

PRESCRIBED POEMS 2024

POEM GR. 8 GIRLS AND BOYS

THE SEA (James Reeves)

The sea is a hungry dog.  
Giant and grey.  
He rolls on the beach all day.  
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws.

Hour upon hour he gnaws  
The rumbling, tumbling stones.  
And 'Bones, bones, bones, bones!'  
The giant sea-dog moans,  
Licking his greasy paws.

And when the night wind roars  
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,  
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,  
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,  
And howls and hollos long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,  
When even the grasses on the dune  
Play no more their reedy tune,  
With his head between his paws  
He lies on the sandy shores,

So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

## POEM GR. 9 GIRLS AND BOYS

### THEY HAVE CUT DOWN THE PINES (Mary Lisle)

They have cut down the pines where they stood;  
The wind will miss them – the rain,  
When its silver blind is down.  
They have stripped the bark from the wood –  
The needly bows, and the brown  
Knobbly nuts trodden into the ground.  
The kind, the friendly trees,  
Where all day small winds sound,  
And all day long the sun  
Plays hide and seek with shadows  
Till the multiplying shadows turn to one  
And night is here.

They have cut down the trees and ended now  
The gentle colloquy of bough and bough.  
They are making a fence by the creek,  
And have cut down the pines for the posts.  
Wan in the sunlight as ghosts  
The naked trunks lie.  
A bird nested there – it will seek  
In vain: they have cut down the pines.

## POEM GR. 10 GIRLS AND BOYS

### The Road Not Taken (Robert Frost)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no steps had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

## POEM GR. 11 GIRLS AND BOYS

### An African Thunderstorm (David Rubadiri)

From the west  
Clouds come hurrying with the wind  
Turning sharply  
Here and there  
Like a plague of locusts  
Whirling,  
Tossing up things on its tail  
Like a madman chasing nothing.  
Pregnant clouds  
Ride stately on its back,  
Gathering to perch on hills  
Like sinister dark wings;  
The wind whistles by  
And trees bend to let it pass.  
In the village  
Screams of delighted children,  
Toss and turn  
In the din of the whirling wind,  
Women,  
Babies clinging on their backs  
Dart about  
In and out  
Madly;  
The wind whistles by  
Whilst trees bend to let it pass.  
Clothes wave like tattered flags  
Flying off  
To expose dangling breasts  
As jagged blinding flashes  
Rumble, tremble and crack  
Amidst the smell of fired smoke  
And the pelting march of the storm.

## POEM GR. 12 GIRLS AND BOYS

### Funeral Blues (W. H. Auden)

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.  
Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message 'He is Dead'.  
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.  
He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.  
The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

## POEM OPEN WOMEN AND MEN

### Natural son (Richard Murphy)

Before the spectacled professor snipped  
The cord, I heard your birth-cry flood the ward,  
And lowered your mother's tortured head, and wept.  
The house you'd left would need to be restored.

No worse pain could be borne, to bear the joy  
Of seeing you come in a slow dive from the womb,  
Pushed from your fluid home, pronounced 'a boy'.  
You'll never find so well equipped a room.

No house we build could hope to satisfy  
Every small need, now that you've made this move  
To share our loneliness, much as we try  
Our vocal skill to wall you round with love.

This day you crave so little, we so much  
For you to live, who need our merest touch.