

Poems are out of this world

Picture: SIMON FINLAY

Homesick astronauts, an argumentative sun and moon and skies jewelled with stars flooded the imagination of young writers who put pen to paper for this year's Young Poets of the Year competition.

The contest, organised by Bayer CropScience and the EDP, is celebrated today - National Poetry Day - with a supplement featuring the winning poems, runners-up, highly commended and a selection of the many others which caught the eye of the judges during the selection process.

For the first time in the four-year history of the annual competition, children were encouraged to be inspired by a photograph - of the Earth as seen from space.

Almost 600 children, representing 25 schools, wrote about the sensation of looking down on our planet, or took the image as a starting point for an exploration of diverse subjects and points of view.

The standard of work proved extremely high and demonstrated the prodigious talent of young writers across the region.

Earlier this week, 10 prize-winning poets were awarded certificates and goodie bags at Norwich City's Study Support Centre by new on-loan star Leroy Lita.

The winners in each age category, representing eight to nine-year-olds and 10 to 11-year-olds, also won £100 each, while their schools were given £500 and the chance for a group of pupils to spend a day at the Study Support Centre, which offers programmes in literacy, numeracy and ICT, using the power of football

Today is National Poetry Day and we are marking it with a supplement featuring poems from the EDP and Bayer CropScience Young Poets of the Year competition. This year pupils were asked to respond to a photo of the Earth as seen from space. **LAURA DEVLIN** and **SIMON PROCTOR** report.

to engage pupils.

Winner William Palmer, 10, of Blackbourne Middle School in Stanton, near Bury St Edmunds, impressed with his verse about a spaceman sitting in his hi-tech spaceship, pining for home comforts.

Nine-year-old Ellamae Hindley, of Robert Kett Junior School in Wymondham, received the other top prize for her tribute to the wonders of God's creation.

Dave Jones, site manager at Bayer CropScience, said: "The competition has gone from strength to strength and the standard of entries this year was very high.

"The theme of Earth from Space



YOUNG POETS: Front row, from left, William Palmer (winner 10-11), Norwich City's on-loan star Leroy Lita and Ellamae Hindley (winner 8-9); middle row, from left, Luan Pemberton (highly commended 10-11), Natasha Tench (highly commended 8-9), George Barnes (runner-up 8-9), Georgina Leake (highly commended 8-9); back row, from left, Edward Chilvers (highly commended 8-9), Elliot Legg (highly commended 10-11), Devon Young (highly commended 10-11), Laurina Mellows (runner-up 10-11).

clearly inspired the children and it was lovely to read their poems. They are all stars."

Bayer is also donating £500 each to two charities: OCD Action, which helps those with obsessive compulsive disorders, and the

Norwich-based SAW Trust, which encourages engagement between science and the arts.

The first-stage judges were Simon Proctor of the EDP, Norfolk and Norwich Festival director Jonathan Holloway, Paulene Guise of Bayer

CropScience and Anne Osbourn of the John Innes Centre and SAW Trust. The final-stage judge was actor Roger Lloyd-Pack, whose credits include Only Fools and Horses, The Vicar of Dibley and Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.

WINNER: 8-9 age category

The Sophistication of God's Creation

God clapped his hands and Earth was born
Clouds and dust and gas
Rock crusts, oceans and atmosphere.
Are we flat or are we round?
Imagine, a ship sailing round or falling to the ground.

Floating, floating through space and time.
My spirit and soul are free, no gravity to pull me back
I am flying like a bird
Looking down, looking down.
What can I see?

The stratosphere, mesosphere,
God in his heaven, creating, creating
Emotional raindrops
Music of the rainbow, the masterpiece of the skies
And as I watch ...

The music from God's heart, the heartbeat from heaven begins to play
And the cloud with angel wings
Carries the creation's dawn.
And I can see the magnificence of the rainbow umbrellaing the earth.
The wind is practising her song, over in the troposphere
Where the weather is born.

I can hear, what can I hear?
The waves crashing to the shore.
As the galleon ships sail back in time
Captain Cook, Columbus, Nelson's battle,
Explorers, sacrifices, battleships and wars.
This haunting world what am I seeing this for?

As I float the moon winks and says "Hello."
The sun smiles as a huge swirl of stars float past me.
It's so amazing I can see Earth in this situation.
The sophistication of God's creation
As the earth and planets are born.

Ellamae Hindley

Age 9
Robert Kett Junior School, Wymondham



WINNER: 10-11 age category

I'm a Down to Earth Kind of Chap

Lazily, as I slump in my technical, space chair,
A pitch, dark blue blanket, eternal, sits out there.
In my modern, space chair, lonely sad,
If I could return to earth, if only I could return to earth, I'd be immensely glad,
You see really, I'm a down to earth kind of chap.

A snowy white mass blanks my home, lost.
I am something similarly unfound in my spaceship, through nothing being tossed.
Constantly, dreaming of a flat neatly tucked away,
Yet here I am imprisoned in misery and dismay, again, sad in every way.
You see really, I'm a down to earth kind of chap.

Thick leather of a chair strokes my claustrophobic space leggings,
As my depressed brain sends 'I want to go home' - 'Let me return' begging.
I imagine my NASA space chair is a sleek, black sofa in my flat.
I imagine ice, metallic floor is my accommodation's woven mat.
You see really, I'm a down to earth kind of chap.

Why (not) on earth am I here, I ask myself.
So up from my super, space chair I heavily heave with little stealth.
Optimistically, in an escape craft I joyfully puff a happy sigh.
The escape craft: fire madly blazing, soaring earthwards through the mysterious sky.
I'm a returning to earth kind of chap.

William Palmer

Age 10
Blackbourne Middle School, Stanton, Suffolk



RUNNERS-UP

8-9 age category

I Want to be Home

One side dark, one side bright:
One side day, one side night.
Too big to catch –
With invisible hands that hold.
Slow, yet fast:
The future, the past.

The seed of God, the breath of life:
Father, mother, husband, wife.
And nobody knows its history,
That's why it is a mystery;
And I don't have much of a clue
Of what existed before you.

A multicoloured marble,
Never to stop rolling round its golden target;
An artist's palette,
Swirled with red, white, green and blue;
A glittering opal,
Cloaked in black.

Not a sound, not a word;
Not a whisper, nothing heard.
Oh! For the buzzing of bees,
Birds singing in the trees,
The sweet smell of autumn leaves,
And the noise of crashing seas.

I'm nowhere near it
Thousands of miles away;
I wish I could be there
Every single day.
Fire the rocket boosters!
I want to be home ...

George Barnes
Age 9
Barnham Broom School

10-11 age category

Instead of me Going to the Moon

Instead of me going to the moon,
Why can't the moon come to me?
It could come round my house,
I'd invite it to tea.

The sun could come too,
Is it a he or a she?
A Mr or Mrs?
We'll have to wait and see.

Yesterday they both came round
Acting icily polite.
As soon as I go out of the room,
The sun starts up a fight.

"You're stealing my glory!"
The sun, he said.
"The world would love it
"If you were dead!"

"You old ball of gas,"
The moon, he retorted.
"To the south of Southern Spain
"You should be imported!"

It all ends with a slap around the face
For the moon,
Who I stop from doing the same.
I won't invite them around again any time soon.

Six days on I've been thinking.
I think stars and planets prefer space.
I'm going to go round their house sometime soon
And visit them in their home place.

NASA says I can't be an astronaut.
So I can't go visit them in that place.
Anyway I'd miss my shampoo,
And you can't eat beans in space.

Laurina Mellows
Age 11
Overstrand Belfry School

HIGHLY COMMENDED

8-9 age category

The Earth We Have

The world is a twirling water bomb,
A big, black cloak looming over it.
A spinning willow pattern on it.
Italy is a bronze leather boot.
The Antarctic is a solid white city
With icing sugar on the bottom.
Clouds like a powerfully flapping swan,
Crashing waves thundering foam,
The gripping face of God.

Edward Chilvers
Age 9
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Costessey

The Changing World

The world is a washing machine
Whirling, twirling
A frisbee endlessly spinning and swinging.

The world is a light in the middle of night,
A jewel, fragile and so very bright.

Clouds like a bed of snow on a bleak
Winter's morning
Ice on the extremes continuously thawing.

Georgina Leake
Age 9
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Costessey

The Planets and the Stars

The Earth is swirling below you.
When you are drifting gently up to space.
You drop down upon the moon.
The Earth looks like a tiny place.

Lots of shooting stars flying beside you.
They look like tiny suns
The light almost blinds you.
Make a wish when you see one.

You walk up to a crater.
It's deep, dark and smelly,
An alien pops out its head
Then jumps out wearing one welly.

You look up at the planets.
With the alien by your side,
They look like little pebbles
They look like they're trying to hide.

There are all different kinds of stars
Small, medium and large,
They drift over the planets
Like Jupiter, Earth and Mars.

You get into your floating rocket.
To tell the world what you have seen.
You get back into your house
And realise that is was just a dream.

Natasha Tench
Age 8
Overstrand Belfry School

10-11 age category

The Earth

A glass eye that is whirling
around in your old granddad's eye socket

Like a wet cloudy day
Swirling around in the winter sky

A dull fluffy cloud
Twisting about in the stormy sky

Like a crystal ball that has a
magical fortune-teller sitting
beside it.

A marble is floating
In the black sky of space
All colourful and sparkly

Luan Pemberton
Age 10
Gresham Village School

Earth from Space

E verything so small.
A n endless black background.
R ound and round it goes
T hough nobody can stop it.
H alf light, half dark.

F or it could stop, this
R ounded shape in empty space.
O n the moon I stand, I think to
M yself that I am,

S eparated by a
P articularly big step.
A way from my family living on a ball of
C ontrasting colours:
E arth.

Elliot Legg
Age 11
Middleton, VC Primary School

Earth from Space

I'm in a rocket, three, two, one,
An exquisite voyage has just begun.
I'm afraid of heights, but there's no fear,
Now I'm past the atmosphere.
This shimmering ball of paradise blue,
Is truly a miraculous view.
Fantastical sights from this colossal height,
Day creeping, the beginning of night.
In Australia the day is new,
Everything's smiling, every kangaroo!
Over France comes one of many nights.
As it gets shadowy, on come the lights.
This magical, miraculous, moving marble,
It's really cool, it's a marvel.
Egyptian deserts, seas of sand,
The Nile stretching across the land.
The minuscule islands of the UK,
The remarkable sight will blow you away.
I can even see the North Pole,
It looks like a blizzard of toilet roll.
A toddler's picture, splattered with paint.
These views are so awesome, I could faint.
I think we should call this a day,
As our rocket flies away.

Devon Young
Age 11
Falcon Junior School, Norwich

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KNOW THAT...



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manufactures crop protection products
which are distributed worldwide?