

John Betjeman Poetry Competition 2012

We are now accepting entries for the 6th annual John Betjeman poetry competition for young people. The judges are the poet Grace Nichols and the author and journalist Andrew Martin.

The competition is open for poems from 10-13 year-olds until a closing date of 31st July. The first prize is £1000 (£500 to the winner and £500 to the English department of his or her school). As part of the first prize, a poet will visit the winning school to hold a poetry workshop. There are also Eurostar tickets and book tokens for winning entries. The school that inspires the greatest number of children to enter the competition will win a poet visit. The point of the poetry competition is to encourage more children to read and write poetry, to consider the world around them, and to try and describe it.

Each child is invited to send in (by post or online) one poem on the theme of 'place'. They can choose anywhere that is important to them – from their bedroom to somewhere they visited on holiday, from their favourite park to their favourite building. The subject of their poem could be a city or a garden or a beach or a street. We are asking them to capture in words what that place means to them.

Winners of the poetry competition are invited to read their poems aloud to an audience of judges, entrants, teachers and parents at an awards ceremony held on National Poetry Day, Thursday 4th October, on the upper concourse of St Pancras International, next to the bronze statue of Sir John Betjeman. The presentation of prizes will be followed by afternoon tea at the Betjeman Arms.

The competition is free to enter and an online entry form can be found at our website www.betjemanpoetrycompetition.com. Poems and one completed entry form per class can also be sent via the post and should be addressed to: The John Betjeman poetry competition, PO BOX3770, Royal Mail, Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, SN7 7JB.

For more information, please contact the prize administrator Justin Gowers at betjemanpoetrycompetition@gmail.com.