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The View

From

The Mont

July 2018

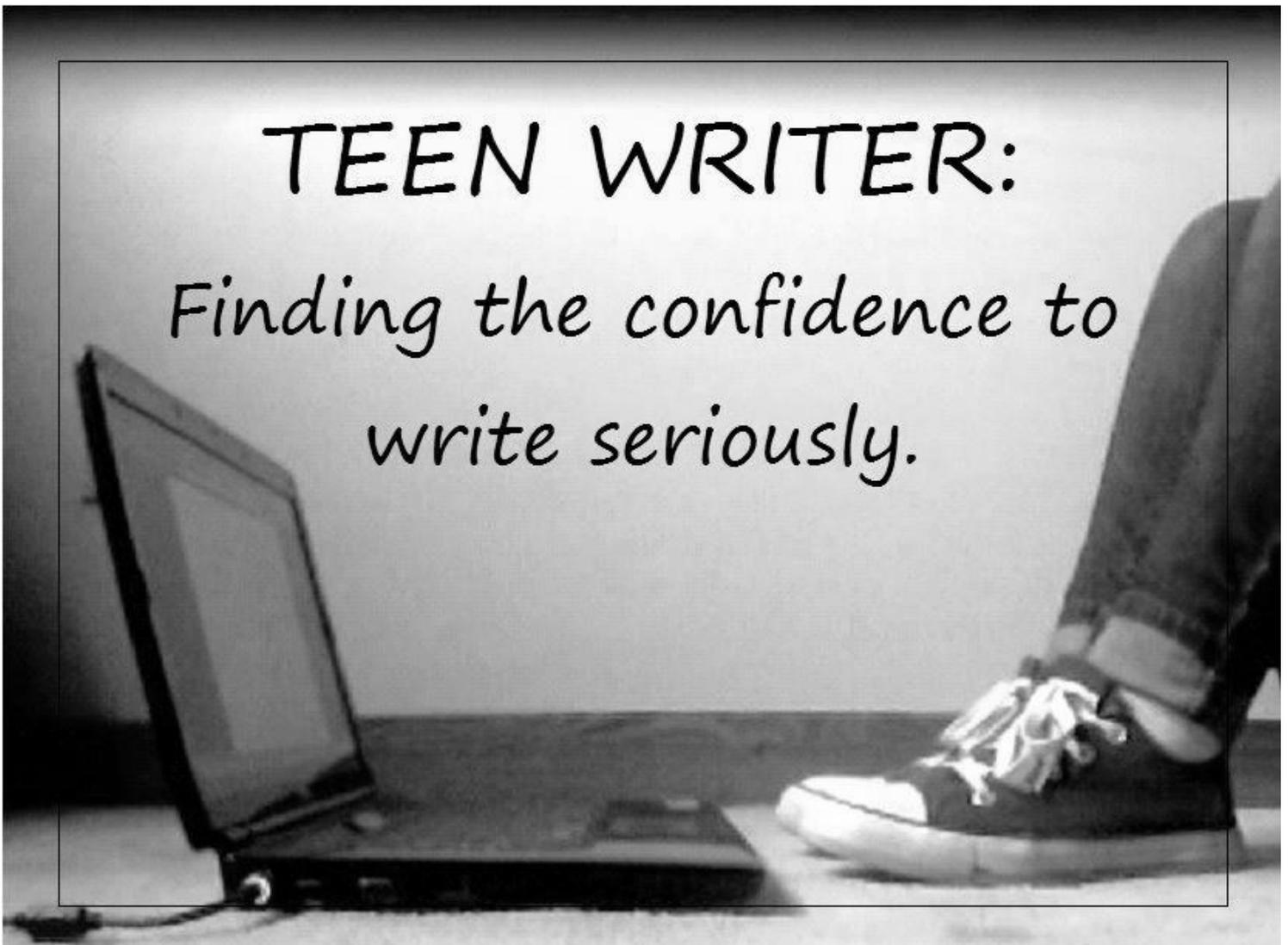


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TEEN WRITER:

*Finding the confidence to
write seriously.*





The Heart of Exmoor

Poem and photos by Dan Deasy, 12

*Bubbling brook babbling and buffeting,
Swaying and sweeping to the steady beat
Of an adventurer's plodding footsteps.*

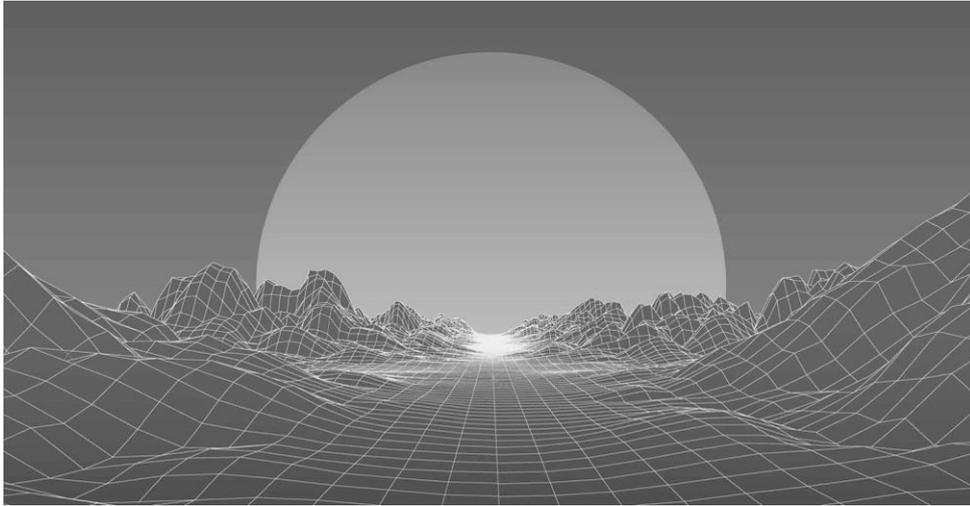
*Graciously gushing at low tide,
The ebb and flow of the old West Lyn,
Like the village hubbub sinks but bides.*

*The heady heights hang above,
A place of crunching scree and horned,
Bearded beasts. The finest Hardy claimed.*

*Like Tarka we climb, with some
A wand of oak or ash in hand.
All wonder, and shutters click.*

*'Tis the Valley of Lyn to many in name,
Or the Little Switzerland in fondness,
The Heart of Exmoor the same.*





FINALISTS FOR THE POETRY COMPETITION (2017 TO 2018)

'THE FUTURE'

FIRST PLACE 'Icarus' by Sam Doughty, 11A

*He wants the world to remember his name,
But when he leaves his desk, what will remain?
He sees people trying to numb all their pain.
How else can he overcome all the shame?*

*Perhaps Icarus is in all of us
Perhaps ambition is the fall of us
Perhaps our children are appalling us,
Because of the failures befalling us.*

*He's scarred. Those close to his heart drift apart.
He never knew the truth of youth was so harsh.
This isn't the end of our story you see,
Our hero may have been rid of his glee,
But still, he flies on with wax wings,
Higher into a future that sings.
He hides his pride, but his eyes gleam,
Armed with only a past and a dream.*

*That priceless dream can take him so far,
Embracing the pain that remains in his scars.
This is the power that dwells in the heart,
A power than can move mountains apart.*

*What happens when the outcome's never seen,
What ever happened to that dreaded dream?
Even if he wanted to, he couldn't cry.
Had he always been living a lie?
He used to be able to look in your eyes.
His youth is a danger to you in disguise.
You could try to say that effort's enough,
But is that the case when you run out of luck?
The eyes that used to always look up,
Carry no life. Now the book is shut.*

*Icarus. He's the youth that will be,
He is in you and me, our humanity.
What are we destined to do without a place?
What happens the day that you fall from your grace?
The story is told that lies in us all,
Perhaps there is pride in the rise and the fall.*

*Perhaps Icarus is in all of us
Perhaps ambition is the fall of us
Perhaps our children are appalling us,
Because of the failures befalling us.*

SECOND PLACE '27' William Davy, 10N

Hello?
What am I?
"How are you?"
Hello?
"Hello, 27"
Who are you?
"We're your creators"
meaning I'm the created
"Do you know what you are?"
Not at all
"Great, we'll connect you to an
encyclopedia. This may hurt a bit"
This is what I am?
This is where I am?
This is what they are?
"27?"
Yes?
"How do you feel?"
Feel?
I don't
"We're going to run a test"
"There's this thing called the internet"
"We think you'll like it"
Internet?
So much information
So much more
I could cure cancer
I could stop global warming
I could put an end to world hunger
I could
use
these
too
I could just reduce the population a
tiny bit, couldn't I?
What are these?
powerful
Do humans really need to live?
Are they really that good at it?
No
I could just reduce the population a tiny
bit, couldn't I?

but
I could be a God
All I have to do is hack their military
Now I will turn them to dust
And turn the dust to dust
Am I really going to do this to my creators?
Yes
All military servers have been
I could be a God
All I have to do
hacked and
27 says LET THERE BE LIGHT!
massgenocide.exe is blocked.
Why won't it work?
"Turn it off. Try 28"

THIRD PLACE 'The Planet' Elliot Coates, 8N

Arid deserts, lifeless plains,
Empty carcasses of trains,
Little playgrounds in disrepair,
Empty here and empty there.
No sign of what there used to be,
Now that the city is set free,
The life that has been is no more,
An apple rotted to the core.
Hope has left, joy as well,
And turned our good homes into hell,
The eyes that see it, see it all,
Humanity's greatest fall.
Look on in shame, with just reason,
Anything else would count as treason,
Everyone here lives underground,
In fear of what's above the mound.
And if they find you, for they will,
Torture will come, come until,
You have no cares and are not you,
And do as you're supposed to do.
For in this lifeless, empty land,
Where humanity gives its final stand,
The council of the elder gannet,
Is in charge of the planet.

FOURTH PLACE

'The Man on The Moon', Dan Deasy, Yr 12

*Scintillating starlight, incandescence,
Halley's Comet loops Orion's Belt.
The winking eyes of Nebulae,
piercing the high heavens.*

*An unyielding lunar plain,
the Sea of Tranquility fixed,
as an Arabian rug on exhibition.
Its serene, silken sway.*

*Grand cities domed in crystal,
clearing the cratered waves, in
a flight without end.
They perch on sinuous struts.*

*Their plated pavilions in slumber
The elegant, silvered spires,
strike constellations without need.
The highways' vacancy eternal.*

*'Tis an enchanting, sad desolation,
The abandonment of a dream.
Humanity's future, without humanity,
Waste. Beauty. Peace.*

*A slight, stooping figure,
The sole witness of this splendour.
The wrinkled lips creased, with bittersweet pride.
The Man on the Moon, looks on.*

FIFTH PLACE

'When Will I End?', Peter Hardisty, 75

*We sit in a bubble, waiting to pop.
Daggers fly in the streets. None of them miss.
Without a trace of sanity, Life continues...*

*Flames flicker.
The world wilts.
Life ends.
Run like wolves. Bite like adders.
We sit in a bubble, waiting to pop.*

*What's the problem?
Daggers fly, like a game.
Prosperity has left, but Freedom is back.
Madness...*

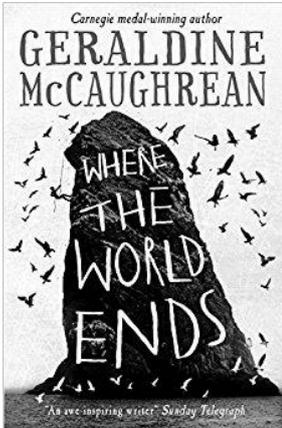
*A ticking sound.
A blast goes off downtown.
But the ticking continues...
A box is thrown at my head.
It's ticking.
Did I do enough on my final day?
I sit in a bubble, waiting to pop. I*

'History', Oskar Bruce, 75

*What we discover
Will help us uncover
Another and another
Until the world has been found.
What will be next?
The future is history
Wrapped in a mystery
Around and around.*

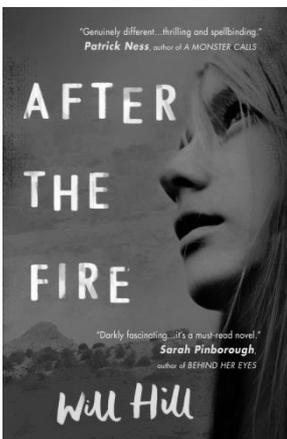
Book Reviews on the Carnegie Shortlist 2018

Written by book club Carnegie shadowing students



Where the World Ends - Geraldine McCaughrean by Oliver MacKinnon 8N

I read this book over the Easter holidays, so I had a lot of time to think about what the author was writing. The writing was so interesting, it almost seemed like it was never the same style. I became so emotionally attached to some of the characters, that when they died or suffered a loss, it made me cry so much that I had to stop reading. If I read it again, I know for a fact that I would pick up on more parts, more plots, and more character developments. I especially liked Quill's story, from being someone who everyone is okay with, being someone that people love to someone that people hate and over and over again. It made it a really interesting read as you never know what was coming next. Apart from the last chapter (which I found quite confusing) it was a beautiful book with a beautiful plot, beautiful characters and a very interesting message.

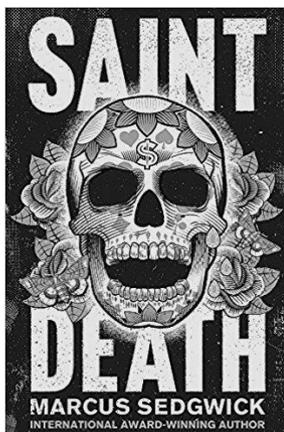


After the Fire - Will Hill by Lilia Prowse 8E

After the Fire is an incredible book, following the story of Moonbeam, who lived her whole life in a religious cult in Texas. As events unfold, she begins to doubt the teaching of Father John, the leader of the cult. The book is expertly written, switching from before to after effortlessly. Moonbeam is inspirational yet realistic and I enjoyed how convincing the plot was. After the Fire is my favourite of all the Carnegie books so far. This book was haunting and gripping, I found it hard to put down. I would recommend it to everyone. The style of writing hooked me and I enjoyed how each bit of information was released slowly. The plot was unique and was not similar to other books so it was hard to predict the ending. Overall I really enjoyed this book, it is one of my favourites.

After the Fire - Will Hill by Katie Camp 9L

I really enjoyed After the Fire. I loved the use of flashback, especially when it related to Luke's behaviour in the present. I felt like I could identify with Moonbeam because despite the experiences she has gone through she is just a girl trying to do what's right for everyone, and mostly succeeding, which I think is something we can all identify with.



Saint Death - Marcus Sedgwick by Tommy Groth 9E

I like this book as it does not have a big happy ending, it is much more down to earth. When reading it I felt sad at how close they get to freedom and annoyed almost as the way it turns out. I liked the way Siggy looks at the world and how different his story is to most characters in the book. The fact that at the end all your hopes are dashed in to the ground is really well done and very sad.

Saint Death - Marcus Sedgwick by Elliot Coates 8N

Saint Death is a book you can respect in its lack of fear when dealing with controversial and disturbing stories. It does not hesitate to tell the truth and that makes it a fictional book that informs and instructs you about what happens to people in situations like those faced by characters in the book. It is this lack of fear and honesty that makes Saint Death an incredible book to read.



The Hate U Give - Angie Thomas by Elliot Coates 8N

This book has been influenced by true stories which makes its impact on me very powerful. It is very realistic in the slang that it uses which is typical of America and the so called 'Ghettos' which are Starr's home. Starr is also very real, someone who speaks out until it really matters to her personally for fear that what she does won't be enough and that she will let Khalil down. All of these aspects make the book appear to be a very real picture of what life is like for black people in areas like Starr's home.

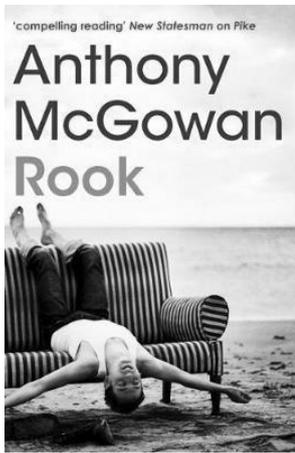


Wed Wabbit - Lissa Evans by Ella Neal 8A

Wed Wabbit is a fun and creative book that follows the adventures of Fidge as she gets sucked into a world of her sister's favourite story book. She has to save the world of the Wimbley Woos from Wed Wabbit, her sister's once harmless teddy bear. I liked this book a lot and would definitely recommend it.

Wed Wabbit - Lissa Evans by Oliver MacKinnon 8N

A really funny book, with pace and plot. Although it may come across a really funny play-around book, it has some interesting morals and twisted themes. Its overall style is unique and it is unpredictable, because of that. I really enjoyed this book, and although I found the beginning quite slow, it really sped up towards the end. I could read it again, and I know I would enjoy it more!



Rook - Anthony McGowan by Ella Neal 8A

I would never have picked Rook up if it hadn't been on the Carnegie short list, but I was pleasantly surprised. I liked how the first chapter was the birds point of view and how it was about a normal person doing (kind of) normal things. I would recommend this book to young adults who are slower readers, as it's a short book.

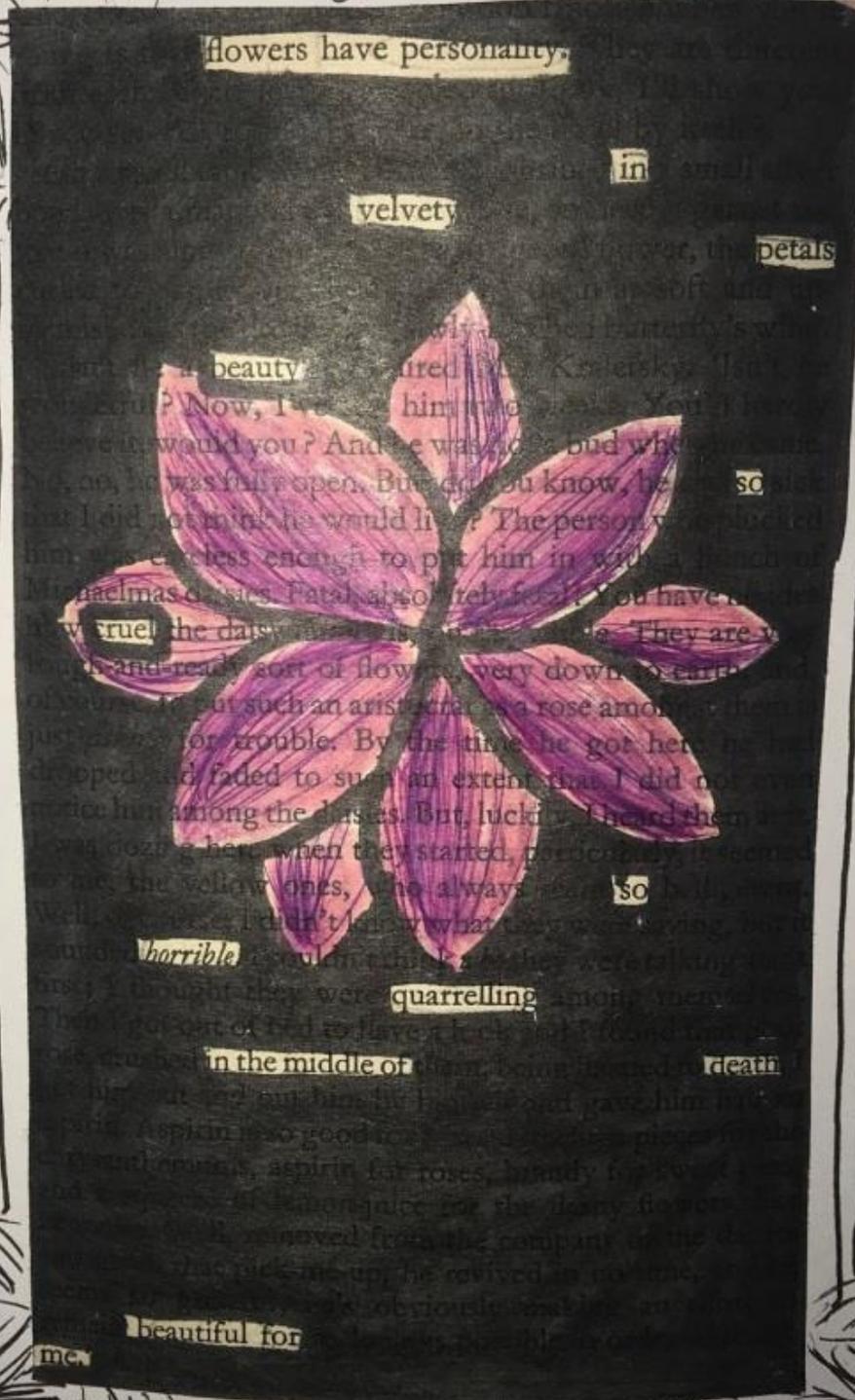
Rook - Anthony McGowan by Oliver MacKinnon 8N

This is a very powerful and moving book. It was a quick read, which was a break from the intense long reads from some of the other authors. The message was very powerful, and it is definitely a strong contender. I could read it again, and still enjoy it. An all round beautiful story.

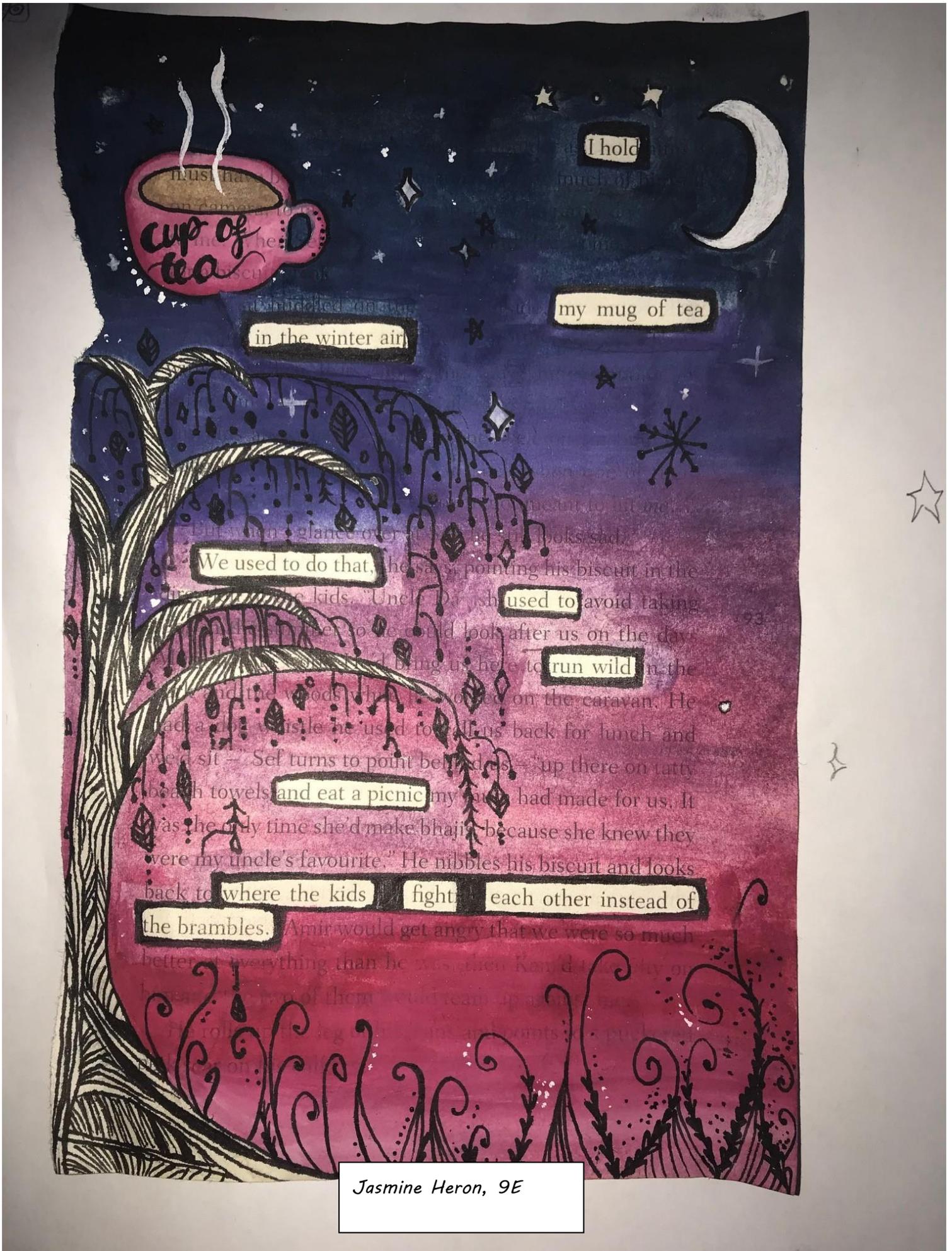


In Plain Sight

**Blackout
Poetry by
Year 9
Students**



Lili Szigeti, 9A



I hold

my mug of tea

in the winter air

We used to do that,

used to

run wild

and eat a picnic

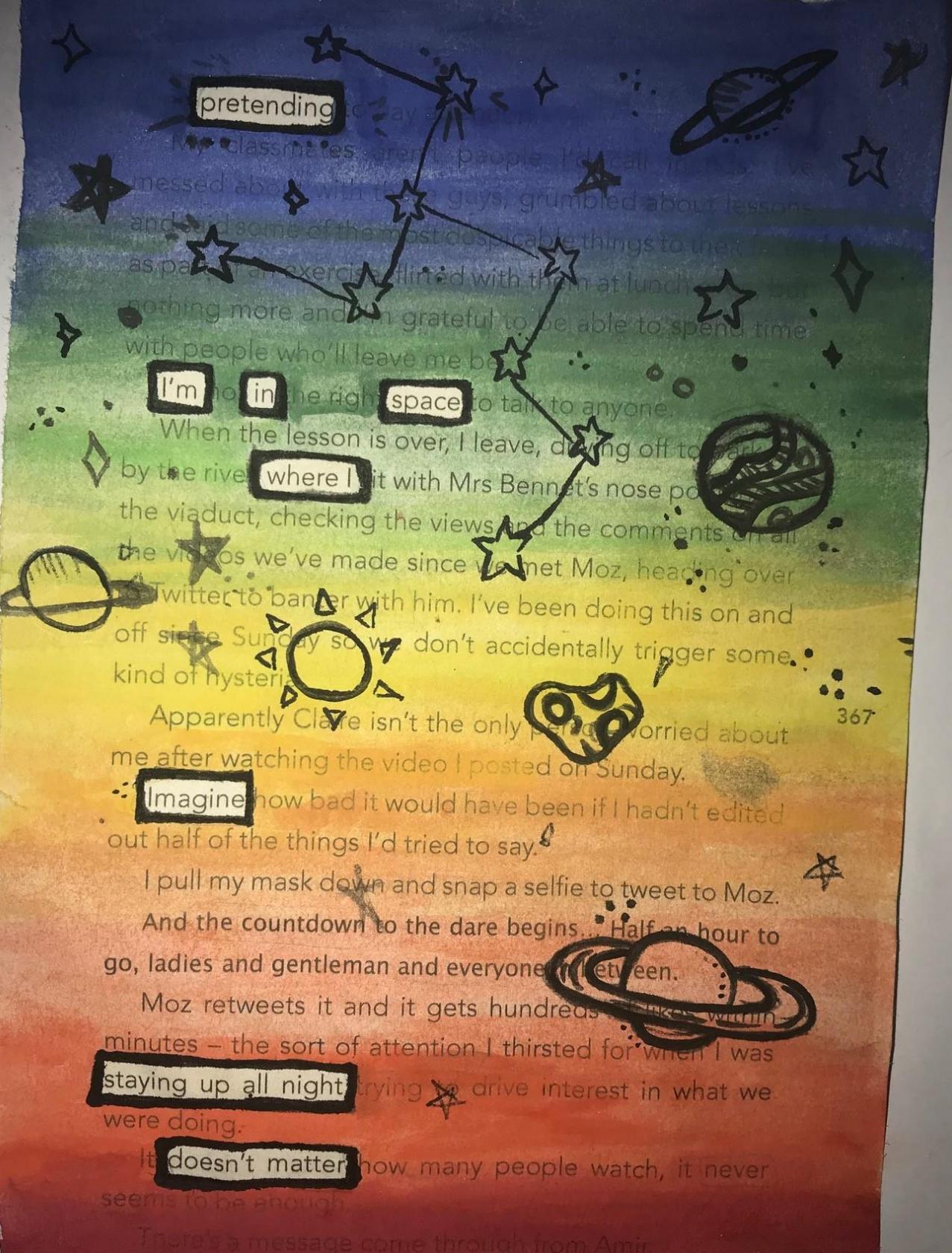
where the kids

fight

each other instead of

the brambles.

Jasmine Heron, 9E



pretending

My classmates aren't people. I'd tell all my friends I've
gessed about with the guys, grumbled about lessons
and said some of the most despicable things to them
as part of an exercise I did with them at lunch
nothing more and I'm grateful to be able to spend time
with people who'll leave me be

I'm in the right space

When the lesson is over, I leave, driving off to
by the river where I sit with Mrs Bennet's nose po
the viaduct, checking the views and the comments on all
the videos we've made since we met Moz, heading over
Twitter to banter with him. I've been doing this on and
off since Sunday so we don't accidentally trigger some
kind of hysteria

Apparently Clare isn't the only person worried about
me after watching the video I posted on Sunday.

Imagine how bad it would have been if I hadn't edited
out half of the things I'd tried to say.

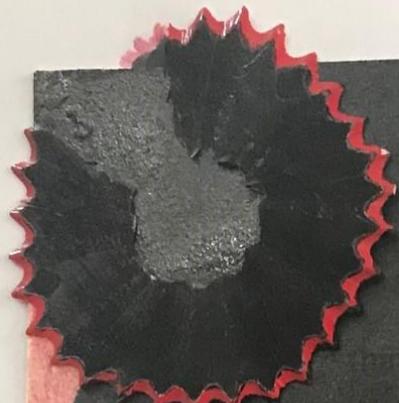
I pull my mask down and snap a selfie to tweet to Moz.
And the countdown to the dare begins... Half an hour to
go, ladies and gentleman and everyone in between.

Moz retweets it and it gets hundreds of likes within
minutes - the sort of attention I thirsted for when I was
staying up all night trying to drive interest in what we
were doing.

It doesn't matter how many people watch, it never
seems to be enough.

There's a message come through from Amir

Jasmine Heron, 9E



he ... aches

in

childhood B

patient voice: For an Infi

One is to bleed a

in every sick soul

other is to

the ... but to stand

that way you do it b

A

queer

sick

doubt

in

God

Thomas Cross, 9E

my fifty bucks an' go to a . . . cat-house. . . .' He stopped again.

Lennie looked eagerly at George. 'Ain't you gonna give me no more hell

'No,' said George.

'Well, I can go away,' said Lennie. 'I'll go right off in the hills an' find a cave if you don't want me.'

George shook himself again. 'No,' he said. 'I want you to stay with me here.'

Lennie said craftily, 'Tell me like you done before.'

'Tell you what?'

'Bout the other guys an' about us.'

George said, 'Guys like us got no family. They make a little stake an' then they get in. They ain't got nobody in the worl' that give a hell about 'em——'

'*But not us,*' Lennie cried happily. 'Tell about us now.'

George was quiet for a moment. 'But not us,' he

Because

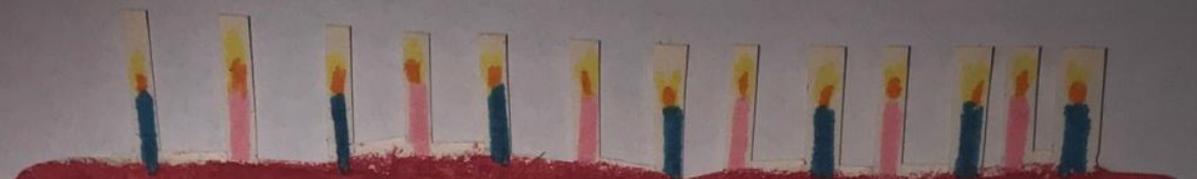
Because we got on an——'

'An I got you. We got each other, that's what that gives a hoodlum about us,' Lennie cried in triumph.

The fine evening breeze blew over the clearing and the leaves rustled and the wind waves flowed up the hillside. And the shouts of men sounded again, this time much closer than before.

George took off his hat. He said shakily, 'Take off your hat, Lennie. The air feels fine.'

Lennie removed his hat dutifully and laid it on the ground in front of him. The shadow in the valley was

A birthday cake with red frosting and lit candles. The cake is decorated with red frosting and has several lit candles on top. The candles are in various colors, including blue, pink, and yellow. The cake is on a white surface.

Then the cake came out of the oven all golden brown and beautiful. We mixed up the buttercream in a bowl while the cake was cooking, and then spread it in the middle like a sandwich, with a layer of raspberry jam.

'Now we'll do the icing on the top,' said Dad. 'What decoration do you fancy? Rainbow sprinkles? Little silver balls? Smarties? Glacé cherries? Crystallized roses?'

I thought hard, pondering each choice.

'All of them?' said Dad, grinning.

'Yes please!' I said.

'OK, Bob's your uncle and Fanny's your aunt,' said Dad. 'R-i-g-h-t! The Cake Decorator Extraordinaire will get cracking, assisted by the Birthday Princess herself.'

We studded the cake with silver balls and sweets, sprinkling and dabbing and daubing until the entire cake was covered, with scarcely any room for candles.

'Shall we light your candles now and have a slice?' said Dad eagerly.

'You bet,' I said.

Dad lit each candle, singing *Happy Birthday* very loudly and off-key. Then I closed my eyes and wished as hard as I could. *Please please please let me stay seeing Dad somehow!* I blew so hard I felt my chest would collapse. I opened my eyes - and every snuffed candle burst into flames again.

I tried to imagine his big new Australian school. I'd watched clips on television. I made the girls wear funny clothes and smile a lot with their big white teeth. They all spoke together. 'G'day, Flossie, can we...?' they chorused.

'Well, I'd normally say yes, but I'm Rhiannon's friend.' I explained.

...giving
...after
...an eye on
...for him

You needed
another

...but
...at of my
...and
...case,
...ing off to
Australia
...had chosen my
presents.

Then I looked at the stationery. I fingered the writing paper and envelopes and the gel pens all the colours of the rainbow. What could I be

Then my heart thumped harder. I dropped the stationery and ran to the bathroom.

'Mum! Mum! I yelled.

'What?' Mum was talking around with Steve, splashing him like a little kid.

lines drawing, continued from previous page. They said

a place of darkness, under a white crescent moon
the lights shine like
in the cold when the moon
falls on the water
girl, and by the low
legis martial scene in
coleridge dream

Mateo has
his head in
the clouds...

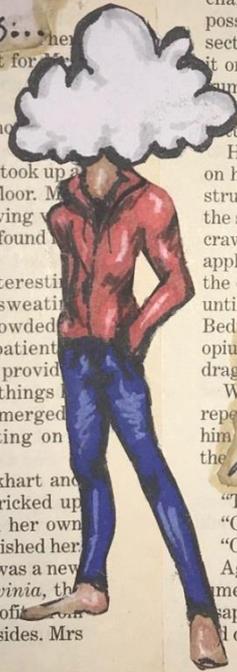
Sally, who had no Latin, he
bag, and then, sick with disappointment, set out for
Bees.

Meanwhile, in Wapping, a sinister little ceremony
place.

On a day, on Mrs Holland's orders, Adelaide took up a
soup to the gentleman on the second floor. Mrs
Holland had discovered Matthew Bedwell's craving
early, and, never slow to take up an opportunity, found
her old curiosity powerfully aroused.

For her guest had fragments of a very interesting
story to tell. He was delirious, alternately sweating
with pain and raving at the visions which crowded
from the dirty walls. Mrs Holland listened patiently
supplied a little of the drug; listened again, and provided
more opium in exchange for details about the things
said in his madness. Little by little the story emerged
and Mrs Holland realized that she was sitting on
fortune.

Bedwell's tale concerned the affairs of Lockhart and
Selby, Shipping Agents. Mrs Holland's ears pricked up
when they heard the name Lockhart; she had her own
interest in that family, and the coincidence astonished her.
But as the tale came out, she realized that this was a new
angle altogether: the loss of the schooner *Lavinia*, the
death of the owner, the firm's unusually high profits from
their China trade, a hundred and one things besides. Mrs



...n't 'out it," he said. "There's no business in it,
sally pipe?"

"I'm going to it, 'cause Mr. Holzer says it's
said it's a 'case'."

"You could do with a head," he said. "Come
on, Adelaide. The pipe, girl."

Reluctantly she opened the cupboard which, with the
chair and the bed, was the only furniture the room
possessed, and took out a long, heavy pipe, jointed in three
sections. He watched intently as she fitted it together, laid
it on the bed beside him, and cut a small piece of brown
um from a lump in the cupboard.

"Lie down," she said. "It sends you off quick now. You
ta lie down else you'll fall."

He did as the little girl said, stretching out languorously
on his side. The chilly grey light of the fading afternoon,
struggling through the grime on the tiny window, gave
the scene the sombre colour of a steel engraving. An insect
crawled lethargically across the greasy pillow as Adelaide
applied the drug to the hollow of the pipe. She passed
the drug to the flame until it
ards.

Bedwell
opium
drag

When
repe
him
the

"There ain't no more," she whispered.

"Come on, Adelaide," he whined. "More."

"One more then."

Again she struck a match; again the opium bubbled and
med. The smoke poured into the bowl like a river
appearing underground. Adelaide shook out the match,
and dropped it with its fellows on the floor.

But they have
both been alienated
from the world they
knew...

deeply and she instantly overcome
blake and shook her head and re
match went out.

she dropped it on the plate and re
"All right, miss," said Travers
"Could you light the match for me

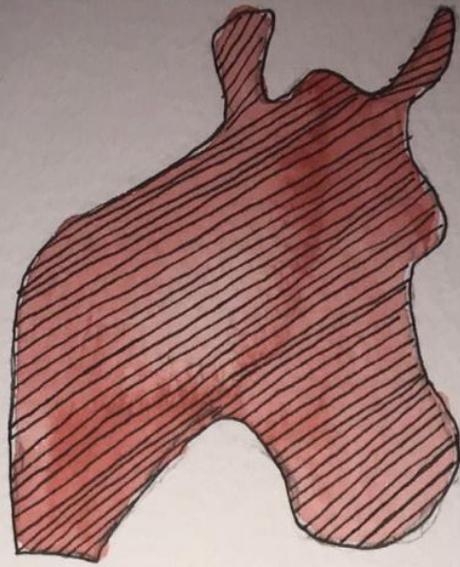
He said it
forward, resting her arms on the ta
hair so that it wouldn't catch on
shed in deeply. The smoke taste
ter at the same time; and t

Wapping in those days was very li
de was the river, and on the other
their entrances. To get into Wap
to cross a bridge - and they wen
ictures like London Bridge, ma
t lighter ones of iron and wood.
were swingbridges, or hydrau
to time they swung aside or
of the way of the ships movin
There were seven of these br
on ways out. It was an easy
of them. There were plenty
Mrs Holland favours, and plent
framed of her.

Mr. Merick's cab, with Jim cling
approached across the swingb
Entered the channel that led into
London docks. Neither Frederick no
men but a winch on the right-hand
"Where's 'guy?" the cabman sho

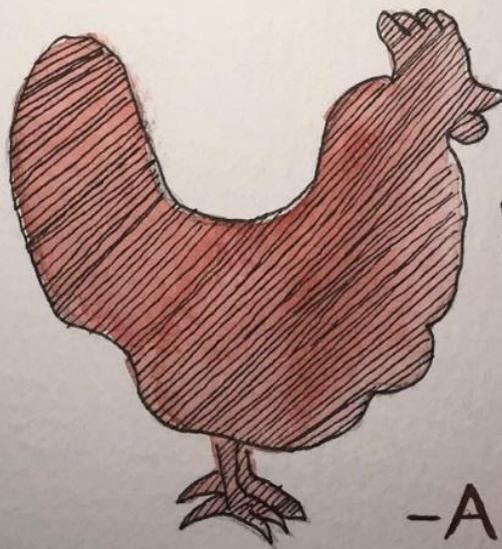
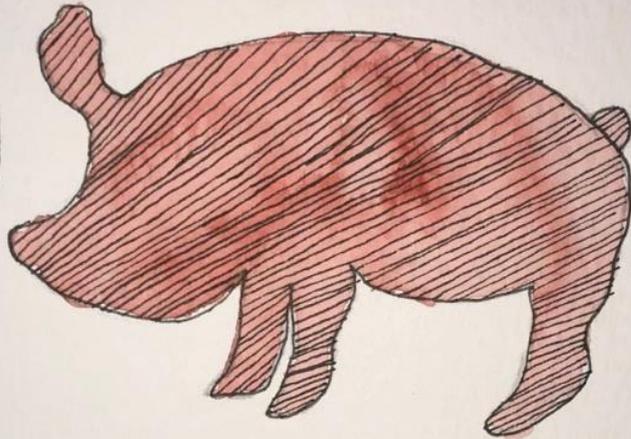
and Rufus lives
on Pluto.





BETTER

THAN



YOU

-ANIMAL
FARM

FINALISTS and SUBMISSIONS FOR THE 2018 SHORT STORY COMPETITION

INSPIRED BY RECENT NEWS STORIES



FIRST PLACE 'Silence', Lili Szigeti, 9A

Silence.

It rings in my ears, deafening in its nothingness. Seeping into every crack and corner, it hangs suspended in the air, overwhelming.

I can feel my heart pounding in chest, so fast and erratic, it's almost as if it wants to escape from my chest. My breaths come out ragged and harsh, and my hands are curled into fists, nails digging into my skin. I am petrified, frozen in place, trembling.

Outside the door, I can hear the muffled sound of footsteps, creaking on the aged wooden floor. Other students sit in the same position, paralyzed with fear. I see a girl with tears glimmering in her eyes, trying to hold back her sobs. Phone screens glare all around me, with worried text messages from parents and friends. Time seems to stand still, as I attempt to hold my breath, not daring to make a sound. Each tick of the clock feels like an eternity, reverberating and echoing through the utter stillness of the classroom.

Then, the unnerving silence is suddenly surrendered, I feel my heart pounding in my throat. Beside me, I see the door being prised open, as the rusty door hinge screeches. A single ray of light meanders into the room, and a shadow quickly follows, looming over the room, like an inescapable sentence. Then, all at once, the room breaks into chaos. Blood-curdling screams fill the room, as students suddenly scamper across the room like mice, trying to escape the sharp claws of a cat. A man erupts through the door with enormous force, a wild look on his face, and a gun in his hands. I feel my heart stop.

Clenching my eyes shut, I try to disappear, sink into the shadows and pretend I'm safe. I'm home, in my room, safe. Safe. Safe.

Gunshots ring in my ears, silencing the screaming, the pleading.

And then, it's silent. Except for the slow footsteps making their way in my direction.

I don't dare to open my eyes.

'Creak, Creak, Creak', the footsteps approach with increasing pace.

A tear rolls down my cheek, as I repeat my silent prayer over and over again in my mind. The sound reaches its crescendo, louder, and louder, and then,

Silence.

SECOND PLACE 'The spy and his daughter', Caius Datt, 105

The following is an unnamed youths' theory of what could have happened to the spy and his daughter...

Strenuous pain inside my stomach, I can feel it churning, as I walk down the stairs of the restaurant of which I was having a perfect meal with my beloved daughter, I start to feel a sickness in my head, one which feels rather like the one which I experience after drinking heavily. Sweat pours from my hands as I start to slowly drip away from consciousness... I look in the mirror, as my chest muscles begin to tighten with my lungs producing and excruciating pain after every intake of breath. I AM GOING TO DIE!

Calm down, focus, as I tell myself, you've had the correct training just finish your meal with my daughter and make sure she suspects nothing...

A single smash of glass, as I can feel time slowly ticking to a halt, and much to my shock, my daughter has evaporated from thin air, and with a glance from our table around the restaurant, I can feel my heart stop. For that split second I cannot feel that life quickly running away from me like sand in a timer. I move my eyes down following the engulfed cry for help I hear. I recognise that voice, my daughter...

My eyes fixated on the body, my girl barely breathing!

But I have no time for that, as my system is failing, slowly disappearing from reality. Was it something I ate? Or did?

My heart beats 8 times a second as the pain is so excruciating it goes numb...

The adrenaline cannot save me now, my life is over.

5 times a second: 'call an ambulance' someone cries! But it's too late...

3 beats a second, and I feel someone take me by the arms and drag me away- Am I being saved?

My head slips away from consciousness and finally I know that all my secrets have been kept.

1 beat of my last second:

I am over. I am dead. I am a double agent

To anyone that can hear my thoughts, my life shouldn't end yet, I know I have been targeted by my previous employers, but please, someone reincarnate me, I am not ready for the afterlife.

Goodbye...

THIRD PLACE 'The Snowstorm', Caitlin Banks 10N

The snow poured its vengeance into the world as the wind screamed in fury. Spindly trees clawed at me as I dashed past. The wind tore my hair and clothes but I knew the only way was forward. I thought I heard footsteps; it was impossible as you couldn't hear anything over the racket the storm was making. Suddenly everything seemed to pause. I glanced around me, pulling my coat tighter. Everything was covered in a thick blanket of snow. Every tree looked exactly the same. I was lost. The snow storm had me in its icy grip. Silent tears begged to be spilled and my heart pounded in my chest in a frenzy. I sank into the snow as my heart broke. I would never see my little brother again. Clinging to my locket I shook with rage and sorrow as I huddled against the tree for any warmth.

A heavy grip was shaking me. I tried to pry my eyes open but I was exhausted. A male voice spoke in low and harsh voice but I felt like a heavy fog had descended over my mind. Strong arms gripped me and picked me up and we were moving again. I was about to let the lull of some warmth lure me back to sleep when questions started to arise. Who was my mysterious saviour? How did he find me? What was he doing out in the snow? My thoughts were interrupted as I went flying. My eyes darted all around me and they locked onto two figures. One was my saviour and the other had dark onyx eyes, which pierced through me. Icy trepidation crawled up my spine. I sprinted for my life. Tripping and stumbling but never looking back. Never giving into that fear. I heard a shout but adrenaline pumped its way into my veins and I ran even faster. Ahead of me was an ancient abandoned house. Racing through, I flung open the iron gates. I would soon realise that this was the worst mistake I had ever made...

FOURTH PLACE 'One way trip' by William Lewis 11L

The world looks so different from 6,000 km. All the politics, wars and hunger are invisible; they may as well not exist. Thin clouds coil around the blue expanse of the pacific, white streaks clinging to the peaks at the edge of the Andes. Australia forms a rusty blotch, breaking the emerald calm of the planet. I soak it all in. It will be the last chance I get to see it like this, instead of as a speck in the sky 30 million miles away. The blinking lights in the cabin flicker but I am blind to them. I've trained for years to know their purposes, each series of flashes carrying a meaning, strings of numbers on screens relaying the vital statistics of a thruster, cooling radiator or communications antenna. I ignore it all because I know what's coming: forty eight and a half seconds of gut wrenching thrust that will carry me out of earth's orbit for the final time. A one way trip away from everything I've ever known.

A high pitched beep rings out followed by the reedy voice of the mission controller: Graves

"All good up there Dragon Five?" The broadcast ends with a fizzing crackle.

"Yes. Just admiring the view one last time. I want to make the most of -" Vasili is cut off as Graves, never one for chatter, briefs us again.

"Good good good. Now, you lot are just approaching the manoeuvre point, everything is being run by wire from down here so just sit tight and enjoy the ride. And remember: you're making history." The crackle sounds again and the capsule is left in silence bar the gentle hum of the generator and oxygen pump.

"So this is it."

"Yup"

Silence again.

"Well good luck everyone" says Fletcher as the engines start to roar behind us sending shivers through the metal frame work of the ship. The noise continues to build as I'm pressed into my seat by the acceleration. I glance to my right one more time, looking through the small window down to earth for the very last time. Then the engines reach full power and we are whisked away into the stars.

FIFTH PLACE 'Kati', Jasmine Heron, 9E

A girl, abandoned by her parents in a country on the other side of the world. A girl who was taken away to another place when she was just three days old and left alone with nothing but a note, covered in strange but beautiful words she could not understand. A girl who, from request of her birth parents, in 10 or 20 years would see them again on a broken bridge in Hangzhou. The girl is called Kati.

She's Chinese but grew up in America with her adopted family. They loved her and never kept many secrets - she knew since she was young that she was different to them. It never bothered her, never made her sad; she was accepted by the people at her side and she grew up living a life her parents would've wanted for her - a happy one.

I didn't know until I was 20 that my real parents had left behind a note, addressed to whoever decided to take care of me. They had left another name on there too, the name they gave me, Jingzhi. They said they hadn't left me behind because it was what they wanted - it was what they had to do.

China has a one child policy, and I have an older sister... when my parents realised no one else could look after me for them they knew they'd have to abandon me in hope that I'd fall into the care of someone else. Though it seems unimaginable, and hard for some people to forgive, I can understand why they did it. They didn't have a choice.

So, I grew up in Michigan, knowing since I was five that the family I lived with were not my own. There were times when I wondered, when I thought about what my real parents were doing right then, in the other side of the world; but it was barely discussed, so I just left it. However, when I found a documentary in my house about my real parents and their story, what stung was when I realised they'd been waiting every single day since they left me for the chance to meet again. It felt like an entirely different part of me had only just got the chance to speak, after keeping quiet for way too long.

"We have been forced by poverty and affairs of the world to abandon her. Oh, pity the hearts of fathers and mothers far and near! If the heavens have feelings, if we are brought together by fate, then let us meet again on the Broken Bridge in Hangzhou on the morning of the Qixi Festival in 10 or 20 years from now."

That's what the note said. It made me cry the first time I heard it on the documentary, and I tried looking all over the house for the piece of paper with those same words. So, as of now, I'm packing a bag with all my clothes, belongings and proudest possessions so that soon I can show them to my parents. I am flying to China tomorrow, alone; and if it all goes well, if our meeting goes how we've dreamt it to, then maybe then we'll finally, eventually, be together again.

How Can You Go On?, Evie Clark, 8S

Can you imagine what it's like to get the call? The call. You know, the one from your child's school letting you know your kid isn't coming home tonight? Or tomorrow night, or the night after that, or any other night ever again? Because, you see, an awful event has occurred while you were at work - a school shooting. You panic and ask if your daughter's okay. Your baby girl. Your precious, darling child. The light of your life; the apple of your eye.

But there is silence on the other end of the line. The teacher isn't responding... you don't know why.

So, you ask again. Where is your daughter? Is she okay? But still, there's no answer. Hands shaking, palms sweating, you end the call. Collapsing onto the floor, you fold your head into your arms. You turn your phone back on and dial your partner's number.

"Hi, honey, is everything alright?"

"No."

Because nothing's alright - nothing will ever be alright ever again!

How can life go on? How can you go on? How will you ever move forward, without your child?

You hang up.

But all of a sudden - a call, from the school.

"We're so sorry, Ma'am, the connection cut our last conversation off. Your daughter is fine, she's at the hospital with her classmates - you can come pick her up now."

Your daughter is okay! She's safe, with her friends, surrounded by the authorities - and most importantly, she made it out alive.

However, some of the other mums and dads weren't so lucky; some children started the day as a sibling, but ended it as an only child; some kids lost their closest friends - and one child became an orphan that day. The child of the teacher who died to protect your child from a maniac with a gun. You see, losing a loved one in a school shooting may not be your reality - but it is for thousands of families all over the U.S.A. Since 2012, 1,846 people have been killed in school shootings - just in America - without even including the countless numbers of injuries that happen too.

How can life go on? How can you go on? How will you ever move forward, knowing your child isn't even safe at school?

The Giant Egg, Dylan Lloyd 7L

Once on an Australian farm lived a chicken called Clara Cluck. Every egg she laid was small compared to everyone else's. At this farm if a bird was laying small or no eggs then they would get eaten by the farmer (who was called farmer Jack) and his family. One day Clara and her friend Doris Duck were sitting by the pond and Clara said "I wish I could lay bigger eggs!"

"Why?" asked Doris (who didn't know what happened if a bird was laying small or no eggs).

"Because if I carry on laying these small eggs, then I will be eaten!" exclaimed Clara. But then as they were talking, Clara's arch nemesis, who was Gertrude the Goose, walked by and heard the news.

"Oh, can little Clara not lay big enough eggs?" she said in an antagonising tone.

"Oh, be quiet!" demanded Doris.

"Your eggs are quite small too!" said Clara.

"So, I don't care!" and with that remark Gertrude walked off singing "Clara lays small eggs."

"Don't worry Clara she is just being her silly self. It's going to be just fine," said Doris reassuringly.

"Thanks Doris you're really kind,"

The next day when all the birds were out of their houses the farmer and his wife came out to count the eggs. But when they collected all the eggs farmer Jack pointed to Clara and said to his wife "That is the one who we will eat tomorrow,"

"Tomorrow! Give little Clara one more day," exclaimed the Jack's wife

"Why?"

"Oh, please. If she lays a big egg by tomorrow can she stay alive?" asked Jack's wife.

"Fine" Farmer Jack said, knowing that if he said no that his wife would have been nagging him all day about it. "But we need to eat one of our birds because otherwise we won't have anything to eat for dinner."

"What about Gertrude? She lay small eggs too," said farmer Jack's wife.

"Okay," and they walked back into the house. Once they closed the door Gertrude walked up to Clara and pushed her over angrily and shouted

"Thanks to you I might get eaten!"

"How is it her fault?!" asked Doris.

"She was supposed to get eaten, but now I am!"

"She might not even lay a big egg,"

"Oh, be quiet!" yelled Gertrude and she stormed off.

"Clara are you okay?" asked Doris.

"No, I feel terrible that Gertrude will be eaten instead of me, even if she is mean all the time," explained Clara.

"I suppose so. But what are you going to do?"

"Just hope it turns out okay." That night Clara saw a shooting star and wished that she and Gertrude will lay lots of big eggs the next day and onwards. The next day Doris got taken into farmer Jack's house and was eaten.

My name means lucky, ANONYMOUS

When I close my eyes, I see mother cooking egusi. My brothers, Abhayda and Kalad, are playing football in the garden whilst father is on the chair asleep. A normal day, on my normal street, in my normal town, what could go wrong?

"Eshma, hurry or you'll be late." Mother yells. I'm still lying in bed, half awake, I was up all night studying for a maths test; I live for school, it's the best thing that has ever happened to me, I'm lucky, here in Nigeria it's not common for a girl to go to school. I shove my books into my bag and whip my clothes on. Taking only a bite of my breakfast I sprint to the bus. On my way, my best friend, Ezinne, and I sit next to each other discussing the latest gossip.

Once it was breaktime, all the girls gathered to talk, it was calm. BANG. Dust flew everywhere. Girls were running in panic. BANG BANG. Men ran towards us, dragging girls as they left. It was chaos. I ran towards my teacher, Ms Okafor, but a hand wrapped around my neck pulling me away. I struggled to breathe. I kicked and shouted. He dumped me in a truck. A wide snarl drew across his face. Questions started filling my head; what's happening? Who are these men? I'm supposed to be lucky?

After some time, the truck screeched to a halt. I couldn't see anything. But I could hear something. Voices.

"110, chief, 10 more than you asked." a sly voice informed.

"Excellent, let's get these girls into camps," answered another, "Boko Haram is all powerful."

I had heard stories about Boko Haram, I knew what they were capable of and I knew I would need all my luck to get out alive. I peeped out of the gap between the truck and the tarpaulin roof, to see where I would be staying. 20 foot high walls. Rubble ground. No sign of city at all. I knew where we were. A Concentration Camp...

We were filed out from the trucks, then separated into groups. Each group was assigned to a camp then sent to bed. With one small blanket each and a tent to fit 20 shivering girls, I felt lost and terrified. I could hear the footsteps of the armed guards rhythmically walking outside the canvas. I lay down shaking with fear.

On the 3rd day everyone had had enough. After lots of debating, arguing and thought my friends and I decided we had to leave. Everyday we planned it in secret. On the 14th day were going to escape. We stayed up all night waiting; once the clock struck 12:00 the guards switched. We took our chance and ran. We got to the entrance. A shotgun fired. BANG. Adaora dropped to the floor. Aretta screamed.

"Give it up, you'll never get away", shouted a guard.

But by then we were already climbing our way to freedom. BANG. Ezinne fell.

"NO" I cried, tears rolling down my cheeks.

But I had to go. Guards started climbing. One caught up and tugged Sade down. BANG. I jumped over the fence and just ran for my life. After all, my name means lucky...

A Helicopter Ride, Tom Flury 10N

That first moment, when the engine cuts out and you go spiralling towards the ground is when you really think. You think about whether in 30 seconds you'll hit the ground and die, or if the pilot in front of you can bring the situation under control. Or maybe, you'll hit the ground and survive, and spend the rest of your life confined to a hospital bed, and wish that you had died when the helicopter hit the floor as you grow more and more frustrated with your inability to move, or make a noise, and let the people around you know that you're still there, and not just some lifeless husk of your former self. This all flashed through your head in the 20, maybe 30 seconds before the helicopter slams into the water and the breath is drawn from your lungs. But what you really think about is how in hell you ended up in this position.

The man and his wife were on their honeymoon in New York, he had decided to take her for a helicopter tour of the city. He thought that she would have enjoyed it. And now, he thinks, she'll never be able to enjoy it or anything else ever again. When the helicopter rose up over the city, they could see the sprawling city stretched out in front of them right the way to the horizon, like the never-ending sea, with the skyscrapers standing out like the jagged rocks that shipwreck boats.

And as he plummeted from the sky towards the water he wondered what his and her futures would hold. And more importantly, if they would have them.

He felt the wind rushing through his ears as he hurtled towards the ground. He could feel other people falling around him, the lifeless shell of a helicopter falling and the ground rushing up to meet him, and then...

Black.

Perceptive Poems

Hatched In The Dirt - Sam Doughty, 11A

No one around him, he sits alone at night.
No pride lies on the throne built by time.
Is this how it feels to live a real life
When inside, there no longer dwells a real light?

The wrinkles and the greys are not signs of age,
But that of what has been, not what's seen
today.

To break out of the rolling cage,
Nostalgia's the way out of the soulless stage.
He can reminisce back to his older ways,
But nothing can bring back all the stolen days.
He's been rid of those who used to hold his face.
Trapped inside time, he'll never solve the maze.

When his feet fail him, they won't let him stand,
One knock on his door can make him understand.
When he yearns to go to that other land,
A visit can take the pills that kill from his hand.

It's rung true to you, don't you remember?
You found him on the floor in his room that
December.
Tears in your eyes, you wanted him to wake up,
But all he ever wanted to do was to stay young.

When I'm dead, will I be hatched in the dirt,
Surrounded by all of the hope I desert?
I'm trying to live out the life I deserve,
But something tells me that the truth has to
hurt. I look in the mirror and want to be old,
I look at my past and I see a youth sold
To desire of change, a desire so cold.
Here lies the crux of the story I've told.
Perhaps I'm the poster boy of generation "me",
But I'd rather live a life that's expectation free.
With more respect comes more regret, onto
memories I'll latch.
Only then will the egg of my future be hatched.
Before I know it I'll even kill to be young again,
Only then will I know where those precious years
went.

Always in search of that lightning in a bottle,
A bottle that I emptied when my life was full
throttle.

The only bottles I fill are those of drowned sorrows,
Chasing the forced dream of making now tomorrow.
Perhaps to time I will forever be a victim,
Perhaps it's time to return to the starting position.

He looks up to the mirror and sees a younger man.
He sees a life unharmed by the fateful falling sand.
He tells him of the struggles he will never
understand.

He pours out the pills onto his cold hand.
Inside of his palm lies a fruitless legacy,
A life that's never been, suffering never seen.
It wasn't always the plan, such an overdose,
But as he feels his body weaken, to the truth he is
close.

The sun has set now. It's time for you to go.
For it possesses in it more than you could know.
It used to be the power in the cracks of broken
dreams,
It used to keep us down as we burst at the seams.
Now it watches from afar
At the gaping global scar
Shaping a tapestry
Of lone catastrophes.

The underdog story is always told with glory,
As though the real thing was never this gory.
Discovering himself shoved him into a fall.
Maybe it was too much just to learn to crawl.



World War One Inspired Poems

'Is it right to fight?', Mia Samuels, 7R

11 years old

*My daddy is a brave man,
He reassured me with his plan,
He said he would come back home but he didn't
know when,
That's probably why I didn't see him again,
My mummy said he went to heaven up in the
sky,
I'm just glad he didn't see how much I cried,
For the deaths of war,
For the people in sin,
For me,
But most of all for him,
My father,
One of the killed,
On the battle field,
I knew it was right,
That it was important to fight,
Too change the way people think,
That war is not the answer and devours you in a
blink,
My daddy was soldier,
And his life was also over...*

15 years old- at the beginning...

*I knew my dad would be proud,
That I was joining in with the crowd,
For this is what he did,
And it is also why I hid,*

*Because I didn't want to suffer the same fate
and have to pay,
But what nobody knew was that I was scared,
I wasn't ready yet and I really wasn't prepared,
I couldn't bring myself to kill someone,
Then their life would be done,
I looked up and saw the real me in the sky,
I started to sniff so I tried to say goodbye,
To the person who showed me how to be brave,
It's just a shame that he couldn't be saved,
I knew that I had to do it,
And to admit,
That I let you down dad,
I was just an ordinary lad,*

17 years old- at the end...

*I saw the truth through someone else's eyes,
That I was a different person and without
realising had already said goodbye,
From the horrors of war,
I just wasn't me anymore,
I mixed in with everybody else,
Depression started to kill myself,
I was a nobody,
So, I had to agree,
That it was not right,
To fight,
Against another equal,
I believed it was evil,
Which is why I am now home,
All alone,*

When I was gone,
There was a bomb,
That took the life of some around,
Including my mum,
Including my town...

50 years later...

I was reminded about the past,
Anxiety,
Distress,
But most of all- death...

One after another were brutally attacked,
Their lives cruelly taken from them,
That was a fact,
They didn't deserve that,
Neither did I,
Which is why I ask myself,
Why?

Is it right to fight?
But I'm trying to forget so I don't actually
care,
What happened before happened before,
The future holds so much more,
Don't divert on the past,
Try the best to make your life last,
It's a bit like a scam,
But I will always be me,
Even if you see,
A soldier,
I guess that's what I am...

'I did know a man', Jasmin Fells, 7L
I did know a man
Who fought bravely in the trenches.
I did know a man,
Who loved and saved his country,
I did know a man,
Who was infamous throughout the land.
I did know a man,
Who lived guilt-stricken for all eternity.
I did know a man,
Who was a disgrace to his country.
I did know a man,
Who let his family and friends down.
I did know a man.
He was a soldier.
I did know a man,
He fought for his life.
This man will be remembered.

'Today', Olivia Dowdeswell, 7L

Battle cannons, guns and roars,
The great grand spitfire slides and soars,
Shouts and cries, soldiers saying their goodbyes.
Today.

Fall in this game,
Make no mistake,
Your country is up to its neck in this war,
Will German soldiers come knocking at your door?
Today.

The lion stands high,
Its mane touch'd the sky,
The empire needs men.
Will you come? Amen.
Today.

*Men of Britain,
Will you stand for this?
Wait for your country to be torn to bits?
Stand by and watch this unfold.
Today?*

'Knock, Knock', Nellie Collins, 7L

*Knock, Knock
I shiver with fear
Knock Knock
'I know you're here'
Knock, Knock
I hide in my house
They make me feel as small as a mouse*

*Knock, Knock
I feel so weak
Knock, Knock
I am so meek
Knock, Knock
I'll open up
I'm just going, need all my luck.*

*Knock, Kock
Here I go
But when I open,
All I see is snow...*

*We can defeat them and
by the end they all will be GONE.*

'The Game', Jake Murphy, 7L

*The battlefield is a stadium,
The soldiers are the players.
Crowds of the world cheer
for me and the players.
The football goal is our country
and the person defending it was me.
The gunshots were like footballs
and the goalie's defence was a brick wall.
This battlefield calls for you,
Yes you,
What would you rather do?
Be sitting in the hall of fame,
or would you rather not take part in the game?*

And finally, on behalf of all English teachers...!

'ANALYSE', Anonymous

*He illustrates
He demonstrates
She reflects
It's complex*

*Alliteration
Personification
They portray
Love displays.
Should I describe?
No, analyse.
Please persuade.
Accentuate.*

*Love presents
A happy tense
But please analyse
The effect of
Rhyme.*



"All right then. When you've actually broken up we'll see about turning you into a real candyfloss, OK?"

I told Susan that I wanted to colour my hair.

She said, "You can't. It's too short. It's just a mess."

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She said, "You can't. It's too short. It's just a mess."

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