

# OZ KIDS IN PRINT



**May 2014**

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

*A great tool  
to improve  
literacy  
in schools!*

Cover design by  
**Hayley Thompson**  
(Commonwealth Bank  
Art Award Winner 2013)

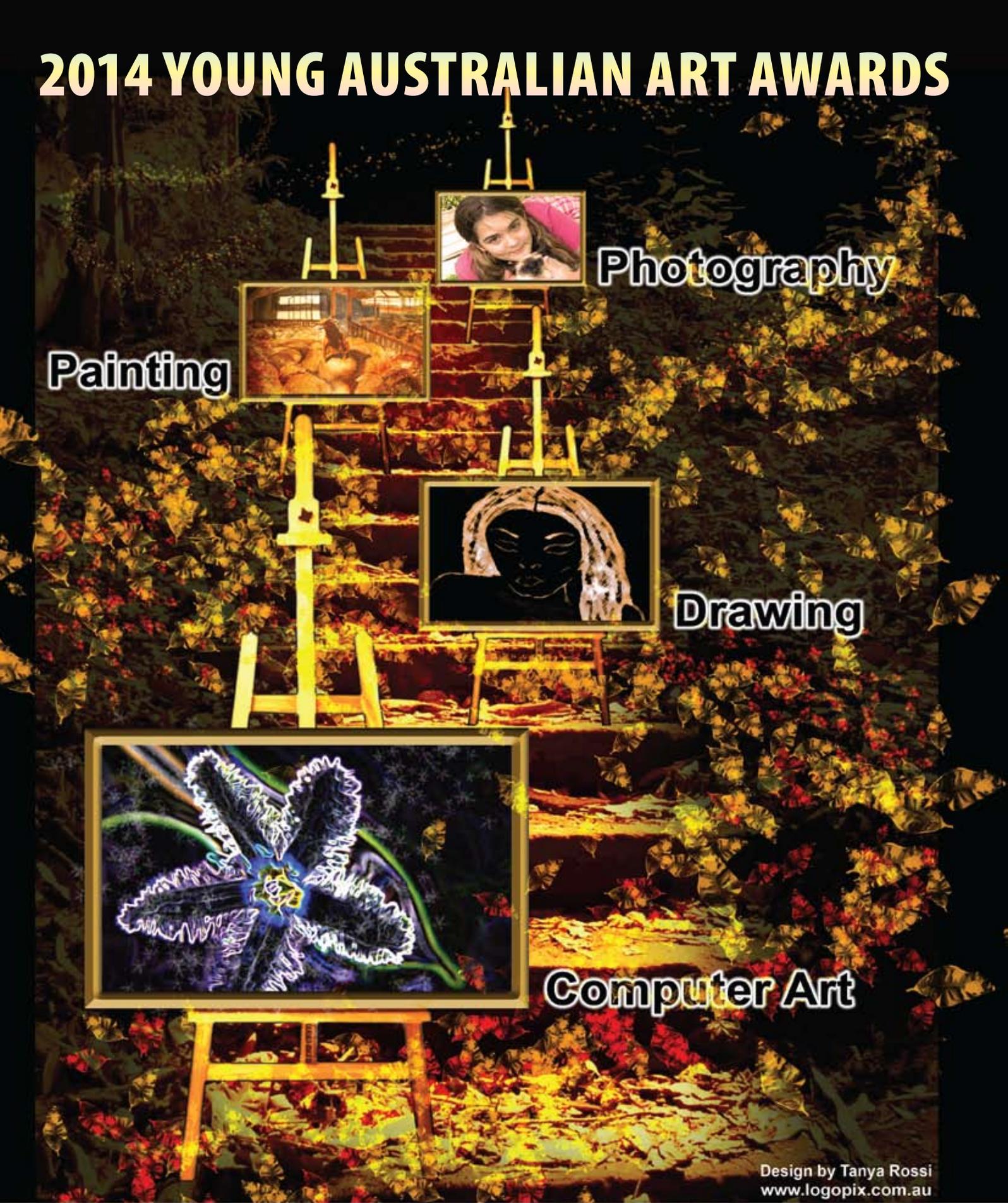
Print Post Approved  
P.P. 334553/00001

**FREE ENTRY**

**TO STUDENTS IN PRIMARY OR  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

*Proudly supported by the Australian Government*

# 2014 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.

# OZ KIDS IN PRINT

## Contents

<b>From the Editor's Desk</b> ..... 4	<b>The Bridge</b> ..... 8 <i>Ella Andersen, Flinders Christian Community College, Tyabb, Vic.</i>	<b>The Drought</b> .....33 <i>Gretel Gibson-Bourke, St. Cecilia's Catholic Primary School, Glen Iris, Vic.</i>
<b>Book Reviews</b> .....4, 5	<b>Finding Almuđj</b> .....12 <i>Ellen Thomas, Eynesbury Senior College, Adelaide, SA</i>	<b>The Walkabout</b> .....35 <i>Cindy Zeng, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Glen Iris, Vic.</i>
<b>Ambassadors</b> .....21	<b>Charlie Wattle's Diary</b> .....14 <i>Casey Wood, John Paul College, Kalgoorlie-Boulder, WA</i>	<b>Sketching</b> .....37 <i>Georgina Cooper, Nambour Christian College, Nambour, Qld.</i>
<b>Book Reviews</b> .....36	<b>The Albatross</b> .....20 <i>Ellen Thomas, Eynesbury Senior College, Adelaide, SA</i>	<b>The Narrator</b> .....38 <i>Thierry Falcone, Strathmore Secondary College, Strathmore, Vic.</i>
<b>AWARDS FOR POETRY</b>		
<b>Baby</b> .....20 <i>Pfeiffer Elizabeth Myers, Rehoboth Christian College (Wilson Campus), Waterford, WA</i>	<b>Locket of Memories</b> .....22 <i>Alicia Munn-Gardner, Home schooled, Aratula, Qld.</i>	<b>Battle of the Beasts</b> .....41 <i>Lachlan Tonissen, The Hamilton &amp; Alexandra College, Hamilton, Vic.</i>
<b>Once a Utopia</b> .....24 <i>Dylan Peisley, Prince Alfred College, Kent Town, SA</i>	<b>DayCare Teddy Bear</b> .....23 <i>Trayce Warena, Kambalda Primary School, Kambalda, WA</i>	<b>S.O.S.</b> .....42 <i>Emily Crellin, Lisarow Public School, Lisarow, NSW</i>
<b>Poem from the Heart</b> .....25 <i>Karen Zhao, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Glen Iris, Vic.</i>	<b>Marcia Flynn, 18th February 1894 – 31st October 1911</b> .....25 <i>Billie Parkinson, The Friends' School, North Hobart, Tas.</i>	<b>Midnight Walk</b> .....43 <i>Selena Zheng, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Glen Iris, Vic.</i>
<b>The People</b> .....27 <i>Jake Walters, Chisholm Catholic College, Cornubia, Qld.</i>	<b>The Trapped Eagle</b> .....26 <i>Heidi Grace, Eynesbury Senior College, Adelaide, SA</i>	<b>From a Girl to a Woman</b> .....44 <i>Esther Breece, Silkwood School, Mt. Nathan, Qld.</i>
<b>My Beautiful Home</b> .....29 <i>Sonia Tint, Oxley Park, NSW</i>	<b>The Rooms</b> .....27 <i>Isabella Kacic, Silkwood School, Mt. Nathan, Qld.</i>	<b>Tragic Reunions</b> .....46 <i>Isabella Fuller, St. Monica's College, Cairns, Qld.</i>
<b>Days</b> .....29 <i>Divya Lal, Governor Philip King Public School, Edensor Park, NSW</i>	<b>Staying Alive</b> .....28 <i>Lauren Dickins, Oxley Christian College, Chirside Park, Vic.</i>	
<b>Yearning for Grandpa</b> .....41 <i>Kithma Kaluwitharana, St. Peter's College, Cranbourne, Vic.</i>	<b>Put your shoes on!</b> .....28 <i>Ariana Tonev, Padbury Catholic Primary School, Padbury, WA</i>	
<b>Acid Rain</b> .....43 <i>Jemima Helps, Westminster Senior School, Marion, SA</i>	<b>Gone</b> .....29 <i>Madison Unicomb, Turrumurra High School, Turrumurra, NSW</i>	
<b>One of a Kind</b> .....45 <i>Miranda Plowman, Distance Education Victoria, Thornbury, Vic.</i>	<b>Za'eron</b> .....30 <i>Matthew Harper-Gomm, Kambrya College, Berwick, Vic.</i>	
<b>AWARDS FOR SHORT STORIES</b>		
<b>The Waiting Game</b> ..... 6 <i>Tess McLinden, Loreto Mandeville Hall, Toorak, Vic.</i>	<b>Secret of the Persian Cat</b> .....32 <i>Oscar Pollack, Anglican Church Grammar School, East Brisbane, Qld.</i>	
<b>Toilet Fun Turns into Toilet Drama</b> ..... 7 <i>Miranda Plowman, Distance Education Victoria, Thornbury, Vic.</i>	<b>It's a City Life</b> .....33 <i>Brodie Momsen, Caringbah High School, Caringbah, NSW</i>	

Front cover image by  
**Hayley Thompson**

Photo credits – 'The Bridge', p. 8: Simon Whitehead, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Westgate\\_Bridge.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Westgate_Bridge.jpg). 'The Bridge', p. 10: Christophe Mallet, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/christophemallet/3346818160/>. 'Finding Almuđj', p. 12: Thomas Schoch, <http://www.retas.de/thomas/travel/australia2005/index.html>. 'Charlie Wattle's Diary', pp. 14–19: Joshonot, <http://www.freeimages.com/browse.phtml?f=download&id=1433790>. 'The Albatross', p. 20: Glen Fergus, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shy\\_albatross\\_in\\_flight.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shy_albatross_in_flight.jpg). 'Marcia Flynn...', p. 20: 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  
Publisher:.....Robin Leonard  
Finals Judge: .....Professor Margot Hillel OAM  
Australian Catholic University  
Sponsorship Manager: ..Ernest Bland  
Advertising Manager:....Trevor St John  
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](http://www.mediawarehouse.com.au)

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Autumn is here. A great time to snuggle up with a blanket and write. We have received some wonderful stories and poems so far. Don't wait until September to enter.

Just remember the rules to help make sure your entry gets through.

Please make sure punctuation is correct. It must be entered as you would hand it in to your teacher – not a whole lot of text cut and pasted. These are literary awards and your work is judged as such.

We cannot stress enough that **the work must be yours** and not off the internet or by other means. Plagiarism is an offence. It is illegal to send in work from another author and put your name on it.

### ENTER ON-LINE

at

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



**KEEP ON WRITING  
(TYPING)!**

*Carol Dick*  
Managing Editor

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



## BOOK REVIEW

### Welcome Home by Christina Booth

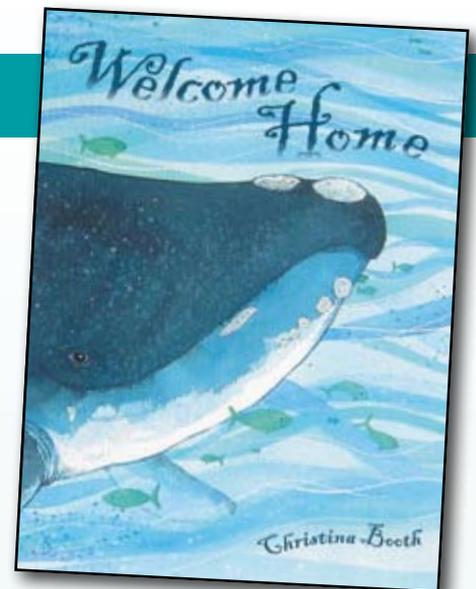
**ISBN:** 9781925000092 (paperback),  
9781925000085 (hardcover)

**Publication date:** 1 Oct 2013 (hardcover),  
1 Feb 2014 (paperback)

**Extent:** 32 pages **Format:** Portrait picture book

**Price:** \$26.95 (hardcover), \$16.95 (paperback)

**Category:** Fiction **Age guide:** 7+



*Christina Booth's Welcome Home – the story of a boy and a whale – has been short-listed for the Crystal Kite Award (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators award).*

*Welcome Home* is the story of a young boy and a whale as she swims into the river harbour seeking safety and a resolution to the violent past relationship between whales and man. This prosaic journey, accompanied with soft sketchy watercolour images, reveals how the past can impact our future. Can the boy make amends for the past? Can the whale forgive and return to what was once her ancestor's home?

Whaling is a horrific image to portray in any literature yet this story offers its history and consequences to children and adults in a gentle, safe way.

This story does not avoid the facts but ends with hope and reconciliation, using history to show the consequences of our actions and choices.

#### **About the Author**

Christina grew up in Tasmania, Australia, mostly on the beach or at her parents' home with wombats and echidnas digging holes in the yard. Trained as a teacher, Christina is also a landscape artist. She started her publishing career as an illustrator to great writers such as Colin Thiele, Max Fatchen and Christobel Mattingley. In 2007 Christina's first picture book, *Purinina, A Devil's Tale* (Lothian Hachette) was published. She illustrates her own books and great stories for other authors. A number of her books have won awards.

#### **REVIEWER – Jenny Mounfield**

'When I heard her call, it came from the river, echoing off the mountains like a whisper while the moon danced on the waves.'

Filled with poetic language, and gentle watercolour illustrations in tones that

encourage reflection, this is a beautiful story of one whale's return to its ancestral waters and the intuitive child who is there to welcome her.

'Each day she comes closer, telling me something new. Sometimes she is full of joy. Sometimes she is sad. It tugs at my heart as I listen.'

Hunted to the point of extinction, the southern right whales have returned to Hobart's Derwent River after an absence of almost two hundred years. So named due to the perception that these were the 'right' whales to hunt, the southern right whale was declared a protected species in 1935.

To ensure our future doesn't mirror our past, *Welcome Home* is a must-read for primary school children. Not only will they come away with knowledge of these majestic creatures—thanks to an informative double-page spread at the end of the book—but they will learn about compassion, consequence and respect.

Christina Booth is an award-winning author / illustrator. Other titles include: *Kip, I Wish There Were Dinosaurs* and *Potato Music*.

Jenny Mounfield is the author of four books and several short stories for young people. Her reviews have appeared both online and print.

# • BOOK REVIEWS •

## **The Boy Who Barked**

By Liliane Grace

Illustrated by Yvette Bentata-Moore

ISBN: 0980473705, 9780980473704

Publisher: Grace Productions, 2008

Extent: 43 pages Age guide: 7-10

Dr John Demartini is an internationally renowned author, speaker, educator and philosopher who has touched the lives of close to 2 billion people around the world with his revolutionary insights about life, love and the state of the world.

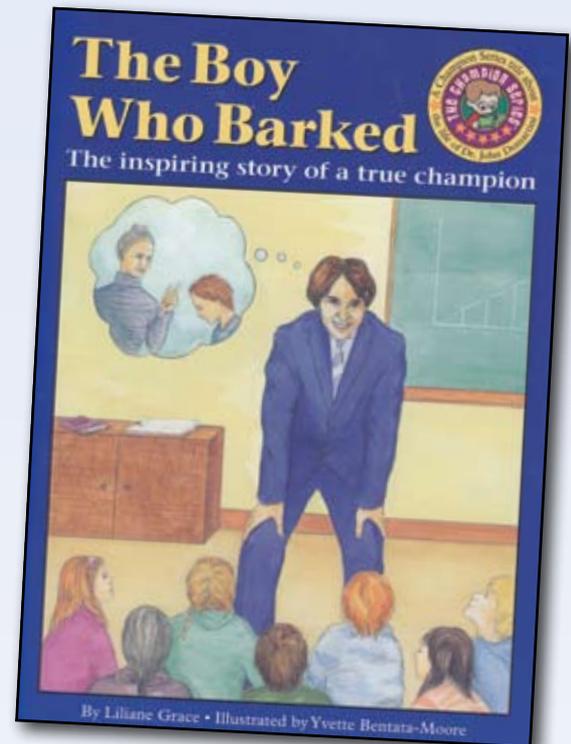
Dr Demartini began life as a 'learning disabled child'. Unable to read by the age of 14, he left school and embarked on a journey across America to pursue his dream of becoming a surfer. That journey was life-changing for him: he met two wise men whose messages to him altered his entire life direction. And he 'met' his intuition – find out how in *The Boy Who Barked*, our picture book that pays tribute to his inspiring life.

When he was younger he needed a brace on his hand and foot, but taught himself to not need them. He was told by his teacher

that he would never be able to read, write or communicate properly.

When he got older the school work got harder, so he left school and travelled to California to become a surfer. On his way he stopped at El Paso, Texas, and was confronted by some cowboys. His mind told him to bark, so he did, and the cowboys left.

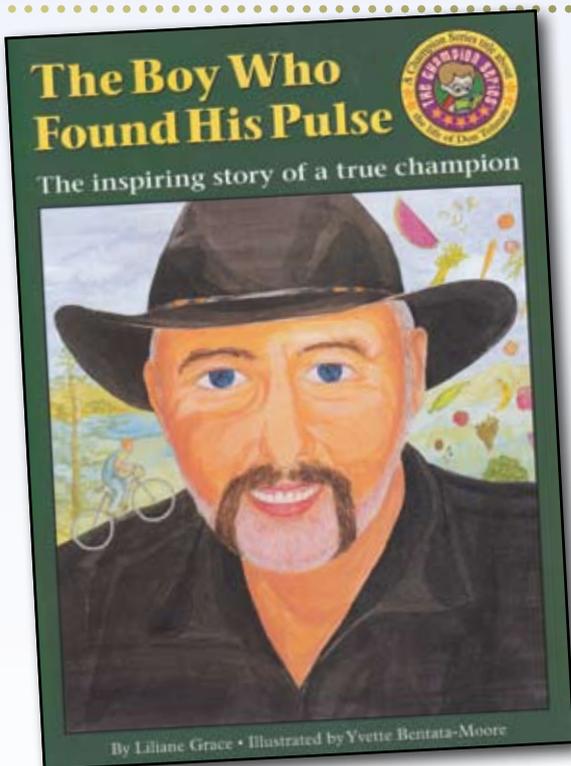
At one point he ate some poisonous seeds and became very sick and a woman came by and took care of him and saved his life. A few days later he was in a health food store, and saw a song for a health talk. A wise old man led the talk. He got the boy to listen to the message of their heart, and the boy imagined himself speaking to a room full of people. He then went home and studied very hard, and became the top student.



From then he started giving talks in the evenings, became a Doctor and opened his own chiropractic clinic, and now inspires people with his story and knowledge.

This is a good book, quite inspirational.

— Reviewed by Stuart D



## **The Boy Who Found His Pulse**

By Liliane Grace

Illustrated by Yvette Bentata-Moore

ISBN: 0980473713, 9780980473711 (Paperback)

Publisher: Grace Productions, 2008

Extent: 42 pages Age guide: 7-10

*The Boy Who Found His Pulse* will affirm each child's knowing that he or she has genius within. This inspiring story continues The Champion Series, in which you will meet men and women who set out to realise a childhood dream.

This is a book about a boy that goes to Sunday school one day, and learns about a thing called 'Pulse'. He spends seventeen years looking

to find out what 'Pulse' was. He nearly gives up, but one day he meets a man who offers him a job with his foundation. He then pieces everything together and found the seven things that are needed to be well. Wherever he goes he teaches people about his findings.

This is a great inspiring book.

— Reviewed by Stuart D

# The Waiting Game

**E**ACH day at 4 o'clock the old man left the haven that was his home and assembled on the nature strip that lay out the front. He waited. In the warm summer evenings he would wait out for hours observing as the Sun would give way to still and balmy nights. But winter had closed in and though the man still stuck to his waiting routine, his aged and frail body could not fathom more than an hour of the stiff cold.

He had observed this routine almost religiously ever since he could remember living in that house. Passers-by would stare solicitously at the man as though trying to uncover what he was waiting for. Sometimes young children would cross the street and avoid the old man as if frightened or threatened by him. When his neighbours drove by they would humbly bow their heads or look the other way. But no one had ever spoken to him.

It is not that they were not curious as to why he waited; this had been a long disputed neighbourhood mystery, it was merely due to the fact that he was surrounded by a mournful air that suggested he'd rather be left alone. Perhaps it was the way he solemnly hung his head as though the weight was too heavy for his shoulders to bear, or the way he seemed uneasy when he heard a car door slam. 'Bloody Aussies' he would mutter under his breath as person by person strolled by without word.

His skin was leathery and wrinkled, his cheekbones were sunken and his eyes were grey and tired, but his face wasn't empty or unpleasant – it was a face that told a story.

His daily habit was not confined to the waiting game; at 7pm each night through all seasons he would light the open fire. The pungent scent of the burning wood reminded him of his life on the farm in Germany. At a time when he existed as things far greater than just an old man. A father... a husband.

The old man had not always been old. In earlier life he had lived in a small memorial town in East Germany, Zilky, it was called. Every night around dinner, his wife opened the chimney and let the smoke bellow out into the cold country air. Each night as



he smelt the smoke, the old man would come in from work outside and return to the warmth of the family home, like a stork returning to its nest. Though he knew it was not possible, he possessed a childish hope that supposed that if he lit the fire each night, his family might now come home to him. His life in Germany seemed so far away, yet, he knew he had never moved forward.

The memories had never faded. That day, in the late spring of 1945 when he left his wife and two daughters in their mass graves in Dachau was the day he had stopped living. The first part of life he had since rendered was his time for making memories and the second part was for remembering. He had stopped celebrating life since their deaths; he couldn't make memories on his own...

One night as dark was closing in, the old man headed back inside the Zilky studio, he had named it that some time ago in nostalgia for his old life. The name had seemed fitting, Zilky was a memorial town and the place he had made all his memories and it was in the Zilky Studio that he reflected on these. He had already checked the mail that day, but there was something about the letter box that seemed to lure him in once again. He reached his hand in, producing a yellow sticky note, etched with the misspelt handwriting of a child. 'Wat are you wating for?' the note read. His head buzzing with intrigue, the old man sauntered through the gates, and went inside and lit the fire.

The man didn't write a response for some time. He wasn't bothered or slighted by the question. Nor was he stuck for an answer, but it had seemed like years since he'd

spoken to a child. In fact, it was years since he had spoken to anyone. He had forgotten how to share.

Three days later he returned to the letter box with a response. 'I won't tell you whom I am waiting for. Though what I will tell you is that I have waited for many years and despite my hopes and prayers, the people I await are never coming home.' His decrepit hands trembled as he carefully folded the note and placed it in his letter box.

The following morning, and the one after that, the old man checked for any mail. To his own surprise he had become impatient for a response. He was used to waiting, but the prospect of anticipating something that might actually come was... invigorating.

On the third morning when he checked the letter box again, another yellow sticky note awaited him. He held it close to his chest waiting until he returned inside to read it. 'Are you lonely old man?' 'Chrissake' he thought to himself with a snicker, 'Kids these days certainly don't hold back'. He considered the question... The old man wasn't necessarily lonely, in the true sense of the word, for, memories of the past had become his closest allies. What he feared most however, was that in his old age he was beginning to forget things. He was afraid that one day, his memory would desert him and he would be left all alone... No. But I do think I need a friend.

The next morning upon venturing to the mailbox the old man was met with a quick response; 'I wud like to be your frend but I don't write very good. do you think I cud visit you?'. Grabbing a pen from his coat pocket the man turned over the note simply replying, 'Yes'.

Days passed and there was no sign of the boy. But the man's confidence didn't waver; he knew the boy was coming.

It was just as the days were beginning to roll into weeks that the young boy mustered up the confidence to visit the old man. It was four o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon; the old man was playing his usual waiting game not paying attention, when he was surprised by a tap on the back. The old man peered over his shoulder eyeing off the young boy. They exchanged a half-hearted smile and were silent for a moment.

The old man stared at the boy whose hopeful green eyes contrasted to his own sunken grey ones and his skin was chubby and soft in places where the old man's was wrinkled. But what the old man saw in the boy's face that mirrored his own, was that it too told a story; a scar spanned across his right cheek and for a moment the man considered that this young boy may too have been hurt.

The boy stayed with the man for the hour that he waited. Though they didn't talk a

lot, his presence seemed to help the old man stand a little taller, his head seemed a little lighter on his shoulders and his grey eyes were a little less tired. When the old man returned inside that night he removed the fire tools from beside the fireplace, burying them in the cellar. He threw away the matches. The waiting game was over.

By **Tess McLinden**

Year 11, Loreto Mandeville Hall  
TOORAK – VIC.

## Toilet Fun Turns into Toilet **DRAMA**

**M**Y NAME is Miranda and this is my story, all the juicy horrid details that caused quite an event. I am the sort of person who loves routines, they provide guidance, predictability and everyone knows their role and place. Now, my best friend Irene and I are complete opposites, she loves loud music, drama and danger. Irene is like brushfire, once she starts, she is very hard to stop.

Let me now tell you one of my much needed routines. When Irene visits the toilets in large shopping centres, I have a habit of always checking her pockets, even her shoes and if she is wearing a hat, I check there is nothing under it. Do you know what I am looking for? Water guns!

I went to the public toilets feeling confident and reassured that mine and other people's safety was not at risk. You see, Irene has a habit of spraying people in toilets. My theory is that she watches comings and goings of toilet life, she finds an elderly or defenceless person and then she strikes, like a cobra hunting for its prey. She squirts the water up like a killer whale in the sea. A stream of water lasts for about 5 seconds and then she runs, runs like the wind!

I, an innocent person, walk out of the toilet and wash my hands. My hands are not yet dry. I shake them. A senior citizen walks out and seems startled, perplexed and mad. She starts yelling "What did you wet me with?". She strides out asking me to follow. By sheer and utter coincidence, security is walking by. The lady calls out "Security". The security officer strolls

over like he owns the place, acting like a shark, controller of the great blue sea. He demands "What's up here?". The old lady says "That kid wet me with something and I am not happy about it".

The security guard turned to look at me and went "Tut tut tut. Did you do such a thing?". "No Sir, I did not", I replied forcefully. Then in a know it all fashion, he said "Who did?". It finally clicked, I didn't check thoroughly enough, it must have been Irene. She must have put the gun in her little Hello Kitty purse. The security guard looks at me and asks "Who did it then?". "It must have been my friend Irene, she has a habit of doing silly things", I said. And he asks "Where would that friend of yours be?".



At that moment, Irene, looking mad, loudly yells "Where have you been?". "I have been chatting to this lovely security man about wet matters I stated." Irene fidgets and starts biting her nails. I said, "I bet if you look in her Hello Kitty bag, there will be a water gun?". It was hand painted, with pink brush strokes. I am still curious to why she put so much effort into her gun. They're always taken away. The security man looks at me and said "You may go". "As for you, young lady or not, come with me." Irene looks scared and abandoned.

I walk off and pretend I don't care about Irene or the little business she got us into. I find Susie (her mum) drinking coffee looking quite relaxed. She casually asks "Where have you been and where is Irene?". Irene is helping security with some spraying matters. Susie jumps up, nearly spilling her coffee, and follows me. We find Irene, the elderly lady and the security guard in deep conversation in between Irene's sniffles.

Irene is banned from entering the shopping centre for 2 weeks. Looking back, I wonder how our friendship survived such an event, somehow it seemed to. Irene has an adventurous spirit who is fun to be around but goes a little overboard on the pranks!

P.S: Bits of this story are true. I wrote this story in honour of my friend Irene. She has taught me not to take life seriously all the time!

By **Miranda Plowman**

Year 5, Distance Education Victoria  
THORNBURY – VIC.

# THE BRIDGE



## October 1968

I awoke with a start, and punched my alarm. I brushed sleep out of my eyes and started downstairs. I needed to make myself a cup of coffee. “Jeremy!” That was my mum.

“What?” I asked her groggily.

“Don’t forget to take out the garbage, before you leave for work.” I nodded quickly, dismissing her. I made a cup of coffee, then left for work. I climbed into the Holden and turned the key. The engine turned and rumbled to life. I threw the gear to reverse before I remembered the bins! I raced inside, emptied the bin, and chucked the bag in the garbage bin. I dragged the bin out to the curb. Then I ran back into my Holden and backed out of the driveway.

I was going to miss work. Construction on the bridge started a few months ago, I’d been hired to help. The bridge was a mighty one! It was gorgeous, the queen of all bridges! I pulled into the car park and locked my car.

“Jezzaaa!” a deep voice hollered, I turned to see my mate, Gary.

“Where ya been mate? Herb’s getting peeved. Ya late, mate. You know how he is, so if I were you, I’d get my—”. Gary was silenced as he saw Herb, striding from the one of the huts.

“Jeremy!” I turned. I’d know that voice anywhere.

“You’re late” Herb said sternly. “We need all hands on deck, no slackers.” I stared at him and started to apologise but he cut me off. “What are you waiting for? Get up there!”

His voice was rising. I obediently hurried towards the hut to grab my helmet. Herbert, or Herb as he preferred to be called, was the chief of my span. He was a tough critic, but he was fair. I walked into the hut and was greeted by a few stares and a few murmurs about how late I was. “Nice to see you too, fellas” I said, my voice dripping with sarcasm. I hurried out of the hut before they could respond.

We had begun laying the foundations in April. This meant sinking nearly 10,000 metres of 1.53 metre diameter cylinders and driving 2770 metres of octagonal steel piles. It was tough work but once built, the Westgate was going to allow traffic flow over the Yarra. I nimbly climbed up the gantry. Once I was at the top, I admired what a gorgeous day it was. There was not an imperfection in the brilliant blue sky. The clouds were as fluffy as whipped cream and the birds sang softly, nesting in the box girders. You could hardly hear the roar of the traffic from up here, it was so peaceful. The hammers and drills made a sort of beautiful music that only a tradesman

could appreciate. Finished with admiring the day, I threw my helmet on my head, my brown/blonde hair peeking out from underneath it. I flicked it out of the way and began to work.

I welded and hammered until lunch, and then I clambered back down the gantry. I headed to my hut, where I grabbed some money, then ran back out to the car park. I unlocked the Holden and ducked inside. I drove to Altona to grab some lunch, before heading back to the huts. I decided on a sandwich and chips. I nibbled on a chip as I drove back to the construction site. I got back to my hut and realised my helmet was still on. I quickly pushed it off and it tumbled to the ground bouncing, and then finally staying in the dirt. I flicked the sweaty helmet hair out of my eyes. Then I took a gulp of my Coke and began to eat. I then realised how ravenous I really was.

The meal was gone in seconds. I leaned back against a tree, scooping up my helmet as I did. “Jez”, a voice behind me said. Gary strode up to me, his brown curly hair moulded into the shape of a helmet.

“Gaz”, I said disapprovingly, “hair”.

“Oh right”, he replied as he ran his hand through his hair.

“So, how was work on your span?” I asked.

“Oh you know, welding and stuff. The usual.”

“Yeah I know I’m beat.”

“Same, I’m exhausted. How long till we resume?”

“15 minutes or so. Sit down; it’s cooler in the shade.”

Gary leant against the tree, next to me. Gary was the strong, silent type and he just liked sitting and observing. I didn’t mind, I wasn’t in a talkative mood. It was 30 degrees and working on the bridge in this weather was not going to make me pleased. I glanced at my watch. “Time to go Gaz”, I yawned as I stood up. He groaned and followed. We headed back towards my gantry. Gaz clambered up and I followed suit. As we reached the top I chucked my helmet back on and resumed my welding and hammering.

As we finished work, the air had a cold bite to it. I stopped and admired the view. The sun glinted off the still waters, but Melbourne still had the roar of the traffic breaking the beautiful serenity. We all hurried down the gantry, eager to rest and shower. As I stepped into the Holden I rushed out of the car park. I pulled into the driveway and locked my car. As I stepped in the door at home, I realised I still had my work boots on. I quickly backpedalled and kicked them off.

After I had showered, I opened a packet of Twisties, turned on the TV and kicked my feet up. I watched whilst eating my Twisties. After a while, I was sick of watching TV so I put my music on instead. At 9 o’clock, exhausted after work, I fell asleep on the couch.

### September 1969

Work continued on as usual. Welding, grinding, and hammering anything that was asked of us. Finally, Contract F was finished. This meant we could finally stop welding and get to constructing. But it also meant harder labour. Work started at 8:30 every morning, and I wasn’t a morning person. I struggled out of bed at 6 every morning, to make it to work just before 8:30. Today however, I had a spring in my step. We were starting something new and after 17 months of the same thing, we were all eager for a change. I quickly gulped down my cornflakes and drank my coffee. I grabbed my keys, flung open

the car door and jumped inside. I turned the key. I heard a high pitch whirrr. “Not again”, I mumbled. The starter motor hadn’t engaged. I hurried inside the garage and grabbed a hammer. I lifted the bonnet and gave the starter motor three taps. I went back to the car and turned the key. The engine rumbled to life. I got back out of the Holden, slammed the bonnet and flung the hammer to the back seats. I was finally on my way to work.

As I pulled into the car park, Gary greeted me with his usual “Jezzaaa!”. We walked together towards the hut so I could grab my helmet. As we walked back from the hut, Gary asked me how long we had until we had to start working. I replied, “10 minutes”. We climbed up the gantry, and found ourselves on a skeleton of a mighty bridge. The Westgate was finally coming together! I watched as the ferry crossed tirelessly from one side of the Yarra to the next. Melbourne hadn’t changed much. The construction managers were preparing the spans to be put on the structure we had spent long months building. I glanced down. The buzz coming from the city was hardly audible over the sound of the workers chatting and the height we were at. The birds flew lazily over the trees and around the power lines. Before long the rest of the men joined us and started to work. I caught a hard stare off Herb and a gesture pointing to his head. I realised I didn’t have my helmet on. I placed it on my head and gave him thumbs up. He turned away shaking his head. After that we got to work preparing the bridge.

After work that day, we were all particularly tired. The group of us all went to Gary’s place and hung around there for a while. We were all chatting and some were drinking, until the crowd of people dispersed. We all crawled back into our cars and drove home.

The next morning most arrived with a headache – Gary included. Herb gathered us all around near our hut and gave us a brief.

“OK fellas, today’s a big day. We will be lifting the spans today and securing the girders.” We all groaned and muttered. “We need maximum concentration today. Those spans have got to go on correctly or else we may have some major complications later on. All right?”

We all muttered yes and split up. Some of

us headed off to the scaffolding and some headed off to the gantry. Gary had to go to scaffolding to work inside the box girders, whereas I was on the gantry. The ladder on the gantry was now speckled with rust, some flaking off into my hands. I climbed up until I was at the top. The smell of petrol and the sound of steel being ground took the air. The air was cold and fresh, and it prickled at my skin. I stood up and slowly guided the crane.

When it came to lunch, all of us ate greedily. We all had two bottles of drink, even in the cool weather and most of us had more than two burgers. We all crammed inside the huts to avoid the cold wind that bit at our heels. After the break, all of us hastily returned to our duties.

Work was finished for the day and we all headed home to get a good sleep and rest before tomorrow. I had no energy to cook tonight, so I got fish and chips. After I ate, I crawled into bed to hibernate as long as my alarm would let me.

### 2 June 1970

As I flicked on the radio that morning, I realised with a shock that the Milford Haven Bridge in the United Kingdom had collapsed. This was built similar to my bridge. As I climbed in my car that morning, I tried to think of what could have caused the collapse. As I arrived at work, the mood was grim. Gary didn’t greet me as he usually did. I questioned him on why he was so glum.

“Did you hear about the Milford Haven collapse?” I asked.

“Yeah. Its meant to be like the Westgate. D’you reckon the Westgate’ll be all right?”

“Yeah it’ll be fine. We took all the care with the girders and the spans. It’ll be fine.”

I didn’t know if I was reassuring myself or him. We slowly drifted towards the huts to grab our helmets. The sky was as dull and grey as the mood on the site. The birds weren’t singing and Melbourne hustle and bustle roar didn’t seem to be there. The river was grey from the reflection of the sky. It started to drizzle. The drops that rolled down the gantry looked like the whole bridge was crying. We were told that actions were being taken to strengthen the steel and girders on the bridge. We got to

*Continued on page 10*

*Continued from page 9*

work. Back to the welding and hammering we went.

At the lunch break, I slowly munched on my ham and cheese roll in my car. The huts were too crowded in the rain so I had retreated to my car. I sipped my water and left my car. We clambered back up to strengthen the bridge again.

### **22 June 1970**

We finally finished strengthening the bridge today. We'd spent almost a month strengthening it so an accident like the Milford Haven wouldn't happen.

We turned up to work when we heard the news that we could get back to joining and lifting the spans. Our spirits were lifted and we happily got back to work. The birds were singing again and the river sparkled diamonds. I threw my helmet on my head and flicked my considerably longer hair out of my face. As we worked, chatter ricocheted from inside the girders. I started humming to myself pleasantly and the trill of hammers hitting steel pierced the early morning silence.

### **August 1970**

As I rolled out of bed that morning, I was pleased over our efforts to raise the spans and secure them. I ducked into my car and started the engine. As I saw our bridge from afar, it truly looked like the queen of all bridges. I pulled into the car park and realised something was amiss. The managers were huddled in a circle, discussing something deeply.

"It's not much of a gap", someone mumbled.

"Maybe, but it's still not exact."

"It's only 114mm!"

"114mm could change the outcome."

"Why don't we weigh one side down? That'll make it even."

"Yes, yes good idea. We would save time that way. I'll tell them straight away."

The manager strode towards us workers.

"In recent calculations of the bridge, we have found that one span is slightly more elevated than the other. We are resolving

this by weighing down the elevated side with kentledge. This will even out the spans and join the bridge."

My heart sank. A block of kentledge weighed about 8 tonnes. It was going to be hard work getting it on the bridge and levelled. I sighed and hastily climbed the gantry to again guide the cranes.

### **9 September 1970**

As I gazed up at the bridge that morning, I knew something wasn't right. There was something... wrong about its shape. I exited my car and saw the managers huddled in a circle again. They were talking in very serious tones.

"There's a complication."

"I noticed it this morning. She's not right."

"There is a buckle in the bridge."

"What! How'd it happen?"

"There is obvious overstress due to concrete kentledge."

"We measured it all and monitored it. Nothing was amiss."

"I know but we have to fix it fast, before it gets worse."

The manager sauntered over to us. He took a deep breath and began to talk.

"Well men", he began, "There is a buckle in the bridge, and it is causing major complications. This is due to the over stress of the kentledge. Unscrewing a few bolts should help the girder un-buckle and straighten out."

### **14 October 1970**

Today was the day we were removing some of the bolts. As I pulled into the car park, I saw everything was prepared for us to get to work. I strode into the hut to grab my now scuffed and almost black, white helmet. I strode over to where Gary was leaning against a tall tree. His face was barely visible through the dense leaves. I could tell it was him by his slouched figure and clothing he wore. I ducked to avoid hitting my head on a tree.

"Today's the big day!" I exclaimed.

"Yeah well it's gonna be a big job."



"We're so close to finishing her."

"I know. I am dreaming of the day I can wake up at 9", he chuckled.

"When this job's over, I'm ditching my alarm clock."

"Jeremy, Gary!" A voice behind us yelled. It was Herb.

"Get yourselves working."

"Yes Herb", we replied in unison.

We put our helmets on and quickly scrambled up the gantry. With no time to admire the view, I quickly bent over and began unscrewing. After a couple of hours, we were all exhausted.

Then the bridge gave a small tremble, then a groan that sounded like a Rottweiler after a rabbit. It gave one more tremble then was silent. The workers were silent for a while then someone yelled, "Oh look, she's having growing pains!". After everyone had gotten over the shock, we all laughed heartily then got back to work.



### 15 October 1970

I went to work as normal that morning. Gulped down breakfast, drained my coffee, jumped in the car and made my way through the traffic to work. I locked my car and walked towards the hut to grab my helmet. I chatted with a few of the workers in there then headed out into the fresh air. The day was a mild day. It wasn't boiling but it wasn't freezing either. The birds chirped happily in their nests and the leaves swayed lazily in the breeze. Flowers were beginning to bloom and spring was finally here.

We climbed up the ladder to continue fixing the buckle. We began removing the bolts. Then the plates slipped.

"Scuse me", I asked the manager.

"What? Why aren't you working?"

"The plates slipped when I unscrewed the bolts. Now they're stuck."

"Well tighten them with an airgun. Yes that shall work", he muttered to himself.

I hurried back to the plates and began un-screwing again. After I had removed 30 bolts and Gary had 4, I thought I felt a sliding movement. I looked down at the holes. They were now completely blind.

A change rippled throughout the bridge. The buckle had been contained to the upper panel, but a quick glance to my comrades confirmed my suspicion of the buckle spreading to the outer panels. A few surprised exclamations from the other end of the bridge meant that the bridge had settled on the northern side.

We, on our orders, continued to re-bolt the bridge. The manager assessed the bridge. He started to call us off the bridge. We slowly stood up, cautiously stood up, knowing our bridge was weakening.

Then we heard an eerie pinging. I glanced down and saw the flakes of rust peeling off the weathered steel. The metal was turning a peculiar shade of blue and I heard the jarring screech of metal scraping against metal. Things that should have been firm and solid started to move underneath our feet. My heart turned to stone and my hands clasped over my ears, trying to block out the sound. It sounded like the devil himself was awakening and it sure felt like it too. I stared helplessly at my mates knowing we would be lucky if we survived this. There was no way we could get off the Westgate now. The noise grew louder and louder and it seemed like the world stood still as the bridge – my bridge, began to fall.

Every second seemed to take an hour as we plummeted down to the Yarra River. 2000 tonnes of bridge fell onto the river and the huts below. I knew the outcome there.

I was jerked off the bridge and I flew through the air. I landed in the water and it felt like forever until I surfaced. I was so shocked I started to sink again. My brain then started to think quickly. My arms and legs swam furiously through the mud, oil and debris. I was on the bank when a wall of fire erupted in front of my eyes. The wails and screams of people echoed in my ears. I fell back into the water flailing to get away from the fire. After it was extinguished, I slowly stood up. Yelling out the names of my mates and shifting the remains of the bridge looking for survivors, for anything, really. Two men in white dragged me away. They told me to sit by the ambulance, but I got up and went back to the water.

"Gaz!" I shouted. "Anyone!"

I turned around to look at my surrounds. The big bridge was crumpled and twisted in ruin. Where the huts had been, there were white cloths. I didn't look that way; instead I looked at the bridge more closely. It was ruined, two years of work, twisted and mud splattered. Our final moments on the bridge seemed like weeks ago. It seemed like weeks ago when the sturdy metal turned blue and we plummeted down to the river.

I began searching again when a man all muddy, oily and bloody started moving twisted girders. With a shock I realised it was Gary. He looked like death and I suspected I looked the same. We acknowledged each other then began digging and shifting together. We recovered injured and dead. We moved bits of scaffolding and identified those injured and dead. We worked tirelessly for hours cutting the box girders open to recover the engineers that were working inside. The men in white told us to go home, but we were back within the hour.

Whilst we were shifting, digging and recovering, we wondered what had gone so terribly wrong, and why. We had followed orders and planned everything to perfection. Then something was nagging at the back of my brain, I realised what it was. The Milford Haven. That had collapsed under construction too. It clicked. The buckle, the shortcuts, the re-bolting. It all made sense, the engineering of the bridge had failed. That was what had bought it down. All the strain on the metal turned it blue, peeled the rust off and made a tremendous roar that could be heard from 20 km away.

### 16 October 1970

Today the Prime Minister said "I am sure the whole of Australia is shocked and saddened by the serious accident at West Gate Bridge. Please extend my deepest sympathy to all those families to whom this tragic event has brought such grief." They say there will be a Royal Commission into the failure. But I know how it happened. Ask anyone who worked on the bridge that day. They'll say the same words: Design. Fault.

By **Ella Andersen**  
Year 7,

Flinders Christian Community College  
TYABB – VIC.

# FINDING ALMUDJ

**T**HE wailing chants and cries from 'sorry business' echoed down into Mikinj Valley as the spirit of Guboo returned to the Dreaming Ancestors. My guman and the elder of the Gagudju people, gone. Taken by the waters sent from the great power of Kakadu, Almudj. She had done wrong and it was in my power to revenge Guboo. With my skin painted white and spear in hand, I left my people behind. I set out on a journey to find her, to follow the Dreamtime story once told to us by the elders.

The Dreamtime story passed down to us told of a rainbow serpent, who the Gagudju people called Almudj. She lived deep within Kakadu, sleeping under a pool beyond Burrangie. Almudj was the creator of mountains, valleys and waterholes – she shaped the land and spilled water to make rivers, lakes and billabongs. Almudj was known as the great creator, bringing the seasons each year that are responsible for life. However, Guboo always told us that Almudj should be feared. She can punish those who do wrong with her great power, creating floods. My guman fell victim to the rains Almudj sent. She had taken him, but he had done no wrong. She had broken the customary laws of the Gagudju elders and for that I must punish her.

The echoing chants followed me as I made my way down the Mikinj Valley, my spear gripped tightly in my hands. I did not know of my journey exactly, but old rumours told that the pool Almudj rested in, lay deep in the heart of Kakadu, near Jim Jim Falls. I could find my way there by following the stars of the night sky, using the Southern Cross as a point to guide me. I looked over my shoulder, the sky above blackened by smoke. A pair of kangaroo stood camouflaged in the dry bushland, as if proudly sending me on my journey. They watched me leave the valley.

I reached the mangroves of Yellow Water, the sky now orange as it set deep into the horizon. In front of me was the glistening water, a shimmering reflection of clouds and of the fiery orange sky. Everything that lay beneath it was hidden. We were always warned of the creatures that lived in the depths of Yellow Water, and although it held an abundance of fish it was home to deadly crocodiles. Goose

bumps ran up my legs in uncertainty, as I broke the glass surface. Moving deeper, I gripped my spear tighter, the splintered wood crafted from hibiscus now digging into my hands. Ripples broke through the floating algae and I remained unaware if it was just a Barramundi or the tail of a crocodile, something only an experienced mani could tell apart. The silence of the still water was broken as a black-necked stork sprang out the reeds. The glass now rippled behind me, and shadows of a crocodile became clearer. The water broke like the clouds of the monsoonal season. My steps once cautious and silent, now stirred up the mud.

As night fell, I rested high up in an Anbinik tree, its leaves olive with the light of day now a glistening silver, a mirror to the moon. Here, I was safe from the dangers that ruled the plains of Kakadu.

With the break of day, I could see where the cliff dropped off in the distance, and could hear the faint sound of water crashing down from great heights. I had found it, found the place where Almudj lay in rest, in the pools below Jim Jim Falls. I made my way to the edge of the cliff, to the top of the waterfall. From here I could see far across Kakadu. I could see the powerful Mary River winding through valleys, forcing its way past the dense eucalyptus. Paperbarks wept over the billabongs they sheltered. I could see across the lowlands, over the stone country and deep into

Arnhem Land. This was all Almudj had created. Without her the land would be dry and barren, there would be no creatures to roam amongst the evergreen flora of our nura.

My eyes followed down into the depths of the water, but I could not see Almudj. The pool was a still blue, no shadows, no life. I broke a piece of the decaying limestone and threw it down the waterfall, the sound of its crashing covering the splash. But still nothing. I leaned further and further over to get a better view until I felt my feet slipping beneath me.

I found myself awake, shoulders pressed into the damp, orange clay of the bank, legs being bitten by the cool shallow water. The colours of a rainbow disappeared into the mist of the waterfall. The colours of the rainbow serpent. Almudj took the life of my grandfather, but spared mine. She let me go free. I could not take revenge on the great power of Kakadu. I could not look back as I walked away from the pool.

I left to venture back up the waterfall, back through Yellow Water and the forests of gums. A rainbow streamed through the clouds above. Almudj was guiding me home.

*By Ellen Thomas*

*Year 12, Eynesbury Senior College  
ADELAIDE – SA*



# Creative Net



Dear Literacy Educator

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.

We also organise literary events for schools. Students pay \$20 + GST and we provide the MC, authors and illustrators for a day which includes three workshops from each of the presenters, a launch, book signings, etc -- everything you would expect from a festival, plus free show bags each containing a Ford Street book and merchandise (worth around \$20).

Ask us about our PD seminars for Tls/educators, too. (We organised the two highly successful Keeping Books Alive seminars at the RACV Club.)

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)

With best wishes

Terrie Saunders  
Creative Net

## VIC

Goldie Alexander  
June Alexander  
Krista Bell  
Kevin Burgemeestre  
Sue Bursztynski  
Bernard Caleo  
Isobelle Carmody  
Margaret Clark  
Sherryl Clark  
Paul Collins  
Michael Connell  
Meredith Costain  
Justin D'Ath  
Graham Davey  
Julie Davey  
Hazel Edwards  
Corinne Fenton  
Marjory Gardner  
Jacqui Grantford  
Robert Greenberg  
Susan Halliday  
Susan Halliday/Phil Kettle  
Leigh Hobbs  
Niki Horin  
George Ivanoff  
Bernadette Kelly  
Jackie Kevin  
Phil Kettle  
Sue Lawson  
Virginia Lowe  
Felicity Marshall  
Lorraine Marwood

Maureen McCarthy  
Foz Meadows  
Marc McBride  
Sean McMullen  
Dave O'Neil  
Wendy Orr  
Michael Panckridge  
Julie Perrin  
Judith Rossell  
Michael Salmon  
Claire Saxby  
Tony Thompson  
Ian Trevaskis  
Adam Wallace  
Dee White  
Mark Wilson

## NSW

Deborah Abela  
Stephen Axelsen  
Dianne Bates  
Patricia Bernard  
Jess Black  
Jenny Blackford  
Russell Blackford  
Charlotte Calder  
Jill Carter-Hansen  
Chris Cheng  
Wai Ping Chim  
Laurine Croasdale  
Aleesah Darlison  
Melaina Faranda  
Serena Geddes  
Susanne Gervay

Pip Harry  
Michelle Heeter  
Nette Hilton  
Peter Klein  
Jan Latta  
Nathan Luff  
Sophie Masson  
Jeni Mawter  
Kim Miller  
Lewis Morley  
Louise Park  
Felicity Pulman  
Moya Simons  
Paul Stafford  
Shane Thamm  
Lesley Vamos

## WA

Cristy Burne  
Mark Greenwood  
Frané Lessac  
Sally Murphy  
Teena Raffa-Mulligan  
Veronica Rooke  
Den Scheer

## SA

Ben Chandler  
Katrina Germein  
Phillip Gwynne  
Sally Heinrich  
Heather Taylor Johnson  
Claire Richards  
Kristin Weidenbach

## TAS

Christina Booth  
Kate Gordon  
Steve Isham  
Sally Odgers

## QLD

Kathryn Apel  
Peter Carnavas  
Brian Falkner  
JE Fison  
Katrina Germein  
Sheryl Gwyther  
Elaine Ouston  
Marianne de Pierres  
Dimitry Powell  
Angela Sunde  
Michelle Worthington

## NT

Leonie Norrington

## ACT

Tania McCartney  
Stephanie Owen-Reeder  
Tracey Hawkins

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

# Charlie Wattle's Diary

## **Tuesday 2nd July 1722**

I perchance this is worth it. I spent three shillings on this journal and risked being caught by masters in need of my work. Edward, my little brother, I have done this for one day, you will hopefully receive this and know I am still alive. I miss you dearly! Stay safe with Aunt Mary for she is your new mama.

Life here is hard. After running from my Master, I have been begging on streets and cleaning houses. Many people here are neither rich, nor poor. Many live in only stone houses. Some families have 10 members in a house with three bedrooms. One house I have cleaned has 12 children sharing a tiny room and the attic.

Leaving my Master has misfortunes as well as some advantages. I now sleep mostly under porches or on the side of the road. I must also keep away from thugs and thieves. I must also keep from kidnapers.

I had a close encounter the other day with a kidnapper. Edward, it was a horrible time. I woke to great manly hands grabbing my arm and dragging me to the coach parked on the road. Praise the Lord for a tree had dropped long branches onto the road. With my free arm I grabbed a stick and began waking the man. Even though the stick was cutting my hands, I continued to hit him. Soon, he let go and I ran. I hid in a dark alley a few blocks from where I have been sleeping. The man did not bother to chase me. I slept in the alley that night, not that I got much anyway.

I was asked to clean Mistress Annette's house at midday. I must be heading to her house, for if I'm late I will be punished with lashes. I wish to see you soon Edward.

It's sunset and I have been cleaning all day. Mistress Annette paid me three shillings today. Not only that, but she granted me to stay in her house for the night for she has no children yet. She is pregnant and due for a baby in five weeks.

This is my first night in nine months sleeping on a mattress. I'm sitting beside the fire for light to write in my journal. I must not tell anyone about me or my letters for I will be forced to teach or work with

a Master who needs my skills. I must visit Farmer Drew for my rations. I must plough his paddock before I receive my rations. I pray the Lord for a bigger ration this time for I needed to beg on the streets for food last time. I must rest for I have a big day tomorrow. Sweet dreams my brother.

## **Wednesday 3rd July**

This morning I woke early to walk to Farmer Drew's paddock. My hands have blisters and have been aching all day. But thank the Lord for getting me a bigger ration. Farmer Drew gave me a dozen eggs, a cabbage, some spinach, a bottle of milk from his cow Rainy, and a basket of fresh apples.

Farmer Drew is leaving to Sydney for a month to work. This makes me needing to beg again for I must do my share with Sam. Edward, Sam was a convict on my ship. She's my age, 14, and is my only friend. She has lately got the flu and is unable to work for rations. I share her a quarter for she will not let me give her any more. Farmer Drew gave me five shillings for when I told him about Sam.

We work together to help Farmer Drew. He felt sorry and told me to buy medicine for her. Sam is the only one to know about my writing. And I'm to keep it like that.

## **Thursday 4th July**

Today I bought medicine for Sam. It cost me eight shillings, emptying my pocket. Being poor is worth saving my only friend. Now I must work twice as hard.

I must visit Mistress Elizabeth today, as well as a new man I have not worked for yet. He seemed like a nice gentleman when he saw me ploughing Farmer Drew's paddock. He asked for who I am and if I could clean his house today for two shillings. At first I refused, but when he offered seven shillings, I couldn't help but say yes. I must be off to Mistress Elizabeth and the man's house.

## **Friday 5th July**

Mistress Elizabeth paid me two shillings yesterday. I was disappointed for her house is quite big. The man, his name is James, had a small house. He only had a one bedroom house, that he shared with his wife and daughter.

James allowed me to play with his daughter Lucy on the street. We played skipping and drew pictures in the dirt. Lucy told me that her real mother had died of illness three years ago whilst the plague went around the town. As she told me that her mother was pregnant with her little brother, tears rolled down her cheeks. I embraced her in a hug and whipped her tears away. I told her about how our mama and papa both died of diseases and how I had to leave you behind back in London. I did not mention to her that I was a convict, all I said was I needed to come here for work.

After we talked, James called us in for lunch. I had never had lunch at someone's house before. I told James and his wife Alice about Sam and that she could not do much. Alice walked off and soon returned with a basket with fresh scones and vegetables from their garden. I was overwhelmed for their offer and thanked them deeply. We prayed to Lord for our food he has given us, then enjoyed our lunch.

After lunch, I sadly had to leave for more work. I thanked James and Alice again and said goodbye to Lucy. As I was walking off, James called out to me "Charlie! Wait!". I turned around to see James running up to me. He handed me seven shillings. I was very grateful and headed off to work.

Sam showed some recovery when I got back to her late evening. Sam lives in a small hut outside of town. I would live with her but her hut is not big enough for both of us. I showed her the basket of food Alice had gave me and told her that it was for her. Sam looked up to me with a great smile on her face. "We shall have a lovely feast tomorrow night. Be here before sunset, and I'll prepare a nice meal." Even though I knew it would only be a bowl of soup or a few scones, I smiled back.

I left her hut just after sunset to find a sheltered place to sleep. I'm now resting against a light post with an oil lamp hanging from a hook. I can only just see my letters.

## **Saturday 6th July**

Today I visited Sam early. I asked her for anything she wanted for I was heading to the markets. The markets are a while away. Its about six kilometres from here, it's in

another small town. "You must spend it on yourself, for you have done all work this week." Sam argued. "No! I ca—" but Sam cut me off. "Just do it! If you come home with something for me, I will not accept it. So best you buy something that will be useful for you." I knew I couldn't argue with her. So I walked off to the markets.

There were many things there today. I decided to buy a dress from a young girl selling them. By the state she was in, I could tell she was poor like me. She was selling them for two shillings each. I had 12 shillings from all my work I had done so far. I decided to buy two dresses. I will tell Sam they are an early present.

When I saw a stall selling ink and quills, I couldn't resist. I was running out of ink, and I broke my quill yesterday. I'm now using my new quill. Sadly they were dear, so I could only buy a small bottle of ink and a tiny quill. Sam told me she will help me make ink. Her mama once taught her how to mix ink.

I left the markets with four shillings left in my hand, a bottle of ink, a quill from a black bird and two rag dresses. My old one has tears and patches all through it. Even though these are only from rags, they are somewhat most easier to wear.

Edward, I miss the silk dresses in London. The sewn bonnets mama made, the soft shoes we bought with our birthday money and the warm jumpers made from sheep wool.

### *Monday 8th July*

Today I worked for James and Alice. James had gone in a ship to Port Jackson for reasons I do not know. Alice and Lucy seemed so upset. Not knowing why he had left made it hard to comfort them. I did not know why.

After I finished cleaning the house, I sat down beside Alice on their porch. Lucy was somewhere in her room. Bravely I asked, "Why has James left to Port Jackson? You do not have to tell me if you wish not to".

By now Alice had tears in her eyes. "He had left for he stole food for Lucy and I", she cried sadly. "He was sent to Port Jackson for two years in goal, and 100 lashes!"

Alice now was crying her heart out. I felt terrible! Poor James would be gone for two

years, and would most likely die from the lashes. One convict I knew was sentenced to 100 lashes. The last time I saw him was when he was being led out of gaol and to the lashing room.

Even though dinner with Sam was nice, I couldn't feel anything but sadness. Perchance James survives! I told Sam what had happened. I kept crying when I tried to tell her. Sam told me to sleep in her hut tonight. She made a layer of leaves for her to sleep on outside.

I've just woken to a terrible dream. I was sweaty from fright. In my dream, I was James. I was serving my punishment. You were there Edward, so was Alice and Lucy. It was like I could feel the pain as I was whipped with the leather belt. When I reached my 100th lash, I passed out and woke up shaking all over. I am unable to fall asleep again. I'm frightened of the horrible dream returning.

### *Tuesday 9th July*

Today was full of misfortunes. We woke to a startle as a thief ran off from the hut. Sam cried at him "Come back you stupid thief!". Sam was about to race after him, but I knew it was no use. I quickly grabbed her shoulder and told her she will only make herself more ill. We soon figured he had only stolen a pan and a cabbage lying on the table.

As I was just about to leave, I stepped on a sharp thorn. I was in a lot of pain. Sam luckily had a tourniquet in her hut. It stung heaps when she tightened it around my foot. A lot of blood was covering the floor, so I offered to clean it by sweeping the bloody dirt away. Sam told me she will do it later in the day.

After I rested, I set off back to town. When I was heading back into town, I found a young boy crying on the side of the road. "What ever is the problem?" I asked, kneeling down beside the crying child.

He looked up to me with red eyes and sobbed, "A man stole my new toy I had just bought with my shillings. I've saved up since I was 4, and he stole my toy!"

The boy cried in his small hands. It reminded me so much of you Edward. He had light brown hair shortly cut. His eyes were a deep blue, just the same as yours. "Where may your parents be?" I asked, trying to cheer him up. "I do not have any",

he sobbed. "They were killed by thugs three years ago. I live by myself..."

I looked down at the boy and told him quietly, "You know what? I'm just like you. I left my family back in London. My mama and papa both died before I left. My little brother Edward, he had to stay home with my Aunt Mary. May I ask your name?"

"I'm Lucas, Lucas Ronald."

"Well Lucas, being so young and fragile, would you consider staying with me and my friend? I feel it will be much safer for you."

Lucas looked up to me with wide eyes and a smile slowly formed on his face. "Of course I would!" he cheered.

### *Wednesday 10th July*

Today I could not work for my foot was swollen. Luckily, Sam had healed and set off to clean houses. Lucas was a bit scared of Sam, for she was not as sweet looking as me. She had lost many teeth and her hair was very 'wild'. Lucas decided to stay with me for the day. Even though he didn't think it would be much fun, he wanted to keep me company.

When Lucas asked if we had a ration for him, for he had not eaten in days, I noticed our food was very low. We had only a few apples from Farmer Drew left. I handed Lucas an apple, which he ate quickly. I decided to have one as well. It was nice having a fresh apple. When I looked down into the basket where our food should be, I noticed only one apple was left! "We must beg for food or shillings", Lucas said.

I could tell he was disappointed. Usually when I begged for food or shillings, all I got was foul language and sometimes stones thrown at me. But I knew I had to for Lucas and Sam. We're heading off now.

Thank the Lord for all of the kind hearted people. We earned six shillings, a bundle of apples, some salted meat, two cabbages, a basket of mixed veggies and some treats. I knew it was because of Lucas. He walked around with his sweet round eyes begging people for food. He got most of it, I only got a few shillings and the apples. I helped Lucas carry the food and money back to Sam's hut. Sam never returned until late after sunset. I watched her delighted face

*Continued on page 16*

*Continued from page 15*

as she noticed the pile of food on the table. "I must say, what amazing work you have done!"

Sam clapped her hands. "I also have good news. Lucas, look what I have for you." Sam pulled out a small hand-carved wooden doll. Lucas ran up to Sam and gave her a big hug. "Thank you!" Lucas giggled. He ran off and played with his new toy in the dirt.

"I saw Alice today. She was emptying a heap of boxes into the rubbish carriage. I asked her how she was feeling and she broke into tears. She invited me inside for a snack, but had to sadly go ahead and clean more houses. I wished her luck and set off", Sam told me once Lucas had left. I wished so much for her to have James back. I must pay Lucy a visit tomorrow.

#### **Thursday 11th July**

Today I woke early. My foot was slightly better, but it was now beginning to be infected. Lucas and I walked to the toy shop and bought a little wooden doll for Lucy. I hoped it would cheer her up a slight bit.

We continued over to her house. When we reached it, yelling and screaming came from inside. Lucas was by my side in seconds clenching my arm. I quickly ran inside, Lucas was too frightened to even move. Just as I entered the door, Alice threw a wooden chair across the room towards Lucy. Luckily Lucy was standing beside the door, so I had time to quickly pull her out of the way of the flying chair. Alice froze, suddenly noticing me. I could feel Lucy shaking as she buried her head in my chest. Alice's eyes were wide with shock. It was like she had not noticed what she had done, then suddenly recognising it. She quickly ran up to her room, I could tell she was crying.

Once the door slammed I looked down at Lucy. The poor sweetie was shaking all over. There was a small cut on her cheek. I rushed her to the drawers and pulled out a bandage to cover her wound. Before placing the bandage on her delicate cheek, I remembered to wash out the wound to stop infections. "Lucy, I have a friend you might want to play with. He's outside. Be mindful he is a shy boy. His name is Lucas. I'm just going to see your mama for a moment."

I led Lucy to the door. I watched her as she introduced herself to Lucas, then closed the door. I was slightly afraid as I walked towards Alice's room. As I peeked in the door, Alice welcomed me in. She was whipping her tears away and bandaging her hand. She must have cut it while throwing the chair. "I'm not here to argue," I insisted.

"Can you please do me a favour Charlie?" Alice wiped more tears away. "For Lucy's safety, please take care of her for a few days. I just need to become used to not having James around."

I felt my mouth drop open. Now I was caring full-time for a six year old boy, and now an eight year old girl, and I'm a convict that lives on the streets! I slightly nodded my head and walked out of the room. Once I settled down Lucy we headed back to Sam's hut. Lucy and Lucas are insisting me on playing with them and their new toys. I must say, they remind me of you and I Edward. I must go now.

#### **Friday 12th July**

The temperature today has risen so high, we've decided to go to the river for a swim. Lucas, Lucy, Sam and I headed off to the river. It was a long walk, but in the end we had a nice relaxing time in the cool water.

I'm sitting on a rock by the river bank writing in my journal. I had just read all of my work. I've noticed how much I've wrote. Well, it's so you know Edward that I'm still alive and miss you with all my heart. Every night I have dreams of you and mama and papa and me. We're racing down the cottage garden to be greeted by mama and papa with fresh soup and baked bread. But then you and mama and papa walk off. I try race after you, but I cannot move. Then I wake up with sweat and my heart is racing.

#### **Saturday 13th July**

Today I was back at work with Sam. It was a lot easier working together for working alone wasn't easy. We cleaned Mistress Annete, Mistress Elizabeth, Sir William Storb and Captain Joal Nian's house. We earned five shillings altogether.

When I was cleaning the attic of Captain Joal, I found a great slithery monster that struck out at me. I quickly grabbed a pole and with a few stabs it was dead. I didn't want to kill it, but if I didn't, I would have

died. Captain Joal told me he had seen the snake before.

At Mistress Elizabeth's house, I found a young girl hiding in the attic. She shrieked when I saw her, but begged for me to leave. "Why are you up here?" I asked, completely ignoring her.

"I am a convict. I've run away from my master. He was abusing me, so Mistress Anne..."

I cut her off, "Mistress Anne? I know her as Mistress Elizabeth". The little girl looked at me puzzled. "Is she respectful of you?" I asked after a long silence.

She slowly shook her head. "She is no better than my master, but without her, I would have no food nor shelter." I could see cuts and bruises covering the poor child.

"I am a convict as well. I live with my friend Sam, she's 14 years old. I also have kinda adopted a young boy called Lucas and a girl named Lucy."

"Oh my! Will you not mind caring for me? You must, for Lucas is my brother!"

I looked at her in shock. "How can I get you away from here without being caught?" and at that I heard Mistress Elizabeth climbing the wooden ladder leading to the attic. In a second the girl was hiding and I began sweeping. I was ordered to leave immediately. I looked over to where the girl was hiding and winked at her.

I told Lucas about his sister. He sounded so happy to know she was still alive. He told me more about her. She was named Catherine, aged 8. She has short brown hair, short as a boy's. No one knew why her hair had not grown fully. He said when their parents were killed, a master had adopted them. Catherine had risked her life to distract her master whilst Lucas had the chance to run away. Lucas was proud to know she had run away as well. He was shattered but when I told him she had not found the best place to stay. He begged me to help her, so I must. Mistress Elizabeth had asked for my return in three days, so I plan to save Catherine then. It is awfully late now and my oil lamp is dying out.

#### **Monday 15th July**

Lucy and Sam have said they are helping Lucas and I save Catherine, whether I like it or not. Sam planned most of it. She says

when Mistress Elizabeth leaves to do her daily food shopping, Lucas and I would help get Catherine out of the house. Lucy and Sam will be making sure Mistress Elizabeth shall not return any time soon. It will be a huge risk, for once Mistress Elizabeth finds out that Catherine had run away, she might go searching for us. Lucy says we may have a punishment of 50 lashes, or even to be hung! I must leave now, for we are heading to the town church to pray for the best.

Church was most terrifying! Whilst in the hall, on our knees praying, the land beneath us shook in anger. I froze as I watched the wall crumble from the shaking. I had never experienced anything like it Edward! The ground just began shaking everything and knocking it down. Sam had luckily grabbed my arm for the roof of the church broke and was falling down on top of me. Lucy and Lucas had run to the door as soon as the horror begun. I feel so stupid, I stood there like I was frozen in time. I thanked Sam ever so gracefully. We are now at Sam's hut, having boiled rice and an apple mixture Lucy had created. She says her father had taught her before he was sent to Port Jackson. I hugged Lucy tightly as she began to cry. I must have some rest now, for tomorrow is a big day. If there is no more letters after this Edward, I have sadly been caught or worse. If this is the last thing I will write Edward, I must say, I love you my dear brother!

### **Tuesday 16th July**

Oh my! That was a close call. We woke early this morning to get ready for the day. When I arrived at Mistress Elizabeth's house, I acted normal and did my usual chores. The moment Mistress Elizabeth had left the house, I got to work immediately. I made a two second silent prayer then headed upstairs. Catherine was surprised to see me. I told her what we were doing and she was ever so grateful. We quickly went down stairs and exited through the back door. It took a lot of persuasion, for Catherine was awfully scared of being caught. Lucas embraced his sister in a massive hug and a heap of love. I had to tell them we needed to go before Mistress Elizabeth returns. We met Sam and Lucy in a nearby alley and I handed the two over. I had to run back for I could see Mistress Elizabeth leaving the market from the alleyway. I had just picked up the broom when she entered the house. "Good day Mistress", I greeted her. I unpacked her small bags of shopping and made her supper. I nervously

watched her as she headed up to the attic. She soon came down and asked something I wish she didn't. "Did you see anyone, like in the house?" I shook my head. I knew I had to act more like I didn't even know Catherine existed. "What do you mean Mistress?" I asked. She seemed she didn't want me to know about Catherine, so she just left it. "No loss anyway. That brat just wasted my time and money", I heard her mumble whilst heading out for a walk. I met Catherine and the rest at Sam's hut. Catherine had made us all a stew for saying thank you. It was a lovely meal, but that's when I realised something. I noticed how many mouths we were needing to feed. I had to ask Sam what we should do about it. She was too tired to answer. "We'll talk over it tomorrow", was all she said. My, I'm awfully tired myself. Good night Edward, and sweet dreams.

### **Wednesday 17th July**

I asked Sam again first thing this morning about the amount of mouths we were needing to feed. She stood there, considering of what to do next for a long time. We are now caring for three children, as well as ourselves. As much as we hated it, we had to minimise the amount of children we needed to care for. Sam and I both agreed that Lucy must head home. I could not tell Lucy the sad news, so Sam had done so. Lucy was neither upset nor happy about this. She did miss her mother, even though she had not been gone for long. And she did not want to leave us, for we were like her second family. "It is for yours and our own good. I swear an oath I will visit you at least once a week", I comforted Lucy at her door. The poor child was in tears, but the moment her mother answered the door, they quickly disappeared. Alice was pleased to see her daughter again. She handed me three shillings for caring for Lucy. I decided to buy a fresh baked bread loaf and share between the family of now 4.

### **Thursday 18th July**

Today a horrible storm swept through the town. Trees were uprooted and many houses were damaged. Whilst we were sheltering from the storm, Sam had decided to have a quick check outside to see if any damage had been done close by. At that very moment, a tree about 3 paces away was knocked over by the wind. Sam had just enough time to warn us and get us out from the hut. In seconds it was crushed. I broke into tears, knowing everything we had owned, would most likely be crushed

with the hut. The storm had only lasted for a few hours. Once the clouds had gone, we checked to see if there were any remains that we could salvage. We could only save a few personal belongings, such as my diary, some belongings of Lucas's and Catherine's, and a bangle Sam was given before she boarded the ship and transported to New Holland. We also found undamaged belongings such as money, food and cooking tools. I write this at about 3 hours before the sun disappears behind the horizon. I must keep a close eye on Lucas and Catherine, for we are sleeping on the streets. I perchance all is well before we find a safer place to sleep. We are extremely low on rations and money. I'll ask Lucas and Catherine tonight if they wish to start working to earn some cash. We are in desperate need of food, making us needing to beg on the streets...

### **Friday 18th July**

I had just noticed how much paper I have left. I have only a few spaces to write. Until I earn at least 3 shillings I can use to buy something personal, I won't be able to write. I promise to you Edward, I will write again! Wish you the best!

### **Sunday 3rd August**

How many things I have to write about! Edward, in the last 15 days, many things in life have changed. Catherine came down with the flu and we had to use our savings to buy medicine. All our spare change is kept in a small leather pocket in hope that one day we could use it to make a business. Once Catherine was feeling better, her and Lucas began working. Catherine couldn't go cleaning houses in case Mistress Elizabeth may catch her. On their first day, they earned 4 shillings, which Sam and I decided they can use it to buy a gift for themselves. Yesterday Farmer Drew came home, with an extremely high paid worker named Spencer. He had asked me to work for him as well on his new farm he had just brought beside Farmer Drew's. I shall not brag about his looks, but he is the most loveliest looking man I have ever seen. He is more sweeter than Mike, Edward. His short blonde hair, deep green eyes... I must say, he does look a tad like father, in a younger version. Anyway, Farmer Drew had told me about his trip to Sydney and his pay rise. He said he had the chance to visit Captain Arnold, the captain of one of the ships in the second fleet. I asked for food instead of money this

*Continued on page 18*

*Continued from page 17*

time, seeing we were in desperate need of some. Spencer gave me a basket of apples and three shillings. He said I could use it to reward myself. Obviously I used it to buy more pages. Ever so slowly, prices are now rising in markets and things are becoming dear. I noticed the ink has now gone from two shillings, to four shillings. Luckily Sam had passed down her way of making ink to me. If you ever wish to make some Edward, simply mix coal, water and a tad bit of a burnt candle. Add a few drops of dye (any colour you wish) to create the colour of your ink. I must not use too much pages! Talk soon Edward. Love you dearly, good night.

### **Wednesday 6th August**

Sam, Catherine, Lucas and I have been working ever so hard for the last three days. We noticed how desperate we were for money and food. I have cleaned seven houses, and that's only me! The others have cleaned a total of sixteen houses. We earned a total of 13 shillings! As much as we are desperate to eat all of the food we had bought at once, we must resist the temptation for we will have no food at all. I've learnt a lot about Spencer. He is an extremely kind man and cares for rich and poor. Whenever I am to help as his maid, I am paid more than any other mistress or master. Every few days, I am to give a few shillings to Catherine for her to purchase rags and sewing equipment. She is unable to clean houses, due to the risk of being caught by Mistress Elizabeth, so she stitches dresses and clothes together to sell at the markets. So far, she has spent 1 shilling and 4 pence on rags and sewing equipment, and made 3 shillings. Sam had said I must not work tomorrow for I have worked so hard in the past few days. I must rest now for my head is throbbing in pain. Good night Edward.

### **Thursday 7th August**

I worked for Spencer today. I had to plough his paddocks, water some of his gardens, and plant a few hundred seeds. Once I was tired out, Spencer offered me to sit down for a cup of fresh cow's milk. I enjoyed it very much for I felt dehydrated from the boiling sun. Spencer let me in on a secret I shall not repeat to anyone, except you Edward. I do not know why he had told me, when no-one else knows. He pulled his chair over to mine and shared his secret. "I work for Captain Arnold, and you know the age limit you have to be

18?" He waited for me to answer. "Yes..." I said confused. "Well, I am only 15, but I was desperate to get away from my family in London", he said the word "family" as if it was his arch enemy. "Why would you wish to part from your family?" I asked, obviously thinking it would be the most idiotic thing to do. If I ever had the choice to be with you, even for a day Edward, I wouldn't resist. "I grew up in a family of eight, my father, five brothers and my only sister. My mama died giving birth to me..." I watched Spencer as a tear rolled down his cheek.

"I was the youngest out of all my family, with my twin sister. Once my mother died, two of my brothers took their own lives. The rest left to another country. Being too young to leave, my sister and I had to live with my abusive father. In desperate need to get away, my sister and I signed up to work for Captain Arnold. Miraculously, we were accepted. Sadly, my sister was shot dead whilst passing a native island. To make things worse, I was the one with the gun..." I knew how upset Spencer was, so I said he didn't have to talk about it any more. Once he had pulled himself together, Spencer said something I did not expect to come. It felt like a coach had just hit me in the back. As I was heading out of the gate, Spencer grabbed my hand. "Charlie, I have something I need to say... I feel I have feelings for you." I felt my cheeks burning up. "Goodbye Charlie", and with that I left.

### **Friday 8th August**

Today was extremely embarrassing whilst working for Spencer. Just as I was about to leave, he asked if I could have a quick talk. I felt a slight bit tense as I sat beside Spencer. "I would really appreciate it if you could work for me, and I am your Master." I did a quick prayer that I was only dreaming. I could not leave Sam by herself to care for Lucas and Catherine. That's when I made the biggest mistake I have ever made. I would have taken it back, but what is said is sadly said. "I am very flattered, but I cannot, for I must help get money for Sam and the others. And I do not want another master, I am quite fine keeping away from them!"

I snapped my hands up to my mouth. I just told Spencer I had run from my master! I'm going to get a million lashes, or most possibly hung! "Please, do not tell anyone what I had just said!" I prayed. Spencer looked at me, "I shall not repeat your

secret, for you have one of my own". I felt as if a boulder had just been lifted off my shoulders. "And don't worry, I will make your life much better if I am your master." I looked at Spencer confused. I honestly did not know how he could make my life better by taking me away from Sam and Lucas and Catherine, it is as if they are a part of my family. "I will pay you double what you earn now, and I will happily let you, and your friends sleep in the storage room. I don't want to be your master, I wish to be your caretaker."

I looked up at Spencer, shocked. Edward, I can't explain how joyful I was. I felt like jumping out of my seat and giving Spencer a great hug to say thank you. I'm at the moment in Spencer's kitchen. Being so rich, he has a table, a wonderful fire place, and even swags for us to sleep on. It feels as if I can trust Spencer with my whole life! He is now peering over my shoulder and watching me write. He doesn't know how to read my letters, so I am not afraid to say anything about him. Edward, you may wish to not read what I am to write next... Mama and Papa did say I may not love a boy until I am thirteen, but now I am fourteen, I feel I can love someone, and that someone is Spencer!

### **Saturday 9th August**

Today, waking up on a swag, would be one of the millions of happy things that happened today. I would tell you them all Edward, but I would run out of pages! Spencer had let Sam, Lucas, Catherine and I stay in his storage room. I must describe his massive house to you. It is not massive compared to some houses in London, but massive to the ones in town. The house has many different rooms; the attic, dining room, storage room, a room for Spencer to sleep in, and a kitchen.

When we worked today, we would often earn about two or three shillings. Spencer gave us a pound! He said we could split it, and buy something at the markets. He took us in his very own coach to the shops. I bought more pages. I wished to buy a quill I saw. It had a lovely green/blue colour to it. Spencer saw me eyeing the quill. He walked up to the man selling them and said "Could I please have that lovely blue and green quill?" My jaw dropped. The man went to get the quill and handed it over to Spencer. "That one is from a rare bird here in New Holland, so it cost 14 shillings." Spencer paid for it and walked over to me, handing me the most expensive

quill I have ever known! I was speechless. "Thank you!" was all I could say. I am at the moment using it to write. Its beautiful tip makes my letters look ten times better than before. You may notice the difference in the writing Edward. I must go and have supper now.

I write this at a rough 3 hours after sunset. Once supper was finished, Spencer asked me to go have a talk with him outside. Once I was out there, he turned to face me. "Charlie, do you love me?" I choked on my words, "I... I do have feelings for you", I soon said. "Would you care if we could be together, for I love you?" At that, I watched Spencer go down on his knee and pull a small ring from his pocket. I could see the green and silver shells on it. It looked wonderful. I didn't know what to say. "I know we are only young, but I want to be with you forever." And with that, I held out my hand to let him slide on the lovely ring. I could hear Sam, Lucas and Catherine clapping behind me. They were watching the whole time. Edward, I can now say, I'm officially in a relationship. I hope you do not mind your big sister having a love for my own Master. I still love you the most, always have and always will.

### **Sunday 10th August**

Today, Spencer took Sam, Lucas, Catherine and I to the river. We had a wonderful lunch; bread, soup and fresh milk. We had a swim, caught some fish with our hands, and had fun. Edward, 9 months ago, I was sentenced to 9 years in prison on New Holland. I thought my life would never go back to the happy times I had. Until the day I met Spencer. I prayed to the Lord for how grateful he was, changing my to-be-horrible life, into one I will never forget. I love you Edward, and don't you forget that!

### **Friday 29th August**

I have not written in my diary since the 10th of August. I can not stop myself from crying. Edward, please brace yourself for the news... Spencer was killed in a coach accident on the 16th of August 1722... I shall not explain it Edward, for I wish you to not have any horrid thoughts. Spencer is in peace now. Out of all of the sadness, one thing has made my life change. Once Spencer's will was found, in bold writing he had wrote these exact words, "To my beloved wife, Charlie Wattle, she is to be given 300 pounds from my money, my property in Rose Hill, life stock and house, is all to go to Charlie Wattle." I have thanked

Spencer a million times, but I would rather have him back than the money.

We are to go to his funeral tomorrow. We are at the moment having a rest on the side of the dirt road. The funeral is in Sydney, and Captain Arnold will be there. Spencer had given me a lovely dress he had brought before he died. I am to wear it tomorrow. We must leave now.

### **Saturday 30th August**

We have just got back from the funeral. David, one of Spencer's close friends he travelled with on the ship, read a lovely speech about Spencer's life. I'm going to miss you Spencer.

### **Sunday 31st August**

This morning, Sam and I talked about what we would use the money to buy. We could not decide, so I decided to take a walk down to the markets. Whilst on my way there, I saw a young child. There were men harassing the poor child. Without thinking, I raced up to the boy, grabbed his arm, and ran. I could hear the men running after us. Surprisingly, the young boy was a fast runner, and kept up to me. I ran to the main part of town. Luckily, there were many people there. I quickly helped the boy hide into the crowd. I was more lucky that boy had trusted me and new from the start I was saving him. "Follow me to a safer place."

Once back at Spencer's house, I asked the boy if he knew where his parents were. The boy was so young, probably about four years old. "I do know where they are," he said in a small voice. The next thing he said broke my heart. "They are in heaven." He said it with no sadness. Probably because he does not understand what death is.

That is when I had an idea of how to spend the money. Edward, I feel if I spend the money to build a decent size building, and turn it into an orphanage I could help children like the young boy. The amount of children left on the streets, it's horrible. No child should go through a life of deciding where to sleep.

Once we found out the little boy's name, Damien, I talked to Sam about the idea. "The money was given to you Charlie, it's your decision. I feel it would be a great idea, just, it may be hard for a runaway convict to be the founder of the first orphanage in New Holland." This made me think for a while.

We had let Damien sleep in our house for the night. The attic is now the bedroom for the kids. Sam and I sleep in Spencer's old room. Whilst having supper, Damien broke my heart when he ate his small serving of rice and asked ever so sweetly if he could have more. He was starving. I gave him another serving, this time slightly larger. Whilst saying goodnight to the children, Damien said "Thank you for the food. You're an angel sent from God."

### **Monday 1st September**

Well, Edward. You won't believe my luck today. I decided to use a portion of our money to make sure Sam and the kids were comfortable. I bought a nice patched dress for Sam, Catherine and I, and a shirt and shorts for Lucas and Damien. The look on their faces when I arrived home was priceless. The children raced up to their room to change. Sam didn't wish to change yet for she wanted to wear it for a special occasion.

After buying the clothes, Sam and I decided to have a proper look around the house. We did not have any time earlier, and wanted to know what we were actually living in. Whilst looking around the storage room, we found a trap door that led to a stair well, that led to a basement. It was extremely unclean and Sam wanted to turn it into another room. So we asked the kids to help and buy supper time, it was a lovely clean room. We used some things from the attic and things that were already in the basement to turn it into a bedroom. It has a mattress, some blankets Catherine had made, a small table and some little ornaments.

We had supper, rice and some soup the kids made. Their were some lovely cutlery we found in the basement. I must light the fire now for it seems as if a storm is coming. The temperature is dropping. Wish you sweet dreams Edward.

### **Wednesday 3rd September**

Well Edward, I do not have any more space for more pages. I promise to buy another journal, but for now, I must have a break. I love you dearly and I am sure to send you this the moment the next mail ship arrives. I hope this makes it right to your door step! I can not wait to write to you again. Goodbye for now, Edward.

**By Casey Wood**

Year 8, John Paul College  
KALGOORLIE-BOULDER – WA

# The Albatross

**T**HE smell of salt was always different here. Not the overriding saltiness of the corner shop's chips, but different. It was a natural scent that I wanted to take home with me in the buckets of sand I hid under the peppermint green bonnet of our station wagon every year.

I loved staying at our beach shack, collecting shells left by the high tides and exploring the thick scrub. But today mum had made me go out with my brothers. They skated off ahead of me, like they always did, shouting back at me to hurry up. I could never skate like them though; I just could not get enough push off the ground. I could hear my brothers yelling up ahead, their gruesome laughter filling the cold wind that swept past my ears. The smell from their durries grew stronger, and I pinched my nose as I caught up to them.

Then I noticed what they were laughing at. Once the king of the ocean's skies and now it quivered like its prey. Its head was buried beneath the shadows of its crooked wing. It was tormented, its body surrounded by the mess of sticks and rocks they had thrown. My brothers kicked stones up off the ground towards me, but seeing the water swell up in my eyes and my cheeks a stinging red, they left. I did not want this albatross to end up like the one on the deli's flyer, its bones decaying faster than the coke caps and Snickers wrappers that filled its stomach. But what could I do?

By the time I looked back up towards my brothers they were already past the Sander's house that overlooked the bay. There was no point in me trying to keep up with them now; they were too far ahead and they would not wait. They never did. They skated off down to the deli, their scratched Élan boards grinding up against the concrete curb. They would return home as the sun sank below the ocean's horizon. They did this every day, using the summer months to perfect their ollies and kick flips, just so they could show off when they returned home, skate across the basketball court and tell the other boys stories of girls they met down at the beach.

At the shack my fishing gear leant up against the faded and cracking blue of its

exterior, worn from sand propelled by the ocean's winds. It was like nature was trying to wear away something we had created.

I propped myself up against the rocks of the cliff face, and my palms were red and stinging from the climb. I liked

fishing here. Sometimes I could hear the laughter and shouting of other kids echoing around the ancient rocks from Horse Shoe Bay.

Water gently crashed up against the shore and with each tide my denim overall clung tighter to my legs, as if the sea was beginning to swallow them. I looped my bait bucket around my arm, knowing it could not withstand the power of the southern waves and not wanting to lose the squid I had spent hours picking.

Squid were always the best bait to use along the coast. Dad had taught me how to pick the best ones, and how you had to lightly squeeze them to make sure they were not too tough. I remember the first time I touched one; they were squirmy and slippery like soap and had an odour that stayed in my nose for days. As I broke into its ink sac with my hook, the black ink oozed down the granite rock, giving it a purple shine when the sun peered down from behind the clouds. It reminded me of the stained concrete of Jeffery Sander's petrol station and how the oil there would always run down the creek, glazing the water's surface.

I tossed my line down when the wave pulled back so it would be further out than I could throw. There was peace here, and nature was at ease.

Through the beating of the waves, it scraped up onto the rocks, edging closer towards me and the overpowering smell

of squid drawing it in. It dragged its wing, like a wounded soldier. The albatross was a victim of my brother's cruelty. I wanted to help, save it from the inevitable. I snapped the handle off my rod, tying loops of fishing line to its ends just like I had seen on the wildlife rescue show. Its beak cracked the rim of my bucket, not even noticing my touch as it devoured my week's worth of bait.

The albatross pulled its wing in, jerking at the unfamiliarity of its artificial support. Its wings stretched, each feather a sail to its effortless flight and then it broke across the ocean's surface. I heard the snap, like the cracking of dry sticks before a flame, and the sky was empty. The stained red water crashed against the rocks, washing away the black ink. Just a floating white buoy remained.

**By Ellen Thomas**

*Year 12, Eynesbury Senior College  
ADELAIDE – SA*

## Baby

A little world she feels and sees  
Her mother's hands,  
Her mother's knees.  
She hides her face against her breast  
And doesn't care to learn the rest.

Her mother's smell is comforting;  
She hears her mother's bracelets ring.  
She never wants this time to end  
Or see her life around the bend.

**By Pfeiffer Elizabeth Myers**

*Age 9, Rehoboth Christian College  
(Wilson Campus)  
WATERFORD – WA*



# Ambassadors

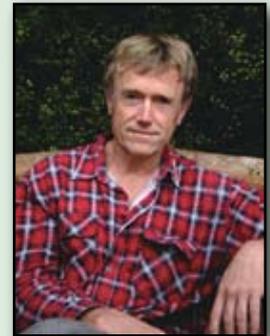


☺ **Krista Bell** is an award-winning author of twenty-six books for young readers. Krista has been professionally involved in children's literature for over thirty years, as well as being the mother of three sons, all of whom are good readers and writers! Krista's middle son, Damien, is the illustrator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

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 transport planner husband next to a railway line so she can quickly catch a train to the MCG to watch a football or cricket 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)



# Locket of Memories

**W**HEN I wake up I find myself lying on a bed in a strange unfamiliar room. I make to get up but a wave of dizziness hits me with such force I have to grab onto something to steady myself.

I can hear this loud sound like a pig being tortured. I let go of the chair – big mistake – as soon as I let go, my knees buckle from lack of use. The occupant of the armchair wakes suddenly just as the tortured pig sound stops. The occupant – a boy – looks down at me alarmed.

“Jordan!” he exclaims, jumping up and helping me to my feet. I frown at him, “My name is Rachael, not Jordan.” Who is this strange red-haired creature?

The boy’s smile falters and he looks unsure. “Jordan, it’s me – Kayb”, he says looking alarmed. “Your brother...” he adds when I don’t say anything.

I keep silent, fingering the silver locket around my throat. I am thinking and mourning. My brother... how much have I forgotten?

“You’re my brother?” I say slowly, tasting the words on my tongue. “Why’d you call me Jordan? That’s my last name”, I say, proud of the little knowledge I do have.

The boy — my brother – Kayb, says nothing, he just stares at me. It’s making me uncomfortable.

Finally I ignore him and take the locket off. I’ve stared at it many times when I was at the hospital; it is the only thing I remember, the only thing that links me to my past. Inside is a small faded picture of a little boy and girl standing next to a man

– my dad – and a beautiful woman who I do not remember – my mother. The boy before me is obviously the older version of the boy in the photograph.

“Where am I... Kayb?” I ask and the use of his name jolts him out of his kind of trance.

“Grandma’s. Don’t you remember?”

“No I don’t,” I say shortly. “Look, Kayb, I remember nothing except for this locket.” I dangle the locket before his nose. “Do you know why that might be?”

He would have a better chance of guessing than I would. He’s known me for years; I’ve only known me for a few weeks.

“Grandma took that photo before mum died”, Kayb says unexpectedly. “You loved that photo. The last one that was taken before mum died and it also reminded...” (I notice how he uses past tense, he is handling this better than I am) “... reminded you of when you and grandma were chums. You were always grandma’s favourite, then mum died and soon afterwards Uncle Albert. She’s never been the same since. She went rather distant from everyone, it hurt you especially. You and she have never gotten along since you’re both so alike. You loved that photo because it reminded you of when you were happy”, Kabe finishes sighing, “when we were all happy”.

“Oh”, I say and for some reason I feel like crying. But he is wrong. I still love the photo, even more, now that I know.

I get changed into a pair of jeans and a white woollen jersey that used to be my favourite. But it feels wrong wearing it,

like I’m insulting my memory by wearing something I loved but can’t remember loving, so instead I slip into a plain t-shirt. I love this one because it’s blank – like me. I throw back my long red hair into a high ponytail and stare at the faded photograph inside the locket one more time before I join Kayb down stairs.

“Ho brother”, I announce cheerfully. He just stares at me like nobody had ever said that to him in his entire life. Nobody probably has, but then again I’m not just nobody to him, any way – am I?

I go about around the kitchen searching for a plate, but I can’t remember which cupboard they’re in. You’d be surprised how hard they are to find – at least in this kitchen. Someone, probably Kayb, thrusts a plate in my hand.

“The way you’re scuttling about you’d think you’d forgotten where the plates are, girl.” I look up into the face of my grandma. Oops definitely not Kayb. I am afraid for a second that she knows I’ve lost my memory, but I don’t think she does.

“Um... good morning...?” I say, shrugging, what else can I say? Congratulations, you are correct, here is your lottery money – spend it wisely – doesn’t quite work. She frowns at me suspiciously and goes out of the kitchen. Are all my family so distant? No “good morning – how did you sleep?”. This is the first time I’ve seen you since you were in the car accident!

After breakfast Kayb and I play a board game. “Jordan, do you think your memories will come back?”

“I don’t know”, I say uncomfortably. “The truth is I’m not sure I want them back... I’m

cold. I'm going to get a jumper", I mutter, getting up.

As I make my way towards the stairs I finger the silver locket, I'm so deep in thought that as I turn a corner I accidentally bump into someone. "I suppose you enjoy running into people, girl?", my Grandma says angrily, going grumpily to a tall mirror on the wall as to straighten her 'precious' glasses.

I murmur an apology slightly angrily myself, at her attitude. As she regards herself in the mirror, I have a sudden picture in my head – such a ridiculous picture that a giggle escapes my mouth before I can stop it, but I'm glad I giggled.

I feel like being rude. I see her eyes flit to me in the mirror.

"What is it, girl?" she asks sharply. How could this mean, grumpy lady and I have ever been chums?!

"You look like a fish wearing glasses!" I shout, suddenly having enough of everyone's depressed attitude. My anger dies down a little and I am slightly afraid that I have gone too far as the silence thickens.

"I see", is all she says.

All is quiet for a few seconds. And then she starts laughing and laughing, finally she

turns to look at me regaining control over her laughter. "What kind of fish?" she asks curiously trying to hide her smile.

"A fish with wings and horns", I say, trying just as hard as she to remain moody. Then at the same time our smiles win against our wills and we grin at each other. Friends.

All of a sudden time goes backwards and I get a glimpse of how it used to be when the photograph in the locket was taken. I smile inwardly; maybe my memories aren't that bad after all, all I have to do is find them...

By **Alicia Munn-Gardner**  
Year 7, Home schooled  
ARATULA – QLD.

## DayCare Teddy Bear

**M**Y STUFFING kept pouring out in disaster. I had to run down to the playground so my best friend Shamous who is a grain of sand and could stitch me up along with his 2 million brothers and sisters. This routine happens every morning at 7.00am.

Ahhhhh, I scream loudly as I stumbled over Rocky. He asked if I was okay but I was much in a rush to talk, the doors of the daycare were opening soon and I have to get stitched up before the children come to play with me.

When I carried all of my stuffing that fell on the ground I ran towards Shamous, he was sitting with his adopted brother Jack.

I walked up to him and asked if he could stitch my ripped up patches from the children yesterday, it was a tough day for me because I couldn't yell in front of them. Shamous left to get his stitching kit and came back with his needle and thread, it only took him 30 seconds to finish.

I quickly ran back to the Daycare centre and saw a darkened massive tough guy standing in front of me with a dirty grin on his face, asking me all of these questions about my childhood with my long lost friend Fluffy. We were best of friends. He tried to snatch me and stuff me into a big bag. I ran back up to the playground to hide in Shamous's home that was filled with a stench of rotten scraps.

I jumped into the sandpit and sank into the ground. I popped my head out and didn't see him anywhere. Suddenly I felt a gooey wet saliva dripping down my shoulder. I slowly turned my head around and saw the guy, he grabbed me by the ear then put me in his bag, it was very dark in there.

All I remember was that I was taken out of the bag and put in front of my long lost friend Fluffy. "It's a pleasure to see you again, Fluffy." He looked furious.

"What's wrong?" I asked in a confused way. "Remember you put me in an institution for crazy people." "I promise I'll never do anything like that again".

As Fluffy accepted my apology we hugged and became friends again.

By **Trayce Warena**  
Year 7, Kambalda Primary School  
KAMBALDA – WA



# Once a Utopia

I look around at this beautiful place  
Once a utopia for the Aboriginal race  
But where music, dance and songs once blared  
Now in misery, only sad and lifeless eyes stared

Such a proud race, resilient and strong  
White fullas came, and it all went wrong  
Standing up tall, they called it colonisation  
All it really meant was to steal the Aboriginal nation

As I looked around at once strong men  
Their hands still and faces crest fallen  
I knew it was time, the truthful story I would write  
About whites and blacks and that bloody fight

You see those cunning old whites, they'll have you believe  
That their Christianity and welfare provided a reprieve  
They rescued those savages to save their souls,  
"you couldn't find God down those water holes"

So they rounded up the little ones, all fair and bonny  
Said "forget your names you are now Faith, Hope and Conny"  
All that you've learnt will no longer serve  
A Christian education is what you deserve

A traditional word no longer spoke  
Otherwise it would enrage the white folk  
"Where is my mummy?"; "We'll hear no more of that"  
With the whip or cane, came a sharp whack

You see, these white fullas, do gooders you could say  
were protective by government, they could do as they may  
Stealing the babies straight from mothers' breasts  
All the while saying "we know best"

Scrubbing and cleaning forever their chores  
Forget hunting and playing like kids outdoors  
Working and serving, earning their keep  
None of life's spoils would they reap

So now that the hourglass still spills its sand  
I focus my eyes on an old woman's hands  
So wrinkly, so old weathered and worn,  
I begin to wonder what it was like when she was born

But I look into her eyes, deep into her soul  
And I can see many stories yet to be told  
Of sadness and grief, loss and depression  
I see babies born and taken, nothing that would be fixed with a  
counselling session

I take her hand, all weathered and worn  
And we talk about the days her babies were born  
Her eyes light up, they find their glimmer  
And for a while the anger, rage and sadness simmer

This old woman has lived her whole life  
under white man's rule and never caused any strife  
Yet still today, no justice is done  
She sits in her chair and waits for the one

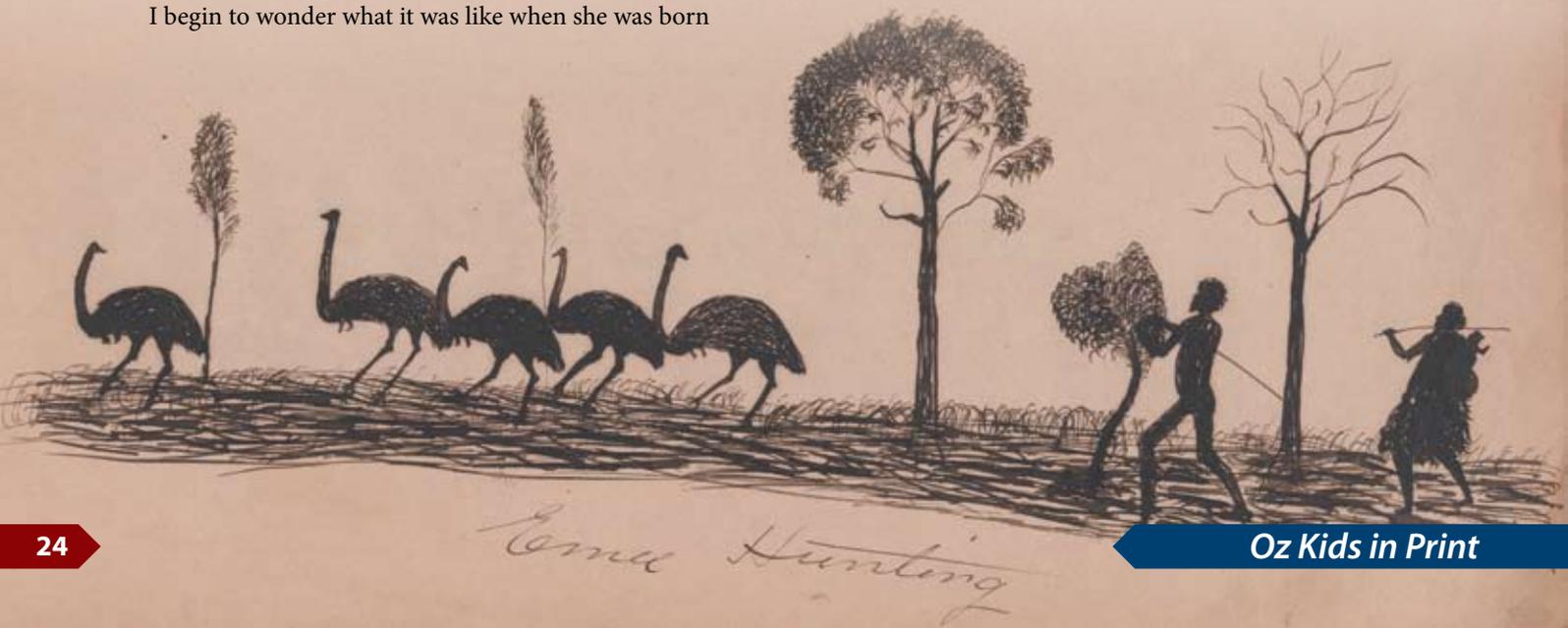
That one day soon her babies will return  
Of their whereabouts she may learn  
Of how they grew up, all bonny and fair  
To tell them that all these years she did care

"Whatever those missionaries said just ignore  
When they took you, pain oozed from every pore.  
I wanted you, my babies, I searched every day  
Asked the white folk for help", "no" they would say

Many a times I was told you were better off white  
and that finding you was a useless plight  
So with flour and blanket off I would go  
Hoping in my heart that you would know

Now here you are child, in front of me  
All grown, well dressed and smiling proudly  
Your eyes fill with tears, you feel in your heart  
That this moment in our relationship is just the start

**By Dylan Peisley**  
Year 8, Prince Alfred College  
KENT TOWN – SA



**W**ALKING through the dark yard I realise I am not scared. I should be, but I'm not. I hear a rustling in the bushes nearby, but I can't be sure if it's an animal or a person. I get to the spot I need to be and look down at the gravestone in front of me. Marcia Flynn. Born on 18th of February 1894. Died 31st of October 1911. My name is Marcia Flynn. I was born on 18th of February 1994. Today is 31st of October 2011. I knew I was going to die when I got here, but seeing this... I realise how sick and twisted and sad she must be to go to all the effort to find this gravestone, this girl.

She was just a girl, Marcia Flynn, dying at only seventeen. I will die at seventeen. I haven't lived my life yet, and I'm not going to. This is the first moment since I found out I was going to perish that I have been sad. Sad for the people around me, sad for this little girl lying in the ground below me, sad for the girl that was going to make me join her, sad for John, sad for myself. I am overcome with a sense of grief so great my knees give out and I sink down onto the damp grass. "You came." A little girl's voice says from somewhere behind me. I turn and there she is – Annabelle Westbird. The twelve year old girl who has hated me since the accident. She decided I didn't deserve to live if her brother couldn't.

"Annabelle... I..." I know what I want to say but my mouth won't form the words.

"Save it. I don't care. You killed him, so now I'm going to kill you." I shiver, not because I'm cold, not because of what she said, but how she said it. There is no changing her mind – no reasoning with her. She came here to do one thing and nothing is going to stand in her way.



"Don't cry – it's pathetic. Did you shed tears for John? Did you cry when you killed my brother?!" She is shouting now – inconsolable. I notice a light come on in a house nearby but I don't look at it. Annabelle hasn't noticed it and I don't want to bring her attention to it. Instead I try to keep her talking as long as possible.

"Anna – you know I didn't mean to. We were all drunk and dumb and... I know it's no excuse but you killing me isn't going to bring him back. I miss him too. So, so, so much. I miss him being there to talk to at 3am. I miss him comforting me when I was sad. I miss his little kisses. I miss him calling me beautiful. I miss his pet names. Annabelle, I miss him and I regret getting

behind the wheel of that car every day. I spent a long time wishing it was me, not him. But then I realised all that wishing, all the hating myself, all that time spent regretting – I was wasting my life. I had already wasted... His." I can't bring myself to say his name. "Wasting my own as well would be silly. I might as well live my life to the fullest, for both of us." I can't control my tears now, as they poured down my face. I look up at Annabelle and for the first time we make eye contact. Her face is softer and just for a moment I think she is considering letting me live, I think she has realised it wasn't entirely my fault.

Annabelle can't spend her life missing her brother and blaming me – it is not a way to live. Her face hardens to the human like stone it has been since the night she arrived at the hospital in her pyjamas, just to be told her bother had died upon impact. I will never forget her face the moment the doctor told her. Her face is hard again now and even if she has come to the mindset I have, she set out to do something tonight and she is going to get it done no matter what. She reaches into the little bag she has slung across her chest and shoulder. When her hand emerges again there is a hand held gun in her small, childish fist. She points it at me.

"I'm sorry, but I have to do this – for him." Everything seems to go into slow motion for a second, while her finger strains against the trigger, then everything goes too fast and all I can see is red and all I can feel is a fiery pain in my shoulder and all I can hear is screaming – my own.

*By Billie Parkinson  
Year 10, The Friends' School  
NORTH HOBART – TAS.*

## *Poem from the Heart*

No poem is bad,  
No song is horrible,  
It is pure emotions  
It is the most true  
It is the real story  
It is said from the heart.

It might be their story,  
It might be their secret,  
It might be a toddler's laughter,  
It might be an elder's wise words

Don't ever criticise with anger and scorn,  
Or are you saying their thoughts are awful?  
Do you realise what you are doing?  
The souls of teenagers hurt  
Delicate arms with cuts  
Working desks with blood  
Tests paper with stains of tears  
And dead young bodies lying in coffins.

*By Karen Zhao  
Year 7, Korowa Anglican Girls' School  
GLEN IRIS – VIC.*

# The Trapped Eagle

THOMAS'S nose crinkled in disdain at the strong aroma that made its way through the shabby school house building. Thirty-four adolescent boys were cramped together, shoulder to shoulder, as though they were sardines in a can. Their green uniforms were almost black, smeared with mud and sweat. The temperature gauge at the front, pointed to a whopping forty-six degrees. But the teacher, Mr Blackmon, being the cruel and tyrannical task master that he was, had insisted that every single one of the twelve classroom windows remain shut. Of course there was no sense in this, and everyone knew it.

"Thomas, do you mind explaining to the class what I just said?" As soon as the harshly spoken words were uttered, thirty-three heads spun around in perfect unison, as though they were string puppets performing an act. Thomas, avoiding their intense glares, hung his head in shame. He could feel a deep red flush cover his cheeks and ears as though it were a blanket. Now his heart hammered within him. He had practised this before. Many times in fact. But the words came out of his mouth too soon; too fast. "Nnn nu nu nono Ssss ... irrr". The room then filled with what felt like an eternity of deathly silence for poor Thomas. He sat waiting, fidgeting with his pencil, pretending to be somewhere else in his mind. But it was not to be. Like a lion cub ensnared in a trap, he could not escape. Because then it happened. The class erupted with jeers and laughter.

"Silence! Silence class! I said, silence!" roared Mr Blackmon, as he violently slammed his large fist on the wooden table. Fragments of saliva sprayed out of his mouth. His face was purple with fury and his veins protruded from his neck giving him the appearance of an enraged monster. Looking as though he was about to erupt, the boys went immediately silent.

Mr Blackmon stood erect, his focus completely on Thomas. For him the boy was easy prey. Sensing the teacher's loathing and animosity, Thomas swallowed hard. "Thomas", growled the teacher. "Come up here. Stand in front of the class. Now!" Thomas emerged slowly from his desk; body quivering as he made his way through the maze of tables. For a

moment he froze. But then, as though heaven's angels were spurring him on, courage filled his soul, and he turned and faced his peers.

Before anything else could happen, Mr Blackmon interrupted the mood. "Gentleman, I want you to take a good, hard, look at Thomas and tell me what do you see?" Instantly, whisperings and chattering could be heard all around the room. Then it stopped, as a slim, prudish looking young lad, with a ruddy complexion and a thick crop of black hair raised his hand. "Sir, if I may!" Looking at the pupil, Mr Blackmon gave a single nod; though it was a nod that would have hardly been noticeable to any stranger in attendance on that day.

Being given permission, the lad eagerly proceeded after displaying a wry smile. "Thank you, Sir. I wish to say, here is a boy who is, well, afraid of himself. A boy who will never take risks. A boy who will always remain the same. And someone we", now gesturing towards the other boys, and with a deep sense of pride, "that we ... will never be." He then looked intently at Thomas and grinned maliciously, taking great delight in watching his victim squirm even more nervously. Then he slowly sat down.

Mr Blackmon cleared his throat, his voice firm but thoughtful. "Yes. I would have to agree with you, James. He is not like us. But remember boys, we who are stronger should extend our compassion; moreover, our sympathy to the likes of this forlorn creature. After all, boys, he is our fellow neighbour, as the Good Book tells us." Thomas's bottom lip quivered and his eyes moistened with tears.

Mr Blackmon walked over to his table, but it was as if a change of mind had occurred in seconds, because his countenance returned once more to the vile villain he was. He pulled out a large leather strap from alongside his desk. "Get over here, Boy! I'll show you something", he barked. Thomas cringed as he slowly made his way toward Mr Blackmon. He was trembling with fear, like a man does in the moments before the executioner is about to come down with the axe. For Thomas imagined Mr Blackmon would mercilessly pound

his body, striking him again and again till he wished he was dead.

"Boy", Mr Blackmon commenced theatrically, "if you can show us that you are good at something, I will not whip you. But if you cannot, I will give you a lashing like you have never seen before". Thomas solemnly nodded his head. "Well, hurry up then! Tell us what you can do!" shrieked Mr Blackmon. "I... ccccaann... sssinnng... ssssiirrrr."

Every eye was fixated on Thomas, who stood shaking, with his hands clenched together. Then a hush came over the room. Even Mr Blackmon went silent with expectation, as Thomas closed his eyes for a moment, as though he was deep in prayer. Taking a long breath, he slowly opened his eyes and mouth.

Thomas sang. The words that poured forth from his small frame were beautiful. Nay, they had another worldliness to them. A loud soprano voice filled the room and further. It was strong and crystal clear. He was spectacular, angelic, ethereal. Tears trickled down many of the students' faces in astonishment. Others felt electricity flowing through their veins. Even Mr Blackmon was mesmerised and left utterly speechless. Moreover, for this brief period humiliation transcended on them all. Except for Thomas, whose performance was truly breathtaking. Amazing. He was like a bird released from a cage and in full flight. An eagle soaring majestically over the world for all to see.

By **Heidi Grace**

Year 12, Eynesbury Senior College  
ADELAIDE – SA



# The Rooms

**S**O THERE I was trapped in this mysterious white room. The walls were gigantic pillows as soft as clouds and it was almost physically impossible to hurt myself. But why? It's not like I was going to hurt myself on purpose.

All of a sudden the door swung open. I immediately ran out into this never ending hall with doors on either side. As I walked down this hall I was desperately trying to open all the doors, but they were all locked. Where am I?

After about ten minutes of looking I found one door that was unlocked. I slowly opened it and inside was a world made of lollies! I ran around eating everything I could, when all of a sudden I came across a gigantic castle made of jelly standing right in front of me. I wanted to eat it so bad but I also wanted to explore it and see who owned it. Meanwhile I was inside the castle; it was amazing! It had a ballroom, an arcade, a massive living room, dining

room, over 20 bedrooms, a 5 acre indoor pool, and even a bumper cars room! And, instead of going down in the elevator you could go down the chocolate slide.

All of a sudden I stepped into a dark and foggy room. I think I saw a coffin in the corner, but I was too terrified to check so I ran out the room. It was time to find an exit so I left the lolly world and went back into the hallway.

So I was searching this never ending hallway and I found one huge open door. I couldn't see anything. I took one step and fell down this slide. It was an ongoing slide, so I was on it for a while. I noticed that every now and then I would go past a window. I decided to try and hang on to a window when I went past one so I grabbed a window.

I suddenly stopped falling. I pulled myself up to the window and stared out at nothing. I saw miles and miles of black so I opened the window and jumped out.

I landed with a thud on the ground. I decided to keep walking till I came to a wall or at least something.

Just as I was deep in thought I walked face first into a wall. Right next to me there was a light switch. I flipped it and the room was a... actually I wasn't sure, all I could see was fog. At least I could slightly see so I walked next to the wall until I found something... it was a door, finally. I slowly opened it with my eyes closed. What was it now. A trampoline room? A snow chamber? I opened my eyes and everything seemed normal.

All of a sudden my best friend Emily jumped out from behind a tree and yelled SURPRISE!!!! "I got ya!" "Great prank Emily. But you have to tell me how you did it."

*By Isabella Kacic  
Year 7, Silkwood School  
MT. NATHAN – QLD.*

## The People

I'm flying, high, higher than the tallest snow peaks,  
The air is flowing through my hair, like the dynamic movement of a rushing river.

I'm past the point of happiness—I am happiness  
I'm past the point of dreams—I am living a dream  
There are the rivers, the mountains, the people, the cities.  
So cramped in a land of promise and futures that could never be.  
The people, they walk, they talk, they laugh, they cry.  
A cyclone of twisted emotions breaking with reality.

So delicate is our home, this immense void of ideas and emotions,  
So much variety; nature, beauty, cleanliness.  
So much variety; cities, concrete canyons.

We survive, we thrive—  
We kill, we drill.  
If there is justification, we don't know it.  
We are the light, we are the dark.  
The beginning—the end.  
We are the people.

*By Jake Walters  
Year 8, Chisholm Catholic College  
CORNUBIA – QLD.*



# Staying Alive

“LOOK out!” cried Eve down the cliff face. A rock was falling towards her best friend, Lucy. Lucy watched the stone fall past her silently. Down it fell until it was a tiny speck amongst the dense dry bushland below.

Eve was tired and her hands were red with rope-burn. Lucy’s eyes were bloodshot from all the wind and the two friends were ready to give up. The cliff was as jagged as a lightning bolt and the girls were nervous for their lives.

Suddenly... a terrible scream echoed through the forest. It seemed to be as loud as a volcano eruption and as spine tingling as a melting ice block in your mouth. The huge cloud of dust cleared... Lucy peered down slowly, only to see Eve hanging freely from one hand. Lucy stared in disbelief. Eve’s rope was dangling, broken from the mighty cliff face and everything else was gone.

It was a nerve wracking trip for Lucy. She finally got to Eve who was struggling to hold on and with shaking hands that felt like they were on fire, somehow managed to heave her up the remainder of the rugged unsteady, cliff face.

When they reached the top, Eve was thankful to Lucy but looking down the cliff, she was worried about her backpack. It held her phone and camera.

A week later, Eve and Lucy returned to the foot of the cliff. “LOOK!” exclaimed Eve, “My backpack!”. There on the ground lay a waterlogged backpack that belonged to Eve.

They hugged each other in delight. All Eve could say was... “I hope my phone works”, and the two friends laughed and walked away.



By **Lauren Dickins**  
Year 5, Oxley Christian College  
CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.



## Put your shoes on!

ONCE upon a time there were two little children. Their names were Rosie and Harrison. On this day they were visiting Grandma Flo, who was Rosie and Harrison’s grandma. The children wanted to go outside so Grandma Flo said, “You can go as long as you put your shoes on first”. The two children ignored her and went outside anyway.

Rosie and Harrison were playing happily until they got prickles in their feet. “Ouch!” cried Harrison. “Ohhhhh” said Rosie and then they both started to cry. Grandma Flo heard the children crying and went

outside to see what was wrong. “Why did you not put your shoes on when I told you?” Grandma asked the crying children. “Because we wanted to go and play quicker”, sobbed Rosie. Harrison said “We wanted to play before lunch and have more time playing”.

Grandma kissed them both on the top of their head and said “I hope you learned your lesson because tomorrow we are going to go to the park and play”. Rosie and Harrison replied “Yes Grandma Flo, we are sorry we didn’t listen”.

The next day when Grandma Flo asked them to get ready to go the park, Rosie and Harrison put their shoes on straight away. When Grandma Flo saw them all ready with their shoes on she gave them a big squeezey huggle and said “Well done for remembering to put your shoes on, I think we will have a special treat after lunch today.”

Later that afternoon when it was time to go home the children didn’t want to leave Grandma’s house. They gave her an extra special hug and kiss but they remembered to listen and went home with Dad for dinner. They remembered that listening is very important and got ready for bed as soon as Daddy asked them including brushing their teeth.

By **Ariana Tonev**  
Age 6, Padbury Catholic Primary School  
PADBURY – WA

# GONE

**O**RANGE-speckled mahogany red leaves flew gracefully about in the chilled autumn breeze. However, to Ebony Grace, the pure beauty of the small neighbourhood park was less than distracting. The emptiness was slowly consuming her. He was gone and she knew it. The word hope meant nothing to her now.

Familiar memories of cheerful laughter and glowing grins flashed through her busy mind and she cringed. The tiny holes in her sunhat allowed small amounts of sunlight to trickle in and warm her pale skin. Loneliness was catching up to her and although there was a small crowd of joyful families all around her, she felt isolated and miserable. Ebony drooped and felt the salty tears slowly fall down her cheeks.

The stunning diamond ring on her finger held no meaning now and dust started to linger around the edges of the precious stone.

War was a hungry, ruthless beast that feasted mercilessly on its prey, its prey being innocent men fighting for their country. The crumpled telegram she held in her dainty hands was a reminder of the pain she felt and the cold-blooded brutality of this universe. It made her wonder if others felt the agony she did, if mothers yearned for their sons in the early hours of the morning, and if daughters cried themselves to sleep with images of their loved one's face fixed into their brain.

A small part of her urged her to accept that she would feel this misery for the remainder of her life. He was Missing In Action; he wasn't going to return from the perils of war. He was lost, gone. That's what he was... Gone.

By **Madison Unicomb**  
Year 7, Turramurra High School  
TURRAMURRA – NSW



# My Beautiful Home



This land we live in,  
The air we breathe,  
The grass we step in,  
And everything in between.

As I stare at the sky,  
Gleaming with light,  
I see how lucky we are.

The trees as tall as buildings  
standing, giving us shade.  
The beautiful range of flowers,  
shining, like it will never fade.

As I hear the laughter,  
Of my brother and father,  
I see how lucky we are.

We live in this beautiful land,  
Where everything is planned.  
No chaos, no fights,  
Everyone has their own rights,  
In this beautiful country of mine.

As I hear the birds singing,  
I get a great feeling,  
And I see how lucky we are.

By **Sonia Tint**  
Year 7  
OXLEY PARK – NSW

# Days

Let it sleet on Sunday,  
Monday let it snow,  
Let the mist on Tuesday  
From the salt-sea flow.  
Let it hail on Wednesday,  
Thursday let it rain,  
Let the wind on Friday  
Blow a hurricane.  
But Saturday, Saturday  
Break fair and fine,  
And all day on Saturday  
Let the sun shine.

By **Divya Lal**  
Year 6, Governor Philip King Public School  
EDENSOR PARK – NSW



# Za'eron

COUNTLESS aeons ago and somewhere beyond the misty veil of dreaming, there stood of old the mighty city of Za'eron. It rose, it is said, in those innumerable ages before even the ancient thousand-tiered pagoda of Tp was built upon the green terraces of Choreon, and even before the first golden brick was laid in the construction of time-hallowed Oir. A great edifice of obsidian brick and ivy covered ziggurats; it was whispered to be a profane place, where the inhuman inhabitants worshiped unholy gods.

All of the lands around Za'eron were empty, although it was a land of fertile plains and further away there was dense forest, and it was ruled by the beasts. For the creatures of Za'eron were secretive and isolated. And while their high city commanded a view of all the lands around, they stayed in their black city, and lived not on the land.

Now in time there came to the southern coasts of that land an expedition of humans, sent from the distant land of timeless Kemt, which lay under the shadow of the black pyramids. Sent by the pharaoh of that land himself, these men were the greatest warriors of their people, and had been sent north to scout new lands their lord to conquer. For in those ancient days Kemt was still a great power in the young world.

They came in long boats of gilded wood, with sails of the finest silk from far Ophir, and they strode forth upon the white beaches of this newfound land wearing only their loin clothes. For while it was cold here, the land of Kemt was hot, and these men were loath to put aside the dress of their homeland when they were already surrounded by so much that was different. But while the warriors thought the land too green, and the sky too wet, they had to admit that it was fertile. Thus they returned to Pharaoh far away with news that the north was ripe for settlement.

So now Great Pharaoh caused a great fleet of barges and long boats to be constructed in his northern ports, and he gathered all of the surplus population of his land and sent them forth across the Deep Waters to those distant coasts which had been found by his warriors. And in time they at last drew forth upon the white beaches, and a

great host of their number went forward and set themselves up on the fertile plains that lay close the marble coasts.

And now many years passed, and the people of Kemt had divided among themselves the land. They built a great city on the coast where their warriors had first landed all those many years ago, and they named that city Fyt-rtes. There their might grew great. But soon Pharaoh, far away in Kemt, sent word that more men and women of his land, having heard tales of the prosperity to be found in the new settlement, wanted to migrate. This did not suit the designs of the warriors, who were now the governors of the new settlement, for their land was little and they could not take more settlers. So deep and long they sat in thought and consulted their generals, and it was suggested that a way be found to pass the dense forest which lay to the north, for there might lay land equally as fertile as the coastal settlement.

So not more than five and thirty years after the first of Pharaoh's boats had drawn nigh to the southern coasts of the land of Za'eron, a great host of warriors of the land of Kemt drove north, and the rumour of their feet upon the virgin earth was as the thunder before the storm. At last they breached the dense forests and came upon an open plain of the most fertile land that they had ever seen.

Yet the warriors could not rejoice, for there upon the horizon was a tall hill. And upon that hill: The Black City of Za'eron.

Now the strong warriors of antique and mystical Kemt looked upon Za'eron and knew fear, for that black city of soaring ziggurats and obsidian walls was greater than even the mightiest city of Kemt, and besides; the knowledge of an alien presence in this seemingly empty land was at once both troubling and offensive to them. Thus they for a time retreated to the cover of the woods and set up camp upon the edge of the Plain of Za'eron.

The message from there travelled fast; from the settlement on the coast and across the Deep Waters to Kemt, past the vast delta of the hundred rivers and unto the Pharaoh himself, sitting in his high palace of opulence. There he heard tale

of the Black City, and he contemplated upon what was to be done. Long he sat in though upon his ivory throne, and long he took counsel with his nomarches and viziers, and they all said alike: "The Black City must be razed". For the men of Kemt were of a warlike temper, and the occult priests in their shadowy sanctums had declared the time ripe for the steel of Kemt to shed new blood, and thus Pharaoh was goaded to war.

Now he caused to be built in all of ports of the marshy northern coasts the greatest armada that the world had yet seen. From horizon to horizon the Deep Waters were smothered in a blanket of wood and silk. The gilded masts of Pharaoh's great galleys shone like towers of fire in the young sun's rays, and his banner caressed the warm desert winds from east to west. And the oceans churned red with the blood of a thousand sacrificial bulls, which the cryptic priests of Kemt had slain in honour of Ra, the god of war.

And eight and thirty years had passed from when the warriors of Kemt first came to the new land, when Pharaoh's armada came to those innocent white beaches. There a hundred thousand of the tall bronze skinned warriors of Kemt marched ashore, and even the ancient and primeval forests of Karindas yielded before them, for so great was their might that their iron clad shoes crushes everything between The Deep Waters and Za'eron.

But that fate would have it that on that night as the men of Kemt made camp upon the plains under the green witch light of the hideous gibbous moon, there was a time of festival in the Black City. For the creatures that lived therein were not human, and they worshipped strange and abominable gods in strange and hideous rites. Thus as the men of Kemt stood upon the edge of Plain of Za'eron, they did hear from that obscene city noises of a most singular and nauseating manner; horrendous screams and pathetic squeals carried across from the city to the warrior's ears, and they were overcome by an unknown fear, so great and all-consuming that some gave in despair and fled, and were lost. But the rest set their hearts to stone, as befitted a warrior of Kemt, and their fear they channelled into rage.

Like ants tearing at a dying grasshopper, the hordes of Kemt rained their steel spears down upon the four iron gates of Zaèron, and within the city the unwholesome festivities and the singular sounds abruptly ceased. But now Pharaoh had brought his engines of war against the gates, and they were torn down, those ancient gates which had been wrought in the eons before even the first Black Pyramid of Naqad had been dreamed of.

Into the city those frenzied warriors streamed, knowing not what they would find, but knowingly only that this city was an aberration, and must be destroyed. Now all of the straight silent streets of the city were paved in basalt, and the ziggurats and particular unmentionable icons were fashioned of onyx, and everything was black, except where singular canals of green slime oozed their way about soaring sable towers of impossible height, made all the more peculiar and inhuman by the absence of windows and certain other particulars.

Now all the streets were empty, for all of the creatures of that doomed city were worshipping their enigmatic and unknowable gods in the very centre of the city, where the Ziggurat of Ti'hgaa rises solemn and brooding beneath the leering gibbous moon. And there the men of Kemt found the things, all silent and standing on the endless tiers of that impossibly vast onyx ziggurat. They were abominations, obscene green toadlike monstrosities that gazed blinding with their indescribable faces. They wriggled and manoeuvre themselves in a most offensive manner, that made one quite nauseous yet their limbs and other appendages were uncountable, for they constantly were being formed and absorbed by the great amorphous mass of plasmic ooze and transparent organs that constituted the creature's bodies. Eyes rolled out of the depths of their obese bodies in the most disgusting manner, and then rolled back down again, only to be replaced by some new appendage, whether some

curious tentacle or what could have been an ear, but was probably a nose.

So great was this most insurmountable of monstrous and unspeakable alien abominations that Pharaoh turned away, lest the horror of the scene overcome even him, and he called upon Ra to aid him in delivering the sane world of this insane impossibility. Thenceforth the bravest of the warriors of proud and mighty Kemt swept through that fetid city to the Great Ziggurat of Ti'hgaa. There the creatures of Zaèron stood defenceless, silent, and they did not resist as the enraged warriors of Kemt hacked and hewed them down. That night upon the slopes Ti'hgaa there was a river of butcher: quasi-organs and masses of amorphous plasma were hewn from the creatures, which squealed most frightfully as they sorrowfully watched their purplish ichor that constituted their blood drain away, cascading down the tiers of the ziggurat like a disgusting and savage waterfall.

But when all of the creatures were slaughtered and in pieces across the city, Pharaoh ascended the Ziggurat of Ti'hgaa to the very top, and there he discovered the crowning horror.

For there, atop that city of grotesque sprawl of inhumanity there stood the ikon of the Great One, that Unnameable Thing which would forever on haunt the dreams of the men of Kemt. It was the crowning abomination, a singular pit of insanity reared in the sunless ages beneath that same evil gibbous moon that now

looked down upon Pharaoh in all of his insignificant might.

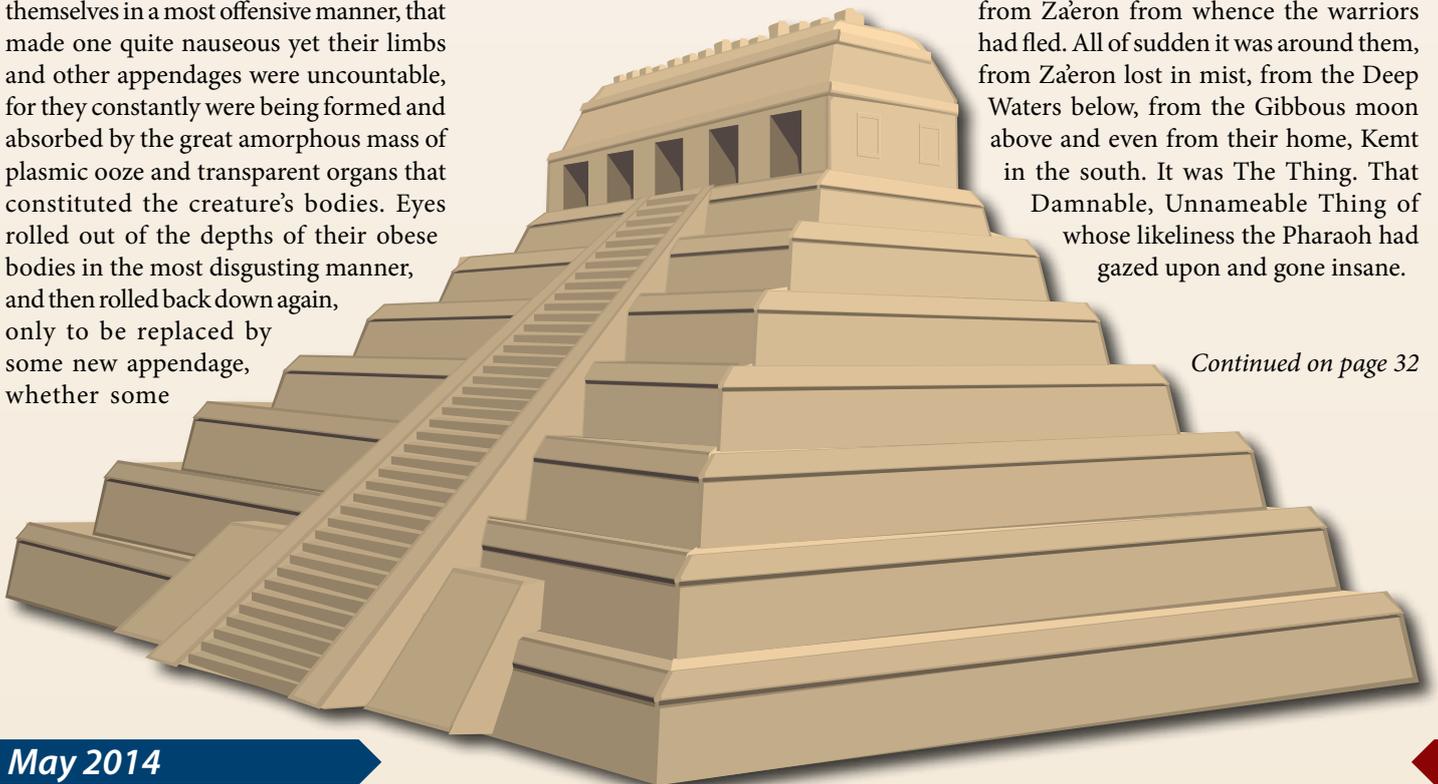
It was great statue, carved of some lost stone no longer known by man, and the thing it depicted had far too many eyes, and far too many tentacles, and such impossible wings and such cruel claws and so many mouths and countless other indescribable monstrosities that Pharaoh promptly turned and threw himself from that high place in utter horror.

And at that moment a strange green mist descended from the scarred and cursed moon, and engulfed that cursed place. And when the men of Kemt saw their Pharaoh's body lying broken amidst the fetid remains of the creatures at the base of the Ziggurat, they fled in frenzied horror. And it is even whispered by old strange women in the deep desert that when some of the men of Kemt looked back at the Ziggurat and the butchery that lay there, they saw certain movements among the dead masses of shapeless creatures that defied human sanity.

Now as the morning sun rose the Men of Kemt were streaming abroad their great ships, and behind them all of Zaèron and the lands about were obscured in mist.

But as the armada pulled out into the Deep Waters of the sea, Doom came to them. For as their gilded ships left the land, the oceans heave, and the sun was hid. Impossibly then the great cursed gibbous moon erupted in the sky, and a great wailing was heard from the north, from Zaèron from whence the warriors had fled. All of sudden it was around them, from Zaèron lost in mist, from the Deep Waters below, from the Gibbous moon above and even from their home, Kemt in the south. It was The Thing. That Damnable, Unnameable Thing of whose likeness the Pharaoh had gazed upon and gone insane.

*Continued on page 32*



Continued from page 31

If anything, it was more terrible than any carving of stone could predict, and certain values about defied the rules that govern our part of space and time, such to the point that every mind in the Army of Kemt snapped in insanity. The great gilded longboats of Pharaoh splintered like match wood in the mountainous and enraged waves, and they were tossed up high onto the Bird Roads by mighty gusts of unexplainable winds. The Thing had come. The unknown god, or whatever it was, from Zaëron had come to revenge its creatures, and thus there ended the might of Kemt.

Just as suddenly as It came, It left, leaving only an empty expanse of blue ocean, and a few stray clouds in the sky, but there was nothing left to mark the great army of Pharaoh. And Kemt was left emptied of its men, and its power and might vanished. Pharaoh's palaces by the Great River crumbled away into the desert sands, and the lost tombs of the kings were left unguarded, and they were pillaged. Thus was the power of Kemt ended, and it never rose to conquer new lands again.

But that is not the end of the tale, for in the countless eternities that passed thereafter, new men came to the land where Zaëron once stood, and they came to the east coast, and named this new land Karindas. But

as these adventurous men pushed inland, they came across a great swamp that emitted strange sounds and mists under the gibbous moon. The Meerai Marsh they called it, which meant 'haunted' in their tongue, and they spoke in legends of the great sprawling ruins at its core, where still stands tall the solemn Ziggurat of Ti'hgaa. But never has even the most adventurous quester or hero dared to climb that cursed pyramid, for it is said that strange creatures guard it, which dance about and worship an unmentionable ikon at its peak under a swollen and sinister moon.

By **Matthew Harper-Gomm**  
Year 10, Kambrya College  
BERWICK – VIC.



## Secret of the Persian Cat

Tim was stroking Whiskers in his living room when she suddenly bit him. She jumped out of his lap with a crazed look in her eyes. She ran out through the pet door and disappeared. There had been a magnetic storm in London. All the animals in town seemed jumpy and a little crazy that day.

Tim ran after Whiskers and encountered a major problem. A large power pole from the street had fallen over and blocked off the entrance to his house.

There was only a small gap for a cat or a small animal to fit through. Tim heard a loud crash and panicked. He squeezed through the gap and found disaster all throughout the street. In the middle of a wrecked house there was a horrifying sight.

Whiskers had grown extremely large and destroyed the neighbourhood and everything as far as Tim could see. Only Tim's house was left standing. It was as if Whiskers wanted Tim and his grandparents to see everything she had done and bow down before her.

Tim shouted angrily, "What do you want, you monster?"

Whiskers didn't respond. Tim rubbed his eyes to make sure he wasn't daydreaming.

He wasn't. Slowly Whiskers turned around. Somehow in her belly a door slowly opened and out stepped two human-looking figures. Tim looked up. They looked like a man and a woman...

They stepped towards Tim and then he finally realised the uncanny resemblance between them all. He ran over and hugged them. This was the best day of his life. His parents had finally returned.

His parents later revealed that they had been on a top-secret mission in China for the government.

"We didn't want to leave you, but the government threatened to kill you if we didn't do what we were told", his mum said.

"We went inside the cat to surprise you for your twelfth birthday. The cat was a size-changing robot programmed to find you. The government gave us the cat as a reward for completing the mission."

Tim realised that it was his twelfth birthday that day. He hugged them again and said "Don't leave me again". His mother and father replied in unison, "We won't".

By **Oscar Pollack**  
Year 7, Anglican Church Grammar School  
EAST BRISBANE – QLD.

**T**IMOTHY Brown was an ordinary, eleven-year-old boy living with his grandparents until one day he found an odd looking cat after school on the side of the road. It looked very hungry and Tim decided to take it home to give it shelter. Tim had loved cats ever since he had received his first cat for his 7th birthday from his parents, who had mysteriously disappeared after that day. After Tim fed the cat, he soon found out from his grandparents that the cat was female and a Persian cat at that. Tim decided to name her Whiskers. If only he knew his life would change forever after that day...



# It's a City Life

Fearing the unknown and what lay ahead had been stopping him from residing elsewhere, but that was a thing of the past.

Stepping out of the city he ran into the rolling hills filled with luscious, fresh, green grass. He ran so far and for so long that he could no longer see the monstrous city behind him and was now beginning to see faint outlines of what appeared to be houses. Soon he could make out fences and chimneys poking out from the tops of the houses.

Little did he know that the first house he came across was going to be his home. As he reached a small, timber cottage surrounded by beautiful white picket fences and filled with an abundance of natural flora, he was greeted by a friendly farmer by the name of Dave. Like they say, it was love at first sight.

He and Dave, well, as I should now say, Rusty and Dave, got along like two peas in a pod and Rusty willingly became Dave's loyal companion and work dog. Only five words can describe what they did after that... They lived happily ever after.

The end.

By **Brodie Momsen**

Year 7, Caringbah High School  
CARINGBAH – NSW

**L**OOKING up into the glowing, white stars every night he wondered why, why him? Why was he not cared for? Why did no one love him?

Scavenging through vile trash cans for puny scraps of food that others take for granted was a hassle. The wet and mouldy piece of cardboard provided very little protection against the disgusting sidewalk lined with chewing gum. The sun was blocked by the impeding army of buildings and the sky was next to nothing; invaded by grey hazardous fumes launched into the sky by colossal factories. He could see through the façade of the city peoples' smiles and into their cold, black hearts filled with hatred for anything but themselves.

At this point you may be thinking that this story is about a homeless man, but you are mistaken. This story is about a dog. This black and white Border Collie was dumped

into the harsh streets of Ginde, ACT. From a puppy he had been forced to fend for himself. He had no name. He knew that he would be driven insane if he continued to live as a victim of this brutal city.

When his gaze was forced up and over the numerous dull buildings by the blinding reflection off a taxi's window, his feet followed. Swiftly weaving through heavy city traffic he veered away from the tall, intruding buildings and stumbled upon a marketplace. He nosed his way around the busy stores unnoticed until he gained sight of a Peking Duck restaurant. With his mouth drooling, he hunted down the unattended rack of barbecued ducks then rapidly pounced. He clenched the duck within his mouth like a lion before sprinting away without even glancing back. With a full stomach and a clear mind he realised the city was no home he wanted to live in.

## THE DROUGHT

CRASH! BANG! FLOP!

Someone's down,  
People rushing all around,  
I can't bear this horrible sound,  
Where is the water?

WHY? NO! HELP!

My whole family I will so miss,  
I never got to share love's first kiss,  
I need water, I can't stand this,  
Where is the water?

CRASH! BANG! FLOP!

Someone's down,  
People rushing all around,  
I can't bear this horrible sound,  
Where is the water?

PHEW! GASP! AGH!

I feel the heat slip into me,  
It's like the sharp sting of a bee,  
The world is slowly spinning, see?  
Where is the water?

ARGH! WHAT? GASP!

My life is coming to an end,  
Through my body, a message I send,  
Can I make it around the bend?  
Where is the water?

By **Gretel Gibson-Bourke**

Year 6,  
St. Cecilia's Catholic Primary School  
GLEN IRIS – VIC.



**Want 9,542 friends  
worldwide?**

**Join the Club.**

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

**lions australia**

*we serve*



# The Walkabout

**T**HE GARDEN was empty. All the flowers seemed to have breathed their last breath. There was only one small lone tree neglected in the middle of the garden. The worst was the small, rusty shack like a pile of weeds in a lush garden. Nothing seemed to want to grow or be there any more. I decided I'd had enough. I went on a journey to find myself. The true me. Not the brave, courageous me that I acted, but the me that showed pure and genuine emotion. I was going now, only bringing with me pure memories.

I set off. I wasn't sure which route to take. My mother would have told me to go through the desert, to seek adventure and new experiences. My father would have told me to go the safe way, which in his eyes was the 'normal' route, sticking to the path where I forever travelled. He was always overly concerned about my health.

But I didn't want to listen to any of them. I wanted to travel my own path. Seek my own adventure and listen to myself; so I decided to go through the forest.

The dense bushes all looked comparable and there seemed no way to tell where I was. The thick canopy made the sun shine rainbow rays through the trees, reflecting onto the crystal clear river.

I was looking back at the river, deciding whether I should bring extra water, when I knocked into a wooden gate. It was almost hidden by the pink and purple flowers but was just noticeable. Although the fence itself showed no hint of wear or algae, the door creaked as if it hadn't been opened for centuries and as I pushed it open, it slowly fell off its hinges. In the middle of

the forest, one of the least unlikely places, there was a small dwelling...

As I walked inside the cottage, the air welcomed me and I at once felt floaty and light. It seemed as if the cottage had been neglected for years, but the house and garden itself was very clean. As I walked carefully inside, not misjudging a step, a tall dark figure approached me...

It was a young girl. She had dark hair and was pretty, but her big brown eyes looked lonely and miserable. She looked at me for a moment, then turned around to face the long hallway; beckoning me to follow her. As I trailed behind her, I wondered where she was taking me.

When she finally stopped, we were in a room at the end of the hallway. She introduced herself as Alexandra and told me that she had been alone in the cottage ever since she had been left, deserted, in the forest with her father smiling and her mother in tears, as a young child. They had promised they would come back as they turned away but they never did so she was left to find her own food, mend her own clothes and make her own money. She asked me how I came to be here. I said to her that I had nowhere to stay as the government was taking over my house and my parents had entered another world after an accident.

We got to know each very well and lived a simple but happy life with Alexandra telling me stories every night about her job as a tailor. I also learnt to take responsibility for myself and earned my share by selling things I found or made in the market. I became very clever with

my hands and greatly impressed all of my customers, working as a young girl.

One day, Alexandra didn't come home for a long time. I was worried and didn't know what to do so I just waited. I waited for what must have been hours. Alexandra still didn't come. I went out of the house to find her. I walked to her little stall where she'd taking me heaps of times before. Her stall was all set up with beautiful frocks hanging on a rack. I marvelled at all of them. But the most important thing wasn't there. Alexandra was missing. I darted around, anxiously asking everyone whether they knew about her. Nobody knew until I asked a woman in her middle ages that was sitting by the pond. Her reply; "The tailor? Didn't you hear? She's been taken to the hospital". I was stunned, still in an utter state of shock. I sprinted all the way to the hospital that the woman pointed out only to hear the nurse say the dreaded words, "She hit her head on a rock whilst falling into the creek". Her voice lowered to a whisper. "She's isn't alive any more darling."

And that was it...

That was how I had lost the most precious person in my life. Now that Alexandra wasn't alive, what was the purpose of life to me now?

I am ready. I lunge forward and fall. Down, down, down. I grasp onto the picture of Alexandra in my mind and join her. Forever.

**By Cindy Zeng**

*Year 7, Korowa Anglican Girls' School  
GLEN IRIS – VIC.*

# BOOK REVIEWS

Meet our book reviewers –  
 India, Hannah,  
 Rebecca and Eloise,  
 from Gold Street  
 Primary School  
 in Clifton Hill, Victoria.

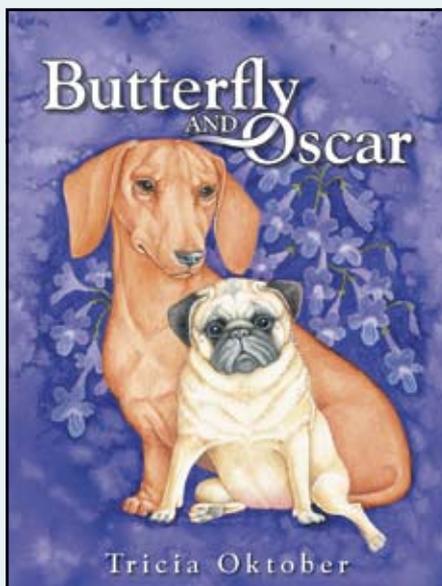
Reviews Coordinators:  
 Meredith Costain  
 and Dana Corben



## **Butterfly and Oscar**

by Tricia Oktober  
 (Ford Street Publishing)

This book is about a family of dachshunds. The owners of the dogs introduce a new dog, a pug named Butterfly. Butterfly discovers that she is different from the other dogs. Her friend Oscar tries to explain that it's all right and they love her for who she is but Butterfly isn't satisfied. But how did she know she was different? And will she recover from her great sadness? Find out by reading this book.



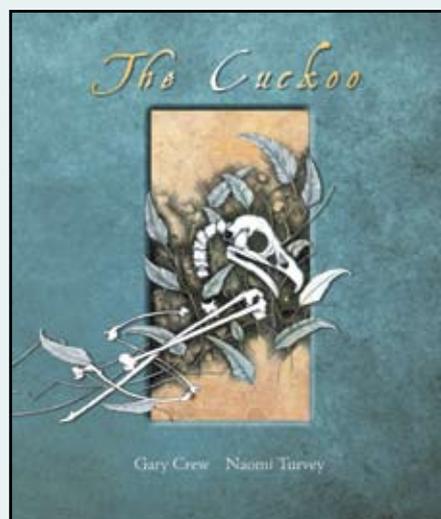
The illustrations in this book have been done using a wide range of fabulous colours. They are very detailed and interesting to look at. Recommended for younger readers.

— Eloise

## **The Cuckoo**

by Gary Crew (Ford Street Publishing)

This book is about a boy called Martin who is the runt of the family. His father likes his brothers better than him since they are more handsome and strong.



Martin's mother dies and he begins to feel like no one loves him. He spends most of his time in the woods talking to the small animals but his favourite by far is the cuckoo.

Things take a devastating turn when his brothers are torn apart by eagles and his father takes all his anger out on him. Martin decides it's time for a change.

This book is similar to *Caleb* because they are both very dark and mysterious. If you enjoy Gary Crew's other books then this will be a great one for you.

Although this is a picture book, some of the events are quite shocking so it is definitely recommended for older readers.

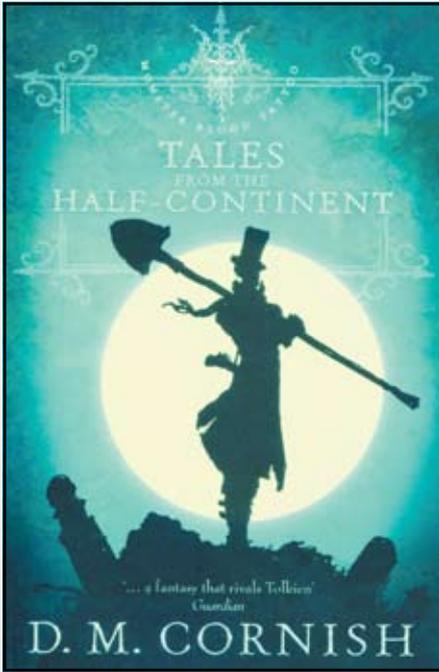
— Hannah

## **Tales from the Half-Continent**

By D M Cornish (Omnibus / Scholastic)

From the author of the *Monster Blood Trilogy* comes the *Tales from the Half-Continent*.

Times are tough for grave robbers. Bunting Faukes is in debt but has no way to repay it. Atticus Wells, a sleuth with strange eyes



that seem to be able to see into everything, has presented a way out.

Virtue Bland is alone in the world and has been packed off to Brandenbrass to serve her late father's employer's household. She only has her old pa's olfactologue to remind

her of him, which allows her to detect the smell of monsters.

Recommended for readers who love fantasy aged 9+.

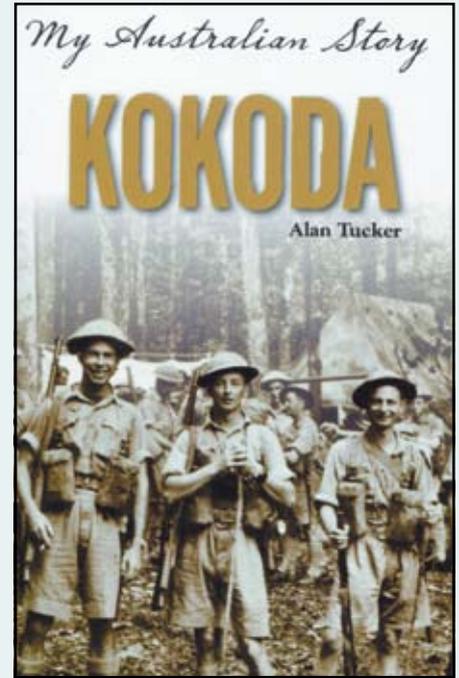
— India

### **Kokoda**

by Alan Tucker (Scholastic)

This book is about World War 2 and the men going along the Kokoda track. Archie's brother Des has been sent into the army and Archie is hoping that he will survive.

Des sends many letters about his time on the Kokoda track. A bomb has gone off and Archie is curious to know if Des has survived the bombing. But Archie starts having his own problems with the battle in Townsville against the local bully. He records it in his diary as the town becomes part of a Pacific campaign. Will Des survive as the coastline reels under the Japanese bombs?



I think this is a good book that has lots of detail without being too confusing. I recommend this book for ages 10+ as it is about the war and some tragic things happen.

— Rebecca

# Sketching

**T**HE GIRL walked through the forest, dead leaves crunched beneath her bare feet making her flinch. She stopped at a large,

circular stone surrounding a rotting, dead oak stump.

Carefully, quietly she climbed over the rock and tiptoed to the oak.

She sat down and pulled an old leather book out of her sack and flicked through the pages, sketch after sketch, memory after memory.

She closed her eyes and imagined another thing to sketch. She sat there for a while, thinking, then she opened her eyes and took out a charcoal stick from her pocket and placed it on the page.

Automatically her hand started moving across the page.

A dark welcoming line appeared from the pen and placed itself on the page in a form of a horse.

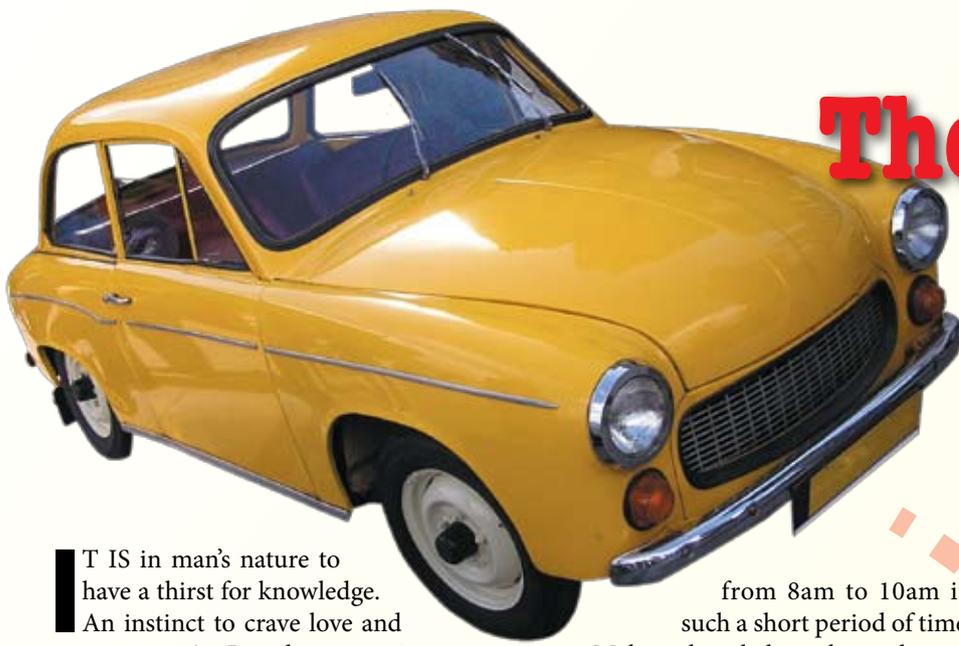
The girl acknowledged her wonderful sketch, she pulled a tiny piece of bark from the magical trunk, she crunched it in between her hands and sprinkled it over the page and then blew it off.

A magical horse flew out of the pages, tail held high and neck arched, he whinnied a glorious noise that rung out across the whole forest, and then galloped into the stump.

Into a magical land never to be seen again.

The girl put her pencil and book back into her sack, she jumped over the rock surrounding the oak and walked home, dead leaves crunching beneath her feet.

By **Georgina Cooper**  
Year 5,  
Nambour Christian College  
NAMBOUR – QLD.



# The Narrator

She was simply going to have a nice day out on the town. Whatever that meant.

The man across town left his home after having eaten a very filling breakfast. No. Not at all. In fact he ate stale cereal and didn't realise he was out of milk until he had already poured the cereal into a bowl. The man was having a bad day, but he felt that the sudden urge to go into town would fix him right up. He smiled and exited his home, heading down the path and out his white picket fence.

He crossed the road without looking and was immediately hit by an oncoming canary yellow car...

No no, too bitter an end. Of course he looked both ways before crossing, he wasn't stupid. He watched the hideous canary yellow car pass him and then proceeded to walk safely across the road, reaching the other side quite easily. Then some other irrelevant stuff happened that The Narrator couldn't really be bothered thinking about so he would come back to it later. Then the man was in town.

The woman ate a filling breakfast, unlike the completely unrelated man across town. She left her home and got in her car, checked herself out in the rear view mirror, then adjusted it so she could see a little more out the back window rather than her own head.

The Narrator found this hilarious because he once saw this happen on a cartoon and totally just stole that exact scene. Nobody would even notice because it's not like they copyrighted it or anything. Plus he didn't care anyway. He made the cartoon in the first place. At this point it was just reusing old work.

The woman drove into town in her horrible canary yellow car that she didn't even really like all that much, though felt compelled to buy it at the car dealer's for some unknown reason. She passed by a man on her way, who looked as if he was going to walk straight onto the road without looking but instead was relieved to see that he did in fact check before heading to his death.

This was a poorly worded and inconsistently crafted paragraph. The Narrator knew. If

IT IS in man's nature to have a thirst for knowledge. An instinct to crave love and compassion. An Impulse to survive and thrive in the world man is placed in.

It is the job of the Narrator to give, or deprive man of these things. Based entirely on how good a mood he is in.

The Narrator decides life, death, love, hate, hope, compassion and overall fate of his humanity. He or She is the be all and end all of every being in their creation.

It is believed by man, thanks to The Narrator, that a benevolent god entwined each and every person in humanity to their significant other by means of a red thread. It is the job of the Narrator to help each character find one another. Or not. It really doesn't matter.

There exists no such thing as coincidences in the universe. The Narrator dare not be so impetuous as to let such petty accidents occur in his domain.

Instead, fate lay a faint trail for each individual to follow, with the impression that they were choosing the path to go down. In reality, it is The Narrator who chooses left or right, up or down, in or out, yes or no. And it is The Narrator who chooses exactly who abides by the rules, and who flaunts the very existence of reality.

What could he say. He had a dynamic personality.

A man awoke from his slumber at a little past 8am. No. Certainly not. He awoke at a little before 10am. He slept in and was late for work. Again.

The Narrator enjoyed displeasing people, making them wonder how on earth it went

from 8am to 10am in such a short period of time.

Making them believe they only were resting their eyes for a few moments. In reality they were, that was the time it took for The Narrator to do whatever he pleased with them.

The man awoke with a jolt, and looked at the clock, crying out in distress. Actually, no. He didn't mind having slept in. In fact, he decided he wasn't even going to go into work today.

He felt a certain. Need. To go out on the town. He felt a special pull, like someone was nudging him to do something important.

The Narrator could easily have brought this man straight to his one true love today. His significant other that had been connected to him by that one red thread. Though on the other end of the spectrum, this could have been the day The Narrator spoke the man into the path of an oncoming bus. Again. Very dynamic personality shifts.

A little away from where the man lived, a young woman awoke also. Same age as the man, a little over... 28 years old.

She awoke at about the same time. 11am. Exactly. On the dot. Sure why not.

The woman decided, thanks to The Narrator, that she wouldn't be meeting her friend for breakfast today. Instead she was going to have a day out on the town. And she would drive. Because she had a sudden distaste for people. And the outdoors. Which brought into question why she was even going 'out on the town'. What did that phrase even mean anyway?

The Narrator decided the woman wouldn't worry about any of those things any more.

the two people lived on opposite sides of town, how did she pass him in order to get to the city? Look, it didn't really matter, he would fix that bit up later. The point was that the woman almost killed her soulmate in a really ugly car and that still amused The Narrator quite a bit.

The man, upon making it into town, made his way to the central city park.

The woman, upon making it into town, did the exact same thing.

Both the man and the woman walked up to the fountain in the middle of the park and sat on either side of it, completely oblivious of each other's existence.

When the man looked behind him at all the scenery he saw only the back of a woman sitting on the opposite side of the fountain. When he happened to turn his back, the woman would turn around, feeling like someone was watching her. This continued on for a few seconds. No. Minutes. Until finally the two turned around at the exact same time and met each other's eyes.

The two felt an overwhelming, slightly concerning sense of admiration for the other, both assuming it was somehow love at first sight.

The man took a moment to ponder how exactly both he and his one true love just happened to end up in the same part of town at exactly the same time and met just as they had did.

The Narrator decided he would stop thinking about that immediately.

The woman began walking around the fountain, as did the man, both meeting one another just in front of it. The woman suddenly broke out into song about her one true love and everybody in the park joined in on her musical number.

The man stood there absolutely terrified for his safety. How did everybody know the words to this song? He had never even heard it before. Is this some sort of elaborate flash mob in order to freak him out or something? Is this going to be the way he dies? With an axe wielding psychotic woman who sang a song about love whilst she hacked him to pieces?

"I don't know why I'm singing", the woman chirped.

The man attempted to freestyle his way in, deciding it was the only plausible way to continue.

"I have no idea how we came to meet, but hot damn you sure are neat." The man sang out of time and off key, the whole park stopped their musical number to stare at the man.

The man was very embarrassed.

At this point The Narrator was in fits of laughter from the story he had created. Never in all his time had he conjured up something so perfect. He wondered if this was how Disney films were made.

Okay so maybe the whole thing wasn't quite so absurd. Maybe the man had taken music lessons quite a few years back and knew exactly how to sing in time and in key. Possibly with some better freestyling too. He would make the time signature simple time, just so the man could keep up, plus the key was in C Major, very doable.

"The way we met has got me thinking, we were meant to be I just have this inkling, you and I are bound by thread, there's no keeping us apart until one of us ends up dead."

Okay so it would need a bit of refining. Plus it ended a little more solemnly than The Narrator had hoped. He had just gotten away from the idea of death.

The woman was nonetheless thrilled by the man's musical genius and threw herself into his arms.

Then the man placed her back on the ground and fell into her arms.

Screw gender roles. The Narrator does what he wants.

The Narrator decided he was going to break the fourth wall between himself and the audience. There was no reason behind this. He just thought he would give it a shot.

"So what do you think of this so far? Yes you, reading this right now. From wherever you are from, wherever you are currently, whoever you may be, I ask this of you. Am i creating a good storyline? Dynamic characters? A real emotional rollercoaster of a story? I'll tell you, being a Narrator is bloody hard work. Sometimes i just need to take a break and let a man walk to his doom, an incoming canary yellow car. But on days like today, I'm a little more thoughtful and creative, don't you think?"

I have real inspiration, like no other I've had before. I'm really intrigued by where this story is going. I hope you are too."

The Narrator decided it was time for a plot twist. "Oh no," he sensed the audience would think. Possibly even accompanied by a small gasp or dramatic music. Regardless, he would carry on.

The whole, happy endings and thirst for knowledge being quenched rubbish was really getting on The Narrator's nerves. Almost as much as that ridiculous story about the vampires and werewolves. It was just so unrealistic and overly dramatic. He didn't need that in his story. He only needed a plot twist.

The woman suddenly clutched her heart. Not her literal heart, just the place on her chest where her heart would...

The woman clutched her chest, round about the area where her heart was.

*Continued on page 40*



*Continued from page 39*

Suddenly, the woman gasped and clutched her chest. The man looked at her, astonished.

“What is it!?” he cried. “Are you having heart palpitations?”

“I don’t know what that means”, replied the woman through weak breaths. “But I think I have a noticeably rapid, strong, or irregular heartbeat due to agitation, exertion, or illness.”

The man gasped. Clearly terrified. Thinking quickly he did what any reasonable person in this situation would do.

He dropped her and pretended he had never seen this woman before and washed his hands of the problem, running out of the park and into the nearest Starbucks he could find. He waited patiently at the window sipping his soy latté for 15 minutes. When the ambulance arrived he walked out and pretended that he had just noticed what was going on.

“Oh my goodness what happened here!?” he cried in an unconvincing, 6 year old play standard tone.

“I think I’ve had heart palpitations!” the woman cried, for some reason sounding completely fine and going along with the man’s act.

The man rode in the ambulance with the woman until they reached the hospital. Then he thanked the ambulance driver for the ride as he lived next to the hospital and couldn’t be bothered walking home. He then proceeded to go home and cook supper because he was a real douchebag and didn’t care about his one true love at all. Then he accidentally tripped down the stairs and died because that is totally the fate he deserved for being such a rude guy.

The Narrator looked over his writing and laughed and laughed. All right, the fun was over, let’s go back to the plot twist. This started out as a story about destiny, and it sure as hell was going to end as one. And maybe even have a few metaphors in it too.

Suddenly, the woman grabbed her.... Wait how did that sentence start again? The Narrator scrolled up to his previous work

and proceeded to copy and paste what he had written before.

Suddenly, the woman gasped and clutched her chest. The man looked at her, astonished.

“What is it!?” he cried.

“Heart”, was all the woman could say before she passed out in his arms.

The man quickly checked her pulse. Deciding that she was indeed still alive, he phoned the ambulance. Five minutes passed until they arrived and the man rode with the woman to the hospital.

After explaining to the doctors that he had only just met the woman but felt that they were meant for each other and were each other’s one true love, the doctor told him that he “didn’t care”.

He then proceeded to perform a dance number involving all the medical equipment he could find, and promptly left the emergency room.

It took three days of the man waiting around for the doctors to finally allow the woman to leave the hospital. At this point, the man confessed the love he was suppressing for her since the moment they met and she replied that she felt the exact same way. They then proceeded to actually ask each others’ names and got to know each other a little better before the woman produced a ring from her pocket and proposed to the man who began to tear up ever so slightly.

The two were married in the morning and not until 30 happy years of being married did they actually begin pondering their very existence and even though it was very likely that they did exist, it was also very likely, that they did not. And The Narrator let them. It was their reward for being his puppets for so long. People were allowed to think freely and be who they are. Just, as long as they did it right. His way. And they can’t question any of what he says or does. At all.

“A thirst for knowledge is never quite quenched. It will either drive you insane or make you a massive control freak. Sometimes even both. To know is to not know, and to not know is to know exactly what you want to know. Also, while I have you here, the answer to the meaning of life,

the universe and everything is...”

The Narrator’s microwave oven went off and he excitedly got up to go fetch his nachos that he had prepared.

But if the Narrator is gone, then who could be writing this? Is it The Narrator of The Narrator? Is someone narrating me as I Narrate this right now? Or is it just the original Narrator having come back from getting his nachos, seeing as words would be put down as soon as he returned, as if time had never passed at all. Or is there actually an infinite number of Narrators, all narrating a supposed fictional timeline, only to be narrated to do so themselves in the first place.

I guess the world is filled with Narrators, all narrating the lives of others and fixing whether they put a capital letter on the right form of narrate.

Sometimes there is no mystical ‘red thread’ binding two individuals to spend their lives together, it doesn’t necessarily mean you shouldn’t try. One shouldn’t be led to believe in a thing as trivial as ‘fate.’ You should not give up your life so willingly to something out of your control. By the same token, one should not believe in ‘coincidences.’ Although it may not be fate throwing you around to be with that one special person. The luck of the draw may have something special in store for you.

The point, you ask? Is that we aren’t to know what is around the corner for us. Nobody is. There is no hoping to a benevolent Narrator that there will be good fortune or bad coming your way. Knowledge like that could kill a man, or at the very least make you slightly irritated like there was a rash on your privates. You should always try to decide your own fate, and not the fate of others.

The point is for the Narrator to let go of the fictional universe he creates, and not conform to the fictional universe he himself is apart of. Life is too short to write up another. Love who you want, do what you can. Live life like you aren’t being narrated.

But what would I know? I just write the story.

By **Thierry Falcone**  
Year 11, Strathmore Secondary College  
STRATHMORE – VIC.

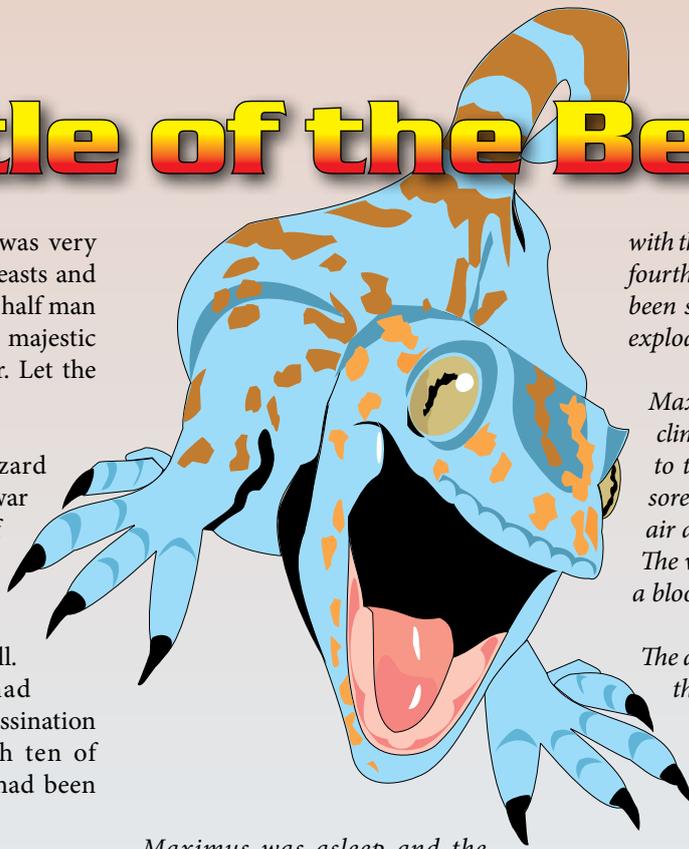
# Battle of the Beasts

**T**HERE was a wood that was very strange. There were cat beasts and fire ants and maybe some half man half birds. This is a tale of these majestic animals, a tale of clans and war. Let the tale begin!

Trouble was stirring in the lizard clan... there had been a call for war from the viper clan, a group of poisonous snakes with deadly venom, and now all the other clans across the other sides of the wood had heard it as well. Maximus the lizard leader had almost been killed when an assassination had been attempted in which ten of his guards had been killed. It had been something like this.

*The assassins made no sound as they crept into the lizard's fortress. Ten guards stood outside their master's room. No problem. After all, the assassins were vipers!*

*One viper snuck behind one guard and killed him. While the other guards were doing a quiet battle with three vipers the other viper threw a poison bomb at them killing them all.*



*Maximus was asleep and the assassins stole into the room. Suddenly Maximus jumped up dagger in hand and, ringing a bell, summoned backup. The assassins were startled and Maximus took this chance to stab one in the eye causing the viper to cry out with pain.*

*The vipers were stunned by this approach so one of the assassins dropped a poison bomb. Three of the four assassins (including the one*

*with the sore eye) jumped out of the way. The fourth assassin was less fortunate... he had been standing closest to the bomb when it exploded killing him but not his comrades.*

*Maximus (he was a gecko lizard) had climbed up the roof and now he was going to throw a dagger at the viper with the sore eye. The dagger whizzed through the air and buried itself into the viper's neck. The viper crumpled to the ground making a bloody mess on the white carpet.*

*The assassins were getting scared now that they couldn't even see Maximus but he could see them. He took pity on them and dropped down onto the floor.*

*Maximus ran over to his bed and pressed a hidden lever... the wall closest to the vipers began to move and... a big mutated lizard walked in and saw the two vipers (it didn't see Maximus because he had climbed up the wall again) and its two heads bore down on the two vipers swallowing them in one gulp. A trapdoor opened under the mutant and it fell into a pit. The assassins had failed in their mission.*

**By Lachlan Tonissen**

*Year 3, The Hamilton & Alexandra College  
HAMILTON – VIC.*

# Yearning for Grandpa

The sun shines through my window pane  
But you have left me lonely  
Amidst this beauty, I feel alone  
But I know you won't be here with me.

The cold wind touch me with icy hands  
The stars hide and not reveal their shine  
This is how I feel without you and  
Along with my grief, the cold is all mine.

Your smile and your love they all still remain  
Leaving my heart scarred and heavy  
They still linger in my mind like the puddles left from a rain,  
And I wish you were still here with me.

My world is all grey because you had to leave me,  
Your absence make me drown in my own tears  
I need you here to help me stand, and make me face my years  
Oh how I wish you were still here with me...

**By Kithma Kaluwitharana**

*Year 12, St. Peter's College  
CRANBOURNE – VIC.*

# S.O.S.

**A**LL I remember is a great big storm. Then I blacked out. And now, I'm here washed up on an island, with no form of mankind at all. All it is trees as far as the eye can see. Well, and plants, a few giant mountains and some calm beaches.

I got up and started trekking towards one of the mountains. I was weary and it seemed impossible to even get to the bottom of the mountain. But I had to do it. I had a goal, and I was going to achieve it.

For goodness sake. I'm only 11. Why was God doing this to me? What did I do wrong? Or maybe it's just bad luck. I'm stranded on an island, no food, bored out of my mind... nope, no one could ever get that much bad luck! I've got to keep going, I'm almost there! I'm almost at the bottom of the mountain.

I found a cave at the bottom of the mountain to sleep inside. I gathered some sticks and made a fire, and I made a blanket made out of leaves that I shall take with me on my travels. Luckily, mother had told me how to crochet years ago, and now I was an expert at it!

I was trying to get some sleep, as I knew I would have a long trip tomorrow, but I kept hearing all these strange sounds. Some sounded like scratching, the others sounded like growling. I ducked under the covers and tried to block out the noises, but they just seemed to get louder!

I think I eventually fell asleep, because I woke up and the sun was just rising over the cliff face. It was a beautiful sight. But I knew I didn't have time to spare and look at beautiful sunrises. I had to continue my journey and try to reach the top of the mountain by sunset. I just hoped there was somewhere for me to sleep at the top. But no time to think ahead. That's in the future. I must worry about how I will get to the top. I grabbed the blanket I had made the night before and set off.

I came across this river with beautiful glistening water. I got on my knees and greedily dunked my head in the river. The cold water splashed onto my face and I took a big gulp. I hadn't had a drink in days. I was so happy. But I didn't spend



too long there as I knew that half the day was already gone. The sun was high in the sky, shining on my face.

The sun is slowly making its descent. It is getting colder and colder, but I don't have a jacket. I decide to jog up the mountain. One, it might make me warmer, and two, I will get tired, so I might sleep through all the creepy noises.

You wouldn't believe it. Amazingly, there is a rickety old wooden cottage up here on the top of the mountain. I knocked on the door, but no answered so I walked in. It was pretty bare and mouldy, so I guessed this island must be really old. At least there was a bed, and some food. I looked all over the food, but of course it was covered in green fungus and mould. It was putrid. But the bed was great. It was a double bed, and it was soft, considering that the mattress was made out of feathers. It had a beautiful quilt, but I decided not to be too greedy, and I just used my own that I had made the day before.

Surprisingly, there were no loud, scary noises tonight. I did hear a 'thump', but it sounded like it was really far away, on the other side of the island. I guessed it must have just been a tree falling.

I had a really good night's sleep, and when I got up the next morning it was still pretty dark outside, so I explored the house more. I discovered another bedroom, and I had a peek in the wardrobe. There was actually some clothes in there! I was gob smacked! But they were really old. They were rags and mainly black, white and brown. I didn't

have any clothes, and by now, I'd guessed that no one had lived here for more than fifty years! I found a small, old backpack to put the clothes in. I also put my blanket inside. Then I went downstairs to see if there was anything else that I could grab before I trekked into the unknown. It was magical! Whoever had lived here sixty odd years ago, must have been an inventor, or a scientist. There was all these different machines and there was stuff everywhere! I grabbed a hot water bottle that was on the desk, and put it in the backpack, that was now on my back.

As I headed out the door, I looked back at the house and I knew that it was special. I just had this feeling. How many people get stranded on an island that they've never heard of, and find a house with lots of strange and quirky things? It was all just left there, like nothing ever happened, it just got older.

I walked to the tippity top of the mountain and admired the view. I could see over the whole island! I felt like the queen, higher than everybody else. The wind flowed through my hair as I balanced on the tip of my dainty toes. The grass was waving in the breeze, and the flowers were opening up, ready for spring.

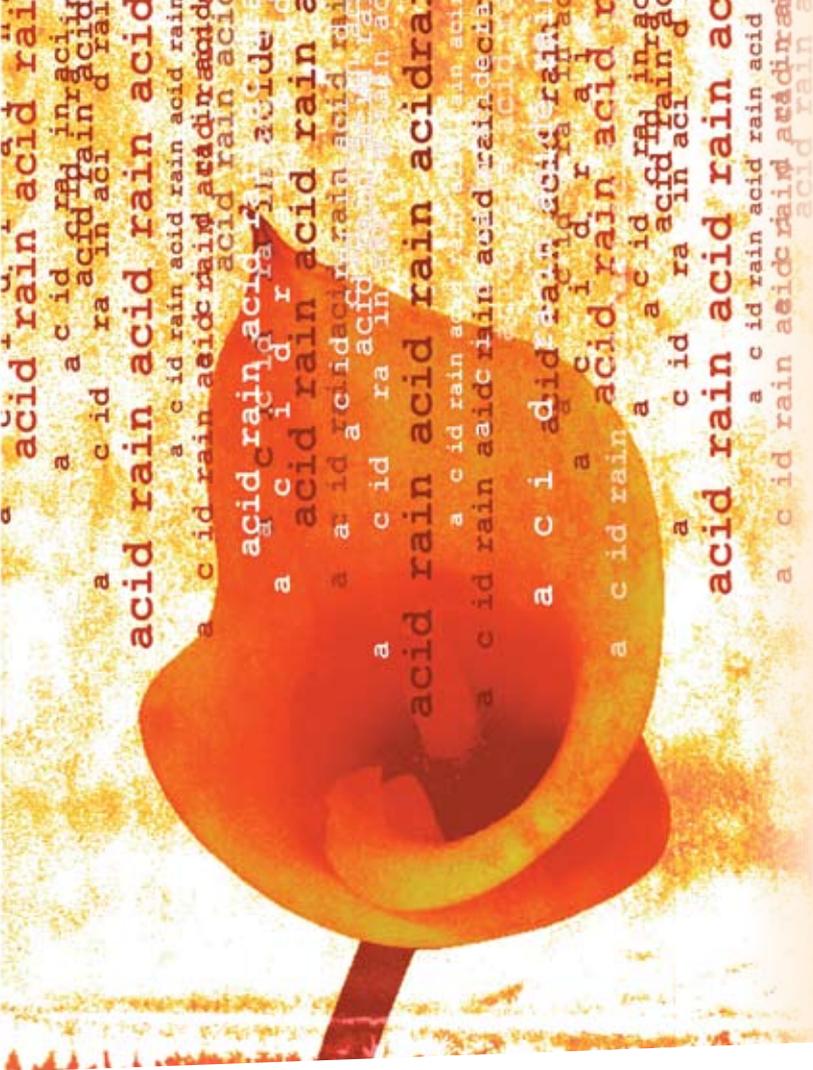
I could see an apple tree on the other side of the island, so I started to make my way towards it. The apples looked so shiny, juicy and full of flavour. The thought of me biting into one of them kept me going.

I stumbled down the mountain with the bag on my back. It was quite heavy, but I think it was because I had gotten weaker over the past days. I wasn't used to being in conditions like this.

All of a sudden, I saw a flash out of the corner of my eye. I turned around. It was a boat! I couldn't believe it. I thought I still might be asleep. But I wasn't! From that moment, I stumbled down the mountain as fast as I could. I ran to the shore as my parents stepped out of the boat and gave me a big hug. I was saved. I was going home.

*By Emily Crellin*

*Year 5, Lisarow Public School  
LISAROW – NSW*



Acid rain falls from the sky  
Here is the simple reason why  
The carbon dioxide in the air  
Reacts with rainwater here and there

Sulfurous, sulfuric and nitric acid  
Created when water and dioxides are added  
Are dissolved and added to the rain  
Falling to Earth in destructive bane

The acid kills forests, exposing ground to skies  
Animals must leave their homes or face demise  
Pulling aluminium from the dark brown soil  
Killing all who use the river through embroil

Some can stand the toxic weather  
Depending on the pH being high or nether  
Frogs have the highest chance of survival  
To the acid poor snails are simply no rival

What can be done to stop the pain  
That is brought along by this senseless rain?  
Perhaps one day in times to come  
From acid rain we will no longer run.

*By Jemima Helps  
Year 9, Westminster Senior School  
MARION – SA*

## Midnight Walk

IT WAS a dark and stormy night. I was at home by myself. The windows were banging and it was as if there were people walking around the house. “Thump! Dra-a-a-g! Thump! Dra-a-a-g!” Something or someone was in the basement. I was sure of it. I ducked under my bed covers and huddled with anything I could find. A doll, from my dead Aunt. She died holding the doll and so it was given to me. The doll had thick, chestnut hair, red eyes, scars all over her body and a frown on her face. I fall asleep shuddering in the dark and wake up to the sound of my door opening.

“Mum? Dad? Is that you?” I whispered as a chill ran down my spine when I found that my doll had disappeared. Silence. A bloodcurdling scream rang through the house followed by eerie singing. I grab my phone and call my parents.

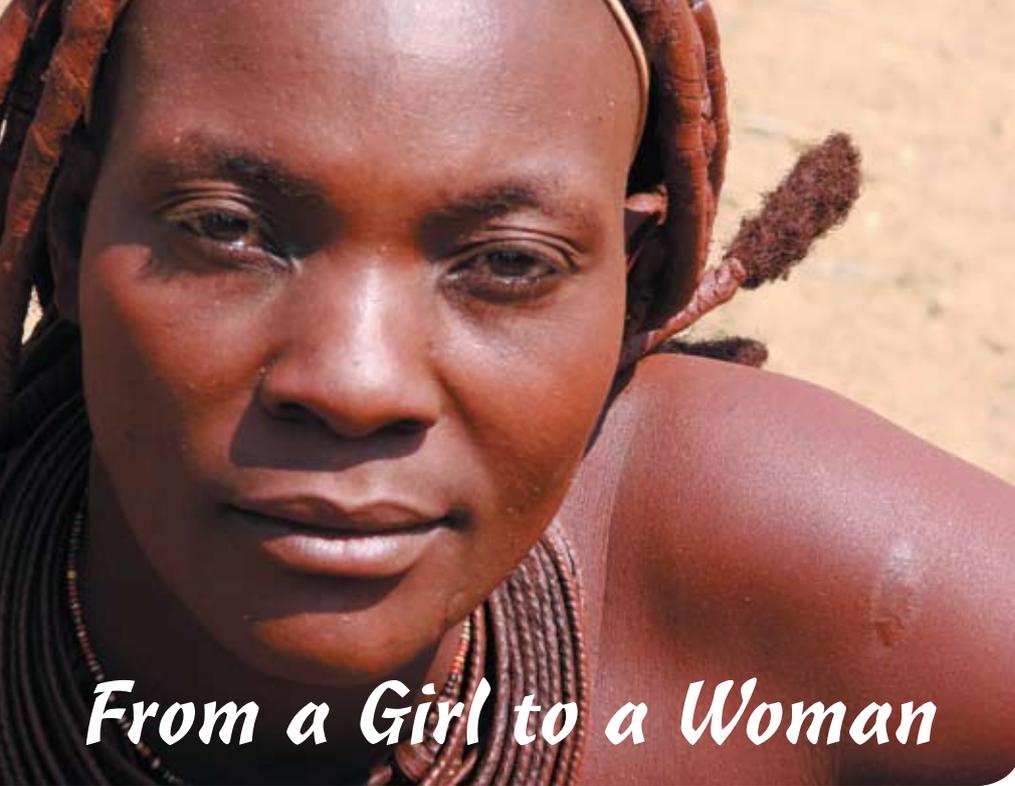
“Hello? Mum, help me! There is someone in our house!” I whimper, almost in tears.

“I know...” was the ghostly reply. It wasn’t Mum. By now, my eyes were pouring. I had never been so petrified in my life. With all the courage I had left, I step out of bed with a torch just as my door slams shut. I walk over and open it, on the stairs was my doll. I run over to pick it up to see blood coming from her scars. I drop her in horror and walk back to my room. Just at that moment, something grabs my ankle. I screamed at the top of my lungs when I turned to see my doll, staring at me, hands around my ankle. I fell back and plunge down the stairs.

That was where my parents found me the next morning. Holding my doll, at the bottom of the stairs, dead just like my Aunt. Written next to me in blood, were the words “YOU ARE NEXT”. My doll was grinning. She had a knife in her hands.

*By Selena Zheng  
Year 7, Korowa Anglican Girls’ School  
GLEN IRIS – VIC.*





## From a Girl to a Woman

**M**USONDA'S younger siblings depended on her, as she was the eldest. Chi was eight, Ebele was ten, Abidena was five and Obi was just two. They couldn't afford school, so they mainly stayed in the place that they called home. It was small and dusty. They didn't have clean water, so every day Musonda walked eight hours to get the water they needed. Their father had long since gone to war and their mother was shot, so fourteen-year-old Musonda took the fall for the family. They were all very thin and quite poor but they managed and were thankful for all they got.

One day, Musonda cut her leg on the walk so she took exceptionally long. "Just do it", she thought to herself. By the time that she had got the water the sun had started to set. She couldn't afford to stay out while it was dark and rest or clean up her leg. It was very hard for her to walk and it seemed like the sun was setting incredibly fast. Suddenly, he came out from behind the bush. The last thing she felt was him jumping on her and the old bucket with the water, drop.

When she woke up she had a concussion and the sun was shining brightly in her eyes. Her clothes were ripped and she was mainly naked. She was scared. She didn't know what had happened and then she realised. She was another victim of rape. At least I'm still alive. Most women don't survive, she thought. She noticed that the cut on her leg was open again and gushing out blood. She had to get help. Then she remembered; I don't have any medical care.

She decided to walk home, they had a few medical aids there for emergencies.

By the time she got home, all she could think about was her leg. Ebele wrapped it in some leaves and tried to mop up the blood. "What happened?" she asked. Musonda didn't know how to respond. She asked Ebele to come closer so she could whisper in her ear. She told her all that had happened and then asked for rest. "Nobody is leaving", she said before she shut her eyes.

Six months later, Musonda's baby bump was quite large. She didn't want to go through with it, but she had no choice. She never learnt about it so she was quite clueless and very scared. She didn't want to have this perverted man's baby or go into childbirth, especially without assistance.

Out in the slum, she heard two elderly women talking.

"Hear about the childbirth centre in Kawangware?"

"Yes. Its about time they did something like this."

"Medical care for pregnant women and toddlers, prenatal knowledge, plus a safe place to give birth!"

"I'm sorry to butt in, where is this place?" asked Musonda.

"Kawangware, darling, its about a mile from here." Seeing her bump and knowing

her age, she added, "I can show you if you'd like". And she took her up on her offer. They would set out the next day.

"Listen up, I might not be back for a few days, so Ebele is in charge." They agreed. She gave each of them a kiss and was on her way. She met the old women who was of a very kind nature and she asked her how she got pregnant. Musonda was sick of telling the story but she let the old women know anyway, as it was thanks to her she was coming here. "Oh my!" the old women said. "Men are horrible sometimes." She nodded and for the rest of the trip it was mainly silence and Musonda was careful to remember how to get there.

A man appeared at the doorway. Medium height, thin build, with a very kind look in his eyes. When he saw her, his smile widened. "Welcome. I am Moffat." As we walked in, she looked around. She had never seen anything like it. Clean, peaceful and there were lots of plants. "Wow...", she said in amazement. "How much will it cost me to be here?"

"However much you can."

"Oh", she said sadly. She had no money at all. "I am supporting my four younger siblings. I have no money at all, at least not at the moment." She turned around and started to walk away when he summoned her over. "You pay us when you can, if you can. We do not turn anyone away."

Musonda was overjoyed. She thanked him and turned to the elderly woman and said, "May we please go? I have a horrible fear of being out at night". And so they walked together.

She thanked the old woman before entering her home. Obi waddled up to her. "Why hello, little duck!" she said cheerfully as she lifted him in her arms. "Well, how did it go?" asked Ebele.

"Absolutely wonderful", she replied. "Did anything happen while I was away?"

"A goat wandered in while we were sleeping!" shouted Abidena.

"My! Isn't that interesting!" Musonda said as she laughed.

"We had to shoo it out", stated Chi. The all had a big laugh and decided to get some rest.

Three months later, there would be a family trip to Kawangware. "Let's go if we are to get there by sunset!" said a very excited Musonda. While they were walking, she told them about FreMo. All of the perks and what Moffat said about paying. About halfway there, she felt a pain in her stomach and Chi grasped her hand. "Are you all right?" asked Ebele.

"I think this is supposed to happen", she said. She didn't want to admit it, but she knew it was time. The baby was coming.

When they arrived, she tried to remain calm as she said to Moffat, "I have had a contraction". He rushed her off to the birthing room and called over one of the nurses, Panina. "What now?" she said with a note of panic in her voice. Her contractions were two minutes apart now. The baby was about to come... "Push!" Moffat said in his kind tone. The room was spinning and suddenly, she felt a release. In her arms, Panina was holding a beautiful baby girl. They gave her a bit of a tap on

the back to get her respiratory system going and bathed her for a few seconds in a miniature tub and handed her to her mother. "Oh, wow", she said, in awe. Her baby was amazing. "Her name will be Nkechinyere", she said with quite a broad smile on her face.

"A beautiful name for a beautiful baby", Moffat replied with a smile almost as wide as hers.

"Thank you. Rest assured, one day, you will be repaid."

By the time they had done all the medical checks, Musonda was fast asleep. Ebele, Chi, Obi and Abidena had come in and were admiring the newborn. They were all silently ecstatic, all but Ebele. She couldn't think how their family would survive. She would have to do the walk, but that was fine. She had done it before, when Musonda was injured. But what about everything else? Nobody in the slum liked her like they did Musonda, so it would be

harder for her to trade in the market. "Hi", Musonda gently whispered in her ear. That brought her back to now, where she should be happy. "How are you going?" Ebele whispered back.

"Well, I'm quite tired." They giggled. "They have offered for us to stay the night. I accepted. We will all stay in here", Musonda said, as she was still deathly afraid of leaving at night, especially in an unknown area.

She thanked Moffat and Panina one more time and then they left. They gave her a few basic needs for the baby and told her she was welcome at any time. They decided on a day for a checkup and they were on their way. The baby grew as healthy as a baby in a slum in Kenya can and they all lived long and happy lives.

By **Esther Breece**  
Year 7, Silkwood School  
MT. NATHAN – QLD.

# One of a Kind

My nan is one of a kind, a real keeper in my mind.  
My nan is funny, so very funny, she might be crazy but nothing is ever hazy.  
My nan is bold, very bold, she might speak her mind, but she is always kind.  
My nan is stubborn, so very stubborn, it's a wonder, she ever got a husband.  
My nan has pets, many pets, the fighting ferret was the best.  
My nan has siblings, lots of siblings, too many to name and that's a shame.  
My nan was sneaky, even a little creepy.  
When my nan neared, her sister feared as pranks yanked her down a rank.

But for me, I am blest,  
because I am not the sister nor a guest.  
I am the granddaughter who reminisces with her nan.  
Yarns are told of soaring spiders, hair aflame,  
cracked chairs collapsing, siblings defying deadly danger,  
my notorious Nan is the one to blame.

Of course,  
I do not have the run of the mill nan.  
But then again, I would not like a nan  
who thought frills were on dresses.  
I have a non stop noteworthy, nearly normal nan.  
I ask, what more could one want in a nan?

By **Miranda Plowman**  
Year 5, Distance Education Victoria  
THORNBURY – VIC.



# TRAGIC REUNIONS

**T**HE AROMA of black-bean sauce, prawn fried rice, sweet and sour pork and chicken chow mein filled my nostrils. Mum, Dad, Aunty Linda, Uncle Noah, my cousins Lillian and Cody and I sat around the lunch table, happily chatting, laughing and getting along. I was surprised that we all suddenly bonded over something so little; Chinese food. Before all this started, it was as if WW III had started in our house and let me tell you, this 'rivalry' has been going on for years.

★ ★ ★

I sat on the edge of my bed. An uneasy feeling filled my stomach, as I waited for the door-bell to ring. To calm my nerves, I ran my slender fingers through my shaggy, packaged-dyed black hair. My parents and I dreaded this time of year; the annual Worsnop family reunion. It happened during the September school holidays at our mansion every year. We never got along because our personalities clashed. They were 'preppy', annoying and oh so provocative.

Ding-dong, ding-dong!

"Gabe, could you get the door please?" boomed my mum Cleo's voice. I was guessing she was in the kitchen, cooking up a storm.

"All right", I yelled back, slowly walking down the stairs, not wanting to face my nightmare.

★ ★ ★

"Well, surprise! Surprise! Look who's here!" My voice dripped with boredom.

"Has last year's attire made a reappearance?" My Aunty Linda snubbed. Her eyes judged my daily outfit; A *Sleeping With Sirens* t-shirt, black, ripped skinny jeans and scuffed, black converse.

"I could say the same about yours", my voice continued to drip.



I mean seriously, hers wasn't any better. Her strapless, floral, skin tight dress, nude heels and pink handbag? What was she? The Princess of the World?

She huffed off to the direction of the kitchen, probably to harass mum about my manners. My uncle Noah walked past, nodded his head and said, "Gabe."

He then followed his wife to the kitchen. Finally, my twin cousins, Lillian and Cody came in.

"Well look who it is! The Emo Faggot," Lillian snarked.

"Oh, look who it is! Dumb and Dumber, you being Dumber, Lillian." I mimicked her tone, a smirk slid across my face. She gasped and stomped towards the lounge room with Cody in tow.

★ ★ ★

I lazed on the couch, listening to Memphis Mayfire, waiting for time to pass, until suddenly a pillow was thrown at my face. Another one followed. I took out my headphones and looked at the twins. Fake, innocent smiles spread across their faces.

"What do you think you are doing?" I screamed.

"Annoying you for our entertainment", Cody replied, his voice cracking a bit. I laughed dryly at his reply.

"Well could you stop? I've had enough of you twits", I spat, when out of nowhere, I heard mum yell.

"I've had a gutful of you telling me how to raise my own child! You need to remove the pole out of your backside and leave me alone to my own parenting!"

"Excuse me? But Gabe is out of control!" Aunty Linda shouted back.

Thwack!

Oh My God! Mum slapped Aunty Linda. This is great! I can just tell this isn't going to end well.

"You have no right to slap my wife, Cleo!" Uncle Noah roared, his face red with anger.

"She has been harassing me about my parenting skills for years, Noah!" Mum yelled at him.

"Don't you dare yell at my wife, Noah!" my dad Mark butts in.

Beep, Beep, Beep, Beep!

Thick, grey smoke filled the lounge room. The fighting stopped. Mum went into hysterics. Lunch was incinerated.

"Is anyone up for Chinese?" she yelled out.

Smiles appeared on everyone's faces.

**By Isabella Fuller**  
Year 11,  
St. Monica's College  
CAIRNS - QLD.



# 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



Jeni Mawter

## 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



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

Please tick the box that most suits your school:

Individual Subscription \$44 (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)

# School fee payments made easy with *School Plan*

Ensuring school fees are paid on time can be a challenge for many families. Whether it's balancing the household budget or keeping track of when payments are due, school fees can sometimes be overlooked, resulting in late payment. Fortunately, there is a simple solution—***School Plan***.

*School Plan* pays your child's fees in full, directly to the school when they are due, while you pay *School Plan* in easy-to-manage monthly or fortnightly instalments. Never miss a payment or early bird discount again!

*School Plan* can cover any fixed fees, whether they are compulsory or non-compulsory, including:

- ✓ Tuition fees
- ✓ Boarding fees
- ✓ Camp fees
- ✓ Building fund donations
- ✓ Extra curricular activities such as music tuition.

For more information, call **1800 337 419** or visit **[www.schoolplan.com.au](http://www.schoolplan.com.au)**



SUPPORTING  
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION



Australian  
Scholarships  
Group