

## COBIS Poetry Competition 2024/25

### Magical Moments

#### Key Stage 4-5 Runner-up

##### A Single Smile

The woman who lives the khaki house across the street  
smells of cinnamon and red wine.  
I know this because she hugged me once.

She sits in a worn, woven, splintered rocking chair on her porch,  
the seat stained with the vibrant blood of bottled grapes.  
She grunts that she doesn't want a new one.

Her smiles are like crisp envelopes,  
Decorated with ruby wax stamps  
Which she'll send to me as I stride off the public city bus.  
I worry that one day I'll stop receiving mail.

I often gaze at her from my dust covered windowsill,  
Dodging her glances, yet,  
In pure awe  
As she sits beneath the ancient, wisteria-draped pergola,  
Framing her home.  
Pursing her pale lips at her latest library book,  
Rocking her chair in the humid dusk.  
Her hair grows white, untidy and thin,  
Yet flaps in the wind  
Like that of a movie star.  
Her tortoise shell glasses sit askew atop her nose,  
Which is dappled with freckles.

With my head melted on the foggy glass of my window,  
She turns and stares  
Into the faint light of my bedroom.

When our eyes meet,  
The world turns silent.  
My heart slams itself against my ribs,  
And although the atoms in my body begin to shiver,  
I stare back.

In partnership with:

I swear her grin was like a glowing roadmap,  
A wrinkled lifetime of expression.

Red wine in hand,  
She returns to her book.

The woman in the khaki house across the street,  
Probably doesn't know the significance of her single smile.

Or maybe she does.

**Clara Rogers (aged 15)**  
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