

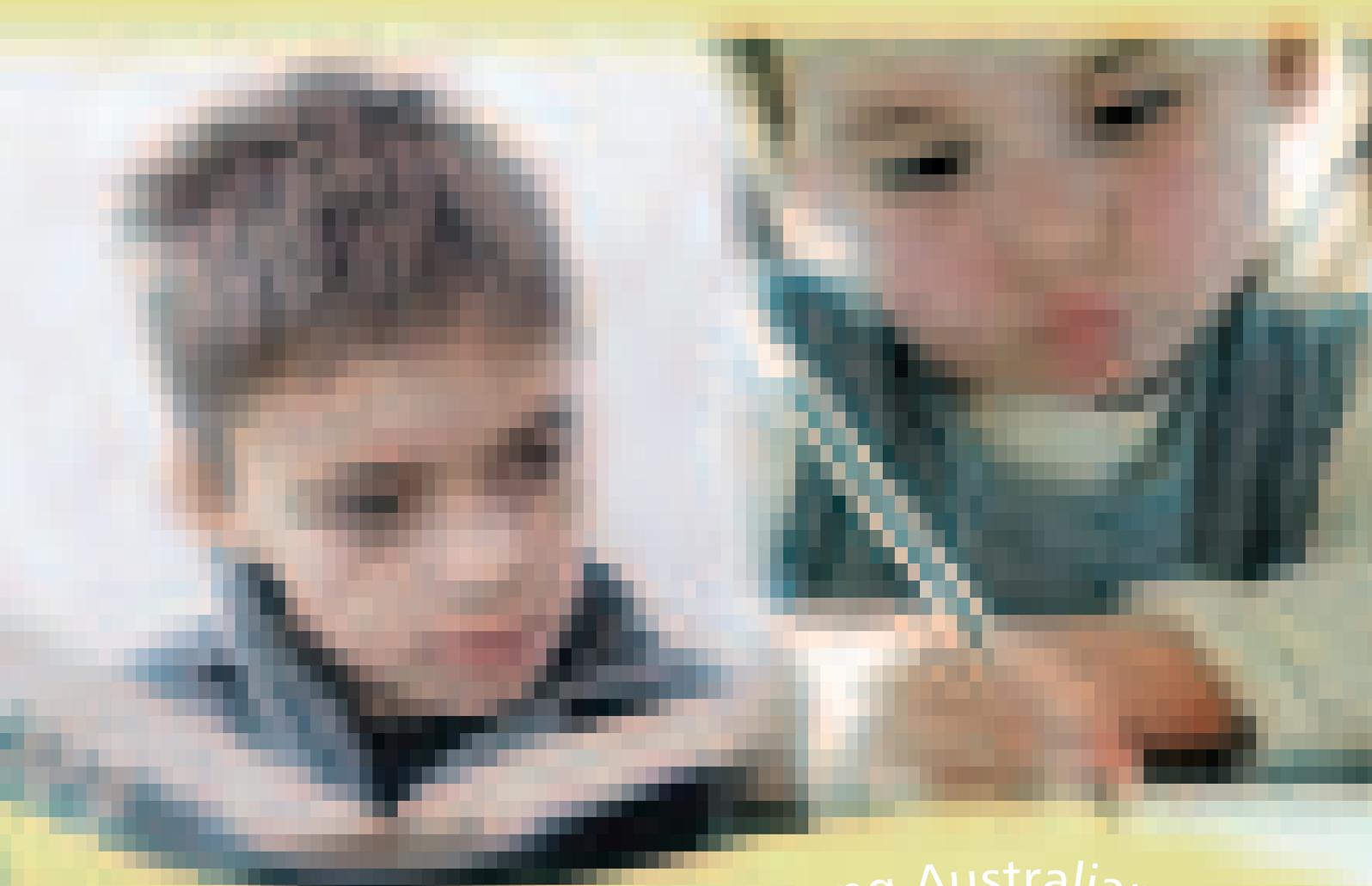
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# *Oz Kidz in Print*

[www.ozkidz.com.au](http://www.ozkidz.com.au)

**February 2006**



The magazine for promoting young Australian writers

**FREE ENTRY**

TO STUDENTS IN PRIMARY  
OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

**Incorporating  
*The Young  
Australian  
Writers'  
Awards***

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

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**Mr. Don Burke** is our Foundation Patron.

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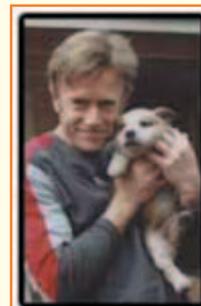
When Don Burke is not busy, he likes to read and nothing could be better than reading short stories and poetry from our young Australian writers in *Oz Kidz in Print*.

**Paul Collins** was born in England, raised in New Zealand and moved to Australia in 1972.

In 1975 he launched *Void*, the first professional science fiction magazine Australia had seen since the demise of the joint Australian and British production *Vision of Tomorrow*.

His first fantasy novel for younger readers was *The Wizard's Torment*. Paul then edited the young adult anthology *Dream Weavers*, Australia's first heroic fantasy anthology ever. This was followed by *Fantastic Worlds*, and *Tales from the Wasteland*.

Paul's recent works include the highly successful fantasy series (co-edited with Michael Pryor), *The Quentaris Chronicles*, to which Paul also contributes titles (*Swords of Quentaris*, *Slaves of Quentaris*, *Princess of Shadows* and *Dragonlords of Quentaris*); The Jelindel Chronicles, in which *Dragonlinks* was the first title, and *The Earthborn Wars* trilogy, of which *The Earthborn* was the first title. Visit [www.paulcollins.com.au](http://www.paulcollins.com.au) for more. ➔



➔ **Hazel Edwards** is the author of 150 books including the classic *There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake* (Penguin 2005); *Hand Me Down Hippo* (Penguin – April 2005); *Antarctica's Frozen Chosen*; *Fake ID*; *Duty Free*; *Stalker* (plus audio from Bolinda Audio); *Muscles*; *The Giant Traffic Jam*; *Astrid the Mind Reading Chook* and many more great titles. Visit [www.hazeledwards.com](http://www.hazeledwards.com) for details of her Antarctic books.

**Anna Ciddor** has always been fascinated by the question, 'What if I lived in another time or place?'. She changed career from maths teacher to author so she'd have the excuse to spend lots of time doing research. She has written and illustrated over fifty books, including the highly popular and exciting Viking Magic trilogy: *Runestone*, *Wolfspell* and *Stormriders*. Bravery, friendship, and a dash of magic are the keys to these adventure stories, which are based on real Viking history. *Runestone* was chosen as a Children's Book Council Notable Book in 2003 and has been shortlisted for many awards. You can find out more about Anna and her books at [www.viking-magic.com](http://www.viking-magic.com).

Anna keeps in touch with her readers through school visits and her website, but she is also keen to encourage the writing efforts of budding young authors through the Young Australian Writers' Awards. ➔



➔ **Lorraine Wilson** writes extensively both reference material for teachers and books for children. She has now written over two hundred books including: *Write me a Sign*; *Write me a Poem*; *Bubblegum*; *My Mum has False Teeth*; *Footy Kids*, *The Lift-Off Kids*, *I Have Two Dads*, and *I Speak Two Languages*.

**Libby Hathorn** is an award-winning Australian author of more than forty books for children. Her work has been translated into several languages and adapted for stage and screen. She was awarded a Centenary Medal in 2001 for her work in children's literature. More recently, her CDROM *Weirdstop* won the AIMIA Award (Australian Interactive Media Industry Awards) as Best Children's Product of 2003; her picture storybook *The River* won the Society of Women Writers' Bi-annual Award for Younger Readers; and *Over the Moon* was a Children's Book Council Notable Book in the same year. See extensive booklist and awards at [www.libbyhathorn.com](http://www.libbyhathorn.com). ➔



➔ **Meredith Costain** lives in Melbourne with her partner, fellow children's author Paul Collins, three chooks, a cat, a kelpie and a red heeler. Her work ranges from picture books through to popular fiction and non-fiction for older readers, and she is the editor of national children's magazine, *Comet*. Meredith's books include *Freeing Billy*, *The Sandpit War*, *Rock Raps* and *Musical Harriet*, which was adapted for television by the ABC. She regularly presents writing workshops for kids and adults in libraries and schools. Visit her at: [www.plasticine.com/mcostain](http://www.plasticine.com/mcostain)

For some ideas on how to get ideas for your own stories, visit this link: [www.pearsoned.com.au/schools/magazines/yawaTips.asp](http://www.pearsoned.com.au/schools/magazines/yawaTips.asp)

# Oz Kidz in Print

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## TIME

Saion Chatterjee, Brisbane Boys' College, Toowong, Qld.

## ANZAC POEM

Ella Pattison, Shelford Girls' Grammar School, Caulfield, Vic.

## THE FOREST I USED TO KNOW

Hannah Simkin, Hartwell Primary School, Camberwell, Vic.

## HOW ARE FOSSILS MADE?

Alexander Yip, Sydney Grammar School – Edgecliff Preparatory,  
Sydney, NSW.

## HOLIDAYS

Brooke Ellis, Mill Park Secondary College, Epping, Vic.

## LOST

Katherine Sest, Shelford Girls' Grammar School, Caulfield, Vic.

## MY BROTHERS

Tom Coulson, Coutesville Primary School, East Bentleigh, Vic.

## EMPTY THOUGHTS

Ben Mahoney, Hartwell Primary School, Camberwell, Vic.

## ANGEL ON EARTH

Melinda Adams, Carinya Christian School, Tamworth, NSW.

## LOST

Katherine Sest, Shelford Girls' Grammar School, Caulfield, Vic.

## THE GRUMPY OLD MOON

Sarah Muir-Smith, Holy Eucharist Parish PS, Malvern East, Vic.

## AWARDS FOR SHORT STORIES

### FELIX AND SHANNIGAN'S FIRST DAYS

Hannah Blennerhassett, Hartwell Primary School, Camberwell, Vic.

### FIRE STARTER

Kimberley Kardaras, Mill Park Secondary College, Mill Park, Vic.

### JUST BELIEVE

Hannah Sprinkston, Lower Mitcham, SA.

### THE HIDDEN CHEST

Sarah Shaw, Manly West Primary School, Balgowlah, NSW.

### UNTITLED

Jacqui Norman, St. Francis Xavier College, Beaconsfield, Vic.

### AN ADVENTURE OF A TREE

Sunjuri Sun, St. Mary's PS, Hampton, Vic.

### A DOG'S LIFE

Tyler Heycott, Wollongong PS, Wollongong, NSW.

### GOODBYE GRANDPA

Lucy Moffatt, Peterhead, SA.

### “THE ARGUMENT”

Kassandra Schwartz, Ballajura Community College, Ballajura, Qld.

### THE MAGIC GATE

Dominica Roebuck, Assumption Catholic College, Bathurst, NSW.

### A YOUNG MONARCH

Sarah McGeough, St. John the Baptist, Gladstone, Qld.

### AN AUSTRALIAN DINOSAUR ADVENTURE!!!

Samantha Sambidge-Mitchell, Jerrabomberra, NSW.

### ANCIENT RESCUE

Marianne Curran, Tarragindi, Qld.

### SNOW SPORTS

Abbey Field, Parkfield Primary School, Australind, WA.

### AMY'S DREAM

Dinali Daluwatte, Glendal Primary School, Glen Waverley, Vic.

### WILD AND FREE

Sarah Ashleigh Kent, Victory Christian College, Bendigo, Vic.

### A SPECIAL NIGHT

Olivia Jane Woodfall, Coutesville PS, East Bentleigh, Vic.

### TO THE DIGGERS

Adam Little, Middle Ridge State School, Middle Ridge, Qld.

### THE USEFUL POISONOUS APPLE

Mi-Thao Bui, St. Martin d Porres Primary School, Avondale  
Heights, Vic.

### PANDA EYES

Skye Melki-Wegner, Glen Waverley Secondary College, Glen  
Waverley, Vic.

## AWARDS FOR POETRY

### VORTEX

Kathryn Shaw, Kinross Wolaroi Preparatory School, Orange, NSW.

### HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY – I love you how much?

Natasha Tamburini, St. Joseph's Catholic HS, Albion Park, NSW.

### THIS IS HOW OUR CLASS BEHAVES

Georgia Janssen/Zoe Karantzas, St. Mary's PS, Hampton, Vic.

### BUILDING PYRAMIDS

Kate Balka, St. Mary's Primary School, Hampton, Vic.

### MY DAD

Alexander Yip, Sydney Grammar School – Edgecliff Preparatory,  
Sydney, NSW.

### THE HURRICANE

Sarah Ashleigh Kent, Victory Christian College, Bendigo, Vic.

### “SURVIVAL-MOTIVATION”

Joel Basedow, Springwood High School, Springwood, NSW.

### THE STORM OF THE GIANT

Bryony Stringer, Mount Waverley SC, Mt. Waverley, Vic.

### NO FLOWER

Tammy Better, Mount Scopus Memorial College, Burwood, Vic.

### I, THE FORGOTTEN

Melanie Fehlandt, Ogilvie High School, Hobart, Tas.

### THE HUNT

Sarah Plowman, Mill Park Secondary College, Epping, Vic.

### FAMILY

Christine Demiris, The MacRobertson Girl's High School,  
Melbourne, Vic.

### BENEATH THE SURFACE

Naomi McCloskey, Nowra Christian School, South Nowra, Vic.

### SISTER

Baya Ou Yang, McKinnon Primary School, Ormond, Vic.

### STAYING AT HOME..... While my brother is at school

Prachi Nagrath, Epping Public School, Epping, NSW.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Welcome to the first edition of *Oz Kidz in Print* for 2006. Where did last year go? The Awards Night for 2005 was held in November and what a great night it was. Check the centre pages of this Edition for the 'Award Winners' details.

Please don't be discouraged if your story or poem isn't published the first time you enter.

As Paul Collins writes in his editorial in this issue, 'Sometimes getting your manuscript published is pure luck. You might have a dog in your story, and the editor reading your manuscript might love dogs. For this reason it's important to realise that persistence is important.'

One thing I have noticed is the number of entries which are based on sadness, loneliness, war and death. They are written well but we need some more light-hearted entries PLEASE! I look forward to more brighter stories and poems in the future. I enjoy reading all the entries.

As a 'special feature' in our magazine we will be giving reviews on the newly released novels by our fantastic Author Patrons. Where have they been hiding? These books are fantastic. Read the reviews and find out more!

We have a great year ahead and with all the entries we have received so far, the magazine is going to be packed with some very interesting reading. ENJOY!

**KEEP ON WRITING!**

*Carol Dick*  
Managing Editor

## BOOK REVIEW

The first review is *DragonFang* by Paul Collins.

This is the second book in the Jelindel series. Once I started reading it I realised I would benefit better by reading about her in the first book *Dragonlinks*.

From the first book we have Jelindel dek Mediesar, a Countess

who led a charmed life until lindrak assassins murdered her family. Jelindel always had a yearning for knowledge and that yearning saved her life on that fateful night. Her family are holding a party inside the palace and she dresses as a boy and ventures to the rooftops to study the stars. That's where the real adventure starts.

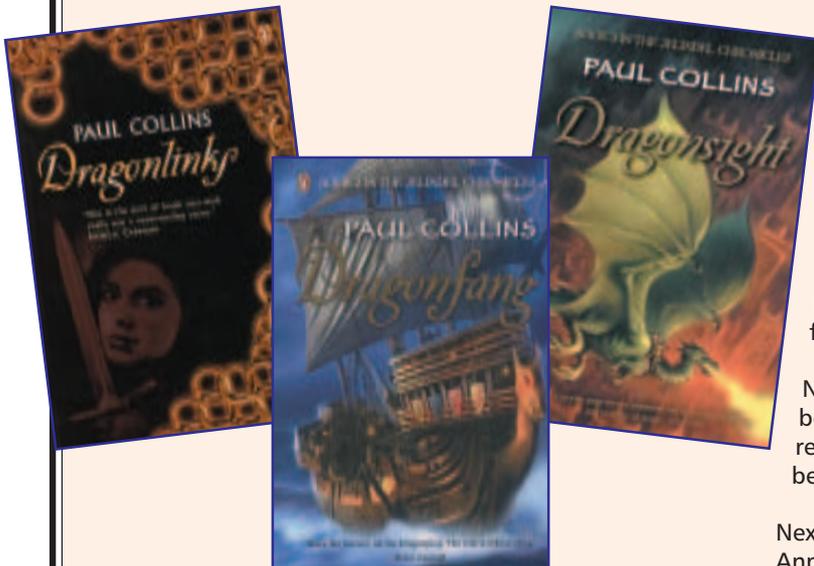
Now we are following the adventures of Jelindel, as she tries to find the Pentacle Gems, and Daretor and Zimak as they attempt to survive a series of life-threatening ordeals.

If you like mystery and magic then you are going to love these books. From the very beginning you are captured into Jelindel's world (or should I say worlds). You are taking a journey into a place of murder, mystery, magic and science fiction. You will be unable to put the book down. Time is now irrelevant.

These books are written for the older readers and the 'mature' ones too. I am a mum of three and I totally enjoyed them. I am a self-confessed Harry Potter fan but after reading these fascinating books, I have another favourite.

Now onto *Dragonsight* the third Jelindel novel. I had better get my comfy chair ready because I have a lot of reading to do. I had better set the alarm because I won't be watching the time.

Next issue I will be reviewing the series *Viking Magic* by Anna Ciddor.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



I hope you all had a great summer break and have come back revitalised and full of ideas for new stories and poems to submit to us. We are really looking forward to reading all your pieces. Last year we received over 20,000 entries from students from all over Australia all vying for the "Young

Australian Writer of the Year" title. They were all of outstanding quality and our Selection Committee and independent judging panel had a very challenging task to actually pick the finalists and winners. So congratulations once again for the 2005 finalists and winners in both the general category and the "Bright Kids" category especially designed for children with Specific Learning difficulties.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for all of you to submit your pieces to us, especially for children with Specific Learning difficulties. I know writing is sometimes hard, but it is through writing that you will be able to express how you feel as well as raise awareness in the community about the important

issue of Specific Learning difficulties which affects up to 20% of Australian primary school-aged children.

In this issue, you will read the pieces of the 2005 finalists and winners in the "Bright Kids" category. The finalists and winners in this category were very lucky to receive their Awards from the hands of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, OAM, as the 2005 awards in this category were named after her daughter, Mrs Helen Handbury, who was renowned for the good work she did in the community and her wish to help all children.

I am very excited to also announce the decision of our Board to run for the very first time this year "The Young Australian Arts Awards". You can read more about categories under that Award and conditions of entry in the next page.

I invite you all to read very carefully the terms and conditions of entry into the "Young Australian Writers' Awards", "The Young Australian Arts Awards" and the "Bright Kids Awards" in the following page and check their individual websites for further details.

*Miranda de la Masse-Homsy*  
CEO

## Terms of Entry

The Australian Children's Literary Board is proud to announce a national writing competition to encourage, recognise and promote the literary excellence of young Australian writers. All entries are judged by a panel of respected Australian authors and entries selected for short listing will be published in the Oz Kidz in Print magazine. At the end of the year all published entries are entered into the *Young Australian Writers Award* which has the potential to open the doors to many fantastic opportunities such as scholarships and professional publishing.

- Students must submit a piece of writing in a style and topic of their choice (should not exceed 3000 words).
- Teachers are to select and send in only the best entries from the following four year level categories:

Grade 3-4    Grade 5-6    Year 7-9    Year 10-12

- Entries spanning multiple pages must be stapled in the top left corner and each page must contain the student's name in the top right and current page number in the bottom right.

- Each entry must have a filled out copy of the entry form as its cover.
- No entries received will be returned, so it is advised that students make copies of their work.
- The Australian Children's Literary Board does not take responsibility for any lost, misplaced, delayed or damaged entries.
- All submitted work must be an original piece by the author(s) and may include drawings.
- All submitted work remains the property of the author however *Oz Kidz in Print* reserves the right to publish submitted work in any form.
- All entries must be submitted to P.O. Box 267, Lara, Vic. 3212.
- Entries must be received by 1 September, 2006.

## A message from Hazel Edwards

### Ten Hints For Young Writer Survival

How to write when you're short of time, can't get motivated or haven't got the words:

1. Work in five minute jottings, don't expect to write the whole thing. Think drafts, not final version.
2. Who is your audience? Examiner? Student? Angle it at their interests and in their kind of language.
3. To get started, jot idea words, based on the title or key word e.g. If the word is RED *Recycled Eggs Diet* or *Redirect Electronic Dummy*. Then pick the best combination of ideas.
4. Diversify, try writing factual 'how not to...' from a funny perspective based on a subject you know about.
5. Keep it short and relevant. Best point first and weakest in middle. Good writing is not judged on weight.
6. Keep ideas notebook or microcassette or folder for one liner ideas.
7. Start with a question, and answer in an unexpected way. e.g. Why did the Bikie girl turn up on her bike in tats, dreadlocks and black fluffy boots for the Dancing contest?
8. Use all the senses. Include smells, tastes, sounds, textures and sights.
9. Choose an unusual perspective if writing in first person, for example a computer hacker, sleuth or TV commercial.
10. Read it aloud or onto tape, as a way of getting started or editing.

PS Save a twist for the end.

Hazel Edwards 2005  
[www.hazeledwards.com](http://www.hazeledwards.com)  
Check out the website for further hints.

## FAMILY

Family is like a star in the grey sky  
Like the birds and the bees  
And the days that pass you by.

Family is the bright sun  
And the grey clouds  
Copious fun  
And hardship is mounds

Family stands by you  
When the going gets tough  
When the patch of life  
Seems nothing but rough

Through the peaks and grooves  
The roller coaster of life  
The happy days  
And the days filled with strife.

Your family stays strong  
Like an immovable rock  
An unbreakable chain  
Secured with a lock

When the days are lonely  
And the nights worse  
When you feel as though  
You are living a curse.

You find comfort in knowing  
These are people that care  
People with whom  
A special bond you share.

*By Christine Demiris  
Year 9, The MacRobertson Girl's High School  
MELBOURNE – VIC.  
Teacher: Ms. M. Purcell*



## NO FLOWER

Why do I search  
For empty peace

The lack of heart  
Just makes me weep

Why do I follow  
What I see

What I want  
Isn't what I need

I sleep, don't wake  
Before the dawn

My passing was quick  
Will someone mourn?

Who cares about  
My colourless skin

My upturned heart  
My scaring sin

Who sees the dagger  
Before it drops

Just sixteen years  
Barely a pop

Who worried  
When I didn't arrive

No one cared that  
I wasn't alive

My name is called out  
No one knows

Who is willing to search  
Where no one goes

So deep within  
I will lie

I see though their eyes  
One at a time

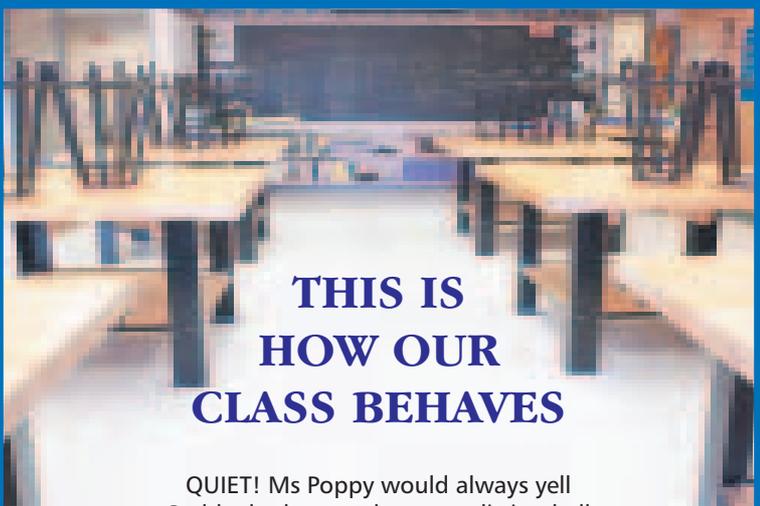
Why don't they cry  
an empty chair

A broken soul  
A gazeless stare

I see no name  
No struggle for power

No love, no care  
No stone, no flower.

*By Tammy Better  
Year 10  
Mount Scopus  
Memorial College  
BURWOOD – VIC.  
Teacher: Red Bingham*



## THIS IS HOW OUR CLASS BEHAVES

QUIET! Ms Poppy would always yell  
Suddenly she rang her ear splitting bell  
Chloe sneakily and quietly arrived  
Whilst Ms Poppy was still asking 5x5.

Christian and Finn were quoting last night's Simpsons shows  
Whilst Alex was in a complete doze  
Toby was dreaming about his secret love  
Whilst Georgina was teaching the class to draw a dove.

### THIS IS HOW OUR CLASS BEHAVES

Sara is still decorating her title page  
Whilst Bon was sending the teacher into a rage  
Lexi was trying to fix her hair  
Whilst Jess was rocking on her chair.

Julia was being a bookworm  
Whilst the whole class was looking forward to the end of term  
Molly was obsessing over Orlando Bloom  
Whilst she was supposed to be studying Tutenkamen's tomb.

### THIS IS HOW OUR CLASS BEHAVES

Carly was learning the capital letter rule  
While Kate was complaining the school should get a pool  
Madison was thinking about her next basketball game  
While Blake broke a window and Matt got the blame.

Lauren was waiting for the phone to ring  
And Bronte was plucking her guitar strings  
Dane was bragging about his fabulous vacation  
At the same time fixing his multiplication.

### THIS IS HOW OUR CLASS BEHAVES

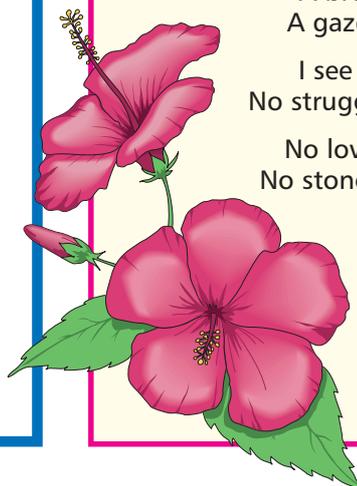
Belle was organising her Smiggle things  
Whilst the class asked Eleanor to sing  
John was practising his soccer skills  
Whilst Emma was making pretend money bills.

Georgia was imitating her mum's lady friend  
When the day was finally coming to an end.

This is how our class behaves  
It sometimes sends our teachers into their graves.

In the end our class is not at all bad  
Because the end of the day we are all glad.

*By Georgia Janssen/Zoe Karantzas  
Age 12, St. Mary's Primary School  
HAMPTON – VIC.*



### FELIX AND SHANNIGAN'S FIRST DAYS

#### CHAPTER 1: BORN IN THE WILD WIND

One stormy night Snowflakes moved off from the herd of the mighty stallion "Pondie". As she moved she heard the sound of four thundering hooves, Snowflake stopped and looked behind her, it was Brownie! Brownie stopped beside her friend and then they looked for one more moment and then walked off to a small cave safe and quiet from the storm to give birth. They both settled and looked at their pregnant bellies and waited for the pain of labour. One hour later Snowflake and Brownie, in so much pain, until finally there were two young colts at their mother's feet. Snowflake decided to call her young, Felix and Brownie called her young one Shannigan.

When dawn came Snowflake, Brownie, Felix and Shannigan left the cave to find Pondie (their father) and his herd near the cascade. Snowflake and Brownie said to their colts, "We should look in the lower cascade and their normal grazing ground."



The two colts learnt where north, south, east and west were and the two mares passed all their cunning to the young colts.

#### CHAPTER 2: PONDIE AND HIS HERD

They finally found the herd; they all heard the sound of the big cry of the stallion. The colts were shaking at the sound of the second cry of the mighty stallion. The two mares and colts walked over to greet him. Once again Charlie came to try and steal Pondie's mares and foals. Pondie gave a massive cry of rage.

The two stallions fought till dark. And once again Pondie was victorious.

Felix and Shannigan were still shaking as they drank from their mothers, but Snowflake and Brownie knew their two colts would have to fight for their survival.

*By Hannah Blennerhassett  
Year 4, Hartwell Primary School  
CAMBERWELL – VIC.*

### THE HIDDEN CHEST

The dirt, the mud and the twigs seemed to stick as Lily slowly mixed them together in an old, cracked bucket. Her long, blonde plaits kept falling in her eyes as she played but that didn't stop her from making a delicious feast for her friends, Mr Flopsy and Mrs Fairy.

Faintly, Lily heard her mum call out from the veranda.

"Lily Billy, Grandma and Grandpa are here."

Lily's grandparents lived in Melbourne and she only got to see them once or twice a year. Lily loved it when they came. She loved how her grandma brought her famous rumballs with her and the thrilling stories her grandpa told of when he was young.



Running as fast as she could, Lily reached the back door at the same time her grandparents put down their heavy bags.

"Cookie, look how much you've grown!" her grandma said in amazement, throwing her arms around Lily.

"How have you been?" her grandma whispered quietly in Lily's ear.

"Good", Lily replied, nearly choking because her grandma was squeezing her so tightly.

"Hold on, let me see her", said her grandpa, slowly making his way towards Lily. He lifted Lily off her feet and gave her a big, loving cuddle. His bristly moustache tickled her face as he swung her around in his arms. Lily smiled as her grandparents made their way upstairs to put their bags in the guest room.

Lily carried the heavy china plates over to the long, wooden table as she helped her mum set the table for dinner while her mum cooked her delicious spaghetti bolognese. Lily's grandma came down from

## THE HIDDEN CHEST (Cont'd.)

the lounge room carrying a glass of red wine in one hand.

"Are you sure you don't want me to help Debbie?" she asked.

"No Jane, I told you, you're supposed to be relaxing!" Lily's mum replied as she called everyone for dinner.

In the morning Lily went down to the back of the garden to pick some mangoes and passionfruit for breakfast like her mum had asked. At that moment she glimpsed a silver twinkle out of the corner of her eye. She left the cardboard box filled with fruit on the

ground and slowly walked over to where she had seen the twinkle.

Brushing away the crumbly mound of dirt she could see it clearly. It was a chest with a golden "S" on the lid. Bending down she picked it up. It was a tightly shut with a small silver lock and under the chest it had soft, velvet matting with the words, "Property of Sam Hurtung". Leaving the box of fruit, Lily ran inside and placed the chest gently on her special shelf.

*By Sarah Shaw  
Grade 5/6S, Manly West Primary School  
BALGOWLAH – NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Brenda Street*

## FIRE STARTER

It happened about five years ago. When I couldn't control it. Those smells and images will forever haunt my dreams. I will carry the burden of their deaths. The blood will never wash from my hands. I can see it. Teasing me, taunting me. It started with a boy, another fire starter. His house burnt down around him after he had gotten angry. The neighbours saw him, standing in the middle of the wreckage engulfed in flames and yet perfectly fine. He had started it. Accidentally, but still he had started it. After that reports of fire starters became more frequent. Campaigns began. The government quarantined every fire starter. Tracked them down and locked them away. I still remember every details of what happened when they tried to take me.

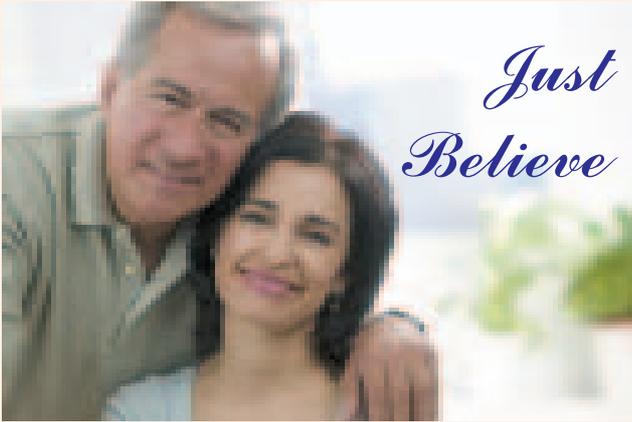
It was early in the morning. My mother had gone to the shops to get milk. I sat down in my living room. I sank into a big blue leather couch surveying my surroundings. I didn't know what I was then. Ignorance is quite often bliss. I gazed at the crumbling walls of the stone fireplace, the bright rug beneath my feet, the towering bookshelf, which had seemed larger when I was a child. I was about to take a sip from the warm mug in my hand when I heard a knock at the door. I went to answer it, thinking it was my mother. I swung the heavy brown door open, smile ready.



I soon saw that it wasn't my mother but four large men. I looked at causing me to drop my drink. My mug shattered, hot liquid splashing everywhere. Before I could speak, the man gripping my wrist tightened his grip so that he could pull me from the doorway of my house.

My wrist felt as though it would explode under the extreme pressure he was putting on it. The other three men grabbed my free hand and feet. I struggled as they lifted me from the ground. Writhing, trying to free myself from their grasp, I screamed "help me! I'm being attacked!". The deserted street gave no reply. I felt it, building up. I couldn't hold it in any longer. I screamed as jets of fire shot from my hands and feet. The men screamed as they were engulfed in crimson flames. They dropped me on the ground and I smelt it before I saw it. The burning flesh, peeling from their bones, falling to the ground as they did. I jumped up and ran, tears streaming down my face. My legs screaming for me to stop but I did not obey. I continued pumping my legs as hard as I could, my feet throbbing with pain as glass from the road cut into the soles of my feet. I ran towards the bush, found a tree and lay under it weeping.

*By Kimberley Kardaras  
Year 8CE, Mill Park Secondary College  
MILL PARK – VIC.*



*Just  
Believe*

The wind rushed past my face. Sweat was running down my forehead. I was going so fast everything was a complete blur except for the finish line, I was nearly there... Finally I slowed down. Had I won, had I lost? I looked up. Everyone was running towards me. I must have. I had won!!

I awoke suddenly. "It was all a dream", I said to myself with disappointment. For my whole life I have dreamed of becoming a world sprint champion. Now I am 13 and I do not think I'll ever become one. Mum always tells me to be positive but well, I am doing training but it's just not working for me. I mean I'm pretty good. I turned my head and looked at the clock, it was 3 am. I lay on my back just thinking and soon I had fallen asleep.

"Hannah, get up or you'll be late for sprint practice", my mother Leanne yelled.

I rolled over and fell over the side of my bed. I slowly slid out of bed, left my bedroom and made my way down the stairs. I served myself breakfast, went back upstairs and put my tracksuit on. This time I ran down the stairs, out the front door, hopped on my bike and off I went riding down the street. Soon enough I was running laps around the oval.

When I arrived home, I was met by a huge bear hug from my Mum.

"What's up?" She explained almost in tears that I had won a scholarship to the best sporting school in Australia – McNeil High!

I began to fall apart in tears of joy and disappointment.

"What if everyone there is better than me?" I asked.

"Just remember, it doesn't matter what they think as long as you believe in yourself!"

Good old mum, always positive.

It was a week until the first day of the year, well for the next few terms anyway. I thought I should start packing seeing it was a boarding school. I made sure I had my lucky necklace given to me by my Grandmother before she died.

A week later, the bus was at my front door, waiting for me to board. I gave both parents a hug and three kisses each and climbed the stairs, took my seat next to a girl named Cassie who I became instant friends with. We talked and talked and talked! There was so much to know about each other.

Soon, we arrived and that was the start of my dream coming true.

*By Hannah Sprinkston*  
LOWER MITCHAM – SA

### BUILDING PYRAMIDS

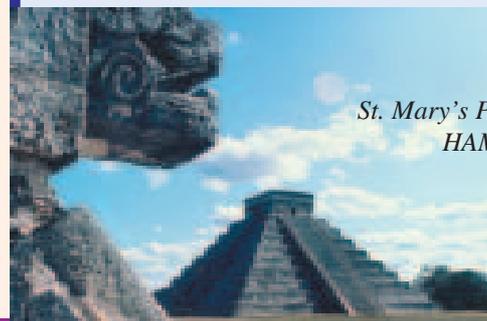
I wake up every morning with someone  
whipping my back,  
With a man complaining I'm being so slack,  
I trudge through the mud with a sleepy yawn,  
because it is only five minutes to dawn.

I eat a piece of bread with mould all though it,  
I hate to eat it because it's hard to chew it,  
I pull a brick it's my heavy load,  
I pull it up the pyramid road.

The sun burns down on my head,  
Make my bald head red,  
I have a banana for lunch,  
I wish I had a whole bunch.

I keep on going even though I'm starving,  
I keep on building it for the king,  
Now it's time for bed,  
Finally I can rest my head.

The next day is as bad as the last,  
The pyramid is coming on slowly not fast,  
The day is hotter than before,  
Up above the eagles soar.



*By Kate Balka*  
Grade 3/4 BN  
St. Mary's Primary School  
HAMPTON – VIC.

## UNTITLED

He wiped the sweat from his forehead, as his eyes stared up at the balcony of the old hotel. He stood there, in the middle of the street where the darkness began to overpower the streetlights. All the shops were closed for the night; there was no one around, apart from the two shadows behind the curtain up in the window of the hotel. There was a bright light coming from the room, lighting up a small section of the street. His eyes focused closely on the two shapes, he felt a cool breeze fly beneath him. Suddenly his heart froze, a deadly scream swept throughout the midnight air. His heart pounding, he looked up at the window once more as the two shadows slowly disappeared.



His eyes scanned the hotel windows. Trying to find the two shadows that had once appeared in his sight. Suddenly the light in the room switched off, and everything was dark. He took a step towards the hotel, as a cat quickly ran past his feet. He looked around cautiously and then quickly made his way up to the front door of the hotel. The front door towered over him; it was covered in green paint, which had worn away at the edges. His hand wrapped itself around the frozen, cold handle, but it refused to turn, it was locked. So he took a step backwards and stared up, then suddenly he placed his foot inside a large crack on the surface of the hotel wall. Holding on firmly to the street lamp as he gradually made his way up the wall to the balcony. Curiosity got the better of him; he had to find out who it was that broke the town's silence with a scream.

Eventually he swung his legs around the balcony's

rail and quickly placed his feet on the hard concrete floor. He pressed his ear gently against the dark window. He couldn't hear anything, apart from the pounding beat of his own heart. He slid his hand across the door leading into the hotel room. To his surprise it was unlocked. With one swift movement the door opened. He took a step inside, his fingers shaking; he closed the door behind him. His hands then grabbed the curtain and pulled it across to the one side. The light that had once lit up the room was now replaced by a pitch-black shade of darkness. His fingertips danced around, trying to find a light switch.

Suddenly the darkness left the room and the small light bulb in the middle of the room was alive. His eyes searched the area quickly, searching for any sign of movement. He moved his feet slowly, dodging piles of clothes, as he made his way towards the other side of the room. His hands brushed past an old wooden box. Looking down at his hands, a dark red liquid was now present on his fingertips. It was blood. Suddenly he began to panic, running from one side of the room to another. His eyes noticed a door connected to the main living room. He walked carefully over towards it, constantly looking over his shoulder. His heart pounding inside his chest, as he reached down and opened it. He swung it open to one side and quickly took a large step backwards. It was only a bathroom. Eventually he worked up enough courage to step inside. The hard tiles shattered with every step. At the back of the bathroom, there was a deep bathtub. He took a closer look, and then placed his hand over his mouth. There in the tub, lay the body of a dead man. There were bloodstains on the edges of the white bathtub. He breathed heavily and ran out of the room. His hands were shaking, and his face had gone white with numbness. There was no one around, and the air was silent. There was a tiny window open, letting in waves of frozen air. The smell of blood began to fill the room.

He couldn't stand it any longer; he took a step towards the balcony door. Suddenly he was stopped by an unfamiliar figure. A large man, wearing dark clothes, and he was holding something in his hands. He took a step away from the man, wiping his forehead once again, however this time with a sigh of relief. The man standing in front of him placed his camera on the ground as the man called "cut".

*By Jacqui Norman  
Year 11*

*St. Francis Xavier College  
BEACONSFIELD – VIC  
Teacher: Mr. Greg Ashcroft*

### AN ADVENTURE OF A TREE

BONG! OWW! OUCH! The gardener dropped me on a hard tough rock. I watched the other tiny seeds falling onto nice soft tender soil. This isn't fair I thought. How come I have to be dropped onto this hard firm rock and all the other little seeds land on nice soft soil? Suddenly a great big wind blew me off the hard rock and onto nice spongy soil. That's much more comfortable here.

A week later a long stick grew out of me, soon lots of sticks poked out of me, I even had roots digging into the soft dirt and the small lime green things called leaves started growing out of me, I was becoming a tree.

As years passed, I became strong and steady. Every morning this spring, I woke up to birds of all sorts singing and chirping, having a great time on my sturdy branches. Beautiful flowers such as daisies, tulips, roses, daffodils and blossoms began growing in the stunning garden, but one day little green round things appeared on me. Then after a few weeks they grew bright yellow and then very soon they became oval-shaped things. One day I saw a young magpie eating the yellow oval-shaped things. I asked him what they were.

He said "They are lemons of course!"

Then he took another big bite of the lemon.

"They are very sour and juicy" he replied again.



A few days later it was summer. It became warm and sunny. The children spent more time outside than inside, they watered me, splashed in the sparkling pool and they played with bouncy balls.

As months passed by, it soon became autumn. My beautiful green leaves became yellow, orange and red. As I watched in horror as one by one my lovely leaves dropped off, the soft tender soil beneath me was covered in dead leaves. The children threw the leaves up into the frosty air, then piled them up into a great big stack of leaves and then tossed themselves into the air and landed on the pile.

But when winter came, the children came inside and hardly came out to play. When it was early winter, little bits of icy white things came floating down and soon covered the ground in pale white. By now the colourful birds were gone and I figured out that the white things were snow. When it became the middle

of winter the weather became harsh, the frosty wind blew the strong branches of my tree, it hailed more often and it became bitterly cold. Now it was late winter and the freezing cold weather began to get warmer and the birds returned.

Since I have been a tree, for forty eight years my branches were huge and steady, I was looking forward to another spring for the forty-eighth time, but this spring was different. The birds were not singing and having a great time. In fact they were rather sad and gloomy, as they sobbed they sang:

The time has come  
There is work to be done  
The trees will die  
And we will cry

Then one spring morning a man walked out of the house with a sharp axe over his shoulder. The birds screamed out "The time has come". All the birds flew onto the roof of the house, covering their faces with their wings. The man stood in front of a tree, he swung his axe around and ... THUMP! A tree fell down. A few other people came out of the house to help the man carry the tree into the truck. Then the tree was driven away never to be seen again. Each day another tree was chopped down. When the man swung his axe around me I knew I would be dead. But when he chopped me down I was still alive and I could feel people lifting me up then dragging me to the truck.

When the doors of the truck closed I was taken to a busy factory. At the factory I was cut into fine thin strips and then I was made into paper. It was amazing.

When I was put into a shop, half of me was bought by an author. When she drove me to her house she took a piece of me and used a long hollow thing with black water inside to scribble on me. But then she shook her head and frowned. Then before I knew it she scrunched the piece of paper into a ball and then threw it into the bin. Then she repeated it over and over again until the bin was almost about to burst. Finally she smiled and nodded her head.

While she was typing on the computer I made a new friend. The hollow thing with black water in it was called a pen and the black water was called ink. Suddenly the author took a chunk of me and put me into a printer. Then the printer printed squiggles on

*Cont'd...*

## AN ADVENTURE OF A TREE (Cont'd)

me. The very next day the author sent that part of me to the publishers.

When the publishers agreed to publish the book they sold millions of copies. The children loved it! The book was called 'Dragon'. It was about a boy who finds a world of dragons. Because the author only bought half of me the publishers bought the other half by coincidence so the other half of me was made into books.

At the bookshop a vaguely familiar man walked in and grabbed a cop of Dragons. Which happened to be a piece of me. Soon I found out that he was giving me to his niece for her birthday. When I was wrapped in colourful wrapping paper, the man drove me to his niece's house. As soon as the wrapping paper was ripped I recognized the girl straight away, she was one of the children who used to water me and played with my leaves. The man who bought me was the man who helped carry me to the truck. I looked out

of the window and recognised the pretty garden straight away. It was the place where I grew up as a tree.

When the girl finished reading me she left me on a table near the window and paid no attention to me. I watched the garden for years and years, watching strong trees, green plants and beautiful flowers of all sorts grow. But when the trees got chopped down everything was dull and sad. I watched the birds flying around and singing. The children playing outside and the weather changing each season but I never forgot my fantastic adventure.

By Sunjuri Sun  
Grade 3/4 KD,  
St. Mary's Primary School  
HAMPTON – VIC.



## “SURVIVAL-MOTIVATION”

When you believe in dreams  
Anything is possible  
It's like flying without wings  
Knowing your desires are achievable  
Visions hold your reason for life  
Love comes in-between  
The future is in your hands  
Miracles can happen  
A dream is where it begins  
I have a reason for life  
Its all because of you  
You helped me fly  
My dreams I could pursue  
I fell but strived  
The vision pulled me thorough  
I was strong and survived  
Faith allowed it to come true  
The future remains bright  
God you're the reason,  
It's all because of you.

By Joel Basedow  
Age 17  
Springwood  
High School  
SPRINGWOOD – NSW



## THE STORM OF THE GIANT

When clashing cloud in pain cry,  
And yellow blood spread down the sky,  
When stars grow dark and die,  
And moon hides behind the mountain.

With foot of heavy granite stone,  
He crushes all beneath his toes,  
Then standing among ruin alone,  
His battle cry is heard far over the lands.

Smash! Crash! Sword on stone!  
The silver sword soon turned to roan,  
Sparks flew! Cut deep down to the bone!  
The giant gave a mighty groan, and there he fell, a  
tyrant gone.

The rumours flew faster than wind,  
Soon to reach the ears of the king!  
A smile, once lost, became a grin!  
The Prince, his son, had won again!

By Bryony Stringer  
Year 7B  
Mount Waverley  
Secondary College  
MT. WAVERLEY – VIC.



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2565	Glue Stick 15g	20
2566	Glue Stick 21g	20
2567	School Glue 37ml	18
2568	School Glue 118ml	12
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2570	White Glue 37ml	18
2571	White Glue 118ml	12
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## Some Writing Tips

by Paul Collins

[www.paulcollins.com.au](http://www.paulcollins.com.au)

[www.quentaris.com](http://www.quentaris.com)

No one can really teach you how to write. You either have the drive to write, or you don't. Having said this, there are many shortcuts to becoming a published writer. Some of the following might help:

1. Write as much as you can, and read more than you write. There's an old saying: 'Input must exceed output'. You wouldn't for instance attempt to make a table unless you had first studied how others had made them. If you're writing fantasy for instance, you need to know all the conventions: archetypes, the structure, what is accepted and what isn't; to include a map, etc. Only by reading heaps of fantasy novels will you be able to write one that is publishable. Know your subject!
2. Writing workshops can be confronting. But they offer shortcuts. The tutors know their craft. They will help you with presentation of your manuscript; give professional feedback on what works and what doesn't; they invariably introduce you to like-minded people; often workshop participation leads to meeting publishers who would otherwise be unavailable to you. Just because you might be young, doesn't mean that you shouldn't participate in writing workshops. Some are tailored especially for younger writers.
3. There are many writers' organisations around the world. These usually have newsletters which provide excellent opportunities for beginner and professional writers. They include writing competitions; publishers' 'want lists'; articles on writing; contacts with like-minded people; tell you about book launches where you can network and meet people. Most Australian States have writing centres – they're easy to find on the internet. Type into Google: "writers centre" +Australia. You'll find thousands of sites around Australia. Many have links to other writers' centres. Between them, you'll find every possible centre in Australia. A fund of knowledge, at your fingertips.
4. If you're in doubt as to convention, pick up any book and see how the book is laid out. Note the indents at the beginning of each paragraph for instance. Many beginners run all their lines together, even dialogue. This is not the way it's done. A book will show you how to do it. Presentation is most important. Try as hard as you can to proofread your manuscript before sending it out. If a publisher sees countless spelling mistakes and other errors, your manuscript will not, as a rule, be given the time it deserves. Publishers receive thousands of manuscripts a year, and it costs them to read through them. You need to appear professional.
5. Although it's not necessary, it sometimes helps to have a mentor, someone who can give you free advice. If you seek this from established authors, be sure to thank them for their help. If your mentor can give you a quote for your work, or a quick assessment, it might help. If the publisher knows the author, they will take more notice of your manuscript.
6. Sometimes getting your manuscript published is pure luck. You might have a dog in your story, and the editor reading your manuscript might love dogs. Or an upcoming issue of the magazine might be a dog special, and your manuscript has arrived at that magical time. For this reason it's important to realise that persistence is important. Acceptance is purely subjective. Most of the world's classics have been rejected on numerous occasions, only to find publication and then go on to greatness. If you're aware of flaws in your manuscript, or some

generous editor points out errors, take their advice and at least look over your work one more time before sending it back out. You don't have to agree with the advice, but it might, just *might* help sell your manuscript on its next submission. On this note, if you have faith in your work, send it out and keep doing so till you've exhausted all avenues of publication. Remember, the internet is an excellent tool. It will give you as many magazine addresses as you'll ever need. Many of them pay – even if you don't want to become a full time writer, as a hobby, it's quite lucrative. For example, if you're a science fiction writer, you can go to: <http://www.ralan.com> and discover all the latest paying markets around the world. Or, type into Google: "kids magazines". You'll see over 100,000 entries on this subject. And remember, many of these magazines also publish non-fiction. If you write about something typically Australian, like Aussie Rules, and send some high quality pics, many overseas magazines will think your article exotic. It will stand out among all the other submissions, if only for its uniqueness. And it's this uniqueness that might get you published.

7. A final tip: if your imagination is letting you down, try writing an anecdotal story – something that happened to you in real life. When I wrote *The Great Ferret Race*, I knew nothing about ferrets, so I emailed several ferret clubs in the US and asked for anecdotal stories. One lady said her ferrets play ice hockey. She puts ice cubes on the lino floor in her kitchen and her ferrets scabble about to gain possession of the ice cubes. Another lady had a ferret who loved a certain brand of chewing gum. One day, it found her chewing gum in her shopping bag, ate it, and fell asleep. The lady went shopping, and when she opened her bag to pay for her groceries, the ferret jumped out and ran under the aisles of the shopping market. Security staff were called, people were yelling out that a rat was loose – pandemonium reigned. These, and other anecdotal stories, appear in my book. So even if you don't have any funny stories, ask people for theirs. You'll be surprised how generous people can be if you seek their help.

Paul Collins is the co-creator with Michael Pryor of *The Quentaris Chronicles*, and author of *The Jelindel Chronicles* and *The Earthborn Wars*.



Paul Collins

### GOODBYE GRANDPA

"Seph has the best voice ever."

"Yeah, AND she's the best trumpeter."

"Tell me about it! She could be a jazz musician tomorrow if she tried!"

Tia and Jen were confused. Their best friend Persephone was the most amazing jazz singer and trumpeter they had ever heard, but she had just stopped one day. She was hardly ever at school either. There was a rumour going around that her grandfather had died but who trusts a rumour?

"Maybe we should stop by the cemetery later", suggested Tia.

"Good idea. We'll stop over at Seph's too", agreed Jen.

"Seph! SEPH!!" called Jen, rapping on Persephone's door. A tousle-haired, bag-eyed twelve year old slouched there. "Oh, hi." She looked so sick. Skinny too. "Err, do you mind if we come in?" asked Tia. "Can't see why not", said Persephone indifferently.

"Where's your trumpet, Seph?" asked Jen.

"And your mike?" added Tia.

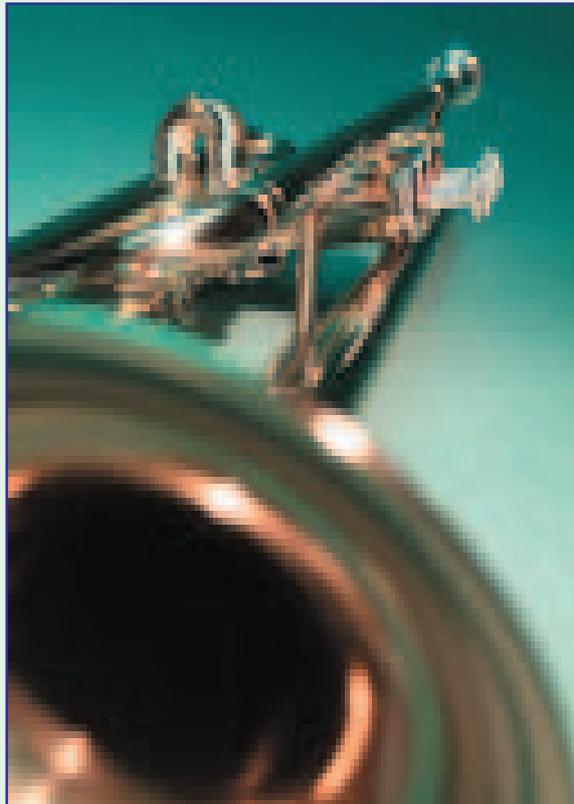
"I don't want them any more", said Persephone firmly. She sounded like she was telling herself as well as them.

"But you were so good—"

"I don't care. I'm not going to ever sing or play that stupid instrument again."

"Just chucked them out then?" Both Jen and Tia knew she could never do that.

"I put them in the Shed." That was worse than the dump. The Shed was the place where the older kids went to trash things and graffiti. They would have a field day with a trumpet and microphone.



"WHAT!!!!???" yelled Tia. "YOU WERE BORN TO BE A JAZZ MUSICIAN!!! JUST BECAUSE YOUR GRANDFATHER TAUGHT YOU HOW TO PLAY THE TRUMPET, DOESN'T MEAN YOU SEND IT TO DOOM WHEN HE'S RESTING!!!"

"DON'T YOU DARE BRING GRANDPA INTO THIS!!" Persephone screamed.

When her friends left, Persephone thought. "I was born to be a musician. What else am I good at? I can't write a story for cashews, I can't make my acting realistic, I got the lowest grade possible in PE, and, just like any normal twelve year old, I'm not interested in Science or Maths."

Persephone Field had made her decision.

She ran down to the Shed. Teenagers were yelling out obscenities. "Who the! #\$^@^ put this #%^&@\$%&@#\$ thing here?"

"Who cares? Let's smash it."

"GET AWAY FROM MY TRUMPET!!" They turned around and amazingly—ran away.

"COWARDS!" yelled Persephone.

She ran up and grabbed her trumpet and mike. Then she ran home, set up her mike in her room, grabbed her trumpet again and ran down to the cemetery.

She set herself next to her grandpa's grave and began to sing the first jazz song he had taught her: "Glory of Love" with their special trumpets solo. She played and sang through all of their special songs one last time.

That was six years ago now. Persephone passed Music with flying colours and is currently studying in the conservatorium to be either a musical grievance councillor or a music teacher.

By Lucy Moffatt  
PETERHEAD – SA

## SISTER

As soon as we were together,  
I knew we'd never be apart.  
You mean the world to me,  
The 1st inside my heart.

As we grew much older,  
We would always fight.  
And although sisters always do,  
I thought it wasn't right.

We'd always end up angry,  
We'd always end up sad.  
I'd always end up crying,  
You'd always end up mad.

But as a few years drifted,  
We'd always found a way,  
To forgive each other for everything,  
And survive another day.

Everyday together,  
Was always an adventure,  
Everyday was different,  
But always a memory to remember.

We always shared memories,  
Both happy and sad.  
We always shared secrets,  
Both good and bad.

You were always encouraging,  
Whenever I was down.  
You always made me feel happy,  
And never let me frown.

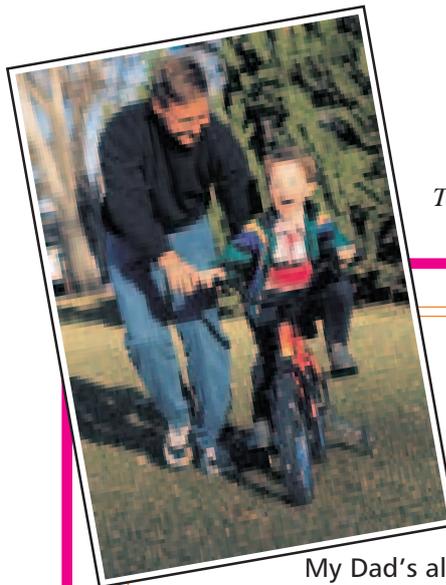
We share something important,  
Better than a white dove.  
It's what everybody has,  
But only a sister shares it, love.

I've loved you all my life,  
And I'll never forget.  
All the way back when we were kids,  
The day that we had met.

A sister is not just someone,  
You are related to.  
It's someone you love and care about,  
And you know that they love you.

Thank you so much, sister,  
Thank you for all your care.  
Through times that I had needed you,  
You were always there.

I love you so much, sister,  
Ever since the start.  
You'll always have a place,  
Deep inside my heart.



*By Baya Ou Yang  
Grade 5  
McKinnon Primary School  
ORMOND – VIC.  
Teacher: Ms. Sarah Thurgood*

## MY DAD

My Dad's always cheerful  
He will forever make me laugh  
He makes me glad, after I've been sad  
And teaches me to be tough  
He works real hard, to give me toys  
And sacrifices his time  
To let me play with other boys  
But sometimes he gets mad  
After I've been bad  
But when I say sorry  
He'll reply "Don't worry"  
And we'll race outside in a hurry!

And that's why I love him.

*By Alexander Yip  
Year 5R, Sydney Grammar School  
Edgecliff Preparatory, SYDNEY – NSW*



**I, THE FORGOTTEN**



Monster  
 Surging through, determined  
 Terrorising burnt dust  
 Swarming, startled clouds  
 Obscuring reality  
 Parched air,  
 Gasping for life  
 See shapes, hear strange voices  
 Disturbed in my reverie  
 People running towards  
 Family  
 Grabbing, huddling  
 In her trembling embrace.

Shaking, as leaves in the wind  
 She's sobbing mumbling  
 Cradling as we were newborn  
 Little ones frightened, eyes uncomprehending  
 Shouting, such commotion  
 Figures commanding release  
 She's clutching, wailing  
 Raise my head,  
 Whispering breeze whipping hair  
 Truthful sunlight illuminating rivers of  
 Agony on ebony skin  
 Pleading, begging  
 Old gum groans in exasperation  
 Millions of green children muttering disapproval  
 Wrenching hands now  
 Arms, pale, evil, reaching to pluck us from  
 Existence  
 As we know it

Exclaiming  
 Kicking, struggling as one possessed  
 Look wildly for her  
 Howling insanely like the dingo  
 Face contorted  
 Mask of fear  
 Resisting, voices shouting devil's tongue

Dragged, desecrated  
 As mere animals  
 Screaming gain  
 Inhuman, piercing  
 Alien source  
 World spinning  
 Heavy blow

Distant noises, fading  
 Warm rivulets streaming  
 Distorting vision  
 Hazy now  
 Tossed into dark prison  
 Hear far-off rumbling  
 Through murky oblivion  
 Destination; unknown  
 Can't fight  
 Stolen  
 A tiny, lonely fleck  
 I, the forgotten

*By Melaine Fehlandt  
 Year 10  
 OGILVIE HIGH SCHOOL  
 HOBART – TAS.*

**STAYING AT HOME.....  
 While my Brother is at School**

To school he goes every day,  
 I wish he could just stay and play,  
 But ALAS I can't talk and tell him how I feel,  
 Because I'm a mere little baby in my mother's arms,  
 Only sleeping, crying and having my meal.  
 OH NO! I pressed the big red button,  
 Mum told me not to,  
 What's going to happen to me and you?  
 Phew, it's just that big black box that my brother plays  
 games on,  
 I wish I could play them too – they sound so fun!  
 I wanted to turn the noisy thing off –  
 So I pushed the big red button again and "POOF" all the  
 colours and sounds were gone.  
 I'm getting quite hungry now so I better cry,  
 Oh wait I heard the doorbell ring, it's my brother,  
 I better go say HI!!!



*By Prachi Nagrath  
 Year 5, Age 11  
 Epping Public School  
 EPPING – NSW*

*Teachers:  
 Mrs. McManus  
 and Mrs. Wiltshire*

## BENEATH THE SURFACE

So many things  
That you can't see  
Are going on  
Inside of me.

The things I think  
The things I feel  
What drives me mad  
What makes me reel.

So many things  
That you can't see  
Are going on  
Inside of me.

What people say  
That make me sad  
The things I've done  
That makes me bad.



Experiences that haunt me  
from long ago  
All come back  
And leave so slow.

So many things  
That you can't see  
Are going on  
Inside of me.

Beneath the surface  
Where you can't see  
They're going on  
Inside of me.

*By Naomi McCloskey  
Grade 10  
Nowra Christian School  
SOUTH NOWRA – NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Griffin*

## TIME

A perpetual hourglass  
Passing us without concern  
Revolving  
Never interfering  
We exist upon its every move  
Everlasting timer  
It does not stop  
It does not wait  
Tick Tick Tick

Time is our navigator  
Orientating our lives  
It watches over us  
From the void of space  
It does not stop  
It does not wait  
Tick Tick Tick

Time glides past  
Awaiting no man  
No room to "err"  
Yet there's always tomorrow  
It controls our destiny  
And watches over our every move  
It is the ruler of itself  
It does not stop  
It does not wait  
Tick Tick Tick

Time is the ever present now  
Therefore I Am  
Tick Tock.

*By Saion Chatterjee  
Age 13, Brisbane Boys' College  
TOOWONG – QLD.*



# The 2005 Young Australian Writers Awards



## ◀ FRED P. ARCHER LITERARY AWARD

**KATRINA WRIGLEY**  
*The Peninsula School,  
Mt. Eliza, Vic.*

## ▶ TELEMATICS TRUST LITERARY AWARD

**HAYLEE WILSON**  
*Glenelg School, Glenelg  
East, SA*



## ◀ BUSHELLS LITERARY AWARD

**VICTORIA WANDKE**  
*Carey Grammar School,  
Kew, Vic.*

## ▶ PERCY BAXTER TRUST ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**AMY CASSELL**  
*Strathcona Baptist Girls'  
Grammar School,  
Canterbury, Vic.*

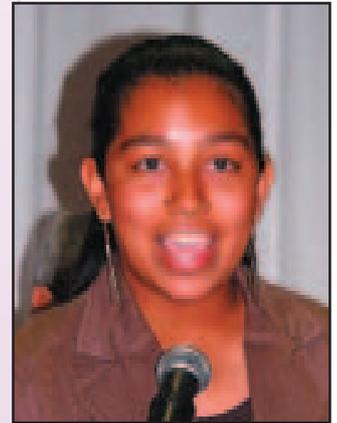


## ◀ JACK BROCKHOFF FOUNDATION AWARD

**NICHOLAS ARNOLD**  
*Mornington Secondary  
College, Vic.*

## ▶ ASG LITERARY AWARD Poetry Category

**KRISTEN COLACO**  
*Overnewton Anglican  
Community College*

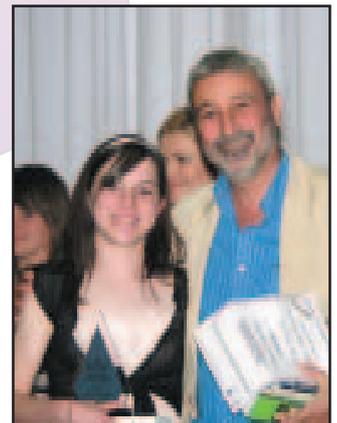


## ◀ QANTAS FLIGHT CATERING AWARD

**KELSEY PEGRUM**  
*St. Denis Primary School,  
Perth, WA*

## ▶ DON BURKE LITERARY AWARD

**CLAIRE PEOPLES**  
*Siena College,  
Camberwell, Victoria*



Chloe Pukk?

◀ **HELEN HANDBURY  
LITERARY AWARD  
Primary School  
Category**

**CHLOE PUKK**  
*Diamond Creek East Primary School*

**ASG LITERARY  
AWARD  
Short Story  
Category**

**EMILY WEBB-SMITH**  
*Geraldton Grammar  
School, Geraldton, WA*



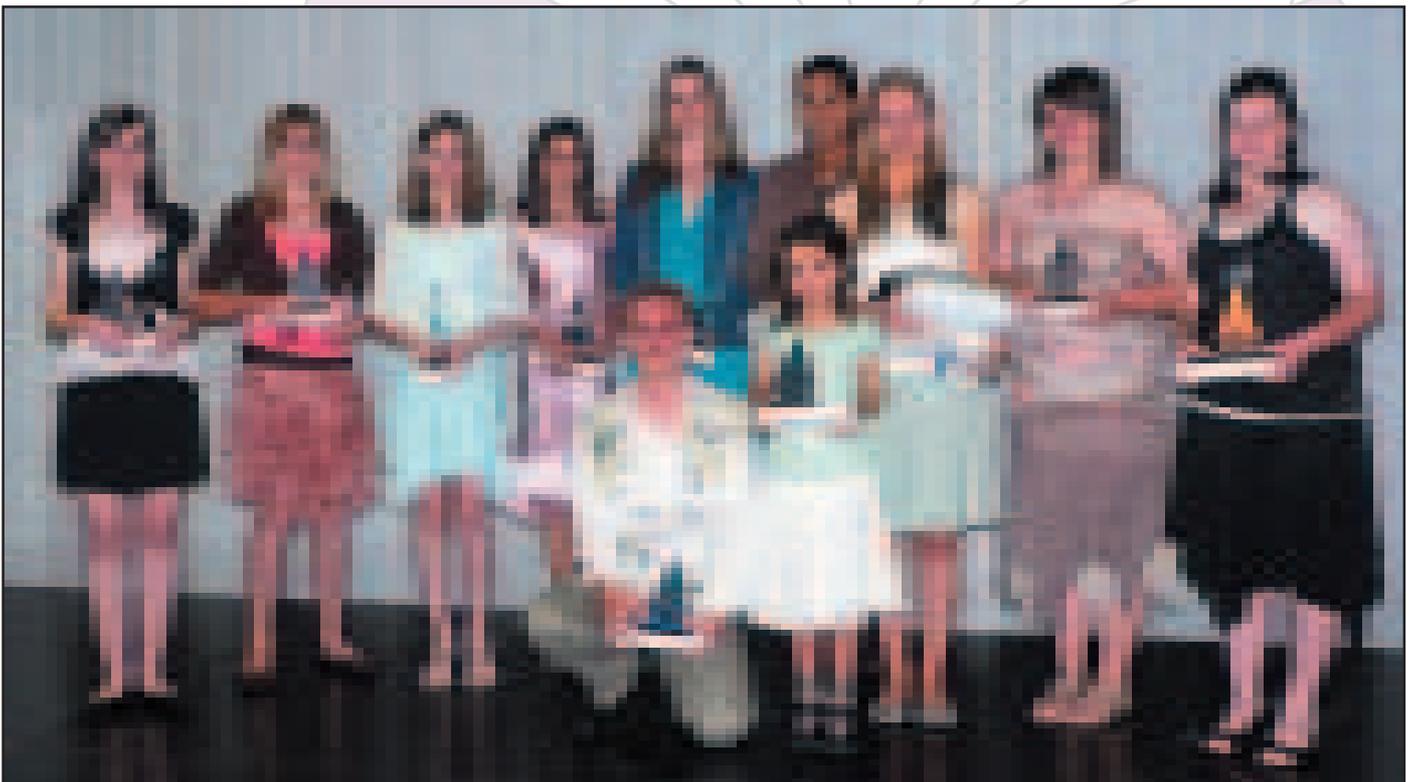
Lachlan McGinnes?

◀ **HELEN HANDBURY  
LITERARY AWARD  
Secondary School  
Category**

**LACHLAN MCGINNES**  
*Xavier College*

**GE INSURANCE  
ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD**

**SONIA DODD**  
*Mayfield West  
Demonstration  
School, NSW*



# Shane Gould joins Community Cash



An Australian swimming legend has teamed up to the Bushells Community Cash Challenge, to help pour cash back into the community!

Shane Gould, the winner of 3 Gold medals at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, was thrilled to be involved in this fantastic fundraising initiative. Shane has been involved with all sorts of community groups for as long as she can remember, from school to swimming squads and horse riding, and knows just how important they are for kids.

‘When I was growing up, I relied on the support of the local community swimming pool and its facilities to help me achieve my sporting dreams’, she said.

With Shane’s support, the first stage of the Community Cash initiative is off to a great start. Shane visited five of the organisations who have registered with Community Cash, including a kindergarten and surf club, and was delighted with the enthusiasm the kids showed to their group.

As well as that, 16 lucky groups have just received grants from \$500 to \$5,000 in the first Community Cash quarterly draw. One of these groups was the Brindabella Blues Football Club in Canberra, who are going to use their \$500 cash grant to purchase a PA system for their club.

The Brindabella Blues are just like most other community groups especially schools around Australia. Providing necessary services, but always on the look out for more cash for basic needs such as equipment.

Unfortunately, many groups find it hard to raise money for necessary equipment. Everyone is tired of the old raffle ticket and chocolate drive, and looking for new and easy approach to fundraising. That’s why Community Cash is just so great – everyone knows someone who drinks tea, so collecting tokens is easy.

The next round of grants is being drawn on January 31, so there’s still enough time to collect the 50 minimum tokens to be in the draw. And remember, the groups at the end of the competition who collect the most amount of tokens will win up to \$25,000.

Most people belong to at least one community group – whether it is the local school, sporting group or after school care – they can all get involved in Community Cash.

Register your group at [www.bushellscommunitycash.com.au](http://www.bushellscommunitycash.com.au) and start collecting tokens today!



*Brindabella Blues Football Club celebrates their winnings – the Bushells way!*



### “THE ARGUMENT”



“Please don’t leave me William, I can’t stand the thought of not seeing you whenever I feel like it.”

“But I must, I don’t want to leave, I just have to.”

“We are engaged, how do I know that you will return to me?”

“I know I will.”

“How do you know?” debated Elizabeth.

“I just have this gut instinct that everything will be all right.”

“Fine, go, leave me but I will be waiting for your return.”

“Please don’t be like this, I promise that when I return, we will get married” promised William.

“I love you.”

“I love you too, very much so.”

“How will I tell my parents? They love you like their own son”, asked Elizabeth.

“Tell them in your own time darling.” William left with his pride intact and his honour pack in his bag ready for the war.

Elizabeth was frightened for her only love who would travel afar to a foreign place. He has never been to Gallipoli. Elizabeth looked down at the floor, she fell to her knees and began to cry, and her tears were her only saviour of insanity.

Later that evening Elizabeth’s parents came home from their busy social lives. They had found Elizabeth sleeping on the floor in the living room.

“Elizabeth, Elizabeth, wake up we’re home”, whispered Mrs. Wilson, crouching down beside Elizabeth’s exhausted body.

“I must have dozed off a while after William left.”

“William was here?”

“Oh yes, he told me some horrible news.”

“What was it my dear?” enquired Mrs. Wilson.

“Oh mother, he is going to the war in Gallipoli. I do not know how long he will be gone for but he promised that he would not get hurt and that when he returned we will get married.”

“I see, but isn’t it the honourable thing to do for our country, for Australia?”

“I do not care whether or not it is the honourable thing to do, he should be here with me.”

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson prepared the dinner and left Elizabeth alone before they talked with her again. Elizabeth felt so tired from all the shock, she was physically and mentally exhausted so she went to bed.

The next morning Elizabeth sat on her window sill hoping to get one last glimpse of her loved one before he left. Suddenly she saw William running towards her house. She ran to the front door, William opened the door and kissed her tenderly on the lips. She got a cold shiver down her spine, it was as if it was warning her for William not to go because something bad could happen. William left and he ran back down the street. Elizabeth thought that it was best to get on with life and not let it slow her down.

Three months later Elizabeth got a letter, she dropped the letter to the floor in sorrow and Elizabeth followed.

*By Kasandra Schwartz*

*Age 15*

*Ballajura Community College*

*BALLAJURA – QLD.*

### HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY I love you how much?

Mum I love you so much!  
It’s something I can’t describe  
You’ve been there for me always  
When I’ve smiled and when I’ve cried  
So I thank you for being there  
And bringing me into this world  
So I can now look up to you and think  
My mum’s the best in the world!



*By Natasha Tamburini*

*Year 7*

*St. Joseph’s Catholic  
High School*

*ALBION PARK – NSW*

## THE MAGIC GATE

Once upon a time there lived a little girl called Olivia. She was very different to all her friends. The thing was, Olivia always dreamed. She dreamt of unicorns, fairies and other fantasy tales. Her parents did not like it at all.

One day, it was raining outside and Olivia was dreaming as usual. She paused to look out the window when she saw a shimmering light near the garden gate. She called for her mum and dad but when they arrived there was no shimmering light. Olivia ran outside to go and see if the gate started shimmering again but when she arrived, the gate was gone.

Instead of the gate there was a little door. It was way too small to fit Olivia. As she reached out to touch the door she realised she was shrinking!! Eventually she was so small, it was just the right size for Olivia to fit!!

Olivia opened the door and realised that she was in a Little Village with lots of little humans, the size of her, scavenging around. She was so amazed! This town was like the one she was reading in her book the day before! She had read this book over and over so she knew what she had to do.

In the story, Tidy town was a lovely Village but there was just one thing that put the tidy town out of order. On the top of the hill, where it was cold, icy and very windy, there lived a Troll by the name of Munchka. Munchka loved to steal the children of Tidy town and was a very mean Monster.

Olivia's job was to save the Tidy town village from this terrible Troll.

Olivia's back shivered at the sight of him. She could already tell how scary this monster would be. "If no one else will do it, I guess I'm the person for the job", Olivia thought. Just then, a lady hurried past Olivia. "Oh, Buttercup cookies and orange flavored whiskers!!" The lady said as she hurried along. "Quick! Jason, Jackson and.... WHERE'S BABY JOE!" Olivia knew straight away something was going on. "I don't mean to budge in or anything, she said "But is anything wrong?" "ANYTHING WRONG?!", the lady said, "WELL AS A MATTER OF FACT, MY BABY'S BEEN TAKEN BY MUNCHKA THE TROLL!!"

"Oh no!"

"We are going to save her do not worry", Olivia said to the sad woman.

"Look. I will go and find the Munchka. If he has your baby I will convince him into giving it back to you".

"You'd really do that? For me?"

"Urr... I gguueess.

Olivia was very scared but knew this town was relying on her.

Olivia trudged up the mountain and just as she was about to sit down, she saw an ugly looking thing only about five metres away from her. "I'mmmm Ollliivviiiaa", she stuttered.

"YES? WHAT IS IT YOU WANT LITTLE GIRL?"

"Well you see. I came for a ladies baby named Joe. She would really like it back".

Munchka's eyes grew teary. "It's just.....",

"What?"

"Well..... I had a baby of my own and she just disappeared. Like that. Ever since then, I have been taking babies and pretending that he/she was my own." This wasn't in the story! Olivia couldn't believe her eyes. A troll. Crying! Olivia put her arm around him and said, "Munchka, Imagine how the parents would feel."

"They feel just like you felt when your baby disappeared." Munchka started to understand and not after long, he and Olivia were walking back down the mountain to Tidy town.

People ran at the sight of him. Children screamed at the look on his face. "Stop!" Olivia screamed. Everyone froze at the sound of her voice.

"Munchka has something to tell you all."

"I'm sorry." He explained the story to them and they all understood. As a matter of fact, people of tidy town began weeping themselves and not after long, everyone understood the troll and decided to have a feast to celebrate the event.

Thanks to Olivia, Tidy town is now a safe and friendly place and you never know, one rainy day when your head is full of imagination, you could all of a sudden be out there saving the world....

THE END

This story is dedicated to my beautiful cousin, Nicholas, who has the most wild imagination.

*By* *Dominica Roebuck*  
*Age 12*  
*Assumption Catholic School*  
*BATHURST – NSW*

### AN AUSTRALIAN DINOSAUR ADVENTURE !!!

In Australia, about 50 million years ago, there were dinosaurs all over the dusty plains, in rainforests and along the coasts. Since my family and I are taking a trip around Australia, I am going to write a diary about the adventures we experienced and the fun and excitement we had.

Day 1: It was the 8th of February and our first trip was down south, which in the future will be called Victoria. When we got there, there was a tour guide standing with many tourists asking really complicated questions such as, what kind of dinosaurs could be found in the area. The tour guide replied, to their amazement, that they might see Ultrasaurus, Troodon, Eorapter, Wannasaurus, Saltapus, Savapelta or the Triceratops. The tour guide also told us if we saw a nest, then not to go it, or the mother dinosaur might think that we were going to hurt the babies.

Day 2: It was the 9th of February. We headed west, to South Australia, and when we arrived there was an old English man. All the dinosaurs seemed to like him but then another kind of dinosaur who didn't seem to like him came up and when the dinosaur went away, there was no Old English man patting and hugging the dinosaurs any more! The dinosaurs that we saw in South Australia were the Camerasaurus, Zigongosaurus, Minmi, Mussasaurus and the Argentinosaurus.

Day 3: It was the 10th of February and we kept heading west and found a small village. There were only about eleven small huts. In the future this village is going to be called Perth, and the State will be called Western Australia. Near the little village there was a creek called Dino Creek. Here there was fresh water to drink and fish, frogs and heaps of other animals around that we could catch, cook and eat. In this hot and dry place there lived dinosaurs called the Thecodontosaurus, Oviraptor, Anklosaurus, Velociraptor, Diplodocus, Supersaurus, Seismosaurus and of course, the Drosaurus.

Day 4: It was the 11th of February and we were heading northeast, towards an area, which in the future, is going to be called the Northern Territory. There were not only dinosaurs but also humungous spiders in webs and huge crocodiles, so we didn't stay there very long. The dinosaurs that live there are named Megalosaurus, Brachiosaurus and of coarse the Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Day 5: The 12th of February was the last day of our great family adventure and we were still heading east towards a place, which in the future will be called

Queensland. It was nice and sunny and tropical, with beautiful sandy beaches and blue seas. I think it is the best day we've had in a long, long

time. So, we just stayed at the beach for the day and relaxed. The type of dinosaurs there are the Kronosaurus, Moonoclonniu and the Spinasaurus.

Day 6: We are home now and ready to go hunting for food but we have just got to look out for the Sammisaurus because it's the most intelligent dinosaur in the world. We enjoyed our holiday around Australia and hope you enjoyed it too.



*By Samantha Sambidge-Mitchell*

*Age 11*

*JERRABOMBERRA – NSW*

### ANZAC POEM

The battlefield is silenced,  
Our rifles all in hand,  
And all that lies between us,  
Is the pitted, dark course sand.  
The first gunshot fired,  
A sharp and piercing sound,  
We know that we don't stand much hope,  
But we have to stand our ground.  
We can almost taste the stench of lost bodies,  
A strong and bitter stench,  
The smell we must get used to,  
Slowly filling up our trench.  
When our white flag is risen,  
Some take it as relief,  
But for the sad lost bodies,  
It is only disbelief.

*By Ella Pattison*

*Year 6*

*Shelford Girls' Grammar School  
CAULFIELD – VIC.*

*Teacher: Mrs Tania Whitehead*



## A YOUNG MONARCH

Once, long ago, in a land not far from here, there lived an orphaned girl called Emily. She lived in a forest known as "The Forest of the Moon and Stars" inside a hollow tree. In the house there also lived an elf whose name was Rael. Emily didn't know that Rael lived with her inside the tree until one fateful day...

It was in the morning and Emily had just come home from her morning walk. As she walked into the room as she did every morning, what should she see waiting for her but Rael himself.

"Emily, you must come away with me at once", he said softly.

"Who... who are you?" Emily asked. "It doesn't matter at the moment; the only thing that matters is that you're in great danger. If you come with me now I will tell you on the way", he replied quickly with a quiver of fear in his voice.

"Okay", says Emily. Rael indicated that she should take a rucksack that he had packed earlier.

Quietly they slipped out of the house and into the forest. As they were walking Rael told Emily all about who he was and why they had to leave the house. Suddenly Rael spoke "Listen, there are grogoyles coming through the forest and they're riding nightmares, we need to move quickly and get out of the forest", he finished.

"Okay, but what do we do then?" asked Emily.

"We find the rebels and put you on the throne", he said moving quickly through the forest.

Three days later they were nice and comfortable and most importantly, safe within the rebel encampment. While Emily slept inside her tent, plans were being made to overthrow the impostor Harald and put her back on the throne.

"We can't do that, it would be suicide to even try", said Rael speaking to Ahjad.

"Well, what do you think would be better?" asked Ahjad.

"Get Harald pre-occupied and attack while he's busy", replied Rael.

"Okay, it's agreed, we'll do that then", said Ahjad.

Over the next month, preparations were made to put Emily on the throne and one week before the attack, she turned ten. According to Rael, that was why the grogoyles had come to kill her, it was the age that she could rule without a regent so Harald sought to dispose of the threat to his throne.

The week passed quickly and while the battle waged Emily stayed safely hidden away in the rebel camp. Oh, what a great battle it was. There was fierce fighting for four days and both sides suffered great losses. It seemed like the battle would go on for weeks and weeks until suddenly, the enemy forces surrendered. Without any hesitation,

Emily was put upon the throne, Harald was thrown in prison and peace spread throughout the land.



By Sarah McGeough  
Age 11

St. John the Baptist  
GLADSTONE – QLD.

Teacher: Mrs Penny Collins

## HOLIDAYS

The sunny mornings  
The hot nights  
The fresh breeze  
The highest humidity  
The sparkling beaches  
The soft silky sand  
The excitement of arriving  
The smell of different cultures  
Everybody smiling  
Happiness all around  
Tasting the sweet smell  
Felling no anger  
Believing in whatever  
Fun all of the time  
Disappointment of leaving.



By Brooke Ellis  
Year 9B  
Mill Park Secondary  
College  
MILL PARK – VIC.

### THE FOREST I USED TO KNOW

I stand alone in a beautiful forest  
The light is slightly green  
Trees are looming overhead  
Swinging lively and free.

I love my lush green forest  
With all its noise and life  
I close my eyes and smell it  
So natural and untouched.

Two months later I came again  
But my forest was quite different  
It looked all burnt and empty  
Destroyed and deserted.

Where are the trees  
And life and sound  
What has happened to my forest  
The forest I used to know.

*By Hannah Simkin  
Year 6  
Hartwell Primary School  
CAMBERWELL – VIC.*

### HOW ARE FOSSILS MADE?

A long, long time ago,  
dinosaurs ruled the earth.  
The big and small, the short and tall,  
they ruled since their birth.

Then one day, a comet came,  
it wiped out all their kind.  
No longer then to stalk and roam,  
there were none for one to find.

After a while, everything rotted,  
except their teeth and bones.  
It took a long, long time,  
but they turned to little stone.

Those little stones were called fossils,  
and they were buried deep.  
A team of scientists found them,  
and gave them to a museum to keep.

*By Alexander Yip  
Year 5R  
Sydney Grammar School  
Edgecliff Preparatory  
SYDNEY – NSW*

### ANGEL ON EARTH

We have no words they're all locked inside  
Trapped like our feelings, they're so hard to find  
No words could express what you meant to our lives  
You were an angel, your wings were alive.

You had a love that shone in the dark  
You had an energy a million times a spark  
You had a passion and a hope in the LORD  
You served Him till the end and He bought you forward  
Now you are in Heaven perfect and unlike our earth  
With your God that loved you from before your earthly birth.

We have no words they're all locked inside  
Trapped like our feelings, they're so hard to find  
No words could express what you meant to our lives  
You were an angel, your wings were alive.

We will always miss your smile like a song without a rhyme  
We will never understand that this was God's own time.  
We will miss your bubbly self like the land misses the rain,  
We know you are in Heaven and that you feel no pain.  
You are now so happy, you will never shed a tear,  
Your angelic voice is all we want to hear.

We have no words they're all locked inside  
Trapped like our feelings, they're so hard to find  
No words could express what you meant to our lives  
You were an angel, your wings were alive.

Thank you to God that she was his child,  
We're thankful that she could live for a while  
Thankyou so much for her happy soul,  
Thankyou that now she is with You and whole,  
We all loved her, oh how that's true  
and we are most thankful that she loved You.



*By Melinda Adams  
Age 17  
Carinya Christian School  
TAMWORTH – NSW*

## ANCIENT RESCUE

"Hurry up!" Athena exclaimed.

"I'm going as fast as I can", her magical horse Jupiter retorted.

When they reached the mountain Athena climbed down from Jupiter, checked that there wasn't anyone watching, and encased a nearby boulder with bronze light from her fingertips. With a flick of her wrist, the boulder rolled away, revealing a small cave with a pond.

Athena followed Jupiter inside, then moved the boulder back.

"There's a new spell I wanted you to try", Jupiter said after Athena had released the little, purple dragon and the slightly smaller, gold griffin from the baskets tied to Jupiter's rump. They immediately started chasing each other around the cave.



Sit down, place your hands palms up on your knees and say ***Evom evac. It should move the cave to another mountain.***"

Athena did as she was told. The cave began to shake. This lasted for about a minute, then stopped.

"Was that supposed to happen?" She asked.

"Yes, but usually not for that long. We might have gone a little further than we intended", Jupiter answered. "I'll go outside and see where we are."

Athena moved the boulder again.

"Oh no", Jupiter said. "We didn't go a little too far, we're in China. And it wasn't just in distance either, it was in time. This is Ancient China."

Athena went outside to have a look. There was a large wall that stretched as far as the eye could see on both sides. It looked to be unfinished in some parts. Suddenly, there was the sound of a whip and a scream coming from a nearby house. Athena climbed onto

Jupiter.

"Go over there", Athena ordered him.

"But we co-"

"Just go! And try to do it quickly."

Jupiter set off towards the house at a gallop.

When they reached the gate, Athena jumped off Jupiter. "Stay here", she told him.

She ran through the gate and into the courtyard. Sitting on the ground was a thin girl of about eleven. "Hello", Athena said trying to get the girl's attention. The girl put up her head, looking confused. Athena tried to think of a way to make the girl understand. There was only one way she could think of that might work.

"*Hsilgne keeps*", she said. "Hello", she said again to test it.

"Hello", the girl said in reply.

"Good, you can understand me", Athena sighed in relief. "Quickly, follow me."

"I can't", the other girl moaned. "There's a magical globe that surrounds me, and if I try to leave I'll burn."

Athena looked at her, putting magic into her sight. She saw a faint, green sphere. Using her magic like a needle, she reached forward and burst it.

"Okay it's gone now", she said. "Now hurry!"

They ran outside to where Jupiter was waiting. Athena jumped on and pulled the other girl up.

"Go back to the cave as fast as you possibly can!" She told him. As he set off, the Chinese girl clung to her tightly. Athena looked behind them and saw a group of guards following them. Jupiter suddenly swerved into the cave. Athena dismounted, covered the hole and cast the moving spell. When the shaking stopped, she asked the girl what her name was. She paused for a moment.

"Ling", she said at last.

"Welcome to Australia, Ling."

*By Marianne Curran  
Age 11  
61 Pope St.  
TARRAGINDI – QLD.*

### THE USEFUL POISONOUS APPLE

One day a pixie was walking by the apple trees and smelt something unusual; it was hard to tell what it smelt like. "I think there's a poisonous apple here, I've heard that poisonous apples don't smell the same as other apples", thought the pixie. 'It...IS!' the pixie ran as fast as he could, to tell the king.



The pixie burst into the palace where the king was asking one of his servants to prepare a big fairy ball in the Fairy-hall, then the king turned to the pixie "Your majesty there is a poisonous apple in the apple tree! it smelt very unusual! Please tell your kingdom." The king then went to an open window and called down to everyone "Do not go and eat from the apple trees there is a poisonous apple in one of them it is forbidden. The pixie told the Queen and the princess whose name was Annie. When Annie heard the news she was worried and ran straight to the palace library, she searched for books that would tell her how to get rid of poisonous apples.... after a few minutes Annie came to a book that had the title: Poisonous Apple Tips Annie sat down to take a look at it, she was just about to turn the page to 184 when she saw something about necessary apples, it said: 'if there is a poisonous apple in a tree do not worry, if there is anything dangerous the apple might save you'. Annie thought about it and wondered how an apple would save her.

Next morning Annie woke up by the sound of birds singing cheerfully, it was a wonderful sound; everyone

listened from the window and was laughing with joy all but Annie who was still thinking about the book and the forbidden apple.

Soon, or later the birds flew to the apple trees and started pecking on every apple.

On the night of the ball Annie was on her way happily, suddenly she saw an enormous tornado; Annie hid herself behind a rock and held on tightly with fear. She saw everything being ruined and the people in the tornado, a minute later something came to Annie's mind it was the book! She had finally understood what it meant, "**Maybe, maybe the birds didn't peck the poisonous apple, I'll look**" thought Annie. She looked around her and then saw an apple that was yet not pecked. "It must be the one! I didn't see any birds drop to the ground! She climbed up the tree and picked it. She said goodbye to the apple and threw it into the tornado. All at once things turned to normal. Everybody was saved and at the ball it was a very cheerful one. Every one held up their glasses and shouted, "Hail to the princess!!! Cheers!!!"

They celebrated this especially because there was no more wild tornado blowing fiercely outside or any poisonous apple in the apple tree. Now they were free to eat apples, apple puddings and apple pies, anything that had apples in it.

The End

By Mi-Thao Bui,  
Grade 2, Age 8  
St Martin de Porres Primary School  
AVONDALE HEIGHTS – VIC.

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## SNOW SPORTS

It was the winter holidays. We were staying in a cabin near the slopes. The moment I walked in I knew what I wanted to do! The blazing fire and comfy lounge were very inviting. I had the perfect book in mind, unfortunately my family had other plans.

Mum was busy unpacking and the boys were organizing their equipment. The perfect opportunity for my book and I to disappear! I'd just reached the bedroom door when ...

"Chelsea", shouted Dad "come here".

"Busted", I groaned.

"Come on, we're going snowboarding", said Dad eagerly. "It'll be great!"

Dad looked so excited I couldn't say no. I soon found myself perched on a chair-lift heading up the mountain. The view was breathtaking, but it didn't feel too safe.

I was relieved when we reached the summit, to have my feet back on the ground instead of dangling twelve metres in the air. That feeling didn't last long.

"Right Chelsea", ordered Dad. "Listen up, arms out like a star, bend your knees, beware of markers, weave down the hill to slow down, and swerve to stop".

"OK, arms out, bent knees, something about markers", I muttered.

"Weave what?" I called out to Dad.

"Go!" yelled Dad.

It was too late. I pushed off and managed to stay up. Wow! Maybe I can do this, I thought. I soon zoomed past Dad.

"Chelsea, slow down", Dad shouted "Watch out!"

**CRASH!!!**

"Are you OK" asked Dad.

"I guess" I spluttered through a mouthful of snow.

"I'm going to see Mum at the cabin."

On the way back I met up with Damian who was heading back for lunch. While we were walking I told him about my 'snowboarding expertise'.

Damian suggested I try tubing. "It's really easy, all you do is sit down and hold on" he said.

I gave this some thought while we ate. I still felt doubtful but Damian assured me it wasn't difficult. I decided to give it a go.

Damian explained some simple instructions. I'd had a few turns and thought I was going pretty well. Until a

four-year-old raced by yelling, "Hurry up slow coach!"

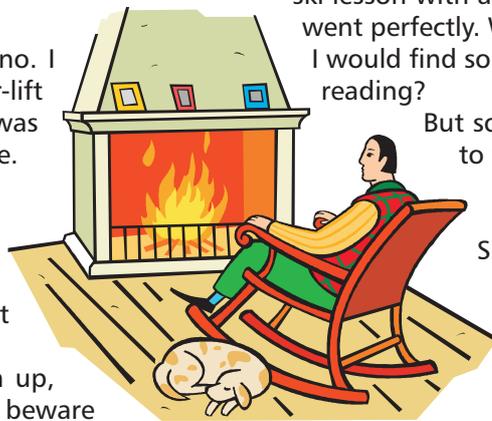
Having that little kid torment me was too much.

I'd had enough sport for one day. My body still ached from the accident earlier and as I trudged through the door, Mum smiled knowingly and offered to run me a hot bath. As I lay in the steaming hot water I thought about my experiences that day.

The next morning I felt a new determination to prove myself on the snow, so I approached Mum about it. She was overjoyed and quickly arranged a two hour ski lesson with an instructor. After that, things went perfectly. Who would have believed that I would find something else I love as much as reading?

But something was urging me back to the cabin. It was a new book.

Not one I'm reading though, one I'm writing. About...  
**SNOWSPORTS!**



*By Abbey Field  
Age 9*

*Parkfield Primary School  
AUSTRALIND – WA*

## VORTEX

Sucked through the vortex!

Breathless!

Free Falling.

Images snatched from my memory.

My mind instantly confused.

Back and forth

Whirling!

Reaching out but everything twirled faster.

Hurling through time and space.

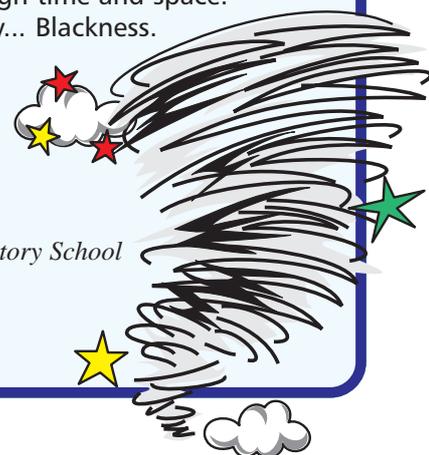
Suddenly... Blackness.

*By Kathryn Shaw*

*Age 10*

*Kinross Wolaroi Preparatory School*

*ORANGE – NSW*



## AMY'S DREAM

Neptune... it's so fascinating. My name is Amy Collins and you can guess what my favourite planet is... Neptune!! I've never been sure why but I just like it; it's blue (my favourite colour), and it's cold there (I like cold better than hot...). I'm also one of those people who have wanted to do something for ages (I want to be an astronaut). I mean, wouldn't you like to see space...

But now I'm in university and study at the "University of California". I'm a long way away from home; my family is in Australia while I'm here in California. And because I'm through a couple of years in university I keep a diary of what's going on ...

California, USA  
Sunday  
29th May

*Dear Diary,  
The Californian University is huge!!!  
I've been lost twice but it's worth it.  
I've had tours of most of the space shuttles that Andy Thomas recently was in!!! Now I'm studying "Long Term effects of being in space".  
I have to go and study now!  
Amy.*

That night when I went home at 8:30. On Thursday morning I got a call from...

They were looking for an astronaut in training who had done 2 years at university, to go to the ISS

(International Space Station). Of course I said yes (why would anyone ever refuse!?) and he said we're going on the **23rd of June!! I can't wait!!!**

## N.A.S.A.

California, USA  
Friday  
3rd June

*Dear Diary,  
I'm going to the ISS on 23rd June!!!  
YAY!!  
Amy*

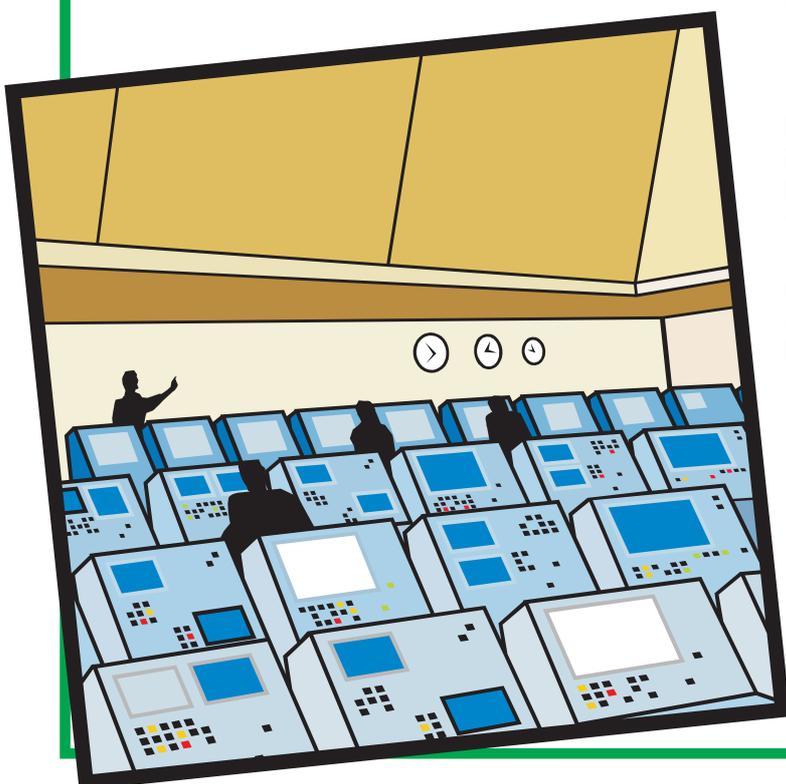
Finally it was that day... the 23rd June. We were going to leave at 2:45. The time was 2:30, 15 minutes and we're off! We had a meeting talking about the 14 day trip and how we all had a 50% chance of dying and 50% chance of staying alive, but we are only doing it because we have always wanted to do it...

California, USA  
Thursday  
23rd June

*Dear Diary,  
I'm minutes away from going into space. I've got butterflies in my tummy. I am so, so nervous; I'm trying to use those relaxation methods Mr. Walker thought me in year 8. You never know; you might die.  
Amy*

As we were going I had a long nap... when I woke up the ISS was in sight, I stood up and it felt like no one else was there. I went to the control room (I wasn't allowed to go in there but this was an emergency!), as I thought no one was there, luckily I knew how fly a space craft, I tried to steer... nothing happened... I looked out side and saw the crew on Neptune acting in my favourite television show "Charmed". Chiew Peng, Russell & Andrew were the "charmed ones"!! Suddenly they froze... but then came back to life; except way paler. I ran to the computer typed an e-mail back and hit the "send" button. They were actually clones each with an atomic bomb in their hands. The bombs dropped right towards earth...

*By Dinali Daluwatte  
Year 4, Age 10  
Glendal Primary School  
GLEN WAVERLEY - VIC.*



### LOST

Whenever something is found,  
something is lost,  
whether it be love,  
a locket or even sadly trust.

Mountains may move and  
things be discovered,  
but to lose the person to whom you mothered,  
would not only devastate but also break a soul.

Your life may be shattered or may be evolved,  
It could be for better, it could be for worse,  
It may be the second time,  
even harder the first.

Someone may have left this world,  
with his or her stories no longer being told.  
A culture being destroyed,  
or worse being sold.

As something that the public sees  
as just a waste of time.  
But that's not what it is;  
it's really someone's way of life.

A life that was maybe diverse,  
a life that was uncomplicated.  
Something at peace,  
or always being devastated.

Being devastated with things,  
like your own people being changed,  
changed to what is thought to be better  
but actually be inferior.

It doesn't matter what people see  
on the outside,  
the only thing that matters  
is the interior.

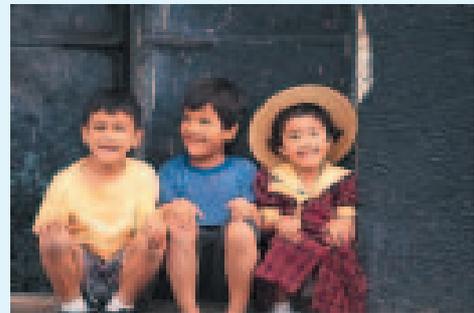
Don't change your ways even if  
someone says they're worse.  
Because we are a multicultural community  
country, and universe.



By Katherine Sest,  
Year 6W  
Shelford Girls'  
Grammar School  
CAULFIELD – VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs Tania Whitehead

### MY BROTHERS

Brothers, two of them,  
Means double the annoyance.  
They have silly conversations  
That I just don't understand.  
Cause I'm the little one,  
The one they like to tease.  
They think they are the bosses of me.  
They hog the computer, the x-box too  
And I hardly ever get a turn.  
They play footie and basketball  
And they don't let me play.  
AND THAT'S HOW MUCH THEY ANNOY ME!



By Tom Coulson  
Grade 3ks  
Coutesville Primary School  
EAST BENTLEIGH – VIC.

### THE HURRICANE

The sky was bleak, the morning was grey,  
The sea was angry, the palm trees swayed,  
The air was hot, but the clouds were cold,  
The storm broke out before the day was old.

The rain was hard, it cut my back,  
The wind was fierce, it did not slack.  
The sand was flying everywhere,  
The ropes were tight, they held me there.  
The salty water lapped my feet,  
I was sure the storm must soon retreat.

Soon enough the hurricane passed,  
But it felt like forever, I can relax at last  
The storm took away my closest friend Timothy.  
Who was there to the end.

By Sarah  
Ashleigh Kent  
Year 7,  
Victory Christian  
College  
BENDIGO – VIC.

## WILD AND FREE

It waited silently in the dark. Swiftly and invisibly moving from shadow to shadow. It was hard to keep hidden because the moon shone so bright that night. A beam of silver moon light flashed over its back as it moved out of the shadows to look at the far away Alps. Its breath frosted into puffs of fog as it breathed heavily in the cold night air.

The only thing it left behind was an imprint in the ground where it had walked. It had been awake all night and was tired, it stumbled on a rock, its heart skipped a beat. It was scared because it didn't want to be seen or heard by anything. It heard a noise and vanished into the shadows, the moonlight flashed on its black mane. "Roof Roof", the little pug barked. "Go away Monty!" yelled Sarah, "it's only 8:00am". The little dog whined and shook its grey head and trotted down the hallway after the Burmese cat. In a flourish the cat leaped and scrambled on to a nearby

chair. There was a great commotion of hissing and barking as Princess the cat scratched Monty on the nose. Poor little Monty ran back to his basket lifting his black paw up to the place where Princess had scratched him, crying softly.

"Sarah, get up its time to feed the calves!" Sarah's Dad yelled, "We've got a lot to do today". "Alright! I'm coming", muttered Sarah.

"Neigh!"

"Oh no! not the!..." Sarah's Dad groaned. "The wild horses are coming through again Dad". Sarah yelled above the mooing of the little calves. The stallion of the herd leaped over the tall fence into the paddock, his black coat gleaming in the early sun. The white star on his forehead looked like it shone. The stallion's herd behind him were chestnut, white/grey and bay, but none as black as he was.

All the horses in the black stallions herd and himself were over 16 hands high.

"Come on, close the gate on them!" Sarah's Dad yelled, but it was too late even though the gate was almost closed.

The tired stallion jumped over the high gate, the herd following closely behind then disappeared into the forest.

The sun light flashed on the stallion's black mare. Being so near to getting caught the stallion wouldn't risk coming back again.

*By Sarah Ashleigh Kent  
Year 7  
Victory Christian College  
BENDIGO – VIC.*



## THE GRUMPY OLD MOON

The moon is so grumpy but no one knows why,  
He stays in the one spot bossing the sky,  
But I did once hear a quite interesting thing,  
He's always so grumpy in everything.  
'Cause he wants to have friends and he wants to have fun,  
And all of the stars call him 'Grumpy Old Bum',  
Then they all shoot off laughing at how he has holes,  
So the moon is still grumpy, that's what I was told.

*By Sarah Muir-Smith  
Grade 4  
Holy Eucharist Parish Primary School  
MALVERN EAST – VIC.  
Teacher: Miss Bromley*

### A DOG'S LIFE

In the backyard of 37 Unit Street a Border Collie dug and dug, looking for his bone, which he buried in the yard a few days ago. He couldn't remember exactly what day it was when he buried it, but he knew it was somewhere. He had just about given up, when he got a whiff of something in the dirt. Frantically, he started to dig again, and then he saw it. White, really dirty and very smelly. HIS BONE! He knew he would find it sooner or later.

This dog's name was Frankie and he was very pleased with himself at locating his well seasoned bone, so he started chewing on it until he heard a voice next door.

Frankie immediately lost interest in his bone at the prospect of a chat, and went over to the old wooden paling fence, that was at the edge of the yard. Frankie peeped through a rather large gap, where a paling had fallen off. Many years earlier and he saw Sam, his best friend.

"How's the new puppy Sam?" said Frankie.

"Other than eating my dinner and wetting herself in MY BED, I guess she's okay", Sam fretted.

"It's really OK?"

"Not to mention she left a small deposit on my bed as well, just before bedtime last night."

"That puppy must be a nuisance."

Frankie said "I'm pleased I don't have to share my space with an annoying puppy with no regard for the importance of a clean warm bed".

At that Frankie said goodbye and walked up to his bed and had a cosy nap.

★ ★ ★

Frankie was awoken by a high pitched YAP! Being in such a lovely sleep he decided not to investigate and went back to sleep. A second or two later Frankie was startled by something that landed on top of him and grabbed him by the ear. In terrible pain, he jumped to his feet to find that the pup from next door was right beside him, on his bed, crouched down ready to pounce on him again.

"Hey, what's going on? What are you doing in my yard? What are you doing in my bed? Where's Sam? And what's your name anyway?" Frankie blurted out all at once.

"I'm Roxy and Sam's not there. I came through that place in the fence where you and Sam talk. Want a game? I bet

I can beat you". Roxy replied in a puppy like voice.

Roxy didn't wait for an answer before Frankie knew it she was attached to Frankie's ear again, then she let go and darted off around the garden at lightning speed, reappeared, then darted under Frankie's back legs. Frankie was taken completely by surprise and was knocked right off his feet.

"That's not playing fair" groaned Frankie. "You need to learn some manners."

"I'm a puppy, I don't know any manners", Roxy laughed and bolted off around the yard again.

This time Frankie was ready for her and growled as she approached him. Roxy stopped short. Frankie growled again, just to let her know who was in charge, then he bolted around the yard, following the same path as Roxy and then returned.

"Wow, Sam never moves that fast!" said Roxy in amazement.

"You need to know that even though Sam is old and can't turn around very fast, he is still a great mate and very wise. I bet if you give Sam a chance there are games you can play together."

Frankie went and found a sunny spot on the backyard away from Roxy, for a nap. Roxy must have joined him after he fell asleep. Frankie was woken by the sound of the back door opening and found Roxy curled up against his side.

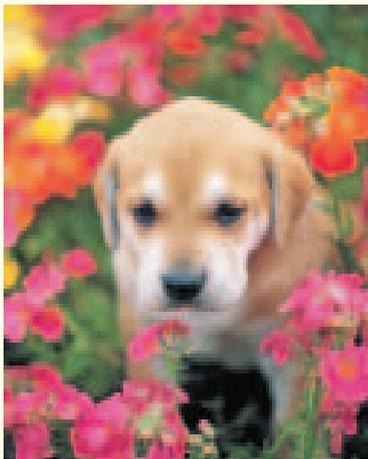
Frankie lay very still, as not to disturb Roxy and watched his owner, Jeffrey carrying a rug, which he placed on the ground at the door of Frankie's kennel. Then he put down a bowl. Frankie watched, still not moving as Jeffrey went to the fence; he leaned over and started to call Roxy. Roxy woke up at the sound of her name and ran over to Jeffrey and jumped up on his legs.

"Oh there you are Roxy. Who already brought you over to our yard?" asked Jeffrey.

Frankie had a strange feeling. What was the extra rug and bowl for and why was Jeffrey looking for the pup next door?

Jeffrey sat down and Roxy jumped all over him. Jeffrey laughed and that made Roxy jump around even more. Frankie decided it was time for him to reclaim his master, so he went over to join in the game. That's when he heard Jeffrey break the terrible news.

*Cont'd...*



## A DOG'S LIFE (Cont'd)

Roxy was spending the night at his house because his Sam and family had gone to visit Aunty, and Roxy couldn't go because she was too young.

"Because she had no manners", thought Frankie.

Frankie wasn't very happy at the thought of having to share this yard for a full night with this annoying thing from next door. Then he had an idea. He would make some rules so their time together would be better. NO biting ears. NO sleeping on my bed and NO eating from my bowl. Frankie told these rules to Roxy and was feeling much better about spending the night together.

Frankie and Roxy spent the next hour playing together in the yard. Roxy would chase Frankie and then Frankie would chase Roxy. They had a great time and when they were both too exhausted to play any more, Frankie went into his kennel for a nap. Roxy followed. Frankie growled to let Roxy know that she was not allowed in his kennel. Roxy backed out, then she tried to enter again. Frankie growled again and Roxy backed out again. This happened several times then Roxy got the idea and went to sleep on the rug Jeffrey had put down for her to sleep on.

It was starting to get dark and Frankie knew it would soon be dinner time. Jeffrey came out carrying two cans of dinner. He went over to the bowl for Roxy first.

"That's not fair", Frankie thought, feeling jealous because Roxy was going to be fed first. But then Jeffrey picked the bowl up before Roxy ate anything from it. He must have known because he put the dinner into Frankie's bowl, gave him a pat and said:

"Dig in mate, you've got competition tonight."

Then he put Roxy's bowl down and Roxy started to eat.

After dinner it was dark and the two dogs had had a busy day. Frankie went into his kennel. Roxy made towards the kennel.

"Just coming to say goodnight", said Roxy and sent to lay on the rug.

"Goodnight Roxy", said Frankie, "I've enjoyed your company today".

★ ★ ★

Sam called Frankie from the yard next door.

Frankie went to their chat spot in the fence.

"Gee thanks Frankie," said Sam, "Don't know what you did, but that puppy over there has learnt some manners. I get to sleep on my own bed and I get to eat my own dinner. It's great!"

Roxy came over to the fence to say hello to Frankie.

"Can I come over to play again sometimes?" she asked Frankie.

"Any time you like", replied Frankie.

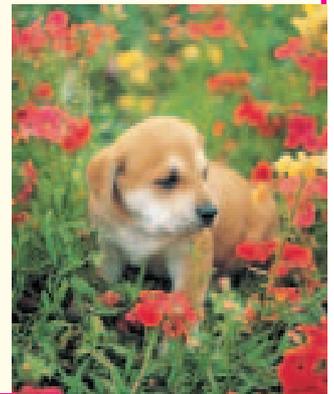
*By Tyler Heycott*

*Year 6*

*Wollongong Primary School*

*WOLLONGONG – NSW*

*Teacher: Mr P. Hutchison*



## THE HUNT

Times of need are close at hand,  
When flags of anger cross the land.

But never seen is never feared,  
The blind vision seeing, never seared.

Pain from blunder blinds my eyes,  
End so close, I do not despise.

Hope has dwindled, all is lost,  
Never am I able to stand the cost.

Woven now, these nets of woe,  
Seeds now, the farmers sow.



Needles darn the growing gaps,  
The air is filled with howls and yaps.

A hunt is in session, I feel it now,  
To sunder future, do I bow.

Open the gate, the path is clear,  
No victory calls, do I hear.

*By Sarah Plowman*

*Year 10,*

*Mill Park Secondary College*

*EPPING – VIC.*

*Teacher: Mr P. Giapanzakis*

### A SPECIAL NIGHT

The night was silent and suddenly, Aria Jent woke to sound of tapping on her window, followed by a rustling noise. She climbed out of bed, looked out of the window, and found two green eyes staring at her. The creature turned in fright and moved back a bit.

"WOW!" Said Aria in awe, "a unicorn". And sure enough, the creature was really a magnificent white unicorn.

Aria opened the window and climbed out, still only wearing her nightgown, and walked over to the unicorn half expecting it to run away but it didn't

"Hello", the unicorn said in a gentle whispery voice. Aria jumped in shock.

"I...I didn't think unicorns could talk", she stammered.

"Well we can. Hi I'm Pip", he replied.

"Pip?" Said Aria, "Just Pip?"

"Yeah, what's wrong with Pip?" the unicorn asked.

"Nothing, but I thought that unicorn names were longer and more fancy like Rosetta and Firedrake", replied Aria.

Pip asked Aria if she would like to go for a ride. Aria agreed excitedly, and she climbed on his back and held on to his lovely silky mane. Pip galloped off along the street to the beach that was down the road from Aria's house. He rode up to the cliff and Aria dismounted, she stood next to Pip and the wind blew her beautiful brown hair around her face. The moon light shone on the water.

"It's amazing", gasped Aria. Suddenly there was a huge gust of wind and it blew Aria off the cliff and she fell into the sea below.

"HELP", she screamed and Pip plunged himself into the water next to her.

"Get on my back", he instructed her calmly and she

grabbed his mane and heaved herself onto his back. He swam smoothly through cool water to the shore and Aria dismounted.

"Thanks Pip, I thought I was going to drown", Aria said relieved and gasping for air.

"It was no trouble", said Pip shaking himself dry "Now we'd better get you home."

"But I can't go home wearing this", Aria said pointing to her sopping wet nightgown.

"No, you can't, but that's easily fixed," and with that he pointed his horn to Arie's heart and there was a flash of blue light.

"Wow, I'm dry", Aria said as she looked down in amazement at her now perfectly dry nightgown.

She mounted Pip again and he galloped off back down the road to Aria's house. When he got into her front yard he walked slowly round the house, into the back garden, and right up to her window.

Pip put his head in and said, Climb across my back and over my neck until you are back in your bedroom."

"Okay", said Aria and did as she was told.

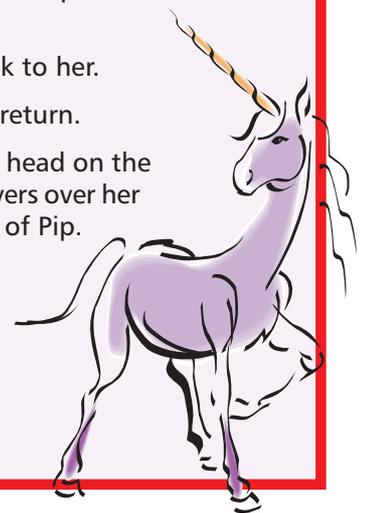
Once in her bedroom she kissed Pip on the nose and he trotted off into the night.

"Farewell Aria", he called back to her.

"Goodbye Pip", she called in return.

Aria climbed into bed, lay her head on the pillow, pulled the soft pink covers over her and fell fast asleep dreaming of Pip.

*By Olivia Jane Woodfall  
Year 6, Age 12  
Coatesville Primary School  
EAST BENTEIGH – VIC.*



### TO THE DIGGERS

With the hell of war, unknown terrain, exhausting climate, disease and fear, victory in the Pacific would seem unachievable by anyone's standards. All these things that were endured by you who survived would haunt you for the rest of your lives.

Instead of living through your youth with friends and family, being able to do the things you enjoyed; you

gave it all up to fight for your country. What made you give it up for Australia, to go to the arduous Kokoda, with terrible conditions and with no training in jungle combat; with your doubts about the war, with the fear of being killed, and mates dropping dead all around you? What drove you to keep on fighting

*Cont'd...*

## TO THE DIGGERS (Cont'd.)

at Milne Bay, when the Japanese surrounded you, yet you managed to fend them off again and push them back? I believe there are many unsung heroes who put their life on the line, who showed grit and determination to prove that they were ready to fight for their country to the death defending it. The courage you showed was incredible, considering the size and reputation of the Japanese army.



To have victory under those circumstances was inexplicable and unimaginable, but not to you our Aussie men.

Your Australian spirit proved to be the difference in the war. There must have been a great tension as the two enemies were about to meet. The Aussies, determined and ready to fight for and defend their country to the death, and the Japanese, who were overconfident and self-assured, which contributed to

their downfall. This spirit of the Anzac is summed up by these four qualities, on which the present day army has built their foundations – courage, endurance, sacrifice, and most of all mateship. As Australians, you always had something to fight for, although it felt you had lost everything.

The sight of your mate falling behind, after being shot right next to you, would have been a horrific sight that would stay in your mind forever. But you still fought on, with a renewed burst of energy, to avenge your mate. All your thoughts of pity for the Japanese you were shooting at would vanish.

How did it feel when the Japanese surrendered, and your months of intense fighting and solid defence proved impregnable?

There must have been some mixed moods around the camp after the war. Of sorrow for ones that were left behind, relief that the war was finally over, anxiety of what may have changed back home, whether loved ones would still have hope that you were still alive, or whether you'd been forgotten.

Thanks to you the courageous men who fought valiantly and gave their lives, or survived to tell the tale, we still

*By Adam Little  
Grade 5  
Middle Ridge State School  
MIDDLE RIDGE – QLD.*

## EMPTY THOUGHTS

An old man is wise  
Walking down the path  
Being followed by an infant  
But both with empty thoughts.

The man he tries to clear his mind  
But it's too corrupt with thoughts  
The boy he gazes at the ground  
Thinking, concentrating on life.

As they walk down the path  
He follows Wise Man's footsteps  
They both wander aimlessly  
Searching for answers  
But do answers lead to more questions?



As they walk down the path  
The boy asks  
"Will we ever find the answers?"

*By Ben Mahoney  
Year 6, Hartwell Primary School  
CAMBERWELL – VIC.*

# An Australian Storyteller's Interactive Journey

Written by Libby Hathorn

The idea for Weirdstop™, a suite of interactive stories, evolved in the late 1990's when the internet was brand spanking new! Given some of my children's stories were adapted to plays, movies and opera, I saw the internet as a happy 'marriage of the arts' with all the possibility of STORY being embellished and kid's reading enhanced by animation, games, illustration, hypertext, voice-over, music, poetry or even text itself. But not only that, it seemed I was poised at a critical point in the history of children's literature, in the making of STORY – the idea thrilled me! So we began the slow process of development with the idea that a series could follow. And it did – namely *Weirdstop*, *Coolstop* and *Wonderstop*.

In the early days of the internet my author site with lots of flashing text, thanks to my son, was among the first author sites, and I believe my story *The Wishing Cupboard* was the first Australian interactive story online. This is a story in itself but suffice to say the tale of a little boy waiting, with his Vietnamese grandmother, for his mother to bring back his cousin from Vietnam, allowed me to tell his story (as in the book later published by Lothian) and also tell Vietnamese folktales with the click of a magic set of drawers, story within story. This is still available online.

## Funding

Working with a son in the ICT business was an added incentive to realising story in many guises on the internet – the innovations seeming endless. Alas! cost considerations were a brake, but we could tell there was still much to be achieved on a budget. And our small company set out bravely. We'd try to get at least one story up, and then go for corporate funding.

An Australia Council grant gave us the means to develop my first story *Eye to Eye*. Developers were few on the ground, expensive and in high demand but we found one. This ghost story in a modern setting was trialled in a number of schools across Australia as a prototype for Weirdstop™. Using a graphic designer/coder to create an interface and 'pages' with graphics and simple flash animations, rather than scroll-through pages, the story was interspersed with three simple games relating to the text, its setting and characters. A drag and drop vocabulary game matching synonyms (*Syno Signs*), a memory matching game (*Picture Power*) and self-competitive hand and eye co-ordination game (*Eyeball*) were used in this story, all rich in well executed visuals. Both attractive flash animations and photo collages were used as

artwork in the presentation of *Eye to Eye*, our first story. Like making a movie it became 'our' story instead of 'my'.

## Playfulness

We wanted to capitalise on the 'playfulness' of the medium, with games adding to the enjoyment of the story. And we planned to inspire kids, presenting quality artwork e.g. the slide game in *Collector* or the animations of *Imagine Centre*. All games were planned to be bright, attractive, varied, non sexist, non violent, simple to access and to use and above all relevant to the story being read.

## A Quiz

*Thinksmart* consisted of nine comprehension questions based on the reading of the text which were self-paced and self-correcting.

## Higher Order Thinking

*Workwiz* teacher/parent notes suggested more in depth responses to develop reading skills. These themed research suggestions could involve a variety of actions from using the internet to interviewing a community member face to face. In *Coolstop* the teacher notes were developed using Bloom's Taxonomy.

## The Lure

A certificate of achievement was planned to be downloadable with student name to be inserted at each story's completion. Kids worked really hard to achieve this, typing in their name and printing out their personalised certificate. On the Newcastle campus, where we did some trialling, some kids who did not have good reading skills were not only 'glued to' the story and played the games with gusto, but sat round discussing the quiz (2 – 3 to a computer) and stayed in at recess, each to get his certificate. It worked! In some weird way that tiny screen has the power to captivate and engage kids immediately, as we suspected.

## The Team

Securing corporate funding was so much easier once we had the prototype to show and our 'trailing' story

Cont'd...

## An Australian Storyteller's Interactive Journey

(Continued)

to tell. The development of the project brief was completed over a series of six weeks, involving meetings with those central to the team. Integral to the development of original interactive Australian stories was simply the *enjoyment* of story. And we knew we had the means of catering for a range of readers of differing literacy skills and with differing learning styles.

In the first instance, I didn't realise how many people would be involved, from the writer to developer, graphic artist, animators, teachers, consultants and games developer to the sound technician, voice over artist, composer, tester and many more. Totally engaging and demanding, for this writer it was just as well our budget allowed for a full time project manager who worked the time line and co-ordination really effectively. Within a year our first story suite *Weirdstop* was completed and in the market place. *Coolstop*, the second story suite based on sporting stories was quickly underway with a new team.

### Awards

Thus far, *Weirdstop* has won the 2004 AIMIA (Australian Interactive Media Industry Awards) as Best Children's Product, 2003; and was short-listed for The Mayne Award for Multimedia in the South Australian Premier's Awards for Literature in that same year. More recently *Weirdstop* won The Society of Women Writers NSW Biennial Book Awards 2005. *Coolstop* was short listed in the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) awards in the E Best Primary Education Resource Category. Whilst the *Weirdstop*™ series has been entered into various prizes in the industry with success, we are looking forward to a time when we can submit our story suites to the Children's Book Council Awards.

### The Journey Continues...Wonderstop

Our third suite *Wonderstop* for 7 to 11 year olds is in development. We've taken a different tack on this environmental journey of two little wombats Bodge and Widge, in that it's a giant game, complete with stories, poetry, games and quizzes. They travel through 10 STOPS in all, each with an environmental theme. At each STOP the kids will read/hear a story, play two funny games, find the hidden environmental message, discover a beautiful poem, watch a nature video and answer a quiz.

All of this to reveals the secret way to the next STOP and finally to get through to celebrate in the Land of Most.

And *Poetrystop* – how to enjoy and write poetry is in concept stage. That doesn't mean to say there are no books in the wings at present for this writer. I'm always thrilled to see a new cover, always relieved to see a reprint, and love that feeling of the new book hot off the press and sitting in your hands where you can see, touch and smell it; and these days, sitting reading with my grandchild Ruby, and watching her delight in the 'page'. But she'll be a 'digital native' too. I would like to believe the book will always have its rightful place. However, I'm mindful that with the pace of technological change, even though schools have not adapted quickly, it's clear to see how important computers are in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and how engaging is interactive storytelling. Blogs, Forums, Chatrooms and Projects will become basic classroom communications; and mobile phone use as another storyteller domain has only just begun. It's exciting to think that the potential to ENGAGE kids in story in so many different ways, particularly those who are reluctant to read independently, is huge and as yet untapped. As it's exciting to dream about what writers will come up with next, the original idea still being critical to a good story!



Libby Hathorn

### PANDA EYES

My hands are numb, wilting from the cold.

'Where are we going?'

'Away', says my mother, her tears lost in the rain. The travelling case slips from her grasp, trailing in the slush. Damp chill buries the grass as it struggles from under the weight of shadows to breath.

'What about—'

'He's not coming', she says, gasping through the night. I stumble, struggling to keep up with her long strides.

'Why not?' I say, trembling.

'He's why we have to go.' I look up through the rain and see new bruises spreading across her cheekbones. They blossom slowly, unravelling their agony in a cold web of despair.

We pass my climbing tree. Not so long ago, my father would lift me into its branches, and I would pull myself higher and higher, a spirit ascending. I would embrace the sky, throwing out my arms into the morning sunlight.

That was before the broken bottles invaded our home and forced us to flee into the emptiness of twilight. Now the branches snarl at me, gnarled claws wrenching open the sky like a tine of sorrows to pour upon the world. Shadows dance, their blurred forms unfolding across the road like grasping death.

'What's that?' I say, spotting a bulging lump under my mother's jacket. She passes it to me without stopping.

'Pandy!' I exclaim, feeling the toy panda's ragged features, and hug my mother's waist. She stops for a moment, bending down to my level. The travelling case collapses in the roadside mud as she pulls me into her arms.

'We're going to a better place,' she says, hair matted, clothing soaked. 'It's like an adventure.' She clutches my face in her clammy hands, pulling my wet hair away from my eyes.

'Really?' I say, taking in the cracked bitumen and the stink of pugent mud and sweat that mingles with the fresh scent of rain.

'What kind of adventure?'

'One with a happy ending,' she says. 'I promise.' Her eyes glisten with rain and tears.

'You look like Pandy,' I say, touching her bruises.

She flinches, blinks, and offers a tentative smile that fails to mask the stabbing pain. I know that pain. It whispers across your skin, breathing cold death into every pour, diving, crawling, drowning.

'I'm so sorry,' she chokes, splashing as she collapses into a puddle. We could just fade into the rain; forever flying, forever crying, forever dying.

'Come on,' she says, pulling away from my icy touch. She yanks the case up again; its wheels stick in the mud. I help her pull, numb fingers straining to get a grasp on the slippery handle. The wheels come free, spinning, dancing pirouettes of eternal darkness through the night.

A patch of lights appear, far away, a speck of warmth on the horizon.

'The town,' says my mother. 'That's where we're going.'

Something cold brushes across my face. 'It's snowing!' I say, and a flicker of a smile adorns my mother's face, before fading away into cold oblivion. I hold out my arms in wonder, and flakes settle on my sleeve like delicate crystal insects. Specks of coldness melt in my hair and dribble down across my cheek, tears of winter. As we trudge through the mud I cover my face with Pandy's soggy form to ease the stabbing pain of frost in my nose and eyes.

I imagine that we are two ghosts, spirits of winter, flapping away into the night. Dark mist pervades the world, immortal breath of winter, as the snow metamorphoses from crystalised beauty into another source of pain. But we do not feel it; we can fade away through the night and find a brighter world. I sense my hands, my legs, my trembling shoulders but they shy away from my eyes to form nothing more than the weeping darkness that rolls across my skin.

'The town,' my mother announces, and I clutch her arm. I do not want to enter the darkened streets, the



## PANDA EYES (Cont'd)

cold alleys, the unfriendly buildings that bury away their warmth and care not to share it with two lonely ghosts of the snow.

'Let's go home,' I beg, but she does not listen, she has lost her emotions to the night. I watch her vacant eyes reflected in the streetlight as she stumbles into the town's dark jaws.

We huddle in a doorway, breathing in each other's scent, clinging to the freezing limbs that jerk with animation to remind us of life.

'I'm a ghost,' I whisper, my words floating through the shadows before dissipating to the mercy of the cold.

'No,' she says. 'You're my little panda.' She clings to me, and I cling to Pandy, and we wipe our stinging faces again each other's wet jackets. A car roars past, splashing us with mud and pain as its headlights flicker in the night. The echoing of its engine dribbles down into the frost to dig its grave, dying away into frozen silence.

We keep walking, back bent, faces melting away as we move from the glow of a window into darkness. I

see my ghostly reflection on some of the windows, as though I stand inside the bubbles of warmth, but then the snow billows around my filthy form and reality slices through my mind once more. Am I inside or outside? A ghost or a child? A raindrop or a dying reflection?

The snow dies as dawn begins to trickle through the streets. We halt outside a building with warm lights, a refuse for lonely spirits. My mother, stained with mud and tears, brushes her hair away from her panda eyes and knocks on the door.

'We'll be safe here,' she says.

'Where are we? Where are we going?' I ask, clutching Pandy to my chest and leaning on my mother for support.

'To Spring,' she says. My ghost on the window smiles, then vanishes, as three of us step into the warmth.

*By Skye Melki-Wegner  
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