

EXAMPLE ENTRY: Peterhouse JCR Arts Competition 2024

Uneven Pavements

I saw home in the dodgy fence panel
that was always meaning to be mended;
tied together by old rope.

I saw home in the uneven pavements
that trip, and trial, those who have yet to venture
this particular corner of the concrete jungle.

I saw home in the potholes
that I learned to swerve, troubling those
that drive unaware.

I saw home in the half-painted wall
with the paint peeling still - decades on...
hoping to cling on.

I saw home in the setting of the sun
above the house that homes the
pigeon on its aerial - a silhouette.

I saw home in the half-fallen tree
that twists in contortions that defy gravity.

I saw home in the wilderness of the driveway
that let Persistence's picture be framed
in its 'front garden' - the weeds that find their way
through the cracks.

I saw home in the unscrubbed street signs,
names obscured by the dirt of dreary days.

I saw home in the streets
where beautiful imperfections were just left to
be:
in the embattled rose,
the one that grows where little else does,
finds sanctuary in the clays that founded its beauty,

the clay that moulds the people that tread it
in its own imperfect image.

In piecing together these familiar fragments;
in seeing them in unfamiliar faces, places,

I see pride in imperfection, a sign of greatness.

I see home.

Short description to explain how the work fits the theme (max 250 words):

This poem is one of hope and pride in the face of adversity and inequality, as I walk the streets of my home town - exploring these topics, whilst appealing to the broader theme of 'Everyday Life'. The notion of imperfection is a thread that runs through the poem, in the 'dodgy fence panel', 'unscrubbed street signs' and 'half-painted walls' and there is contained within this imperfection a sense of pride and home. The 'embattled rose' is the key symbol of this triumph in the face of adversity, growing in the London clay where I live, reflecting the people that tread it. Equally, the 'weeds that make their way through the cracks' signify the persistence and resilience required to thrive in the face of such adversity. An idea of home and a 'pride in imperfection' have become a key part of 'Everyday Life' that can be taken with those that live here wherever they go as they move away from home - 'familiar fragments' seen in 'unfamiliar faces, places'. These 'fragments' are what 'Everyday Life' means to me, a beautiful struggle that moulds who we become and the contribution we make to society, who we keep in our mind's eye as we journey through life.