

POEMS ON THE MOVE
Guernsey's International Poetry Competition 2022
Judge: Michael Symmons Roberts

OPEN CATEGORY

1st prize: *THE WORK*, **Bruce Meyer**, Canada
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £1000
email: bruce.meyer@sympatico.ca

THE WORK

Saturday afternoons when I accompanied my father
on his weekend errands, he would dial the dashboard

radio to broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera
where a man with a mid-Atlantic accent explained

the grief of human calamity set to song. When traffic
snarled and a soprano lamented how she gave her

life to art while her lover was tortured just off stage,
my father would stare at the long avenues ahead,

and one day he told me he'd taken singing lessons
but the road did not go where he had hoped and fate

always plays a hand in what we are, though we sing
when no one listens about how it could be different.

2nd prize: *DEER ON THE ROAD*, **Jo Haslam**, West Yorkshire
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £500
email: johas2002@yahoo.co.uk

DEER ON THE ROAD

Out of the mist, on the road for home, he veered from our car;
and no signs anywhere, though those trees higher up
are called *Hartwood*. And though he was gone so suddenly,
he won't disappear; the dark solidness and startled eyes.
When I close my own he floats in front like that ice age deer
in the flow of the river, or the hart of dreams, but real,
earth coloured. And I don't know why we didn't stop and follow him
over sodden fields, through clinging drops of mizzled rain,
odd wavered things catching our feet, damp hair snagged
with twigs and leaves; till we reach the copse on the slope
of the hill, where we're the dream, soaked and not sure
why we've come this far with nothing in sight,
but unable to leave the deep night of the woods
till he leaps in front, the star of his rump glimmered white.

3rd prize: *POEM, PAINTED ON A WINDOWSILL*,

Sue Leigh, Oxfordshire

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions, £250

www.sueleighpoetry.com

poem, painted on a windowsill

in my room the window open
to this September morning
notebook's vacancy
then the moth

soft, powdery, mottled
like willow bark
its sudden scarlet
as it flares, wings open

and all I want to say,
cannot say
is there in that moment, given
red underwing, visiting

CHANNEL ISLANDS CATEGORY

1st place: *MY LIFE IS A BLACK KNITTED SWEATER DRESS*,
Natasha Moskaljov, Sark

Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions
www.natashamoskaljov.com

MY LIFE IS A BLACK KNITTED SWEATER DRESS

A day before my father's funeral
I bought the only piece of clothing I wore
straight from the store. There was no time
to rinse the woollen threads.
Two things on my mind:

Where did the garment come from?
Where is my dad going?

The dress can't tell me.
Tata can't tell me.

I imagined clear waters, clean hands, bright eyes,
all bugs with wings of butterflies. How does it feel
to have no body? I said goodbye
and washed the black knitted sweater dress.
It's drying in the Sun until I wear it again.

2nd place: *BUILDING A NEST DURING LOCKDOWN*,
Sandra Noel, Jersey
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions
email: sandra@twoplustwo.je

BUILDING A NEST DURING LOCKDOWN

The delicate build of a crows nest —
twig by twig, weave by weave.

Behind the patio window, my mind offers up
a tuft of grey roots —
no boxes of dye online.

I can choose to simply sit, train my eyes
between the gutter of the red-brick house
and the far off sea...

She lays her eggs in his domain;
he's watching from the uppermost branch
of the twisted willow.

The hours of sitting that follows.

3rd place: *KESTREL*, **Victoria Punch**, Guernsey
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions
[@victoriapunch_](#)

KESTREL

up on the cliff edge, I
looked out, the open sky
beneath me moved with the pattern of the waves,
bent like how glass bends
when it has hung for decades. and I saw
the kestrel, like a rosary held – moved one
bead on and then one more –
as the air of the prayer kept it hovering.
sand below paler than the bird's back, and I have never
seen one from above before and I can
not imagine how this moment ends
as, held and holding, the bird
(held by the prayer, by the glass air)
pauses

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CATEGORY

1st place: *JACKDAW GIFTS*, **Emily Hunt**, Warwickshire
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions
Instagram: @em_loves_nature_

JACKDAW GIFTS

He brings sticks, shells, an empty crisp packet -
I turn the soil to unveil sprouting seeds,
leatherjackets. We are a symbiosis.
He brings a clattering of jackdaws
chack-chacking, feathers and a full heart,
ash trees studded black.
He brings dusk and darkness, an end to summer,
harvest. Each morning I pour water and
watch him bathe. He knows I saved him
from the raven, taught him to fly,
gave him life, now he flies to me
with gifts - nutshells, lambs' tails,
twigs, watches me weave a nest of our love,
pretends he'll never leave

2nd place: *AT THE BUS STOP*, **Oshadha Perera**, New Zealand
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

AT THE BUS STOP

A bus with yellow doors and red decals
saying 'city route' will stop for me,
but I'll have to say 'sorry' with cute round eyes
because I'm busy looking around,
at the supermarket with its green roof
and the full-to-the-brim parking lots,
the run-down bookshop with the friendly owner
who wears a pink vintage dress every day,
the shop in the corner that sells lawnmowers
even in snowing winters,
the two craft shops that are up before the sun,
the city I'll be calling home.

3rd place: *AN ODE TO TOMORROW*, **Martha Iris Blue**, Cheshire
Poems on the Move & Poems on the Buses Exhibitions

AN ODE TO TOMORROW

Tomorrow.

You fill me, like lemonade, with sparkling energy,
geometric hopes that dull over hours of patient waiting;
your light touch absorbs me like a chanced dance with the moon;
you are turmoil amongst my ruffled minds;
you disturb me like wind in the washing;
you show me peeks of a world through a misting eyelid;
you share photographs tinted from sun,
preparing me for tomorrow,
tomorrow's black veils and whitened flowers
that drown me in a sepia world,
their world,
the world of tomorrow,
just out of reach until today.

COMMENDED: *THE 7 O'CLOCK BUS*, **Naomi Miller**, Guernsey
EMPTY SUNSETS, **Oshadha Perera**, N.Z.
A GHOST LIKE YOU, **Millie Addison**, Scotland

POEMS ON THE BUSES

(12 poems listed *alphabetically* by poet's surname)

BOUQUET, **Ruth Aylett**, Edinburgh

Poems on the Buses Exhibition

<http://www.macs.hw.ac.uk/~ruth/writing.html>

BOUQUET

Here's bindweed for the man
who just has to chat on a long haul flight

here's love-in-the-mist for a fixation
with a minor celebrity's long glossy hair

here's rose bay willow herb for everyone
whose title is more impressive than they are

here's knapweed with instructions
for your daily flint chipping practice

here's soapwort for when
supermarkets run out of hand sanitiser

here's cuckoo pint
for the first beer of spring

here's snapdragon for
the most fun you will have today

THREE GREBES, **Dickon Bevington**, Cambridgeshire
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
twitter: @dickonb

THREE GREBES

Over April's first sundown,
three grebes make ballet.

Three thornshadow beaks,
precise on a pinkening

stage, tracing old geometry
across seersucker water,

old patterns whose line
pins me, points out now

my sudden here. This instant,
to the sad brag jazz of geese

barking dark be-home-soons,
their only audience is me,

and nothing but waves
between us and cold Venus.

IN THE VILLAGE HALL, **Sharon Black**, France
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
www.sharonblack.co.uk

In the village hall

a pool of sunlight spreads
across the wooden floor – whorls,

flecked chains and golden knots emerge
like water creatures floating

over deeper scores – pointed heel,
metal chair leg, tip of an umbrella.

Outside, clouds shift. By a whitewashed cottage
a line of laundry

gives a multi-coloured wave.
When the heating switches on

each drop of sun evaporates in unison –
grain falls into shadow, warmth

replaces light. Somewhere else
the wind lifts up a corner of my life.

PICKING OLIVES, **Chris Campbell**, Bristol
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
www.chriscampbellpoetry.co.uk

PICKING OLIVES

I watch an elderly neighbour wilt, through our kitchen window's frosted glass. A tracksuited teenager offers her water. My muddy fleece matches the communal garden opposite, your bump

almost bigger than our packed fridge, spitting out the snacks you crave. I'm wearing my best smile, making a joke so funny that drivers on the road below rubberneck – the open freezer

door reveals family photos, holiday magnets. I wash salad, prepare olives. You shriek, we're clutching stomachs, and I even hear neighbours in the garden tearing up roots. I'm viewing our lives from under our spot-

light; planting olive pits and watching you grow – our little one kicking; changing life as we know.

BAKELITE, **Bruce Meyer**, Canada
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
email: bruce.meyer@sympatico.ca

BAKELITE

Her man ran off with a woman who promised
to buy him a new tractor. A preacher said the work
of God was mysterious as wind racing to bless

the head of every stalk of wheat. The Sioux City
Bears were ahead by six going into the ninth.
Perry Como wanted a little dreamer to dream on.

The radio in my headboard was a prophet eating
locusts in the Midwest dust, and a prairie fire
in the buzzing clock insisted now was three a.m.,

that if I closed my eyes there wasn't any far away,
no highway straight as a salesman's spiel,
or limits to the miles my ear could see.

DEPARTING GIFT, **Callum Moores**, Guernsey
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

DEPARTING GIFT

Two salt crusted shoes
abandoned at the shoreline.
The ocean will misconstrue
this departing gift and do everything
in its power to return them.

Yesterday they corkscrewed as one.
Two skins fused in sweaty dance
until rapture mutated to blisters
poking through the surface.

Their ex-occupant had been worn
as smooth as the stones they now adorn.
Then worn more until sand, dispersing freely
in the water. As though it was never a stone.
As though she was never a daughter.

A MOMENT, **Callum Moores**, Guernsey
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

A MOMENT

She hopped the fence while my back was turned.

Reaching across the separateness
to rest a warm hand on my shoulder.

Choosing me as sole witness.

Lifting my chin and with it
my gaze from the riverbed sludge.

She had gathered all that was beautiful
and laid it out before me.

Glistening in a suspended peace.

Now, soaked in honey,
even the pylons looked kind.

I carefully folded the corners
of a tissue over her masterpiece.

Aware that it would still fade in her light.

VISITING MY AUNT, **Shirley Nicholson**, Manchester
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

VISITING MY AUNT

I find her seated in the high backed chair,
hunched like a squirrel with a nut,

her cheekbones more pronounced,
eyes still pin-sharp, hair snow-white.

I catch my breath. Does my head touch the ceiling?
Behind her the new garden large enough

for recliner and scented roses, a studio
in the old stone courtyard with her tools,

and palette, paint-tubes, brushes – lined up, ready
for painting trips. Yet here she is,

a thimble tininess. I bring food
from the kitchen, take the plate to her

as I'd feed a robin, imagine at any moment
she'll float through the open window.

TEA BAG DIPPING IN WINTER, **Sandra Noel**, Jersey
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
email: sandra@twoplustwo.je

TEA BAG DIPPING IN WINTER

The gasp for air
on entering seven-degree water –
we twirl off the slip in slight of swell
fluorescent pink and orange floats
playing tag in the sparkle.

Puffing round the white buoy with the black stripe,
the usual banter... *crochet octopus, why not lime cake?*
Jane's pics, Simon's lost gloves...

Suddenly sea-shifted,
the barnacle on gull-rock that last month
stole toe skin, now nibbles my right knee,
left buttock slaps the slip;
a rinse cycle in the froth.

Euphoria of body in one piece.

TILL TOMORROW, **Oshadha Perera**, New Zealand
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

TILL TOMORROW

I'll be thinking of early morning trips,
when the sky's still sleeping.
I'll be thinking of the friction of wheels
against tarred runways.
I'll be thinking of the grey clouds
gobbling up green and blue.
I'll be thinking of birds and rainbows,
playing tag in the sky.
I'll be thinking of old memories,
packed away in suitcases.
I'll be thinking of houses and homes,
of sunshine and sunsets.
I'll be climbing down the stairs,
letting the wind blow in my face.

I WONDER IF THERE'S A MINOTAUR,
Amber Torrens-Dodd, West Midlands
Poems on the Buses Exhibition
email: ambertd3010@gmail.com

I WONDER IF THERE'S A MINOTAUR

Sometimes my mind
feels like a maze

A labyrinth I could
lose myself in

I'm constantly walking
straight into dead ends

And thinking damn
I should've brought string

PAW-SHAPED HOLE, **Issy Whitford**, Guernsey
Poems on the Buses Exhibition

PAW-SHAPED HOLE

Loud barker,
Dinner eater,
House guarder,
Good greeter

Warm cuddler,
Not a scarer,
Food smuggler,
Nothing hairier

Playful pup,
Not that clever,
Lost to heaven,
In my heart forever.