



## Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize 2021 Written entries 2021

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### **Above And Beneath Our Feet**

Well trodden  
Well ridden  
Through millennia  
Ancient and modern  
Millions of feet  
Vast tracks and quadruple hooves  
Imprint this Bridle Way  
Travelling along lilting lines of poetry  
Around lyrical contours undulating gently  
Through unspoilt countryside  
Rhythm and rhyme  
Scenery and stanza combined.  
Traversing lush layered brushstrokes lavish  
With cultural rural landscape  
Old stones still standing redolent with ritual  
Watercolours of the season blending  
Texture, taste, sensation  
Sharp whip of bitter winter wind  
Stark contrast With soft caress of summer breeze across  
A blushed cheek  
Bodies absorbing the literal, natural world by osmosis  
Field mice scampering,  
Zigzagging among the furrows  
Wild rabbits excavating labyrinthine burrows  
Soot black crows' wings  
Circling overhead on warm currents  
Uplifted by the captivating chorus of birdsong  
Sweet on the air below  
Air fresh and aromatic, atmospheric  
Laden rich with heritage  
Diverse with history  
Life's events great and small stitched, embroidered,  
In panoramic tapestry  
Woven, threaded through open weave terrain  
Long rolling chalk downs etched sporadically  
White with symbolic horses elongated  
Gallop free across a patchwork spread of  
Quilted meadows and grassy hillsides echoing the past.  
Waving fields of golden beards of barley Or swaying ears of ripening corn  
A distant copse cropped close  
Gnarled branches of elderly trees and thorny bushes  
Form natural hedgerow borders

Safe havens for flora and fauna  
Once a primordial soupy expanse of sea  
Undiscovered and undisturbed along the ocean bed  
Multitudinous minutiae of crustaceans crushed  
By the weight of centuries  
Transformed into the white limestone strata below  
The magnificent upheaval of the exposed ridge  
A line drawn by a mystical hand across our land  
And sustained by the earth beneath  
Enveloped by Nature's beauty  
For each step taken and for  
Every exhalation  
Something of our inner selves remains  
To embellish, to imbue The Spirit Of The Ridgeway

*Susan Adamson*

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