

## Cross-Country School Run by Joseph Coelho

Specially commissioned poem for the Lowestoft Olympic/Poetry Project

### Cross-Country School Run

The Park swells its green around us.  
Our youth is pressed by the sky's weight.  
We decide to run together.

The Park's drizzle waters our legs,  
soaking our numb roots with promise.  
We will run-to-seed together.

Dizzy with excitement and fear.  
We've heard of the park's night witches  
that meet at the hollow at night...  
BANG!  
We are the surge of spellbound children.

Threadbare pumps press the sucking clay  
as The Park's air needles our lungs,  
as the sky turns our skin to felt.

There are cheaters in the bushes  
preying on an easy finish  
striped with the claw medals of thorns.

We play the mile-long run for fun,  
our muscles become our joypads  
we become our own avatars.  
Teachers offer power-pack smiles,  
as the park raises its levels  
we whoop, laugh and shout together.

Our arms link over our shoulders  
as the rain juggles its assault  
we're clown-clumsy in the pouring,  
tumbling into the years ahead  
holding tightrope tight to our friendship,  
we finish the run together.