

The logo for the National Literacy Trust, featuring the words "National Literacy Trust" in white, stacked vertically, inside a dark blue shield-like shape.

National
Literacy
Trust

Change your story

**A Virtual Anthology
of poems by students from
Carshalton High School For Girls
on the theme of
hidden or unnoticed wonders
from our local area.**

Wonder Where You Are

“Look Again: Poetry from Our Community”

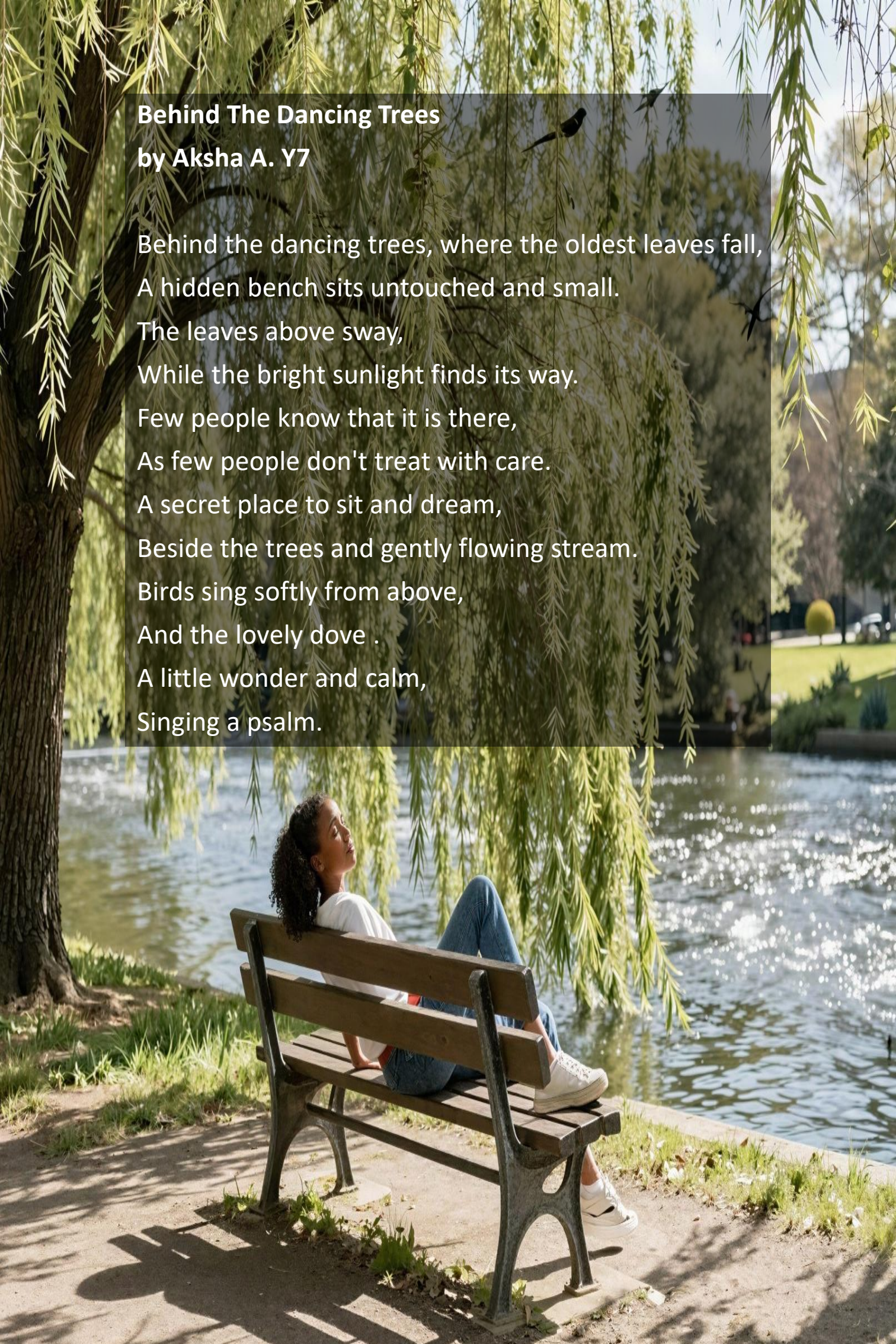


Poems are ordered alphabetically by the poet's surname.

Behind The Dancing Trees

by Aksha A. Y7

Behind the dancing trees, where the oldest leaves fall,
A hidden bench sits untouched and small.
The leaves above sway,
While the bright sunlight finds its way.
Few people know that it is there,
As few people don't treat with care.
A secret place to sit and dream,
Beside the trees and gently flowing stream.
Birds sing softly from above,
And the lovely dove .
A little wonder and calm,
Singing a psalm.



Wonders

by Anha A. Y10

The noisy world completely fades away,
As this breathtaking vision steals my senses away.
I look around in wonder at the view,
By a kingdom of shadows, breathtaking and wild.

The dark water trembles with small, gentle waves,
while a swan drifts like a fairy in the emerald caves.
She glides through the mist without leaving a trace,
a quiet white spirit moving with absolute grace.

Above, the willow leaves hang like tangled lace,
while golden fingers of sunlight spike into the water.
The heavy darkness shatters as the bright rays strike down,
turning the cold, black surface into a pool of liquid gold

The echo of the chirping rings clear through the trees,
like crystal bells ringing softly through the breeze.
The hidden, winged creatures spin a fantasy before my eyes,
as the forest slowly steals my senses away.



The Corner Shop

by Aneesa C. and Zahra R. Y12

The annoying man
across the street
telling off kids
for buying treats
green and mean,
but also keen
to sell his sweets
which are fun to eat.

Wow! The kids cry out.

Wow! The kids chow down.

"Mmm, what a wonderful bite,"
they all squeal in delight!

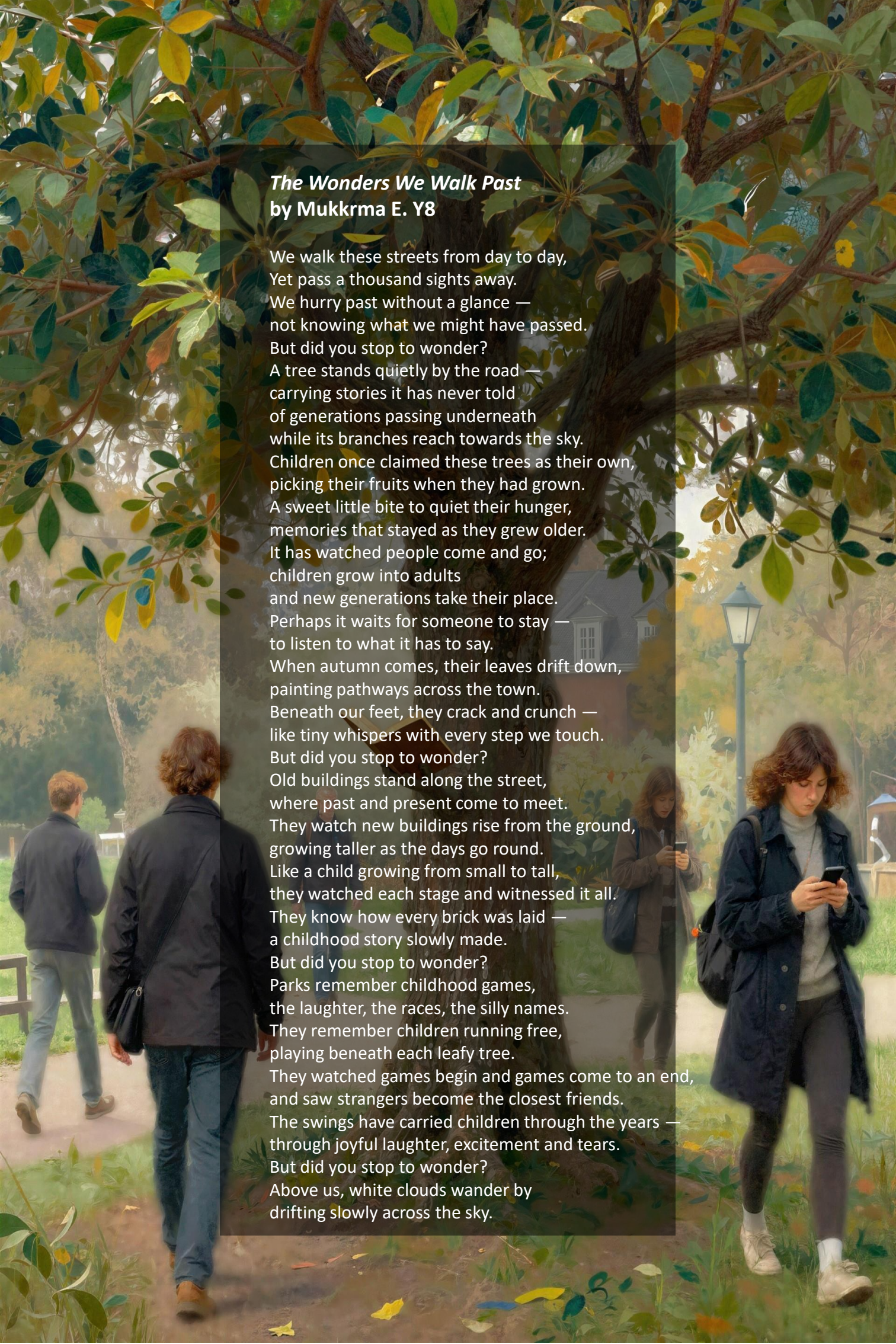
The man peers through the screen,
drawn in by their gleam,
"Huh," he huffs out,
today, he won't shout.

A close-up photograph of a white squirrel with a large, bushy tail, perched on a tree branch. The squirrel is looking towards the right of the frame. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a forest setting. The squirrel's fur is bright white, and its eyes are dark and prominent. Its tail is very full and extends upwards and backwards. The tree branch it is sitting on is dark and textured.

Snowy the Squirrel
by Charlotte E. Y7

Snowy the squirrel, white as snow,
Scurries through the trees wherever we go.
With a fluffy little tail, a magical sight,
He is a little wonder, pure and bright.

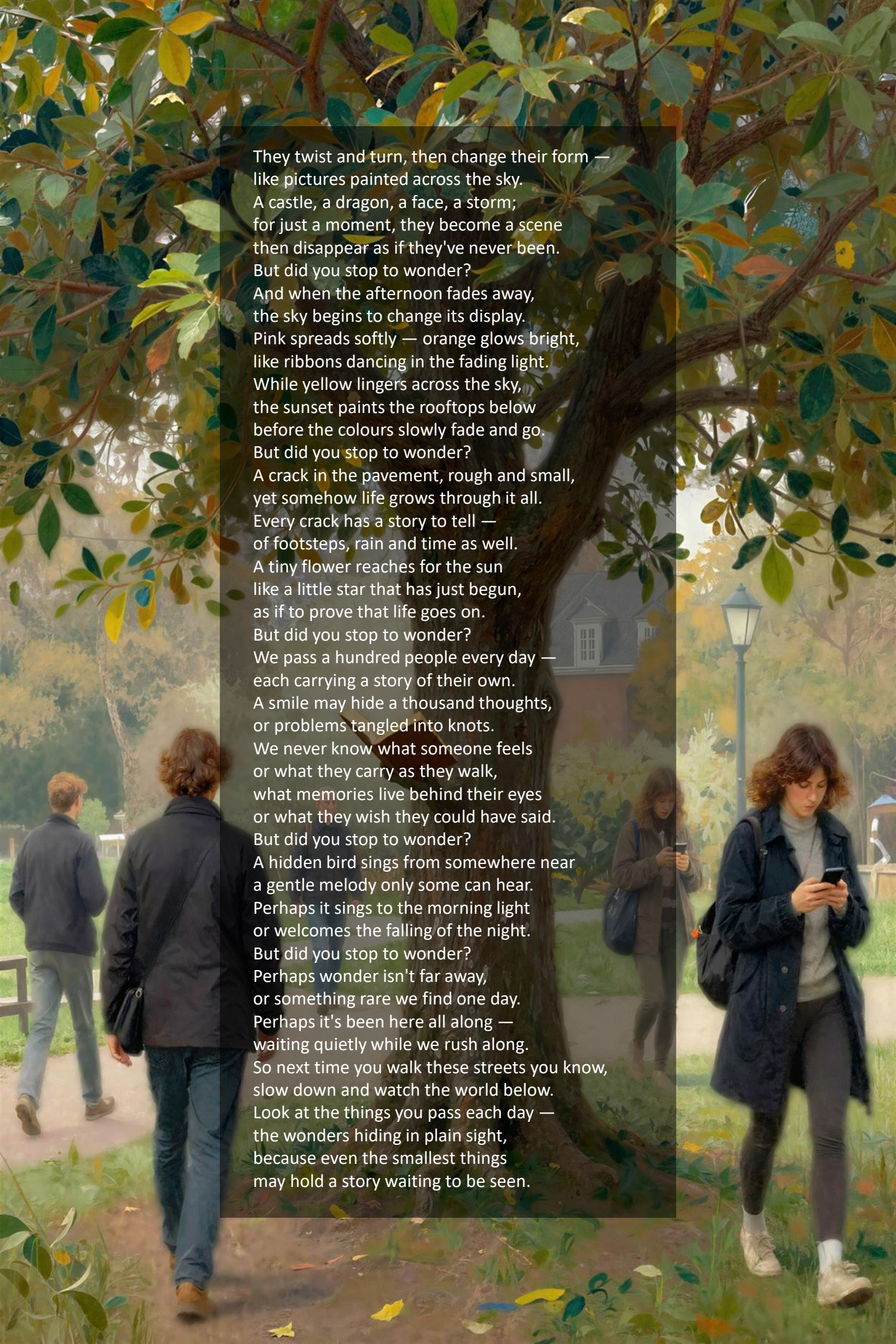
We spot him jumping from tree to tree,
What a lovely sight to see.
A rare little visitor, happy and free,
Our snowy white squirrel, as precious as can be.

The background is a painterly illustration of a park scene. In the foreground, two people are walking away from the viewer on a path. To the right, a woman is walking towards the viewer, looking down at her smartphone. In the background, another person is visible, also looking at a phone. The scene is filled with trees, some with green leaves and others with yellow and orange autumn foliage. A street lamp is visible on the right side. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

The Wonders We Walk Past

by Mukkrma E. Y8

We walk these streets from day to day,
Yet pass a thousand sights away.
We hurry past without a glance —
not knowing what we might have passed.
But did you stop to wonder?
A tree stands quietly by the road —
carrying stories it has never told
of generations passing underneath
while its branches reach towards the sky.
Children once claimed these trees as their own,
picking their fruits when they had grown.
A sweet little bite to quiet their hunger,
memories that stayed as they grew older.
It has watched people come and go;
children grow into adults
and new generations take their place.
Perhaps it waits for someone to stay —
to listen to what it has to say.
When autumn comes, their leaves drift down,
painting pathways across the town.
Beneath our feet, they crack and crunch —
like tiny whispers with every step we touch.
But did you stop to wonder?
Old buildings stand along the street,
where past and present come to meet.
They watch new buildings rise from the ground,
growing taller as the days go round.
Like a child growing from small to tall,
they watched each stage and witnessed it all.
They know how every brick was laid —
a childhood story slowly made.
But did you stop to wonder?
Parks remember childhood games,
the laughter, the races, the silly names.
They remember children running free,
playing beneath each leafy tree.
They watched games begin and games come to an end,
and saw strangers become the closest friends.
The swings have carried children through the years —
through joyful laughter, excitement and tears.
But did you stop to wonder?
Above us, white clouds wander by
drifting slowly across the sky.

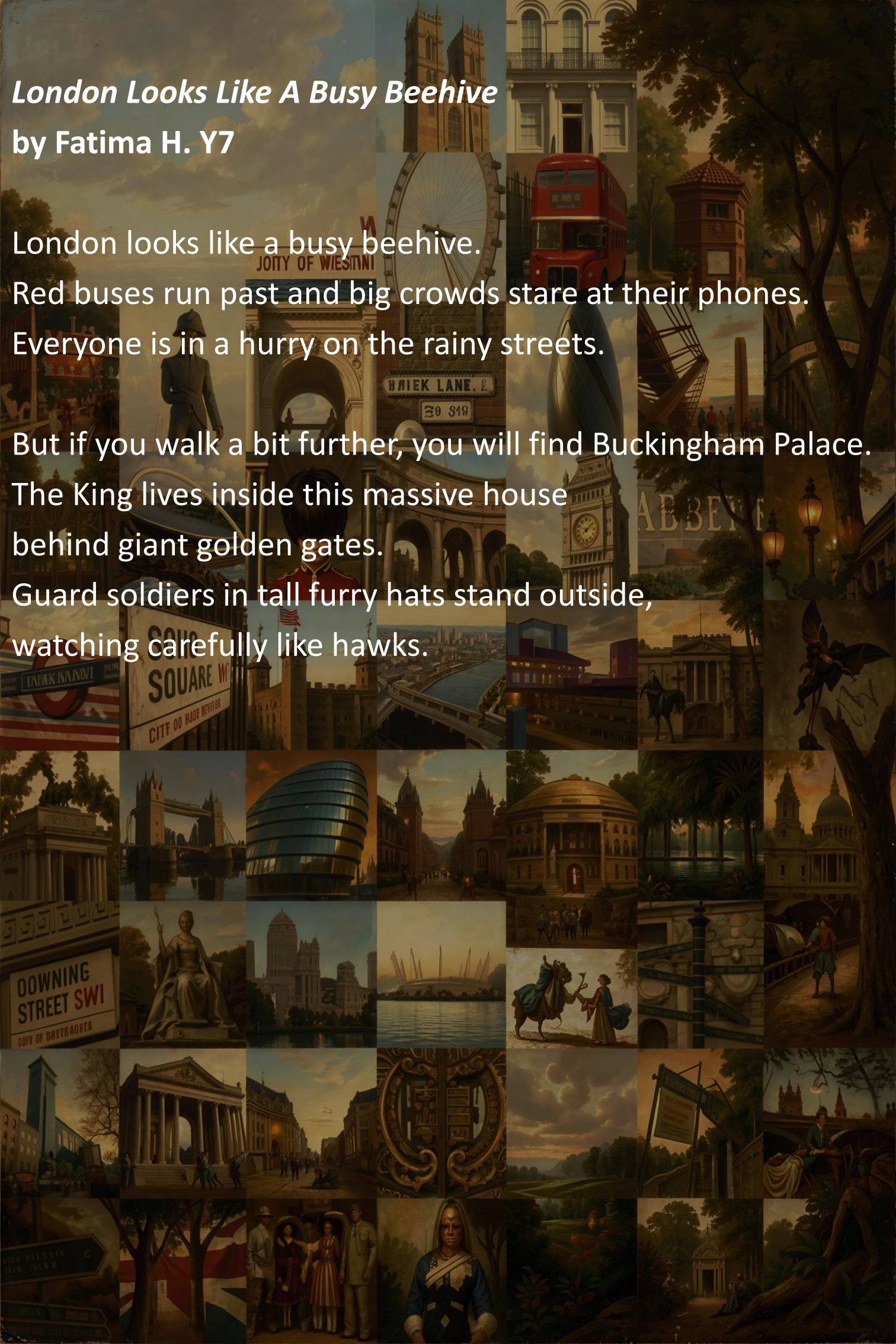
The background is a soft, painterly illustration of a park. In the foreground, two people are walking away from the viewer on a path. To the right, a woman in a dark coat is looking down at her phone. In the background, another person is also looking at a phone. A large, leafy tree stands in the center, and a street lamp is visible on the right. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

They twist and turn, then change their form —
like pictures painted across the sky.
A castle, a dragon, a face, a storm;
for just a moment, they become a scene
then disappear as if they've never been.
But did you stop to wonder?
And when the afternoon fades away,
the sky begins to change its display.
Pink spreads softly — orange glows bright,
like ribbons dancing in the fading light.
While yellow lingers across the sky,
the sunset paints the rooftops below
before the colours slowly fade and go.
But did you stop to wonder?
A crack in the pavement, rough and small,
yet somehow life grows through it all.
Every crack has a story to tell —
of footsteps, rain and time as well.
A tiny flower reaches for the sun
like a little star that has just begun,
as if to prove that life goes on.
But did you stop to wonder?
We pass a hundred people every day —
each carrying a story of their own.
A smile may hide a thousand thoughts,
or problems tangled into knots.
We never know what someone feels
or what they carry as they walk,
what memories live behind their eyes
or what they wish they could have said.
But did you stop to wonder?
A hidden bird sings from somewhere near
a gentle melody only some can hear.
Perhaps it sings to the morning light
or welcomes the falling of the night.
But did you stop to wonder?
Perhaps wonder isn't far away,
or something rare we find one day.
Perhaps it's been here all along —
waiting quietly while we rush along.
So next time you walk these streets you know,
slow down and watch the world below.
Look at the things you pass each day —
the wonders hiding in plain sight,
because even the smallest things
may hold a story waiting to be seen.

London Looks Like A Busy Beehive
by Fatima H. Y7

London looks like a busy beehive.
Red buses run past and big crowds stare at their phones.
Everyone is in a hurry on the rainy streets.

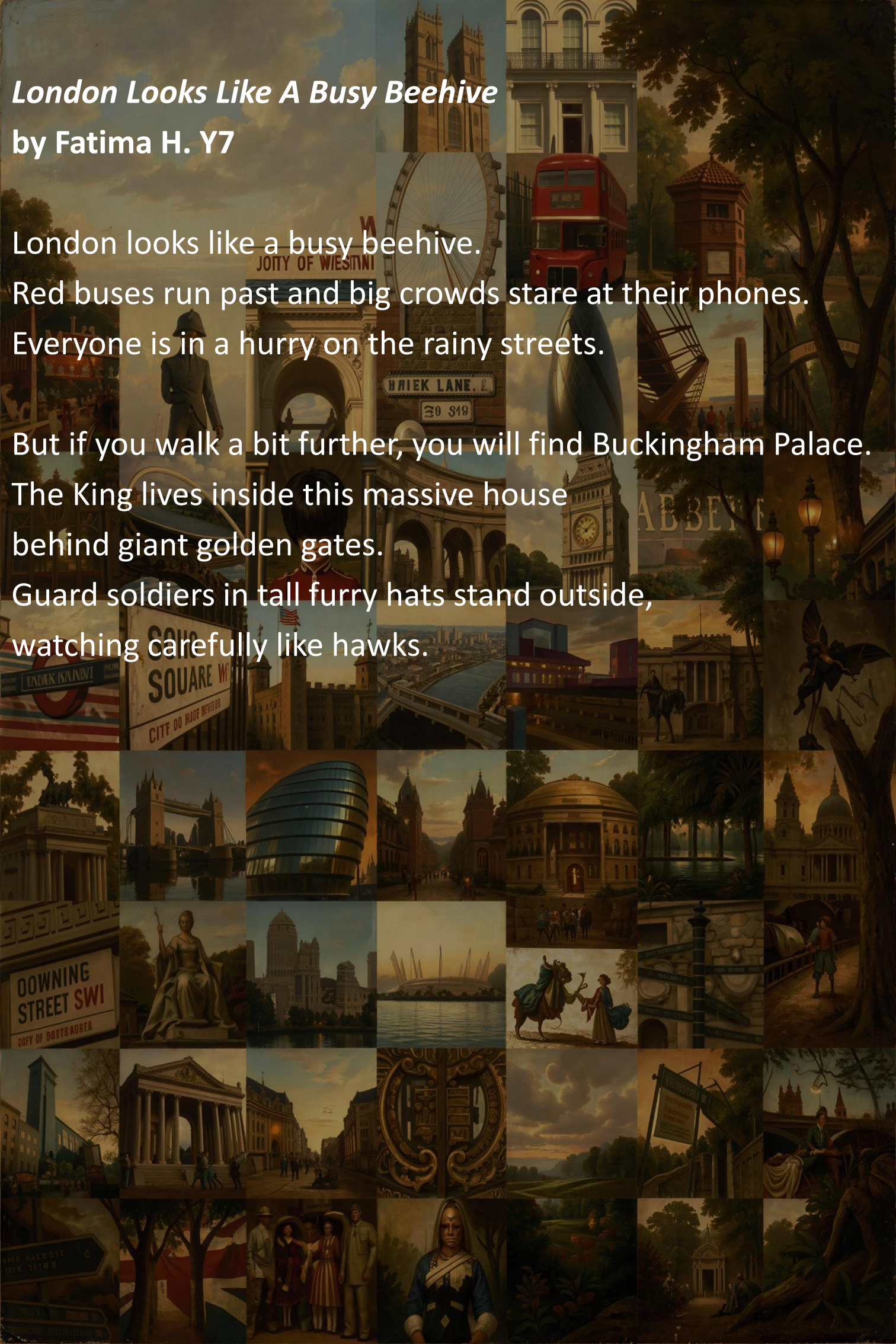
But if you walk a bit further, you will find Buckingham Palace.
The King lives inside this massive house
behind giant golden gates.
Guard soldiers in tall furry hats stand outside,
watching carefully like hawks.



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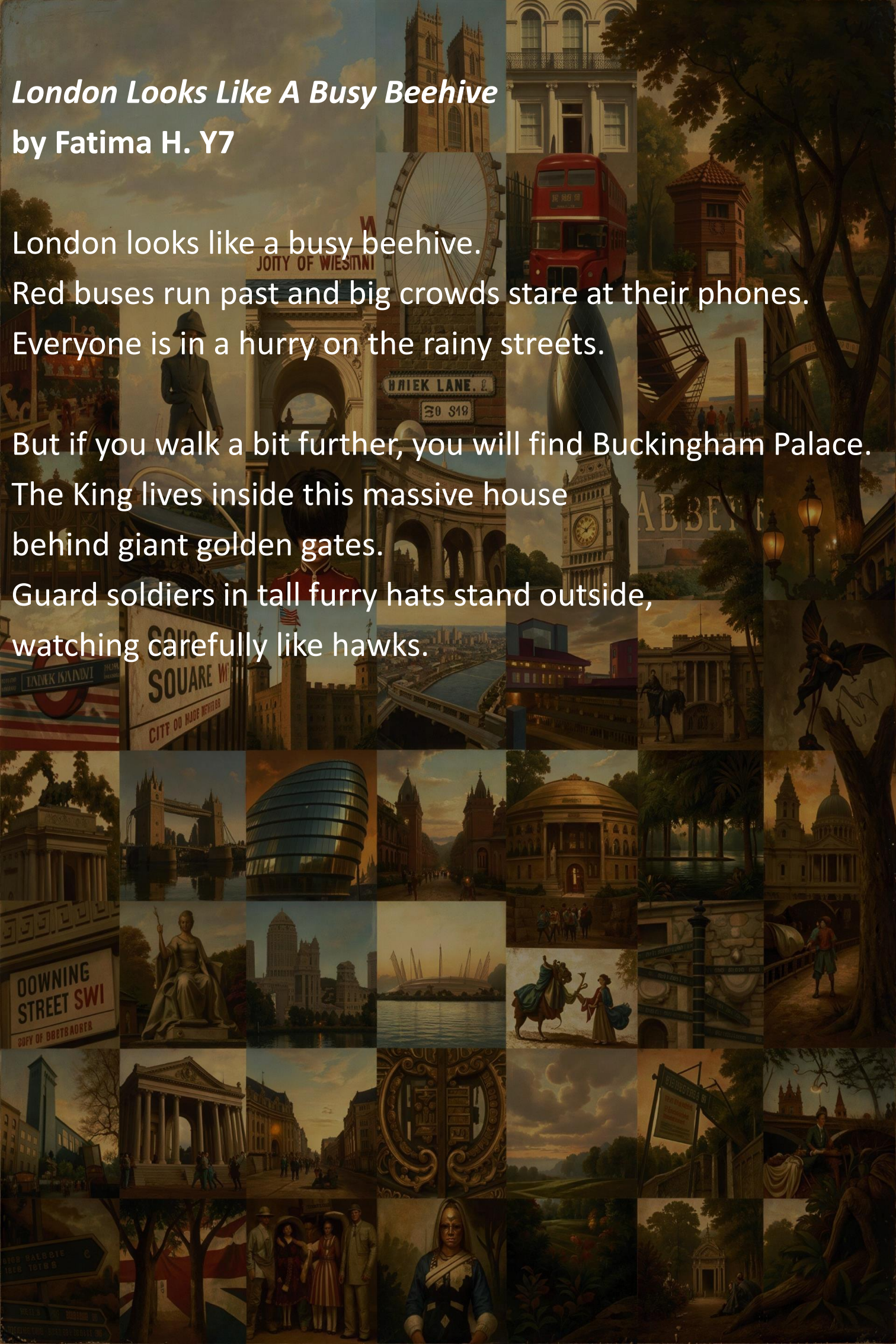
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What the Sunlight Said

by Harshitha J. Y7

Wow! What a bright morning
the bright sun caught my ear
the shiny golden light spoke to me
like angels sharing a secret.
Soft whisper heard through my ears,
the bus departed by the pavement
as they ran, breathing heavily.
As sadness flicked across my face
like a blanket of freshly fallen snow,
my eyes turned to look around, as quick as a flash,
there's a pond of metallic cars,
painted with bright colours.

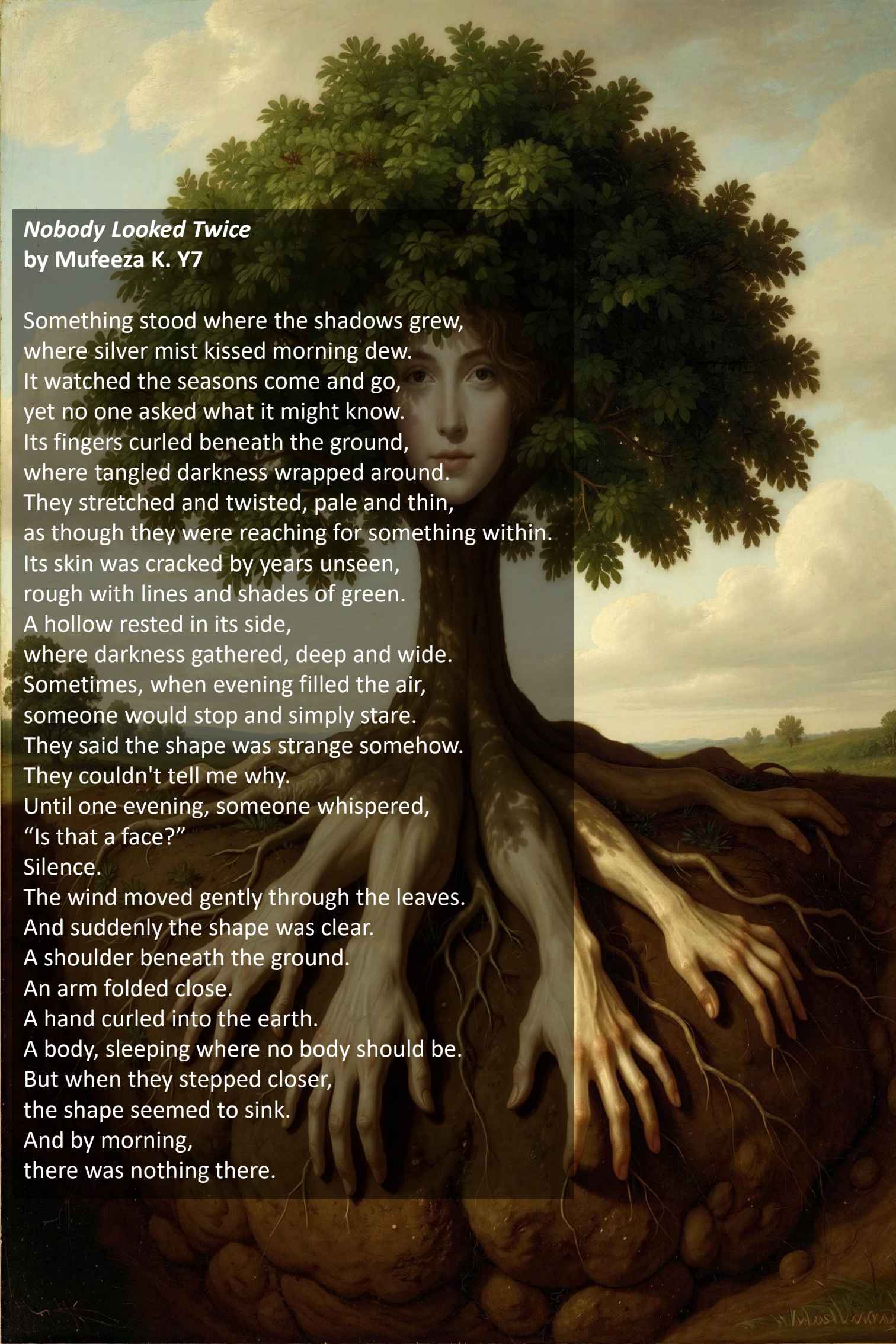
The Ancient Alderwood Yew
by Sofia K. Y7

An old, gnarled thing to stumble upon,
A sleeping giant awakening at dawn.
At least a thousand years untold,
A great, fat story waiting to unfold.

When heavy hearts are weighed with grief,
It lowers down a velvet leaf.
It wraps its boughs around the crying,
And stills the heavy sound of sighing.

Beneath its thick and emerald dome ,
The lost and weeping find a home,
It shields them from the biting wind,
A silent, ancient and steadfast friend.

For every tear the broken shed,
It drops a berry , bright and red.
It guards their pain till shadows flee,
The Alderwood`s great healing tree.

A painting of a large, leafy tree with a human face and hands as roots. The face is visible through the trunk, looking directly at the viewer. The hands are the roots, reaching out from the ground. The background is a landscape with a cloudy sky and distant hills.

Nobody Looked Twice

by Mufeeza K. Y7

Something stood where the shadows grew,
where silver mist kissed morning dew.
It watched the seasons come and go,
yet no one asked what it might know.
Its fingers curled beneath the ground,
where tangled darkness wrapped around.
They stretched and twisted, pale and thin,
as though they were reaching for something within.
Its skin was cracked by years unseen,
rough with lines and shades of green.
A hollow rested in its side,
where darkness gathered, deep and wide.
Sometimes, when evening filled the air,
someone would stop and simply stare.
They said the shape was strange somehow.
They couldn't tell me why.
Until one evening, someone whispered,
"Is that a face?"
Silence.
The wind moved gently through the leaves.
And suddenly the shape was clear.
A shoulder beneath the ground.
An arm folded close.
A hand curled into the earth.
A body, sleeping where no body should be.
But when they stepped closer,
the shape seemed to sink.
And by morning,
there was nothing there.

The background is a lush, detailed painting of a pond scene. In the foreground, a white swan stands on the left bank, surrounded by vibrant flowers like roses and tulips. Another swan is in the water, and a third is on the right bank. The pond is surrounded by tall trees with dense foliage, and a small stone building is visible in the distance. The overall atmosphere is serene and somewhat melancholic, with soft lighting and rich colors.

The King's Decree
by Tukshika K. Y11

I breathe my sorrow,
To whomever listens,
As the water glistens-
And cry for morrow.

Every summer in July,
My undergirds crumble and break,
Oh-for nature's sake,
Why don't you come on by?

My herons pose their wings,
Attempting to impress;
Your visits grow less and less-
As the pain grows and stings.

Have I become worthless-
Or have you become distant?
Now I am insistent!
You really are heartless...

I shall give thee trees,
Or bless thine eyes with nature,
Is this, for thee, a wager?
Begging on my knees,
I plead.

My leaves go crisp with winter air,
Yet another year to spare;
To revel happily in isolation,
And for my heart to cry for salvation.

You leave me when I am old and frail,
Yet you were with me when I was fair and pale.
And what did I do to thee,
For you to disobey nature's decree?
Perhaps in another life,
You will come and visit me.

A Great Egret stands in a shallow pond at sunset. Its wings are spread wide, showing the intricate patterns of its feathers. The bird's long neck is curved, and its sharp beak is pointed forward. The water around it is rippled, and its reflection is visible in the calm water below. The background is a soft, warm glow from the setting sun, creating a peaceful and serene atmosphere.

The Wonder Beneath
by Paridhi K. Y7

The peaceful ponds, so calm and bright,
Reflecting clouds in the morning light.
The water moves, the leaves sway slow,
But there's a secret down below.
A heron waits beside the stream,
So still, it almost looks like a dream.
Most people pass and never see
The quiet wonder is hiding free.

A young man and woman are standing in a field at dusk, looking at each other. They are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the woman on the left and the man on the right. They are both wearing dark clothing. The background features large, dark trees with intricate branch structures against a deep blue twilight sky. The ground is covered in tall grass and some small plants. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

In Croydon's Streets
by Mathooshana P. Y8

In Croydon's streets, where buses hum,
And footsteps hurry, people come,
There's wonder hiding in plain sight,
In windows glowing through the night.
The trees stand tall in Wandle Park,
Their branches whisper in the dark,
While sunlight dances on the stream,
Like something borrowed from a dream.
A child looks up, the clouds drift by,
Silver castles in the sky,
And suddenly the busy street
Feels like a world both strange and sweet.
The buildings rise, the trains rush through,
Yet little wonders still shine through—
A bird in flight, a flower grown,
A quiet moment all your own.
So Croydon, bustling, bright and wide,
Keeps secret magic deep inside.
You don't need far-off lands to roam—
Sometimes wonder lives right close to home.

Winter's Quiet Beauty

by Hanishga P. Y10

Winter's quiet beauty,
A blanket of frost adorns the trees,
As winter whispers through the breeze.
The golden sun, though faint and low,
Casts silver light on fields of snow.

Bare branches sway - the cold winds sing,
While frozen leaves await the spring.
And through the mist, the streetlights glow,
Like scattered stars upon the snow.

The world grows still, the skies turn grey,
As daylight slowly fades away.
Yet in the cold, a warmth remains -
A quiet winter beauty sustains.

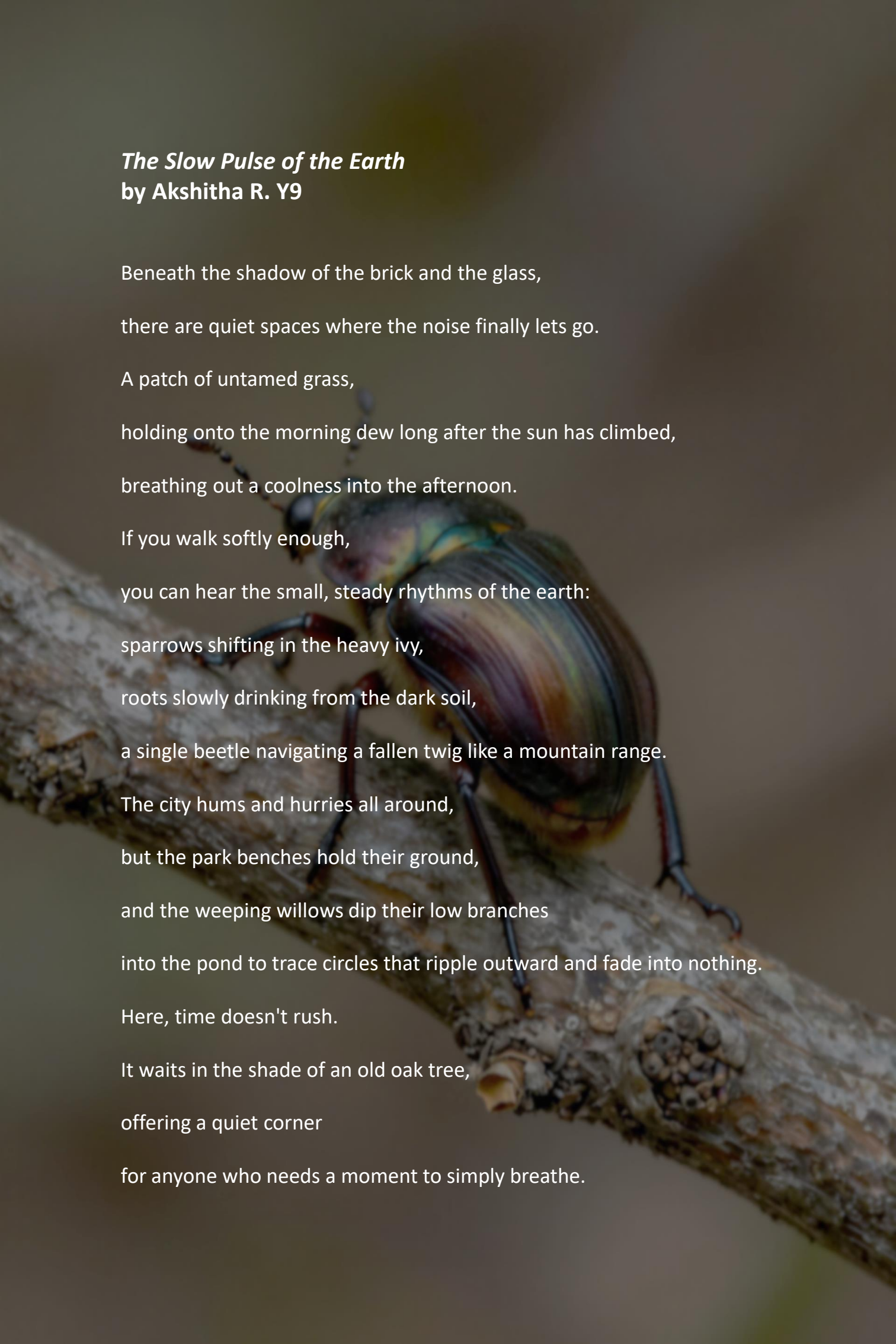
The background image is a photograph of a street scene during the 'blue hour' of dawn or dusk. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues. On the right, there are multi-story brick buildings with white window frames. A few cars are parked along the street, and a lone figure is visible on the sidewalk. The overall mood is quiet and nostalgic, which complements the poem's theme of memory and magic in an ordinary place.

As Dawn Breaks And Sunlight Bursts

by Janisri P. Y10

As dawn breaks and sunlight bursts,
dew from the day before hangs in thirst.
The paths of cool Sutton winds loop and swirl ,
slowly revealing Sutton's secret pearl.
Where Sutton's lower road holds everyone's delight ,
with sweet smelling bakery and a pint of milk tonight.
As we move towards our nearest recreation ground,
we see a trapped old moth eaten owl toy among the ivy twirls,
in the ivy it has been trapped green and stitches broken among the swirls.
As we enter through the rusted, paint-peeled gates,
a vast field of lush green grass awaits,
In the middle of the green grass lay,
we see a willow tree sway,
Among its twisted branches of sage leaves,
the morning air gently breathes,
The rusted gate and the forgotten toy holds memories of past,
the memories under the tree of children are vast ,
Gently tugging at your coat with its braided branches,
wanting to give more memory that dances,
As this slowly fades from mind,
we watch and wait.
In this quiet ordinary place,
where a sudden wonder fills this place,
A spark of magic, wild and free,
Hidden right inside this fine willow tree.

The Slow Pulse of the Earth
by Akshitha R. Y9



Beneath the shadow of the brick and the glass,
there are quiet spaces where the noise finally lets go.
A patch of untamed grass,
holding onto the morning dew long after the sun has climbed,
breathing out a coolness into the afternoon.
If you walk softly enough,
you can hear the small, steady rhythms of the earth:
sparrows shifting in the heavy ivy,
roots slowly drinking from the dark soil,
a single beetle navigating a fallen twig like a mountain range.
The city hums and hurries all around,
but the park benches hold their ground,
and the weeping willows dip their low branches
into the pond to trace circles that ripple outward and fade into nothing.
Here, time doesn't rush.
It waits in the shade of an old oak tree,
offering a quiet corner
for anyone who needs a moment to simply breathe.

The Mystery of the Monument
by Lucksha R. Y9

Alone at dark and day,
Just feeling gloomy and grey,
A mystery no one knows,
And that's what they chose.

But there's a hidden secret,
And it doesn't show its weakness.
Founded in the Georgian Ages,
It's been through a lot of stages,
Born in the eighteenth century's glow,
An ancient relic from long ago,
Forged in nineteen-oh-seven by Hart, Son, Peard & Co,
The towering wrought iron cockerel
Looks down to the streets below.

So, there we have it,
But it's just a bit,
The truth of the stone,
I just hope this will come to be known,
All the history behind,
Will come to mind.

The Thin House On The Edge Of The Street

by Vera S. Y8

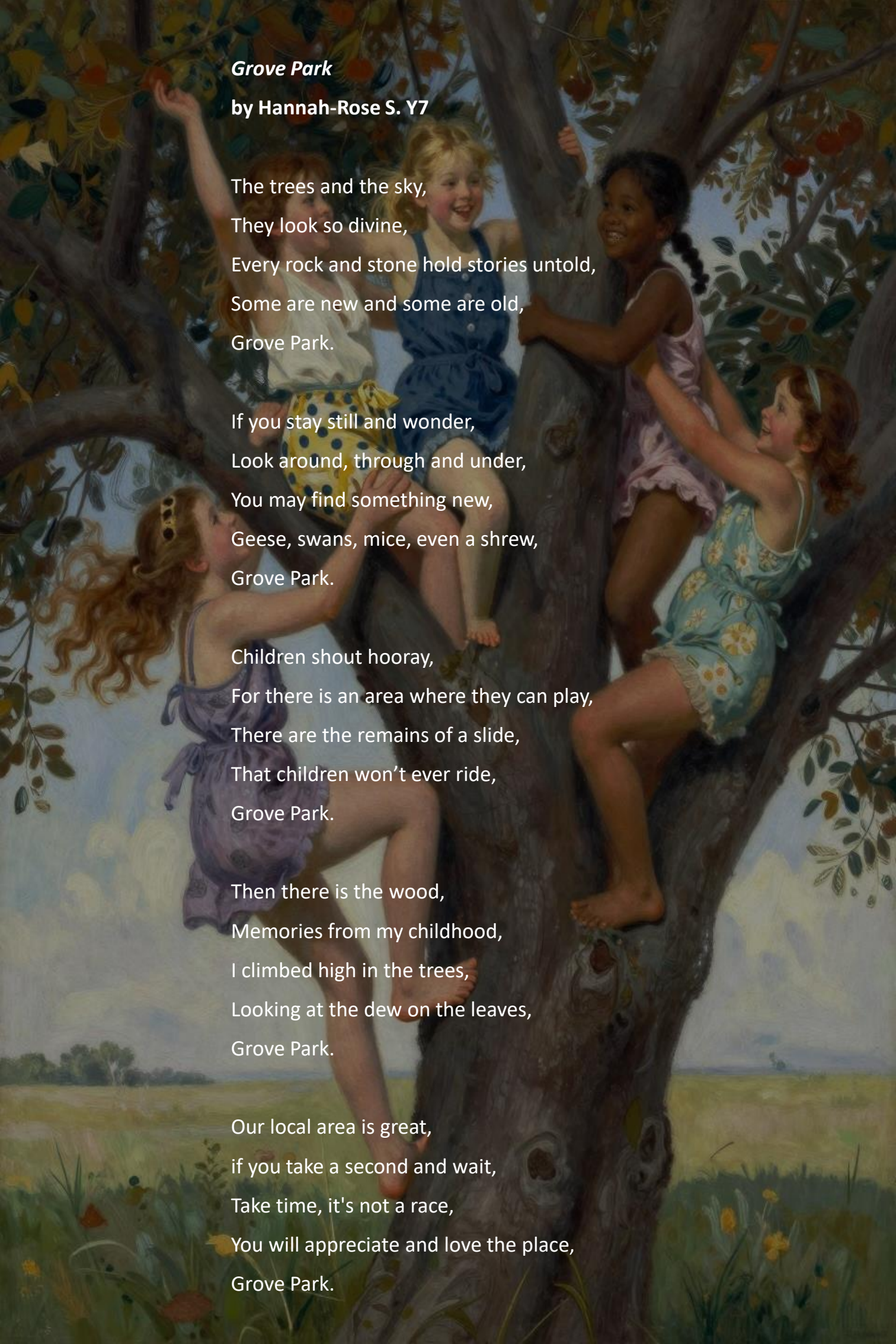
When I'm running to school,
And the morning is chilly and cool,
The thin house on the edge of the street
Is standing, as always, so simple and neat.

I laugh and go on,
Staring at the unwavering sun,
Looking at the swans in the lake—
What even is there to hate?

To any other pedestrian, it's just a house,
But to me, it's a wonder,
A quiet little place
That feels like something much more.

Even if it's a wonder quieter than a mouse.



A painting of five children climbing a large, gnarled tree in a park. The children are of diverse backgrounds and are dressed in summer clothing. They are barefoot and appear to be enjoying their climb. The background shows a grassy field and a clear sky.

Grove Park

by Hannah-Rose S. Y7

The trees and the sky,
They look so divine,
Every rock and stone hold stories untold,
Some are new and some are old,
Grove Park.

If you stay still and wonder,
Look around, through and under,
You may find something new,
Geese, swans, mice, even a shrew,
Grove Park.

Children shout hooray,
For there is an area where they can play,
There are the remains of a slide,
That children won't ever ride,
Grove Park.

Then there is the wood,
Memories from my childhood,
I climbed high in the trees,
Looking at the dew on the leaves,
Grove Park.

Our local area is great,
if you take a second and wait,
Take time, it's not a race,
You will appreciate and love the place,
Grove Park.

Beach Day

by Fatima S. Y10

A slow sunset draws along the pebbles

A group of teenage rebels

A flock of birds swoosh past

Lovers who meet at last

Each who have their own story

Stories that share one simple glory,

A shore that tears apart and brings together as it wishes to do so

Yet the time does not slow.

A heartbreak that was engraved in history cannot be rewritten,

And two lovers entwined cannot forsake their future

For only a place where the sand, water and fire meet can change this twist of fates.

And yet as we live effortlessly as we do

These grains of sand carry much more than we have a clue

A walk down the pebbly route can lead to more than just a soiled boot.

NB. The poet requested that her work is presented without an illustration.

Hidden Wonders

by Sahana S. Y8

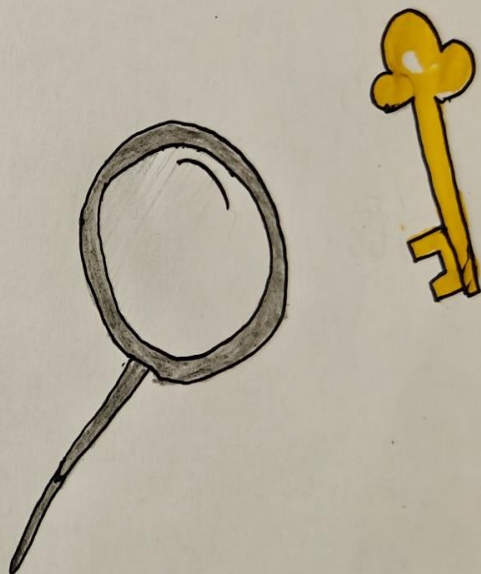
Behind the busy roads and rushing feet,
There are secret wonders hiding in our street.
Not behind a golden gate or castle wall,
But in little places we forget to call.

A tiny flower beside the road,
A robin singing its morning ode,
Raindrops sparkling on a leaf,
Small treasures hiding underneath.



At sunset, windows turn to gold,
And stories fill the street untold.
The evening breeze whispers, "Look around —
There is magic waiting to be found."

We often search for wonders far away,
For famous sights and places people praise.
But perhaps the greatest secret we discover
Is the beauty hiding right under our cover.



So slow your steps and look once more,
Past the busy street and through the door.
For every corner, if we truly see,
Can hold a little piece of mystery.

My local place may seem ordinary at first sight,
But look a little closer — it is filled with light.
For hidden wonders aren't always somewhere new;
Sometimes, they are waiting right beside you!



NB. The poet requested that her work is presented with her own illustration.

The Hidden Wonders of Purley Way

by Yasmika S. Y7

Beyond the traffic and retail glare,
There are many secrets in the Surrey air,

Here, early pilots took to silver wings,
Where Croydon Aerodrome's history rings,
The enormous twin towers lie high and blue
Where a power station's fire once burned and blew.

Beneath the tarmac where shoppers stride,
The hidden waters of Wandle lie,
Feeding quiet ponds where willows leap
And nature hold its breath, asleep.

Once, purple fields of lavender clothed this land,
Scenting the Surrey breeze for mile around,
Long before wheels reclaimed this sacred ground.

So slow your pace along the hurried line,
And see the layers trapped in shifting time,
For Purley Way is more than metal, stone and glass-
It is a stage where centuries softly pass.

The Hidden Wonders of Wallington

by Anaya T. Y8

Hi, it's your local celebrity of Wallington , Anaya,
I go to CHSG and I am fire.

Don't you listen you little liar,
Destiny says she is a hidden wonder, no denier.

Enough of myself,
Now, let's get on
To the hidden wonders of Wallington!

Wallington where mysterious people stop to wonder,
On a pond full of ducks where they ponder.
No town could have the beauty of a pond like this,
Destiny says the pond is filled with a magical bliss.
Even the ducks swim and love it there,
Right now, why don't you go enjoy the mystical air.
So explore the miracle into the wonders of Wallington?

On the streets of Wallington, the shops sparkle like diamonds beneath the evening sky,
Flowers bloom brightly as the gentle breeze drifts by.

Wallington, Wallington, my favourite place,
A proud guardian watches over with a welcoming face.
Like a magnificent palace, the Town Hall adds beauty to the urban space,
Looming above the streets, it stands with grace.

I love it here, it's amazing!
No doubt when you come here, your eyes will just be gazing,
Grand, glorious, glowing Wallington is like a cherry on top on a cake.
To you, I present the town we love to make!

