

# Poetry

## Group 1

## The Magic of the Yellow Mountains

*ESF Quarry Bay School, Wong, Angie – 7*

Oh no, Oh no—I am in the midst of the mist!  
Does the magic inside still exist?  
In the mist, I use my fist,  
Until it forms a twist of mist...

The wind is whooshing to me like it is soothing me to sleep.  
Over the mountains the mist seems to creep,  
I wonder about that lost treasure hidden in the mountains deep,  
What other secrets does the mountain keep?

I knock on the rocky wall to see if there is a secret door,  
Suddenly, a sense of musty smell slowly fills up my sensitive nose,  
I hear a bird noisily chirping, sending a warning from the floor,  
About this mysterious mist? Who knows?

But I must embark on the perilous journey,  
As it begins for you and me,  
Following the footsteps of Li Bai and Du Fu,  
Go! Go! I will be following you!

I must run through the hills,  
Standing tall like massive giants in the sky,  
Running, climbing and dashing until,  
I reach the mountains that are so high...

As high as the vast blanket of grey clouds,  
As scary as a frightening creature, dark and mean,  
As secret as a treasure chest buried underground,  
As magical as you could ever dare to dream.

The legend goes, or so I'm told,  
Whoever sees the sacred gold,  
Which the creature guards and holds,  
A never-ending curse will behold,  
But should you fail, you should know,  
The creature will never let you go...

Have you heard the legend of the scary creature?  
It has lots of threatening features...  
People saw the mythical creature,  
Hiding in the clouds,

Trying to protect the treasure it enshrouds.  
Two big wings, a feathery tail, and sharp claws,  
It kills people with its nasty jaws.

If you do not want to be killed,  
Or continue the trend of blood being spilled,  
You must think of a fabulous poem!  
Just like Li Bai and Du Fu, these two marvellous poets.  
You must not make the poem worse,  
Or else you cannot break the curse.

The treasure is waiting for you at the top of the mountain,  
Hidden behind the fortress of the flowing fountain,  
Keep climbing! keep climbing! Until the sun goes down,  
Use the moonlight power to hunt around,  
To make the creature fall asleep, you simply must recite,  
The following verse under the cover of a dark and windy night.  
Then you will discover the treasure hidden beneath him,  
With secrets filled to the brim.

“This poem will lift the curse of the treasure,  
Which will bring you lots of pleasure,  
You better use the poem wisely,  
And move it around cautiously,  
Knower of secrets, holder of gold,  
You have followed the instructions you were told,  
Now, make your own poem and you shall see,  
That the magic of the mountains lies in thee”

## The Legendary Huangshan

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Cheng, Ning Sang Nansun – 7*

High, high up in the sky,  
Long, long live on the Earth.  
Dark, dark caves hide the dragon eyes,  
Huangshan at its million years of birth.

Color-changing trees all year around,  
Free-floating clouds greet you everywhere.  
Sweet-chirping birds can always be found,  
Huangshan the prime nature is here.

Full, full of people among the scenery,  
Lined, lined up of cable cars to the peak.  
Stop, stop! Don't cross the road boundary,  
Huangshan the famous mountain makes you unable to speak.

Popular tales about the legendary place,  
Countless drawings around the mysterious mountain.  
Twenty thousand poems praising the nature's grace,  
An extra one composed by a little boy called Nansun.

# Ode to Dragons

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Chan, Him – 9*

Oh dragons, mysterious dragons,  
What is it like to live in the staggering mountains  
above the sea of floating clouds?

Moving yet motionless,  
Fleeting yet eternal.

How many thousands of years have you hidden among these black camel humps?  
What do you eat, where do you sleep?  
I wonder if ever we would meet.

Oh dragons, awesome dragons  
Oh you powerful beast  
What happened on the day of the race Jade Emperor gave?  
Why have you lost to a bunny, a tiger,  
an ox and even a mouse  
when you could have soared through  
the clouds with your awe-inspiring wings?  
Of all the animals, you should have been the king!

Oh dragons, majestic dragons  
Guardian of the mountains,  
How you protected the villages in the lofty mountains from peril!  
Symbol of strength and peace.  
Elusive dragon, why didn't you make yourself seen?  
The ancient bones that people found,  
did they really belong to you?  
Are you false or are you true?

Oh dragons, mythical dragons,  
Through all the centuries, you must have witnessed countless changes.  
How many intense battles have you won?  
Creatures of legends,  
Were you there when Huangdi  
created the Elixir of Immortality?  
Did you really carry him, amidst rolling thunder  
Towards a place shining with grandeur?

Oh dragons, you pillar of strength,  
If you are more than a waking dream,  
please continue to protect us and

Poetry  
Group 2

## The Beasts Among the Beauty

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Tsoi, Micaela Emily – 10*

Awe-inspiring Huangshan,  
Your thousand stone steps are a stairway to Heaven,  
Climbed upon millions of times.

Dangerous Huangshan,  
Those knife-like peaks are high above unworthy humans.  
Piercing calls from birds of prey echo across your valleys.

Fantastical Huangshan,  
Beasts roam your mystical mountains,  
Surrounded by somber seas.  
Mist emerges from the flaring nostrils of flying dragons,  
High up in the sky.

Majestic Huangshan,  
Peacocks play lotuses on your jagged edges.  
Competing pine trees twist and turn upwards  
In a flurry of green.

Tender Huangshan,  
You have watched over so many battles;  
Your earth is the quilt of the perished heroes.  
Their deeds will never be forgotten,  
Even while they have died.

Ancient Huangshan,  
Cliffs and slopes house your granite rocks,  
Worn by time and weather.

Renowned Huangshan,  
Legends encircle your entire being,  
Changing and growing to this day.

Mysterious Huangshan,  
Your endless secrets are yet to be discovered.

## The Spirits of Huangshan

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Yu, Christabel – 10*

In the magical, mythical mountains of China,  
One mountain carries a much dreamier sight.  
With seemingly so many mysteries to unveil,  
The spirits of Huangshan work both day and night.

In Spring when the fireball first reveals its head,  
The spirits glaze the peaks with a single sun beam.  
Till all peaks and rocks shine in the early sunlight  
They shall sparkle and shine and twinkle and gleam.

When noon is coming, all the spirits gather—  
They use clouds to ensure Huangshan's great beauty.  
The marshmallows floating make Huangshan more special,  
Perfecting the grand mount is the spirits' only duty.

The next on their list is to bubble those hot springs—  
A job to perfect on their endless To-Do-Lists.  
The spirits must make tomorrow's preparation,  
Their magic flows out from their heart to their fists.

In Winter when the days grow only shorter,  
Those spirits must hurry their work more than ever.  
They shall polish those ever-green pine trees  
So that the warm green coating stays on forever.

Before the spirits may await a new year,  
For a finishing touch they sprinkle on snow.  
Until all the peaks have white fondant draped over  
Only then may the spirits take rest somewhere low.

The next time you visit the ever-mighty Huangshan,  
Remember the work done by the spirits combined.  
They perfect their home so that you all may visit:  
The mountain shall be grand and always refined.

# The Girl And The Dragon

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, David, Antonin – 11*

The humans played in the meadows,  
They laughed and stood in the shadow,  
Of the glorious rock,  
And then drank from the brook,  
It was a blissful life, but tomorrow...

The wind howled and screamed in their ears,  
Raindrops fell for what felt like years,  
As lightning began to flash,  
The wind began to lash,  
And the sky moaned and flooded them with tears...

The dragons, they came one day,  
And they showed humans a place to stay,  
A place to play and live,  
Where they could strive,  
So they followed the dragons right away.

To the mountain, the place of light,  
The land of good, free of the night,  
It was a paradise,  
It was so very nice,  
Huang Shan, the mountain of all the light.

But soon the people lost their faith,  
And treated the dragons like wraiths,  
They drove them away far,  
And put them behind bars,  
And so the poor dragons lost human's faith...

The humans hunted dragons down,  
They destroyed ev'ry single town,  
Eviscerated,  
The dragons were hated,  
And if people captured one it would drown.

The people's ubiquitous hate,  
Made the good dragons too to hate,  
And detest a person,  
Oh they hated a human,  
They would destroy and eviscerate.

A young woman knight one day came,  
She was brave and swore to tame,  
A Brobdingnagian,  
Fierce, evil, dragon,  
A dragon that had caused many people pain.

One day the knight, the brave the brave,  
She found a dragon in his grave,  
It so wanted to die,  
It cried it cried and cried,  
Then moaned, "why do humans treat us like slaves?"

To which the brave bravely replied,  
You see people are terrified,  
Of you and your dark looks,  
And your breath which can cook,  
Something to death, so see they're terrified.

But I do really mean no harm,  
How can I prove I won't bite arms,  
Or destroy anything,  
I wouldn't burn a thing,  
I can fix anything, And I am calm.

That's it cried she, she danced around,  
What, roared the dragon, bringing down,  
The whole entire cave,  
But with a single wave,  
Fixed the entire cave, saying "what now?"

She told the dragon, yesterday,  
There were fires, though they're away,  
It caused massive damage,  
If you just could manage  
To fix it, no one would fear you, hooray!

The dragon at once had agreed,  
It flew off faster than her steed,  
To the people's huge town,  
They flew down, down and down,  
And the dragon helped all those in need.

The dragon rebuilt the whole place,  
Soon it was again paradise,  
A very happy town,  
Oh a happy town,  
An extremely happy nice paradise.

People accepted the dragons,  
 They made friendship with the dragons,  
 They lived in harmony,  
 And they were now happy,  
 People no longer saw them as problems.

Huang Shan the mountain in China,  
 Which were named after the emp'ror,  
 Huang Di the savior,  
 Who saved the dragons, her  
 Work allowed dragons to live in China!

## Huangshan, A Poem.

*St. Francis of Assisi's English Primary School, Chan, Chun On – 11*

Leaving China, his family and the mountains go,  
 The yellow emperor rises to the heavens.  
 He blesses the mountains, letting it inspire  
 Of Art, of Poetry, even Legends.  
 Legends of creatures hidden in elevation;  
 Tales of Magical, Misty Mountains.

As mist flutters in different sections,  
 Filled am I with wonder and joy.  
 North, South, East, West, all directions!  
 Up and down does the mist toy.  
 Much like us siblings,  
 With games we're used to playing.

As I absorb the summit's sight,  
 Filled I am with a strong passion.  
 It seems small, like the moss on the peak's might,  
 Yet it is much bigger, a magnificent illusion.  
 From Moss to Pine,  
 From Passion to Excitement.

A spirit climbing up the mountains,  
 A fairy weaving on the loom.  
 Another, tending to his gardens,  
 One Immortal sunning his shoes.  
 What other vivid scenes,  
 Can nature evoke?

The thousand-year-old Greeting Pine,  
 With its pals' pass their prime.  
 Preserved through the years on rocks and snowdrift.  
 They stay together, although sometimes disheartened,  
 They meet and laugh, with their unweaving grit.

It's a long day, I tell you that.  
 So I go in to lay and rest.  
 It is in the early mornings I need to be awake,  
 So that see can I the mountain's best.  
 But first, I'd like a bath,  
 Before I follow the dreamy path.

Smelling of perfumes and lilies,  
 When inhaled uplifts mouth's corners.  
 As I feel the warmth spreading through my body,  
 I then step in, bathing in aromas.  
 as the breeze blows away my sweat,  
 Coolness and relaxation lets me rest.

As the sun glows on the mountains,  
 And filled myself with anticipation.  
 In its glory I feel an  
 Excitement for magical creations.  
 It will come soon,  
 And make me swoon.

Then I hear a shout coming behind,  
 Oh! It's my family, surprising me.  
 "Come, come!" was my reply,  
 Then around a bird, rainbows surround suddenly.  
 This is what we call Buddha's Light,  
 Only a lucky few can see its beautiful might.

Then we look around, and what sees us?  
 Clouds coming together to form big sea,  
 I think of Molly, Mary, and Mickey, family we are,  
 Thinking of the strength we possesses.  
 A tear falls from my face,  
 I receive the greatest of grace.

## E.T. and the Beast

*Yaumati Catholic Primary School (Hoi Wang Road), Leung, Anna Petra – 10*

A multitude of stars  
 Glittered from afar.  
 Glimmering fireflies  
 Danced close by.

Nowhere in sight,  
 At dead of night.  
 A dragon in slumber  
 In a gigantic lair.

A shapeless shadow  
 In rural ruins.  
 Patted and poked,  
 The dragon was woken.

Down the gorges,  
 Up the ridges.  
 I rode the dragon  
 Around the pavilions.

At Hundred-Foot Waterfall,  
 We swooped and soared  
 Over pine trees and rocks,  
 Magical, rare and odd.

At Lion Peak, I fancied  
 I giggled with monkeys.  
 At Nine Dragon Peak, I reckoned  
 I chuckled with pheasants.

Yellows on the horizon  
 Startled the dragon.  
 It shook to break free  
 And get rid of me.

From the mystic mountains  
 The dragon disappeared.  
 In the serene firmament  
 The shadow lingered.

Who am I?  
 A man? No! I deny.  
 Cosmic dust?  
 An ET on Earth crust!

It is no wonder  
 Great poets of China,  
 Du Fu and Li Bai,  
 Dwelled on the hillside.

The bards longed to pursue me  
 In the clouds, the Heavenly Sea.  
 But I drifted back to the exterior,  
 The unfamiliar and the obscure.

# Poetry

## Group 3

## Spellbound

*ESF South Island School, Li, Annika – 12*

As I leaned precariously over the edge,  
A dizzying, sheer drop fell away at my toes.  
I gripped the patterned stone rails  
And tried to contain the gasp that shot  
Between my trembling lips  
Like an escaped bird, no longer caged.

Wispy ghosts of mist flitted around  
Lost travellers,  
The souls of explorers whose footprints prevailed,  
Engraved on the face of the Yellow Mountains.  
I stood on the Bridge of Immortals  
Alone, and yet not alone.

The name of the bridge lied.  
How many had been fooled to cross it?  
Yet I was one of them.  
The stone beneath my innocent feet  
Was raw, honest and true.  
Still it stayed silent.

It did not creak as I made my way across.  
I traced the outline of the hills as I went  
With my fingers, blotted with ink;  
I wove the beauty, the mystery, into a painting,  
Quickening my pace to match the mountain's song.  
A thousand secrets awaited me.

I ran my fingers along the rough bark  
Of gnarled, twisted pine trees.  
They seemed to bow and beckon, rasping  
"Come, courageous adventurer.  
What is it that you seek?"  
My answer was lost in the vast echoes.

I passed boulders with glaring faces  
Of man, monkey and ogre...  
A single silent warning: "Beware!"  
Stone beings, a grotesque masquerade...  
Then an unfading sight brought me sudden relief-  
A finger of rock pointed the infinite way.



The sea of clouds harmonised in voices of angels,  
 “Oh, fly with us, fly, and you will be free.”  
 I gazed at the pure heaven no mortal hand could paint.  
 White flooded my vision; for a moment I was blinded.  
 Ink splattered my paper, honest fragments of night.  
 The dazzling ecstasy deceived. I turned away.

My fingers dwindled and trailed  
 In the healing water of a hot spring.  
 No voice spoke to me but a faint sigh carried on the breeze.  
 The spirit of an Emperor bathed in sacred pools.  
 My reflection faded as I withdrew.

My paintbrush danced on paper as I drew on.  
 Barely aware of the cluster of village houses below my cliff,  
 I sat back to admire my work.  
 The Yellow Mountains reawakened  
 On fragile yet powerful paper and ink.  
 I wondered at its mere capabilities.

Twisted trees, angry rocks, tranquil sky and water.  
 A swallow froze in its hundredth wingbeat,  
 An opaline droplet halted before the splash,  
 A vibrant flower was trapped in still life,  
 I wished to be part of it all.  
 Carefully, swiftly, my ink began to bloom.

Sunlight glinted off a strange object in the distance.  
 I stopped and peered more closely at the phenomenon  
 Which sat in the heart of the village below  
 A pond in the shape of a half moon.  
 I marveled at the manmade beauty and picked up my brush.  
 Deftly, the pond was soon depicted in my painting.

A gale sliced through the air.  
 My ink bottle toppled over and spilt.  
 As I bent to pick it up, my papers scattered and rose like birds.  
 I grasped at them, trapped in a tornado of paper and ink.  
 Then, suddenly but slowly,  
 Almost as if planned, the world spun to a halt.

I wasn't falling. Just... hanging  
 In empty silent space,  
 Wondering if the world had come to its end.  
 I wasn't breathing. Merely... existing  
 In empty silent space,  
 Hearing my own thoughts louder than echoes.

Then the tips of my feet kissed rough ground  
 As motion filled in the void.  
 I was back where I had left – wasn't I?  
 Something felt different. Something felt wrong.  
 The birds' beaks were open; the frog leapt into the waterfall.  
 But no song came; the splash emitted nothing.

\*\*\*

Twisted trees, angry rocks, tranquil sky and water.  
 A swallow froze in its hundredth wingbeat,  
 An opaline droplet halted before the splash,  
 A vibrant flower was trapped in still life,  
 An artist desired to be part of it all,  
 For atop a painted cliff, a figure sat, brush in hand.

Two children, each the mirror image of the other,  
 Frowned at the painting through wide, dark eyes.  
 “Who drew that?”  
 Chaste hands seized the fragile paper  
 And yanked it all the way back to Hongcun Village.  
 It swooped after them, a peculiar kite.

Near the pond that was in the shape of half a moon,  
 The child with a cole flower in her black hair  
 Pushed the other with a cole flower in her black hair.  
 “Get the water!”  
 The liquid sloshed from the pail and onto the painting.  
 The child gave a yelp, cradling it. “Be careful!”

“Do your chores and give me that!”  
 The children snatched the paper callously, the pail forgotten.  
 “Hey, it's mine!” Staggering feet met the skid of a puddle;  
 Balance was lost, and so was the grip on the painting.  
 The paper drifted slowly, like a sinking, rocking ship  
 Down into the crystalline water of the pond.

For a heartbeat of stillness,  
 The children stared down at the disappearing ink.  
 Then the child with a cole flower in her black hair  
 Pushed the other with a cole flower in her black hair.  
 “Look what you did!” A childish, accusing tone.  
 “No, look what you d-” Eyes widened in shock.

\*\*\*

A desperate breath tore from my chest.  
 Sunkissed droplets flicked upwards.  
 Beside me, scraps of paper debris slowly dissolved.  
 Two children, each the mirror image of the other,  
 Frowned at me through wide, dark eyes.  
 “How did you appear like that? No one was in the pond.”

“Where do you come from?”  
 “What are you doing  
 In our Moon Pond?  
 You’re making the water dirty!  
 We drink it  
 But now we can’t.”

I didn’t answer.  
 I couldn’t.  
 I groped around for comfort,  
 My shaking fingers caught hold of my paintbrush.  
 “Ooh! Give it!”  
 The children wrenched it out of my hand.

“Hey look - we can draw!”  
 The children smeared the wet brush against  
 The dry stone ground.  
 “Here’s a house-”  
 I watched lines appear from my twirling brush  
 Like blossoming flowers on an unsteady branch.

I watched the children paint with my brush.  
 Such power, at the mercy of such vulnerable hands.  
 Such impulsive, young minds.  
 “Here’s me-”  
 “Me! Me! Draw me too! Make it pretty.”  
 “And here’s you.”

My heartbeat accelerated.  
 Something urged me to rush forward,  
 Something urged me to tear the brush  
 Out of that vulnerable hand  
 That had held it a moment ago...  
 But no longer.

The paintbrush clattered to the ground.  
 The two children were gone. Vanished.  
 Next to the brush, there lay two cole flowers, each the mirror image of the other.  
 And in the innocent drawing, there stood two children:  
 A child with black hair  
 Pushing the other with black hair.

# Where Dragons Are Born

*ESF West Island School, Tsang, Eric – 13*

I lie peacefully, calmly, knowingly on my bed  
In repose, serene, a pillow under my head  
Eyes closed, curtains drawn, not a single word spoken  
By the family around me, heads bowed for this occasion.

I gaze at the majestic mountains before me  
The place where I arranged for my soul to fly free  
Below the jagged edges, cloaked in a silvery mist  
I know however, that I will sorely be missed.

Perched atop the soaring mountain ridges  
A lone pagoda looks over the horizon  
A grand view it offers for when my soul emerges  
And arrives in the pagoda on these mountains.

Solemnly they stand still, yet at ease, I let go  
The last chapter of my life has drawn to a close  
Free of pain, free of worry, I let out and die  
People gathered around lift their heads for a final goodbye.

\*\*\*

I stare blankly at the opaque wooden box  
And imagine myself somehow peering through.  
How desperately I wish to break the locks  
And find my owner's death to be untrue.

I watch his flames flicker at my owner's cremation  
I reach my leg out, cherishing the warmth he gives  
My mind wanders away in imagination  
Without him by my side, how shall I ever live?

I stumble along the path of life aimlessly  
Every dreary step I take seems to lead nowhere  
Lamenting the loss of my only family  
I retire to my stable, overcome with despair.

I lie pale, sickly, knowingly in my stable  
Dreaming of the times he rode me to battle  
Eyes closed, I smile, death is right around the corner  
At last, I'll be reunited with my owner.

I gaze at the magical mountains before me  
The place together, where we will finally be  
Above the sheer cliffs, cloaked in a silvery mist  
He knew after all, that he would sorely be missed.

Perched atop the soaring mountain ridges  
A lone pagoda looks over the horizon  
A marvellous place we'll share when my soul emerges  
And arrives in the pagoda on these mountains.

Death lifts me up, I cling on dearly, not letting go  
It marks the start of a new life without grief or woe  
I can't see, I can't hear, no words can be exchanged  
Yet we know, we'll meet soon, just as we'd arranged.

\*\*\*

Bones of a horse rest beside a soldier's ashes  
Buried, they remain intact even as time passes  
Five hundred years later, two archaeologists arrive  
Seeking knowledge of how the ancient lead their lives.

In vain they try to solve the puzzle of bones  
Piecing wrong parts of the skeleton together  
Its bones had aged, resting beside a tombstone  
The leg bones lay fractured and the ribcage shattered.

Unable to fix the scattered bones left behind  
They think further and an image forms in their minds  
Wondering what the pile of remains could once have been  
Their imagination fills the gaps in between.

"It has a horse's long neck, a horse's long head."  
"But its ribcage is missing, with the tail of a snake's."  
"Perhaps it's a bit of both, maybe it's cross bred?"  
"Don't worry about it, it'll give you a headache."  
"Oh, what shall we do with this baffling mystery?"  
"We'll decorate it in our journal and make history."

"Lets give it scales and a body long and bendy  
That bears a striking resemblance to a snake."  
"Flowing mane, vibrant spikes along its body  
And an imposing aura that never breaks."  
"Two trailing whiskers of smoke stemming from its snout  
And wispy, pearly white horns for its curved eyebrows."  
"A tail of fire, burning bright, that stretches far out  
Four mighty lizard legs it'll have, standing tall and proud."

“We’ll give it shades of bright gold orange and red  
To symbolize good fortune and vitality.”  
“A twinge of jade green and blue for its spikes and head  
To symbolize peace and immortality.”

They detail their findings on a scroll of parchment  
About the species they discovered and how it looks  
Described as a creature, strong and magnificent  
Destined to be immortalized in fiction books.

\*\*\*

We gaze together at the mountains below  
I’m perched upon his saddle, just like years ago  
An arrow pouch slung behind, a hand on my bow  
A protective leather sleeve fitted on my wrist  
Riding, soldier and horse, above the silvery mist  
We leave behind memories which will sorely be missed.  
I look into a lake from above as I fly  
And the first glimpse of a dragon enters my eye.  
Below lays the place of a metamorphosis  
We know that dragons will never cease to exist.

Still, today, above China’s magical mountains  
A horse’s soul rests in the spirit of dragons.

## Slaying God to Spite Servants

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Yau, Alicia – 13*

Morning is ripe with the dewy scent of petrichor  
Mist caresses the drooping leaves  
Snaking past an ancient pine, felled by  
Skies that wept and wailed through  
Monsoons sweeping through on yesterday’s eve

Bloated persimmons fall into the basket,  
Though I dare not steal one to satisfy my starvation  
Sternly reminding myself of  
Hollowed cheeks and vacant eyes, crying out  
As every child went unfed

Undergrowth obscuring a cave’s narrow crevice  
Tempting me into its sunken mouth, a lure cast  
Of sun-kissed elderberry clusters  
I lose my footing on the precipice, plummeting down  
Into consuming blackness

Shadows embrace unblemished skin  
Once I step where the skylight seeps through  
The stomach of this cavernous behemoth  
Transforms into another entity  
Emerging out of tales woven from words

A palace that revels in its bestial splendour  
Archaic roots gnarled into an ancient crowning of  
Bygone deities, architects of this earthbound elysian  
Evident to my intrusion, this mirror dimension has all but been forsaken  
By all except an insensate king

Its form incites enthralling, ardent desire to  
Abscond this domain, yet I remain frozen by some inherent reverence  
For the resplendent creature lying in solitude, eternally slumbering  
When I am abruptly cast in the lustre of a phosphorescent iris  
Framing me in its impassive, aureate peripheral

The dragon’s awakening enshrouds its kingdom in tranquil ambience  
Choking down inarticulate veneration, I am struck by  
Instinct to run and spread news of this miracle unfolding through mirages

On its iridescent scales cloaking millennia of life reflects  
My ascent lifted from an unfurled claw

The winds are emergent wings stolen  
From Cranes soaring against  
Vivid hues painted on picturesque  
Tapestries of the heavens behind me while  
My feet traverse familiar routes  
To the outskirts of my village

Father's displeasure distinctly conveyed furrow of his brows  
I do not heed in favour of addressing the council of elders  
Imparting the blessed encounter, though their expressions are enigmatic  
As the coven's conferral draws to a close  
I find myself barraged with commendation

Elated laughter spills above barley mead bottles  
Condensed around paths debauched with detritus  
Adults drinking into delirious stupor  
Amidst incoherence is an idea conveyed through  
Whispers of inciting a kind of personal rebellion

Murmurs of discontent had travelled through provinces  
An emperor, jade palace adorned with jewels of  
Cruelties inflicted and a nation disregarded while  
Conflicts of the capital devouring itself before consideration  
Of devastation wrought by summer storms

Preceding him is a symbol; a mark of ancient kings  
Born the son of dragons, bearing the vicious heart of a viper  
A man, a mortal, yet unreachable and unaffected  
Monuments of the exalted are all commoners can reach,  
And that contumacious iconoclasm can incinerate

Sickening decay unravels in my chest  
Illogical thought tightens its grasp around my throat  
Incomprehensible, this insidious scheme of vengeance  
I had unknowingly unleashed  
Amidst grief and chaos, my mind drifts

Their intent is not at trial, that much is evident  
What I question is my perception, shrouded in dread that by rose-tinted reminiscence  
I invented the antithesis of idealities that  
In reality are unsympathetic and intolerant and void, with  
Halcyons of a bygone childhood marred with morbid ambiguity

What my people have suffered is an ocean of despair  
My betrayal is but a ripple over the churning surface  
Irrationality, misguidance and naivety cloud my judgement—  
For selfish delusions of repentance, I cede to conceit  
Intrusion on absolute authority is necessary immolation

“If they let us go, we can at least help pierce its skin”  
Other children chime in with agreement. The pervasive silence of  
My absence of assent made stillness more oppressive  
Within the encirclement of expectant eyes  
Accusatory dismissal swiftly replaces admiration

Pitiful little renegade, feeling lonely in your own world?  
Better than being a powerless spectre in other ones  
Drowning against the current, why not release yourself from this torrent?  
Then I suppose it's the hubris of personal truth  
That leads me away from the iniquitous festivities

Tendrils of heat embrace empty nightfall  
Shadows casting phantasms upon limestone  
The distant hunt makes monsters of men  
Wearing altered faces, for in this moment their expressions bear  
Myriads of hate, echoed across masses; I am again inexorably alone

Memory guides me through labyrinthine terrain  
The constraint of time a stalking predator at my heel  
Its snarling teeth averted by seeking refuge in the abyss—  
Embraced by the vertiginous depths of the earth  
And transported to my mirror realm once more

Serpentine creepers obscure tapering pathways  
Meandering chasms elevating a swollen mouth which  
Exposes a knife's edge of granite  
Growing closer the sonorous battle cries  
Pierce through in vicious oscillations

I rouse the creature, bittersweet farewells unspoken  
In one motion it soars into sanctity of the skies, cavorting amongst sun-stroked clouds  
Exquisite vision of untamed splendour  
Invoking such visceral, evocative intoxication  
Freedom echoes through valleys in magnificent resonance, such that  
My exhalation comes in tremulous rapture

# Conversation with a stranger

Marymount Secondary School, Chan, Ka Yuen Dabby – 14

He graduated with honours and worked  
minimum wage at a monotonous life  
Droning on his monotonous labour and  
Returning home to a monotonous wife  
With about as much intrigue as a freshly boiled bean.

By pure chance the marbled floor bled stardust  
on one such boring night.  
and the man was met by one sudden compulsion to  
run  
up north  
to the mountains

And so he did  
sprinting 'cross continents  
As Gaia crumbles and cracks and implodes upon herself  
And man-made metropolis morphs and  
folds into the starry cosmos and  
The empires and the gulags and the corporations go  
until there are only the yellow mountains left up high.

The man scrambled uphill 'til the sole of his foot hammered into the crook of a scaled neck

*“Hello.”* It trills  
features flowing, ethereal  
Written in the reptilian language of gods.

“Oh, hi.”

The man replies in surprise.  
The tip of his nose was flaking from the cold.  
Huangshan was a very chilly mountain.

After a brief awkward silence  
He inquired the possibility of divine intervention.  
Perhaps, the world could stop ending?  
He wonders, in naive optimism.

The dragon plainly refuses.

You see, this dragon was a nihilist.  
The lonely and sad sort that witnessed the rise of empires  
that had rooted for the little bumbling figures  
with too much brains and too much ambition  
it looked on  
until they became a city-civilization-empire-superpower

until they subdued war  
vanquished famine  
mauled plague  
conquered death

*Veni, vidi, vici*

Until the four horsemen of the apocalypse were replaced  
by a lumbering silicon titan  
called humanity

Until the deadly consequence of hubris caught up  
and the cosmos decided to swallow its mistake whole

the dragon sighs,  
“I hope this rotting universe starts anew  
and spins a less insidious tale.”

The man frowns in confusion.

“Sorry, that’s too grand a world view for me.  
Maybe if I were a dragon I’d understand  
But there is much contentment in  
my boring farandole of life  
Ya’ know, I have a very nice wife  
And a lot of friends I go out drinking with sometimes  
(Li puked on me once when he was drunk but I still miss him)  
And there’s this fluffy terrier I see near the dumpling store after my night shift  
He likes lap cheung with scallions on ‘em

It’s all very small, very irrelevant but  
but I’d still like the world to survive so I can see them again.”

Ah yes, and my baby!  
He showed a crudely done portrait of a young girl tattooed in teal and red on his back.  
This is my daughter. Ain’t she ‘dorable?

The dragon nuzzles closer with narrowed spectacles.  
 “Yes.”  
 It lies through its teeth.  
 “She is a bright young thing.”

A sudden unnamed sentiment bloomed  
 inside it’s reptilian chest  
 Seasoned with a tang of  
 longing for a past  
 when hordes of winded serpents graced villages atop mystical cliffs.

“I’m sorry,” it confesses.  
 “But I couldn’t bring the world back even if I tried.  
 We dragons aren’t gods.”

“Oh. That’s alright.”  
 The man upheld the image of boyish insouciance at the news.  
 “Don’t mope, we had a good run.”

the horizon was rolling towards them  
 in a spectacle of colour.  
 “Look, it’s almost here!” The man gestures.  
 “Here, hold my hand.”

The dragon allowed the man to hold the tip of its nail.

“Good night,”

“Good night.”

It was oddly warm, at the end of the universe.

## Immortality

*St. Paul’s Co-educational College, Ma, Tuen Hang Luann – 12*

Trek  
 to the highest mountain.  
 Leave  
 your royal chambers.  
*Do it. Do it.* Embark on this journey  
 Or you’ll regret.

I toss and turn.  
 “Whoosh”, the curtain billows, like the diaphanous dresses of my dancing concubines  
 to reveal  
 draped in cloud, how it greatly outshines  
 the zen yellow of the sun,  
 The blue-black tip of Mount Yi.

Come  
 to me.  
 Retrieve  
 your honour.  
*Do it. Do it.* Embark on this journey  
 Or you’ll regret.

Line up  
 a thousand dutiful slaves and a thousand feisty warhorses.  
 Bring the very elite  
 but prepare for losses  
 That distant taupe mountain tip  
 I will forever feel athirst for.

Paled turquoise  
 upon celeste  
 upon azure.  
 Prime your beauteous self for my presence,  
 Ocean of the sky.

He’s coming.  
 We rumble, roll like soft waves.  
 The misty clouds gather, clinging to the peaks.  
 Earnest to embrace him if he braves  
 our mystery, our richness, our serenity,  
 Our glory.

The monkey  
watching the sea  
No, the immortal  
pointing the way  
I'm coming, I'm coming.

Scarred yet magnificent, our rock guards,  
They are.  
Pave the way, the holy road  
Long enough to reach the heavens,  
wide enough for two chariots  
For the legend is here  
*He is here!*

This  
is my destiny.  
Here  
I shall be hailed.  
Greetings, mountain.

The hot springs frisk and frolic  
The waterfalls,  
they spray and strike  
“Salute to the King,” the mountain calls, half hidden in the cloud of seas  
as it stands the straightest,  
however gnarled it was moulded milleniums ago .

### Day 1

I bathe  
in the nourishing hot spring  
under the gentle caress,  
in the steady cradle of the mountain.

### Day 49

The legend, he steps at night  
onto the holy path  
Light,  
aureate light  
And he disappears.

Listen  
to me, how beholden to you am I  
that I hereby bless you  
with the name  
Huangshan.

*Huangshan*, the pine trees sway to the rhythm of  
*Huangshan*, the grotesque rocks croon and chant  
*Huangshan*, the scintillating waterfalls plunge and purr  
*Huangshan*, the seeds for time-honoured literature it will plant  
And so it was decided  
*Huangshan*.



# Poetry

## Group 4

## Leaves.

*Creative Secondary School, Chen, Dee Zion – 15*

They're quite peculiar, aren't they?  
Those dangling green things  
But then after time passes?  
They wither and die.

So this is how our story begins.

Along the vast expanse of eastern China,  
At the peak of Huangshan,  
Li Bai went to pray.  
At that big pine plant.

He got down on his feet  
Safe from any aggression  
And then,  
he prayed

He prayed to the gods of heaven  
He prayed to the earth below  
He prayed to the eight immortals  
On that lush green mountain  
He prayed.

I've always wondered about that man,  
It seems like he's always there.  
It seems like he's been through a lot  
It just doesn't seem fair.

This is the story of Li Bai the poet  
On his quest to rise to fame  
He succeeded slightly  
Then nothing was ever the same

Li Bai was a politician.  
He was calm as a tree,  
As still as a leaf,  
Though one thing you should know, that he never admitted defeat.

No matter what  
No matter the enemies

No matter the trials  
He stands on the mountain for centuries.

Li Bai had a dream  
The dream of immortality.  
That the immortal will stand.  
He stands there for eternity

He stands for justice  
He stands for the weak.  
He stands against tyranny  
He stands for the meek.

He achieved what he wanted,  
Though the world may never know.  
He's gathered all the ingredients  
The elixir of life. His end goal.

But then... All of a sudden? Everything changed.  
He no longer stood for equity.  
He no longer stood for the right.  
He no longer stood for the needy.

Perpetuity changes people.  
Power corrupts.  
Life isn't fair, he said,  
Life is unjust.

Life doesn't discriminate  
It takes and it takes and it takes and it takes and it takes  
But we keep living anyways  
We laugh and we cry and we break, and we make our mistakes

So it doesn't matter in the end.  
No need for justice,  
No need for virtuousness,  
No need to play nice

It's every man for himself.  
Everyone is alone,  
no matter the relationship.  
I was stupid to not have known.

Like a leaf, Li Bai was,  
A bright and wonderful plant.  
Though his ideals withered and died  
On the mountain of Huang Shan

## The Lost Treasure

*Heep Yunn School, Chen, Man Chin – 16*

Amidst  
this mountain  
thousands feet above,  
lies a valuable possession  
long lost in the city.

Intangible, but consoling.  
Not discerned, yet felt.

Bizarre.  
What luxury a city like such can't render?  
A metropolis with skyscrapers squeezing one another,  
an advanced place where machinery predominates feelings,  
an expeditious economy where money is spent without tracking!

Along the steep stairs I walk,  
attempting to conquer the mountaintop,  
and claim the treasure mine,  
before the others can find.  
“A magical mountain” —  
more like an object to fulfill temptation!  
First battling with walking corpses beside,  
next avoiding the snare of squirming serpent,  
I struggle to climb to higher grounds.  
Yet  
“still millions of miles before the peak!”  
I heard from someone,  
completely crushing my enthusiasm.  
‘Onerous journey...’  
Watching their figures from behind,  
exhaustion surges deep inside.

Listen!  
Long, lyrical tune lingers around,  
up and down it goes  
like soft, smooth, flowing water,  
with a graceful swan babbling and pattering.

Two roads diverge in front of me:  
One paved with shimmering golden bricks,  
Another leads to rocks, pines, springs and clouds.

Between them sits an old man playing jade flute—  
Mellifluous the melody is,  
the song of the magical mountain.

‘Excuse me sir,  
does this road lead to the exquisite treasure?’

Thoughtfully,  
he eyes the people on the road of gold,  
then twinkles at me but never confirms.

“Just let your heart rule.”

I step on the road that contains no gold.  
Encircling me are peculiar rocks,  
akin to an immortal pointing the way,  
and a lonely monkey watching the sea.  
Spectacular and mesmerizing those odd rocks are,  
whose stories can only be felt with soul.

As I advance on this narrow road,  
trees with strong, stout trunks appears,  
as if dragons and phoenixes chasing and gambolling  
along the way, invigorating me with continuous exuberance.  
Filling the air with refreshing scent,  
the pines trees grow unfaltering,  
their cordial branches stretching out,  
greeting every passer by.

Misty steam swirl about from  
milky, bubbling hot springs.  
Babbling, fizzling they whisper  
softly, secretly they seep  
deep into the ground.

Seas of clouds are  
flowing and drifting:  
Mystical and delicate,  
like soft whipped cream  
on the gateau of heaven.

“Contentment is never something luxury,  
mere can it be  
detaching from the rowdy city,  
and listen to the song of nature,  
where consolation is found,  
and one’s deepest desire is answered.

Tranquility has long faded in our city,  
not eyes can see or palms can touch.  
They come with rapacious, expecting to gain more,  
yet leaving in disappointment, eventually losing more.  
Those living puppet has long lost their lives,  
yet they are still climbing,  
ignoring the initial will of their hearts.”

Turning back,  
there lies a big grin on his face.

“But you have found it.”

The treasure in the trace.

# Lost in Heaven

*Shanghai Singapore Internatonal School, Panda, Anouska – 15*

The rain pitter-pattered against the juddering clear glass window,  
A blanket of innocent liquid globes shimmered in the orange.  
The Yellow Mountains whizzed past me fleetingly,  
Sea green lines of a patient's monitor.

Bump. Bump. Bump.  
As the tin-roofed bus greeted each curve of the hilly road,  
The imprinted ink brush leaped out between my coarse fingers,  
A sinking, hollow void flooded my soul like oozing black ink.

Once upon a time they used to call me a poet,  
I was primed, praised, and passionate.  
My poems were the choir of stars in the starry night sky,  
And I was the moon, the Maestro of the orchestra.

Now upon a time they call me the fallen hero,  
A man who holds a purple hyacinth in his softened hands.  
A man whose words no longer weave to create tapestries,  
A man whose nightmares reign with images of empty, long scrolls of paper.

Thoughts pulsed with intense bitterness in my mind,  
My numb feet staggered out of the swarming, chaotic and retro bus,  
The iciness in nature's realm stabbed me instantly; a thousand hot knives,  
I stopped to desperately inhale the lingering, dewy petrichor.

My breath was a blossoming vapor,  
A baby dragon breathing fire for the first time.  
My eyes found themselves captivated by the sight before me,  
Liu Haisu's strokes of watercolor coming to life.

The world had secluded me from the rest,  
A boy abandoned in the kingdom of green.  
For a moment time felt still in silence,  
And then, I smiled.

Colossal brown giants filled the horizon with occasional specks of green,  
The austere shoulders of earth carried the weight of the spectral, strenuous sky.  
The peaks extended their necks in excitement and kissed the beryl blue skies,  
Oh, how could one believe this luxury?

The sound of the mellifluent chorus of the harmonious, twittering birds blessed my ears,  
A baffling presence of something exquisite; I turn,  
Passionate Buffy Laughing thrushes wink at me as they fly by,  
My butterfly heart fluttered with an unknown bliss;  
My cheeks blushed like that of a schoolgirl.

My feet drowned themselves eagerly in the Springs of Youth,  
Oozing warm water rippled around the edges.  
Was this where Emperor Huang Di became younger?  
Remnants of history shivered within my blood.

Floating clouds enwrapped the craggy mountain ridges in a warm hug,  
Was that the famed Bright Top reaching high in its mightiness?  
Ballerinas of beauty twirled gracefully under the beaming daughter of the sky,  
The delicate hands of inspiration intertwined swiftly against my cold ones.

My crooked shoes found themselves slipping off the moist stones,  
I stopped as my eyes became the artist viewing his masterpiece.  
My stubby legs throbbed and screamed in agony,  
But that hardly mattered now.

Lost in and about the green,  
The Immortal Showing the Way stood on the edge,  
A certain liveliness erupted within the stone itself,  
As if any moment Han would appear and show me the way.

My vision blurred;  
The picturesque scenery unfolded slowly before me,  
The sky was an elegant necklace of sapphire and amber,  
The sweet hyphens of the mountain blues raced against each other.

Almost abruptly I felt someone call my name; I turned,  
Befuddling. Bewildering. Majestic. Paradise. Ecstasy. Hope.  
An ethereal circular glow mixed with colors of the rainbow,  
Surely a plucked piece of heaven itself,  
The shine of Buddha's Light illuminated the darkness.

A crackle from beneath the woody twigs,  
Curiosity unraveled slowly within me,  
A glimpse of something fiery red and yellow caught my attention,  
What possibly lurked beneath the earth's shadows?

Perhaps the ferocious and famed Huangshanlong,  
Ready to change the world with its dominance,  
Or even a bold, majestic phoenix,  
Spreading its phenomenal, scaly wings into the light.

A hearty laugh sneakily escaped my moist lips,  
 A burning sensation to scream overtakes my soul,  
 Before the splendor would devour me whole.  
 Nothing could ever be compared to Huangshan, the mighty yellow,  
 Now I truly understand what Xu Xiake felt.

I sat down by the Monkey Watching the Sea,  
 The lungs of nature breathed with me, as if consoling me,  
 The once cold wind tickled the rim of my ears softly; a cat's purring,  
 For never, had I felt this alive.

Perhaps the prodigious Li Bai had once sat here too,  
 With an empty scroll in one hand and an ink brush in the other,  
 Pondering the existence of the beauty of the mountains,  
 Ideas buzzing in his head like the harmony of bees.

My once softened hands clasped the ink brush tightly,  
 A blistering thrill surged through my soul; a cherishing passion.  
 The crushed paper of words began to crinkle open ever so gently,  
 My hands glided smoothly across the paper;  
 A night ship sailing across the tamed blues.

I began writing about everything I had seen,  
 Something about the place held me magically bound,  
 For its grace was unmatched to anything known to the world.

The man whose poignancy was engulfed by the dancing mountains,  
 The man whose feathers of hope had fallen to the ground;  
 Only for the angels of happiness to rise above the green,  
 This was my story.

The tale of I, Li Huang,  
 A man who had once been intoxicated by monotony,  
 And the man Huangshan had resurrected from the ashes by  
 introducing all the brightness there is in the world.

## Musings of A Mountain

*Singapore International School, Boey Jun Xin – 15*

At the beginning I was nothing  
 But soft soil and pebbles.  
 Until the Emperor<sup>1</sup> came  
 And my name was born  
 From the ashes he was made immune in.

I saw the rise of different tribes  
 That inhabited the land around me.  
 The clashing and clanging of their swords  
 Echoed through my then youthful valleys

I witnessed the change in dynasties.  
 As the leaves on my trees grew and withered,  
 So did they rise and fall.  
 And with every winter that passed,  
 I saw the development and complexity of men.

Then came the Qing dynasty,  
 The one to end them all.  
 I should have known the anger boiling,  
 Boiling inside me  
 As opium flooded the plains I called home,  
 Made men delirious with delusions  
 Caught up in the mirage of the life it offered them.

Even I was not spared from its effects  
 And soon birds who dwelled amongst my trees  
 Could not tell one chang<sup>2</sup> from one li<sup>3</sup>.

Thus the long line of dynasties ended  
 But there was not yet peace.  
 The time of great divide had come.

I should have known the sadness churning,  
 Churning in me  
 With the cultural revolution that resulted  
 From the rising of the Red Guard<sup>4</sup>  
 People who looked the same,  
 Could have called each other brothers, sisters

Setting upon one another,  
Drawing blood,  
Tearing each other apart.

I stood witness to their last breath  
Blown away on the lonely wind  
And their blood  
Stained on the fine green blanket of mine  
And I could do nothing,  
But offer my silent companionship,  
Hoped my tall peaks provided them  
A memory of happier days.

Finally, the bloodshed halted  
An awkward truce reached  
And once again my monkey<sup>5</sup>  
Gazed upon calm seas.

For many years I saw land  
Prosper and grow.  
Animals lived peacefully,  
Saplings which had been with me from the start,  
Grew even wiser in their old age,  
Their branches thick and knobbly,  
Leaves a rustic green.

But as they say,  
A period of peace  
Only foreshadows more war  
And soon we were fighting again.

This battle was different,  
We were at war with a virus  
And again men were dying  
As it ate their lungs  
Grew fat on the oxygen they inhaled.

Yet we were undefeated  
And the roars of the people  
Shouting jiyau, jiyau<sup>6</sup>  
Sent tremors through my craggy cliffs

I too bellowed with them,  
Sang my war cry in the wind  
Hung my flag on the branches  
Sharpened my boulders into mighty spears

And at long last,  
We drove it down,  
Kept it contained.

So you see,  
I am not just aged rock.  
In my valleys hold  
The untold stories of heroes  
In my caves hear  
The cry of triumph and victory  
In me feel  
The beating of our history.

Notes:

emperor<sup>1</sup> — The Yellow Emperor, whose pill, made from various herbs on Huangshan, made him immortal  
chang<sup>2</sup>, li<sup>3</sup> — Ancient Chinese units of Measurements

Red Guard<sup>4</sup> — student movement in China during the cultural revolution, known in Chinese as 红卫兵

my monkey<sup>5</sup> — Famous rock on Huangshan named “Monkey watching The Sea — 猴子观海”

jiayou<sup>6</sup> — Chinese term of encouragement, meaning “stay strong”

# Believe

*St. Paul's Co-educational College, Tam, Tiffany – 16*

You angle your head  
Up to heaven  
Seeking my smudged  
And distant figure

Settled in the  
Cusp of the  
Eastern province  
Of Anhui

I am shrouded in  
The silk of clouds  
Adorned by wreaths  
Of emerald green

Crowned by a  
Halo of splendor  
From the rising  
Sun and casting me

Under the brightest  
Of all lights  
Outshining the  
Shadows at my feet

As I wonder  
And ponder  
What it is you seek  
From my rich and

Plentiful depths  
Holding secrets  
Far beyond your  
Finite reach

But you dream  
And dream  
Of wondrous myths and  
Fantastic legends

Of blissful life  
And sweet escape  
Of wispy winds  
And ancient paths

Worn down by  
Generations and  
Generations of  
Your kind.

You cannot help but  
Be drawn to me  
To unfurl the  
Mysteries sitting

Behind this cloudy  
Screen of times  
Past like a river  
That never stops

Flowing with life  
So painfully beautiful  
Painted with the  
Allure of magic

That throbs deep  
Within my cavernous  
Expanse and  
Runs through

My glowing veins  
And jagged soul  
That stands long  
And strong.

Now I see you  
An overwhelming  
Speck on the ground  
With your arm

Stretching to my  
Looming shadow  
Tangible as the fog  
That slips between

Your open fingers  
Trying to drink in  
The grandeur of  
My presence.

Your face is set  
With the determination  
Of unyielding stone  
And undying spirit

When hearing  
My solemn, gentle  
Whisper telling you  
To *believe*

And maybe one day  
You will see—  
The soaring dragons  
Above my celestial peak  
The flourishing flowers  
Studding lush leaves  
The arching pines  
Straining skyward  
The thunderous falls  
So spirited, so spirited  
All indicative of  
The well of magic that  
Lies within me.

# Poetry

## Group 5

### The Elixir, Attained.

*American International School, Chaudhuri, Aishani – 15*

She remembers her mother  
telling her of immortals  
with black top knots,  
weathered monarchs  
lording over realms;  
she heard of them enough that, in  
her earliest fantasies, she teased from them  
kindly smiles that held  
history's wisdom and promises of  
elusive peace.

Those were her first dreams—  
the ones that came after held  
little importance, but they brought down  
clouds to wreath the  
peaks and veil  
the great Yellow Mountains,  
until she was left with  
only wisps of memories that  
her outstretched fingers could  
never quite grasp.

Years later, with the taste of sorrow and  
burden fresh on her  
tongue, she sought out  
the laps that had cradled  
her in sweeter  
days;  
it was a homecoming, each  
step a beckon—  
the spirits called, in the  
wind that tugged on her hair and  
the leaves that reached out to  
brush her arm.

The summons, were they for her?  
For a figure so  
insurmountably humbled, so  
incongruous  
amidst the thrumming vitality  
of divine creation?

They were; they always  
had been, the very words that promised  
her wisdom and granted her  
peace when she little  
needed it.

There was no  
conquering mountains, that day—  
only a girl,  
her people,  
and understanding.

She remembers her mother  
telling her of immortals  
with black top knots,  
and her ink carries  
those words into  
eternity.



# Ascension

*ESF Sha Tin College, Chan, Cyrus – 17*

“Up where the lotus flower blooms, lies life’s secret.” Or so the legend foretold.  
Like a mantra, the traveller devotedly recited the legend, completely enraptured—  
But then, the utterances came to a murmur. His mantra, disrupted.

Behind the clouds and mist the earth rumbled to life,  
Pines trees weaved between the swirling sea of white, as it filled every crevice in its shroud  
Granite peaks emerged from the perpetual sea, piercing its surface reaching for the skies.

The ground reverberated with an underlying hum, gently shaking the traveller’s rucksack—  
Snapping him out of a trance. Now, only those peaks were stopping his advance.  
His pilgrimage was beginning.

The mountains were unforgiving, the mist growing heavier and heavier with each step.  
Wading in the swirling sea, the white tendrils snatched at the traveller  
as he slowly succumbed to those lifeless, soulless, stone pillars

His mantra, no longer a beacon of focus—  
became a cry for his sanity, as the mountain continued its torment.  
As his strength waned—a light—in the distance.

Gravel slipped and shifted beneath his feet,  
cutting calluses along the ridges, as he wandered on  
his will flickering as the light still released its incandescence

There it was, the gap was closing.  
Just beyond that light, upon the peak  
was Lianhua, unwavering in its grandeur.

Perched atop, the lotus was in full bloom,  
petals imbued with an ambrosial scent  
and a delicate, rosy gleam.

Yet to the traveller it looked,  
mundane. Like its glamour  
had been washed away

The mantra had been his lifeblood,  
yet there was no secret,  
no answer for the traveller

Instead he had suffered,  
endured nature’s torment

For what?

To reach the pinnacle, yet come  
empty handed?

To yearn for more?

And then, in a moment of epiphany  
like the mist had been lifted

He had found it.

# Serenity

*Kiangsu Chekiang College International Section, Nguyen, Trinity – 16*

Take me to the mountains where all the poets want to die.  
Fly me across the clouds and show me  
How the dragons ricochet off to eternal bliss.  
But before I go, let me say a prayer of gratitude  
For each chink in my armour.

Isn't it romantic how we could spend our lives  
Running barefoot on endless stone stairs with our hearts tied?  
Under the curtains of pine trees looks like the perfect place to cry.  
We could carve our initials on the walls.  
Let it grow with the trees until the world falls.

These mountains gathered here  
In heart-stopping echos of folklore.  
A place deep in my bones  
I call seventh heaven.  
A place of tranquility and synchronicity  
I call my sacred oasis, my nirvana.  
A place of the birth of poems.  
I call my religion.

I know you'd never take chances.  
I never learn.  
Bridges burned.  
But this time I'll make it right.  
I'd build a castle just to keep you warm  
In these perilous nights.

We speak a secret language that will forever linger in these mists.  
Long live, the poems we'd write,  
Magic we'd make.  
And in the last of days,  
May our bodies be cloaked with vines intertwined.  
May the stairs we walked through  
Be decked with memories.

Some day, we will be remembered.

Poetry  
Group 6

# Magical Mountain

*Korean International School Springboard, Chen, Ue – 12*

Mountain  
Foggy hot  
Climb run move  
Snow cloud sun trees  
Mountain is cold and hot  
Run bike climb, the mountain serves

# Magical Mountain

*Korean International School Springboard, Cheung, Charlize – 12*

*Volcano  
Fresh romantic  
Explode, erupt move  
Loud noise, heavy shake  
Old man with white hair  
Waiting for his children to come home  
It is sad to see it there*

# Off We Go To The Mountains!

*Korean International School Springboard, Choi, Mattea – 12*

Six bears, two pandas, and a doggy (Holly, Bao Bao, Magic, LTT, Tom, Timothy, Harrods, Cha Siu, and Tracy) have gone hiking.  
They see a mountain in front of them.  
It smells mostly like lilies.  
It sounds like a tinkle out of nowhere.  
It tastes like honey and bamboo.  
It's perfect and high enough for their adventurous hike.

# Magical Mountain

*Korean International School Springboard, Chor, Damien – 13*

Mountain  
Mysterious stormy  
Seeing climbing hiking  
Windy cold steep scary climb  
Let's go hiking with our family  
It's peaceful triangular calm majestic magnificent

# Magical Mountain

*Korean International School Springboard, Leung, Darren – 13*

Peak  
Strange terrific  
Hike walk climb  
People trees snow animals  
The peak is very pointy  
It is steep and snow white  
The peak looks calm but also lonely

Poetry  
Group 7

# Mountain Senses

*Korean International School Springboard, Kwan, Jordan – 14*

It taste like a green leafy vegetable

It smells like moss

It looks like a sharp slope

It sounds like wind blowing in all different directions

It feels like you are on the top of the world.

# Magical Mountain

*Korean International School Springboard, Lin, Adrian – 15*

The mountain is green.

It tastes like vegetables.

It sounds like the howling wind.

It smells like moist air.

It looks as tall as The Shard in London, England.

It makes me feel a bit scared when I go on it.