

I have chosen these five poems: Dear Felix by Jackie Kay, There Are No Boring People in This World by Yevgeny Yevtushenko, A Life in Dreams by Jacob Sam-La Rose, Bad Moon by Claire Askew and 041 by Ian Banks, as they all felt somewhat familiar to me, whether it was the objective of the poem or the feeling they described. As I read through many poems these five seemed to stand out because they all made me feel comforted in some way, which is what seems to connect them all. For instance, Dear Felix seems to be talking about someone, possibly the poet's son, who has committed suicide and how the poet misses them. She talks about still feeling his presence after he's gone in the small things, like sunlight lighting up rooms. This idea comforts me, to know someone you love never truly leaves you. Bad Moon made me feel comforted in a different way to the others, it made me laugh which immediately brightened my mood. The poet makes fun of the common use of the moon as a symbol in poems and how the same metaphors are used over and over, suggesting some unique alternatives. Saying this as a poet herself, she seems to be self-aware, which was amusing.

When reading the poems I was immediately drawn to the ideas they have to offer as opposed to the way they are written, as they all read more like a story than a poem, with either irregular or no rhyme scheme at all. But upon rereading them, I looked more at their form and structure and found I especially enjoyed the flow of 041 by Ian Banks because it is so different from my other choices of poems, with short lines, only a few words long. It felt concise yet meaningful and seemed almost like a flurry of thoughts in the moment, telling the story of this phone call.

Specifically, 'There Are No Boring People in This World' by Yevgeny Yevtushenko spoke to me because the ideas he writes about are things I always like to think, it's almost as if he understands my view on the world. The poem is about how every life on this earth is like it's own planet and every stranger has their own life story that's just as meaningful to them as ours is to us. I have often thought about the stunning fact that every stranger has their own life with brilliant experiences and extreme hardships which we cannot see by just looking at them. This is what this poem talks about, so it seemed as if he could see inside my head and again I seem to relate to the poet, a stranger. He explains how we are all interesting, even if it may not be clear to the people around us, as they do not truly understand what goes on inside our heads, even our closest friends and family. As people, we relate through similar experiences but we all experience them differently and associate them with different emotions, so how can we ever truly relate? The ideas of this poem are very well summed up in the final, poignant line that when we die, "it isn't people but whole worlds that perish".

# Dear Felix

by Jackie Kay

Here you are Felix, looking into the future  
You never got to have,  
Your mum smiling at your side,  
Your dark brown eyes, warm, kind.

Here you are again, Felix,  
Coming into empty rooms,  
Filling them with light,  
Walking across the fields in the early light,

Crossing the old lines  
Your spirit lifted, your parting gift, this:  
A legacy of kindness.  
A new friend in the wilderness.

If you could come back, Felix,  
You'd know how much you were missed, are loved;  
Whether the moon is full or crescent,  
Your absence is a presence.

You would take it back if you could,  
Turn back, turn around, come back.  
If they could they would take it back;  
The mean things they never meant to mean.

In your name and with you in mind,  
We will, Felix: we will promise to be kind.

# There are no boring people in this world

by Yevgeny Yevtushenko

There are no boring people in this world.  
Each fate is like the history of a planet.  
And no two planets are alike at all.  
Each is distinct – you simply can't compare it.

If someone lived without attracting notice  
and made a friend of their obscurity –  
then their uniqueness was precisely this.  
Their very plainness made them interesting.

Each person has a world that's all their own.  
Each of those worlds must have its finest moment  
and each must have its hour of bitter torment –  
and yet, to us, both hours remain unknown.

When people die, they do not die alone.  
They die along with their first kiss, first combat.  
They take away their first day in the snow ...  
All gone, all gone – there's just no way to stop it.

There may be much that's fated to remain,  
but something – something leaves us all the same.  
The rules are cruel, the game nightmarish –  
it isn't people but whole worlds that perish.

# A Life in Dreams

by Jacob Sam-La Rose

There have been teeth  
falling loose from their sockets  
like a shower of petals or bones.  
There has been treacle;  
attempts to run against a gravity wound so tight  
tight single steps were futile,  
a travelling nowhere,  
a running on the spot,  
a fanged leer and a gnarled hand  
inching ever closer.  
There have been glorious revolutions in unnamed countries,  
wars against tyrants,  
troops like legions of swarming beetles.  
There have been blades, flashing at the sun.  
Once or twice, a fluency in kung-fu.

Up has mostly been up,  
though has been convincingly turned  
on its head.  
There have been drives down unfamiliar streets,  
the front of a car crumpled  
like a denim pulled fresh from the wash.  
Once, a mobile home.  
There have been more than a few kisses. School  
classrooms and corridors.  
A hiding place in a primary attic.  
There have been clothes, forgotten  
and remembered too late.  
A numbness of gums.  
Weightlessness.  
Unassisted flight.  
Falling but never hitting the ground.  
Fear  
as solid and real  
as table tops or bed-frames.  
There has been silence,

the power of sound cleft from the mouth,  
the jaw gummed with quiet, the throat  
emptied of ammunition.  
There has been love.

There have been messages  
passed back and forth between hemispheres, metaphors  
like acres of fortune cookies.  
All this, behind shuttered and fluttering eyes  
and, I'd wager, some of the best,  
where everything moved like snowfall  
and time itself was as delicate as a snowflake,  
melting on the tongue.

## Bad Moon

by Claire Askew

The moon must be sick of being in poems –  
always gripped by fingers of late honeysuckle,  
always filtered in the lake through the jetty's slats,  
always silvering the flicked tails of the koi.  
Always a dinner plate or mirror,  
always a fingernail clipping, a grin.

The moon must be sick of being in poems.  
Always the bright pin in the pictures's corner,  
always looking in at the window of middle-class homes.  
Always shoved above a bridge in Paris or Venice,  
always an eyeball or symbol,  
always a radiant woman, a bowl.

It's also in the splintered windscreen of the crime scene  
with its blots of blood. It's hung over the pig farm,  
streaking white across the silo's cheek  
and slanting through the lorry walls in blades.  
It's in every dented can at the landfill pit,  
turning the tip to a shoal of dirty fish.

Never the buried skull,  
never the gummed plug in the junkie's sink.  
Never the white cat under the truck's wheel,  
never the beached and stinking jellyfish.  
Never the gallstone or the pulled tooth, of course.  
Nobody wants to read poems about this.

by Iain Banks

My lady's voice on the phone  
Like an electric thread of silk  
Drawing me back through night's dark maze  
To a stormy city  
A handful-hundred miles away.  
"There's thunder,  
Can you hear it?"  
I hear  
Something too fine, too balanced  
To be called tangle,  
Too wisely innocent of plans, devices  
To be named weave.  
I press the plastic closer,  
Try to bring her nearer.  
"Can you hear the thunder?"  
But the gale is drowned,  
The rain hushed,  
Thunder quieted.  
She speaks,  
And a gentler force  
Overwhelms all of them.