

UPPER PRIMARY

Runner-Up

I'm searching for stars,
But I can't find any.

I can't find stars on the Internet,
Only people who think
They're fabulous
And more important
Than people like me.

There are no stars to be seen
On the TV,
Just well-known celebrities,
Famous for being ... on the TV.
They mean nothing to me.

The stars on the street
Must be hidden from me,
Because all I can see
Are posters
Advertising places
where people go
To hear YELLING faces.

In magazines,
The stars are playing hide-and-seek,
But the ones
Who've done bad things
Mustn't be very good at that game:
They glare icily at me
From the glossy front cover.

Older teenage girls
Yabber on and on and on and on
About hot guys and movie stars,
But all I hear
Are ridiculous things ...
Skirts shorter than my attention span,
Earrings longer than blue whales,
Heels taller than the Eiffel Tower,
Lipstick scarlet like a rose flower.

Grace Stanhope

Valentine Public School
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Sodden Dreams

But then,
I see a teacher,
Patiently explaining difficult maths to a child.

I see a worn and harried business man
Gripping the filthy hand
Of a teary-eyed little girl
Taking the time to find her mother
In a noisy public place.

I see a pet shop owner,
Eyes glowing with enthusiastic fervour,
Showing a fuzzy, licking, affectionate dog
To a euphoric laughing boy.

I see an elderly, solitary gardener,
Tending, caring and guarding his family:
The stretching trees and spreading flowers.
He gives passersby the occasional nod
As he shows his grandchildren
How to plant daisies.

I see a broke man begging for money
By the side of a humble church;
One by one,
The worshippers file out
And hand the homeless, sunken-eyed man
A dollar each.

I see kindred spirits;
I know where the real stars are.
They're not shining and twinkling in the sky,
They don't come out at night, on the TV,
Or hide away from the world
In a stretched limo, the length of the sea.
The true stars are plain to see,
They're right here, in front of me.

I'm not searching for the stars anymore.
I've found them.

Judges' Comment:

Here is an intelligent, well argued interpretation of the star theme. The poet's voice is clear as she spins out her ideas. There is a good range of characters, neatly established...the teacher, business man, mother, petshop owner, gardener, beggar. Deft touches of character enliven her world, her "kindred spirits", while she debunks the imagery from contemporary technology, fashion, magazine and TV culture. This is an interesting piece of work, well crafted. [It is unfortunate near the end that "broke" is used when "poor" would be more apt - or possibly "broken".]