
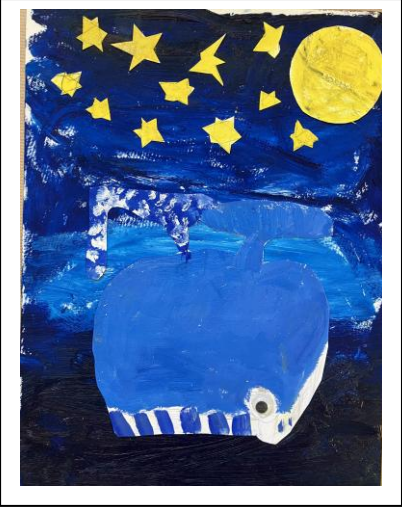



The Du Maurier Fowey Literary Festival Competition for Young Writers and Artists 2026

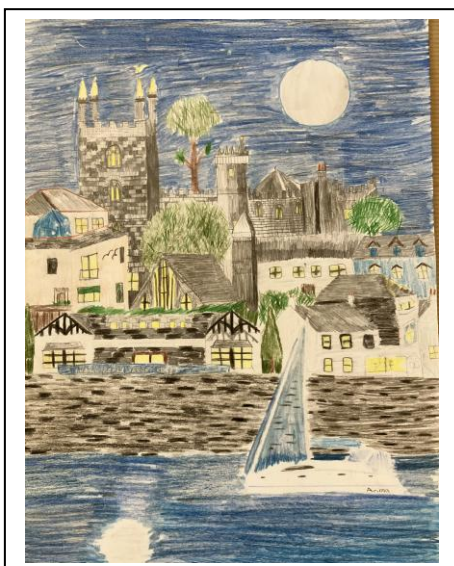
Results

Award	Code	Name	YR	School/Independent
<b>Art</b>				
<b>FS/KS1</b>				
1st	F7A	Shasha	YR	Fowey
		<p>The judges loved Shasha's fluffy printed owls all sitting on their branch. A lovely range of painted nighttime colours for the sky demonstrating good colour mixing. Shasha has carefully printed the eyes which really seem to be looking out from the painting. What are they watching for?</p>		
Joint 2nd	I6A	Bertie	Y1	Independent
		<p>A striking picture with a good sense of scale. The whale is set at an interesting angle. Use of collage is most effective. Judges felt that Bertie has made great contrast between the dark painted background and the moon and carefully cut out and positioned stars. Is the whale alone out there on that dark night?</p>		
Joint 2 <sup>nd</sup>	PO17A	Abike	Y2	Pondhu
		<p>The judges thought that the nighttime woodland scene was very atmospheric. The very careful blending of green chalks trees was very effective. The moon and stars also. The stillness of the fox against the movement of the trees was striking. Has the fox spotted something?</p>		

Highly Commended	P2A	Kaiden	Y1	Polruan
Highly Commended	I5A	Fossie	Y2	Independent
Highly Commended	F6A	Indie	YR	Fowey
Highly Commended	SC3A	Harper Rose	Y1	St Cleer
Commended	PO7A	Frankie	Y2	Pondhu
Commended	P5A	Jowan	Y2	Polruan
Commended	P1A	Zeniah	Y2	Polruan
Commended	PO12A	Freya	Y2	Pondhu
Commended	I16A	Erin	Y2	Independent
Commended	SC4A	Fia	Y1	St Cleer
Commended	F16A	Eddison	Y1	Fowey
Commended	F10A	Phoenix	YR	Fowey
Commended	F8A	Nya	YR	Fowey
Commended	F9A	Archie	YR	Fowey

**KS2**

1 <sup>st</sup>	I7A	Lizzie	Y6	Independent
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Such a careful drawing with so much attention to detail makes this picture a joy to view. The scene is instantly recognisable. Perspective is given by the studied placement of buildings one behind and on top of the other. The moon and its reflection allow us to realise that this picture could well be set After Midnight. The picture suggests an adventure- where is that yacht bound?

Joint 2 <sup>nd</sup>	P8A	Antonia	Y5	Polruan
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A lovely tonal After Midnight sky. Along with a glittery moon. Antonia has really thought carefully about how to use the media at her disposal. Great use of gel print to form the tree canopy and branch that the owl is sitting on. He looks on top of the world and at a great vantage point. Great attention to detail in the layering of the owl's face and tummy feathers, all using the gel prints.

Judges were delighted to see that Polruan School were continuing to develop the skills taught to them in July 2025. All the entries use of gel prints. Artist Louise Kidd visited the school in July 2025 and was sponsored by The Mid Cornwall Arts Society in collaboration with the Du Maurier Fowey Literary Festival Competition for Young Writers and Artists 2025. Louise gave her time for free and Mid Cornwall Arts Society provided Gel Printing plates and materials for the whole school to use.

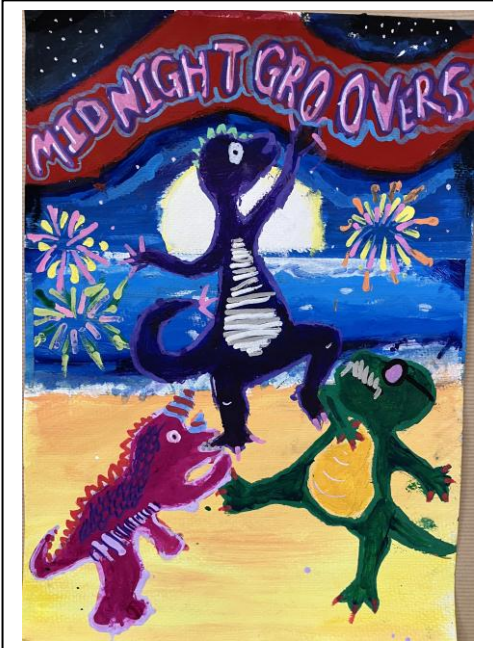
Joint 2nd

I4A

Wilby

Y5

Independent



Just imagine! Is this Readymoney Beach After Midnight?! Judges thought Wilby's picture was fun and exuberant, very eye catching! He has thought carefully about colour to create good contrast between the background and the crazy creatures! Great placement of the components of sand, sea, moonlight and fireworks to draw the eye straight to those Midnight Groovers on the beach!

Highly Commended	I9A	Poppy	Y3	Independent
Highly Commended	I15A	Rex	Y3	Independent
Highly Commended	P7A	Erin	Y5	Polruan
Highly Commended	P10A	Ava	Y4	Polruan
Highly Commended	F1A	Evelyn	Y6	Fowey
Highly Commended	I1A	Joseph	Y4	Independent
Commended	F5A	Merryn	Y6	Fowey
Commended	F4A	Lizzie	Y6	Fowey
Commended	I12A	Merryn	Y6	Independent
Commended	I8A	Marlowe	Y5	Independent
Commended	I10A	Rosa	Y5	Independent
Commended	P9A	Kian	Y5	Polruan
Commended	I14A	Finley	Y5	Independent
Commended	C2A	Reine	Y4	Charlestown
Commended	C1A	Isaac	Y4	Charlestown
Commended	P14A	Ronnie	Y3	Polruan

KS3/4

1st

I3A

Barney

Y7

Independent



Judges loved the striking bold minimal range of colours, the flat colours of night time. Care, thought and patience has been taken to create the jumble of buildings, the angles and juxtaposition of the rooflines and lights determining perspective. The simple use of three short lines to demonstrate the reflection of moonlit shadows on the water is again an effective simplification.

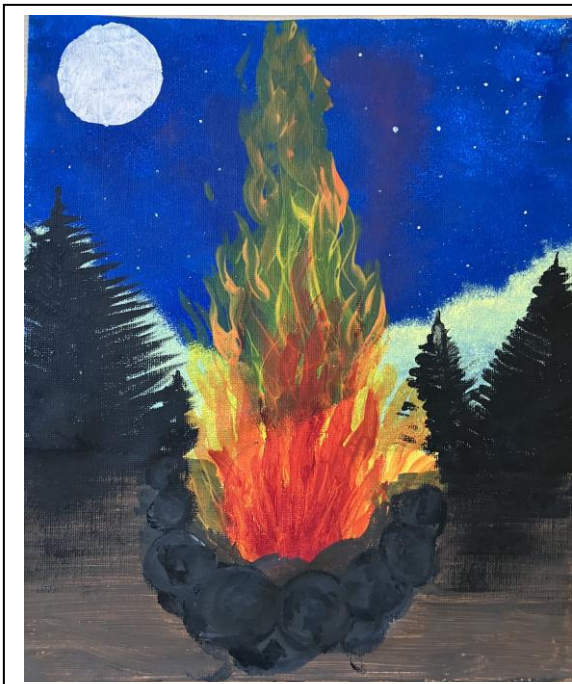
2nd

I11A

Scarlett

Y7

Independent



Judges loved the overall impression this picture gave; the sense of warmth from the carefully painted fire, the peace from the still trees and the vertical direction of the flames, the depth of the scene depicted by the receding trees and the creamy white background. The scene is thoughtfully constructed and is effective in its simplicity. The judges felt that Scarlett had most probably experienced sitting out After Midnight enjoying the warmth of the fire and watching the moonlit sky!

Special Award

I13A

Aleida

Age 3

Independent



Aleida is 3 years old. She took such care in selecting her materials and preparing them for this collage that the judges felt that the finished piece was worthy of a mention and inclusion here. Aleida will receive a certificate.

## Poetry

### FS/KS1

Award	Code	Name	Year Group	School/Independent
Joint 1 <sup>st</sup>	I2P	Thea	Y2	Independent

#### After Midnight

The moon is shining  
The stars are glittering  
I can hear owls hooting from big trees  
The grass is waving in the wind  
I feel magic all around me  
I zip up my tent  
And say goodnight.

#### Judges' remarks:

We loved how Thea used sight, sound and her 6<sup>th</sup> sense to describe the moment. It was a clever idea to put a place, the tent, in the poem. It enables the reader to have a very clear picture of Thea outdoors in the moonlight watching and listening. The last two lines suggest that she is snug and happy to be outdoors after midnight. A magical poem! Well done Thea!

Joint 1 <sup>st</sup>	SP29P	Mason	Y2	South Petherwin
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#### After Midnight

Up in the sky I see a star  
Twinkling bright from afar  
In the dark night I see a fox  
I hope the farmers gate is locked.

#### Judges' remarks:

The judges loved the thoughts going through Mason's head as he pictures himself perhaps watching out of a window after midnight. Good word choices – afar, and good rhyming words- star, afar and fox, locked. We loved the humour of the last line! Well done Mason!

2 <sup>nd</sup>	SP9P	Fletcher	Y1	South Petherwin
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#### After Midnight

After midnight I saw an owl  
Then I heard a wolf howl  
A plane flying in the night  
Zooming with it's flashing light.

#### Judges' remarks:

Judges thought that Fletcher had created a very clear picture of what he could hear and see perhaps from his bedroom window one very dark night. We liked the rhyme and rhythm of the poem. Well done Fletcher!

Highly Commended	F6P	Eddison	Y1	Fowey
Highly Commended	F5P	Dominic	Y1	Fowey
Highly Commended	F18P	Elize	Y1	Fowey
Commended	SP26P	Penny	Y2	South Petherwin
Commended	SP18P	Freddie	Y2	South Petherwin
<b>KS2</b>				
1st	W24P	Sydney	Y5	Wadebridge
Sea Born, Star Bound				
<p>I am the sea; the sea is me. I am sea born; star bound</p> <p>The night sea is a confession, whispered in a language only the heart understands It's surface is a velvet curtain, hiding a thousand unspoken stories The night sea is a fallen sky, it's waves the slow breathing of stars, It's a cool dark quilt, stitched with threads of starlight. The night sea is a cradle of silver, rocking the moon to sleep It's an opulent stage, where the moon rehearses her quiet monologues. The night sea is a vast, patient creature, blinking slowly with phosphorescent eyes It's a mouth of sound, swallowing sound and certainty alike. The night sea is a kingdom without a ruler, ruled only by the wind, It holds the shore the way a ghost holds a memory, softly, but with a grip that never loosens</p> <p>I am the rolling, cresting, frothing waves on the beach, And the sea is the soft pitter- patter of bare feet across the sandy shores. The water knows my name and I walk where it leads, It hums it's ancient stories through the pull of shifting reeds.</p> <p>I am the sea; the sea is me. I am sea born; star bound I understand the sea; the sea understands me.</p>				
<p>Judges' remarks: Sydney's poem stood out in a class of about 30 similar poems. Sydney's poem has beautiful imagery, created through the use of personification and metaphors. The word choices are ambitious and used with good understanding of what they mean. The main bulk of the poem with it's ten lines of repeated pattern "The night sea..... It's .... had tingles going down the judges spines! Beautiful poetry Sydney!</p>				
Joint 2 <sup>nd</sup>	B61P	Bo	Y5	Brunel
After Midnight				
<p>Owl, alone, solo Calls softly over oak trees White- glider. Hoot! Twoo!</p>				

Judges' remarks:

A haiku! Very carefully chosen words create a strong image of the owl. His position, the sounds, his movements. Bo's haiku was one of many, but judges all felt this haiku was the most effective. So simple, so magical! Well done Bo!

Joint 2<sup>nd</sup>

B5P

Ommarion

Y6

Brunel

### Cats After Midnight

As midnight rose, the cat ran under the stars

A black looking cat, lurking in the valley.

Sat there looking up at the gleaming Mars.

Tip toeing down the dark and wet alley.

It's shadow cast 'gainst the moonlit silver sky.

No sound he made, a silent vow to keep.

Thinking about the ones who said goodbye.

The shadow- cat beast prowling in the deep.

Beneath the firmament he seeks the stars.

His heart hungry for vengeance he can't keep

To heal the spirits ancient, jagged scars

And tears of sorrow on his face will creep.

The cat slithered down the road feeling bored

In shadow deep, he acts the lethal lord.

Judges' remarks:

The poem has a traditional feel to it. Omm makes some ambitious word choices- vengeance, firmament.

Omm has made careful word choices to keep to the alternate line rhyme pattern.

There are some lovely descriptive phrases such as *It's shadow cast 'gainst the moonlit silver sky.*

Judges felt that the poem was ambitious and successful in creating a clear image of the prowling cat After Midnight.

Highly Commended	B32P	Kaleb	Y4	Brunel
Highly Commended	B29P	Phoenix	Y4	Brunel
Highly Commended	B31P	Darcey	Y4	Brunel
Highly Commended	C8P	Rory	Y5	Charlestown
Highly Commended	C1P	Rosie	Y5	Charlestown
Highly Commended	W39P	Alice T	Y5	Wadebridge
Commended	SP33P	Esmé	Y3	South Petherwin
Commended	SP35P	Zara	Y3	South Petherwin
Commended	SP42P	Evelyn	Y3	South Petherwin
Commended	B33P	Noah	Y4	Brunel
Commended	B34P	Kornelia	Y4	Brunel
Commended	B28P	Fox	Y4	Brunel
Commended	SP52P	Tamar	Y4	South Petherwin
Commended	SP47P	Libby	Y4	South Petherwin

Commended	SP56P	Ted	Y4	South Petherwin
Commended	SP466P	Florence	Y4	South Petherwin
Commended	W1P	Lily	Y5	Wadebridge
Commended	W40P	Gracie	Y5	Wadebridge
Commended	W27P	Otis	Y5	Wadebridge
Commended	W3P	Edrick	Y5	Wadebridge
Commended	W9P	Caiden	Y5	Wadebridge
Commended	I3P	Rosa	Y5	Independent
Commended	C7P	Jackson	Y5	Charlestown
Commended	C4P	Archie B	Y5	Charlestown
Commended	B54P	Max E	Y5	Brunel
Commended	B69P	Lottie	Y5	Brunel
Commended	B4P	Willow	Y6	Brunel
Commended	B9P	Freddie	Y6	Brunel
Commended	B8P	Robert	Y6	Brunel
Commended	B7P	Alana	Y6	Brunel
Commended	B6P	Holly	Y6	Brunel
Commended	B1P	Eden	Y6	Brunel
Commended	B2P	Cara	Y6	Brunel
Commended	B3P	Daisy	Y6	Brunel

#### KS3/4

1 <sup>st</sup>	T1P	Sophie	Y8	Truro School
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Let me, midnight, plunge into your inky black sky and watch the dying stars up above mutter their last words.

*No, child, for day is too near for you to dwell on something as dark as me*

Tell me, midnight, why do you hide your broken, hopeful, self away from the melliflous rays they call sunlight?

*I am caged, child – a sorcerer’s spell tugs me away from the thing you call joy.*

Spare me, midnight, from hearing one more of your sorrowful and silent lullabies.

*My dear child, I have no sorrow, only truth. Yet a soul so bright as yours cannot find the difference*

Chase me, midnight, into the dawn and away from the dusk; let me cradle you in my motherly arms ‘til fear wakes and **do?** you.

*Beautiful child, I cannot grow such wings and fly. But I will forever stand beside you- whisper my name in darkened corners of your luminous daylight.*

Judges’ remarks:

This entry is very original in its approach and theme. The opening line is dramatic; the child addresses midnight directly and midnight replies. It is a prose poem; the lines are long and uneven yet have a poetic cadence. Lines beginning Let me, Tell me, Spare me help to strengthen the poetic rhythm. The poem has a lilt and is gentle in it’s rhythm. The structure of the poem is based upon the child’s pity for midnight, and midnight’s concern

that the child should understand its unalterable nature, and that should perhaps provide comfort to the child. A lovely poem enjoyed by all of the poetry judges.

Joint 2<sup>nd</sup>

PC2P

Ember

Y7

Penryn College

After Midnight

Blanket of midnight  
Thick and soft  
Carrying all my dreams aloft  
Floating through inky waves of stars  
The studs of diamond scars,  
The cold clear night  
No clouds to be seen  
No wisps of dark grey shadows seen  
And some are afraid  
Of an abyss so vast  
With timeless echoes of lives long past.  
But as I lay  
Safe in my bed  
With honey sweet thoughts filling my head  
The night feels like a comforting thing  
Not rough and spectral and manacing  
So next time please do not show fear  
When midnight wanders ever near.

Judges' remarks:

Ember's poem creates a peaceful atmosphere in which there is more beauty than fears of after midnight – a thick blanket carrying all my dreams aloft. Dreams not nightmares as demonstrated in lovely phrases such as Honey sweet thoughts. Thank you Ember!

Joint 2<sup>nd</sup>

T2P

Amelie

Y8

Truro School

After Midnight

Oh, I have swum to the deepest depths of the sea,  
Where it feels safe and sacred and free,  
I have skimmed the surface of a utopian paradise,  
I have done thousands of things you wouldn't imagine;  
Tumbled and glided and paddled out in the sonorous silence.  
I have reached the sanctity of the ocean,  
Where the moonlight lay still and warm  
And the seaweed carassed my toes.  
I have felt life moving with me in that un-trespassed space,  
Where time passes, like the pearlescent moon is fading beyond the horizon,  
It's light reaching below the surface for me, conjuring a spell in the stygian night.  
I have dived deeper than the elegant cormorant,  
Dreaming of what tomorrow could bring.....

Judges' remarks:

An original interesting approach creating a dream like atmosphere evoking the paradise of the sea in the moonlight. The poem is blank verse, thus giving it freedom. The word choices are careful and effective; lively verbs: tumbled, glided, paddled, arresting phrases such as sonorous silence, pearlescent moon. Well done Amelie!

Highly Commended	I1P	Scarlett	Y7	Independent
Highly Commended	PC5P	Bow	Y7	Penryn College
Commended	PC6P	Zoe	Y7	Penryn College
Commended	PC3P	Aparna	Y7	Penryn College
Commended	PC1P	Jordan	Y7	Penryn College

### Story

#### KS1

1 <sup>st</sup>	I6S	Theo	YR	Independent
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#### After Midnight

Theo was sleeping in his bed when SMASH!

Theo wakes up and races outside!

Theo raced to his garden and saw a meteor.

Theo hears the clock strike midnight and after midnight he becomes Super Theo.

He throws the meteor over his head into the field.

It becomes a granite boulder.

The end

Judges' remarks:

Theo wrote a book! It is beautifully illustrated, has a front and back cover with excellent bubble writing, and a blurb! Judges loved the story, all about the meteor landing in Theo's garden and the magic that happened after midnight. The judges loved it!

#### KS2

1 <sup>st</sup>	F1S	Lizzie	Y6	Fowey
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#### After Midnight

Rose had become quiet. For her to become quiet, you would not have been surprised to see snow fall in hottest August, or Bengal tigers live in Surrey. In short, she was loud. What may have caused this abrupt change, you might ask? Well it had something to do with After Midnight.

As Rose Penhallow tossed and turned, she felt the clocks steady gaze upon her willing her to react to it's impatient ticks. Eleven o'clock. Flinging off her duvet she silently got dressed and picked up a black and white picture off her desk, turned into the hall and ran down the steps. Without looking back, she gathered her keys and slipped off into the night.

Darkness. It enveloped Rose; meanwhile cold clawed at her like a lion. The night was clear, cloudless and eery as the moon hung silently, causing ominous shadows to crowd Rose. She stared at the river through a gap in the houses. To Rose, it looked like a glassy mirror and almost made her stop. Now was not the time to be fascinated by the River

Fowey, no, it was the time to hurry. Reluctantly, Rose broke into a run, and ran down the road. Just then she saw something that made her heart drop.

Rose's uncle and aunt were walking along Custom House Hill towards her. Violently looking around she darted into Bull's Lane and didn't stop running till she reached Pebble and Salt. Breathing a sigh of relief, Rose leant against the wall. When she got her breath back she heard the church's solitary chimes ring out in the atmosphere. Twelve tocks. Midnight. Feeling her heart in her mouth she fled to Whitehouse.

Finally, after five minutes of endless running, Rose stood overlooking the estuary, panting. In a cloud of shiny atoms, a ship emerged out of the river. It was an old vessel, full of sails and was like a neon shimmering ghost in the middle of the water. Rose gaped in awe at the strange spectacle, enthralled by the gorgeous blue sea reflecting it.

Suddenly Rose lifted up the photograph she had taken from her desk, and positioned it next to one of the men on the boat. It was him. She ran into the water, all the while staring at the ship and just then the ship was directed into land. Rose stepped out of the water as the ship docked and an elderly man jumped off the boat and limped over to Rose, grinning. It was Grandad. He hugged her for what felt like ten years.

But just as swiftly as it had happened, Grandad and the boat faded away. Rose was left on the beach, joyous tears rolling down her face.

As she walked back, Rose Penhallow would never forget the unusual adventure that reunited her and her Grandad after midnight.

Judges' remarks:

The judges enjoyed this story about a girl called Rose very much. There is a good introduction to the character in the first paragraph. Lizzie gave us a clear setting – the streets of Fowey. Then the magical part of the story unfolds, involving Rose's grandfather. The story concludes beautifully with a gentle nod to the theme of After Midnight. There are a wide range of sentence starters adding interest – In short, , just then, reluctantly. Lizzie has used lots of active verbs, darted, fled, hurry, slipped off. This is a really well constructed, well thought out, well told story. Well done Lizzie!

2<sup>nd</sup>

F6S

Marlowe

Y5

Fowey

#### After Midnight

Just after midnight I awoke from my deep slumber with a noise of something sharp on glass. I saw a group of seagulls tapping on my window. I quickly ducked so none of the flock could see me. Boom! Crash! Thump!

I had another look, seagulls had broken down the Niles bakery window and eaten all the pasties! Steak ones, cheese ones and even giant ones! I was very tempted to tiptoe the pasty crumb road, so I did exactly that.

Peeping inside Shrew bookshop, every book was torn and scratched and even ripped in two. I gasped under my breath. As I turned away I heard a big, loud ferry toot. I put my head to it but Haveners restaurant was in the way. I quickly ran past Rubys and peeked from the quay. At least twenty seagulls were partying on the ferry squawking sea shantys!

“Oh what do you do with the drunken sailor,  
What do you do with the drunken sailor,  
Earli in the morning!”

I broke out with laughter.

Suddenly the seagulls turned to me .....

Judges' remarks:

Judges thought that this was a good story with a definite beginning, middle and end. It is full of detail, and the reader can clearly follow the route the story's narrator takes through Fowey. Initially the story is rather scary, as the seagulls cause significant damage to the town. Then it seems that the end of the story will be fun, with the seagulls singing and having a party on the ferry, but they turn to look at the narrator, and the story stops abruptly, suggesting that the seagulls' intention is not fun at all.

Marlowe obviously knows seagulls well – greedy, noisy, often in groups and are not to be trusted! A well told tale!

Highly Commended	F17S	Hugo	Y4	Fowey
Highly Commended	F12S	Kaitlyn	Y4	Fowey
Highly Commended	F18S	Scarlett	Y4	Fowey
Highly Commended	F7S	Emme	Y5	Fowey
Highly Commended	I5S	Lizzie	Y6	Independent
Commended	F11S	Rosemary	Y4	Fowey
Commended	F13S	Evie	Y4	Fowey
Commended	F10S	Dominic	Y4	Fowey
Commended	F19S	Ernest	Y4	Fowey
Commended	F4S	Ethan	Y6	Fowey
Commended	F2S	Merryn	Y6	Fowey
Commended	F3S	Betsy	Y6	Fowey

**KS3/4**

Joint 1 <sup>st</sup>	I7S	Molly	Y9	Independent
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After Midnight

I'm a vile vicious creature riddled with shame. My existence pervades in constant darkness. As long as I continue shunned from normality and society I have to live off loathing. Loathing for myself.

As I write, the sun is falling unwillingly: the night overwhelming it with its coldness, coldness that I so dutifully suffer. In times where dark winds and seeps through the streets, I am most reminded of its icy grasp. My only glimpse of somewhat warmth is through my torn, stained sleeping bag. Once white, now littered with grey and brown blotches which, in my boredom, form wishful scenes: a horse galloping to freedom or a prisoner breaking through harsh chains that once bound them.

I knew I'd fall into homelessness when my mother left me to fend for myself, not yet on the streets, but in that house. Some days I'm grateful I'm out of that disasterous place. On others I weep, mourning for a warm bed, mourning for an embrace to melt away the searing pain of loneliness. Most of all, I mourn Honey.

The inescapable darkness invades where I now scrawl. No morsel of light that remains is wasted by me, the moon's cruel gaze is enough to keep me scribbling away.

She was as sweet as the name suggested. Two messily formed pigtails sat unevenly on her head and strands of her brown hair poked out from the bobbles. She pulled at my hands with persistence and incredible strength. It was long after midnight and she was dressed in a sagging nightie and clutched a torn bear with a little red bow in one hand. Mum just

left, and Honey was tearstained and pleading for safety. I was certain at nine she couldn't comprehend the severity of the situation but she had that knowing gaze as if she could see through the walls of excuses I had haphazardly built around her.

I'm disgraceful, crawling, street vermin deserving of the constant jeers and stares because I let them steal away my sister to a different home. I was given her address, scared to knock because of my dishevelled state and how lowly I had become. I paused and managed to catch a glimpse through a gap in the curtains. Long hair cascaded down her back in waves. A lady stood behind her brushing it through as Honey laughed. She was smiling, dimples poking through, nose scrunching as it always did when she was truly happy. That's when I turned my back, once and for all. She was safe, but not with me. She was laughing, but not with me. I let her turn away and she was clearly thriving. No need for her brother stumbling through the door.

The unbearable gnawing cold meant that I dropped my pen, it rolled to feet. The figure crouched, and proffered a cup, it's contents steaming.

"You don't have to do this alone any longer."

She gently said, as dawn rose behind her.

Judges' remarks:

This is a memorable piece of writing dealing with homelessness and missing family. It is powerful and convincing. Judges thought that some hope was offered at the end of the story. There is a good use of language; age appropriate and used correctly. Lots of strong descriptive words and phrases. The story is concise but effectively draws the reader into the story. The story is clearly set at night, and although After Midnight is not mentioned, the timeline for someone living on the streets is perhaps linear rather than by the hour. All of the judges were moved by this piece and the sensitivity demonstrated in Molly's storytelling.

Joint 1<sup>st</sup>

I2S

Minver

Y11

Independent

#### After Midnight

The clock tower struck twelve, pealing it's hollow, mournful echo across the still wakeful city.

1854, London.

A man walked through the haggard streets, dressed in clothes far too rich for the poverty of his surroundings. He was dressed all in black; save for the paleness of his shirt collar and shining silver cufflinks peeking out ominously from the sleeves of his overcoat. The man walked with an air of ethereal grace despite his impeding limp. He leaned on a cane fashioned of blackwood, the bone glittering malevolently in the subdued light of the moon.

The man continued down the dank mud-strewn street; the smog filled air hung heavily over the mangle of shapeless roof tops; a silent yet imposing shroud, enveloping the darkened city. He made his way steadily towards the battered door of an abominable rookery which had been occupied well beyond it's initial capacity. Through a single cracked windowpane, a candle flickered, the flame was brittle choked by the pool of wax engulfing it. But there, past the wavering candle and putrid mess of tangled bodies – a boy.

The boy was small, far too small for his eight years of age. He lay on his side, legs and arms pulled close to his puny body. His mother knelt fretfully beside him, exhaustion and worry overcrowding her pallid features. She tucked the threadbare blanket closer around the boy's corpse like frame, her hand hovering over his shoulder for a moment longer before returning limply to her side.

The man stood in the doorway; his eyes sharp and focused, peering into the sickly gloom of the rookery.

The boy's eyes opened.

The mother's face crumpled as she cradled the boy to his chest, her eyes fighting back the tears threatening to spill down her face.

Slowly, the boy rose, his mother releasing his small form from her grasp, and he walked towards the broad figure of the man, silhouetted by the moon's shadow.

The mother sat back on her heels, tears running freely down features as her glossy eyes stared at the corner where the boy had been moments before. She clutched the moth-eaten blanket to her torso, as if trying to engrave the fabric into her body as she let out a long, inconsolable cry.

The boy turned slightly at the sound of his mother's scream.

"Will I see her again?" the boy asked hesitantly.

"Sooner than you think." The man replied stoically, tugging the boy's hand firmly leading him down the dingy grime ridden dtreet.

The man did not speak again, nor did he slow his pace, nor release the boy's hand- because that was his job. Not to console. Not to explain. For the man was death .....and death needed no explanation.

Judges' remarks:

This is a powerfully written story. There is a superb opening line which clearly sets the mood. The date and place clearly set the scene. There is strong descriptive language with clear imagery throughout the story. The reader is led effectively into the story and wants to know more about the gentleman and why he is in this area of London that clearly puts him out of place. The third paragraph sets the scene very effectively. Oh what a twist as we finally learn who the gentleman is and what his business is. The story has a clear beginning, middle and conclusion and is particularly memorable because the language is evocative and the reader is emotionally moved by the plight of the circumstances. The judges were all very impressed with Minver's power of storytelling.

2<sup>nd</sup>

I4S

Denny

Y7

Independent

#### After Midnight

Midnight ..... the witching hour..... the time of darkness .....when all the things watching from the shadows come out to play. The great grandfather clock echoes through the big, empty house; tick... tick... tick. It's happening again. Always at midnight. Never at eleven or nine o'clock. ALWAYS at midnight. I throw on my rubber duck slippers, they quack when I walk, slip out of bed and slightly crack open my door to peer into the darkness. It's blacker than ink, blacker than black, blacker than the blackest of black! A new world record of black used in one sentence! And don't even try to beat me by writing black, black, black, black, black, black, that doesn't even make sense.

I stare into the void of darkness. My mind is wandering like it always does. Why is it so dark? What could be hiding in there? Is it safe? Even though I'm in my house and I've

walked that exact hall a thousand times. I can tell. Its definitely not safe. I stare hypnotized into the darkness. It feels like something is calling my name.

“Joseph..... Joseph ..... Joseph.”

Yes that’s my name, Joseph. Am I though, I ask myself? What if I’m dreaming. What if I’m a random middle aged man called Steve, Jacob, or Razzle? What sort of a name is Razzle anyway, it sounds like a name a dragon would be called, and if I am Razzle then Im gonna have to live with a ridiculous name the rest of my life and I might never get any friends or a job or-! I told you my mind could wander. I pinch myself on the elbow. No. Not dreaming. And definitely not Razzle. For a moment I think I catch a glimpse of something moving in the darkness.... Could it be my parents? No. My parents are still asleep. Something’s always felt unsettling in this house. But especially at midnight. And even though I’m scared of my own shadow, in a split second decision, I edge my stiff body towards the hallway and start making my way out of my bedroom. My slippers quacking along the way..... quack .....quack....quack. Halfway down the hall paranoia starts kicking in. As I walk further down it feels like the paintings framed on the walls are watching me, their eyes following my every movement. Almost at the end of the hall.The ticking of the great grandfather clock is getting louder. Tick.....Tick.....Tick. Along with my heavy breathing and quacking slippers it sounds like an orchestra of bizarre sounds. “Tick, huff, quack. Tick, huff, quack. Tick, huff, quack.” I wonder to myself if anyone would ever buy tickets to an orchestra of terrible sounds. I’m so lost in thought I don’t see that I’ve reached the end of the insanely long hallway. Waiting for the hand to chime the next day. Waiting for this nightmare to end. And then ..... the clock ticks backwards.....

Judges’ remarks:

This story has a very strong beginning and a good cliff hanger of an ending! The scary theme is interesting and convincing. The main character is likeable, we like his distractions and musings. Humour lifts the sense of doom and is effective. There is good use of language – witching hour, crack open the door, orchestra of bizarre sounds. We do want the story to continue! The judges felt that Denny demonstrated great potential as a storyteller!

Highly Commended	T1S	Amelie	Y8	Truro School
Highly Commended	T3S	Sophie	Y8	Truro School

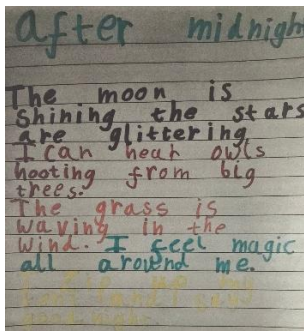
## Young Artist of the Year 2026

All 8 prizewinning frames pieces of art were on display in Fowey River Gallery for ten days during April. With 87 votes from visitors to the gallery Barney's wonderful picture Fowey Harbour After Midnight had the most votes. Barney was presented with the Young Artist of the Year trophy at the presentation event on Sat 9<sup>th</sup> May at the Fowey Harbour Hotel by Mandi Dellow, owner of the Fowey River Gallery.



## Young Writer of the Year 2026

JT Scott, a local children's author who has written stories for ages: the series of Sammy Rambles, Molly Manila and Bumper and Friends books, selected our Young Writer of the Year. Jenny chose Thea as our Young Writer of the Year with her fantastic poem After Midnight.



Jenny said, I've chosen this poem because I love the words and the way within the lines Thea is inviting you to be outside amongst the trees, listening to the owls and feeling the magic. Visually it has been written thoughtfully using the different colours as she changes senses, - seeing, hearing, feeling, and leaves me with a sense on anticipation of what might happen next.

