

Set Poems for Arklow Music Festival 2024

Verse Speaking (6 - 7 Years)

The White Window by James Stephens

The Moon comes every night to peep
Through the window where I lie:
But I pretend to be asleep;
And watch the Moon go slowly by,
— And she never makes a sound!

She stands and stares! And then she goes
To the house that's next to me,
Stealing by on tippy-toes;
To peep at folk asleep maybe
— And she never makes a sound!

Upside Down by Aileen Fisher

It's funny how beetles
and creatures like that
can walk upside down
as well as walk flat.

They crawl on a ceiling
and climb on a wall
without any practice
or trouble at all.

While I have been trying
for a year (maybe more)
and still I can't stand
with my head on the floor.

The Witch by Percy H. Ilott

I saw her plucking cowslips,
And marked her where she stood:
She never knew I watched her
While hiding in the wood.

Her skirt was brightest crimson,
And black her steeple hat,
Her broomstick lay beside her—
I'm positive of that.

Her chin was sharp and pointed,
Her eyes were—I don't know—
For, when she turned towards me—
I thought it best—to go!

Recycling is the Greatest by Ted Scheu

The Recycling is the greatest thing,
That each of us can do.
We send our plastic out and,
it comes back as something new.

It works for glass and paper too.
We trade them in for others.
I wonder if recycling works
For very bossy brothers.

Verse Speaking (8 - 9 Years)

The Cow by Robert Louis Stevenson

The friendly cow all red and white,
I laugh with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.

Little Trotty Wagtail by John Clare

Little trotty wagtail he went in the rain,
And tittering, tottering sideways he ne'er got straight again.
He stopped to get a worm, and look'd up to catch a fly,
And then he flew away ere his feathers they were dry.

Little trotty wagtail, he waddled in the mud,
And left his little footmarks, trample where he would.
He waddled in the water-pudge and waggle went his tail,
And chirrupt up his wings to dry upon the garden rail.

Little trotty wagtail, you nimble all about,
And in the dimpling water-pudge you waddle in and out;
Your home is nigh at hand, and in the warm pigsty,
So, little Master Wagtail, I'll bid you a "Goodbye".

Windy Nights by Robert Louis Stevenson

Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.

Fairy Story by Stevie Smith

I went into the wood one day
And there I walked and lost my way

When it was so dark I could not see
A little creature came to me.

He said if I would sing a song
The time would not be very long

But first I must let him hold my hand tight
Or else the wood would give me a fright

I sang a song, he let me go
But now I am home again there is nobody I know.

Verse Speaking (10 - 11 Years)

The Cradle Song by Padraic Colum

O men from the fields,
Come gently within.
Tread softly, softly
O men coming in!
Mavourneen is going
From me and from you,
Where Mary will fold him
With mantle of blue!
From reek of the smoke
And cold of the floor
And the peering of things
Across the half-door.
O men of the fields,
Soft, softly come thro'
Mary puts round him
Her mantle of blue.

The Balloon Man by Rose Fyleman

He always comes on market days
And holds balloons – a lovely bunch –
And in the market square he stays,
And never seems to think of lunch.

They're red and purple, blue and green,
And when it is a sunny day
The carts and people get between
You see them shining far away.

And some are big and some are small,
All tied together with a string.
And if there is a wind at all
They tug and tug like anything.

Some day perhaps he'll let them go
And we shall see them sailing high,
And stand and watch them from below —
They would look pretty in the sky!

Someone by Walter De La Mare

Someone came knocking
At my wee, small door;
Someone came knocking;
I'm sure — sure — sure;
I listened, I opened,
I looked to left and right,
But nought there was a-stirring
In the still, dark night;
Only the busy beetle
Tap-tapping in the wall,
Only from the forest
The screech owl's call,
Only the cricket whistling
While the dewdrops fall,
So I know not who came knocking,
At all, at all, at all.

I've Had This Shirt by Michael Rosen

I've had this shirt
That's covered in dirt
For years and years and years.
It used to be red, but I wore it in bed,
And it went grey,
Cos I wore it all day,
For years and years and years.
The arms fell off
In the Monday wash
And you can see my vest
Through the holes in my chest

For years and years and years.
As my shirt falls apart
I'll keep the bits
In a biscuit tin
On the mantelpiece.

Verse Speaking (12 - 13 Years)

White Fields by James Stephens

I

In the winter time we go
Walking in the fields of snow;

Where there is no grass at all;
Where the top of every wall,

Every fence, and every tree,
Is as white as white can be.

II

Pointing out the way we came,
-Every one of them the same-

All across the fields there be
Prints in silver filigree;

And our mothers always know,
By the footprints in the snow,

Where it is the children go.

The Star by Jane Taylor

TWINKLE, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are !
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the trav'ler in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often thro' my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

'Tis your bright and tiny spark,
Lights the trav'ler in the dark:
Tho' I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

Autumn by John Clare

I love the fitful gust that shakes
The casement all the day,
And from the glossy elm tree takes
The faded leaves away,
Twirling them by the window pane
With thousand others down the lane.

I love to see the shaking twig
Dance till the shut of eve,
The sparrow on the cottage rig,
Whose chirp would make believe
That Spring was just now flirting by
In Summer's lap with flowers to lie.

I love to see the cottage smoke
Curl upwards through the trees,
The pigeons nestled round the cote
On November days like these;
The cock upon the dunghill crowing,
The mill sails on the heath a-going.

The feather from the raven's breast
Falls on the stubble lea,
The acorns near the old crow's nest
Drop pattering down the tree;
The grunting pigs, that wait for all,
Scramble and hurry where they fall.

Verse Speaking (14 Years)

The Little Waves of Breffny by Eva Gore-Booth

The grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea,
And there is traffic in it and many a horse and cart,
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me,
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it and terror on the wind,
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal,
But the Little Waves of Breffny have drenched my heart in spray,
And the Little Waves of Breffny go stumbling through my soul.

Daffodils by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

A Boy's Song by James Hogg

Where the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and over the lea,
That 's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That 's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest;
There to track the homeward bee,
That 's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest,
Where the shadow falls the deepest,
Where the clustering nuts fall free,
That 's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away
Little sweet maidens from the play,
Or love to banter and fight so well,
That 's the thing I never could tell.

But this I know, I love to play,
Through the meadow, among the hay,
Up the water and over the lea,
That 's the way for Billy and me.

Verse Speaking - The Yeats Competition (14 years and over)

*Four poems are provided below but **any Yeats poem** may be chosen.*

The Lake Isle of Innisfree by W. B. Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven by W. B. Yeats

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

Down by the Salley Gardens by W. B. Yeats

Down by the salley gardens
my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens
with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy,
as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish,
with her would not agree.

In a field by the river
my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder
she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy,
as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish,
and now am full of tears.

To a Child Dancing in the Wind by W. B. Yeats

Dance there upon the shore;
What need have you to care
For wind or water's roar?
And tumble out your hair
That the salt drops have wet;
Being young you have not known
The fool's triumph, nor yet
Love lost as soon as won,
Nor the best labourer dead
And all the sheaves to bind.
What need have you to dread
The monstrous crying of wind?