



Year 5/6

Poetry

Anthology

# Cycle A

## Unit 1

Senryus

From a Railway Carriage – Robert Louis Stevenson

The River – Valerie Bloom

Whatif – Shel Silverstein

## Unit 2

Renga

Bed in Summer – Robert Louis Stevenson

Goldilocks on CCTV – John Agard

Jabberwocky – Lewis Carroll

Adventures of Isabel – Ogden Nash

# Cycle B

## Unit 1

Ottava Rima

Dreams – Longston Hughes

The Parent and Child Quadrille – Michaela Morgan

I am a Writer – Josephs Coelho

## Unit 2

Free Verse

The language of cat – Rachel Rooney

The Tyger – William Blake

Peer Pressure – Karl Nova

Senryu

Mud Pie

Kids playing outside

Mud pies made and tall trees climbed

Balls thrown and fish caught

Listen

Assembly is full

Headteacher is on the stage

The room falls silent

Welcome

The new baby screams

Its eyes closed and small fists balled

Welcome to the world

## **From a Railway Carriage** **by Robert Louis Stevenson**

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,  
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;  
And charging along like troops in a battle,  
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:  
All of the sights of the hill and the plain  
Fly as thick as driving rain;  
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,  
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clammers and scrambles,  
All by himself and gathering brambles;  
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;  
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!  
Here is a cart run away in the road  
Lumping along with man and load;  
And here is a mill and there is a river:  
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!



# The River

by Valerie Bloom

The River's a wanderer.  
A nomad, a tramp,  
He doesn't choose one place  
To set up his camp.

The River's a winder,  
Through valley and hill  
He twists and he turns,  
He just cannot be still.

The River's a hoarder,  
And he buries down deep  
Those little treasures  
That he wants to keep.

The River's a baby,  
He gurgles and hums,  
And sounds like he's happily  
Sucking his thumbs.

The River's a singer,  
As he dances along,  
The countryside echoes  
The notes of his song.

The River's a monster  
Hungry and vexed,  
He's gobbled up trees  
And he'll swallow you next.

# Whatif

from the book "A Light in the Attic" (1981)

Shel Silverstein

Last night, while I lay thinking here,  
some Whatifs crawled inside my ear  
and pranced and partied all night long  
and sang their same old Whatif song:

Whatif I'm dumb in school?

Whatif they've closed the swimming pool?

Whatif I get beat up?

Whatif there's poison in my cup?

Whatif I start to cry?

Whatif I get sick and die?

Whatif I flunk that test?

Whatif green hair grows on my chest?

Whatif nobody likes me?

Whatif a bolt of lightning strikes me?

Whatif I don't grow tall?

Whatif my head starts getting smaller?

Whatif the fish won't bite?

Whatif the wind tears up my kite?

Whatif they start a war?

Whatif my parents get divorced?

Whatif the bus is late?

Whatif my teeth don't grow in straight?

Whatif I tear my pants?

Whatif I never learn to dance?

Everything seems well, and then  
the nighttime Whatifs strike again!

# Renga

## Breeze

Snow yet remaining  
The mountain slopes are misty –  
An evening in spring.

Far away the water flows  
Past the plum-scented village.

In the river breeze  
The willow trees are clustered  
Spring is appearing.

The sound of a boat being poled  
Clear in the morning light.

The moon! Does it still  
Over fog-enshrouded fields  
Linger in the sky?

Meadows carpeted in frost –  
Autumn has drawn to a close.

## Autumn

The final leaf falls

The tree branches are so bare

Autumn has arrived

Remember Summer's warm kiss

So gentle, it will be missed



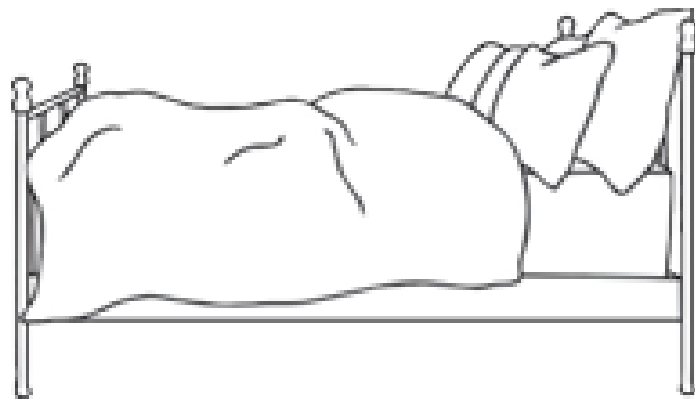
# — Bed in Summer —

By Robert Louis Stevenson

In winter I get up at night  
And dress by yellow candle-light.  
In summer, quite the other way,  
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see  
The birds still hopping on the tree,  
Or hear the grown-up people's feet  
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?



## *Goldilocks on CCTV* by John Agard

There she was on the news,  
Miss Goody Two Shoes  
caught on CCTV.

Don't look so shocked.  
Of course you know who – who else but Goldilocks!

Broke into a house  
of suburban grisslies,  
a nuclear family

from the sound of it.  
Daddy Bear Mummy Bear  
and whiz kid Baby Bear.

There she was, tucking in  
to a bowl of their muesli.  
Every move on CCTV.

How she vandalised a chair  
in the nursery  
then tried out their jacuzzi

not to mention the towels  
marked His and Hers.  
And everywhere a trail

of golden curls mixed with fur.  
A forensic goldmine.  
It appears the police found her

in perfect slumber  
at the scene of the crime – which wasn't very clever.

But the Bears decided to drop  
charges for the sake of  
happy-ever-after.

And so fairy-tale justice  
was seen to be vindicated  
and Goldie's parents were sedated.



# *Jabberwocky*

**Lewis Carroll** - 1832-1898

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;  
Long time the manxome foe he sought—  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.



Ottava Rima

Tiger

Quickly did the tiger begin his fast run  
Over hilly ground you see him fly and leap  
The passive prey laying grazing in the sun  
Suddenly its life that it wanted to keep  
Tiger pounces, quickly getting the job done  
The prey collapsing in a really big heap  
Tiger sleeps as night takes over from the day  
Will we ever see the hunter become prey?

## A Summer Ottawa Rima

The crash of waves is always in the air,  
And caravans adorn the crowded shore.  
People roast on towels without a care,  
Or find new rocky outcrops to explore.  
Crunchy crystal sand grows too hot to bear,  
Yet we stay: it's what all Aussies yearn for!  
In summertime, this is our golden place;  
Then winter comes and banishes all trace.

By James Aithchison

## Dreams

by Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.



## The Parent and Child Quadrille by Michaela Morgan

Could you be a little better?  
Could you be a little more?  
Could you stand up straight, speak clearly,  
Pick your clothes up off the floor.  
Could you, would you, will you, won't you?  
Can you be the perfect child?

Could you walk a little quicker?  
Could you smile a sweeter smile?  
Could you eat up all your dinner-  
Chewing quietly the while?

Could you be polite and grateful?  
Always say 'thank you' and 'please'?  
Could you keep your bedroom tidy-  
And have shiny, shiny knees?  
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you  
Oh why don't you try to be the perfect child?

Will you go to bed on order?  
Will you fall asleep when told?  
Will you leap out when you're called for-  
Be a JOY to behold?

Will you work so hard at lessons  
That you get a perfect score?  
Be superb at spelling, sums and science  
Do your homework. Ask for more?

Will you always make the extra effort?  
Have gleaming teeth and shining hair.  
And if you end up in Emergency please have  
spotless underwear  
Can't you be like the kids on telly - act as if you're  
on an ad?  
Be well behaved and clever and make a humble  
parent glad?

You can really have no notion how delightful it would be  
If you do all you are asked to - and you do it perfectly.  
So be not wild, oh errant child, but be serious, be grave  
Be sensible, be superior, be SILENT  
oh...BEHAVE.







## Free Verse

### The Truth

Truth is a mountain which must be bravely  
climbed

Truth is in the wind which swirls around snowy  
peaks

Truth is in the trees which keep me company on  
my ascent

But on the journey, truth couldn't be seen  
amongst the storm

The mountain stood so vast and tall

Looking down upon us all

The wind cloaks herself in dark at night

She whips and cries and gave a fright

The trees capture innocent passers-by

They used their limbs to clutch them tight in  
the cold and crisp night sky

## The Language of Cat

by Rachel Rooney



Teach me the language of Cat;  
the slow-motion blink, that crystal stare,  
a tight-lipped purr and a wide-mouthed hiss.  
Let me walk with a saunter, nose in the air.

Teach my ears the way to ignore  
names that I'm called. May they only twitch  
to the distant shake of a boxful of biscuits,  
the clink of a fork on a china dish.

Teach me that vanishing trick  
where dents in cushions appear, and I'm missed.  
Show me the high-wire trip along fences  
to hideaway places, that no-one but me knows exist.

Don't teach me Dog,  
all eager to please, that slobbers, yaps and begs for a pat,  
that sits when told by its owner, that's led on a lead.  
No, not that. Teach me the language of Cat.

## The Tyger

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat.  
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp.  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears  
And water'd heaven with their tears:  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,  
In the forests of the night:  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?



## Peer Pressure

The fear of being left out is what it's all about  
No one wants to get laughed at or be the odd one out  
No one likes to feel rejected put down and dejected  
we all love to feel accepted, we're all affected  
but you have to learn to be your own person  
just be yourself and aim to be your best version  
You're not a robot programmed to follow without thinking  
just acting brainless with empty eyes blinking  
I understand the pressure it doesn't stop as you grow  
It's natural to follow where everyone goes  
and sometimes it's ok to go with the flow  
but other times you have to swim against the tide and so  
you'll have to say no, when everyone says yes  
and be firm with your choice deep in your chest  
and overcome that fear of being left out  
because that's what peer pressure is really all about.

Karl Nova