

OZ KIDS IN PRINT

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2022 ATCO Gas Indigenous Art Award

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Contents

ARTICLES & FEATURES

Creative Net	2
From the Editor's Desk.....	4
Illustrator Workshops	4
Our Authors & Illustrators	10
Book reviews.....	16
<i>Brandon & Palmina & Savannah</i>	
Ambassadors	19

AWARDS FOR POETRY

<i>Juliet's Monologue</i>	8
<i>Mayim Gerdis, Moriah College, Queens Park N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Bird Upon the Withered Oak Tree</i>	9
<i>Mingze Sun, Pacific Hills Christian School, Dural, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>A Swan, A Lake and A Sunset Scene Disrupted</i>	9
<i>Nethya Wijesekera, Gordon East Public School, Gordon, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Problem Without Repair</i>	12
<i>Sophia Gianotti, Presbyterian Ladies College, Peppermint Grove W.A.</i>	
<i>Concealed</i>	12
<i>Kayla Nguyen, Dominic's Priory College, North Adelaide .S.A.</i>	
<i>The Journey to Mudgee</i>	12
<i>Sybella El-Haddad, Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>A Wonderful World Is What I Desire</i>	13
<i>Claire Ping, Artarmon Public School, Artarmon, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>ANZAC Day Poem</i>	18
<i>Sybella El-Haddad, Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Flowers</i>	20
<i>Miesha Rattray, Burnside State School, Burnside, Qld.</i>	
<i>The Volcano's Revenge</i>	24
<i>Ruby Hand, Trinity Lutheran College, Ashmore, Qld.</i>	

<i>The Thunderstorm</i>	24
<i>Ritika Mishra, Ironbark Ridge Public School, Rouse Hill, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>We are octopuses</i>	24
<i>Renee Kim, Mornington Primary School, Mornington, Vic.</i>	
<i>I see you, Teacher</i>	25
<i>Elizaveta Fedotova, Bob Hawke College, Subiaco, W.A.</i>	
<i>14 Days</i>	27
<i>By Cacia Charles, East Launceston Primary School, Launceston, Tas.</i>	
<i>Friends</i>	27
<i>Savannah Bunston, Burnside State School, Burnside, Qld.</i>	
<i>The void of time</i>	28
<i>Prithila Acharjee, Georges River College, Penshurst Girls CampuS, Penshurst, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>River Rain</i>	29
<i>Emma Zhang, Carlingford West Public School, Carlingford, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Carrying On</i>	30
<i>Maya Sandberg, Burnside State School, Burnside, Qld.</i>	
<i>Medusa</i>	31
<i>Sophia Gianotti, Presbyterian Ladies College, Peppermint Grove, W.A.</i>	

AWARDS FOR SHORT STORIES

<i>The New School</i>	6
<i>Miesha Rattray, Burnside State School, Burnside, Qld.</i>	
<i>Books</i>	7
<i>Abigail Wu, Ravenswood School for Girls, Gordon, N.S.W.</i>	

<i>Magnifying Glasses Smash Sometimes</i>	11
<i>Ruby Hand, Trinity Lutheran College, Ashmore, Qld.</i>	
<i>Wings</i>	13
<i>Grace Hallock, Ravenswood School for Girls, Gordon, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Mayhem and Movies</i>	14
<i>Wendy Johnston, Greenslopes State School, Greenslopes, Qld.</i>	
<i>Broken Bottle</i>	15
<i>Anushka Mishra, Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Hopeful Star</i>	18
<i>Sybella El-Haddad, Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Music Has A Meaning</i>	20
<i>Nethya Wijesekera, Gordon East Public School, Gordon, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Galaxy of Flowers</i>	22
<i>Elizabeth Vardouniotis, The Hills Grammar School, Kenthurst, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Finis Est:</i>	23
<i>Kaylee Jesnowski, Mindarie Senior College, Mindarie, W.A.</i>	
<i>Off To The Sea</i>	25
<i>Pratigya KC, Burnside State School, Burnside, Qld.</i>	
<i>Seasons</i>	26
<i>Lily Zhang, Pymble Ladies' College, Pymble, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>Sign of the Times</i>	26
<i>Ruby Hand, Trinity Lutheran College, Ashmore, Qld.</i>	
<i>Mystery Camera</i>	28
<i>Oliver Imhoff-Keogh, Armadale Primary School, Armadale, Vic.</i>	
<i>Endless</i>	29
<i>Madelyn Rose, Bunbury Senior High School, Bunbury, Qld.</i>	
<i>Fallen Angel</i>	30
<i>Anushka Mishra, Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, N.S.W.</i>	
<i>The Mountain Trek</i>	31
<i>Chelsea Qiao, Ravenswood School for Girls, Gordon, N.S.W.</i>	

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'The Two Jelly Fish'

Chloe Rodney

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to Edition 2 of the OzKids magazine.

The Author & Illustrator Workshops headed to Port Headland. Roy Hill Community Foundation sponsored the workshops at the schools.

Without sponsorship, the Art & literary visits couldn't be done.

Author/Illustrator visits through CreativeNet. Helping to encourage children to be creative, in their favourite media, is what we strive to do.

The year is flying, so make sure you get your entries in early.

- Carol

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(TYPING)!**

Carol Dick
Managing Editor

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Workshops by Marjory Gardener & with Claire Saxby

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THE NEW SCHOOL

The old house just felt so much like home. I stand outside with moving boxes in my hands, tears running down my face. Mum puts her hand on my shoulder. "It will be ok, sweetheart," she says. The door slams as I jump in the car. My baby brother and sister are asleep either side of me. Why can't my life be as easy as theirs?

We arrive at our new home, shivers running down my spine, the wind blowing past me. The new house has a huge veranda with plants all around it. I'll deal with this!

I run, hoping I can get to our old house. I realise I can't run all that way, so I give up.

"DANNIELLE! Where were you? We were about to call the police!" I didn't care what they had to say, so I walked up to my room and started to unpack. The wardrobe was huge and dusty. Whoops, I bumped into the cupboard and a small package fell out. Inside it was a pencil. I put it down on my desk and go down to mum.

"We're going shopping for new school clothes," mum said. When I walked back up to my room my heart stopped. The pencil I found had written a message on the bedroom wall. It read,

"DON'T GO OUT INTO THE WOODS AFTER DARK".

Why, I wondered? What could possibly be out there? The sun was just going down. "Stupid, stupid, stupid," I thought to myself, but I just had to go and have a look. I ran outside into the deep, dark woods. I paused in a clearing, listening intently. Nothing stirred, not even the crickets who would normally be making a racket. Just then, a scuffling noise came from behind some bushes. I screamed and freaked out. I made it back to the house, my lungs about to burst.

"Is everything ok, Danielle?" mum said. They had just come back from the shops. I knew they wouldn't understand, so I just left it as it was. As I went up to my room, I couldn't sleep, all I could think about was, what was that noise, what was out there? Was it real or my imagination?

In the morning, I had to get ready for

school. "Are you excited for school?" mum asked. I couldn't answer her, I was just missing my old friends and school too much. As I walked through the school gates, something wasn't right, I could feel it. When I got home, I wasn't ready for what met my startled eyes. The pencil had written something again.

"BEWARE OF THE WALK TO SCHOOL."

Why had it said that? Nothing had happened yesterday.

In the morning, I left for school as normal, but found unconsciously that I was always looking over my shoulder. I felt eyes watching me, but every time I turned around, there was nothing there. I made it to school without any problem, but in a heightened state with my nerves on edge.

"Are you okay?" Mrs Sullivan, my new teacher, asked.

"I, I, I, I'm fine, thanks," I stammered.

I made it through the school day, but with a feeling of trepidation about the walk home. The same feeling was there on the way home as in the morning, but like the morning, there was nothing to see. "What is going on?" I thought to myself. I staggered up the stairs to my room, fearing what the pencil may have written. There on the wall in big letters it said,

"YOU CANNOT RELAX. I WILL FIND YOU!"

After another unsettled night, I made it downstairs to breakfast. Mum and Dad looked a bit strange, but they didn't say anything. I left for school, again fearing what might happen on the way, but, just like yesterday, nothing happened. Just that uneasy feeling of being watched.

After school, I again trudged upstairs, fearing what I might see. Carefully opening my bedroom door, I peered around the corner, scared of what might be written on the wall. But there was nothing new. Exhausted with relief, I collapsed onto my bed, staring up at the ceiling. That's when I let out a terrifying scream. On the ceiling was written,

"OPEN YOUR WARDROBE IF YOU DARE".

I slowly slid down off my bed. Step by slow step, I approached my wardrobe door. As silently and carefully as I could, I slowly opened the door. Inside all I could see was my clothes, hanging up on their hangers. Then, the clothes parted. I let out another terrifying scream. Then a great, giggling laugh came from behind the clothes.

"Got you," laughed my best friend, April. "I'm so sorry to have put you through all this, but your parents and I thought it would make the most amazing prank ever to play on you. We just wanted you to have something else on your mind, rather than be freaked out about the move and your new school."

What could I say? April and I had been playing practical jokes on each other ever since we could remember, often with our parents' help. I gave her a great big hug, but with a mischievous look on my face, pondering what I could do to top this one.

*By Miesha Rattray
Grade Category: Middle
Burnside State School
Burnside, Qld.*



Books

With a spring in my step, I strolled closer to the enormous door that had its arms spread wide. As I walked in, the smell of ancient leather reached my nose, and I felt a sense of warmth. The shelves were lined with books of different ages. There were balconies high above the polished floor and statues on the walls. Everything was perfect.

I gently touched a crippled book with my hand and read the gold lettering on its cover. It had a comforting title and a familiar author that made me feel cosy inside. I put it back on the shelf, just as a wave crashed onto the shore nearby. The library was gorgeous, and I wanted to stay here forever.

Up on a balcony, there were shelves of modern literature and on another there were neat stacks of romantic literature. On the other balconies, there were piles of books from different eras and genres. I had never seen so many books in my life, nor knew so many different types of literature existed. As I looked down, I realised how many books there were. The exterior of the library was gorgeous. The white bricks that made up the building were strong and purposeful. The tall grey roof towered above me. The massive area of greenery around the building was covered

with different types of plants and neatly trimmed shrubbery. Attractive flowers grew in groups and the sky was clear with a few clouds scattered amongst it.

I grinned and continued looking closer at the brilliant architecture and I noticed all the details there were. The way the statue of a goddess had a tiny crack in it and how the imperfections of the pages from the books became apparent. The wood in some bookcases were slightly chipped and a few books had small holes on their covers. I wanted to try my best to help this library be even better than it already was.

I chatted away with the receptionist at the front desk and asked how I could support this library. My gut was telling me that this question would lead to a biased answer, but I waited for a reasonable response to appear. The piles of information I received, was something that would keep me busy for the next months. So, I continued on my journey of exploring the library. I was about to go back into the main corridor when I heard a voice.

“You must leave now. This library has been booked.” Ordered a sharp woman behind me. I was extremely muddled. I didn’t realise that a library could be booked but today I had learnt many things, so I sighed

and agreed to leave. I quickly rushed back inside to let my family know we had to leave, and we were all disappointed but grabbed our belongings.

Just before we left, I had a long last look at the magnificent structure and sighed heavily. I told myself I would come back some day. The stunning books and architecture would never be forgotten.

*By Abigail Wu
Grade Category: Middle
Ravenswood School for Girls
Gordon, N.S.W.*



Juliet's Monologue

*Oh, dear Nurse, why should I be deserving of such grief and misery?
As you just saw, Father is ready to disown me! And for what?
Madam and Father's only wish for me is to marry Paris,
Although, I would rather burn in hell than be cursed with a man whom I loathe.*

*Oh, dear Nurse, how am I supposed to marry Paris when my heart only beats for Romeo?
I am so innocently young and yet my destiny has already been decided.
It seems wrong that love so pure and strong,
Can cause such chaos in the streets of a once so peaceful town.*

*Oh, dear Nurse, why do I have to be subject to this great vexation?
I feel as if I will never see the light of day again!
Romeo my dearest love, what would he think of me if I turned against him and married over?
Romeo, Romeo, Romeo it is he and only him whom I truly love.*

*My parents are under the impression that I am grieving over the death of Tybalt,
Despite the fact that it was he who planned for Romeo to take his last breath.
But Father's words were clear they cut deeper than a knife,
Poor Father, he does not know that I am already a wife!*

*Oh, dear Nurse, my one and only desire is to live a peaceful life,
How shall I pursue this if I am enduring such strife?
Oh, dear Nurse, (sighs) the kinsman Paris, why must he draw breath?
If Madam and Father think they can pressure me into marrying him, well they can think again!
Maybe I should go into eternal sleep and never be awoken,
For my heart cannot ache no more.*

*Oh, dear Nurse, you have been more of a mother than Madam has ever been to me.
Although I feel as if a dreadful storm has overtaken,
Still, my trust in you remains unshaken.*

*Oh, dear Nurse, it was under the Luna that Romeo expressed his love for me.
I sense that his endearment towards me is faithful,
(Sighs) If only you could see Romeo from my eyes,
Then perhaps you would understand my distress.*

*I realise that your intervention may not be wise for the sake of your place within this household.
That is why it is pronounced that I shall go to Friar Laurence's cell tomorrow to seek his guidance.*

*By Mayim Gerdis
Grade Category: Senior
Moriah College
Queens Park N.S.W.*



Bird Upon the Withered Oak Tree

*Morning calls in the quiet wood
Where great gushing brooks and rivers have stood
But alas! music stirs and the tune is heard
O, bird upon the withered oak tree*

*Proud, be thee,
Thou art such a glee,
Didst thou draw out thy wings?
Didst thou draw out thy throat strings?*

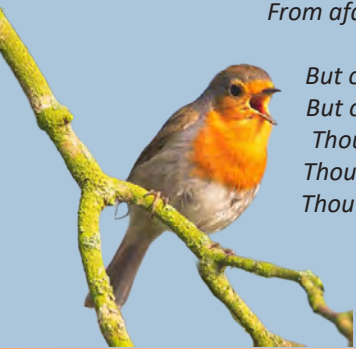
*From afar thy tragic tales mayst be gotten!
From afar thy performance mayst be soft as cotton!
From afar thy theatrics and flairs mayst be seen!
From afar thy life a singer you've been!*

*But o, dearly so we want to stay
But o, dearly so to see your play
Thou art a wonder, a spectacle
Thou hath spectacular wonders!
Thou hath wonderful spectacles!*

*How doth thee sing oh so dauntless?
How doth thee sing oh so gallant?
How doth thee sing oh so flawless?
How doth thee sing oh so valiant?*

*O, bird upon the withered oak tree!
Sing thy songs! Sing! Sing!
For thou art the bird
Upon the withered oak tree!*

*By Mingze Sun
Grade Category: Middle
Pacific Hills Christian School
Dural, N.S.W.*



A Swan, A Lake and A Sunset Scene Disrupted

*A swan breathes in the scent of sugar lilies.
Its delicate white wings unfold and glide through the
water.
Water ripples, a quiet sunset scene disrupted.
A small frog croaks a sad, mournful tune.*

*A rabbit laps from the water
but runs as the swan slaps the water violently.
The swan wants the lake all to herself.*

*By Nethya Wijesekera
Grade Category: Middle
Gordon East Public School
Gordon, N.S.W.*



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**Pictured: Marjory Gardner, Meredith Costain, Phil Kettle,
Marc McBride, Paul Collins and George Ivanoff.**

Magnifying Glasses Smash Sometimes

1870s London, England

As Florence Rose put on her fleece-lined blue raincoat, she almost saw her reflection in the glossiness of the material. She could hear the pitter patter of rain on the glass roof of the mansion. She then proceeded to unfold her umbrella and strutted out the heavy oak door, beaming with excitement in preparation for a new mystery!

As she walked rapidly through the curtain of water, her raincoat tugged and before she knew it her mother was in front of her. She looked at her intently and grabbed her fist, flattened her palm and placed on it a picture of a missing girl. She then closed her hand carefully and whispered to Florence, "Find her and maybe, just maybe I will tell you the truth."

Her mother disappeared in the steam train's fog and Florence was on tenterhooks immediately to investigate this mysterious piece of information. She later realised not only did her mother give her a picture she also gave some other details.

The next day, Florence went to the address she had been given. When she knocked a tornado formed in her stomach. The door opened and a little girl stood there and looked up at Florence and sighed. The little girl's mother then proceeded to say 'Hello' in a suspicious voice.

Florence couldn't wait and pushed open the door, knocking the mother and child out of the way. She felt that tonight was going to be the night that she would find an important piece of the puzzle.

The house had the pungent scent of stale cigar smoke and discarded ash. Florence then followed the girl's mother to what she called 'work'. She was apparently an entertainer of some sort. She followed her to her place of work which was at the...
GIN PALACE!

Florence ventured into the backstage area. She went over to one of the dressing tables and saw a beautiful, red rose laying there.

She smelt the blooming rose's essence and had an instant flashback to when she was little and her father owned a red rose field. Florence shed a bitter sweet tear once the memory faded.

She took the rose and embroidered it into her silky red hair and wiped away the tear that had escaped down her cheek. She was about to walk off when a man, sporting a thick London accent, shouted out, "Ay, Lady Trapeze, go on the stage and do your act!"

Florence was about to say that there had been a misunderstanding, but the man insisted and pushed Florence on to the stage. So she climbed onto the trapeze. She was swinging back and forth when all of a sudden she saw a bullet coming towards her and a sharp, intense searing pain exploded within her foot. Florence screamed in pain and jumped off the trapeze, limping off the stage.

The enemy smiled with joy and celebrated with excitement, thinking that Florence was dead, or close to it.

She then saw the mother, clad in an acrobatic suit and stretching, getting ready to go on stage. Florence approached her but she whipped around and held a flick knife against her throat and said, "Say one word about what you find out and

you are DEAD!"

Florence then left in a terrible hurry to get home. Little did she know she was not alone. The clicking of a walking stick trailing behind her, getting faster as her pace increased.

Florence arrived home to a note that read,

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
By the next full moon,
I would have killed you....

Signed *MH*

A shiver escaped down Florence's spine, knowing that tomorrow night brought the next full moon.

She finally fell asleep, unsure of the fate she would receive tomorrow. Would she survive or would the letter's scribe get the better of her?

By Ruby Hand
Grade Category: Middle
Trinity Lutheran College
Ashmore, Qld.



Problem Without Repair

Smiling, hiding. A problem without repair.

*No one will see she says,
Even if they did,
would anyone care?*

*Drowning, sinking.
Just inches away.
You told her to swim,
But she needed you to stay.*

*Breaking, crying.
The night swallows her cries.
Not a light flickered,
To see the pain behind her eyes.*

*Pleading, begging.
Falling on deaf ears.
No one to help her,
As she's consumed by her fears.*

*The light guttered out of her,
And the darkness grew.
She needed help,
And she looked to you.*

*By Sophia Gianotti
Grade Category: Junior
Presbyterian Ladies College
Peppermint Grove W.A.*



Concealed

*Soft comes the whisper
Of its prodigious screams
Discerned through the howls of the dark
Concealed in pockets of deception*

*On this red dirt we stand
Smothered by grey concrete
Silenced, stolen, and snaffled
Here awaits Australia's morals*

*I cogitate of white lies
The silent crying of the ancestors
The despondent spirit still strays
Peeks fearfully but blundered*

*I think of those
taught to reject their culture
No mother's arms to hold
No father's love to guide*

*Those who remain unheard
Dissimulated
as the stolen generation
Dismal, I observe as life decays.*

*By Kayla Nguyen
Grade Category: Middle
Dominic's Priory College
North Adelaide .S.A.*



The Journey to Mudgee

*As the boat sliced the ocean in half
Hopelessness came to me.
Whining, crying, complaining,
Just let me be.*

*Has the world truly ended?
I'll never know.
I don't know what's happening,
Where will I go?*

*Time flies as the sand whips my eyes.
The boat has left,
No money.
Do I have to commit theft?*

*I went to the Government,
They gave me some change.*

*Months went past,
And finally I saw the mast.*

*Days and days went by,
But then love finally arrived.*

*We settled in Mudgee,
We lived at ease.
I felt like my life had a new lease!*

*By Sybella El-Haddad
Grade Category: Middle
Santa Sabina College
Strathfield, N.S.W.*



WINGS

The long grass studded the plains, growing in unruly clumps across the horizon. The sun pierced down onto the plains in violent streaks, one after another they struck the ground. Trees dotted the skyline, accompanied by the scattered bones and carcasses of dead animals.

The putrid scent of decaying animals rode on the breeze, the smell of life barely noticeable. The dust was so thick and blocked my nose and barely anything could be detectable. Vultures circled the decaying body of a zebra, their squawks bringing death and despair.

I could hear their wingbeats gradually getting louder and louder until it drowned out any other sound that might have been made. They all chirped and squawked in their disorderly manner and dug in, ripping pieces of the zebra's shoulder and flank to feed themselves.

I didn't like it. Not at all.

This was chaos but there should only have been the balance of nature. I felt sick to the bone for what was happening was wrong. The vultures had dominated and left nothing behind except the bones of their leftovers. I'd been scavenging for food,

my body willing to give up and for me to just die. But I kept going.

I was so exhausted and starved while watching these vultures fill their bellies, then flapping to lift themselves into the distance. My mouth was dry. I was salivating. I could almost taste the glorious taste of food but was then drawn back to reality. I then rebelled. I dug my claws into the patches of spinifex growing around me and lashed my tail back and forth.

I could now taste it, clear and strong, the passion of revenge for all the things I'd lost. I soared across the plains toward the storm of wings and feathers that had now faded into the swirling dust. I ran past multiple trees, their trunks bent in weird shapes, the carcasses left to rot under the sweltering sun. I broke through all the dust and there I saw it. A cloud as dark as night, coming right towards me.

By Grace Hallock

*Grade Category: Middle
Ravenswood School for Girls
Gordon, N.S.W.*



A Wonderful World Is What I Desire

I want to wake up to the scintillating sunlight filtering through my bedroom curtains in a kaleidoscope of colour,

The dim, weak, spluttering glow of the submerged sun is absolutely not what I desire.

*I want to wake up to the verdant, lush, vibrant forest,
The devastating, deafening thud of cut-down lowering trees is not what I desire.*

I want to wake up to the pristine, gleaming, cerulean ocean's waves lapping gently over my feet like an eager dog licking its owners' feet,

The millions of innocent, vulnerable animals violently choking on humans' revolting rubbish is not what I desire.

I want to wake up to the pure, fresh, unpolluted air passing in a peaceful zephyr,

The hot suffocating atmosphere of ghastly, grotesque greenhouse gases is not what I desire.

By Claire Ping

*Grade Category: Middle
Artarmon Public School
Artarmon, N.S.W.*



Mayhem and Movies

Harriet ran through the hills, not a care in the world. The grass was lush and green, and the sky was bright and free of clouds. This was worth the 4-hour plane trip. Harriet broke into song, shining as bright as a star. But as she reached the chorus, the magic stopped.

She stuttered for a second before squeaking "line, please?"

"Harriet Blakes! I will not tolerate such stupidity! One more incident and I'm replacing you!" Yelled the French director, Charles, while snapping the clapboard.

The camerawoman, Zoe, was fuming. "But sir, we'll run out of time! We need this done by the holidays!" While they were arguing, Harriet awkwardly stared at the ground. She then glanced at Zoe. She had short blonde hair, much shorter than Harriet's, and pale skin. Harriet felt bad for her. She was forgetting her lines often, delaying the film. And Harriet knew Zoe wanted to get back to her Husband in time for the Winter Holidays. Harriet tiptoed over to Charles to tell him that Zoe should get a raise, when she heard a scream.

"Zee Scripts! Vey are gone!" Charles bellowed with a heavy accent. If he wasn't mad then, he was now. His face was red and it looked like steam was coming out of his ears. Harriet scrambled away from the aggressive director and towards the trailers. She ran like she had never run before, kicked the door of trailer open, praying Charles had not followed her.

She flicked on the TV and fell onto the soft, red velvet couch. A show about cats came on and Harriet's mind zoned out. But soon a knock on the door interrupted the meows of the cats. Harriet dreaded seeing Charles again, but she slowly opened the door...

Outside was none other than Justin, Harriet's co-star. "Can I come in?" He asked politely. "Sh- sure..." Harriet stuttered. "I came to say that you're on in ten minutes. Zoe wanted me to tell you." "But I forgot all my lines!" "Then read the scripts." "The scripts are missing!"

Justin looked shocked. The colour drained from his face. In panic, Harriet slammed the door in his face, trying to cover up her

tears. She was on in ten minutes and she didn't know her lines...

"Uh... so yeah... I forgot." Harriet was once again cowering in front of Charles. The atmosphere was tense as he drooped his head, trying to hide his anger. He muttered something along the lines of 'Even Zoe would do better than you', turned tail and stormed off. Harriet was mad at herself now.

She fell backwards with a FWOMPH! Onto the long swaying grass and watched the clouds go by. "No movie, no Job, no Job, no money, No money, no house," was going through her head over and over again. She had to get the scripts back, and she had to do it fast.

The sun was dipping below the skyline, and Harriet was in her trailer with Justin. The country sky was brilliant, filled with stars Harriet had never seen in the city.

"So how are we gonna get the scripts back?" Harriet pondered.

Justin smirked. "I have some suspicions..." he replied cunningly. "The only person close enough to the director's room before filming today was the costume designer, but I can't think of a reason she would steal the scripts!"

Harriet laid back onto her chair, breathing in the sweet country air. Justin was amazing at solving mysteries, much better than she was. Thunder cracked. A few small droplets of rain starting landing on their heads. Stormy clouds swept in, covering up the beautiful sky like a blanket over a campfire.

"See you tomorrow!" Justin exclaimed. He got out of his chair and began running back to his trailer. But he was stopped by a towering figure.

Zoe was standing before them, scripts in hand and a sinister look on her face. She charged at Justin, tackling him and pinning him to the ground. Justin screamed while Harriet watched in terror. The heavy rain picked up, making a booming sound as it hit the ground. Harriet stood there. Her heart was pounding as hard as blacksmith's hammer. She ran. She leapt. She grabbed Justin's hand and yanked him out of Zoe's clutches.

Time was in slow motion as Harriet went plummeting towards the ground, hitting the concrete road with a PHWOMP! The world blinked. All Harriet could hear was the sound of the rain, the sound of the hail, the sound of Zoe laughing.

Harriet was looking at a ceiling. She sat up, glancing around and checking her surroundings.

She was sitting in a recliner in the director's office, and Justin was sitting next to her. Her senses kicked in, and she realized Justin was talking to her. "Glad you're awake!" he said calmly before hugging her. "You were asleep for 3 days! Zoe got fired!" Harriet gasped. She then broke into laughter and fell backwards, nearly falling off the recliner.

Justin was about to talk when Charles busted through the door, with a frown on his red face and a messed-up moustache. He pushed Justin off his chair, and aggressively shoved himself onto the chair. "VAT'S IT!" he screamed. "IVE VAD ENOUGH OV VIS STUPID MOVIE! VE ARE MAKING A SHOW ABOUT CATS!"

By Wendy Johnston
Grade Category: Middle
Greenslopes State School
Greenslopes, Qld.



Broken Bottle

The sand settled in between my toes and the saltwater washes it away. The cycle repeats itself. I stare into the setting sun. How it rises every morning to provide us with light and warmth, and how it sets every evening, taking with it the light and the warmth. It gives and it takes back.

Staring at the water, the thick, white foam leaves behind a wine bottle. The glass is tinted, or dirty with a murky green colour. The edges were sharp and ragged as if it had been thrown against a brick wall. The broken pieces of the bottle were placed inside. Almost as if the person who threw the bottle, picked up the pieces. Like they were trying to rebuild the bottle. Even though it looked like a broken bottle, I knew better. It was a sign from someone. Someone who had been broken down and tried to rebuild themselves. Someone who was suffering but had no one to turn to.

I was also sending the objects back fully repaired. It told me that the person on the other side was happy and provided with what they needed. For me, it meant that the person who was sending broken items was provided with the fixed items once I mended them. Even though I had never met this mysterious person, I could tell they lived close by. If these items were sent from far, the condition of the items would not be as stable as they are. The wine bottle would be broken even more, and the broken pieces could not have made it back. They would have been scattered across the ocean and never to be seen again. It would be like ripping apart pieces of paper and letting go of them on a windy day. The paper would be separated and

never be together again.

The next day, I received a note. A damp piece of paper that looked as though it had been recently written. The ink was still seeping through the paper and left an imprint on my hand. The paper was crisp and pearl white as a new piece of paper should be. It was delivered to my doorstep, along with a bouquet of flowers. They were my favourite - sunflowers. They had been arranged with the slightest of yellow tulips and tied with a bright pink ribbon.

It was a letter of gratitude and how they appreciated my diligence and hard work. They praised my attention to detail and how neatly I completed the task. They told me to keep working and it will come in handy one day. The note came with a basket of broken items. The note asked if I could fix the items and send it through the sea by tomorrow. I looked up, only to see the light fading and the cold swept over. I grabbed the floral arrangement, note and basket and hurried inside.

I pulled over my chair and slid over to my table. I tied my hair neatly into a ponytail, ensuring the hair was out of my way. The basket on the floor and my hands at work, fixing every single item. Working through the night and repairing every broken item in the bag. Sipping my coffee every few minutes to give me a much-needed boost of energy as well as something that keeps me awake. I managed to finish fixing everything by sunrise and even managed to protect the contents of the basket from the water. I built a dome around it to ensure my hard work wouldn't go to waste.

As soon as I sent the basket off into the ocean, I let out a sigh of relief. All the pressure from the work was lifted and I could finally redeem my deprived sleep. Not long after a short nap, I could hear the doorbell and rushed to answer it. I met with a woman. She looked as though she was in her mid-forties. She looked fresh and clean. As if she was a successful businesswoman and someone who was well off.

I gestured for her to come in and she gave me a warm smile. She entered and sat down on the couch. She motioned for me to join her, and I followed. The woman explained to me that she was the one sending me broken items to test my ability and how I read certain items. She was also like me- someone, who fixed broken items and returned them. She also had a special ability that would enable her to help people - compassion. That is how I entered a new chapter in my story. The chapter on helping people grow out of their shells and become more compassionate and understanding to others.

The sand settled in between my toes and the saltwater washes it away. The cycle repeats itself. I stare into the white moon. It's always there, just overpowered by the light of the sun. Appearing when the sun hides. It's always there, just not visible.

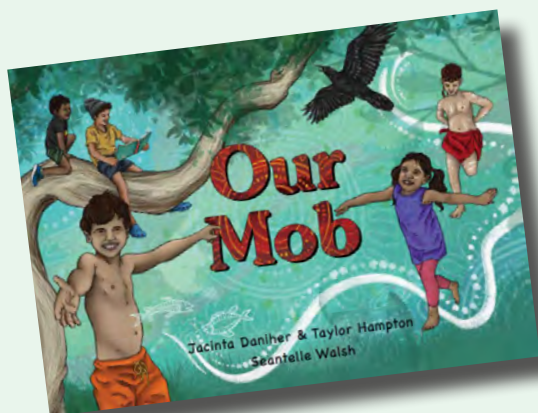
*By Anushka Mishra
Grade Category: Middle
Our Lady of Mercy College
Parramatta, N.S.W.*



BOOK REVIEWS

Meet our book reviewers:
Brandon & Palmina & Savannah

Reviews Coordinator
Meredith Costain



Our Mob

by Nean McKenzie (Midnight Sun)

This book takes a look at First Nations cultures through the eyes of children from various communities. Many traditional activities such as baking, arts and sport are introduced with a 'hello' in the language of the people we are learning about.

A great way to learn about Indigenous cultures, I really liked how this educational picture book takes a gentle walk through so many activities and places. The beautiful illustrations help to bring these people and places to life. *Our Mob* can be enjoyed by any audience, and especially for readers aged 3–12.

Rating: 9/10

— Brandon



The Cockatoo Wars

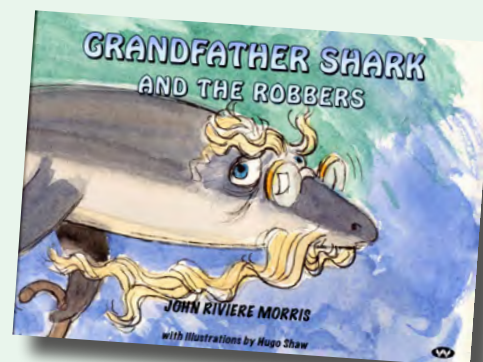
by Helen Milroy (Magabala Books)

The Cockatoo Wars follows the two cockatoo clans of the ancient forest at war. But what happens when they're too busy fighting to notice a massive bushfire heading their way? Can the cockatoos save the day with some help from the Bush Mob?

This is a story of brotherhood and forgiveness that kept me turning the pages, while the illustrations brought the Australian animals to life. I liked how this book teaches us about taking care of the land by living as a part of it. Recommended for readers aged 3–8, and anyone with a love of Australian wildlife.

Rating: 8/10

— Brandon



The Grandfather Shark and the Robbers

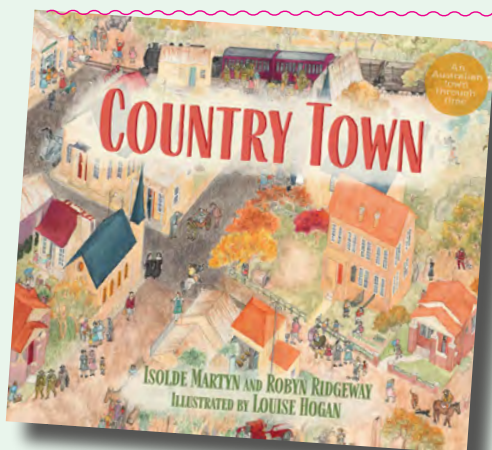
by John Riviere Morris, illustrated by Hugo Shaw (Wakefield Press)

Robbers descend on the sleepy beach town of Point Lonsdale, and it's up to Grandfather Shark to stop them! When televisions are stolen in the middle of the night, the town's residents grow worried and afraid. Who has been sneaking around and creeping through windows? Grandfather Shark knows, and he's on their tail. The suspense will keep you on the edge of your seat!

This is a wonderfully written story featuring a very brave shark who cares for the humans around him. I loved the way the author and illustrator worked together to capture this relationship. The story is exciting and engaging, the action throughout will keep you turning the page. Recommended for ages 6 and up.

Rating: 8/10

— Palmina



Country Town

by Isolde Martyn and Robyn Ridgeway, illustrations by Louise Hogan (Ford Street Publishing)

Covering the progress of a fictional small country town from colonial invasion to present day, **Country Town** is an interesting and experimental look at Australia's colonial history. By exploring the history of a fictional town rather than

a real one, the book is able to present the effects of multiple different social changes in an engaging, thorough manner. The illustrations are visually exciting and show the town's progress through the ages, perfect for any reader interested in Australian history. Recommended for readers aged 8–12.

Rating: 9/10

— Savannah



Follow the Rainbow

by Juliet M. Sampson, illustrated by Anne Ryan (Ford Street Publishing)

Ruby and her faithful companion Tavish are on a quest to find what hides at the end of a rainbow! Ruby will take a journey through wind and rain in search of the mystery, but who will help her? Could it be Scarecrow, Metal Man, or Lion?

Follow the Rainbow sparks imagination and creativity, it's an adventure that will keep you guessing! This colourful story features beautiful illustrations that utilise texture and collage. Ruby's curiosity promotes the diversity of the natural world, encouraging exploration and play through nature's elements. I loved the way each page was as vivid and vibrant as the last. Recommended for ages 4 and up.

Rating: 9/10

— Palmina

FORD street REVIEW

This Spells Trouble

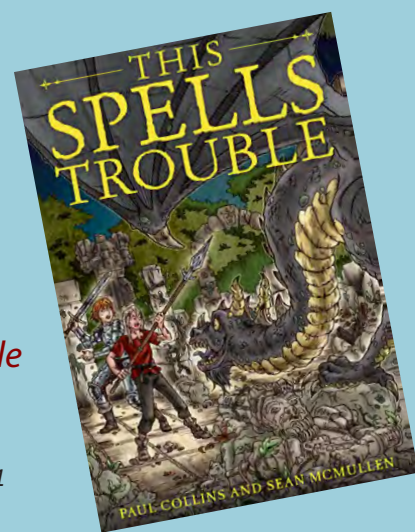
By Savannah Hollis

RRP \$17.95

ISBN 9781922696311

Release: July 2023

FORD STREET PUBLISHING



The most recent children's book from Paul Collins and Sean McMullen, *This Spells Trouble*, is an exciting middle grade fantasy set in the land of Dravinia. The narrative centres around Winston, the apprentice to the bumbling wizard Faramond, as he faces a series of dangers in the magical world.

The book sets itself apart from more standard junior fantasy through its willingness to indulge humour and a respect for its young readers in equal measure. The comedy in the novel has echoes of Terry Gilliam's fantasy work, with lots of upbeat, outlandish situations thrust upon the young hero; carts become infused with giant chicken legs, so that they might run faster; Winston becomes embroiled in a union scandal; and a giant snake with an acerbic wit antagonises Faramond with riddles. This is all communicated to younger readers with clear, concise language, that means that even as situations become more magical and less conventionally logical, a younger reader would be able to follow.

While it is distinct in its genre, many of the hallmarks of fantasy are present. Readers interested in dragons, knights, wizards, and epic quests will find them all here, though played with in unique and sometimes subtle ways. For example, when Winston first encounters the dragon Griffid, the dragon is sleeping and has no real interest in eating people. He's curt, communicates telepathically, and seems too apathetic to really pose a threat to anyone. His development throughout the novel and its relationship with more conventional depictions of dragons is satisfying for those well versed with other portrayals of dragons in children's literature.

Much of the humour of the novel comes from Winston's relationship with the wizard Faramond, who is both his mentor and carer. Faramond is an inept, often cruel guardian for Winston, but Winston is decidedly smarter than his master, both in magic and in life. While this can often be a trope of children's literature – the adults unaware of the real life of the children that surround them – *This Spells Trouble* indulges the reader by exceeding the trope, pushing it to absurdity and creating catharsis from seeing just how baffled even other adults are at Faramond's ineptitude.

While it does have a comedic focus, especially in its first half, *This Spells Trouble* will engage advanced younger readers with the sophistication of its narrative, which concludes with a neat and satisfying final chapter. This also makes it appropriate for older readers who may be looking to share a reading experience with a younger reader.

The narrative moves at a satisfying clip, establishing and then affirming the ideas around maturity and independence it toys with throughout. There are a few minor points in which it can be unclear as to why events are unfolding the way they are, but the reasoning behind these choices always becomes clear within a chapter or two and it is never so noticeable so as to impact the enjoyment of the reading experience.

Overall, *This Spells Trouble* is an exciting fantasy story for a modern young reader, with a strong plot and distinctive and funny characters which can entertain even a much older reader.

ANZAC Day Poem

Early in the morning while the sky is still grey
We take a moment of silence for ANZAC day.
They fought for the freedom of our country opening new doors
Those killed and wounded fought hard at war.

Men and women of every race
We give you our hearts full of grace.
Its a day to remember fellow soldiers left behind
Who returned home injured broken in the inside.

Those who grew anxious scarred by the bloody battle
Their experiences to hard to handle.
As we unite together on this special day swarmed by our
terrible loss
We stand together remembering those who were shot.

They travelled through shores across the never ending sea
To allow us to live in a great land and be free.
They aren't forgotten or have been unnoticed through the years
Quietly we stand and remember them as the radiant sun
appears.

They were loved people when they answered our plea
so may we make it up to them for letting us be free.
May we remember them.



By Sybella El-Haddad
Grade Category: Middle
Santa Sabina College
Strathfield, N.S.W.

Hopeful Star

Alone at the veranda she notices the peace she never heard before. The birds cooed to their young and the odd scuffle of the bush filled her with nature's harmony. The rough wooden floor scrapes her hands as she pushes herself up, a welcoming sting and the sudden epiphany hits her, a mental blow yet she stumbles against the wall and slides to the ground.

Lifting her head she stares at the sky filled with the silver dust of stars sporadically spread in little clusters. They sparkle like diamonds yet the very stars are illusions of hope. Her face screws up with her hands curled in anger as she is thrown into the inner turmoil of her mind.

Like machines we serve our purpose till our expiration date, rust and age only to grow and fade into the past. Our mark in the world insignificant, we will be forgotten over time. Like a ritual we meet deadlines from dawn to dusk, living in endless nights, with caffeinated minds. No Herculean can save us from time.

Holding onto a thread called life, cut

and separated from the very essence of a "normal" life. She lost what we hold precious in time... If only she had more time. As the night grows, borders blur and colours bleed into darkness.

Dreams can be destroyed like Lego pieces, the fallen blocks take time to mend and laborious to rebuild. Sometimes she believes that she can fight the disease inside of her, that she can beat the chances against her, to prove that the statistics were wrong, only to descend into despair when she sees her tiny little increments of progress, those baby steps won't ever matter in the grand scheme of the things. The sky continues to darken like her mood and tears of frustration escape her lids.

A light breeze blew past her hair and gave the lingering scent of fresh pines like the smell of home, a small smile grows and she momentarily forgets the smell of sickness that seems to cling to her where ever she goes. Breathing deeply she counts each star for all her hopes, aspirations and inspirations...more and more.

She sails among the stars and the sky's the limit. But all things must fall due to the gravity of fallen expectations, her incompetency and the lack of will to live. But a sweet memory unveils; her mother had once comfortingly wrapped her into an embrace parting words of wisdom, whispering, "Embracing your fears is risky but not nearly as dangerous as losing hope. Only when we are brave enough to explore that darkness, will we be able to discover the infinite power in ourselves."

You may not realise it but away from the city at night, there are tens and thousands of stars. We all dance in the madness of desolation at some point in our life. When dawn breaks the sun's light tries to illuminate the path we tread on and there is always one, hopeful star hidden in the blue sky waiting to be rediscovered in times of darkness.

By Anushka Mishra
Grade Category: Middle
Our Lady of Mercy College,
Parramatta, N.S.W.

Ambassadors



👉 **Paul Collins** has written many books for younger readers. He is best known for his fantasy and science fiction titles: The Jelindel Chronicles (*Dragonlinks, Dragonfang, Dragonsight* and *Wardragon*), and The Quentaris Chronicles – co-edited with Michael Pryor – (*Swords of Quentaris, Slaves of Quentaris, Dragonlords of Quentaris, Princess of Shadows, The Forgotten Prince, Vampires of Quentaris* and *The Spell of Undoing*). His trade books published in America are *The Earthborn, The Skyborn* and *The Hiveborn*.

Paul has edited many anthologies which include *Trust Me!, Rich & Rare* and Australia's first fantasy anthology, *Dream Weavers*. He also edited *The MUP Encyclopaedia of Australian SF&F*.

His last fantasy series was *The Warlock's Child*, written in collaboration with Sean McMullen. His book, *Slaves of Quentaris*, was listed in *1001 Children's Books You Must Read Before You Die* (UK, 2009). His latest books are *James Gong – The Chinese Dragon* and *Tarni's Chance* illustrated by Jules Ober.

Paul has been short-listed for many awards and has won the Inaugural Peter McNamara A Bertram Chandler, Aurealis and William Atheling awards. In 2022 he was awarded the CBCA's Leila St John Award for services to Victorian children.

Other than his writing, Paul is the publisher at Ford Street Publishing, a children's specialist publishing everything from picture books through to young adult literature. Two books, *Pool*, by Justin D'Ath and *Crossing the Line*, by Dianne Bates, were short-listed for the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and the NSW Premier's Literary Awards. A third, Shane Thamm's *My Private Pectus*, was short-listed in the Territory Read Award. Ford Street won Picture Book of the Year with Chris McKimmie's *I NEED a Parrot*.

Paul spends much of his time travelling around Australia giving writing workshops to students from grade four to Year 12.

Paul's websites are: www.paulcollins.com.au, www.fordstreetpublishing.com and www.creativenetspeakers.com.

👉 **Anna Ciddor** says she can't imagine a better job than being an author and illustrator. She gets to spend all day sitting around daydreaming, sketching, making up stories, and indulging her obsession for research and history – except when her smart watch tells her get up and run around, or her grandchildren need looking after! While indulging her passion, she has created nearly 60 books on all sorts of topics that have taken her fancy, and won many accolades, including the Nance Donkin Award for Children's Literature, a grant from the Australia Council, three Notable Book awards from the Children's Book Council of Australia and shortlistings for numerous other awards.

Anna's latest novels, *The Boy Who Stepped Through Time* (Allen and Unwin 2021) and *A Message Through Time* (Allen and Unwin April 2023 release) are time-slip adventures that carry the main characters (and the readers) back to Roman times. You can find out more about Anna Ciddor and her books, and get some tips for your own writing and illustrating, at www.annaciddor.com. If you would like Anna to visit your school you can book her through www.creativenetspeakers.com



👉 **Meredith Costain** is a versatile writer whose work ranges from picture books through to poetry, series fiction and narrative non-fiction. Her latest books include the quirky *Ella Diaries* – which has been shortlisted many times in the YABBA and KOALA children's choice awards – and its sister series, *Olivia's Secret Scribbles*. Other titles include CBCA Honour Book *Doodledum Dancing, Musical Harriet*, nature series *My Life in the Wild*, and novelisations of the TV shows *Dance Academy* and *The PM's Daughter*. She was recently honoured to receive the KOALA Legend Award.

Meredith lives in inner-city Melbourne with a menagerie of pets, who frequently wrangle their way into her stories and poems. She enjoys presenting writing workshops for children and adults around Australia and overseas, and loves helping writers to create stories based on their own experiences. To find out more about her books, pets and early writing years, visit www.meredithcostain.com

Music Has A Meaning

I pushed Otilie's bedroom door open and stormed inside. Legs crossed elaborately, Otilie was playing the ukulele. I knew it wasn't her fault I'd gotten in trouble at school, but I unleashed my fury on her anyway.

"Why do you never help me with my

homework?" I shrieked at her wildly. She returned my gaze in a tranquil manner.

"Frank," she began peacefully, but I wasn't finished.

"Why do you just sit there and play music all the time?" I hurtled myself onto her azure-quilted bed.

"Frank." Otilie was speaking again. "Music is essential to life. It –"

"Doesn't help me!" I screamed at her, in the most horrible tone.

"Frank." Otilie's tone was barely a murmur. "Sit down."

"I already am sitting!" I snapped at her. She was inflicting her calmness on me.

"Close your eyes, then." I grudgingly did this.

"Grow angry. Why is your homework so annoying? Focus on the anger." She didn't have to say this. All I saw was red. Patches of crimson on top of more patches of crimson.

Then she began to play her music. Ukulele strings were plucked gently, forming a soft, sweet melody that flooded into me. All of a sudden, my fury was disappearing into her music. This put me into a frenzy, but I remained calm. Now I was astonished, as I hadn't known such a powerful emotion such as anger could vanish just by plucking four thin, pallid strings.

I lay back on Otilie's soft cobalt pillow and released myself into the uplifting, jubilant tune. My mind, previously a tumultuous hurricane, now became blithe as Otilie played the last note of her gentle melody.

I opened my eyes. She was smiling at me. "What did you learn?" she questioned, staring deep into my eyes.

I grinned back to her and replied in euphoria, "Music has a meaning."

By Nethya Wijesekera
Grade Category: Middle
Gordon East Public School
Gordon, N.S.W.



Flowers

Are the flowers blooming,
In the day or the night?
The environment is deteriorating,
Will they win the fight?

We have to take action,
We need to take a stance,
Or the flowers will die,
They won't stand a chance.

Will you choose to destroy,
Or will you choose to protect?
Because it's not just the flowers,
It's the whole environment you affect.

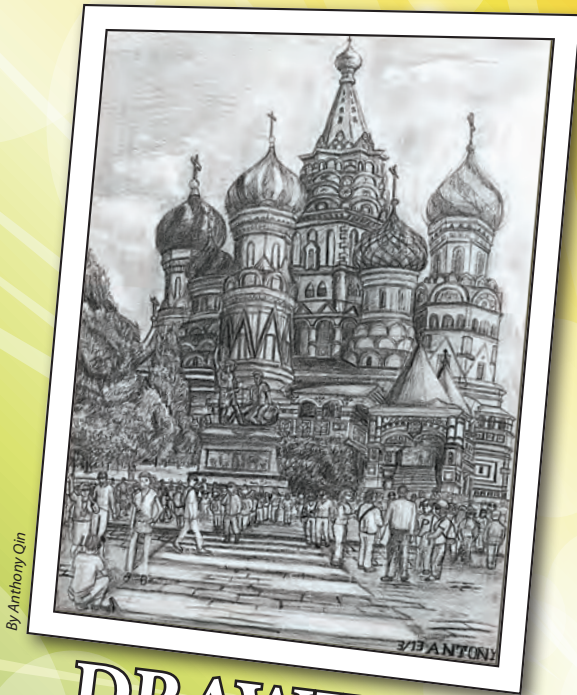
Flowers are special,
We need them to live,
If we all don't change soon,
Will we be able to forgive?

Because we will only remember more.
Lest we forget.
The poppy stands high in the dust.
It perseveres through its hardships.
It is the blood of our friends,
It is reality, scary but true.
War, Death, Grief.
Lest we forget.

By Miesha Rattray
Grade Category: Middle
Burnside State School
Burnside, Qld.



2023 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ART AWARDS



By Anthony Qin

DRAWING



By Manna Tsuchiya

COMPUTER ART



By Kat Kaulder

PHOTOGRAPHY



By Matthew Ropesam

PAINTING

www.ozkids.com.au

The YoungAtArt website and the Young Australian Art Awards are an initiative of the Children's Charity Network. All entrants must be no older than 18 years of age or attending either a primary or secondary college. There are 4 categories: Painting, Drawing, Photography, Computer Art. There are three age groups: Junior (Prep to Grade 4), Middle (Grade 5 to Year 8), Senior (Year 9 to Year 12).

To enter your Artwork you will need to obtain a digital image of your piece of work and submit this image on-line through our website at www.ozkids.com.au.

To do this you will be required to sign up in order for you to have the access to submit artwork. If you or your school do not have access to digital imaging, you may send a copy of your artwork to Young at Art, PO Box 267, Lara, Victoria 3212. Further information is available online.

Galaxy of Flowers

Late afternoon was the best time to venture into the forest, for that was when the greatest transformations occurred. Advancing into the trees, I was immediately met by a narrow stream, silent and gliding but present and guarding. Along the line of the water, there was a break in the canopy – letting in a fracture of light, cutting the scenery in half.

A chorus of calls, cries, whispers and shrill melodies echoed through the trees, filling my head with conversation before fading away to the sky. A solemn, bone-like trunk arched across the other side of the stream, daring me to cross. It was right in doing so, I could not be prepared for the change.

Stepping down into moss and rock, my ankles chilled from the cool breath of the earth. On this side, the trees seemed to grow wider, hungrier, but also kinder. There was a genuine sincerity that communicated with an absorbing silence. A cricket chirped, and barely reaching my ears, was swallowed by the damp.

I was welcomed by a low moan, an exchange between a large oak and the passing air. This beguiling conversation sustained as I continued further into the heart. There, the branches stooped lower, bowing respectfully to the ground. The sky was a thick heavy canopy that sat over the forest like a lid, impenetrable. Rain was locked out, and the constant drip of moisture was trapped in.

The dense, earthy scent of petrichor hung on everything, rising from the undergrowth in a sensible volume and up to the canopy, only to be denied exit. There was a mutual respect between the two worlds and their inhabitants, and they left each other undisturbed.

The only acknowledgement of the other was a clearing – a breath in a world of stillness. The clearing was a circular patch of grass, where the ground had dried enough to support something more defiant. It sprawled out as far as it dared, guiltily fading out a foot before the trees.

Such a feature was a result of a fault in the canopy, where the light cracked through and trespassed down to the forest floor. It blessed the ground with a scattering of wildflowers - who smiled back up to the sky in gratitude - and dried the surface enough for a soft grass to settle in over the damp moss.

For a good part of the afternoon, clear white light had bled through the canopy of trees onto the green carpet below. Once the sun reached a certain angle, the light flared, seeming to coat the greenery in flames. It held in its glowing brilliance scattered spotlights of a luminescent gold, until it faded to a lazy orange.

These puddles of light hung for a long while, waiting for sundown. As the sunlight tired, the white flowers stippling the grass seemed to glow like miniature moons suspended in a galaxy of deep teal. Scattered in this space were tiny 'yellow Star-of-Bethlehems' clustered in sprays around the clearing.

As I laid in this galaxy of flowers, I could look up and see the real stars and moon, gazing down on their floral counterparts and casting a silvery shadow down to greet them. The forest breathed a whisper of contentment, fluttering through the trees one-by-one as if they were wishing each other goodnight. With a final sigh the forest had quietened, leaving only the cool breath of sleep.

Upon the rising of the sun the next morning, a golden glint caught my eye from within the trees. Saying my farewells to the joyous clearing, I followed. Back into the thick forest, I felt the temperature drop again, the cool air swimming around my ankles in familiarity.

Looking back, I could no longer see the clearing, and wondered if I should find it again. This light that I followed grew, once again selfishly intruding on the darkness that recoiled in a sense of distrust. The culprit was a path, brilliantly lit from a circle of sun enclosed by a tunnel of trees, directing the light like a beacon until it dispersed into the shadow.

The tunnel arched exponentially towards the sky, and then suddenly peeled away, baptising me in the golden rays of dawn. Emerging above the canopy, the stifling silence lifted, and was replaced with a refreshed morning call, a far-off reply. The strengthening sun advanced steadily, a consistent slow march, feeding the ocean of trees with its energy.

As the trees drank, they flared with bright health – a field of marigold blooming from the dark ocean. My eyes adjusting to the dizzying brightness, I found myself standing upon a hill. It broke out of the canopy lid and up to freedom; like a child gaining its first taste of independence, but still tied down to its home. Atop of this feature, bathing in the now diffused sunlight, I realised a world with much yet to offer.

By Elizabeth Vardouniotis
Grade Category: Senior
The Hills Grammar School
Kenthurst, N.S.W.





Finis Est:

Standing in her room with a look of recreancy pasted upon her cold, damp face, Jocasta prepares herself for the worst. And as she steps forwards, slowly and solemnly, the floorboards groan with condemnation at her every step. Her petite hands shake back and forth as one reaches up towards the cold, brassy doorknob, grasps hold of it and with a soft click, locks its shut.

*No one will see her.
No one will find her.
No one else shall be harmed.*

Stepping up on to her bed, she leans against the wall's wooden planks, coloured more of a cinnamon where the varnish holds and paler in the regions which have endured more wear, and the eyes of this wood, almost as dark as the grooves between each plank, direct their solemn, disapproving gaze down upon Jocasta.

And the bed frame, now below her, lets out an agonising shriek of pain as she distributes her full weight onto its spongy mattress. This bed, their marriage bed; the place where her and Laius had made a child; the same place where she and said child had made more. This horrific act had gone unknown for so many years. Yet now it haunts her every thought. She has lost control and has no escape from what she has done.

Had her husband not ordered the abandonment of their newborn child, she would have been blessed with a happy life and much happier fate. But instead, she was oblivious to her own child's existence and married him.

Taking small steps, she reaches the foot of the bed, stands upon its small wooden ledge, reaches out her smooth hands, which shake so much more rapidly now, up towards the roof and grasps a hanging rope; the end tied into a noose.

Taking deep breaths in and out, she savours her last few moments on Earth and contemplates her choices. Maybe she should have fought harder to keep her child.

Maybe she should have considered the similarities between Oedipus' and her long-lost child, such as the scars on his ankles which perfectly match the wounds which the baby would have gained after its ankles were riveted together, or even the connection between the fates given to them by the oracle which, being almost identical, should have immediately told her the truth.

But no scrutiny could deflect her mind from doing what she thought was best. So, she fits the rope around her neck and tightens it to fit close to her skin. And without a second thought, steps off of the edge, and lets her body hang limp.

Now, with her wide eyes watering and reflecting her regrets and grief, her flaccid body hangs from the frayed rope like the petals of a wilted flower, swinging back and forth above her bed in a rhythm not dissimilar to that of a metronome.

The door rattles as someone tries to enter through the locked door. "Jocasta?", speaks a rushed—sounding masculine voice, "Jocasta, are you in there?"

Bang!

*Their fist hits the door.
"Jocasta, have you seen my sword?"*

Bang!

With each pound upon this wooden barrier, the idle dust surrounding the door jumps from the ground in mist-like clouds.

"Jocasta!" he raises his voice which seems to deepen more and more the angrier he gets. "I need my sword!"

Bang!

The door is rammed down and a man enters from within the mushroom cloud of dust that just escaped from beneath the falling door.

It is Oedipus; her husband; her son.

But he is too late. She is already gone. And he collapses to the ground in a heaped mess of sweat and tears. His search for his sword now irrelevant and forgotten.

He crawls forwards, shaking with each movement. This had all been his fault. Why must the gods have chosen to save his life over hers?

It had been him who was supposed to die all those years ago. Yet now here he is, alive, sitting below the body of his own mother. His real mother. His wife. How wrong it was of him to marry her. And his children. His poor, poor children. Now to be without both mother and grandmother all due to his own careless actions.

*By Kaylee Jesnoewski
Grade Category: Senior
Mindarie Senior College
Mindarie, W.A.*

The Volcano's Revenge

*The volcano erupts violently,
Wrapping its ferocious fiery fingers around the
frightened, awestruck crowd,
Burning the land.*

*The piping hot lava makes the people's blood
curdle and their bones protrude from goose bump
covered skin.*

*Hissing, roaring, rumbling and screaming its lava
trail through the sand.*

*Ripping through the trees so high,
Breathing fire to the sky.*

*The smoking trail pricks my eyes with fury as it
creates a thick film of tears.*

*Around me I hear echoing shrieks of terror and the
aftertaste of lingering ash stings my tongue.*

*The deafening steam whistle sings its petrifying
tune,*

*As the lava whispers,
'I have returned for you'.*

*By Ruby Hand
Grade Category: Middle
Trinity Lutheran College
Ashmore, Qld.*

The Thunderstorm

*The children and birds nestle near,
Shivering from the cold
With an eager eye and willing ear,
They wait for a blast of snow.*

*With a sudden blow, the winds rise,
Hailstones drop like bombs
Rain falls like air strikes,
Diving down towards the tombs.*

*A lightning scar struck down low,
As thunder continued their deed
The world was a failure below,
As the plains began to bleed*

*Life was drained away,
After a cackle and a roar
Slowly the houses began to sway,
Preparing for war.*

*By Ritika Mishra
Grade Category: Middle
Ironbark Ridge Public School
Rouse Hill, N.S.W.*



We are octopuses

*Limbs splay out beside us,
In our jet-black masks.
"Are those limbs arms or legs?"
Many before you,
Have asked.*

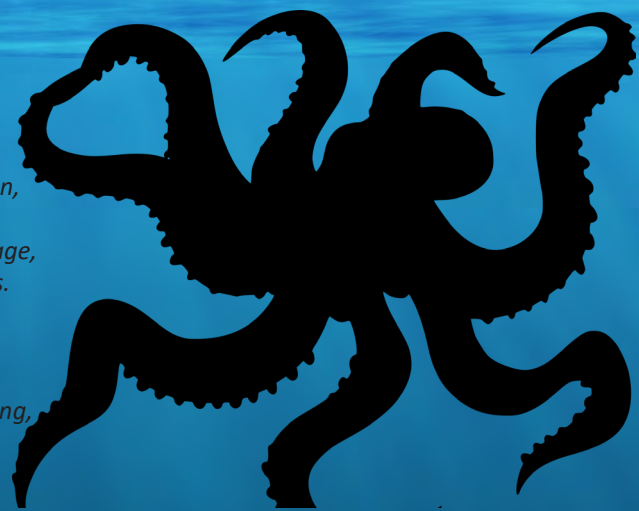
*We pounce on our prey,
We hunt for our pleasure,
For a snail or crab,
Our glee,
We can't measure.*

*People say blood must be red,
But frankly speaking, is that true?
Not in our case, we admit,
Since our blood is blue.*

*One moment, we're vivid green,
the next, we are carnelian,
We pride ourselves on camouflage,
We are undersea chameleons.*

*We are agile and intelligent,
Wiser than books,
What are we? Are you wondering,
We are
Octopuses!*

*By Renee Kim
Grade Category: Middle
Mornington Primary School
Mornington, Vic.*



Off To The Sea

Ann sat on the sand and watched the waves crash against the shore. She could sit there for as long as she liked. Her parents had died in a car accident one year ago. Now, at her new home, the orphanage, they never sent people to look for the missing children, because, at some point, they knew the children would come back.

She felt good about running away, but somehow it made her heart sink. Before she had time to fully consider her options, she thought, "This is for you, mum and dad." She had always hated the water, but it didn't matter because this wasn't for her, it was for her parents. Abruptly, she stood up and solemnly walked to the water. In the reflection, she saw her parents with

their arms around her.

Ann's tears plopped into the water, replacing their faces with hers and as it did so, her parents called to her.

"Annabelle! Annabella! Annie! Ann!" All the names she had been called throughout her short life. But she knew she was hallucinating, because there was not a soul in sight to be seen or heard, apart from her of course. The water was icy and her toes turned numb, but, relentlessly, her feet went on and on until she was swimming and no longer felt cold. A magic aura swirled around her which somehow allowed her to do things she would never normally be able to do.

On her way, further out to sea, she was friendly to all the sea creatures, whether it was in the deep, the shallow, on the bottom or floating on the surface. She freed all the creatures from litter and fishing nets. Even if they looked terrifying, she still helped them and treated them all equally. At last, when the work was done, she reached an island which fortunately had lots of resources. The island was enormous, but she explored every bit of it.

Every day, she picked berries, nuts and fruits from the many trees that grew on the fine sand. If there ever was low stock, she always had emergency seeds to plant. Every now and then, all island and sea animals would gather together and have fun. Ann always went every day to check through the whole island and its waters for any animal or creature in need of help. It was great exercise for her and most of all, she enjoyed it. Ann loved the animals and creatures as much as they loved her back. This is Ann's home, there is always enough for everyone and there always will be. "If this is my deathbed, so be it, at least I feel happy here," Ann thought.

By Pratigya KC
Grade Category: Middle
Burnside State School
Burnside, Qld.

I see you, Teacher

I see you, Teacher
I see you too, Hawk's Eye
We follow you, Teacher
We learn from you. We grow

You sculpt our souls, our mind. We strengthen
You open the window. We crawl, we walk, we run, we fly
We conquer new horizons. You watch with your eyelids
trembling
You smile.

Fine lines near your eyes deepen

Sometimes we fall. We fail. It hurts
You reach out softly. You protect. You guide.
We think

We rise again. We fly. We cheer
We bring our kids. We trust. We pray
The offspring's pledge, we see you, Teacher

I see you too, you say again
Young lives, bright eyes

We see you, Teacher
I see you too, Hawk's Eyes, you say

By Elizaveta Fedotova
Grade Category: Senior
Bob Hawke College
Subiaco, W.A.



Seasons

Spring. Twirling cherry blossoms glistened like amaranthine jewels in the luminosity of the sun. The zephyr, caressing my skin like a loving mother, followed a chorus of twitters flowing through the slender boughs of oak, noble and elderly. The virescent-green leaves whispered, trailing a myrrh behind. In the luscious fields of gold, the seldom dandelion was like a dainty ballerina, pirouetting in a citrus-yellow skirt.

Summer. The sweltering ball of radiance bears down on the field, crops yearning for water. The air is tremulous like a mirage, and sweat gathered on the laborious farmer's brow, little globules of toil. The sky, deep blue, is daubed with the sheen of scuttling altocumulus clouds.

Autumn. The golden aureole embraced the rooftops of silken gold and persimmon. The horizon was a breathtaking harlequin of fuschia, cochineal and cerulean. Wisps of cotton candy lingered in the fluorescent sky and the towering branches began to lose their opal-shaped foliage. A squirrel scuttled along the leaf-lain ground. Up above, a bevy of swans fly away, like opals in the harsh wind.

Winter. My hitched breath is a cloud of smoke, drifting into the clouds above with ravenous bellies of Stygian magenta. The trees are bare, having their leaves savagely ruffled and there is only the sound of snow falling. My eyelashes are frost-covered, and the occasional crackle of composting leaves sounds, echoing into the empty forest.

Seasons. Spring breathes growth. Summer brings heat. Autumn spreads the word of Winter. Winter whispers frigidness. Intertwined sisters, they are the sole rulers of Year, their palace.



*By Lily Zhang
Grade Category: Middle
Pymble Ladies' College
Pymble, N.S.W.*

Sign of the Times

Ishrami roamed the dusty, cobbled streets, unaware his life was about to become more than the cherished soccer ball he held in his tiny hands. He walked a little further when kaboom! The house in front of him explodes, sending shards of worry and fear down his spine.

His lips tremble along with his legs. The fire spreads like molten fire and Ishrami runs for his life, dodging the spray of bullets ricocheting off the concrete ruins. He accidentally drops his soccer ball and runs after it but the flames are too close now, the heat beating down on him like a boxer's fist.

Ishrami runs to his ever forgotten ruined home passing a once loved sofa that lies abandoned, its springs exposed like gaping

sores. Ishrami's cuddly toy lies in the rubble, its limbs severed like a cut communication cord. What once was a home is now a barren wasteland of tears. He runs to the safety of his mother's bittersweet hug but the flames slowly catch up with them.

His mother runs holding Ishrami in her weak arms, crying out in pain and with every tear screaming, "FIRE, FIRE!" Leaving everything behind they ran to faraway safety, passing the battle-weary soldiers retiring from tainted streets, thinking only of home.

The only thing Ishrami could think of was his father. With the sudden realisation he screamed, "DADDY!" His mother frantically yelling, 'We can't turn back now!' The heat beat down on their backs, Ishrami could

hardly see with the thick film of tears in his eyes.

He was terrified but all of a sudden they heard water splashing and the fire was out. Everyone stopped and turned back to see the fire trail had vanished. Ishrami, unaware of his final destination, started to search for his father. Walking through the ruins of his life, little was he to know this would be a sign of the times.

*By Ruby Hand
Grade Category: Middle
Trinity Lutheran College
Ashmore, Qld.*

14 Days

25th of April 2006
We were trapped
underground with no escape.
We went down with 17 men
only 14 came out.

We went down as usual at 9:25pm.
The ground started to tremble and quake.
Rocks rain from above
men around me scurry, though it is too late.

27th of April 2006
Our mate Larry was found
buried under rock and rubble.

14 days.

We sat in a cavity
so small that it was cruel to put a dog in such a space.
Only the water dripping from the roof to quench our
thirst
till one day a tube emerged.
Through that tube we got food, water and a phone.

336 hours.

Of sitting and singing.
Then there was boom, crash, bam
a passageway cracked through the rock.
We emerged from the hole,
reporters and news crews crowding the mine.
I saw Craig's tears as he opened the mine shaft door.

We are out!
20,160 minutes.

9 May 2006
I hung up my tag, in time for breakfast
I thought that I would never do that again
after being stuck under 3 Eiffel Towers of rock.

20, 160 minutes.
366 hours.
14 days.

By Cacia Charles
Grade Category: Middle
East Launceston Primary School
Launceston, Tas.



FRIENDS

You feel you don't know me because I am different to you
And you are different to me but maybe we're a bit the same

Friends can find new friends if they just talk to get to know
About me, about you and about each other

You don't know about me because I am different
But maybe we could be BFF's if you just ask me to chat

I'll listen to you and you'll listen to me
I will see you and you will see me

We are both different but we could be brave
And maybe we could be Friends.

By Savannah Bunston
Grade Category: Middle
Burnside State School
Burnside, Qld.



Mystery Camera

One lovely morning at dawn I took the bus to the Harbour Bridge. I arrived at the Harbour Bridge at 12:30am. As I walked on the bridge, I almost tripped on a camera! It was very dusty, and it looked old. I had a look at a picture on it and the people in the picture were stuck in the camera! Their clothes looked like they were from the 1990's! I saw a keyhole on the left side of the camera. On top of the keyhole, it said "Find the key to let the spirits be in peace."

Then I realized that I had to save the spirits. At that moment I started searching everywhere for the key. I looked all around the cities of Australia. Suddenly I found a clue on how to let the spirits be in peace! The clue was in the middle of Australia where Uluru was. It was amazing. It said, "Follow the star to the ninja goblins."

A bright yellow star twinkling on the floor suddenly appeared in front of me like a bright shooting star in the sky. I followed

the star, and I reached the ninja goblins. There were millions of them. They were green with goo dripping from them onto the floor. They were fat and small. Their eyes were so big they could see everything, even very tiny objects.

The ninja goblins tried to protect the key from the special camera. I tried to protect the camera. It was the right time to show off my ninja skills. I almost fought all of them, but I was too tired. I couldn't do it anymore.

Suddenly, all of the ninja goblins yelled "It's farting time!" then all of them farted! The ninja goblins' fart smelt like onions mixed with gorilla poo. The smell was disgusting! I couldn't breathe and I had to hold my breath. I ran and got the key quickly before the ninja goblins' disgusting farting time ended.

Then a fairy stopped me! The fairy came out of a tree that was tall like a giant. She was hiding behind the tree, so no one knew she

was there, not even the ninja goblins! The fairy said, "If you unlock the camera now, I will tell you what happened to the people."

So, I unlocked the camera quickly because I wanted to know what happened to the spirits. The spirits came out of the camera, and they were free. The spirits said, "Thank you." and they disappeared in a big gust of wind. But the fairy ran away too! I yelled, "Wait! Liar!" I felt happy for the spirits but furious at the fairy.

I suddenly woke up and realized it was all a dream. I told my friends and family about my dream. My mum said, "That is the coolest dream I've heard in my entire life. It sounds amazing." I just smiled with a huge grin like the Cheshire cat.



By Oliver Imhoff-Keogh
Grade Category: Middle
Armadale Primary School
Armadale, Vic.



The void of time

Looking in the mirror I see a blur
I am gone
I cannot recognise myself as me anymore
And I know others can't as well
As I distance myself from the ones that surround me
I feel as if I am floating alone
In a deserted ocean
Where the waves crash against me
I drown myself in the past
Breaking away from the present and from what's to come

I am lost
And I am gone
The past is the past
But that is what is holding me back
The past then becomes my present
And my present becomes my future

By Prithila Acharjee
Grade Category: Senior
Georges River College, Penshurst Girls Campus
Penshurst, N.S.W.

ENDLESS

Shut up. Shut up. Shut up. Just shut up.

I stared blankly at my wall, my breathing quiet. It was endless. They were always at each other's throats. I didn't even know what they were arguing about this time. All I knew was that it was more intense than usual. Maybe one of them found proof of the other cheating. Maybe they were finally gonna divorce.

Outside, I could hear the soft, comforting sounds of rainfall. I often found myself to be more relaxed when the rain fell, the quiet yet insistent hammering of the water against the roof, or sliding down my bedroom window. I used to think of the drops as race cars, back when I was a child. When everyone was happy, and arguments came as rarely as a triple rainbow.

The roaring of my father brought me back to the present, and I remembered the current situation. I wanted to escape. To get away from this broken family, the two who could never see eye to eye. My parents were stubborn and strong willed

Which made arguments between the two even more heated, more drawn out. More unbearable.

My stomach flipped as I heard my mother's defensive retort, her voice quieter and yet just as intense, just as awful to listen to. I sighed, tucking my knees in closer to my body and hugging them to myself. I wanted to be smaller, to disappear from this angry house.

Endless. Endless. Endless.

My stomach flipped again hearing a loud metallic bang. The sound of a fist connecting with thin metal, probably a heater. My father had a habit of getting violent when he got angry, and although he had never hurt my mother on purpose, it didn't make it any less terrifying. The two were still yelling, throwing accusations and defences.

I sighed again, my heart beginning to properly race. I didn't want to be here. Shifting, I reached over to my bedside table, grabbing the pair of headphones atop a stack of books. I turned them on, slipping my phone out of my pocket and connecting them. The music filled my ears, drowning out my parents as I breathed out another sigh of relief, leaning my head against my wall.

I guess temporary relief is still relief.



*By Madelyn Rose
Grade Category: Senior
Bunbury Senior High School
Bunbury, Qld.*

River Rain

*The river
Pummelled
By raindrops*

*The splashing
The dripping
And tapping*

*The musty
Smell of rain
Of wood*

*Of water
Mingled together
On a rainy day*

*I taste
The rain
From
Its
Smell*

*Felt
The
Calmness
Lull slowly
Over*

*When
The river rains.*

*By Emma Zhang
Grade Category: Middle
Carlingford West Public School
Carlingford, N.S.W.*



Fallen Angel

My head crashing against the wall as a vicious, incarnadine liquid flowed downwards, sinking into the floor. Sharp, shards of glass flung against the carpet, hidden from sight. A dangerous weapon concealed beneath me, waiting to attack. Legs shaking and trembling to hold the remaining weight. Grabbing onto picture frames which told a happier story than reality. Receding backwards away from the chaos and breaking free from the chains holding me back. Running into darkness, collapsing on the ground, finally free from the world around me. The darkness welcomed me back and left me unconscious with all senses lost.

Waking up, I am surrounded by a brilliant white covering the walls, roof and even my apparel. My body covered in the colour from top to bottom. My head feeling heavy and my heart pounding inside in fear. Lost in my thoughts, someone touches my hand,

asking if I was awake. I move my fingers forward in response. Struggling to sit upright, this person helps me, supporting my back and head. I was so used to being thrown like a rag; this kindness was new. Did I really deserve the kindness shown my way? Or was this person another betrayer, like all others before.

As days passed, this person would help me sit up, finish my meals, and provide me company. I slowly opened to them, revealing each chapter of my life. How miserable and pathetic I was, not being able to retort back and voice my judgements.

This was my weakness, succumbing to others and their harmful actions. The actions that affected me most, but I kept quiet. My mouth was unable to move because of fear. Fear that it would get worse than it already is, that my life would fade away because of the power they held,, that I could never recover from all that has been cursed to my fate.

Yet, here I am, sharing my thoughts and experience to this one person who has brought hope and light to me. The one person who saved me when I was at death's door. They believed I could heal, and they would be there every step of the way. No matter if I decided to give up,

they would follow me and pull me out of my darkness.

Soon, I left the blinding white place. I was well enough to walk in lush, green gardens, pick the flowers and intake their fresh aroma. Warmth enveloped me, as I stepped out. It was spring and all things nature were starting to bloom. Petals sprung from stems, colouring the land with an enchanting new view. Trees were starting to bear fruit, that fell into my hands and filled my mouth with a sweet delight.

I finally felt like I deserved all that was around me because of the wonderful person who lent me their hand in times of darkness. All I needed was just one person to pull me out. Just one person as a support pillar in the journey to recover. Just one person to bring a smile to my face. Just one person to help me live and continue my life.

I was once a fallen angel, but now my wings have healed, and I can fly far and wide. I can help heal all the other broken wings in the world. So that all the fallen angels can be free. Free from all injustice they have faced, from the ones who trapped them and cut their wings, to be themselves. After all, it only took one person to pull out another from the darkness.

By Anushka Mishra
Grade Category: Middle
Our Lady of Mercy College
Parramatta, N.S.W.



Carrying On

You carry on
Through life
Through hard times
Carrying on, is all you can do

Carry on through hard times
Withstand the pressure
Just hold on
Carry on

But is carrying on the best thing to do
Maybe do something
Maybe not

Just carry on
Through life
Through hard times
Carry on

All you can do
Maybe not
Today it's going to change
You can make a difference

You can survive life's challenges
All you can do
Is get ready for life's journey
Life's obstacles and mazes
Carry on

By Maya Sandberg
Grade Category: Middle
Burnside State School
Burnside, Qld.



The Mountain Trek

Thunder quickened his pace along the narrow path of the mountain. The steep sides curved straight down to the dark mist below. The jagged, dove white mountains soared into the sky. They were snow hooded, encased with a necklace of white.

The near gale wind shrieked, causing a slide of rocks to fall into the abyss. Thunder felt the scratches of rough stones under his paws as he led his pack up the sheer sloped trail. His breath billowed out, making the pathway ahead foggy and hard to see. Over his shoulder he could make out his pack climbing painfully behind.

Hawk, the pack's deputy came at Thunder's heels, followed by Lia, his mate and their two cubs, Storm and Venus. Behind all of them came their mothers and cubs. Bringing up the rear came the hunters and fighters. Lastly, followed the other wolf packs, led by Sky, Shadow and Wind. They had been travelling for days and prey had become scarce. The air stung of frost and moisture. The wind howled even harder puffing up the thick layer of fur on their backs. A storm was on its way. Suddenly, something flickered in the corner of his eyes. First it was a speck in the

distance, then turning into huge, jagged shapes casting a shadow over the whole mountain. Thunder whipped around just in time to see a torrent of boulders crashing down, throwing a colossal weight onto Thunder's body. Then, he heard a several yowls and screeches before everything blacked out in front of him.

By Chelsea Qiao
Grade Category: Middle
Ravenswood School for Girls
Gordon, N.S.W.



Medusa

Beauty is pain.
Beauty is cruel.
Beauty is not what they said it would be.
Lust and leering. His hands.

They take and take.
Hers as well.
They take and take.
Until nothing was left to give.

They whispered in my ears now,
slithering and sly.

I was the victim at first,
But the 'temptress' they named me.

My revenge will not wait,
And I'll smile as they flee.

By Sophia Gianotti
Grade Category: Senior
Presbyterian Ladies College
Peppermint Grove, W.A.





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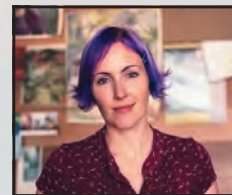
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