



GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture

Anthology of Recommended **POEMS**



VOLUME ONE

**ENGLISH POEMS
YEARS 9 - 12**

Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture

Malifa, APIA

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Curriculum Design and Materials Division

TATES (The Association of Teachers of English in Samoa)

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Statement by the Chief Executive Officer



The production of this document from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture is an incentive to help improve accessibility to needed documents for better quality resources and education for all.

This document is specifically developed for the Secondary Level English. The founding idea is to assist with the Ministry's reviewed English Secondary Curriculums for the Four-Year Secondary Level reform.

The anthology is a collection of literature works by World and Pacific writers which are recommended in the mainstream English and Communication English curriculum statements. These literature works are used for the purpose of providing teachers as well as students a variety of poems to study for the achievement of many of the Learning Outcomes outlined in the curriculum.

With high expectation and aspiration, the Ministry hopes that these resources will drive the accomplishment of its mission *“to promote quality and sustainable development in all aspects of Education, Sports and Culture to ensure improved opportunities for all”*. The Ministry also expects that these resources will help the Ministry achieve the overarching goals of the Education Sector which are to enhance quality of education, enhance educational access and opportunities, enhance relevance of education and trainings, strengthen community engagement and collaborative partnerships, and establish sustainable and efficient management of all education resources to meet service delivery expectations.

I hope educators, parents and students will fully utilise these resources to develop student centred activities, assessments and interventions to enrich Samoa's quality educational opportunities.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Afamasaga-Fuata'i'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Afamasaga Dr. Karoline Afamasaga-Fuata'i

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All the glory to our Heavenly Father for his assistance and guidance which has led to the completion of this document.

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Appreciation and special thanks to all the poets whose works have been extracted from the Ministry's English textbooks as well as other sources referenced. The Ministry wishes to thank and acknowledge all our local and regional poets whose works have been selected to be used for the study of Literature in our schools. Your writings have been selected because they were highly recommended by our teachers.

Lastly, I thank our literacy team here at CDMD, Afioga Tuiloma Inipene Simanu, Nicki Perese and Iose Togagae. Your contribution in every way will not go unnoticed.

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Introduction

The review of the new Four-Year Secondary Level curriculums has informed the need to re-look at publication of materials and recommended texts. The goal of this document is to ensure teachers and students have “access” to resources to support the teaching and learning of English.

This document is to be printed and distributed to schools at no cost to the schools to ensure availability to all schools. The Ministry believes that if students have access to these materials, then the likelihood of students improving their awareness and understanding of various genres and writings from local, regional and international authors.

The texts have been reshuffled from previous list of recommended texts to ensure each level has a range of texts to choose from and to ensure there is no repetition throughout the levels.

Poems listed in this document are listed for recommended texts for the 4 Year Secondary Level curriculums 2021. Other texts are extracted from the Ministry’s English Textbooks Year 9 – Year 13, online resources, existing textbooks and support from the TATES.

Year 9 – Poems

Requiem, by Robert Louis Stevenson¹

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

Here may the winds about me blow;
Here the clouds may come and go;
Here shall be rest for evermo,
And the heart for aye shall be still.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Storm by R. N. Barlett²

Bursting on the suburbs with dynamic gusts of energy
And concentrated fury comes the mad March gale.
Blowing off the roofing-felt which lies atop the
garden sheds,
Encountering the window with a splash of sleet and
hail.
Distending all the trousers on the wildly waving
washing-line,
Drumming on the window like a hanged man's heels,
Swaying all the aiches of the television aerials,
Muddying the roadway 'neath the slowly turning
wheels.
Gentlemen in overcoats pursuing trilbies hopelessly
Cursing at the vigour of the brusque March gale,
And lightning lights the darkening sky with bright

celestial clarity,
While women in their kitchens hear the thunder and
turn pale.
Ear-lobes reddening at the slashing of the hail-stones,
Nose-tips deadening at the coldness of the sleet,
Eye-lids wincing at the brightness of the lightning
Wet stones glistening beneath the hurried feet.
White marbles bouncing on the flat roofs of the
garages,
Black sky paling as the storm dies down.
Wet folk emerging from the haven of a doorway
As the sun comes out again and smiles upon the
town.

Forgive me by Tate Simi³

Forgive me
for having not done enough
to try to save your life
and accepting too readily
the finality of your 'cancerous fate'
forgive me
for having not thanked you
for being a great mother
and for not telling you
that I loved you
before you died
I hope
that in passing on
your gift of love
you will find it in your heart
where ever you may be watching from
to forgive me

¹ English Year 9 Book 2, p.11, 2002

² English Year 9 Book 1, p.60, 2004

³ English Year 9 Book 1, p.62, 2004

My Lovely Dolphin by Teari Narii⁴

My lovely dolphin
Every day when I go fishing
In my canoe
You always come with me
And I feed you
With the fish I catch

When you finish eating
I play with you and the ball
That I bring from the island
When we finish playing
I take a photo of you
And I come back with no fish.

My Educated Son by Maunga Itai⁵

Happiness fills me
My son now returns
The plane now lands
While I wait

Passengers come down
My son comes down
He and his friends
My heart beats

I love him
I run to him
With arms wide open
Shouting his name

But...

⁴ English Year 11 Book 1, p.106, 2003

⁵ <https://rnzaustin.weebly.com/uploads>

He doesn't hear me!
He passes me by
With his white friends!
Denying his mother!

I'm very old
I'm a skinny woman
I'm a dirty mother
I'm not good enough

He walks away
I burst into tears
Crying, crying and crying
Calling his name

He is educated
He lives a foreign life
He denies his mother
His own mother.

Sisters and Brothers by Emma Kruse Vaai⁶

On sad days sometimes
you and I find
that we have each other.

During such times brother of mine
inwardly I sigh
for I cannot bear to see
the inner core of your eye
welling a tear that will not spill
but mirrors the face of your sister here.

But come –
Let us talk of good things
of happy times

⁶ English Year 13, p.153, 2004

of our separate lives
and of yours and mine.
Bad days shall pass
and tomorrow another
in the knowledge that we have each other.
Come to the table
your food is prepared
And I shall sit beside you
you who will always stand by me.

And when you go
I know you will never leave me
because
I know
I am
I am
the inner corner of your eye
where tears give birth.

A Man's World by Jully Makini⁷

My brother can sit on the table
I mustn't
He can say what he likes whenever he likes
I must keep quiet
He can order me around like a slave
I must not backchat
He gives me his dirty clothes to wash
I wish he would wash mine!
If he sits on the front steps
I must go round to the back door
If the house is full
I must crawl on my hands and knees
I must walk behind him not in front
Watch my speech when he is in the house
Don't say 'face' but say 'front'
Not 'teeth' but 'stone'

⁷ English Year 13, p.152, 2004

Carry out my love affairs behind his back
Custom allows him to thrash both of us if caught
But he can carry on in front of me
That's his privilege
I must pay compensation
If I'm to get married
Or pregnant without a hubby
A brother can make a living out of his sisters!

Family by Jackie Fa'asisila⁸

Family
heart of fa'asamoa
encompassing one and all.
The sinnet that binds lives together
Catches people when they fall
Family ever valued
As global threats surge
Family forever constant
as old and new ways merge.

A Mother's Love by Valma Galuvao

Like Samoa's fine mat
Priceless and magnificent
Woven intricately
A rich embroidery
That speaks of love
Far-reaching and unselfish
Intricately embellished with light
Glowing, a sparkle that glitters
To guide, lead and protect
A warmth within my soul
To last for a lifetime
And beyond

⁸ Endless Circles, p.20, 2015

Year 10 – Poems

Two Word Poem by Laura Ranger⁹

The toad sat on a red stool
it was a toadstool

The rain tied a bow
in the cloud's hair
it was a rainbow.

Which witch put sand
in my sandwich?

I stood under the bridge,
then I understood.

I sat on the ledge and
thought about what I know
it was knowledge.

Arrival by Ruth Gilbert¹⁰

The swift descent through darkening air,
Lights, leaning palms, and reef-encircled there
Your Island, Tusitala — a rush of fragrant heat,
Warm laughter in our ears,
Warm earth beneath our feet,
And as we dreamed it, jewelled, high,
Your wide, your starry sky.

The Market by Ruth Gilbert ¹¹

Sack-laden trucks, crammed buses, hungry dogs, and
heat;
Baskets, bright umbrellas, children, jandaled feet,

and eager vendors squatting, cross-legged, their
watchful eyes

Half hidden behind mounds of morning merchandise:
Taro, bread-fruit, green bananas, and gourmet ones
they call

Lady-fingers, golden, plump, sugar-sweet and small.
Cocoa, like black putty, that willing house-boys brew
Foolhardy guests, or, gleeful, buy in sticky lumps and
chew.

All colour, chaos, movement, until the noon sun
stares

On empty streets and weary forms stretched,
sleeping, by their wares.

The Graves by Ruth Gilbert¹²

These graves about the fale say:

Even in death you are not far away.

By day the children bring to you

The wild hibiscus as they always do.

Each night

Your smaller fale shares our fale's light.

Our talk is yours; the laughter that you hear,

Your laughter; Death's not far, but near —

So near, that even when we weep

It is your tears we find upon our sleep;

And pondering all these island graves have said

I think again upon our Western dead:

The bleak hill-side, the broken cross,

The seeping moss. . .

⁹ English Year 10 Book 1, p.27, 2004

¹⁰ English Year 10 Book 1, p.31, 2004

¹¹ English Year 10 Book 1, p.31, 2004

¹² English Year 10 Book 1, p.33, 2004

Grandson by Albert Wednt¹³

Tonight Mele gave me a photo of my grandson
for my desk at work

It was taken at his Aoga Fa'a-Sāmoa

Smileless he gazes back at me

With my father's penetrating eyes

Prominent Wendt forehead

under a curly tangle of black hair

On his blue sweatshirt in gold

INTERNATIONAL COLLECTION

He'll be three in January

My father's eighty-six and can't walk any more

I sent him a wheelchair a few months ago

Soon I must take his great grandson

to visit him in the Vaipe

E oso le ivi le ivi

For Tehaa to see his future reflection

For my father to meet the child that he was

O What Is That Sound by W.H. Auden¹⁴

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear

Down in the valley drumming, drumming?

Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,

The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear

Over the distance, brightly, brightly?

Only the sun on their weapons, dear,

As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear,

What are they doing this morning, this morning?

Only their usual manoeuvres, dear,

¹³ English Year 10 Book 1, p.34, 2004

Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there,

Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?

Perhaps a change in their orders, dear.

Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care,

Haven't they reined their horses, their horses?

Why they are none of them wounded, dear,

None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want, with white hair,

Is it the parson, is it, is it?

No, they are passing his gateway, dear,

Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer who lives so near.

It must be the farmer so cunning, so cunning?

They have passed the farmyard already, dear,

And now they are running.

O where are you going? Stay with me here!

Were the vows you swore deceiving, deceiving?

No, I promised to love you, dear,

But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,

O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;

Their boots are heavy on the floor

And their eyes are burning.

¹⁴ English Year 10 Book 1, p.35, 2004

The Turtle on Land by Brenda Ngaoire¹⁵

If the turtle was on land
Floating above a field somewhere
People would come from everywhere
To goggle at it
People would walk around it
Marvelling at its big shiny shell.
The people would declare it precious
Because it's a more famous creature
Than anything else
And they would protect it so that
It would not be hurt.
The turtle would be the greatest
Wonder known
And people would come to behold it
To be healed, to gain knowledge
To know beauty and to wonder
How it could be.
People would love it and defend it
With their lives
They would somehow know that
Their lives
Their own loveliness
Could be nothing without it
If the turtle was on land.

Darkness within the Light by Kauraka Kauraka¹⁶

Show off with your New Zealand degree!
Think you're smart!
Let's compete climbing for coconuts!
Can you husk my number of nuts?
Can you dive and fill the sack with pearl shells?
Think you're smart?
Count, see who's got the most?

¹⁵ English Year 11 Book 1, p.105, 2003

¹⁶ English Year 13, p.149, 2004

You really think I'm dumb?
You're not aware of the darkness within your light.
How I pity you!
Foreign knowledge has blinded your heart!
When I welcomed you with a greeting kiss
you offered your cheek to someone else.
When I slapped your thigh to say Hello
you thought I was seducing you.
I spoke to you in Maori but you replied in English.
you wouldn't lend a hand unless I paid cash.
I despair, my friend, you leave me desolate!

Father and Son by Ruperake Petaia¹⁷

He comes home now
his mind filled with
the wisdom of the Papalagi
Your son has done well at school
and you are proud, and showed
him off to friends for their congratulations
for you had wanted it all this way!

But

suddenly he speaks
and you don't want to hear him
he dresses
and you don't want to see him
He tries to explain himself
but you say he's just a
trying-to-be-smart little cheek
who's had too much education.
I wonder where
in the darkness
you lost each other
father and son.

¹⁷ English Year 13, p.147, 2004

Plea to the Spanish Lady By Cherie Barford¹⁸

Important streets fall before you
and now Talune berthed in Apia
harbours your sway
Sway not our way, Lady
Such homage grieves us

Aboard Talune the Doctor examines
bodies propped by mail bags
Colonel Logan agrees
 ‘Yes,
a sea-sick lot this one.’
The ocean is calm

Today the Sāmoan Times is all news:
death notices and a front page
Today the editor died
Today Teuila’s screams awoke me
as she lay between her parents
dipping fingers in their sweat

Her name means flower, Lady
see her tremble and wilt
We will bury her in lavalava
scented with frangipani

At Papauta Girls’ School desks are empty
Colonel Logan shouts ‘I do not care if they
are going to die, Let them die and go to Hell.’
American medicine is sent back unopened

He’s never cared for us, Lady
He’s not my brother in Christ. He can’t be
Logs tumble, tumble from his eyes
Crosses bearing corpses swim in them

¹⁸ English Year 13, p.95, 2004

¹⁹ Civilized girl, p.19, 1991

My flesh is moist, too moist
Who will harvest the taro and breadfruit?
Who will instruct the young? Feed my children?

Don’t linger Spanish Lady
The trenches are full and
my family spills into the ocean
fevered and dazed
drowning at each other’s feet
Go now, Lady
We have fallen before you

Without Children by Jully Sipolo¹⁹

The house is dead
no life movement of laughter
no splashing in the sink
or early morning sign-song
no baby voice crying “Mummio”
no mixing milk
no nappies to wash
no warm soft cuddly body
to hold
Life is so empty
Without children.

Equality by Noumea Simi²⁰

It matters not
That I am
Woman or man

It matters not
That you are
She or he

²⁰ Sails of Dawn , 1992

It matters only
That in life
There is we

Town and Village by Albert Wednt²¹

A town is made
of iron, stone and wood.
A village is made
of palm fronds, people, and great silences.
I am attracted to the villages
but I live in the town
Why is this? I always
ask myself.
In the town I can hide
from the great silences
that fall at evening.

Dear Grandma by Leota Valma Galuvao

I see you Grandma
Frail and fading away
As each day that passes
takes your strength in part
Each night that darkens
echoes your calls of many
calls that I've come to know
as recited songs to keep,
as I mourn you now,
seeing your pain.
As I laugh over sweet memories
of your many ways

I see you Grandma
suffering silently, praying promptly
silently, praying promptly...

endless efforts to soothe
are all in vain.
Changing recipes to appetise
often come to fail.
Varied news to cheer
you no longer hear.
And I can only be there
to show that I care.

To you Grandma
I take off the hats
of all your generations.
From your faith
They've grown.
From your sweat and pain
they've learned.
And I can only hope
that I salute you
In what I have and will become
I love you Grandma.

²¹ Target 6, p.69, 1995

Year 11 – Poems

A Farewell by A.R.D Fairburn²²

What is there left to be said?
There is nothing we can say,
nothing at all to be done
to undo the time of day;
no words to make the sun
roll east, or raise the dead.
I loved you as I loved life:
the hand I stretched out to you
returning like Noah's dove
brought a new earth to view,
till I was quick with love;
But Time sharpens his knife,
Time smiles and whets his knife,
and something has got to come out
quickly, and be buried deep,
not spoken or thought about
or remembered even in sleep.
You must live, get on with your life.

To My Grandson Oliver Maireriki Aged One Day

by Alistair Te Ariki Campbell²³

Fierce little warrior,
What are you dreaming of
In your pre-dawn sleep?
The ancestral carver
Who jealously preserves
The stern family likeness
Has carved your small face
From obsidian, denting
The bridge of the nose
So that you grimly frown
As if bracing yourself

²² English Year 11 Book 1, p.45, 2003

²³ English Year 11 Book 1, p.47, 2003

To wake up in a world
Far removed from the warm
Maternal waters of Tongareva
Where you had waited
All these years to be born,
Moulded in the spirit
Of the last appointed ariki
Whose proud name you bear.
Dearest blood of the land,
The wonder of your parents,
Elizabeth and Gregory,
Through whom our ancestors
Express their brooding care,
What more can I wish you than
The fulfilment of your dreams,
Love and peace of mind
And the world to enjoy?

Huia Villa by Peter Hooper²⁴

Take her arm, help her
gently from her chair, give
her crippled feet time
to shuffle their eighty years
to the door. Encourage her,
speak most distinctly to an ear
that muffles every voice
to riddles. Hands
grope trembling at the air
seeking a guidance
sight can no longer give.
Hoarsely she heaves
a guttural question.
Smile assent, pretend
to understand the tongue
a stroke has garbled.

²⁴ English Year 11 Book 1, p.49, 2003

Slowly she crosses
the terrible desert, nears
and sees me — eyes, voice and hands
lift to surprise and joy.
Swiftly she winces as
a cut lip stabs anew.
(They tell me she fell and
broke her teeth. I taste the bruised mouth, blood
black in the cut.)
My hands touch hers, I
take her to her room,
give her small gifts of
cake and fruit. She trembles most of the time. I
think she asks, ‘Am
I very ugly now?’
I laugh and kiss her cheek.
She soon tires, shaking, hands
grow cold. I place some
sweets in the drawer of a lowboy. As often.
most will be stolen, and
she will know another
small grief added to
griefs daily renewed.
I leave her
at the door of the dayroom,
the tremor of my betrayal
in eyes she turns
to the thirty faces
in that shattered room,
chiselled like hers
by agony and madness
to a naked sculpture of bone.
This is the way we live
forever now.
She is my mother.

²⁵ English Year 11 Book 1, p.52, 2003

Last Run by Bruce Stronach²⁵

He'd fallen over a cliff
And he'd broken his leg.
Just a mustering dog.
And he looked at me, there on the hill,
Showing no hurt, as if he'd taken no ill,
And his ears, and his tail,
And his dark eyes too,
Said plainly,
‘Well, Boss, what do we do?
Any more sheep to head?
Give me a run.’
But he'd never head sheep any more.
His day was done.
He thought it was fun
When I lifted the gun.

The Soldier by Rupert Brooke (1887–1915)²⁶

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England
given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

²⁶ English Year 11 Book 2, p.97, 2004

Dusk Cries, Languedoc by Graeme Lay²⁷

Every dusk the pigeon's cooing comes
Over and over, self-pitying
From the spreading plane tree in this village
Where on a hill the witch-hatted chateau
Stands grey, dead and shuttered
In its long shadow the ancient church
Where the Wednesday mass
Has an attendance of five, priest included
And by day nothing moves
In the cobbled streets
Except the bowed legs of old women
Bearing bread.
At sunset, gangs of cats emerge from doorways
And crouch, watchful & mistrustful, staring up
Where the fading sky is cross-hatched with swallows
Who, fork-tailed, swoop & dart
Staccato song-lines bouncing from tiled roofs
Flying at the speed of sound
Before shooting skyward once more
Then plunging into the plane tree
Where the pigeon still plays its pitiful refrain
Like the robed, rejected priest
Who greets me in the village square
And entreats me, in pigeon English

Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley²⁸

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

²⁷ English Year 11 Book 2, p.98, 2004

²⁸ English Year 11 Book 2, p.100, 2004

The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Sea-fever by John Masefield²⁹

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea
and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the
white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn
breaking.
I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the
running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds
flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the
sea-gulls crying.
I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant
gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the
wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-
rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long
trick's over.

²⁹ English Year 11 Book 2, p.101, 2004

The Fog by F. R. McCreary³⁰

Slowly the fog,
Hunch-shouldered with a grey face,
Arms wide, advances,
Finger-tips touching the way
Past the dark houses
And dark gardens of roses.
Up the short street from the harbour,
Slowly the fog,
Seeking, seeking;
Arms wide, shoulders hunched,
Searching, searching.
Out to the streets, to the fields,
Slowly the fog –
A blind man hunting the moon.

Crucifixion on Sunday by Talosaga Tolovae³¹

You have talked
about your Christ
with a bleeding heart
a face aged with pity
crucified on calico sheets
on cool rafters
of your place of worship
for my sake.

But I've seen
my father
eyes bloodshot
skin cracked and blackened
by hours of labour in the sun
to keep his children in school
and provide for the family.

Still you talked
of the sacrifice
your Christ
made on Golgotha
to earn for us
a one way ticket
to his place of residence.

But I've seen
the black robed priests
of your Christ
crucifying my father
on Sundays
with loaded scripts for his wages
to aid heal your Christ's
injury to his heart.

A simple thank you would be nice by Nicki Perese

You speak cold with your sharp words that endure
scars
Cutting my self-esteem into pieces like a shredder
Condemning my every move with your eyes
And as a dictator you continue to determine my fate
To break, re-make as a snake for your own sake.

Why don't you try to lend a golden star
For giving me more than what I signed up for
Or a simple '*malo lava*' to calm my unstable nerves
That have been exhausted, beaten-out and dismantled
For my mere gifts of passion and time.

Before, you realize that I'm worth much more
Than you or anyone utterly deserves
And that you deserve less of my time
On capacity building work that are yours

³⁰ English Year 13, p.136, 2004

³¹ English Year 13, p.148, 2004

That could have tasted damn well
In a cool tropical glass of THANK YOU.

Oh bring back higher standards by Peter Dixon³²

Oh bring back higher standards –
the pencil and the cane –
if we want education then we must have some pain.
Oh, bring us back all the gone days
Yes, bring back all the past . . .
let's put them all in rows again – so we can see who's
last.
Let's label all the good ones
(the ones like you and me)
and make them into prefects – like prefects used to
be.
We'll put them on the honours board
. . . as honours ought to be,
and write their names in burnished script –
for all the world to see.
We'll have them back in uniform,
we'll have them doff their caps,
and learn what manners really are
. . . for decent kind of chaps!
. . . So let's label all the good ones,
we'll call them 'A's and 'B's –
and we'll parcel up the useless ones
and call them 'C's and 'D's
. . . We'll even have an 'E' lot!
. . . an 'F' or 'G' maybe!!
. . . so they can know they're useless,
. . . and not as good as me.

For we've got to have the stupid –

³² English Year 13, p.23, 2004

And we've got to have the poor
Because –
If we don't have them . . .
Well . . . what are prefects for?

Who cares? By Lemalu Tate Simi³³

(to the man under the Apia Town Clock Tower)

Are you a lunatic, a vagabond
that you should have the time
to loiter under the clock tower
eating leftovers and feeding
your life to the dogs?
I've seen you before
in the bus shelters of Sydney
in the pigeon parks of Wellington
drinking, sleeping, pissing
in the same clothes
on city streets
Then, I despised
the seeming purposelessness
of your existence
and your lack of value
for the invaluable
gift of life
Now, in my sorrow
I envy your solitude,
your seeming immunity
to the pain of losing
loved ones you never knew;
how you obliviously loiter
in the shadows
of the town clock tower
feeding your life to the dogs –
Who cares?

³³ English Year 13, p.208, 2004

My mother's words by Valma Galuvao

Calming and soothing
They stopped me from crying
When I was a child
Seeking her attention
Her warm embrace

Serious, stern and strict
They fed courage into my lonely heart
When I was a teenager
Living away from home
To get a better education

Boastful and appreciative
They told me of your pride
And challenged me
To face tough and demanding situations
When I became a civil servant

Your words my beloved
Treasures of the heart
A light to guide the way
An echo to remind of all you taught
Now that I am here
A leader to lead our family
Into the future.

Be warned by Noumea Simi³⁴

Fagaloa I weep for you
Should you open your arms
To the dollar promises of greedy men
Who will come with their poison
To build your dreams on

Be warned Fagaloa
That your ocean floors
Will not belch forth death
That your guardian hills
Will not cast ghostly shadows
To haunt you

My refuge. by Siaosi. J. Leleimalefaga

Blood and blisters on the feet of my father,
As he walks long distances
on rugged paths trying to reach somewhere.
A long journey marked with countless challenges,
thirsty and hungry and sometimes without a care.
Tears and sweat fall to the ground
with the hope that someday things will turn around.
Torn up clothes with nothing but me in his arms,
as you race yourself to keep me
out of the rain and in to the shade.
Breathing heavily as he touches my tiny chin
and kisses me on the lips.
His hopeful voice saying,
'it's o.k. it will be all over soon.'
I closed my eyes, and shut them tight.
My head tugged deep into his arms,
where I felt free from all the world's tyranny,
where I felt loved.

³⁴ Sails of Dawn, 1992

Year 12 – Poems

Sonnet 18 By William Shakespeare³⁵

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet 116 by William Shakespeare³⁶

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark*,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be
taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass** come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

³⁵ English Year 11 Book 1, p.51, 2003

³⁶ English Year 12, p.158, 2004

Roman Wall Blues by W. H. Auden³⁷

Over the heather the wet wind blows,
I've lice in my tunic and a cold in my nose.
The rain comes pattering out of the sky,
I'm a Wall soldier, I don't know why.
The mist creeps over the cold grey stone,
My girl's in Tungria; I sleep alone.
Aulus goes hanging around her place,
I don't like his manners, I don't like his face.
Piso's a Christian, he worships a fish;
There'd be no kissing if he had his wish.
She gave me a ring but I diced it away;
I want my girl and I want my pay.
When I'm a veteran with only one eye
I shall do nothing but look at the sky.

A Perfect Life by Kevin Ireland³⁸

falling in love with you
for the day
we went right through the lot
from young fervour
to the arm-chair luxury
of forgiving old age
in the morning
I gazed on your alabaster skin
in the evening
I counted your grey hairs
at eight a.m.
I wrote you a teenage poem
at four in the afternoon
I signed on for our pensions
in the course of a single rotation
of the planet we met
loved built our dream-house

³⁷ English Year 12, p.45, 2004

³⁸ English Year 12, p.46, 2004

raised children retired
and lay down to die
I enjoyed falling in love with you
for the day
it saved an extravagant waste of time

Last Lesson of the Afternoon by D. H. Lawrence³⁹

When will the bell ring, and end this weariness?
How long have they tugged the leash, and strained
apart,
My pack of unruly hounds! I cannot start
Them again on a quarry of knowledge they hate to
hunt,
I can haul them and urge them no more.
No longer can I endure the brunt
Of the books that lie out on the desks; a full three-
score
Of several insults of blotted pages, and scrawl
Of slovenly work that they have offered me.
It is sick, and what on earth is the good of it all?
What good to them or me, I cannot see!
So, shall I take
My last dear fuel of life to heap on my soul
And kindle my will to a flame that shall consume
Their dross of indifference; and take the toll
Of their insults in punishment? – I will not! –
I will not waste my soul and strength for this.
What do I care for all that they do amiss!
What is the point of this teaching of mine, and of this
Learning of theirs? It all goes down the same abyss.
What does it matter to me, if they can write
A description of a dog, or if they can't?
What is the point? To us both, it is all my aunt!
And yet I'm supposed to care, with all my might.

³⁹ English Year 12, p.47, 2004

I do not, and will not; they won't and they don't; and
that's all!

I shall keep my strength for myself; they can keep
theirs as well.

Why should we beat our heads against the wall
Of each other? I shall sit and wait for the bell.

Dulce et Decorum est by Wilfred Owen⁴⁰

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through
sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of disappointed shells that dropped behind.

GAS! Gas! Quick, boys!— An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundering like a man in fire or lime.—
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud

⁴⁰ English Year 12, p.51, 2004

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

The Tiger by William Blake⁴¹

Tiger! Tiger! 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, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? And 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 watered heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night,

⁴¹ English Year 12, p.159, 2004

⁴² English Year 12, p.160, 2004

What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold by William
Wordsworth⁴²

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound to each by natural piety.

Crossing the Bar* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson⁴³

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourn** of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face

⁴³ English Year 12, p.161, 2004

When I have crossed the bar.

Do not go gentle into that good night by Dylan Thomas⁴⁴

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

I wandered lonely as a cloud by William Wordsworth⁴⁵

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

⁴⁴ English Year 13, p.113, 2004

⁴⁵ English Year 13, p.138, 2004

When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed – and gazed – but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Death be not Proud by John Donne⁴⁶

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow;

⁴⁶ English Year 13, p.140, 2004

And soonest our best men with thee do go –
Rest of their bones, and souls' delivery!
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate
men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well;
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!

When by Robert Zend⁴⁷

Death doesn't
end life
death just
interrupts it

a book mark between page 256 and 257
a dental appointment on Friday at two
guests tonight
a movie tomorrow evening
a discussion that didn't end
coffee percolating on the stove
six shirts at the laundry
a holiday in Mexico this winter

this is what things are like
when a period is placed
in the middle of a sentence.

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost⁴⁸

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both

⁴⁷ English Year 13, p.141, 2004

⁴⁸ English Year 13, p.142, 2004

And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth.

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Part II by
Samuel Taylor Coleridge⁴⁹

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo !

⁴⁹ English Year 13, p.143, 2004

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for
killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done an hellish thing,

And it would work 'em woe:

For all averred, I had killed the bird

That made the breeze to blow.

Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,

That made the breeze to blow !

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same,
and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,

The glorious Sun uprist:

Then all averred, I had killed the bird

That brought the fog and mist.

'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,

That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific
Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the
Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,

The furrow followed free;

We were the first that ever burst

Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,

'Twas sad as sad could be;

And we did speak only to break

The silence of the sea !

All in a hot and copper sky,

The bloody Sun, at noon,

Right up above the mast did stand,

No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,

We stuck, nor breath nor motion;

As idle as a painted ship

Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, every where,

And all the boards did shrink;

Water, water, every where,

Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ !

That ever this should be !

Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs

Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout

The death-fires danced at night;

The water, like a witch's oils,

Burnt green, and blue and white.

Island Fire by Konai Helu Thaman⁵⁰

Embers

of a once blazing fire

sleep through an endless night

fraught with the din of

billiard balls

rock n roll music

Hollywood violence

and the slow turning of foreign textbook pages

The embers wait

perhaps never to be rekindled

by dry coconut leaves

.... kerosene is easier.

⁵⁰ Target 4, p.93, 1990

Caught Up by Joyce Kumbeli⁵¹

I dream of a Mercedes
so I buy a raffle ticket
I dream of going places
so I buy another raffle ticket

I dream of money
so I buy a Coke
I dream of more money
so I buy a win moni ticket

But alas!
When the top falls
I find gazing up at me
'Sorry try again'

And when I scratch
the last square
I find that there is
One ten thousand less

I curse myself
For having spent
the last toea I had
and shout Finish
this is the last!

But then I dream again
So I buy more raffle ticket
Then I buy one more Coke
And yet one more moni ticket

Is there an end to all this!

⁵¹ English Year 13, p.150, 2004

Kidnapped by Ruperake Petaia⁵²

I was six
when Mama was careless
She sent me to school
alone
five days a week.

One day I was
kidnapped
by a band of Western philosophers
armed with glossy-pictured textbooks
and registered reputations
'Holder of B. A. and M. A. degrees'
I was held in a classroom
guarded by Churchill and Garibaldi
pinned up on one wall
and Hitler and Mao dictating
from the other
Guevara pointed a revolution
at my brains
from his 'Guerilla Warfare'

Each three month term
they sent threats
to my Mama and Papa

Mama and Papa
loved their son
and paid ransom fees each time
Mama and Papa
grew poorer and poorer
and my kidnappers
grew richer and richer
I grew whiter and whiter

On my release fifteen years

⁵² English Year 13, p.146, 2004

after I was handed
(among loud applause from my fellow victims)
a piece of paper
to decorate my walls
certifying my release.

Mass Media, Mass Mania by Nora Vagi Brash⁵³

Yummy, sweet marie, tea cake
KO kraka, PK, KK
Tic tac Fanta tango
Toothache, decoy, decay
Koikoi anyway
Fall out pull em out
Strong teeth? No way!

Talking about lime fresh
Blue Omo for brightness
Palmolive, brighter soap,
Soft soap, dope soap
Whiter wash, wash wash, brain wash
Brain blank, blank cheque, blank bank
Check out!

Buy now! Buy new, buy big, buy bulk
Buy more, buy me, buy now, Dinau
Buy! Buy! Good bye self reliance
Sell! Sell! Sell self, sell soil
Sell soul, sell out, sell bottles
Sell empty promises
SOLD OUT.

⁵³ English Year 13, p.154, 2004

⁵⁴ Samoa Language Week, p.14, 2016

Identity by Lemalu Tate Simi⁵⁴

Educate yourself enough
So you may understand
The ways of other people
But not too much
That you may lose
Your understanding
Of your own

Try things palagi
Not so you may become palagi
But so you may see the value
Of things Samoan
not so you may sound Samoan
but so you may
feel the essence
of being Samoan

Above all
Be aware and proud
Of what you are
So you may spare yourself
The agony of those who are asking
“What am I?”

Civilised Girl by Jully Makini⁵⁵

Cheap perfume
Six-inch heels
Skin-tight pants
Civilised girl
Steel-wool hair
Fuzzy and stiff
Now soft as coconut husk
Held by a dozen clips

⁵⁵ English Year 13, p.209, 2004

Charcoal-black skin
Painted red
Bushy eyebrows
Plucked and pencilled
Who am I?
Melanesian, Caucasian or
Half-caste?
Make up your mind
Where am I going –
Forward, backward, still?
What do I call myself –
Mrs, Miss or Ms?
Why do I do this?
Imitation
What's wrong with it?
Civilisation.

Va by Jackie Fa'asisila⁵⁶

The relationship between
Connections, relationships
Affiliations, boundaries

Space
Between

Va holds all things together
Pervades life inside and out
God and His people
A mother and her child
Family and land

Value others
Show reverence and respect
Teu le va

⁵⁶ Endless Circles, p.18, 2015

Never! COVID 19 by Leota Valma Galuvao

Like an ominous cloud
You hover over the horizon
Looking, scheming, waiting
Ready to descend
And tear me to pieces

Like a veil of darkness
You hover over the horizon
Looking, scheming, waiting
Ready to seep and crawl
And smother me in my sleep

But wait!!!
You will not harm me
My SAVIOUR is with me
His armour my shield
His blood my protection
You will NEVER dare to come near me.

Star in the marble by Ruperake Petaia⁵⁷

In my childhood
I used to crack marbles
Looking for the stars in them,
and everytime I cracked a marble
I find a broken star.

One day I turned school age,
my health teacher, middle-aged
with a hankerchief tucked
into his belt to show his cleanliness,
told me marbles were dirty
and dangerous when swallowed.

So I dropped marbles

⁵⁷ Blue Rain, p.12, 1980

and took up Book-keeping
passed Book-keeping in School Certificate
and said to myself;
'Boy, you're educated,
go ye and be a banker.'

For a year
I worked in a bank
but the place smelled of starch
and I was getting breakable,
marble-like.
I remembered what my teacher
said about marbles and
I quit for health reasons.

Now I am a faithful puppet
in a Government puppet show,
Man my life has truly been
one long string of searches,
still searching for that star in the marble.

How could you? By Noumea Simi⁵⁸

How could it be?
That you could wam to my pain
The next day and forget
How you stripped my soul bare
To the darkness and uncertainty
And how you left my pride
Shredded in the wind
Tossed into the ocean
Weeping
How could you?

⁵⁸ Sails of Dawn, 1992

⁵⁹ Target 6, p.25, 1995

Uncivil Servants by Konai Helu Thaman⁵⁹

Many of my friends
Are civil servants
With uncivil thoughts.
They smile at my weaknesses
And thrive on my poverty ...
Their bodies though weakening
From muscular indifference.
But they cannot erase my existence
For my plight chimes with the hour
And my blood they drink at cocktail parties
Always full of smiling false faces
Behind which lie authority and private interests.
Yet if I tell them what I think
I may go to hell or even lose my scholarship!

Quiet Pain by Konai Helu Thaman⁶⁰

deep in the shady stillness
of the raintree's thoughts
i walk blindly into your silence
with you
sitting there like coral rock
your familiar face
is strange

outside
cicada's cry
rekindles the flame
we retreat into ourselves
children of sky and earth
quiet pain lingers like coral dust
we are both afraid to say
i love you as i love you

⁶⁰ Target 5, p.125, 1993

Son of mine by Kath Walker⁶¹

My son, your troubled eyes search mine,
Puzzled and hurt by colour line.
Your black skin as soft as velvet shine,
What can I tell you, son of mine?

I could tell you of heartbreak, hatred blind,
I could tell of crimes that share mankind,
Of brutal wrong and deeds malign,
Of rape and murder, son of mine.

But I'll tell instead of bravery and fire
When lives of black and white entwine,
And men in brotherhood combine
This would I tell you, son of mine.

Of you. by Momoe Von Reiche⁶²

When the autumn mists
Descended, I knew you –
Hazy, moody, uncertain.
When the winter rains
Fell, I thought of you –
Warm, safe, sleepy.
When the spring leaves
Opened, I dreamt of you –
Green, woolly, naïve.
When the tropic seas were rough,
I remembered you –
Wild, tempestuous, cruel.
When the summer evening
Closed, I longed for you –
Caressing, gentle, protective.

A time to talk by Robert Frost⁶³

When a friend calls to me from the road
And slows his horse to a meaning walk,
I don't stand still and look around
On all the hills I haven't hoed,
And shout from where I am, 'What is it?'
No, not as there is a time to talk.
I thrust my hoe in the mellow ground,
Blade end up and five feet tall,
And plod: I go up to be stone wall
For a friendly visit.

⁶¹ www.metonlinelearning.gov.to/wp-content/uploads

⁶¹ Target 7, p.19, 1992

⁶³ poets.org/poem/time-talk

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