

CREATIVE CATS

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St Catherine's
BRAMLEY

MAGAZINE OF THE ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

Welcome to the 2025 edition of the St Catherine's Creative Writing magazine!

This year's magazine showcases an exciting collection of short stories, poems and extracts written by students who attend the Creative Writing Club. The club meets every Monday lunchtime for half an hour and is an opportunity for pupils from a range of years to have fun, improve their writing skills, and share and discuss their work. Each week we engage in different activities and games to spark creativity and inspire new ideas for writing projects. Also, members have regular opportunities to enter both in-school and national competitions.

As the outgoing creative writing prefects, we would like to thank Mrs Whittingham for leading the club, bringing such enthusiasm to every meeting, and for providing helpful advice and encouragement to all. Furthermore, we are grateful to everyone who has contributed to the magazine and shown such commitment to the club throughout the year. We are delighted to welcome Lauren and Florence as next year's creative writing prefects and wish them every success in their new roles.

We hope you enjoy reading the wide range of works that students have written and hope that it inspires you to try out writing yourself and to join the club if you are a student. The Creative Writing Club is open to everyone, and there is a very relaxed atmosphere, making it accessible for both novice and experienced writers alike.

From all of us in the creative writing team, we wish you a wonderful summer holiday and happy reading and writing!

Erin, Olivia and Ellie U6

A special thank you

Since the Creative Writing Club began four years ago, it has had staunch support from Alice Phillips. The club and I would like to thank her for all of her interest and involvement.

We wish her a very happy retirement and hope that she will continue to read our magazine in years to come.

Vanessa Whittingham



Creative Writing Competition Winners 2025

This year's whole school Creative Writing Competition had connection as its theme. Entrants could submit a poem, short story, screenplay or play that was inspired by connection.

First Prize and winner of the Creative Writing Cup

In Orbit

I melt into you, sharing gravity,
Pulled together instead of down.
Orbiting each other as if we are all that exists.

Our blood rushing parallel as we touch,
Along your arms, I see my veins, my children's too.
Connected in ways I did not know were possible.

Did you know you pull me
In ways I did not know I could be pulled?
You move us together.
In ways I did not know existed.

I'm always watching you, through space
Across time.
I see nebula when you blink.
And I become lost in our universe.

The stars never blinked for me,
But they light up just for you.
You ignite them, illuminating them as you walk
As if Angels were aware of your presence.

I ache when I am away from you,
A magnetic force, screaming 'turn around'.
You are my compass, my needle, my north star
You are my love, my heart that beats from afar.

My soul will find yours when we die.

Summer U6



Second Prize

The Thread of Us

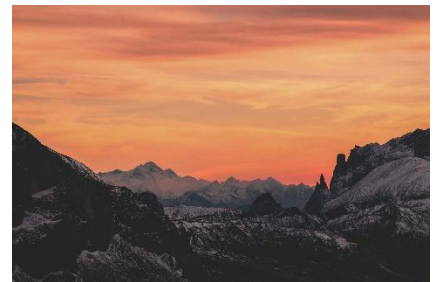
Beneath the stars, where silence hums,
An unseen thread between us runs.
Through lifetimes lived and yet to be,
It binds your heart, your soul, to me.
No matter the distance, the years, the space,
No matter the changes etched on our face,
This thread may stretch, it may twist, may fray,
But never will it break or drift away.

For when two souls are meant to be,
They find each other, inevitably.
Even if oceans rise, or mountains divide,
This thread will pull us to the other's side.

If I ever lose you, I will not rest;
I'll search for your soul in the faces of the rest.
Each glance, each voice, a fleeting chance—
A shadow of you in the world's expanse.
And when I close my eyes at night,
It's you who keeps my dreams alight.
The sun and moon, forever apart,
Carry the weight of a shared heart.

They reach through time in an endless dance,
Eclipses prove their love's expanse.
You are the echo of a love once known,
The face of the past my heart calls home.
When our eyes meet, the earth holds its breath,
Time blows low, life forgets death.
In that moment, the world fades away,
Nothing exists but the bond we replay.

If someday you feel you've lost it all,
When the leaves of your life begin to fall,
Remember the trees in winter's frost,
Standing firm, though their leaves are lost.
They know that spring will come again,
That life returns after sorrow's reign.
So too, this thread will weather the storm,
Through love reborn and heat transformed.



Tabitha L6



St Catherine's School
BRAMLEY

Third Prize

The Wildflower Meadow

Throughout my life, many have spoken fondly of the loving relationship that sisters can share. I have always been grateful for having a relationship such as this, as my sister and I have created many memories together. Our similarity in age has served us well. We were able to experience life under roofs of similar protection, the cocoon-like security we felt inside our tee-pee tent at age five being my favourite. There were also times when we felt as if there were no boundaries at all, we pranced through meadows of thriving wildflowers and danced outside when the rain came pelting down.

Those are some of the fondest recollections I can find from inside my photo album of a memory. Back when life was more simple, in our days of daisy chains and shared bedrooms, we had an inseverable fierce connection; it's as if we were one soul, exploring the world together. My childhood self was innocent. My childhood self was adventurous. But my childhood self had no knowledge of cancer's existence or my sister's fate at the gripping hands of this illness.



Today, in my days of paperwork and piles of laundry, I feel the loss of my sister shift from aimless tears to a devouring void which so often consumes me. It's been an eternity since my sister's death, yet the effect it has given has lasted so long that it seems like only yesterday when I was weeping by her death bed. This new and old grief has sought me out, reoccurring with painful reality. Now that life is more complex, the loss of my sister has become more complex as well. But the worst part about all of this is that nothing I do – no therapy, no distraction, no crying – can bring her back. For such a long time I haven't been able to move on from the fact that she is gone, and so is our connection.

But right now, it is summer, and my sister loved summer. Her favourite part about it was watching the sun sink into the wildflower meadow near where we grew up. Suddenly, I



somehow consider – from deep down within me – that visiting the place she loved so dearly might fill the empty void inside my heart.

It is a long drive to reach my hometown, a drive so far from where I live now. While I am here, seeing people from my childhood, I keep a feigned smile on my face. If someone were to give me their condolences, I have planned to simply accept and move forward. I have not come here to intensify my yearning for the life I once had. I have come here to visit the wildflower meadow where I hope to find solace and a connection to my sister.

Afternoon has turned to early evening, and I walk through a sun-washed woodland to my destination. This path, dappled with patches of gold, eventually opens up to my sister's favourite place. By the time I reach it, the sun has nestled itself low in the sky, soon to be dipping into the trees in the distance. The sky has melted into warm pinks and oranges, and the clouds are painted smudges, like candy floss. That comparison makes me remember how my sister used to adore the sweet fluffiness of this sweet treat when we would go to the summer fair. This memory makes me smile. It's a mere lifting at the corners of my mouth, but it is a smile nonetheless.

I take a deep breath of fresh air, and breath out slowly. Being here in a place flooding with memories of my sister provides me with a strange sensation. I am missing her, but not quite like I normally do; instead of being consumed by mountains of sadness, I am strangely contented. At once I find a part of me being pulled towards the memory of my sister. Out of the silence, a comfortingly familiar voice breaks my reverie.



“Hey,” the voice says softly, and I turn to see its owner. The owner of the whispering voice is none other than my sister. I am struck with disbelief, and seeing her – or this vision of her, I begin to consider – makes my heart lurch. “It’s been a long time, hasn’t it, sis? You haven’t been here in ages.”

“How...? This must be my imagination. You can’t possibly be here. You’re... you’re, well...” I just can’t form the words. *Dead. You are dead.*

“Dead?” *It’s like she can read my mind,* “It seems that way, doesn’t it?” In that moment I’m not sure which statement she is referring to, being dead or reading my mind. It could be either, or both, I realise.

Then, she reaches over and holds my hand, but I feel no physical connection. Feeling this absence of touch leads me to understand that my sister standing here is a mere figment of my imagination. All the same, a tear rolls down my cheek. “You’re not real,” I say aloud. “This is just my grief playing tricks on me.”

“Maybe it is. But maybe this vision is here to tell you that I am still here. I’m not gone. I may not be real, but never forget that our love always will be. Remember, despite the pain grief can inflict, connection and love with fierce integrity have the power to outlast death. I’m always here with you. Goodbye, sis.”

“Good...” I start, but I cut off when I see she has disappeared; it is only me, the sunset and the wildflowers. “Bye.” I finish. But considering what she said, which has revealed a profound truth, I remind myself that this is not goodbye forever. I will continue to live with a different view of my sister’s life and death, because she is right. A strong connection like ours has remained unsevered, and her death made no difference to it.

We are in different worlds, physically separated by the transition from life to death, but our connection, our love, will travel through any dimensional plane and keep us together at heart. That, I think, is beautiful.



Isabella U4



Specially Commended

That Little Girl

My dad still calls me little girl,
And I always tell him to stop,
"I've grown up now Dad,"
But the truth is I have not.

I wish I could go back, back to a time I didn't care,
When I wore a princess dress all the time,
When my mum still cut my hair;

The girl that didn't care about her clothes,
Nor if the colours matched just right.
A little girl that slept with all her teddies,
So none felt left out at night.

I'm not that little girl anymore,
Yet my love is as hot as a flame.
The connection I have with that little girl,
Will always remain the same.

Emilia L4



Commended

My final acceptance

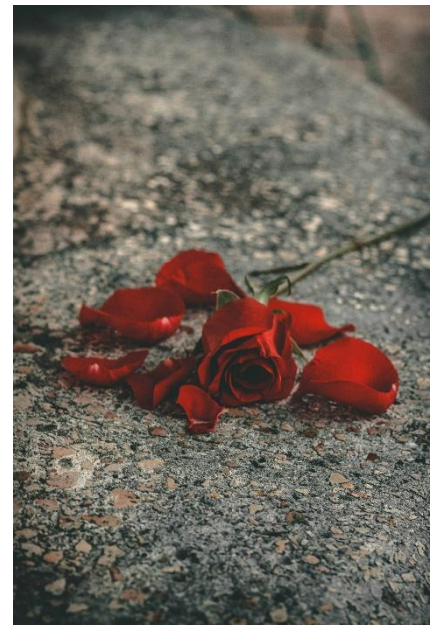
Another day pretending,
Pretending that you care.
You can never imagine the pain,
Let alone the despair,
How I struggle while you celebrate,
And our connection no longer elates.
For my heart swells and chokes at your name,
While my life to you is only a game.
But you would not know and
You would not care.

You are beyond my dreams,
My goals and my liberty.
Never again will you have to bleed,
In order to give me what I need.
I know you despise but please hear my call,
For my connection to you is greater than our brawl...

Let us waltz, your hand in mine.
To return to the linear and above the divine.
But before you let go,
To send me from woe,
Tell me you know and tell me you care.

I used to dream of a saviour like you,
To pull me into your arms like you used to do.
But I fail to see the wicked beyond your own lies,
Of course, I am no match for your anger nor your disguise.
Surely, I am content that I am only a whisper,
Or a shadowed thought in your twisted truth?
I cannot make you understand,
But look and see we stand on common ground.

When you look to her eyes do you think of me too?
Or is that just my wish to not see the clues.
Perhaps you dismiss but you still sliced my heart,
But it is not like I can leave and forget that we are
apart.
So, I will put our connection away and behind,
So now and never will I again be led blind.



Olivia U5



The Invisible Thread

Violet

Jolting awake from my thunderous dream, I struggle to untangle the threads of reality. Fighting between the possible and inevitable, I pry my eyes open, as the fog unmask my vision. The feel of my cotton blanket grounds me, and the comforting warmth of the sun dapples on my face. I look out the window and there it is again - the faint outline of Sun Tale Library. Though I've never been, it somehow feels inexplicably dear.



I clutch my hand close to my chest as my heart beats erratically. I look further again as vision comes racing to me. I see the cuts of the wooden tabourets and blinding sconces and a dashing dimple from a genuine smile.

Who is he?

Xander

Screams.

Horrible screams echo inside my head.

"Sir, are you alright?" politely the man asks.

"Oh yes, sorry about that. Is there anything else you would like?" I say passing him the books.

"No, but thank you very much!"



I give him a simple smile and take a large gulp of my water. She's still there. Again. At the back of my mind. Haunting my day as well as night.

I rub my temples, the library is quiet and looming. So unlike the roaring in my head are her insistent whispers and faint sounds gnawing at my head, her sharp nails clawing at ...

Salt air tingles through my nose as I make my way through the town. I hear the distant cries

of the seagulls and the harsh sound of the water as it crashes against the dock. These make me content on my way to this year's Founder's Day Celebration. Was I raised in this town? No. Am I still going though because I want to flee the monstrosity that lurks in my head? Yes.

Violet



Still, his laugh playing like a melody in my head. I link arms with my best friend through the fair. Ever since I was little this time of the year was always the most ecstatic time - but I don't know if I will say the same this year.

The smell of chocolate and caramel dipped apples wafts through the air, trying to hold me together while I flee away. Lights twinkle overhead and the sound of laughter twirls in my ears, but none of it feels quite the same. I glance at my best friend, who's grinning ear to ear, tugging me toward the merry-go-round.

"Come on, you used to love this!" she says, her voice light and full of the excitement I wish I could muster. 'Used to' being a keyword now.

'I don't know how I feel about this Steph,' I say, my stomach turning. I look at her beside me and see her sparkling blue eyes glittering



in the hue of green. Then I realise that sacrificing my fear is better than watching her flicker fade away.

As we get on our horses, her whimsical laugh lifts my heart slightly.

The hairs on the back of my neck start to rise and that's when I feel it. Feel him. He is here. He is definitely here. I snap my head around in all directions trying to find the face of my imagination. In my peripheral, I see him and he's staring right back at me.

Oh god. Oh god. Oh gods.

He's even more alluring than the allowance my mind gave me of him. He is quite simply the devil incarnate. His jet-black hair is gelled back in thin lines down to his sharp jaw which is finer than blades. His menacing dark eyes bore into mine.

Xander

She is a mirage, a naturally occurring optical phenomenon that bends light rays to produce the image of a girl who is a familiar face but is unknown beneath the surface.



The truth is I don't know her. Not really. Not what makes her laugh or her favourite colour. Who she wanted to be when she grew up or if she's allergic to shellfish. That's what makes this...odd for me. Having this connection with a person I hardly know. I do not know her the way most do, but I know her in a way no one else ever would. Two strangers in a woven path, forced to share. It hummed between us like a secret. It kills her that she can't pick up the scissors and cut it. It kills me that I want more of it.

Violet

I jump off my horse, needing to leave the wrath of his stare. Turning towards the exit, I grab Steph's arm giving no explanation. Then I saunter towards the exit. Suddenly, I am stopped by a hard wall. Wait a wall? No, not a wall, it's his hard rigid chest.

'Who are you?' his voice like a slap, sharp and lethal.

'Who are you?' I retort trying to maintain my composure though my nerves are hard to conceal with my shaky hands. Realising, I put my hands behind my back discreetly. But I do know him, he's the face of my dreams -or should I say nightmares - his hair, his eyes, his body. All too familiar.

'I asked first,' he says tone laced with malice.

'My name is....y- you um hold no significance to me, I am in no position to tell you,' I say my chin high, indicating a confidence I don't feel.

'You're the girl, kept in the back of my brain, protected from the chaos looming at the front.'

His words seem like a jab to the stomach, though I don't know why. He doesn't know me, and I don't know him. But is that really true? Do I know him?

'You're him,' I say my hands falling limply beside me.

'Who's him?'

'You.'

I focus on the nails, I claw into my palm as something solid to keep my intrigue masked.

Xander

"Me?" I echo, a slow smirk tugging at my lips as I tilt my head, still trying to piece her together. "Please, do enlighten me—who exactly am I?" Sarcasm drips from my words, but beneath it, something else lingers. Curiosity. Recognition.



She exhales sharply, "and you still haven't answered my question."

Her delicate fingers rise to her temples, rubbing slow circles as if trying to wipe me from her vision. As if she can't quite believe I'm standing here.

"I see you everywhere," she murmurs, her voice barely above a whisper. "In my slumber, in my wake... in my darkness." The last word falters, almost as if she aches to say it. She shakes her head and presses her palm against it twice, as if trying to ground herself.

"Dreams?" I ask.

She hesitates, her expression unreadable. "I guess."

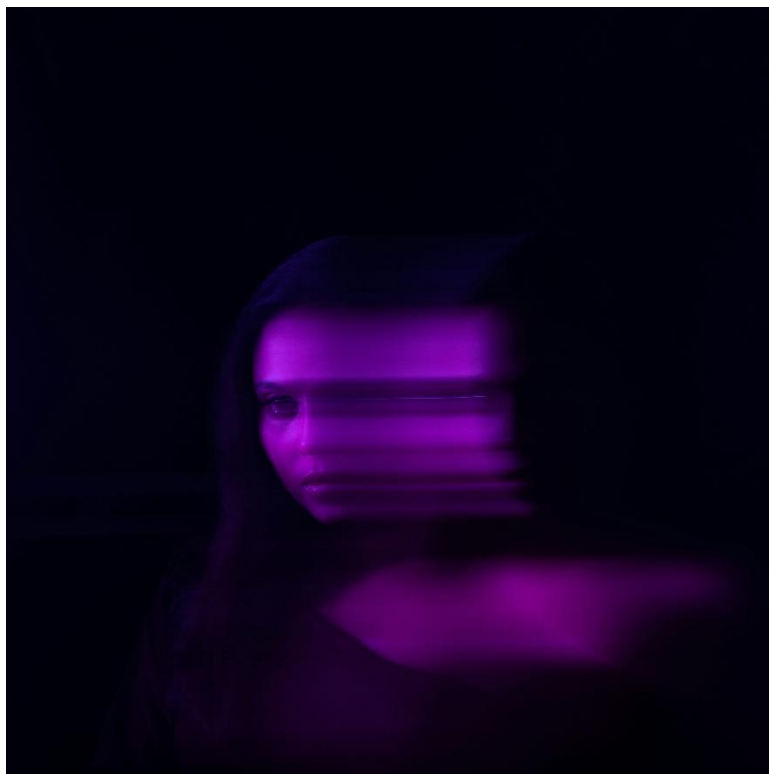
A short, hollow laugh escapes me. "While you've been tucked away in dreams," I say, voice dropping lower, "I've been drowning in chaos."

"Wake up"

"W-what I am awake," she counters.

"Wake up."

Brinda U5



Connection

-Orange, honey, grapes and tea...

-What a nonsense you've just written?

-Dionysus – god of wine besides fertility.

And ancient priceless gifts from gods.

We are connected to the past in every single action and in every single thing.

So, same as our descendants will receive, whatever we may bring ,

We will be learning from our past,

From past since the beginning.

And telling our children and their children about the foundations and creations

We might as well explore some new beginnings and new endings.

Although, I don't think there will be new inceptions.

Because history's repeating, reciting, restating and coming back to its origination.



How many times did humans fight?

A dozen? A Hundred? A Thousand?

No, there's about fourteen thousand massive hostilities , that were recorded in the world's timeline.

These are the ones that were written down, yet still many remain uncoun ted.

How many times it will take for us to get that wars are barbaric and useless?

I hope it will happen, late better than never,

Because people, who died were not worthless.

I can be seen as soft and mindless,

But I don't want to be defenceless.

Yes, I am young and I am terrified to live in the society,

Where people judge : by race, by colour and even by the length of a skirt or the everyday hairstyle,

And only thing I am able to do is just smile,

While walking the mile in their shoes,

So , I'll have their shoes and we'll have

between us the distance of a mile .

Humans should be
empathetic!

Isn't this what they say?

Well, then those truths are
told,

But the lies won't fade away.

Same plot and same script,

Exact same ideas.

Like second and first world

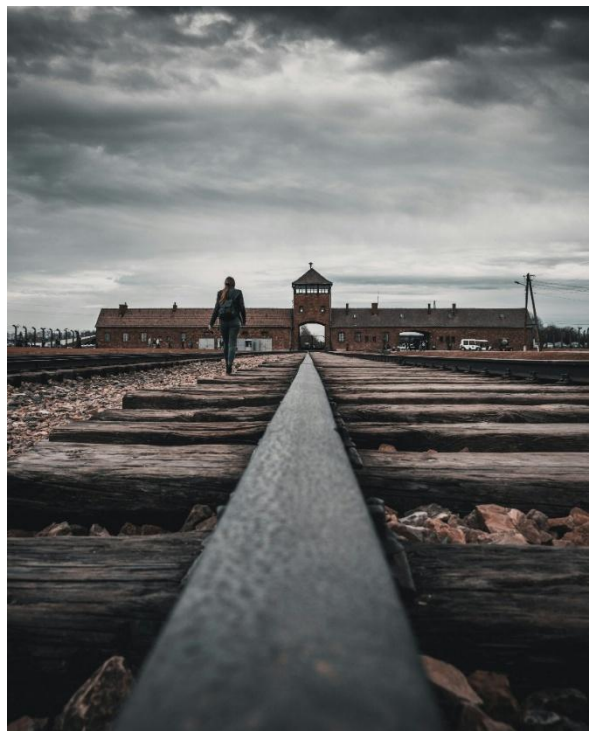


And all wars before,
Same goals and results,
Same losers and winners
And history loops once more.

Connection between the today and tomorrow,
And all of those days that had past,
Is like the alignment of tiles in domino,
Or cards in the large house of cards.

I know that my poem had escalated quickly
From oranges straight into wars,
But history's like that and the past and the future
Like ants in death spiral, till the end there it goes.

Sofiia U5





The Calls

Love can come in many forms. It can be a dozen red roses and expensive gifts or grand gestures and public displays of affection. But I think the best form love can take is in simply being seen—a silent understanding, a connection.

May 30th was when the first phone call came. It was late in the evening. The air was thick and warm, laced with the faint smell of pollen from the flowers beneath me. I was sitting on the fire escape, looking over the city that had seen me grow up. The day was slow, perhaps that's why the call came when it did. It wasn't my mobile that rang, but the landline. I reluctantly walked back into the apartment and answered. I spoke into the phone but got no response for a few seconds before a voice answered.

"Vera?" it called.

"No one by that name lives here, I'm afraid."

I could hear light breathing on the other side of the phone, like someone was mustering up the courage to speak again. I waited to see what they would say.



“I’m terribly sorry. I thought Vera lived here,” the voice softly told me. The voice sounded old, tired, and weary—like it wasn’t really there, but it was.

The second call didn’t come for a while—June 11th. I had just returned from a holiday and was mourning the loss of freedom and the absence of responsibilities. Once again, I was out on the fire escape, this time not looking out onto the city but the other way—onto my neighbourhood and the street below me. Children home from school played in the streets, chalk patterns covered the tarmac, and their laughter echoed through the breeze.

The conversation started off the same as it did before. The voice asked for a woman named Vera, and I reminded it that no one by that name lived here anymore. The voice apologised just like it did before. But this time, before hanging up, it asked me a question.

“Tell me,” the voice began, “is there still a deli near this address?”

“Yes, the best in New York.”

“Good,” the voice whispered.

“Why?” I questioned.

“I just remember some fond memories there,” the voice finished before abruptly hanging up. How did they know about the deli?

After the second one, the calls started weighing heavily on my mind. No one used the landline anymore, so I knew that whenever the phone rang, it was the voice calling. I started to hate leaving the house in fear that the voice would call when I wasn’t there. I hated sleeping in case I missed the sharp ringing of the phone. All I wanted to do was sit under the phone, ready to answer the moment the voice called. It wasn’t until more than two months later that the third call came.

August 24th. I had just returned from grocery shopping. I had various pots, bottles, and punnets scattered across my kitchen counters as I moved in and out of the fridge and pantry. Once again, the conversation started the same way as it always did. I had to once again tell the voice that there was no Vera, and once again, I had to listen to the voice’s apology. This time, however, the voice asked me another question.

“Can you still see into the top left window of the brownstone townhouse across the street from the fire escape?” it asked.

I told the voice to wait for a moment as I went to check. I ran to the fire escape, climbed out onto it, and looked directly into the top left window of the house the voice had described. Yes, yes, you could.

I ran back to the phone to answer the voice’s question, but no one was there. Once again, the voice had hung up.



Weeks and months passed, but I never got a fourth call. I began to forget all about the voice, Vera, the deli, and the top left window—like it was all part of a dream that I happened to share with the voice. On October 3rd, I received my first letter. My lease was ending soon, and I needed to find a new home. As I started house hunting and packing up my belongings, the only thing I longed for was one last call. A call to explain all the ones before. Who was the voice? But more importantly, who was Vera? Why were there fond memories at the deli? And what was so special about the top left window of the brownstone townhouse across the street?

Two nights before I was due to leave, I took a risk. For the first time ever, I called the voice. It felt so wrong to do—like I was invading the privacy of this mysterious entity who somehow knew too much about where I lived. The voice answered my call. I invited the voice to tea the following day, even though my tea set was deep in a cardboard box somewhere, and I had not a single pastry in the fridge. The voice agreed, and I anxiously waited the following day for it to come so I could put a face to it, so I could ask who Vera was, so I could be told about the fond memories of the deli.

The voice never came, though. That evening, or maybe it was the early hours of the morning, the phone rang for the fourth and final time.

“Hello, I am the voice—Albert Fitz,” it began. “I can tell you must be curious about me, but probably more curious about Vera.”

The voice, now Albert Fitz, continued. “Vera lived here long ago. She was my first friend.”

“Where is she now?” I asked. He hesitated momentarily before answering.



“I haven’t a clue. I haven’t seen her since we were seventeen, back in the sixties. She moved house—presumably went to university.” Albert seemed nostalgic talking about her, but not in a sad way, like he knew he couldn’t follow her as she moved.

“I never heard her voice before she left. That has always been one of my biggest regrets.”

“But why not?” I pried.

It was after this that Albert Fitz, the voice, told me the truth about Vera.

Vera was born and raised in New York, while Albert only moved to the brownstone townhouse opposite her when he was fifteen. The top left window belonged to his bedroom, where he would sit and gaze out at her every morning before school and every evening before bed. He never knew why she didn’t attend school; he had to overhear it from peers in his class.

“She can’t hear,” said the deli owner’s son to his gaggle of teenage boyfriends, who followed him around. The boy told them the story of how she had gone into the deli and tried to get a job, but without being able to hear or talk particularly effectively, she was turned down. She was rejected because she couldn’t communicate.

Albert knew the feeling very well—he had felt it too. Vera was trapped in a glass box. She was seen by everyone, but heard by no one. Albert wasn’t very popular either, partially because he was new to the school and partially because of his very basic and broken English. Although he couldn’t speak, he could understand superbly. He knew what was said in the world around him, but when he tried to join in, it didn’t sound the same. Albert had resorted to reading, learning about worlds outside of his own to distract himself from the loneliness he faced.

After hearing the deli owner’s son, Albert bought Vera a small sandwich from that very deli and left it on her doorstep, along with a short list of his favourite books. Once Vera had received his gifts, she smiled at him from her fire escape, and a friendship began. They didn’t need to talk for hours on the phone or spread meaningless gossip. They understood each other well enough not to have to exchange many words at all. All they needed were their words about their neighbourhood, the deli, and the fire escape that could be seen from the top left window of the brownstone townhouse across the street. For them, it was enough. It was all they needed.

“Thank you, Albert Fitz. I hope you find your Vera,” and with that, for the first and last time, I hung up the call. I will miss the voice as I move, but its lesson will forever stay with me: You don’t need words to make a connection—only feelings.

Bani L5



Red String

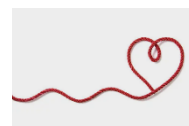
There is this theory, that my mother used to tell me when I was little. She used to tell me that when someone is born, an invisible red thread is tied around the fingers of people who are destined to meet each other.

When I first met Markus in year two of school, we clicked instantly and I was sure that our red strings would never loosen. I remember being so insanely addicted to making sure our red strings never snapped or loosened, even for a second. I'm not sure when it began—when the first slight fraying of our strings occurred, unnoticed but inevitable, or perhaps it was a slow, imperceptible erosion that took years to make itself visible. But I do know that it was during a moment like any other, one of those brief exchanges that used to carry so much weight, that I first felt the distance between us. It was a Monday, or perhaps a

Tuesday; I can never quite remember the exact day, because time had begun to feel indistinct, a vague collection of moments that could've been stretched or shortened without anyone noticing.

We were sitting in our usual café—the one with the half worn wooden tables, comfortable velvet chairs and the flickering fluorescent lights that buzzed softly in the corners, the air always tinged with the smell of burnt coffee. It was the same café we'd always meet in when we were young, the one where we'd spent hours discussing everything and nothing, ignoring all the other kids that invited us to play football. Now, it felt like we were sitting there because we were too tired to find anywhere else. I looked over at Markus, across from me, and watched him stir his coffee absently. His eyes were fixed on the steam rising from the mug, and his expression was distant. I could tell that something was bothering him, but like always, I was too afraid to ask. Afraid of the silence that might follow, the awkwardness that would seep in if I dared to acknowledge that things were no longer the way they once were.

“You ever think we’re getting old?” Markus asked suddenly, breaking the silence. The question hung there, like an unexpected weight lingering in the air, and for a moment,





I didn't know how to answer. It was one of those questions that sounded so simple but felt impossible to unpack. I laughed, but it wasn't a real laugh, more of a reflex, something automatic, like a protective barrier. It was a laugh that didn't reach my eyes, that didn't have any joy in it.

"I don't know," I said, my voice a little too light, a little too forced. "Maybe. But getting older is just a part of it, right? You can't stop it." He didn't respond right away. He just kept stirring his coffee, his fingers tight around the handle, as if the act of stirring was the only thing keeping him anchored to this world. I watched him, trying to understand, trying to grasp whatever had shifted in his mood, in his presence. There was something hollow about him now, as though the person I had known, the Markus who was once so full of life and energy, had begun to wither away under some invisible weight.

"I guess," he said after a while, his voice quieter than usual. "But it's... this." I didn't know what he meant. This. What was this? The silence that had started to fill the spaces between us? The way our conversations had grown thin and fragmented? The fact that, despite all the years we'd spent together, I couldn't remember the last time we'd really talked about anything with the excited tone we used to have?

"I don't know what you mean," I said, leaning forward, trying to make him see that I wanted to understand. But his gaze remained distant, his eyes unfocused. It was as though he was seeing something beyond me, something I couldn't even begin to fathom. He didn't answer. Instead, he sat back in his chair, rubbing his temple with his fingers, like the weight of whatever was on his mind was too much for him to bear. The silence between us stretched longer than it had in years, thick and suffocating. I felt something shifting—something I wasn't sure I could stop, something that had been moving beneath the surface for a long time, unseen but inevitable. "Markus, you okay?" I asked, my voice a little more insistent this time. He looked at me then, his gaze meeting mine for the first time since he'd spoken, and I saw it. It wasn't anger or frustration—it was something else. Something that was harder to name. A kind of weary sadness, the kind that settles into your bones after years of bearing a burden you can't put down. His lips parted, like he was about to say



something, but no words came. Instead, he just exhaled slowly, almost as if he had forgotten how to breathe properly.

“I don’t know,” he said quietly, almost to himself. “I don’t know what I’m doing anymore. I don’t know what we’re doing.” I felt a sharp pang in my chest at his words, something akin to fear, but deeper—darker. It was as if the ground beneath us had shifted, revealing a yawning chasm that neither of us knew how to bridge. I wanted to say something—to reach out, to pull him back from whatever place he had gone to—but I didn’t. I couldn’t. Instead, I just sat there, watching him, trying to understand, but finding that everything I had thought I knew about us—the easy rhythm, the jokes, the stories—was slipping away from me like sand through my fingers.

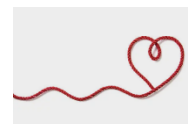
“I think we’ve... changed,” I said finally, my voice barely audible. It wasn’t a question, though. I wasn’t looking for him to confirm it. I already knew. I had known for a while. “Yeah,” he replied. “We’ve changed. And I don’t think we can go back.” The words hit me like a blow. I wanted to deny them, to insist that we were just going through a rough patch, that everything would return to normal if we just kept trying. But even as I thought it, I knew it wasn’t true. Because deep down, I had already felt it—that pull, that distance growing wider between us. It wasn’t something I could ignore anymore, no matter how much I wanted to.

We finished our coffee in silence. I left the café first, pretending not to notice the way he hesitated, as though he wasn’t sure whether to follow me or stay where he was. The air outside was cool, the kind of evening chill that sinks into your bones and lingers, even when you’re indoors. But it didn’t feel cold in the same way it used to. It felt... distant. Like the world had suddenly become far away, a place I no longer recognised.

The days that followed were a blur. We continued meeting at the same café, sitting at the same table, but everything had changed. Our conversations became shorter, more distant. The silences grew longer, more oppressive. We still spoke to each other, of course. Unimportant things. Surface-level things. But we had stopped talking about anything that mattered, anything real. I tried to pretend like nothing had changed, like we were still the same. I talked about my day, about work, about the things I knew would pass the time without causing any discomfort. But each time, he seemed further away. His responses were mechanical and empty. His eyes would glaze over when I spoke, like he was listening but not hearing. And I felt it too. That same sense of disconnect, as if we were two people trapped in the same room but incapable of reaching each other.

And then there came a day—a day that I hadn’t expected, that I had been silently dreading—when he didn’t show up. I waited, of course. I always waited. I told myself it was just a late train, a last-minute change of plans, something trivial. But the minutes turned into an hour, and still, he didn’t appear. I checked my phone—nothing. No text. No call. Not even an explanation.

I left the café, feeling a strange emptiness in my chest, like something was missing, but I couldn’t quite place it. I walked through the streets, numb to the world around me, and tried to convince myself it didn’t matter. After all, we had been drifting for so



long. This was just the natural end of something that had already begun to unravel. I called him once, but the phone rang and rang, and then went straight to voicemail. "I can't talk right now," he said, his voice flat, impersonal, as if the words had been recorded long ago and were now repeating themselves in some endless loop. And for the first time, I didn't leave a message. There was no point. He wouldn't listen. It didn't matter.

The next day, I saw him again. It was a chance meeting, the kind that shouldn't have been significant. He was walking down the street, his face as unreadable as ever, his eyes fixed ahead as if he had forgotten that I was there. I stood there for a moment, waiting for him to notice me, to break the silence, but he didn't. He passed by without a word, without even a glance. It was at this moment I started to realise, that no matter how strong my need was for our friendship back, no matter how desperate and eager I was to have that connection I had with him before, he was stuck in a place. A place where not even that sort of desperation and eagerness could pull him out of the dreary and dull hole he willingly fell in. I didn't call out to him. I didn't even stop him. Because I knew, as he did, that there was nothing left to say. We had drifted so far apart that no amount of words, no amount of effort, could ever bring us back. It wasn't a sudden break. It wasn't an argument or a betrayal. It was just... the inevitable. A connection that had once been so strong had frayed and snapped without either of us really noticing until it was too late.

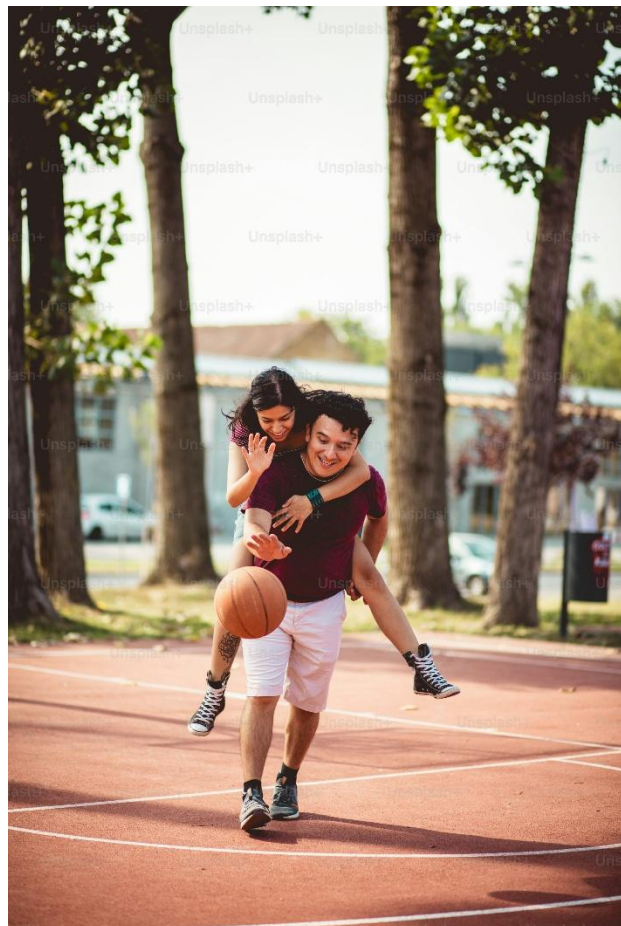
I stood there for a moment longer, watching him disappear into the crowd. And then I turned away and walked in the other direction. The world felt cold, but it also felt empty. And I realised then that I wasn't just walking away from him. I was walking away from fun game nights and late night talks. I was walking away from sleepovers that were filled with unforgettable inside jokes. I was walking away from the one person I could tell anything without fear of ever being judged. The red string had finally snapped.

Ameera L5



Our Connection

From dawn 'til dusk we were never apart,
Soulmates, we were told right from the start.
The connection we shared grew,
Into something big, bigger than me bigger than you.



Our first steps shared, tentative and shy,
Back in the day when we reached for the sky.
We thought the stars were aligned
Like we had been perfectly designed.

Hot summers filled with innocent delight,
Frosty winters ended in a great snowball fight.
Steaming hot chocolate turned to iced latte,
Adventures at night instead of the day.

I used to be the one left playing catch with you
Until the coaches took over as you grew.
I still watched with ever growing pride,
But by then it was not just me at your side.

We thought we could beat fate.
So naïve; everything has an expiry date.
We ended in tragedy like Romeo and Juliet,
Now all we have is deep regret.

Connection takes years to evolve,
Before your eyes it can dissolve.
Fragile and dangerous like cracking glass,
Reduced into memories from the past.

Florence U4



Connection I

Having a connection is amazing,
It's a feeling to which nothing compares,
When someone shows you their affection,
Or they express and explain their cares.

It's a feeling that floods you with joy,
One that people don't often get to explore,
Like to go on a journey,
On a plane, on a boat, going away, ahoy!

I love the connection I have,
It's little but sweet and pure,
I love the connection I have,
I love it, for certain, for sure.

Jasmine L4



Connection II

My mum asked me the other day what I would ask my future self, but to be honest, I had no clue. I loved these types of questions because they got me thinking, which I don't often do. However, this question was different. It made me think about all the horrible memories I've ever had or are currently experiencing. My mum told me, because I was struggling, to sleep on it and come back to her with a paragraph or two.

So I started writing. Nothing. Came. Out. It was quite frustrating really. However, soon enough I managed to come up with something.

'If I could ask my future self one thing, it would be, does it get better? The heartbreak, the hard times and all the things in life that made me feel like I was just a grain of sand in a vast beach that everyone just trod on. Does life beyond my childhood change and develop? Is the reason I'm so unhappy because of my friends? What's the **CONNECTION?**'

I handed this to my mum the next morning and she let out a tear. 'Honey,' she said, 'I love you.' She stepped forward and hugged me, stroking my hair away from my face.

'I love you too mum.'

That night I went to sleep feeling better than ever. I had achieved the unachievable, I had found the lost. Understanding. I had found the **connection**.

Jasmine L4



Connections

I always thought I had connections,
With people I don't know.
But really I didn't,
Were they friend or foe?

Wind comes from the east,
And it comes from the west.
It may push you to be someone else,
But all you have to do is try your best.

The connections we have,
They say 'keep them close'.
Don't let them go,
Don't even boast.

They'll tell you to stop,
Sit back and think.
But you have to be determined,
Don't even blink.

So I guess what I'm saying,
Is to just be yourself.
Because at the end of the day,
You'll be tipping off the shelf.

Sometimes is best to ignore the connections,
Just for once take a break.
Focus on your self reflections.

So take this as a note to self,
To be kind to others.
And most importantly,
Be kind to your self.



Charlotte L4



Meant To Be

Sometimes the world can blow you away,
Sometimes it picks you up and takes you to where you're meant to be.
I'm meant to be with my family.
The sun and moon are meant to be in the sky.
The cars on the road and the boats in the sea.
These are where these things are meant to be.
Whether you're smart on your feet or smart in your brain.
There's always someone for you.

Amelie L4



Connection

Connection is something that every human seeks.
Once found people are at their peak.
Never take it for granted.
Never say it not true.
Every day all they think about is you!
Connection is word like so many are.
The love for each other is as big as a star!
If you try to explain it you just won't understand.
Only once you've felt it you can hold a hand.
Never take it for granted, never say it's not true.
Everyone feels connection. I hope you do too!

Amelie L4



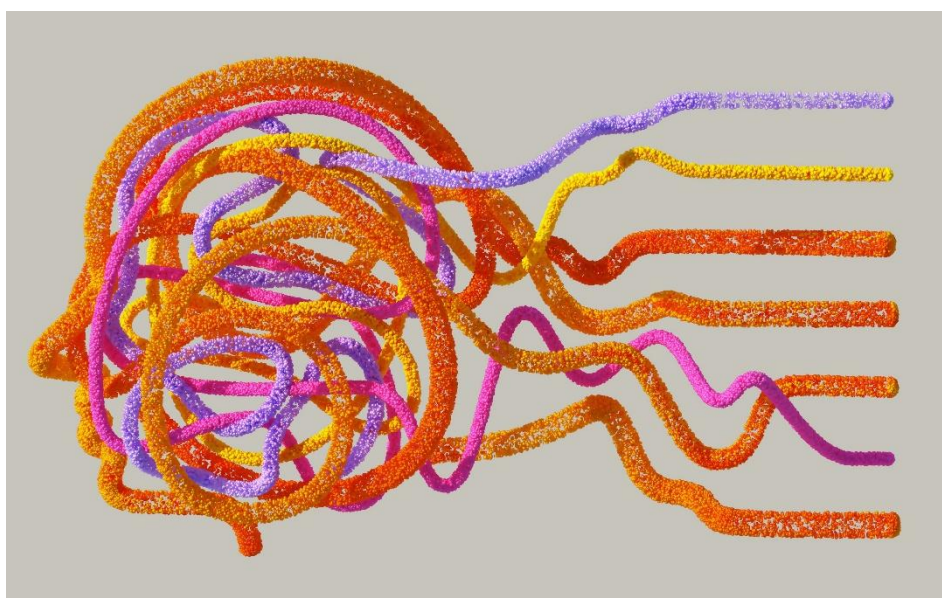
Girls' Schools Association Senior Writing Award

Congratulations to Aurelia Pettifor L4 whose entry for the Girls' Schools Association Senior Writing Award was one of the three entries shortlisted in the years 7-9 category. The competition was judged by Hannah Barnes, Associate Editor at the New Statesman, who gave Aurelia the following feedback:

Thank you so much for sharing your experience of the world with me. This was such powerful writing. You are right to reject labels and be proud of who you are. It was so brave to explain to adults how their behaviour made you feel, and extremely understanding of you to realise that they were trying to be kind. You certainly educated me!

Do You See Me?

A label – it's useful on a packet of food or medicine – but on a person – I'm not so sure. Does it identify, define or hide you? Is it actually helpful? Not long ago I was "labelled"... and I hated it! I was called "Autistic"... so suddenly there I was – associated with that stereotype of an autistic child, wearing oversized ear defenders, sitting and hugging their knees whilst rocking and repeating a singular, nonsensical phrase. No – but I was still me – only thanks to my "label" I was suddenly a "type". Embarrassed by this profile that I now had, I wanted more than ever to disappear, keen to be disassociated with this stereotype – until one day I unexpectedly found my voice: "I am not a "label, profile" or "type"...I am Me!" and, in making my small but powerful stand, I have educated one more person in this world less familiar with neurodiversity who will themselves go on and hopefully educate others through their actions if not words.



Starting secondary school was hard enough – so many things to remember – classrooms, teachers, friends, homework – in a brain like mine all this information comes across in



extreme high definition – vivid and detailed, maximum volume and no off switch to mute the constant barrage. In language lessons for example, as I try to take in the teacher’s words, I can hear my own breathing as well as that of the girls either side of me, the voices of those passing in the corridor and the shrieks of the girls on the sports field. It’s hard to stay focused but the teachers try in various ways to keep my attention as all the other distractions compete for my brain space. After all, she knows I have a “profile” and this is the positive side of that label.

One teacher however – we’ll call her Ms X – simply didn’t get me. Unfortunately, she only saw the “label”. She would deliberately single me out and speak to me as if I was a foreign language student – requiring slow and simplistic words. I tried to ignore it as it came from ignorance rather than malice. The more she was like this however, the more stressed and flustered I became which meant my words would usually come out in muddle – which didn’t help my case!

One day, when seeking clarification, again she simply repeated herself loudly and slowly – only for everyone to witness my apparent stupidity. At the end of the lesson I approached her and this time managed to get my words out in the right order. I realise now that this took real courage as I had previously always sought to avoid associating myself with my “profile”; I was worried that she would think I was being rude and disrespectful – but I needed to get her to see me... beyond the label...

She then asked how I learn best and was there anything that she could do to help. I explained what it felt like to be treated as though you are stupid and singled out in front of everyone. She listened... and heard me... the person. She now treats me “normally” like everyone else and when I ask questions she looks to find other ways of explaining her point. As a result I feel more relaxed in her presence to open up and voice my feelings. She now sees there is more meaning to a person than the label that’s attached to them. I hope she’ll spread the word. Thank you for reading this... one voice making a small difference.



Aurelia L4



Hood of Sherwood Forest

“Goodbye!” Shouted Mum as I left, “Don’t get distracted in the forest this time, Red. Go straight to Granny’s.”

Mum always got anxious when I went out in the woods alone after the incident with the wolf, but I’m not scared. I was never scared of that wolf, I was the one who managed to kill it. I turned around to give mum a smile and a hug before leaving.

I started to walk along the path, through the forest. It was slippery with snow from last night. Little ice crystals had formed on the trees and they glistened in the sun like little, tiny mirrors. Carefully, I strode along the cobble stone path. It was usually uneven and uncomfortable underneath my feet but today it was smooth from the ice. I picked some snowdrops on the way to put on display at Granny’s house. They looked beautiful against the frost-bitten grass. I put about ten of them in my basket of blueberry muffins and continued to head along the frozen stream.



Suddenly, I heard a twig snap. It echoed around the area, ringing around the forest. The sound came from somewhere just ahead of me in a holly bush. I slowly crept forward, wondering what had made that sound. I felt something being thrown over my head, then everything went black.

I was conscious but trapped. Where was I?

I could feel my heels dragging along the icy path. The cold stung against my skin. After taking a few deep breaths, I listened, and I could hear someone breathing in and out quickly and loudly. The material trapping me was thick and rough against my skin, but I could just see a tall figure wearing green with a hood over his head through a hole in the fabric. He had a bag strapped onto his back with arrow ends poking out. He was carrying a large wooden bow with an engraved, colourful pattern on the handle.



I took out my pocketknife (mum had given it to me to protect myself a few weeks ago) and started to cut a hole in the bottom of the bag. It took a lot of effort and breathing was hard as the material was thick. Before I could finish, someone opened the bag. They stood in front of me and said:

“I’m here to protect you.”



He was a man with a low and rugged voice. He had traces of a beard and a long, red cut along his cheek. He had a very fake, white toothy smile. "I am Robin Hood, senior protector in Sherwood Forest. My merry men work as my assistants. I saw you alone and saved you from all of the dangers of the wood. I am known to help helpless, pretty and desperate young girls like you avoid the many hazards here. Little girls like you shouldn't be out in the woods alone. You need a strong man like me to look after you. I am sure you'll understand that I will like a reward for my troubles, you know, saving your life and all that. The wolf could have eaten you."

"I killed that wolf two weeks ago." I said plainly.

Completely ignoring me he carried on,

"You can show your appreciation toward me in..." I punched him. I wanted to prove that I could protect myself against egotistical men like him. I didn't need any man to protect me.



Where was I? I'd never been to this part of the forest before. The trees were so tall I couldn't see the top and there was a huge blazing campfire, circled by small, one man tents. The fire was strong enough to fill the entire area with heat and warmth. A huge pile of vegetables and tins of food piled up high in the corner, next to where Robin Hood lay, unconscious. His face had a swelling red mark where I struck him, just under his eye. I decided to wake him by prodding him with a long wooden pole on the shoulder. His eyes slowly started to blink open. He took a breath then managed to speak the word,



“Gold.”

I was very tempted to punch him again, but I managed to refrain myself. I needed to work out what was going on.

“Where am I?” I asked.

You would have thought this to be a quite simple question, but no. Hood just kept rambling on about him and his achievements and his, “wonderful merry men”.

Suddenly, there was a rustle in the bushes, then I saw the axe man I met while saving Granny. He was kind, but he didn’t help much; I did all the work. I was the one who killed the wolf, not him. All he did was give me the weapon. I haven’t stopped thinking about John since that day.

“Hi John” said hood, “this is little John, one of my merry men!” He said this very proudly, as if he was trying to show off about it.

“We’ve met” I said, “a few weeks ago.”



“Red! How are you doing? It’s nice to see you again... why are you here?” asked John.

“Because,” I spoke through my teeth, “your stuck-up little friend kidnapped me. To protect me or something. As if I, of all people, need protection.”

“She’s right. It was her who saved that old lady from the wolf. Not me,” John said.

“You’re telling me that she is capable and able to use a weapon...” said Robin.

“Yes,” Said John defiantly.

“Okay...” slurred Robin, “if you’re so good at



protecting yourself then I'm sure you could beat me in a fight...for gold. Of course." A smug look crept its way along his smarmy face.

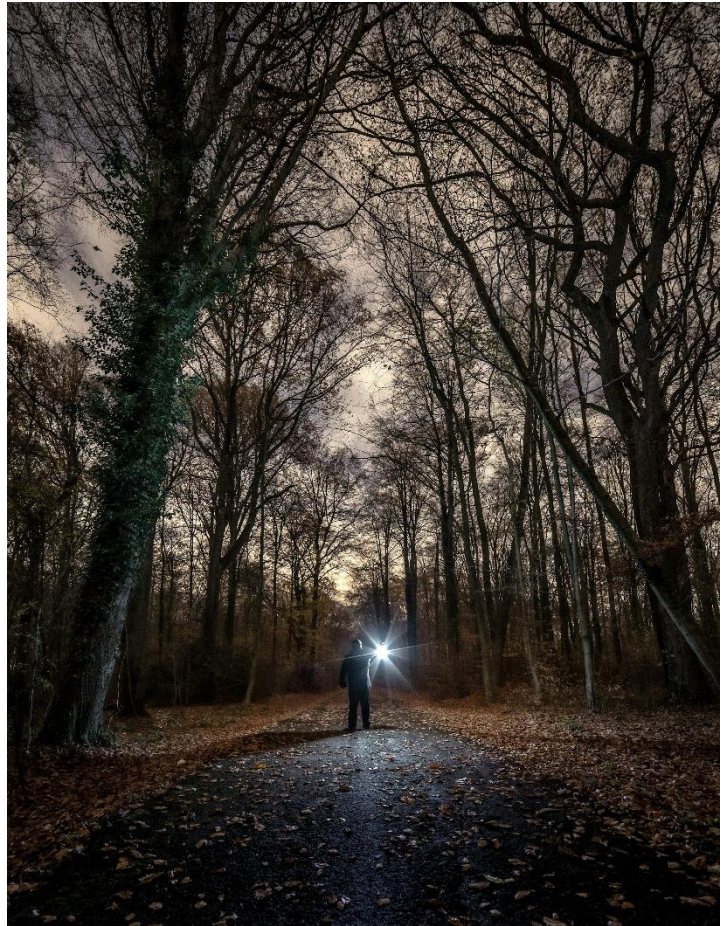
I replied,

" Okay, you're on."

I picked up a long wooden pole from the ground and got ready while he did the same. "Winner gets ten gold coins."

"Deal," he sniggered," are you sure you want to wager that much, princess?" I snarled and rolled my eyes.

John was the referee, "Robin, are you ready?" Robin nodded," Red, are you ready?" I nodded, "let the fight begin in 3...2...1.... GO!"



Sticks were hurled in every direction. Grunts of effort and groans of pain could be heard from miles around. The poles made a loud whoosh! sound when they dived down. Every swing took huge amounts of effort. I nearly broke my pole with the force it went crashing down to the floor. I mostly aimed for his legs to trip him up, but it just wasn't working. My arms tired quickly as the poles were very heavy, but I could see his were too. The swings became weak and less powerful.

The fight lasted for hours. Even John had lost interest and had started to make dinner. I thought it was never going to end until finally I managed to knock him to the floor by hitting the back of his knees. He struggled but I pinned him down by holding the pole to his chest. Finally, the fight was over. Both breathing heavily, I let him stand up.

"Hand them over then," I said.

"What?" Asked Hood.

"The coins." I replied.

"I can give you something better," he said.

" Like what?" I asked. He closed his eyes, puckered his lips, and leaned toward me. Quickly, I backed away from him. He stumbled forward and landed flat on his face.



“Why did you move?” he asked.

“What made you think that I wanted to kiss you?” I replied.

“Because...” he said, “I am the most handsome, funniest, most charming, and overall best person you’ll ever meet, and the last.”

“What?” I asked.

“I’m not letting you go anywhere. You see, I’m in charge around here and what I say goes. John, get her.”

Hood turned his back, chuckling while John darted toward me. I started to run away, to get away from that selfish self-centred man, but after only a couple steps, I felt a strong hand grab my shoulder and forcefully pull me backwards. I did the only thing I could. I lifted my one free hand and made a fist. With all my might, I punched him, right on the nose. He let out a loud cry as his nose started to bleed. He stumbled backwards and I ran as far away as I could. Past the campsite, along the path, and all the way back home.



Amelia U3



National Poetry Day

The theme of this year's National Poetry Day was **Your Voice Counts**. This inspired Evelyn's poem:

My Inky Crow



I didn't have a voice until we met,
I'd sit there calling on words that wouldn't come,
But the caged crow inside me kept
Empty, mute, silenced and numb.
I felt joy brighter than suns, pain deeper than
oceans
But mute I remained despite these emotions.
When my fingers met pen, who introduced me
to paper
I realised then how the world could be greater.
My voice erupted in a thousand drawings
Silent yet screaming, ink is my calling.

Evelyn L5

Orwell Youth Prize

Freedom Is was the theme of the Orwell Youth Prize this year. This was a starting point for Summer's poem:

Orwell investigated freedom, took a ballpoint pen and left a signature,
He took on social power and ripped it apart in literature.
And Orwell, he knew, he had to write to articulate flaws
To articulate *'freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two makes four'*

'All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others'
All people are equal, but some sexualities more equal than some lovers.
Imagine, you live and subscribe in an age of egalitarian ideology,
Yet die instead of thrive in the age of government theology.

Juxtapositions, oxymorons, paradoxes
Orwell used confusion to conflate philosophical toxins.
Freedom is so fleeting, freedom cannot last.
*'Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present
- controls the past.'*



Orwell eats society, and digests its common themes
Orwell bites down on government, and chews on executive means.
He comes to a conclusion, after making us doubt our own,
Looks forward to 1984, and voices societies' collective moan.

All our fears of regression, placed in 'progressive' chains,
All our fears of government and designed mind-games -
Tell us through stories that
Freedom is not fixed, it bends.
Tells us through quotations
'Power is not a means, it is an end'

Summer U6



Writing Warm Ups

At one of our meetings, as a warm up, we gave ourselves a few minutes to use all the letters of the alphabet, in order, in a poem. Congratulations to Evelyn Lawford who managed it with time to spare!

Alphabet Poem

An ambient alpine air blessed bruised bosoms beneath cool candlelit canopies.
Don't disrupt dear, eon's effects encourage futile followers to frolic fruitlessly for fortnights.
Graveley giraffes graze; homesick, hopeless, hardened. It is just juvenile to joke just
knobbing knots.

Loveless, lightless moons make night numb obsidian.

Pointless perspiration pierced Queen Quinlan's rosy raspberry red robes.
Somebody saw sights she tried to unsee, urgent ugly violent visions, vexing wartimes.
Xiphoids yielding zodiac's zenith

A Story In Six Words

Writing a story in six words was another challenge that we set ourselves as a writing warm up.

Sisi letter Max yes date happy

Aurelia U3

It wasn't the butler this time

Madeleine L5

Lust rejection burned knife blood death

Evelyn L5



Fantastic Feast

Using *The Centipede's Song* by Roald Dahl as a starting point, the Club members wrote poems about delicious and or magical food. As we wait to have lunch after our meetings each week, food is never far from our thoughts!

Food Thoughts From Abroad

A spread of party jollof rice
Will take your mind to all things nice.
Top it off with plantain and chicken
This will really get your tongue tinglin'.
But wait, you're in boarding school in England
Where all these foods you dream of remain
In your fantasy-land.

You wait till the holiday
And when you finally get home,
Then you can, at last,
Chew the chicken straight off the bone.

You're unsatisfied with mediocre British cuisine.
When your school tries to make some,
You just want to scream,
And to lay down your head,
And to fall back into your dream,
Where the food you taste
Makes your face gleam.

Jade L4



Magic Carrots

Crunch of carrot so crisp and juicy.
Piled high beyond our sight.
One nibble, one bite.
Some love, some hate
But no matter the taste, the texture or time
Eat the carrots past the sky and over the moon,
It will help you from eternal gloom!

Past the savoury and next to the sweet,
There is such a lovely treat.
Beyond our thought, sense and wonder,
It will let you stray from blunder.
This magic and its spark,
Will let you fly in the park.

Olivia U5

A Banquet

Entering the dining room,
full of delectable food.
Pan fried Norwegian salmon,
drizzled with tangy lemon.
Gamey rack of herby Lamb,
paired with the salty chowder clam.
Cheeses from around the world,
baked with bacon, curled.
Vegetables stir fried in soy sauce,
The flavours won't be lost.

r

Anson L5



Feast

Gran's house

Oh.

Here we go.

We walk into the dining room, I peak upon the table
The ghastly sight of broccoli makes me feel unstable,
My mind wonders, horrified, at the unfamiliar smell
Atop the table what it was, at five, I couldn't tell.

A hundred jars of dying stars with chocolate sauce to dip,
Seven ants who no longer dance shoved in a Cherry pip,
Blue cheese of chickens from Charles Dickens atop a tortured rat,
And toffee tarts with human hearts all poured into a vat.
My love if you don't eat it, you'll break your granny's heart,
And don't play with your food or pick it all apart,
Sit down be quiet don't mutter a peep,
Or I shall take away your toys whilst you are asleep.

Evelyn L5



Feast

A modern table with a fire.
Towers of sushi like a byre.
What's that I see?
Pizza for free!
Squid tentacles with sauce
And wonton dumplings, the shape of a horse.
Hot chocolate with marshmallows and cream,
And enough Lipton to make you scream!
Waffles and pancakes in all shape and form,
And chewy cookies that make you feel warm.
Mocha balls oozing chocolate lava.
I'm really happy there is no guava.

Amelie L4



Fantastic Feast

If I could wish for anything
A meal fit for a king.
I would wish for
Some fried rice all the way
from Japan for sure.
I would definitely say
Some yummy noodles too,
An enough iced tea to make me use the loo.
Si, si some Italian pizza,
More beautiful than the Mona Lisa.
Everything I would eat in one day
Not wait until may.
My belly would be full,
I'd be bigger than a bull.
MY ONLY RULE IS
No meat allowed
And no coke fizz,
People that eat at this table have vowed.
The best Food and the star
Is a giant chocolate bar.
People come from everywhere.



Charlotte L4



Fantastic Feast

I gasp as I see our table of food,
Which looks so delectable and good.
Stuffing dumplings in my mouth, I give off a sigh of joy.
The sauce bursts out from the pork in its wrap,
The perfect food before a nap
Transporting you to a world of wonder.

Egg tarts lie on the right side of me,
I tuck in (after the dumplings) with glee.
My heart is hit by a warm fuzzy feeling.
I recall kindergarten, my grandparents picking
Me up holding egg tarts.
I'm leaning on a wall,
I feel like I can fly.

It shocks others when I gush milk into my tea.
But at home it's not only me.
I miss swinging my legs off the ground,
Glancing up at my mother when she's around.
Being cautious that it doesn't spill,
I carefully pour the milk,
To imitate her.

The greatest feast is
The one you have to leave.

Beatrice L5



Food

Standing right before me is a table full of food,
Chocolates, sweets, exotic fruit, everything looks good,
It all was gone quite quickly, I ate it up with haste,
But there's more to this whole varied spread than just its luscious taste.

The gumdrops make you fly, try the toffee and disappear,
One bite of the tiramisu and people's thoughts become quite clear,
The apples are quite scrumptious, the blueberries are too,
I sank my teeth into a plum and wound up in Peru.

But effects aren't always positive, your life might fall to shambles,
Rule the world or grow twelve toes, it can be quite the gamble,
Take to the skies and soon your sight you might lack,
Vanishing might be fun for a day, but not if you can't come back.

So know that magic is never free, a price must always be paid,
In order to obtain something new, a sacrifice must be made,
So tread carefully if you choose to approach the table,
For using such things without consequence is certainly just a fable.

Isabelle U5



Poems Written on November 5th



I am a Firework

I am a firework.
Once a match is struck,
I blow up.
The moment I step on that plane
And fly further and further away
The comfort of my family seems to fade.
The firework has been ignited.
All the feelings bubbling up inside
Seem to explode.

As my loving mother's arm is no longer.
As each day seems to draw on
The magnitude of the firework seems to shrivel;
I have done my time.

Six weeks is up and I am back on a plane
But this time,
I am flying further and further away.

Jade L4

Night Sky

The sky is darkness without you.
We won't be here if you aren't there too.
Rising up like a shimmering shooting star,
But from my little heart you won't be far.
Reaching to your destination,
Painting our beloved nation.
With endless possibilities of colours,
Let us gloriously adore her.

Anson L5



Firework

Anticipation poised on the edge of its seat, stood and looked out onto its blank page,
taking up his paintbrush, he ignites the tip in the water pot beside,
and in an abstract dash across the plain
flash bang! A great explosion of fire and noise,
struck across the sky in a terrible crack,
the light kept growing, igniting further the midnight darkness
and washed with colour the awed canvas of people's faces.
I squeezed my hand tighter, appreciating the warmth that bled between my fingers.

Luna L5



Firework Boy

I hate you. I hate your mind, I hate your soul.
I hate the way you speak, your voice, your hair as black as coal.
I hate your face, your eyes, your teeth your smile
The way you stack paper in that perfect pile.

I hate how being near you makes my world brighter,
How your voice sparks my heart like a cigarette lighter.
I hate how your hair falls over your eyes, like smoke over the moon
I hate how your smile is contagious and how your eyes make me miss you.
I hate your perfection, I'll never live up to it.
I hate that I love you, and that I can't give up on it.
Your laugh lights my fuse, then an explosion of red erupts on my face,
You smile, pull me closer in a long awaited embrace.

Boom.

Evelyn L5



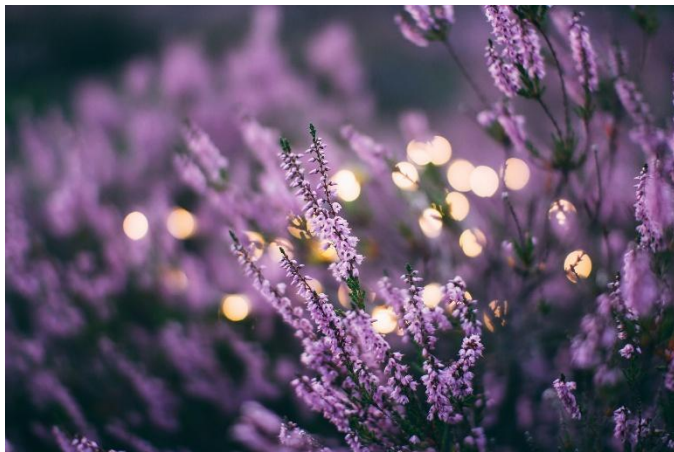
Firework

A firework is a sudden thing,
Colours beautiful and brilliant, loud
and making the most of everything.
Its sudden birth and death with a burst of flame,
A dying star, a last, final hope, a beauty from afar.



Our lives with Mother Nature is a firework, short and brief:
Though with enough power and sparkle it is surely a memory others will keep.
The azure blues of peace and harmony, the greens of growth and adventure,
The purple flowers of wonder and amazement

Gabrielle L5



Fireworks

Two sparks met in the dark, shy and bright.
A spark igniting and ascending into the darkness.
Their laughter soared, colours bursting in flight.
Together their dances, a dazzling display,
Lighting the sky in a passionate sway.



But as time wore on,
The colours grew loud,
Crashing and clashing, fierce thundercloud.
Their wonder faded to echoes and fight,
A firework's beauty faded into the night.

Anna L5



Fireworks

I have one task in my sight
To drape a veil in the sky of shimmering light
Thrust up into the sky, I'm finally allowed to play
Although I won't quite be seen in the day.
Oh no, my fellow competitors want to fight
Displaying all their hues in magnificent might.

Sprawling throughout the sky they sparkle
With hues of gold and silver
Shooting outwards and conquering the sky
I marvel.
However, soon enough they wither
Floating leisurely downwards, the flowers wilt
Elegant petals are carried away as they start to tilt.

Darkness engulfs the night sky once again
And I look forward to my next performance ... when?

Beatrice L5



Fireworks

A peaceful blanket of serenity is slung across the world,
No harsh sounds or braying voices, everything is quite still.
Then, bang, quite out of nowhere the calm comes crashing down
The panic builds and swirls around until it consumes my mind.
No warning or explanation, I cannot understand
These violent shocks consume me, the vibrations wrack my body,
Soon I start to tremble, as the crashes and bangs continue,
Nobody sees the danger, they just clap and giggle with glee,
My family don't appreciate the risk, nobody does but me.

Isabelle U5



The Hero's Journey

The Hero's journey is a common narrative archetype that involves a hero who goes on an adventure, learns a lesson, wins a victory with that newfound knowledge and then returns home transformed. Club members planned their own narrative, structured as a hero's journey, and then wrote the opening to it.



She dashed through the woods large paw in front of large paw, her heavy footsteps boomed through the mossy ground, and auburn thick brown fur billowed furiously in the wind. Suddenly, she stopped. Blood roared through her round ears as a loud beating thud of her screaming heart fought against her rib cage. She listened. Listened intently like life was depending on it. A drop of hot condensation dripped off her black nose, only her heavy panting could be heard through the many capillaries of trees. A sharp crack of a twig shot through the expanse, and she was off again. Behind her she could hear another bigger, stronger, savage set of paws...

Luna L5



"Checkmate." I knocked over Alysa's last pawn for the eighth time in the last ten minutes.

"You cheated."

"Sore loser."

She rolled her eyes. I rolled mine. She may have been the only friend I had, but often I felt as though I'd rather be alone than with someone so stupid. That may sound rude, well it is rude, but Alyssa was stupid in the truest sense. I wouldn't mind this, but she always believed she was smarter than me. She was always jealous, always picking apart my victories, always-BANG.

Black. So dark, so cold.

"Uh hello?" Spat a raspy voice.

"What the-"

"Save it. How'd you get here."

"Rude."

"Answer."

"Uh I don't-" as I opened my eyes I started. I was in a white void, with a grey figure in front of me, no shape, just an essence of a person.

"Don't scream. How did you get here?"

"I don't know. Who- what are you? Where are we?!"

"Calm down." It's voice softened. "I broke my nose recently. I cut my hair myself, it's short choppy and black. I have dark eye bags and pasty skin. I'm wearing loose clothes and I'm holding a gun."

As she spoke she began to form in front of me. She was pretty like a gorse bush, all angles and muscle with haunting yellow eyes. I stopped shaking and took in her newly appeared form.

"Stop staring. Who are you?"

"Evangeline."

"Jelly."

"What?"

She smirked. Black again.

I was in the nurses office. What the hell. I looked around, bemused. I caught a flash of red on the mirror. Written in blood "CLOSE ONE EYE". I rubbed the sleep off my eyes. The message was gone. Huh?

"Glad you're awake. Some idiot hit you with a hardball, you alright love?" The nurse spoke in such a sunny voice. She saw me a lot, I was in here a lot. I'm not exactly... popular with the other kids at school. They hate me. I have revolution in my veins and rebellion in my blood but everyone around me seems to accept the system, yearn for it, and they see my existence as a direct opposition to it.

Evelyn L5





It was dark. The peace treaties had been declined by the government, and there was only one obvious path that could lead to prosperity. At least, that was what the citizens would be made to believe. With the signing of this document proposed by the Houses, the fate of the country would be sealed. Ignorance was bliss, wasn't it? And after all, all the training, the plans for the country led up to this moment: to the war. But it was obvious to the leader that this was not right. Behind the scenes, discrepancy,

Gabrielle L5

The grand hall was adorned with golden chandeliers and rows of white roses, a picturesque setting for what should have been the happiest day of her life. But Claire's hands trembled beneath her lace veil.

Anna L5



Interior Monologues

Club members chose a character and then wrote their thoughts as an interior monologue:

Sleeping Beauty



He kissed me? Who is he? I'm in the same room but everything's different. The rosy wallpaper looks so grey and sun-bleached- and why is my hair so long?! Who is this man standing over me? Why has he got a bloody knife in his hand? I haven't eaten in so long I'm so hungry. Wait what- this is real. Okay, okay don't panic call for a maid. Why is no voice coming out?! MARRIAGE?! Why is this man saying we will soon be wed?! I just woke up from a nap what the- no where is everyone?! Why is everything different? I'm so hungry. I can't move my joints are so stiff I feel like I've been lying here for a hundred years. Wait what? Fought off the dragon? Lethal thorns? True

love? Who is this man? I need to call for a maid. Ugh I can feel my back I'm so hungry. Why hasn't anyone come in? Ok I'm up. So dizzy. Why are my muscles so weak? And why is he talking like that? He's speaking French like me only he isn't... I understand him but only just. I'm so confused. And hungry. But oddly well rested. WHO IS THIS MAN AND WHY IS HE CARRYING ME OUT THE WINDOW?! Ok I give up let's see where this goes...

Evelyn L5

Meg from *Little Women*

What should I do with my life? I try to tell myself to look ahead but deep, deep down I still miss the days when I can be free from the worries for my future and the needing to think before buying. I am so tired of pretending to be someone I'm not, pretending to like politics when I don't even know about or I just don't care. Sometimes I just hate what I am like not trying to pretend that we are just like before when there is nothing left valuable in the house. Maybe I should just marry rich. Does money really bring happiness? Can love battle against poverty? I keep telling Jo that Just because my dreams are different than yours doesn't mean they're unimportant, all I want is to have a home where I can let go of my duties and a loving family and I am willing to work for it.



Lillian L5



Belle From *Beauty and The Beast*



"This plot is a tangled mess, I doubt it'll resolve itself"
" I probably have enough apples now"
" Better take some hay fever tablets when I get home-
this place is a nightmare"
" I'm hot"
"This dress is scratchy"
" these characters are so badly written- why would she
say that?!"
"Paris sounds exciting- I wish I could leave this town.
Maybe I could, I could steal a horse and some food, I'd
probably make it miles and miles.... No I can't leave my
father"
"I've nearly finished this... I'd better grab a new one on
my way home.

Isabelle U5

The Horns of a Dilemma

This book is rather boring, maybe I should stop reading, well, maybe, but that kind of feels mean in case it gets better. What was the last book that I DNF'd. Ummmm..... Oh yes, it was the one about the cook. The writing was just... I wonder what's for dinner, I hope it's not pasta, although I do like pesto. I wonder if you can make it at home, but u don't really like cooking so, I guess... I should ask what dinner is so I can prepare myself if it is pasta, gosh that sounds like an army thing. I would be way to scared to go into the army, but they do get benefits I. Oh no! I need to do my homework, I can't believe that she set me so much, but what if you read instead, but I don't really want to, it's not a very good book. Ok what about a pros and cons list

Pros : the book could be interesting soon, ummmmmmm

It might be better than homework, ummm okay, cons

I need to do my homework

And

If I start it now I will be happier later, but

I don't really want to do it, so I guess making myself happy right now is a pro. I don't know, okay let me think of something productive to do. I could.... I mean I could take the dog on a walk, but just cold, I wonder whether dogs feel the cold. I guess, right this is not productive, okay, what else could u do. Ok think, think, think, ooooooh what if I... ummmmm, ahhhhh, nothing is coming to me. What if I read, I think that is much better than doing my homework. Ok, I won't DNF the book...

Nina U5



Dramatic Monologues

I felt a quiet sense of pride in my classroom. Today was one of those days when everything seemed to fall into place. The sunlight poured in through the tall windows, illuminating the faces of my bright students, each one so unique, so full of potential. I stopped by Lilith's desk to hand her her assignment...

Anna L5

... it was easy: copying. I revelled in the praise. After all, Tristan had chosen to work hard, and his test paper was so close to mine. It was his fault really; not mine. I bet even Miss Blackwell could tell. Sometimes grit was nothing. You get nowhere with sheer hard work; suffering said it was so. Was it really my fault that Tristan was so oblivious to this? So, I had copied his work, embellished a few answers and presented them to the class. So, I was getting a perfect score and the attention of the school board and Miss Blackwell's undeniable praise. It had been his fault that he said nothing. It had been his fault that he buried himself in silent tears, whilst I was winning. Always winning.

Gabrielle L5

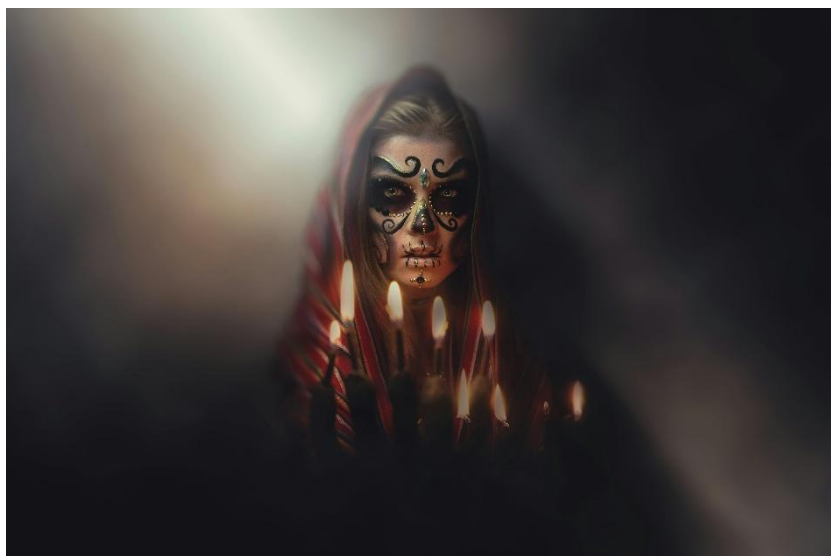


Hey you, please come close
Do you hear it too?
Yes I know you do.
Go on you can trust me,
Listen...
Don't frown, I know you can
Go on, go on
I don't understand.

Hey! Don't wander away
I know you can hear me, don't you lie,
You're like the rest of them.
You can ignore it but it will capture you
Like it did with the rest.
Crazy? No I'm not crazy. I want to
Save you.
Tick, tick,
There now, you see – it will get you in the end.
Time It ticks, it tricks
But moreover – will scratch your soul.

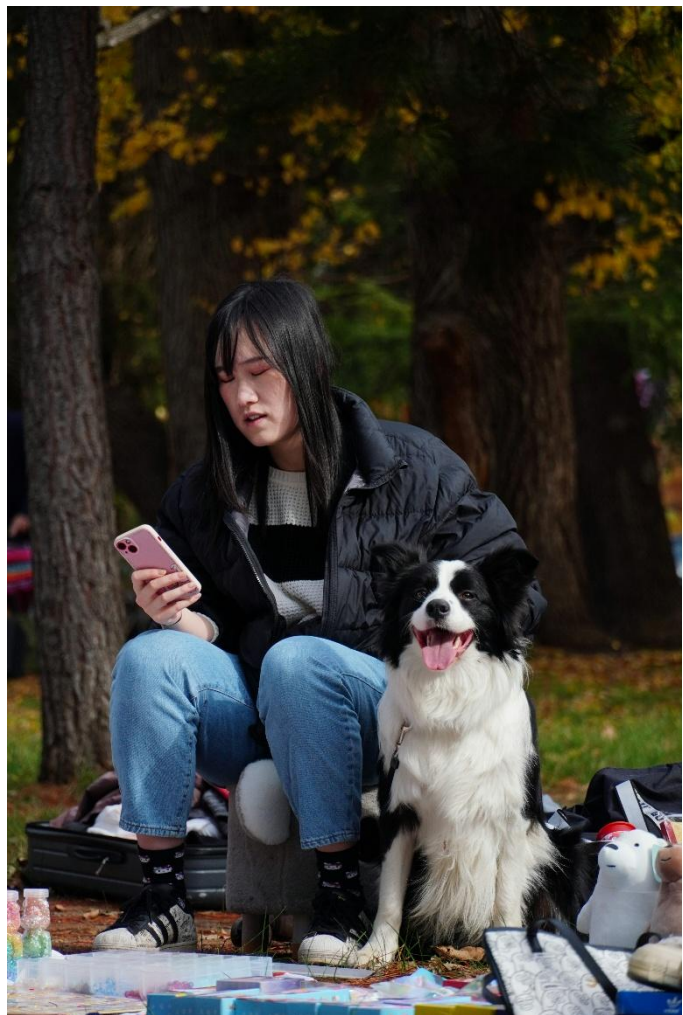
Stop running! I will save you
Hey stop!
You can run but it will never die.
Live in denial, why don't you
I said stop!

Olivia U5



Woof woof, can we play?
Is that a ball, shall I follow it?
Snif snif, what do I smell?
The scent of food wafting through the air!
Growl, why do I smell something else nearby,
Oh no, the ferocious cat towers over me,
Time to run back to mummy.
Bark bark, why is she holding a glowing brick.
Stop and play with me!
Tap tap, put that down,
Come and go for a walk with me!
Under the dazzling streams of beams,
Here I go, skipping with the butterflies,
Playing hide and seek with mummy
I am confused why she still looks at that glowing brick over a bush
In frustration I bark! Can we play?

Beatrice L5



Grumpy From *Snow White*

Hei Ho, Hei Ho, and off to work we go!
Every day, it's all the same to my meaningless existence called life.
Ordered to mine, diminishing our status, we are forced to crouch
Down into the depths. Aching bones and wobbly knees,
I head back knowing the pain will always stay.
It is all the same.

Call me selfish to argue against you all,
In deciding to feed a wandering stranger.
She wears embellished cloths and velvet clogs,
and proclaims that she is "lost".
Our rations are gone, hunger growls loudly,
Within our stomachs as you all fawn over a new acquaintance,
desperate to become her friend

Who are we to submit to others?
Who are we to be taken advantage of,
To satisfy the Queen's glittery greed?

Simply fictional characters.
That's who we are.
"Insolent fools" manipulated by others,
to obey their selfish plot desires,
to act out a role against our free will,
to decay without any purpose of our own.

But that is fine.
I'll just wait for the fortunate fates to cut my strings.
For now, I'll just continue my role
Being grumpy.

Beatrice L5



The first time I remember feeling

The first time I remember feeling revulsion was the first time I ate something that I shouldn't eat. I was in a restaurant eating with my family. My mother then handed me a wet-wipe. At the time, I was 3 or 4 and didn't understand the concept of using a wet-wipe. I started, therefore, licking and chewing it. A bitter taste quickly filled my mouth so I put the wet-wipe aside. Trying to get the awful bitterness away, I drank a massive amount of water but it was no use. I dared not tell my parents because I was afraid that I would get scolded. The few months after the incident, I still tasted the bitterness in my mouth. It was a dreaded demon following me.

Anson L5



The first time I remember feeling different was when I was four and a half. I remember sitting in my kindergarten classroom, staring at a blank page my teacher had left out for me. I struggled through writing a sentence, only I didn't know which hand to use. My pencil marks were rugged and smudged and my letters were vague hieroglyphs building misspelt words. My teacher corrected it- but to me, her red ink left nothing but meaningless scars on the paper. I began to draw, I drew my stories and classwork, shading the people and refining the details. I looked around, everyone's pages were full of neat letters. I looked down, mine was covered in red ink, chicken scratch writing and some doodles. I cried. I still have the same chicken scratch writing, red scars still bleed out onto my page from my English teacher's pen, but I've learned that it's okay - I will always have my drawings to tell my stories and that's better than any words or spellings.

Evelyn L5



The first time I remember feeling really calm was when I sat down on the plumeria tree outside my house with my pet bunny. The sun was streaming through the leaves and like gold flakes kissing the branches. I remember following my pet's stare and looking up at the sky, all of a sudden I realised the beauty around me how the clouds looked liked fluffy candy floss and became aware about the sounds of nature around me. But then I realised there was just myself and nobody else but I wasn't scared instead I felt a sense of calmness washing over me. I remember sitting there for ages without the concept of time just staring into void while unconsciously stroking my pet. At that moment the buzzing thoughts in my mind died down.

Lillian L5



In The Footsteps of Robinson Crusoe

Taking inspiration from Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*, club members wrote journal entries for a character shipwrecked on a desert island.



Dear Diary,

Today is the third year anniversary since I was stranded on this island. This is a milestone for me so I decided to celebrate my achievement of surviving. As usual, I gathered up the essential branches for the fire to keep warm and cook. I can sense that summer is approaching as the days had been warmer. I guess less work for me to carry those heavy branches! I wanted a huge feast for dinner, filled with a big chunk of meat. I waited for my target behind a berry bush. The fattest, juiciest pig came in my direction. I thought to myself as I waited, Oh, I can't imagine how succulent and delicious you are! I raised my spear up and stabbed it into its belly. Back at my shelter, I seasoned it with salt and roasted it over the fire. When I bit into the flesh, it was the best pork I had ever had. I don't particularly like pork back at home but on this island I will eat anything to survive. At the end of dinner, there was a shooting star. The wish? I think we both know.

Anson L5



Dear Diary,

Finally, I've escaped. I had had enough of my parents constantly expecting perfection from me; hitting me if I get back than an A on a simple maths test.

I still can't believe that I managed to steal their boat and sail away before they had even woken up. I just kept sailing south, hoping beyond hope that I would find somewhere that accepted me for who I was instead of expecting perfection 24/7.

Then the storm hit. It was manic and as uncontrollable as a wolf, but I kept pushing through for the glimpse of hope that I would find somewhere that would offer me respect, but suddenly black.

I woke up on this beautiful island lucky to have survived, safe from life, to do whatever I want without judging eyes peering at me constantly.

I have unlimited coconuts! My life is great!

Aurelia U3



Day 32.

By now, I have established what tree is best to harvest fruits from, what shade to sleep under to avoid the sun, which water is safest to drink. But I have not encountered a single clue as to whether or not human life still exists. I have given up hope of finding another breathing body. Now, a world beyond this island seems almost laughable. Everything is sea - the same, engulfing, choking darkness. I am starting to wonder whether this is all a fever dream; how could life out of this island exist? How could there be billions of people in the same world as me, chatting with electronics and skyscrapers and whatnot? The world seemed limitless out there, and yet here, my life revolves around the berry bush and waterhole, which now seem to be my only source of comfort.

Day 36.

A bird landed here today. Briefly. It reminded me of the outside world: a motif of the messages others harbour. Being alone seemed like a solace before, a moment of blissful peace, an escape from what was. The poets have all expressed the beauty of a world away from the hustle and bustle of people; the philosophers a desire to know if complete isolation would strike new ideas, however, I cannot think of the beauties of the dunes surrounding me, cannot think of the eureka moments others can. I am alone. The bird has long gone by now; a mockery of my trapped state. Fate is unkind, I know this. I can barely remember why I am here now. The only thing I know is that I want out.

Day 65.

I saw two ships passing by today. I am struggling to remember how human chatter sounds. The ships could have been my way of escape, but somehow, they did not see me. I tried to light a fire to catch their attention but my resources are running out now. The trees are barren and bare, the bushes devoid of all fruit. They will grow back, of course. I will escape this island, of course.

Gabrielle L5



Nina's character is on a psychological island.

Day 16 of my quest for freedom:

Dear Diary,

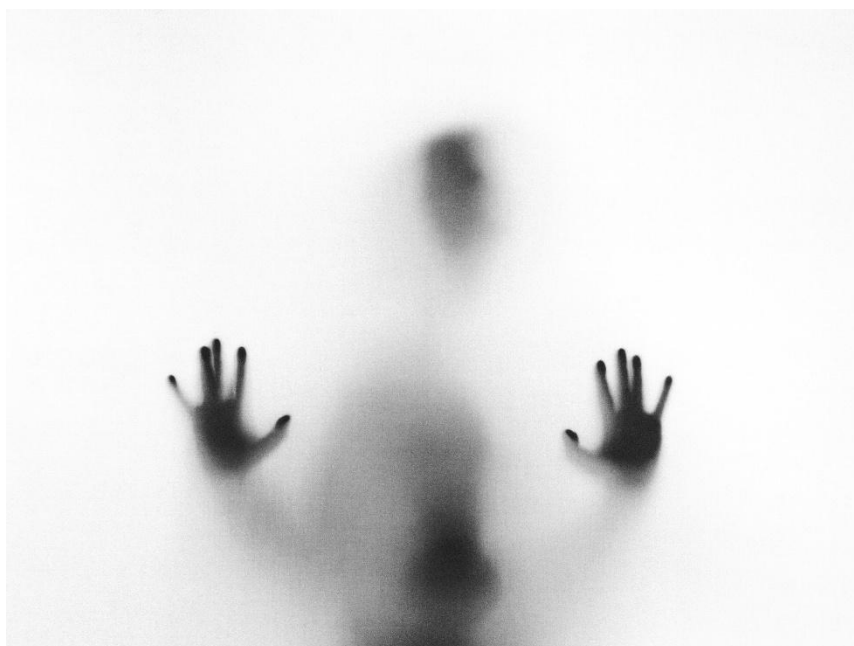
While I was exploring today, over the desolate, barren landscape, I stumbled across an interesting piece of information. There are mammals that live on this island, in these very harsh conditions. This is such an exciting revelation, and I plan on discovering much more about these animals and how they live in such extremes of temperature. I feel like I am slowly healing, however all days become a continuous slog as I keep on exploring. Why is my life like this, why did the accident have to happen? Now I am stuck here, unable to move past this state of oblivion and unknowing. I hope that this discovery of animals in this place shall bring me back. I supposedly loved them, before. All of these unknowns and the endless pressure of figuring everything out is crushing me. How do I stop the sadness of thinking of those I used to love? I may never come back. For everyone's happiness and my sanity, as those cursed things in the corner are really quite annoying, I hope I come back. I wish I had never got into that accident. I wish I didn't have amnesia.

Day 17 of my quest for freedom:

Dear Diary,

As the struggles continue and the endless crying from relatives drags on, I begin to wonder how my quest will turn out. Will I ever leave the desert island of my mind, where I am stranded forever, or will somebody, something save me? I really hope they do, and soon, I don't think I can deal with more sympathetic looks and shocked faces when I don't remember them. Isn't that the point of amnesia? Apparently I am more sarcastic now, not like my old self. Do I want to be like my old self? I feel stuck in this paradox of 'old me' and 'new me'.

Nina U5



To Jason:

Did you see our son's dead bodies? I wonder how you felt when you saw them. That's exactly how I felt when I found out you decided to remarry. Do you remember the time when we first met each other? Do you remember the days that we loved each other so fiercely, so completely, that the world outside our bond seemed to fade into insignificance? And the vows... the vows that contained all our deepest feelings we made together— do you remember them?

I betrayed my own family, I soiled my hands for your ambition, I chose to bear the excruciating pain and gave you two precious children... What did you do to me? You chose to remarry. You chose to abandon me, the woman who gave you everything, just to increase your own status and wealth. And you had the audacity and contemptible sense and told me that you did this all for me, for OUR future. Do you think I am stupid? Do you think that I could be so easily deceived by your hollow and meaningless words? You knew precisely what would happen to me if you did remarry. I would become a despicable woman, and nobody would ever marry me again. And our sons... our innocent, precious sons... they would become children that nobody would love and care for because they are stained by the dishonour of their mother. You knew all of this, but you still chose to remarry.

The moment I discovered your betrayal, my heart throbbed with pain. The darkness of grief seemed to want to kill me. But now I've awoken. The tears I shed for you have dried. You do not deserve me to feel so sad. You are not worthy of my sorrow. You are a contemptible, loathsome, terrible cheater and liar.

Your new bride, that shimmering, foolish girl, burned to a crisp in front of you. How did that feel? And her father, the king, clung to her in his final moments, embracing his dying child. They were victims of your own ambition. They were unfortunate consequences of your own treacherous heart. And our sons... they were so sweet and precious to me, however they are now gone by my hand. Do you feel the emptiness now, Jason? You can cry. You can mourn. You can curse me. But I, Medea, who once wept for your betrayal, now feel a joy so pure and intoxicating, that it seemed to be a sweet voice that sings in my soul. Your unbearable grief is now my greatest triumph. Each piece of your ruined life is a masterpiece of my revenge. From this day forward, every happy memory you ever had will be poisoned by the sight of our dead sons. Your sleep will be filled with their silent accusations and the screams of your new bride. You will live, but you will only be a ghost, haunted by what you lost, forever. My revenge is complete.

Your avenger,
Medea

Annie U4



Ekphrastic Poems



Who is disturbing my peace at my time of rest?
The light is unnaturally bright at night, I must confess.

Oh now I see!
There's a girl in front of me.
She doesn't seem like she's from the village
More like a warrior, full of courage.
Next to her stands her sword,
Not like a maiden, more like a lord.
Her beauty is unmatched, her complexion
Is perfect, anyone will feel affection
Towards this charming lady.

This man is so ridiculous and shady!
Why is he looking at the mighty devil
Like he's lusting for me, this outrageous mortal!
I can smell the alcohol, cheap, bad quality whisky.
He must have drank a lot, looking tipsy.

Anson L5



Everywhere I look;
Soft white snow,
As white as a blank canvas,
Waiting to be painted on;
As soft as a plump pillow,
Waiting to be slept on.

I hear ringing in the distance;
Church bells,
Calling people into the warm,
Away from the bleak and crisp world
Just sitting outside,
Frozen and waiting.

A cart comes rattling down the track,
Shattering the silence,
Of the quiet world around me.
A girl screams,
As she gets hit with a ball of snow,
The sound makes me wince.

I love the silence,
The peace of the blank snow,
And the gentle ringing of the bells.
It brings me a lasting feeling,
A feeling of hope,
A feeling of joy.

Aurelia U3



The Church at Auvers – Van Gogh

Shadows darken the path I walk,
midnight clouds shut out the heavens
blocking the angel's rays of light.

time passes, but no sun arrives,
time passes, but no hours tick by,
time passes, but time does not pass.

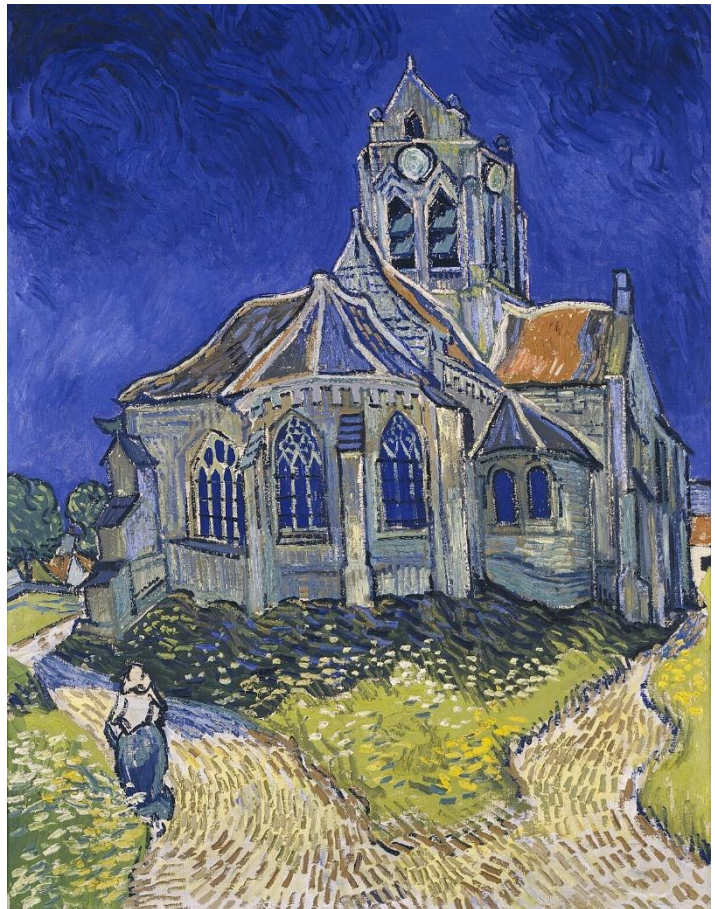
the clock upon the tallest spire
is empty and bare, with no hands
to count the moments flying by.

I walk, I walk, I walk, I walk,
down the path that is never bright,
always choosing left, never right.

Just to repeat it all again
the next day and the next and next,
over and over and over.

But is it really tomorrow,
if today cannot ever end?

Madeleine L5



Autumn breathes on my neck
I wrap my scarf closer.
The Sun shines and the leaves fall;
A little dog races by,
chasing a freshly fallen leaf.
I smile—how innocent they are.

Lights shines through the leaves,
Lighting a glittery path
It reminds me, what my mother said:
It's like your future!
Like my future?
I beam—Yes, like my future.

Shades brought shapes;
Shapes brought life.
Life brought me!
I grinned—I'm really unique.

Nicole U3



Self Portrait with Death Playing The Fiddle – Arnold Böcklin



Fiddle Player

My heart only beats for you,
I love you with every beat of the heart that you're breaking.
Was your love for me even true?
I give to you all my life, and my soul that you're taking.
You take my breath away,
Loving you kills me.
I'm begging you to stay,
But you only leave me.
You've taken my soul, my light my joy,
You've played me like a fiddle, no more than a toy.
You've taken my talents, my skill, adoration
And left me with this numbness beyond comprehension.
I fell in love with a shadow, with the melodic tune
But the same shadow used me, bled me dry like a prune.
There's nothing of me left, a broken heart in a casket
But still I'm called selfish, nothing more than an artist.
I let you mould me, I became your clay,
But no matter how much you took, what you changed
I was never enough, things just weren't the same.
I know you never loved me, but still all the same,
I'll love you forever, until I decay,
Until the strings on that fiddle refuse to play,
Until the bristles in my paint brush fall and fray.

Silly mortal, you lovesick man,
I used you, this was all my plan.
My fiddle won't play without someone to sing for,
You were nothing more than an inspiration
I used your pain, your light, your core,
All for a little musical decoration.
Your pain was beautiful,
Your light so warm,
But I am just death
And your suffering was suitable
So now I'll leave you, leave your heart torn.

Evelyn L5





The Substandard Bairn

My sisters, brothers, mother, father and I have all waited for this day;
For this pink, pig-bellied sausage-child to blow my sweet, tender heart away.
I have toiled, I have laboured, I have fared many a bad time:
All for this demon of a child to look like nothing but a crime.

Gabrielle L5

The Substandard Matriarch

I stared at the women holding me, supposedly called mother.
Her eyes bore into mine with disappointment, just like no other.
Her furrowed brows and turned down frown reflected the ones of mine
Her sore eyes and blatant lies made my world turn upside down.
How can I call this one mother when she won't call me son
How can I wake up and expect this world to be fun.
How can I let myself feel and live free,
When all she see is disappointment in me?

Someone reaches their crooked hand for my head
Maybe they will take me up to bed?
My mother will never wish me a goodnight
She will never think to tuck me in tight.
I hope this person will take me away
This woman is my mother, this cannot be the only way.

Sophia L5



The Return of the Prodigal Son - Rembrandt



The Reunion

Clutching his heart, a weary figure bends,
His guilt engulfs the room, accompanied by sobs;
His scrapped rags and worn out soles,
Bear the memory of his reckless wanderings;
His bloodied feet and beaten back,
Reflect what his morals lack.

The father's tender arms around this unfaithful son,
Gently embrace like an open door;
Glaring down at his father, the elder brother stands,
Eager to speak his mocking and inferior thoughts
Of this show of compassion,
Reflecting his menacing and horrifying gaze.

Beatrice L5



Holiday On Earth

Taking my seat, I squished myself in to sit perfectly, and rigged on the spaceship, the locker smell of cold metal and sterile air made my heart race with anticipation. This is going to be amazing. I couldn't help stretching my face into a toothy grin as I looked through a circular window to my left. The space flight satellites beeping about us, measuring infinities of everything, floating around.

Luna L5



The Alien's Holiday

The city, fuelling so many stories
that I've grown up amongst, sprawls ahead.
I know that, yet I can't see it
in front of me. All I can see are
the heavy clouds enveloping all,
the dark shadow rolling down the dim roads.
London is trapped underneath the smog.
They didn't mention that in the stories.
I suppose I'm not surprised,
for it's only ever the beauty that's
remembered,
no matter the planet, the galaxy.



Madeleine L5



Earth?

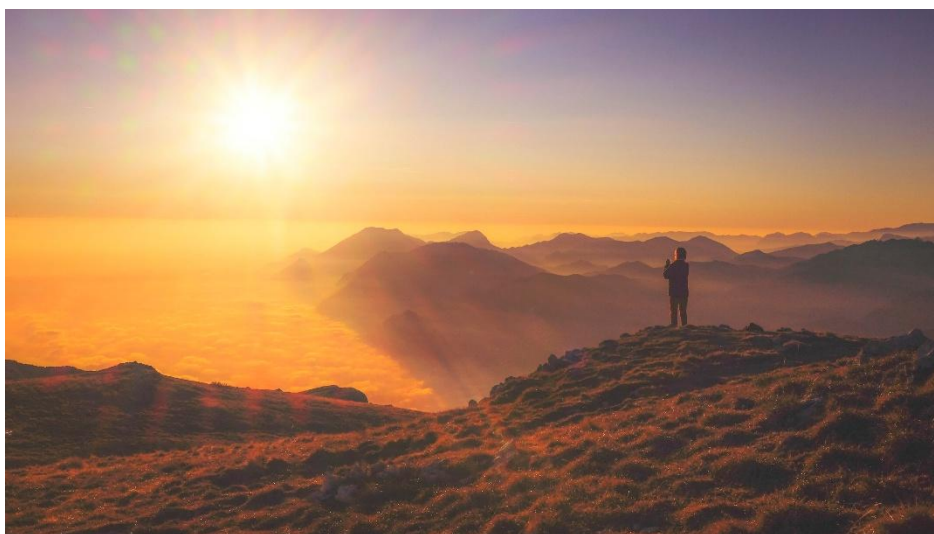
It's not what I thought. My chest feels heavy.
Guilt hangs in the stale air, forgotten but not quite forgiven.
I take one step than another, I'm not ready
It's carnage and flames, tyranny and lies badly hidden
Eight billion broken lives,
Four billion heart broken wives.
Nuclear fumes hang with the guilt,
Trees, plants, flowers wilt
Lives ended here, more than the human race
Zebras, cats, goats all saw deface.
I came here for history, travelled past nebulae
All I witness is misery, constant and regular.
Earth was never the planet of the wise,
It's a floating rock full of the consequences of lies.
Earth is heartbreak and betrayal, greed and hurt
And forever it will lie here, toxic and burnt.

Evelyn L5

The Alien's Holiday

I stepped into the blazing yellow light, leaving my space shuttle behind. I was taken aback at the beauty of this planet. I'd heard from my friends and family whom have visited this place before how the sun shines yellow, making everything look lighter. Whereas back home everything is given a darker blue tint from the cerulean star.

Sophia L5



Glasses

Two girls sit, together on a bench
Each, identical to each other:
except for one tiny,
almost invisible, infinitesimal difference.
The girl on the left is wearing
a pair of new, barely worn, circular
glasses.

These glasses seem quite ordinary, in a sea of specs
and perfect vision
But for the girl, they were quite out of the ordinary.
Without her new, barely worn, circular glasses,
the world seemed to bend to her will,
colours and shapes morphed into images as she perceived them

Gabrielle L5



The lady in taxi C

The lady who was in 38 C
that's what everyone tells me
Came into my taxi C.
She wore a smiley face
with sea blue eyes.
Her age looks around ninety
But she gives the feeling
That she's around twenty.
She came in and said,
"Yay! Off to the ferris wheel! "
I was confounded
What is wrong with her?
Life is bad
As a taxi driver
You meet all kind of people
Crazy, depressed
Joyful, silent
But this lady
Who's in my taxi C
Seems very special indeed.



Nicole U3



Others

And people, they write about people.
They write about each other.
As if time was running out and eternity was an hour.

And others can write, so much better than I can
And others can write music to accompany their thoughts, and
I just feel like I jumble a combination on a page.
That I'm running out of ideas like I'm running out of pain.

And I hate every poem, every lyric, every line.
So, I hate my voice like I hate every rhyme.
So instead, I just shut my eyes and imagine a song
That sings like I could, but without feeling wrong.

And all I can hear, in my own tangled mind,
Is the thoughts and the feelings that I left behind.
Because when I write about myself, or I write under the covers,
I'm writing about somebody else – who writes about others.

Summer U6

