

Foyles Young Poet of the Year Winners: 2008

Rather Anywhere

Rather anywhere.
Kettering, Totleigh, Sidcup
or Hull. But not Bude.

Suburbanized, Bowdlerized,
peripherised, concentricized.
A cess-pit that way.
A hell-hole today.
A town, all bastardised.

Would you believe it?
The Western Post and the Sun
but no Telegraph.

Stunted, inbred, uneducated, ill-fed,
mangy, bumpkin-head, stingy, half-dead.
Tramp, young mother, brat, witch;
thug, brigand, yob and snitch.
Victorian, Dark aged, inglorious, freak parade.

Andrew Wynn Owen

Plastic Framed Bubble-wrap

Brass, circular, dented,
a poor choice against the pinewood.
A foresty freshness;
cold, yielding, but warming.
Large French windows,
no carpet and a sofa
covered in bubble-wrap.
Woman assaulted on her way home
after dropping off her two children
aged four and five at nursery school.
Plastic framed double glazed certified,
a snail makes its way over the patio
while a little boy of four or five
eats ants picked from the ground.
'That view will sell this house' you say
'Its stunning' I lie.

Oliver Colegrave

Timekeeper

A sky of clarity, peculiarity, globularity,
With a capacity for veracity and audacity
A complex mix of lighting, delighting and insight

A swirl of time, stars and nothingness,
A culmination of the heavens and memory
The Timekeeper saw it all

Every jeer, every cheer, every leer
Nectarines, a cheesy magazine, the unforeseen
The sulphurous cannoneer, the brutal buccaneer, the illustrious musketeer
The Timekeeper saw it all

And as the impressionists worked their magic,
As the excluded brooded
And fathers snoozed to the laments of radio 3
You always saw it all

Staring into the cold night
The haze of breath breaking the darkness
A thousand stars, from a world away
Shoot their ancient light into my unthinking eyes

They will witness it all
From the first crack as life tore into existence
To the moment when Pandora's box is closed
And the world becomes silent

Joseph McManners

A Bullet

But for now I wait. Cold, cramped and claustrophobic,
Knowing it could be any second now.
But I simply do **not** know.

Then like my targets, I will lie denatured, motionless, helpless,
Waiting to be pulled out of a bloodied body by doctors' prying instruments
Or found years later by a tweed wearing historian in Wellington boots
Interested in adding me to his collection.
Or, maybe gathered up, melted down, reformed for a new purpose,
Or, the same purpose.

Cold, cramped, claustrophobic, I sit and wait for the trigger.
Wait for release.
At my destination, wherever it will be
(For I do not know **where** it will be)
Wood will splinter, metal puncture,
Faces and limbs rupture.
My tiny body heavy with anger, hate, vengeance,
Passion, insanity perhaps...

Matthew Aydon

Question Mark

Serpentine, clandestine, anodyne,
just a sign of
confusion, profusion, delusion
and really for
query, eerie, jeery or more.

Interrogative, with prerogative,
being simply
symbolic, parodic, melodic,
by each
intonation, fluctuation, inflection of speech.

Rhetorical, categorical, cynical
yet
mellifluous, superfluous, unearthliness
even where
stopping, thinking, glazing, travelling there.

Characterised, epitomised, subsidised
by all those
sunderings, haltings, gratings, pauses
of our
chatter, natter, mad hatter-to-hatter.

Employable, unthreatened, job-secure,
while we keep
using and being, star-gazing and seeing
until suddenly
brokenly, chokingly, intended: an answer.

Andrew Wynn Owen

The Signs

Clear glass only,
Clear bottles and jars only,
Paper and card only,
Cans only.

No swimming, no fishing, no diving.
No parking in the places allocated for the disabled.

Bude Post Office, no dogs admitted.
Pick up a leaflet, it will tell you all you need to know,
Birthday cards; our simply seasonal selection.
Opening hours;
Monday. 9-5
Tuesday. 9-5
Wednesday Thursday, Friday. 9-5
Saturday. 9-12:30.

Short stay parking only.
Pay here.
Have you paid and displayed your ticket?
Fashion Hire,
Cornish Goodness,
Welcome to Bude.

Please call again.

Matthew Aydon

The Choice

I'm a cheese maverick,
a pudding detective,
a cake marauder,
a biscuit miner,
a snackoholic,
a pot noodle rapist,
a fan of chocolate,
partial to pasta,
a calorie corsair,
the Pied Piper of fudge,
a cookie monster,
a baconophile
and morally opposed to tofu.

Left or right?
I'm not the shoe,
I am the choice.
I'm the voice that
left the door unlocked
and who thinks
there's a chance
two twos are five.

Oliver Colegrave

Watch the Sky

The handle is a brass orb—golden brown and dented like a roll, or crushed skull. I smell the air. It is fresh and dawning. It smells like morning. Or mourning.

The handle, cold to touch and uneven lets me see her. The woman crying by the snow on the window sill. The world cannot be turning. There is no change.

The window is open, snow pouring in, the shutters are broken, soon to begin. The wind has brought down tiles, like fallen soldiers or flowers in winter.

The moon is coming, but not here yet, not hidden by the white sky. “Just me and the moon” she says, “it doesn’t matter. Shut it if you like.”

The window, the widow, the world.

Charles Hooper

The Children of Hamelin

Whatever happened to the children of Hamelin?
Do they remain as children – free from adolescent woe,
fighting over the remote in a German mountain?
Or are dust and bones all that remain of a hundred
lifetimes of awkward questions?

Oliver Colegrave

Terragogous

Rock-reptilian, land bound, looking round,
cumbersome thundersome, the wondersome survivor.

Schildkröten, ground besotten, age rotten,
wide thrown, seed sown, unknown.

Abdominally-all, steady canopic crawl,
Terragogous, analogous, one solus.

Rising up, mountain top, tired not,
mountaineer, buccaneer, aged seer.

Strong, striking pillar, salad killer,
Desert tracker, can't walk back-er.

Tortue, fought-few, end due, never new,
Stronghold, bulky bold, winter-told.

Armoured for battle, a pebble rattle, tiny cattle,
Mud spattered, shell flattered, egg shattered.

Tartaruga, shambling mover, ancient Hoover,
blithering, dithering, all withering.

Lizard face, mammoth base, body-mace,
Lion claws, bear-scaled paws, plated sores.

Testudo, Greek named, truculent-famed,
Unmatched, unmastered, untamed, unreal.

Steadfast thing, resilient king,
Shuffling, ruffling, tussling boulder.

Ancestry great, dino-fate, Jurassic-late,
Wizened race, egg based, carapaced.

Andrew Wynn Owen

Wren

Tiny wings flex and cut in a blur
The sound like holidays in a country retreat
A vibrant hedgerow sings and moves
As a wren flutters
Smaller than a leaf
And in unison – a shriek

The tap as the tiny creature defies force
And brushes against the air
Briefly perching on a stained farmyard roof
Before it skips away on the light breeze

Wren thinks nothing of the dog's longing gaze
And chirps with playful joy
In sapphire and radiant white
Wren hops through
A tiny kite
Ripe red fruits filling its sharp beak
With colourful sustenance.

Joseph McManners

Raymond

We never listened to his stories.
A man who risked life and limb for us.
Who dug early graves for fallen comrades.
This was Ray and we never listened to him.

Ray's body, lying in a clump of daffodils
By the motorway. His car wrecked, he
Must've clambered out after the crash
To die among the daffodils.

Matthew Aydon

An Affair

1.

You are my transience; my liminality
and love life.
I escape to something
better, or at least different.
I can will a whisper and you
are with me: this thought of adventure.
You are passing, the flower only
shown at weddings or funerals.
I will return to be in awe of you —
your excited world; I can see sea.

2.

They are having an affair with drizzle.
I can see them, from here, my bed bound mind.
They are clinging to their lover,
what we do only at airports and
on special occasions, they do when they can.
Windows know how to love and how to live.

Charles Hooper