

LITTLE THINGS

an anthology of poetry
(second edition)

Little Things: an anthology of poetry (second edition)

© Ethos Books, 2025

Illustrations © Gavin Goo, 2013, 2025

Copyrights to individual works featured in this publication are reserved by their respective authors and publishers

ISBN 978-981-17689-0-3 (paperback)

ISBN 978-981-17689-1-0 (ebook)

Published under the imprint Ethos Books by

Pagesetters Services Pte Ltd

28 Sin Ming Lane

#06-131 Midview City

Singapore 573972

www.ethosbooks.com.sg

With the support of



The publisher reserves all rights to this title.

Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

In-house editing by Cassandra Yeap

Cover illustration by Gavin Goo

Layout and design by Pagesetters Services Pte Ltd

First printing, 2025 by Times Printers Pte Ltd

Typeface: ITC Berkeley Oldstyle

Material: 80gsm Enso Lux

Cataloguing-in-Publication information for this title is available from the National Library Board Singapore.

LITTLE THINGS

an anthology of poetry
(second edition)

Edited by

Loh Chin Ee, Angelia Poon and Esther Vincent



ethos books

CONTENTS

Introduction	12
1. Little Things	
Little Things	17
<i>(written on the Mid-Autumn Festival)</i>	
<i>By Geraldine Heng</i>	
After The Lion Dance	18
<i>By Chris Mooney-Singh</i>	
cutting grass	21
<i>By Aaron Maniam</i>	
The Habit of Leaves	22
<i>By Yong Shu Hoong</i>	
it rains today	23
<i>By Arthur Yap</i>	
Ode to a Raindrop	24
<i>By William Wright Harris</i>	
Trust. Weather forecast	25
<i>By Tan Wei Ting</i>	
Fog	26
<i>By Carl Sandburg</i>	
Monsoon	27
<i>By Eugene Datta</i>	
Snack	28
<i>By Paul Tan</i>	

Corn 29
By Changming Yuan

There's Always Things to Come Back to the
Kitchen for 30
By Alison Wong

Morning relay 31
By Shuntaro Tanikawa
(Translated by William I. Elliott and Kazuo Kawamura)

Cyclist 32
By Lee Tzu Pheng

Cat Apostrophe 33
(for Emi and Mewf)
By Aaron Lee

Haikus In The Garden 34
By Janet Baird

2. Growing Up

Only the Moon 39
By Wong May

The Trouble with Snowmen 40
By Roger McGough

Farrer Park 42
By Ann Peters

Keeping Time 43
By Colin Tan

On Turning Ten 44
By Billy Collins

My Parents 46
By Stephen Spender

The Pond 47
By Devika Rege

Lullaby 48
By John Fuller

two balloons 49
By Madeleine Lee

The Beginning of Speech 50
By Adonis
(Translated by Khaled Mattawa)

A river where neither submerging nor floating
occurs 51
By Sakthi Jothi
(Translated by Thila Varghese)

At the Dentist 53
By Ng Yi-Sheng

Boys In Jungle Green 54
By Robert Yeo

Fat is Not a Fairy Tale 56
By Jane Yolen

3. People Around Us

Spinning Circles 59
By Prasatt s/o Arumugam

Durian 60
By Gilbert Koh

close all the windows 62
By Cyril Wong

Hands 64
By Shirley Lim

Family Photos 65
By Wendy Gan

My Papa's Waltz 66
By Theodore Roethke

Initiation 67
By Alvin Pang

Autism Poem: The Grid 69
By Barbara Crooker

The End Of Every Field 70
By Teng Qian Xi

4-D 71
By Theophilus Kwek

Kesh 72
By Tessa Kaur

Neighbours 75
By Alfian Sa'at

Quadratic Equation 77
By Terry Teo

Disquiet 78
By Shilpa Dikshit Thapliyal

4. Going Places

Tropical Roots 81
By Margaret Leong

Stamp Collecting 82
By Boey Kim Cheng

Prescription 85
By Emma Kruse Va'ai

Poem From A Tent 86
(Rapakoshi, Pakistan, 2006)
By Heng Siok Tian

Big Game 87
By Leong Liew Geok

Chai 88
By Marc Daniel Nair

Copernicus For A Singaporean
Grandmother 90
By Wena Poon

everything changes but the sea 92
By Ruth Tang Yee Ning

Letter From Home 93
By Grace Chua

Mid-Autumn Mooncakes 94
By Eileen Chong

A Boat Across the River 95
By Rina Garcia Chua

Migrant Hostel 96
By Peter Skrzynecki

Hush 98
By Rolinda Onates Espanola

5. Love and Loss

Velcro 101
By Stella Goh

Void Deck Romance 102
By Diana Johar

Present Light 104
By Charles Ghigna

One note 105
By J.D. Mitchell-Lumsden

In Love, His Grammar Grew 106
By Stephen Dunn

chope	107
<i>By Joshua Ip</i>	
With Margaret At Yogyakarta	108
<i>By Goh Poh Seng</i>	
The Fist	109
<i>By Derek Walcott</i>	
“Hello Green Leaf”	110
<i>By Raymond G. Falgui</i>	
Late Fragment	112
<i>By Raymond Carver</i>	
The Spider and the Ghost of the Fly	113
<i>By Vachel Lindsay</i>	
focus your heart	114
<i>By Angeline Yap</i>	
old house at ang siang hill	115
<i>By Arthur Yap</i>	
Evening at Dakota Crescent	117
<i>By Yu Jia Cheong</i>	
Lonesome Bidadari	118
<i>By Faridah Taib</i>	
<i>(Translated by Annaliza Bakri)</i>	
Love nest	119
<i>By Jonathan Liautrakul</i>	
I dropped my phone	120
<i>By Ng Yin-Ling</i>	
Carbon Cycle	122
<i>By King Llanza</i>	
Inuka	123
<i>By Ann Ang</i>	

6. On Words

Lyric 17 127
By José Garcia Villa

If You Must Know 128
By Lee Tzu Pheng

rcvd grf 129
By Grace Chua

when words are not enough remember 130
(for ivy)
By Chandran Nair

ting 聽 (listen) 131
By Angeline Yap

ars pasifika 132
By Craig Santos Perez

Absentee words 133
By Tope Omoniyi

The library of the blind 134
By Juan Manuel Roca
(Translated by Raúl Jaime Gaviria)

Reading Wordsworth 135
By Eddie Tay

Lit Boys 136
(for Franklin and the Class of 2006)
By Ivan Ang

7. Our Earth

The Summer Day 141
By Mary Oliver

Kupu-Kupu 142
By Kamaria Buang
(Translated by Pasidah Rahmat)

Whenever you see a tree	143
<i>By Padma Venkatraman</i>	
The Grass Grows Wild	144
<i>By Meenakshi Palaniappan</i>	
hdb hornbills	145
<i>By Euginia Tan</i>	
Quokka	146
<i>By Ow Yeong Wai Kit</i>	
Invasive Species	147
<i>By Maureen Yeo</i>	
Saola	150
<i>By Teresa Mei Chuc</i>	
Oil Spill	151
<i>By Vinita Agrawal</i>	
Albatross	153
<i>By Esther Vincent</i>	
Land	154
<i>By S. Vijayalakshmi</i>	
<i>(Translated by Thila Varghese)</i>	
Kranji Sewage Plant	155
<i>By Mohd Khair Mohd Yasin</i>	
<i>(Translated by Annaliza Bakri)</i>	
Poetry as a Lesson in Zoology	156
<i>By F. Jordan Carnice</i>	
There Will Come Soft Rains	158
<i>By Sara Teasdale</i>	
Copyright	159
About the Editors	169

INTRODUCTION

LOH CHIN EE, ANGELIA POON AND ESTHER VINCENT

Little Things—second time around.

Little Things began with the germ of an idea: a wish for our young students in Singapore to have a book of poems they could call their own in school and at home. We wanted a collection that teachers could use to introduce youthful readers to the art of poetry. At the same time, we hoped that students would be inspired to dip into the book whenever they so desired to read and discover poetry on their own. It's been a little over ten years since *Little Things* was first published in 2013 and we couldn't be more pleased at how this book with its cheerful, sunny-yellow cover has become a familiar sight to many Literature teachers and students.

Much has happened in these twelve years—the Covid-19 pandemic, the explosion of generative AI and undeniable climate change, to name just three far-reaching existential events. If anything, these developments continue to underscore the importance of poetry. The Covid-19 pandemic and its related lockdowns revealed our need for words

and human connection in the midst of isolation. The juggernaut that is generative AI makes it more imperative than ever before that we protect human creativity while the climate crisis mandates that we inspire the collective imagination through poetry and literature to live more sustainably.

The world may have changed in many ways but some things also remain the same. As co-editors of this new and expanded edition of *Little Things*, we have stayed true to our intention for young readers to notice and appreciate the poetic in their everyday lives. We continue to be Singapore- and Asia-focused in our selection of poems, reflecting our belief in the importance of place in forming the identities and sense of belonging in our readers. The number of poems in this second edition has increased, a sign of the many important concerns we feel need addressing today. Thus we have seen fit to include a whole new section on “Our Earth” in addition to expanding our previous sections of “Little Things”, “Growing Up”, “People Around Us”, “Going Places”, “Love and Loss”, and “On Words”. “Our Earth” draws on the environmental work of co-editor Esther Vincent who edits the eco-journal *The Tiger Moth Review*, and whose research in recent years has been focused on eco-literature.

In our selections, we have endeavoured to ensure that the poems here are composed in a variety of forms and styles, from shape poems to sonnets. There are poems for everyone, we hope—poems that