



## Poetry Competition 2022 'Air'

ASIBA is pleased to publish the list of finalists in this year's poetry competition. OIB Cambridge Inspector, Dr Celia O'Donovan, chose the winning poems, awarding a joint first place in the Senior (1e/Terminale) category. Book prizes will be sent to the poets placed from first to fourth place in each category.

*"It has been an enjoyable experience reading the poems that made it to the final and, as always, it has been difficult to decide on the winners. The poems were very varied in tone, expression and content. All the finalists demonstrated creativity in interpreting the theme of "Air" and finding the words and images to convey their ideas. The winning poems were sensitive, thoughtful and original, and their impact on the reader was both intellectual and emotional.*

*The young poets' control of language, metaphor and reference is to be commended; they wrote with maturity and flair. To have made it to the final shortlist is a great honour and all the finalists should be proud of their achievement. Writing poetry is a way of experimenting with language and ideas and expressing the emotions. It has beneficial effects on creative thinking, self-awareness and the development of identity. I hope that all our young writers will continue to express themselves through poetry as they continue through their education."*

*Dr Celia O'Donovan.*

## List of prizewinners and finalists

### JUNIOR Category (Troisième / Seconde )

- 1st Prize 'A breath of fresh air', Manon Sampson, 2de, Institution Saint Joseph, Le Havre
- 2nd Prize 'Where Multitudes are Created', Iman Monfopa, 2de, Lycée International de Saint Germain en Laye.
- 3rd Prize. 'The Windy Dilemma', Samuel-Lievin Mulumba, 3e, Lycee Francais International Denis Diderot, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 4th Prize. 'The Dread of Light', Tenzin Burney, 2de, Cité-scolaire Maurice Ravel, Vincennes.
- Finalist. 'Heaven Life', Mahé Becker, 2de, Lycée Lucie Aubrac, Courbevoie
- Finalist. 'Aerial Cuddle', Angèle Leroy, 2de, Lycée International Montebello, Lille
- Finalists 'İselq Ɓu!pu!lq', Mathilde, Clara, Lalie, Emilie, 2de, Lycée Vaugelas, Chambéry

### SENIOR category (Première / Terminale)

- 1st Prize 'A Breath of Air', Pierre Mion, Tle, Groupe Scolaire Saint Anne, Brest.
- 1st Prize 'Pranayama', Alice Messler, Tle, Lycée International des Pontonniers, Strasbourg.
- 2nd Prize 'Respirations of April 6 1986', Elisa Buenerd, 1e, CSI Lycée international de Grenoble.
- 3rd Prize Air , 'If you had asked her', Johana Guérin, 1e, Lycée Saint Charles, Marseille
- Finalist. 'The Mail-Delivering Airship', Assia Fougou, 1e, Lycée International Charles de Gaulle, Dijon
- Finalist. 'Angel', Ajar Madad / Océanne Sitbon, 1e, Lycée Lucie Aubrac, Courbevoie
- Finalist 'Without Air', Charles Ottavi, Tle, EIB Etoile, Paris.

## **“A breath of fresh air”**

Standing in the middle of open green meadows,  
A breath in, and then out, flowing through my anatomy,  
The slow rise and downfall of my body.  
Trapped in their cage of unyielding bone,  
My chest being filled and emptied by the pink streaked bellows.

To feel my hair swim in the clear O<sub>2</sub>,  
To open my arms to float in the unspoken,  
To let my mouth drop slightly open,  
And allow my pharynx to be soaked in atom 8  
The old swept away, leaving space for the new.

They say that the wind speaks  
But to me, she gently whispers  
Like a tickle in your neck, soft yet loud whimpers.  
And to her I listen as she mutters in my ear,  
Caressing her tender breaths against my reddened cheek.

So I take another deep breath in  
to then let it drop  
As every good thing, must have a downfall,  
It all eventually stops.

That is, a breath of fresh air.

where multitudes are created

Breathe out,  
Watch as the fog of me blends into the night sky  
Rustles against the leaves of a tree whose branches  
Spider-web into the moonlight.

I sift and hide into the folds of a fallen star  
As you recollect a moment long forgotten  
A past life, a lover, a poem  
'I love you's whispered like a sin,  
Or a promise.

I leave your mouth to come into an other  
And next time I am back with a bite

Piercing through wool like a curse,  
Or a promise.  
The sweet kiss of a life

Become a breeze, become a gale, become a hurricane.

Breathe in, a moment passes  
And now I softly glow on the edge of a  
streetlight, and for a moment, I am seen.

I live in a place where multitudes are created,  
And you were made there too.

## The Windy Dilemma

Wouldn't you like to wallow in your desires? Your oh so earthy, wistful wishes....  
But you mustn't sully yourself with the soil.  
Envision tree branches.  
Observe their sway as the wind blows  
Their leaves are stuck, kept away from a freedom they don't yet know  
We're bound to the ground of what isn't substantial,  
Obsessed with the financial.  
To be airy is detachment.  
You don't focus on who's "me"  
Because the material isn't real  
To be earthly, is to be mundane.  
Money, clothes, jewellery  
Narcissism, not altruism  
You're focused on yourself, so try to look around.  
I want you to focus and listen!  
Is your mind sound?  
Flutter to your vision.  
Can you see the leaves?  
Can you discern how the air heaves?  
They've come off their branch, flying and floating as they please.  
Standing your ground, like roots in the soil  
Having your thoughts billow in the breeze  
Don't dwell on it too much.  
Just breathe.

## The Dread of Light

With one gently powerful gust of wind  
I am brought back to these distant old times.  
I can't turn back or look at what's within  
Can't break this peace, this rhythm, these rhymes.

Skeletons of light crowd my troubled mind,  
These silver frames, silhouettes in the night  
Blur my deep blue watery eyes, I'm blind.  
Wet tears roll down my cheeks dreading the light

A sunbeam pierces the blanket of clouds  
As if paving the way to the present  
Bringing me home to the smoke, the crowds.

I don't want to go back to where we went  
Let us stay in this twist in time, this dent.  
But with one gust of wind the present settles back on my skin.

## Heaven Life

How heavenly,  
a flier that stands high against the breeze.  
The air, pale,  
dives, and raises  
our hearts  
as they carry thorns.

But as a windfall lifts a comet,  
and unspools the kite,  
there, as it veers  
to cheer at another place,  
bluer and whiter.  
Life takes off.

# Aerial Cuddle

The Air,           The Air,           where?  
The Air,           who?  
Blowing out   my hair  
Please, give       me a           clue

                  Thanks to its blast  
Your voice                           will outlast  
          The sound                   of my tear,  
          Is all                           I can hear;

                  Like a           comforting hug  
Embracing,                   surrounding me;  
Drowning           in the sea  
          Seems like                   a lofty bug:

          It seems to me                   that it is there  
Obnoxious,           foolish,           narcissistic  
          Isn't it                   sarcastic?  
          Our convictions, destroying the Air.



## tsəɫq ɓuɪpuɪɫq

I walk on the wind, foot on the bubble,  
I hear the sweet clouds whisper and mumble,  
The sound of the world has no gravity.  
Beyond, there lies the trumpet's melody.

Heavenly, fundamental root of lungs,  
Blow loud and carry your golden noises,  
The deep mist fires our guiding way, scattered guns.  
Ether's whims don't drop light dews on roses.

Atmosphere coldly rare, so hard to breathe.

The hollow trumpet's sound deprived of life.

Sky, forest of oxygen burns from grief.

The wind keeps the stars reflecting on the knife.

As new-borns inhale, keepers exhale last.

Yellow ocean underneath their masks,

Accomplishing their fated task,

Unbreathable blinding **B L A S T**

## **A Breath of air**

A barrel organ in a barren world  
Quite slowly, slowly, in the morning, played.  
I seem to remember, my memories fade,  
That guns had fallen silent, ceased their skirl.  
One two three, one two three, one two three four

A barrel organ in a barren world  
Quite slowly, slowly, passed those lying dead  
While buried men - those living still - they fed  
On its music that softened the barbed wire's curls.  
One two three, one two three, one two three four

A barrel organ, and a barrel full  
Of air, no bullets, and just for once, no pain.  
I dropped the trigger I did not need to pull  
And softly whistled, just to whistle again  
One two three, one two three, one two three four

A barrel organ, then a barren world  
Above, up there; no music, but a plane  
And with the crashing wheel of fate then hurled  
Upon us, as hunted birds, a bombshell rain.  
The world's waltz played.

Pranayama (meaning "breathe" in Sanskrit, which is the elevation of life energies)

When your dreams were caught in  
Words, fingers, hair  
I got air from you  
I smiled with my eyes to see  
The incredible human being you were  
Becoming  
The divine feminine  
On our bikes the sun was burning  
Black asphalt sliding under minty pupils  
We were throwing ourselves into the milky  
Greenish sky  
That only we could paint  
Because we felt like it.

You told me "do what comes naturally"  
And a gentle breath  
Sat by me  
Made me dance in the evening in my kitchen  
Reminded me to breathe when  
I came into the world each morning  
And that it will be the last thing  
I do when I leave.

I remember when you were with me  
Because my mind would be in my heart  
And the air could pass through me.  
Now that I left, and so did you,  
I read you in the breeze,  
I hear you in my verse,  
By the melodies of the universe.

## **Respirations of April 26, 1986.**

In the heart of the night,  
the walls trembled.

Svetlana pressed her cheek against her beloved boy's.  
Aleksandr's arms embraced Yeva's body, eyes  
fastened to the incandescence-  
truly a work of art-  
Yakiv leaned on his cane: utterly astonished  
Beside them, on the stone bridge,  
Valerii and Leonid - father and son.  
The twins Ruslana and Lidiia.  
Maia, Liubov, Vladlen.  
All neighbors.                      All friends.

They didn't know. So they stayed there. All night.                      *Breathing.*  
Breathing.  
Breathing.      Iron taste in their lungs.

The radiant blue flooding up into infinity.

As air carried ashes,  
breath carried death.

poem asiba writing competition 2022

THEME: AIR

If you had asked her,  
she would have said she craved freedom,  
this feeling of immensity that touched her  
when the salty breeze brushed her hair  
and caressed her soul.

If you had asked her  
she would have told you  
everything in the whole world,  
and raised a toast to old time's sake.

Her eyes were as glittering as the ocean she sailed  
Her laugh as harmonious as the melody she had heard  
Her heart grew warmer for each person she met.

She was as free as wind  
Forceful as mistral, gentle as suroeste

Where the aria hushed, emerged a soft whisper

## The Mail-delivering Airship

Lo! and behold! The mail airship!  
What news from overseas  
Carry those letters from the trip  
Across the horizons?

It soars with the wind above lands  
And oceans ; cliffs, moors, plains,  
Rivers, brooks, forests, glades, swamps, fields,  
Hills, valleys and mountains.

Piercing through fluffy cotton clouds  
It glides as stars appear,  
Accompanied by flocks of birds  
Breathing the purest atmosphere.

The captain delivers orders,  
The helmsman steers the craft,  
The cartographers chart  
Unknown territories.

Crossing borders between nations,  
They witness peace and war.  
Though the sole freedom they call theirs,  
Is flying in the air.

## Angel

As we dived among the white hills  
another life was launched.  
I gazed into your heavenly face:  
my heart veered from place to place,  
carrying between your breasts  
the thin-stemmed  
string supported by your beating heart.  
Despite the windfall that flowered over us,  
the spindle in my hand stayed planted  
but the briar sprig became thorns  
and I had to let it go -  
as you rose into the blue with the wind.