



MARY KENYON POETRY PRIZE 2024 - WINNERS

YEARS 7-9

My Mother Says

By Neena, 9H

My mother says the leaves talk in the twilight,
that the murmur of the trees makes some secret song,
her calloused palms tend so gently to the dying flowers.

My mother says we should listen to the hum of the earth,
of everything it houses and the words that go unspoken,
whilst she buries a lifeless bird underneath the dirt.

The bird's mate comes to our garden a few days later, hobbling with an injured wing.

Do not mar people with the fire on your tongue, till your fury has a rightful direction, but be their hope.

Somehow, the injured bird finds strength to fly again.

My mother is a woman with rigid determination,
wiping the sweat from her brow. Know when to stop, she says.
Do not give till you are empty husk more than woman, she means.
She ploughs through the earth, digging through ant nests,
thinking of the rose bushes she will plant when the leaves turn crackly orange.

My mother's hair is turning grey, and lines are etched onto her face,
sacrifice stains her skin, armour encases her bones.

My mother tends to other gardens now, ones she has always nurtured.

Time is a waiting woman, and my mother patiently wonders when her flowers will bloom.



YEARS 10-11

Earhart's Absolute Ceiling

By Riya, 11G

From Earhart's absolute ceiling she can still see the stars and she'll tell us

(clear for take-off) get the wind under your wings, chase them!

Pierce through the clouds, cruise on the crystal-clear winds (268 km/hr);

this blue silence is your new good friend – nothing reaches this high –
congratulations.

Taking fully impossible breaths in the thinner-than-thread air

Rippling through it as a tender mirage, yet casting a winged shadow

to hold our hands and point the direction (measuring each degree) for us

Us: blinded, a blinking aeroplane, a shooting star, or an angel? We ask.

It doesn't matter; looking up is how you climb, love!

Climb: at full throttle to join the frosted blue sky brandishing the sun.

Icarus returns. Brushed by the sun he tumbled down (aircraft on ground).

She returns. From the absolute ceiling, having mapped the net of stars and clouds –

maybe fierce turbulence –

maybe paralysed, stalling –

maybe diving like a bird (uncontrolled flight into terrain),

floating, fluttering, with the fizz of a flame sparking out.

Wings not melted but glassified in the firing-sun.

Hold her as a reminder in your pocket of new worlds, greater velocities, higher ceilings,

and she'll hear us (clear for landing).



YEARS 12-13

The Tapestry of Time

By Anvi, 12KRE

Inspirational women, quietly sewn into
the tapestry of time
not the flashy embroidery, oh no, but the
small yet durable,
barely-there stitches
that hold together,
and sustain the
shape and form of society.
That turn the tears of adversity into tears of
strength, and courage
Gellhorn, Kare, Gibb; simply
slip stitches,
slip slip slipping away into the vibrant, rich
honorable tapestry
of history.
Into the tapestry of time.