

**TOWNSVILLE EISTEDDFOD 2022**

**RECITATION CHAMPIONSHIP AGE 15-18:**

Lines Composed on April 23, 2016, on the 400th Anniversary of His Death by Wilude Scabere

Shall I compare his language to a grave?  
It is more lively and more flowery.  
His rough-shook words refuse to be death's slave.  
No tomb's as showy or so showery.  
A sepulchre, though hard as rock, erodes,  
and shrines do often lose their lustre's prime,  
while monuments, though nice, make poor abodes,  
and sadly catacombs decay in time.  
But Shakespeare's language will not go away.  
Unceasingly, his lines play in the mind.  
They pop up even on a summer's day.  
Unlike a crypt, they will not stay behind.  
Alas, poor Oracle, his song goes on,  
despite all efforts of oblivion

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### POEM AGE 15

#### Summer Rain by Phil Cummings

The homestead stands in red dust; powder dry  
Against a backdrop of a summer-storm sky.  
Black clouds are gathering, rolling, tumbling,  
Blowing, flexing, restlessly rumbling.

They slowly drift, menacingly creep  
Like grumpy giants woken from sleep.  
The children fly loud, into the day  
Chaotic cockatoos in carefree play.

They leap, they spin, shirts flapping like sails  
The wind swirls dust; ghostly red veils.  
Thunder roars like a truck in a shed.  
The first fat droplets tap at their heads.

They shake and buck like wild horses  
Then gallop to the creek where the water courses.  
The children play, they slip and roll  
They stumble in mud, like new-born foals.

They splash in shallows, slide down banks  
And catch water flowing from rusty tanks.  
Then,

When the rain is gone ...  
And the day is done ...  
... They head home.

Walking under skies with rainbow arches  
Wandering like sheep on weary marches.  
Drawn to light from a window frame  
Like moths seek light in a summer-night game.  
And, laughing together  
Under veranda shelter ...  
... They rest.

#### Bushfire by Katherine Blowen

A grey misty haze hung above the wide  
expanse of bushland. All was quiet and  
still. The sun seethed down – a filmy  
golden ball hanging in space...

Then a sudden crackle, a cracked twig –  
tiny white and orange flames popping and  
creeping along the ground as if uncertain  
of their whereabouts.

Cautiously creeping, then leaping about,  
Flickering flames all scramble out.

Whooo! Whooo! Whooo!  
Gently blowing, then gathering force  
the wind swells with pride and leads the course.  
Whooo! Whooo! Whooo!

As confidence gains, they swoop and swirl,  
led by the music of the wind as it now  
pushes them roughly along.  
Leaping and frolicking, devouring everything  
in their way, they move with breathless  
rapidity through the bushland,  
encircled in white smoke.

Puffing and blowing the smoke forms a wall,  
Spreading and stretching and covering all.

Leaving a charred black path behind them  
and grotesque blackened branches of trees ---  
these are the only remains of the  
devastating bushfire.

Catastrophe!.....Catastrophe!.....  
Charred blackened stumps are all you see!

**OR**

**School Bus Ballad by Max Fatchen**

It clattered past the paddocks with petrol-fuming fuss  
While cows would gallop, tails aloft,  
to race the old school bus.  
And down along those country roads it gave a bumpy ride,  
A school Mum at the steering wheel and lively kids inside.

It picked up waiting children, their heavy schoolbags slung,  
While sheepdogs from verandahs importantly gave tongue.  
It backfired like a howitzer and blokes cried,  
'Thar she blows,'  
Alarming shearers in the sheds and panicking the crows.

When winter veiled the ranges and rain beat  
like a drum  
The old school bus rolled onwards steered by that  
dauntless Mum.  
It carried on regardless of heat and dust and mud,  
It once outraced a bushfire and struggled through a flood.

The old bus swerved and rattled and took some  
careful turning,  
Depositing its precious load at local seats of learning,  
The sums, the reading and the rest,  
how pupils' knowledge soared  
And when the day was over, they clambered back aboard.

This transport now long obsolete, has met its rusty fate  
But there's a local legend for those that stay out late,  
That, from a nearby wrecking yard a ghostly bus will glide  
A school Mum at the steering wheel and lively kids inside.

**OR**

**Lost by Carol Ann Duffy**

Left, left again, right, left, right, right again then left,  
up, down, around and about, in out, right, left, right...  
Excellent, I'm lost; all alone on the lip of a wood –  
sip, slurp, it's sucked me in, a morsel of white bread  
in its dark mouth. The trees

are breathing quietly.

Who knows if a witch isn't a heap of leaves and old twigs,  
hunched and sleeping under a bush? Or a bird  
wasn't a girl like me, put under a spell and made to sing  
on the branches of a silver birch

till another girl came

to take her place? I run away through the woods,  
all voices miles away now. Who knows that a stone  
isn't a toad with a jewel in its brain that hops away  
when you touch it? Or a log isn't a sleeping prince

who'll suddenly stand, shaking the bugs and beetles  
from his rusty hair? Lost is thrilling, my own scream  
swooping away into the heart of this wood  
as the night comes down. Down, over my eyes  
like a blindfold.

**The Visitor by Ian Serrailier**

A crumbling churchyard, the sea and the moon;  
The waves had gouged out grave and bone;  
A man was walking, late and alone...  
He saw a skeleton on the ground;  
A ring on a bony finger he found.  
He ran home to his wife and gave her the ring.  
"Oh, where did you get it?" He said not a thing.  
"It's the loveliest ring in the world," she said,  
As it glowed on her finger. They slipped off to bed.  
At midnight they woke. In the dark outside,  
"Give me my ring!" a chill voice cried.  
"What was that, William? What did it say?"  
"Don't worry my dear. It'll soon go away."  
"I'm coming!" A skeleton opened the door.  
"Give me my ring!" It was crossing the floor.  
"What was that, William? What did it say?"  
"Don't worry, my dear. It'll soon go away."  
"I'm reaching you now. I'm climbing the bed."  
The wife pulled the sheet right over her head.  
It was torn from her grasp and tossed in the air:  
"I'll drag you out of bed by the hair!"  
"What was that, William? What did it say?"  
"Throw the ring through the window! THROW IT AWAY!"  
She threw it. The skeleton leapt from the sill.  
Scooped up the ring and clattered downhill,  
Fainter....and fainter....Then all was still.

**OR**

**Snowy Mountains by Mike Jackson**

I suppose you think Australia is all plains and white hot sun  
Well, don't forget the mountains where the snowy rivers run,  
Where the land is wild and rugged and, in winter, icy cold  
And the people, like the country, are hardy, free and bold.  
  
Snow gums grace the mountainside and tussock grass the flat  
And men and horses work to rear the cattle sleek and fat.  
In Springtime, Summer and Autumn, stock graze on that high plain  
And before the Winter snow falls, they bring them down again.  
  
Then the rivers, filled with melted snow, flow icy, deep and fast  
One slip midstream on horseback may well be your last!  
There are few things I like better than to ride a mountain track  
And listen to the bird call as another echoes back.  
  
The mountain song of currawong from treetops up on high,  
And sulphur-crested cockatoos that screech across the sky,  
The crystal winter coolness of a Snowy Mountain morn  
What a place to be alive....and glad that you were born!

**The Bully by Christopher Reid**

The playground bully  
    barged up to me!  
He blustered. He cursed.  
    He threatened big trouble.  
And the speech balloon –  
    or speech bubble –  
that floated above his head  
    like his own private moon  
grew heavier  
    and heavier  
with all the many vile and violent  
    things he said.  
It bulged. It sagged.  
    It seemed about to burst.  
I thought of getting a pin  
    And sticking it in  
to help it along,  
    but one sharp look  
was all that it took.  
    One look was enough.  
With a great pop –  
    or splat – it shattered,  
splattering him  
    from head to foot  
with all the disgusting stuff  
    that had just come out of his mouth.  
I tell you,  
    That made him stop.  
That made him strangely silent  
    That made him sing a new song.

**OR**

**The Lion and the Echo by Brian Patten**

The King of the Beasts, deep in the wood,  
Roared as loudly as it could.  
Right away the echo came back  
And the lion thought itself under attack.  
  
'What voice is it that roars like mine?'  
The echo replied, 'Mine, mine.'  
  
'Who might you be?' asked the furious lion,  
'I'm the king of this jungle, this jungle is mine.'  
And the echo came back a second time,  
'This jungle is mine, is mine, is mine.'  
  
'Come out,' roared the lion, 'Enough deceit,  
Do you fear your own defeat?  
But all the echo did was repeat,  
'Defeat..... defeat....'  
  
Frightened by every conceivable sound,  
The exhausted lion sank to the ground.  
A bird in a tree looked down and it said,  
'Dear lion, I'm afraid that what you hear  
Is simply the voice of your lion-sized fear.'

**Sir Guy and the Enchanted Princess by David Harmer**

Through howling winds on a storm-tossed moor  
Sir Guy came to a castle door.

He was led by some strange power  
To the deepest dungeon of a ruined tower.

A Princess sat on a jewelled throne  
Her lovely features carved in stone.

His body trembled, was she dead?  
Then her sweet voice filled his head.

"These evil spirits, guard me well  
Brave Sir Knight, please break their spell.

Though I am stone, you shall see  
Kiss me once, I shall be free!"

As demons howled she came to life  
Blushed and whispered, "Have you a wife?"

"My love," he said, "still remains  
With collecting stamps and spotting trains.

But as long as you do as you're told  
I think you'll do, come on it's cold."

"Oh," she cried "you weedy bore  
I wish I was entranced once more."

Lightning struck, the demons hissed  
Sir Guy was stone, a voice croaked "Missed!"

The Princess rode his horse away  
And poor Sir Guy's still there today.

**The Rock Pool by Peter Skryznecki**

The rock pool  
is a magic circle  
full of colours the sea  
washes in –  
blues, greens, browns, reds:  
yellow that leaps  
in reflection  
and does a somersault  
over your head!  
Seagrass weaves  
in slow, soft dances –  
reaches up to your face  
and hands:  
growing out of tiny pebbles  
and the patterns  
of drifting sand.  
Here's a crab  
that scuttles sideways,  
hiding under a shelf of stone.  
Look – here's a fish  
with purple stripes!  
And – there –  
a piece of cuttlebone.  
The rock pool  
is a magic circle  
full of treasures  
from a sea king's cave –  
thrown up for the delight  
of children  
by swirling tide  
and crashing waves!

**OR**

**Summer Storm by John Foster**

Light travels, said Miss,  
Faster than sound.  
Next time there's a storm,  
When you see lightning,  
Start counting slowly in seconds,  
If you divide  
The number of seconds by three,  
It will tell you  
How many kilometres you are  
From the centre of the storm.

Two nights later,  
I was woken  
By the lashing rain,  
The lightning,  
And the thunder's crash.

I lay,  
Huddled beneath the sheet,  
As the rain poured down  
And lightning lit up the bedroom.  
Slowly counting the seconds,  
Listening for the thunder  
And calculating the distance  
As the storm closed in –

Until,  
With a blinding flash  
And a simultaneous ear-splitting crash,  
The storm passed  
Directly overhead.

And I shook with fright  
As the storm passed on,  
Leaving the branches shuddering  
And the leaves weeping.

**Monster Boast by Ros Barber**

He's as big as a gorilla  
But he fits into my hand  
His skin is made of metal  
And his blood is made of sand.

He doesn't like the darkness  
Even though he CAN see  
And he doesn't like broccoli  
(just like me).

He can walk on the ceiling  
AND he can fly,  
He's got a door in his stomach  
That serves goggnacious pie.

It's him that you should blame for  
Eating chocolates off the tree  
And hiding all the wrappers  
Under the settee.

You'd like to meet my monster?  
I'm afraid he's very shy,  
He gets invisibility  
When grown-ups pass by.

Oh, and he's got antlers  
AND he's magnetic....  
His hands are made of comic books  
AND.... Oh, forget it

**OR**

**DARK by Tony Mitton**

When light is bright  
where does dark hide?

Inside a sack.  
Down in each crack.  
Shadowy, mischievous,  
secretive, black.

Down in the cellar,  
up in the loft,  
dark waits so patiently,  
silent and soft.

It's inside the cupboard,  
it's under the bed.  
Just close your eyes  
and it's inside your head.

At the flick of a switch,  
at the death of a flame,  
what lies a-waiting,  
oh, what is its name?

At the pull of a blind  
at the blink of a spark,  
what fills the emptiness?  
Yes, it's the dark!

**OR**

**Little Abigail and the Beautiful Pony by Shel Silverstein**

There was a girl named Abigail  
Who was taking a drive  
Through the country  
With her parents  
When she spied a beautiful sad-eyed  
Grey and white pony.  
And next to it was a sign  
That said,  
FOR SALE – CHEAP.  
“Oh,” said Abigail,  
“May I have that pony?  
May I please?  
And her parents said,  
“No you may not.”  
And Abigail said,  
“But I MUST have that pony.  
If I don't get it I'll die.”  
And her parents said, “You won't die.  
No child ever died yet from not getting a pony.”  
And Abigail felt so bad  
That when she got home she went to bed,  
And she couldn't eat,  
And she couldn't sleep'  
And her heart was broken,  
And she DID die –  
All because of a pony  
That her parents wouldn't buy.



**Spaghetti by Frank Flynn**

A plate heaped high  
with spaghetti  
all covered with tomato sauce  
is just about my favourite meal.  
It looks just like  
a gigantic heap of:  
steaming  
    tangled  
    mixed  
    up  
twizzled  
    twisted  
wound  
    up  
    woozled

**WORMS!**

I like to pick them up  
one at a time;  
swallowing them slowly  
head first,  
until the tail flips  
across my cheek  
before the final wriggling  
down my throat.

But best of all,  
when I've finished eating.  
I go and look in a mirror  
because the tomato sauce  
smeared around my mouth  
makes me look like a clown.

**OR**

**Under My Dragon's Wing by Christopher Harris**

Nothing can hurt me,  
Nothing can sting,  
When I'm hiding under my dragon's wing.

No one can find me,  
No one can fight.  
Under my dragon's wing, all is all right.

I hear them outside,  
Asking, "Where can they be?  
Look in the car! Now look in the tree!

Check the gazebo,  
Peek in the wagon.  
Search everywhere – but don't bother that dragon...."

No one says "No" here,  
And no one tells lies,  
And here I can dream and I'm just the right size.

I'm all that I want;  
I don't need a thing,  
Here at home....under my dragon's wing.