



Association des sections internationales
britanniques et anglophones

POETRY COMPETITION RESULTS 2015

'REMEMBRANCE'

Première / Terminale

Winner

The Sound of Silence Jeanne BIGOT 1e Lycée International Montebello, Lille

Runner-up

Amnesia Bonnie WILSON T1e Cité Scolaire Internationale, Lyon.

Finalists

About Becoming Laura-Li JEANNOT T1e British Section, Lycée International, St Germain-en-Laye

The Curtain of Recall Ella DUNNET 1e Lycée Honoré de Balzac, Paris

The Mayfly Tree Standing Athénaïs BEAUVOIS 1e Lycée international Montebello, Lille

Wanton Memories Zoe BISCHOFF T1e Lycée international, English Section, Strasbourg

Troisième/Seconde

Winner

The Stages of Remembrance
and Grief Zach HENDERSON 3e Insititut Fenelon, Grasse

Runner-up

Remembrance Sarah FRANCIA 2nde Lycée International Montebello, Lille

Finalists

Atlas Bertie SMITH 3e Insititut Fenelon, Grasse

It's been forgotten Emma GARTON 2nde Lycée Georges Duby, Luynes, Aix-en-Provence

Memories of You Clementine SOULA HICKS 2e Insititut Fenelon, Grasse

The Photographer said Caroline BUHLER 2nde Lycée Georges Duby, Luynes, Aix-en-Provence

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248 rue de Rivoli
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THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Close your eyes and hear it
The sound of the young souls
"Bravely fighting" for the nation.
Hear their steps, marching over
The Somme. And their voices,
Chants rising up to the troublesome blue
Of the European sky, in this summer of 1914.
Their voices fill the air, flying up, and up
Higher into the atmosphere, like a smoke of hope
Clouding their minds and enlisting their brains.

Close your eyes and hear it
Hear the silence of their souls,
Sacrificed for the nation.
They're not uttering a sound anymore,
For war has shut them up, and yet.
Yet they are everywhere. In our minds,
In the books we read, in the words we say.
And their smiles should not be forgotten,
Nor their chants forgotten.
Hear the silence.

Entry No. 1

Amnesia:

Though I cannot recollect,
I use the tools at hand:
A picture, a pen, a toothbrush,
Anything to grasp at a life
That I will never know, or love,
Nor point to on a map.
It is here I will recreate,
Past scenes that have been forgotten,
Calendar dates that will never come to pass.
For if all roads lead to Rome,
None lead to my past.

1: About Becoming

This morning I awoke smelling honey and algae and my whole body swelled with the high tide like it, too, was driftwood among the waves; I breathed my father's favourite flowers and grasped, underwater, your spilt-milk, felt-tip fingers as if you were still something I could hold onto.

Let me drown, I say, let me drown because this saltiness is all that I have left.
Let me drown for I am starting to forget the grain of your skin and because yesterday, I failed to remember my grandmother's perfume. I am scared of letting go.

I learned the meaning of *being* when I was ten with scrapped knees and a sea-shaped smile, my hands full of broken shells;
Now I am trying to learn what it means to *become*, to fill my empty ribs with the tang of your skin and my mother's name, with my whole town buried below my heart underneath 8000 wild flowers and everything that I have ever lost
Until I can no longer breathe under the ghost of what was and what could have been;

Until I am drowning in this sea full of hushed words and indigo, lint-ridden days.

I am afraid that one day, this flesh will peel away;
these quiet bones will shatter; this chrysalid heart will burst open
and these memories will spill into the gutter only to be swept away at night like broken shards of glass.

Let me drown, because this is what I have become – froth and foam and memories seeping through the cracks of my ribs, dripping from the shells of my ears like warm, wilted, golden honey.

8.

The Curtain of Recall

First came the sun, then the moon
A new life woven in a fragile loom,

Life is but a feast
For the tender souls at peace.

Old silver songs of love,
The first flight of the dove.

Rag dolls and ribbons,
Rings and rust.

Silver threads of amnesias,
Sewing by a nimble seamstress.

A wrinkle in time,
The clocks rewind.

We wish we could salvage the moon,
From the ticking of the tomb.

Remember the minutes, the months, the years,
An entire life spent over happiness and tears.

And so, turned to dust
Are the rag dolls, the rings, the rust.

The mayfly tree standing

Here is an oak tree standing roots in the black ground,
Here since the beginning, he thus heard all the silence and sounds.
Oh ! The gloomy crowd, this human tide of uniforms...
The crushing feet come closer, closer and louder,
And he felt so tiny inside the oppressive immensity of soldiers.

Seasons came and seasons left : the snow, the sky, the fog and the wind
His yellow-torn leaves falling,
Leaving him naked and vulnerable
In his riot with no sound against the unbearable.
Shivering inside, thinking "tick-tock, tick-tock, this time I'll be no more a survivor".

In order to hang on, he used to recite poetry
He stood strong because they wanted him to be
At least, that what was written on the propaganda poster
Proudly nailed on under the folding branches.

Wounded by a German bullet, scarred by a British one,
He echoes the damage as a testimony of time.
And he has changed. From that glittering oak he has turned into this weak willow, willow, willow.
And this story printed in his pale sap,
It is today a promise of Remembrance.

7.

Wanton Memories

Mnemosyne is a rose whose sensuous petals
Exhale a hell of darkened dew.
Those vap'rous ghouls smoothly tumble
Into lewd fallow whorls
Which mix in sinful mirth.

And in their smoke,
I err
Breathing the remnants of a many-coloured past,
Inurned and dumb.

Once more,
(Time's tide lifted by phantasmal winds)
Running in rosemary
Past the fleeting trees
To the tepid tune
Of the rustling plain
Draped
In Moon's light kiss.

POEM 1

The Stages of Remembrance and Grief

Till the end of her time, she'll place that extra plate,
Trying to remember, what is now a name on a slate,
Allowing the horror of her loss, to keep her up late.
Thinking of the boy, who died for his State.

What if she'd hid him, what if she'd said,
That he was sickly and had to stay in his bed,
If only, she said, If only I'd bargained,
I wouldn't be sitting here mourning his passing.

For such a sweet little thing, to be put to rest,
Fighting valiantly for his country's quest,
Determined to wear with pride that green official vest,
Which now has six rounds punctured through its chest.

But now he's gone, and in a better place,
She can almost remember the curves of his face.
Her son, her darling boy, the one thing in the world that brought her joy,
Will forever be, four feet below, with his father and his father so.

Remembrance

When I find myself thinking of the past,
I remember the smell of the pine trees,
The bite of that salty yet sweet breeze
And the splendid greens of the moss come last.

And I wonder if the traces of my past
Still linger in the places I have stayed.
And the fort? Does it still stand in the tree's shade?
Have plants invaded the hideout so fast?

Perhaps it has all been erased by time.
But perhaps it does not matter at all,
and I should ignore the past's angry call.

Yet these memories though sour as lime,
Leave me afterwards with a sweet feeling
And I would give them away for nothing.

POEM 2

ATLAS

You will remember who you are
When the sun goes down
And you are, yet again,
Left with the moon and your own heartbeat.
You will remember who you are
Watching from the mountain tops
As birds soar high above you
Free and capable of everything.
You will remember who you are
After having your heart broken
For what you promised yourself
Was the last time your chest would feel that heavy.
You will remember who you are
As you roam in confidence
And regain your faith
In the one you matter most to.
As you fall into my arms,
I need you to apprehend and internalize:
As long as I am with you, you will never be alone,
And as you figure out, by your own hand, who you are, you will never feel more alive.

4. It's Been Forgotten

Cold, robotic scribbles onto parchment
Numbers printed onto old newspapers
Three hundred thousand, four hundred thousand
What difference does it make any more?
Photos seen by thousands, mourned by so few
The Great War's been erased from our spirits.
It has been vulgarized, so simplified
That its soul has been wrenched from its body
Covered in scars, shell-shocked, like those soldiers
No one seems to care anymore.
Was this war a useless pitiful thing?
In a life span, people have forgotten
What millions of lives have helped them to learn.
Photos of dead soldiers are shown to kids,
No emotions, fully desensitized
By this silent world who feigns purity.
It's a universal catastrophe
Of monsters tearing each other to shreds
Numbed into the buzz of history class.
Why?

POEM 4

Memories of you

When I go to bed at night,
I start digging in my mind
This image in black and white,
Is the memory I find.

I then wake up and sit down,
To look right at this picture.
But at the end I will drown,
In a tide of tears for sure.

I remember your voice,
It was warm and trembling.
I remember your eyes,
They were blue and sparkling.
I remember your arms,
They were big and loving.
I remember your heart,
It was huge and dying.

You, my Grandpa who gave
So much love, if they knew,
Are you lying in your grave,
And I am missing you.

1. The Photographer said

The photographer said you need a camera
If you want to capture history,
If you want to discover, burned in your lens,
Shattered glass of a heartbroken creature.
Vestiges of harvested beliefs and clustered sounds,
Screeching tales altered by an adjusting shutter
Or a broken flash sensor.
Pictures spreading secondhand thoughts, a pair of eyes,
Tortured tears over the years escaping,
Vanishing from a machine-built heart.
Two snapshots glaring at one another
Though one is studying the dazed past.
Yet as I recall, as burning glance, as icy grip,
I smuggle it, drown it in my flesh, as I ask:
Do you believe in ghosts?
I do, I believe in the ghost of us
Although I have zoomed out of our blurred-ink photograph
Our remembrance will live as infinity in my heart.