

The Poetry Society seeks 'poems that engage the senses and imagination' for the prestigious Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2014



Award opens for entries: midday, 10th March 2014

Deadline: 31st July 2014

Announcement of the winners of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award: 2nd October 2014 (National Poetry Day)

Judges: Grace Nichols and Simon Barraclough

"I'll be on the lookout for poems that surprise me with their images; poems that are tuned in to the resonance and sounds of words...In fact poems that engage the senses and imagination and catch us up in the world they create."

Grace Nichols, Foyle Young Poets of the Year 2014 Judge

www.foyleyoungpoets.org

The Poetry Society announces today the launch of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2014, the world's largest and most prestigious award for young poets aged 11-17 years old.

Last year's competition attracted entries from a staggering 7,478 young people from 75 countries worldwide, making it one of the largest literary competitions in the world. The 2013 winners (15 top winners and 85 commended poets) spanned the globe, from Nigeria to Malaysia and from right across the UK. Now in its 17th year, the competition once again invites young poets to enter their writing.

The Poetry Society is thrilled that The Foyle Young Poet of the Year Award 2014 will be judged by Grace Nichols and Simon Barraclough.

Launching the Foyle Young Poets Award, Grace said:

"The Foyle Young Poets Competition is a great way of involving young people in the making of poetry and keeping the power and magic of language alive. Winning a poetry prize doesn't in itself make you 'a better poet' than someone who hasn't, but it goes a long way in terms of gaining attention and a readership for

your work. It also helps us to discover new talent. So here's your chance to take part in this exciting competition and arrest us with your poems.

Keep it real. Keep it fresh. Write in your own voice. I'll be on the lookout for poems that surprise me with their images; poems that are tuned in to the resonance and sounds of words and not those that merely rhyme for rhyme sake; in fact poems that engage the senses and imagination and catch us up in the world they create."

Any young person writing in English can enter the competition, whether they have been writing for a long time or just started, and the competition is free to enter. Full details on entering the competition can be found at www.foyleyoungpoets.org

The top 15 winning poets will have their poems published in an anthology in March 2015, which will be sent out to more than 22,000 people worldwide, making it one of the largest circulated poetry anthologies in the world. The current anthology '[Rattle the hatches](#)' is published today, and celebrates last year's winners and invites entries to the 2014 competition (free copies for schools and individuals can be requested by emailing fyp@poetrysociety.org.uk)

The top 15 poets will attend a week-long residential creative writing course at the prestigious Hurst Arvon centre in Shropshire, where they will be tutored by this year's judges, or receive a visit to their school from a professional poet, followed by one to one and distance mentoring (age dependent). The 85 Commended Winners will receive book prizes and a year's Youth Membership of the Poetry Society, the UK's leading poetry organisation.

All 100 winners of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award benefit from ongoing support and encouragement, via publication, performance, promotion and internship opportunities throughout the UK. In 2013, Foyle winners were showcased at the BBC Proms, Cheltenham Literature Festival, Ledbury Poetry Festival and the Southbank Centre.

The prizes will be awarded at a special ceremony held at the Royal Festival Hall in London on Thursday 2nd October (National Poetry Day).

The Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award also incorporates a year round programme of activity aimed at encouraging creativity and literacy in schools. Every year the scheme nurtures best practice in creative writing teaching, identifying committed 'Teacher Trailblazers' to act as mentors and share lesson ideas. Foyle and the Poetry Society also offer additional poet-led workshops and events to a number of 'applauded schools', to reward their continuing commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the Award. The newly relaunched Poetryclass site offers a wide range of free downloadable teaching resources, including special Foyle lesson plans based on previous winning poems.

Since it began in 1998, the Award has kick-started the career of some of today's most exciting new voices, including *Poetry London* editor Ahren Warner and Derbyshire Poet Laureate Helen Mort. The Award represents a career-changing achievement for many. The phrase 'Former Foyle Young Poet' is now commonly found in professional biographies as alumni continue to make their mark on the wider literary world, their names appearing on bookshelves and at festivals the world over. The Poetry Society's online Alumni Library celebrates the successes of these exciting new voices.

Magnus Dixon, 13, was a Top 15 Foyle Young Poet of the Year 2013:

"The greatest pleasure was hearing work by others. Everyone was so good, yet voices were so different. It was strange but wonderful. What the inspirational Arvon course has done is changed us into better poets and life-long friends. I plan to submit as many poems as I can to Foyle Young Poets until I am 17, hoping I can go back to the Hurst one day."

Judith Palmer, Director of the Poetry Society believes that the quality of this year's entrants will be as impressive as previous years:

"Look at the Poetry Society's Foyle Young Poets Award and you will see the huge appetite young people have for poetry. Every year the competition produces poems which astound us. It's great to see the Foyle Award giving so many young writers the inspiration to make poetry a significant part of their lives, and giving us all great pleasure through their creativity."

The Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2014 is generously supported by the Foyle Foundation.

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Editor's Notes

The Foyle Young Poets of the Year 2014 Judges

Grace Nichols

Grace Nichols was born in Georgetown, Guyana and grew up in a small country village on the coast. A move to the city with her family when she was eight greatly influenced her first novel, *Whole of a Morning Sky* (1986), a story set in 1960s Guyana amidst the country's struggle for independence. This period shaped her writings and sparked her interest in Guyanese folk tales, Amerindian myths and the South American civilisations of the Aztec and Inca. She has lived in the UK since 1977. Her first poetry collection, *I is a Long-Memoried Woman* (1983), won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize. The book was subsequently dramatised for radio by the BBC, and adapted for film, winning a gold medal at the International Film and Television Festival New York. Her latest books are *Picasso, I Want My Face Back* (2009); and *I Have Crossed an Ocean: Selected Poems* (2010). She also writes books for children, including *Come on into My Tropical Garden* (1988), and *Everybody Got A Gift* (2005) which includes new and selected poems. Her two new children's books, *Cosmic Disco* and *Sun Time, Snow Time* were released in August 2013.

Simon Barraclough

Simon Barraclough was born and raised in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire but studied literature in Nottingham and Brighton, eventually moving to London in 1997. His poems have been published widely in journals and anthologies and he is a regular contributor to Radio 3 and Radio 4, particularly The Film Programme for which he has been commissioned to write several new pieces. His debut book, *Los Alamos Mon Amour* was nominated for Best First Collection in the Forward Prize of 2008, going on to publish *Bonjour Tetris* (2010) and *Neptune Blue* (2011). He is the editor of *Psycho Poetica* (Sidekick Books, 2012) and co-author of *The Debris Field* (Sidekick Books, 2013). He works as a freelance writer in the creative and technical fields and runs occasional school workshops on writing and poetry, and is currently poet in residence at the Mullard Space Science Laboratory in Surrey and working on a book and event entitled Sunspots.

"I'm incredibly excited about judging the Poetry Society's Foyle Young Poet of the Year Award. When I was 11 or 12 I fell in love with poetry, hard, and I feel this journey will take me back in time to when poetry was a vast and mysterious continent, waiting to receive my inky footprints. I can't wait to see how, and what, our young poets are writing and I'm looking forward to helping them explore their abilities and potential via the Arvon course." - Simon Barraclough

The Foyle Foundation

The Foyle Foundation is an independent grant-making trust supporting UK charities which, since its formation in 2001, has become a major funder of the arts and learning.

The Foyle Foundation has invested in the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award since 2001, one of its longest partnerships. During this time it has trebled its support and enabled the competition to develop and grow to become one of the premier literary awards in the country.

www.foylefoundation.org.uk

The Poetry Society

The Poetry Society was founded in 1909 to promote a “more general recognition and appreciation of poetry”. Since then, it has grown into one of Britain’s most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally.

Today it has nearly 4,000 members worldwide and publishes the leading poetry magazine, Poetry Review.

With innovative education and commissioning programmes, and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages.

As well as the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award, the Poetry Society runs the National Poetry Competition, one of the world’s longest-running and most prestigious prizes for an individual poem, and the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry – the prize founded by Carol Ann Duffy with the honorarium the Poet Laureate traditionally receives from HM the Queen.

www.poetrysociety.org.uk

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