

opening extract from

cloud busting

written by

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Mr Mackie Said

Mr Mackie said,
'Write a poem
About
Someone near to you,
Dear to you.
A pet,
A family member,
A friend.'
Funny, I thought,
How pets come first.
'That's your homework,'
Said Mr Mackie.
And the whole class groaned.
Except me.
'But poems are hard, sir!'
'Poems are boring!'
'Poems are for old people.'
'Poems are for boring, old people.'

'No one reads poetry –
Unless their teacher makes them.'
'No one likes poetry except
Poets –
Or those who don't have a life.'
And Mr Mackie said,
'ENOUGH!'
And we all went quiet
'Cause Mr Mackie sure can shout.
Then Mr Mackie said,
'Hands up those who like rap music.'
And me and some others
Put our hands up.
'Hands up those who like pop music.'
And me and most others
Put our hands up.
'Hands up those who like classical
music.'

And me and almost everyone
Kept our hands down.
Except for Oliver.
Only Oliver
Put his hand up.
But then he would.
And Mr Mackie said,
'Rap music and pop
And punk and rock
Have words.
And the words are poetry
Set to music,
That's all.'
'What about classical music?'
Asked Oliver.
But then he would.
'Classical music creates poetry
In your mind.

And your heart.
And your soul.
Even if there are no words
Being sung or spoken,
It still creates poetry
Inside you.'
And we all went quiet
Thinking.
Thinking.
And the strange thing is
No one laughed.
Mr Mackie smiled.
'Any questions?'
Hands shot up.
'Does it have to rhyme, sir?'
'No.'
'How do we start, sir?'
'With whatever comes

Into your head.
Just let it out.
Don't hold back.
Don't stop yourselves.
Don't censor yourselves.
Let your words flow
Like a mountain stream
Like a babbling brook
Like a raging river
Like a tidal wave
A tsunami!
Like a cosmic wave,
Moving between galaxies.
Like a . . . like a . . .'
And we all groaned
'Cause Mr Mackie was off
Like a racehorse
Running its own race.

Just running 'cause it can,
Running to hear its hooves
Pound the ground.
Just running, running
For love and pleasure.
'Sir, can I write about
My dog?
My cat?
My goldfish?'
'Yes.'
'Sir, can I write about
My computer?
My skateboard?
Jaws, my teddy bear?'
'No.'
I put my hand up.
'Sir, can I write about Davey?'
The class went very still . . .

Very quiet.
My face began to burn
Burn hot then
Burn cold.
'Yes, Sam, you do that,'
Said Mr Mackie after the longest
pause.
'Write about Dave.'
'What d'you want to write
About him for?'
That was Alex,
Talking at me.
Frowning at me.
Davey made him nervous,
Uncomfortable.
Uneasy.
Because of what he did.
Even though Davey isn't

Here any more
He still has the power
To make people
Uncomfortable,
Uneasy,
. . . to remember.
I didn't answer
My ex-best friend Alex.
What could I say?
I want to write about Davey
Because Mum says
You don't miss the water
Till the well runs dry.
I want to write about Davey
Because when he was here
I never gave him a second thought.
I want to write about Davey
Because now he's gone

I can't get him out of my head.
And I never thought I would,
But I miss him.
There!
I admit it.
He's gone.
And it's *his* fault –
The fault of the class idiot
The class bully.
And I miss him.
Not the class idiot.
He's gone too and
I don't miss him one bit.
I miss Davey.
His name was Davey.
Dave.
David Youngson.
But everyone called him Fizzy Feet.