

## SPEECH TEST PIECES

### 7 YEARS & UNDER

#### SKIN – David Campbell

I wonder why  
my skin's so thin –  
it has to keep  
my insides in!  
it also blocks  
the nasties out –  
it's something I  
can't do without!

It's funny stuff  
it splits and peels,  
but when it's cut –  
Guess what? It heals!  
It's one of my  
most precious things –  
the way it fits  
the way it clings.

A wrinkle here  
a dimple there  
it hugs me tight  
just everywhere!  
It stays with me  
for all I do  
and as I grow  
it stretches too!

On leg or arm  
or nose or chin  
I really love  
my skinny skin!

## **8 YEARS & UNDER 10**

### **DEAR MUM** - Brian Patten

While you were out  
a cup went and broke itself,  
a crack appeared in the blue vase  
your great-great granddad  
brought back from China.  
Somehow, without me even turning on the tap,  
the sink mysteriously overflowed.  
A strange jam-stain,  
about the size of a boy's hand,  
appeared on the kitchen wall.  
I don't think we will ever discover  
exactly how the cat  
managed to turn on the washing-machine  
(specially from the inside),  
or how the self-raising flour  
managed to self-raise.  
I can tell you I was scared when,  
as if by magic,  
a series of muddy footprints  
appeared on the new white carpet.  
I was being good  
(honest)  
but I think the house is haunted so,  
knowing you're going to have a fit,  
I've gone over to Gran's for a bit.

**10 YEARS & UNDER 12 DRAMA QUEEN** by Lynda Burnett

Oh no! There's a nut in my muesli!  
Quick somebody take it away!  
Disgusting, revolting, I hate them,  
I can't eat my breakfast today.

That's not fair, that's not true,  
You're just being mean,  
I don't think I make a fuss,  
I'm not a drama queen.

Oh! This horrible stupid old jacket,  
I never can do up the zip,  
I pull and I tug and I yank it,  
You see it's beginning to rip!

That's not fair, that's not true,  
You're just being mean,  
I hate it when you call me that,  
I'm not a drama queen.

Oh help! There's a cut on my finger,  
I'm bleeding, I'm bleeding, I'm sick,  
A plaster, a cuddle, a lolly,  
Somebody come to me quick!

That's not fair, that's not true,  
You're just being mean,  
You don't know how much it hurts,  
I'm not a drama queen.

I'm hungry, I'm empty, I'm starving,  
My tummy is starting to cry,  
It's ages and ages till dinner,  
If I don't get a biscuit I'll die!

That's not fair, that's not true,  
You're just being mean,  
If you call me that again,  
I'll, I'll be a drama queen.

## **12 YEARS & UNDER 14**

### **TANE MAHUTA By Karla Milo**

Tane Mahuta

holding up the sky  
weathering storms  
absorbing lightning  
holding tears in your leaves  
cupped gentle in your fingertips

Tane Mahuta

I see your face  
unblinking in the sun  
I see you blow kisses at the stars  
you look into the eye of the moon  
and smile back at her when tears threaten

Tane Mahuta

a forest will gather gentle around you  
I want to wrap my arms around your limbs  
feel your heart beat against my chest  
I will strip away the dead leaves  
I will carry your seeds in my pockets

Tane Mahuta

I want to help lift your heavy heart  
from your foundations  
to the uttermost tips of your twigs  
I will sing with the birds  
resting in your elbows  
I will wear their feathers  
in my hair

Tane Mahuta

evergreen to me  
I will hide in the hollow of your heart  
and sing the sacred song  
to your spirit  
I will tickle your toes  
and the whole forest will quake  
with your laughter

## **14 YEARS & UNDER 16**

### **THE SPIDER AND THE FLY**

‘Will you walk into my parlour?’ said the Spider to the Fly,  
‘Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;  
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,  
And I have many curious things to show when you are there,’  
‘Oh no, no,’ said the little Fly, ‘to ask me is in vain,  
For who goes up your winding stair can ne’er come down again.’

‘I’m sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;  
Will you rest upon my little bed?’ said the Spider to the Fly.  
‘There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin;  
And if you like to rest awhile, I’ll snugly tuck you in!’  
‘Oh no, no,’ said the little fly, ‘for I’ve often heard it said,  
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!;

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, ‘Dear friend, what can I do,  
To prove the warm affection I’ve always felt for you?  
I have within my pantry good store of all that’s nice;  
I’m sure you’re very welcome – will you please to take a slice?’  
‘Oh no, no,’ said the little Fly, ‘kind sir, that cannot be,  
I’ve heard what’s in your pantry, and I do not wish to see.’

‘Sweet creature,’ said the Spider, ‘you’re witty and you’re wise;  
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are  
Your eyes!  
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,  
I you’ll step in a moment, dear, you shall behold yourself.’  
I thank you, gentle sir,’ she said, ‘for what you’re pleased to say,  
And bidding you good morning now, I’ll call another day.’

The Spider turned him round about, and went into his den,  
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon come back again;  
So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,  
And set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.  
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing:  
‘Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearly and silver wing;  
Your robes are green and purple – there’s a crest upon your head;  
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead.’

Alas, alas! How very soon this silly little Fly,  
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;  
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,  
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue;  
Thinking only of her crested head – poor foolish thing! At last,  
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.  
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,  
Within his little parlour – but she ne’er came out again!

Mary Howitt

## **16 YEARS & OVER**

### *A Story – Glenn Colquhoun*

I would like to be a story.  
Maybe my stomach could be the first notes of an opera.  
it is soft and round. It could be sung by fat men  
in black suits at the top of their voices.  
It should wobble and bounce and echo.  
Maybe my bones could be the rattle of dancing.  
If they were hung in a doorway by the beach, they  
would chime in the wind. Fingers could strum  
the lines at the corners of eyes when I smile.  
Maybe my skin could be the pale screen of a movie.  
Light catches through a window and draws pictures on me.  
Cowboys roam the sun-drenched prairies on the back  
of my arms. Gangsters move quietly in the shadows.  
Maybe my hands could be the covers of a book.  
They are bent over at the edges and well-thumbed.  
People read carefully between the lines. They could  
make stories from whatever they held between them.  
Maybe my mouth could be a poem. It is so full of words.  
I should take it down to a choppy sea and leave it on  
the beach for the water to bubble on my tongue.  
    One day my ears could become shells.  
        My throat would make the sound of gulls.  
            Birds might pluck at my teeth for mussels.  
                My jaw would become driftwood.  
And in time all that would be left is a simple conversation  
where the words are eroded to notes.

## **PREPARED READING 8 YEARS & UNDER**

### **PROSE PASSAGE FROM: THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS**

BY JOHN BOYNE

After walking for the best part of an hour and starting to feel a little hungry, he thought that maybe that was enough exploration for one day and it would be a good idea to turn back.

However, just at the moment a small dot appeared in the distance and he narrowed his eyes to try to see what it was.

Bruno remembered a book he had read in which a man was lost in the desert and because he hadn't had any food or water for several days had started to imagine that he saw wonderful restaurants and enormous fountains, but when he tried to eat or drink from them they disappeared into nothingness, just handfuls of sand. He wondered whether that was what was happening to him now.

But while he was thinking his feet were taking him, step by step, closer and closer to the dot in the distance, which in the meantime had become a speck, and then began to show every sign of turning into a blob. And shortly after that the blob became a figure. And then, as Bruno got even closer, he saw that the thing was neither a dot nor a speck nor a blob nor a figure, but a person.

In fact it was a boy.

So he continued to walk, and before long they were facing each other.

'Hello,' said Bruno.

'Hello,' said the boy.

The boy was smaller than Bruno and was sitting on the ground with a forlorn expression. He wore the same striped pyjamas that all the other people on that side of the fence wore, and a striped cloth cap on his head.

Bruno was sure that he had never seen a skinnier or sadder boy in his life but decided that he had better talk to him.