

# Terry Kelly Poetry Prize 2017 Anthology



**Learning and Participation**  
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TERRY KELLY POETRY PRIZE  
2017 ANTHOLOGY

Welcome to the Terry Kelly Poetry Prize 2017 anthology and the brilliant mix of shortlisted poems from young writers based in the North East.

The Terry Kelly Poetry Prize began in 2016 to celebrate the life of local writer, Shields Gazette reporter and poet, Terry Kelly. The prize runs annually as part of The Takeover, an arts festival at The Customs House for emerging artists and arts professionals. The shortlisted poems were chosen from almost 100 entries because they were captivating in both form and subject. Our shortlist features a wide range of themes, from the tiny details of everyday life to grand questions about the universe.

We would like to extend special thanks to Sheila Wakefield from Red Squirrel Press for being so generous with her time in imparting her expertise to help us create this anthology. We are also deeply grateful to The Barbour Foundation, whose generous grant allowed us to publish this anthology, Arts Council England and our partners at The Shields Gazette, South Tyneside Council and The Word whose support has made the Terry Kelly Poetry Prize possible.

We hope you will enjoy reading these poems as much as we loved selecting them.

Maxine Davies, editor

## **A Jarrow Lad**

Terry was not just Jarrow and Hebburn's long-term Gazette reporter but a Jarrow lad who was in contact with the great and good of the literary world.

He believed poetry really mattered and I am sure he would be delighted that this Customs House competition will help to remind young people of the power of poetry.

This is a brief extract, from an article on Terry, from the poet and editor Roger Garfitt, which appeared in 'The Next Review' magazine:

*Terry, who was modest about his own poetry but passionate about his criticism, relishing the chance The London Magazine and The Next Review were giving him to stretch out in extended pieces on the life's work of major figures that were always thoroughly researched and carefully considered.*

And I have to make reference to Bob Dylan, as Terry was a Bob Dylan aficionado. Here is what Michael Gray, a Dylan scholar of the highest order, has to say:

*Terry was also a poet, a critic, a Larkin scholar, a reviewer for London Magazine and The Next Review, a big Jerry Lee Lewis fan, an Elvis expert and a shrewd devotee of, and writer on, the work of Bob Dylan.*

Terry was very happily married to Val and they had a daughter, Kate. He lived in Jarrow most of his life and both our sister Maureen, brother Paul and myself are proud to say he was our brother.

*/Tom Kelly*



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**Work by writers aged 11  
years and under**

## **Flying Through The Breeze**

*Kayne Allsopp*

Gliding through the blizzard below,  
Smoky puffs of clouds dash before me,  
Fun flying with the wind.  
The clouds are candy floss,  
I could eat them all day.  
Glittering lights on the field like a patch work quilt,  
Fluttering to my freedom,  
Relaxing and calm sunny days that I don't want to end.

## **Metal Monsters**

*Gabriel Dunn*

Despite the shape, this beast is colossal,  
Vomiting smoke, and a roaring voice.  
Down by the cliff, north of here, where you go,  
Metal Monsters follow.  
It is mammoth, screaming like the devil,  
Roaring in its glory, making clouds cry.  
With its fuming yellow eyes, and mighty strong arms,  
It is immense, and they weigh tons.

## **The Ferry**

*Ava George*

On the ferry I can smell the salty sea when it waves up and down.

I look all around I can see fishermen fishing for their tea.

I touch the waves when they come up high.

One day they might touch the sky.

I feel I may melt in the boiling hot sun.

I love this ferry! One day I will return.

## **In The Universe Above**

*Leyia Griffith*

Glistening asteroids gallop through the night sky  
causing mischief all day and night.  
They play with each other daily.

Saturn pirouettes around the colossal sun.  
Earth boasts that it has life and is the most colourful.  
Mercury plays with Venus around the mother of light.

The incandescent sun mourns while watching the  
planets dance around her.  
The sun waves her fiery cloak around her in  
fury!  
She looks over the planets under her and around her.

Stars chatter incessantly and the powerful universe  
tells them off!  
Stars wait nervously in the hope that they are  
bright enough to be seen.  
Stars sing into the night.

The moon gets bullied by passing comets that  
crash into him with impeccable force.  
He watches the planets play but is too far away  
to join in.  
Loneliness overcomes him and devastation is his only  
friend.

## **The Boats Go Out To Sea**

*Charlotte Macmillan*

The boats go out to the  
swirling sparkly blue sea  
passing the lighthouse  
on the rocks

People fishing on the  
jetty waving goodbye

Seagulls making lots of  
noise as people pass by

When the moon rises  
the light will shine  
to show you the way

## **Remember**

*Alfie Young*

Here these poppies lie  
Along the very tall grass  
Oh my, oh my, oh my  
Here the Germans come

Here all the boats come  
Looking out for air raids  
Boom boom from those cannons  
The sky all different shades

Listen to those guns fire  
The people run to hide  
Here come the soldiers  
No one wants to be outside

Here we are ready to fight back  
The Germans are ready to attack  
But when all these soldiers die  
Their families just sit and cry

So that's why we have poppies  
In remembrance of the soldiers  
That have died in the war  
That gave their lives for us

## **Travelling**

*Angel Young*

Faraway in the desert, travelling very slow  
Riding on our camels, on an adventure, here we go  
Over the hills and through the hot sand  
Trot on, trot on, trot on, find the secret land  
We are getting closer, I have a funny feeling in my tummy  
Our camels reach the caves.....  
RUN!! There's a mummy!!!



**Work by writers aged 12 to  
16 years old**

## **The Sun Dances With The Sky**

*Mya Abdul*

She doesn't have to be anything special,  
But the clouds are jealous.  
The moon mimics her passion when she is gone,  
Because she leaves an effect on everything within her reach.

She does her own thing.  
Never failing to be filled with energy and enlightenment,  
The birds sing songs of praise and gratitude when she comes  
and goes,  
Because without her,  
They cannot survive without her.

The world is most alive when she is around.  
Her glow never fails to shine with a sense of purpose,  
Like she has no fear of rejection.  
Even if she was though,  
I would still be by her side.

Even though if she is far out of my reach.  
I will still be by her side.

Her passion and her warmth is all I want,  
She is all I need.  
I love her with all my heart.  
She is more than just a star to me.

She is the sole reason why I exist,  
And the bane of my life,  
– The Sky

## **The Universe**

*Isaac Brown*

Our universe is vast beyond measure  
With billions of stars all twinkling bright  
Shining their light upon distant shores  
Where night and day merge into one  
As gas chokes the air of ancient planets  
On foreign rock their great planes stand  
And mercury waters swell in the darkness  
A sight so strange these sunless seas  
The sound of creation hums in the dusk  
The banging of drums and the whining of flutes  
Where the blackness is dark beyond dark  
And beyond our human conception.

## **Storm Cliff Sea**

*Olivia Gardener*

My naked feet cold on the dirt.  
Tall grass tapping  
brushing against my shins.  
Numbness spreading from nimble fingers.  
Fingers now like skeletal ivory keys  
yet no music could be heard.

The wind which surrounded ran streamline like waters over  
my scalp.  
Taking with it my blanket of security and crumbs of confidence  
in which it took no concern in doing so.

Dark clouds overhead like ash cotton balls.  
Dripping stains of ink across the canvas  
accompanied by strikes of solar light.  
Heard only by those close enough  
closer, closer.

Eyes yellow.  
The halos of distant angels  
but Zeus was the only God playing his hand.

Rocks now at my feet.  
As I look down to see the calm sea beckoning me  
shores filled with lost shells and treasures.  
Old friends now many memories away.

He then turned back to say,  
'I am sorry my loves for now I must return to the sea.  
I will never be gone in head or heart  
as long as you remember me.'

And down he fell into the sea above.

## **Aloud**

*Amy Langdown*

I'm not good at talking  
To new people  
To people I've known for years  
To the people I love  
But  
I have a voice  
Through singing  
It's the only time my voice is true  
And  
Before I could read  
I would sing on karaoke  
Because I knew the words  
Off by heart  
And they worked their way  
Into my heart  
So when I stand on stage  
And sing like I'll never sing again  
I know who I am  
And you can too  
Because  
I might not be able to talk  
But I sure can sing  
And I will sing  
'Till I have no voice left  
To do so

## **Inspiration**

*Luke Million*

An intellectual thought surges into your head,  
Ricocheting and bouncing off your skull wall,  
Each concept a miracle, re-shaping innovation,  
Triggering and signalling acts of inspiration.

It can be drawn from the smallest of things;  
Books, movies, scripts, speeches or even poems.  
Whatever it is, it inspires the nation,  
To make wonderful art using with the gift of creation.

No good, no bad, no right, no wrong,  
Everything designed and generated is magnificent,  
We're inspired, all differently, 7 days a week,  
To create, and inspire, this makes us unique.

Get inspired, change the world.

## **eat yellow paint**

*Morgan Place*

I'm on a diet of yellow paint to make my interiors happy, so I'd love it if you'd stop throwing your blue paint at me.

You look pretty green to me, but your heart seems rather grey, I've never seen such a thing, is your heart in a state of decay?

Maybe this is all just purple, and my yellow diet just won't work, perhaps adding some other colours to my meals won't hurt;

But no colours are as happy as yellow, at least that's what I've been told, blue is such a sad colour, and grey tells me you're old.

So I'll keep to my diet of yellow paint and hope it cures my sadness, I fear adding any other colours will but feed this madness.

## **The garden rose**

*Millie Taylor*

I rose and I fell  
In the garden I lay  
when thy did not rise  
They grew and wilted  
while I flourished  
through my own passage  
our paths would meet  
as the thorns pierced my skin  
thy blood stained the flora  
to a crimson scent  
The rose  
The garden rose.



**Work by writers aged 17 to  
25 years old**

## **Home**

*Lauren Aspery*

The silence throbbed  
with the memories  
of her life so far.  
All she had ever known  
was in that house.

Each wall knew  
the after-argument thoughts  
muttered under her breath  
and saw the mess she had made -

The coffee rings on countertops,  
the crumbs swept under the table,  
the empty bottles in the shower  
and the bulbs left unreplaced.

The faded laughter  
of forgotten moments  
echoed in her mind,  
but she couldn't bring herself to listen.

She turned to leave,  
Taking one last glance at  
what she was leaving behind.

## **Tales of Ordinary Kindness**

*Jacob Atkinson*

A skinhead helping  
    my grandma cross the road,  
    monitoring the footfall  
    of each fragile step;  
    a hug when we are broken,  
    enslaved by grief.

Praise amidst scrutiny,  
    the act of not judging.

Kind words in the thrall of doubt  
    a helping hand over ice.

The warmth of a smile,  
    a love unconditional;  
    a nod of understanding,  
    your hand on my shoulders.

## Late

*Georgia Cole*

Today I was late again.  
My punctuality  
is at fifty percent,  
'cause half the time I'm in my mind  
and my mind doesn't like time,  
it only wants to find  
some quality in reality  
while it's drinking grey tea  
with its grey matter.  
What's the matter? Won't you ask  
to a child behind a mask  
who knows too much of the man  
who sought fire in her land?  
Take that the way you will.  
You possess the power of free will.  
But don't get me started on that,  
how it's a concept too flat;  
somehow they can't take the freedom  
like so many things are taken,  
like a life with a knife  
or purity with nudity.  
And the world just continues.  
You can't keep up with news  
of how a boy was bullied to death,  
no one there for her last breath,  
still no body found upon the heath.  
None of these tragedies  
will ever truly have remedies  
because they were not celebrities -  
they were not well known casualties.  
There is just constant chaos.  
So can we be blamed for feeling no pathos when unnamed  
victims of society die so tragically in the arms of a loved one  
we will never set eyes upon?  
For we are connected in a way  
far from what we like to say.

As it doesn't matter anymore  
when you say your love is raw  
if you can't spare a penny  
for a man who is friendly  
but has no roof over his head  
like those people not yet dead  
who come in masses  
instead of going to mass,  
desperately seeking refuge here  
in this place we hold so dear  
and defend with all our might  
despite declaring equal rights  
for all of God's children.  
But what is God but a villain  
who smites those who are innocent?  
Those who have not even a cent?  
Answer me, I beseech thee.

But wait.

I'm getting off topic.

Mind running.

I cannot stop it.

Though I hardly run, that's probably why my legs are thick  
and I make up lies about why I was late again.

It's agonising walking this cement  
when I know all that I know.

But please, hand me a note  
and tell me how I was late again  
and that my punctuality is at fifty percent.

## **The Unexpected Safe Zone**

*Claire Hanratty*

I had never once heard of this place, nor known it had existed,  
But since, by chance, I happened to eavesdrop into a conversation of said place,  
I now feel compelled to go.  
It's as if some unknown force of supernatural source is beckoning me over,  
To the abandoned ash grounds,  
So that the vital beginning of its sinister plan can unfurl.

This teasing and pleasing flummoxed sort of feeling in my chest drags me down  
And pounds each awaited beat of my unsuspecting heart,  
So that I can no longer bare the temptation of setting foot, soul  
And life onto this ironic and unholy property.  
I say ironic, as previous workers aimed to make a living by attending the factory  
Prior to the disaster that terminated not only careers,  
But certain lives.

Every thought is of the time I will have there,  
And the images that would scare the few who'd dare to think of such a place at such a time.  
It is now starting to overwhelm me,  
Like an extraordinarily consolidated addiction-  
Of which I have yet to become addicted to.

Disassociation with myself is common and bleak but  
My knowledge of this shrine to the consequences of carelessness,  
Has somewhat reunited my being and I.  
As both silence and violence are combined, for me,  
So that I may feel whole  
-Not cold-  
As a human is entitled to be.

The apparition of my presence in this sanctuary of salvation,  
Now forever within my knowledge,  
Saddens me.

## **The Definition of a Woman**

*Georgia Lambert*

'Let us define what is meant by a 'Woman''  
Was pronounced by a culture filled with power,  
The 'Power' which men gained by the hour,  
Whilst a woman would be denied of a say.

"Firstly", men said, "Women should be all alike,  
None should possess any quality distinct"  
In its meaning, this rule appeared succinct  
And the woman was forced to simply concede.

"Secondly", men said, "Women should be graceful,  
Like a beautiful flower in summertime"  
In its meaning, this rule appeared sublime  
And the woman was forced to simply concede.

"Lastly", men said, "Women should be unlettered,  
Simply none should be taught how to read or write"  
In its meaning, this rule appeared finite  
And the woman was forced to simply concede.

Yet, it seemed that overtime they would dispute,  
Women all over the world would take a stand.  
As a woman's power began to expand,  
So did their influence in society.

"Firstly", women said, "We are exceptional,  
Unique and individual – those we are"  
"Secondly", women said, "We are strong-minded,  
Let us care less about how a woman looks"  
"Lastly, let us care more about our own minds,  
Let us women be aptly educated.  
Let us break the gender roles that are in use,  
So women are not a product of culture,  
But a product of themselves in their own lives.  
If we assume equal rights for the genders,  
Then, and only then, can society thrive"



## **Blank Slates**

*Jennifer Spraggs*

We are brought into this world as blank slates;  
Clean whiteboards untouched by pens crafting us how they  
like,  
Contaminating our brains with the infections of society.  
Our fingerprints are ripples in a calm sea, gently spreading  
and disappearing across the water.  
Birth marks are imprinted on our skin, brown smudges  
that are unique to everyone and anyone.  
Some look like letters; encrypted messages sent from the  
angels,  
Others like geometric shapes, hearts or circles in patterns,  
Codes that open the doors to our souls.

As we grow, freckles appear like new found constellations  
across a naked sky, flowing in uncoordinated circles  
around our body that is a river, endlessly moving and never  
stopping.  
Moles will rise from the skin like mountains growing  
from the depths of the soil for humans to admire and explore.  
We open our skin over the course of existence  
leaving behind white scars like smoke from an aeroplane  
painting the sky.  
When we reach death we are no longer blank slates;  
Rather a combination of memories sketched across our bodies  
that make us who we are.





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A collection of poems from writers aged 6 to 19 years old based in the North East. These poems were shortlisted from the almost 100 entries received for the Terry Kelly Poetry Prize 2017.

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