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Issue 1, 2024

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C.D. Dodd Indigenous Art Award*

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OZ KIDS IN PRINT

Contents

Creative Net.....	2
From the Editor's Desk.....	4
Our Authors & Illustrators	8
Book reviews	12
YABBA	14
Ambassadors.....	17
2023 Your Australian Literary & Art Award Winners	18

AWARDS FOR POETRY

<i>Our Gem</i>	6
Lauren Woo, Artarmon Public School, Artarmon, NSW	
<i>I Know of a Land</i>	9
Mingze Sun, Pacific Hills Christian, School, Dural, NSW	
<i>The Excursion</i>	11
Delilah, Sylvie, Olivia, Heidi, Salinda, Alexandra, Dottie, Willow, Elodie, Zara, Natalia, Dot., Fahan School, Lower Sandy Bay, Tas.	
<i>The Battle</i>	11
Amelia Lonsdale, St John's Lutheran, Kingaroy, Qld.	
<i>Family</i>	25
Lauren Woo, Artarmon Public School, Artarmon, NSW	

<i>The Poet</i>	28
Lena Takahashi, Waitara Public School, Wahroonga, NSW	
<i>Butterfly Ballerina</i>	28
Amelia Lonsdale, St John's Lutheran School, Kingaroy, Qld.	
<i>The Loved and the Lost</i>	29
Kaylee Jesnoewski, Mindarie Senior College, Mindarie, WA	
<i>Reading is Power</i>	32
Jessica Brimson, Our Lady's College, Annerley, Qld.	
<i>When you blow a balloon</i>	33
Eleanor Yao, Vermont Primary School, Vermont, Vic.	
<i>Enchantment meets Cityscape</i>	33
Suwan Liu, Christ Church Grammar School, South Yarra, Vic.	

AWARDS FOR SHORT STORIES

<i>Friendship</i>	5
Anushka Mishra, Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, NSW	
<i>I lived</i>	6
Jessica Brimson, Our lady's College, Greenslopes, Qld.	
<i>Potato's Fate</i>	7
Joanne Peter, Burnside State School, Burnside, Qld.	
<i>Marbles</i>	10
Lena Takahashi, Waitara Public School, Wahroonga, NSW	
<i>The Bench</i>	16
Meii You, Pymble Ladies' College, Pymble, NSW	
<i>A Lost Sort of Loneliness</i>	24
Sophie Aitken, Moonee Ponds West Primary, Moonee Ponds, Vic.	
<i>My eyes</i>	26
Isabelle F, Baimbridge College, Hamilton, Vic.	
<i>My Little Love</i>	29
Marjorie Hackenberg, Sanderson Middle School, Wulagi, NT	
<i>The Lost Croissant</i>	30
Xanthe Gaynor, Burnside State School, Burnside, Qld.	
<i>My Treasure</i>	31
Kaitlyn Blake, Mullauna College, Donvale, Vic.	
<i>The Moon</i>	32
Lily Zhang, Pymble Ladies College, Pymble, NSW	

'Gowing with the Flow'

Front page cover image

Kaliyah Williams

2023 C. D. Dodd Indigenous Art Award

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Managing Editor/Layout: Carol Dick
Publisher: Jason Woods
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Sponsorship Manager: Ernest Bland
Advertising Manager: Ernest Bland
Fund Committee: Gail Woods CPA
Paul Warburton CPA
Jason Woods

Directors: Jason Woods (Executive)
Rob Eyton
Nick Brooke
John McGuire
Gail Woods CPA
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to our 25th year of OzKidsInPrint. Our first magazine for the year.

It doesn't seem like that long again, that we turned 20.

Winners of the 2023 Literary & Arts Awards start on page 18.

I have published some of the Art entries from 2023. They didn't make the judge's choices, but are worthy of a mention. There were over 1000 entries. We cannot choose them all.

Check out the YABBA Awards (*YOUNG AUSTRALIANS BEST BOOK AWARDS*) Find out more on page 14. Our Author & Illustrator Patrons are amongst the favourites.

Have a great 2024.

- Carol

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KEEP ON WRITING (TYPING)!

Carol Dick
Managing Editor

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Some of the entries from 2023

Editor's



Rainbow Enigma
Marziyah Patanwala
Painting - Senior
William Clarke College
Kellyville, NSW



Do not disappear into the forever night
Meera Nirmalendran
Drawing - Senior
Abbotsleigh
Wahroonga, NSW



Hidden in the Hawthorn
Meera Nirmalendran
Drawing - Senior
Abbotsleigh
Wahroonga, NSW



Hipsters
Tayler McLeod
Computer - Middle
Lindfield Learning Village
Lindfield, NSW



Biodiversity
Leah Burns
Computer - Middle
Marsden State High
Marsden, QLD



Owl
Alice Li
Drawing - Middle
Cherrybrook Technical High School
Cherrybrook, NSW



Me and My Sister in Singapore
Amelia Fan
Drawing - Junior
Roseville College
Roseville, NSW



Famous Landmarks in Sydney
Terence Tao
Drawing - Junior
Concord West Public School
Concord West, NSW



A Day at the Beach
Annice Shin
Drawing - Junior
Murray Farm
Calingford, NSW

Friendship

In the heart of a sprawling forest, two vastly different animals found themselves on a collision course, their destinies intertwined by chance. The first was a majestic gray wolf, his piercing eyes gleaming with intelligence and wisdom. The second was a vibrant and mischievous red fox, whose bushy tail danced with every playful step. Both creatures were masters of their domains, the wolf ruling over the depths of the forest, and the fox claiming the fringes where the wilderness meets human civilization.

On a cool autumn morning, as the sun cast golden hues through the foliage, the wolf embarked on his solitary patrol. His powerful strides carried him effortlessly over the forest floor, his keen senses absorbing every rustle and whisper. In his pursuit of solitude, he seldom encountered creatures beyond his own pack, but today fate had different plans.

Meanwhile, the fox, named Jasper, was pursuing a secret treasure he had discovered—a hidden stash of mouthwatering berries tucked away beneath a moss-covered rock. His light-footed movements betrayed his cunning as he deftly navigated the thick undergrowth, his nose twitching with anticipation. Unbeknownst to him, he was on a collision course with the wolf.

The air tingled with anticipation as the two animals unknowingly approached each other. The forest held its breath, nature poised to witness this momentous meeting. Suddenly, the wolf caught a whiff of something unfamiliar, an intoxicating blend of musk and earth. Intrigued, he veered from his path and followed the scent, his curiosity piqued.

Jasper, sensing the presence of an unfamiliar predator, halted in his tracks. His bright orange fur bristled, tail erect, as he tried to determine the source of this new threat. Peering through a thicket of brambles, he caught a glimpse of the wolf—a formidable creature, muscles rippling beneath his sleek coat. Fear gripped Jasper's heart, but he refused to let it overpower his quick wit.

The wolf, too, had caught sight of the fox, a small creature with fiery fur that shone like the autumn leaves. Though the wolf's

predatory instincts stirred, there was something about the fox's demeanour that intrigued him. Instead of baring his teeth or fleeing in terror, the fox stood his ground, his intelligent eyes locked with the wolf's.

Recognizing a flicker of curiosity in the wolf's gaze, Jasper summoned his courage and stepped forward, his russet fur standing out against the emerald backdrop. With measured steps, he approached the towering figure, his mind racing with the possibilities that lay before them.

"I am Jasper, the red fox," he declared, his voice surprisingly strong despite the tremor in his heart. "And you, sir, are a creature of magnificence. What brings you to my humble domain?"

The wolf regarded Jasper with a mixture of awe and respect. Never before had he encountered a creature so bold and eloquent. His voice resonated with a deep timbre as he responded, "I am known as Greyfang, Alpha of the Eastern Forest. I wandered here by chance, enticed by the unfamiliar scent that clings to your fur. What secret does this forest hold?"

Jasper smiled, realizing that perhaps this meeting was not a confrontation, but an opportunity for friendship and mutual understanding. "Oh, Greyfang, this forest holds many secrets. Secrets of the trees whispering ancient tales, secrets of the babbling brooks that sing melodies of life. Come, let me be your guide, and I shall reveal the hidden wonders of my realm."

Intrigued by the fox's offer, Greyfang nodded his massive head, and together they ventured deeper into the forest. Jasper led the way, weaving through thickets and meandering streams, while Greyfang followed, his massive paws creating a symphony of soft thuds against the forest floor.

As they explored, the two creatures learned from one another. Greyfang shared stories of

survival and loyalty within his wolf pack, while Jasper recounted his encounters with human beings and the secrets of their civilized world. Their friendship grew, transcending the boundaries of their respective species.

Days turned into weeks, and weeks into months. The forest witnessed an unprecedented harmony between the wolf and the fox, a testament to the power of unity amidst diversity. They hunted together, their coordinated efforts ensuring a bountiful feast for both the pack and the fox's kin. They played together, their laughter echoing through the ancient trees, delighting the creatures that dwelled within.

Word of their extraordinary bond soon spread throughout the animal kingdom, becoming a symbol of hope and unity. The forest flourished under their watchful gaze, and creatures of all kinds looked upon their example as a reminder that peace and understanding could prevail, even in a world filled with differences.

And so, as the seasons changed and the forest blossomed, the friendship between Greyfang and Jasper remained unwavering. Their paths had crossed by chance, but their destiny was sealed by the power of love, respect, and the recognition that all creatures, no matter how different, are deserving of compassion and friendship.

By **Anushka Mishra**
Grade Category: Middle
Our Lady of Mercy College
Parramatta, NSW
Teacher: Julia Plummer



I lived

I untangled the old kite from my childhood. The string was slightly worn and the colours were old timey, like the past. It was such a windy day, the weather forecast said it would be as windy as it was in 1941, but I don't trust the news, especially Real facts on 7+.

"Mum, come on, it's getting really windy." Cried Sally. She was 8 years old and as freedom flying as I was in my childhood days.

"Coming!" I replied. I grabbed my kite and rushed to my daughter. We decided to walk, enough fossil fuels are occurring, especially with all the new latest modes of transport. Sally also thought it would be good to study the wind patterns, seeing if they change.

A few minutes later, we arrived at the park. Mayor Alliot was going to turn it into a community

garden, where new flowers and shrubs will be planted all the time! So, we better make the most of it now. The wind was accelerating to 20 knots and increasing slowly. I gave the kite to Sally, and it zoomed doing backflips in the air.

Sally was smiling so happily; it warmed my heart like I was roasting marshmallows. The chocolatey goodness of a roasted smore. Yum! I better make a mental note to introduce Sally to smores. The wind slowly started to die down, so we head back for some lunch.

As we started to head home, I could hear twigs snapping behind us. We turned to see, the wind, it had accelerated to

26 knots! Picking up old fallen leaves and twigs! Sally and I ran as fast as our legs would go. Eventually, after a solid 6 minutes of running, we arrived home, I made Sally's favourite, spaghetti and meatballs. I sat up at the table with Sally, watching her munch away at her spaghetti.

"Can we fly the kite again tomorrow?" eagerly asked Sally.

"If it is windy enough, yes we could." For a good minute, I saw her eyes sparkle like the north star, in the darkest of night. I smiled and hugged her tight.

"Are you happy? You lived an awesome 8 years."

Yes," Grinned Sally from ear to ear. "I lived!"

By **Jessica Brimson**
Grade Category: Middle
Our lady's College
Greenslopes, Qld.

Our Gem

Beneath the azure canopy, the world in sway,
A symphony of life in the light of day.
Mountains rise, majestic and bold,
Legends etched in peaks of gold.

Fields, a tapestry of emerald hue,
Where blooms unfold in morning dew.
Sunset's brush, a palette divine,
Painting the horizon, a masterpiece in time.

Oceans deep, an endless trance,
Whispers of tales in every dance.
Golden shores kissed by the sun's embrace,
A sanctuary where dreams find grace.

In ancient forests, whispers of old,
Secrets in every leaf, stories unfold.
Creatures of whimsy, in shadows they play,
Nature's ballet, night and day.

Cities pulse with electric might,
A kaleidoscope in the vibrant night.
Bridges of dreams connecting souls,
In the heart of progress, a symphony unfolds.

Life's tapestry woven with threads so fine,
In the grand design, a cosmic rhyme.
Our world, a gem in the vast expanse,
A celebration of existence, a dance unfurls.

In this global ballet, let our spirits twirl,
A joyous tribute to our beautiful world.

By **Lauren Woo**
Grade Category: Middle
Artarmon Public School
Artarmon, NSW

Potatoe's Fate

I landed in the middle of many fried, cut up chips. I stared in horror as I turned around and saw a tiny chip that had a red gem on it. Could it be? Was it him? Spud? Brother? How could they do this to him? These innocent potatoes! They did nothing and still these cruel humans do this to us! Just then a big shadow hovered over the top of my head. A knife! Oh, this isn't going to end well!

Chop! Oof! I woke up in a boiling hot pan, "Ouch! It hurts! It hurts!" I cried. I ran around the pan, panicking. Was this it? The end of Tater Lee Jamie's life? After many tries, I managed to climb out of the hot pan. I made a run for it, frantically searching for a place to hide before.....

"HUMANS!!! Run!"

"Stop right there you pesky chip! Don't make this difficult for you! You WILL regret this!" I kept sprinting across the kitchen benchtop, desperately trying to escape from the wrath of the human.

"Ahhhhhhhhhh!" I slid down the side of the kitchen benchtop, barely landing on my feet. I looked behind me, long human arms just missing me. I made an escape through a small gap in the window. Voices faded away as I slowly started to walk towards the fence. I was far away, far away from home, from Spud, from safety. I was lost,

lost in a strange world, a world I don't belong in.

I didn't know where to go, who to go to, I don't even know where I am! I just walked off, away from the house.

I sat down at a nearby river. I laid back, looking at the soft white clouds. "Oh clouds, I wish I was just as good as you. You have been everywhere! How do you know where you're going?" I sighed. That's when I realized I was talking to a cloud. Haha, how silly of me! I closed my eyes and drifted away to my happy place, home.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Crash! Boom! Lightning struck me awake. Where was I now? Wh... What? Water? How??? While I was in my imagination, I must have dozed off and landed into the water and drifted away into the ocean I must admit, I sometimes roll around when I sleep, it's a problem.

Waves crashed onto me, as I hung onto a log, swallowing heaps of water. Thunder, lightning, giant waves? Oh great! It's like this crazy world wants to kill me! Just then a huge wave knocked me down into the dark, unclear water. I held my breath as long as I could, then, everything went black.

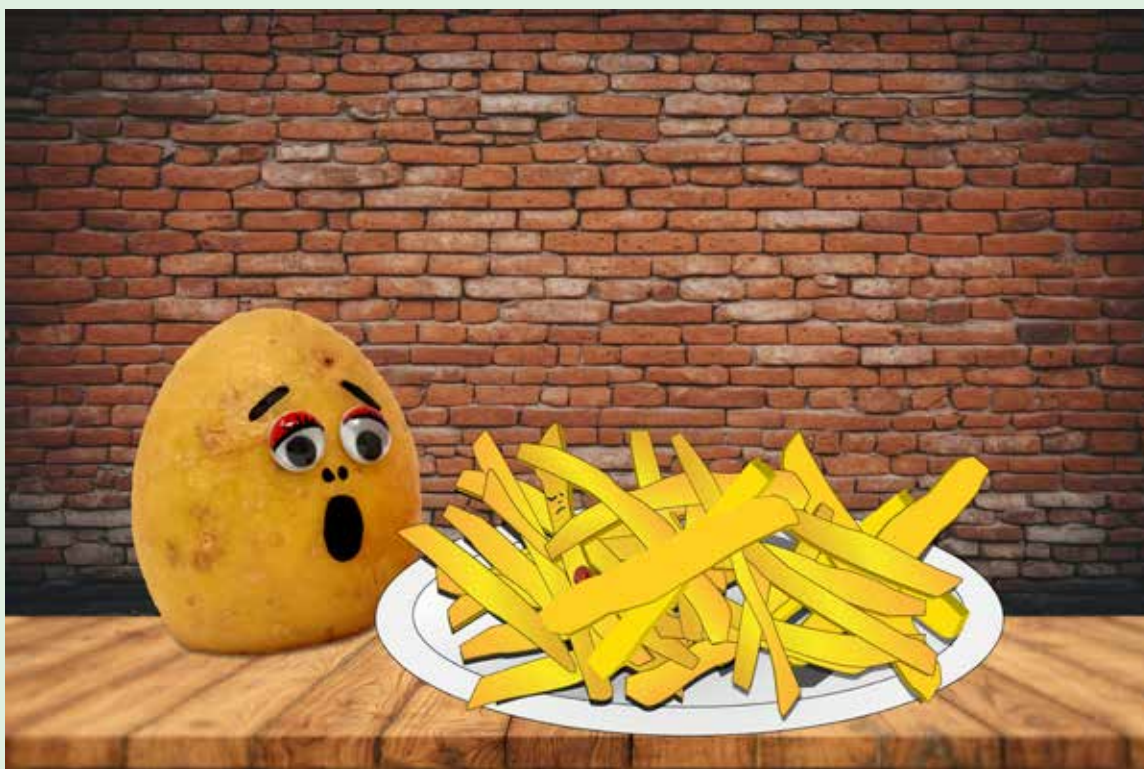
Whoosh! Whoosh! I woke up on soft sand, I jumped up in shock! Was it over?

Am I alive? Or is this just heaven? Am I in heaven? I looked around, calm seas, clear blue skies, soft sand, wind blowing around me, gently brushing against my golden skin. I breathed in heavily, it was over. Just then, a small familiar voice came behind me, "Crisis averted!" I turned around in shock, "SPUD!!!"

I ran towards him, and he hugged me with open arms. I was still so confused, "How is it possible?" I saw the red gem?" Spud chuckled and said, "I ran out of there and I must have dropped the red gem and it probably landed on another chip."

Then Spud gave me a strange look, "You know it takes more than a human to get rid of me, right?" I looked around in embarrassment, "Of course, after all, you are my brother!" And with that, we stood there watching the sunset with our arms around each other. What a perfect ending to a crazy story, am I right?

*By Joanne Peter
Grade Category: Middle
Burnside State School
Burnside, Qld
Teacher: Mrs Blunt*



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

I Know of a Land



Peter - Sydney, Australia

I know of a land with hot sandy beaches,
With neighbourhoods and cafes,
And a school with many teachers.
I know of a land where people talk slang,
They say, 'G'day' when you meet 'em in sunshine, hail or rain.
I know of a land with the top-notch summertimes,
When the sun burns bright,
And the boxes at Woolworths are filled with limes.
We visit Palm Beach (but Bondi is better!)
We get home and gather together,
On the soil of the land which I call home.



Abioye - Kano, Nigeria

I know of a land with vast yellow plains,
We've got elephants and giraffes...
But we haven't got much rain.
The temperature is over 30 and being sunburnt is a pain.
I know of a land where crops don't thrive,
We don't have a car and my parents can't drive.
We don't have much food nor money, I say.
Dad sells carrots, but sometimes, our visitors don't pay.
At night, it's just you, the sky and the stars.
You creep out just a little, because the door is ajar.
And then you will see the land which I call home.

Dmitry - Kiev, Ukraine

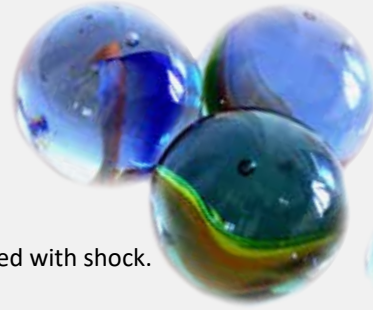
I know of a land torn apart by war,
Our flat was bombed, and we are now poor.
The sky used to be blue, but it's not anymore.
And if you look at the sky, you might see a bomb,
You black out in a heartbeat, and when you wake up...
You realise everything is gone.

I know of a land which is being invaded,
Sometimes, our town is being raided.
People are shouting things in Russian,
As you crawl out from the mass destruction.
I know of a land which I hope will be fixed.
The war has broken my heart,
For the land I call home is breaking apart.

We each know a land in this extensive globe,
But wherever it might be, you still call it home.
extensive globe,
But wherever it might be, you still call it home.



By **Mingze Sun**
Grade Category: Middle
Pacific Hills Christian School
Dural, NSW
Teacher: Mr Lees



Marbles

I remember the old days; the ones when we used to challenge people to marbles games, create steam train models with molding clay, survey Milson's Point from our vine-ensnared tree house, and so on, and so forth.

These games were - a moderate fun, I guess? Not really particularly life-changing. Yet. But I didn't know that it would become a game-changer.

I would like to give you every single detail, like how many specks of dust were in the place I am going to tell you about, but that would just bore you to death, not entrance you in a world of mysteries (or, earth.) So not really the outcome I'm looking for.

Let's go straight into the action. We were pasting on bold letters (with the font of Glacial Indifference - uh oh, a fact!) onto a flag (the New South Wales flag, actually; oops! Wink, wink...) for our Gatherers Club Selection Announcement when Miley let out a shriek (that **PIERCED MY EARDRUMS AND ALMOST MADE ME DEAF, MILEY**, if you're out there reading this!) and dropped the banner.

"Miley!" I roared, provoked to my Irritation Chart's climax. "Why'd you do that?" The crumpled flag, which we had spent hours smoothing creases off, was partly torn by Miley's sharp fingernails and the announcement was going to start in **TEN MINUTES**.

Miley's hand was trembling furiously, pointing to something - an empty patch of carpet, so what?

"It's empty, stop having annoying hysterics!" Wait.
Oh no.
Wasn't that -
Yes...
No!
Yes -
Peppercorn!

I froze as if struck by lightning as realisation dawned inside me. Wasn't our Golden Retriever, Peppercorn, sitting obediently right there? How had he disappeared? He certainly wasn't anywhere else in the house - or outside!
And then I spot it - a hairline crack, tracing

a square big enough for a young teenager to fit in!

"Rheanne, what in the world are you trying to do? And you call me crazy?" I frantically reached out onto my desk and grabbed a smooth, working flashlight; the one with the sphere at the end, to light up the way. Shoving up the broken floorboards it revealed, followed along by a hollow, dark tunnel, I jumped in without hesitation.

"RHEANNE!"

Miley's panicked screeches echoed down the jagged, splintery slide. Abruptly, **CRASH!** I landed in a pile of dirt and bark on the floor. Not soon after, my older sister's right behind me.

"Turn on the flashlight..." Miley moaned, "quick, quick!"

I fumbled on the switch - except there wasn't one.

I held up my new flashlight to the last glimmer of light showing, uncovering a beautiful, turquoise-coloured agate-like marble.

"Aha," I whipped around, ready to pounce and hurl the marble at the unfamiliar voice, but the teenage girl just put her hands up shoulder height with a mocking expression, "just what I needed."

As my vision grew more accustomed to the darkness, I wondered about the familiar face grinning broadly and unpleasantly at me.

Oh, I realised, eyes growing wide, it's Farren Hayes - the one in the wanted posters!

"Don't move, or he dies."

A golden retriever whimpered at Farren's side, a gun pressed to his neck; Peppercorn!

"You know who I am?"

I swallowed, gulping, and finally nodded.

"Yesss..." She spoke like a snake about to bite, "You dare call the police and y' die."

I froze, paralysed with shock.

"Now, if y' accept a game of marbles an' win, y' get 'm back, girl. Bu' I'm warning y' - I'm a damn bit good at marbles. If I win, I get your marble an' dog. An' trust me, these ar' valuable."

I snuck a look back at Miley - but she's gone, gone! I couldn't believe she ditched me! Too scared, huh!

"Agreed," I declared as confidently as I can, "bring out your marble."

A Tahitian-pearl style marble is placed on a small narrow table, sort of like a pool table, and I placed the agate marble on the other side.

"First of th'ee st'ikes wins. Y' go first."

I roll it forward... and it hits straight on the target!

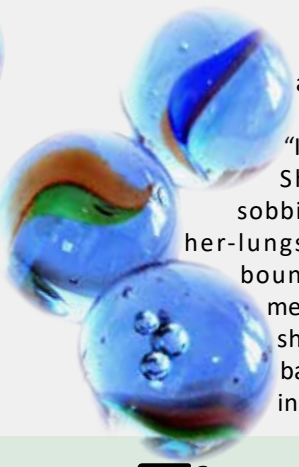
Farren fumed. I replaced my marble, but I barely glanced at it for a split second before it was knocked down and into the bark. A grin of triumph spread across Farren's face. One-one. Still a few more shots to go.

I shot it forward, missing by only a millimetre, and groan. Farren smirks and slides my marble off the table with hers, slow motion.

So, one-two. There was still a chance for me to win. I bowled the agate marble forward, colliding with the green-black gradient and making it even - two-two.

Face twisted in fury and rage, Farren struck nice and even; but her marble slips across a droplet of water, changing course and slamming into a rock on the floor of the cramped cavish bunker. Peppercorn whined in misery, and I snapped back to reality, remembering my purpose. I whisked my marble forward once again... missing by a fraction of a millimetre, this time.

But apparently it brushed past Farren's marble, because it twirled gradually for a while and then plonked to the floor. Farren screamed in outrage and made a run for it, up the tunnel - when Miley and the police officers, faces triumphant, snatched away her dagger and gun, as well



as her taser.

“I’LL GET YOU FOR THIS!”
She shrieked, half-sobbing, half-screaming-her-lungs-out. Peppercorn bounded happily up to me and Miley as Farren shouted, grasping the bars of a temporary cell in the blue and white

van as if choking someone’s neck.

So, ever since then, that scene of triumph, marbles has been part of my regular, everyday schedule. I’ve never lost a single round, but like I said before, yet. Who knows what the future will have in store for me?

Talking bananas? Aliens stealing my salami sandwiches? Clay train models coming to

life on the tracks? But anyway, that brings my story to an end. Let’s wrap it up now. We live a happy, happy, amazingly merry life from then on... or, do we really?

By **Lena Takahashi**
Grade Category: Junior
Waitara Public School
Wahroonga, NSW

The Excursion

A hat and sunscreen
A teddy and my lunchbox
Off to the gardens

On the bus with Ken
From school to the big gardens
Skipping to the gate

The queen and king’s crown
The gate, fancy and dark
Photo with teddy

No picking flowers
Bees and butterflies need them
Pollen to honey

Lily pads and ducks
A bench for our lunchboxes
Sunny, bright and hot

Baby ducks, ducklings
Green lily pads are floating
Mummy in the shade

A pond and a path
White bridge and blue waterfall
I can smell hot chips

Roses and tulips
Indigo granny bonnets
Flowers on archway

The Fahan School Kindergarten class 2023

By **Delilah, Sylvie, Olivia, Heidi, Salinda, Alexandra, Dottie, Willow, Elodie, Zara, Natalia, Dot..**

Grade Category: Junior
Fahan School
Lower Sandy Bay, Tas.
Teacher: Rebecca Wiggins

The Battle

The sparkling pool is shiny and wide
The sound of children echos on all sides
A scaley enemy slithers about
“Look over there!” a shout rings out

A scream emerges, high-pitched and shrill
My brother is underwater, still
He pops his head up bewildered and confused
Two beady eyes look back amused

In challenge, the snake rears up its head
My brother frozen, still in dread
Gran lunges in his direction
Whisking my brother to protection

We retreat from the snake
All of us alert and awake
Our five-year-old selves, lifted over the fence
We stare at the snake, our bodies all tense

My Gran takes a spade
And attacks it with the blade
A hush falls over everyone
We battled the snake and Gran made sure we won!

By **Amelia Lonsdale**
Grade Category: Senior
St John’s Lutheran
Kingaroy, Qld.



BOOK REVIEWS

Meet our book reviewers Yoni, Lily, Ailish, Bridie, Tamar and Elior from Years 4 and 5 at Tucker Road, Bentleigh Primary School, in Victoria.

Reviews Coordinators:
Robyn Donoghue and Meredith Costain

Blair Moon : How to be Cooler than the Moon

by Ashleigh Mounser (Ford Street Publishing)

Blair, who has grown up in a nursing home, has been home-schooled all her life. Her best buddies are Edgar and Nancy, who are 92 and 74. But things get interesting when she starts going to a real school for the first time in her life.

Is she going to fit in with the other students?

Will she win the star role in the school play?

Or achieve her goal of being elected school president?

You'll have to read the book to find out!

I enjoyed this book very much because of the tricky words and the amazing comedy. Recommended for readers aged 10+.

Rating: 9/10

— Yoni, Year 5

Wild Bush Days

written by Penny Harrison and illustrated by Virginia Gray (Midnight Sun Publishing)

I don't usually read books like this, but I thought this one was great! The story shifts from the present to the past as bush walkers imagine a time when a Lady Bushranger lived in the mountains. The kids in the book use their imaginations to act out the scenes.

I loved all the detailed illustrations because they tell their own story, alongside the words. The language used in the book is very interesting with great adjectives and I loved the storyline.

Because some of the language in this story is quite complicated, I recommend it to readers aged 10+ who like to think about feelings.

Rating: 9/10

— Lily, Year 5

Girls Change the Game : First Game Back

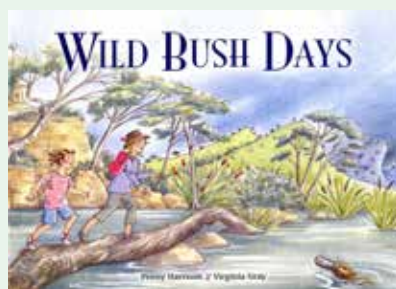
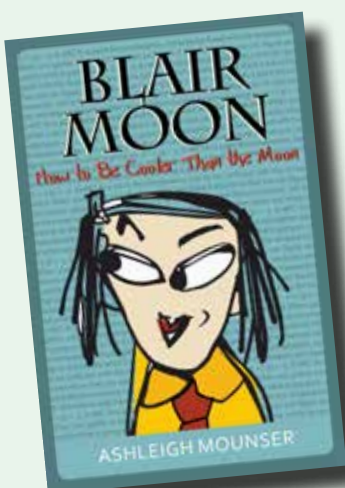
by Gabrielle Gloury and Michael Hyde (Ford Street Publishing)

After two years of Covid they're back! The Westpark Scorpions Under 14 Girls team face their biggest rival – Riverside Devils. The Scorpions have gained new players and a brand-new coach, Rita. During isolation Rita checked in on the girls via Zoom to give drills to help them with their kicking style and handballs. She also gave the girls exercises to keep their fitness levels up.

This book is written as a 'choose-your-own-adventure', where the authors let you decide what the characters will do next. I enjoyed this book because I'm a footy girl and love this style of writing! Suitable for readers aged 10+.

Rating: 9.5/10

— Ailish, Year 5





Sunny the Shark: Surviving the Wild

written and illustrated by Remy Lai (Allen & Unwin)

Sunny and her pilot fish friends set off to look for food, but some things in the ocean are not what they seem. Like the plastic ring that wraps itself around Sunny's fin, making it difficult for her to hunt.

Sunny the Shark is a graphic novel for young readers. I liked it a lot because at the beginning all the characters work together as a team, and parts of it made me laugh. But I also found out about the dangers of plastics in our oceans.

I think this book would suit kids who are between 7-10, love reading graphic novels and love to laugh.

Rating: 9/10

— Bridie, Year 5

The Raven Heir

by Stephanie Burgis (Bloomsbury)

The Raven Heir is a fantasy story about magical triplets, called Cordelia, Giles and Rosalind. At the start of the book the triplets are hidden in a castle and their sorceress mum and big brother get captured while a terrible war is happening. The triplets need to save their family and end the war, but nobody can be trusted.

I loved this book because you never know what will happen next and there are lots of secrets to be discovered. Perfect for fiction, adventure and animal lovers aged 9-12.

Rating: 10/10

— Tamar, Year 4

Alex and the Alpacas Save the World

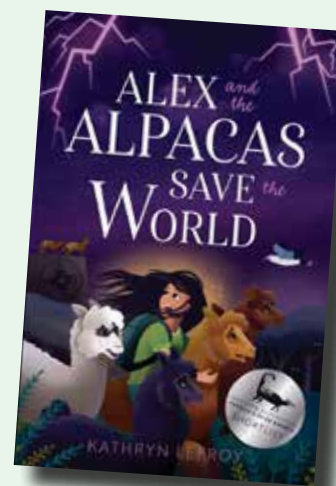
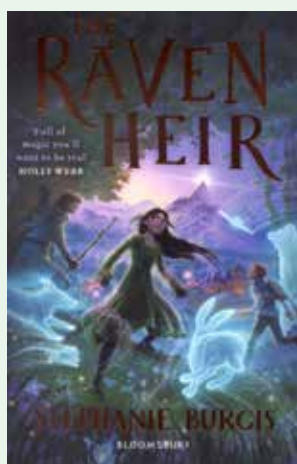
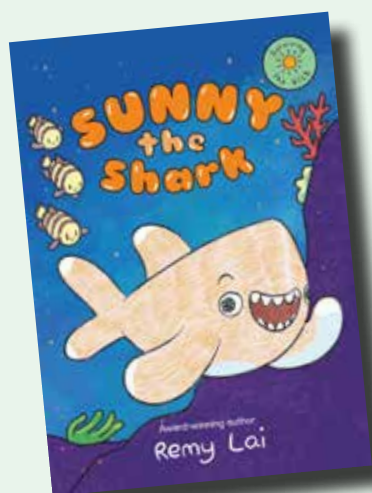
by Kathryn Lefroy (Fremantle Press)

When Alex and her mum go to help care for her grumpy Grandpa Jacob in Tasmania, she has no idea about what she's going to find on his farm. Talking alpacas! She's soon caught up in a family secret that threatens to destroy the world. Can she and Leeuie, the boy from next-door, help to save it?

I enjoyed this book because it was full of action and suspense, with plenty of cliff hangers to keep you turning the pages! If you love adventure, you'll love this book!

Rating: 10/10

— Elijor, Year 5



YABBA AWARDS

YOUNG AUSTRALIANS BEST BOOK AWARDS

Do you love reading? Every year Victorian students are encouraged to vote for their favourite books in the YOUNG AUSTRALIANS BEST BOOK AWARDS, with various sections ranging from picture books through to YA novels.

Last year's awards ceremony was held at Camberwell Girls Grammar School. Students from local schools were treated to answers to Burning Questions from authors and illustrators, a session of Squiggle-graphy with illustrator Marjory Gardner, and plenty of humour from the host – comedian and children's author Peter Helliar. The highlight of the day was the song 'Thank You for the Books' performed by members of the CGGS choir. Voting for the 2024 Awards* is now open!

THANK YOU FOR THE BOOKS

*Thank you for the stories
The books you've written
And with all your art we're smitten
We can't live without them
We say with all honesty
What would life be?
Without your books for us all to read
So we say thank you for the stories
You've presented so brilliantly.*

*The YABBA awards are now in their 38th year
Let us celebrate and give everyone a big cheer
A Cake-eating Hippo – a fantastical thing
We've Hickory Dashed, read Frankie Fish
The pictures, the words,
We just want to acknowledge you now.*

So we say . . .

*Thank you for the stories
The books you've written
And with all your art we're smitten
We can't live without them
We say with all honesty
What would life be?
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So we say thank you for the stories
You've presented so brilliantly
So we say thank you for the stories
You've presented so brilliantly
Thank you for the books.*

*Lyrics by Mernda Central College, VIC
Camberwell Girls Grammar choir*



Camberwell Girls Grammar Choir performing
'Thank You for the Books'



Illustrator Marjory Gardner and host Peter Helliar



Authors Adam Wallace and Ingrid Laguna launch the awards ceremony



Author George Ivanoff receiving the award for Fiction for Younger Readers



Andy Griffiths accepting the Graham Davey Citation



Meredith Costain and Danielle McDonald, shortlisted for the Fiction for Younger Readers award

*** And watch out for the KOALA and KROC awards in NSW and the Northern Territory!**

With thanks to Anne Devenish, Senior Librarian, CGGS

The Bench

The sky was bright blue. The trees were a beautiful verdant green and the sparkling grass was lush beneath me. Along the cobbled path people walked, ran and played; it was a serene scene of joy and bliss.

I had lived here, in this small park my whole life, watching silently as people rested on me, talked quietly, shared secrets. Some poor old blokes had even nodded off. These people were relaxed and happy, and so was I. Such is the life of a common park bench.

But something had changed today. Something crackled under the veil of happiness.

The first thing I noticed was the large banner strung crudely between two spindly birches; it depicted some sort of cross, except the ends of the cross kind of turned so it looked like a wheel. There was constantly a crowd beneath the sign that day, chanting, and a man at the front near the banner, a guy with a toothbrush moustache waved his fists, his voice echoing across the city. In the whole twenty years since I had been created, I had never seen such a disturbing scene.

A few days after the toothbrush moustache man made his speech was the most frightful moments of my life.

It was night, one of those peaceful ones where you can hear the cicadas in the trees. The air was humid and hot, and mosquitos swelled around the trash cans in the park. The moon, round like a plate, hung in the sky. Trees swayed to the breeze and two silhouettes appeared in the semi-darkness,

one carrying a baby-shaped shadow.

They crept through the park and rested on me. It was a man and a woman, the latter cradling a small baby who was asleep. They talked between themselves quietly and I could sense terror in their eyes.

A commotion from the other side of the park drew their attention. The woman shrieked and the two dove behind me just as a gunshot lit up the night. For a moment, it was brighter than the moon. Then more came and a fusillade of bullets wedged themselves inside me.

“Run!” Yelled the man.

I knew who they were, and who the group of men charging across the park were as well. The two cowering behind me were Jews. The men with guns were the Gestapo. More bullets sailed through the air. The gunshots sounded like rain pounding on the roof on a hot summer’s day.

I needed to protect the family, so prone and exposed behind me, from the bullets of the Gestapo. I wanted to wrap my arms around them and tell them that it would be alright, that they would all wake up and find out that it was all a bad dream, that nobody was trying to kill them. But I couldn’t. I was frozen solid in the ground, arms pinned to my sides and could only watch in horror as a single true bullet sparkled menacingly in the moonlight.

Behind me, the woman screamed again, this time a pained, drawn-out cry of agony and defeat. Her blood spilled onto the ground and carved a small trail through the grass like a river snaking in a hundred different directions. The man cursed.

every direction a black gun was drawn. A single, loud gunshot, not unlike a firework, rang through the still night. The Gestapo headed back the way they had come. Their job was done.

A plane sped across the sky, followed by others in quick succession. The noise of their engines filled the air and suddenly, bombs were falling from the heaven, from the stars and I could see buildings in all directions crumbling like sand. The ground shook and a huge bomb exploded right in the park, blowing me apart, sending wooden pieces shooting into the air. Pain ripped through me as I was shredded, and everything seemed red for a moment. I felt myself fall and land helplessly on the ground, physically hurt from being forcefully separated from my friends, and mentally broken. I was done for.

Just like the Jewish family dead beside me, their blood still fresh on the red-stained grass. None of them would ever open their eyes again.

I stared up at the stars, barely visible from here and wished with all my heart, that kindness and justice would rule the world once more, and everybody would be equal.

The planes’ rumbling engines gradually faded and the night returned to its quietness and tranquillity, and the moon lit everything in a soft glow. Lying silently on my back, I could feel the termites around me, jaws gnashing in excitement and the last thought I had before everything went dark was:

If only there would be peace. In the future. No fighting, no war. Just peace.

By **Mei You**

Grade Category: Middle
Pymble Ladies’ College
Pymble, NSW

The Gestapo had reached me. They encircled the man, still lying on the ground with the baby in his arms. The baby’s face was splattered with blood, hers or her mother’s, nobody would ever know. From



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

Young Australian

2023

Writers' Awards

The BIC Young Australian
Writer of the Year Award



Gevin Kankanamalage

Scotch College, Hawthorn Vic

'Of Butterflies and Memories'



Sedgman Literary Award

Poetry – Secondary

Zy McLeod

Lindfield Learning Village, NSW

SEDGMAN

Roy Hill Literary Award

Short Story – Secondary

Heath Knight

St John's Lutheran School, NSW



C.D. Dodd Literary Award

Junior Poetry

Jasper Wang

Cherrybrook Public School, NSW



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Geoff & Helen Handbury

Achievement Award

Rohan Cali

Scotch College, Vic.

**Geoff and Helen
Handbury
Foundation**



Geoff & Helen Handbury

Literary Award

Nathan Munro

Scotch College, Vic.

Young
2023
Australian Art Awards

**The Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Art Award
Young Australian Artist of the Year**



Elizabeth Vardouniotis
The Hills Grammar School, NSW



Commonwealth Bank Art Award
Painting – Senior
Julia Wang
Melbourne Girls' College, Vic.



Commonwealth Bank
Commonwealth Bank Art Award
Painting – Junior
Barry Wu
Lindfield Public School, NSW



Commonwealth Bank Art Award
Painting – Middle (Joint Winner)
Candice Chen
Roseville College, NSW

Commonwealth Bank Art Award
Painting – Middle (Joint Winner)
Kingsley Liu
Jasper Road Public School Vic.





*Bic Australia Art Award
Computer Art - Senior*
Feteema Aljibri
Southern River College, WA



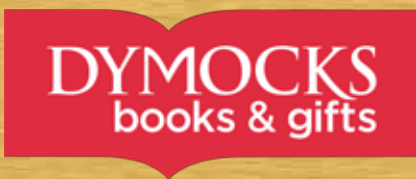
*Bic Australia Art Award
Computer Art - Middle*
Lisa Kataoka
St George Girls High School, NSW



*Bic Australia Art Award
Computer Art - Junior*
Phoebe Webber
Huntingdale Primary School, WA



*Dymock's Tooronga Art Award
Drawing - Senior*
Tillie Moyle
Moreton Bay College, Qld.



*Dymock's Tooronga Art Award
Drawing - Middle*
Annie Li
St George Girls High School, NSW





*Lions Club Art Award
Drawing - Primary*
Yolanda Lu
John Purchase Public School, NSW



*Lions Club Art Award
Photography – Senior*
Ian Lee
The Kings School, NSW



*Kin Mining Ltd Art Award
Photography - Middle*
Lisa Kataoka
St George Girls High School, NSW



*Kin Mining Ltd Art Award
Photography – Junior*
Alma Naphali
Reddam House, NSW



*Marjory Gardner Art Award
Judge's Choice Awards*
Dana Han
Lane Cove West Public School, NSW



*Marc McBride Art Award
Judge's Choice Awards*
Julia Wang
Melbourne Girls' College, Vic.



*Ann Ryan Art Award
Judge's Choice Awards*
Surahanni Pindan
Fitzroy Valley District High School, WA

Young Australian
2023
Indigenous Art Awards

The C.D. Dodd Indigenous Art Award
Young Indigenous Artist of the Year



Kaliyah Williams
Fitzroy Valley District High School, WA



Roy Hill Foundation
Indigenous Art - Middle
Solomon Seroney



Bellevue Gold Ltd
Indigenous Art - Junior
Nikeelah Ejai



Regional Indigenous Art Awards

2023



Element 25 Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Leonard Gilboy



Newcrest Mining
Indigenous Art Award
Jasper Chen



KIN Mining Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Kelish Williams



Calidus Resources Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Tykih Brown



Capricorn Metals
Indigenous Art Award
Zileah Gordon



Sedgman Pty Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Nygoyah Cherel



Spartan Resources Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Eden Ishiguchi



Northern Star Resources
Indigenous Art Award
Cheyetta Shandley



Impact Minerals
Indigenous Art Award
Ruby Skinner



Auking Mining Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Tarique Geary-Bedford



Central Petroleum
Indigenous Art Award
Jacqueeta Shaw



Metro Mining Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Tykih Brown



Mount Gibson Iron Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Ira Nargoodah



Dacian Gold Ltd
Indigenous Art Award
Louisianna Shaw



Arafura Resources
Indigenous Art Award
Faith Little



IGO Resources
Indigenous Art Award
Ismahl Croft

A Lost Sort of Loneliness

I look into the vast distance. I wrap my old arms around my grandchildren's stubby shoulders. They laugh and I give them my warmest smile as I place freshly baked damper in their tiny hands.

I walk out of the door and sit down on the scorching oak planks. They burn my skin, but I don't care. I carefully slip the fresh warm damper out of my pocket. My mother drifts effortlessly out of the door and gives me her warmest smile, I smile back.

My brother and I walk across the rough gravel path to the lake so we can catch freshwater fish.

He glides gracefully into the iridescent tranquil water, barely making a ripple. I think about how much I love my family, how good our way of life is, connected to country.

Back home, eating fresh fish with our family and the elders, they tell us stories of the past. They explain the things we used to do and the traditions we still follow now.

Everything is nice, everything is calm...

As I get just a little older, things start to change. Not for the better. Mum warns me of the Gubba, those white people

who have been cruel and heartless to our people, taking the children. She talks about the cruelty and heartlessness. They search homes and peoples' land to take people "like me". I stare in utter dread as she says, "Be wary my daughter, they could come for you and your brother too." She sounds nervous.

I grow scared, fearful and curiously hateful of them. Why would they do this, how could they?

One bright sunny afternoon I play with my friends under the cool shade of eucalyptus trees. Suddenly the slam of a car door interrupts our game. Only those Gubba have cars I don't recognise so I did what my mother had warned me I needed to do, and ran. Together with my friends, we ran into bushland.

I ran so much that my eyes blurred and the tears that ran down my face fell behind me, forming puddles of fear and dread. Yellow earthy ochre accumulates on the dusty dirty red soil but it still reminds me of the prison they thought was full of hope.

I didn't care that we were running into unknown land with snakes and possibly spiders. All that really mattered was that we got back to our families safely.

Suddenly I catch my leg on a broken branch. I scream with all my might. The pain slows me down and then my leg throbs but I can't stop. The impact made my tears cascade faster to my chin, I can barely see now, but I keep going.

I heard the Gubba's enraged voices shout with frustration. They were getting closer. A man caught up with me and then yanked my arm, slightly dislocating my shoulder. As I writhed in pain, the man took me back to his car in front of my family. I could hear my mother's screams and cries as I tried to reach for her but I wasn't strong enough to escape. As I was dragged away to his tar black automobile, all I wanted to do was die. Anything, anything was better than this.

We drive away. I was crying, terrified.

Eventually we stopped. He pulled me out and dragged me carelessly along the gravel road. We walked and walked 'til we got to a tiny room. Then he swung open the door of what looked like a cell and threw me with a thud as I met the cruel stone floor. "Get changed!" he snapped. "And out of whatever that filthy thing is." He pointed at the frock my mother made and sneered at me with a disgusted look on his face, slammed the door and walked away, making his stomping extremely noticeable.

My eyes brushed over the faded periwinkle dress that had stains and dirt, like it was from another life. It looked miserable draped over an old oak rocking chair.

I slipped on the rough dress the cruel man gave me and sat on the bed.

Rain and the hail pelted down on the roof but the only other sounds were my endless cries and sobs. My thoughts rolled and crashed through my head like a raging waterfall. How would I get out? How would I get home? Would I ever see my mother again?

All I could do now was miserably cry my broken self to sleep. I did and I didn't stop. I didn't get out of bed 'til their shouts rang in my ears and my mind couldn't take it anymore. I wished so desperately not to see those men in black and white. As they took me out of the room, I saw innocent girls being beaten just because they were talking their own language. I felt so much sorrow for them and that I couldn't make friends, but I didn't care if I made friends. I would lose them anyway.

I coped with this 'till we started lessons. They locked a group of us in a cramped room with zero natural light. No way out. A teacher in the front of the room taught us to read and to write, but we weren't there for fun. They were trying to change us. Once one single girl in my group made the girl next to her laugh and the next day bruises and gashes painted her once clear skin with purple and drying blood. The teacher pulled her to the front of the class. I saw the yearning and the terror strike her red spotted face as her eyes screamed for help. It was supposed to teach us all a lesson. It was like a horror



Family

story with a moral to behave. To make us shut our mouths, otherwise her tragic story would repeat.

The men made us into their little domestics, like clay they forcefully moulded over time, forming us into any little thing society accepted, but everything we didn't. They made us wash dishes, scrub floors until our fingers bled. The harsh soap seeped into my raw skin. Bacteria accumulated like sharks to blood. I once ripped most of my skin off my finger when preparing a dish but they just put a band-aid on it and said I'd be fine. But the soap seeped in and felt like bladed daggers.

Sometimes when we had all been good, we got to go outside for five minutes but the gates had electric barbed wire. We still didn't get to socialise but whispers were better than nothing. Sometimes they made us stand outside, the unforgiving icy wind grazing our uncovered arms while we huddled close together. So many of us together, but still it was so lonely.

Every evening as the night and moon blankets the sun, I dream of everlasting springs. My mother spreads her open arms like vast welcoming wings and I run towards freedom. I run towards family, I run towards country. The gate grows near but the men drag me back into the endless, empty, black as I scream and yearn for my mother just like she once did.

My hopeful dreams begin to invade my mind and take over. I believe in getting out of this. I've had enough and I am strong enough, because I am enough.

I sit with my grandchildren on lawns outside a big white building. I think about how I gained my freedom once again. How I was reunited with my mother once again. I unwrap some damper I had prepared for my grandchildren at this event as I listen to the Gubba and the one word I have waited a long time to hear, sorry.

And now I have. Is it enough or do we need a bigger voice?

By Sophie Aitken
Grade Category: Middle
Moonee Ponds West Primary
Moonee Ponds, Vic.

In the book of life, a chapter unfolds,
Bound by ties that time never molds.
A family's embrace, a fortress so strong,
A chorus of voices, a lifelong song.

Through the seasons, through joy and strife,
Family weaves the fabric of life.
In laughter and tears, in moments grand,
A circle of love, forever to withstand.

From the roots that anchor, deep and true,
Branches extend, a familial view.
In the garden of kinship, blossoms of care,
Each member's essence, a treasure rare.

A tapestry woven with stories and grace,
Family, the home where hearts find a place.
Shared memories, like stars in the night,
Illuminate the bonds, pure and bright.

Through trials and triumphs, together we stand,
A united front, hand in hand.
In the mosaic of love, each one a part,
Family, a masterpiece of the heart.

So cherish the ties that bind and entwine,
In the warmth of kin, love continues to shine.
Through the chapters of life, a constant decree,
Family, the anchor, in a boundless sea.

By Lauren Woo
Grade Category: Middle
Artarmon Public School
Artarmon, NSW
Teacher: Ms Minchester



My eyes

My eyes were locked on the little bowl under the microscope. Looking at the little freckle like DNA I see something move. I shoot up thinking about what I just saw. I've never seen anything like it I rush to my co-worker keen to get the answer on what I had just seen in the DNA. Was it something that's extinct? Was it a rare species? Scrolling through the links desperate to find the answer to this. That's when I see it. At the bottom, very bottom of the page. Dinosaur DNA.

I'm back looking under the microscope hoping it's not what I think it is. There it is again. Like the size of a small peanut. It was definitely a dinosaur's DNA cell. I jump up in a fright trying to focus on what I just created in this lab. It keeps moving like a sausage in a pan! I run over to my co-worker, and he looked as shocked as I was. He rushed over to look in the microscope to see if I was telling the truth or if I was just imagining it. He stared at it for a good ten minutes before realising I wasn't just imagining it

"Quick get it to a safe spot and put it in an incubator!"

1982, 1982 was the last time dinosaurs went extinct. We weren't sure what type it was yet but we were sure it was going to be dangerous. We put it separately from the rest as it could cause panic in the area. We didn't know whether it would lead to great

danger, or the world would stay the same. So, we waited and waited.

6 Months passed "Crack, crack". I turned around quicker than a meerkat and locked my eyes on the now hatching egg. 2 cracks. 3 cracks, it just kept going. I was anxiously waiting for it to fully crack open. Right at that second it cracked in half. I leaned over the incubator to see a tiny little T-Rex sitting in the warm incubator. I stared at it in shock. It was like it was eyeing me down for a morning snack. It started making weird noises I had never heard before.

I couldn't quite react right. I was stood looking at this dinosaur like I just saw someone get run over! I reached into my pocket to grab my phone out to call my coworker when this newly born t-rex leaped onto me! I dropped to the floor in a fright. I looked up slowly at my feet and saw it was gone. I stood up slowly to see if I could see where it went. But as to my surprise it was gone.

"AHHHH!" I hear a piercing scream coming from the room next to me. I was like a cat to see if I could catch it. Suddenly the power went out. Everything is pitch black. I hear chewing in the corner of the room. "It couldn't be. Could it?" I step slowly into the corner of the room. I hear chewing on the left side down. I suddenly hear nothing but silence. I start creeping to a flashlight I could see on a bench. I move a bit more

quickly trying to stay away from the t-rex. I just let a t-rex escape. I thought to myself as I grab the flashlight from the bench.

I turn on the flashlight only to see blood splattered on the floor and walls. It was almost like the body had been dragged out of the room. I make my way to the right side of the room anxious I was going to run into this monster. I start stepping in a pool of blood. I shone my torch forward only to see a hand sitting upright in the corner of the room.

I gagged but stopped myself. I hear growling in the corner of the room. Right side down. It sounded like it had already grown a fair bit. Suddenly the lights start to flicker. "The powers back on!" As I finish my sentence I turn around and it leaps out at me! I fall to the ground struggling to get back up! This monster is fighting me trying to get a piece of me, but I won't let that happen!

"BANG!" The T-rex falls to the ground. I look up to see my co-worker standing there with a shotgun. There was blood all over the floor and on me with only a few minor injuries. I couldn't stand. I was laying there in shock trying to think about what had just happened.

"Are you alright?" Asked my Co-worker.

I was starting to go faint. All I could hear was sirens and the sound of my co-worker's voice.

I looked at him and said, "Thank you" in a faint voice.

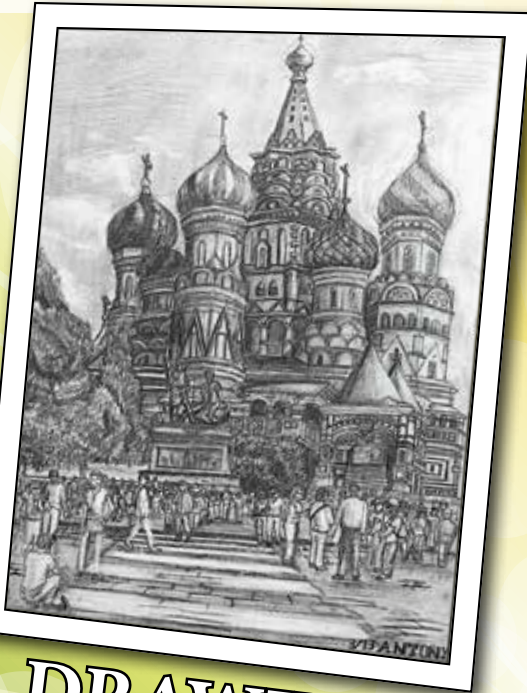
That's when I blacked out.

By **Isabelle F**
Grade Category: Middle
Baimbridge College
Hamilton, Vic.



2024

YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ART AWARDS



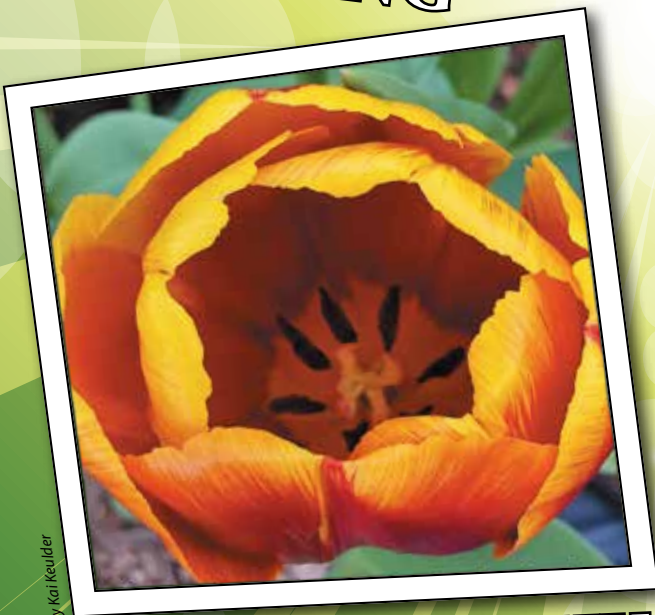
By Anthony Qin

DRAWING



By Manna Tsuchiya

COMPUTER ART



By Kai Keulder

PHOTOGRAPHY



By Matthew Ropcyam

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.

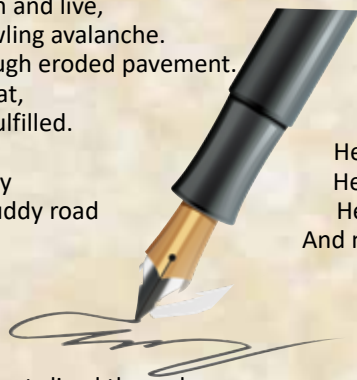
To do this you will be required to sign up in order for you to have the access to submit artwork. If you or your school do not have access to digital imaging, you may send a copy of your artwork to: Young Australian Artist Awards, **Postal Address: PO Box 16 Coldstream Victoria 3770**

The Poet

He stares wistfully
Out his window pane
Silvery raindrops trickling down swirls of glass
Like translucent constellations,
The sheer sound of bittersweet silence
Fills the room,
The aura of sorrow crowding into his heart.
Alone and empty, bitter and gone,
His spirit drifts away in the breezing winds.
His soul dances and weaves through the clouds.
And as quick as that,
His heart is all gone.

She leans out hopefully
Through the curtained arch separating her from the city,
Milky teardrops gliding down shards of glass
Like magical comets.
The sheer sound of a warring urge
Fills the mansion.
Alone and impatient, keen and live,
Her body drifts away in the howling avalanche.
Her own self dances and weaves through eroded pavement.
And as quick as that,
Her destiny is almost fulfilled.

He trudges bitterly
Through the drenched muddy road
Hope dropping
And falling
Falling
Falling
Falling
Until the last thread of hope is almost sliced through.
Yet a strange feeling takes over his body
An urge to go someplace out into wilderness,
Forcing his feet to shuffle in one direction, then the other -
And stops him at an old marble building.
With no one in sight.



She pushes forcefully
Through the tyre-battered road
Sanity decreasing
And dropping
Dropping
Dropping
Dropping
Until the last fibre of patience is almost sawed through.
Yet a peculiar numbness takes control of her body
An urge to go someplace out into the wilderness,
Forcing her feet to slide in that direction, then this one -
And stops her at an old marble building.
With someone in view.

'Who are you?'
'Why are you asking?'
'Why are you here?'
'Since when were you here?'
'I just came.'
'Me too.'

'Who are you?' In unison they ask.

Dark green ink splatters onto their portraits,
His nails stained with the liquid.
He gently lays the quill down on charred parchment,
He tears apart the words, the writing, the literature;
He rips apart the worlds, the magic, the characters -
And no one knows where the fragments of He and Her lie
today.

By Lena Takahashi
Grade Category: Junior
Waitara Public School
Wahroonga, NSW

Butterfly Ballerina

The butterfly flits and floats about
Her sapphire dress drifts about in the breeze
She stands upon the ruby stage
Ready to whirl and twirl into the light

She takes a deep breath
And with the flick of a switch
She pirouettes across the stage
Like a blue ballerina in a frilly dress

Her arms dance around
Her wings flutter high
She drifts across the scene
Before her time has run out

She lies down to rest
On a graceful green leaf
She lived her few days
'Till she is laid to rest



By Amelia Lonsdale
Grade Category: Senior
St John's Lutheran School
Kingaroy, Qld.
Teacher: Jodie Springhall

My Little Love

I know the sound of her sharp clear voice rolling and curling from word to word,
Among the slur of condescending mutters and unsure humming.

She should meld into the group like everyone else, fit in. But instead sits on top like oil on an ocean, of churning, swirling chaos.

She is elsewhere as she ticks her way through a list of menial tasks, that carve across her mind.

She sits among the centre of the group but in a space like the eye of a cyclone, calm while the storm swirls around her.

The curiosity of anyone who wanders past is captured, a trapped animal within her little circle. But she doesn't notice the fuss she causes with her simple existence, and I know what comes next.

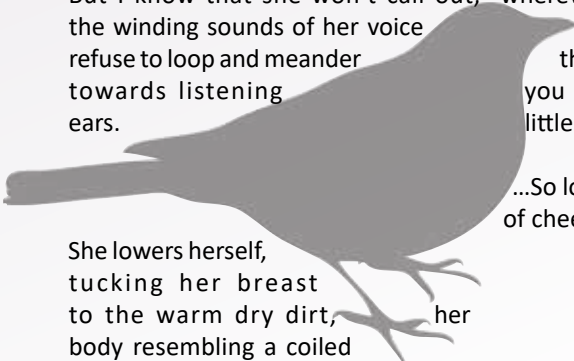
Her circle is invaded by a set of watchful eyes paired with a tilt of the head, as if to say you don't belong.

A long word sewn with threads of annoyance, and my little love, she takes the first blow,
and her curly words reserved only for her ears, become a short sharp trilling noise barely perceptible to the ear. It clicks and rolls in the back of her throat only to abruptly cease as she swallows her irritation.

A long, drawn-out pause where the breeze seems to hold its breath, then they come for my little love again.

But I know that she won't call out, the winding sounds of her voice refuse to loop and meander towards listening ears.

She lowers herself,
tucking her breast
to the warm dry dirt,
her
body resembling a coiled
spring.



Then she crawls through the obnoxiously cheerful sunshine and claws through the crowd, strong and silent.

She wanders with purpose towards me and rests her precious head on my shoulder as I greet her hello.

Something unintelligible is whispered in response using her spiralled calls, her cooing, curled words crisp and clear.

Woven sentences that twist as they leave her tongue, even her playful singsong is powerful, dragging onlookers towards us.

Puffed up, tall and proud, her point is clear: she is in control, eyes meet eyes with respect of uttermost sincerity, for my little love.

I know my little love, the perfect arch of her beak that curves downward and the little splotch of a scar just above it. Her gorgeous eyes, I know them too, the deep jade that demands attention from anyone she meets.

She has an attitude that gets her the top spot in a social hierarchy she was never part of. I know the feel of her soft dusty grey feathers beneath my fingertips and the milk-sweet smell of her perched on my shoulder.

But forget what I know, living within the walls of the same house, she knows me too.

She stands guard if I drift to sleep at midday when the world is somehow heavier than my eyelids.

When I have to go, she knows where to find me. The pitter patter of her feet, against the cool ceramic tiles, follows wherever I go.

I don't care much for people, they leave you behind and hurt you at every opportunity, but my little love will stay by my side...

...So long as she has access to a piece of cheese.

By **Marjorie Hackenberg**
Grade Category: Middle
Sanderson Middle School
Wulagi, NT
Teacher: Kvitka Becker

The Loved and the Lost



Ignorance adorned my weary soul
As life's melodies unfolded in symphony.
Blissful whispers, radiant and whole
Yet veiled in my oblivious reverie.

The sunshine danced upon my fading dreams
Golden hues shimmered in cherished embrace.
But gratitude remained unseen, it seems
For I failed to behold life's heartfelt grace.

In my naivety, I took for granted
The love that held me tenderly, embraced.
Oh, the tears I'd shed if I had abandoned
The blindfold that concealed loves fragile space.

Too late, I realized the truth's cruel rhyme
That happiness, like petals, oft will wilt.
A tempest swept away the love sublime
And bitter sorrow flooded, truly split.

Oh, dear departed, who now reside afar
Gone from this earthly coil, your spirit free.
Regret clings to my heart, a haunting scar
For I failed to acknowledge adequately.

But in my grief, a revelation shines
A beacon in the darkness, faint but true.
To honour you, beloved, in these rhymes
To cherish life, to celebrate anew.

Pained gratitude now fills my aching heart
For in love's absence, I have come to know,
That treasured moments, sacred works of art
Require our embrace and gratitude to grow.

So, I stand upon the precipice of loss
Where shadows merge with memories of you.
In this abyss, I'll find solace, despite the cost
And cherish the happiness I never knew.

By **Kaylee Jesnoewski**
Grade Category: Senior
Mindarie Senior College
Mindarie, WA

The Lost Croissant

This is a story about a croissant who lost his way. Listen to Chris Saunt (the croissant's) life story and understand that he was a very lost croissant.

Paris, 1972

Busy streets, shops full of people, cars speeding by. "AHHHH" Screamed the newly employed baker, Remy, as he dropped the big pile of pastries that were balancing in a tower on his huge tray. He quickly picked it all up, acting like nothing happened. Remy put the tray on top of the display box and was about to fill it up with pastries when Milly Delacour (the famous singer, she is a goddess to the French people) walked in. Everyone's jaw dropped in shock. In a split second...

"EEEEEEEE!" Squealed everyone in the bakery. They all ran up to her and asked for her autograph. The head baker, Mr Maurice was busy trying to make everything in the shop look as exquisite as can be, that he didn't notice who had walked in. He walked over and yelled at everyone to get back to their seats. Then he saw her. The famous Milly Delacour standing right in front of him looking flabbergasted from all the commotion.

He ran over to her excitedly and asked her to sign his chef hat. He started to squeal louder than all of the other people in the shop and couldn't take his eyes off of his hat.

He went out the back to admire his hat, but then he spotted Remy standing there with a dreamy look on his face and Mr Maurice changed emotions quicker than a flash of lightning. "GET BACK TO WORK, PAYSAN!" (French for male peasant) Remy

suddenly snapped out of his trance and Mr Maurice went back to his office. Milly came up to the counter.

"Hi, could I have a dozen croissants to take, please," she said in a friendly voice. "Of course," Remy replied, trying to sound masculine. She stared at him with a questionable look, knowing by what he looked like, that he didn't actually sound like that. He delivered her food as quick as he could.

Milly left as soon as she got her food, trying not to show that she doesn't like the new employee. She stepped out onto the road to hop into her car but suddenly "SCRRRTT!!!"

"AAAAHHH!!!" screamed Milly as a car almost ran over her. She jumped back and accidentally threw the twelve croissants up into the air. Luckily, they all fell back into the box, but one little croissant rolled away...

"AAAAHHH!!!" I yelled loudly as I rolled down the road. My feet were aching, and my legs felt like jelly. I was so tired that I had to find a place to rest. I ran across the road and found myself in an alleyway. This wasn't just your normal alleyway, though. It was one of those dark, mysterious alleyways. It was one that, even if you're really happy, can always make you feel uncomfortable and scared.

I needed to sit down but the alley was so creepy that I had to look around. The road was too dangerous, so I walked up the alley but then... "CHRIS... CHRIS..... CHRIS". There was a voice saying my name, over and over again. I followed where it was coming from, and it led me to this big, green thing. I knew a lot about the world, seeing that I was only made this morning, but I had no idea at all what this thing was.

I followed the voice into the big, green thing, but I was about halfway in when.

"AAAAHHH!!!" Something had picked up the big, green thing and I was inside of it! I got lifted up but suddenly. "AAAAHHH!!!" I was tipped over and I fell down into something! I thought that I was going to die, but then, I landed.

I thought that I was going to land with a big CRASH, but I landed on something that was soft and bumpy. I didn't know what this was, but I knew one thing. IT STANK! It smelled so bad that I almost fainted! But then I saw something. It was a faint silhouette of something. And it was coming towards me! It was now right at my face, but I still couldn't tell what it was. "G'day, mate," said a very distinctive voice.

"LARRY, IS THAT YOU??" I exclaimed. "Nah, mate, I'm Lazza," The mystery person said.

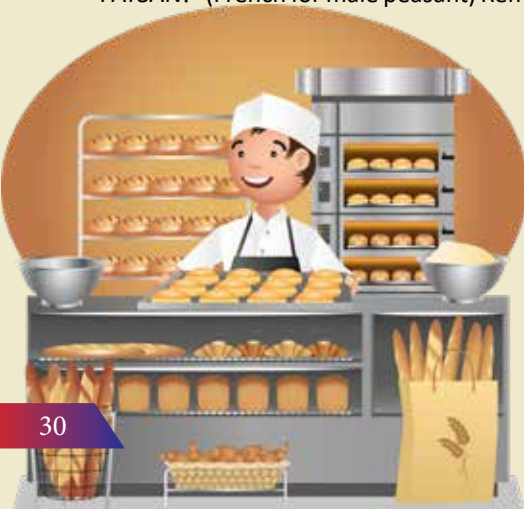
"It is you!" I yelled even louder. You see Larry, or Lazza, the lamington, was my old friend from the bakery. We were put next to each other in the display box and became instant friends. The mystery person stepped into the light, and I was so excited to see one of my friends, but when he was lit up, he looked didn't look like what I remembered he did. Then I noticed what was wrong. Lazza had a big chunk taken out of him! No wonder he looked different; half of his body was missing!

"Where are we?" I asked him. "We're in the bin truck, mate. I been in ere about three days now," he said with his strong accent. I was confused at what he said.

"The what truck?" I asked. "The bin truck, mate," he replied, "What's the bin?" I said, but then Lazza looked at me like I was a total freak.

"The bin is where everyone puts their rubbish, mate". Now I understood.

"So, why are you here, mate," Lazza asked me' Ummm, I was being called into this big green thing... I mean, the bin, by someone and then I got picked up and tipped upside down and I landed in here." I explained. "Who was calling you?" He asked, "I'm not sure, actually," He got me thinking. "Who would know my name?" I thought 'I was only made this morning'. "Mate, I think you're just tired and went delusional for a second," Lazza stated. "Where do we go after this?" I questioned. "UMMMM, I





honestly don't know, mate," he replied. "We should probably leave, just in case something bad happens," I suggested. "Yeah, mate, that might be a good idea," he replied.

So, we set off. Well, sort of. First, we had to find a way out. We looked all around this 'rubbish truck' to try and find a way out of there. Finally, I saw light through the corner of my eye. "YESSSSS!!! I SEE LIGHT!!!!!!!" I cried. I ran towards it, but soon noticed that it was just a piece of foil. "Never mind," I called out to Lazza.

"Mate, come over 'ere," he yelled back at me. I ran over and we found ourselves standing under a giant opening, but then we had to jump back, because we were about to get crushed by a huge pile of trash. Then, I got an idea. "Lazza, are you thinking what I'm thinking?" I exclaimed. "No, sorry mate, I'm not the brightest star." "I was thinking, that if we could get enough of this 'rubbish' then we might be able to climb out of here," I remarked.

So, we got to work. We finally got enough rubbish to make a huge pile. We climbed up the rubbish pile and jumped on to the top of the truck. "I can see the bakery!" I yelled across to Lazza. It was hard to hear each other so we had to yell. Suddenly, the truck stopped. "This is our chance, mate" Lazza told me. We jumped off the roof of the truck and landed perfectly on the pathway like spiderman. The bakery was so close that I could already smell the sweet scent of all the food. I...I mean, my friends.

Busy streets, shops full of people, cars speeding by. Chris walked across the road like a stuck-up posh guy with his nose in the air and his eyes shut. He felt so

incredible that he had found his way back home. He opened his eyes and turned to Lazza, who wasn't used to people looking like that, so was staring at him with a questionable look on his face. Suddenly, his face changed expressions in a split second. "MATE, LOOK OUT!!" He yelled. Chris turned around but then. "AAAAHHH!"

He rolled down the street for ages.' Here we go again,'

By **Xanthe Gaynor**
Grade Category: Middle
Burnside State School
Burnside, Qld.

My Treasure

Fear. Uncertainty. 7 seconds for my body to fade into an unconscious state, empty dreaming to drifting feelings of pain, irritability, and dryness. It took a while to get my mind straight, but once I did the fear settled in again.

I realised the procedure was over and my desire to go home was overwhelming. The nurse's voices drowned my thoughts with their compassion. They had their suspicions but no answer they could give me yet.

My bed is my transport, the light seems to be racing past but it's all an illusion. It's like I'm in a city, the people surrounding me are as if they are buildings towering above. My room is silent for what seems an eternity.

One by one the doctors walked in. Dr Wilson took the lead and I'll never forget the words he spoke. He said a lot but basically, I have a chronic illness named Crohn's disease. Crohn's is inflammation and ulceration of the digestive system.

My heart was racing, my head was swarmed with questions. 'Why me?' 'What did I do?' I just wanted everything to go back to the way it was before. The times when I didn't have pain, when I didn't have to worry about going to the bathroom. The questions and thoughts left my head and that's when a down pour of emotions hit. I wasn't angry I was disappointed at what my life had become.

It had become more difficult to attend school and to do the things I enjoy. With all these new medications it became an overload. I had to be aware of the side effects, my food intake, symptoms which added to a huge stress. Many questions unanswered but all I wanted to know is, how long until the pain stops!?

At first all the negatives were at the front of my mind. The pain in my stomach. Mood change, hunger, jittering, it was just there. But at some point, I was grateful, grateful for the hospital staff and all they did, the healthy weight I gained back, reducing of symptoms, and new knowledge.

Treasure can be defined as something or someone that holds great worth or value. The value of this treasure can be seen differently in other eyes. It's easier to think of the negatives than the positives, we can't change what has happened to us. When we are at our worst our attitude can determine who we become.

I value that my condition now had a name and with that comes strategies to manage day to day life. It's given me a newfound strength, courage to share my journey to help others.



I value the connections I've made with my health team and the community affected by Inflammatory Bowel Disease. It has shown me the stories of others who have it worse than me and still manage to complete amazing goals that healthier people may never attempt.

Crohn's disease can bring out the best in me and that's why it's my treasure.

By **Kaitlyn Blake**
Grade Category: Middle
Mullauna College
Donvale, Vic.



Reading is Power

*Each page I turn,
Each book I read.
A story is created,
Just look and see,*

*From fresh pages to eye-catching illustrations,
From arty books to world dominations,
Each book is an adventure,
One that the reader must endeavour!*

*So read a book, one or two,
Let yourself guide the journey,
It is up to you!*

By Jessica Brimson
Grade Category: Middle
Our lady's College
Annerley, Qld.
Teacher: Mrs Mckeiver

The Moon

She knew, once scaled, the ladder would lead her to the moon, her dream, her aspiration and her raison d'être. The medley of crickets shattered the monastic silence of the gilded field. Her sinewed and calloused hands, gripping the rungs of a weathered ladder, tightened as she stepped, rung by rung. Reclining in the sky, garbed by an ebony mantilla, a solace and muse, was the pockmarked silver pendulum, its face shedding striations of undulating light.

When she found herself in this strange world, the plumes of mist rose from the ground, and she felt light. "Where am I?" Her glaucous eyes dilated, and she climbed to her knees, before standing to see the ladder and pacing towards it, an instinctive pull pushing her, as if her feet moved by themselves. She felt as if a tide washed away her memories, and her breath rose and fell silently.

Her memory slunk back, tentatively tugged from her mind. That fateful night, Death swung his scythe towards her, when the blizzard, first a breath of snow and then a maelstrom of alabaster sludge, hit her home, a rickety kludge that could only withstand so much. "Help... Death has come for me too early... help," she lisped

weakly.

She pulled herself under the blankets, but she felt the thin line between life and death prodding itself as her fingers became frosted and almost solid. Her languished attempts of closing the patches letting in the howling winds useless as the gales jabbed their way in the minute striations and crevices.

Hypothermia clawed at her chest, but all she could do was shiver, her eyes closed and eyelashes frost-covered, and attempt to grasp her way back into the world of the living. Consciousness tugged her, but the spindly fingers of Death had already clasped her. And then, her body became taut, a marionette with no puppeteer.

And now, as she grasps the last rung of the ladder, she enters where sylphs like her dwell, forever after their departure from Earth. The shaft of moonlight welcomes her with open arms, to her dream, the Garden of Eden.

By Lily Zhang
Grade Category: Middle
Pymble Ladies College
Pymble, NSW

When you blow a balloon



When you blow a balloon
It flies to the moon

You need songs
To be strong

You want a sate
to drink a lovely lemonade

When your grumpy
Your eyebrows gets bumpy

Your stinky
Your inky

By **Eleanor Yao**
Grade Category: Junior
Vermont Primary School
Vermont, Vic.
Teacher: Hsien Tran

Enchantment meets Cityscape

When you walk through the world,
A treasure met the heart,
In amongst a dust of grey,
Are the spirits, creating an art.

Thorough the flames that spit,
Is a world that seems like dry thirst,
It is dark, murky, ugly, disgraceful,
But that is only at first...

A secret, invisible mist,
Of happiness, colour and cheer,
It drifts elegantly like a gliding swan,
Unlike the grey, cigarette world, lame and mere.

A family of pixies, wizards and more,
Gather 'round crystal and glass,
Watching an animation of celestial dogs,
Laughing and giggling as they pass.

A dear fairy gathered her thoughts,
As she sat down with an elf,
She read him a myth of mermaids and maps,
Until he fell down, smiling and laughed at himself.

So when you walk through,
That world of disgrace,
Look closely at all the smiles and laughter,
Its where enchantment meets cityscape.

By **Suwan Liu**
Grade Category: Junior
Christ Church Grammar School
South Yarra, Vic.
Teacher: Holly Dong



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