



Poetry

Group 1

City God and Little Girl

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Chung, King Long Jacqueline – 6

There was an old city god living inside the walled city.
And a little girl skipping outside, chatting with city god, funny and witty.

“When you grow up, you will have shiny necklaces, like neon lights.
And they will twinkle at night.”

“Why are your dull clothes made of wood and bricks?
I want a colorful steel-and-glass dress because it is harder to break.”

“When you grow up, in your high heel shoes, you will become so tall that you can touch the sky.
But be careful – don’t let the clouds blindfold you, or the birds crash into you when they fly.”

“The summer weather is so hot and everyone wears a hat, but why don’t you?
Umm... I guess your tiled roof blocks the sunshine, so I would like it too!”

When little girl grows up, she becomes the tallest building in Shanghai and all her dreams come true.
The young lady bows to the city god, and thanks him, “I wouldn’t become so pretty without you!”

Taste of Old Shanghai

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Chan, Anne – 6

White is flour,
Flour turns into dough,
Dough is pulled and kneaded long,
And long are the slurpy *Yang Chun* noodles.

Mysteriously wrapped,
Wrapped into a swirly mini bun,
Bun is packed with bursting flavour,
And flavour soup drips from the legendary *Xiao Long Bao*.

Hairy but small,
Small but jammed with scrumptious roes,
Roes and meat tastes like heaven,
And heaven is the mouth-watering *hairy crab*.

Juicy and tender,
Tenderly baked inside the mud crust,
Crust cracks open and steam flies out,
And out is the moist *Beggar's chicken*.



Poetry

Group 2

The Nostalgia of Old Shanghai

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Tang, Lok Yee – 11

Bustling streets of old and young,
Strolling through shops, or the
Opera house, where songs were sung.
The elderly lie contented,
In houses brimming with children,
And sigh leisurely in their sleep.

The corner restaurant,
A place beloved by all ages.
Steaming with conversation
And care for one another.
Bubbling with the aroma
Of small, indulgent buns.

But now? How is it now?
Highways built, old houses destroyed,
Skyscrapers standing where the
Shoemaker's shop should've stood tinkering.
Tinkering, tinkering.

The usual road where the rickshaws ran
Squeezing through the crowds,
And European motor cars,
Which huffed and puffed
In the busy city which never sleeps.
The tram has —perhaps— lost his leg;
He is now a monorail.

Though people now seldom
Enjoy the luxury of a tram
Unlike their elders before them.

Where has the old watch shop fled?
The Oriental Pearl Tower now stands
instead.
The Huang Pu River where the Chinese
junks sailed
Now cruises fancy ferries and yachts.

Holding the sepia photographs,
Losing the color of its life.
Sighing at the fading memories,
Recalling the joy of old.

The Huangpu River

German Swiss International School, Micromatis, Anna – 11

The leaves, gossiping about my every move
Rustled and stirred.
The wind whispers its promises
And whistles with the birds.

This doesn't stop me as I cunningly sneak,
To reach the sparkling Huangpu River.
A small, silvery oasis
A mesmerising restless mirror.

Sunset light dances on its surface,
Its performance warming the air.
Illuminating the shimmering river
Twinkling without a care.

I sway my tail to the beat
Of the whistling on the breeze from heaven.
I wanted to dance in the moonlight,
I thought it would be like this forever.

Oh how I was wrong
Living in this novice.
The birds would not coo their lullaby,
The wind would not whisper its promise.

The sixteenth century, as the oak trees call,
Changed my life completely.

I saw a stone wall over a thousand feet long
As I regarded it weakly!

The two-legged creatures, Ren Lei,
Erected that oppressive structure that made me shiver.
It blocked me off, all nature, all animals,
The worst thing, they blocked me off Huangpu River.

After that, life changed,
And now I distrusted the humans.
A can't sway my tail to the beat
And loathed every man and woman.

I hid beneath the bushes,
And watched between the leaves.
I heard the booming of the cannons
The sound of stomping feet.

As I watch between the leaves
I saw bandit from overseas.
These were pirates, I should have known,
Hailing from the Far East.

The wall they built blocked me off
Everything that I treasured.
The trees, my home, my animal friends
But most of all my river.

The last drop I saw of that river,
Fell on my ruddy tail.
I let the cold of the drop seep in
To keep away the enduring sadness inside, I failed.

But that one drop of river,
Before splashing on my fur,
Had let off an explosion
And sent out tiny drops in a blur.

The landed on the cold stone ground,
And from the drops I saw,
Tiny flowers poking out,
Abloom, from the stone, raw.

From there, a new life began,
A new life of green.
Hopefully humans would one day understand
How much the Old Shanghai river meant to me!

The Eyes of the Dragon

Yew Chung International School, Lee, Hannah – 11

Up towards the East,
Overlooking the Huangpu River,

Awake, were the eyes of the Dragon
never slept, battle-scarred and wept.

Its ivory claws that once formed the rugged landscape,
have been demolished by intruding armies.

Its rocky scales that created infinite villages,
refined into a thin layer of dust.

Its antlers which birthed the forests,
clawed the sky with their bare branches.

Its glorious eyes which gave life to the people wept as freedom languished.

Eight years in the dark came great light
Shining on the path to victory.

Visitors from every nation and race journeyed to trade,
And Shanghai was back to its former glory.

Expo welcomed the world with great grace,
Continuing the legacy as China's wondrous place.

Up towards the East,
Cradling the Huangpu river,

Sparkling, are the eyes of the Dragon,
Wide open for a bright new day.



Poetry

Group 3

Longua Temple – Chinese New Year in the 1800's

Chinese International School, Sun, Adrian – 12

Vivid explosions like a lotus flower bursting in the night sky,
Coloring it with ruby red like a dragon's flames
And emerald green as bright as a jade Buddha.
The radiating fireworks fly over the tip of the towering Long Hua Temple,
An array of brilliant beauty followed by the unpleasant smell of rotten eggs.
The dazzling fireworks explode into the moonlit sky with a deafening crackle
To scare away the *Nian* that haunts the streets at night

Walking through the crowded Longhua garden,
I inhale the rich and oaky smell as steam fills the air
Dancing its way through the gleaming bright lights,
Hanging down from the wooden food stalls.
The sizzling sound of spring rolls entices me
And the smell of freshly baked rice cake plays with my nostrils.
Handing over a copper coin,
Ravenously, I sink my teeth into the luscious snacks.

Looking up, I see the Longhua Pagoda,
A towering red structure reaching high up in the sky,
With the roof's edges curling out at the very end
And dangling bells hanging down from the tips,
Creating an exuberant ringing sound in the wind.
An ancient, wooden staircase leads up to the seventh floor.
I am tiny and insignificant against the tallest building in Shanghai.

Engrossed by monks chanting,
I am lured into the Grand Hall of the Great Sage.
At the entrance way, a colossal statue of Buddha catches my eye.
Wearing a golden glossy robe, it is raised high above the worshipers.
The five hundred golden statues glisten and glimmer in the lantern light
And the room is scented with cassia and sandalwood,
The billowing smoke of fires from the courtyard fills the night.

Suddenly a resounding “bong” rings in my ear,
As I hear the sound of a prodigious, bronze bell dangling from the Bell Tower.
On New Year’s Eve, it’s hit 108 times,
As the number brings good fortune to mankind.
Every time the bell rings,
A firework is lit up displaying an array of color,
Starting the new year with multitudes of amber, lilac and indigo.

Nian: A mythological beast that lives in the mountains or sea, and haunts the streets on Chinese New Year to attack people.

In Old Shanghai

King George V School, Jain, Mudita – 11

When the rest of the world is bustling and rushing,
I am sitting, and breathing and relaxing
In Old Shanghai.

When the rest of the world is crashing through the water,
I let the pure, crystal-clear water wash my feet, coming and going
In Old Shanghai.

When the rest of the world is investing on artificial light,
I am enjoying the natural beauty of Shanghai greenery, for free
In Old Shanghai.

When the rest of the world is running across roads and through streets,
I am running across the shoreline of the beach, pale yellow sand to the left and light blue
water to the right, a bright light on my face and a dark shadow on the sand,
In Old Shanghai.

When the rest of the world is mixing new spices,
I am enjoying the simple past, and old traditional culture
In Old Shanghai.

When the rest of the world is laughing, shouting and screaming,
I am praying silently, in one of the hundred temples built before I could walk,
In Old Shanghai.

Good Old Times of Shanghai

*St. Margaret's Co-Educational English Secondary and Primary School (Secondary Section),
Li, Ernest – 13*

Do you see that tower?
Do you see that building?
Well lucky you,
we never saw it.

all we saw was low lying schools,
and bobbing old fishing boats.

quiet streets and peaceful people,
roaming around ,
with smiles plastered to their faces.

There was never a single shout,
of anger nor rage.
All there was were laughter and natter ,
over thirst-quenching tea and heavenly food.

But wait ,
whats that sound?
Its the pirates coming 'round!

Do not fret , do not fuss
for theres a barrier to shelter us.

A great big wall,
10 metres tall.
Thats surely enough ,
to fend them off.

Such harmony
Such peacefulness.
Why would anyone,
want to disrupt us ?

Oh , if only I knew ,
that this is just the calm before the storm.



Poetry

Group 4

The House Your Reminiscence Built

Carmel School Association Elsa High School, Fischer, Ben – 15

(Do you ever know that

In you is the thought of being alive, darting through the streets of Old Shanghai staring at flames, breathing in hope through nostrils that breed happiness, of listening to the chimes of City God Temple with crystalline ears. I think of you in tears.

I think of you uncaged)

(Do you ever know that

never

In you still lies the stories, buried somewhere under the wheelchairs you wish were strapped with wings and your skin; a skeletal embrace that unravels like string, like the dreams you spun on your arachnoid loom. Do you know the day you leave? Is it coming soon?

I pray for you unaged)

never

(Do you ever know that

In you is music—something soft, something soulful—something past the din of melancholy, past chairs littering the waiting rooms beyond a visitor glass, past patients shuffled over tennis balls, past brooms sweeping declarations of faith to God and unasked vacancies and halls you'd use to run around and scream.

I hope you forget)

never

(Do you ever know that

In you is a bulletin board on which your husband's tacked, his lips on your cheek, as happy, strong and mortal as he was—do you remember him? He was the first to tell your old story, to kiss you under City Wall stars and to swear you Alzheimer's a bitch and dance to Liu Fang like you used to, back before there were no happy endings.

I know who you've upset)

(Do you ever know that

never

In you is the choices that you did or didn't make, breeding resentment over the wish that the pain would feel a little more eventful, that the anger that could bubble and burst when you're alone and there's no-one to see your wings and the hospital light halos and our little secret that you can never transcend. Right?

you are feverous and pained)

(Do you ever know that

never

In you is something stirring; something once sung and lost forever; something waiting for the day that you break free and your old story of crystalline ears and firecrackers is replaced by a new story of your Old Shanghai; of hospital beds and neon lighting and sitting around drinking food while we all pray for the day that no-one ever dies.

your new stories are still unexplained)

(Do you ever know that

never

In you is the forgotten, the old cities, the clocks starting at fifty, the dreams that this new story could be just as dreamy, that it isn't mere mortality and the mediocrity of 'pain with age' and caretakers and windows too small to honor the view of a city still standing and breathlessness and the dread of abruptness and the fear of losing you.

you are still yourself)

Do you ever know

if this will be forever? Have you remembered?

never

Monument to the Past, Beacon for the Future

SKH Tang Shiu Kin Secondary School, Lee, Ting Kwan Thomas – 16

Today was the big day of the street lamp
It was delivered fresh, with a pleasant smell of paint.
The workers carefully put it into a pit, next to the busy Shanghai waterfront.
From that day onwards, this small pit of fresh soil would be its home.
Standing up straight,
its lean body would add a few beautiful strokes to the dazzling Shanghai
as if an elegant white gown worn by a happy bride.
It was a substitute for the trees
as birds built nest on it.
It overlooked the polished buildings and houses
where people toiled relentlessly in the pursuit and sketching of their dreams.
When night fell
It would be the silent guardian,
Protecting the younglings and the old
from the dark oblivion

The lamp became friends with the trams and the cars
A bizarre invention powered by cable lines and oil.
They added a few more notes to the symphony of Shanghai Tan.
Under the facade of glamour,
Shanghai was just a normal city.
People came and went.
They wore suit and robe, dressed in “Cheongsam”
The lamp saw them changing.
From an infant, playing with toy dolls

to a teenager, passionate about tasks in life and calls.
 From a young freshman
 to an old, elegant gentleman who had thrived along their path

For the lamp, it had been renewed.
 Though the fresh paint was wearing off,
 the light was dimming.
 The nest had been emptied.
 Passers-by threw loathing glances at it.
 Finally, it was stripped down, and
 relocated next to a big patch of land
 that would soon become a new, glamorous club.
 With cosmopolitans coming in and out.
 With the longest bar in the Orient,
 the club witnessed the lives of musicians, poets, spies and socialites.
 Standing under the billboard, the lamp
 listened to the talking and laughing of men and women
 Sniffed the enchanted aurora of cocktails and perfumes
 Caught a glimpse of tycoons with their muses, striding along the bar table.
 And tasted the nightlife of the new Cathay crown jewel.
 This was the happiest time of the lamp,
 Until the Imperial army of Japan that ended it all.

January,
 The New Year was right around the corner
 A time for every single street to be overwhelmed by lanterns
 And flooded by a sea of red Fai Chuns.
 Firecrackers to be piled up for the New Year's Eve's celebrations
 Yet, on the contrary,
 The New Year's Eve was overwhelmed by rain of cannonballs and gunshots.
 They claimed startled lives
 Old and younglings alike;
 Flabbergasted
 Confused
 Shanghai surrendered to the Rising Sun in distraught.
 The lamp stood soberingly,
 Witnessing the Japanese march of triumph.

Fireworks, lanterns, all lights were banned
 And everything was hushed into pitch darkness.
 Black became the new trend
 Poets and musicians
 Took their last bow.
 Spies and tycoons fled in haste
 Gentlemen and ladies,
 Became refugees and homeless.
 Those who stayed had to kneel before

The new Japanese conquerors.
The lamp,
Now covered with faded club posters and ragged photographs
Became a hazy memory.
Passers-by looked at it with pity
As if the artworks stung their suffering souls.

Days dragged on like years.
People were looking forward to being free again,
Their lives were stained with terror and fear
The lamp
Battered and weathered by time
Was stripped down to pieces.
Unknown of the future, the lamp sat patiently
Dreaming for the day when it could stand on the street again.

Patience had done it a great favour
The lamp was placed back to its home
The pit, next to the busy Shanghai waterfront
Standing up straight,
It looked around, searching for fragments from the old times.
The lamp scanned the streets
it peeked over for suits, robes and “Cheung Sam”
Listened for laughter from bars and pubs.
Sniffed the aroma from cigars and opium
Yet,
It found nothing.

In a distance,
Flocks of people were marching.
Holding a red book and chanting revolution slogans,
They smashed pubs and bars
Ripped suits, robes and “Cheung Sam”
“Destroy the old filth!” they bellowed.
The lamp testified trials, torture
And execution.
People sported clubs, axes and sickles,
Accusing and swearing became a new trend.
The red guards seized the city; caught it by its throat
Sliced it clean
And created a new cult.

Amongst all the chaos,
The guards spared the lamp.
It was old and fragile,
With rusts, bumps and scars engraved on its shins.
Time had taken its toll

One night, its lean body was put down
 And carried away.
 It was placed into a run-down hotel
 Where the lamp was left to rot.

1990s

The last decade
 The lamp has survived the 20th century.
 Researchers found it lying under rubbles and ruins.
 They carefully lifted it up,
 Washed it clean
 And refurbished it.
 Scholars and artists threw longing gazes on it.
 Amazed by its every curve and slant,
 Awed by its history.
 The lamp was overwhelmed by this renewed sensation.
 It became the new icon of the old times,
 When people still created and lived their dreams.
 Its heritage was honored in an auction,
 Where it found its new home.

Over Shanghai's contemporary skyline
 An aeon-lighted gallery rising above its high-rising counterparts
 Looking out the window,
 Dazzled by its captivating sight.
 It rings a distant bell.
 The lamp
 After all these years, still standing upright,
 Greeting its audience,
 Saluting in front of cameras and posing on canvas.
 Tourists, poets and artists mused by its stories
 Trendily-clad youngsters learn precious history from it.
 Its images travel across the globe through Instagram and Twitter.
 Its antiquity brightens up the murky historical landscape.

This is the tale of a street lamp
 It has witnessed Shanghai
 In new and old alike.
 In its ups and downs akin.
 This new tale of old shanghai will not end here,
 It will move on,
 Til aeon.

Adieu

St. Joseph's College, Li, Pak Ho Parco – 16

The clock on the wall struck four,
Chiming the woefully old, familiar tune.
Air raid sirens in the distance yet war is near
Breezing in with no signs of ending soon.

“School is dismissed—you may go.”
Mother Agnes bid a farewell,
Her eyes red and watery.
“May God bless you and keep you.”

Jing-yi and I lingered at the school gate,
Trying to prolong our time together.
Deep in our hearts,
We knew we won't meet forever.

We promised not to forget each other,
And embraced a final hug.
I didn't dare to turn around,
As I would surely weep.

I trooped along Avenue Joffre
Lined with French Phoenix trees and high-fashion boutiques.
Rickshaws, pedicabs alongside Terraplane coupés
Whizzed by.

Hectic, dazzling, vivacious.
 She has always been like that.
 The Shanghai I grew up in.
 But will she still?

I turned a corner and now
 The sidewalks seethed with people and commotion.
 I know every single face,
 For the Shanghai streets were my childhood playground.

Ah Chen was shouldering heavy loads on bamboo poles;
 Zhang was preparing porky soup dumplings and green onion pancakes;
 Deng was selling rattle drums and shuttlecocks;
 Li was waiting for customers with long, unruly hair to show up.

Wang who sold newspapers part-time yelled,
 “The Japs will arrive in less than a month!”
 The market fell into a transient silence,
 Gradually returning to a semblance of normality.

I was lucky enough to flee,
 But what about them?
 Then I remembered Yeye⁽¹⁾ used to say,
 “Life goes on, no matter what.”

Turning right at the dentist’s,
 The long tang⁽²⁾ came into sight.
*My house was a big, square, dark grey concrete building,
 Just like all the other sixty-nine.*

*Baba⁽³⁾ waved at me in the car, urging me to hurry.
 Yet I had no intention to scurry.
 With my eyes I captured the pulchritudinous view,
 And bade my city a fond adieu.*

(1) Grandfather

(2) A cluster of houses surrounded by a communal wall which is characteristic of Shanghai

(3) Father



Poetry

Group 5

Fragments

Singapore International School, Chan, Chloe – 17

two vicious beasts once encircled our city –
a leaping dragon and a virtuous phoenix –
in exchange for our loyalty and our traditions
spitfires spat fire,
rippling heat across calm waters
openly warning our enemies:
stay away

peaceful seas calmed our minds
and the godly creatures lay at ease
in the flame of the moment
we let our guards down.

celestial beings woven from ginseng and fur
pulled the wool over our eyes.
Blindsided,
we poisoned their heart and core
and slowly drove them away –
when the rising sun returned,
they'd have inched farther,
meters into miles into-
Gone.

All that's left now
are fragments of our wall:
singed feathers and burnt scales
an inauspicious whisker and a viceless beak;
haunting remnants of
how much greater we could have been.

The Girl Hu Could Not Forget

St. Paul's Co-educational College, Suen, Wing Man Evianne – 18

Lady Godiva would be proud;
I turn heads with naked sobriety
like a woman who cannot forget.

Strangers, in clothes unfitting,
waltz across the Bund
for a backdrop common
in their own homes—

it is a shrine
branded clear, a scar
on the otherwise perfect cheek—

with smiles etched into
faceless masks masking
a darkness which
oozes from slits for the eyes

to embrace the floors, *their* homes,
of a city of sin by day.

The plaza is a bloody carpet
for clean men pouring from
antique buildings
with the looks of a church.

I orient the Orient disguised as
a history, unfurled;
between oriental and orientalist
is a balance beam I trample
gracefully with ease.

Bound would I have been
had I a witch's eyes,
nose of a cauldron's steward,
dial back seventy-

seven years ago, unless
I refuged like a Russian
under the floorboards,
kiss the back of Plath's hand;

her father wanted me dead,
until the river turned redder
than the soup I housed
in my veins.

Refreshed with Western
rage—the kind which tapers
off into laze,
by gifting your troubled mind
opiates concocting

within you a lascivious haze
which courts the dead.

You begin to dream
beautifully of wheat fields
sprouting like
children until they're tied
like a little girl's
unruly hair, then

cut off like Rapunzel's.
And like an Alice
you fall into merciless darkness
until you wake

on a dead city's streets,
save for the occasional plea
for another night survived
by trading corianders
for magnolias.

The flowers entwine;
encapsulated in capsules
I burn with scrolls
and browned, inked parchment.

The very same which lingered as
kings fought for a throne
to be lost
in minutes;

which bribed with mercy
in the form of diamonds,
not silver and gold.

Delivered to a city
old with wars for grandeur;
surrounded like a discipline child
whose rebellious phase set in.

Whose phase I fantasise,
standing in a pavilion
watching a garden wilt;

I stand corrected
in a fantasy

thoroughly lived in:
orienting in its fathomed
and sanctioned beauty.

I say a prayer
and begin my journey again.

But I, yet I, am but a
passerby.

Walking these roads
of cities sieged with blood
for a reminder,

walking these roads
of cities dredged in dust
for a conscience

I had long forgotten
yet I had not:
I am but a passerby.
The tales I tell with feet
that tail
a history I mesmerise
but not too much

is one we all know
is as such—
I turn heads with my nakedness,
unpeeling the city's golden touch.



Poetry

Group 6

Tale of the White Magnolia Flower

Korean International Springboard, Chau, Kirsten - 13

Sparkling and brilliant white flower,
Story of the three sisters and the Dragon King's power,

Sea salt locked up in a great store room,
Cut open by the sisters to save the villagers from sickness and gloom,

All the salt spilled in the sea,
Raged the Dragon King to turn the sisters into Yulan trees.

White Yulan is the middle sister with refreshing scent,
Enjoyed deeply by the Chinese descent.



Poetry

Group 7

Shanghai Disneyland

Korean International Springboard, Ching, Matthew - 15

Shanghai Disney in Pudong
big, wide and long.

Roaring Rapids, Seven Dwarfs Mine Train,
soaring over the horizon on a Dumbo flying plane.

Star Wars Launch Bay meeting Kylo Ren,
then having my picture next to the Millennium Falcon.

Buzz Lightyear rescue, explorer canoe,
all my favourite characters walking down Mickey Avenue.

Getting lost in Alice's Wonderland Maze,
spinning on the Hunny pots left me in a daze.

Delighted by Enchanted Light,
return home in the blissful, beautiful night.

Shanghai Haiku

Korean International Springboard, Hughes, Edward – 15

On top of the sea,
Old fishing village of Hudu
Now busy Shanghai

Fast Train

Korean International Springboard, Lee, Joshua – 16

`SMT stands for Shanghai Maglev Train,
The fastest way from the airport to Shanghai main.
The highest speed is 267 miles per hour
Taking you all the way to the Jing Mao Tower.
Reaching its destination in the blink of an eye.
It's an amazing fun journey that you have got to try.
Advanced technology used in its construction
A great locomotive without obstruction
2002 was the start of its climb
SMT the ride of a lifetime.