



Guardian, by Kutloogh Qureshi from Tiffin Girls' School

First Place Winner of the RAF100 'War in the Skies' strand of the 2017/18 Poetry Competition, ages 14-16

Blue. White. Red
Engine and heart roar as one
Wild metal.
I can taste valour in the air

It's easy to fly and forget,
Drunk on sunlight
like that six-year-old in a cardboard plane
sodden in the August rain

The sky is free like dreams:
She's beautiful and sinister
Unconquered.
Celestial and raw

And it hurts.
The bitter guns and
Black smoke burn
I see her tortured face

Blue. White. Red
I will defend,
In Person, Crown and Dignity
Courage calls.

And our hearts roar as one
For the barley fields
And the boys in cardboard planes
For freedom.

And I'm not afraid:
Let the wind whisper my story
Of summer days and the
Ones I loved

Capture my colours
In the constellations
They'll look and remember
What we gave

Through struggles to the stars.



Kutloogh reading her poem at Buckingham Palace for the NSI Centenary Finale

"Thank you so much for allowing us to come to such an amazing event! It was a wonderful experience and a really once-in-a-lifetime event!" - Kutloogh Qureshi