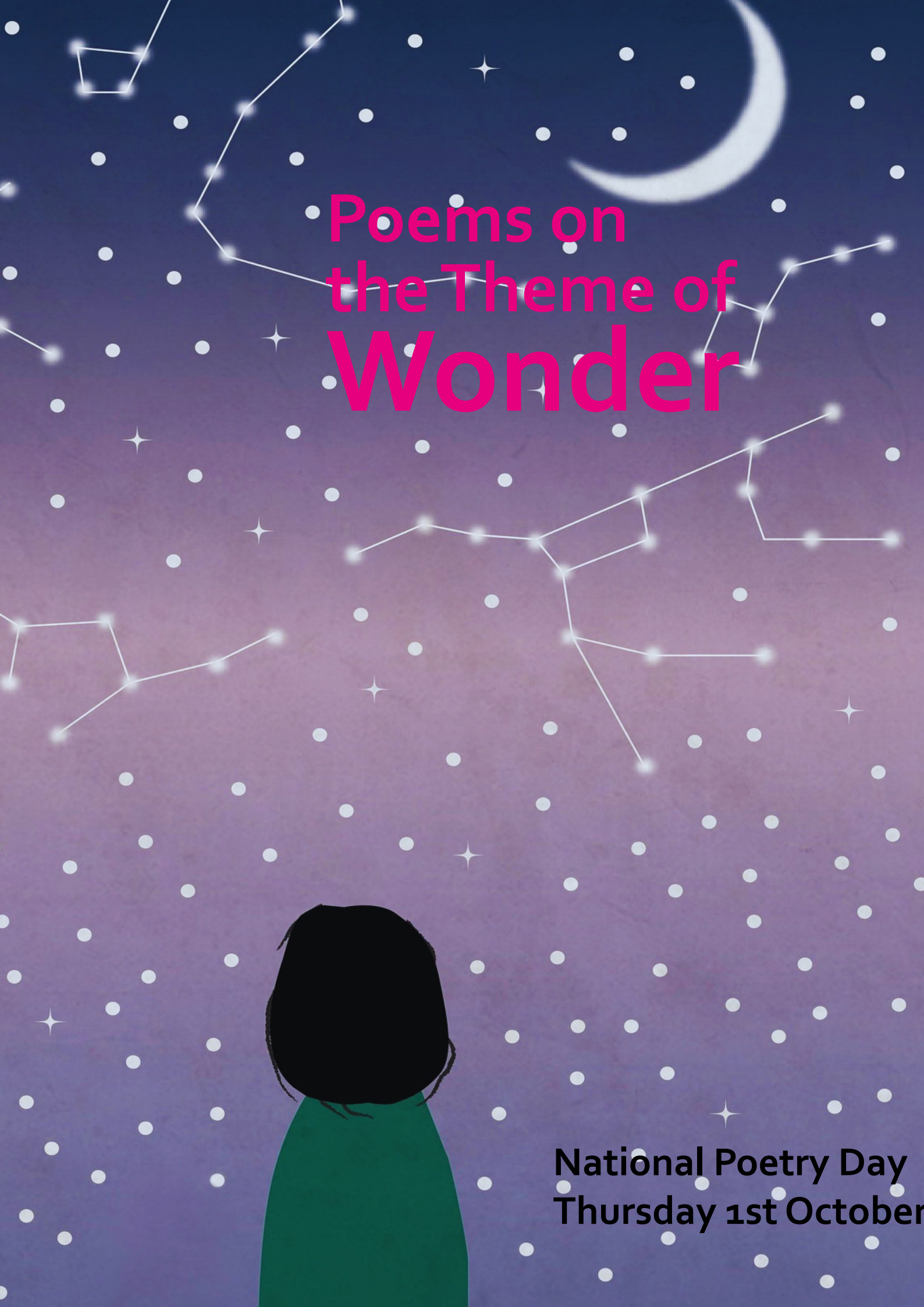




Poems on the Theme of Wonder

National Poetry Day
Thursday 1st October

Acknowledgements

Anthology compiled by Barbara Bleiman

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English & Media Centre, 2026

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Introducing Wonder

You will find lots of 'wonderful' poems on the theme of Wonder on National Poetry Day in various places, including the National Poetry Day website.

EMC has decided, this year, to focus on just one way of looking at the theme, the idea of finding wonder in *small* things.

In this little collection, we have chosen poems by poets who have found something special in an unusual or surprising thing, everything from a paperclip, a courgette, a caterpillar or weed, to a tomato plant or a jar of honey. We've included a poem by the English and Media Centre's very own Barbara Bleiman too! Many of the poems are re-printed here, recent ones by kind permission of the writers. Poems in copyright have links to online sources.

Prompts to help you think about the poems

1. Read the poems.
2. Choose one that you specially like.
3. Talk about that poem to someone else, to a small group, or with the whole class. You could use these prompts for your discussion:
 - I like this one because...
 - My favourite line is...
 - I wonder why the poet said/chose to...
 - It made me think about/reminded me of...
4. Write your own poem about finding interest, surprise, joy, awe in, or appreciation of, something that often goes unnoticed by other people, or isn't seen as especially worthy of 'wonder'.

Purr-fect Wonder

Sometimes the cat will decide
to take a nap in my lap

and a gentle murmur begins,
a hum in the back of her throat,

rising to a strong steady whirr
as she softens into a snooze,

the creation of a vibration
that passes from her fur to my skin.

It's a trusting kind of feeling
(although there's claw-kneading too)!

How happy the cat must be,
her purr like thunder now

and it's rumbling right through me,
the wonder of being the chosen one.

Victoria Gatehouse
By kind permission of the author

Paperclip

Made to keep my thoughts in order,
humble piece of twisted wire
marking the pages in a book
oh so easily overlooked,
taken for granted, yet this spring –
such a simple, humble thing –
is trusted by teachers the world over
to hold their precious words together
then afterwards stuffed in a pocket or
discarded on the classroom floor.

Carole Bromley

By kind permission of the author

Cinnabar Caterpillars

On the waste ground, in dusty midsummer,
prospect for gold and you'll find the ragwort's bloom.
Look closer – see how it's decked with bright scarves?
Hufflepuff house, or Watford football fans
cheering the season on.

Tipped into a curious palm
they ammonite immediately,
coiling tight till danger's passed.

Back on their patch, they can strip the plant bare –
leaf, stalk and petal –
in a matter of days.

Tiny tigers, devouring the sun.

Sarah Ziman

By kind permission of the author.

First published in *Why Did My Brain Make Me Say It?* (Troika, 2024)

A Bird, came down the Walk

A Bird, came down the Walk

He did not know I saw -

He bit an Angle Worm in halves

And ate the fellow, raw,

And then, he drank a Dew

From a convenient Grass -

And then hopped sidewise to the Wall

To let a Beetle pass -

He glanced with rapid eyes,

That hurried all abroad -

They looked like frightened Beads, I thought,

He stirred his Velvet Head. -

Like one in danger, Cautious,

I offered him a Crumb,

And he unrolled his feathers,

And rowed him softer Home -

Than Oars divide the Ocean,

Too silver for a seam,

Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon,

Leap, plashless as they swim.

Emily Dickinson

Dawn

An angel, robed in spotless white,
Bent down and kissed the sleeping Night.
Night woke to blush; the sprite was gone.
Men saw the blush and called it Dawn.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Ode to a Courgette

It grows whenever you're not looking,
without a thought for your fancy cooking.

Fierce orange flower, ribbed flesh, it seems
innocuous, yet it has big dreams.

Zucchini, baby marrow, zoodles -
mouthwatering when served with noodles!

Firenze, Alfresco, Shooting Star...

fragrant, delicious, softer by far

than anything in my veggie patch.

It grows while I sit here and watch.

Carole Bromley

By kind permission of the author

On First Growing a Tomato Plant

I bought a tomato plant at the stall.
My husband looked doubtful.
I'd never grown a single thing before –
it's him who tends our garden.
'You can buy tomatoes cheaply you know
and it'll need watering every day.'
I knew what he thought –
it'd be him doing the watering.
I put it in a pot, filled it with compost
and put in a stick just in case it grew tall.
I watered it and watered it,
every day I watered it.
And then one day they appeared –
tiny yellow buds and flowers
and the stalk just grew and grew
till little beads appeared
pale green at first, then orange-tinged
and at last crimson orbs of joy.

Every day I water it.
Every day I go and look at it
and wonder at the buds and the beads
and the crimson orbs that I pick
and hold like jewels in my hand,
then taste on my tongue
like the rarest of delicacies –
oysters, truffles, caviar.

Barbara Bleiman
By kind permission of the author

In the Department of Medical Entomology

The professor welcomes his guest
with a flourish and a petri dish.

In it, a tsetse fly squats exhausted,
next to a bloated maggot, twice its size.

A live birth! the professor exclaims.

We were all there. Isn't it magnificent!

Do you have children yourself?

Rachel Burrows

By kind permission of the author

Five Other Poems on Wonder at Small Things

(Available online)

Carpe Diem

by Rebecca Watts

A poem about a snail

<https://rerebeccawatts.weebly.com/poems.html>

Dew

by Kwame Dawes

<https://poemsontheunderground.org/dew-2>

A Jar of Honey

by Jacob Polley

https://www.poetryinternational.com/en/poets-poems/poems/poem/103-27699_A-JAR-OF-HONEY

Ragwort

by Anne Stevenson

<https://poemsontheunderground.org/ragwort>

The Patience of Ordinary Things

by Pat Schneider

<https://poets.org/poem/patience-ordinary-things>