

CREATIVE CATS

23-24



MAGAZINE OF THE ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

Welcome to this year's edition of *Creative Cats*, our Creative Writing Club magazine.

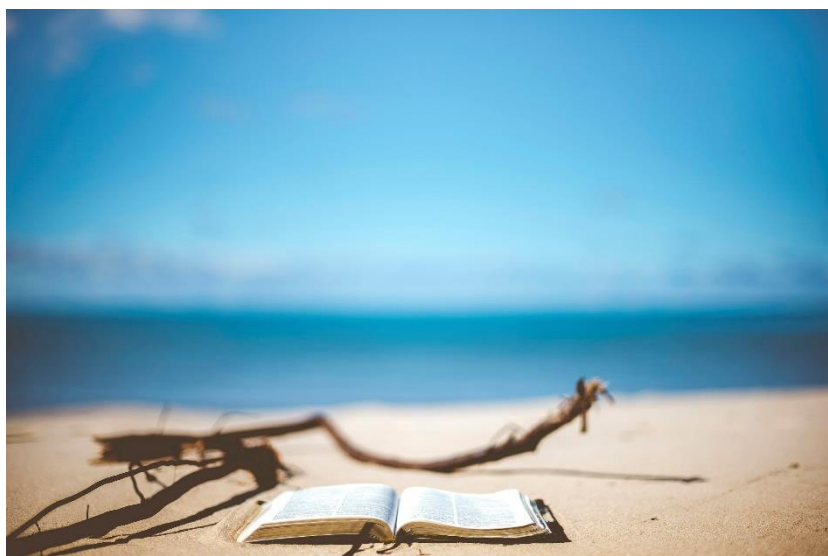
In this, the third edition of the magazine, we celebrate the works of our members who attend the Club weekly during Monday lunchtime to engage in a range of creative writing-based activities such as story-telling games, presentations from the Creative Writing prefects and discussions to share ideas. Many members have ongoing projects which they are encouraged to develop in our meetings and frequent creative writing competitions make sure that there is always something to work towards.

As the outgoing Creative Writing prefects of 2023/24, we would like to thank Mrs Whittingham for her enthusiasm and dedication to the Club, organising meetings every week as well as competitions and this magazine. We would also like to thank everyone who has attended our meetings this year and contributed to the lively and stimulating atmosphere and hope that many new writers will be inspired to join in the coming terms.

As we look forward to the next year, we welcome Olivia Maxwell, Eleanor Thurgood and Erin Chan, who will be taking over the roles of Creative Writing prefects and wish them every success in their support of the club in the future.

We hope everyone has a wonderful summer holiday and happy reading!

Olivia and Alice (U6)



Creative Writing Competition Winners 2024

The London Underground was the theme for this year's whole school Creative Writing Competition. Entrants could choose any station on the London Underground as their inspiration and could submit a poem, short story, screenplay or play.

First Prize and winner of the Creative Writing Cup

Latimer Road

I hated the cold, the weather, the rain
and I hated boarding that stuffed whippet-train.
I'd put headphones on, to block out the strangers
with a plan to drown out any potential dangers.

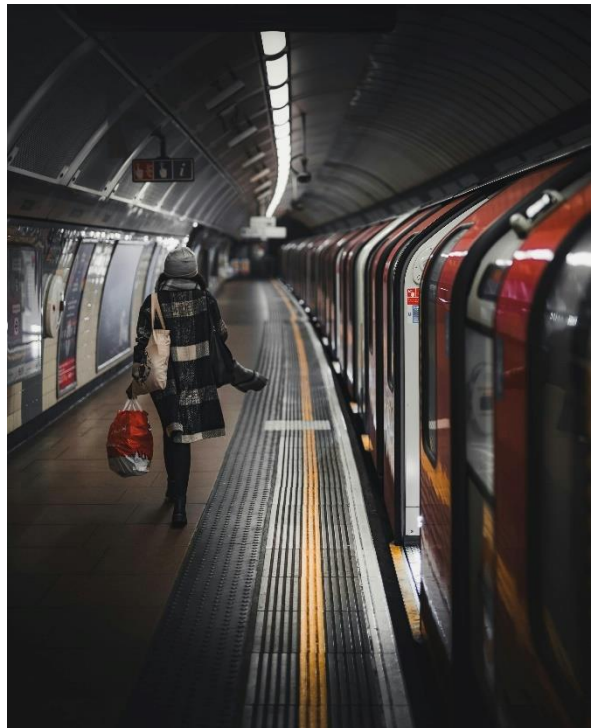
And I hated tapping that card,
and watching the bill come through on the app.
But in a way, I liked the journey
more than I ever even liked you back.

And before I started my return home,
you would kiss me goodbye at the door.
And you would tell me it's a right than a left
to reach the station's first floor.

But on the way home one night,
when your words had damaged my ears,
a blocked out stranger leant forward and told me
that you were not worth the tears.

And the weather might be cold,
but you were like frost
because I touched you and it felt like an ache.
And you gave me a coat, instead of your company
because the ice felt so alone in your wake.

So, we shook hands and we parted ways
but your name never leaves my phone.
Because to me your name isn't 'Alex' or 'Al'
it will always be 'Latimer Road.'



Summer L6



Second Prize

The Train Announcer

Whitewashed quiet surrounds me,
the walls wrapped in an opaque silence.
The hours fall away slowly,
solemnly, the minute hand in another room

enduring its steady ticks, permitting
the passage of time its full duration
despite its wish to escape from this clear,
empty space. The clock's face

frowns, waiting for the tranquility to break,
for the patter of feet to fill the corridor
marking the end of my long, tedious vigil
behind the hush of a microphone. It's my turn

to emerge back out into the clamour of London:
shoes pounding, cars screeching,
voices wailing and shouting and shrieking,
sounds weaving and curving,



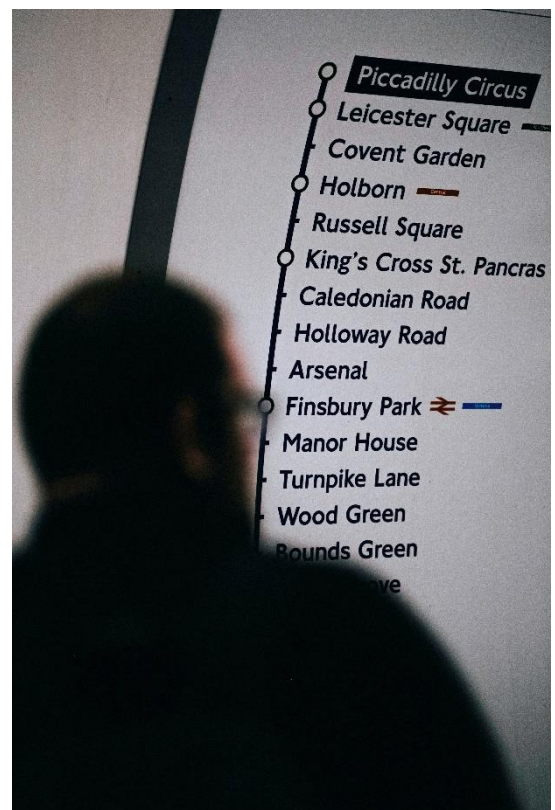
separating and merging,
superposing and scattering,
spiralling up together into
a great barrier of noise.

And my voice above the rest,
monotone words cutting
through each soft murmur,
each scratch and whisper,

the slow crescendo
of a train pulling into a station,
the rush of wind that draws it away.
The intermittent grind and squeal of its brakes.

The daily announcements spill
across the tracks of the Piccadilly Line,
and I quietly stand, and think
of how I loathe the sound of my voice on repeat.

Alice U6



Third Prize

Sound of Silence



St Catherine's School
BRAMLEY

Sound of Silence

—Tottenham Court Road tube station

*1: The title and part of the second and fifth songs are inspired by *The Sound of Silence* by Simon & Garfunkel

*2: This line takes its inspiration from *Gold* (from *Once* the musical)

Act 1

[2024, autumn, Tottenham Court Road tube station.]

[An old piano with dirty cover has been placed in the middle of the stage, facing right]

[Choir stands at the back]

1. Forgotten Sound

Choir:

*There is an old upright piano,
In the Tottenham Court Road tube station.
It has been forgotten in the corner,
And dust has fallen on the velvet cover.
Hasn't been played for a long, long time.
Was forgotten since that cold Autumn.*

*If you had a chance
To ask someone walking by,
Who walked past this station,
Four or five years ago,
When you say this question,
he shall sigh and answer:*

[Enters **Man**]

Man:

*Ah! It seems just like yesterday,
When melody floated like Golden Hall Vienna,
Street musicians came from all around,
And the musical voice never ceased to sound.
A dream of tales from Cinderella,
Yet lingered when the midnight's bell rang.*

Choir and Man:

*But when did it all die?
The passion, the heart, now turned to stone.
The vision drowned in the deep, cold darkness.*



[Exit **Man**]

[**Michael** enters and stands by the piano]

Michael:

Within the sound of silence.

[**Michael** slowly removes the velvet cover of the piano and sits down. He sighs and starts playing *Sound of Silence (reprise)*.]

[Blackout, when **Michael** ends his playing, he remains on the stage.]

[Five years ago, 2019, autumn.]

[Lights on, piano with clean cover now facing back. **Jason** enters and sits behind.]

[**Michael** remains in the middle stage.]

Michael:

I'm Michael. A poor and "poor" (*in air*) music college student in the great city of London. The cost of living here is super damn expensive. I am studying music at King's College London, getting some scholarship payments but none of them can help with my fees...I already have big student loans. Living for life is hard.

You may not believe me, my whole life has been based on music: my career, my job...but now I want to give it up, right now, right here in the place I am standing in: **Tottenham Court Road tube station**.

2. When I Walk Without Rhythm

[**Jason** starts playing.]

[Piano turns facing front.]

Michael:

*When I'm walking without rhythm alone.
Chaotic beats tapping against streets of cobblestone.
Beneath the streetlamp's halo,
A dancer dancing on his own.
When I'm walking without rhythm alone.*

*Every day running past the underground station,
Am I heading to dawn or another hell?
Street pianist, oh please turn your head,
Hear the timpani drumming in my chest!
You'll see unspoken words rise to my lips.*

*When I'm walking without rhythm alone.
Neon lights that split the night stabs into my eyes.
The dancer puts his collar up,
To prevent wind cold and damp.
When I'm walking without rhythm alone.*



*Every time I teach my students in class,
I see no passion nor joy in their eyes.
The colourful city lights too bright,
Dyeing their irises and sight.
Poison of golden dream stains the young's heart.
(Climbing upstairs)*

[Lights become dimmer, spotlights follow **Michael** and **Jason**.]

*Oh—Can anyone hear me praying?
Would you drag us out of this silence?
Sweet Jesus, if you exist, tell me,
On this road of thorns, shall I keep going?*

(Stands on bed)

Hey! Should I quit, and should I run?

Should I escape from (this) disgraceful dusk?

[Light flashing] Or shall I stay, fight and rip the curtains down! (Shouts)

But am I brave enough; pure enough? (Slowly kneeling down)

(Stretches right hand to front, seems wants to touch something far away.)

To touch the sound of silence, oh my soul.

(He falls down onto bed)

[Totally blackout.]

[Lights on, piano facing stage right.]

[**Jason** starts playing the *reprise*, whole stage is lit. **Michael** jumps up from his bed and looks downstairs.]

Michael:

Is that him? (Running downstairs.)

[**Michael** knocks the door and **Jason** stops playing.]

[**Jason** slowly walks to the door.]

3.The First Meet

Michael (places his ear to the door):

Hey, who are you?

Why do I know this song?

Jason (stops in front of the door):

I can hear familiar footsteps outside.

Tell me, if I've met you before.

Michael (slides down with his back against the door until he touches the floor):



*I think I kept hearing that piece in a station.
My friend, it's my way to my work location.
I would like to talk with you, for a long time.
But the ticking clock never waits for my line.*

Jason (squashes down, his forehead touches the door):
*The black paint surface of piano is not like mirror.
I saw your reflection but not your face.
I can hear your cheering voice from back.
But you always left before I turn my head.*

Michael [Jason] (both slowly stand up):
*Well, I guess it's meant to be. [It's our destiny.]
To make me hear your sound. [You're here for me.]
It offers me the chance. [I'm the lucky one.]
Now please open your door. [Oh, good old friend.]*

Together:
Show your face!

[Jason opens the door, and they quickly hug and turn. Now Michael is in the doorway. They look in each other's eyes and start laughing.]

Michael (laughs):
Guess I need to introduce myself? My name's Michael, recently studying in KCL.

Jason (shyly smiling):
That's for sure, and so do I, Jason.

Michael:
*I'm nineteen,
Living upstairs in a family friend's house.
They charge me little, but my scholarship won't help.
So, this organ student and tutor he's poor as hell.*

Jason:
*As a twenty years old street pianist, I live well.
And the scholarship from RMC gives me joy.*

Michael:
Wait, stop.

Jason:
What?



Michael:
Your—scholarship, how much do they give you?

Jason:
(Trying hard to think) Five thousand pounds each term? And they pay for all my school fees.

Michael:
...Damn it!

Jason:
(Comforting) *But I'm from an Asian country,
No student loan but full price rent.
We are not that different—*

[They hold hands and starts dancing.]

Michael:
Hail! it's nice to meet you anyway!



Together:
This friendship of fate!

Jason:
Our souls, they are now intertwined!

Together:
Link by the three sisters' thread!

Michael:
*Why don't we stay up this whole night,
Sing 'bout the future and the past?*

Jason:
(Leads Michael to the piano, they sit down)
*Or let music flow under our hands,
'Till the morning lark shows its head—*

[**Michael** also sits down, then they play the ending of the song while the curtain goes down.]

[The end of Act 1]

Act 2

[Still five years ago, Christmas Eve.]

[**Jason** rushes upstairs to knock **Michael's** door.]

[**Michael** opens the door.]

Jason:
(Breathless) Hi, Michael! I think you told me that your family is away, and you are staying here for Christmas, right?

Michael:
Yes, and?

Jason:
I need to take you somewhere tonight, now!

Michael:
(Confused) Okay sure, but...

Jason:
(Takes Michael's hand and runs downstairs) I will explain it on the way.

[They get down to the street.]



Jason:

You know, I work as a busker. This Christmas Eve, musicians around the place where I busk are having a party in one of their houses. I want to introduce you to them.

Michael:

(Becomes nervous) You should've told me to prepare a piece for this...

Jason:

It's fine. Most of the time we just improvise...

[Lights black out]

[When light is on again, there are about 10 people sitting around a table with their instruments.]

Here we are.

[A middle-aged man comes up to them.]

Mark:

Hello, Jason. I see you've brought us a new friend?

Jason:

Yep, Mark, this is Michael, my neighbour; Michael, this is our master of the house Mark, pianist and vocalist, but he's working as a physics teacher.

Michael:

(Shakes hands) Nice to meet you.

Mark:

Nice to meet you too. Now you two lazy-lately-late ones should go and sit with these crazy weirdos...we are going to begin. (Walks away.)

Jason: (Whispers)

You'd better get used to the way he talks.

Michael:

(Smile) I will. (Looks around at people of all ages and races.) These people, they seem...interesting?

Jason:

Oh no, they are far more than interesting. You will see.

[**Mark** stands up with a teaspoon in his hand knocking a glass of wine three times.]

[Everyone becomes silent.]



4. Lift that Song!

Mark:

*Merry Christmas, everyone in your seats.
If you know this song, then stand and sing with me—*

[All musicians stand with their instruments.]

Men [Women]:

Woo— [Do do do]

Woo— [La la la la]

Mark:

*So, oh, lift that song.
Lift our voices, make it high!
Things did not go well at work, I'll say.
Glad the music takes my troubles away.
Life's not fine but hope still shines,
While melody stays in my head.
(Goes to the piano, starts play)*

Everyone:

*So, oh we should lift that song,
Lift our voices, raise them high!*

[A petite blonde girl about 17 stands up.]

Lucy:

*Sorry that next year I will be away.
I believe that you guys will slay.
Coz schoolwork gets heavy every day,
But nothing stops the music I play!
(Sits by Mark and starts to play)*

Everyone (at back):

We'll miss you!

[A Latino man plays pizzicato on his cello]

Marques:

*Feliz navidad, mis amigos!
We don't fear sunburn nor snow.
No matter the freezing wind's cuttin' into my mind.
The song of passion burns in my blood!*

[The middle-aged flutist and the old bassoonist turn to each other.]



Daisy:

See all birds fly south.

Dan:

See our passing youth.

Daisy and Dan:

Yet the peace of life, it still goes on.

[Mark joins in.]

Trio:

We wish our future will be well composed.

Play some...major chords!

Jason:

(To Michael, whispering) I should go prepare.

[Bald drummer smashes the cymbal.]

Ivan:

When the beat smashes in,

It will save you from drownin'.

[Guitarist plays a chord, with eyes filled with light.]

Phil:

Strum all the strings.

Never be afraid of stings.

[Saxophonist's glasses glistens. She taps on her feet.]

Jean:

Click your fingers, tap your toes

Then the jazzy rhythm runs through .

Ivan, Phil and Jean:

Warms your blood from cold.

[Young violinist plays in G string's seven positions (Which means some really high, beautiful notes).]

Juliette:

Fingers shift up, lead to a brighter life.

The bow will be glad to slur through this line.

[Harpist with red, short hair is doing glissando.]

Eloise:

Glissando walks down the strings,

At top we add a little muffling.

Jason (sit on the other side of Mark):

Do crescendo an' acceleratin' (to)'wards the sky!

[Everyone plays in unison.]

Everyone:

All of us should all be lifting our voices!

We shall lift that song, raise it high!

(Toast, cheer) Hey!



[Black out.]

[The streetlights are dim, it is already midnight.]

[**Jason** and **Michael** are in the street with a spotlight on them, the wall behind is painted as a piano (see on the cover!).]

Jason:

You seem like you have something to say.

Michael:

Yes...just give me a second. (Pause)...You know, the people in that room, they are different from the people I know.

Jason:

(Stops) I think I get what you mean, and that's also the reason why I joined them.

5. Sound of Silence

Jason:

*I saw them under the red, naked lights.
They speak without words, are no longer human.
None of these fools will hear any of our voices.
No one dares to disturb the sound of silence.*

Michael:

*These deaths on two legs don't know that it grows.
Spreads like cancer, changes our musical into a mime.
I might reach them if they raise and dare to take my arms,
But my silent words like raindrops, only echo in the well.*

Together:

*Humans built their own fake neon god,
Worshipped him with prayers and bows.
They never see the warning signs,
That are under their eyes.*

*The prophet whispers oracles on the street,
But no one listens to the words he sings.
They ignore the dazzling paint above,
On subway walls and the tenement halls.*

Michael:

*If someone breaks the sound of silence,
Let them hear the teaching from us.*

Jason:

The Lesson can't be taught by omens alone,



Folks learn how to speak from imitations...

Michael:

If you mean people in that apartment...

Jason:

*That's what I want to tell the world.
To go on streets and spread the passion,
Music should not be trapped in theatre.*

*It is in the form of freedom.
Don't link it with any honour.
Just enjoy it when you're playing it,
And you'll break the sound of silence!*

Together (dancing around):

*Then we'll destroy the man-made church,
Burn the gospels that neon god said.
They will no longer be blind to the warning.
Sign will go through clearer lenses.*

*From now on everywhere we go,
Bible of music will be sold.
Feel the vibrations even if you're deaf,
Dance with us you blind and ignorant.*

Jason:

Finally touch the sound of silence.

Michael:

Within the sound of silence.

Together:

*Lift that song and break—
The sound of silence.*

Michael:

(Breaths rapidly) Last question, how much do you earn per month?

Jason:

2,300 after taxes, if you are lucky and good enough.

Michael:

Enough to afford my life. You know what, I'm in. I'm going to join you and play outside.



Jason:
(Smile) Welcome to my world

[Blackout.]
[One months later, 2020.]
[Lights on, **Michael** stands in the middle of the stage.]

Michael:
But things don't always go well... It's the beginning of 2020. I think you all know what happened...

[Lights flash.]
[Street musicians come on the stage; **Jason** stands by **Michael**.]

6. Say a Word

Everyone:
Say a word, my friend.
If you are still here with me.

Michael:
The school closes which makes most of us lose our jobs.

Everyone:
Say a word, my friend.
If you are still here with me.
Be my back, my friend.
Leave a sign that I can see.

Michael:
And then they don't allow us to busk anymore.

Mark:
(Grumpy on phone) HOW DARE YOU...They hang up? Seriously? People only doing this for fun are fine, like me and Dan...oh no, he's so afraid he's going to lose his conducting job because the school can't really hold an orchestra now. But the others...I don't know what Jean, Phil and Juliette will do. This is destroying us.

Everyone:
Say a word, my friend.
If you are still here with me.
Till when, when will it end?
Now I desperately want to stand on the streets!

Lucy:
School has stopped, and I don't have instrument at home...There's absolutely no way to keep playing!



Everyone:

*What should we do to get back to old times?
To the happy days we can never rewind.*

Daisy:

Some of us get this Covid. Marques headed back to his homeland [Marques bows and goes offstage.] ...They say hotter places are safer.

Everyone:

*Say a word, my friend.
If you need to leave me.*

[Piano smashes a really tense chord.]

Michael:

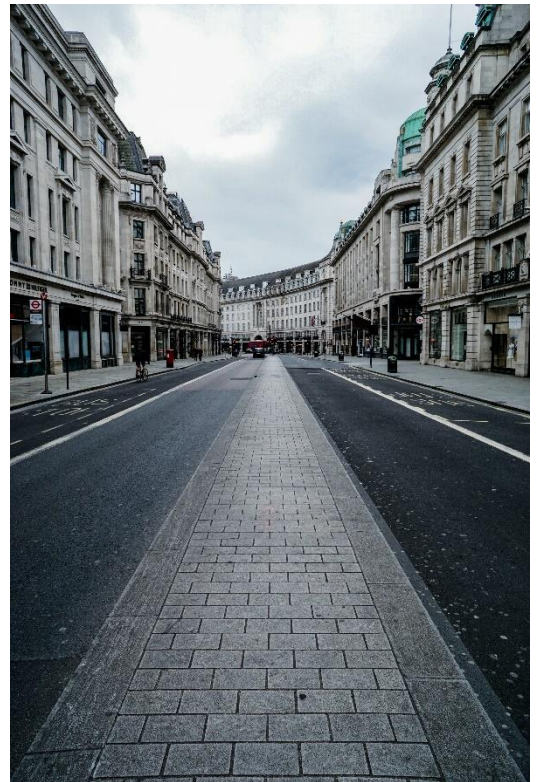
And Jason's parents are badly ill.
...They are in danger.

[Jason gives Michael his one last hug.]

Jason:

So I got on a plane to my homeland.
Before I left, I said to Michael and everybody:

*Don't forget what dream we had at first,
Let it still keep blasting in your heart.
Just one year after the period ends.
We shall be back, all back here, again.*



Sorry, Michael. (He lowers his head, then turns and run away.)

Everyone:

*Say a word, my friend.
If you have to leave me.
Tell no lies, my friend.*

Michael:

You will be back? Won't you?

[Black out.]

[Back to now, 2024, autumn.]

[**Michael** finishes the last several bars of *Say a Word*, then starts playing *Sound of Silence* (*reprise*).]

[After he finishes, he sighs and remains sitting by the piano.]

[A man comes on the stage—**Jason** is back]



Jason:

(Walks towards to Michael and put his hand on his shoulder.) Hey.
[**Michael** quickly turns his head with surprise and tears in his eyes.]
(Smiles) I'm back.

[**Michael** stands up and give **Jason** a big hug.]

[While they are hugging, other street musicians get on the stage and stand behind them.
They sing to the street.]

7. Reunion

Everyone:

*Oh, we lift that song,
break the sound of silence.
Come, stand and sing,
As we have a reunion.*

Mark:

After time has passed, I'm glad to see we're all alive!

Daisy:

With smiling face,

Dan:

And cheerful voice!

The trio:

*Dolente variation's gone,
Now Giocososo notes go alone.*

Marques:

Ya estoy de vuelta.

Despertar, people around us!

Juliette:

*Once music changes your mind,
You will live long with it in you.*

Eloise:

*It's in all of our ears,
It's under your finger.*

Marques and Juliette and Eloise:

As long as you listen!

Lucy:

*Hey, hey what's up our generation Z?
Did organ pipe ever vibrate with your breath?*

Jean:

Take a bite of this musical apple.



Whether you prefer baroque or classical.

Ivan:

Thunder of toms will wake you from your dream.

Step on the pedal, have the ecstasy of sound.

Phil:

Think and learn the sound as though you're a child.

No matter if you play electrical or with woods.

Jean and Ivan and Phil:

Come stand up all you fools.

*Don't trade your love for gold! *2*

Women [Men]:

Ah— [Dip dap]

Ah— [Li la li la]

Everyone:

Oh, we lift that song,

break the sound of silence.

Get closer, be patient and hear,

Apollo himself will visit here. (Point at their hearts.)

Jason:

I am back to my station,

The old throne's waiting.

Let music fill this land.

Bring the world real joy.

[Jason and Michael look at each other.]

Michael:

Now we lift that song to

Break the sound of silence.

[Jason holds Michael's hand.]

[All musicians on the stage raise their heads to focus on the audience. They seem to look through time and space, with hope in their eyes.]

[The end of Act 2]

Sunny L5



Highly Commended

The London Underground

Beneath the city's bustling stride,
A network of tunnels does reside,
A deep-down world, dark and profound,
In the heart of London, it's the Underground.

Steel serpents race through the earth,
Whispers of wind announce their birth,
Mind the gap, the voice does shout,
As from the darkness carriages fly out,

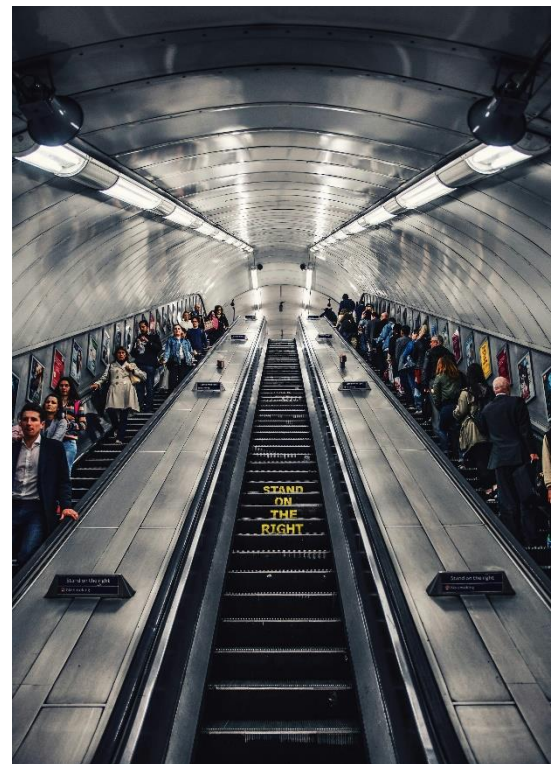
The train approaches with a mighty roar,
And the doors hiss open, "all aboard".
The platforms pulse under hurried feet,
As commuters march to a frantic beat.

Graffiti is sprayed all over the walls,
A messy mural of urban scrawls,
Passengers ebb and flow like the tide,
As underneath the city they glide.

Announcements echo in a robotic tone,
Each day the same monotonous drone,
Through the veins of the city, the trains do speed,
A steady heartbeat, without which London would bleed.

At 6pm the day reaches its peak,
Towards their busy lives the mob does streak.
They will each go about their day,
But not the underground.
No that's here to stay.

Isabelle L5



Green Park



He's wandering in the green park, a torch in one hand, a vine in the other. Birds chirp a dulcet tune as bushes rustle in the breeze. Dancing to the symphony of nature, he skips across the grass. Purple glitter sparkles through the trees, illuminating his path. Squirrels wave, handing him chestnuts and magical fruits.

The glitter goes a little dimmer with each step he takes. He turns his head and sees a trail of diamonds leading to a bright light. He walks over, but the vine threads into the grass.

"Put it down," the wind whispers.

"But it's way too pretty," he shouts back. "The way the vine twists into the flowers. The way it glistens in the stars. The way streaks of black line its leaves."

He ambles into the woods. "Go ahead, boy, follow me," someone says, piercing through the dust, crying out like a snare clanging into his ears.

Grabbing onto him like he's prey.

He takes a lick of the black fluid dripping from the bottom of the vine. His tongue tingles. The torch gets dimmer.

Angels sing from the other side:

*Come over to the bright place
it's never too late
to go back to the green park.*

Drunk from the poison, he doesn't hear that mellifluous voice shouting from behind. All he hears is the vine hissing that jarring tune.



Basking in unconsciousness, he doesn't see the diamonds behind him. All he sees is the vine stretching ahead of him.

The vine strings through the grass, pulling his legs through the darkness. Holding on to it tighter, he trudges on into the facade of the unknown.

He's the corpse in the gladiator show.

His feet are covered in blisters from getting dragged through the thorns and gravel, but he's clueless. He whips the light into a ditch where it plunges into oblivion. He smiles as his left hand is free. The vine sees it and winds around both of his hands.

Cackles echo through the woods.

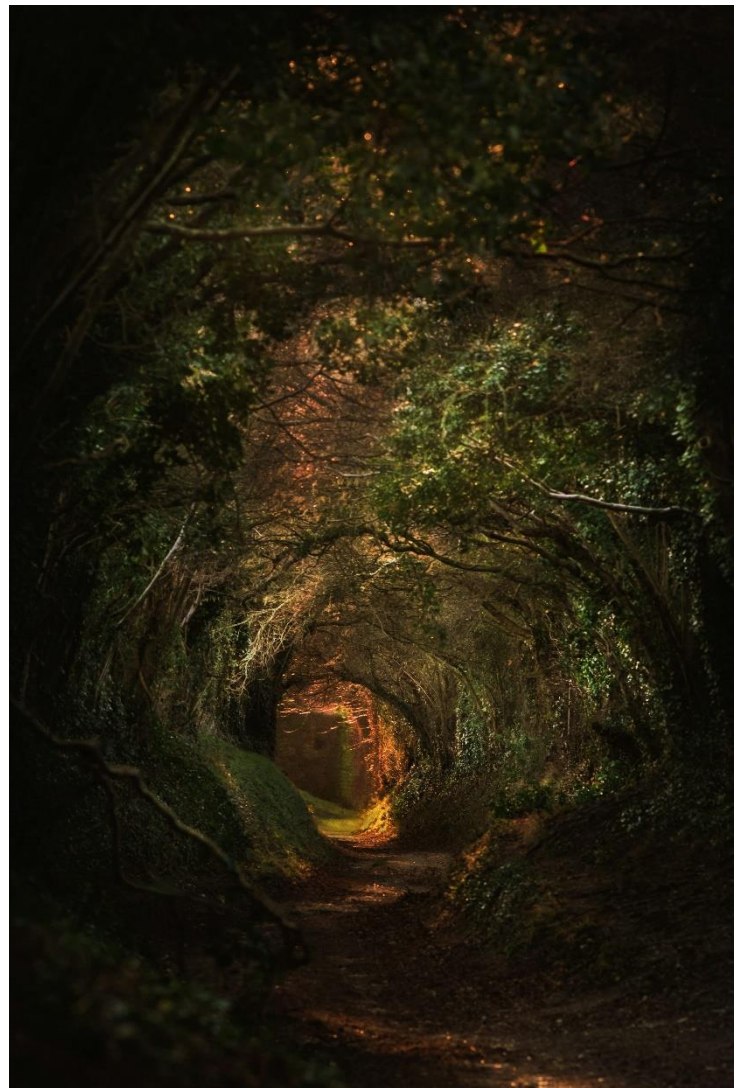
And there he reaches it. The pot of gold.
He puts his hand into the gold and lets out a sharp cry. Tears roll down his cheeks as snakes crawl up his body, biting him, hissing in contempt.

Caricatures of his soul fall on him. Crows hound the vine, singing into the night sky. Doves flounder in the murky pond the light died in. He crumbles over, praying, begging for mercy:

*I'm a new person I've changed
My feet are facing you can't you see*

The vine turns black and a wave of ink blinds him, leaving nothing but gloom. He staggers on, feet towards the dark, just as it was all along.

Florence U4



Unseen

I wake with a start.
A shout, a kick to the side once again.
No one ever notices me, why would they?
Perpetually in their haste to catch the train,
I'm just a nuisance, an unwanted delay.
Unseen, unwanted, unnoticed.

I was tricked by the name -
Richmond, rich hill, its all the same now -
No pot of gold for me and my discarded coffee cup
Ever hopeful to be seen, but how?
The thriving never look down as they're already up.
Disregarded, overlooked, ignored.

Tunnel walls of my temporary home closing in,
Incessant announcements becoming louder,
Shiny, new shoes growing closer, invading my space,
Ticking of the grand clock constantly prouder,
Deafening grate of the train and track without grace.
Pitiless, merciless, soulless.

It's all rushing back now, the beginning of the end,
Screeching of the train embodying her shrill scream.
I lost control, my car, my life, my mind
In an instant all was gone, like my worst dream
Spiralling downhill, it's never kind.
Punished, penalised, imprisoned.

Every day the sharp suits and bulging briefcases -
Another reminder of the man I once was, full of glee.
My new world is diminishing,
Please, what can Richmond do for me?
I need to grow again, life is beginning,
Progressing, improving, developing.

They wouldn't want me to be like this,
To be saved, I need to at least try.
I want to be the success I used to be.
I will walk out of this cave, I will not be shy.
A better day is ahead, waiting for me,
Grateful, faithful, hopeful.



Florence L4



Going Underground

Rounds of applause came from outside Notting Hill underground station like waves of thunder rushing towards it. The sound forced itself into the quiet subway station, but the boisterous atmosphere appeared to be sucked outside and forbade to enter.

Today is the birthday of the duke's daughter. There had been a lot of rumours regarding the real identity of the little girl, as words that she had been adopted spread crazily across all the towns and cottages. But nothing could affect the duke's family, they still celebrated the girl's birthday as usual, in fact even more ceremoniously, inviting all the families that were wealthy and had a high status, even welcoming crowds to stand outside the castle and watch.



Meanwhile, as the party is held, a girl, roughly about the age of 15, covered with a twice-turned broken gown, sits steadily beside the wall in the subway station, her pale face and dull eyes reflect her hopeless situation.

A plastic box lay in front of her, it contained a few pieces of money, which seemed rather empty in the big box. Her name was Bethy. She was left alone by her family and ended up in a nursing house, but the nursing house collapsed under a fire. She escaped, with no identity and ID cards, in the hope of freedom, moved out, and started living in the streets. She felt quite happy and comfortable at first, but then, it gradually turned into a nightmare, bullied by older kids in the streets. She did not have enough money to buy food and no shelter to hide from the storms.

She felt abandoned by the rest of the world.

Just as Bethy was thinking about what she would be like if her parents hadn't abandoned her, or if she was the duke's daughter, she heard talking and humming noises becoming louder and louder, coming towards her. She sat up straight, and two teenagers around her age came into view, they, however, didn't seem to notice her.

"Where's here? It smells of rotten egg!" A girl wearing a glistening fishtail gown exclaimed.

Bethy shrieked, not because of the amazement of seeing someone so pretty and wearing such a shiny dress, but because the girl looked so much like Bethy, as if a mirror was held before her.

"Ahhh you scared m..." the teenage boy cried. And then, as if just noticing Bethy's appearance, he froze as a statue, his complaints stuck in his throat.



“Who are you?” Demanded the girl, “How come you look so like me? Are you on a mission to assassinate me? By Papa’s rivals? Don’t look at me like that! You filthy little scaven...”

However, she was not able to finish her ‘rap-like invasion’, as the boy quickly poked her with his elbow, gesturing her to stop talking, as he said slowly, “Marina? I think she might be your sister.”

This wild thought hit the two girls gravely. They both said, “She? My sister will never be like this.” Ironically, the two of them held the same expression when saying this, making them even more alike.

After ten minutes of persuasion, the boy, Gapeson, finally convinced Marina to take Bethy back to the duke and ask for a solution.

Bethy’s mouth could not completely close; the amazement and jealousy grabbed her by the throat as she entered the castle. Gold and ‘diamondy’ colours shone before her, making her eyes blur. She hated that the world was such an unfair place, that sisters born by the same parent could have totally different fortunes: why did one live in a castle and a life with a silver spoon in her mouth while the other lived a life like a mouse, living underground in the dirty stations?

“Papa!” Marina cried as she caught sight of a middle-aged man sitting on a gold-built golden throne, “I found a girl that looks really like me!”

“You might be twins actually, I remembered your mom saying that she gave birth to two girls but lost one in the hospital,” said the man calmly. Hearing this, Bethy suddenly felt a feeling of guilt running through her, she had always so firmly believed that her family abandoned her, never realizing that she might be stolen or simply lost.

“You can stay here with Marina, and we can be a family.” This is what the duke said that made Marina and Bethy family forever, not just genetically, but truly in real life. Afterwards, Marina changed her attitude toward Bethy and apologized for calling her a ‘filthy little scavenger’, and Bethy regretted deeply in her heart for feeling jealous about the life Marina lived.

Fiona L4





Piccadilly Circus

Sometimes I think that I am not there,
Sometimes I think that no one cares.
Because down here at Piccadilly –
I feel quite silly –
With this thought that has come to mind.
No one here cares what I am thinking right now.

I am looking at them,
They don't look back.
It's like they're in a bubble,
A bubble under the sea,
I can see them but they can't see me.

I ask a man in a bright yellow vest
Whether he can help me get something of my
chest.
He says, "Sure open up."
And I say back,
"Does anyone here care
Or do they just stare,
Stare at the signs and the bill boards?"

And what that man tells me I will never forget,
"Life is too short to ponder these things,
So my advice, young girl, is to go to your station
And hop on your train,
And hope for the best when you get home again."

Emily U3



At our last meeting before Christmas, the Creative Writing Club wrote their own version of the Twelve Days of Christmas:

The Twelve Days of St Cat's

On the first day of Christmas
At St Catherine's you can see
A massive rucksack on an U3.

On the second day...
Two order marks (and anxiety).

On the third day...
Three confiscated phones.

On the fourth day...
Four late buses.

On the fifth day of Christmas...
Five cattern cakes.

On the sixth day of Christmas...
Six "missing" maths preps.

On the seventh day of Christmas...
Seven sleeping sixth formers.

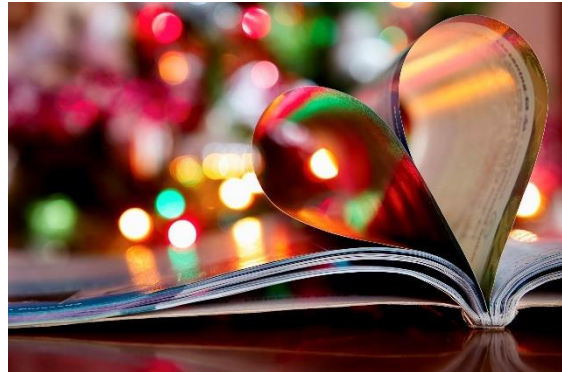
On the eighth day of Christmas...
Eight shining lights.

On the ninth day of Christmas...
Nine loud fire drills.

On the tenth day of Christmas...
Ten cockroaches performing a play directed by Miss Green.

On the eleventh day of Christmas...
Eleven trips to medical.

On the twelfth day of Christmas...
Twelve cheering teachers!



Opening Sentences To A Novel

In one of our meetings, each club member set themselves the challenge of coming up with the opening sentence or two to a novel in five minutes. Here are the results:

It took me three betrayals to finally understand the world is just an elaborate tapestry of lies, my fury will never be quelled.

Anna U4

Years later, I still don't know where I went wrong.

Annabel U4

She was staring desperately into the midnight void.

Alexandra L4

Charlotte couldn't remember anything when the rocket ship landed with a thump.

Annie Ma L4

I survived yesterday but will something destroy me today?

Anson U4

Charlotte couldn't remember anything when the rocket ship landed with a thump, her memory was simply lost.

Beatrice U4

I was so certain that I had found my happy ending.

Delilah L4

I survived nothing. Nothing survived me.

Charlotte U4

Her face; delicate, pale... doll-like, despite the dripping gash separating her jaw from her face was quite beautiful.

Evie U4

To start with, Nono was a little, fluffy, cute panda, to be specific, a toy panda.

Fiona L4

It was a crisp summer's morning. We didn't know what was coming for us.

Florence Foster U4

Was I going insane? No, not yet. But, was that screaming ringing through my ears real? Was I still dreaming?

Gabrielle Li L4

Two realms lived, Celestia and Teyvat. The world of gods and the world of humans. But who knew that a crack would rise between them. A fallen star falling in the sky about to land in the deep waters of Teyvat.

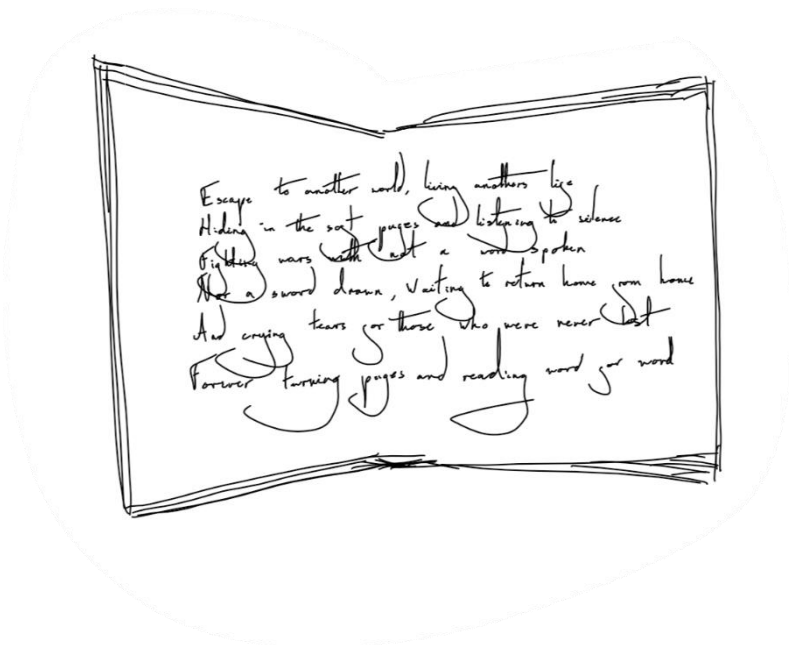
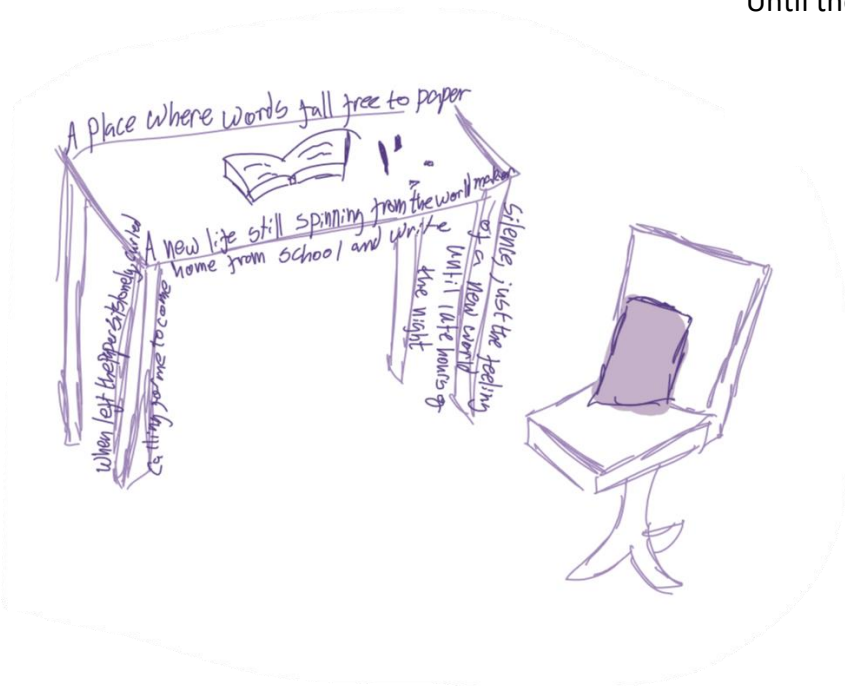
Layah L4



Shape Poems about Refuge

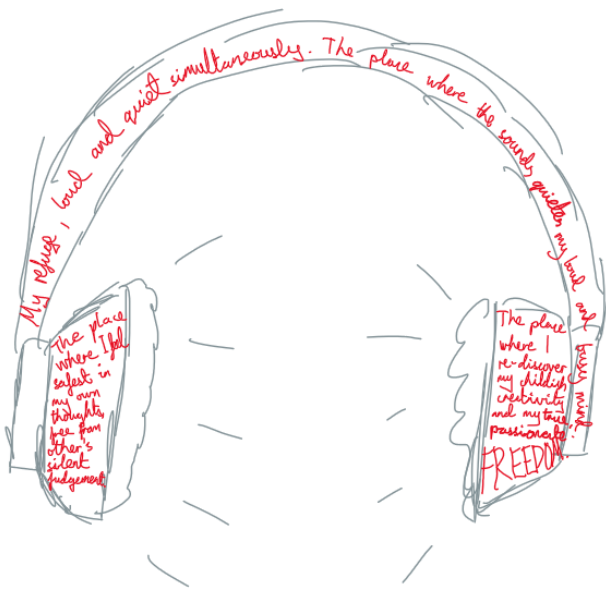
A place where words flow free to paper,
A new life still spinning from the world maker.
Silence just the feeling of a new world
When leaving, the paper sits lonely curled –
Calling for me to come home from school and write,
Until the late hours of the night.

Evie U4



Elizabeth U4



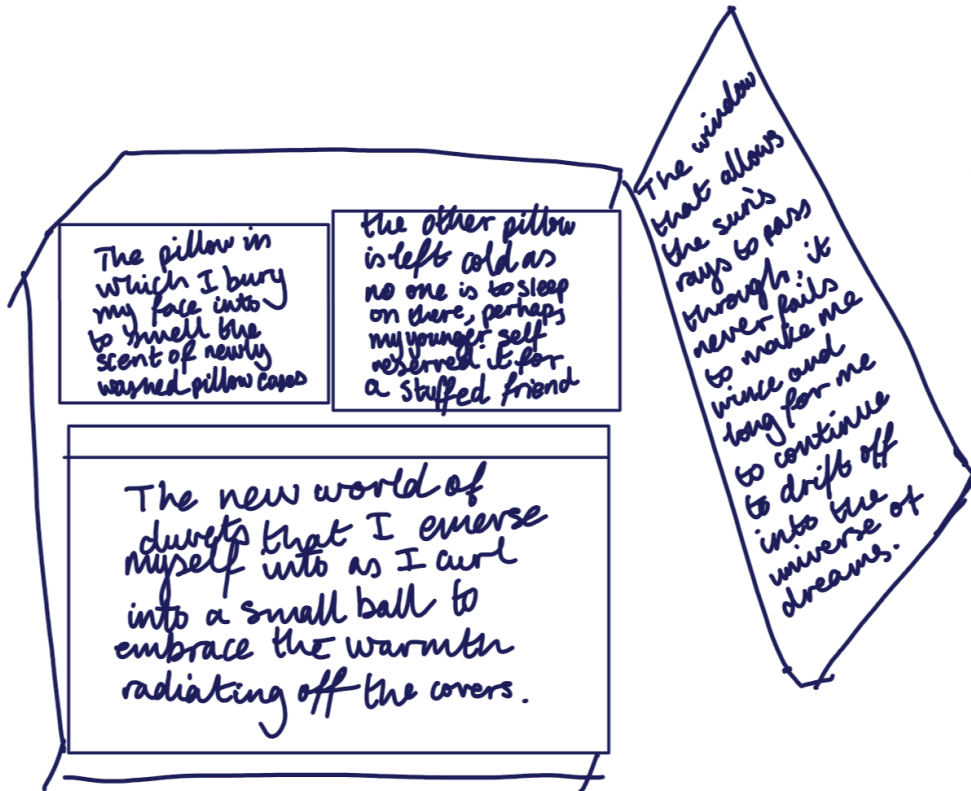


Sasha U4



Fiona L4





Anna U4



Beatrice L4



First Day of The Holidays

The streets are quiet, the sun is rising,
A gentle breeze is blowing, the sky is clouding.
As I walk, my mind is clear, my heart is glowing,
The first day of Easter break is here.

The air is crisp, the birds are chirping,
A chorus of life, a symphony of sound.
As I stroll, my senses are tingling,
And the first day of Easter break is all around.

The trees are green, the fields are flowering,
A vibrant palette, a masterpiece of colour.
As I wander, my spirit is soaring,
And Easter break is before me now.

Anna U4



Haikus



Mortal ends
Serene new life flourishes
The cycle begins.

Anna U4

Walking in solitude
I suddenly trip and fall
Looking up to caring eyes

Beatrice L4

A cold winters night
Leaving home for adventure
Crows always alone.

The Spring breeze whispers,
Wisdom etched in lines and grace,
Older age blooms true.

Emily L5



Whispering river
Ducks guiding their new young home
Wild rapids ahead.

Evie U4



Whispers in the wind
Mother Nature calls my name
She cries, wails, clears, smiles.

Gabrielle U4



The St Catherine's Ghost



For Hallowe'en, Club members tried their hand at planning and writing the opening to a ghost story. As a starting point, we talked about the fire that took place at St Catherine's in 1907 after the school was struck by lightning. We thought about what ghosts might still haunt the school from this time...

I stood there holding the grubby plates in my hands. The sous chef seemed to be doing his job, when he dropped all his cooking utensils with a loud bang on the floor. He stared blankly at the bland kitchen wall. I was about to step forward and ask why he had stopped working when suddenly he jolted his head back with a loud crack and rolled it round. Crunch, pop, click. He stopped, looked up and began working like he had never worked before, at an inhuman speed and accuracy. He poured a mysterious liquid into a vast brown pot boiling on the stove.

All of a sudden, he turned with haste towards me and started marching in my direction. I jumped back in fear, only to find that he walked straight past me without a second glance to greet the new customers with a sly grin.

Sophie U4

I wanted to prove them wrong. I knew what I had seen in the classrooms that are off limits at night. The lady that I'd seen was far from anything I had encountered before, far from human. Her face was paler than smoke and her silent voice longed for sound. As I crept along the corridor, the banging in my chest increased.

Olivia L5



A Dialogue Between a Mother and a Daughter

“Ma?” A syllable I so rarely dared to utter.

“Go away.” The ice wall rose between us, a rift that has lasted since the incident.

“You’re acting like a child” I said, sticking out my chin.

Silence.

“Why won’t you talk to me?”

“Everything I’ve ever loved, everyone I’ve ever knew. They left. Called me a bad mother. I AM NOT A BAD MOTHER!” Rage slowly began to seep into the room through this statement.

“I can’t help who I am, I’m not going to change for you.”

“This isn’t you. My DAUGHTER is perfect.” The emphasis she put into that word stung. She told me she’d love me no matter what but I suppose those words were empty. Tears threatened to sting my eyes, I bit them back.

“I miss you,” I whispered these long thought words. “Or I miss the mother I used to have.”

“Go to your room. Don’t speak of this again. Don’t speak to me again. You can’t redeem yourself from this. You’ll never be enough.” Her harsh words bit at my brain. I obeyed, closing my door behind me, I let a few cold tears leak out.

Evie U4

“Do you want to explain something to me?” Mother asked, she had a partially torn up piece of paper clenched in her fist. Her felt my cheeks flood with heat.

“No.” I said abruptly. Wrong answer, I shouldn’t have said that.

Olivia L5



Through Their Eyes Poetry Competition

Congratulations to competition winners: Jadesola Adebulehin, Olivia Canale, Jasmine James, Emily King, Evie Lawford, Gabrielle Li, Isabella Seagrim and Daisy Taylor whose poems have been chosen to be published in an anthology by *Young Writers*. The competition's brief was to write a poem from a particular perspective. The winners chose to anthropomorphise objects to provide the perspective. Some of the objects brought to life came from St Cat's.

A Game

Not again,
please not again.
I plead in desperation.
They always make the same mistakes,
Over and over.
I wonder what goes on
in their funny little minds?
As if they think something different will happen
When they make the same moves.
The same mistakes.
Again and again.
If only I had legs I'd walk right over
And win my game for them.
If they thought to care for my opinion
I'd be more than glad to give it.
I have a brain in here
although they'd be surprised.
I know how to win
better than any piece on the board.
Better than the rook, the pawn, the bishop, the knight or the king.
This game belongs to me.
I hold the most power here
if anyone cared to notice.
If I had my own legs, my own voice,
They'd win my game every time.



Daisy L5



The Empty Cup

Sat in solitude on a ledge
But not so close to fall off the edge.
Watching time pass by, I find space,
In the company of nature's grace.
Teachers always come and go,
But wait a second for me? No!
Old coffee stains cling to me
So forever dirty I shall be.
Once clasped by the handle with a certain grace
All that is left is a empty space
I ponder life's rather calming embrace.
I choose not to remember the utter disgrace
Yet amidst the obsolete scene,
I feel the absence of what could have been.
Teachers talking, lessons learned,
But for me, no moment to be earned.
Stains of coffee, marks of time,
Forever etched, an enduring sign.
Yet in this solitude, I find my place,
A silent witness to the human race.



Emily L5

The Bench

Beneath the shade of towering trees,
A silent witness to joy and laughter.
I've seen and heard all the stories.
Time flows around me, yet I remain.

I am bench for those who are no longer here,
Holding spirits through the cracks in my wood,
Quietly whispering in my ear.
I sit silently midway between the living and the
gone.

The lives who come through me,
live eternal in my company.



Isabella L5



The Tree

I can see high,
I can see low.
The thunder in the sky,
On my leaves the water flow,
Never stops to greet.
Always in a fleet -
Always the observer -
Always on the sideline.

A friend to all
is a friend to none.
I shelter, I protect,
Always the comforter
never comforted.
Always the observer -
Always on the sideline

I feel the cries,
I watch the joys,
They change and grow.
I could never do that.
They run to the grass,
I could never do that.
Always the observer -
Always on the sideline.

Olivia L5



The Willow



In my heart of the willow,
Change abodes,
I've seen people come and go,
Like the river flows,
I've seen buildings rise and fall,
I will stand here, telling my story,
As the world around me moves from glory to glory.
The hustle and bustle of everyday life forgets none but all,
Sit, stop and listen for mother nature's call.

In my heart of the willow,
Change abodes,
I've seen people come and go
Like the river flows.

Jadesola U3



River rocks

Water passes over me, time wearing me away
Unlike the river rushes, I will not decay.
The things I've seen, lives that fell
The stories growing, I can tell;
I've watched apes turn to people, people turn to war,
All sense of moral living, left in the before,
I've watched soldiers man their posts, waiting.
I've watched men get getting gunned down, waning.

Water passes over me, time cruelly keeps me here;
Just like the river rushes, I wish to disappear.
I see but I can't help, I'm forced to spectate.
All I have are stories, facts with no debate .
I've watched barbarians turn to savages, war torn land
Is a morally good society possible or is it just a fad?
For as long as I've been, I've watched armed idiots screaming,
Now it is certain, my only peace is when I'm dreaming.

Evie U4



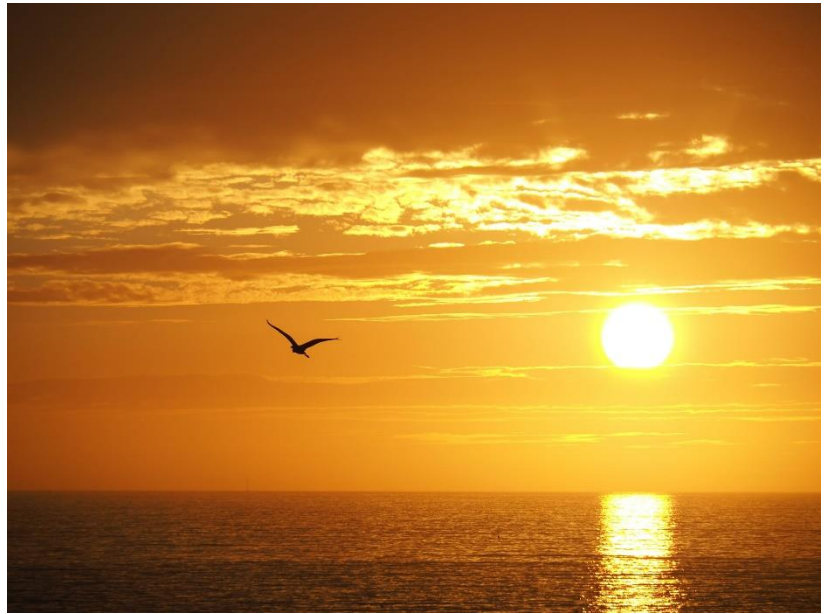
Moon

Imagine the beams in the morning.
The bright orange hues, the golden
glow,
The calling birds,
Each singing their sweet tune.

Robins, sparrows, buzzards too,
The warm warm air
And the soft gentle glow.

See the frost and the chill of the
night,
See the stars, and the mist
And its sheen oh-so bright.

The stars a memory.
Each a dream.
A thought, a feeling -
That I clasp as they shoot by.



I want to see the biggest of them all:
The shining glory,
The Majesty itself
The idol of my story.

But I cannot reach the morning,
No matter how hard I try.
Our encounter will be a prize
For all of human eyes.

Gabrielle U4



The War Doctor

In the war's bleak shadows, I stand alone,
A silent healer, with heart of stone?
While soldiers' bravery is widely sung,
My unseen battles remain known to none.

Through tear-filled nights and blood-stained days,
I mend the broken in countless ways.
Yet, in the desperation of victory's song,
My quiet struggles are swept along.

With trembling hands and a heavy heart,
I play my part, a silent yet sweet art.
Though recognition may never be near,
I'll keep healing through pain and fear.

For in the darkness of war's cruel game,
I'll be the light, despite the shame.
Though my story may fade, unseen,
I'll keep healing, a silent, yet hopeful dream.

Jasmine U3



I Have Left

I have left
Left my family, left the terrors
Felt the trepidation fade away
Never to see the white star
Or the red emblazed cloth
Never to see him and his officials
No need to worship
No need to fear

But there is fear.
I have left.
I have left.

My mother, my father,
My sister, my brother
He will know by now.
He will trap them
Ensnare them
Engulf them
Without them knowing any better

Will my sister weep
Wondering when I had gone?
Would my brother fight
When they come and take him away?
And would they be ashamed?
To have a daughter like me?

I feel the relief
The contentment of escaping
The wind in my hair
Liberty, free to do anything
Free to sing, free to dance
Free to insult and laugh.
Free to think.
Free to crippled and shrivel up at night.
Knowing they're trapped.
Knowing their ensnared.
Knowing their engulfed.

And it is all my fault.
It is my fault.
I have left
I have left.

Gabrielle U4

