

Chiltern Arts 2024 Poetry Collection

A photograph of three children from behind, running on a paved road that stretches into the distance under a cloudy sky. The child on the left wears a yellow cape, the middle child a pink cape, and the child on the right a red cape. They are all pointing forward with their right arms. The text 'OUR EVERYDAY HEROES' is overlaid on the image in a mix of black and white fonts. A white line drawing of wings is in the bottom left corner.

OUR
EVERYDAY
HEROES

2024 Poetry Competition: Everyday Heroes

Poetry Competition Winners

Rob Lowe — Adult Category Winner	2
Aishni Mishra — Under 18s Category Winner	3
Rowan Sumpter — Under 12s Category Winner	4

Highly Commended Poetry Entries

Tom Chinnery	5
Millie Holmes	6
Pranshi Gupta	7
Florence Pratt	8
Amelia Wallace	8
Rose Williams	9

Shortlisted Poetry Competition Entries

Afra Ahmad	10
Mahika Bhat	11
Seren Dale	12
Danara Fernando	13
Ava Hipkin	14
Minnie Holden	14
Ivana Ilieva	15
Saffah Kiani	16
Steven Jackson	17
Ellen Jeyasingham	18
Pemma Lama	19
Austin Lawrence	19
Mary Mullett	20
Viv Nicholas	21
Noya Pal	22
Orson Peters	23
Sanjay Rathinam .V	23
Elizabeth Rodda	24
Sitara Sheth	25
Mariam Soliman	26
Oskar Weymouth	27
Teddy Wilks	28

WINNER OF THE ADULT CATEGORY

Moths can be Heroines too

Rob Lowe

She still has a face, small and mute,
Though now it is holy dust,
This moth on my laminate floor,
Grey, polished, and pristine,
Who flew to the light, unaware
It would burn up her life.

She beat against a rounded bulb,
Low energy and low cost,
As in prayer, or an aspirant monk
Knocking, on the monastery door.

Then she died, not with a fuss,
But quietly, laying on her back,
And folding her feet neatly,
As if for a holiday journey.

I found her there, dry, brown as regret,
Picked her up, between thumb and forefinger,
Lay her on an old oak table, in state,
Gave her this service of words (they will not bring her back).

WINNER OF THE UNDER 18s CATEGORY

Worthwhile
Aishni Mishra

If someone had told me that you'd be there
I'd have gotten up at once.
No hesitations or oscillations
I'd be standing there at the front.
If it costs money, I'll sell my bike,
Sell everything for some little price.
It's more important to see you there,
Rather than keep things for which I do not care.
They say that I cannot be like you,
For people like that are so few.
But if I do not try, how will I see?
See whether I can do.
I wish to be as good as you, as willed,
Understand the right like you, after the wrong.
My heart knows I should take my own path, I will,
But I want to dip my pen in your old inkwell first.
So, if someone had told me you'd be there,
I'd have gotten up there at once.
I'd have left my work, and my sandwich unfinished,
And would race there before anyone else.
Catch a glimpse of you, witness the dream,
And know finally that so can I
Be the one that I want to be.
I know it takes will,
I know it takes effort.
But doesn't anything worthwhile take it all?

WINNER OF THE UNDER 12s CATEGORY

Teachers

Rowan Sumpter

A child, a school,

That's all we see.

If a child goes to school it comes back smart as can be.

"But what's in between?" I hear you ask.

The answer to that is the heroic teachers of course!

They're amazing and kind and let you share.

They're cool, but better still,

They don't despair,

when you still don't know the difference between there, their and they're!

So it's clear, and I hope you'll agree,

That teachers are as great as can be!

So it's not just child + school = smart,

You need a teacher in between with a great big heart!

To teach, teach, teach and teach longer still,

For day after day and from morning till noon.

So next time you see one I want you to say,

A great big thank you for the teachers who,

Change children's lives,

They really do!

HIGHLY COMMENDED POEMS

A Deed on the Downs: A tribute to Emily Davison
Tom Chinnery

She bought a ticket on Derby Day
It was a return but proved one way

Arriving at the course amongst the cheers
Not here for the spectacle just filled with fears

The horses they gathered at the start
Emily gathered her brave, brave heart

Reflecting on her treatment the justice of her cause
She ducked under the rail without a pause

Her fate came towards her in terminal haste
She ran forward to meet it no time to waste

The crowds and the cortège its end unseen
The only colours showing purple white and green

The truth was spoken and the speaker died
The speaker died but the truth survived

HIGHLY COMMENDED POEMS

A Tree Needs Rain to Grow

Millie Holmes

Forget the capes, forget the suits,
Forget the flying through the air.
They are stereotypes, down with the stereotypes.
Heroes are everywhere.

This is an example of one;
One of many, one of a kind.
One I love, who saved my day.
One with a hero sort of mind.

Picture this scene:
Thunder, lightning, rain and wind.
All alone, yet with so many,
She smiled. She laughed. She grinned.

And when the rain poured down,
Upon my very head.
She knew she couldn't make it go away,
So joined me instead.

She was the sun, my sun,
In a dark and gloomy storm.
In a time where I felt damp and cold,
She brought a little warm.

Flashback to 5 years before:
A dark, heavy cloud above her head.
The rain poured down, she hid it away.
I joined her instead.

And from the dampness of the soil,
A blossom tree did grow.
A blossom tree of our friendship
Put it's roots down long ago

I'm so grateful for what she did for me,
And what I was to her when tears did flow.
Not all heroes are true friends,
But all true friends are heroes.

HIGHLY COMMENDED POEMS

The Times and Trials of Valerie Jimyohng
Pranshi Gupta

Valerie
Finest Actress in the World
Glittering gowns, Winning Oscars, Flying capes
Valerie
Second Lady of the White House
But Childhood Valerie —
A memory in form of a slap echoes the room
Screaming, Blood Pooling
Dripping
From Fine Silk Sleeves
Crying for help
School friends laughing hahaha
Locked away
Limbs turning to Ice

It Burns
White Hot
Curling Iron Scars on Upper Arm
Smiles, 'You can look if you like'
You stand There. Frozen. In Shock
Pen and paper rustling. Quietly quietly
Valerie
Laughs clear as day
Melodious voice streaming through the Horrors of Her Life
Cascading Forgiveness
Like a shining waterfall
Like Sunlight rippling on the Glassy Surface of souls

Valerie
Bullied, Tortured, Branded
Valerie
The Girl Who Lived

HIGHLY COMMENDED POEMS

On the Mountains

Florence Pratt

There I was, on the mountain,
Through the thick pure white snow,
About to go on the jump,
I missed the run and fell in what felt like slow-mo.

Then someone came up to me,
She was a stranger I had never met before,
She was French so I didn't understand much,
But she helped me up so I could ski some more!

And that was how she saved my legs,
From getting broken,
But like I already said,
She helped me up
even though we had never spoken!

Everyday heroes of our towns

Amelia Wallace

Everyday heroes live all around our towns
Doctors and nurses wearing their gowns

When the binmen come on Friday in their lorry
We all shout 'yay' as we don't need to worry

The Police look after us and are strong and brave
Fortunately for me I am always well behaved

Firefighters and extremely daring
Helpful in emergencies and are always caring

Everyday heroes live all around our towns
They turn our frowns upside down!

HIGHLY COMMENDED POEMS

Changing Places

Rose Williams

He counted the pills out into her hand
And passed her the glass of squash.
He collected the laundry and loaded it in,
Then returned to help her to wash.

He pocketed money for on the way home
Planned what they'd have for their tea.
Picked up the books he'd had no time to read,
His diary, his kit and his key.

He rinsed out the breakfast things, left them to drain,
Cleared up the mess on the floor.
Made sure that her thermos was filled for the day
Then put on his shoes by the door.

He pulled on his coat, picked up his bag,
Running, because he was late,
Tried turning his mind to what the day held
This carer of only just eight.

SHORTLISTED POEMS

Limbs
Afra Ahmad

A man without limbs
grapples with negativity
to function properly.

She is not
just my mother.

The voracious nooks
and crannies
of this house
have been nudging me:
who will tend to us, now?
whose smile will
warm us up?

In response to
their plea,
I holler:
who will lull
my insecurities to sleep?
who will wipe
my profuse tears?

An obsession
with a mother
is different than that
with a lover –
you wouldn't have

arrived here
without a mother,

you have dwelled
near her heart
before entering
this realm
of murkiness and exhaustion.

Without her
every magical thing
that encompasses me
becomes meaningless,

without her
the synonym of
everything
is
nothing.

She is akin
to my limbs.

In her absence,
I resemble a man
without limbs;

In her absence,
I resemble a boat
adrift on the sea.

Hero Poem

Mahika Bhat

Because of **You**

I have laughed a little harder

Cried a little less

And smiled a lot more

For no special reason

Because of **You**

I have felt the warmth

Of a special relationship

And the gift of your love

Makes my life feel complete

Because of **You**

My world is a happier place

And makes me feel loved

I want to thank you for

Everything

My heroes
Seren Dale

My heroes have helped me along the way
Helping when things get tough every single day
Getting me up when I'm feeling down
Slowly starting to erase my frown.

My heroes make me caring and kind
My heroes make me follow my heart and mind
They make me feel special and liked
And teach me how to get things right

My heroes welcome me whatever the day
And make sure that I take the right way
My heroes help me all along
And make me feel like I belong

I trust them to help me and make me feel strong
I trust them to help me make sure I don't go wrong
My heroes have made me to be calm and complete
My heroes have made me to be tough and sturdy like concrete

Your heroes are different but have the same traits
Are probably not scared to face down mistakes
They are probably just like mine
And I hope that yours are just as divine

Light to dark
Danara Fernando

Tokyo, Paris, London

What do they have in similar

Light

A magical force they used to say

Or was it a witch casting her spell

The only people who know are themselves

It's quite dark here

I wouldn't be surprised if they lived here

Flyway I called him he lived under my bed

I never got the see how he looked I was to scared

I always had a feeling he talked with Woodrow

Woodrow and Flyway they lived in my room

I wish they were here

It's all quiet and lonely

I'd even look at flyway

I wish I could go back home

There was light there

It's all dark here

My mum is my hero
Ava Hipkin

My mum is my hero
Because she gives me
Gratefulness and
Kindness and happiness
When she tickles me.

My hero is...
Minnie Holden

My hero is...
Phoebe.
She is like the brightest star
On a moon lit night.
She makes me smile.
Her little hands are warm
they make me feel safe.

Our Everyday Heroes: My Mum
Ivana Ilieva

She's very caring and very knowing,
She knows how to handle any tantrum I'm throwing,
She'll give and give,
And then she'll give some more,
And she'll always think you are to adore,
She never stops working,
In the office, around the house,
She'd never hurt anyone, not even a mouse,
She watches TV with me,
Even on a school night,
She gives me the best hugs,
We rarely ever have a fight
I love my mum,
To the moon and back,
She's the best mum
And *nothing* is changing that.

My Best Friend Saffah Kiani

My best friend is a dazzling ray of light,
In my dull and drab day at tiring school.
Their presence makes everything bright,
In the dull armour, they are the shining crown jewel.

They know just how to make me smile,
With a funny joke, a tight hug, or a one chance high five.
They always go the extra mile,
To make my day feel alive.

When the lessons seem never-ending,
And the clock ticks oh so dreadfully slow,
My best friend is always lending,
A listening ear and a funny show.

They make the cafeteria food taste better,
And homework seem less of a chore.
With them by my side, nothing could be a bother,
And I could not possibly ask for more!

We laugh, we talk, we share our goals and dreams,
And through it all, they never ever judge.
A best friend is more than it seems,
They are my sunshine in the grudge.

So thank you, my dear best friend,
For lightening my dull and drab school day.
You make my school life worth the spend,
And for that, I shall always gladly say, 'yay'!

The Last Blacksmith
Steven Jackson

He's the last. Fourth generation.
In Boolteens by the busy road.
Works with fire - at his station -
Where hammer and anvil explode.

"Tired? Never!" he says.
Open door. *Modus operandi*.
"While I'm able, these days,
I'm going to take it handy."

Handy. Easy does it.
Fell into the trade. "Been here since."
Seventy years at the fire pit –
Heat don't make him wince.

But what when the hammer drops?
What while the cars wheel by?
What when the anvil's chorus stops?
What when the fires die?

Know he's the last. Fourth generation.
In Boolteens by the busy road.
Works with fire - at his station –
Where hammer and anvil explode.

My hero is
Ellen Jeyasingham

My hero is the person who
Leads me to the light when I'm in the dark
The person who will be there when
I feel low

My hero is the one to
Bring me down to earth
When I'm in the sky
When I'm dancing on the roof
They will come to me when I fall

My hero
Is the Nutella and
I'm the strawberry

My hero
Will always be there for me

Friendship's Valour: Ode to My Hero
Pemma Lama

In the landscape of life, where storms collide,
My hero, my anchor, my friend resides.
Not clad in capes, nor with powers bold,
Yet in their presence, my fears do fold.

Like a beacon in the night, steadfast and true,
They guide me through the darkness, my spirits renew.
Through trials and triumphs, they stand by my side,
In their embrace, my worries subside.

In the tapestry of time, woven with care,
Their laughter, their love, my soul does ensnare.
For in my best friend, I see a hero's grace,
A champion of kindness, in every embrace.

Their words, like a shield, protect and defend,
Their actions, a testament, to a bond that won't bend.
Through thick and thin, they never waver,
My heart's guardian, my eternal saviour.

So here's to my best friend, my hero so true,
In every word, in every deed, I see you.
For in your friendship, I find my strength,
My beacon, my guide, my hero at length.

Icon
Austin Lawrence

Icon
Navigator
Shaper of London Underground
Harry Beck

David Essex Fever
Mary Mullett

The atmosphere is electric,
The lights dim very low,
We hear the sound of someone walking,
Now fast, now a little slow,
With music in the background,
Of favourite songs we know,
We eager fans are waiting,
For the hero to appear,
The time must be nearly here,
The band run to the background,
The audience are hush,
The stage is set for brilliance,
And a fast adrenalin rush.

He makes a dramatic entrance,
To the whistles and the cheers,
At last we can see David,
Between the lights, smiles and tears.

He rushes in with "Wonderful"
A powerful moving song,
Then quieter now,
"A winters Tale",
To hush the very throng,
The magic keeps on going,
For this mystic icon man,
From "Hold me close!",
To "Silver dream",
We cannot have enough,
Until with "Missing you"
He disappears in smoke,
In a puff.

Can we wait 'til next time?
We'll have to I suppose,
When David Essex fever,
Will have us on our toes.

OMNIOCRACY: A tribute to Benjamin Zepheheniah Viv Nicholas

Let's look in a dictionary for the words that end with the suffix

'OCRACY' which relates to POWER

A is for Autocracy where one man has too much power

B is for Bureaucracy where a system makes decisions with no regards for its citizens

D is for Democracy when elections decide our leaders. Should we give proportional representation a go?

K is for Kleptocracy when our elected leaders line their own pockets?

And what do you reckon on **M** for Meritocracy which leads us to a University Challenge champion trashing our economy in a few weeks whilst serving as Chancellor of the Exchequer?

And can we dismiss **P** for Plutocracy when we are governed by the rich? This is really clever when it happens as maybe we do not even see it! What do you reckon is happening when three media barons control much of our national press.

And turning to **T** for Theocracy where we are led by a religious leader – it's not looking too good in Iran!

So I have made up a word – **O** for Omnicracy which means that everyone and everything is a stakeholder and given its due regards.

Together we are one
Noya Pal

Together we are one
We never fall down
We have each others back
And never, never leave each other behind

Sometimes we argue
Other times we disagree
We bear grudges and make faces
But we laugh it out in the end.

We chuckle, giggle and laugh
Until we collapse to the ground
We tell jokes and have fun
It's amazing, but...

This year though, we leave for secondary school
And have to say goodbye
We wave our hands and turn away
But, we will never forget
Because together we are one.

My Mum is my hero
Orson Peters

My mum is my hero
because she is funny.
When she is funny she
makes me feel happy.
When I get the feeling
I feel like I am in a
love blanket.

My Hero — Vijay Anand Sundaesan
Sanjai Rathinam .V

My hero shall be someone who is my bosom companion,
Even through the deepest canyons
Of strife, we just go on and on with our laughing life.
However, his sharp words feel like strike through my soul with a blunt knife.
Which conjure tears in my once gleaming eyes, But that is just who brothers are,
Then he yonder the bridge of emotions to tie
Our friendship, It feels so ordinary, yet so bizarre.

My hero shall be someone who cares for me,
To find some brother like this is rare.
Even if he is a tad bit rude,
And every so often he gets screwed,
But that is just his attitude.
Yet his charisma makes him
Look like a heroic dude,
What a cliché.

ONE IN A MILLION
Elizabeth Rodda

You're one in a million, you,
Even though that number is growing
Throughout the land.
So many selfless people giving
Their time, their concern, their determination.

But to me, and to so many
In this village, town and county,
You're a life saver, a listening ear,
A helping hand when help is needed,
A true friend in need.

Coming home after a second operation,
with an elderly husband helpless and hopeless,
I couldn't have faced the future without you.
You came and visited,
"What can I do to help" you said.

How can you give so much of yourself
to so many people and still have time and energy
to live your own life? I know the answer, of course:
the needs of others, whatever they are,
always come first for you.

So thank you, neighbour, from the bottom of my heart.
You are my hero.

Fighting for Equality
Sitara Sheth

Here I was
Born to drive change,
The colour of my skin, here for a reason, Alabama the
origin of my basis, Existing in a world of two.

An early departure from school
To care for my dying grandma
And later, ma
Married the love of my life
And became Rosa Parks.

Side by side we fought together,
Waiting rooms, libraries and transport.
Separated from the other world.
I am not giving up my seat, I am not paying the fine, I will
not stay in jail.

The law is wrong, not my behaviour.
My bereavements and grief continue, my fight continues.
The world will be better for all.

My Hero
Mariam Soliman

My hero doesn't wear a cape or a funny mask, she doesn't need batman superpowers, she is Wonder Woman through and through.

A guiding light, my mother's stride,
Her embrace warm and secure,
Through life's challenges, she ensures that,
I am never alone in this whole wide world,
For my hero mother is always by my side,
She nurtured my talents, she gave me hope,
Without her I would be lost,
Without her, I would lose my way,
Her love has no bounds, it's clear,
With each heroic sacrifice, she holds me dear
A smile is all it takes,
And off I sour,
Into her comfort, an open, wide door,
Waiting there just for me,
Her strength, unfaltering, she stands tall,
With it, she conquers all.
From late nights spent working hard,
Folding, cleaning, feeding, aiding
To caring moments, her attributes of kindness are written in bold
Her wisdom, a pearl, she gives endlessly to us,
Consoling speeches and kind words that melt my heart

Say Goodbye
Oskar Weymouth

I packed my backpack
And raced outside,
Said goodbye to my mother and father
I forgot about my hurt cats who cried.

I wished my classmates a happy holiday
But the sun had a different plan,
While in the car
I wondered about my cats who I thought were waiting.

I went inside my humble abode
Not stopping my work,
My parents sat me down at the table
And told me a dark story.

“When you were away
Death had a kidnapping,
Our two cats aren’t with us anymore
I’m sorry...”.

I was about to say hi
But they are gone
I cried and cried
I didn’t even say goodbye.

They were my Heroes.

Lost
Teddy Wilks

When you get lost as a kid, it's scary
You feel alone without anyone
You run as fast as you can to find your parents
And when you're too tired to run you just sit and cry
your eyes out

Then you see a stranger coming towards you
And you stand up ready to run but then they take your hand and say,
"Let's get you to some help."
And you're so tired you follow them

And when you're in the car going home you think how a stranger can
be so kind

I have never forgotten that.