

Day 1: The Day War Came

by Nicola Davies

The day war came there were flowers on the window sill
and my father sang my baby brother back to sleep.
My mother made my breakfast, kissed my nose
and walked with me to school.

That morning I learned about volcanoes, I sang a song about how tadpoles turn at
last to frogs.

I made a picture of myself with wings.

Then, just after lunch, while I watched a cloud shaped like a dolphin, war came.

At first, just like a spattering of hail

a voice of thunder...

then all smoke and fire and noise, that I didn't understand.

It came across the playground.

It came into my teacher's face.

It brought the roof down.

and turned my town to rubble.

I can't say the words that tell you

about the blackened hole that had been my home.

All I can say is this:

war took everything

war took everyone

I was ragged, bloody, all alone.

I ran. Rode on the back of trucks, in buses;

walked over fields and roads and mountains,

in the cold and mud and rain;

on a boat that leaked and almost sank

and up a beach where babies lay face down in the sand.

I ran until I couldn't run

until I reached a row of huts

and found a corner with a dirty blanket

and a door that rattled in the wind

But war had followed me.

It was underneath my skin,

behind my eyes,

and in my dreams.

It had taken possession of my heart.

I walked and walked to try and drive war out of myself,

to try and find a place it hadn't reached.

But war was in the way that doors shut when I came down the street
It was in the way the people didn't smile, and turned away.

I came to a school.
I looked in through the window.
They were learning all about volcanoes
And drawing birds and singing.

I went inside.
My footsteps echoed in the hall
I pushed the door and faces turned towards me
but the teacher didn't smile.
She said, there is no room for you,
you see, there is no chair for you to sit on,
you have to go away.

And then I understood that war had got here too.

I turned around and went back to the hut, the corner and the blanket
and crawled inside.
It seemed that war had taken all the world and all the people in it.

The door banged.
I thought it was the wind.
But a child's voice spoke
"I brought you this," she said "so you can come to school."
It was a chair. A chair for me to sit on and learn about volcanoes, frogs and singing
And drive the war out of my heart.

She smiled and said "My friends have brought theirs too, so all the children here can
come to school"

Out of every hut a child came and we walked together,
on a road all lined with chairs.
Pushing back the war with every step.

Link to poem here: <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2016/apr/28/the-day-the-war-came-poem-about-unaccompanied-child-refugees>

Nicola Davies, *The Day War Came*, © Nicola Davies 2016

Day 2: "Hope" is the thing with feathers

by Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Emily Dickinson, 'Hope' is the Thing with Feathers from *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*
Edited by R. W. Franklin (Harvard University Press, 1999)

Day 3: CHARACTERS (a haiku for haiku...and, ahem...twitter)

by Jason Reynolds

i wish more of us
spoke in haiku, considered
the weight of each word

Jason Reynolds, *CHARACTERS* © Jason Reynolds 2018

Day 4: The City of my Birth

by Karl Nova

I spy with my London eye
Big Ben telling the time
as these thoughts like the River Thames
flow through my mind
Thoughts of love for my city
Like tube trains move quickly
Although unlike them
there's no delay, swiftly
like red buses that move through the streets
Like the blood pumping through my veins
as my heart beats
I feel a rush of blood for the city of my birth
I might be biased, it's one of the greatest on earth
I stand still on Westminster bridge watching the movement
of different people moving around I am grooving
to music pumping in my headphones, I crack a smile
London is my playground and I am its child.

Karl Nova, *The City of my Birth* from *Rhythm and Poetry*, © (Caboodle Books)

Day 5: Ode to Teachers

by Pat Mora

I remember
the first day,
how I looked down,
hoping you wouldn't see
me,
and when I glanced up,
I saw your smile
shining like a soft light
from deep inside you.

"I'm listening," you encourage us.
"Come on!
Join our conversation,
let us hear your neon certainties,
thorny doubts, tangled angers,"
but for weeks I hid inside.

I read and reread your notes
praising
my writing,
and you whispered,
"We need you
and your stories
and questions
that like a fresh path
will take us to new vistas."

Slowly, your faith grew
into my courage
and for you—
instead of handing you
a note or apple or flowers—
I raised my hand.

I carry your smile
and faith inside like I carry
my dog's face,
my sister's laugh,
creamy melodies,
the softness of sunrise,
steady blessings of stars,
autumn smell of gingerbread,
the security of a sweater on a chilly day.

Pat Mora, *Ode to Teachers* from *Dizzy in Your Eyes*. Copyright © 2010 by Pat Mora.