks to our supporters

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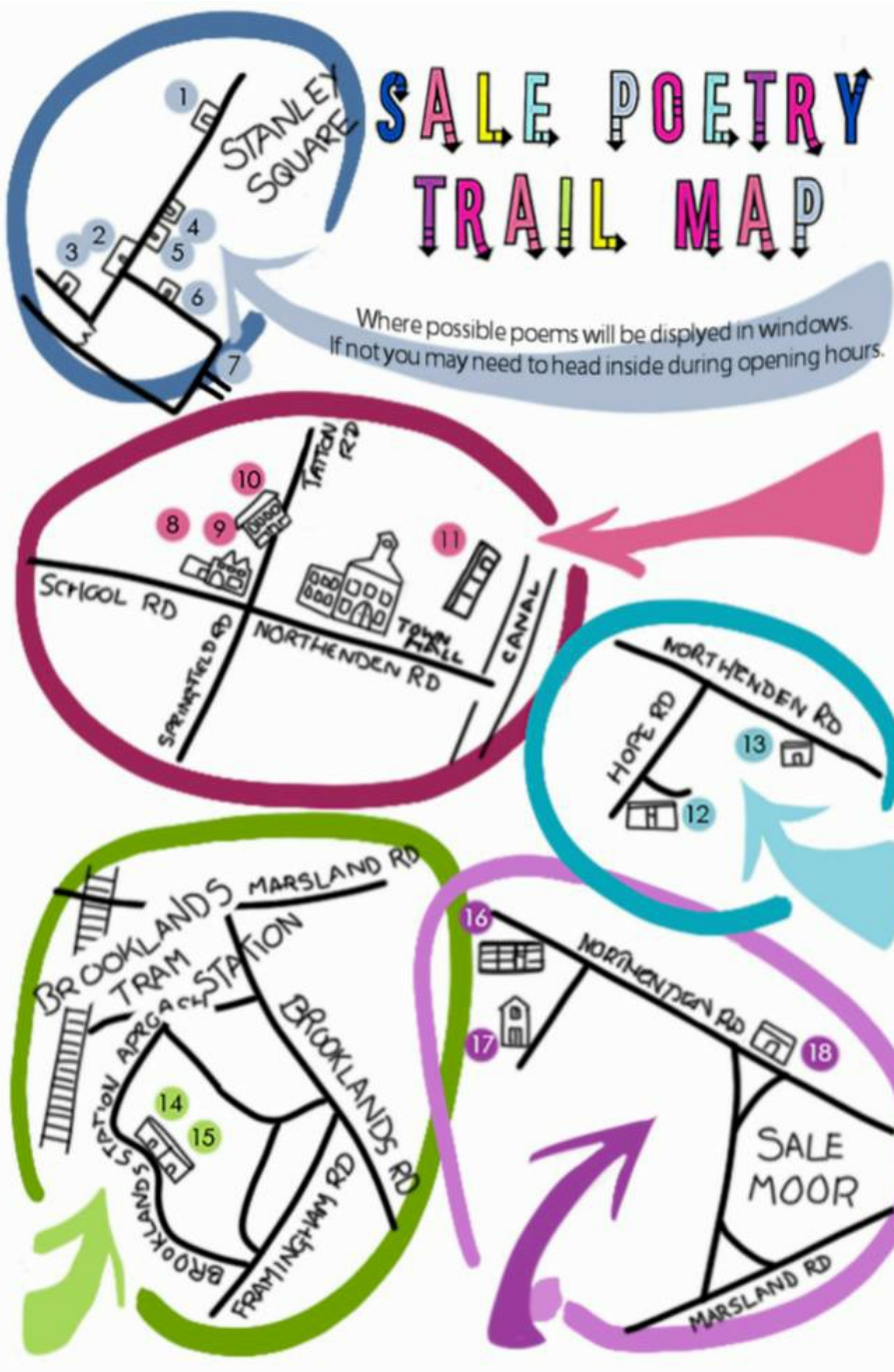
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