

Speech and Drama Poems

**Post-Primary Open
Events 74, 76, 78**

Event 74 Year 8/9 Boys/Girls

I Grabbed an Education

I wish I could be solemn as John Wayne
Making the matter-of-fact pay up and look fairly
Adequate copy for a new book, thoughtfully plain
So many words well put together squarely.
I wish I'd grabbed an education early.

Similarly when over Ted Hughes' work I pore
I am astonished at his animal knowledge
That Billy Smart would pay good money for;
He'd be an asset to a veterinary college.
Has Howard got a faculty in Dulwich?

One of these days I'm going to study hard
Save up a heap of words and spread them squarely
A shelf of poem books by the robot bard
And John will not review my works unfairly.
I grabbed an education late but barely.

Patrick Kavanagh

Event 76 Year 10/11 Boys/Girls

The Rain Stick

Up-end the rainstick and what happens next
Is a music that you never would have known
To listen for. In a cactus stalk

Downpour, sluice-rush, spillage and backwash
Come flowing through. You stand there like a pipe
Being played by water, you shake it again lightly

And diminuendo runs through all its scales
Like a gutter stopping trickling. And now here comes
A sprinkle of drops out of the freshened leaves,

Then subtle little wets off grass and daisies;
Then glitter-drizzle, almost-breaths of air.
Up-end the stick again. What happens next

Is undiminished for having happened once,
Twice, ten, a thousand times before.
Who cares if the music that transpires

Is the fall of grit or dry seeds through a cactus?
You are like a rich man entering heaven
Through the ear of a raindrop. Listen now again.

for Beth and Rand

Seamus Heaney

Event 78 Year 12/13/14 Boys/Girls

The Sunlight on the Garden

The sunlight on the garden
Hardens and grows cold,
We cannot cage the minute
Within its nets of gold,
When all is told
We cannot beg for pardon.

Our freedom as free lances
Advances towards its end;
The earth compels, upon it
Sonnets and birds descend;
And soon, my friend,
We shall have no time for dances.

The sky was good for flying
Defying the church bells
And every evil iron
Siren and what it tells;
The earth compels,
We are dying, Egypt, dying

And not expecting pardon,
Hardened in heart anew,
But glad to have sat under
Thunder and rain with you,
And grateful too
For sunlight on the garden.

Louis MacNeice