

**Harmony Tree International Speech Festival (HTISF)**  
2024-2025 Set Pieces for Asia Division

**Verse Speaking**  
*Born in 2009-2010*

Choice A

## The Dark

*by James Carter*

Why are we so afraid of the dark?  
It doesn't bite and doesn't bark,  
Or chase old ladies round the park  
Or steal your sweeties for a lark

And though it might not let you see  
It lets you have some privacy  
And gives you time to go to sleep  
Provides a place to hide or weep

It cannot help but be around  
When beastly things make beastly sounds  
When back doors slam and windows creek  
When cats have fights and voices shriek

The dark is cosy, still and calm  
And never does you any harm  
In the loft, below the sink,  
It's somewhere nice and quiet to think

Deep in cupboards, pockets too  
It's always lurking out of view  
Why won't it come out till it's night?  
Perhaps the dark's afraid of light.

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**Choice B**

## Ring Home

*by Philip Gross*

She's come so far, what can she say?  
She's punched her last coin in.  
There's a pinball flicker  
of connections, then the ansafone:

her mother, the voice  
of her whole life so far  
sounding cramped in that little  
black box, speaking slow

as a hostage in the judder  
of a ransom video. *Please*  
*Leave your name and your number.*  
*Speak after the tone.*

She can't find the words to explain  
to a ghost in a machine  
a hundred miles away  
in the hall in the house that was home.