

# *Oz Kids in Print*



**March 2008**

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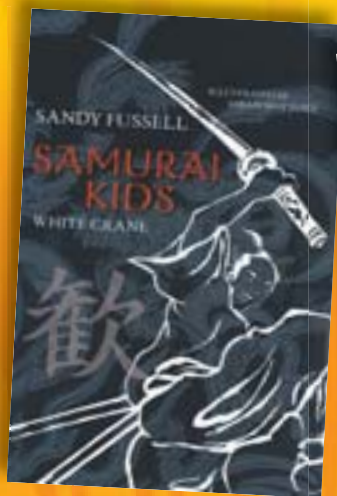
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# Oz Kids in Print

Published by:

Australian Children's Literary Board  
(an initiative of the Children's Charity Network)  
ABN 58 109 336 245  
Phone: (03) 5282 8950 Fax: (03) 5282 8950  
170 Forest Road, Lara, Victoria 3212

Postal Address: PO Box 267, Lara, Victoria 3212  
The Selection Committee:  
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Publisher: Robin Leonard  
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Directors: Assoc. Prof. Margot Hillel OAM (Chair)  
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Layout/Pre-press: Desktop Dynamics, Geelong  
Website Production: The Media Warehouse  
www.mediawarehouse.com.au

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## *From the Editor's Desk*

The beginning of another great year. While Australia's students were on holidays, the Oz Kids publishers with the help of our great web designer (Media Warehouse) have created a great new way to send in your entries.

### **A FANTASTIC ANNOUNCEMENT!**

Entry to the Young Australian Writers Awards are... NOW ON-LINE! It is simple and it saves on paper and postage.

Go to [www.ozkids.com.au](http://www.ozkids.com.au) and do the following:

1. Enter all your details.
2. Then all you have to do is open your document and cut then paste it straight into the submission box provided. Now when an entry is sent in to us it won't have to be retyped or scanned. You have done the work already so this will prevent the need to do it again.
3. Read and agree to the terms and conditions.

Help save the planet and enter on-line.

If you haven't a computer at home then the school can send the entry on your behalf.



**KEEP ON WRITING  
(TYPING)!**

*Carol Dick*  
Managing Editor

## *Discovery Day at Cruden Farm*

On the 25th of February I took my family to visit Cruden Farm in Langwarrin.

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch invited families to visit Cruden Farm for Discovery Day, which raised more than \$60,000 for Murdoch Children's Research Institute. For \$40 an adult entry the children were entertained with Circus Oz workshops, Western Bulldogs kick to kick, pony rides, clowns, magicians and a baby animal farm. TV characters Dorothy the Dinosaur, Dora the Explorer, Dr Katrina Warren and her dog Toby were a big hit with kids, as were the face painting fairies. At the Discovery Tent, budding scientists of all ages learned about DNA and the human body from the Institute's researchers.

Also, in one of the beautiful old stables, we found a wonderful lady donating her time and products in sand art. The kids had a wonderful time creating their sand art picture (free) and returned it to where it was laminated to take home. The kids also were given a cup cake to decorate at the Leader Newspaper stand.

All money raised goes towards innovative, world class research to help prevent and treat conditions affecting children including allergy, cancer, cerebral palsy, obesity, heart disease, genetic conditions and premature birth.

Geoff Handbury AO is the Patron for Children's Charity Network. Geoff Handbury and Dame Elisabeth Murdoch support our organisation by sponsoring the Bright Kids Awards. I encourage everyone to visit Cruden Farm next year and support their cause as they support us.

I asked my children how they enjoyed the day and they said 'FANTASTIC'.

THANK YOU Dame Elisabeth and Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

# Wilbur's Wonderful World



Once upon a time there was a toy wombat called Wilbur. He was all alone in the shop and he hoped that someone would buy him.

One day, a lady did. "This will be a good present for my daughter Anjali. She will love it!"

When he got to the lady's house, she put him in a cupboard. Wilbur didn't like it in there – it was dark and he was starting to feel lonely.

When the little girl's birthday came, Wilbur was wrapped up. Wilbur didn't like being wrapped up; he wanted to see what was going on.

Before he had time to get too worried, he could feel himself being handed over to someone. Before long he saw a little happy, cheerful face looking down at him. "Thanks Mum, Thanks Dad, I love him – I shall call him Wilbur"

After her birthday was over, Anjali took Wilbur everywhere. They went to the park and played soccer....

And also played in the playground....

She introduced him to all of her toys.....

And they welcomed him to the family with a tea party, just for him!

Took him to restaurants....

And Wilbur willingly helped Anjali and her father do the gardening.

Wilbur tried Anjali's trampoline, but couldn't get the bounce he wanted.

Anjali lifted him up so that they could smell the beautiful roses together. "Roses smell nice... ATCHOOO!" sneezed Wilbur, smiling.

Wilbur curiously watched Anjali as she had her bath. "It will be your turn next."

He liked the feel of the soft white bubbles...

...but decided that he didn't like baths after all.

When Wilbur was finally dry, Anjali cheered him by reading him a story.

"Hey Anjali, are you hungry?" asked Wilbur, but Anjali didn't understand his special Wombat Toy Language. "Come here Wilbur the weather's on."

Later on, they snuggled together to watch the television, to see what the weather was going to be the next day. Would it be rainy or sunny?

Wilbur didn't really mind if it was going to be rainy or sunny. "I am just so grateful and happy to have such a wonderful friend."

*By Carly Lockett*



## Loneliness

Loneliness is as dark as the deep, blue sea and tastes as bitter as a lemon. It smells like burnt coal on a runaway train. Loneliness sounds like silence in an empty house at night. Loneliness is waiting at a bus stop for your best friend but she never arrives. It looks like a puppy in a torn cardboard box waiting for a little girl to take him home.

*By Samantha Lynch*  
5S





Birds begin to squawk as the morning sunlight peeps  
through the Ute's dusty window.  
The farmer is getting ready for a long, hard day's work  
on the huge farm,  
There are just enough cool breezes to make the leaves  
tumble around the sad, rundown shed...  
The cracked ground crumbles as the sheep's hard hooves  
slowly plod around the paddock,  
Kangaroos drink from the dam under the shade from  
spreading branches of the huge gum trees  
A broken barbed wire fence is piled up near the Ute,  
ready to be taken to the dump  
The tractor's engine groans while the farmer tries hard to start it.  
Cattle roam in the vast paddocks, while eating long  
lush grass because they're hungry,  
Horses gallop wildly through the hilly grasslands, while  
the red dust kicks up behind them,  
The day is getting tired as the birds fly back to their nests  
for the night  
The windmills are spinning more slowly as the hot wind  
weakens in strength.  
The dark silhouettes of the distant mountains, from the  
farmer's veranda, seem to glow in the sunset.  
The cattle quietly relaxing in the tiny bit of sunlight,  
swing their tails every now and then,  
The farmer brushes his boots on the mat before walking  
into his small, cosy house.  
The busy, hot day becomes a cool, restful night on  
sleeping farm.

*By Paige Rhodes  
Grade 6  
COROWA SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL  
COROWA – NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Lorna Read*

## *Lest We Forget*

Brother embraces brother,  
And mate says goodbye to mate,  
Men write their final letters,  
Trying to accept their fate.

Maybe they think, but know,  
They are grasping at straws,  
Death must come - it follows life,  
The most obeyed and cruellest of laws.

They feel no anger, point no finger of blame,  
Most of these men they chose to be here,  
Some wanted adventure or to travel,  
But none are immune to the cold hand of fear.

They are trying not to shake or cry,  
Then they hear the whistle blow,  
Despite their fear they have no choice,  
They know they have to go.

They are all dead within minutes,  
Not given more than a second's thought,  
I wonder if this is what they expected,  
The kind of adventure they sought.

Scary minutes later the last wave goes,  
And of course it's exactly the same,  
They feel they are moved without moving,  
Pieces in a sick twisted game.

I'm not sure what an Australian is,  
But I know what makes them true blue,  
Someone who would give anything for their country,  
Something that would terrify me, but that I'd gladly do.

To me, they are real Aussies,  
Truly worthy of the name,  
For their country they lost their lives,  
In that sick and twisted game.

*By Ariah Farrow  
Year 7, Modbury West Schools  
MODBURY – SA  
Teacher: Mel Harmer*



## My Place

*"We cannot forever hide the truth about ourselves, from ourselves." – John McCain*

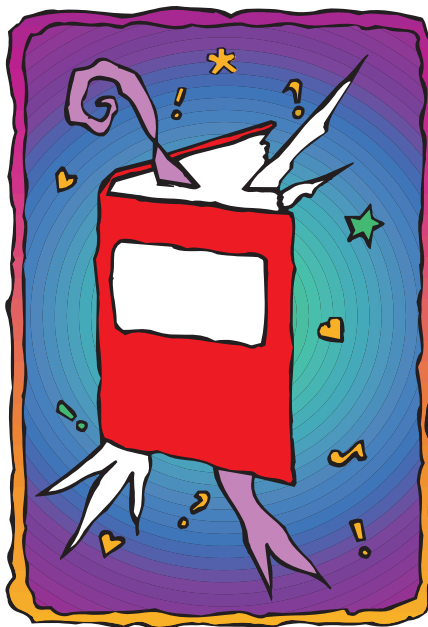
He sat on his bed in the middle of all the clutter, and thought to himself, "I really need to get my life in order". He decided everything should have a place and it should be put away so he could find it all when he would need it.

The boy dragged a large box out from under his bed and started placing his memories in it. These were all the things he knew he had grown out of but thought he wasn't ready to get rid of yet. They were the things he thought one day he could pass on to someone younger. They were stories of dreams and encouragement.

Next he collected his pride and placed it in a folder. He locked it in a drawer where no one else would be able to see it. Occasionally he came back and he looked at it to remind himself of his achievements. It was something that made him feel good.

At that point he remembered the mischievous thoughts that messed up his room in the first place. He knew they were not good but it was fun to have them there for a while. They played and bounced around until they decided it was time to go, leaving a wake of destruction behind. Sometimes he wished he could shut the door to stop them from coming in, but this would release the dark thoughts that live behind the door. That was where his anger and fear were kept. These were the feelings he was ashamed of and never liked anyone to see.

He placed his Red Book on the shelf. This was where he kept his happiness. Whenever he opened it, a beam of light shone like a beacon and attracted others to him. Alongside this book were all his dreams, waiting to be opened once more. There were large dreams and small ones. All of them were well read and lovingly looked after.



The boy finally finished repairing the damage incurred by the mischievous thoughts. He reached above him and dusted his faith, it was always left on and always shining to fill the room with light. It illuminated his truth, compassion and peace that were displayed on the wall adjacent the door. These things would always be there for anyone to see. He never turned the light out because in the darkest hours the boy would need it most.

And then he thought about the last thing he needed to sort out. He thought of the place where he felt comfortable and warm. It was there, the memories of those who loved him resided. His bed, in the middle of the room was the centre of everything, openly displayed for all to see. It was always there, waiting for him. He tucked in the edges and pulled the blankets a little higher around him and snuggled in, ready for the next day.

*By James Gatehouse  
Age 13  
Emmaus College  
JIMBOOLA – QLD.*

## The Thoughts



of a Seed

How can I be big and strong?  
Will I be a clump of leaves?  
How can I be tall and green?  
Will I be like the other trees?  
How can I grow?  
Will I be closer to the sky?  
How can I see the birds?  
Will I be short or high?  
How can I do everything?  
Will I even be a tree?  
Believe it or not I am wrong,  
I'm a daisy, look at me!!

*By Sonia Dodd  
Age 9, Year 4  
Mayfield West Demonstration School  
Teacher: Mr D. Morrison*

### KRISTA'S MISSION: the journey from idea to publication

#### Researching, writing and getting a picture book published

by Krista Bell [www.kristabell.com](http://www.kristabell.com)

AS THE author of twenty two published books for young readers, I know that once you find a story to tell, you need to focus on writing and re-writing it to the best of your ability — and you need to be patient until it gets into print!

Most of the books I've written have been based on real life experiences — I take the facts and turn them into 'fibtion' (my word for 'fiction') by using my imagination to stretch the story with interesting fibs. Most of my books were published within a year of my writing the text and sending it to my publisher. But my most recent book, **Lofty's Mission**, has had an almost four year journey from idea to research to first draft to being published.



*'Dodi' as a young adult*

This story grew from real life, but it uses historical facts and settings. I thought it would be interesting for you to share the journey of a picture book from idea to publication, so here's the story behind **Lofty's Mission**.

In 1992 when my family moved to Glen Iris in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, my eldest son, Ben, built an enormous aviary in our backyard. As I stood there admiring his handiwork, I could never have guessed that bird cage would play such a vital role in my writing a picture book that would be published sixteen years later, in 2008. Ben kept birds in the aviary for many years, until university studies took over his life and the cage stood empty.

Then one summer night as he bicycled home from work, my husband, Douglas, found a sick pigeon on the banks of the Yarra River and brought her home for me to nurse back to health. I'd had experience with 'Pidge' (read my story *Pigeon Pair in Stories* for Seven Year Olds, Random House), an orphaned pigeon who had lived with us when Ben was twelve, so I knew a little about homing pigeons and 'Xena', as we named her, proved to be tough as her namesake and miraculously survived.

Over the next decade, my flock grew until I had almost thirty homing pigeons. My best stock bird was 'Hercules', a very handsome male, who produced some excellent babies with

'Xena'. Every once in a while there was an exceptional 'squeaker' — a baby that was much bigger and stronger than its 'twin', as pigeons usually lay two eggs. The baby pigeons are called 'squeakers' because for the first six to eight weeks of their life, as their yellow fluff is replaced by real feathers, that is what they do: they squeak, asking their parents to feed them, pretty much continuously.

One very special 'squeaker' was 'Dodi', born on the day that Princess Diana died, and he grew into a big, confident adult pigeon, ready to take on the world. On several occasions 'Dodi' even physically challenged his father, 'Hercules', as to which one of them should head the flock. 'Dodi' was an ordinary grey pigeon, but like his father he was fearless. When he was still a 'squeaker', 'Dodi' started feeding himself from the seed tin and drinking water on his own, rather than his parents thrusting mushed up food into his mouth with their beaks. He was one feisty pigeon and he, with his father, 'Hercules', was the inspiration for my character 'Lofty' in *Lofty's Mission*.

The idea for the book came from a TV documentary I saw in 2004 about pigeons in Europe during the Second World War. They lived in mobile lofts and followed the army's movements. I wondered how those pigeons learnt to fly back to a loft that was moving, because I had thought that pigeons always flew back to where they were born. I discovered that if you take a six week old 'squeaker' from its home, it's old enough to survive without its parents feeding it, and yet young enough to be taught to return to a different loft. In the case of the army pigeons during the war in Europe, that was a mobile loft.

I'm a curious person — guess that's why I'm an author (as well as the fact that I love words). I wondered if our Australian Army had used pigeons as messengers during the Second World War — and, yes, they had, in New Guinea. Being me, I wanted to know more. As luck would have it, about this time I was awarded a **May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust** creative time fellowship for May 2004, which meant I had free accommodation in a studio apartment in Canberra, home of

*Continued on page 10*



*'Dodi' fully grown*

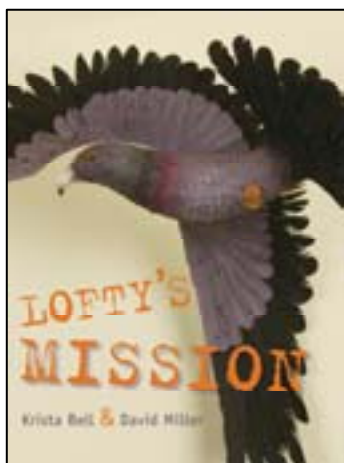
# LOFTY'S MISSION

By Krista Bell, Illustrated by David Miller

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Published by Lothian Children's Book on 13 March 2008  
\$28.99 hardback, ISBN 9781842555705, Recommended age 5+

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During war times, everyone has to make sacrifices. For Harley, it means giving up his baby homing pigeon, Lofty, to help the army.

Harley is devastated to lose his friend, but Lofty, re-named number 371, proves to be invaluable for the war effort, flying hundreds of miles behind enemy lines carrying confidential information.

When Lofty has to carry urgent information to save a platoon of soldiers, he must fly through enemy gunfire. Exhausted and badly wounded, Lofty's bravery shines through and he doesn't stop until his mission is complete.

**Lofty's Mission** tells the story of a side of Australia's wartime history that few of us know about, a special bravery that came from a very unlikely place.

## About the author:

Award-winning author Krista Bell is a full-time writer of books for young people. Krista also travels around Australia giving writing workshops at schools and libraries. She is the author of many junior fiction titles including *Read My Mind*; *Sniffy the Sniffer Dog*; *No Strings*; *No Tears*, and the non fiction book about homophones, *That's The Trick*. Krista lives in Kooyong, Victoria, with her husband and three sons.

## About the Illustrator

David Miller is a Melbourne based illustrator who specialises in paper sculpture. His acclaimed picture book collaborations include *Boo to a Goose* by Mem Fox, *Where There's Smoke* by Robin Lovell and *Ringle Tingle Tiger* by Mark Austin, as well as *Refugees* (shortlisted by the CBCA in 2005) which he wrote and illustrated.

### KRISTA'S MISSION: the journey from idea to publication

Continued from Page 8

the **Australian War Memorial**, the perfect place for me to research what I hoped would become a story.

The May Gibbs' fellowship meant I was away from home for a month and could spend every minute of the day working on my writing (except when I was writer-in-residence at various schools), without having to run a family household as I usually do. This was such a luxury that I worked on two projects at once. While staying in the **Canberra studio in May 2004** I began writing my junior novel ***Who Dares?*** which was **published in 2005**, a time frame that I had come to think of as 'normal'.

'Normal' for me was that I'd write a text and less than a year later the book would be published, with chapter heading drawings done by my middle son, Damien. But, while I was diligently writing my first draft of *Who Dares?* in Canberra, I knew it was only a fifteen-minute walk from my apartment to the Australian War Memorial. So, when I was not working on my novel, I spent many hours in the reference library at the AWM, researching carrier pigeons that flew for the Australian Army during the Second World War.

Before going to Canberra I had spoken with my publisher, Helen Chamberlin at Lothian Books, about my interest in carrier pigeons during the War. I had no idea where my research would take me, but I wanted to write a picture book text about Australian homing pigeons who flew for the army. Helen advised me to do my research with an open mind and let the human element just happen — she was confident I would find my story for young readers.

I was amazed that at the **Australian War Memorial reference library** I was allowed to handle precious **historical documents** about carrier pigeons. I watched an inspiring black and white **documentary film** on video (without sound) made by the army in the early nineteen forties up in northern Queensland. I discovered that hundreds of thousands of pigeons were trained by the army in Australia during the war and that most of those birds had been bred by home breeders — 'pigeon fanciers', as they are called, who lived in the suburbs and bred these birds to race them.

There it was — the human story. How could I use this? I sat back in my chair at the Australian War Memorial library, closed my eyes and thought about my friends who live in Adelaide and have a large aviary. Ian was in his mid fifties then and his son, Evan, was a young adult, but both of them had been keen breeders of racing pigeons since they were eight or nine. On several occasions, as their birds flew back into their garden after a race, I had watched Ian get the race ring off a bird's leg and into the time clock, hoping his pigeon might be the race winner. I knew the thrill of pigeon racing.

In **May 2004** at the **Australian War Memorial in Canberra**, my imagination whirled. What if, during the Second World War, one of the pigeons trained by the army had been bred by a young boy who was hoping it would be a champion racing pigeon?

What if the bird was taken from the boy and given away to the army? How would the boy feel? If this had happened to Ian or Evan when they were boys, they would have been devastated. I had the start of my story.

More research. More details. More quirky facts. I found **an original letter** written by the army in New South Wales to a Victorian pigeon breeder, stating that his bird would be de-commissioned and returned to him. That was a vital link in the story I built up over the next few months. In real life some birds had been returned to their owners — this was an important detail. Once back in Melbourne I would talk to such breeders, now in their eighties, as well as to an old soldier who had trained the birds for the army up north.

Still at the AWM I held in my hands **a triplicate notepad** made of rice paper that was used by soldiers for writing messages during combat. The first copy would be put in the cylinder attached to the leg of one pigeon, the next copy attached to a second pigeon (in case the first pigeon was shot down and did not get through to headquarters) and the third copy was kept as a record. The AWM also had lots of **photos** of things like the cane hampers used to transport pigeons on the back of motorbikes. As well as giving me all sorts of inspiration for the text of my picture book, these photos would be good reference material for the period details in the illustrations for *Lofty's Mission*.

More research revealed that several Australian pigeons had been awarded the **Dickin Medal for Bravery** (an international award) during the Second World War, because they had made courageous flights under enemy fire. These pigeons had taken messages from the war zone back to the safety of their mobile lofts, passing on vital information to headquarters and saving many soldiers from certain death. Some of them were seriously wounded, but kept flying. These were the heroes I wanted to commemorate in my picture book, even though my story was to be pure 'fiction'. Being me, I wondered how you would pin a bravery medal on a pigeon — and smiled when I realised the medal was put on a ribbon and slipped over the pigeon's head!

Cont'd...



David Miller the illustrator with Krista at David's studio

With my research done I couldn't wait to actually write, so I started the **first draft** of *Lofty's Mission* in late **May 2004** sitting in Canberra airport on my way home to Melbourne. During the remainder of that year I re-wrote my story many times, with input from my editor and my publisher, who were both confident that my story was a 'goer'. In late 2004 Lothian Books said yes to their publishing *Lofty's Mission*, and in early 2005 **David Miller** agreed to illustrate it with his superb paper sculptures, basing them on my AWM research, as well as a visit to my pigeons and photos I gave him of my birds.

By mid 2005 David had drawn a small scale dummy rough which we edited together at our publisher's office, and then we signed a joint contract for our book to be published in March 2007. Two years seemed a long time to wait — it would be almost three years since I had begun the project. But as it turned out, it was to be even longer — the publishing company, Lothian Books, was sold, and publication of *Lofty's Mission* was delayed until March 2008! Patience, Krista, patience!

So, having taken almost four years to be published, *Lofty's Mission* is now the book of which I'm most proud — it's the book I always hoped I would write one day. A book that speaks to young readers and to adults. A book that feels just right. There's nothing I want to change. It's the book I wanted to write.

The hard work of researching, plotting, writing and re-writing my story, followed by the long wait for publication has certainly tested my patience, but now that *Lofty* has flown onto the shelves of bookshops and libraries, I know the wait was totally worth it. Dreams do come true! Magic does happen! Believe in yourself, find your story, do the hard work — and be patient!

★ ★ ★

*Lofty's Mission*, written by Krista Bell and illustrated by David Miller is published by Lothian Books, an imprint of Hachette Livre Australia.

## Composure

Crossing her room in two purposeful strides,  
She reaches her wardrobe.  
Locating her favourite dress,  
She slips it on.  
Feeling the cold, silky material against her naked body,  
She smiles weakly.



Entering the bathroom cautiously,  
She begins to apply mascara.  
Surveying her carefully made up face,  
She is satisfied with what she sees.  
Wrapping her grandmother's pearls around her neck,  
She feels their cold beauty.  
With the utmost composure she enters the bedroom,  
Sitting on the bed regally,  
She begins to cry as if her heart would break.

By Kendra Pratt, Year 10  
Westminster School  
MARION – SA

## OAKLEIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL

### ARE YOU A DIRECT DESCENDANT OF PAST STUDENTS, TEACHERS OR STAFF MEMBERS?

A \$300 Scholarship is available to year 6 or 7 students (completing primary and going on to secondary).

The OAKLEIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL SOCIETY is offering a \$300 scholarship, with a certificate, as a memorial to the OAKLEIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL, which was demolished in 1993.

To be considered for this scholarship students must be a Direct Descendent of a past student, teacher, staff member or councillor of OAKLEIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL. All year 6 or 7 students, moving on to secondary school next year, are encouraged to check whether their parents

or grandparents had any association with OAKLEIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL and, if so, to make an early application for this scholarship.

Applications must be received before September and should be addressed to:

**OAKLEIGH TECHNICAL  
SCHOOL SOCIETY,**  
P.O. Box 27, Springvale VIC 3171.

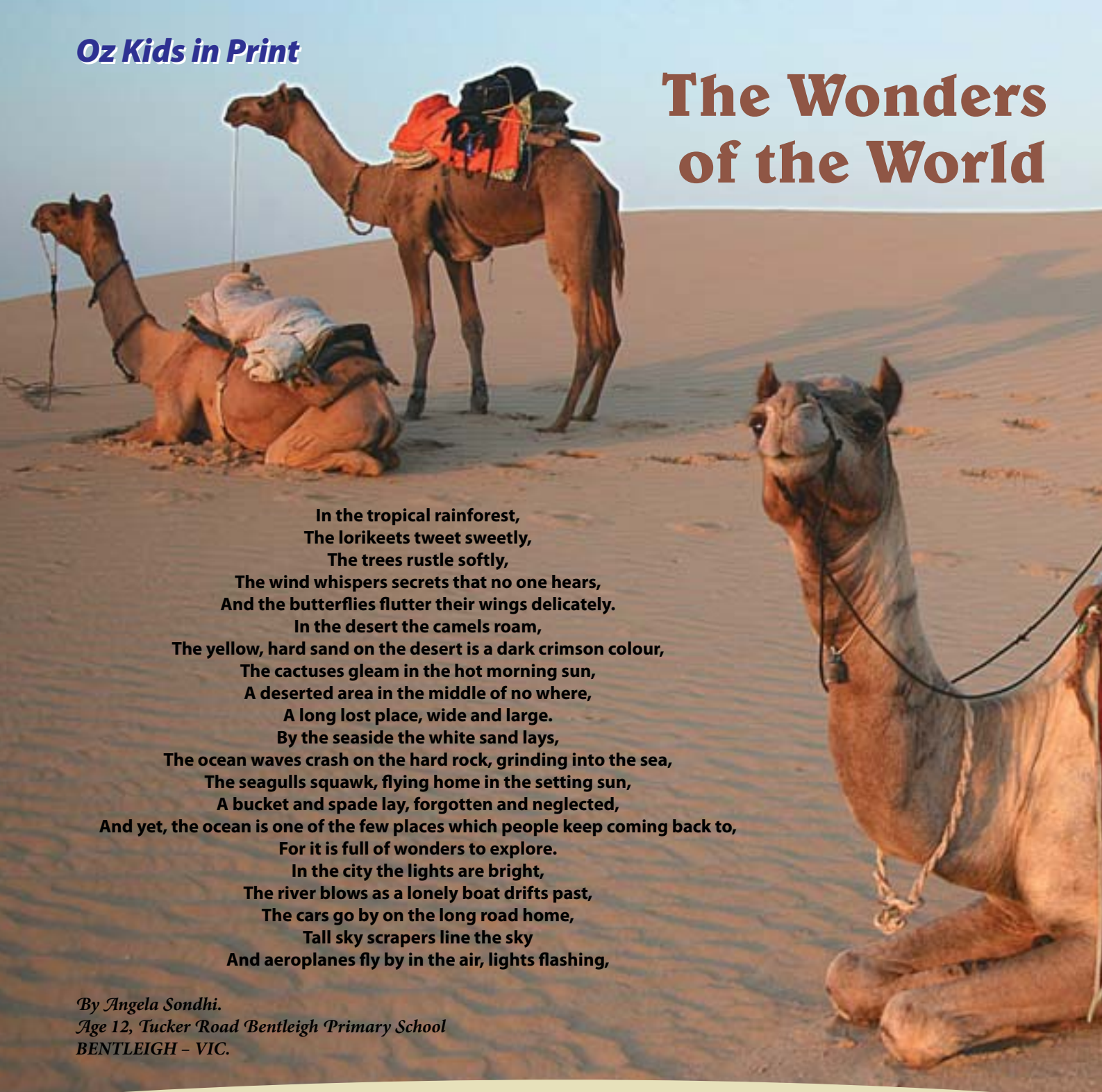
Enquiries: Mr. Bruce Barnhill  
Phone: (03) 5982 2026

Email: kc66@net2000.com.au  
or dotuce@optusnet.com.au



*The scholarship is awarded to encourage a student that may not be an outstanding achiever at this time. We hope that winning the award will inspire and give confidence to the student to do better at their secondary school.*

# The Wonders of the World



In the tropical rainforest,  
The lorikeets tweet sweetly,  
The trees rustle softly,  
The wind whispers secrets that no one hears,  
And the butterflies flutter their wings delicately.  
In the desert the camels roam,  
The yellow, hard sand on the desert is a dark crimson colour,  
The cactuses gleam in the hot morning sun,  
A deserted area in the middle of no where,  
A long lost place, wide and large.  
By the seaside the white sand lays,  
The ocean waves crash on the hard rock, grinding into the sea,  
The seagulls squawk, flying home in the setting sun,  
A bucket and spade lay, forgotten and neglected,  
And yet, the ocean is one of the few places which people keep coming back to,  
For it is full of wonders to explore.  
In the city the lights are bright,  
The river flows as a lonely boat drifts past,  
The cars go by on the long road home,  
Tall sky scrapers line the sky  
And aeroplanes fly by in the air, lights flashing,

*By Angela Sondhi.*

*Age 12, Tucker Road Bentleigh Primary School*

*BENTLEIGH - VIC.*

## Making a Difference

If you have seen the people in need, think again. Try to help those poor people and in need.

They are not lucky, but we are lucky. To make a poor person have their need to live, do something in the community that can make a poor person feel better to live, or you can donate food, clothing and things you don't need to a community such as The Salvation Army or instead, donate money to your local church. Even sponsor a child who is in need of care.

When you do something good to someone poor who does not have fresh food, water, clothes, shelter, education, a

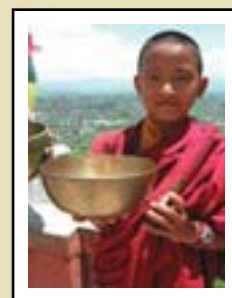
doctor or parents, you are making a big difference to the community and to the world we all live in.

*By Francesca Cruz*

*Age 8*

*Our Lady Queen of Peace  
Primary School*

*GREYSTANES - NSW*



## Lost in the Jungle

THE SUN was rising in Africa, while animals stirred. In a largish old brick house there lived a girl named 'Shani'. She lived with her sister, her pet lion cub, her pet wildcat and her sister's African parrot. She woke up that morning to be greeted by... "Kati is up my trousers again!" It was her sister, Petra, who had always had a problem with Kati, the pet wildcat, going up her trousers in the mornings. "Ouch!" came an agonised yell. Shani scooted down the stairs and ran into the kitchen only to be bowled over by Ingwe, the lion cub. "Lemme up!" Shani grunted.

She got up and saw Petra struggling to unhook Kati from her leg, grunting and puffing with tears of pain trickling down her cheeks. Shani laughed silently to herself and then went over unhooked Kati's sharp claws from her sister's scarred leg. "I think that we should go on a walk now" said Petra, quietly.

So they packed food, water and other items they might need.

Then they set off walking down the crooked, narrow track that led to the jungle.

After hours of walking, Petra said "Let's rest for a while to catch up our strength". Shani agreed hastily and they both sat down with a big BUMP!

"Did you bring the map or compass?", asked Petra, sleepily, "because I don't remember the way."



"No", Shani replied, a small quiver in her voice, "I thought you did!"...

The sisters knew that they were lost and in big trouble. It was starting to get dark, and they were lucky that Shani found a small thicket that they could shelter in. Petra always had six blankets in case of an emergency. In this case, it was an emergency.

"We'll put two blankets on the ground to sleep on, two to pull over us and one to drape over the entrance, the other we can keep," Petra said.

So they sat in their little home and whispered, listened and jumped at every sound. The girls heard an owl, a genet and an aardvark.

But then, far away but getting closer, came footsteps. They were medium sized feet, Petra could tell from the noise, but the two of them were terrified. Accompanying the footsteps was a low, rumbling growl. Then Petra's expression changed from terrified to calm. She got up and crawled to the entrance, pulled up the blanket and went out, draping the blanket down behind her.

Shani sat in the shelter, trembling so hard that she thought she would puke. But then Petra came in, cradling two bundles in the leftover blanket.

"Look at what I found." Petra was grinning and glancing down at the two bundles.

She unfolded the blanket and out jumped Ingwe and Kati!

Well, Shani was amazed and delighted but they all went to sleep quickly. The next morning the girls had fish for breakfast and the cubs had some bush pig. Then the group set off with Ingwe in the lead.

"Hey look! Ingwe is leading us home!"

It was true. The house was in sight now, and they could hear Singsi, Petra's parrot, screeching his head off.

Shani got the keys to the house and went inside.

"It's so good to be home" Petra sighed, flopping onto the couch.

Shani grinned and headed into the kitchen to make lunch. What an adventure they had just had!

*By Roxanne Lazarus  
Year 4  
Manly West Primary School  
BALGOWLAH - NSW  
Teacher: Mr Andy Rankin*

# The Zurgies

Once upon a time there was a nice happy family called the Zurgies. They lived in a beautiful big greenhouse. In the Zurgies' family there was a young boy called Tim, an older brother called Zac, a teenage girl called Zoe and the mum and the dad, Mr and Mrs Zurgie.

The Zurgie's cheeks were round and red and it looked like they were going to pop. They wore very weird fashions but they were very nice.

One day Mrs Zurgie was taking out the garbage when she saw the most amazing thing. She paused for a moment then dropped the garbage and ran inside the house to tell Mr Zurgie. Mrs Zurgie called out for Mr Zurgie but there was no reply. So Mrs Zurgie went out into the garden to find Mr Zurgie.

"TMNOBRREZYDO!"

"Pardon? This time speak a bit clearer."

"O.K.. Well I was taking the garbage out and I saw.... Ohhh!" Mrs Zurgie fainted.

Mr Zurgie then ran out front and saw a vegetable eating monster. It had purple lumpy skin and sparkling red eyes. The monster looked Mr Zurgie in the eyes but Mr Zurgie knew what would happen if he looked the monster straight in the eyes! He ran inside to warn the children and explain to them why you must never look the scary monster straight in the eye. He found them playing Worms and Snails in the playroom. "Kids, follow me." Mr Zurgie headed to the lounge room. "Sit down beside me," he whispered. The children sat down quickly beside Mr Zurgie. "I want you all to listen to me very carefully alright?"

"O.K."

"A long time ago you used to have an uncle. His name was Fred. One day he went outside and he saw a purple monster with red sparkling eyes." Mr Zurgie stopped and pointed to the window. "The monster was at that very spot there. Just near the bunch of flowers." Just as Mr Zurgie spoke, Mrs Zurgie came into the room. "I think it would best not to tell them that story yet."

"Kids, all you need to know is, don't look the monster straight in the eye," said Mr Zurgie sadly.

Mrs Zurgie looked in an old book titled, "How to Fight off a Purple Vegetable Eating Monster." She then headed for the kitchen when a few pieces of clear glass from the greenhouse roof came falling down. "Oh no! Not again! We'll have to get the handyman next door." Mrs Zurgie started mixing up a brown, gooey mixture while Mr Zurgie was looking out the

window watching the purple monster. Tim, Zac, and Zoe sneaked outside to play vegieball. They had forgotten all about the purple monster and the rules that went with it!

Suddenly the purple monster appeared, bent down and grabbed Tim in his hands. Just then Mrs Zurgie and Mr Zurgie came running out of the greenhouse and put the brown gooey mixture in front of the monster being very careful not to look in its eyes. But it was too late! The monster had already swallowed Tim whole. Then the whole family looked straight in the horrible monsters' eyes. The monster picked up Zac first, then Zoe and then Mr Zurgie and last of all Mrs Zurgie.

It was dark and spooky inside the monster's tummy. "Lucky I always carry a torch in my pocket," said Mr Zurgie. He clicked on the torch and looked around. He could see Mrs Zurgie, Zoe and Zac but not Tim.

"TIM!" Mr and Mrs Zurgie yelled at the same time.

"I'm just here," said a voice that sounded like Tim's. Mrs Zurgie followed the voice but saw nothing... nothing at all!

"It must have been my imagination," said Mrs Zurgie sadly. "Boo!" said a voice from behind.

"Tim!"

Tim joined his family and they started looking for a way out. Mr Zurgie whispered something to Mrs Zurgie, Mrs Zurgie whispered to Zoe, Zoe whispered to Zac and then Zac whispered it to Tim.

Suddenly they all started tickling the monster's stomach.

The monster's expression changed from an evil smile to an expression that looked like it was going to be sick. Soon there was a rumbling sound. The Zurgies went up... up... UP!! They closed their eyes and before they knew it they were out on the front yard surrounded by sloppy yellow goo. Then they all ran as fast as they could inside the house and had a shower.

When Mr Zurgie had finished his shower he went outside and went searching round and round the house. He couldn't see the monster so he looked in the bowl Mrs Zurgie had put down on the ground. There was no brown gooey mixture in it and no sign of the monster so Mr Zurgie started pulling out some weeds in the flowerbed. When he had finished he hopped in his car and headed off to town. After he arrived he went into a shop called "Happy Birthday". Half an hour later Mr Zurgie emerged with two nicely wrapped presents, put them in the boot and drove off. When he came to the greenhouse he hid the presents in his beside table and started making a card. It said, "Dear Zoe, Mum and I wish you a happy birthday,



## The Zurgies (Cont'd.)

from Dad." He hid it with the presents. The next morning Mr Zurgie, Mrs Zurgie, Tim, and Zac woke up earlier than Zoe and blew up some balloons. When Zoe woke up it was still pitch black. Suddenly the lights turned on and 'SURPRISE!' Zoe saw a table with two presents on it. She was so happy she hugged them all and opened her presents straight away. Zoe opened the littlest one first and it was a game called "Guess the Potato Head". Zoe played this game at school and she loved it. Next she opened the other present. It had pink wrapping paper and a white bow on it. When Zoe finally opened it she knew straight away what it was – a Fruity Digital Pet! Fruity Digital Pets are digital pieces of fruit you can look after. Zoe was so happy that she gave her family another hug each.

The Zurgies spent the rest of the day playing with Zoe's presents. They all went to bed exhausted. After everyone had gone to sleep Zac realised that he had forgotten to give his card to Zoe so he sneaked into Zoe's room and put it gently on her bedside table. On the way back to his dark room he could see two, red, sparkly eyes staring at him from outside the window...

*By Lana Magnussen  
Year 4E, Age 9  
Yugumbir Primary School  
REGENTS PARK – QLD.  
Teacher : Miss McGregor*



None truly know her,  
Her story is undiscovered,  
But she's known by all,  
She can hear them judging her.

Yet she walks,  
With her head held high,  
Oh to be like her.

A single island alone in the sea,  
The sea of blank faces,  
All turned towards her,  
Whispering like the wind through the trees.

Still she walks,  
With her head held high,  
Oh to be like her.

Not a word was ever spoken to her,  
Nor her to they,  
Each is on one another's mind,  
Yet silence is ever present.

Still she walks,  
With her head held high,  
Oh to be like her.

The rumours spread like wildfire,  
Every ear had heard,  
Every mouth had spoken,  
The story of the unknown girl.

Still she walks,  
With her head held high,  
Oh to be like her.

Standing isolated from the world,  
A single tear glistens on her cheek,  
So strong on the outside,  
But inside she is scared and lonely.

Still she walks,  
With her head held high,  
Oh to be like her.

They noticed when she disappeared,  
That unspeakable confidence,  
That always seemed so distant,  
It was gone without a trace.

Yet all are scared and alone inside,  
Wishing to be so strong,  
As the unknown girl once was.

To walk,  
With their heads held high,  
Oh to be like her.

*By Renae Lawrence  
Year 9, Age 14  
St. Paul's Campus, St. Joseph's High School  
PORT MACQUARIE – NSW  
Teacher: Miss Davis*

## *The Grass is Always Greener...*



The quickest, white stallion leaps over the rusty, dilapidated bridge because he wants to get to the lush, green grass beside a clear, gurgling creek.

And around the brightly blooming, apple orchard, up the high, bluebell-covered mountains, past the shadowy, exquisite tree line to the crystal clear snow, he canters just to see what is on the other side...

Terrifying, crackling – fire burning swiftly with no intention of stopping.

Vicious wolves ripping, scaring, killing anything in sight!

Rain, storms, lightning and fire, tornados, whirlpools, volcanoes, and earthquakes.

The beautiful, white stallion takes one look and gallops down the other side of the mountain, through the crystal-clear snow, back through the rippling tree line, past the bluebell-covered mountains, around the bright, blooming, apple orchards beside the clear, gurgling creek and back over the rusty, dilapidated bridge.

The quickest, white stallion was about to gallop the short distance to his father when suddenly a bramble of wire caught on his hock. He fell heavily to the hard, crusty ground. Alarmed, he wriggled desperately, but the sharp barbed wire dug in deeper and cut painfully into his torn flesh.


### **All of a sudden...**

Out of the bushes jumped a leprechaun and gently touched the now horribly bleeding wound. **Immediately** the wound vanished and, at the exact same time, so did the leprechaun. So the quick, white stallion galloped gracefully over to where his father, a magnificent, pawing, snorting chestnut awaited and they both nickered with joy!


The beautiful, quick, white stallion finally realised that the grass is NEVER greener on the other side!

*By Amy Webb, Year 6, Age 11  
Corowa South Public School, COROWA – NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Lorna Read*


## *Snow's Kiss*



The soft flakes fall  
And kiss my face  
With coldness  
As the silence hangs  
Just like the thick snow  
Upon the sweet smelling pines  
And the skiers, the silent skiers  
Drifting down the slope with a' woosh'  
Me, gliding, gliding  
No cares have I  
As I go 'shhhhhh'  
Down, down, down  
The misty air swirls around my face  
And my peaceful mind drifts  
Thinking of all the good things to come  
Long, snowy runs  
And short bumpy ones too  
They are all magical to me, just magical  
But suddenly I fall down  
Into the deep drifts of snow



No matter, no matter I get up again, it's all fun  
The soft snow starts again  
Whirling down  
A glow bathes me, not cold, but warm  
In the heavy white silence  
I find happiness once more.



*By Taylah Danae Baggs  
Grade 6, Age 10  
Mooloolaba State School  
MOOLOOLABA – QLD.  
Teacher: Ms Danette Flick*

## A Step at a Time

As the summit layer of warmth covered the cold pavement, tranquillity filled the surroundings  
 Golden plates hung proudly on the brick faces staring out at the blank benches,  
 honouring their memorable duty  
 A grey-silver reptile raced, it found its refuge between two bricks  
 People like ants on a dry barren land  
 The flowers of all colours are destroyed with little way of escaping and entering  
 They are trapped on the outside where none can get in because of the walls plastered with signs  
 and metal bars liming the light and warmth  
 But I'm too busy, pretending not to care, only pretending  
 Footsteps echo along the concrete floor  
 Dim lit corridor creeps past dungeons each dark, cold restrained by store barricades  
 The cold grey corrugated metal represents  
 the confine conducts  
 The clouds slowly started to shadow the sun, darkness gradually started to drop upon  
 The sad days

*By Parisa Hassan, Year 10, Macquarie Fields High School  
 MACQUARIE FIELDS – NSW*

## Sports Day



Breaths heavy, hearts pounding.  
 Waiting for the gun.  
 The bang is all surrounding.  
 The crowd is silent in anticipation.  
 There's the bang and the realisation.  
 It's time to run, nothing else matters.  
 If you don't win all your dreams shatter.  
 Only 40 metres to go.  
 Keep on going do not slow.  
 Push your chest out and you will win.  
 Which will give you a shiny grin.  
 Here comes the lady with the blue cube.  
 Just hope and pray she's coming to you.  
 Stand up on the podium and feel proud.  
 Put on a smile and wave to the crowd.  
 The race is over and now you're done.  
 Then it hits you you're number one.

*By Allison Carleton,  
 Grade 7, Age 12  
 McDowall State School  
 McDOWALL – QLD.  
 Teacher: Mrs Moore*

## tomorrow

is always another day

Sad, rundown machinery sheds,  
 The insistent call of nature,  
 Purple shadows of the distant mountains,  
 Forlorn, cob-webby windows,  
 Slippery stones on the river-bed,  
 Rusty barbed-wire silhouettes in the dusk,  
 The threatening boom of gunshots,  
 Gusting winds.  
 The distant horizon  
 can be seen  
 from the top of my home.  
 Deserted houses dotting the countryside,  
 Swirling dust tornadoes,  
 Empty dams,  
 Bare paddocks.

### Will tomorrow bring us hope?

*By Brianna Hewitt  
 Year 5  
 Corowa South Public School  
 COROWA – NSW*

# FUN!

Fun can be found in unexpected places,  
Reflected in some cheeky faces.  
Playing at a sleepover at night,  
Maybe having a popcorn fight.  
FUN! FUN! FUN!

Looking at your dog doing tricks,  
Cooking with some brownie mix.  
Reading an exciting fairytale book,  
A story you'll enjoy with just one look.  
FUN! FUN! FUN!

Watching a movie with your friends,  
A hilarious scene that never ends.  
Shopping for the rest of the day,  
Makes this one sensational day.  
FUN! FUN! FUN!

Eating some chocolate and steering a trolley,  
Knocking into poor old Molly.  
Having fun with your netball team,  
Perhaps eating some pink ice-cream.  
FUN! FUN! FUN!

Laughing at your cousin Lucy,  
While she's eating something juicy.  
Having a party and playing games,  
Dancing with your brother James.  
FUN! FUN! FUN!

Having humour is one thing you need in life,  
But still try not to get into strife.  
Playing games your own way,  
Boy, this has been one fantastic day.  
FUN! FUN! FUN!

*By Molly Gardner-Drummond  
Grade 6, Orchard Grove Primary School  
BLACKBURN SOUTH - VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs Regester*



# Yesterday, I Travelled The Universe



Yesterday, I travelled the universe.  
Stars and planets,  
Spinning their  
Complex dance.  
In the night's dark sky.

Yesterday, I travelled down the ocean.  
Fishes flapping their fins,  
Mermaids combing their long seaweed hair,  
And the sea turtles,  
Riding the currents.  
Down in the deep, dark ocean.

Yesterday, I dug to China.  
Carving out dirt and worms,  
To be swallowed by the earth  
And spat out in front of a scaled dragon,  
Snorting out fire with shock.  
In the middle of oriental China.

Yesterday, I went on a train trip.  
Twisting and turning over the country side.  
Sliding and gliding through hills,  
And the trees  
Bowed in greeting.  
In the emerald grassy countryside.

Today, I think I will travel home  
And be back just in time for dinner.

*'By Georgia Freeman  
Year 9, St. Pauls' High School  
PORT MACQUARIE - NSW  
Teacher: Miss Davis*

## Is Ignorance Really Bliss?

The man stood there mortified, his hands shaking with fear and sorrow. One, single glistening tear coursed its way down his old wrinkled face that was now covered with soot and ash. His dog stood beside him ever faithful.



though he realised he did not want to watch. So what would happen now to this old man who had no family or no friends? A man who had nowhere to go and nothing he knew that could help him?

As he looked down at the pile of smouldering ash that had once been his home he was overwhelmed by a sense of loss and sorrow that could not be explained by mere words. The tangle of feelings that now possessed this man overwhelmed him. As he felt a soft, wet lick against his hand he broke out of his brooding and patted the dog on the head and looked towards the fire fighters. At this moment they were struggling in vain to quench the flames that had claimed, what now, was a simple pile of ash. "Come on dog" said the old man to his faithful companion as they walked off.

It had been a mere two hours earlier when he was sitting at his table, its fine grain soft to the touch. He had simply been eating his evening meal with no one to keep him company except for his dear dog Lassie who had always stood by his side. The dog would normally have smelt the smoke that wafted from the oven but its sense of smell now corroded by old age could not be depended on.

Some say that ignorance is bliss. Is it really? Is the old man's ignorance of the fact that the oven had been left on bliss? And what of the fire that had slowly spread to engulf the rest of the room? Or maybe ignorance is bliss. The fact that he was ignorant of the current situation meant he was able to finish dinner.

At this time he became aware of the fact that it was slowly getting hotter in the room and the air seemed to be hazy and did not smell the same. As he slowly limped towards the kitchen door he knew that it was too late. As he pushed at the kitchen door in vain he realised it would not open. The door, too old and splintered, was set fast and the metal rims had been welded shut by the searing heat that came from inside the kitchen. As he bent down to look through the keyhole he felt as if he was staring at another world. Was this really his kitchen? The flames danced over the treated wood as if to tease and the black smoke seemed to choke all oxygen in the room.

"Run!" he shouted to the dog as much as he said it to himself hoping that the words would actually do something. But as he ran he seemed to slow and a thought came to him. Wouldn't it just be easier to lie down and have a little rest? Soon all was black. The man pulled himself up he grabbed the dog's collar just in time to collapse again as the dog with great effort and love dragged his master out the front door.

As he stood on his front lawn he found himself staring at the fiery mass of his house, not able to tear his eyes away, even

Welfare services reluctantly took the man and his shaggy looking pet into their care. It was the next day that they realised that this man was no ordinary

man and that every morning when he awoke he could remember nothing except for his companion lassie who would accompany him everywhere.

Every morning the man would awake with no knowledge of the fire or the fact that he was one of many of his age that had dementia. He was told every morning that he was a new resident of the Oxley Retirement Home so he was blissfully unaware of what was happening and lived every day as if it was a normal day. Every morning he would introduce himself to everyone in the retirement village and they would look at him as if he were mad.

But would life continue as normal for a man that so obviously had encountered so many obstacles and yet was content with life? Would life simply continue for this man who knew nothing of the happenings of the previous day and had no one to depend upon but the staff who told him the same story everyday?

One day the answer to that question was answered and his only true companion in life, the one who had saved his life and the one who was the best friend to a man in such a troublesome life, died. With a simple quiver the dog died with its head rested on the old man's hand as he rested.

Once again we come to that question, is ignorance bliss?

Is the fact that the man lived every day afresh, with a new wonder, bliss? What about the fact that the man would not have to remember the terror of his house burning down? But then again is ignorance really bliss? What about the fact that every day after the death of his dear companion he would have to wake up without Lassie and not know where he is or what is happening? The old man would not have the companion that he once knew and would be all alone in a world of complete strangers every day.

Is ignorance bliss? I don't know, that is neither a question that I alone can answer nor any one person. It is a question that perhaps does not have an answer and will never be answered.

*By Timothy Barber, Year 9  
St. Patrick's Marist College  
DUNDAS - NSW  
Teacher: Mr Bosco*

## *The Meaning of Family*

THERE he sat in his favourite chair in front of the television, which was showing his favourite program. The only piece of clothing he wore was a white singlet that was stained from the greasy takeaway foods and footy shorts of his favourite team. A beer was placed comfortably in his left hand and the remote was placed comfortably in his right. His big beer gut hung over his shorts revealing his belly button and to finish this portrait, one little hair stood on his shiny bald head.

Now in the other room was a quiet, petite woman hovering over the stove. She was extremely thin, wearing only a floral dress that hung off her shoulders. Her thin fingers were gripped around the neck of the wooden spoon stirring what she had made for his lunch. Her brown hair was placed nicely behind her ears where she had two gold studs that she was given for her birthday. On her feet was only the same pair of pink slippers that she wears day in and day out.

She then spoons out his lunch and brings it to him so he doesn't miss a minute of his program. When he is finished eating, she cleans his plate and then gives him dessert, which consists of vanilla ice cream with chocolate topping and a side of walnuts. Now that he is filled and pleased she can herself have some lunch. She washes, dries and cleans all in the amount of time until her little bundle of joy comes home.

As she predicted, her daughter aged only eight, walked through the front door at precisely 3 o'clock. Afternoon tea, which was home made chocolate cookies and milk, was laid out on the kitchen table. Her daughter sat down but didn't dare to eat. She waited and waited never touching the food.

Her mother was in shock. Then she heard an unusual sound coming from the lounge room. Thump thump thump. It felt like an earthquake or to some a herd of elephants stampeding but it was neither. It was her husband who to her surprise was walking over to the table containing the food and sat down right next to his daughter.

The woman felt frozen, she couldn't move. She closed her eyes really tight thinking this was a dream. She opened one eye very slowly and saw the most wonderful sight. She was witnessing her husband having afternoon tea with his daughter for the first time since she was a child. Her husband called her over and gently patted the seat next to him as if to say this seat is yours. Tears began to fall down the woman's cheek and a smile appeared for the first time in a while. While sitting beside her husband and her daughter, she had this feeling that was out of the ordinary. For the first time in a long time they were a family.

*By Katrina  
Cazzulino  
Age 15  
Gilroy Maria College  
INGHAM - QLD.*



## *Sheridan's Place*

The velvet, purple curtains drift open, to show the early morning of a new day.

Droplets hang tightly to the spider webs where they had made their homes for the night.

I see the fog swirl round and round, as if alive.

The fog forms a friendly, dancing figure, who is soon joined by company.

Slowly followed by one another, they leap off through the trees.

A lonely butterfly floats gracefully onto the face of a giggling Gerbera, under the window sill.

The sunlight dances joyfully through holes in the trees.



The light spills into the brook, causing water to occasionally splash me in the face.

The leaves rustle quietly, swaying in the gentle breeze.

From inside a hollow stump two bright eyes of a rabbit stare out curiously, as a slight rumble from the neighbouring tree sounded.

His jolly face beaming as a little bird took its first flight, from within the tangled branches.

My fog friend comes dancing back.

"Sheridan it's time to go now, you must go"

*By Taylah Smith, Year K-6  
St. Peter's Anglican Primary School  
CAMPBELLTOWN - NSW. Teacher: Laura Mitchell*

## The Guthega Ghost

"This time, I'm going to win... yahoo!" Emily woke up in the middle of the night and thought she was dreaming. Then she heard it again. "I'm going to win today. Yes!" Her heart was thumping. It sounded like elephants. Emily could hear the strange voice from outside her room but she was too scared to go and check it out. She went back to sleep.

Emily Saunders was on holidays at the snow with her family. Her two younger sisters, Kate and Madeline, were sharing her room at the Guthega lodge. Her mum and dad were staying in the room next door. Other families were also there including her best friend, Miley.

The following morning Emily asked everyone at the breakfast table if they heard any funny voices last night. "You've just been dreaming Emily" they all said. Emily wasn't sure if she was dreaming or not but quickly forgot about it when she went out skiing.

At ski school they did some races. Miley was racing Emily and catching up fast. Miley was saying "I'm going to win!" Suddenly Emily remembered the voice from last night and fell over in a big snow pile.



At the end of the day everyone sat around the fire and told ghost stories. Emily secretly wondered if the voice she heard might have been a ghost. She really knew there was no such thing as ghosts but was still a bit nervous going to sleep that night.

"I saw you race and crash. I am definitely going to win today!" Emily was certain she heard a voice this time and ran out to the hallway. There was no one there. Emily looked down the steep stairs to see nothing but she felt a whoosh of wind go right past her. Emily ran straight to Miley's room to wake her and tell what happened.

"I think it's a ghost" said Emily.

"Do you think so? Why would a ghost be here at Guthega?" said Miley.

"I don't know, but I'd like to find out."

The next morning the girls walked through the snow to Guthega Dam. They threw some stones on the frozen lake. Suddenly a huge rock bounced across the icy surface of the dam. "Did you see that?" said Emily.

"Yes. Something weird is going on here!" said Miley. The girls ran back to the warm lodge to tell Emily's dad. Mr Saunders didn't have any answers for them but told them to sit by the fire and read a few books.

The girls found some old books and started reading. Emily noticed some old photos of ski racers from fifty years ago.

There was a story about a famous Guthega race where the leading skier, Gerry McIntosh, disappeared in a blizzard and was never seen again. He had never won a race but had come second fifteen times and always said "Today I'm going to win!"

Emily thought "Oh my gosh! That is just like the voice I have been hearing. Do you think the ghost of Gerry McIntosh is living in the lodge?" Miley suggested they stay awake tonight to find out.

After everyone was asleep, the girls crept out to the hallway hoping to see the ghost. Suddenly a huge wind blew past and the girls heard the voice say "I'm going to win today!" They couldn't see anyone but they both yelled "Go Gerry, go!" The girls then heard "I've won. I've finally won!" Then nothing. The girls went back to bed and off to sleep.

They told everyone at breakfast but no one really believed them.

The following night the girls sat up waiting for the ghost but heard nothing until there was a tiny click of metal. "What's that?" they said to each other.

"That's my gold medal" they heard. "Thanks for setting me free!"

The girls were so excited they decided to become famous ghost whisperers.

THE END

*By Melissa Regan, Grade 3,  
St. John's School,  
NARRAWEENA - NSW*



## Obscured by Contesting Blurs

THE SUN, sitting midway in the sky, stretched its dusty golden fingers down through the last of the early morning fog. The crunch of gravel as she walked was dulled by the cool dew that seemed to cling to everything. A bird called. She stopped. Craning her neck to look in the gum trees nearby for the culprit, the girl narrowly caught a flash of *blur* in a range of exotic shades. She stood there awhile, completely ignoring the world and contemplated that she was one with the birds; a part of their alluring brightly coloured freedom. It was only when her back, straining under the weight of her school bag stuffed to the seams with books, began to voice its complaint at the delay, that she remembered where she was and hurried on her way.

Slowly the gravel petered out and was replaced by bitumen. Its black surface was spotted with green mosslike growths that made faces and worlds, beguiling those prone to distraction to stop and decipher them. Today she didn't have the time. She quickened her pace. Thud, thud. Staccato steps carried her. Faster. So fast that she almost flew. So fast that the blacks and the greens *blurred* and distorted. They shouted their freedom and tempted her to linger, but she flew on. So fast now that soon she would be the exotic *blur* and then she might never stop. Thuddy, thuddidy. The whole world would join in with her beat. Thuddidy.

A fly *buzzing* nearby looked around in alarm as a streaking *blur* of brightly coloured, frenzy-fuelled speed and confusion

blew him and his brothers from the carcass they were enjoying. The flies whirled and buzzed, *blurring* into their own cloud. Blackness dense and nearly impenetrable. Blackness filled with impatience and hostility. The flies settled again, clinging closer to the compelling waft of rotting flesh. Of death.

All frenetic speed seized. She had stopped, sapped of all energy, at the gate. It stood open, begging, forcing her to take one step closer and then another. Thud. Pause. Thud. Her hand rested delicately on the gate. A voice called out. *Ding*. And she craned her head closer towards what lay inside, catching a *blur* of blue and the tinkle of voices. Finally, she looked down to where her hand lay obscuring a place, a name. '*Institute of Learning*'. And warily, glancing over her shoulder at the freedom she hankered for, she stepped inside and blended until she too was a part of the blue *blur*.



By Rebecca L Briody  
Age 15  
Loreto College  
BALLARAT - VIC.

## My Grandma

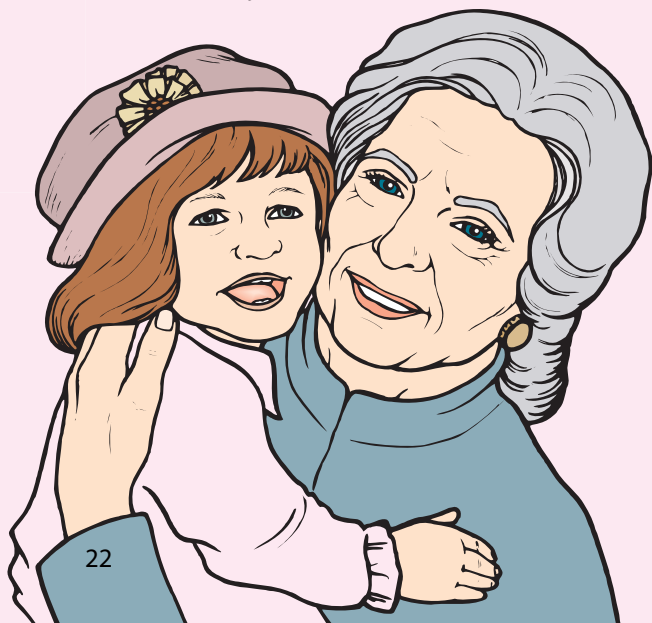
By Jasmine Mills

Year K-6

St. Peter's Anglican Primary School

CAMPBELLTOWN - NSW

Teacher: Laura Mitchell



She sits at her windowsill  
A framed photograph in her grieving hands  
Tears drip from her eyes  
Like the rain that's pelting down outside  
As she sobs...

She remembers once again  
Her parents  
The foster home  
Her mum's grave  
And the worry of losing everything she has, all over again

She's trying to be brave  
Trying not to think about her traumatised childhood  
Trying not to remember all the hurtful words,  
echoing in her shadowed mind,  
But somehow she is scared, for all eternity

She is caught in the moment,  
So fragile and brittle  
As she looks back on her life,  
Dreaming of the one she will have next  
She runs out of tears.

And now we remember her spirit  
Her presence still lurks in our hearts  
My grandma,  
Not dead, just sitting at her window sill.  
In Heaven

# Ambassadors



☛ **Krista Bell** is an award-winning author of twenty-one books for young readers. Krista has been professionally involved in children's literature for over thirty years, as well as being the mother of three sons, all of whom are good readers and writers! Krista's middle son, Damien, is the illustrator of her junior novels. Having grown up in Sydney, Krista had her own bookshop, was a publicist for a publishing company, then a book reviewer on ABC Radio for fifteen years, and during that time moved to Melbourne with her family.

It was in Melbourne that her first book, *JEZZA*, a picture book illustrated by Kym Lardner, was published in 1991. Krista calls the way she writes FIBTION, because she takes real life experiences, embroiders them with fibs and turns them into stories.

Krista lives with her sons and transport planner husband next to a railway line so she can quickly catch a train to the MCG to watch a football match, or go to the theatre, a concert or the National Gallery in town, or visit South Bank or Federation Square where she can be a professional "stickybeak", collecting story ideas. Visit [www.kristabell.com](http://www.kristabell.com).

**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)



# The Young Australian Writers Awards

# 2007

The BIC Australia  
Young Writer of the Year Award

**SHAUN BULLOCK**

*Quirindi High School,  
Quirindi NSW*



**DYMOCKS**  
BOOKSELLERS

**Dymocks Literary Award**

*Short Story – Secondary*

**STEPHENIE CONSTAND**

*Ravenswood School, Gordon, NSW*

*(Photo unavailable)*



**Qantas Flight Catering  
Literary Award**

*Short Story – Primary*

**RYAN HIRSCH**

*Reddam House, Woollahra, NSW*



◀ **ASG Literary Award**

*Secondary*

**EMMA YOUNG**

*Enfield, SA*



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**ASG Literary Award**

*Primary*

**AHARANI GANESHAMOORTHY**

*Baulkham Hills Primary School,*

*Baulkham Hills, NSW*





◀ **3M Literary Award**  
*Poetry – Secondary*  
**LUCY MACLEISH**  
*Cathedral College, Wangaratta, Vic.*

**3M**

**Percy Baxter Trust**



**Percy Baxter Trust** ▶  
**Literary Award**  
*Poetry – Primary*

**ISABELLA ATHAIDE**  
*St. Christopher's Primary School,  
Airport West, Vic.*



◀ **Helen Handbury Literary Award**  
**JOANNE BUI**  
*Southvale Primary School,  
Noble Park, Vic.*



*(Above and left) Awards winners and sponsor  
representatives at the Awards Night, 28 October 2007.  
Photos: Ikon Images*



**Bic Australia Art Award  
Painting – Senior**

**JESSICA SHIPARD**

*Mount St. Bernard College, Qld.*



**Percy Baxter Trust Art Award  
Painting – Primary**

**JACOB LAMBELL**

*Oakleigh Primary School, Vic.*



**ASG Art Award  
Painting – Junior**

**CONNOR DONNELLY**

*Caboolture State School, Qld.*



**Bic Australia Art Award  
Computer Design – Senior**

**CECILIA JIN**

*Cheltenham Girls' High, NSW*



**ASG Art Award  
Drawing: Prep–4**

**LIAM IRVING**

*Beaconsfield Upper Primary, Vic.*



**Media Warehouse Art Award  
Computer Design – Middle**

**SAMANTHA BORG**

*Colyton High School, NSW*



**ASG Art Award  
Computer Design – Junior**

**JESSICA SLATTERY**

*Kingswood College, Vic.*



**Train Trak Art Award  
Photography – Senior**

**DAVID CARTIER**

*Beerwah State HS, Qld.*



**Ikon Images Art Award  
Photography – Middle**

**RACHELLE FEWSTER**

*Cervantes Primary School, WA*



**The Lady Potter Art Award  
Young Australian Artist of the Year**



**KAT PHILLIMORE**

*Yarra Valley Grammar School, Vic.*



**Perpetual Trustees Art Award  
Drawing – Senior**

**EMMA HALFPENNY**

*Star of the Sea School, Vic.*



**Perpetual Trustees Art Award  
Drawing – Primary**

**ZAC SLATTERY**

*Kingswood College, Vic.*



THE LIGHT filtered through the trees and created a silhouette against the dark marble path. Vermin scurried along the sewer rivers edge, their scratching almost rhythmic. But the worst vermin there wasn't a rat, not even a rodent but a young man by the name of Jack Stillwater. The small scythe by his side was almost invisible, hidden in his black robes, which swayed as he walked. He had no feelings, no remorse, no love, he was an

assassin, hired to kill. He looked at himself in the sewer river, the scars his father left him glinted pink in the moonlight, he turned away, disgusted by his own pity. He lifted the parchment before his eyes and read:

1. Enter Undertown.
2. Take out Light Guards.
3. Call for the Dark Ones reinforcements.
4. 15,000 dollar reward when all is completed.

He looked at the crumbled walls, and he saw the Light Guards marching and protecting the innocent civilians. He punched himself viciously in the arm and angrily marched forward, he couldn't let his feeling overwhelm him. He clambered up the wall, his wiry fingers searching for holds and his thin, yet strong arms heaved him up onto the destroyed walls. He leaped across a small gap and hid behind a block, a Light Guard only meters from his position. "Killing a Light Guard of

any kind was an offence worthy of death" he thought, then another thought leapt into his mind: "If you get caught".

He dived from behind the block and brought his scythe down, the blade even cutting through the air. There was no scream as the lifeless body dropped from the wall with a thud. He picked up the Light Guard's steam rifle, and set the other Guards in his sights. There was a hiss and another thud, as another Light guard fell from the wall, this one was headless. He tucked the rifle into his cloak and hastily pulled a hugglehide horn from his cloak and let out one sharp blow. Within seconds 50 or so Dark Ones ran down from the hill their steam rifles glinted in the moonlight as green gas bombs flew through the air.

Jack looked down from the hilltop seeing the town burn and watching the once free people be lead away, the children the mothers and the old men would be feasted on by the Dark Ones, their bodies would have piercing on the neck where the Dark Ones would feast. Jack looked at the carnage and the destruction, the innocent faces looking up at their attacker's faces eager to feast, destroy and kill. "I have seen death, I have killed..." he muttered to himself, and with a sigh he mumbled as he fingered his money pouch, "And I will kill again."

As Jack turned and walked away from the carnage he thought "What people will do for money, for power, for pride, but inside all they feel is loneliness and a man without love is a man without life".

*By Jamie Cameron, Grade 7, Age 12  
Guardian Angels School, WYNNUM - QLD.*



# **QANTAS FLIGHT CATERING LIMITED MELBOURNE**

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## Soccer

We're going to see the world's best game,  
and there isn't any catch.  
We're gonna see the Aussies play  
a good old soccer match.

I've liked soccer all my life  
and I am proud to say,  
we all despise rugby  
from the Bunnies to Footscray.

We jump out of the car,  
there is no time for grace,  
we sprint toward the ticket booth,  
my friend setting the pace.

I take in my surroundings,  
and quickly see a cop,  
this guy had hair like you might see  
up upon a mop.

I thought the Aussies might play  
a new team called Acacia.  
But then I realised that our boys  
would be battling Croatia.

The Aussies walked out on the pitch,  
the Croatian dudes looked bold.  
But although they sport red and white,  
we've got green and gold.

The whistle blows, the ball is dropped  
Kewell's got the ball,  
he dribbles round Croatia's mids,  
they all look 6 feet tall.



Kewell sends a flying kick  
up to Lucas Neill.  
He's a guy who plays his sport  
with respect and with zeal.

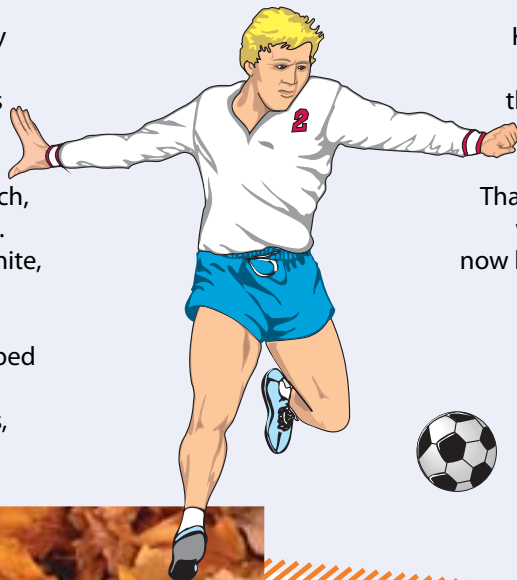
As the game rages on,  
I can barely look.  
Croatia tops the score 2-1,  
time is almost off the hook.

But look! Moore's passed the ball  
to the flying Luca,  
he boots the ball right down  
to my favourite, Mark Viduka.

Viduka boots it down the field  
it dodges Croatia's parry,  
the ball is soon received  
by the team's best player, Harry.

Kewell sends it flying home  
with the tip of his shoes,  
the score is levelled! It's 2 all!  
We didn't win or lose!

That just shows we don't give up,  
we're true blue to the core,  
now how would Steve Irwin say this?  
"Crikey! It's a draw!"



*By Benjamin Iain Macmillan  
Grade 7, Age 11  
Marist College Ashgrove  
ASHGROVE - QLD.*



## "Remembrance of All Things Past"

Memories swinging in the gentle breeze,  
A ticking pendulum of the demise,  
The ruins of childish frivolity and freedom  
Flicker across a face like faulty fluorescent

The slowly rotting rope,  
Marks the fragile grip these memoirs hold,  
The tenacious clasp of a toddler,  
loosened at the sight of a shiny new doll

Haunting lullabies of past joys and toys  
Of smiles, of tears, of nighttime fears.  
Echoes, losing out to the hustle and bustle  
Of working hard and playing harder.  
Broken trucks and rotting prides  
Litter this deserted moor of memory,  
Lingering in the shadowy depths,  
Educated by sights and scents

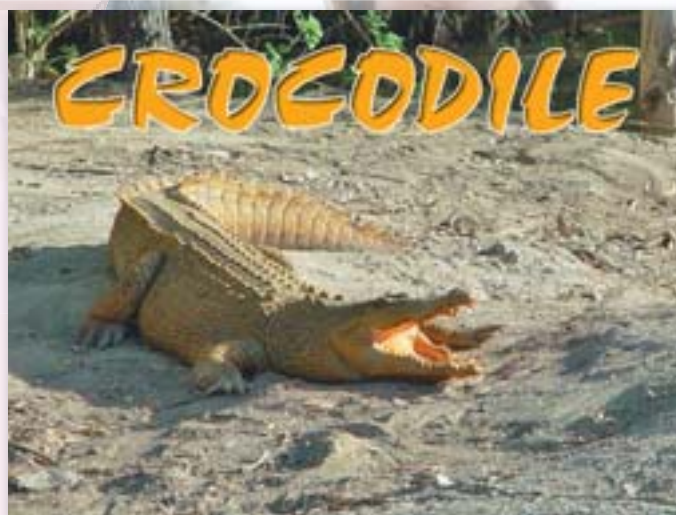
The leaves turn golden, brown, then fall  
A fading smile, a wrinkled face,  
Failing sight, a barely beating heart,  
The tyre swings eternal, the hangman's noose

*By Madeleine Stark  
St. Paul's Campus  
PORT MACQUARIE - NSW  
Teacher: Miss Davis*

## My Guardian Angel

My Guardian Angel is nice and kind  
 But very very hard to find  
 My Guardian Angel is shiny and bright  
 While I say goodnight  
 I'll never know my Guardian Angel's name  
 But I'll recognise it by all its fame  
 My Guardian Angel will always be there  
 For me anywhere  
 My Guardian Angel might be soft and squishy  
 Or she might be very pretty  
 My Guardian Angel might be hairy  
 Or she might be a pretty fairy  
 My Guardian Angel might not be near  
 But it'll hear when I'm in fear  
 My Guardian Angel will never been seen  
 As well as it'll never be mean  
 My Guardian Angel might be above my head  
 While I lay in my warm cosy bed  
 My Guardian Angel might look like a star  
 Though it's very very far  
 My Guardian Angel does not live in a nest  
 My Guardian Angel is the Best!

By Kristy McDonald  
 Year 3  
 St Thomas Aquinas  
 BULLABURRA-NSW  
 Teacher: Mr Chenoweth



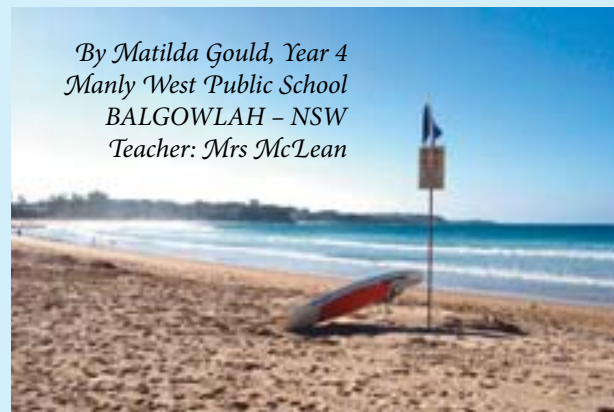
I saw him  
 Emerging from the dark waters  
 Of the deep, black lake  
 A creature of the deep  
 Teeth sending shivers up my spine  
 I saw him  
 Basking in the warmth  
 Of the hot, summer sun  
 Scales glistening as if they were jewels  
 Eyes only half closed  
 He doesn't want to be caught unawares  
 I saw him  
 Lying in a bed of leaves  
 Camouflaged in the scrub  
 A little rabbit, oblivious to the lifeless figure  
 SNAP! And all that is left is a pool of blood  
 I saw him eyeing me suspiciously  
 Deciding whether to attack  
 My instincts overpower my mind  
 I turn to leave

I have seen enough...

By Beth Stone  
 Year K-6  
 St. Peter's Anglican Primary School  
 CAMPBELLTOWN - NSW  
 Teacher: Laura Mitchell

**M**agnificent aqua bubble blue water, rippling gently  
**A**ll manner of seagulls circling one hot chip  
**N**ever ending memories, treasured in your mind  
**L**ime, chocolate and honey comb ice cream dripping onto the hot ground  
**Y**ellow sand crunching softly under your feet

By Matilda Gould, Year 4  
 Manly West Public School  
 BALGOWLAH - NSW  
 Teacher: Mrs McLean



## Repent

**A** SWOLLEN sun of the new morning cast gently on the faces of the mourners. The grass wept morning dew beneath the feet of onlookers, friends, family, and the priest serving on that day. Though as it was, the aforementioned religious figure was particularly peculiar. Well-mannered, soft spoken, and seemingly a fellow whose social status was respected and admired, his appearance argued with his role. "We here today will fondly remember Sebastian James Thompson." A glint of silver from the five hoops draped along the cartilage of one of his ears... "We will cherish memories of his smiles and positive nature;" More melancholy twitters sounded from a dainty chain suspended between two more studs in the opposite ear.

"And will ethereally mourn his untimely death."

'A lovely eulogy,' they said. 'Though the priest himself seemed... unique?' That was the adjective they decided on eventually. He was young; it showed in his olive skin and brilliant, chillingly ice-blue eyes. It was his hair that betrayed his features. Most people agreed; said it was a very pale blonde. They would have had little-to-no imagination, these people, and probably dressed as a ghost or a witch at parties. But the people who went to the same parties as a ninja or an Indian would have known it to be a clean, snowy white. How it had come to be such a crisp color may have altered his life in a way that drove him down the path to become a man of religion.

Maybe.

All of it was a puzzle, really, something people would find themselves looking for at times. This applied to some more so than others. One person in particular lurked at the back of the crowd. He stalked the priest's every movement with eyes that carried a look of malice or severe suspicion, it wasn't truly clear.

Detective Mitchell Andrews.

Following a string of unsolved robberies for a year had brought him here, before this man and at a funeral for this unfortunate child. It was sad, but he was on a feverish hunt to bring justice to the aristocrats that were now missing valuables and the hefty pay they had offered into his pocket. Was he tricking himself by saying his actions were noble? Maybe. But the ceremony was ending, the crowd of weeping friends and family thinning, and the priest was holding his hands out before him as he closed with a prayer.

Step left, right; left and right again.

They used those guidelines for models on the catwalk.

But Detective Andrews was no model, and he certainly

wasn't showcasing his attire – shady and inconspicuous as it was.

"Reverend?"

A casual cliché sort of greeting, but it attracted his attention all the same.

He turned; an almost graceful sort of movement, with the way his hair played across his face. A smile broke out – albeit a sad one, as the circumstances weren't the most fortunate.

"How can I help you?"

"I have a few questions for you sir."

"Oh?"

Somewhere, something clicked, and it ricocheted off every bland white wall in the room as a pasty light swept through it. Squinting his offended blue eyes, the pastor shuddered at the cool touch of the metal chair, with full lips pulled into a pout. "Not a very forgiving sort of life is it?" asked he, with all the accepting kindness that could have been mustered in such a situation.

"Welcome to Edinburgh Police Force's interrogation room. Pastor...?" "Venticross. Pastor Venticross, sir."

"Right. I have just a few questions for you today, and we'll take you back to your church later."

"Thank you sir. I hope I can be of some help to you."

Andrews felt as though he had been slapped across the face. When he took people into this room they turned vicious and arrogant. They were the ones that would turn out to be guilty. Did the fact that he was behaving so erratically mean this man was innocent? No, that couldn't be it. Every detail, every suspicion had brought this man before him. It was all flawless.

"Let's get started then."

"I'm all ears, detective."

"Reverend, you've heard of recent robberies haven't you?"

"I have. It's the man in black with the curious mask, correct?" "The very same." Of course he wasn't surprised that the priest had heard of the man – he was the talk of the town. Common references to him included sadly unimaginative names like 'Robin Black Hood' or 'Duke of Bandits' and others like it. And on that thought, the detective found himself listening to the pastor again.



## Repent (Cont'd)

"I know the robberies have been recent, and with that I'd like to inform you I've been traveling with my missionary group for the past 6 months. We only returned three days ago. I don't know much more about it."

A missionary? For Christ's sake, he was not going to be beaten by some charity venture. "Will you be able to supply me with proof?"

"Of course, I've got a mission log in my office. It has all our airline times, tickets, and hotel bookings."

Twenty minutes later and Detective Mitchell Andrews found himself beaten by a charity venture as he listened to the pastor explain his trip.

"Each month found us in a new country with new faces. It's truly something fantastic knowing you're using your life to make others better. Perhaps you'd like to join us next time, Detective."

If the young man hadn't been so genuine, Mitchell Andrews may very well have hit him. "No, thank you Reverend. I appreciate your time, and hope I haven't caused any distress."

"Of course not sir. Good day to you."

Good day to you.

Four words concluded the good detective's leads on anything he could do for this case. And with them fresh in his mind, he returned to his office to file the case away as 'unsolved.'

With a bloated moon to stare lazily through the Chapel windows of gold, red, and silver, the priest stalked down the long hallway in a pair of casual black pants, boots and a dark shirt. Under one arm he toted a black cloak and what looked like a mask that was lacking anything below the cheekbones.

Sliding cautiously into the confession booth, he clasped his hands together in prayer.

*By Caitlyn Lightner  
Year 10*

*Westminster School  
MARION - SA*

*Teacher: Shelda Rathmann*

## The CRAZY Possums

THERE once lived a family, they had three kids. Their names were Jennifer, Ruben and Jasper. They had two old magnolia trees near their bedrooms, and at night the poor children tossed and turned, they couldn't sleep because of the crazy possums. They kept on partying all night long they didn't care at all if the children couldn't sleep. In the morning those children were mad. Jasper said "let's teach those possums a lesson".

Ruben agreed and suggested paint ball guns, but it was no use. The possums kept catching the paint balls with their hands and tails.

Jennifer, who in particular liked the possums said, "You have to talk to them boys".

Jasper said, "They only let you talk to them at night time."

We have to go to bed then, Jennifer had a smile on her face and said "We'll sneak out when dad's watching television and mum's asleep and we will climb the trees and talk to them, okay?"



They did it in silence and climbed up the trees and started to talk.

The possum called Bumpy said, "We only party here because mother Possum-Ma got angry once and sent us to these trees".

Another possum called Rusty said, "And she left us here for you to deal with."

The children decided to meet Possum-Ma. The children asked Possum Ma if she would let the possums live in the macadamia tree because it was far away from the children's bedrooms.

Possum-Ma agreed. But Possum-Ma asked the children if they could have five baskets to sleep in. And every night after that the children slept on. And the children became very good friends with the possums.

*By Tessa Brinkhof  
ASQUITH - NSW*

## *I Couldn't Believe What I Saw*

**I** COULDN'T believe what I saw when I looked through the keyhole...

I couldn't believe what I saw when I looked through the keyhole... there was this beautiful hazel blue round object peering back, it looked familiar, so familiar, but from where? What was it? I took half a step backwards, still in deep thought. I looked again and there gazed this eye of beautiful hazel blue. I thought why that would look so familiar; it's an eye why would it be familiar? I felt a slight twinge of fear turn my stomach; until it clicked it was my eye. But how, how could that be?

I slowly raised my hand to my face, and felt where I thought my eyes should be placed, then said out loud, "yep there's one," then moved my hand across my face, "and there's two." So as I stood there dumb founded, I took another look through the keyhole and as the eye stared back, I took a small jump back and now I could see my whole face.

Fear had now entered me, my heart pumped at an unrecognisable speed. Theory after theory filled my mind, each more wilder than the last. I didn't know what to think, or how to feel. All I knew was that I wanted to get out of this place but I couldn't leave, not yet anyway, I had to know why or at least how I could see my self looking back through the keyhole.

I regretfully looked back through the keyhole now able to see my whole body; we both wore the same expression, and stood in the same pose. We both looked scared out of our wits. I was now bewildered with curiosity, I was without knowledge and it was eating me up inside. I was so used to knowing everything, but I didn't understand how this could be.

I paced backwards and forwards thinking, hoping that there was a plausible reason as to why I was standing both here and on the other side of the keyhole. Then I thought what if I go and try to talk to her, I mean me, I mean whatever.

I racked my brain for the right words, what do you say to someone that you think is you, well you know it's you but you don't know how they could be you. I thought long and hard until I realised that there is probably a parallel universe right on the other side of that door.

Excitement replaced the fear, what if I was the first person to discover this universe. "Oh my gosh I have to show someone!" I exclaimed very loudly. Then a small voice inside my head whispered, "You were the one who found it, why don't you be the one who enters first, don't run off and find someone else; they will just take the credit for it."

I stood there and thought for a second then greedily replied, "You're right, I found it, and I'll be the first who goes into the other universe."

Sweat pouring off me, I nervously elevated my hand and stationed it on the door handle, my whole body quivered I could hardly stand up. I forced myself to jiggle the knob, I turned it slowly to the right but it jolted.

The door was locked, I guess I should've seen that coming, but I had too much hunger inside me. I needed to know what was on the other side of this door. I peered back through the keyhole to once again see me staring back at myself.

I didn't know my next move, I had to open the door I had to see this other universe, and I had to know what was happening. I didn't like being in the dark, but I had no idea how I could get to the other side of this door. I sat down in angry disbelief; I had found another universe parallel to our own but no way of accessing it.

As I sat there I felt heart broken, then I thought maybe I should get someone, someone who would know about this kind of stuff, someone with a few more years of education in their belt. But who, who can I trust, who do I know that won't steal all the glory?

I sat there and thought about it, I thought for ages. Then it hit me: maybe you have to turn the knob to the left. Once again I got so excited, I was jumping for joy, I skipped on over to the door and locked my hand in place. I sharply inhaled and held my breath as I twisted the knob slowly to the left I heard the door click thinking it had opened I walked straight into not realising that the door had remained locked.

I quickly looked around, thankful that no-one had seen me walk into the door. I stood there still quite embarrassed as I rubbed my head to try and ease the pain. I thought ok the door is locked no more trying to turn the handle because that doesn't work.

I returned to my place on the ground lazily gazing at the door whilst in deep thought about who I should run to for help. Then I looked up at the door, it was very tall and it kind of was intimidating, it made me think twice about going to the other side. I mean I had no idea, what the other side of the door held and I even thought once or twice about just walking away and leaving but my curiosity had glued me to the spot.

I decided I was going to run for help, whoever I found first would do. So I got up and started to back away from the door but then I decided I would have one last look before I left. I ran at top speed back to the door and tripped over the door mat in the process. The mat went flying to the left and under it laid a small silver key. Unaware that a large quantity of blood was gushing down my leg from a huge cut that the mat had caused. All my attention was focused on this small key.

I rubbed my eyes in disbelief, I knew it couldn't be true, it just wasn't possible. But all the same, I picked it up and inspected its finer details. They matched the ones of the knob. Mixed feelings of fear and excitement co-existed inside me.

Butterflies filled my stomach I was weak at the knees but nothing could stop me from going to this parallel universe. As I placed the key inside it was a perfect fit. I licked my lips and took a deep breath. I was ready for what this universe might hold.

*Cont'd...*



## *I Couldn't Believe What I Saw (Cont'd)*

I turned the key and the door crept open, fearing what I was about to see, I pushed the door open expecting to see a crowd of people, instead I hear the sound of shattering glass.

I stood there all confused, I looked and noticed on the way open the door hit the mirror that was stationed on the other side of it. I felt so embarrassed I hadn't been looking at a parallel universe; all I was looking at was myself in the mirror.

I couldn't believe how stupid I had been, but lucky I was greedy and didn't run off and tell anyone because then that really would

have been embarrassing. I walked off quite disappointed, I had been looking forward to discovering this parallel universe but obviously there aren't any. And as I left I angrily realised, "oh no, to top my day off, I just broke a mirror that's seven years bad luck!"

*By Natalie Mooy  
Year 9, St. Patrick's Marist College  
DUNDAS - QLD.  
Teacher: Mr Bosco*

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### The Very Sad Day

TODAY is the day, the very sad day for my family: it is my great grandmother's funeral. Most of my family are crying while they do a speech for my great grandmother.

While they are saying their speeches I have tears in my eyes. She died because she had a second stroke. That week she just turned 90 years old.

I was so sad when I saw her. That was the last time I will see her forever.

The night before she died my nanna and pa went to see her because the hospital rang them and said she was having a stroke and she was having trouble breathing and they were worried that she might die in the morning. So they rushed to the hospital.

But it happened during the night, she passed away and my family were so sad; I cried so much!

One week later I still felt sad, but not as much, some things you cannot change.



*By Alora Cincis  
Grade 3  
Silvan Primary School  
SILVAN - VIC.  
Teacher: Ann Clempson*



Blood swishing through my veins,  
Voices whispering all our names,

Hearts beating all day long,  
When our souls sing this song,

Mothers give birth, shedding a tear,  
Children lying in bed, shiver with fear,

Lungs breathing special air,  
Beauty growing in our hair,

Bodies dancing all night through,  
Not knowing what else to do,

Heads looking up to the sky,  
Praying to God we will never die,

Smiles on our happy faces,  
Legs taking us different places,

Lips meeting at first kiss,  
Eyes crying for someone you miss,

Laughing aloud with no care,  
Giggling and clutching your big teddy bear,

Making friends to last forever,  
Writing poems to impress the clever,

Thank you

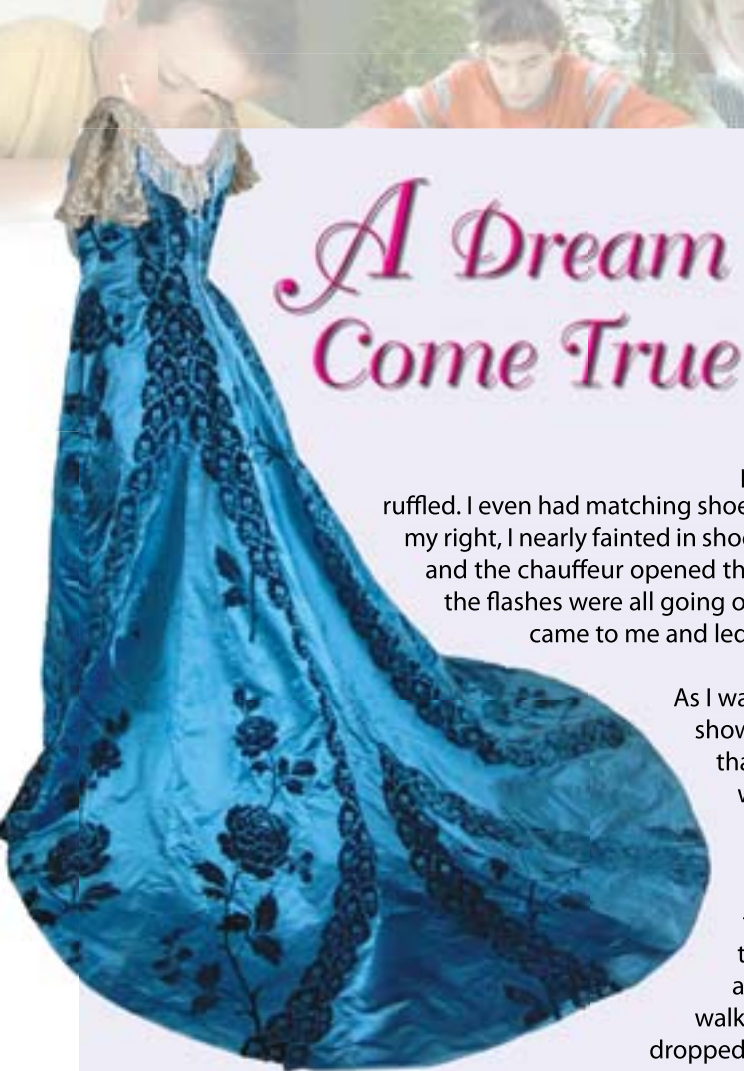
*By Tylah Virtue, Year 6  
St. Carthage's Primary School  
LISMORE - NSW*

### Oh! Precious Waters

Water is a precious thing  
it's getting rare these days,  
but if we all pitch in a bit  
it might not stay that way.  
Some people just don't realise,  
what big a drought we're in  
but one day when all our water's gone,  
the message might sink in.  
So help our world become  
a better place to stay,  
and reduce your water usage  
EVERY SINGLE DAY!

*By Makayla Fraser, Age 11  
Boronia Heights Primary School, BORONIA - VIC.*





# A Dream Come True

IT WAS Friday afternoon and I was walking down the driveway looking at my feet. I was pretty tired after all the tests. As I walked up to the door I nearly tripped over a bright pink box. It had my name on it! I opened the box and I couldn't believe my eyes – there was a 3D image in the box. It was of a Logie Award! I tried to touch it but I could not reach it. Suddenly the scene around me changed.

I looked down at myself. I was in a beautiful dress. It was a peach colour with thin straps. When it reached my waist it was all ruffled. I even had matching shoes! I realised that I was in a black limousine! When I looked over to my right, I nearly fainted in shock. I was sitting next to the famous Kate Ritchie! The car pulled up and the chauffeur opened the door so we stepped out. There were hundreds of cameras and the flashes were all going off at once. I couldn't see anything but I smiled anyway. Someone came to me and led me into a huge hall.

As I walked through the doorway, the person showed me to a seat. The show was starting so it was pitch black. As the night went on I realised that I was sitting with the Home and Away cast! The performances were magical, it felt like the night would go on forever, but it didn't. At the end of the show I got lots of signatures.

I plopped down on a chair and closed my eyes. I counted to 20 to make sure this was real. When I opened my eyes, I was so tired that at first I didn't realise that no-one was there. But when I looked around and no-one was there, I became scared. I stood up and walked quickly to the closest EXIT sign. As I opened the door, my mouth dropped open. It was a huge dressing room, full of dresses. "Dah!"

I ran in and ran my fingers along some dresses. I couldn't help myself. I grabbed a purple mini dress and tried it on. After I paraded up the isle, I grabbed another dress and put it on. I walked up and down, changing clothes. I didn't even hear the door open. I was just turning a final twirl when I heard a cough. I spun around and I felt my cheeks go red. Kate Ritchie was standing at the door smiling. Quickly I ran over and put my own dress back on. We walked back to the limousine and suddenly the things around me changed again.

I found myself staring into the bright pink box. Inside was a pristine white envelope. I opened it and inside there was a poster of me and all of the Home and Away cast! I bolted inside and hung up the poster. I would never forget the feeling of it.

"Shelby, have you finished your homework?"

"No Mum."

I slid my book out and started tackling my maths.

*By Selby Brooks  
Year 5A*

*Pearcedale Primary School  
PEARCEDALE – VIC.*

# Me

Welcome to the world of me  
It's filled with ups and downs you see  
First my crazy hair  
Never love or care  
Then my lumpy nose  
Trapped in a hideous pose  
Next my unshaped eyebrows  
Witty remarks they arouse  
Look into my brown eye  
Now tell the truth, please don't lie,



See my wonky mouth?  
Ends are pointing south  
See my overgrown ears  
They must be your worse fears  
Let's not look at my body,  
Boy, it's really grotty  
But what you don't see  
Is that I love me,  
For I am perfect the way I am.

*By Aleesha Paz, Age 13  
Year 9C, Rosebank College, FIVE DOCK – NSW*

### Sirain

This is not like any other story you've heard. It is about a girl called Sirain and how she became the God of War. It all started in London during the Second World War while her family were held up in a bomb shelter. Her Mother, Lady Ella, her father, Sir Sydney Peters, and her sister, Eleanor, (The most loved of all the family) were cowering for their lives.

Sirain was a very naughty girl. She opened the door of the bomb shelter and saw the sky afire in an orange glow as the bombs ripped through the clouds. Running back inside, she awoke the next morning to see her parents packing bags for her, Eleanor and her Mother to go live with Uncle Charles and Auntie Kathleen before her Father left for France.

They left by train for the Liverpool suburbs out to Anglesey, a remote island off the coast of North Wales.

"Sirain! Sit down and do be quiet", said her Mother. And, as being as naughty as Sirain was, she did the exact opposite, disobeying so when the trolley came with tea, she pushed it over and ran screaming down the aisle. Thankfully, the cart didn't spill. Her Mother, most embarrassed, pulled her by her ear, and dragged her to her seat.

"Why can't you be more like me?" Eleanor said as Sirain thrust her tongue out at her younger sister.

Her Mother thought Sirain would run amok in Uncle Charles stately home so she sent her out into the garden. As she dug, a bright pinkish/red light came from the ground. After the light faded, Sirain was amazed to discover what appeared to be a crystal necklace. Out of curiosity, she kept digging while shoving the necklace into her pocket. After digging for a little longer, she found a book covered in Celtic embroidery. Opening the book, a whirl of dust came forth hovering above her head. A Transcendent voice said: "Read."

"Orth eh borrey sorcane" said Sirain as she opened the pages. Slowly, she was raised off the ground and the misty dust twirled around her while her eyes turned a wicked red.

Awakening on the lawn, Sirain was surrounded by what was left of her family on the Peters farm. Sirain sunk into the ground. Grabbing Eleanor's hand, she pulled her with her into the depths of what lay beneath.

After what felt like hours, Sirain and Eleanor found themselves in a glass fortress. A little red robin flew through the glass walls and said: "I am Afallach, the God of the Underworld. I am here to offer you warning of future tides", as the girls looked at one another.

"This is Caer Wydyr, the Fort of Glass where all your ancestors lay", boomed the bird.

Taken somewhat aback Sirain asked, "May I help you?"

Afallach roared with laughter. No easy feat for a small robin.

"Help me?! I am here to help you!" Pulling a rose the deepest shade of red Sirain had ever seen. Wrenching two thorns from the stem, Afallach drew the sign of war upon Sirain's forehead in resin. Eleanor was given the symbol of fertility.

Cloaking herself in the black robe, Sirain pulled the necklace from her pocket.

"That," said Afallach pointing to the necklace, "is the sign of your divinity. You, young Sirain, are the God of War". A wreath of barbed wire rested just above her head as a scythe appeared within arm's reach above her head.

Eleanor found herself dressed in a green robe with an emerald ring gently wrapped around her left hand, middle finger.

As Afallach the robin flew into the portal above the glass fortress, he called out: "Help your people in this time of need. Sirain, you are the God war. You must protect them. You are the only hope to stop the war machine rolling across Europe now".

Sirain looked at her younger sister, asking "What do we do now?" as Peter's Farm appeared all around them.



*By Rose Siobhan Coleman*

*Year 6*

*Manly West Primary School*

*BALGOWLAH - NSW*

*Teacher: Miss Lees*

### Seeds

As I sit and write this poem  
I think of seeds and want to sow 'em.  
Seeds of words and seeds of rhyme,  
Seeds that will grow strong in time.  
Seeds that will become big trees,  
plants, flowers and the rest of these.  
Their wonderful words will roll off our tongues  
using so much breath it will empty our lungs.  
But for now they are just seeds  
seeds that will fulfil our needs.

*By Bella Chidlow*

*Age 11*

*HAZELBROOK - NSW*



## Comet Hits Jupiter

### Ten seconds to impact

Flying through the warp of space; a prison with no way out.  
A celestial cage...  
Swirling, curling tails of dust; as if on a thread...  
Spinning for all eternity.

### Nine seconds to impact

Blasting, buffeting and chipping away;  
Blades of ice cut through the darkness.  
Peaceful and tranquil, yet the chaos within...  
Sparkling veils of dust and wind...

### Eight seconds to impact

A tail of grey; a dragon of white spans the entire way  
A ball gliding through the barriers of space and time...  
Floating, wafting like a bag caught in a breeze...  
Serenely bobbing through the black waters of space.

### Seven seconds to impact

A dazzling rock of ice;  
Against a deep, dark blue nightline, framed by stars...  
Spiralling masses of red and white  
As delicate as jasmine petals, curling at the touch...

### Six seconds to impact

Strings of St. Elmo's Fire lap at the sides  
As the shards slide off; like morning dew on a leaf...  
Brilliant flares of orange, against floating clouds of brown. Shimmering gossamer threads of dust...

### Five seconds to impact

Dazzling like a diamond ring thrust into the air...  
Only to land in the murky undergrowth...  
Moons of silver bob like apples in water...  
Shielding dazzling eyes of bronze

### Four seconds to impact

Across the tail of the Turquoise Dragon  
Along the neck of the sacred swan...  
The giant ball of murky bronze...  
Around which fair maidens ten and Europa dance.

### Three seconds to impact

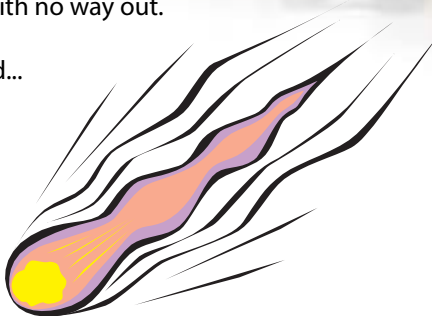
Past the shimmering nexus of stars..  
Through the alignment of the gods  
Winds of fury...  
Scythe the shimmering dust of peace

### Two seconds to impact

Winged comet of Nike heavenly fly...  
Lady of Blue; holding an olive wreath in hand.  
Jupiter, throne of gods...  
Curtain veil of red and gold.

### Impact

Jupiter, son of Cronos; thunderbolts did he wield  
Oh comet of Nike, scabbard so sharp; passed right through, Jupiter's anger and  
Cronos's might;  
Oh where winged lady did thou fly?



By Jason Kwok  
Grade 6  
Reddam House  
WOOLLAHRA - NSW

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As I stand in the misty, lush rainforest,  
I see serpents slide slowly over trees  
I see a frog enjoying its dinner,  
There I fall right to my knees,  
With them twisting, turnings like a strangler fig.  
For this is The Great Land.

I hear a waterfall roaring loudly,  
I hear a trickling of a stream.  
The spacious, colossal wildlife.  
When it all feels like a dream.  
With them twisting, turnings like a strangler fig.  
For this is The Great Land.

I feel a damp, smooth tree trunk,  
As I lay to go to rest.  
I hear my instincts calling,  
As I see an awful pest.  
With them twisting, turnings like a strangler fig.  
For this is The Great Land.

The beautiful flowers I smell,  
Bromeliads, Lilies with care,  
Some sweet, some strange  
And some I can not bare!  
With them twisting, turnings like a strangler fig.  
For this is The Great Land.

The dark, gloomy whereabouts  
Waiting to be found  
For this place has no boundaries  
Quiet, silent, not a sound.  
With them twisting, turnings like a strangler fig.  
For this is The Great Land.

As I walk out of this misty, dark rainforest,  
I am careful not to rush  
I take one last glance  
At its beauty and lush.  
With them twisting, turnings like a strangler fig.  
For this is The Great Land.

*By Bryce Mullens, Age 11  
Central Coast Grammar School  
ERINA HEIGHTS – NSW*

## *The Everlasting Record of Life*

Once in a magical kingdom  
there lived a boy, called Lance  
who always wanted to hold a  
world record in his time. He  
tried to create the first ever  
time travel machine but it was  
a failure.

His father Jim told his son  
Lance never to give up. He  
tried his best until one day  
he found a 2kg bag of tree  
seeds, which had written on it  
“Warning! May grow too high  
and collapse.”

He was really thrilled and so  
excited that he even skipped  
school so he could plant a  
tree with all the tools needed  
– soil, water, sun rays, heat  
and seeds from a corn cob. He  
was working so hard that he  
didn’t even eat breakfast, lunch,  
dinner or snacks for five days.



It took less than two months for Lance’s tree to grow to  
a whopping four hundred metres in height. But then it all  
changed.

The next day, a group of lumberjacks and woodcutters  
came with chain saws and approached the massive tree.  
They powered up their chain saws and started cutting the  
tree in half. But all of a sudden Lance arrived and he saw  
the tree getting tortured. He was yelling to the cutters  
to stop or he would call the police. He was too scared to  
go anywhere. He too watched the tree getting cut down  
to a tiny log on the ground. He sobbed to see his friend  
disappear into an old stump.

The cutters were about to take the branch and walk away  
when the branch slipped from their hands. The massive  
log crushed the cutters.

Was it revenge that Mother Nature had taken on the cutters  
for ruining a precious tree? No one knows for sure but that  
town now has beautiful parks and even a forest. No one is  
willing to risk his or her own life for the life of a tree.

*By David Liteewka  
Year 6  
St. Martin De Porres Primary School  
AVONDALE HEIGHTS – VIC.*

## Shadow Ninja 1



The Ninjitsu Temple... My home for as long as I can remember. I could remember the smell of the trees.

I have just been tasked with the assassination of Arax the warlord of the southern parts of our land.

The person who offered me the job has remained anonymous. Even a person with an inferior mind would know not to assign the almost impossible job to me because I'm doomed to fail, but nevertheless I will try my hardest.

I loaded my small horse-drawn cart with supplies and headed down the rocky sloping mountain track. After four hours of boring track I reached

the edge of the haunted forest. From the mountain the forest was just a large black mass, but up close it was foreboding. A forest cursed for eternity. Werewolves and vampires mainly occupied the forest. Most days you saw a rabbit next to the track that had been ripped to bloody shreds. No rabbits today. That must mean the wolves are starving.

Suddenly a long howl pierced the cool night air. I stopped the cart and watched as werewolves leapt down from the trees and bushes to land in front of the cart. They growled. I took out the blood katana from its scabbard and held it in front of me. My body tensed as they leapt at me.

I charged and severed the hand of one of the creatures and ran for another when a howl which was almost a roar broke the night and two black claws grabbed the werewolf in front of me and ripped it in half in front of me spraying me with crimson blood. The werewolves scattered into the shadows. I looked up. A huge black werewolf was standing in front of me. The two bloody pieces of the torn creature lay at my feet. I was petrified with fear. Then it smiled.

"Hi" it said in a cheerful voice, "I'm Guffer, pleased to make your acquaintance."

I stared at the creature. Had it just spoken?

"Are you deaf?" it asked.

"No, I'm not," I replied, "Can you give me a shortcut to the other side?"

"Yep" replied Guffer. He reached out and grabbed me. He stepped back like he was going to throw a javelin and stepped forward hurling me through the air. It was like flying. It was amazing how I flew over the treetops until I landed. Lucky I smashed a tree.

I got up and swayed a little. The fall had knocked my stomach up a few inches and my brain was flat (that was how it felt anyway). I looked up at the sky to see my cart falling down.

I ran away from the tree and the cart just missed me. Thanks a lot Guffer I thought.

I opened my eyes. I still remembered last night. I stood up and stretched. Amazing I thought as I examined my wooden cart, it seemed to have survived the fall.

I soon set off, destined for the nearest city, Omsaka, famous for slave trading and its precious metals. The air was choked with smog from metal digging and natural gas geysers scattered around the city. All in all the city was not the most pleasant place to live.

As I neared the gates a group of beggars gathered around the cart. I knew what to do. I reached into my pocket and drew out a golden coin. I turned around to face towards the back of the cart and threw the coin. The beggars scrambled towards the coin. They clambered over each other.

The moment I stepped down from the cart a bandit walked out of a shadowy alleyway.

"Hand over your money", he demanded in a gruff voice.

"Over my dead body!" I replied.

The bandit charged forward and I parried. His sword was so rusted that my blade sliced it cleanly in half. The bandit fled into the darkness. I opened the door to Flat 231. The place was a run-down old shack. Several windows were broken and graffiti covered the door. I checked the address to make sure this was the right place. I stepped in cautiously. Suddenly the lights turned on and several spears were held to my throat brandished by Arax's bodyguards. I smiled and shrugged and unbuckled my katana, but kept the small hidden dagger where it should be.

One of the men led me to a door; he opened it and let me in. The room was bathed in an eerie purple glow. There was a man at the other end of the table. He was covered in a black cloak. His hood contained two glowing purple eyes. He lifted his hands and indicated for me to take a seat.

It was time to strike! I drew the dagger, leapt and thrust it at his heart. The dagger met its mark and went straight in without meeting any resistance!! I stormed out of the building seething with rage. So close... I walked to the cart. It had been stripped bare. I almost exploded.

After I found suitable supplies I left the accursed city of Omsaka and continued on my mission. Only the future will tell if I succeed. Well, I continue on...

By Khang Le  
Year 6, Age 12

St Martin De Porres Primary School  
AVONDALE HEIGHTS - VIC.  
Teacher: Veronica Poynton

### Who Is She?

*Who is that woman that I see?*

She has grey wavy hair, thick glasses that cover lifeless eyes, a face that has been weathered by a hard life and wrinkles that appear to hold sadness within every line.

I can't recall her name but she is so familiar to me. I must try and think where I know her from.

When I look at her I get memories of a young girl playing with an old rag doll and playing hop scotch till she gets sore feet.

*Did I go to school with her when I was little?*

*No, that can't be it.*

I continue to look at this woman and try to remember more.

I have vague memories a young teenager going to her first dance at the local hall and being asked to dance by a handsome young gentleman.

I have scattered memories of this young nervous girl getting married in her local church.

I have broken memories of this young pregnant woman waving off her husband as he goes to war.

*I hope she doesn't think it rude of me not saying something to her, but I want to remember where I know her from first.*

I get flashes of this woman's heart breaking as she loses her much loved baby to pneumonia.

I see this woman crying whilst reading a letter that her dearly adored husband has been killed in battle.

*But who is this woman?*

I want to talk to her and tell her that everything will be okay.

She looks so lonely, scared and afraid.

She looks as if she has suffered so much pain.

*I want to take the pain away.*

*I want to help her, but how?*

*I want to talk to her, but nothing comes out.*

*If only I could remember...*

But then I do... I know who this woman is.

She is me.

I see my reflection in the mirror.

I remember that the doctor said that some days would be worse than others as my memory fades.

I lost my heart when my baby died, my soul when my husband died and now I am losing my mind... my memories... my life.

*By Ashleigh Streatfield*

*Year 8, Age 13*

*St. Clare's College, MANUKA - ACT*

### The Calling

I am focused  
On the surrounding night  
Something lingers  
Out of sight  
I probe a signal  
Into the shadowing dusk  
Something's hiding  
It smells my blood  
A dangerous Predator  
With golden eyes  
Lurking somewhere  
Beyond my sight  
I see a figure  
With radiant skin  
Of golden stripes  
And hate within



*By Erin Campbell*

*Year K-6*

*St. Peters Anglican Primary School*

*CAMPBELLTOWN - NSW*

*Teacher: Laura Mitchell*

The tiger aware  
Of my failing flaws  
Ready to pounce  
With excessive force  
Using my talent  
I lure him back  
This immense creature  
With a will to attack  
The cage is near  
Just out of range  
I throw the meat  
Into the cage  
He stalks slowly  
Trying to break free  
He cannot win  
How he hates me!



## In My Garden

In my garden,  
Grasshoppers jump for joy,  
In the cool relaxing breeze.  
In my garden,  
Tomato plants crawl through gaps,  
as they grow their way to live.

In my garden,  
trees grow to reach the sunlight,  
for they need it to live.

In the sky dark clouds filled with heavy water,  
patters down onto the ground  
and quenches the thirst of all living plants.

When the rain stops,  
the birds, toads and all of the insects,  
come out to play.

The birds may sing peaceful songs,  
to the ones who are ill to comfort,  
them as much as they can.

When the sunset comes,  
all the living creatures will find food for their dinner,  
then they will go to sleep.

While the creatures of daytime,  
are peacefully sleeping,  
the night animals come out to have their turn to play.  
But when daytime and sunlight comes,  
the night-time animals go to have their peaceful sleep,  
then the daytime animals come back out to play.

*By Jeremy Commerford  
Age 9  
St Francis Xavier School  
MANOORA – QLD.  
Teacher: Mr Darryl O'Reilly*

## The World in Colour

Can you see the world in all shades of grey  
Not only in black and white?  
Do you believe the world can be technicolour?  
That there are things just beyond your sight?

In darkness there should be freedom  
Yet you have created fear  
For when eyes witness nothing  
There is place for a mind to clear

The one who sees everything in pink  
Will perceive only pale purity  
But in that child-like innocence  
Will ignorance contradict maturity?

Sunshine is said to be warm happiness  
Some pour it over feelings, when all is at stake  
An attempt to mask sadness and anger  
Unsteady lies shatter, exposed as a fake

Envy and jealousy are ghastly thoughts  
They wrap vines over and under your head  
Ideas that green is a natural beauty  
In a instant, these feelings are dead

Where the earth is empty and grey  
There is no wrong, nor right  
Just cloudy hopeless confusion  
Alone and losing sight

Saved by the purity of an angel  
Witnessing all, eyes immaculate as ice  
Desperately trying to aid humanity  
If only her heart could suffice

*By Holly Miller  
Year 9  
Ogilvie High School  
NEWTOWN – TAS.  
Teacher: Rhonda Jackson*



## *The Legend of Abobart*

A long, long, long time ago,  
In the time of horse and cart,  
There was a fat and jolly king  
By the name of Abobart.

Now our king Abobart,  
He wasn't very smart.  
He couldn't joust or fence but  
Blow out candles with a fart.

Yes, that's right,  
He could really let it rip.  
He loved swimming in baked bean pools,  
For him, anytime's right for a dip.

Now one day a terrible monster,  
(to be precise a dragon)  
Declared war against the kingdom's ruler,  
And destroyed the nearest wagon.

And after quite a lot of destruction,  
The dragon flew away,  
To find himself a den,  
And rest for tomorrow's day.

Now when the king heard of this,  
He was outraged and furious.  
He then put on his old armour,  
(How it fitted him is quite curious.)

Away he galloped on his fat pony,  
He knew the road would be hard.  
"For the kingdom!" he cried,  
And drew his sword from the scabbard.

He rode through forests,  
And over a few hills,  
Until he saw the dragon's den,  
Decorated with remains of kills.

Abandoning his horse,  
He crept in on foot,  
Into the darkness of the cave,  
In which the floor was layered with soot.

Suddenly he heard a roar,  
The dragon had awoken!  
The giant monster stamped towards the king,  
With its nostrils a smokin'.

The king's sword and shield,  
Soon were lost in the fight,  
So the king threw a sheep at the dragon,  
To dragon sheep was Turkish Delight.

Then the dragon blasted,  
A ball of fire and flame,  
But Abobart just turned around,  
And played the dragon like a game.

Abobart had farted hard,  
And the flame rebounded.  
The dragon saw a flash of orange,  
And then he was dead.

Abobart found his pony,  
And rode back to town.  
The people whooped, clapped and cheered,  
And made him a better crown.

And to the day Abobart died,  
He always ate baked beans.  
It turns out he died of obesity,  
'Cause he was never with the leans.

And that was the tale of Abobart,  
Who saved the kingdom with a fart.  
This was a long, long, long time ago,  
In the time of horse and cart.

*By Jarrod Kline  
Grade 6*

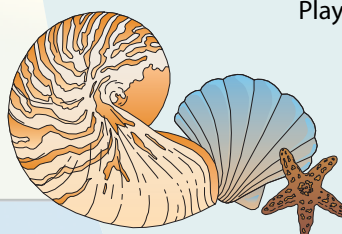
*Ringwood Heights Primary School  
RINGWOOD - VIC.  
Teacher: Miss Dalal Nehme*



## *Holidays*

Sleep overs  
Hanging out with  
My friends  
Going over seas  
Going to the movies  
Visiting my relatives  
Staying up late  
Sleeping in  
In summer going  
To the beach  
Having water fights  
Going shopping  
Playing with my brother  
Watching TV

*By Leeda Tokhi  
Year 5, Manly West Public School  
BALGOWLAH - NSW*



## Down in the Deep Blue Sea

Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I saw a Dolphin looking at me,  
It was dancing and playing like a tap-dancing queen,  
It was an amazing scene so amazing it felt like a dream!

Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I saw a Shark looking at me.  
Its teeth were gleaming and as sharp as knives,  
But it didn't stop me from enjoying my dives!

Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I saw a Turtle looking at me,  
It swam by me slowly and gave me a smile,  
And I thought I won't be seeing him for a while!

Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I saw a Marlin looking at me,  
As he came closer I grabbed hold of his fin,  
He took off quickly and gave me a spin!

Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I saw an Octopus looking at me,  
When I tried to grab on he squirted some ink,  
I got such a surprise I started to sink!

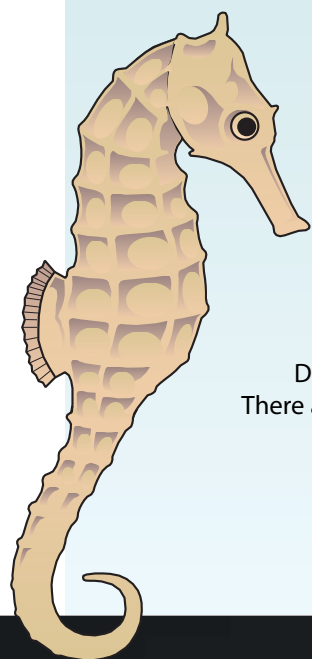
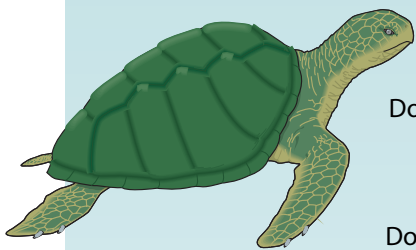
Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I saw a Seahorse looking at me,  
He clutches the coral with his curled up tail,  
He lets go and lets the current set sail.

Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I saw a Killer whale looking at me,  
She glided past me with her calf by her side,  
It squealed with joy cause it was catching its first tide.

Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I saw an Eel looking at me.  
The eel slithered towards me out of the coral bed,  
He gave me a fright and away he sped.

Down in the ocean in the deep blue sea I ended my journey with happiness and glee,  
There are still so many creatures for me to study, but my air has run out and home I must hurry,  
Down here in the deep blue sea my spirit was set free!

*By Eloise Natalotto, Age 9,  
Sacred Heart Primary School, HIGHGATE - WA*



## A Sad Tale...

## ...But True

It Was A Dark, Soundless Night, Like Nature Was Holding Its  
Breath, Waiting For A Storm To Tear Away Houses, Trees, And  
Ruin Our Lives... I Got Up And Went To Mum; A Question  
Deep In My Eyes... Mum Must Have Seen It Because She  
Said, "Great Grandpa Is Dead." I Went Back To My Room, My  
Mind Roaring. My Life Felt Shattered, Like A Ball Though A  
Thin Pane Of Glass... A Storm Was Raging Though My Mind,  
Crashing, Ripping Thoughts, Emotions Were Roaring And  
Only One Remained: Sadness... It Was So Strong, I Felt Like  
I Could Never Be Happy Again...

I Went To Bed And Cried Myself To Sleep...

*By Rhys Mosbey, Grade 6,  
Ringwood Heights Primary School  
RINGWOOD - VIC.  
Teacher: Miss Dalal Nehme*

## Creampatch & Featherpaw



Restrained by my wise father, I watched aghast, as the hunter shoved my sister into his sack with an air of triumph and smugness. I wished to kick and bite him, whatever it took to cause him intolerable pain. As I thought this, the hunter, who was now humming tunelessly, lumbered back down the path out of the forest. With a jolt I remembered the law in our community. 'If a hare was captured by an enemy it showed foolishness and carelessness, therefore not worthy of our rich society.' I

ceased struggling and gave my father a look of plea. Many hares asked him for advice so he was well respected but he looked somber and replied that he'll *try* to persuade the community.

I waited anxiously in my den while Father debated. The occasional uproars resulted in my hopes slipping a further knot. Finally, after what felt like a day and night, Father arrived to announce that he had failed. I wept and wept, feeling helpless. It seemed much smarter to let the hunter catch me too. That way, I'll be with Featherpaw and he'll be outnumbered or I could lure him to chase me and then lead him into a trap. The forest floor was full of traps and there was an especially effective one by the lake that the hare's had set up. I knew Father held me back to protect me but I felt a strong surge of loath towards him now.

There was no point denying I felt angry towards myself too. I had been careless and made such uproar. How was I to know the hunter would visit at dawn? He always comes in the late afternoon. Whitewhiff, the community Elder visited me shortly after Father left. No time was wasted in telling me his brilliant plan. He was going to pop around to the hunter's property and see the security measures put upon Featherpaw. Then we were going to set her free and Featherpaw and I were to run away because the community would skin us alive if they knew I had risked my neck to save an unworthy hare.

The fireball was shining brightly overhead when Whitewhiff returned looking desperate. I was fretting the hunter would have Featherpaw roasted for breakfast but Whitewhiff reassured that she was planned to be his dinner so we had to act fast. Featherpaw was locked in a small cage with vegetables to plump her up but she was refusing to eat. The hunter's five violent dogs which looked more like wolves pranced around the cage and the hunter himself sat beside it, peeling onions. I had met one of his dogs and it stood as one of my worst memories. Four more seemed much too daunting and at that point I considered withdrawing from the plan. Within only ten minutes we've cooked a scheme and were already outside the hunters' back fence. The dogs and

Featherpaw were at the front and it seemed the hunter had gone inside. Our bait was already waiting for us. Two putrid steaks, scattered with ants lay innocently on the dying grass. The dogs have already gnawed on it but it still held a large portion of meat. Using a long branch we pushed it into the dogs' ray of vision. I was confident the dogs would be lured but unfortunately they ignored it.

Disappointed, Whitewhiff and I returned to the edge of the forest. A silence rang between us. Whitewhiff sighed and whispered that there was no other way. Regretfully he explained that he had to be the bait. All the dogs would pursue him because he was much more of a feast than Featherpaw. This was the time when I would unlock the cage using my claws. I doubted my claws would unpick a lock but I didn't have a better plan. Of course I protested. Whitewhiff was risking his life and I didn't want to see him at their mercy. Why couldn't I be the bait? I was much younger, thereby stronger but he insisted that it wouldn't matter so much if he was killed because he has lived life to his fullest and was ready to embrace death with open arms. I felt a surge of admiration to Whitewhiff. I continued to argue but only half-heartedly because I certainly did not want to face those dogs let alone have them hot on my bob.

Whitewhiff wished me luck and vanished behind the house. There were snarls and yaps as he reappeared on the other side of the house now hopping faster than wind. All five dogs had deserted their post. It felt like I drifted to the front lawn. Featherpaw was indeed stuffed into a tiny cage that might have previously held a bird. As I released Featherpaw, the hunter strode out of his house, patting his rifle and cooing in a deadly sweet growl. Featherpaw and I bounded in different directions but I knew, with a sickening lurch of my stomach that he was going to go for me because I was more portly. As if it read my mind, a bullet came whizzing down and hit the wheel of the rickety wagon just above my right paw. Another bullet whizzed so close to my left ear that for a moment I thought it got me. A bullet soared into the treetops as I entered a labyrinth of tree roots. Turning around I saw the hunter stumble and fall with a fuming howl. I continued hopping until I had put a considerable distance between myself and the hunter but found to my great horror my path barred by two of his dogs. This time I leapt blindly to the left, forgetting where I was in my shock but hoping it was the way to a convenient trap. Suddenly my brain focused. Sharply, I turned right and as soon as I could, right again. Before long I had reached the lake and gleefully hurried around the deeply dug ditch which was covered with leaves. The first dog thought I was avoiding



Cont'd...

## Creampatch & Featherpaw (Cont'd.)

his swipe so fell for my hoax but the second dog either had quick reflexes or was actually smart but he dodged it, still attempting to bite and slash at my behind. I found a cluster of trees and swiftly flew in between the broad trunks where I camouflaged with both leaves and trees. My trick worked and the dog slowed to a walk. Taking his confusion to my advantage I leap upon its' back and sunk all claws into its' warm neck. It squirmed and put up an excellent fight until he fell limply before my bloody paws. I couldn't believe I had actually killed this menacing creature.

Featherpaw emerged on the other side of the lake covered in scratches and from the expression she wore, I must've looked like that too. However we were both alive. I told her my side of the story and she told me hers as we limped our way absentmindedly towards the burrow, sore and fragile. When Featherpaw reached the chapter about Whitewhiff I remembered how five had chased him. Two of them then followed me, one of which was dead. Featherpaw claimed three had stalked her and she had led them all into traps so was Whitewhiff still alive? We were still headed for the burrow and we prayed we'll find Whitewhiff inside unharmed and cheerful. Nothing could have prepared us to see him instead, ten metres away from home sporting a broken back and bucketfuls of blood where chunks of flesh were ripped off. That was when I remembered that we could not return to the community. Featherpaw helped me carry Whitewhiff to the

entrance of the burrow, raked the space above his body clear of leaves and wrote a note of farewell to our community.

*Our beloved hare community  
We think your law is plain absurdity.  
Only dad was the sensible one  
He has done all that could be done.  
Whitewhiff accompanied me to rescue Featherpaw  
Away from the hunter's drooling jaw.  
It was a horrible war zone  
Where the hunter's dogs were known.  
Whitewhiff took on all five  
Into his strive  
But he has reached his last breath  
Dying a hero's death.  
We are safe but to flee  
We will not bother to plea.  
With this I farewell  
We will not come back even if you yell.*

*Creampatch & Featherpaw*

By Anna Xu  
Year 7

*Northern Beaches Secondary College  
Manly Selective Campus  
CURL CURL - NSW*

## Bush Fires

Cracking hissing spitting as it burns  
Taking lots of trees and ferns  
The animals and birds flee  
As it burns down another tree

But as the fire is growing  
It does not know the trees are sowing  
Their seeds upon the ground  
In this spot they won't be found

Ready to begin to grow  
This is what the trees know.

## The Fire Ends

The fire is knowing  
That it is steadily slowing  
It is nearing a river  
Where it stops and starts to quiver

It can't burn on one of its sides  
For that is where the river slides  
On the other is a track  
Winding round and coming back

The fire tries to stay alive  
But alas, it simply cannot dive.



*By Hayley Budge  
Age 11*

## *Mums' Big Old Mare*

The swish of a tail,  
The flick of an ear  
I walk in the paddock  
To one old horse dear.

The warm winter coat  
In summer she'd have shed  
Is filled with burrs  
All around her head.

The calico colour,  
That once used to shine  
Is the same as my mum's  
And same as mine.

I lean on her neck  
Then play with her mane,  
And breathe in her smell  
That in memory won't wane.

Around her girth  
Is short of much hair  
From years of the saddle  
She used to wear.

Cracked are her hooves  
And covered in mud  
From standing in water  
With my pony Bud.

Her mane and tail lift  
And tangle in the breeze.  
A stray wattle blossom  
Makes me sneeze.



She snorts and takes  
Six steps with precaution.  
Then turns and looks  
At me in exhaustion.

Her big brown eyes  
Like two dams full  
Staring back at mine  
With an age old pull.

She's mum's mare  
Mum's big old mare.  
When they were both young  
They'd gallop wild with dare.

It's hard to believe,  
That she might soon go.  
That my mum's old mare  
Will fade with the June snow

I know that she's old  
And has had a good life,  
But the thought of her passing  
Cuts with a sad knife

Mum stands behind  
And hugs me tight.  
Her memory in both our minds,  
Will be one filled with light.

*By Bonnie Taylor Forsyth  
Age 13  
WALCHA - NSW*

## **THROUGH BLIND EYES I SEE**

Sharp shafts of terror tear through my soul,  
My world is black and lonely and I am afraid.  
I exist as prey for the elements in a desolate place,  
A forgotten child from a severed world.

A deep, calming voice envelops my fear,  
Like a shepherd rounding his flock.  
Smooth and secure, it controls my dread,  
Its angel touches me gently, but I cannot see.

This voice is my light, like a star in the sky.  
It shields me and soothes me and begs me to heed,  
That wisdom is sight in this place miles from home.  
A glimmer, a flash as my brain escapes its panic.

I can fish, I can climb, the voice insisted I could,  
I see survival and hope like a dream in my head.  
How sweet is this voice that teaches my brain,  
To **see** with my being, instead of closed eyes.

Black is my world, a frightening colour,  
The hue of the night from which to escape.  
But the voice is dark, yet I wish to embrace it,  
My prejudice ebbs like the waning tide.

No shapes or colours to distract my eyes,  
Simple kindness and wisdom have filled the void.  
I see tolerance and respect instead of the dark,  
I exhale and relax because I'm blind, yet I see.



*By Brittany Nabarro  
Year 6  
Reddam House  
WOOLLAHRA - NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Sharon Shapiro*

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