

Winners of the CSG Poetry Competition 2024

National Poetry Day 2024

Counting



Adds Up to Disaster by Anouk, 7R

3=one happy family

4=adds up to disaster

Numbers are a funny thing

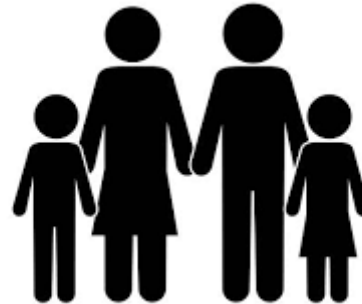
They add up, 'till they don't

At first you have a great time

Integers, increasing in size

Until a fourth one comes along

And messes up the sequence



The newest numeral gets all the praise
And soon the old one is reduced
A decimal it feels, a negative, cut loose
And all it wants is for it to be counted
once more

The pattern is demolished
The numerator takes up the whole
equation
No longer is the sequence ascending in
size
More in matters of importance
And the new addition takes the lead

$2 + 1 = \text{Happy Family}$
 $2 + 2 = \text{Disaster!}$

The first two numbers spend their time
On making sure the little one is fine
And the third number; negative
In a room full of positives.

*Judge's Comments: I love the way
Anouk has woven so many
mathematical terms into her poem
as well as her light-hearted,
conversational tone.*

10 Ways to Save the Wild by Jill, 8C

I'll tell it straight to your face
There aren't any lives left to waste
The animals are waiting to be saved
The end to the world's right next door
What's to ignore?
I can't take it anymore

If you care about the future, the way
forward is clear
I'll say it again 'til all the world hears



You have to water that tree, Bea
Stop eating that beef, Keith
Don't buy all those furs, Fleur
Start planting more pears, Claire
Care for those strays, May
Keep saving the wild

You think the world's fine?
Just look at the time
It's 2024
Net zero 2030, we swore
It's too late to ignore
All the world's in fear
The ending is near
We're circling the drain
All this heavy rain. This heat. This
freeze. This War.
What's to ignore?



The Earth's in pain
And I can't take it anymore
If you care about the future, the way
forward is clear
I'll say it again, 'til all the world hears

Stop trapping those cats, Pat
Release cheetahs, Rita
Don't fly all those planes, Jane
Care for the sharks, Clark
Don't drive that car, Edgar
And keep ...



Judge's Comments: *Jill's poem uses the format of Paul Simon's song 'Fifty Ways'. I really like the way she creates a clear distinction of pace and style between the verses and the chorus and, of course, her subject is terrifyingly urgent now.*



Stolen Property by Clara, Y9

Count your blessings, they tell me
So I go to my counting house
And begin to count each blessing
1,2,3, I count, each one a part of me; a fragment of who I was
And who I will be forever, each one making me whole,
And then I pause
One is missing
I run from my counting house
And phone the police
“One of my blessings is missing!” I say
They go on high alert,
Stop and search everyone for a missing blessing,
A blessing which is not their own, one that doesn't fit,
Because it was never meant for them.



I put up posters in my neighbourhood,
Wanted: A Blessing
The police tell me when they find it,
They will trace my blessing for fingerprints
They will find imprints on it,
Not only from the felon
But for now I can only hope
That my blessing has been, say,
Swept away by the wind
And one day a kind-hearted person
Will pick it up on the street
And recognise it as my own
That they will return it to me
And it will give me the strength
To mould myself into something whole again

Wanted
By Police

A BLESSING

If you find it,
call 999

Judge's Comments: *I like the way Clara takes an abstract idea of a blessing and gives it physical form; the way she takes the everyday saying 'count your blessings' and weaves a narrative around it to make us think about what a blessing really is.*

Poem by Gisele, 10T

I count a total of 10 lit candles.
My face burns with envy.
Being 3 years younger,
I am certain I will never catch up.

30 birthdays pass by.
I admire the golden sparkler that has been
presented to you.
It spits out embers that light up your dim living
room.



42 more,

I watch the hot wax drip down a singular candle.

It runs down my fingers,
coating them in pearly thimbles.

I stand outside your hospital room until the flame
dies out.



Judge's Comments: *This is a most moving poem. I love the way Gisele uses numbers and images of light to trace the journey of a life as well as the way she tracks the speaker's responses: 'I count...I admire...I watch...I stand'.*

Three Generations of Christmas by Annabella, Y10

You wake up in a flurry of snow,
to three half eaten carrots,
two crumbs of a mince pie,
one empty glass of milk,
and a partridge in a pear tree.
Your mother's smile as soft as silk,
enamoured by the thought of a snowman ready
to be built.
Your tiny fingers wrap around a cascade of
presents,
spilt across the floor, embracing you like a warm
quilt.



You raid the chocolates in the window of the advent,
while freshly made gingerbread is displayed,
indulging your soul with its scent.
Hot cocoa,
with ten giant marshmallows,
five of which are pink.
Three rings of squirty cream,
mum with one mug of peppermint tea resting on
her knee,
and a partridge in a pear tree.



There will come a time, when the warmth of
christmas,
morphs into a cold and bitter winter.
When you begin to sink into an abyss of soggy
snow,
which has lost its nostalgic crispness.
Now you're sixteen,
the taste of chocolate for breakfast is no longer
delicious,
and your mother swaps the gingerbread,
for something more 'nutritious'.
Three carrots and a pint of milk remain in the
fridge.



We forget to even buy mince pies,
and the air is filled with stiffness.
With accismus you smile at the,
three gifts,
a tenner,
and a couple of cards from relatives you no longer
see.

Frostbite gnaws at your fingertips and nose,
“this isn't how I remembered it to be,”
and you shiver like the icy branches,
of the weary, frozen trees.



She will wake you up like a
snowstorm.

Her eyes lighting up,
like the sun that adorns the pristine
blanket of snow on the floor.

Enchanted by the reindeers who,
nibbled three carrots.

Marvelling at the,
two crumbs left of a mince pie,
and an empty glass of milk.



You'll teach her to bake gingerbread,
a smell that fills the house with glee.
You'll watch her unwrap a sea of affection,
with a peppermint tea on your knee.
And together adore the snowman you built,
three balls of snow,
a carrot nose,
button eyes so it can see.
A coat,
a scarf,
a woolly hat,
and a partridge in a pear tree.



Judge's Comments: *This is a wonderful poem which uses repeated motifs and brilliantly chosen sensory imagery to create three distinct scenarios, each portraying a different time and a very different emotion. I love the way the poem plays with numbers and improvises on the famous Christmas song.*