

# asiba Poetry Competition 2024 'Ephemeral'

Asiba is delighted to publish the list of winners and finalists in this year's poetry competition, *Ephemeral*. Book prizes of poetry anthologies have been forwarded to four prize-winners in each category, care of their referent teachers.

OIB/BFI Inspector Dr. Celia O'Donovan chose the winning poems and we are very grateful to her for taking the time to judge the competition during a busier-than-ever exam season. Here is her message to the community:

*There were some excellent poems in this year's shortlist and it has been very difficult to make my final choice. The theme of 'Ephemeral' generated poems that were wistful and nostalgic and always with a real sense of the poetic in the choice of words, images and metaphors. The young poets displayed imagination and creativity in their treatment of the theme and all of the poems in the shortlist had considerable merit. The winning poems were especially expressive and moving; the imagery worked on the senses and created an intimate link, both physical and emotional, with the reader that remained after the poem had been read.*

*Poetry writing clearly provides the writer with a very special way of describing feelings and a chance to explore new forms of expression. In this way, it helps to develop different ways of thinking and of using language - skills which are very valuable in studying and writing about literature but also skills that are transferable to life after study.*

*Congratulations to all who took part.*

*Thank you to all who were involved in the judging and especially to Olive Kavanagh, for her efforts in organising this rather wonderful annual event.*

Please scroll down to read the four placed poems and five finalists in each category. These eighteen poems were winnowed out from 123 entries from 29 schools, by volunteer judges drawn from the ASIBA community. Entries came from Belgium, Greece, Ghana, Australia and Switzerland as well as from France.



## Poetry Competition 2024 'Ephemeral' Results

SENIOR category (Première / Terminale)

- 1st Prize. *Anima Dulcis* by Anouk Peterschmitt, 1e, Lycée International Montebello, Lille
- 2nd Prize. *Out of the Sea into the Sky* by Lou Doublet, 1<sup>le</sup>, Lycée Salvador Allende, Hérouville-Saint-Clair
- 3rd Prize. *Seven(teen)* by Angèle Raymond, 1<sup>le</sup>, Groupe Scolaire Sainte Anne, Brest, France.
- 4th Prize. *Death Ephemeral* by Chiara Barbero, 1<sup>le</sup>, Lycée Camille See, Paris
- Finalist *Birthday Party* by Malo Fradin, 1<sup>er</sup>, Lycée Notre Dame de Grandchamp, Versailles
- Finalist *A Ballet in Twilight* by Diane De Supervielle-Rageau, 1<sup>le</sup>, Lycée EIB Etoile, Paris
- Finalist *Ephemeral Nature* by Nicolao Tamagni, 1<sup>er</sup>, Lycée Français Marie Curie, Zurich
- Finalist *Ephemeral* by Alice Ducros, 1<sup>le</sup>, Cité Scolaire Internationale, Lyon
- Finalist *The Symphony* by Bartolomé Comte, 1<sup>le</sup>, Lycée Gustave Flaubert, Rouen

### JUNIOR Category (Troisième / Seconde )

- 1st Prize. *Life's Consumption* by Louis Riga, 2<sup>de</sup>, Institut Fénelon, Grasse
- 2nd Prize. *Transient Innocence* by Anastasia Dubois-Lusseau, 2<sup>de</sup>, Lycée Salvador Allende, Hérouville-Saint-Clair
- 3rd Prize. *Melted* by Rose Bosqui, 2<sup>de</sup>, Lycée Georges Duby, Aix-en Provence.
- 4th Prize. *The Fire* by Norah Joncquel, 2<sup>de</sup>, Lycée International Montebello, Lille
- Finalist. *Strawberry Red* by Lucie Forest, 2<sup>de</sup>, Lycée international CSI Europole, Grenobl
- Finalist. *Faded* by Juliette Hege, 3<sup>e</sup>, Lycée Français Marie Curie, Zurich
- Finalist. *A cold night* by Gaspard Brault-Garin, 2<sup>de</sup>, Lycée EIB Etoile, Paris
- Finalist. *Volcanic Symphony* by Cindy Ly, 2<sup>de</sup>, Lycée International Montebello, Lille
- Finalist. *Before the Tea Gets Cold* by Janna Mallepeyre, 2<sup>de</sup>, Collège / lycée Jeanne d'Arc, Clermont-Ferrand

## Anima Dulcis

In the middle of spring, when nights are warmer than days

I'll leave with you, I'll dream with you

And for one night, I'll let love submerge me

And for one night, I'll embrace my feelings

And for one night, I'll rest on your shoulder

While you read to me those lines you know by heart.

And the wind on your cheek will wake the scent that made me love

And I'll cherish the thought of you.

In the morning, when all has gone

The grass, the trees, the soft whisper of the wind

I'll wake up, alone.

You'll be back where I can't touch you.

The dream will be over, and the night long gone,

The scent left floating, in the ice-cold morning.

## **Out of the sea into the sky**

My heart shattered,  
As I was rummaging through freshly printed photos,  
With my cold winter hands  
Clutching onto the thin piece of paper  
I recalled my last trip to Long Beach with her

The waves were vanishing among the strewn seashells  
And the wind was taking the salt away from the sea  
Only to enhance the tears on her restless face

The skyline was fading away  
As our echoing laughs made their way up to the sun,  
A lasting moment on the shore,  
Momentarily, we became two souls enlivened by short lived thoughts,  
Hoping for more

So, on these lonely melancholic nights  
I lay my head on the wooden floor that has supported me ever since  
And I intensely gaze at the ceiling,  
Catching a glimpse of her

In the middle of this starry paradise,  
She is holding a bouquet of chrysanthemums  
And dances with fallen angels,  
Among the Banyan trees.

Seven(teen)

as I hear the sweet and soft sounds of childish  
laughter, I am brought back abruptly.  
magic colour maths, kisses for plasters, rainbow looms and bracelets,  
all the world to my seven year old self.

childhood turned to teenagehood,  
bead bracelet to golden rings, which turned green  
after a few wears, perfect cursive writing turning to barely legible scratch.

seven to seventeen, still in class, still the same brown eye  
now underlined by eyebags,  
learning how to bike, learning how to drive.  
the bracelets do not fit anymore, their strings snap, beads rolling and now forever lost.

I hang on to what I used to love, hair clips, dinos, superheroes,  
I hang on to my childhood, which I used to loathe,  
hoping it would make me grow up faster.  
I am still a child,  
not yet eighteen,  
still a child.

still feeling seven(teen).  
seven months left.

## Death Ephemeral

The day they buried my father  
They left a vacant spot beside him.  
I joined him  
Lay down beside him.  
I escaped from the careless hands of thought and time  
Galaxies spun overhead,  
Their unchastised pallor blinding.  
But as I lay austere  
Gaia took me in her arms  
Flowers' roots grew tangled  
Worms, flush with rot  
Deprived me of space, clung to me like raspberry thorns.  
My fingers twitched and flesh grew to cover my bones.  
I threw off the blanket of dirt  
Trembling and renewed  
A hulking Lazarus.  
I didn't turn back; left his memory to lie in my stead  
For the worms to devour it, too.  
To love again, I had to let Death grip my father's shoulders once more.

## **Birthday Party**

It was at the tip of her mouth, the tip of her lips, yet, she missed.  
She stays there, staring at it, red balloons hanging from the ceiling.  
And it stands there, unfazed, burning with passion.  
The blow was too weak surely, and she missed.  
No one noticed her red lipstick and her fancy dress.  
Her life had been easy until then, she thinks, and it drips on the cake.  
Numbers have weird shapes and colours start to fade.  
But it's burning and there's no coming back.  
It starts to hurt, really, and she doesn't know why.  
She would love to stay there and be their little girl,  
But the odds are against her. The balloon popped.  
She's not even hungry anymore, that's the price to pay.  
The one is long extinguished now, and the eight is dying,  
She blows.

## A Ballet in Twilight

In twilight's embrace, a garden's delight,  
"Coats on," she exclaimed, voices taking flight.  
The door closed behind, a barrier unfurled,  
Mother's words lost in the double glass world.

Brother leaped forth, a ballet of glee,  
Through crisp air, he danced, wild and free.  
On rocks we stood, rulers of the flowered land,  
Aromatic waltz, scents at our command.

Leaves pirouetted in a vibrant dance,  
Nature's kaleidoscope, a fleeting trance.  
Yellow, orange, brown, a canvas divine,  
A tapestry of autumn, a moment in time.

But this infinity, this time that stood still,  
Merely a dream, an ephemeral thrill.  
The sun, once a beacon, now burned and stung,  
The trees, once proud, bent and broken, wrung.

Transient, a word etched in nature's decree,  
An illusion swift, a harsh reality.  
As shadows lengthen, and daylight fades,  
Ghostly, weak, echoes of joy in twilight cascades.



## Ephemeral Nature

Under the cries of Nyx's cloak, horrible cries piercing the night  
announce the crowning between Gaia 's hips.

A king and an executioner is born

Determined to reach heavens and submit under his chubby palms

Soon Babylon, Athens, Rome spur out of his cradle.

Oh how futile he is, how delusional Adam's seed is

His first steps are made in the house of mourning

He knows already the cruel and unbearable truth

The godly fatal stamp on his forehead :

From dust you rose

And to dust you will return.

Reaching maturity he tries to outrun fatality in vain

He will die, you will, they will, I will.

Growing old he resigns becoming epicurean or stoic

He is ready, nothing will scare him anymore

He has accepted death, and his ephemeral nature

But no, suddenly, he gets up

One last attempt, to run away,

To fight back, to rebel

Too late, the tyrant death has won.

### Poem 3

#### **Ephemeral**

The church bells ring  
on the beat of your foot against the table.  
eyes are tense and whispers fragile  
hands slam against the sticky table  
feet rustle on the cold beige tiles  
tinted with everlasting sand  
that after all these years might turn into ashes.  
there is not one ounce of gratitude in your black cherry jam.  
we hear you mumble, heavily breathe  
the weight of your trembling lips tire gran's shoulders  
and bend the orchids longing on the kitchen's counter.  
The only thing that holds you on to us  
isn't your life anymore,  
way too ephemeral to be consistent,  
but the way your eyes reflect the exact same  
shade of blue as ours.

# THE SYMPHONY

I hear it. Flying through the forest. A Sound.  
Echoing through the trees, gliding across the ground.

Mysterious,

Enthralling,

Overwhelming,

I try to understand—

Too late.

The sound is gone.

Lost in thought, I listen.

Melodic silence.

A whisper.

The wind. It surrounds my soul with the Sound.

I understand now.

It wasn't a sound.

It was a symphony.

The life and death of every being, condensed in one piece.

Mother Nature's orchestra.

The Ephemeral Symphony.

## Life's Consumption

The life of a wave  
    like the shadow of absence.  
Time a temporal slave  
    In a flow of transience.

A sunrise blush on a morning cheek.  
    Ephemeral dawn, so gentle and meek.  
Soft petals bloom, kissed by the light,  
    But withering whispers of the fleeting night.

Heartbeats echo in the silent mist,  
    Ephemeral love, a delicate twist  
Yet within its brevity, a poignant grace  
    A timeless echo in affection's embrace.

Through the ephemeral, life's sweet refrain,  
    Moments we cherish, though touched by pain.  
For in transient beauty, we find our worth,  
    A symphony played on the canvas of earth.

## Transient Innocence

In life's dawn, her eyes painted the sky,  
A dance in sunlight, innocence soared high.  
Memories, soft as whispers, tender and sweet,  
Now, petals of the past, under memory's discreet sheet.

Time dimmed her smile, dreams took a drift,  
Grown-up worries, a harsh, heavy shift.  
A treasure lost in life's vast, rolling sea,  
She's yearning for a past where purity flowed free.

Whispers in the breeze, where joy once sung,  
Beneath weeping skies, where loneliness clung.  
Raindrops cloak her tears, in a silent plea,  
Lost innocence, a poignant melody.

## Melted

There is a man who paints on ice.  
From summer fruits and seeds he makes  
A paint to tint the winter's sights.  
Four faces appear on Finland's lakes  
And will live only a few nights.

There is an art that floats away.  
It breaks apart, it cracks and fades.  
The faces weep with melting snow  
The pieces drift in many shades.

There is a man who now looks on.  
He watches in silence the quick decay  
He takes a picture with little reason,  
He watches in reverence for a few days.

There was a portrait gone so soon,  
The sun too warm; too harsh the sea.  
A climate undone, a planet-like moon.  
The art is gone and so are we.

## The fire

The fire burns, the flames ignite.

The paper dances, the wood's alight,

An orange tongue which twists and turns

The paper blackens before it burns

The smell of smoke is all around

The fire makes a crackling sound

The flames die down, the hearth is dark

The ashes are the fire's lasting mark

## Strawberry Red

I died my hair last week.

Some of the strands that frame my face now colored  
Strawberry red.

My friends tell me I'm pretty

And strangers say the color suits me ;

But mostly what I hear is :

« Is it permanent ? »

« I suppose it is. »

But I know the truth.

Because when I shower,

The water that flows down the drain is tainted pink.

And I know that in a few months,

The color will be faded,

Washed away by soap and time

Waiting to be erased,

And then renewed.

A new color might find its place

Maybe dark purple or ocean blue.

Strawberry red will be replaced

And the process will start anew.

But for now I look in the mirror,

Enjoy the brightness in the light

Try to capture every moment

For all things come and go, right ?



## Faded

Like the wind,  
Left to right,  
East to west.  
There a moment, gone the next.  
Refreshing as a breeze  
Or as heavy as a storm.  
There it is,  
All eyes on it, tunnel vision, forget the rest,  
The rest ceases to breathe.  
Desperately following, chasing, sacrificing, giving, losing, trying,  
Admiring, dreading, holding on  
With all we can,  
Squinting  
For it has already  
Completely  
Faded away.

## A cold night

No moonlight. In the lowlands,  
A campfire. Its yellow flames dancing in the dark,  
Shining firmly, warming surely, against storms, darkness, against  
Everything.  
Each time the fire weakens, it revives.

A cold night. Soot accumulates on the surface of the bark.  
The flames are standing against rain, a wind gust, cold.  
Obscurity is chased away, heat is irradiating.  
Each time the fire weakens, it revives.

A cold night. Furrows can be seen all over the logs,  
They deepen as ashes consume them.  
The flames are standing against the wind, against the snow.  
The wood is dark, the flames are orange, glowing in the dark.  
Each time the fire weakens, it revives.

A cold night. Logs are now embers, Dispersed in a reddish carpet.  
The flames are standing against the breeze, in a flamboyant red.  
Light and heat are nowhere to be seen.  
Each time the fire weakens, it revives?

A cold night.

## Volcanic Symphony

Upon the mountain's crest, a fiery dance,  
A volcano's eruption, strong and bright.  
It's molten passion, fleeting in advance,  
A symphony of chaos, burning night.

In rhythmical beats, the earth's pulse quickens  
Lava cascades in ephemeral grace.  
A fleeting moment, nature's fireworks,  
Leaving traces of ash on Time's embrace.

Beneath the moon's soft glow, the Giant rests,  
A sleeping force, in slumber's sweet embrace.  
The volcano, once fierce, now calm and still,  
Its fiery heart now lulled, a tranquil space

Before the tea gets cold

The coppery hues  
diffuse  
into the boiling ocean  
In the abyss of my bowl  
the tea leaf drowns  
in slow motion

The steam gently escapes  
and settles on my cheeks  
I glee  
My hands meet  
Around the infused tea

I take a sip  
The warmth spreads  
into my ribcage  
I wrap myself in a blanket  
then fall asleep

Tomorrow the soothing tea  
will be old  
will be cold  
but it won't be a waste:  
what I liked  
was its ephemeral taste