

# 7,600 new voices: Foyle Young Poets World's largest poetry competition celebrates record number of entries



Foyle Patron BBC Broadcaster Martha Kearney @ Sarah Lee

*"It is fantastic to see a poetry competition which includes young people from all over the world. I am proud to support Foyle and welcome all those brave enough to show their work to the judges."*

**Martha Kearney, Broadcaster, Radio 4**

**The Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2014** has broken all the records to become the largest poetry competition in the world. A record-breaking **7,600+** young poets (aged 11-17) entered their poems from the very four corners of the earth; with submissions from a staggering **78** countries. This London-based competition run by the **Poetry Society** cemented its global appeal this year, with entries from as far away as Benin, Nepal, Russia and Papua New Guinea.

With such fierce competition, as thousands upon thousands young poets flock to enter each year, to be selected by the judges as one of the top 100 (15 winners and 85 commended poets) is a seriously impressive achievement. This year's world-class winners will be announced at a glittering awards ceremony in London on **National Poetry Day, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014**.

Since it began 17 years ago, the Award has kick-started the career of some of today's most exciting new voices, including multiple-award winner Martha Sprackland, and Ian Burnette whose poem 'Dutch Baby' was Highly Commended in the prestigious Forward Prizes earlier this year by a panel including broadcaster Jeremy Paxman. The Foyle Award is a career-defining moment for many of its winners. The phrase 'Former Foyle Young Poet' is now found in countless 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 quality of entries this year was, as ever, of world-class standard. This year's judges, acclaimed poets Grace Nichols and Simon Barraclough have their work cut out selecting the winners ready for the 2<sup>nd</sup> October announcement. Many of these poems explore with an impressive skill and maturity a wide range of issues, from the perils of social media to the conflicts in the Middle East.

All 100 winning poets will attend a prize giving ceremony at **Royal Festival Hall** in London on **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October (National Poetry Day)**. The Top 15 Foyle Young Poets of the Year will also attend a residential writing week at one of the prestigious Arvon Centres. All 100 winning poets will receive book prizes and become Youth Members of the Poetry Society, the UK's leading poetry organisation.

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

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## **Editor's Notes**

### **National Poetry Day Live – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014**

National Poetry Day is a nationwide celebration of poetry held on the first Thursday in October. Since 1994 it has shaken poetry from its dust-jacket into the nations' streets, offices, shops, playgrounds, train stations and airwaves, through live events, happenings, classroom activities, conversations, broadcasts, tweets and spontaneous uncontrollable outbursts of poetry. The theme this year is **Remember**. National Poetry Day Live is presented by the Poetry Society and Southbank Centre and has run every National Poetry Day since 2009. The programme of events runs 1-8pm at Clore Ballroom, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Rd, London, SE1 8XX. Admission is free.

[www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/info/npd/](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/info/npd/)

### **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](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk)

### **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](http://www.foylefoundation.org.uk)

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