**Human Rights Inspired Poetry**

***Poem*** by Martin Niemoller

First they came for the Socialists,

and I did not speak out—because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists,

and I did not speak out—because I was not a Trade Unionist-

Then they came for the Jews,

and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew-

Then they came for me—

and there was no one left to speak for me

***Freedom Of Expression*** by Joseph Cogavin,

Garbally College,Ballinasloe, Galway

Freedom of expression should be no problem,

But when can we draw the lines?

 Is it possible we are hypocrites?

For we don’t want to hear conflicting viewpoints,

But doesn’t everyone have the right

To freedom of expression,

Or does Ireland not respect that?

Or is it the case

That freedom of expression has never

Or will never exist?

***A Child’s Prayer***

By Catherine Nolan and Louise Guilfoyle

Colaiste Mhuire, Kilkenny

I go to bed at night

Praying not to wake in the light

Knowing that people will see my black eyes

When they ask what happened I’m telling them lies.

Walking to school in my raggy clothes

 Looking at my shoes and seeing my toes

With a few cracked ribs and a pain in my head

All because I wet the bed.

I’m afraid to go home because I know what is in store

No food in the cupboard just scraps on the floor

What can I do for I’m only a child

Yet I am praying for help all the while



***Bullying Me***

By Laura Grace

Colaiste Mhuire, Kilkenny

Why do people bully me?

We were all born equal and free,

Why do people call me names?

When all I want is to join their games.

I’m not that kind of person to fight,

 I can’t even go outside at night,

Some people put me through hell,

When I go home I tell my mother I fell.

With cut elbows and knees,

Black eyes and bruised thighs,

I hate waking up the next day,

To face the same thing.

Why do people bully me?

***Racism***

By Niamh Brennan,

Presentation College, Askea, Co. Carlow

The whistle blows, the race begins,

 The tension is strong to see who wins.

Complaints from the crowd as the African stops,

“He’s won the race, call the cops!”

No black man can defeat us whites,

He’s different, he’s coloured, he has no rights!

The happy smile wipes off his face,

The black man never wins this race.

**Write your own Human Rights Inspired Poem**

* Guidelines For Writing A Poem
* Brainstorm your ideas
* Conduct some research into your topic;
* Think about the tone you want your poem to have;
* Begin your poem by producing a first draft: writing freely to get a flow of ideas underway, trying out paragraphs;  viewpoints, testing different approaches, consulting with peers or teachers;
* Redraft and edit your first draft, deciding on the best arrangement of content and ensuring structure is cohesive,  finalizing verses;
* Finally proofread your poem, check all punctuation, spelling and grammar.

**Inspiration For Human Rights Poetry**

* When writing your own poem think about what image you are trying to create.
* What feelings do you want to express?
* What tension is at the heart of your poem?
* Whose story is the poem telling?
* Your poem does not need to rhyme.
* Poems need to be creative, unique and original.
* And finally let your imagination take hold of your pen.

