

# FIRST PRIZE POEM

Dyslexia, by Erin Dooley

Words and symbols  
Strobe and flow  
Liquid paper  
Churning slow  
Focus...focus  
Never end  
Focus...focus  
I pretend.

**#UWEDISABILITYMONTH**

# SECOND PRIZE POEM

## If Only I Had Known Before, by Jessica Conway

Words

Used to Baffle mE

knowiNg I had the information

Trapped

In my

BRAIN

Squeezing my head, trying to shoot words out of my eyes

To sense order

Make

understand

Explain

It was like two magnets

Positive to

Positive

Pushing apart

Tears of confusion, I knew I knew how

Why wouldn't my hands do what my brain wanted them to do?

Years of: *Could do better*

*Has potential*

*Written doesn't reflect verbal ability*

And then...

Finally

Assessment, diagnosis

40 years old, dyspraxic, discalculus

**And I met you!**

**Study support, my life made sense, my grades jumped up**

**Confidence blossomed**

**No more tears**

**No more lost in isolated fear**

**I am normal, just different too**

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# THIRD PRIZE POEM

## Fireworks, by Stephanie Wilson

Upon this mound is a perpetual display of fireworks  
That captivates my attention from everything beyond it.  
The intensity makes me rush,  
And I'm torn between which dazzling array  
Is most deserving of my attention.

Each new eruption is beautiful,  
And distinctly different from the rest;  
Chaotic bursts of colour that dissipate  
Before I have the chance to fully analyse them.

After twenty, thirty, forty bangs,  
They become overwhelming  
And I curl up in a ball,  
Praying for the show to be over.  
But still I hear each explosion  
As clear as a glass of moonshine,  
The burning lights keeping me warm in the darkness.

Too warm.  
Suddenly a wave of frustration flows over me  
And I fidget in the sticky heat,  
My heart rate rapidly pounding in my chest  
As every flash and pop becomes more frequent.

A voice calls from below,  
So I peer down to see you standing there  
And curiously, I am calm once again,  
Elated by your presence.  
I ask you what you're doing,  
And your laugh bounces through the air  
As you inform me that once again  
I have failed to recollect.

As your lips begin to move  
Another burst of glitter floats through the sky  
And I am hypnotised.  
I begin to wonder what glitter is made from,  
And who first proclaimed its existence,  
When I notice your mouth hiss.

I've done it again.

Please don't hate me  
As much as I hate myself sometimes  
I realise how exasperating it is  
To try and decipher my erratic mind.  
Believe me I've been sat here for years  
Wishing that one day I could walk with you  
Without a flicker of distraction.

And It's not that I don't listen, I hear every word.  
It's just so hard to focus when the world's ablaze.

You try to convince me that it isn't real  
So I dare you to climb upon the hill,  
To see for yourself how the rockets  
Tear through the sky.

Tantalized by the concept, you crawl through the dense grass  
But when you arrive by my side you realise you're missing something:  
The lens required to perceive this parade,  
That the vendor on the ridge forgot to gift you with.

As you see my eyes darting around the desolate night,  
Completely oblivious to how possessed I look,  
You try to decide whether or not this is of good fortune.

Eventually you come to a conclusion,  
That you are content with your peaceful evening,  
And you tell me that I should appreciate mine too.

Because with every quality that I despise  
Comes a silent blessing.  
And the contingency of my whirring mind  
Brings a sparkle that makes me unique.

I just hadn't stopped racing around to realise that yet.

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# COMMENDED POEM

## Mr Lighthouse Keeper, by Charlie Lovegrove

Hello mister light keeper  
With the eye of a minister  
Attempting to captivate  
Can you anticipate  
Or guess my next move  
Think you know everything  
With your lamp shining so bright  
But you've a lot to learn yet  
Try riding the waves of isolation  
Or taste these waters  
You can admire the tides  
The waters crashing on the rocks  
Forgetting the calm sea shore  
And the roundness of the pebbles  
All you see is the  
The oil spills and the chop  
How? there's no telling  
If the tide will rise  
Or if the chaos will stop  
It's easy to see the waves crash  
But forget a wave's gentle retreat  
It's observed by all  
And judged by most  
For mr light keeper  
You will never understand  
How it feels to be this misunderstood tide.

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