

# Oz Kidz in Print

EDITION No. 6

A Lyndhurst Publication

TERM ONE 1995

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# Well done Everyone!

Congratulations and well done to those whose work has been published in Edition 6 of *Oz Kidz in Print*.

Students published will receive an Achievement Award for Writing Excellence along with a complimentary copy of *Oz Kidz in Print*.

The financial awards for the best four pieces of work are awarded to:

Timothy Pont  
for *The Longest Day*,

Allie Rodwell  
for *The Spaghetti Maker*,

Nancy Nesnas  
for *A Street Kid's Plea*,

Catherine Pohlman  
for *To 'White' Australia*.

Oz Kidz in Print

## Achievement Award

for

## Writing Excellence

Presented to

*Timothy Pont*

Pine Rivers State High School

Editor  
Oz Kidz in Print



## From the Editor's Desk...

I am extremely excited to announce that Braith Boyton has been awarded the winner of the award for the best overall work in 1994 for his story, "The Note in the Trunk in the Attic," which was published in edition 5 of *Oz Kidz in Print*.

In accompanying pages Dr Heather Scutter announces our winner, with her comments, and we thank her for her expertise and feedback.

Not only have we a winner for best overall work, but Heather has also commended students published in each edition of the magazine.

Congratulations to Braith and to every student recognized for their excellence in writing and I'm sure your school and teacher are as proud of you as I am.

I believe Heather's feedback gives great direction for all students working hard on their writing and striving to be published, and I encourage each of you to persevere.

Remember winning is a great achievement, but the process of imagining then writing and working to perfect that writing is a process of great joy and worth in itself.

### Selection Committee

In this first issue for 1995 I am pleased to introduce the members of our selection committee. They too have spent time outlining what it is they look for when reviewing work and I thank them for their commitment.

### Housekeeping

Please, please, please.....take note of our mailing address and circulate it to everyone at your school who submits work. The original post office box in Heathmont is no longer ours so if you post there we won't receive your work.

### Primary Submissions—More Please

When filing the work by class as it is submitted, I frequently wish for more work from the lower primary classes. Please primary schools out there, send me work so I can publish more.

### Oz Kidz in Colour

To be able to differentiate each new issue of *Oz Kidz in Print* we will be alternating the colours we select for printing. This is just a simple change we can make each issue which doesn't alter the bottom line, but allows each term's magazine to be different.....and a bit of fun.

I thoroughly enjoy each piece of work submitted to me for consideration, so keep writing!!



# FINALS WINNERS

1994

## THE WINNER FOR 1994

chosen from the published entries for editions 1-5 of *Oz Kidz in Print*, is

### BRAITH BOYTON, Year 6

Empire Vale Primary School, Qld Teachers: R. Glassop and J. Ceely  
for the story "The Note in the Trunk in the Attic" published in Edition 5, 1994.

This very well-constructed story combines elements of lots of different kinds of stories: mystery, detective, murder, boys' own adventure, and a quest for treasure. What's more, Braith plays with these narrative elements to make jokes about them. His story is distinctive for its fresh lively style, its carefully crafted plot, and the controlled narrator's voice. Most importantly, the reader always wants to find out what happens next. Like all good writers, Braith reveals information selectively, to create richer suspense. I liked especially the way Braith plays with word meanings in his story: his chapter headings are witty as well as providing clues to the action. Braith is also to be commended for the balance he develops between different ways of writing: dialogue (which makes an engaging introduction), reporting of past events and description of present action. The story moves in a sophisticated way between past and present, and Braith ties all narrative elements together in a superneat joky conclusion that brings his story full circle.

## SECOND

### DANNY ALLEN, Year 8

Pine Rivers State High School, Qld

Teacher: Mrs Casey for the reflective story  
"Not My Left Foot," published in Edition 4, 1994.

In letter form, Danny, without self-consciousness or self-pity, writes about living with a disability that is as much in others' perceptions as it governs his own experiences. Danny's voice is personal, friendly and direct. His "letter" combines factual information with emotional recollections in an understated and ironic way, this tone being set from the beginning with the excellent introduction touching on memories of the film *My Left Foot*.

## THIRD

### REBECCA JONES, Year 10

Ogilvie High School, Tas

Teacher: Mr J. Kidd for the poem  
"Vacancy, Vacancy" published in Edition 5, 1994.

Using a metaphor which likens people to motels, places occupied temporarily by travellers, Rebecca's poem conveys an acute sense of human emptiness and of the yearning for relationship.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Edition 1** Chantelle Turner, Year 6, St Gertrude's School, NSW; teacher Janet Cummings, for "Wanapini".  
Phuong Lam, Year 7, Bonnyrigg High School, NSW; teacher K. Meisenhelter, for "Holding onto Dreams".
- Edition 2** Paul Souter, Year 10, St Kevin's College, Vic; teacher Naomi Duncan, for "My Dad".  
Belinda Chandler, Year 9, Mildura Secondary College, Vic; teacher Mark Storm, for "Arguments".  
Tanya Kirsty Moir, Year 7, Thangool State School, Qld; teacher Trevor A. Shaw, for "Encounter of Destiny".  
Chris Withington, Year unknown, Koonung Secondary College, Vic; teacher Rosslyn Thomas, for "Afterwards".
- Edition 3** Tracey Field, Year 10, Elanora State High School, Qld; teacher Ms J. Murphy, for "Openings".
- Edition 4** Daniel Purvis, Year 9, St John's High School, Nowra NSW; teacher A. Versitano, for "Switch".  
Barbara Piraino, Year 6, St Gertrude's School, Smithfield NSW; teacher Fran Firth, for "We are the Children".  
Michelle Chambers, Year 11, Manly High School, NSW; teacher Les Matthews, for "The Journey".  
Matthew Jones, Year 5, Bonville Primary School, NSW; teacher Anne Pow, for "The Finals".
- Edition 5** Jean Hall, Year 6, Majura Primary School, ACT; teacher Ms Allen; for "Haunted or Not".

*I look for excellence in four things: ideas and feelings; shape; voice; and word choice. A writer has to have something to say, and has to feel strongly about it. Every piece of writing, fiction, non-fiction or poem, has to be well-constructed, with an original shape or design. The most memorable pieces of writing speak with a strong and individual voice. And word choice is crucial: good writers use words selectively and freshly, vary sentence structures, add surprising elements. Often what a writer cuts out, by editing and redrafting, can change the finished product for the better.*



Dr Heather Scutter (Finals Judge)  
Lecturer in English  
Monash University, Clayton, Victoria



# Meet the Selection Committee



AMANDA SWANEY. When selecting written work I look for freshness. Many students are great mimics of other writers and what they see on the TV. Too often this appears in their own writing so in judging a piece my first question is: Does this say something new or does this say something in a new way? Secondly I look for style and voice. If it is a gothic piece is it full of dark images and danger. If it is a lyrical piece does it sing?

Poetry should not be contrived, it should reflect the age (and sometimes innocence) of the child and not be full of deep and uncomprehensible messages. When children write about something which is close to them it shows in the quality of their writing.

I have been teaching and writing for over twenty years and I still love to share with kids the enjoyment of creating a written piece; I hope we don't lose their sense of wonder to the technology revolution. In fact I'm finding the contrary, the wordprocessor encourages kids to write and they produce magnificent work, particularly if guided by an enthusiastic and sensitive parent or teacher.



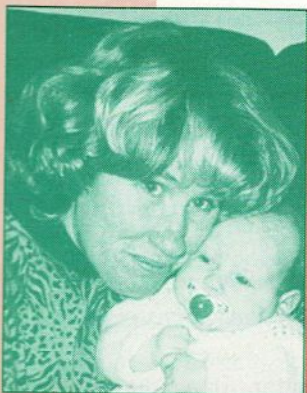
CHRIS THOMPSON is the Artistic Director of St Martins: The Victorian Centre for Youth Arts. He is a former secondary school teacher of drama, english and film & television. He is a writer and director whose work is predominantly for young people and young audiences and includes numerous plays, two feature films and some short stories. He has been a reviewer and contributor to Lowdown magazine (the National Youth Arts magazine) for the past seven years and also reviews youth literature for Viewpoint magazine. Since 1990 he has been a member of the Arts Victoria Drama Assessment Panel which he currently chairs. He has been a member of the selection panels for the Australian Film Institute Awards (1993) the Australian Writers Guild Awards (1994) the Wal Cherry Play of the Year award (1994) and Oz Kidz in Print magazine (1994). He was director of the 13th National Young Playwrights Weekend (1991) and the Seventh National Youth Arts Conference (1994) and has twice visited Japan to conduct workshops and to speak at national and international events. He was a sessional lecturer at Victoria College/Rusden Theatre in Education Unit (1984) a writer and director with FM Live Theatre Company for Schools (1988) and will teach Theatre Studies at the Australian Ballet School in 1995.



PATRICIA DRUCE. Mother of four, resident of Newcastle, NSW.

I have been actively involved in the development of children for many years through schools, libraries and 24 years in the Girl Guide Association.

As a member of the selection committee I look firstly for imagination and, in this TV/video age, originality. I am impressed by a good story line, humour, sadness, clear thoughts expressed with feeling by the writer and if there is a sketch to illustrate, that for me, is an added bonus. I like reading work that shows it means something to the writer. This reaches out to the reader. More from junior schools please.



JULIE BECKHAM is a teacher, mother of two small boys and a poet. She has written short stories and children's fiction. Now she is obsessively writing a novel about a feral woman who changes the world. The community writing group she belongs to publishes Poetrix, a magazine for Australian women's poetry. Julie Beckham is currently studying to gain her Graduate Diploma of Professional Writing.

When I am selecting for Oz Kidz in Print, I look for something that jumps off the page at me, something that shines. This is not only in the pace, tone and voice of your writing but in the depth and clarity of the ideas you express relative to your age. I prefer both prose and poetry that is innovative, or that expresses ideas from an unusual angle or perspective. I enjoy pieces that tackle difficult or taboo subject matter. I like to see evidence that you have taken your work seriously, drafted and polished it so that all distractions have been routed, things such as poor presentation, grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. I would like to see more writing from children aged five to nine years of age (years prep to four) as there is not much sent in to us. If your work is not published this time keep striving. Hone your craft. You learn to write by writing and getting feedback. I'm looking forward to the next package of writing I receive, turning those shiny pieces this way and that to see how they reflect the light.



# Oz Kidz in Print

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Monash University

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## AWARDS FOR SHORT STORIES

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**Story of Love**

Khristina Narsimulu, Birrong Girls' High School, NSW

**Mother's Revenge**

Geordie Moffatt, Gin Gin State High School, QLD

**The Longest Day**

Timothy Pont, Pine Rivers State High School, QLD

**Who's a Pretty Boy?**

Brett Elms, Caboolture State High School, QLD

**The Face Painter**

Alex W. Mitchell, Largs North Primary School, SA

**Liberation**

Sarah Darmody, Manly High School, NSW

**Two Boys**

Brett Ellacott, Stuart State School, QLD

**Family**

Helen O'Connell, MacKillop College, VIC

**The Longest Day**

Sarah Maunder, Pine Rivers State High School, QLD

**The Spaghetti Maker**

Allie Rodwell, Kororo Primary School, NSW

**My Mummy**

Green Lim, Clovelly Public School, NSW

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## AWARDS FOR POETRY

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**A Street Kid's Plea**

Nancy Nesnas, St Gertrude's School, Smithfield NSW

**Small Room in Darkness**

Shane McGrath, Karingal Secondary College, VIC

**My Angry Cat**

Sharon Gallagher, Empire Vale Primary School, QLD

**Worry**

Irini Verios, Presbyterian Ladies' College, WA

**Volcano**

Hannah Mackay, Launceston Preparatory School, TAS

**To 'White' Australia**

Catherine Pohlman, Gin Gin State High School, QLD

**The Pool**

Alex Young, Armidale High School, NSW

**Enter the Rainbow**

Anne-Maree Kaddatz, Caboolture State High School, QLD

**Shell to Kill**

Ben Thompson, Harristown State High School, QLD

**Green Pastures**

Lisa Armstrong, Courallie High School, NSW

**Death**

Sarah Ward, Presbyterian Ladies' College, WA

**Submissions for the next  
edition are due before  
16 JUNE 1995**



# Story of Love

**Khristina Narsimulu, Year 9  
Birrong Girls' High School, NSW  
Teacher: D. Wellham**

"Can I see my baby?" the happy new mother asked. When the little bundle was nestled in her arms and she moved the fold of cloth to look upon his tiny face, she gasped.

The doctor turned quickly and looked out the tall hospital window. The baby had been born without ears.

Time proved that the boy's hearing was perfect. It was only his appearance that was marred.

When he rushed home from school one day and flung himself into his mother's arms, she sighed, knowing that his life was to be a succession of heartbreaks. He blurted out the tragedy.

"A boy, a big boy....called me a freak."

He grew up, handsome except for his misfortune. A favourite with his fellow students, he might have been class captain, but for that.

He developed a gift, a talent for literature and music.

"But you should mix with other young people." His mother said to him, but felt a kindness in her heart.

The boy's father had a session with the family doctor. Could nothing be done? "I believe I could graft a pair of outer ears, if they could be donated," the doctor decided.

Whereupon the search

began for a person who would make such a sacrifice for a young man.

Two years went by.

Then "You are going to hospital, son. Mother and I have someone who will donate the ears you need. But it's a secret," said the father.

The operation was a brilliant success and a new person emerged.

His talents blossomed into genius and school and college became a series of triumphs.

Later he married and entered the diplomatic service.

"But I must know!" he urged his father.

"Who gave so much for me?"

"The agreement was that you are not to know...not yet," said father.

The years kept their profound secret, but the day did come...one of the darkest days that ever passed for a son.

He stood with his father over his mother's coffin.

Slowly, tenderly, the father stretched forth a hand moving the thick reddish brown hair to reveal...the mother had no outer ears.

"Mother said she was glad she never let her hair be cut," he whispered gently "and nobody thought mother was less beautiful, did they?"





# Mother's Revenge



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Geordie Moffatt, Year 11  
Gin Gin State High School, QLD  
Teacher: June Pohlman

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**T**HE Royal Archaeological Museum once occupied the city block between Sanford and Oxford Streets. Number 24 Edenberg Street was all that stood between Doctor Dregsler and great riches.

"Dr Dregsler, what villainous scheme have you devised this time to force us to sell you our home?"

"Me, I would never do such a thing my dear Mrs Lang."

"Why are you so horribly cruel?"

"Ha! Ha! You must mean why am I so incredibly brilliant? It is because of my skill in issues of the law. Always outwitting my foes. Having control of large areas of West End London, with the ability to do anything I choose there. Or maybe it's because I am one of the richest men in London. Anyway, I want you out of this house one week from today. Do you understand me, you petty housewife!"

"Yes! Now get out of my house before I send for the police."

"I own the police, so just remember this, there is no way of crawling from this dilemma."

"Driver!" yelled Dr Dregsler. As the sound of the horse's hooves echoed up the hall, I shivered, knowing that our future in this house was no more.

My father had died several years ago, leaving mother vulnerable to Dr Dregsler's insistent harassment. My brothers hadn't returned from working at the steel factory. Mother was getting worried, then she remembered they were working overtime and sleeping at the factory barracks.

It was difficult to sleep that night knowing this could be our last week in No. 24. The silence of the night was broken by the sounds of dogs barking and the rattling of Spot's chain. Could there be someone sneaking around outside trying to frighten us? The lock on the cellar door often clanged in the strong winds, but it was a still night, so why was it making a noise? I crept into mother's room, she was sitting on the side of her bed. "Can you hear that clanging noise?" I whispered.

"Yes, do you think someone's trying to get into the cellar?" replied mother.

Cautiously we both stood up and peered out the back window. The backyard was empty except for Spot chewing on a ham bone.

As daybreak approached, we ventured outside to inspect the cellar door. An old cold-chisel was lying on the ground and the lock was almost busted apart. Mother swore at the dog for taking a bribe. I ate breakfast before dressing for work.

The Duck Inn was frequented by Dr Dregsler's henchmen, this morning Dr Dregsler was with them. Obviously pre-occupied, he did not recognise me. "What would you like sir?"

"Coffee for me and my associates thanks missy."

I hurriedly fixed his order and took the coffee to his table. What had brought Dr Dregsler out so early in the morning? I began clearing the breakfast dishes from the tables. Dr Dregsler was talking about a note he had found amongst some old correspondence belonging to his late father.





"I believe the basement of the old museum was full of ancient Egyptian artefacts, including two solid gold mummy's caskets and many sizeable gems." Dr Dregsler continued, "I sent the boys around last night to check the place out, they weren't expecting a lock on the cellar door."

The unkempt man sitting beside the doctor questioned whether they would attempt to enter the cellar again tonight.

"Yes you will, only this time don't come back until you have thoroughly checked the cellar floor and walls. If any of the Lang family try to stop you, you know what to do."

A shiver went down my spine, as I knew the reputation of Dr Dregsler's henchmen.

After finishing work I sat for a moment to recall Dr Dregsler's conversation about the artefacts, a friend that works at the new museum should be able to assist me. Alex showed me a floor plan of the old museum and told me about the relocation fifty years ago. A map showed where houses had been built on the land, a small room adjoining the basement of the old museum appeared to be exactly under our house.

Alex said that maybe some of the museum's antiquities were left in there and never retrieved. I also checked their personnel records to see if a one Mr Dregsler had worked there. I read: Norman Dregsler: 1752-1778 Internal Occupation: Curator. Dr Dregsler must be after whatever is in that room. Alex gave me a spare map and some sketches of a mummy.

I hurried home and told mother of Dr Dregsler's plans. We gathered enough courage to go down and search the cellar. The damp and musty room was used to store tea-chests and old junk, neither of us knew what was really down there. We lit a lamp and moved everything into one corner.

"Nothing in that lot," mother said.

"What are you two doing?"

We almost died of fright, it was my two brothers Ned and Harold.

"How come you shifted all this sturrrf!..."  
"THUD!"

"You clumsy oaf!" I shouted. Ned being his clumsy self tripped and blew dust everywhere.

"I swear my foot caught on something," said Ned.

There was a small trap door with the latch sticking up. The door opened with an eerie creak. Ned lowered a lamp down and looked into the room below.

"It's just an empty room," he said.

We had found the room that Alex was talking about, though there wasn't anything Dr Dregsler would want. Ned and Harold were anxious to hear the whole story. This gave Harold (the brains of the family) an idea.

"Maybe if Ned and I wrap ourselves in old rags covered in mud we could look like the mummy in that drawing. Dr Dregsler's men would get such a fright, they wouldn't dare come back again."

After midnight we wrapped Ned and Harold in the old rags and smeared mud all



over them, we had made two pretty convincing mockups. Ned had collected some bats from a nearby derelict house, he would let them out of the bag when the trap door was opened.

Mother was worried about Ned and Harold and told them to be careful. The cellar door stayed unlocked that night, just to make sure the men didn't miss out on our surprise.

The house was in darkness, the following minutes seemed like hours. Anxiously we waited for a sign of their arrival. Sure enough, the dog barked and was subdued with a bone. Dr Dregsler's men were surprised to find the door unlocked. With caution they entered the cellar, determined to find the entrance to the secret room. Mother had moved back some of the junk

and thrown dirt over the trapdoor so as not to make it too obvious.

Ned and Harold could hear the men scuffling around the cellar floor, their whispers inaudible. Feeling a little afraid, Harold questioned his decision to stay in the room. The only way out was through the trap door, and at that moment it opened. The bats flew out of the bag, and the boys let out a hideous moan. The four men burst out of the cellar hysterically screaming, followed by two ghostly figures.

The word of Dr Dregsler's harassment and failed attempt to evict us from our own home soon spread across London. People no longer trusted him and his business collapsed. This meant we kept our home, and the little room under the cellar wasn't completely empty.

# A STREET KID'S PLEA



Nancy Nesnas, Year 6  
St Gertrude's School, NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Carmel Nichaoimh

I need someone to love me,  
Someone to understand;  
I need someone to trust me,  
And lend a helping hand.

I want someone to cuddle me,  
When times I'm feeling down;  
I want someone to make me laugh,  
To smile and not to frown.

I want a big fun brother,  
And a sister too;  
I want to call them funny names,  
Like Buzz or Dew or Lou.

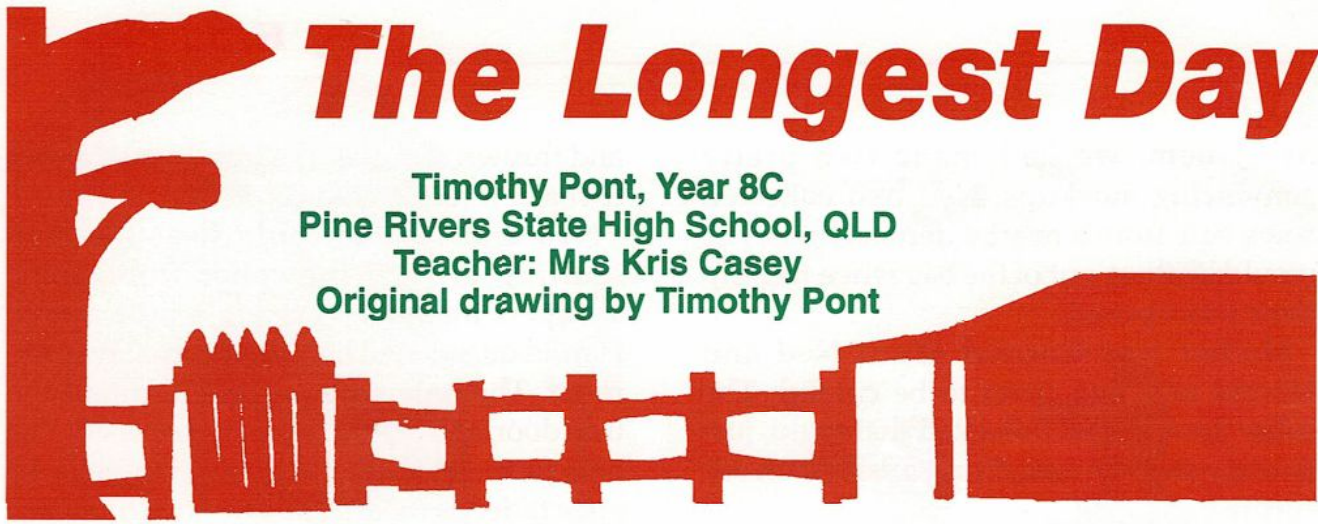
But most of all I really need,  
A special mum or dad;  
Someone who's always there for me,  
When I am really sad.

I wish I had a family,  
That would share good times together;  
Who'd always love me no matter what,  
And be with me  
FOREVER...



# The Longest Day

Timothy Pont, Year 8C  
Pine Rivers State High School, QLD  
Teacher: Mrs Kris Casey  
Original drawing by Timothy Pont



**I** THINK it was my nose that woke up first. The scent of smoke hung around my room, as it had done for days. The odour of burning wood and smoking scrub was enough to galvanise my brain in to action.

I opened my eyes. Yellow light filtered through the blinds and glistened on the tiny particles of dust which danced and skipped around the air.

I was hot and sticky after the warm, humid night, so I decided to have my shower, then satisfy my stomach.

After I'd showered I crept down the stairs. The downy carpet was warm on my feet.

"Good afternoon," said Mum, sarcastically.

"Hi," I said, and grabbed six pancakes, put them on a plate, and smothered them with golden syrup. As I walked over to the table, I fixed my eyes on the tiny rivers of syrup which oozed down the landscape of the pancakes, twisting and curving, and finally cascading down to the plate below.

We lived out in the bush. My older brother Jamie was out working with Dad, and Katie, my little sister, was staying with a friend in town.

I took a stroll outside, to see how much territory the bushfires had claimed since yesterday. Jamie ran past me. I looked to see what the hurry was. My mouth fell open.

Dad was on the tractor, speeding towards the house, with the fire raging behind him. It looked like a cat chasing a mouse.

I looked around and realised that we were trapped. The fire had crept up on us in the space of a few short minutes.

My Mum came out, yelling hysterically, holding a pile of wet sacks. Jamie followed close behind.

"Put this over you and get in the creek!" she bellowed at me, holding out a sack. "And HURRY!"

The fire was only thirty metres away, so I did as I was told, for once. The creek was a narrow ditch that no longer held water, and the banks were overgrown with grass and anything that happened to be in its way.

The fumes choked me, wrapping their toxic tentacles around my throat. The noise deafened me, pounding my ears like a bongo drum player. The heat created a furnace-like atmosphere. The smoke stung my eyes, like the thousands of tiny arrows that the Lilliputians shot at Gulliver.

The fire screamed and howled, then subsided, then once again launched its attack; mercilessly ripping, clawing, tearing with its long, thin fingers of flame. Pieces of burning debris dropped down into the creek, hissing on the now not so wet sack. I crouched down lower, and then I just couldn't hold on any more.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I woke up, I felt like the time Jamie hit me in the stomach with a cricket ball. Then I did what I'd done that time... I threw up on a patch of grass.

I wasn't going to lie there all day, so I pulled the sack off my back. It was caked with ash and dirt. I pulled my aching body out of the creek, then wished I hadn't. There was nothing left.

Our house was a scorched frame. The shed was a charred, twisted tangle of metal and girders. The tractor, Dad's pride and joy, was a blackened, wrecked waste. We had nothing left, except each other. Our most valuable possessions, our lives, were the only ones left on the barren, black plain.

"Seventeen years," whispered Dad hoarsely. His face was ashen, his neat hair singed, his clothes scorched.

Seventeen years. Two hundred and four months. Six thousand, two hundred and nine days. But this was the longest day.



# Small room in darkness

Small room in darkness.  
Walls, floor, roof of steel.  
No windows, no doors.  
No way in, no way out.  
No artificial light  
That might compel us  
To witness  
The dread scene within,  
A floor covered  
In a sea of blood,  
Its centre an island  
Of vomit and excrement.  
Last acts  
Of a once proud beast.

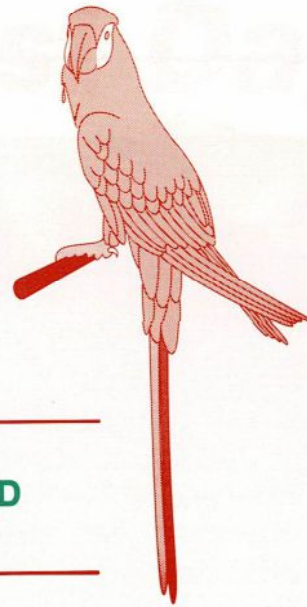
Small room in darkness.  
In the centre, on the floor  
A victim, on the island  
An innocent fallen  
To the bloodlust  
That is the mark of man.  
Once a 'roo.  
Now, head dangling loosely,  
Ruptured entrails painting  
Portraits of despair  
In the fetid air,  
It is a trophy.

Small room in darkness.  
Atop the corpse  
Drunk with glory  
The hunter  
Gun in his hand,  
Smile on his face.  
Small room in darkness.

Shane McGrath, Year 10  
Karingal Secondary College, VIC  
Teacher: Jill Quirk



# Who's a pretty boy?



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**Brett Elms, Year 11**  
**Caboolture State High School, QLD**  
**Teacher: Mr Boxall**

---

"Who's a pretty boy?" the man slowly asked Reg, his new pet. Reg was a young and uneducated, possibly uneducatable, talking bird. The bird could not speak a word, and although Martin had only had it for a week, he was beginning to wonder whether the pet shop had sold him a dud. Reg just sat there and stared blankly into space beyond Martin. He actually had the ability to talk, but he, or more correctly, she, refused to talk until Martin got his facts right. Reg wasn't really a good name for a female parrot.

She might tell him, but refused to give him the pleasure of hearing her talk until he could learn what was right, the hard way.

But she hoped he wouldn't give up, as Martin was actually a very nice person, and she wouldn't have preferred to live with anybody else.

She, like many other parrots, lived a sad life, stuck in a cage, with nothing to do all day but sit around, and get talked to on occasions. *But what about when birds, such as Reg, weren't being talked to?* There was nothing to do. The little mirror and the bell that the owners buy to amuse birds seemed to lose their fun after the first few hours, and then become a reminder of exactly how dull life actually was.

But Martin had it all. He lived a good life. TV, motor cars, stereo players, video games, swimming pools; he had it all. But since Reg was a parrot, and such luxuries aren't for parrots, she went without. What a dull life she led. Long and dull. She would live almost as long as any person, but would she

have all the pleasures of people?

Years went by, during which Martin discovered that Reg wasn't a suitable name for his parrot, and that he'd better change its name to Rita. They had good times and some bad times, but during it all, Martin and Rita were best friends, though if he admitted it to anybody, he would be committed to a lunatic asylum at considerable speed.

Most importantly of all, Rita discovered that she was not the only one on earth having troubles with life. Actually, she had no troubles. Her food was delivered to her, free of charge. She never needed to clean her cage; there are humans to do that, and she never got stressed because there was nothing for her to do which could possibly cause stress.

Martin had to leave every morning at eight, rush away in a car to be caught in early morning traffic, spend eight hours working his fingers to the bone for some greedy millionaire, and struggle home in rush hour traffic. Once home, he had to deal with making meals, balancing cheque books, feeding the parrot and maybe then get some time for leisure. Her poor owner had such a hard life. And through it he still managed to be nice to her. If only she could repay him. If only there was something that she could do to make his life easier.

Then one day it dawned upon her what she must do. It was obvious. She couldn't believe she'd never thought of it before.

She knew by the clock opposite her cage that Martin would soon be home, so she



craned her neck outside the cage further than ever before and grabbed the keys. Whenever Martin opened the cage, he used those, so she knew well how to use them.

She undid the lock and left the cage, hanging the keys back on the hook beside the cage as she left.

Martin's car pulled into the garage. The hands on the clock were in a perfect vertical line; Martin was right on time.

Martin entered the house from the side door, and was surprised to see Rita sitting on the floor, waiting for him.

But before he could say anything, Rita said "You live such a hard life outside the cage," Martin couldn't believe she could say such a complex sentence and look as if she knew what she was talking about.

"Yet you are always nice to me with my perfect life inside the cage. Why don't you join me in there? I'm sure the cage is big enough." It was a very large cage; Martin wanted her to have the best.

This was a very reasonable offer. Martin's life was hard, but he had to ask. "But who will feed us? Your life is only great because there is someone OUTSIDE to make it great. If we're both inside the cage, life won't be so great after all.

But Rita didn't look the least bit disturbed. "Never mind," she calmly and clearly said,

"I've got it all worked out."

Martin reasoned with himself. "If she can talk with such detail, can she also think with the same detail?" he thought. After a brief second's thought, he decided the bird was right. Life was good inside the cage. Rita knew that they needed someone to feed them and probably had that already worked out. Martin accepted.

Rita showed him to his new house and closed the door without entering herself. "I'll be back in a moment," she said. "I just have a few last minute preparations to do." She turned away, but then, without warning swung back, clicked the lock on the door shut and strode into the living room to watch TV.

The keys lay by the entrance to the living room where Rita carelessly tossed them. The bars on the cage were thick; too thick to be broken or bent by any animal, as it wasn't actually a bird cage. Television light shone from the living room for the final twelve years of Martin's life. His screams and pleas for help ignored—living off seed and scraps, hardly getting the bare essentials.

This was the life of a bird. Rita had thought she owed it to Martin to show him exactly how she had felt for the first few years of her miserable life. "Who's a pretty girl?" she laughed to herself.

# MY ANGRY CAT

Mean angry looks  
Long sharp claws  
Short fat body  
MY ANGRY CAT

Running through grass  
Pouncing on mice  
Hissing and meowing  
MY ANGRY CAT

**Sharon Gallagher, Year 5**  
**Empire Vale Primary School, QLD**  
**Teacher: Mr J. Ceely**

Thirsty and hot  
Hungry and good  
Feeling really odd  
MY ANGRY CAT





# W O R R Y

I saw worry,  
She was like an old withered leaf,  
Her hair was white as a white dove,  
And her face was rumped,  
And her hands,  
Soft but wrinkly,  
She had no finger nails,  
But instead,  
Blood red splotches,  
Where they were meant to be.

She walked briskly,  
Like she was trying to get away from something,  
Although her walk was brisk,  
In one way,  
It seemed weak and gentle,  
Her body tone was soft,  
And her eyes,  
her eyes, were tear stained,  
With dark rings underneath them,  
She looked like,  
She had not slept forever.

Her voice,  
I heard it once,  
It was soft and shaky  
Like she had just been crying  
She fumbled over words,  
And struggled to make out sentences,  
She spoke,  
For only a short time,  
And then stood silent,  
Worrying.

Her clothes were ragged and torn,  
But she did not worry about these,  
Because her worries were deep,  
Deeper than the heart's thoughts,  
Deeper than one can think of.  
For she only worried about,  
What is good,  
And what is bad?

Her hands were shaking,  
She did not look comfortable,  
She did not quite know where to put her hands,  
Or her feet,  
For it seemed that she was worried,  
To put her foot on the floor,

What was Worry,  
Worrying about?

Irini Verios, Year 7  
Presbyterian Ladies'  
College, WA  
Teacher: Miss Georgeson



# THE FACE PAINTER

Alex W. Mitchell, Year 4  
 Largs North Primary School, SA  
 Teacher: Lidia Czernichowski  
 Original drawing by Alex W. Mitchell

**K**AREN was a face painter. She loved her job. She loved it when the children lined up at the mall to have their faces painted as their favourite animal or monster. She put her heart into her craft. Every paint stroke was applied with the utmost care, she had done lots of faces, her favourite face a pussycat.

I met Karen at the library. I had never had my face painted. But, after a lot of prompting from my mum, I decided to have it done and then quickly go home to remove the paint.

Karen asked me what I would like to be. I said an alien, a green alien. Karen said she had never done an alien before so she was very excited to do this face, she was very careful in applying the paints.

As soon as the paints were applied to my face I started to feel strange, but I didn't say anything, my face started to tingle. I could hear Karen talking to me but I seemed to be seeing everything for the first time. I felt as if I was on an alien planet with these strange people. Everybody seemed to be staring at me.....me? I was normal. I was me.....but they were all aliens to me, their faces so soft and pale.....not like my beautiful green shaded face. I didn't like that feeling of people being aliens to me, so when I got home I rushed to the bathroom to remove the paint.

I filled up the basin because it would have hurt my skin if I used a scraper. I first covered my face with soap and then held my breath and dipped my face into the water. I looked in the mirror, nothing had changed, no paint had been removed. I tried again and again but it would not come off! I went to my room to think about it!



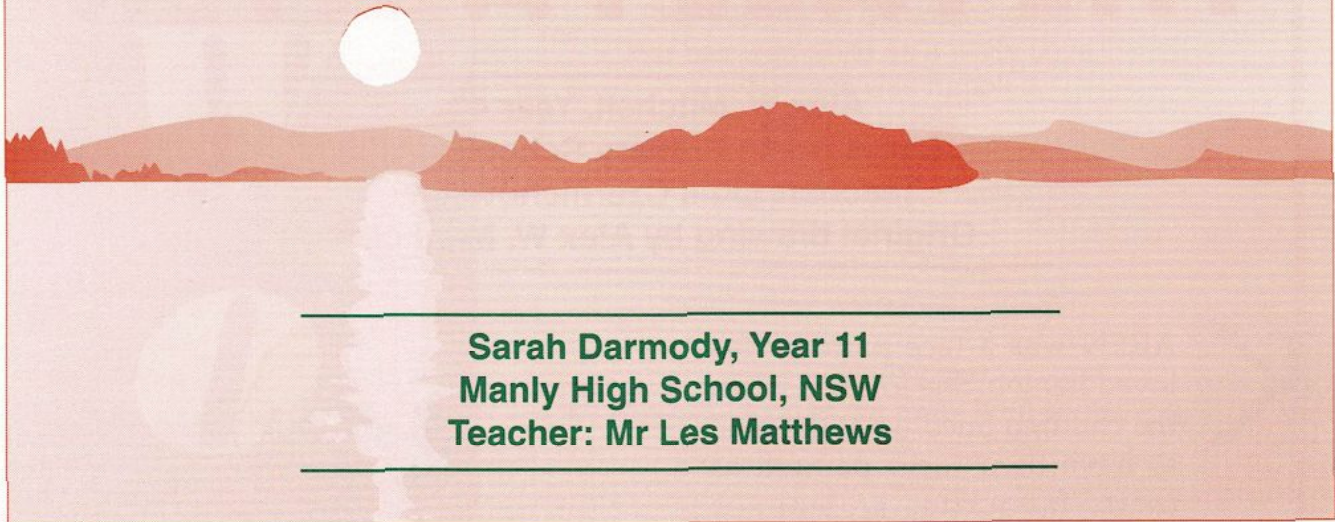
I heard a knock on my door. I opened it, it was my friend. When he saw my face he ran down the street screaming "Aliens have invaded the world, run for your life".

I went into my room to think about it some more. I shut my door. Then suddenly I felt the urge to go into my backyard. As I was walking down the hallway I saw a huntsman spider. I am normally afraid of huntsman spiders, but then I picked it up and ate it without realising it!

I was so upset that I ran out of the house screaming "Oga boga aah"....my dad ran inside and got the camera and took a photo! Then mum calmed me down by squirting me with the hose! But I accidentally fell into the fish pond and ate, a fish! Mum gave me a hot steaming bath which washed off all the paint! After that I have been my old self, but I can't wait to visit Karen the face painter again.



# LIBERATION



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**Sarah Darmody, Year 11  
Manly High School, NSW  
Teacher: Mr Les Matthews**

---

**H**E ran smoothly and swiftly along the lonely expanse of land, the chill night air filling his lungs. Adrenalin pulsed through him making his limbs feel supple and fluid. His feet had ceased their pounding on the hard earth beneath and now they seemed to barely touch it.

From a distance he had seen the devastation, the large grey cloud that had sprouted up over the city like a poisonous mushroom, spreading itself across the sky to become a suffocating blanket of death.

"The city is gone," he thought numbly, "behind me the city lies destroyed, everything in it is gone." As the slow realisation of this thought crept over him, he was suddenly gripped with a euphoria that was unlike anything he had ever known.

"The city is gone!" he screamed to the night sky "The city is gone!" in gratitude and elation, and then he laughed out loud for the feeling it gave him.

He ran onwards in a dreamlike haze, his mind so filled with new and wonderful thoughts that it was dulled to all else, and when he finally collapsed, his body felt the sharp pains of exhaustion shoot through it as every nerve and muscle revenged their neglect. For a while, he slept.....

When he awoke it was still dark, though the direction of the moon told him that dawn was only a few hours away. He could hear voices coming towards him and strained to see a large group of people silhouetted to his left.

He called out to them, asking them where they were travelling to.

"We return to the city, comrade," a man replied. "There is no life for us here. We will return and in time, rebuild from the ruins."

He was startled, shocked that anyone would renounce the new found freedom so precious to him.

"There is no life for you here?" he cried. "There was no life for you there either! You say you weren't unhappy, but what did you feel? Did you feel happiness? Was there any true pleasure or joy? No! You had no time to discover what you felt at all. You had transport to move you through places at the blink of an eye, blinding you forever to the beauty around you. You had the media to dominate your every thought, to rule over your empty lives and fill your empty hearts. You had nothing."

He paused expecting a barrage of outraged insults, but nobody stirred. From the darkness at the back someone, very quietly began to sob. A man spoke in a voice that was strained, scornful "This is the alternative, comrade? Listen... when was the last time you heard a person cry? This life is a life with pain, with heartache, with all the things we had destroyed."

But he only nodded his head slowly answering "I hear the crying and I am glad to hear it. It is the sound of humanity returning to the world. Together we must rediscover what we have lost. Joy and love, beauty and the knowledge of simple things, the real things that our ancestors lived for."

He watched in silence as fresh murmurs broke out amongst the group and they turned doubtfully, hesitantly, to the east, away from the city and into the glow of the rising sun.

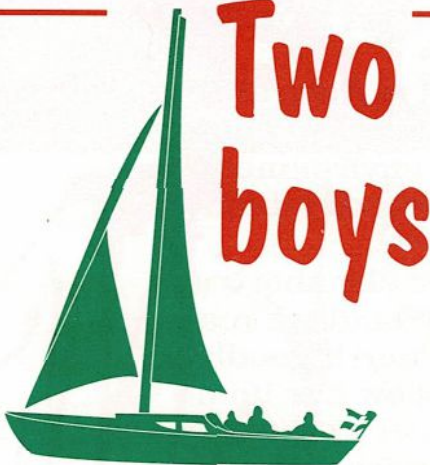
A small child tipped her chin towards the pale light, a curious admiration creeping onto her face. And then, in her eyes, he saw the days to come. He saw men and women discover the earth, saw the forgotten pleasures of thought and pure happiness return. He saw hope.



# VOLCANO

The sea is a volcano  
Rupturing and spilling  
Ripping everything to pieces  
Devouring everything in its path  
Sparing nothing to its spilling, drooling mouth.  
Suddenly he stops, angry and furious.  
It starts bubbling,  
Spilling everything he devoured,  
Spilling louder than loud.  
Suddenly all is quiet;  
He sits in his bed  
Looking at what he has done —  
Sulking.  
Sulking.  
Sulking.

Hannah Mackay, Year 6  
Launceston Preparatory School, TAS  
Teacher: Mrs Leonie McNair



Brett Ellacott, Year 1  
Stuart State School, QLD  
Teacher: Mrs Jeni Lee

One day there were two boys. One was called Ben and the other was called Jock. One day the boys wagged school and the boys got their grandfather's boat. The boat was a yacht. They took their grandfather's truck and they drove the truck to the boat ramp. When they got there they lowered the yacht down. When they got the yacht down and they had the boat in the water they started the engine and set off on their long journey. The boys went through a storm. When they were in the storm, the storm ripped the engine off. There was lightning and thunder and it was windy and stormy. The waves were really big. The waves tossed the yacht up in the air. When that happened they were in the cabin and they rolled around. After, they were bruised a lot and had scars and sores.



# To 'White' Australia

Australia is our present  
Europe was our past  
Yesterday is not tomorrow  
Yesterdays can never last

Don't forsake the present  
For what was Yesteryear  
The north cannot come with you  
To the southern hemisphere

Australia is our present  
Our future, and our home  
A home we barely recognise  
And cannot call our own

How can we know this country  
As we're changing all we can?  
Ignoring nature's warnings  
Craving kingdoms, not a land.

Are we truly of this country?  
Do we know her heart and will?  
Are we true Australians  
Or misplaced Europeans still?

Why don't we know Australia?  
Have we ever really tried?  
We scorn Australia's natives  
In arrogant northern pride.

We forget this is Australia  
The great wild southern land  
An individual environment  
One we do not understand

Europe's not the sky above us  
Europe's not the land we roam  
Time to bid the north goodbye  
For Australia's now our home

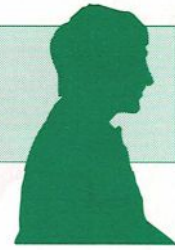
'Tis the southern stars fly overhead  
In the southern sky above  
But at heart, are we Australian?  
One with a land we truly love?

Catherine Pohlman, Year 10  
Gin Gin State High School, QLD  
Teacher: June Pohlman





# FAMILY



**Helen O'Connell, Year 9  
MacKillop College, VIC  
Teacher: Mrs Kate Cronic**

**N**OW, really, the meaning of this word is beyond me. I have been through a case of divorce. I know what it's like. My parents were married for 17 years. What I try to understand is, how? Why? What happened? After all those years, my mother just up and left for someone else.

During those 17 years of being happily married, there was no fighting and bickering. We were just a happy family: Mum, Dad and two children.

When mum went to Melbourne to put the divorce through, I went with her, though I wasn't allowed into the court room, I fought back the tears, knowing that when the

divorce papers came through that it would be the end of my family.

My younger brother and I chose to stay with Dad. It was our decision. I always thought choosing between my parents would be hard but it wasn't.

I somehow knew Dad was the one, and I wanted to stay where I believed it was my home.

Standing outside that courtroom was hard. I wanted to go in there and tear up that dammed divorce paper, I wanted to put the pieces of my family back together, turn back time. But I couldn't. It was too late. The fragments of the glass had already been scattered.

## Shell to Kill



Those I kill I all but hate,  
Good men are thee and true,  
Enemy I'll dub them,  
As I would dub all and you.

Murder reigns, Oh bloody murder,  
Hate is at a peak.  
I'll follow thee while war is fresh,  
I'll hunt, I'll kill, I'll seek.

Men will go before their time,  
They'll perish in the war,  
But not until my dying day,  
Will I forget all that I saw.



**Ben Thompson, Year 8  
Harristown State  
High School, QLD  
Teacher: Mrs Curnow**



# Enter the Rainbow

I have a dream,  
A rainbow in my mind,  
Red like a ribbon of flowing fears,  
Orange for the colour of hurting tears,  
Yellow, like the rind of a lemon,  
Green, a rainforest as peaceful as heaven,  
Indigo, like the depths of coral reefs,  
Violet, like the wings of lorikeets.  
And through this rainbow slides the child,  
Smiling her way to the stars.

**Anne-Maree Kaddatz, Year 9  
Caboolture State High School, QLD  
Teacher: Mr Boxall**

## THE POOL

The trees surrounding the pool send  
murky streaks across the water,  
like green and brown paint,  
slowly running down an easel,  
then merging.  
Out deeper the water changes,  
deepens to a blue.  
Puffy white clouds drift on the surface,  
their edges blurred as they float past  
the vision of the pool.  
Dark secrets are submerged,  
lurking beneath the depths.  
It is a living thing.

Emotions quiver and rise,  
then slowly sink.  
The surface is alive with reflections,  
mingling and separating.  
Then a stick strikes the surface.  
Ripples circle away until they reach the banks.  
Reflections disappear,  
and the pool is once again just a pool.

**Alex Young, Year 9  
Armidale High School, NSW  
Teacher: Di Hall**



# The Longest Day

Sarah Maunder, Year 8  
Pine Rivers State High School, QLD  
Teacher: Mrs Casey

**T**O many people the day may have flown past, while to others it may have seemed to last forever. My day began no differently to any other day.

Outside the day was warming to a summer crescendo, the sky a rich blue, the wind whipping around the trees. I said my goodbyes and walked outside. The tall gate closing behind me, the house disappearing from my sight. An early morning, all the time in the world.

A screech of brakes. I twisted around in fear. I saw it, swerving on the road, like a tormented demon, and I heard my scream, mingled with the cockatoos cries. Then nothing!

**IS THIS ALL IT HAS COME TO  
AN INFINITY OF DARKNESS  
NO BEGINNING  
NO END  
ETERNAL  
AM I DESTINED TO BE STRANDED  
IN NOTHING FOREVER?**

Slowly, I open my eyes, afraid of what I might see. Surrounding me, is black, below me there is dirt. In the distance is a firelight that conquerors the dark. Above me there is a face. Then nothing!

**WONDERING, WONDERING  
I WALK A DARKENED MAZE  
TERROR YIELDS AN ANIMAL  
HELD CAPTIVE BY MY FEAR**

Once again I awake, I am still in that cave. Through a gap I see the trees willow in the wind and the crickets sing a deafening chorus. Trapped and bound, caught like a goldfish in a bowl. I waited. A shadow paced back and forward, just beyond the light, pacing, like a caged animal.

He comes toward me. Silent and threatening. I want to scream, I only squeak. He laughs a vicious laugh. I must tear at his throat. He lunges, his face, close to mine. Spit hangs from

the stubble on his chin.

"No ones gonna find ya girlie, so don't ya go hopin!" He started to turn away, then twisted back. The firelight gleamed in his eyes, they looked like the pits of hell. I shivered, he smiled his ghastly smile, he added "We'll let ya out tomorra!" He let roar his terrible laugh, "But tomorra never comes!" He turned away and as he left the sealed the cave entrance. He took away my glance of time and day.

**THINGS DIE  
YET THE WORLD JUST KEEPS ON TURNING  
DREAMS ARE SHATTERED  
YET THE SKY DOES NOT FALL IN  
THINGS CHANGE  
BUT LIFE WILL ALWAYS CONTINUE**

The fire embers glowed, yet I couldn't move to rekindle the fire. Minutes passed, maybe hours, no-one ever came. Why did they take me? Maybe I would never know. I waited yet I knew no one would ever come. Had night come yet, had this awful day become yesterday, is my torment nearly over, or is today still droning on.

**SILENCE ECHOES  
QUIET THUNDERS  
TIME STANDS STILL  
WITHIN MY HEART.**

My voice sounds hollow, I shout, I sing, I cry. Is it really useless? Will my life just pass in muted silence. My voice grows hoarse, squeaking like a rusty gate. My wrists ache, my head hurts. Is today still hanging on, will tomorrow never come? There's a strange smell in the air. It covers my cries, chokes me in silence. The room begins to spin. The air escapes, running from my fear. Is this what its like to die? Am I dying now? Then nothing!

To many people this day may have drawn to an end too soon. To others it may have seemed endless. For me, this day was the end. The longest day, the last day, of my life.

Tomorrow never came.



# The Spaghetti Maker



**Alie Rodwell, Year 2  
Kororo Primary School, NSW  
Teachers: Mrs Chessell & Mr Griffin**

**O**NCE upon a time there was a spaghetti maker and lots of people came to his shop. But one day the shop was empty because no one came. The spaghetti maker was worried. He put out big signs in the city but still nobody came to his shop.

He was wondering what was happening because even the city was quiet, only the sound of glass breaking. Nobody anywhere.

He found that the noise of the glass breaking was a robber dressed in black breaking into houses and banks. So the spaghetti maker ran home and locked the door. He had a big think about how he could catch the robber and he finally came up with a plan.

The spaghetti maker set to work making

grey spaghetti in his shop. He put lots of oil in the mixture to make it very slippery. He worked very hard carrying it all out to the pavement outside his shop. He knew that soon the robber would come to get him too. When he was finished he sat down and waited until finally the robber came.

The robber did not see the grey spaghetti and slipped and hit his head on the pavement. The spaghetti maker ran out and tied the robber up. The spaghetti maker then looked everywhere for the town people and then finally found them in a dark shed. He untied them and became a hero and was given 500 dollars from all the people to say thank you. The robber went to jail and was never seen again in that town.

## Green pastures

The rain had brought relief  
to a land that looked so dry.  
The rain had brought release  
to my eyes that would not cry.  
Now that the rain had come  
the pastures were all green;  
The gardens were more beautiful  
than before had ever seen.

Now that the rain had come  
it mingled with my tears;  
Together they managed to flood  
all my doubts and fears.  
Only now am I surprised to find  
the rain has melted the walls away,  
and allowed peace to work  
at calming my troubled mind.

**Lisa Armstrong, Year 10  
Courallie High School, NSW  
Teacher: Ms Beck**





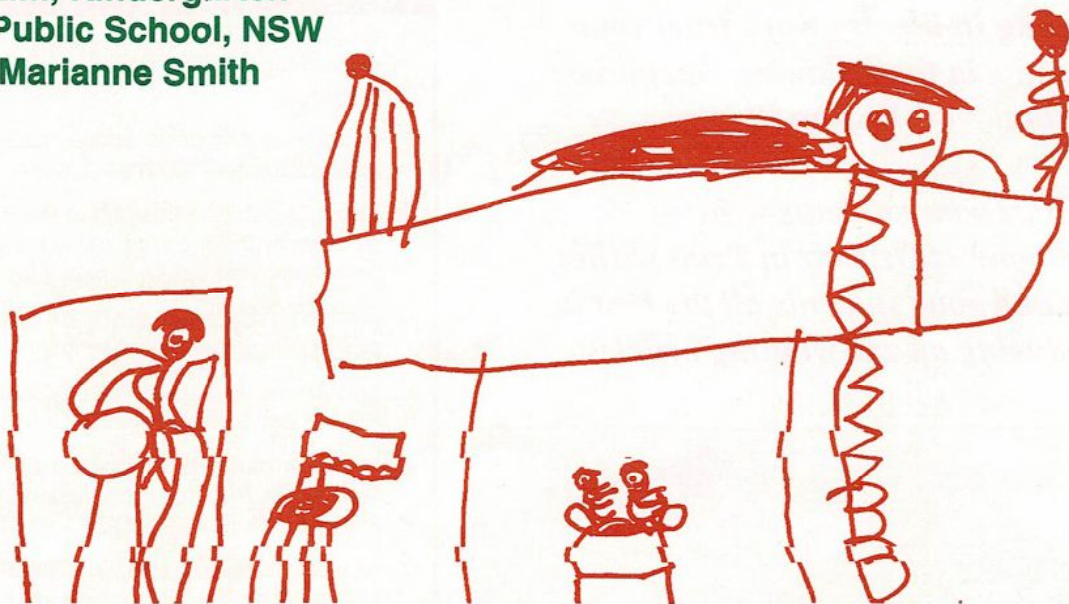
# Death

Struggling.  
Fighting.  
For life.  
Against black terror.  
Against the feel of death.  
Against the terrible blackness overcoming the screaming body.  
Wanting to live on.  
Trying so hard.  
Failing,  
Dying.

Sarah Ward, Year 7  
Presbyterian Ladies' College, WA  
Teacher: Miss Georgeson



Greemn Lim, Kindergarten  
Clovelly Public School, NSW  
Teacher: Marianne Smith



At night my mummy turns into a princess. Then a fairy comes and turns her into a mummy in the morning.





## **Thanks for contributing!**

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### **VICTORIA**

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MacKillop College

Courallie High School  
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Manly High School  
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St Gertrudes School, Smithfield

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Birrong Girls' High School  
Bonville Primary School  
Clovelly Public School  
Coraki Primary School

### **QUEENSLAND**

Ashmore State School  
Caboolture State High School  
Gin Gin State High School  
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4. Work will only be published if submitted by a school with a current subscription.
5. The Finals Judge will be Dr Heather Scutter, English Department, Monash University, Clayton.
6. All work must be submitted to: The Editor, Oz Kidz in Print for adjudication by the panel. PO Box 209, BLACK ROCK VIC 3193.
7. All work must have clearly written the:
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  - Name of school
  - Name of teacher
  - Category of the work, e.g. Poetry or Fiction