

In Hawarden Church Yard

By Michael Bourton, age 12

Winner of the 2013 John Betjeman Poetry Competition for Young People.

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*Behind the hill, the sun slips, slow,
Casting long shadows here below.
The old church, high upon the hill
Reflects the crimson rays until,
The sandstone has a rosy glow.
Over beside the grave yard wall,
Upon a gravestone, standing tall,
As shadows deepen and grow long
The robin sings his evensong.
As deeper the dark shadows fall.
The fir tree standing stiff and straight,
Lichen clad cross beside the gate,
Gold crests twitter in the fir tree,
The thrush repeats his reverie
From the cross, in the fading light.
Pigeons roost in an ancient yew,
And collared doves repeat "Coo, coo."
The blackbird high in the oak tree
Sings to claim his territory
So the birds in the churchyard knew.
The sun is sinking lower still,
The barn owl screeches clear and shrill.
The blackbird calls a loud alarm,
So other birds come to no harm,
As the sun drops behind the hill.
The owl leaves his roost, taking flight
Above the gravestones in the night,
On silent wings he hovers low,
Unheard by creatures down below
And far above their range of sight.
The sun can now be seen no more.
But light streams from the old church door.
As birds fall silent, now we praise,
And to our God our hymns we raise.
With songs no sweeter than before.*

