

# OZ KIDS IN PRINT



**May 2012**

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

*A great tool to  
improve literacy  
in schools!*

Print Post Approved  
P.P. 334553/00001

*Cover design by Den Scheer*

**FREE ENTRY**

**TO STUDENTS IN PRIMARY OR  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

*Proudly supported by the Australian Government*



# Encouraging a Love of Reading



Are your primary school students our next generation of budding authors?

Selected Carpet Court stores around Australia are asking students in years one to four to submit an illustrated story that shares what they love about their community for the chance to win:

**\$1,000 in books & colourful reading mats for their classrooms  
AND \$250 in books for themselves!**

Entries open from 1 February 2012.

To find out if your school is eligible, download entry forms for your students or view the shortlisted entries, visit [www.facebook.com/CarpetCourt](http://www.facebook.com/CarpetCourt) or email [storybook@carpetcourt.com.au](mailto:storybook@carpetcourt.com.au)

Entry is only open to students at participating primary schools.

Entries in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia opened on 1 February 2012 and close on 30 March 2012. Entries in New South Wales open on 30 April 2012 and close on 29 June 2012. Keep an eye out for an update in the June issue of OzKids for Queensland entry dates, commencing in Term 3.

Terms and conditions apply. Refer to our website for more information.



## WIN for your school!

[www.facebook.com/CarpetCourt](http://www.facebook.com/CarpetCourt)

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

**CARPET COURT**

FLOORING CENTRES



Storybook  
Challenge



# OZ KIDS IN PRINT

## Contents

From the Editor's Desk.....	4
Book Review: In the Beech Forest .....	4
The Bravehearts Toolbox.....	5
Ambassadors .....	17
Alice, Christian & Eve: Book Reviews .....	39
School & Library Competition .....	43

### AWARDS FOR POETRY

A Night to Remember .....	8
Emily Basford, Ravenswood School for Girls, Gordon, NSW	
Odd .....	9
Alex Ho, Revesby Heights, NSW	
The Murder .....	11
Robbie Coburn, Assumption College, Kilmore, Vic.	
My Place in the World .....	14
Charlotte Wong, Ravenswood School for Girls, Gordon, NSW	
'Ma' .....	16
Taylah Meneses, North Lakes State College, North Lakes, Qld.	
At Last .....	19
Robbie Coburn, Assumption College, Kilmore, Vic.	
An Aussie Dream.....	21
Grace Molchanoff, The Pines PS, Parafield Gardens, SA	
I Am .....	21
Jean-Pierre Mason Nayna, Thomas Mitchell Primary School, Endeavour Hills, Vic.	
An Unsuccessful Busker .....	22
Robbie Coburn, Assumption College, Kilmore, Vic.	
At the Quarantine Station .....	23
Stephanie Freeborn, Ravenswood School for Girls, Gordon, NSW	
Butterfly Fly Away .....	23
Karis Cheng, Abbotsleigh Senior School, Wahroonga, NSW	
No one ever cares about me.....	30
Lucinda Maxwell, Kalamunda Senior HS, Kalamunda, WA	
The Green Turtle.....	30
Chloe Di Gemma, Lauriston Girls' School, Armadale, Vic.	
Octopuses .....	35
Simone Engele, Oxley Christian College, Chirnside Park, Vic.	
From the Horse's Mouth.....	36
Ella Andersen, Frankston South, Vic.	
Imagine.....	40
Sarah Merry, Mowbray College, Caroline Springs, Vic.	

Winter Girl .....	40
Lucy MacCulloch, Abbotsleigh Junior School, Wahroonga, NSW	
The Bombing .....	41
Connor Randazzo, The Essington School Darwin, Rapid Creek, NT	
Dying All Alone.....	42
Samantha Gates, Huntingtower School, Mt. Waverley, Vic.	
The Clock Ticks On .....	42
Joanna Zhang, Methodist Ladies' College, Kew, Vic.	
Memories .....	42
Sarah Merry, Mowbray College, Caroline Springs, Vic.	
The Other Side of the Mirror .....	45
Joanna Zhang, Methodist Ladies' College, Kew, Vic.	
Winter Haiku.....	45
Chloe Di Gemma, Lauriston Girls' School, Armadale, Vic.	
Dead Love .....	45
Katerina Zafiris, Thomastown Meadows PS, Thomastown, Vic.	
Fairyland.....	46
Shannon Allas-Scott, Gleneagles SC, Endeavour Hills, Vic.	
The Night Shark.....	46
Robbie Coburn, Assumption College, Kilmore, Vic.	

### AWARDS FOR SHORT STORIES

A Monochromatic World .....	6
Chang Jian Li, Melbourne Grammar School, Melbourne, Vic.	
The Migrant .....	8
Talia Walker, Cerdon College, Merrylands, NSW	
Searching for Summer.....	9
Ben Coren, Crescent Head Public, Crescent Head, NSW	
A Surprise Visitor.....	11
Brigette Lill	
Just Be There .....	12
Billie Parkinson, The Friends School, North Hobart, Tas.	
Modern Match Girl.....	14
Imogen Kennard, Ravenswood School for Girls, Gordon, NSW	
The Hijackers .....	16
Jeral Hong Yi Lim, The Knox School, Wantirna South, Vic.	
Halfway to Nowhere .....	18
Beatrice Duong Duong, John Monash Science School, Clayton, Vic.	
Abby and Brambles' Adventures.....	22
Lilli Cowan, The Essington School, Darwin, Nightcliff, NT	
Lost in the Rainforest.....	24
Riya Fordyce, The Essington School, Darwin, Nightcliff, NT	

The Forest .....	24
Gurvir Kaur Sahota, Epping Secondary College, Epping, Vic.	
Crossfire .....	26
Prisca Ochan, Mansfield State High School, Mansfield, Qld.	
Hours of Darkness.....	28
Talia Walker, Cerdon College, Merrylands, NSW	
Malala and the Mysterious Thief.....	31
Chloe Di Gemma, Lauriston Girls' School, Armadale, Vic.	
The Unknown Enemy .....	32
Fariha Islam, Hornsby Girls' High School, Hornsby, NSW	
The Final Act of the Black Rose.....	33
Jessica Chapman, Ipswich State High School, Ipswich, Qld.	
Red in the Snow .....	34
Harry Musson, The Hamilton & Alexandra College, Hamilton, Vic.	
Ivy the Fairy .....	36
Cassandra Sutton, Wagga, NSW	
Things Aren't Always the Way They Seem .....	37
Tristan Danino, Caulfield Grammar School, Wheelers Hill, Vic.	
Helga the Witch .....	38
Fardin Islam, Beaumont Hills Public School, Beaumont Hills, NSW	
Sometimes It Feels So Bright At Night .....	38
Silvia Liber, Dulwich High School of Visual Arts and Design, Dulwich Hill, NSW	
The Beach.....	41
Maxine Macdermott-Opeskin, Ravenswood School for Girls, Gordon, NSW	
Scarred.....	44
Aidan Pierlot, Radford College, Bruce, ACT	

Front cover image by  
Den Scheer

Photo credits – 'A Surprise Visitor', p. 11: English Lock, en.wikipedia. 'My Place in the World', p. 14: Moi Cody, www.sxc.hu/photo/1073703. 'At Last', p. 19: 'The Final Act of the Black Rose', p. 33: Clara Natoli, http://www.morguefile.com/archive/display/208293. 'An Unsuccessful Busker', p. 22: Scott Liddell, www.morguefile.com/archive/display/666156. 'The Unknown Enemy', p. 32: Mikha S, www.sxc.hu/photo/1335687. 'Dying All Alone', p. 42: Aleksandra Banic, www.sxc.hu/photo/440060. 'The Forest', p. 24: 'The Beach', p. 41; 'Winter Haiku', p. 45: Frank Jones, Desktop Dynamics, Geelong.

### Published by:

**Australian Children's Literary Board**  
(an initiative of the Children's Charity Network)  
ABN 58 109 336 245  
Phone: (03) 5282 8950  
Fax: (03) 5282 8950  
170 Forest Road, Lara, Victoria 3212  
Postal Address:  
PO Box 267, Lara, Victoria 3212

### The Selection Committee:

Managing Editor: .....Carol Dick  
Editors: .....Rachael Hinga,  
Bronwyn Jarman  
Publisher:.....Robin Leonard  
Assistant Publisher:.....Leanne Johnstone  
Finals Judge: .....Professor Margot Hillel OAM  
Australian Catholic University  
Marketing Manager: .....Christi Valentine  
Sponsorship Manager: ..Ernest Bland  
Advertising Manager:....Graham Johnstone

Fund Committee: .....Gail Woods CPA  
Paul Warburton CPA  
Rob Leonard  
Directors:.....Prof. Margot Hillel OAM (Chair)  
Prof. Peter Blamey  
Dr. Elaine Saunders  
Gail Woods CPA  
Rob Leonard (Executive)  
Layout/Pre-press:.....Desktop Dynamics, Geelong  
Website Production:.....The Media Warehouse  
www.mediawarehouse.com.au

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The role of the Managing Editor is to not only choose the entries that will go into the magazine but also to source the articles to be published as well. We have Patron Authors who work tirelessly on doing workshops at schools, writing their own books, and to create great articles for me to publish. Sometimes I also come across articles from other sources. I was so impressed when I came across this particular article that I felt compelled to let you know about it. Bravehearts Inc. is a fantastic charity working to support our vulnerable youth. 'The Bravehearts Toolbox' is a book written to assist practitioners working with children affected by sexual assault.

### ENTER ON-LINE

at

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



**KEEP ON WRITING  
(TYPING)!**

*Carol Dick*  
Managing Editor

### Quote from Paul Jennings

Oz Kids in Print is a fine publication which is very professionally produced. It provides a wonderful opportunity for the children lucky enough to be published in it.

## BOOK REVIEW

## In the Beech Forest

by Gary Crew & Den Scheer

Reviewer: Jenny Mounfield

*'He was no ordinary boy, nothing special, and he went into the forest alone.'*

And so begins an adventure, an awakening, a discovery of what it truly means to be alive for a child whose experiences of life and forests are confined to those found in virtual worlds. The boy may enter the ancient beech forest alone, but he carries in his mind all the blood-thirsty monsters of his games.

*'But as withered leaves shifted, and grey shadows lengthened, he hesitated, remembering his computer games, the fearful quests he encountered there, the dreadful heroes, the beasts unconquered, and he wondered if such wild fantasies might threaten here.'*

As he continues on towards the forest's heart, toy sword clutched in his fist, the boy is first tormented by the eerie silence, and then phantom rustlings that may very well be the sounds of fearsome pursuers. Perhaps the sticks beneath his feet are the bones of their prey. But the boy does not run; he is brave, and his bravery will be rewarded.

*In the Beech Forest* is pure magic. Crew's language is delightfully poetic; read aloud, his words slip off the tongue. With a master's hand reminiscent of the great Edgar Allan Poe, Crew builds tension line by line. So, too, he expertly creates a mood of contemplative expectancy in much the same way as a painter will layer dark washes over light to give the illusion of depth.

The illustrations, for the most part, are bold strokes of black on white with the occasional hint of sepia. They add a sense of stark foreboding to the text. As the boy nears the point of discovery, the sketches are imbued with red, a colour synonymous with life.

Through her illustrations, Scheer takes the reader through a landscape that at first appears harsh and static, to one that can almost be seen breathing through the page. While there is no doubt that she is a gifted artist, Scheer's true talent lies in her interpretive ability. This is particularly impressive given that this, her first book, was illustrated when she was only seventeen.

Despite the depictions of monsters, and the sense of creeping menace, *In the Beech Forest* is not a horror story. Indeed, classics such as *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Hansel and Gretel* are far more disturbing. Any anxiety the text and illustrations may cause will soon be forgotten at the story's uplifting conclusion. In these techno-times when our kids' realm of experience seems to be largely virtual, Crew reminds us of the value to be found by immersing ourselves in the world of all our senses.

This title is perfect for reading to groups of children, and is certain to invite discussions from the effect electronic games have on our lives, to environmental matters. I believe kids as young as eight will gain both intellectually and emotionally from this story. At that tender age, I, for one, would have lapped this up. Highly recommended.

*Jenny Mounfield is the author of three novels and a number of short stories for young people and adults. She lives with her family in north of Brisbane Queensland.*

**Publisher:** Ford Street Publishing

**Format:** Hardback PB

**Age:** Kids 10+

**Price:** AUD \$29.95

**ISBN:** 9781921665578



Find us on:  
**facebook®**

**CHILDREN'S CHARITY NETWORK  
SUPPORTS CHARITIES AND  
ORGANISATIONS WHO SUPPORT US!**

# The Bravehearts Toolbox

## For Practitioners Working With Child Sexual Assault

<http://www.bravehearts.org.au>

Combining the expertise of both researchers and practitioners specialising in the area of child sexual assault, this book provides an innovative, evidence-based approach to working with children and young people affected by sexual assault. It is an essential guide for general counsellors, school counsellors, psychologists, youth workers, chaplains, mental health practitioners and other allied health professionals, to provide them with the necessary information and skills to support children and young people affected by sexual assault. Its purpose is to build the confidence of these frontline workers and to reassure them that they do in

fact possess the necessary skills to continue to work with their client once the issue of sexual assault has been raised.

**Bravehearts Inc.** is a national, registered charity whose members believe that the provision of effective support and care to children who have been sexually assaulted and their non-offending families, together with effective prevention, early intervention and increased community awareness will provide a fundamental cornerstone necessary to a healthy society.

### CONTENT

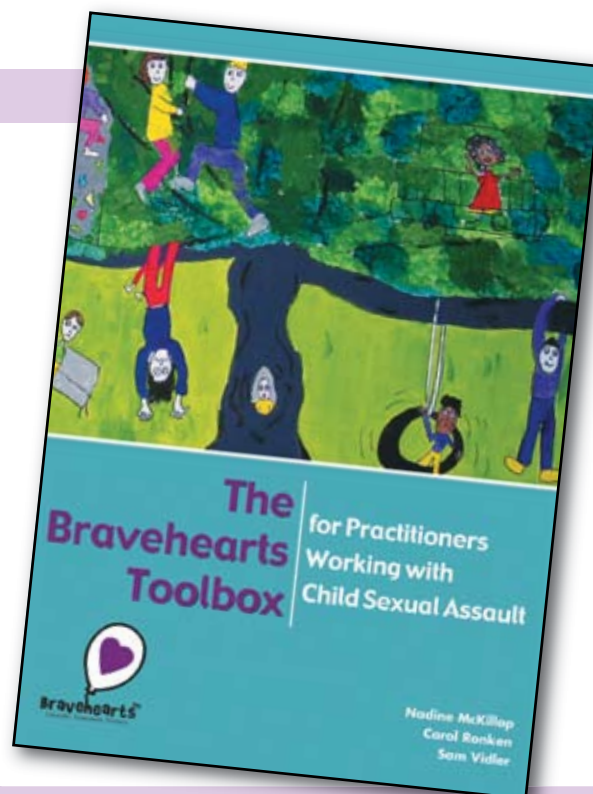
- The Nature of Child Sexual Assault
- Dealing with Disclosures
- The Therapeutic Process: Common Presenting Problems
- The Therapeutic Process: Effective Approaches to Presenting Problems
- Psycho-Educational Tools: Teaching Personal Safety
- The Toll on the Therapist

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Psychologist **Dr. Nadine McKillop** specialises in the prevention of sexual violence and abuse. Working within a holistic framework her experience includes the clinical assessment and treatment of victims and offenders of crime; their families and criminal justice personnel. She also provides professional supervision, training and consultation. Nadine is actively engaged in research, presenting her findings in peer-reviewed journals and at conferences both nationally and internationally.

**Carol Ronken** worked as a researcher and Associate Lecturer at Griffith University in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice before joining Bravehearts in early 2003. With a BA(Psych) and Masters in Social Research, Carol is the Research Manager for Bravehearts and is passionate about ensuring the organisation's active involvement in research, policy and legislative development that aims to prevent, respond to, and ultimately reduce the incidence of child sexual assault in the community.

**Sam Vidler** is a qualified counsellor who has been supporting children and families affected by sexual assault for several years. Sam's qualifications include a Bachelor of Arts and Graduate Diploma in Counselling. She is currently undertaking a postgraduate degree in psychology. In addition to working therapeutically with children, young people and parents, Sam was employed as the Bravehearts' Therapeutic Services Manager until November 2010.



### TESTIMONIALS

This how-to book facilitates education, empowerment, and protection by clinicians who will integrate all the practical information and activities into their repertoire to increase therapeutic outcomes. I heartily endorse this publication as a critical resource for anyone working with children or adolescents. — **Dr John Barletta, Clinical Psychologist.**

Highly recommended to *any* therapist who works with children: not just those who specifically work with known child sexual assault. — **Dr Dylan Wilson, Paediatrician.**

A *must have* for mental health practitioners, teachers, school counsellors, medical practitioners, allied health practitioners and for those who are uncertain about their ability to respond effectively and take action accordingly when someone discloses child sexual assault. — **Jan Bond, Clinical Counsellor**

Released: 22nd November 2011

ISBN: 9781921513886

Price: \$64.95

Australian Academic Press

Paperback. 128 pages

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



# A Monochromatic World

THE working day began.

The communal alarm sounded, a single continuous block of white noise that filled the ear and drowned out all but the loudest screams.

It continued for a length of time, and then was replaced by another sound of the same pitch, of the same volume. There were seven hums, all identical, in all.

He woke up, rubbed his eyes, and got out of bed. He did not bother to make his bed. No one would see it, anyway.

He clothed himself, felt his way to the door, walked down the corridor to the kitchen. Breakfast was there, indifferent and tasteless, reduced to an obligation to proper nutrition.

He went to the bathroom, brushed his teeth. Prevention was always better than cure; or so said the Party-issued touch posters.

He came out, took his schoolbag he had packed yesterday, made for the door. He walked out, shut it. The building was old and draughts blew all along its length. He reached the stairs, felt his way down them. Modern apartment blocks had lifts.

The building was a part of a complex, a commune as the Party called it. He stepped out of the revolving doors and followed the communal path, its concrete blocks bucked and uneven from the subsidence of the ground. Finally he reached the communal gate. He pushed it open and the rest of the world hit him face-on.

A thousand sounds, all different volumes but of the same monotonous pitch, filled his ears. The wind blew across his cheeks, his shoulders, and his face. The vibrations of a thousand people's footsteps shook and resounded through him.

A vehicle rushed past, a truck probably, but who knew, they all sounded the same. He found his groove in the footpath, the one with the square ridged blocks lining it, the one that would lead him to the train station. He could sense the quiet, hushed, unsynchronised whoosh of a thousand breaths, and the subtle presence of the hundreds, thousands, millions of

people that surrounded him in this great metropolis.

He felt the ground rise a little beneath him, felt the sky lighten a little, a bridge. He could hear the river humming underneath, over rocks, over falls. He did not think much of it; he went over it daily.

Beyond the bridge the path he was following began to decline. Gradually all the noises of the city were drowned out and the only noises were the pitter-patter of feet resounding off the steel walls of the passage.

The footpath seamlessly gave way to a moving walkway. No more walking. He relaxed a little.

The walkway seamlessly gave way to an escalator. He had made this journey every day for almost six years now, but he was still unprepared for the lurching sensation that came over him as the escalator began its steep descent. The escalation flattened out and he found himself on the station platform. He could faintly feel the immense weight of the hundreds of metres of earth above him. He felt humbled, a tiny leaf floating in the middle of a great ocean.

There were thousands of people waiting for the trains, just like him. He could hear, in the confined space, the noises they made, the sounds of footsteps, the noises of their breathing and more, resounding off the walls and amplifying.

There was a slight rush of air and a train came to a halt on the opposite platform. There was a rush of footsteps. The train departed.

The PA system delivered a message. Train expected in one minute.

He stepped forward. There was a ridge that ran the entire length of the platform. Beyond it was a sheer drop onto the tracks.

He reached the ridge and leaned forward slightly. Yes, there was a slight breeze, playing across his cheeks, gradually getting stronger. He withdrew.

Another announcement. Train arriving.

The gentle breeze turned into a roar of wind. It subsided as the train braked and stopped. He counted the slight uneasy hums as the train bogies went over the crossover just before the platforms. Eight carriages, a rush hour train.

Everyone scrambled for the raised areas on the platform that indicated the intended position of the doors of the braked train. He found himself pushed onto the train by the sheer force of the surrounding crowds. The train was crowded; he could sense that claustrophobic, humbling feeling he so often felt.

The doors closed and there was a jolt as the train started, then another, and then the train smoothly started to accelerate.

The seats were arranged one wide on each side, all of them facing forward as the train was unidirectional. For the same reason there were doors only on one side.

He went down the length of the carriage, feeling the poles next to the seats. Most of them were gently humming. Finally he found a silent one, swung over and sat down on it.

He had ten stops remaining to sit through.

The train sped on through the tunnel. Occasionally at high speed he could feel slight oscillations coming from the bogies.

The mesmerising rhythm of the train made him feel as if the world was spinning and blurring. He felt his mind frost over.

The train continued on its monotonous journey, which it would repeat over and over again countless times. The train was, like many other things in the City, automated and the computer would not object; it was simply following orders.

He got off at his stop. His school was a short walk away.

He arrived at school just in time. There were 10 minutes until class started.

The school was arranged around a central corridor. At the front was a courtyard. The classrooms were in rows along the

length of the corridor. At the back was a paved area with benches. The canteen was at the side.

The corridor was silent but for footsteps. No one talked. School was a cold, bleak, asocial affair. But they were not aware of it; they had never experienced anything else.

The bell rang. Two hundred students headed for their classrooms. He pushed his way to his classroom.

It was history. He knew exactly where to go.

He found his cubicle quickly. 3 rows down and 4 rows across. He sat down.

He knew no one in his class. School was something you went through to get educated, then the system – the Party – looked through your file and hooked you up to a job suited to you.

He put on the headphones that were permanently attached to the desk. The tape started almost immediately. 'Hello. Welcome to your history class. You are currently studying Modern History. Press the button to proceed.'

The words came out slowly, as a series of hums, like Morse code. It was often difficult to understand; the timing between hums had to be perfect and so it was rarely used.

He pressed and proceeded.

The day's lesson was an essay on life before the Party, the days of corrupt monarchies and superstition, 450 words. It was his assessment for the unit. He finished about half of it in class. The rest was homework. He pulled it out of the typewriter and slipped it into his bag.

The rest of the day was passed in roughly the same manner, save for a half-hour lunch break in the middle. By the time school let out he had a pile of homework to keep him busy, all of it due tomorrow, when a fresh batch would replace it.

When he got home there was a strange sound; the communal alarm was malfunctioning. It was a small deviation in a routine that barely changed.

He did his homework. He finished his essay and pushed it into the fax-mail slot. Miles away at school, a machine would make just the right marks on an identical piece of paper. It would then fall out of an identical slot in the wall and come to a rest on top of a pile of other sheets, identical in all but the content recorded upon their faces.

After dinner he continued on with his homework, the bundled it, completed, into his bag for tomorrow. Then he quickly washed himself all over, did his teeth and went straight to bed.

All inequalities settled and contented, he sank into a tranquil state of reflection. He, like many others, had often wondered if there was another world out there, one that one could see with one's own eyes. The elders sometimes spoke of, usually when very drunk, a time when one could see the world, and judge it for themselves. They said it was a mythical and wonderful land of contrasts. But these inebriated rambles were but vague rumours, and the Party did not approve of them.

The Party was the all-out authority of everything. The people relied on it for security and safety and wellbeing, and the Party gave, out of its boundless goodwill. And in return the people heeded its every word, and obeyed and observed its rules and regulations.

The party represented a shard of light, a shard of hope, at the end of a long tunnel of darkness and unknowing where all was gray to the eyes, cold to the touch, tasteless upon the tongue, scentless to the nose and everything that made a sound was to the ears emanating a monotonous hum.

We, dear reader, are extraordinarily lucky to have our senses in full function. We are very lucky to be able to judge the state of the world with our own eyes, to be able to see truth in its purest form for ourselves, and to enlighten ourselves on the way.

All should be grateful for the senses that the Creator has blessed and endowed upon us and the stimuli of contrast and juxtaposition that surrounds us, for without them this world would be a very different one indeed.

**By Chang Jian Li**

*Year 8, Melbourne Grammar School*

*MELBOURNE – VIC.*

*Teacher: Tim Inglefinger*





# The Migrant

**S**HE stands on the docks nervously. At nineteen years of age, she has never before left her village nestled in the hills. At nineteen years of age, she is leaving all who she loves, and all who love her.

Others bustle past her, bumping her with their large bags. A woman rushes by, clutching her parents' photo to her chest. Her face is streamed with tears. A young man several metres away stands with a young woman. His girlfriend pulls her white ribbon from her hair and presses it into his hand.

There are many like them, crowding the docks. The leaving and the left behind, they congregate to farewell each other. Most of those boarding the tall ship carry personal trinkets, their own small mementos of the lives they will soon forsake.

She draws her suitcase towards her. It is small, and contains clothes; no photo albums or trinkets. She smiles to herself as she remembers the stress of trying to choose clothes for the new country, and how she finally gave up the task and offloaded it on her mother. Her mother had spent the best part of an hour packing those clothes into her suitcase. There weren't many and the suitcase wasn't large, but her mother had taken great care in the packing process.

She holds her santini, a little prayer card, in her hand. Rosamata had given it to her before she left their village, to bring her luck and safety in the new country.

A man shoulders her accidentally. "Mi dispiace, signorina!" he cries. "I'm sorry!"

She smiles and gestures that she is fine. She is too anxious to speak. She feels the nerves crawling from her stomach up into her throat, so that she feels like gagging. There were stories, so many stories, of the bad conditions on these types of ships. Sydney and her twin Roma were supposed to be two of the best, but even so, there was no guarantee that her trip would be as comfortable as the ships' owners had promised her.

She takes a deep breath. All the preparations of the past month or so have come to this moment. The paperwork has been completed, and she has passed her health check. The money she has borrowed for her fare will be repaid over the next year.

She forces herself to relax. Squaring her shoulders, the young migrant steps forward and walks up the ramp that leads into the gaping mouth of the towering ship before her.

*By Talia Walker*

*Year 12, Cerdon College  
MERRYLANDS – NSW*

Can you remember the fifth of November?  
Rockets rapidly rise into the night sky,  
Catherine wheels whizzing like a merry-go-round,  
The crackling bonfire is a fountain of flames.

Smelling the heavy smoke from the burning guys,  
BOOM BANG the fireworks roar,  
Tasting the pretty, pink marshmallows dancing on your tongue,  
Red, yellow, orange blasting in front of your eyes.

Children shout and spin with glee,  
The warmth of the fire is like the sun,  
Taking away the cold on a freezing night,  
Now you remember the fifth of November.

*By Emily Basford*

*Year 5,  
Ravenswood School for Girls  
GORDON – NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Sharon Shapiro*



## A Night to Remember



# Searching for Summer

I AM standing on top of the picnic table, on top of a headland above a surfing village where I live, inspecting the 360 degree views. To the north is Front Beach, where the beautiful sets of waves have turned brown from last week's flooding rain coming out of the creek. It doesn't seem to bother the local surfers though.

To the north-west is an enormous bank of thick, opaque dark grey clouds streaked with flashes of bright, energetic sheet lightning. I could count half a dozen patches of pouring rain heading for the coast. Further to the west I can see the sunset creeping below the clouds, making the backdrop vibrant.

To the south it looks like yet another storm with swirly patterns of clouds playing along the low mountain range. To the east is the ocean. It is completely smooth, with no white ripples, even the horizon which is usually lumpy is a clear precise line. It was like the ocean wasn't expecting a storm. But the storm was coming, and fast.

A few drops didn't deter me from staying to watch that storm come closer and as the clouds swept over the mountain nearest to me, they clung to its side like a moss to a rock.

I'd have to leave soon, because the walk home was down a steep rocky slope that takes me to the top of the golf course and the end of my street. It is better not to go in blinding rain.

This whole summer has been all storms and flooding rain. The temperature is warm, but there has been little sun. The usual sunburn, swim at the beach days are not happening but that has not stopped me having fun, just because it's raining. Instead it has been fun to walk along beach searching for washed up junk. There is a tree that looks like a brachiosaurus, a mattress, lots of metal weird things, even a toilet seat. The best treasure was a log, covered in hundreds of alien creatures that looked like it was from the bottom of the

ocean and had been there for a hundred years. I wanted to save the creatures by pulling the log back into the water but it was too heavy.

I have seen the teenagers take their bogey boards skurfing down the golf course when there is heavy rain. That looks like great fun and I wish mum would let me have a go. Mum saying yes to that is as likely to happen as winning the lotto.

The creek is too swollen for canoeing or paddle boards. The ocean is murky and rough. The weather is constantly cloudy with a chance of rain. Isn't it lucky I like to watch storms, walk in the rain and search for interesting things on the beach because that is my summer!

By **Ben Coren**

Year 5, Crescent Head Public  
CRESCENT HEAD – NSW  
Teacher: Cassie Black

If you don't fit in then you must stand out  
that's what my dad was on about

So what, I play with toys  
that aren't especially made for boys

So what I think that school  
is somewhat very cool

So what I have pink pet mice  
despite their looks, they're really nice

So what I send out daily papers  
I stuff them up with tiny wafers



So what I have an 8 wheeled bike  
it's better than a little trike

So what if my dog is pink  
although it does make you think

So if you want me to stand out  
I'll stand out, oh yes, no doubt

By **Alex Ho**

Year 6, Age 11  
REVESBY HEIGHTS – NSW



**Want 9,542 friends  
worldwide?  
Join the Club.**

**With Youth of the Year, Leos and new Lions Clubs forming everyday,  
there's always new people to meet at Lions.**

**lions australia**  
*we serve*





# THE MURDER



Feathers rest beside you, still confusingly, darling,  
as always, it has escaped your mind;

out in the garden where the crows perch like towers.  
Love, each day I've watched it grow and become dust  
as they feed with beaks and razor-sharp talons,  
picking it away into nothingness.

Lying in a bed of fractured, yellowed reeds,  
dry soil and scattered, dying leaves are  
black towers; you once looked out through  
the kitchen window, smiling, love, smiling.  
Black crow perched on your heart, it feeds.  
The dead shriek. The dead shriek, it flies,  
marching like a guard to the watchtower.

Death, black crow, death, you cry.  
I swept your feathers beneath the carpet, black crow.  
Love, your garden has become overgrown, left unattended,

love, why do you still see roses?

**By Robbie Coburn**

*Year 12, Assumption College  
KILMORE – VIC.*

## A Surprise Visitor



**O**NE night I was woken up by a knock on our front door. I was wondering what time it was when suddenly the clock in the hallway chimed midnight. I thought, who could possibly be knocking at this time of the night? I knew that my Mum and Dad were on a business trip and they would be back at 6 o'clock the next morning. I walked out of my room to get the door but our housekeeper Nancy shoved past me and opened the door.

I wanted to scream at Nancy because Mum and Dad had said no visitors allowed when they were out, but no words came out of my mouth. Then I heard my brother Ethan crying, so I rushed into his room. I found him sobbing and clutching his little toy bear. I whispered some soothing words to him, then ran back into my room.

I pretended to go back to sleep. Then I thought of the trapdoor in my room that led underground to the kitchen. No one knew about my trapdoor except my family.

So I went to get Ethan so we could creep down to the kitchen together and listen to what they were saying outside. By the time

we got close to the kitchen, the time was nearly 1 am. I pulled the slide off the kitchen wall.

I could just see Nancy talking to someone near our front door.

I could hear them talking about breaking into our family safe in the laundry which contained family treasures. I also heard them talking about getting a saw to cut open the safe. Here's my chance, I thought.

I waited until Nancy had gone out with the visitor. I told Ethan to quietly wait for me in the secret passage. Then I crept out and quickly took all the treasures out of the safe.

Moments later, Nancy and the visitor came back and quickly got started. I could hear them trying to saw open the safe but it was going to take a long time for them to complete the job.

To my surprise, there was suddenly the sound of keys turning at the front door. I looked at my watch – it was 4 am. I quickly crept to the front door to open it, when my Mum and Dad walked in. They asked me what the noise was, so I walked with them into the laundry, and told them what Nancy and Mr Nobby our next door neighbour were up to.

Mum and Dad quickly called the police. When the police came, they took Nancy and Mr Nobby away. They would be taken to court next week.

**By Brigitte Lill**

*Age 9*

# Just Be There

NEVER There.

The ball comes streaming down the field towards me. I spread my fingers in the sweaty goalie gloves while the itchy nylon top scratches at my arms. My arms go out in the ready position. On your toes, watch the ball, be ready to jump or dive, on your toes, watch the ball, ready to jump or dive. I go over and over in my head. The voice takes on the voice of my coach, who is yelling at me from the sidelines.

“On your toes, watch the ball, be ready to jump or dive! Watch the ball not me, Charlie!” Silly woman, if you stop yelling at me I might. I can hear my father say to her: “Stop yelling at the girl and she might, Sara”. Sometimes it is good having your father married to your soccer coach.

Focus Charlie, focus. On your toes, watch the ball, ready to jump or dive. The ball is kicked by one of their attackers, a tall skinny, very fast African girl whose name I believe to be Emily. It comes straight at my head.

Jump up; grab it to your chest. I don't jump fast enough.

The next thing I remember is waking up in a room with a white ceiling. As I look around I see light blue curtains surrounding the uncomfortable bed I am on. A mix of the ugly curtains, boring white walls, bed-on-wheels and medical electrics tell me it is a hospital. That or my physio's. But as I look around more I decide... hospital. My physiotherapist doesn't have one of those cool heart beepy monitors and doesn't normally put a drip in my arm.

I am still trying to work out why on earth I am in hospital when my mother comes in. I know something is really wrong now. I don't see mum very often. She moved to the other end of the state mid-way 2009. It is now April 2012 and I have seen her all of four times. My birthday and Christmas in 2009, Christmas 2010, and my older brother Alisdair's birthday in 2011. 2009 was a good year for her. Although that may just be her feeling guilty for moving. Not that the attack of the guilts gets her often.

“Wow, sweetie I haven't seen you for months!”

“Actually mum, its closer to a year. Alisdair's birthday is the last time you were down and that is in March. Its now April.”

“See! Only last month!”

“April last year mum.” It is obvious that this stumps her. I decide to change the subject before I get too angry about it and we argue. She is here so little I don't like us fighting while she is. “Why am I here anyway mum?”

“Oh, you got hit in the head.”

“With what...?”

“A soccer ball silly!” We are both silent as I think about this. I have about a million questions. Starting with: How long have I been asleep? How did the ball hit me in the head? Am I going to be okay? Is everything okay inside my head? Little, important things like my brain?!

I settle for, “Why did you come down, mum?”

“Well your father was there when it happened.” She says this like it is the strangest thing. “He called me when he got here.” I notice she doesn't answer my question.

“And you came straight down?” That is so not like my mother. Before she can answer another voice comes from a silhouette behind the curtain. Alisdair steps through as he says: “No. She came after the doctors told us you might not make it. You had been out for five weeks, and nothing. They needed her signature on the form to turn off your life support because you're underage. Don't get why dad's and my signatures weren't enough”.

While I process this I am dimly aware of mum saying, “Because I am her mother. I'm your mother too, not that you would know it the way you speak to and about me”.

“Because you were never there, mum. When I needed you, when Charlie needed you. Do you know how hard it is consoling a fourteen-year-old girl who has just had her heart broken for the first time when you are a seventeen-year-old male?”

Mum's answer to that was, “Charlie isn't fourteen and you are certainly not seventeen”.

“No Claire, Charlie is sixteen and I am almost nineteen. You came to Charlie's thirteenth birthday and my eighteenth.”

“Oh. Well... I don't remember trivial things like that. You know, numbers never were my strong point.”

“Claire, you're one of Australia's best financial advisers. Numbers are your job, and apparently you're good at it.” I hate this. When mum is here I want things to go back to the way they were. I want dad to come in and wrap his arms around mum and I want mum to laugh and I want Al to look at me and I want us to make vomiting noises and I want... I don't know what I want any more.

Not true. I know I really want to pee. I go to get up, only to have Alisdair's big hand push me, gently but firmly, back onto the bed.

“Where the hell do you think you're going?!” He sounds appalled.

“Bathroom...” He clearly didn't know what to say to that so instead I got a “Nurse! Can you come in here?!”

A round lady in scrubs the same colour of the curtains comes in and says, “Oh, love, you're awake!”

“Yeah, can I go to the bathroom?”

I ended up going, but it took a while to convince the nurse, who kept saying “love” instead of Charlie. She obviously didn't know my name. When Al said “She has a name” the nurse had to consult my chart. She still said Charlotte, not Charlie. When I pointed this out she got all snooty at me saying “Well you don't know my name, do you?”. No, nurse lady, I don't. You never introduced yourself. Before I could say this and have the nurse lady hate me for all of eternity, my dad and Sara came in. Saved.

“Sweetie! You're awake!” Dad sounds so happy it makes me smile. He flies across the room and almost crushes me in a big hug.



"Hey Dad. Good to see you." Mum takes this opportunity to go get a coffee or go to the bathroom or whatever.

"You too kiddo. You had us worried!" Dad frowns as he says this, like I did it on purpose. Yes, dad, I just got myself knocked out to annoy you.

"Yeah, don't do that again kid." Al has the same annoyed upset expression.

"Al I'm not that much younger than you." Great. Now I really do sound like a whiny kid.

"Yes but the difference is you are still a kid. Al isn't", dad says.

"See? I can do lots of things you can't. Because I am an adult and you're just a little kid." Al is ribbing me. Hoping to get a response, but I just can't help it.

"Well there ar—" I get interrupted by a loud scream from just outside my curtained room. I notice that neither Sara nor mum is here, and there is female screaming. This cannot be good. Dad opens the curtains to reveal Sara surrounded by nurses and doctors. Mum is standing there with a kettle. She must have snatched it off the person that got Sara. Dad is now kneeling on the floor next to Sara. Telling her it will be fine. Telling her there are doctors who will take care of her.

Mum is walking away now and Alisdair is following her. I hear him yell, "Claire! Claire! MUM! Come back here, NOW!"

Why is he yelling at her? He sounds so angry. Alisdair doesn't get angry often. Dad sometimes jokes that he could be a Buddhist because he doesn't get angry or lie. I have only heard Al get angry six times that I can remember. Every one of those times has been at mum. Starting at the time she said she was leaving us. Leaving dad. Leaving Al. Leaving me. Since then every time she has come down, including this one, he has got angry with her for something. It never makes sense to me. I asked Al once if he hated mum. He replied "Yes. I think she is an awful person who doesn't think of the consequences to others when she does things". I think about this now. I don't think mum is an awful person. Sure, she wasn't always there for us but that wasn't her fault. There was a job up state that paid better so she took it. Mum and Al have stopped and are talking now. Al is

still angry; he is doing that thing where he waves his hands around a lot.

"Claire, you poured boiling water on her! That could be classified as GBH, and you know what? I hope she files a complaint. I am not Charlie. I don't think you're perfect. I think you're a horrible woman who only does things for herself." Alisdair sounds so angry it makes me flinch.

I process all this. "Claire, you poured boiling water on her" goes around and around my head. Mum had a kettle in her hand. She didn't take it off the person that hurt Sara. She is the person that hurt Sara. I can feel the rage boiling up inside me. Sara was there when mum wasn't. Sara was my mum. Sara did everything mum should have and more and never asked for anything in return apart from respect for the fact that dad moved on when mum left him. Left him for money. This just makes me even angrier.

I rip the IV drip out of my arm and ignore the loud beeping and the nurse running towards me and start towards mum. Part of my brain is telling me that I feel quite faint but ignore it. I start running down the bland corridor. There are people opening doors now to look at what all the commotion is about. I pass them and finally reach mum. She turns to look at me.

"Mum, you were never there. You left us all. Including dad. You got angry when he moved on. YOU POURED BOILING WATER OVER SARA, CLAIRE! She could be badly hurt and you don't care. You don't care about the fact that she is important to Alisdair and me. You don't care that she is the woman who raised your children over the last four years. MUM, YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYONE BUT YOURSELF. You horrible selfish bitch." Everything goes black.

I am dimly aware that dad is talking to me.

"Please, Charlie. Please wake up." I try to open my eyes when dad starts sobbing but it is so hard. Everything is slipping away again. The black nothingness consumes me.

I come back into that semi-conscious state.

"Charlie, please don't leave me like this.

Not yet. I love you more than anything in the world and I always will. I am sorry that I couldn't do more. You know, I arrived just as the ball came at you. I could see what was going to happen. Everything kind of went into slow motion. I stared to run at you but I wasn't fast enough. I am so, so sorry." I want to tell Alisdair that none of this is his fault. He has never done anything wrong, and would never do anything to hurt me but I can't pull myself out of the semi-consciousness to do it. I am trying so hard and almost getting there but I just can't. My eyelids are just too heavy. It all slips again.

"Darling, you really are quite selfish. You know, I really have to get back to work, and the house will be a mess, and I really don't want to pay the man looking after the dog any more." This time I slip away on purpose. I never come back.

**By Billie Parkinson**  
Year 9, The Friends School  
NORTH HOBART – TAS.  
Teacher: Vani Naidoo



## My Place in the World

My heart is pounding like bullets from a rifle.  
Pale palms sweating like Niagara Falls.  
Thoughts are running through my dizzy head like a cross country race.  
The stage is bright.  
An invisible audience,  
Here for me,  
Only me.  
The microphone is prepared  
For my rusty voice.

I was dressed like a desperate tramp.  
Tatty clothes,  
Filthy locks.  
BOOM!  
The music commenced.  
Pumping through my pierced ears  
I began singing.  
The sound wasn't screechy,  
The carolling of a million angels entering heaven.  
The reaction was astounding, changing my like forever.  
I was on my way,  
On my way to fame and fortune.  
For once I felt at home  
Like I was put on earth for a reason.

By **Charlotte Wong**

Year 5, Ravenswood School for Girls, GORDON – NSW

Teacher: Mrs Sharon Shapiro

**H**AVE you ever watched the stars at night? I have. When I was small my mother told me the sad but beautiful story of the Little Match Girl. I remember it as if it was yesterday.

‘The little girl joined her dead grandmother – whom she loved with all her heart – in the sky as a star, and they were united at last’, she would say, stroking my hair as tiredness overcame my senses and my eyelids drooped.

My mother died about a year later. My father was so maddened by his grief that I was taken away to another home. The family meant well but nothing they could give me could replace my mother. On lonely nights I would look at the night sky. It looked as if someone had spilt a bottle of ink on a fresh canvas. I imagined that the pinpricks of light were the fireflies that settled to form the constellations. For so many years I studied dusty volumes from every library looking for one star. I knew it would have my mother’s name, Andromeda.

It was the only thought that helped me deal with my grief as a young child. I knew that my mother would be waiting for me. One day we would be united, just

like in the story of the Little Match Girl. I found the star when I was about five years old. I talked to the star sometimes. I knew that I hadn’t given up on my theory yet. Although at the age of ten I lay in a hospital bed and watched as the cancer of grief ripped my frail body to shreds. I hadn’t seen the stars for so long. The longing was an ally to the grief.

I found a thin, dog-eared paperback under some shrivelled flowers by my bed one night. It was my old copy of the Little Match Girl. I read it again and memories flooded back, and I suddenly knew that my mother wouldn’t have wanted me to give away my life so easily. She would have wanted me to live my life and when the time came (like it did for the girl in the story) I would be able to join her.

Many years passed and I now work as an astronomer. When people ask me what is my favourite star out of all the ones that I study, I smile and say what it is. They don’t know why but I do, and the star knows too.

By **Imogen Kennard**

Year 7, Ravenswood School for Girls

GORDON – NSW

Teacher: Mrs Sharon Shapiro

## Modern Match Girl





# Creative Net



Dear Librarian

Take a look at Creative Net. We have authors and illustrators who you won't find on other speakers' agency sites. Better still, Creative Net is the only speakers' agency in Australia that doesn't charge a booking fee. Our services to you are completely free.

Also, have you considered hosting a literary event? After a successful literary luncheon at Scotch College last year, we're looking for two primary or secondary host schools. Students pay \$20 + GST and we provide the authors/illustrators and show bags (worth \$30 each) free.

We can be contacted by phone on (03) 9481 1120, fax (03) 9481 1123 or email [fordstr@internode.on.net](mailto:fordstr@internode.on.net)

For a full list of our authors and illustrators check out our website at [www.fordstreetpublishing.com/cnet](http://www.fordstreetpublishing.com/cnet)

With best wishes

Terrie Saunders  
Creative Net

Have You Organised  
Your Presenter/s for The  
National Year of Reading?



**National  
Year of  
Reading  
2012**

## NSW

Stephen Axelsen  
Dianne Bates  
Patricia Bernard  
Jenny Blackford  
Russell Blackford  
Chris Cheng  
Laurine Croasdale  
Aleesah Darlison  
Serena Geddes  
Susanne Gervay  
Pip Harry  
Nette Hilton  
Jan Latta  
Sophie Masson  
Jeni Mawter  
Kim Miller  
Lewis Morley  
Louise Park  
Felicity Pulman  
Moya Simons  
Shane Thamm  
Lesley Vamos

## VIC

Goldie Alexander  
June Alexander  
Krista Bell  
Sue Bursztynski  
Isobelle Carmody  
Margaret Clark  
Sherryl Clark  
Paul Collins  
Michael Connell  
Meredith Costain  
Justin D'Ath  
Graham Davey  
Hazel Edwards  
Julie Davey  
Corinne Fenton  
Marjory Gardner  
Jacqui Grantford  
Robert Greenberg  
Susan Halliday  
Susan Halliday/Phil Kettle  
Leigh Hobbs  
George Ivanoff  
Bernadette Kelly  
Jackie Kerin  
Sue Lawson

Felicity Marshall  
Lorraine Marwood  
Foz Meadows  
Marc McBride  
Sean McMullen  
Dave O'Neil  
Wendy Orr  
Michael Panckridge  
Judith Rossell  
Michael Salmon  
Claire Saxby  
Tony Thompson  
Adam Wallace  
Dee White  
Mark Wilson

## WA

Mark Greenwood  
Frané Lessac  
Sally Murphy  
Teena Raffa-Mulligan

## ACT

Tania McCartney  
Stephanie Owen-Reeder  
Tracey Hawkins

## SA

Ben Chandler  
Katrina Germein  
Sally Heinrich  
Claire Richards  
Kristin Weidenbach

## TAS

Christina Booth  
Kate Gordon  
Steve Isham  
Sally Odgers

## QLD

Peter Carnavas  
Brian Falkner  
JE Fison  
Sheryl Gwyther  
Elaine Ouston  
Marianne de Pierres  
Angela Sunde

## NT

Leonie Norrington

In the silent walls of a hospital grim,  
 The chances of survival slim,  
 "Mama, Mama!" is echoed loud  
 As the voice grew closer "how'd  
 this happen? When did she go?  
 Why me? Why her? I did not know."  
 My ma is gone where is she now?  
 How did she leave I don't know how  
 I was here and gone for just one minute,  
 Her pillow left with a dint in it  
 "Doctor, Doctor! Where is my ma?  
 Is she waiting in the car?"  
 "No, no my dear she is no longer here,  
 She is very far but also near."

By **Taylah Meneses**  
 Year 8, North Lakes State College  
 NORTH LAKES – QLD.



*'Ma'*

## THE HIJACKERS

**H**AVING completed my first mission as a determined anti-hijacking agent, I sighed. Not many people are willing to risk their lives to save others. After I do all the life-risking work, my partner Jake takes the credit and spends his pay cheque on junk. Knowing I will be leaving for Hawaii this Friday, I wonder how he will manage.

As my family and I boarded the plane, we could hear people shouting, pushing and shoving. As we finally got to our seats, three men dressed in different outfits caught my attention; my instinct told me they were suspicious.

Not long after, my agent instinct kicked up even more and I was keen on observing them. The first man was sitting in the front aisle, nearest to the cockpit. The second was sitting in the middle row, his eyes were shuffling uncomfortably. The third was sitting in the back row, choosing to sit as near to the washroom as possible. The cough and splutter of the engines told me that the plane was taking off. The three men were preparing to take action; I had to do something...

Feeling for my most trusted weapon super shocker – my pistol, I made my way to the washroom and left the door slightly ajar. I used the time I still have to rack my brains and hatch a plan. All that was needed was for one of the hijackers to enter the washroom...

I waited and just then I heard footsteps heading towards me, lucky me, I thought, must be the hijacker. The door opened, confirming my deduction. I aimed a lights-out job at his neck that left him

unconscious. I decided not to use the super shocker next as it was too risky. So much about having good luck, I thought, as I approached face to face with another hijacker threatening the passengers. I hunt for my smoke bomb under my coat and puffed it at him...

His face was covered in smoke, blinding him. I knocked him out with one blow and left him with the first hijacker in the washroom. The passengers cheered. They were not terrified any more and were calmed by my presence. "Two down, one more to go" I muttered as I headed for the cockpit. Assuming the last hijacker was armed, I barged in, taking him by surprise. He was quick to recover and took aim with the pistol at me. I then recalled training and used the flick-the-gun technique. The pistol went flying through the air and out of the hijacker's reach. He then became desperate. Realising that his accomplices were not there to back him up, he surrendered.

The three hijackers were handed to the police as soon we landed in Hawaii. I was rewarded with a free air ticket to Japan. I breathed a sigh of relief, having enough flying for the day...

By **Jeral Hong Yi Lim**  
 Year 6, The Knox School  
 WANTIRNA SOUTH – VIC.





# Ambassadors



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

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

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

**Paul Collins** was born in England, raised in New Zealand and moved to Australia in 1972. In 1975 he launched *Void*, the first professional science fiction magazine Australia had seen since the demise of the joint Australian and British production *Vision of Tomorrow*. His first fantasy novel for younger readers was *The Wizard's Torment*. Paul then edited the young adult anthology *Dream Weavers*, Australia's first heroic fantasy anthology ever. This was followed by *Fantastic Worlds*, and *Tales from the Wasteland*. Paul's recent works include the highly successful fantasy series (co-edited with Michael Pryor), *The Quentaris Chronicles*, to which Paul also contributes titles (*Swords of Quentaris*, *Slaves of Quentaris*, *Princess of Shadows* and *Dragonlords of Quentaris*); *The Jelindel Chronicles*, in which *Dragonlinks* was the first title, and *The Earthborn Wars* trilogy, of which *The Earthborn* was the first title. Visit [www.paulcollins.com.au](http://www.paulcollins.com.au) for more. ➡



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

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

**Meredith Costain** lives in Melbourne with a menagerie of pets: five chooks, a cat, a kelpie and a red heeler, which often feature in her stories. Her work ranges from picture books through to popular fiction and non-fiction for older readers, and she is the literary editor of national children's magazines *Challenge*, *Explore* and *Comet*. Meredith's books include the series *A Year in Girl Hell*, *Dog Squad*, *Bed Tails* and *Musical Harriet*, which was adapted for television by the ABC. Her picture book *Doodledum Dancing*, illustrated by Pamela Allen, was an Honour Book in the 2007 Children's Book Council of Australia awards.

Meredith regularly presents writing workshops for kids and adults in libraries and schools, and enjoys helping writers create stories based on their own experiences. To find out more about her books, pets and early writing years, visit [www.meredithcostain.com](http://www.meredithcostain.com). ➡



📍 **Jeni Mawter** (J.A. Mawter) is the best-selling children's author of the hilarious 'So' series: *So Gross!*, *So Feral!*, *So Sick!*, *So Festy!*, *So Grotty!* and *So Stinky!* (HarperCollins) as well as the Freewheelers adventure series: *Unleashed!*, *Launched!* and *Extreme!* (HarperCollins). Jeni's picture book *There's a Sun Fairy in Our Garden* was based on her family life with her three children. She has also published fiction, non-fiction, poetry and verse narrative for the education market.

Jeni's enthusiasm for words and books is infectious. She inspires both children and adults. With a Master of Arts in Children's Literature Jeni has taught creative writing at Macquarie University, the NSW Writer's Centre and the Sydney Writers Centre. She presents at numerous other schools, conferences and festivals and is a speaker for the Lateral Learning, Show & Tell and Speaker's Ink speaker's agencies.

If you'd like to find about Jeni's books or to get some hot writing tips please visit [www.jenimawter.com](http://www.jenimawter.com)

**F**LYING. My one mission before I leave this earth. As a child, the closest I ever got to that beautiful sensation was by throwing myself off my grandparents' swing set. Now I am far too old to be able to fit on such a tiny playground, but still – the memories remain with me, and they bring me back to sanity in moments of madness. I am still only young, and one day, I will fly. One day, I will ride the waves of air; I will hang in transit between hell and heaven... and I will laugh.

For the moment though, I sit daydreaming in school, as my class 'mates' continuously flick their rubber bands and spit balls at the back of my head. Glancing at the clock, I notice that I have only three minutes left until I must leave the safety of the room. Gathering my belongings into the smallest parcel I can manage, I start preparing for the daunting journey home. Why these people hate me so much, I cannot fathom. I don't think I have ever actually done anything hateful, and yet everyone – even the teachers – seem to despise me. Perhaps it's a small-town prejudice against the different, or perhaps it is my reluctance to speak, or my peculiar, grey-yellow eyes and gaunt features. But more likely than not, they fear me. Or at least, they fear my cruel mother and her "hideous offspring".

The bell rings and I sprint from the room, slamming through the double doors and straight into the arms of one of my peers – or should I say tormentors? I am expecting him though, so I easily slip out of his ham-like arms with practised ease. Clutching my belongings to my chest, I pump my legs forward with as much force as I can muster. My feet throw me into the street with a speed that makes the wind whip around my face. Adrenaline bursts through my veins as gravel bites at the soles of my flimsy shoes, and all the while, I am being chased by teenagers intent on deforming my face even more. They almost killed me once, and I am certain that they are now set on finishing the job.

The images from that first horrifying experience flash through my mind – the blurs of flesh as these beautiful children had yanked at my hair, spitting in my face and slapping raw skin. I'd only been young and naïve then, and I was overcome with panic as they pinned me down, pulling at my clothes and laughing at my old, ripped underwear. I remembered crying out, only to have a hand clamped over my mouth, tears streaming down my face as they turned more brutal, punching and kicking at me.

I shake those thoughts out of my head and run a little faster. The air streams through my lungs, feeling ice cold against the sweat on my head. It is strange, that even in my fear, the sensation of moving so quickly that I am almost flying does not lose its appeal. The exhilaration makes me grin, and at that stupid moment, I chance a glance behind me. My pursuers see me smile, and must think that I am becoming arrogant, that I am mocking them. This

spurs them on, making them come almost within distance of dragging me to the ground. They shout abuse and jeer at me, calling me the daughter of a mangy witch, throwing rocks which graze my arms.

I finally manage to jump the fence and slam into my house, safe, but only for the time being. My legs tremble and it feels like they are about to buckle. I know better than to simply let myself collapse though. I was lucky today – I'd been careless and almost got caught. I must make sure all the doors are locked now, lest one of the kids decides his hatred of me is greater than his fear for my mother. But hopefully the luck will hold out and I'll have a quiet night alone.

Perhaps not.

"ALEX!" She shrieks my name like a curse, and I suppose that to her, I am one. I am the unwanted child, the mistake from one of her high school romances – but which one, no one will ever know. At first, I pretend not to hear her, but she keeps screaming, again and again. Finally, I creep into her room, my eyes downcast, waiting for the first inevitable blow. It isn't exactly like I can stop her anyway – she is a muscled athlete to my runty figure.

So I stand quietly and allow her to rant and rage at me. She pretends it's just anger at my slamming on the door, but we both know the truth. I am the representation of everything that has ever gone wrong in her life. I am the reminder that she has failed as a lover, a mother, a human. I am the true reflection of herself.

She slaps me, and my body goes rigid, shoulders hunched.

# Halfway to Nowhere



"Stupid girl!" she shouts, lashing out with her sharp, perfectly manicured nails.

My cheek stings, and my arms jerk, but I am silent, staring at the floor. I know it's worse when I try to fight back, as I've learnt thoroughly so many times over.

"Look at me, you little bitch!" she screams, her eyes flashing as she reaches out to shove me.

My shoulder meets the wall, and a second later my head joins it. Bang. Thump. She's always more powerful than I expect, and I daren't resist anyway. Gasping for air, I cower against the blessedly cool marble as she kicks me yet again. Her hatred cuts like daggers against my skin, her words burning like salt in the wounds across my face. My blood mingles with the red of her nails, and she wipes it off in disgust, throwing me out of the room.

I crumble to the floor in the hallway, my body wracked with bruises as I shudder for breath. The blows to my body hurt enough to bring tears to my eyes, but the true reason behind my sobs is not physical. Every day, I try to be brave, but in truth, it does hurt. I have already endured seventeen years of this hell. Seventeen years of teasing and abuse, not just from the strangers in my school, but from the only family I have left. To know that I am not wanted by anyone in this world – that not a single person cares for me or would notice whether I were dead or alive. To then be constantly surrounded by optimistic books, movies and shows about all this love and family bullshit...

Yeah, that's what really wrenches at my heart, what drags me down towards the spiralling madness of inexorable despair.

Blinking to clear my tear-stained eyes, I slowly raise myself onto hands and knees, fighting the waves of nausea which arrived alongside the pounding in my skull. As I pull my limp limbs upwards, I hear my mother flirting on her webcam, and decide that finally, I have had enough. At first I contemplate taking a gun to all their heads, but then I decide that no, I don't want to just be another 'crazy teen massacre'. I have no intention of being all over the news, becoming nothing more than a great pun for a headline. My life has enough pain as it is, so in death I think I would rather be forgotten in peace than remembered through misery. Tomorrow, I will live my

dream at last. Tomorrow, I will fly.

I write a note that will probably never be read, and try to sleep again for one final time. I have barely closed my eyes, when I can again feel the sun's rays on my cheekbones. I dress in my only decent clothes – a black and red dress my grandparents had bought me before they passed away. They were the only people who had ever even remotely cared about what happened to me, and now at long last, I will join them. I leave everything behind except for that one precious image of my true family, which I carefully tuck into a hidden pocket. I've forgotten to put on shoes, but no matter. My destination is only a short drive and then an easy walk away. I am there all too soon, just as the sun has finished its ascent over the horizon. I abandon the car, and start the trek to the very top, being careful not to hurt my bare feet on the rocky ground.

At the tip of the cliff, I look down, and the world sways around me. Vertigo – such a beautiful thing. I can feel my shoulders relaxing already, the tension easing as society's chains start slipping away. The tears drip steadily around my face now, no longer the stream that they began as yesterday. So high up, the wind caresses the bruises on my face, dragging my dress every-which-way and playing tug of war with my deathly black, tangled hair. I can hear the stream rushing beneath me, the birds chirping in the sky, the crisp leaves rustling in the autumn air. Such a lovely day to die. There is a roaring sound in my head, white noise. Everything is just white noise now; the sounds of the world are no longer relevant. At last, everything is peaceful, perfect. No more taunts, screams or accusations. This is the loudest silence I have ever experienced.

I breathe in deeply. Finally, all the pieces fit together – this is what I am meant to do. I turn my back on the plunge for a moment and gaze around at my amazing surroundings. Such a beautiful land, such a cruel world. Spinning slowly, I relish the feel of those rough rocks against the tender skin beneath my feet, and of the dappled sunlight gently warming my shoulders. I close my eyes and spread my arms wide to embrace the end. Just as I step forward, I force my lids open.

The drop, the rush, the fall! I let out an ear piercing scream, the first and only I have ever allowed myself. Such exhilaration!

Gravity grabs me and shoves me towards the earth, which rushes forward to greet me like an old friend. The air streams in and out of my lungs so incredibly fast, it rips at my throat and lips. I am free-falling now, with nothing and no one to stop me or slow me down. Back towards nature I hurtle, like a pellet of hail on a freezing winter's day. For the first time ever, I am truly flying. For the first time ever, I feel like me.

For the first time ever, I feel right—

*By Beatrice Duong Duong*  
Year 12, John Monash Science School  
CLAYTON – VIC.  
Teacher: Balli Kaur

## At Last

Beneath it all is this;

beyond faces, the awful shyness, words  
unsaid, that horrible stillness, unmet  
expectations.

That abyss, foreign,  
then roommate. Beyond  
faces, voices, hearts, mouths.  
Beneath it all is this;

My house, your presence.  
I feel my heart  
pole-vault, landing,  
stationary. The hours  
have flown endlessly by.

Shadows fall back  
onto the curtains, dancing  
in time with the flame of  
the candle. Darkness has  
devoured daylight. Upon

the table, the hourglass has  
reversed itself, dead. Sit  
down. Relax.  
Tomorrow is irrelevant  
here.

*By Robbie Coburn*  
Year 12, Assumption College  
KILMORE – VIC.



# 2012 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ART AWARDS

Painting



Photography



Drawing



Computer Art



Design by Tanya Rossi  
[www.logopix.com.au](http://www.logopix.com.au)

**[www.YoungAtArt.com.au](http://www.YoungAtArt.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.YoungAtArt.com.au](http://www.YoungAtArt.com.au).

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



What turned into reality,  
Had started as a dream.  
Fighting for mighty country  
Had only been a gleam.

While struggling for life as I was,  
I still had the Aussie pride.  
Even fighting for our nation,  
Wasn't always a down-side.

From camp to camp,  
From trench to trench.  
The nasty smell  
Dead body stench.

I caught a glimpse of the donkey,  
He and Simpson were well known.  
We were lucky they were here,  
Otherwise the wounded would be alone.

Many men were dead,  
We knew there'd be more.  
Those shrapnels were deadly,  
We knew that for sure.

When supplies were low,  
Ammunition down,  
We knew what we were in for,  
That caused a frown.

The Turkish were persistent,  
We never stopped.  
But day by day, one by one,  
Our numbers just dropped.

Saddest of all,  
I had to watch my mates die.  
One by one and two by two,  
They'd drop like a fly.

January ninth,  
It was a remarkable day.  
All the fighting  
Seemed to just float away.

# AN AUSSIE DREAM



*By Grace Molchanoff  
Year 7, The Pines Primary School  
PARAFIELD GARDENS – SA  
Teacher: Melanie Hawke*

Something saddened me though,  
It was the thought of my mates.  
Together we'd fought strong,  
Until those horrific dates.

I was the one keeping track,  
Which mate's dead and which mate's not.  
Telling their families is the thing  
That I had dreaded a lot.

The thought of seeing my family,  
Had raised my spirits a fair bit.  
I was so excited,  
I couldn't even sit.

As I paced back and forth,  
Waiting at the station,  
I waited for my family  
With a surge of anticipation.

Running to me,  
I spotted my wife.  
She couldn't believe  
I still had my life.

Very excited,  
Were my little twin boys.  
They jumped into my arms,  
Dropping all of their toys.

I hugged all my family,  
As dearly as could be.  
This was where I belonged,  
This was my family.

Many years later,  
I remember the months at war.  
Fighting for Australia.  
I could never ask for more!

Every Aussie should be proud!  
Every citizen should smile!  
For we are all Aussies,  
Who, for our country, would go a mile!

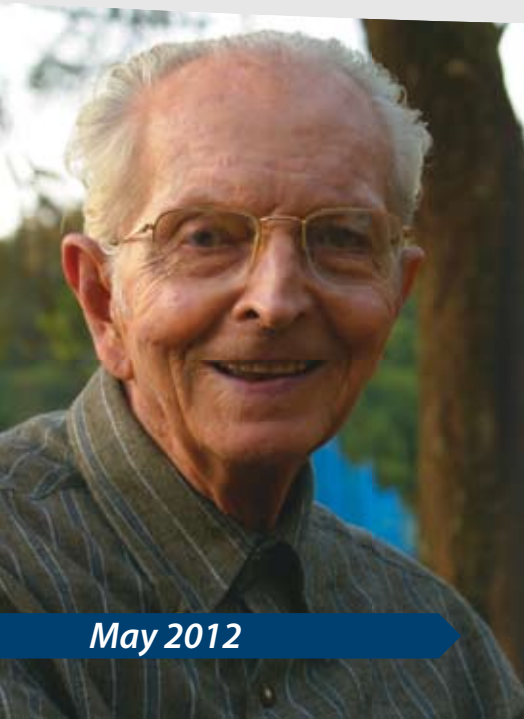
## *I Am*

I am my grandfather's son  
I wonder if I am exactly like him  
I hear his voice in my ear  
I see him when I look in the mirror  
I want to know what happened to him  
I am my grandfather's son.

I pretend he is here with me  
I feel his hand touch me  
I touch my Mum and think of him  
I worry where he is  
I cry when I think of him  
I am my grandfather's son.

I understand how I am like him  
I say he is the best in the world  
I dream he will come back  
I try to ask Mum what happened  
I hope he comes back to me  
I am my grandfather's son.

*By Jean-Pierre Mason Nayna  
Age 11,  
Thomas Mitchell Primary School  
ENDEAVOUR HILLS – VIC.*



# An Unsuccessful Busker



His presence was starving and naked  
on the street.

He squinted to see  
the mothers and their children  
visiting shops and laughing  
with the sleazy salesman.

The pavement bore the footprints  
left by the weight of the masses  
making their way hurriedly  
away from his nakedness.

Scowling secretly  
in the direction of the crowds,  
raising an instrument  
and laying down his hat.

“Hello world”, he sang off key  
but the world was too busy to listen  
and turned its back.

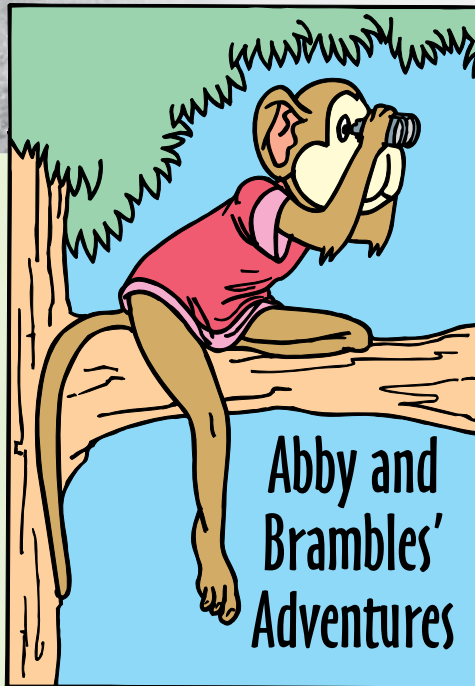
**By Robbie Coburn**

*Year 12, Assumption College*

*KILMORE – VIC.*

ONCE there lived a girl named Abby. She had no parents but she had a pet monkey called Brambles. He was very cheeky. She lives on an island in a small hut that's surrounded by huge lush trees. Abby's house had a big verandah overlooking the sparkly blue sea. They played on the beach every day. The beach has golden, deep, yellow sand with lots of little crystals in it. It also has palm trees on it that sway in the breeze.

One day they were playing on the beach and a plane landed on the island! A man hopped out. He was wearing dark glasses and looked very important. He said, “Would you like to come on a plane ride with me?”. “Yes please!” said Abby, standing up brushing sand from her knees. They got into the plane and shut the door immediately. As the plane started taking off, Abby had a nap. It was going to be a long journey, so she thought it was best to get some rest. She woke up and felt like she was spinning, she didn't know they were crash landing!!! As the plane groaned and tumbled as it dived downwards, Abby felt scared. Then there was a huge thud and the plane crashed! Abby got such a fright she jumped up out of her seat. Immediately the pilot said “Evacuate the plane right now!” Luckily no one got killed.



They found themselves on a exotic island in the jungle. They looked at the wreckage of the plane, which was scattered all over. In the middle of the island was the jungle. It looked like it had been hit by a cyclone. The leaves were shredded, bushes were crooked and the palms were all folded over. Brambles and Abby looked for water for three days then they finally found a big waterfall. It was huge. The water was clear and blue and at the bottom was a beautiful, sparkling river. They ran up to it and jumped in it straight away but then they jumped out again and looked at it more closely, something was very strange about this waterfall. It was very murky and deep.

Suddenly something swooped over them and Brambles jumped onto Abby. The noise got louder and louder and then a big bird snatched them in her enormous, sharp claws and she flew up into the air and towards her nest. It took ages to get there. She took them to her nest to feed them to her babies. But luckily they were already asleep so the big bird put Abby and Bramble under her enormous wings and went to sleep. Abby and Brambles escaped that night by using one of the huge feathers from the bird to parachute out of the tree, but they did not know how to get home!

They were walking around, feeling sad when a bird came over to them. It was a rainbow bird with glittering wings. It said, “Do you need to get home? I will give you a ride if you want one”. “No thanks.” Then they found a vine. It was very long. They thought the vine would be useful so they used the vine to swing home. When they got home they sat on the sand and watched the sunset until they fell asleep. It had been an amazing adventure!

**By Lilli Cowan**

*Year 3, The Essington School – Darwin*

*NIGHTCLIFF – NT*

*Teacher: Ms Annika Mighall*



# + At the Quarantine Station +

Caressing breezes ripple the inky, ebbing currents  
 Eating away at the rotting wooden pier  
 On which I stand, embracing the wind.  
 The diamond-encrusted heavens  
 Roll out above me like sheets of spattered canvas  
 Sending down rays and waves of  
 Hope.

Hope as I gaze at the growing shape  
 Manoeuvring on the brink of the horizon  
 Like a frenzied, playful dog.  
 Forever coming tantalisingly closer,  
 Rolling about on the frolicking waves  
 That have the potential to quash my dreams, my hopes, my  
 Fear.

Fear as I behold her ghostly hull,  
 Daubed with the tell-tale Red Cross  
 That shimmers in the starry midnight light  
 Like blood.  
 Ethereal lanterns flicker like long-dead ghosts  
 Painting haunting pallid faces in my mind, of those I  
 Love.

Love for those on board  
 Whose memories and dear faces  
 Linger in my heart and hopes.  
 My heart yearns and sings  
 For the time when I can once again  
 Feel their pain, their joy, their  
 Grief.

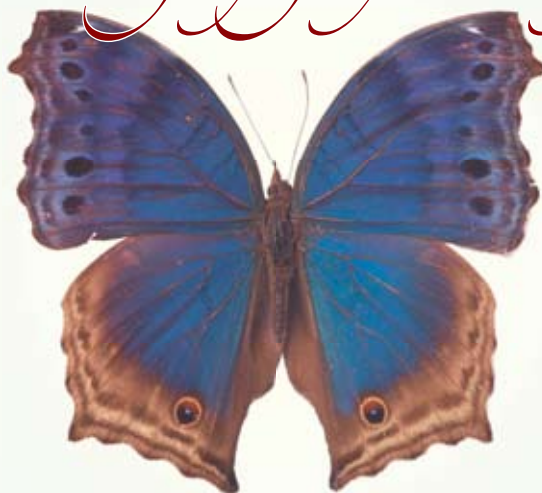
Grief, mad, utter grief, and shock,  
 As the ship carrying my soul  
 Begins to tip, turn, tumble  
 Beneath the hungry, omnipotent waves.  
 My heart sinks with it, and the last  
 Face I see, a crater of sores, finally shows  
 Peace.



By **Stephanie Freeborn**  
 Year 7, Ravenswood School for Girls  
 GORDON – NSW  
 Teacher: Mrs Sharon Shapiro

## Butterfly fly away

Fly away  
 On the wings of the wind  
 With fleeting fancies  
 And fluttering wings  
 Fly butterfly, fly  
 Purple, red, blue and green  
 Yellow and orange too  
 A mosaic of colours  
 Flying in the hot summer winds  
 Fluttering around me  
 With your beauty and poise  
 Grace filled, delicate figures  
 Flying away  
 Into the sky



Into the clouds  
 Away from me  
 Into a dream  
 Where everything is technicolour  
 And the world is not black and white  
 Take me away  
 Take me away to your dream world  
 Of colour and passion  
 Take me away  
 Butterfly fly away

By **Karis Cheng**  
 Year 9, Abbotsleigh Senior School  
 WAHROONGA – NSW



# Lost in the

**"H** EY Miya wake up", said Jack, who was a sturdy looking boy of twelve. "We are in the Amazon already!" "What?" spluttered Miya, jumping up to look out of the window of the bumpy plane. Suddenly the plane landed on a old, unstable dirt track and they were overwhelmed by a dense mass of greenery. Miya and Jack could hear monkeys chattering and birds twittering. "This is fantastic" breathed Miya. "Shh", said Jack, "we might frighten them".

"Come on kids, we need to get to camp before night falls or we'll get lost." The children couldn't believe how many birds

and wildlife came from the Amazon. They could see their parents up ahead of them, but in the excitement of the plants and animals they forgot to keep looking up to see where their parents were. Soon darkness fell and Jack looked up. "Miya, do you know where we are?" he said in a trembling voice. "No. Why?" said Miya. "Because I think we're lost", said Jack.

Miya and Jack both felt scared but decided to stay calm. Miya soon broke the silence that had followed Jack's words by suggesting that they stay on the path. Suddenly a rustling made them both jump and out of the bushes stepped a brown skinned

girl with long black hair and a bow and arrow on her arm. She looked at them out of her big brown eyes and suddenly Miya regained her confidence. "We are lost, could you please help us?" "My name is Mimi", said the girl. "I want to help you, so I will, but you can't let anybody from my tribe camp see you."

So they followed the girl to her camp and hid in a small clearing. Soon they got used to life in the bush. One day they were busy playing catch with a woven ball when a hunter from Mimi's tribe came to the clearing. "Mimi, what are you doing?", he said roughly. "I have to take you back to

## The F

**A** S I walked into the forest, on the ground lay a thick blanket of brown and yellow tinted leaves. There was a cool breeze and it took away the leaves in every direction which created a beautiful scene. Then I heard birds singing which caught my attention. I looked up; I saw birds flying here and there. It made me hum the song they were singing.

As I was walking deeper into the forest I saw sudden movement behind the bush in front of me. I got scared, but I was

still curious to know what it was. All of a sudden there was a ferocious lion with sand-coloured fur. I stood still as it started circling around me. When he opened his mouth to roar, I saw his scary, sharp teeth. I was trembling with fear, so I squinted my eyes, covered my ears and I sat over there. After a few seconds, there was no sound so I peeped around and there was no lion. I got up and ran away as fast as I could.

As I was running I saw an extraordinary waterfall. I stopped over there to relax as my heart was beating so fast. I sat for a

few minutes, and then started roaming around the water. I touched the water, it felt cool and fresh. Since I was so thirsty, I drank some water which gave me energy. I washed my face and started walking again.

In the middle of the forest I saw a cute and tiny cottage; it had a beautiful rose garden in the front yard. As I got closer, beneath the tree I saw something sparkle. I ran to the tree and saw a fancy, old-fashioned, golden key. It was large so I picked it up and I was interested in what it unlocked.



# Rainforest

camp.” “And”, he added with a nasty grin, “I think your friends can come too”. Soon Miya and Jack found themselves being shepherded through the rain forest.

Soon the jungle disappeared and they were in a big clearing. Green grey tents were set up and children played happily between them, but the children were led to the biggest tent and put in a bare cold room to wait. After a few minutes a man came and led them to another room. This one was very different from the one they were in before. It was warm and well furnished. A man with a crown on his head was sitting in a rocking chair. “Who are you?” he

said. Miya and Jack were too petrified to speak. After a long pause he spoke again, “You are white, have you been playing with Mimi?”. Miya slowly nodded her head. “All intruders are sentenced to death, and you will be too.”

On the morning of the execution, Mimi couldn’t bear it any longer. She started begging her father not to kill them. “They have been playing with you? Never!”, shouted her father. “Oh... oh... I’ll run away” she cried, and started sobbing into a filthy rag. Her father, who had lost so much, couldn’t bear to lose his daughter so eventually gave in.

Miya and Jack said goodbye to Mimi and promised they wouldn’t forget her. It was a long journey through the Amazon but Miya and Jack were shown the way by the tribespeople. Finally they made it back to a big town and phoned their parents who came to pick them up with hugs, kisses and tears. They caught a tour bus home and lazed, but they never forgot their rainforest adventure and still remember it now.

**By Riya Fordyce**

*Year 3, The Essington School – Darwin*

**NIGHTCLIFF – NT**

*Teacher: Ms Annika Mighall*

## Forest

I thought for a while, and then I thought it was the key to the cottage. I was just about to open the door with the key when the door flew open, it was unlocked.

I went into the cottage and looked around. In one room I saw a big wooden trunk in the centre of the room. I tried to open the trunk but it was locked so I thought the key would open it. I was right! The key opened the lock of the trunk. Inside were antiques such as wedding photos, dresses and an antique teapot. I opened the teapot and saw two diamond rings. It caught my

attention and I thought it might belong to the couple in the photos. I put everything back in its place and locked the trunk and put the key next to the trunk.

When I went back outside I saw a wall covered in antique paintings. It was huge and tall. I couldn’t see the end of the wall, it was so long. I tried going through it but it was too thick. I started looking at the paintings, because they were so tall. I felt dizzy and I slipped. I tried to hold the wall and my hand went inside, at first I thought that the painting got wrecked.

But it was a hidden door; as I opened it, I saw thick heavy fog which covered the sky. As I went through the fog I ended up in my bedroom, falling asleep. When I opened my eyes it was an unforgettable dream.

**By Gurvir Kaur Sahota**

*Age 14, Epping Secondary College*

**EPPING – VIC.**



# Crossfire

**D**ARKNESS devoured the sky like a python swallows its prey and the white of the stars strewn across it contrasted heavily with the black of the night. I glanced around and scanned my surroundings: the large ancient trees swaying in the breeze, whispering softly as if telling a secret, the penetrating sound of birds' cries and the violent sound of the waves crashing in the distance, like a rapacious, volatile monster, frightening yet somehow comforting.

A human figure emerged from behind the prehistoric trees. "Why did you do it?" it inquired icily, "Why Patrick?"

I turned around and it advanced toward me, I could see that it was Jarrah, the girl I once loved. Her clothes were torn and a deep crimson gash ran down her left arm, mutilating her rich cocoa skin.

Her dark eyes pleaded mine for a valid answer but I simply stared back, now wasn't the time. I crossed my arms across my chest and advanced toward her, a sly smile plastered on my lips. "Jarrah", I cooed as seductively as possible, attempting to wheedle her as I drew her close, "Be reasonable... Please? I would never do anything to hurt you. Not you or your kind".

Fear was written in dark, bold writing all over her lips, those beautiful lips once upon a time I kissed. I could feel her fear like a chill beside me. Large heavy tears welled in her eyes and she began to cry, a sharp, piercing yelp. She shoved me away as she struggled to regain her composure.

"You are a hypocrite!" she screamed, rage and anger conspicuously palpable in her eyes. "A lying, conniving, manipulative hypocrite!"

I was mesmerised by her eyes for a while, so dark, as dark as the night we were in, mine were the contrary, as light as day.

"And if I don't?" I challenged furtively, "what will you do about it?"

She shook her head and turned around slowly, the lack of words she displayed stabbed me deeper than I'd have thought, sharp and lethal. "There's nothing I can

do", she whispered slowly as she began to traverse in the opposite direction, her words came out muffled by tears, "It's your kind of people who make all of the rules".

The sound of chainsaws sounded in the distance and we heard the soft thud as one more tree fell down. As if to support her case, she looked at me once more, a hostile expression permanent on her beautiful face, and stalked away. "Tell Satan I said hello", she declared bitterly. Then she stalked away, she was gone. Forever.

Her last comment stabbed me in the heart, a knife through the heart, but I didn't care. What I did is unforgivable; she could at least try though.

★ ★ ★

"Tell me again why you like me?" Jarrah asked. We were lying down on the sand at the beach, reminiscing as usual; she was propped up on her elbow staring down at me, our eyes philandering with each other, speaking a language of their own. She suddenly picked up a shell and spontaneously gained a deep interest in its anatomy. I smiled. My gaze was still lingering over her, a grin the size of Antarctica smeared across my face, a smile the size of Africa was plastered on hers as it challenged mine.

"I don't know to be honest", I said after a while of deep thinking, "I guess that you're just different... And special".

A roll of thunder sounded in the distance and it suddenly began to rain, surprisingly fine rain, like a white veil the black sky was wearing.

I drew her close to me and caressed her beautiful face with the tips of my fingers. The sudden expression of affection must have caught her off guard as she shivered, a frisson that flowed through both of us. Perhaps it was from the rain.

"We should probably go somewhere covered", she stated matter-of-factly, "our clothes are going to get saturated".

"In that case", I said, my gaze lingering over her eyes, "we won't get wetter".

She smiled. I loved it when she smiled; there was hardly anything to smile about in her life, not with the new Segregation Laws imposed upon all people, not with the fact that her parents were slaughtered in the Massacre.

"Would they approve of us if they were still...?" I began, I was referring to her parents, and it was still hard for me to contemplate what the Government had done. It was abominable, horrible, sickening and barbaric.

She looked at the wet sand and suddenly developed a deep interest in the anatomy of a stone. She tossed it aside and picked up another. She repeated the same action ten times before she spoke. I listened.

"My parents were accepting and tolerant. They didn't like the Government but they weren't xenophobic either. They would approve." She stated, still staring at the ground. A tear rolled down her cheek and she began to weep violently, the tears continued to stream down her face – as if she was washing it all away, the anger, hatred, frustration, and grief. It was hard to watch as your parents were murdered. I hugged her closer and I could feel it all. When she was sad, I was sad.

"There has to be a better place out there", I whispered in her ear. I glanced up toward the sky and watched as the pregnant clouds sluggishly drifted by. "If I can promise you one thing... it's that my heart is yours. Always."

"Don't make promises", she said, "no-one has ever kept their promises. Ever".

"Not me", I promised once more, "not me".

She untangled herself from me, wiped her tears and looked toward the prehistoric trees. "What was that?" she inquired urgently. I glanced in that direction and heard exactly what she was talking about. My father's marauding army was here. They had come.

"My father", was all I could say by way of explanation, "my father has come".

"What do you mean, 'your father'?" she



inquired hastily. "How can it be your father? It sounds like machinery to me."

I sighed and looked at the ground. "A few days ago my father announced that he was planning new development", I said, avoiding eye contact with Jarrah. "He said it was going to be where..." I trailed off, not willing to finish the sentence. She knew what I was talking about.

"My people's trees? The Sacred Murri Trees?" she asked, exasperated. "You've known for days and you tell me now?"

She stood up. The moisture from the rain made her white dress clutch her body, the light from the moon made her black hair appear as if it was glistening. I'd almost forgotten how beautiful she was and needed to close my mouth to keep from drooling. She made me skip heartbeats like a scratched CD. I sighed. She stared at me rancorously. It was my turn to analyse the anatomy of leaves and rocks.

"I didn't think that he'd actually do it", I murmured. "He can be callous, racist, prejudiced, judgemental, one-sided, biased, bigoted and plain mean, but I didn't believe that he was completely heartless. He knows what these trees mean to you and your people."

She sighed and sat back down, a great distance from me. I moved closer, she moved farther away.

"Jarrah", I said, "Please... don't do this to me. I love you". She crossed her arms and turned around. She could be stubborn at times. "Patrick", she said maddened, "you know how much those trees mean to me and my people. I need to get them back. For me. For my people".

"I will help you", I stated, looking straight in her eyes, "I promise, we will get those trees back".

"How?" she asked sceptically, eyeing me incredulously. "They make all of the rules."

"They" are the Government. "They" are powerful. "They" are the Whites.

"Jarrah, we can alter the rules a little bit. We shall protest."

"You could get killed; the Government don't allow protests of any kind", she

pointed out, "are you seriously willing to die for this?"

"I am willing to die for you, for what's right."

I crossed the invisible line between us and drew her close once more. The rain had ceased and left a pleasant lingering smell. The sound of chainsaws sounded once again, "Your father", Jarrah stated, "he..."

"I know", I interjected delicately, "we'll stop him. They must be stopped". She nodded and we both fell asleep to the tranquilising sound of whispering trees and crashing waves in the distance.

The sun's rays pushed through the clouds and lit up the day. I sat up and stared at Jarrah, she looked so peaceful and serene in her sleep. I stood up and paced around for a while, contemplating how Jarrah and I would save the trees. Time was running out. I had an epiphany. "Jarrah", I whispered softly, gently shaking her awake, "wakey, wakey".

"What is it?" she inquired, yawning.

"Do you have some rope? I have an idea."

She left to get the rope and I scanned my surroundings, ensuring no Government Patrollers were nearby. This could kill us both.

"This was all that I could find", Jarrah stated, "is it enough?"

I turned around, and scrutinised the rope. It was perfect. I nodded.

I took her hand and led her beyond the ancient trees. "We are going to tie ourselves to the trees in protest. His army isn't completely heartless."

She looked at me incredulously. "That's what you said about your father."

"I know, but this should be different."

She scrutinised me intensely, as if trying to figure out what type of blood flowed through my veins. Jarrah looked up at the sky and watched as the birds flew by, they were free, something that she ought to be. Finally she nodded. I was glad that she trusted me.

"This one", she said pointing to a dejected looking tree. "Back when I was allowed here, I used to climb this one."

"How do you know it was this one?" I asked, mesmerised by her impeccable memory. "They all appear the same to me."

She simply smiled, her dimples creating crevices in her cheeks. I tied us both to the tree. All we had to do was wait.

"Are you love birds gonna leave or what?" hissed a voice. We both looked in the direction of the voice; it was Raymond, my father's comrade. He advanced toward us, a chainsaw in one hand, axe in the

*Continued on page 28*



*Continued from page 27*

other. "Get out of here!" Raymond slurred, "Before I kill you both".

My heart was hammering in my chest, I took Jarrah's hand and gripped it, if she was going to die, then I'd die with her.

I closed my eyes, and opened them slowly; more of my father's men marched in. My father had come too. "What the bloody hell are you doing with that thing?", my father demanded, staggering toward us. He was conspicuously drunk. His eyes were bloodshot, his hair ruffled and he smelt putrid. Jarrah flinched at my father's words and let out a small cry. My fingers were still intertwined with hers. Sweat trickled down

her forehead and her breathing quickened. The next few words my father managed to utter are not worth mentioning.

Raymond looked in my direction and winked at me. It was time. I closed my eyes and breathed deeply, untangled the confines of the rope from me and removed myself from the tree. Jarrah stared at me confused, baffled. "What is going on?" she demanded. I avoided eye contact with her and decided to fulfil my task. It had to be done. I advanced toward her, fear spread across her face like a rash, slowly lifted the knife from my back pocket. One... I breathed in, reminiscing of the times we'd spent together... Two... I lifted it in the

air... Three... I watched her face as the details of the events finally registered in her mind... Four... She let out a frightened, ear-splitting scream... Five... Six... Seven... I slid the knife down her left arm... Eight... I watched as she screamed louder, an amaranthine screech and tried to prevent further bleeding... Nine... I turned away from her... Ten... She fell to the ground... At the level her and her people should be at. At the level she deserves to be.

I was trapped in the crossfire for a while, but now I've chosen my side. My father was right. You can't be in both.

**By Prisca Ochan**

*Year 9, Mansfield State High School  
MANSFIELD – QLD.*

## Hours of Darkness

**T**HE hours of darkness seemed to extend far past their usual boundaries on that particular night. The raven sky was heavy with ink, and the stars were censored by the blanket of black that threatened to also cloak the moon, its light weakly pouring through the thin spaces in the dense shadow that covered Heaven's dome.

There was little movement that night, little disturbance in the deep woodland of oak trees that stretched along the earth. Sound, too, was suppressed – the usual rustling of reptiles and greetings of birds were absent.

At some point near the height of the night, a young girl stepped carefully from behind an oak tree, slowly treading over and away from the roots and pausing momentarily before striding confidently through the forest. Her pale blue cloak trailed along the leafy ground, the weightless material rippling with an unnatural light, and her bare ivory feet padded softly along the earth.

She walked deliberately, silently, between the trees until she reached an upward slope. The trees thinned at the hill, revealing the isolated church that sat atop it, only visible in the darkness due to the flickering candles that sat outside by the door. The girl paused, head tilted upwards to gaze at the church above. As she did so, the hood of her cloak slipped, revealing her delicate

features. Almond-shaped hazel eyes, large, captivating and innocent, stared upwards, framed by thick, curling lashes. Soft, pale lips parted as she drew a quick breath. She had porcelain skin, the cheeks flushed with perfect rosiness. Loose raven locks hung on either side of her porcelain face, tumbling out of the silken cloak draped over her shoulders to cascade to her waist.

She stepped forward once more. Her small hands hung by her sides as she hurried towards the church. As she neared the top of the hill, she broke into a stumbling run, her light cloak billowing behind her. She crested the hill and crossed to the gate. The sturdy ancient lock snapped at a twist of her fingers and the gate swung open to admit her. The girl walked into the churchyard.

She passed between the headstones slowly, her eyes fixated on the holy building. As she passed, thin cracks shot up the faces of the headstones, throwing sharp splitting sounds into the night, and her lips twitched with something like satisfaction. She climbed the steps leading up to the great double doors, then strode over the row of candles. The barrier of thick wood towered above her. Again, the corner of her mouth twitched, and she placed her palms on the surface. There was a clang of metal, resounding throughout the forest. Had it been any other night, the wildlife would have flown at the sound – but as it was, nothing stirred.

The girl dropped her hands and the doors creaked open to allow her to enter. The hinges screamed in protest, desperate to bar her, but they were silenced by a twitch of her hand. Several thick metal bars lay across the floor, dislodged from their posts along the width of the door where they had prevented entry into the church.

She stood for a moment in the doorway, her feet framed by the candles, straining her eyes to penetrate the dimness of the sacred space. A seemingly endless aisle ran the length of the high-vaulted building. Rows of dusty pews extended into the shadows to either side. At the very end of the aisle, at the front of the church, the grand marble altar stood on a raised platform, a thin white cloth, yellowed with age, draped over the surface. A scene of vegetation was carved into the front, reflecting the view of the forest from the churchyard. An old, cracked candle stood to either side. Behind the altar stretched the tall arched window, though the intricate stained-glass pattern was dull in the dimness.

As the girl stepped over the metal poles and began to walk down the aisle, the torches that hung in brackets on the walls spluttered to life. The breath of flame followed her, each pair of torches igniting as she passed them, until she reached the altar, at which the candle on either side caught light. The flames danced in the still air, though they radiated no heat and the wax did not melt.



A suppressed sobbing carried through the church. The girl advanced until she was close enough to place her palms on the altar. The aged white cloth fell away at her touch, disintegrating into threads little stronger than cobwebs against the weight of her hand. At that, an elderly man – a priest, clothed in white vestments – scrambled from behind the carved stone, his sobs growing louder and more frantic. His pleading, pale eyes glistened with tears as he looked upwards into her face.

“You can’t!” he gasped, moving away from her. “A church –”

“What about it?” Her voice was dangerously sharp, a knife slitting the man’s whimpering.

“It’s a h-holy place...”

“Perfect for sacrifice”, she said simply, reaching into her cloak and withdrawing a sharpened dagger.

The priest cried out and scrambled backwards desperately, but his back connected with the wall and the girl plunged the dagger into his heart. She stepped back as he released a blood-curling scream. Blood pumped from the wound, soaking into his robes. The girl twisted her hand and the dagger twisted also, burying itself deeper into the priest’s chest. He shrieked, his arms thrashed and the colour drained from his face. Within seconds, his screaming was cut short and his eyes ceased their tumultuous rolling.

The priest was dead. It was done.

The girl threw back her head and laughed, her shoulders shaking, sending tremors through her locks. She grasped the side of the altar for support, her face upturned, her wide hazel eyes glinting with viciousness. Her laugh was unnaturally hysterical, the chilling sound rebounding from the walls and reverberating through the church.

In that instant, the stained-glass window behind the altar shattered and shards of glass rained to the ground, catching the glow of the candles and splattering coloured light against the walls. The glass rang against the stone floor, and the piercing shattering filled the forest, slicing through the dark silence. The window gaped open, jagged fragments of glass still clutching to the frame.

The darkness of the night seemed to hesitate, then slowly, as if unsure of itself, it began to seep into the church. First, there were several tendrils that snaked through the opening to curl around the pews and toy with the flames of the candles. Then the tendrils became streams and within seconds the dark was pouring into the church. One by one, the torches were extinguished, until only the two candles by the altar continued to flicker weakly. Night overtook the defiled holy place, and the girl was pleased.

She glanced downwards, at the bloodied stone floor, reflecting the flickering candles beside the altar. The corpse was huddled against the wall, as though afraid of her even in death – as it should be, of course.

The forest was unnaturally silent as she

stepped out into the night. She walked through the churchyard, her very presence disturbing the sleepers below her feet. Further cracks erupted along the surfaces of the headstones, distorting the words and rendering the dead nameless.

The hours of darkness seemed to extend far past their usual boundaries on that particular night. The raven sky was heavy with ink, and the stars were censored by the blanket of black that threatened to also cloak the moon – the darkness masking from the eyes of God the horrific murder of His priest.

The girl padded softly into the forest, leaves and dirt clinging to the sticky fluid smeared across her feet. The hem of her blue cloak was stained with red, though it seemed to shine more vibrantly than ever. The girl returned to the oak tree from whence she had appeared, long before Dawn was victorious in her struggle with Night, but could not be traced any further. She left no trail of her midnight ramble, other than the body of the priest who had once offended her.

When Dawn did rise, rays of sunlight poured hesitantly through the shattered window into the decrepit church. Shards of colour reflected against the high ceiling and bloodied floor. The corpse was mute and immobile, head resting against the stone wall, desperately and vainly waiting to be discovered.

By **Talia Walker**  
Year 12, Cerdon College  
MERRYLANDS – NSW



# No one ever cares about me

I woke up again to the rumbling of my stomach  
 I wake up and see my ribs every day  
 My ribs are weak  
 Though they don't choose it  
 They once lived but soon after died  
 That's the same with everything in life  
 All dead, all bare and all with no care

I haven't eaten in three days straight  
 Even the dogs won't look in my face  
 It doesn't matter whether it's wet or dry  
 People always pass me by  
 As if I'm invisible or too thin to see  
 No one ever cares about me

I wish I could have, even just for one day  
 A nice warm meal with a family  
 All I have left are tears in my eyes  
 No warmth, no breeze, no love  
 I can't have everything  
 I was told when young  
 But I want, need just something

One day I hope I can have that something  
 Even if it is raw or rotten  
 Shoes for my feet, so they do not bleed  
 And take more nutrients away from me

No one ever will  
 No one ever did  
 No one ever cares about me

By **Lucinda Maxwell**  
 Age 14, Kalamunda Senior High School  
 KALAMUNDA – WA

# The Green Turtle

A green mother turtle comes ashore at night,  
 Crawling over the sand until she finds a safe place.  
 Giant feet and flippers pushing her way into the soft sand,  
 Making a round pit to lay her eggs.  
 A clutch of slippery eggs dropping into a narrow hole,  
 Pushing sand over the eggs with her hind flippers to bury them.

Dawn rises and the sun is shining bright,  
 The mother turtle's trail leads from the shallow pit to the sea.  
 After two months, little vulnerable hatchlings appear,  
 Facing many natural and human dangers.  
 Soft heads and hard shells,  
 Small, kicking feet and pointy tails,  
 Tiny, sharp claws.

Scurrying to the ocean as fast as they can,  
 They're valuable to predators and easy to catch.  
 Confused, disorientated and scared,  
 Hungry birds and crabs ready to snatch and grab.  
 Trying to escape,  
 Paddling further away from the shore,  
 Safe and hidden among the seaweed.

In the deep, open ocean current,  
 Only one baby turtle survives to be an adult.  
 Tangled in fishing nets and drowning,  
 Swallowing plastic bags, mistaking them for jelly fish.  
 Tiger sharks lurking in the water,  
 People catching them for meat, eggs, shells and skin.

Green Turtles are endangered!  
 Save and protect these special sea turtles so they can  
 Swim freely in tropical waters without a care in the world.

By **Chloe Di Gemma**  
 Year 4, Lauriston Girls' School  
 ARMADALE – VIC.





**S**PLASH! Splash! The waves smashed against the pointy, jagged rocks. It was May. The rainy season had just finished and the tropical island had sprung to life.

Up in the tall rainforest trees, sitting on the branches, were a gang of lemurs eating some fresh ripened fruit. But higher up still was Malala. She was trying to get a fresh, juicy banana flower for herself. She reached out while her other hand held tightly onto a branch. Her tiny, little hand touched the fruit. Pluck! She caught the banana flower as it fell towards the ground.

Malala climbed down carefully. She ran quickly to her huge pile of fruit and placed the one she had picked with all the others that she had gathered during the day. "There!" said Malala, feeling very proud of herself.

Malala was so busy arranging the pile of fruit and nuts that she hadn't noticed she had been watched by another lemur (but it wasn't her brother, Rija).

★ ★ ★

At sunrise, life in the rainforest was quiet. The only sound you could hear was the call of another lemur. Ooh, ooh, ooh! Malala was snoozing happily away in a tree. Zzzz. Zzzzz. She didn't have to gather any more fruit because her job was complete. She had sufficient fruit and nuts to last her a whole entire week.

Then, all of a sudden, a loud crunching noise woke her up. "Yum! This is the best fruit ever!" cried the voice. Malala ran speedily down the tree. "PAWS UP! STOP MUNCHING MY FOOD, THIEF!" exclaimed Malala. The thief scurried away laughing. Hah, hah, hah! But Malala didn't catch a glimpse of the thief.

Malala looked at the eaten up fruits and nuts on the ground where she had left them. Who had eaten her food? It had taken a whole day to collect her breakfast and the juiciest fruit that came from the highest trees. Another animal had decided to eat all her food instead. She looked around. Paw prints! And they looked so unfamiliar! They led into the leafy, green forest. What animal climbs trees? Will she ever find this thief before it strikes in other places?

Malala decided to track the thief and started following the paw prints. So she

## Malala *and the* Mysterious Thief

climbed up to the top of the canopy and down the trees to the understorey and through the ferns on the forest floor and eventually along the river banks. It was so exhausting! Where was that naughty thief? wondered Malala. She was desperate to find him.

Finally, she rested by the flowing river and sat on a rock which was actually a turtle shell. The grumpy, old turtle woke up stunned. "Hey, lemur! Did you know that you are sitting on me? Mind if you get off!" he grumbled.

Malala quickly got off. She didn't want to mess with the turtle. Then she remembered the thief. "Have you seen anyone run past?" asked Malala in a kind tone. "Yes I have", he replied grumpily. "He just ran past without saying hello. He was black and white and had no tail." "NO TAIL?" cried Malala. What a weird lemur!

So now Malala had some evidence of the mysterious thief. She spotted a log which had fallen into the river and was now stuck in the water by the strong current. Malala walked steadily along the log and across the river to the other side.

Just then, a black and white figure appeared along the stream. "STOP THERE!"

screamed Malala. The thief looked at her. His face was black and white. His ears round. He had no tail and a white fluffy mane. Malala ran swiftly towards him. The thief didn't move at all.

Actually, the thief was an Indri lemur, called Lex. He was very naughty and stole other lemurs' food. Lex made an eerie wail when he saw Malala. "Sh... sh... shouldn't you be somewhere else?" stammered Lex. "NO! I'm here to catch you" explained Malala. "Anyway, aren't you a long way from home?" she demanded.

Lex told Malala that when he stumbled upon the irresistible fruit, he decided to gobble it all up at once. He didn't know how to get the fruit so the only way he could eat some delicious food was to steal it from others. Malala chuckled. "I'll teach you" she said. I wonder what she was up to? Mmm.

Early next morning, the parrots were chirping happily in the trees. Malala and Lex woke up to a hot, humid and sunny day. Training had begun. Lex started climbing trees. "One, two, three, one, two, three", repeated Lex quickly. Malala somehow kept yelling at him like she was the coach. "COME ON. TEN MORE. TOO SLOW! FASTER!" shouted Malala.

That's not all Malala had planned for the naughty thief. Then, Malala told poor Lex to jump into the waterhole where crocodiles lurk in the deep water and wait for their prey. Unfortunately, Lex got chased by one and started screaming like a girl and swam for his life. AAAAAAH! HELP! That should teach him not to steal other lemurs' food, giggled Malala.

Finally, Lex and Malala chomped on the fresh, green leaves together. Malala looked up at the sunset. "Well, it's time for me to go" explained Malala. "Oh well. Come back soon. It won't be much fun without you" replied Lex. So Malala swung on the hanging vine and jumped down the tree to the ground. She waved good-bye and started walking away, humming to herself. Then she heard a distant shout high up in the trees. It was Lex. "Next time when you visit, you're going in the waterhole first." Malala smiled and couldn't wait until her next adventure...

By **Chloe Di Gemma**  
Year 4, Lauriston Girls' School  
ARMADALE - VIC.



# The Unknown Enemy

**I** FELL to my knees, a bead of sweat pouring down my face – it wasn't there! I plunged my hand into my bag again and madly searched the contents. It was DEFINITELY not there. At this point, I was in utter meltdown mode, both from sheer anger and despair. In my rage, I tipped out the contents of my bag and started scanning all the heavy books and other garbage that I had in there. It was nowhere, my secret Naruto fan fiction was lost – and probably in the hands of some random person by now!

When I realised that I was sitting right in the middle of the footpath, I collected my things and started heading home. During the whole trip, I was in complete agony: if someone had found it, they would surely read it and tell everyone about my talentless story. I would probably die from the humiliation. But there was nothing I could do about it. I couldn't go around accusing everyone of stealing a piece of paper. All I could do was wait until the day came that I finally died of humiliation. My blood was boiling with anger, yet freezing with the anticipation of being laughed at...

I woke with a start – I had been daydreaming during English at school again. There was a paper on my desk, a handwritten letter or something. I picked it up and started reading. Then, my eyes began to bulge and my mouth fell open. My anger, that had settled down, began to rise again. 'BLACKMAIL!' I screamed in my head. The worst thing was that I couldn't tell anyone, that would just be weird. No one would understand what this fan fiction meant to me. I was the victim here, and I had no one to protect me. I was vulnerable. Yet angry. Incredibly angry. So angry that—

My inner rage was cut short by the lunch bell. I decided that I would tell my best friend about all of this.

"So, this random person wants you to go to the library block tomorrow at lunch, with your favourite J-pop CD?," she queried.

"Yea", I replied quite miserably, which was quite strange alongside the incredible anger I felt inside.

"So, are you going to listen?"

I shrugged, also in a miserable way. I was starting to hate myself for acting the opposite way to how I actually felt.

"I guess not", I replied, more fiercely than I had intended to. Sakura's shocked face made me feel quite unpleasant. Did she really think that I would give in to the unknown predator that easily? Surely she knew by now that I wasn't like that.

"But—", Sakura stuttered, "wouldn't it be too rash to disobey this unknown sender, knowing that they might expose your story?". Sakura looked at me pleadingly, with such sad eyes... it always worked on me.

"Yea, I guess you're right". I sighed. Sakura was always right. "OK. I'll go tomorrow with my CD". Sakura smiled. "I'm going to come with you", she said.

That night, I thought over what was going to happen tomorrow. I was going to

confront the "enemy" and risk being humiliated if this certain "enemy" was not trustworthy. Also, I had no idea why they wanted me to bring my CD. I had to risk it. I was in a really tight position. I was stressed all evening and my parents must have been wondering why. I packed my bag, putting my favourite CD in the pocket that only Sakura and I knew about.

I woke up the next morning feeling sweaty. I had a big day ahead of me. Periods 1 and 2 went by really fast, as if having to meet this mysterious enemy wasn't daunting enough. It was during Period 3 that I really started to panic. I wasn't ready and lunch was racing towards me. I usually hated English, but I wanted Period 3 to last forever. Before I knew it, the lunch bell rang. "This is it", I thought. I met Sakura under the COLA as usual. She looked quite frightened. I was frightened myself, but I bet she was even more scared. I was just about to tell her that she didn't have to come, but I just remembered that I should check that my CD was safe, before approaching the unknown enemy. I knelt down and unzipped my bag. I opened my secret pocket and was thinking that everything was fine when it hit me that my CD was missing. I felt like crying. That CD was probably my most treasured possession.

"Come on, we don't have any time to lose", Sakura exclaimed. She grabbed my arm and started to drag me up the stairs. I didn't have the courage to tell Sakura about me losing the CD. After what she was doing for me, I couldn't tell her that I could possibly destroy everything because of my forgetfulness.

When we reached the top of the stairs, my heart was pounding uncontrollably. I was confronting the enemy. I scanned the library block. There was no one except for some senior students and a handful of others. There was this one strange girl who was beaming up at me. I smiled back, but walked right past her. Who could this dangerous enemy possibly be? Were they hiding? I decided to be on guard at all times.

"Um, excuse me, I think I'm meant to be seeing you", a tiny, delicate voice said behind me. I spun around, still on guard. Voices could be deceiving.

"I believe this is yours", the girl who had smiled at me earlier, said in a polite voice.

ad done? To keep  
her. I should have  
ere, penniless but



She was the new girl in Year 9, I thought. And she was holding my fan fiction. I gaped at her, unbelievably.

Sakura was laughing now. I turned to her, still gaping. "Are you serious?" I asked, a little louder than I wanted to. "You're the one I've been fearing all this time?" I was still in deep shock. The year 9 let out a little giggle. Then she put on a serious face.

"Looks can be deceiving." I freaked.

It ended out to be that my "dangerous enemy" was just a friendly year 9 who was also a fan of *Naruto* and she really liked my fan fiction. She had requested that I bring my J-pop CD because she was also a fan of that particular band. We became really good friends. The most shocking news was that Sakura had known about

this all along and was the one who hid my CD. She was playing along all this time. But I couldn't stay angry at her, she was an awesome friend. In the end, it wasn't such a bad bargain after all.

**By Fariha Islam**

*Year 8, Hornsby Girls' High School  
HORNSBY – NSW*

# The Final Act of the Black Rose

**S**HE watched them come; her eyes brimming with hate and malice. The warrior guardian continued to stare as the enemy crept closer to the base she had created, the home she had made all those years ago. She could almost see their eyes now; they seemed to gleam at the prospect of an easy victory.

They wanted control of the country, and all the people in it. The only way to achieve that was to destroy the last rebel base – her home. They had been planning it for months; she had seen the plans herself. A surprise attack that if unknown, would have destroyed the family she had made. But she had seen them and seeing no alternative, evacuated the base. Unbeknownst to the enemy, there was no one left but her.

She knew death was near; for no one could survive when the odds were a thousand to one. She could imagine him standing tall behind her, his arm raised with an endless

patience, one that could exceed time itself for its next victim.

She felt calm; the type of calm that one only feels when one is near death. She felt no fear for what was going to happen next; but deep inside her heart guilt festered. She was going to destroy her home to save the rebel army – her family – from the long arm of death. She was ready to die; but that didn't mean she wasn't going to take as many of them with her.

As she watched, the leader of the enemy raised his arm and as one, the monstrosities that called themselves men surged forward. Soon they would be inside, but it won't take them long to figure out that it was empty. She needed bait to entice them; to keep them inside, and she had the perfect volunteer to do it.

The leader and traitor of the rebels almost laughed at their stupidity. Without her knowing, they had used her to find the location of the base. But what they did not realise is that the beacon that led them to her home, would now be leading them to their death; death was not only with her tonight.

The enemy entered and she almost smiled as she pushed a button on the remote in her hand and listened. Faintly she heard women scream, men chanting, "Get on the roof", and children crying. She imagined the shadows of people that now played on

the walls in front of the men that were now inside shooting every which way.

The leader stayed outside, looking at the base with what she thought of as a smug smirk playing on his face. Yes, look smug, she thought, I wish I could see your face afterwards. She could hear footsteps pounding up the stairs towards her and for that single moment, wished her love was by her side. Then they burst through, guns ready.

The Black Rose smiled and with her arm raised, pressed the last button on the remote. A brilliant light instantaneously erupted from the building, shattering windows and blowing out walls. The enemy leader cried in rage and disgust for even in death, the Black Rose – a mere woman – had defeated his army.

**By Jessica Chapman**

*Year 12, Ipswich State High School  
IPSWICH – QLD.*

# Red in the Snow

I FELT my eyes suddenly open. A shock of bright green in the midst of a colourless room. Light continued its struggle to get into the small and enclosed space, but to no prevail. The mottle of greys and whites that textured the walls seemed even duller, and made everything feel far colder. It couldn't be more than 5 o'clock in the morning. I lowered my legs onto the floor, attempting to get up to my feet. Freezing wooden floorboards greeted me as I stood up, walking towards the window. The fogged up glass distorted my view of the outside world but was soon wiped away. At least two feet of snow had fallen during the night, semi-covering the clumps of great pines. The wilderness seemed to be beckoning me to come out and explore it.

Putting on my jumper and jacket I trudged out. Opening the door and ploughing on. Through the snow, ice and slush. There was no wind, but the frozen water soon seeped into my boots and trousers, leaving me even colder than before. My legs seemed to be commanding themselves, moving me through the snow further away from the cabin that I had left. The mind I controlled seemed to be sleeping and the path I was treading was growing more complicated. Soon the path split. Three different paths

to be travelled, each going a separate way. I didn't know where to go, what way to walk. The sun began to peep up over the horizon. Wildlife started coming out of their hiding places and attended to their daily routine. Birds settled onto the branches around me and sang to all that could hear. Then I heard the roar. The huge sound blasted through the snowy wilderness, startling every creature whose ear picked up the waves of volume. Hares sprinted with all of their speed towards their burrows. Birds screeched and flew in the opposite direction. Something was very wrong. I started sprinting towards the direction of the noise, wanting to find out what had happened. The forest was massive and made almost completely of pines. My feet kept their steady beat towards the direction of the roar. Suddenly a splash of brilliant red hit my eye. Deep red on the white snow. Lying in the middle of it was the body of an animal.

The beast was massive. That was the only way to say it. The moose would have been at least two metres long and as tall as a horse. It saddened me to see such a magnificent beast lying on the snowy forest floor. The pools of bright red blood and small chunks of flesh and entrails gave a startling clash to the bright white snow on the ground. The torso of the once beautiful beast was gaping open, revealing a shining mass of gut and inner fluid. I surveyed the scene of the slaughter, trees were torn out of place, snow shovelled out

of the way as if by a massive animal. All immediate signs of a struggle. But the most startling thing about the carcass and what lay around me, was that it was fresh.

I stumbled back from the site of the death, trying to shut the visions and images of the carcass from my mind. But they were relentless. My vision seemed to have a blood red tint and my heart was beating slowly. Turning from the horrible place I ran. My feet seemed to catch every hole and root that got in my way. I almost felt as if the moose body was following me as I tried to run away. The air started to catch in my lung, making it harder to breathe. Glancing up quickly I observed my surroundings. A feeling of horror crept up to my heart as I realised what had happened. I hadn't been past here before. This wasn't the way that I had come. Nothing was familiar. I wasn't going to retrace my steps back to the moose, no matter how lost I was. The trees seemed to close in around me. Every pine looked the same. The branches everywhere, like claws trying to snare and drag me into a trap. I sank down to my knees. Loneliness seeped into my mind. Then a twig snapped behind me. My thoughts shattered and my head twisted suddenly towards the direction of the noise. Something was there, I could feel it. But it didn't want to be seen. My hand instinctively went up to my coat pocket, feeling round for my pocket knife that I always had with me. As I drew it out of my pocket, still staring at the undergrowth that the noise had come from, a snuffle came from the opposite direction. I flicked out the blade. The glint of steel gave me courage. The thing started moving away, seemingly startled by the knife. As soon as the beast had moved away out of earshot I got to my feet. A giddy feeling mixed with nausea swept through my body. For I realised how close to danger I had just been.

All that was escaping my body were shallow breaths. The shots of fear from my recent encounter with the strange beast hadn't settled. Every tree that I passed was dark and gave off an evil aura. The rough bark of the trunks seemed to take the forms of jeering and hungry faces, dripping with malice. Snow drifts and fallen



pine limbs reeked with danger. Every obstacle able to hide a hungry animal. My walk began to become automatic. My legs kept on trudging though the slush, still with no knowing of what lay ahead. Whether the cabin was forward or backwards. The undergrowth and trees were growing thicker. Cutting off most of the already dim light. My hands were shaking with fear. Sweat was pouring down my back and forehead even though it was below freezing. Every sound that occurred caused me to snap my head around and whip out my knife. My mind wasn't focusing. I felt like a frightened hare on the lookout for a huge wolf. Outmatched, outgunned and very scared. Sometimes I thought I could see the beast following me. A flash of shaggy hair, a dog like ear or a shining half-foot long claw. As black and cold as the snow around it. Every animal that should have been running and bounding through the forest was nowhere to be found. Only the cawing of crows could be heard, anticipating a meal that I couldn't see. The snuffling came from the direction I heading. My fear hit the roof. A small whimper escaped my mouth. I had a feeling that the crows were waiting for me.

Suddenly something leapt out of the bushes not eighty yards away. It was like nothing I had ever seen. A massive beast the size of a small car shuffled its feet over the snow. Its body was covered in very long, matted hair, thick and tough looking. Its legs were covered in a similar fashion, but were heavily muscled and looked capable of ripping me in half. A long dog-like tail swept the ground behind the monster.

But most horrible of all was the head. A huge head rolled itself to look towards me. The wolf like ears twitching on its head, trying to pick up any waves of movement echoing through the woods. Small slitted red eyes bored into me. Trying to see into my deepest thoughts, clicking its six inch long claws together. I pulled out my knife and pointed it towards the beast, but now the seemingly tiny blade did nothing but make me realise how powerless I was. My hand started shaking and the knife just slid out of it. The monster gave me an evil look, and then it smiled. I ran.

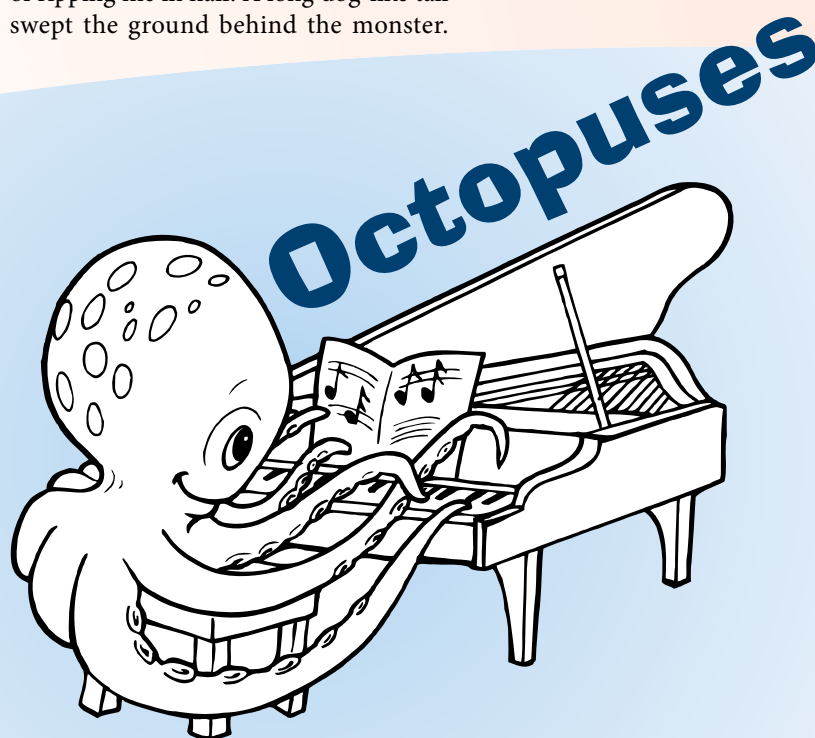
The animal part of my mind took over. I was sprinting, and nothing was going to stop me. I glanced back over my shoulder to look behind me. The monster was easily galloping behind, a leisurely pace for its size. I kept on running but the calm stride of the monster came closer and closer behind me, devouring the space up between us. The whole world felt like it was moving in slow motion as the monster leapt. I fell on the ground before it, raising my arm to provide a feeble shield. The beast's cold and sharp claws tore straight through sinew and flesh. Cracking the bones that it hit. Using my remaining arm I tried with all my might to get to my feet and run from the monster as it curiously sniffed my still twitching limb that was lying on the ground. Tears of pure fear streaked down my face as I ran. Swinging the bloodied stump uselessly that used to be my arm. Stumbling through the undergrowth I went, constantly looking

over my shoulder. I saw a clearing ahead. Long and inviting. A roar sounded behind me as I sprinted towards the clearing. It was a road, the road I had used to get to this hellhole. The beast was close; the crashing noises kept coming closer. This was the end. The beast leapt out of the bushes with claws outstretched. The deadly implements directly struck me, sending a spurt of gore out of my chest. My head hit the ground, splashing as it hit the growing pool of blood. The monster howled with victory, and then it all went black.

The man's friend was travelling down the dirt forest track in his car. Happy that he was going to see his mate, after his stay alone in the mountaineer's cabin. They had been planning to do this hiking trip for years. The friend's car rumbled along the track, going at a decent speed when something ahead caught his eye. Something was lying face down in the middle of the road in a pool of red. The friend ran out to see what had happened. The body seemed familiar, even human. The friend knelt down and turned the body to see the face. Then a cold icy hand of fear grabbed his heart. It was the face of his childhood friend. Tears ran down the friend's face, as he gazed into the features of the man. Behind him, unseen in the bushes a pair of red eyes watched him. Its fangs twisted into an evil grin. It took one step closer. The rest of his prey had arrived.

**By Harry Musson**

*Year 8, The Hamilton and Alexandra College  
HAMILTON – VIC.  
Teacher: Mr Ingham*



They glide underwater like glowing kites,  
Creeping over stones and sand banks,  
Shooting away from danger like navy torpedos,  
Change colours to suit their mood:  
A snazzy purple tie and an orange shirt.  
Their skin can change texture too!  
Is there nothing these freaks can't do?  
Eight tentacles studded with vacuum holes,  
Opening jam jars and walking on land,  
Even learning to shake hands!  
Squirting out ink,  
Sometimes it's pink!  
Never underestimate these crazy life forms.  
Blobby bodies and huge innocent eyes –  
They are truly a surprise!

**By Simone Engele**

*Year 3, Oxley Christian College  
CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.  
Teacher: Sharon Sandison*

# From the Horse's Mouth

Over a Mountain that's where you'll find me.  
I roam the mountains wild and free.  
I am a historic Australian icon I am a Brumby.

I live in a stall with ducted heating  
I want for nothing and that's a blessing  
My coat is brushed my belly is full  
A show horse's life is where I rule

Running from Man who claims I destroy the land  
Using all my cunning just to survive finding fresh food and water  
Trampling the undergrowth reducing fire danger

Plaited up and ready to shine  
Whether it's Cross Country, Dressage or Show jumping that ribbon is mine  
This never fails to keep my rider and me as happy as can be.

We are both equine though our differences are many  
Content to live our lives happily but separately

By **Ella Andersen**

Age 11

FRANKSTON SOUTH – VIC.



## Ivy the Fairy

ONCE upon a time there lived a little fairy named Ivy. Ivy lived in a house made of leaves and flower petals. Ivy had two best friends, Becci and Rosemary. In her class there was a pixie who loved her. His name was Thomas Leaf.

One day when Ivy, Becci and Rosemary went to school, Ivy's teacher Mr Petal was very scared. There had been news their whole fairy world was going to be destroyed. Humans actually owned the garden that Fairy land is built on. Mr Petal's wife Mrs Petal was going to have a baby soon and she could not move very fast with the baby in her tummy.

"Class" he said, "Fairy land is going to be destroyed tomorrow so the school is going to let you off for today so you can pack up and evacuate. Now off you go". He shoed them out the door. The next morning Ivy ran out her door and rushed into the air to see two big humans with shovels and spades to dig up Fairy Land.

"STOP BY FAIRY LAW!!!" She screamed at the top of her voice.

"Yuck, a flying bug" the humans screamed and flung their shovels and spades at Ivy.

"AHHH!!!" Ivy screamed as a shovel fell on top of her, flattening her like a pancake. Becci, Rosemary, Thomas, Mr Petal and the class heard the noise she made and went out to investigate. Fairy Land was not destroyed but one thing was missing, where was Ivy? Everybody split up looking for her. Then Becci called in a sad voice "I found her". The whole class and Mr Petal ran over.

"She's under this shovel I think" said Becci. Everybody lifted up the shovel and there

she was. Mr Petal lent down and listened to her tiny golden heart it wasn't beating. He checked if she was breathing. She wasn't breathing.

'Let's get back to school', Mr Petal said sadly and carried Ivy back to Golden Feather Public School. When they were back in class Mr Petal laid Ivy on his desk. "Class, if you are Ivy's best friends come out the front. Ivy has died, and she tried to save fairy land and got killed."

The next day they had Ivy's funeral. Her friends, classmates and Teacher made a special tombstone for her and put it in the school as a sign of remembrance for her bravery and courage. That same day Mrs Petal had her baby. It was a girl and she named it Ivy in remembrance of the brave Ivy.

Her Ivy became strong and brave as the real Ivy was.

*The End*

By **Cassandra Sutton**

Year 4

WAGGA – NSW





# Things Aren't Always the Way They Seem

**T**O MY friend Linda: Simply running away or slashing your wrists will not help anybody. Shelve your insecurities. Talk to someone... Anyone.

★ ★ ★

Have you ever looked at someone at a joyful moment and thought inwardly to yourself that maybe the grin smeared across their face looked a little too wide? That the hearty chuckle emanating from their mouths was possibly a little too hearty? Perhaps, deep down, there's something not quite right, something eating away at the person until, eventually, the pain becomes too much and the person chooses the irreversible method of escaping it. What could cause such a burden on the person? But, more importantly, why did the person not talk to someone, choosing to instead conceal their pain and suffering until it finally triumphed over their will to live?

Loss, grief, abuse, bullying, bankruptcy, illness, lost love and death are just a few of the many, many things that can push a happy, care-free person over the edge. These things do not necessarily take a front seat in an affected person's life, though if they do the ending may be sweeter, sometimes they bubble down below, slowly gnawing away at their souls until

the person reaches the end of the road. The person may not change at all on the outside; they may remain a happy, care-free person, which makes it all the more grim for the relatives who live on in the aftermath of their death, never knowing why such a seemingly care-free person would suddenly decide to take their own life.

Talking is the best form of release. It's hard to explain, but, somehow, by simply telling someone, it becomes easier to overcome the pain. It's like if you're a peasant in a drought-ravaged third-world country, and you have to walk for miles to get water. It's easier to transfer the water if you share the load with someone else. That's what talking does; balances the suffering so that two people can share it and fight through together instead of a single person suffering and struggling though it alone.

But why do people often not talk about their burden, why do they insist on taking their secrets to the grave? Are they so insecure in themselves that they're simply too self-conscious to tell an outsider of their problems, scared that the outsider might think that they're weak, and that their problems are too trivial to hurt anyone? Or is it more the fact they feel like an outsider themselves, feel detached

from the real world, and just want to be alone? We may never know; a person who becomes withdrawn and doesn't talk will not divulge their motives for their silence, and in the end it will be this silence that kills them.

Modern ways bring with them many complications to a person's life. It's funny to think that less than 2000 years ago people worried about nothing more than their farms or workshops and families. Today our worries range from small things like family feuds and late homework/reports, the everyday problems such as taxes and mortgages, and the worst of the entire world's problems like war, the global economy and global warming. Our happiness depends on a large web of interconnecting problems, each playing its own role in our lives. If one gets more prominence in your life than the rest, then it's time to talk to someone. Fail to speak out, and no-one around will know there's anything wrong. If you see someone who looks slightly restless between flamboyant cackles and cheesy grins, talk to them. You might just save a life.

By **Tristan Danino**

Year 9, Caulfield Grammar School

WHEELERS HILL – VIC.

Teacher: Ms Kortum



# Helga the Witch

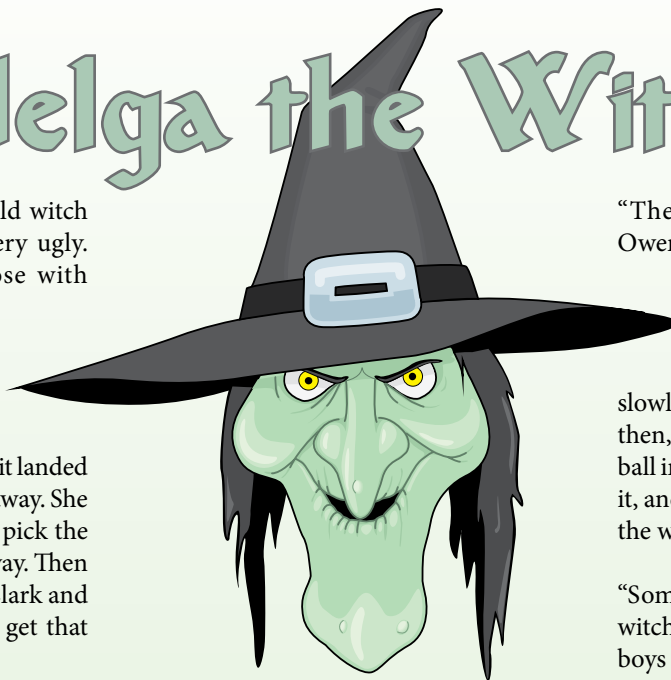
**I**N A shady hollow lived an old witch named Helga. She looked very ugly. She had a really pointy nose with crinkly skin.

One day, three children were playing at the park next to her house. The one named Alan kicked the soccer ball so hard that it landed outside. Helga noticed it straight away. She came outside and used a spell to pick the soccer ball up. Then she took it away. Then Alan and his other two friends, Clark and Owen, all shouted, "We need to get that ball back!"

They tried heaps of ideas, but none of them worked. "I give up!" said Owen.

"I agree", said Clark.

"We can't give up", said Alan. "That ball is very special to me because my Grandma gave it to me".



"There she goes. Let's go", whispered Owen.

You couldn't start to imagine what was inside. They were looking everywhere. Owen was looking slowly so that he didn't miss anything. Just then, Clark found a drawer which had the ball inside it. He quickly went and grabbed it, and before they could do anything else, the witch came in.

"Something smells fishy", remarked the witch. When she looked at the drawer, the boys ran out as quickly as possible but the witch did not bother to chase after them.

"There are some really annoying kids here", said the witch. So she moved. There was never a witch in that city again.

"Then how will we do it?" asked Clark.

"I have a good idea", said Alan.

They followed Alan's plan by first going behind the witch's house and waiting for the witch to go out and punish bad children.

**By Fardin Islam**

*Year 3, Beaumont Hills Public School  
BEAUMONT HILLS – NSW*

## Sometimes It Feels So Bright At Night

*(On virtual peer friendship)*



**C**LATTERING keys in a whirlwind of typos. Sleep-deprived laughter and general nonsense. We discuss giant hipster sieves, England's weather and sweet-toothed zombies all night.

I comment on her gallery-standard art and she replies modestly.

Sometimes it feels so bright at night. The dark doesn't feel so bad and she doesn't seem so far away. Whether through phone or computer we write ridiculous stories, send each other silly pictures or amazing music and for the first time in a while, I can honestly smile in social isolation, all alone, with her.

They never understand and They want me to go outside.

But the day isn't half as nice as the night. She's so close to me but it feels like she's on the other side of the planet. We talk about moving to England and drinking tea together but she wants to go somewhere

with much warmer weather. Wherever she is would be perfectly fine with me. She tells me she's hugging the screen and I send her my smile. How ironic that the closest of our friends should be the furthest. We are both bound by the same rope, both understanding how tight and painful it is. Knowing she's there to share the feeling and the times without feeling at all.

The days are like one big wait when you can spend the nights laughing, smiling, talking, rambling, sharing, writing, drawing, crying, planning and dreaming.

Clattering keys in a whirlwind of typos. Sleep deprived laughter and general nonsense. For the first time in a while, I can honestly smile in social isolation, all alone, together.

**By Silvia Liber**

*Year 9, Dulwich High School of Visual  
Arts and Design  
DULWICH HILL – NSW*





# BOOK REVIEWS

Meet our book reviewers  
Alice, Christian and Eve,  
from Gold Street Primary School  
in Clifton Hill, Victoria.

Reviews Coordinator: Meredith Costain

## **The Secret of the Swords**

by Frances Watts, with illustrations by Gregory Rogers (Allen & Unwin)

This is a great little book about a kitchen girl called Tommy in a medieval castle. Tommy loves swords and always sneaks out of the kitchen to watch the knights practise. When she is assigned to sweep the courtyard and gets into a fight with the keeper of bows, her life changes forever. Her role model Sir Benedict announces that she is the keeper of the blades and Tommy thinks there's hope for her dream of becoming a knight. She's determined to keep her job – but wait! Somebody has stolen Sir Walter's sword and hidden it in the castle. Can Tommy and her new friends find the sword or will she be sent back to the kitchen in disgrace?

The book is well written and I love her descriptive language. It has little illustrations here and there and they're pretty simple. You feel like you're in the book searching for the sword with Tommy



and her friends. Suitable for readers aged 7–9.

Rating: 8.5/10  
Alice Brown

## **Lone Pine**

by Susie Brown & Margaret Warner, with illustrations by Sebastian Ciaffaglione (Little Hare)



I recommend reading *Lone Pine*. I chose this book to review because of its amazing cover illustration and the attractive but strange title. It's an emotional story, in which a mother is waiting for news of her three sons, who are fighting in World War 1. A parcel arrives containing a single pine cone. In the battlefields of Gallipoli, at the end of the day's fighting, one of her sons had stumbled across the pine cone while trying to find out whether his brother was alive or dead. Eventually a pine tree grows and becomes a symbol of remembrance.

I enjoyed reading this book even though it made me sad. I would recommend it as a teaching resource for Remembrance Day or Anzac Day or for children aged 8+.

Rating: 10/10  
Christian McBrearty

## **Bungawitta**

by Emily Rodda, illustrated by Craig Smith (Scholastic)


Set in a town with a population of 12, this book is a great read. Whether you have five minutes to spare or are snuggled up in bed, it's an excellent book to get into.

One morning in the small town of Bungawitta, whilst talking about the drought and how the town needs money, Jay pops up and says, 'Then let's get some money!'. He comes up with the idea of the Bungawitta dirt sculpture festival! The townspeople become excited but will the day go as planned?

I loved how this book is engaging and at times hilarious! *Bungawitta* is great for girls and boys aged 5–10 years with a love of the Aussie outback.

Rating: 7/10  
Eve Nixon





12.17am  
I should go to sleep  
but you're running  
through my mind, again,  
holding out your arms.  
'Come with me Beautiful',  
you say.  
I should go to sleep,  
and I will,  
my heavy eyelids  
won't give me another option.


But imagine,  
that that smell  
wasn't your lynx  
on my teddy bear  
or the left overs  
of yesterday morning's embrace,  
but I could smell you,  
right beside me,  
wrapping me close,  
and I fell asleep,  
synchronising  
our breaths.

Imagine...  
The alarm goes off  
in the morning.  
'Time to get up baby',  
you say.  
'But I'm sleepy!'  
I'll say.  
'I'm hungry. What are we having for breakfast?'  
You'll kiss me as I walk out the door,  
and say,  
'Good luck at school honey. Have a good day.'

## *Imagine*

By **Sarah Merry**  
Year 12, Mowbray College (Town Centre Campus)  
CAROLINE SPRINGS – VIC.

## Winter Girl



There goes my winter girl  
back bended to the shape of the wind,  
the arch of angel wings pressed against flesh,  
thinly veiled by skin.

Your freckles  
fallen like snowflakes across your face,  
slipping down the crevice of your cheekbones  
to sit in the valley of your clavicles,  
building a bridge from shoulder to shoulder.

Your hair like autumn leaves,  
drifting to the ground to make way for  
the twilight frost of your crown;  
the hollow of your smile drips down your face.

You blink, eyelashes dropping,  
ready for icicles to form  
as the rivers of your veins run dry,  
ice crystal forming between the spaces of your ribs.

Your crown comes tumbling down  
(and there goes my winter girl).

By **Lucy MacCulloch**  
Year 3, Abbotsleigh Junior School  
WAHROONGA – NSW





Darkness overtook the sky,  
As the planes came in, flying high,  
Like birds circling, standing by.  
On the horizon, from the East,  
The number of jets grew like yeast.

Boom! The first one hit the ground,  
Sheer destruction, the loudest sound,  
A city woke, trembling with fear,  
They all knew the end was near.  
More bombs dropped, one by one  
And suddenly, there were none.

The planes retreated, leaving behind  
A desolate landscape, still stuck in my mind.  
Standing there, all alone,  
Waiting and wondering; who will come home?

# THE BOMBING

By **Connor Randazzo**

Year 9, The Essington School Darwin  
RAPID CREEK – NT

**A**S THE cold harsh light of winter recedes, the beaches slowly start to fill. Scattered like ants, the beachgoers spread across this once empty expanse of sand, to take their place amongst the countless others. Gulls soar in the cyan sky, only slightly obscuring the tendrils of sunlight which make their way through to the inky depths. A life guard keeps a watchful eye, perched like a hawk upon his tower seat. The surfers are like a pack of wolves; together hunting, preying on the crashing waves which have announced the start of summer.

The sea shimmers like a sapphire jewel, its intangible beauty drawing in all those who lay eyes upon it. Far in the distance a yacht can be spotted, prowling the horizon like a panther. The timid waves lap at the shore, the gentle ebbing and flowing creating a

calming sound track amidst the raucous sounds of the beach.

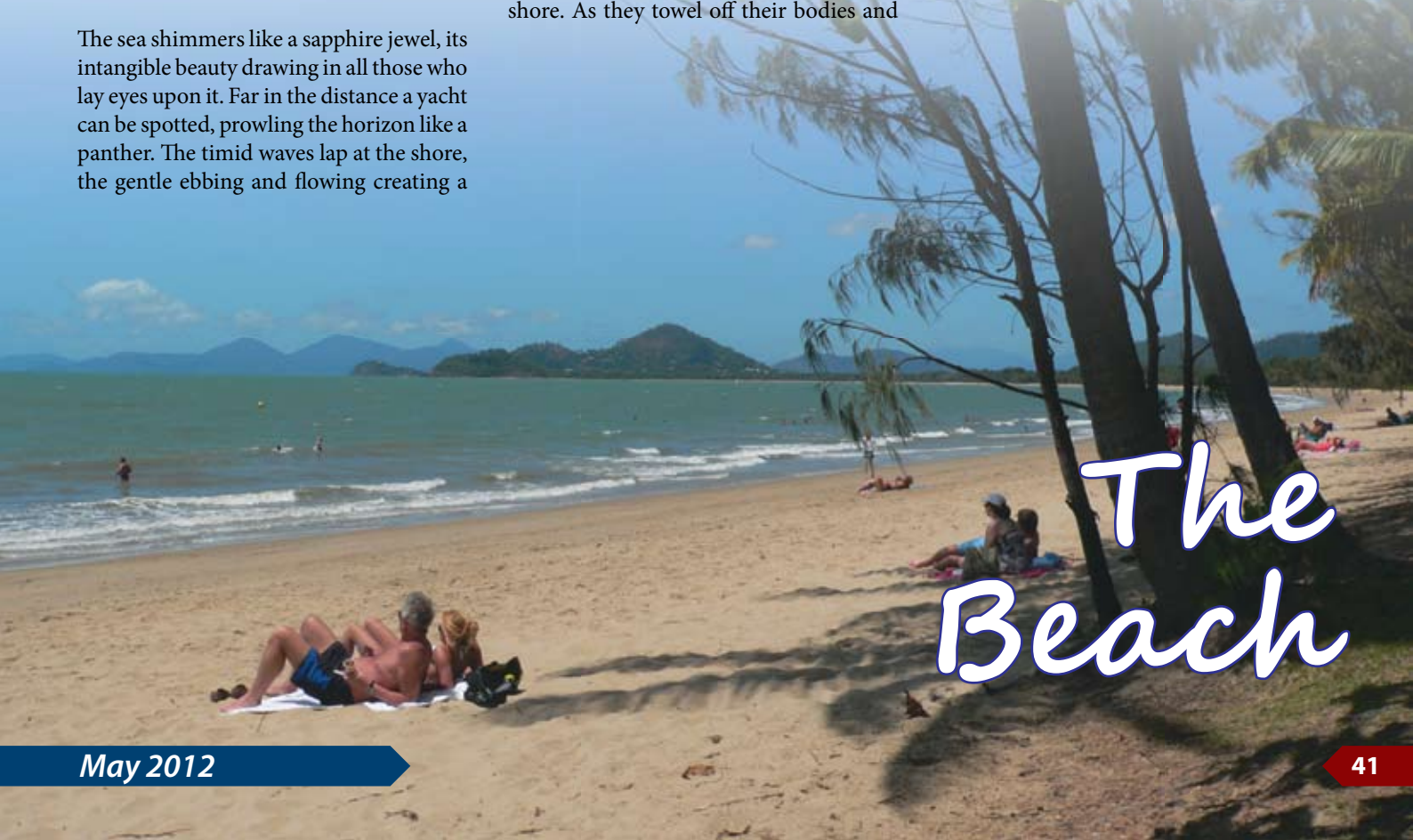
Those at the water's edge can be seen splashing in the shallows with their friends. The crowd disperses as the water deepens, until only the daring are left, swimming amongst the breakers that crash onto the sandbank.

Despite the beauty and fun to be found at the beach, there comes a point where one must leave. At the final pink of dusk, the last swimmers can be seen returning to the shore. As they towel off their bodies and

shake off their sandy towels, the life guard packs up his gear. The gulls pick at the fish and chips left by those who shared a meal in the fading light. Although the day is over and the beachgoers have gone home, the sticky saltiness left by the ocean remains, as one last remainder of the amazing day at the beach.

By **Maxine Macdermott-Opeskin**

Year 7, Ravenswood School for Girls  
GORDON – NSW  
Teacher: Mrs Sharon Shapiro



# The Beach

# Dying All Alone

Waiting to live,  
Waiting to die.  
Lying on the shore,  
Staring at the sky.

World War I,  
Had seemed a game.  
A sort of adventure,  
A chance at Fame.

But now I know,  
I had no idea,  
Of the sweat, of the tears,  
Of the sadness, of the fear.

I wanted to help Britain,  
To serve my country well.  
I was unaware that this war was  
A gory, living hell.

I really thought I'd see,  
My family once again.  
I am so young,  
Why is this the end?

All this sorrow, all this pain,  
If only I had known.  
I wouldn't be lying on the shore,  
Dying all alone.

By **Samantha Gates**  
Year 6, Huntingtower School  
MT. WAVERLEY – VIC.



# The Clock Ticks On

A girl of the past.  
A woman of the future.  
Her joys and sorrows.  
Her laughter and despair.  
The ticking clock;  
there, on the table.  
Each tick, a second,  
gone forever.  
Its sound still echoing  
in the air.  
From ABC's  
to fairy fables.  
School books and texts  
each finished and gone.  
The clock still ticks  
on and on.  
No longer the child  
So unable,  
believing in fairies,  
gnomes and elves.  
The 'pixie dust' – lost its magic.  
The pot of gold,  
at the end of the rainbow,  
lies forever forgotten there.  
Still the clock,  
faster than ever,  
is pushing on and on.  
As the years go by,  
as she gets older,  
each dream breaks,  
then shatters.  
All like bubbles in the wind  
popping one by one.  
The world is changing  
in her eyes.  
The clock ticks on.

By **Joanna Zhang**  
Year 8, Methodist Ladies' College  
KEW – VIC.

# Memories

Once  
upon a time,  
in a land  
not so far away,  
you and I  
were in love.  
It only seems  
like yesterday.  
To forget  
all the kisses  
and whispered words  
seems untrue,  
but if I let myself remember  
I'll find  
I'm missing you.  
Then woven in sweet memories,  
are others  
I'll come across,  
there's some that shatter all the dreams  
from every wishing coin I've tossed.  
They'll make me shudder,  
make me scream,  
all my nightmares  
had come true.  
Sent hurtling into  
desperate dark.  
Punishment  
for loving you.  
The memories are like daggers  
and feathers  
in my heart,  
caressing softly, gently  
into everlasting scars.

By **Sarah Merry**  
Year 12, Mowbray College  
(Town Centre Campus)  
CAROLINE SPRINGS – VIC.





# AUSTRALIA'S LATEST ORIGINAL ANTHOLOGY

Ford Street is releasing its latest baby *Trust Me Too* (edited by Paul Collins) into the literary stratosphere! The anthology comprises 57 original works from some of Australia's leading children's authors, illustrators and poets. See the media release for all the information.

And now our special invitation:

## Melbourne School and Municipal Library Competition!

**How would you like the following authors and illustrators to attend your school or municipal library FREE?**

- Krista Bell
- Meredith Costain
- Marc McBride
- Sean McMullen
- Wendy Orr
- Lucy Sussex
- Jenny Mounfield
- Kirsty Murray\*
- Isobelle Carmody
- George Ivanoff
- Hazel Edwards
- Michael Panckridge
- Corinne Fenton
- Kim Kane
- Margaret Clark
- Paul Collins
- Felicity Marshall
- David Miller
- Leigh Hobbs
- Judith Rossell
- Gabrielle Wang
- Janeen Brian

Sounds too good to be true? It's not! Isobelle Carmody will read from her Obernewtyn prequel and launch *Trust Me Too* on July 27. We're looking at a commencement time of around 6 pm.

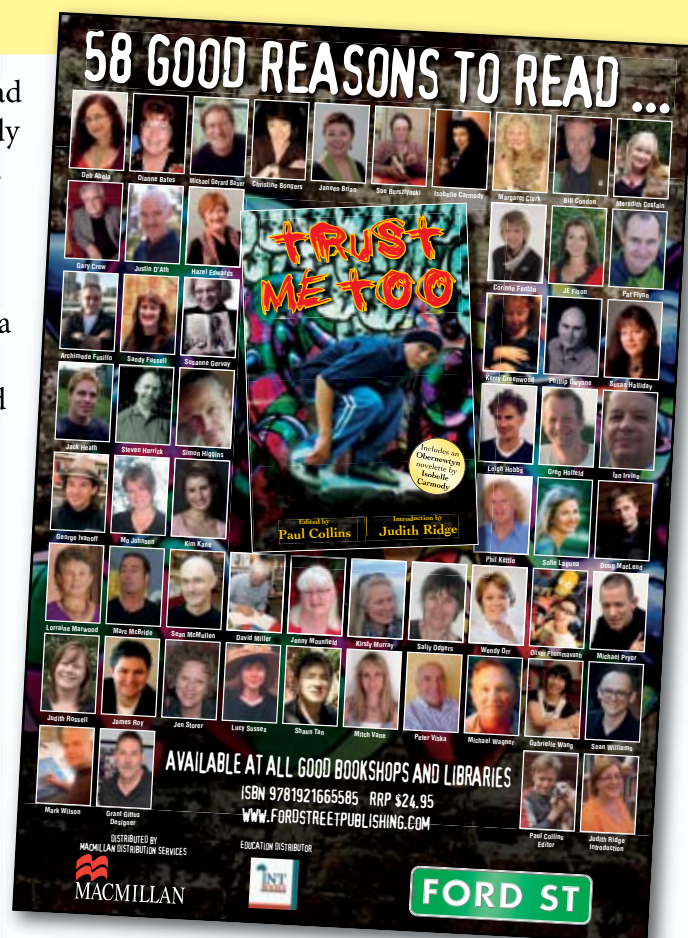
To win we would like from you:

1. Reasons why your venue would be perfect for such a launch
2. An indication of how many people you would invite and expect to attend
3. Ideas on how you would promote the launch.

The deadline is 5 pm June 22. The winner and three short-listed entries will be notified by email and will each receive a complimentary copy of the book. Winners' names will be posted on Ford Street's NEWS page late June.

Email your interest please to Terrie Saunders at [fordstr@internode.on.net](mailto:fordstr@internode.on.net) or call Ford Street Publishing on (03) 9481 1120 if you have any queries.

*\*Author/illustrator line up may change but at time of promotion is fixed. Sorry, entries restricted to Melbourne metropolitan schools and libraries only.*



Sponsored by Creative Net Speakers Agency [www.fordstreetpublishing.com/cnet](http://www.fordstreetpublishing.com/cnet)  
and Ford Street Publishing [www.fordstreetpublishing.com](http://www.fordstreetpublishing.com)

View and/or download the *Trust Me Too* poster (with author/illustrator/poet pics) from: <http://tinyurl.com/6vgd2d9>

# Scarred

**T**HE sun was a creamy orange, the same colour as the melting popsicle in my hand. Some of my neighbours were out front, soaking themselves with icy-cold water hoses to escape the scorching sun. Others were inside breathing in the cool air from their high-powered air conditioners. Everyone was relaxing and having fun but me. I was sitting on the cracked, concrete steps outside the front of my apartment building, staring blankly into space.

I couldn't stop thinking about my dream last night. To an 11 year-old, it was as horrifying as watching your pet die, as most nightmares are. It was so horrifying that I couldn't blink, fearing I might relive the nightmare.

'Daniel! Time for lunch!' My dad works in the military; he doesn't mean to shout, it's his natural instinct.

I woke up on hard plains of tar, my head nestled in a pothole on a worn-out road. My heart was throbbing through my ribcage. I didn't know how I got here, but I wanted to go home. I struggled to get up; it felt like 100-pound weights were pulling down on my lower back, pinning me to the ground. I heard the noise of an old engine in the distance, roaring as it sped closer. The horn sounded loud and hard. I tried to power myself onto my feet, but it was no use. The car couldn't stop, and I couldn't move. The windows of the car were fogged up so I couldn't make out any shapes inside. The tyres blew dust and scattered debris. My heart was about to explode. And then... I woke up, twisted in sheets soaked with panic and sweat. The same dream that I've had for the past five years.

Maybe its just nerves. Dad and I are always moving – usually at a moment's notice – ever since mum died when I was six. He said it's all part of his work; he needs to go

where the military sends him. I've gone to eight schools in five years. It's hard to make friends when you know you won't be around long enough to get to know them.

'Daniel! Pick up some groceries will ya?' yelled dad from the kitchen. The shop was only down the street, it wouldn't take me long. As I glimpsed across the fruit aisle, passing the mangos that Dad loves, a crazy woman ran up to me: 'Matt? Matt!' She looked about 50 or 60 and had wiry, grey hair and bright pink lipstick. 'Matt!' she said, tears streaming down her face. 'Sorry' I replied. 'You must have mistaken me for someone else.' No, I'd recognise the scar on your arm anywhere. I was with you at the park when you cut yourself on the broken glass – I'm your Aunt Jess!' This was all too much for me to take in. I started running home. Dad would have an explanation, I thought.

When I reached home, four policemen were searching my house. I walked inside, dazed and confused. One of the policemen, Officer Jenkins, sat me down and explained

the whole story: 'Daniel, I mean Matt, your Dad has been arrested for kidnapping and your mother is on her way to pick you up', he said. 'That's impossible!' I yelled. 'She's dead!'

'This may come as a shock, but your mum is very much alive and she has been searching for you for over five years', the policeman said.

I started to remember things. Like dad calling me Daniel, saying that was my proper name, after he told me mum died. Like Dad coming home one night and telling me we had to move again, the next day, and then yelling when I told him I couldn't go because I had an English test and a soccer match on the weekend. This was all too much. I started to feel light headed. I closed my eyes and...

I woke up on hard plains of tar, my head nestled in a pothole on a worn-out road. My heart was throbbing through my ribcage. I didn't know how I got here, but I wanted to go home. I struggled to get up; it felt like 100-pound weights were pulling down on my lower back, pinning me to the ground. I heard the noise of an old engine in the distance, roaring as it sped closer. The horn sounded loud and hard. I tried to power myself onto my feet, but it was no use. The car couldn't stop, and I couldn't move. The windows of the car were fogged up so I couldn't make out any shapes inside. The tyres blew dust and scattered debris. My heart was about to explode. And then... the car gradually slowed down, the door began to open. A figure emerged from the dusty exterior. A woman stepped out, and smiled at me like I've known her forever. I *had* known her forever. I stepped into the car, and we drove away.

By **Aidan Pierlot**  
Year 8, Radford College  
BRUCE – ACT





# The Other Side of the Mirror



I live on the other of the mirror,  
the wrong side.  
They, the humans, brand me as a phenomenon.  
They say I am only an illusion;  
created by rays of reflected light.  
In some ways they are right.  
I am no more than an image.  
I mirror whoever,  
Or whatever,  
stands before me.  
I copy anything they do.  
I have no choice,  
nothing to choose from.  
There is no exit to my world.  
The humans come,  
they are so near,  
sometimes our fingers touch.  
Yet, the glass still stands between,  
No matter how thin,  
It still separates,  
dividing their bright world from our dark abyss.  
The other side of the mirror  
is where I live.  
The wrong side.  
Only separated by a line.  
A line too thin, too fine,  
to define the boundary of illusion and reality.

*By Joanna Zhang*

*Year 8, Methodist Ladies' College  
KEW – VIC.*

# Winter Haiku

Snowflakes falling down  
Icicles hanging from the trees  
Magic wonderland

Trees laden with snow  
Small footprints leading nowhere  
Looking for food

Snow-capped mountains  
Sparkling in the bright sunlight  
On top of the world

*By Chloe Di Gemma*

*Year 5, Lauriston Girls' School  
ARMADALE – VIC.*

# Dead Love

Do you see that red rose?  
As elegant as a ballerina's toes.

The poor thing it is dying,  
Its petals are flying.

Just like our love, it is dying,  
Should I be crying?

Alas the tears have come to an end,  
Of us there is no more, it is the end.

Our story has reached the last chapter,  
We close our book, then open another.

*By Katerina Zafiris*

*Year 5, Thomastown Meadows Primary  
THOMASTOWN – VIC.*

Fairyland lies hidden deep  
Beneath an endless place of creeps.  
See the lightning, hear the thunder  
Be ready to plunge six feet under.  
Be ready for a burning flame  
Stop it! Or you will be maimed.  
Be ready for the howling wind  
Or you will drop into Hades' rescind.  
Be ready for the giant flood  
Or be trapped in endless mud.

Be ready for the ancient quake  
Or the world will tremble and shake.  
When you find the lost ruins,  
Make a choice of the doings.  
When you're done, the ground will crease  
And you will find a final peace.

By **Shannon Allas-Scott**  
Year 7, Age 12  
Gleneagles Secondary College  
ENDEAVOUR HILLS – VIC.

# Fairyland

# THE NIGHT SHARK

It broke the stillness suddenly;  
a shark, starving,  
circling the still ocean, tilting  
its great head, searching.

Its cry piercing the air,  
water darkening.  
Watched as it devoured the  
lifeless clouds, still hungry,

thrashing against the  
rising tide, blood  
blanketing the water  
about its body.

Its tail claps against sky,  
moon the only contrast  
against blackness  
and I

am just another lonely eye  
at the window  
waiting for the storm  
to pass.

By **Robbie Coburn**  
Year 12, Assumption College  
KILMORE – VIC.





# AN AUTHOR VISIT TO YOUR SCHOOL

To improve your students' reading and writing skills, each term a school with a current School Subscription to *Oz Kids in Print* will win a children's Author/Illustrator visit to their school to conduct workshops.

These workshops are designed to encourage even the most reluctant students; they are designed to be both fun and educational. Students who have participated have shown a dramatic improvement in their educational standards.

Your students will be able to have access and mentorship with Australia's leading Children's Authors/Illustrators – one of the many benefits of subscribing to *Oz Kids in Print*.

Websites: [www.ozkids.com.au](http://www.ozkids.com.au) or [www.booksforkids.org.au](http://www.booksforkids.org.au)



Paul Collins



Elise Hurst

## REVIEW OUR LIST OF SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S BEST CHILDREN'S AUTHORS/ILLUSTRATORS

- Paul Collins • Meredith Costain • Anna Ciddor • Jeni Mawter • Krista Bell
- Elise Hurst • Craig Smith • Marjory Gardner • Marc McBride • Anne Spudvilas

PLUS MANY MORE AUTHORS



Jeni Mawter



## YES! Our school would like to subscribe to *Oz Kids in Print*

Please tick the box that most suits your school:

☐

Individual Subscription \$33 (1 copy per quarter)

☐

School Subscription \$99 (5 copies per quarter)

### School Details

Name of School: .....

Address: .....

Suburb: .....State: .....Postcode: .....

### Contact Person

Name: .....Position: .....Phone: .....

### Payment Details

Enclosed is a cheque/money order for: \$ ..... Order Number: .....

### Return Details

Please mail your remittance with this form to:

**Children's Charity Network, PO Box 267, Lara Vic. 3212**  
ABN 58 109 336 245

Tel: 03 5282 8950 • Fax: 03 5282 8950 • Email: [info@ozkids.com.au](mailto:info@ozkids.com.au) • Website: [www.ozkids.com.au](http://www.ozkids.com.au)



# Give them the opportunity to reach great heights

Education opens the door to many opportunities in life. That's why education is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give their child.

At the Australian Scholarships Group (ASG), we offer a proven and proactive way to ensure the education dreams you have for your children can be nurtured and funded. ASG's Education Program™ is designed to assist you to prepare for the costs of your child's education – giving them the opportunity to reach great heights.

To find out more about ASG, contact us today on **1800 648 945** or visit **[www.asg.com.au](http://www.asg.com.au)**

## Win a \$12,000\* Education Scholarship

If you have a child under the age of 10, ASG is giving you the chance to win a \$12,000\* Education Scholarship for your child. To enter, simply visit **[www.asg.com.au/winascholarship](http://www.asg.com.au/winascholarship)**



**Australian  
Scholarships  
Group**

\*The projected total value of the Education Scholarship is up to \$15,171 based on the child's age at enrolment, ASG projected earnings and level of study undertaken. Full terms and conditions of ASG's \$12,000 Education Scholarship Draw can be found at [www.asg.com.au/winascholarship](http://www.asg.com.au/winascholarship). Promoter is Australian Scholarships Group Friendly Society Limited (ABN 21 087 648 879), 23 – 25 Hanover St, Oakleigh, VIC 3166. NSW Permit Number LTPS/10/12638; VIC Permit Number 10/4569; ACT Permit Number TP10/5358; SA Permit Number T10/3090.