

# oz KIDS IN PRINT

**August 2017**

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improve literacy  
in schools!*

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Hayley Thompson  
(2016 Commonwealth  
Bank Art Award)*

**FREE ENTRY**

**TO STUDENTS IN PRIMARY  
OR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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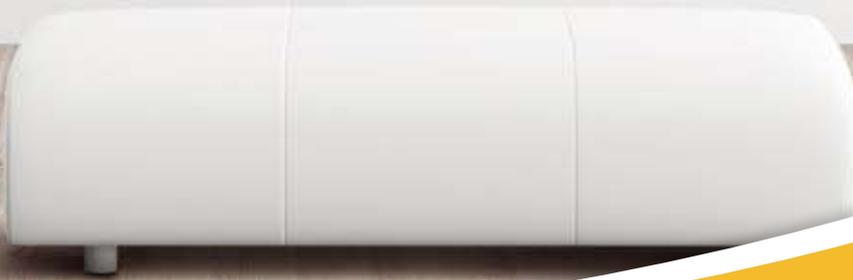
Matteo, 8 years old  
"ALIEN HUNTER"



Lia, 9 years old  
"SUPER DOCTOR"



Théo, 7 years old  
"AIRLINE PILOT"



**SMALL HANDS  
WILL DO  
BIG THINGS**



# OZ KIDS IN PRINT

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This is the second last edition of the magazine before the 2017 Young Australian Writers' Awards, which means you need to get your entries in quickly to be eligible for these awards.

Entries **MUST** be in before 6th October, 2017.

Please don't wait until the last day to enter. We receive more entries in the last week than the rest of the year. Your entry must be published to qualify. This won't happen if there are 400 stories/poems to go through.

Entries received after this date will be eligible for the 2018 Awards. But if you are in Year 12, you may not want to attend the awards after you finish Secondary School. The same goes for students who are doing Year 6 this year, since the teacher you listed is also eligible to attend the night.

So get your entries in now!

**ENTER ON-LINE at**  
[www.ozkids.com.au](http://www.ozkids.com.au)



**KEEP ON WRITING (TYPING)!**

*Carol Dick*  
Managing Editor

# Psychotic

The voices in my head,  
They take charge, they take order.  
I'm sick of it,  
It's a disorder.

I see these people,  
I see these actions.  
They say they're not real,  
I can't control the reactions.

I don't feel in control,  
I feel isolated.  
I get so angry,  
I get so frustrated.

All these theories and answers,  
Jumbled inside.  
I want them to stop,  
It's not a joy ride.

I get filled with anger,  
I get filled with rage.  
I feel like I'm stuck,  
In a flaming cage.

I say I don't need help,  
I say there's nothing wrong.  
I'm normal,  
Please, I'm strong.

They say therapy,  
They say medication.  
There's nothing wrong with me,  
I hate the frustration.

But nobody gets it,  
They don't understand.  
They don't feel like this,  
They don't feel this bland.

I feel tangled,  
I feel lost.  
I'm stressed,  
Please just stop.

I settle down,  
Start to breathe.  
I need help,  
Support me.

*This poem is told from the shoes of someone suffering psychosis. I wanted to write this piece to inform people about this diagnosis. A lot of people don't understand the effect it has on people diagnosed.*

By **Paul Halton**  
Year 6, St Joseph Primary School  
ROCHESTER – VIC.  
Teacher: Peter Shorthouse

# The Unusual Suspect



**O**RDER in the court!!! Daniel sat at the high bench anxiously waiting to be questioned.

He had been accused of killing his classmate, Jessica, by putting sodium hydroxide in the school shower, in which she had run out, just wearing a shower curtain, then only to be pushed down the stairs. Her bloody body had been dumped on the school oval, for the football team to find her the next day.

All evidence had pointed to Daniel, such as the “out of order” signs that had been placed on all the showers except one, and his bleached clothes with blood on them. This was until his sister, Sophie, took the stand. Sophie, aged 12, was a child prodigy, she had already skipped five grades, and was now in Daniel’s grade at school. She then proceeded to take off her cream jacket which revealed blood and dirt on her t-shirt. “It wasn’t Daniel who killed Jessica, it was me”, she said confidently. There was utter shock from the audience, the judge then spoke “Case dismissed until next Monday”.

The detectives now had the task of proving Sophie wrong. They sampled the dirt and blood from her t-shirt. A match to Jessica’s blood and the dirt from school. They then took Sophie and Daniel in for questioning, separately. She had explained to the detective that Jessica bullied her and got what she deserved, whereas Daniel was adamant that Sophie was trying to

take the blame for him. Some detectives believed that Sophie had done it whereas others believed it was Daniel. Whoever it was it had to be discovered soon, as otherwise, the case could be dismissed due to reasonable doubt.

The next day Daniel and Sophie’s house was searched, and their parents questioned. Their parents seemed to believe that Sophie was just covering up for Daniel, and that despite being their son Daniel was guilty. As Daniel’s room had already been searched and the detectives had found the bleached clothes in his cupboard, they did not need to search it again. In Sophie’s room, they had found a science project on sodium hydroxide, and various hate emails on her computer from Jessica, which validated the proposed bullying.

Still the detectives were befuddled with all the evidence that pointed to both the siblings. Then a detective in the corner of the room suggested, what if they were working together? This was the best idea they had had so they decided to investigate it. Unfortunately, they did not account for the fact that when questioned the siblings had ordered pizza. This information could have helped find out who was at home and who was the murderer. Only if the pizza man could remember who answered the door. So, this theory was abandoned.

The detectives decided to do an experiment as they had argued that Sophie was not strong enough to drag the 17-year-old

girl across a football field. So, they got the detective’s 12-year-old daughter to see if she could drag the mannequin wrapped in a shower curtain across the field, she couldn’t. Again, Sophie was taken into questioning, her response “I used the buggy”. The detectives again went down to the crime scene and found the buggy, with dirt in it. Another theory abandoned.

Monday came and the detectives still had no idea who had killed Jessica. Just as they thought the case was dismissed due to unreasonable doubt, both Sophie and Daniel, were released from custody.

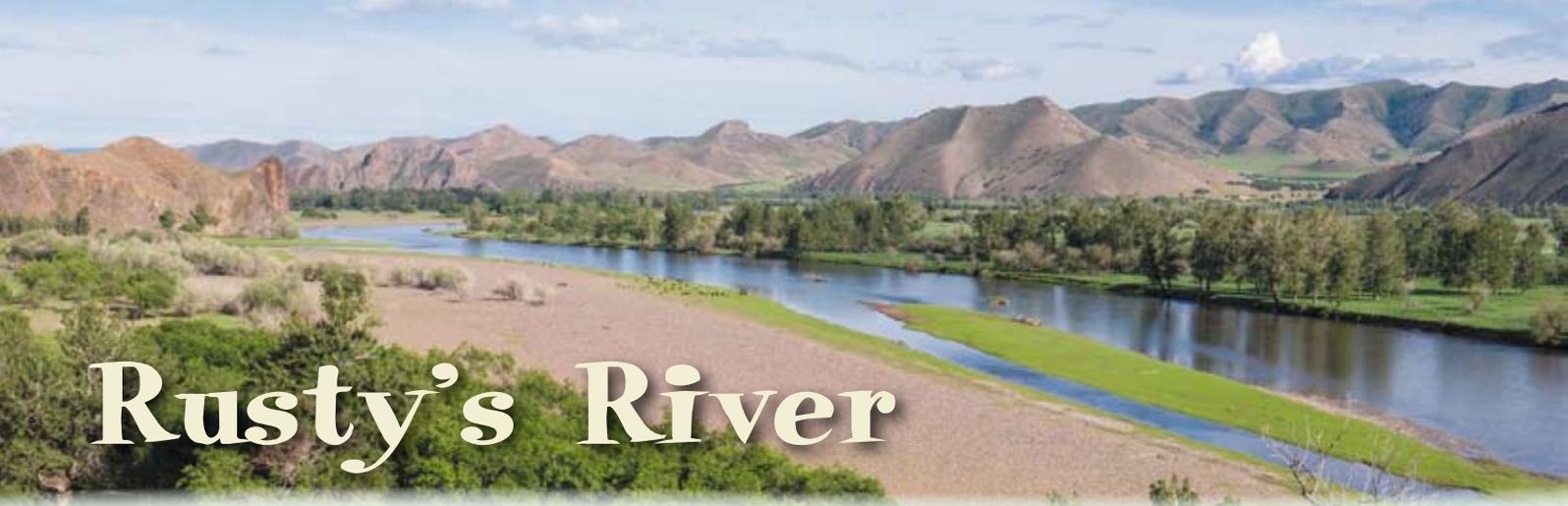
Sophie then told the detective that if she was found guilty she would only get five years’ max, and she would come out of jail with an amazing story that she could publish. The detective then said to Sophie, “You are smart, but you are not smart enough to get away with murder”.

She then replied “I think I am. A lot of people are smart enough to get away with murder. You probably are too but you have to be really smart to make people think things happened that never did”.

“What do you mean exactly?”

She then whispered into the detective’s ear, “I didn’t kill Jessica, Daniel did.”

*By Isabel Hodge  
Year 10, Caringbah High School  
CARINGBAH – NSW*



# Rusty's River

**A**S THE sun set, an old dog named Rusty trotted along the river bank hoping one day he would be a house trained dog but for now he was just a wild dog roaming around the riverbank searching for food. He was afraid of the dangers that lurked within the bush. There were humans everywhere throwing all their stinky rubbish into the river which caused some of the animals to leave the river but Rusty stayed there. There was something that made him attracted to the river. There was a deep bond, maybe Rusty liked the river for the life it gave to the animals or even because of the beauty of the river. All I knew was that he was going to put an end to the pollution and would make all the animals return to the river and would make the humans stop polluting all rivers. But he couldn't, he was just a dog, but a positive dog that could make

a difference. Then suddenly a glamorous speck of light dropped down to the ground and a soft voice cried in pain.

"Please save this river, you're our only hope."

"Who was that?" barked Rusty.

"It's me, the spirit of the river, we have come seeking your advice to help us stop this rubbish going into our rivers and killing poor, innocent animals."

"But what can I do to help?" he asked looking slightly puzzled.

"Why don't you put signs around the bush and then more people will realise what they are really doing when they litter."

So he worked all day and all night printing and drawing signs. Two days later Rusty had finished and stuck all the signs around the bush. Slowly less and less people littered and some humans even arrived with nets and took rubbish out of the river.

"Oh thank you we can never be more grateful to you. Wish what you desire the most and it will come true".

"Well", Rusty shrugged, "I wish that the river would be fresh again and all the animals would come back to the river".

And it was.

*By Shanay Thayaparan  
Year 4, St Luke's Primary School  
LALOR – VIC.*

# The Edge of the World



Tangerine, crimson, and fuchsia,  
the first ray of light went into my eyes,  
glaring but glistening,  
anxious but comfortable, unconsciously I woke up.

Sitting at the highest point,  
overlooking the world,  
gorgeous.  
Drinking a sip of coffee,  
taking an invigorating nap.

A backpacker's journey starts,  
transits mountains and hills,  
over quagmires and streams,  
experiences challenges and failures.

I walked away without vestiges  
just like how I came.  
Except for one question,  
am I at the edge of the world?

*By Jiaqi (Shirley) Yu  
Year 6, Ravenswood School for Girls  
GORDON – NSW  
Teacher: Sharon Shapiro*

# They Said That It Would Be Fair

They said that it would be fair  
That everyone would get a share  
Given with tender and care  
Love; the eternal garment we'd wear

They said we'd be happy  
Always close, you and me  
Joyous, ever so carefree  
Without a single cent of fee



They said we'd reign high  
Our enemies we'd defy  
From a challenge never would we shy  
The flag of success we'd fly

They said we'd live forever  
Certainly, the world will remember  
Remember our legacy; every endeavour  
Our memories no one could sever

They said, they did, nay, they promised so  
But for all their sweet words they were my foe  
False premises; 'twas the star of their show  
Less and less, from them, the truths would flow  
Replaced by the deceit they would sow

Now I know, but I wonder whether you ever will  
Understand my pleas that were so shrill  
From the lands of sorrow that I did till  
The echoes of the horrors abound which I would mill

I begged, I pleaded, I cried  
Yet not a single one for our happiness vied  
Whispering sweet nothings, the truth they did hide  
For they said, no, they didn't; they lied.

By **Sadhvi Naresh**  
Year 10, North Sydney Girls' High School  
CROWS NEST – NSW  
Teacher: Ms Hooworth

## DIFFERENCE

You were made different  
The colour of your skin  
You follow your leaders  
only seeking to win  
You say, they're not the same as me

You teach your poor children  
To hate those who do not speak the same  
But Ignorance is no excuse  
And all you should feel is shame  
You say, they're not the same as me

The greed never ceases  
while people suffer at your hands  
You take more than you need  
And you steal all of their lands  
You say, they're not the same as me

Your bombs, that destroy and kill  
Wrecking what's in front of you  
Not caring about your fellow man  
To imagine what they go through  
You say, they're not the same as me

Those who hold the cash and power  
Who truly have the key  
Every day, I watch in great despair  
And study all there is to see  
And I hope one day  
you will think like me

By **Haysan Michael Morris**  
Year 9, Adelaide High School  
ADELAIDE – SA  
Teacher: Livia Vernari



# The Scenes of Toil, Enslavement and Urging

The cobble stone aisle swayed underneath her blistered feet.  
The rugged calico shredded her hands as she toiled,  
Toiled at the forfeiture of a loved one,  
Toiled at the inhumanity of her proprietor,  
Toiled at the ugly bloodstain on the rugged tapestry.

She stared at the subcompacts hightailing by.  
She longed to escape from her enslavement,  
The enslavement of love,  
The enslavement of hope,  
The enslavement of joy.

For five nights and six days she worked from dawn till dusk.  
She screamed at the murderous scene pictured on the tapestry,  
A scene that was foolhardy,  
A scene of blood and gore,  
A scene of love gone amiss.

Enraged redcoats with grotesque black boots and lanky rifles marched by,  
Urging her to work faster and harder,  
Urging her to forget her life in England,  
Urging her not to speak,  
Urging her to become a machine.

Around her bourgeois bawled tearfully,  
Unmerciful redcoats glared from every angle,  
Everyone bitterly repented signing up for this,  
The measly meals,  
The horrible help,  
The famished, scorching summers.

By **Catherine Swemmer**

Year 5, Ravenswood School for Girls, GORDON – NSW

Teacher: Sharon Shapiro

## The Boy Who Turned into a Carrot

ONCE there was a boy called Daniel. He lived in Carrot Town. In Carrot Town everyone except Daniel, mainly ate carrots. Daniel was the only one to eat only carrots. One sunny morning Daniel was finishing off his carrot smoothie when his hair started turning GREEN! He suddenly realised his whole body was sickly ORANGE! Then Daniel realised he was a carrot!

Suddenly his mum saw him and started CHASING him! He realised, “She must think I’m a real carrot!”

“OUCH” screamed Daniel as his mum bit him. “My mum is gonna eat me”, thought Daniel. “I don’t want to be eaten, it hurts to be bitten”, yelled Daniel.

“Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!” screamed Daniel as he ran. “Hhhheeeellllpppp!!!!” he screamed, but that only attracted more people who would join the chase. He got to the shop and ran to the garage. Daniel huddled, shaking all over with fear. Daniel realised he was a bit less orange, he stared down at his newly formed body (a carrot). He was changing back to himself.

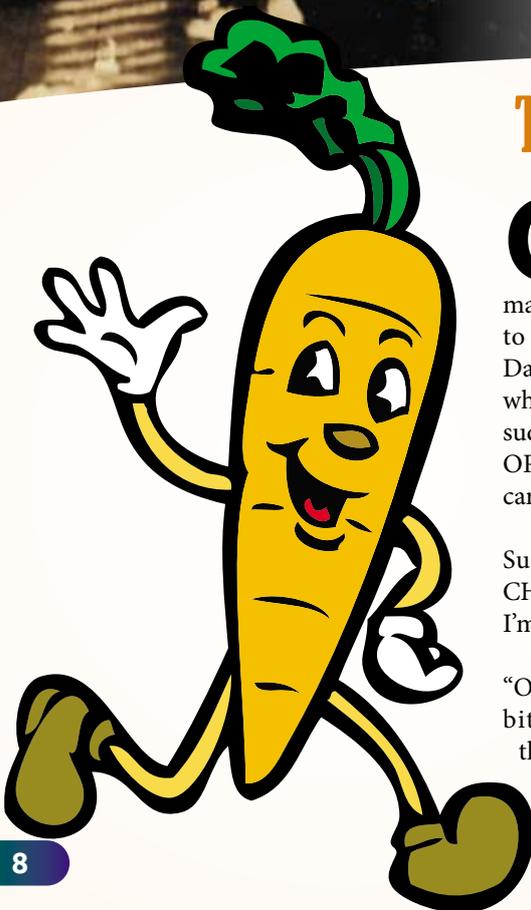
He realised after a couple of minutes he was himself and back to normal, all except one thing, he would never eat carrots again. From now on he would only eat cabbages!

By **Matthew James**

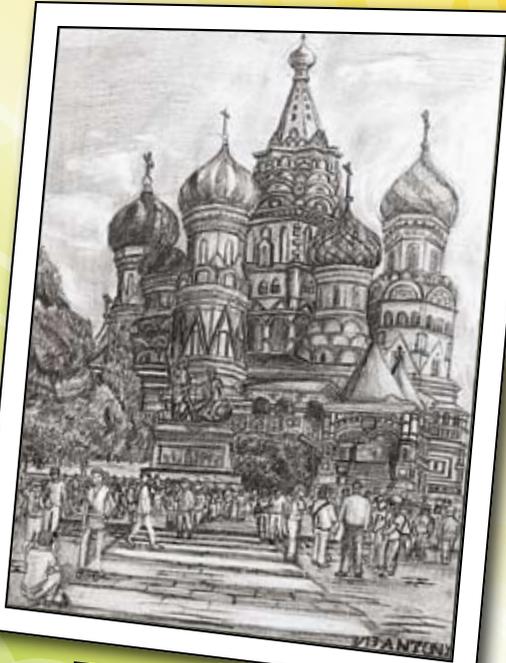
Year 5, St Luke’s Primary School

LALOR – VIC.

Teacher: Ms Mariani



# 2017 YOUNG AUSTRALIAN ART AWARDS



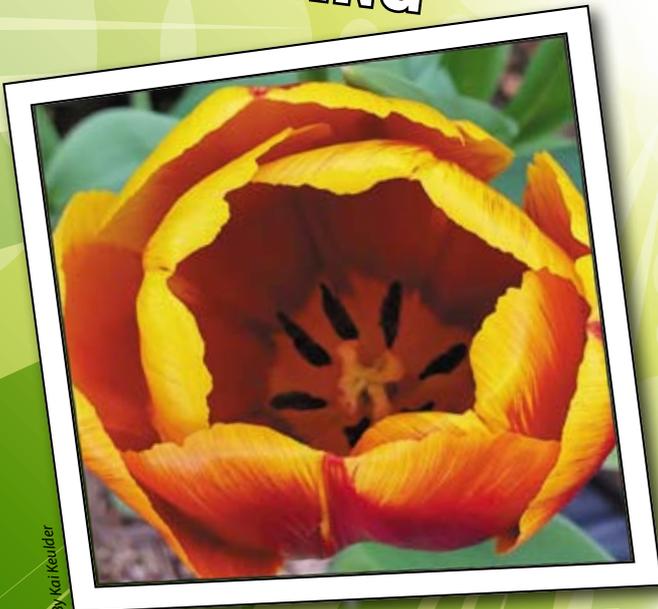
By Anthony Qin

## DRAWING



By Manna Tsuchiya

## COMPUTER ART



By Kai Keulder

## PHOTOGRAPHY



By Matthew Ropeyam

## PAINTING

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

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

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

# Fear's Curse

**S**IERRA doesn't deserve to die... neither did Abigail. I can never forgive myself for that dreadful night that took the life of Abigail. This was the world giving me another chance for not turning away, for not acting cowardly, for doing the 'right thing'. It was like magic for something like this to happen twice to the same person; I knew it was a sign. My thoughts were broken as my toe entered the water, that was laced with shards of shattered ice that led to Sierra. Only to reawaken memories that have haunted me for 6 years.

Sierra's screams echoed through my frightened mind. All I could think about were Abigail's screams though, screams of joy – that is. *We had agreed to go to the beach at night to celebrate the beginning of our summer holidays. We were enjoying ourselves, not worried about what consequences our actions would bring. Abigail was the wildest: climbing trees like a monkey and shouting at the top of her lungs towards the infinite, dark ocean. Only to hear its mighty roar as a reply, with waves crashing against the emerged rocks and drops of salty water filling the air.*

The breeze was so strong; it made my hair dance, like Abigail's hair did when she climbed those trees that night. She always untied her low ponytail before she climbed trees, I never knew why. Before I knew it I was knee deep into the water; it was taking all of the heat from within me. I was terrified. More than just terrified. Intense fear was circulating through my body like blood. A 'curse', that I would fear any large body of water placed on me since Abigail was taken by the unforgiving sea. She said she wanted to go out for a swim, she said it would be fine. She was so wrong. Till this day, I don't understand why we let Abigail do it. *She dove into the water; off the low cliff. Turning back and waving every couple of strokes. The silhouette of a 14 year old girl slowly disappearing into the horizon sparked a feeling of uncertainty, worry and fear.* The same feeling I felt earlier today.

Grabbing our coats before going to the lake wasn't enough; the harsh bite of the gushes of wind always got through. In the summer the clear water sparkled as the sun shone on it. Although, the lake is most alluring now, when a thin layer of ice forms a coat over the water like icing, barren trees get decorated with snow and the sky is grey with golden light that

shoots through. James, Abigail, Sierra and I, found it while exploring when we were 7. It was our hideout because nobody else knew the path to the bewitching lake. Our heads were held high after completing our tediously made bridge. Sierra even climbed on it, despite her not being able to swim.

Although, like I said it 'was' our hideout; never going back after Abigail's death. Being the closest to Abby (Abigail) and suffering from aquaphobia, returning would only cause greater sorrow. I kept repeating the same thing in my mind: I don't want to go back. But somehow, I was compelled to nod when James suggested we should return to the lake.

After grabbing our coats we traversed through the cold ground, our boots leaving footprints that got covered quickly by falling snow. The moonlight was tinted orange, almost red and was navigating through the branches and mixing with the blue light of James' torch. Nothing was escaping through our frigid lips but one thought was circulating in my mind: James shouldn't have brought that torch. I hated that the moonlight and the torch were the colours that the sky was painted with all those nights ago.

*Waiting for Abby to return was like expecting rain in a parched land; unlikely yet faith was necessary. The worry I felt was challenged by hope when James began talking; he said Abby would be sitting in her favourite seat waiting for us. When we walk in she'd say "Where have y'all been?", in an accent to tease Sierra, like she always does. I uncrossed my legs which were cramped in that position. Racing through her front gate, I flung open the door; only to see darkness*

*and an empty seat where I had imagined Abigail to be drinking hot chocolate. That's when we decided to call our parents and the cops. The search began. Red and blue lights flickered as they darted up and down streets for days; my hopes decreased as sleepless nights past. Even falling asleep didn't put me to ease as nightmares of water grew like weeds in my mind. If we did call for help earlier, Abby would be with us today.*

I had a funny feeling when Sierra told me to go collect firewood. Thump! The firewood I was carrying sank into the snow when I heard Sierra's cries. My head snapped back towards the lake and I was off.

I got back to see Sierra's coat folded on the edge of the lake but more importantly Sierra in the middle of the lake. Her arms flailing trying to stay above the water's surface. She doesn't deserve to die, I couldn't let it happen. I knew I had to jump in despite my fear. James was standing on the broken bridge, where I'm assuming Sierra fell from, holding something behind his back. My thoughts strayed away from James' cheers as the eerie liquid crept higher on my pant's fabric. Fear washed over me as the memories of the night Abby disappeared reared up. I had vowed never to swim here again but I couldn't let it be the reason I lost Sierra.

"Help! Hel.. Help!" Sierra screamed while I thought about Abigail's screams.

"I'm... coming!" I yelled back to reassure her between strokes.

"I... I... can't stay up much... long..."

The splashing stopped. My heart did too. I had to dive under the water, something



I 'used' to love because it was so peaceful. My head was bobbing above the water's surface; water trying to make its way in through my nose every time I dipped under. A girl appeared behind James and mouthed 'I believe in you' before untying her ponytail and scaling a tree that touched the clouds. It was Abigail. Even though I knew it wasn't real, it gave me the strength to take a deep breath and look below. Instead of seeing the lifeless body of Sierra slowly sinking, I saw her staring up at me.

The shock left me frozen, I didn't want to leave the tranquillity that I felt down here just to go back up and need a thousand questions answered. I felt Sierra's arms pull on me and then the wind against my face. We laid flat on the whiteness, imprinting our tired shapes on the snow. All at once I stopped shivering and shoving my way past James who towered over us, barked, "What in the world is happening?"

"We can explain everything", comforted James.

"No! You can't James. Tell me why we came to the lake today?! Why did..."

"Shhh... Calm down Maddy please." James broke in.

"I won't calm down after what you.."

"MADELYN!" James exploded, making snow fall off trees and leaving an unsettling silence.

"We can explain everything... promise." Sierra reassured.

"Please..." I sighed, "I need to know".

"We planned it all", James spilled out, signalling us to head to the path leading home.

The unwelcoming darkness that was encompassing me as they explained the events of tonight, would never escape my thoughts. They had devised a plan while I was away from school. After that meeting, Sierra has been taking swimming lessons, secretly. She told me to get wood so that when James broke the bridge and Sierra swam to the centre of the lake, I wouldn't be there. I didn't say anything till I reached my front door then before opening it, I

turned and looking down said "Why?" then raised my eyes to look at them.

"We did it for you." James said, "We did it so you could be... well, you again."

"Yeah", Sierra joined in, "The you who loves water, who would do anything for her friends and could get over any obstacle, even if it's as bad as losing someone... forever".

"And like I said all those nights before, Maddy we'll always be here for you", James consoled.

I stared at each of them for a moment and then turned my back to them without saying a word. I did overcome my fear but if they thought I was okay with what they had done to me... they were wrong: fire burnt in my eyes and my face turned red with the rage that was throbbing within me with each booming heartbeat.

*'As the colour of leaves change with time, so might my attitude towards them.'*

**By Leean Miranda**  
Age 15, KEYSBOROUGH - VIC.

# My Dog Competition

Everyone loves a dog and to celebrate this, Ford Street Publishing is holding the  
**My Dog Art Competition for Kids.**

Open to all mini artists up to the age of 15.

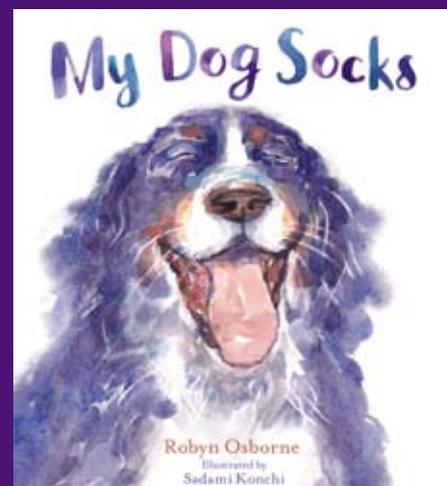
Create a drawing, painting or something arty about a dog and enter to win a box of books!

Entering is easy... just email a photo of your art to [info@fordstreetpublishing.com](mailto:info@fordstreetpublishing.com) by October 12th. Please include your name and age in your entry.

The winner will be announced at the launch of *My Dog Socks*, written by Robyn Osborne and illustrated by Sadami Konchi.  
**October 15th at 2pm at Ford Street Publishing,  
162 Hoddle Street, Abbotsford, Vic.**

RSVP to Paul at [info@fordstreetpublishing.com](mailto:info@fordstreetpublishing.com) by Oct 12th.

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# Missing...



**T**HE WIND howled, the water coming down from the dark clouds made huge puddles on the ground.

“It’s a perfect night for a flashback”, I thought to myself.

My parents and older sister are detectives, you see, and one day in 2014, they went out to solve a mystery.

“Anna, I need you to stay here with your grandparents”, my mum told me. “Your dad, your sister, Charlie and I are going out to solve a mystery about a man named Jeff”.

Of course I wanted to go with them, but I was only eleven, so I reluctantly agreed to stay. As that day went by I received a phone call from my dad.

“Anna, we are going to be a little late, Jeff isn’t giving us any answers”, my dad said over the phone.

So I waited and waited, but my family never came back. The year now is 2016 and I have continued living with my grandparents, wondering what happened to my family.

The days went past and I started getting more and more curious about what had happened to my family. Today my grandparents had forced me to clean my room.

“Fine, I will”, I agreed unwillingly.

Piles and piles of rubbish tumbled out my room. I hadn’t cleaned my room in two years because I didn’t want to lose

the memories I had made with my family. Suddenly, I caught a glimpse of a bright paper scrunched up, stuck to the bottom of my bed. I wondered what was inside the paper. Without a second to waste, like lightning, I bolted to the bed. Opening the paper I could see something was written and it held a metallic object.

“What is it, and who is it from?” I thought to myself.

Little did I know that this letter would give me all the answers to my questions. I read the letter out loud to myself.

“Anna, we have a feeling Jeff is up to no good and will try and take us away so we won’t give the press any news. We are sorry, but we have given these black earrings so you can track us...”

The rest had been cut off, instead some scrawly writing replaced it.

“Anna, I’m Jeff, and as you’re guessing the letter had been from your family. I have taken them and don’t bother finding them because I will know you are trying to track them. How, you ask? Well, I secretly got a tracking device planted in your bicep when you went to the doctor’s for a surgery on your dislocated shoulder, remember that? Well of course not, you were fast asleep and once again, don’t ever come to find your family.”

Wow, I was overcome with emotions, I scanned the paper over and over making sure it was true. It was.

“What do I do now?”, I sobbed.

My grandparents must have heard me sob because they came in quickly. They asked what was wrong, but I told them it was nothing. I didn’t want to trouble them.

“I’m just going to go have a walk to get my mind off things”, I told them.

“If only a tracking device hadn’t been planted in my arm”, I thought to myself. “Then I would be able to find my parents.”

Suddenly, like a lightbulb switching on, I had an idea. I decide I would go to a specialist for them to take out the device. When I was there I decided not to tell them exactly why and what was in my arm.

“It’s just a metal ring”, I lied.

Of course they believed me in my sweet tone. Soon the tracker was gone, I decided now I could look for my parents, not having to worry someone might be tracking me. I hopped on a bus nearby, putting on the earrings. I decided I was going to see where my earrings were the brightest. As the time went past I started to get more and more worried where my family was. Just as I started to lose hope, my earrings started flashing bright red towards Mt. Buller.

“They must be there”, I thought to myself.

So I got off the bus and walked towards the ‘Freezeware Clothes’ store.

“I can’t go looking for my parents with no jacket”, I said to myself.

So that’s what I bought and straight away started walking up north, since this was the way my earrings were the brightest.

I trekked my way up the mountain, heaving until I realised I was at the top. At the top of the mountain, there was a small cave. I could hear voices coming out of it. I crouched down on my knees and crawled into the cave. Inside the cave it was as huge as a house. I scanned the surroundings of the cave, until my eyes stopped at something that was in the middle. Sitting around a table were three people locked to their chairs.

“Mum, dad, Charlie”, I gasped in disbelief.

I couldn’t believe my eyes. I quickly rushed up to them and hugged them.

“Anna! Oh god! We’ve missed you so much”, they all cried.

I cried along with them. After we finished reuniting I asked my parents and Charlie why they never came back.

“We will explain it as soon as you unlock us”, my mum said.

“How? There isn’t a key”, I told them.

“Your earrings are the key”, they replied mysteriously.

I was unconvinced but I decided to try anyway. Click, the locks unlocked and my family was free. After this my parents told me what had happened. Jeffery Hen or Jeff had been stealing cars secretly and had been selling them as his own. When he found out my family knew, he kidnapped them and has been hiding them for the past two years. When he found out that the tracking device wasn’t on me, he quickly locked my parents and sister and flew off in a plane, far into the distance.

“How come no one noticed the cave”, I asked my parents.

“The earrings are the key”, they replied.

All was well, at least for now.

By **Rithika Ganta**  
Year 8, Kambrya College  
BERWICK – VIC.

# The Beach

The glorious sunset paradise, where restless waters flow,  
Where countless memories come alive, is where I like to go.  
The place where I think clearly, and the place where I think grand,  
Splashing in cool water, fun sports on the golden sand.

The sky, a painted canvas, with white bulbous blobs of paint,  
The cottages and houses guarding over; very quaint!  
The windy trees and clashing waves; orchestral symphony,  
Fresh smell of the ocean; an unrivalled imagery.

A calming or exciting place, where children run around,  
Like dawdling ducks they romp about, a picturesque background.  
Mature old ones lie under the wax-melt yellow sun,  
Whilst the little active ones amuse themselves with fun.

Whilst people play and dance and sing, I sit down on the grass,  
And ponder all the numerous things and skills I learnt in class.  
The place that lets one to be intellectually free  
Wonderstruck! Appreciating view of deep blue sea.

A wave of gradual darkness, as the evening arrives,  
The soothing lapping waters, as the sun goes in disguise,  
Surroundings growing ever dark, and darkness left to see,  
Sunset paradise is an amazing place to be!

By **Samuel Zong**  
Year 9, Scotch College  
HAWTHORN – VIC.

# FREEDOM'S CHILD

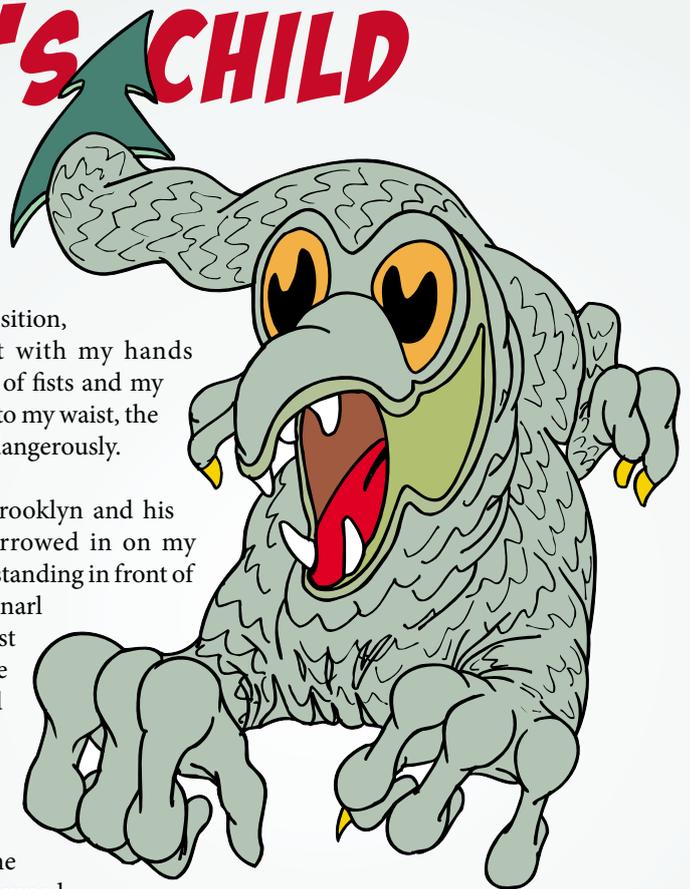
**D**ESPERATION to survive took over me, as I slashed at their feet with my double-edged sword. These aliens looked disgusting; with fangs protruding from their mouths and blank eyes that looked like the life had been drained out of them, the aliens' skin resembled a grey and scaly fish about to die, their appearance worsened with a forehead that was unnaturally big. As I twirled around, sword in hand, confusion started to overtake my brain, "Who were these creatures and why are they here... Most importantly, why don't they look like that alien E.T.?" These questions swirled around in my head, and as the glowing ball of confusion continued to expand, so did my anger.

After taking down a few more of the aliens, I placed my sword back into its sheath and stopped to pick up one of the revolvers that fell from its pocket, when a thought struck me. "Where the heck was Brooklyn?" The thought quickly vanished when I heard a shout filled with glee and victory from my left, and relief flooded me as I glanced to the side and spotted my brother waving his axe around, a smirk on his smug face. I watched on in disbelief and a tiny bit of awe, as he successfully whooped in excitement when he took an alien down. "How is this idiot smiling like a maniac, in the middle of a battle?" I thought, shaking my head at his childish attitude. The sound

of hissing snapped me back into reality where I realised that it was too late to unsheathe my sword. Cursing, I got into a defensive position, my feet spaced apart with my hands formed into the shape of fists and my sword strapped tightly to my waist, the golden hilt glistening dangerously.

Forgetting all about Brooklyn and his stupidity, my eyes narrowed in on my opponent's face. It was standing in front of me at about 6 foot, a snarl rested on its lips, whilst black, beady eyes were glaring down. I stared unwavering at his face, whilst waiting for him to attack first. My patience was rewarded, when he lunged for me impatiently and I sidestepped to the right and kicked him while he was in his dazed state, my foot hitting him square in the back.

I felt a sense of satisfaction fill me as the alien went sprawling onto the ground face first, and amusement filled me as it tried to get up. My amusement vanished instantly as an expression of mum's face flashed through my head, a look of disapproval etched on her lips. It was a look I knew



well, the one she used on me whenever I lied to her and she found out, or when I stole the cookies and blamed it on Brooklyn. The look of disappointment was enough to bring me out of the sadistic daze I was in, and end its life quickly.

*By Imelda Valoia  
Year 8, Notre Dame College  
SHEPPARTON – VIC.  
Teacher: Collette Caffrey*

## She Cries



The day she was born,  
She cries.  
The cry wasn't a cry,  
of when you break a toy,  
Or a bone.  
It's the cry, of a new chapter.  
Awaiting to begin.  
It's the sign of hope in the future.  
A new life is beginning.  
It broke my heart.  
The cry was contagious like yawns.  
Tears started to swell in my eyes,  
A single blink,  
All the water started to trickle down my cheeks.  
I named that she, Ashia.

*By Maggie Yunting Wu  
Year 6, Korowa Anglican Girls' School  
GLEN IRIS – VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs McLean*

# Ambassadors

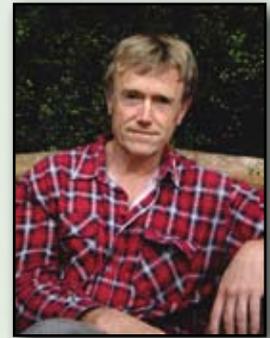


🕒 **Krista Bell** is an award-winning author of twenty-six books for young readers. Krista has been professionally involved in children's literature for over thirty years, as well as being the mother of three sons, all of whom are good readers and writers! Krista's middle son, Damien, is the illustrator 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)

# Jim and Sam in a Haunted House

ONCE upon a time there were two adults named Jim and Samantha that lived in a mansion with everything a person would want. They had a pool, tennis courts, a fountain and a famous landmark called the giant sandwich.

Jim and Sam enjoyed their luxurious lives everyday no matter what until one day they had to sleep over at their uncle's house for two days.

So the next day they packed their clothes, toothbrush etc. When they got to their uncle's house they both felt scared as the house was dark, gloomy, sunless, dim and other words.

After the petrifying look they had at the house Jim and Sam went to their rooms

and unpacked their belongings. Next they did a quick tour of the huge and hair-raising, terrifying house as they weren't entirely sure where all the rooms were. Jim and Sam went together as Sam was terrified of the house and suspected that it was haunted.

For dinner time Jim and Sam ate spaghetti with meatballs that looked like eyeballs and for dessert they had piece of cake decorated with ghosts drawn using icing all prepared by someone unknown.

At 9:00pm Jim and Sam went to their rooms and to bed and because they both suspected that the house was haunted they both stayed up till 12:00am but nothing happened so they fell asleep. As soon as they fell asleep ghosts started flying around

the house playing games, making noise and doing other things.

At 2:00am Jim woke up and heard the noises the ghosts were making and the ghosts noticed that Jim woke up so they all hid behind things and when Jim exited his room he turned on the light and he didn't hear or see anything strange so he went back to bed.

The next morning Jim told Sam what had happened and they both decided they should both get over it because they only had to stay there for a few hours. For breakfast they had cereal which made them think that everything was back to normal. After breakfast they went on their PS4s and played Fifa 17 for a long time because they were bored.

Before they went home they had homemade burgers like the burgers at Hungry Jack's. Later they packed and were ready to go but when they were about to leave the ghosts blocked the way. Just at that moment Sam had a brainwave. She went out the back door so the ghost could go around the house towards the back door so she could trick him and go back through the back door and through the front door with Jim. Without leaving a trace in three seconds they got in their car, left and lived happily ever after.

The End

By **George Zorgar**  
Year 6, St. Luke's Primary School  
LALOR – VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs. Curtis

## Loneliness

She clutched onto the dull blankets  
Memories of the luxurious feasts and banquets  
The quilt was like a second skin  
Goosebumps covered her chin

She shivered quietly  
Thoughts wandered in her mind, tightly  
She shut her eyes moments entered her like falling water  
The games, the cherished fun, the laughter

A tear rolled down her cheek  
The others came down creating a creek  
The feeling was expressionless  
The feeling was nameless

It was not fear  
Or the loss of those dear  
It was not hate  
Of an enemy or a mate

It was loneliness  
It made her emotionless  
The life on her own  
She hurt at every muscle every bone

It was loneliness, isolation

By **Jasmeen Kaur**  
Year 7, Blacktown Girls High School, BLACKTOWN – NSW  
Teacher: Ms Angulo



# Why Pigs Oink - A Myth

**O**NCE in a land far, far away called Munbadda Waterhole lived a jaguar named Inky, but everybody called him Ink for short. Animals like the emu, lion, snake and a tortoise also lived at the waterhole. Every night they sat around the waterhole and sang songs as an animal family while the firefly squids in the waterhole glowed their luminosity.

Ink was the one that was envied by the animal congregation. He was known for his terrible pranks, puns and jokes. He sometimes even sang like the way goats scream! But his biggest target was the pig, Messy. You guessed it, he got it from the way he ate. If you didn't guess it, then... then that's a different story. But the reason he loved pranking Messy was because he

was probably the most gullible out of the lot, which made it bundles easier for Ink to prank him. Messy was the only pig out of the Munbadda animals which means he was the one who received most of the pranks.

Some of the pranks were unbearable for Messy. Once Ink found a hollow rock next to the waterhole and filled up the small stone with the waterhole's water. He stealthily sneaked up to Messy and SPLASH it went onto Messy. Pigs only like water for drinking, they hate cleaning themselves, but love rolling in a nice muddy, pool of mud. At dinner while Ink was still roaring with laughter, Messy fussed about how water is the worst thing to wash yourself.

He lectured the Munbadda animals about how mud is all you could ask for. Most animals were probably half asleep by the time he had finished.

But the one thing that the animals said when they got pranked was "Oi Ink!" As Messy is the one who got pranked the most, he is the one that says "Oi Ink" which changed into "Oink!"

And that is the story of why pigs oink.

Oink! Oink!

By **Manesh Kusalakumar**  
Year 6, St Luke's Primary School  
LALOR - VIC.  
Teacher: Mrs Paolini



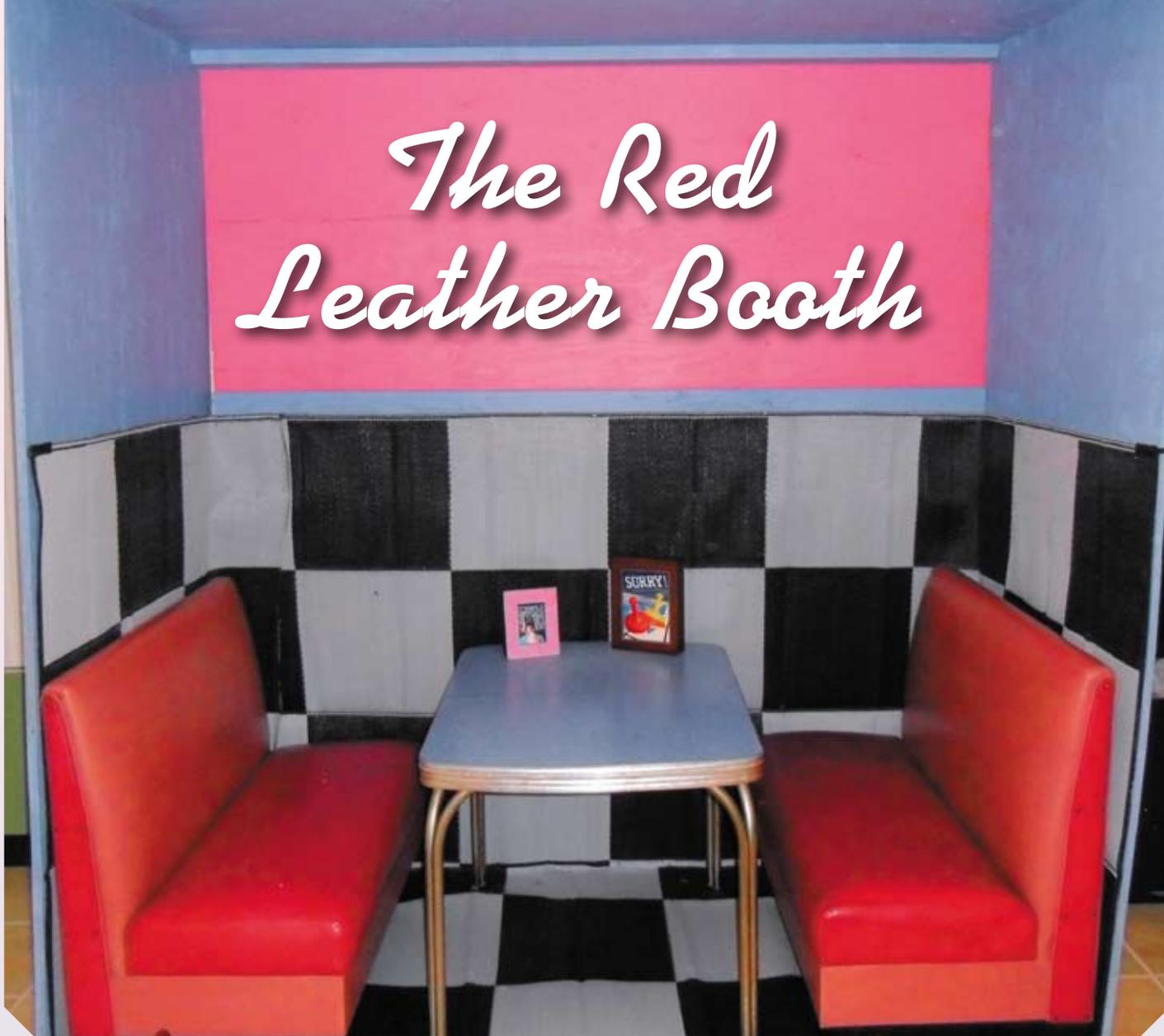
# I'm Not Yours

I'm not your slave.  
You can't control me and change who I am.  
You call me ugly, but I'm beautiful in my unique way.  
I'm not your trophy to show off, I'm a person.  
Your not my man and I'm not your girl.  
I don't need you, I can stand on my own two feet,  
I can stand strong on my own.  
You can't keep me underwater, because sooner or later,  
I will rise up.  
I am stronger than what you think.  
Your words may not hurt me, but deep inside  
I am hurt.  
I can heal again,  
but you still attack me.  
You expect me to back down and take you in,  
but I will rise up again, even stronger.  
I am beautiful.  
I am strong.  
I can overcome anything,  
if I just believe.  
I am.....

~ Women can overcome anything, if we try. ~  
"Overcome your expectations." - Teisa Carolina

By **Teisa Carolina Helu**  
Year 6, St John's Primary School, AUBURN - NSW  
Teacher: Miss Katherine Medrzejewski

# The Red Leather Booth



**S**O THIS is what hell feels like. My throat feels hot and dry like a desert. I don't know where to put my hands, they won't stop shaking. There is a room full of watching eyes; they are all waiting for me. The sound of my own heart pounding in my ears is deafening. How long have I been standing here for? I attempt to clear my throat to buy myself some time. Oh, now everybody is watching me. I glance down at my hands, which are white with a tinge of green. That can't be healthy. I feel like vomiting; I think I'm going to collapse. Why did I agree to this?

★★★

I remember when David and Laura first met. It was an instant spark. David and I were in our usual bar. He was ordering us our usual drinks up at the polished mahogany counter that I always admired, and I was waiting in our red leather booth. David picked up our beers and as he turned back towards me, he bumped his elbow

into a woman sitting at the bar and spilled our drinks. David was frantically blurting out his apologies to the person, who turned around to reveal it was a woman that he would come to know very well. She laughed it off, reassuring him it wasn't a big deal, while flashing her trademark toothy smile. They introduced themselves, and David being the witty person he is, cracked a joke that both of them claim not to remember. This would have been a perfect fairytale meeting if Laura had not fallen off her bar stool in a fit of laughter, causing her to laugh even more uncontrollably.

I watched this scene happen from across the room and I kid you not, I could see the love connection. Hell, the entire room could sense it. Laura's cheeks tinged with pink to David's touch as he helped her up. The corners of his grey eyes crinkled from his smile. Laura tucked her raven hair behind her ear and introduced herself. They began talking, and I didn't even mind that I was sitting alone in the corner of a

booth with no drinks because David had just met his future bride, and I knew it. I stood up, walked over and introduced myself. I then met Laura's friend and for the rest of the evening the four of us sat in our regular booth, laughing and joking all night.

Fast forward a couple of years, and Laura and David had just moved in together. Laura's friend from the bar had moved away to Chicago but still called us sometimes. And me? Well, I had just had my one year marriage anniversary with my lovely wife. That year was a big year for everyone. But it was also the year when Laura and David had had their first real fight. It involved an entire week of silent treatments, door slamming and hysterical crying. However, after a week of not sleeping in the same bed, not sharing breakfasts and not laughing over their little anecdotes, they made up in an afternoon of happy tears and huge hugs. I had gotten a call from Laura that night. She was blubbering, and obviously

tipsy, slurring about how she can't live her life without David. And I was sitting on my couch, smiling to myself. Those two were like magnets, they would always end up together.

It had not even been a year after the big fight when Laura had fallen pregnant. Laura's friend from the bar returned for the baby shower and had burst into tears when she felt the baby kick. I had spent two sleepless days, and one sleepless night, waiting in the hospital, anxious for Laura. The doctor tapped me on the shoulder, apparently I was dozing off, and told me Laura was ready to have visitors in her room. Laura looked absolutely exhausted but she was beaming. David was unshaven and rubbing Laura's shoulders. And the baby? She was gorgeous, born with naturally olive skin and a toothless smile. They called her Brooklyn, named after me. I had even shed a tear or two when they asked if I wanted to be Brooklyn's godfather, but I would never admit it.

Brooklyn had been feisty, even from a young age. She had her own little game where she tried to mimic what people say, as they said it. It was especially charming when she couldn't pronounce long words but tried her hardest to. She had a dimpled smile and her hair was already shoulder length by the time David had finally got around to proposing. He had planned it for months. He had organised a treasure hunt, consisting of ten clues. It started from the moment Laura woke up and found a note in David's absence, until the time Laura had at long-last arrived at the beach. I had been speechless when I saw what David had planned. He had organised it meticulously, so it was just sunset by the time that Laura had arrived. She walked down the rose petal aisle to find David waiting at the end, holding back tears. Everyone she had ever loved stood on either side of the path. It was unforgettable, and the mood was of utter bliss and euphoria. Everyone was on a constant high, just anticipating the wedding.

I had known both David and Laura for almost ten years now, so I thought writing a Best-Man-Speech would be easy. And it was, except I had nearly twenty different versions. I couldn't decide, and the person I wanted to talk to most was David, who was too caught up in wedding plans to worry about the speech. Time passed, and my indecisiveness wouldn't choose one. I knew all of them off-by-heart but I couldn't

decide which was best. It was the morning of the wedding and I had finally chosen a beautiful, yet charming and comical story of how they moved in together. Not to brag, of course, but I am an excellent Best-Man-Speech writer. Except, when it was my turn to say my speech during the wedding, I was at a loss for words.

And now here I am. I am grasping at the words to any of those carefully memorised speeches, but I just cannot find them. I am standing in a crowd full of people, who are all anticipating my speech. My mouth keeps opening and closing. I probably look like a fish out of water. I look around. Everyone has the same expression on their face. It's a painful expression, one of second-hand embarrassment. Oh, help. I don't know what to do. I'm usually so good at speeches! But why is everyone staring at me!? All feeling has escaped my limbs and all rational thoughts have escaped my mind. I frantically nod and sit down in my seat, my face burning but cold and clammy at the same time. My hands are shaking and my hair is sticking to the side of my face. Am I crying? I think there's tears dripping down my face but I don't remember crying. Do normal people get spots in their vision? I feel like shivering and vomiting and screaming, all at once. I make eye-contact with David, pleading for help.

"Oh that's classic Brooklyn", I hear David shout from across the room. He begins to walk over to me. "Brooklyn here, is actually an extremely emotional guy who cries at every sappy scene in a movie!" The crowd laughs and I manage to chuckle along with them. "He's the best guy in the world, my closest friend, and my best man. Even if he still cries in all the Disney movies. I'm not kidding, this big ol' bloke cried in Nemo!"

"But the barracuda!" I retort jokingly. The entire crowd laughs. Okay, maybe this isn't too bad.

"You know that in college, I used to call him 'blubbering Brooklyn'?" Everyone laughs. I look up at him. Thank goodness for David. That man can charm the birds out of the trees.

"Do you all know the story about when I asked him to be my best man? He was in tears, it looked like Niagara Fal – wait, actually, I don't want to spoil it yet. Brooklyn, let's you-and-me tell that story together."

*By Claire Lendvai*

*Year 10, Caringbah High School  
CARINGBAH – NSW  
Teacher: Ms Paabo*

## There's This Question

There's this question that's asked a lot; we hear it in every way,  
"What's the time?" they ask, before disappearing into the day,  
Time for food, time for bed, or time to feed the fishes,  
It's time for work or time to wash the dirty dishes.

Time can go really fast and time can go really slow,  
You didn't even realise that you read that 3 seconds ago,  
Time keeps ticking, no matter what occasion,  
It never stops for any situation.

Waiting for a time to have fun,  
We're booked out from any age to anyone,  
They say you don't know what you have until it's gone,  
But you have to focus on the future and live life to push on.

If there ever comes a day when the day becomes more,  
I wonder how we'll know when to eat, or when it was before,  
Do we hurry? Do we stop? Wait, hold on what's the time?  
If I started earlier, you'd be finished reading this rhyme.

*By Alanah Byron*

*Year 7, Nambour Christian College, NAMBOUR – QLD.  
Teacher: Mrs Stanton*

# OUR AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS ARE BUSY IN SCHOOLS IN RURAL AUSTRALIA.

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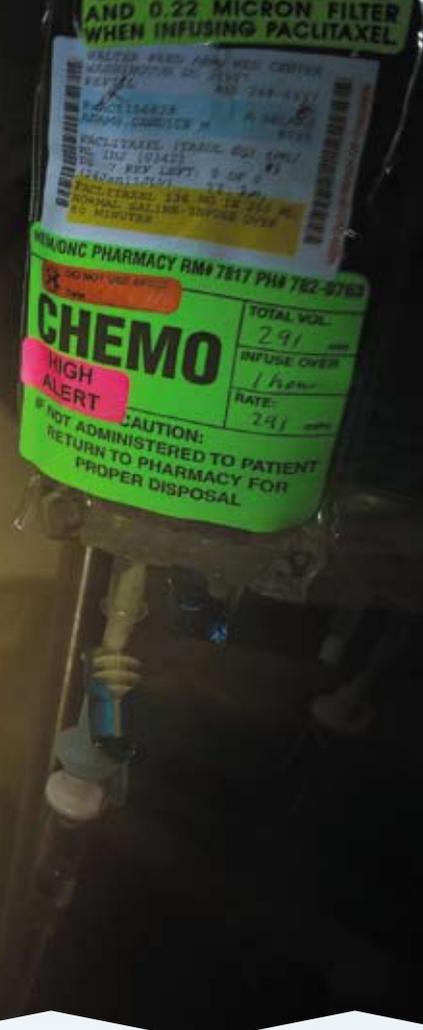


# CANCER

I will strike at the strangest moment  
like debris bobbing in the sea.  
When no one out there can help you,  
and it is just you and me.  
Careful, careful, steady now,  
watch out for that tree!  
Later in the hospital,  
the treatment drives me to flee.  
Hair is slowly dropping  
from your dainty little head,  
Mama! Mama! You will cry  
just to find me instead.  
I think I like the task  
of ruining people's lives,  
being cruel is what the body does  
because doctors will lie at times.  
But in a darkened forest  
a pure white wolf will sleep  
waiting for a call,  
a call from somewhere deep.  
Because once that wolf awakens

I retain my hope no more.  
That wolf will drain my life  
and transfer it, so it's yours.  
Slowly, slowly I am slipping  
that wolf is in your brain.  
It is overtaking all your thoughts  
I have no more life to claim.  
But cautiously I will slip,  
sliding down your arm.  
Hugging my arms around your waist  
your peaceful life in my palm.  
Cancer is a wild animal.  
Lurking in the dark,  
that small white wolf offers hope  
but cancer tears it apart.

*By Maya Skyring*  
Year 6, Ravenswood School for Girls  
GORDON – NSW  
Teacher: Sharon Shapiro



## DYSTOPIAN WORLD STORY

**T**HE SOUND of an eerie screech fills the room. He bursts through the door and out of the broken down building with the unearthly creature chasing after him. Using all the strength in his adrenaline-filled body, he tries to pull old remains of broken down buildings and throwing large metal poles across the path to try to detour the creature. He tries to lose it running in and out of old alleyways until finally the alleyways end... he is trapped.

The alien-like creature comes running around the corner repeating its eerie screech and comes to a halt at the end of the alleyway. His heart starts racing even faster than when the creature had been in pursuit of him, if that was even possible. He felt as if his heart was about to suddenly burst out of his chest, slowly but surely the creature advances forward towards its certain victim.

He catches a glimpse, out of the corner of his eye are three metal rods leaning against the corner of the alleyway. He edges his way towards them shuffling his feet along

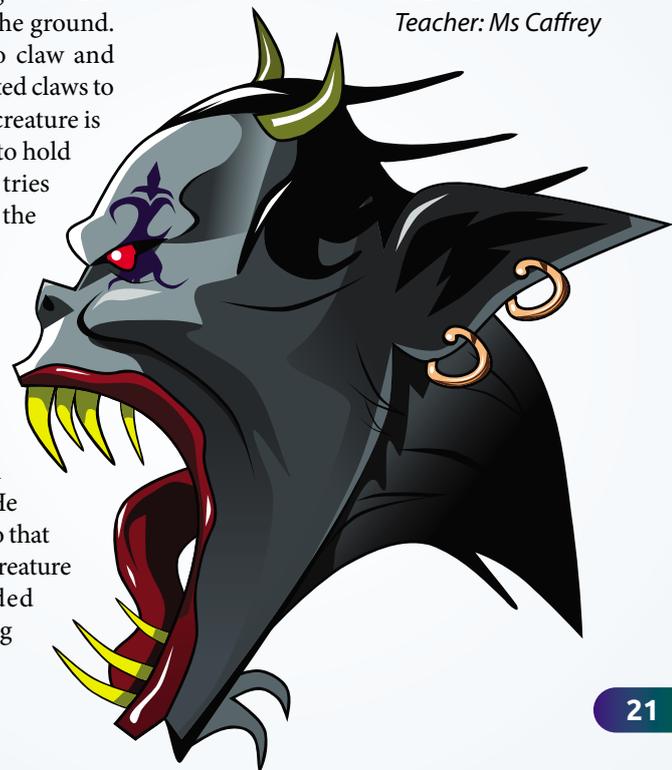
the ground, making no sudden movements that may provoke the creature that is now only ten or so metres away. The poles are only an arm's length away.

“It is now or never”, he thinks to himself. He swiftly reaches for one of the rods, at the same time the creature lunges towards him, the force knocks him to the ground. The creature viciously tries to claw and scratch him using its long serrated claws to devour him. The breath of the creature is so intense and foul that he has to hold down the urge to throw up; he tries to hold the creature off using the rod as a shield.

He uses his legs to push the creature away, giving him just enough time to re-focus; he grips the rod firmly in his hand and plunges it through the chest of the creature, which lets out an unearthly scream. He attempts to struggle to his feet so that he can inspect the vanquished creature but starts feeling light headed and seeing two of everything

before his head starts dizzily spinning, he collapses in a heap on the dismantled concrete ground that has been covered in a thin layer of sand...

*By Brock Ballintine*  
Year 8, Notre Dame College  
SHEPPARTON – VIC.  
Teacher: Ms Caffrey



# Feathered Fate

**T**HE NIGHT of my 21st birthday, I experienced something truly magical. Not often does a gambling addict become appreciative of an environment that had tried so hard to rid her from the world. The realisation of my lust for power truly terrified me and the searing pain of my destiny dawned on me that night. I had to write to the one person that understood me and loved me, my mum.

My mum was like a tenacious eagle – she wasn't scared of storms. Her wings embraced her chicks and nursed them despite their development into power hungry animals. Her startling scarlet coloured eyes were sympathetic to my sickness. Her lips, the twisted petals of a rose, always formed an infectious smile I couldn't resist.

I sat down on the floor. My pen quivered in my hand as I began,

*My Dearest Mother,*

I paused and reflected on how naïve of a sixteen-year-old I was to think gambling was fun. I still remembered the first dollar I had won: my heart jumped, fooled by its deceptive poker face, it was already too late to stop the goblin clawing under my skin.

Its scales were putrid green and rough, itching under my membrane.

*Every time I enter a casino, I grieve because I lost you, dad and Nick. I can't believe it's been 17 months since I saw you last and I am utterly disgusted for what I have done to our family.*

It was true. I was ashamed. The pain I had caused my family was denied for too many years. Every time I entered a casino, I acknowledged the perfectly aligned crystal chandeliers. I did not see beauty within them; I saw soldiers. Their opulence blinded unsuspecting victims whilst the pointed blades starred down ready to stab those underneath. The long red carpet soaked up the people's blood as they continued to claw to every slot machine or table. They were symbols of others' misfortune. Inside I kept my head down, my cheeks blushed, and I held my killer coins tighter. In one room were the slot machines. Their hypnotising eyes were that of a monster I used to read about in Stephen King novels. It chomped my coins. They craved copper. Then, the place I dreaded the most, the poker room. I reclined in leather seats to play. They smelt like profited slaughter.

The casino building always buzzed with laughter, but I fidgeted and sweat protruded from every crevasse in my body even if I felt colder than a corpse. I

couldn't have told my mum how my fists tightened around my precious gold as it chimed melodies for me. But I also could not deny my compulsion to drink. I wanted to feel a wave of warmth travel down my throat only to tame the goblin. But this casino 'buzz' already annihilated my self-worth. Jolly Jeff stood at the bar, his fingers pointed at me like a gun as he beckoned, "Hey, Victoria, poker again, or maybe slot machines, eh?". I never responded but wished he had shot me. I could never have told mum how I congested my airways with toxic tobacco; the ash settled at the bottom of my lungs which weighed me down. Or the car's noxious fumes which acted as a hallucinogen forcing me to succumb to my fate I sealed at 16.

*I was stupid and ungrateful and dishonest at your expense. Tonight, I saw a homeless woman on the boulevard and thought about how you would have stopped and whispered a poem to her as you did to me:*

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers  
that perches in the soul  
and sings the tune without the words  
and never stops at all.*

*I stopped writing, guilt ridden, a tear fell down my face and reddened my cheeks. It landed on the page and smudged the word 'Hope.' I stared at the rain which created a deluge on my apartment window pane, and oddly, it soothed the itch under my skin. I looked toward the moon, whose crescent frowned at me in shame.*

I was glad I wrote to my mum instead of Ace, my best friend. I don't think



A



A

he ever stopped playing poker. He risked it all and won. He helped me and betrayed me. Sometimes I felt like he had me in a noose as he often whispered, "Victoria, put an extra ten bucks in, it won't hurt you... trust me". But just before I suffocated, I found one final strength to untie that knot. How? I guess it was mum. I never told her that though, the grief of having lost her daughter would have lengthened her wrinkles. I continued to write empowered by her strength:

*You knew I grappled the steel bars of my cage and shook them profusely. You knew my tune had fallen silent as the notes ran off the page. Why didn't I? I denied that dwelling on my anguish was pointless. I denied I had ruined our family.*

At midnight on my 21st birthday, I had made the arduous 20-minute walk home when the moon illuminated what seemed like 750,000 wrens. One awoke and flew off an electric wire. It was late and I felt hazy, but this only made the stars dance. I had no coins in my pockets making hideous sounds and the ash that clouded my lungs had dissolved.

*I needed to write to you, I needed to explain. I love you so much and I cannot deny that feeling any longer.*

*As morning came, my head bobbed above the wet page, my neck had stiffened but the morning light had silenced the crows that mimicked the many voices which*

*previously demeaned me. Instead, the wrens sang on the window sill in front of me and announced they were alive, alert and ready to defend themselves. I smiled and whispered to a humble wren, "Hope is a thing with feathers". And as it flew off, its shadow was that of an eagle.*

With one final pen stroke, I sealed my new fate.

*Mummy, your daughter is flying home.*

By **Dominika Bejnarowicz**  
Year 12, St Dominic's Priory College  
NORTH ADELAIDE – SA  
Teacher: Shelda Rathmann

## Stepping Through Time

I have come a long way –  
But how did I get here?

Leaping into community involvement from First Aid to Agriculture.  
Then there's the unforeseeable, public engagement at the zoo.

Enjoying every second –  
Who would have thought?

Back a few years now –  
Studying by Distance, having choices.  
Meeting a few good teachers –  
Is this real?

An important moment happens –  
A 'mentor' for me.  
Someone who explains social interactions.  
Challenges are overcome and promises are made.  
Time travels backwards and now I can't remember –  
What's going on?

Growing younger, confined behind school gates.  
Fights with teachers.  
I am the mouse who roars.  
Many 'little chats' in small cold rooms.  
A rollercoaster of emotions fuelled by negativity.  
Distracted by my skating but not enough –  
Is this forever?

Time continues backwards.  
Playgroups to fluffy toys.  
Then there's the pocket money that I once enjoyed –  
Will these happy times ever disappear?

Now at home with mum.  
Safe, secure and loved.  
My home is familiar, my own.  
Growing younger by the second.  
What will my life be, I wonder?



By **Miranda Plowman**  
Year 8, Distance Education Centre Victoria  
THORBURY – VIC.  
Teacher: Allira Scott

# BOOK REVIEWS

Meet our book reviewers Emily, Nicole, Piper, Zach and Jack from Tucker Road, Bentleigh Primary School, in Victoria.

Reviews Coordinators: Robyn Donoghue and Meredith Costain



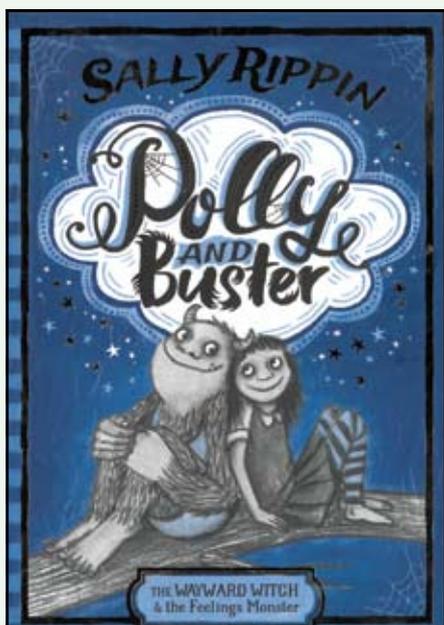
## **Polly and Buster**

by Sally Rippin (Hardie Grant Egmont)

This book is about two best friends called Polly and Buster who are not really meant to be friends, because monsters and witches just don't mix!

It's a good thing that true friendships never end no matter what people say or think.

I like how Sally Rippin has drawn her own pictures this time, they are terrific! She



uses lots of powerful words which makes the book really satisfying to read.

Suitable for readers aged 8+ who love mystery.

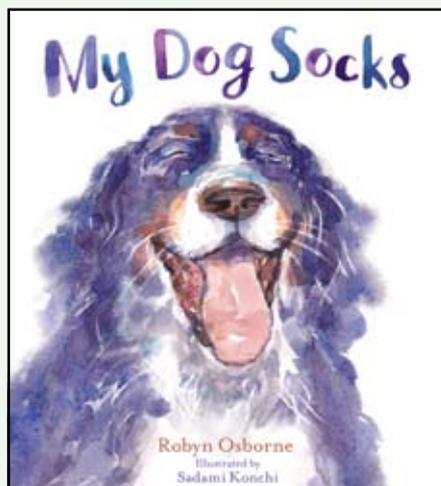
Rating: ★★★★★★★★☆☆

— Emily, Grade 3

## **My Dog Socks**

by Robyn Osborne and Sadami Konchi (Ford Street Publishing)

My Dog Socks is about a boy and his dog Socks. The story describes how the boy and his 'not so ordinary' dog have adventures in the forest, at the farm, on the beach



and in the garden. The book is written in rhyme and has lovely pictures.

In the story we see the dog as a pongy pig, a black bear and a daring dolphin. In the end it shows the close relationship that the boy and the dog have.

I definitely recommend this book for all ages.

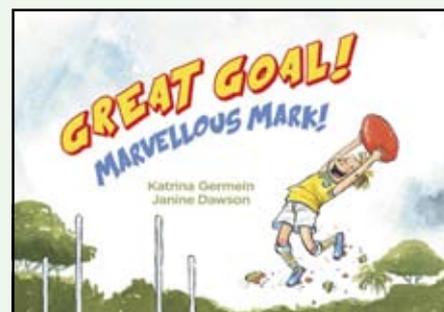
Rating: ★★★★★★★★☆☆

— Nicole, Grade 4

## **Great Goal! Marvellous Mark!**

by Katrina Germein and Janine Dawson (Ford Street Publishing)

This is a story about a footy match played in the rain. But it's not only just for fun — it's also an alphabet book featuring lots of





different words about football! Read about the Yellows vs the Stripeys in this exciting game of footy!

The book has fantastic illustrations by Janine Dawson and would be really good for kids under 9.

Who will win the game?

Rating: ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆

— Zach, Grade 3

**Ella Diaries #11: Going Green**

by Meredith Costain and Danielle McDonald (Scholastic Australia)

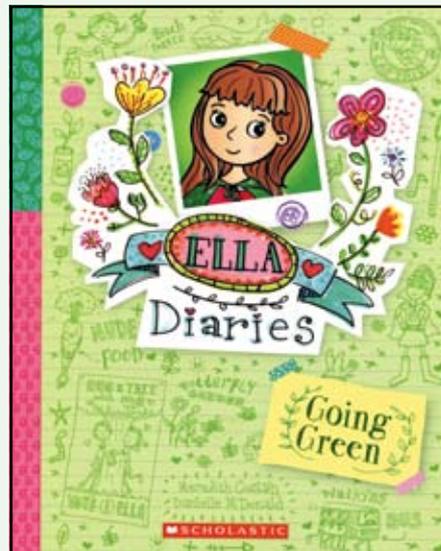
In *Going Green*, enemies Peach and Ella are both going for the position PPC (Planet Protector Captain) at their school, so Zoe helps Ella try to win. But in her typically horrible way, Peach lies about liking the environment just so she can be captain, and Ella has to settle for being Vice PPC.

I really like how much Ella loves the environment, because I love and care for the environment too. There are lots of hints and tips on recycling and caring for our planet throughout the book. I also really like how the book has lovely illustrations on every page.

This book would be great for children aged 7+ who love reading diaries.

Rating: ★★★★★★★★★★

— Piper, Grade 3



**Glitch**

by Michelle Worthington and Andrew Plant (Ford Street Publishing)

This is a story about Glitch and his friend June who have a billycart race. It has a fabulous message about recycling as they make their cart out of all sorts of things

they find at the dump. The illustrations by Andrew Plant are really bright and Michelle Worthington uses lots of great words.

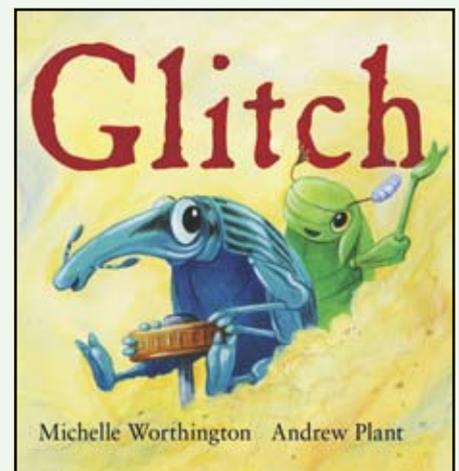
I like this book because it makes people think about what they could make when recycling things. I also really enjoyed how the author and illustrator both made it very entertaining.

This book also gives a strong message to never give up, even if you are losing.

I recommend this book for ages 7–9.

Rating: ★★★★★★★★★★☆☆

— Jack, Grade 6



**T**HE MOONLIGHT glistened amongst the ink splashed black sky. Through my window, I saw the crepuscular night sky stare back at me.

Tomorrow was the day. The day to start a new life, from scratch. I had lived in Vietnam for over 10 years until I migrated to Australia. There was war constantly and children hungry from birth. Kids without parents roaming the streets aimlessly. Tomorrow was the day I start school in a new country. I was filled with trepidation. My English was incoherent. I tried so hard to speak but I just fumble.

Downstairs the smashes and bashes continued as Ma and Pa worked at our food shop *Sieu Thi Vietnam*. We had the shop for a few months now with the help of uncle Tam. Ma and Pa cooked delicious food but there were only a few customers every day. We managed money very tightly. There were limited family times and they were mostly spent on household chores or things to do for the shop.

In the bed, next to me lay Tuyen, my younger sister. We lived in a small rented house with the shop downstairs with a small grey tiled kitchen and two small bedrooms upstairs. Ma and Pa constantly told to me study hard and always said 'Working hard is the key to success.' And as I thought of my frenetic day tomorrow, my eyelids gently closed and I drifted off to sleep.

The sound of the hustle and bustle on main street woke me up. I looked at the clock and it was half past seven. My hair was a mess sticking out like a bird's nest and my eyes were half closed. I ran to the shower and washed myself with cold water sending goose bumps through my limbs. I hurried to the breakfast table and chugged down my glass of milk and two biscuits. I was dreading the walk to school in this cold morning.

I speed walked wearing my oversized kilt which was a hand me down from our lovely neighbours. As I walked, I could see a misty silhouette of Glenfield Public School. I walked past a distinctive red-bricked cottage that glared at me.

I walked a bit further and there I saw an old lady that caught my eye. She had grey hair and skin as white as snow. Her bright, flowery dress showcased her loving personality and her hands wobbled as she



steadied the teacup on the saucer near her. Her piercing hazel eyes penetrated back at me with so much intensity, like she was studying my mind. I kept walking as I looked forward to the first day of my school.

I saw a rush of students and realised I was at the gates of Glenfield Public School. I looked around and went to the school reception for help.

A grumpy old lady with oval shaped glasses which were pushed towards the tip of her nose, showed me my classroom.

I entered the classroom and all eyes were looking at me. I sat down quietly. After introducing me to the class, Ms Aubert started teaching Maths. It was hard for me to follow her English accent. I was scared to ask anything but kept remembering Ma and Pa's words to study hard.

As Ms Aubert's words drifted in the background, my mind flashed back to our beautiful house in Vietnam where I had lot of friends. I spent a lot of time singing

while playing the piano, which I learned from Aunty Chang. She always told Ma and Pa that I should take classes as I am very talented with music. And then war happened and it ruined everything, all my dreams.

The day passed. There were very few kids who looked like me. I was the outsider. Finally, the bell rang and I carried my bag and headed towards the crowded iron gates.

I walked across Parkview Avenue; my street. The distinctive red-bricked house stood out once again as I heard beautiful sounds coming from the open window. I couldn't help but eavesdrop. I sauntered through the white picket fence surrounding the cottage. I peered through the window and saw the same old lady singing softly and playing her grand piano. I was mesmerised by her voice. Something was drawing me towards her.

She held the final chord in her piece and looked at me. She had spotted me. I turned and charged down the street as

fast as I could through the hilly pathways towards home. Through my heavy panting, I headed upstairs.

Who was that lady? Was she a pianist? A singer?

The questions bogged my mind as the sounds of the piano and her beautiful voice replayed over and over. I couldn't wait to walk to school tomorrow.

While having leftover Ca tim kho from the shop for dinner, Ma spoke in Vietnamese to me to study hard and learn good English so that I could help with the shop. 'We are very poor. Study hard Linh,' she said.

I nodded although deep inside me I knew I was not the best in studies. I wanted to scream to Ma that Maths and English don't interest me – music does. I want to sing like a free bird. But that was only in my dreams. I had to work in the shop after school and talk to the customers in English and clean the dirty tables.

Over the next couple of days as I walked passed the red-bricked house I kept seeing the old lady playing the piano and I kept peering through the window. She looked at me and gave me a warm smile but I was too afraid to confront her, so I just ran away. I thought of asking Ma if I could learn singing and piano from this lady but never had the courage to ask, knowing Ma's negative response.

As every day, that day I was walking to school in the cold misty morning. As I was getting closer to the cottage, the familiar sound of the magnificent piano filled the air and brightened the atmosphere. I crept towards the house and I saw the old lady playing the piano and signing in her beautiful voice. She didn't look at me today and instead she wandered off into the depths of the house.

Suddenly, the lady emerged in front of me and smiled affectionately. My first instinct was to run but my feet were rooted to the ground. So, I forced a nervous smile.

'I'm Linda, and I have been noticing you creep towards my front window and see me, and every time I decide to have a chat with you, you run off,' said Linda thoughtfully.

'My na... aa... m... e... iis... Linh,' I stammered.

Linda looked at me amiably and said 'Why don't you come inside? It looks like you like music?'

I walked in the antique old cottage. It had golden ceilings and pale blue walls filled with music trophies and certificates. I checked the grandfather clock near the entrance. I still had time to go to school. I kept looking at the grand piano.

'That's my piano, the one I have had for years. Can you play the piano?' Linda asked, handing me some assorted biscuits.

I nodded.

'You can have a play if you like,' Linda said with her hazel eyes growing larger.

I had been yearning to feel the ivory keys beneath me. I walked over to the piano perhaps with a little too much enthusiasm. I looked back at Linda and she looked at me reassuringly.

It felt amazing to finally play. My fingers felt incredible. I started singing my favourite song. I went on and on and on. Suddenly I realised it was time for school and I started to rush out. Linda held my arm and said 'You have an amazing voice, you played the piano so well. You are so talented. I have never seen so much talent in a girl as young as you. You are a bright star. Come over again my little girl!'

I was in a different world to hear Linda's words. I had found a ray of hope in my otherwise dull life. I ran to school wiping off tears of joy.

During lunchtime, without thinking, I jogged towards Linda's house. I knocked on her door and as she opened the door she seemed surprised but welcomed me at the same time. She ushered me in and we spoke for ages. Even though my English was incoherent, she still understood me. I told her about my journey to Australia from Vietnam and how I had struggled. I blurted it all out. She empathised. She took me compassionately by the hand and took me to the piano. I sat on the stool. My hands shook and I sang the only English song I knew: '*God help the outcasts*'.

The first chord was shaky and as the song progressed my fingers flew though the piano and my voice touched the high notes in perfection.

As I pressed the pedal elongating the last note, I looked over at Linda and she stared stunned.

'Wow, Linh you are amazing. You are truly blessed by God. You have a very soulful voice,' said Linda.

I smiled a genuine smile and went back to school.

Days passed by and every lunchtime I went and saw Linda. We sang together and played the piano pieces. She taught me new songs and some of the most difficult classical compositions. One day I told her, I feel guilty of hiding it from my parents and not paying her any fees. Linda said, 'One day you will, when you show your talent to everybody. That will be my fees.'

The next lunch I had crept out of school, Linda confronted me with a question that changed my life.

'Linh, I am amazed in your music talent and have decided to enrol you in the State Music Championship. Here is the notice and don't worry about the entry fees.'

Linda saw my face and said 'Linh you are God gifted, your talent should be showcased throughout the state.'

I hugged her tightly. Linda promised to speak with Ma and Pa about the championship. I was relieved.

'The competition is in three weeks and I was thinking you could sing and play '*God help the outcasts*', Linda said.

Each morning and afternoon for the next three weeks, I practised and Linda taught me ways to make the dynamics even more sophisticated and worked on my voice.

The competition was only a day away. It was a long night.

The ray of sunlight hit me as I woke up to the competition day! I quickly got dressed and went to Linda's house.

After a short drive, we finally arrived at the State Music Championship.

I headed in, bit nervous. Linda took me backstage and said, 'You've come so far

*Continued on page 28*

*Continued from page 27*

Linh, don't worry, just do it for yourself, live your dreams, this is your chance.'

She hugged me and floated into the audience.

Through the curtains, I saw other nervous performers ready to perform. Each performer did amazing, showcasing their wonderful talents. And now it was my turn. This was my chance to show everyone who I was.

I stepped onto the stage and saw blinding lights appear. I smiled and coaxed a bit. Slowly I sat down on the chester coloured stool and lifted my hands up ready to play. I took a deep breath and played the A flat chord.

*'I don't know if you can hear me, or if you're even there, I don't know if you will listen to a humble prayer...'* I sang softly.

The verse continued and when the chorus came I belted it singing to my full capacity.

*'God help the outcasts, hungry from birth, show them the mercy, they don't find on Earth'*, I sang. The song continued taking me to euphoria erasing all my worries and strife. I felt free.

My fingers flew on the piano as I sang the high E for 13 beats and played the final trill.

I closed my eyes and no matter whether I win or not I would never forget this moment. I stood up and bowed. The auditorium burst with applause. I looked across and saw Ma and Pa. They were smiling and holding back tears.

'In third place, we have Stanley Staggarrich', said the judge with the audience applauding.

'In second place, we have Mary Resthy', continued the judge. The audience clapped.

I was filled with trepidation and anticipation on who was first.

'And now the moment we all have been waiting for – the State Music Championship with an award of \$200, goes to... Linh Nguyen!' said the judge.

I couldn't believe it! I was the State Champion for music!!! I just earned \$200 for my parents!

I shook the judge's hand and held the trophy up high.

I swivelled through the curtains backstage to see Ma, Pa and Tuyen running towards me with big smiles across their face. Pa wrapped me in a bear hug and said 'Linh, how are you so amazing?'

Ma was crying. It was tears of joy as she hugged me tightly. Tuyen gave me a peck

on the cheek illuminating my happiness even more.

In the corner, I saw Linda. I walked towards her and gave her an almighty hug.

'Thank you, for believing in me', I said gratefully.

Ma and Pa couldn't thank Linda enough for her kindness towards me and offered her free Vietnamese food from the shop whenever she wanted.

As we were chatting, a tall man strode towards us and introduced himself as Director of the Australian Music Company.

'I would like to offer a music scholarship to Linh. I have never seen such a young talent in my 30 years in the music industry. It will be an honour to have her', he said professionally.

We thanked him as I was shaking with joy. We all squealed with delight. My dreams came true. Piano and singing had been my passion then and now. It always will be. I was never this happy in my life before.

Finally, the war ended, the war that I had with myself, every day. There was peace and happiness. Smiling to myself, I knew I had fulfilled my dreams.

By **Ananya Bose**  
Year 7

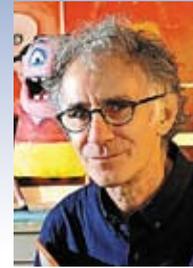
## Being an Explorer

One day I'll be an explorer, one day I'll sail the seas!  
I'll trudge through all the deserts and I'll climb the highest trees.  
I'll make new discoveries that could change lives!  
Purple oak trees or blue bee hives!  
I'll visit all great cities, like Tokyo and Rome.  
All around the globe is where I will roam!  
I'll travel the world, I'll see amazing sights!  
I'll climb mountains, and I'll climb them to brand new heights!  
I might be the new Chris Columbus or so.  
I might be remembered when I'm long ago.  
Exploring and discovering would be my dream.  
Hopefully amazing is how it will seem!

By **Ashlee Palmer**  
Year 5, Greenslopes State School  
GREENSLOPES – QLD.  
Teacher: Miss Rankin



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# Unlucky Life

Hi, my name is Lucky Un (yep I am unlucky) and I am 26 years old. I live in a place called Lucky in Sydney, all the people who live here are lucky, except for me.

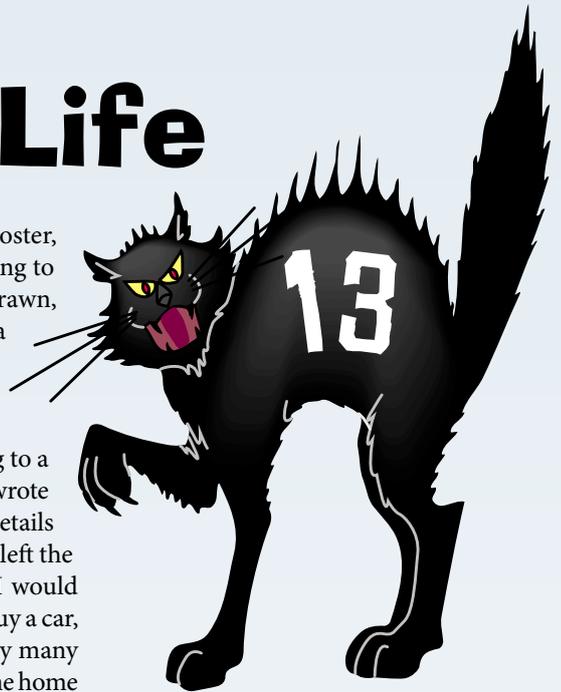
I'm trying to make my life lucky, but all I deserved was unluckiness. So far I've had over five hundred unlucky things that had happened to me and I will say some things that had happened to me.

When it was Christmas I was cracking some crackers when a toy just bombed out from the cracker and travelled to my eye and hit my eye. The second unlucky thing that happened to me was, at Easter I cracked open an egg and guess what, in the egg there was toxic slime and it looked like a total slime mess and that was bad for me. Thirdly at my birthday my parents sang a happy birthday song to me, and when I was cutting the cake I thought my finger was a cake because my cake is a finger and guess what, I have a big cut on my finger, and I had to put a fat bandage on my finger. The last thing that happened to me was on a trip, when my big sister dropped a weight on my foot and I screamed so loud that my cousin from Greenland called my dad's phone and said "Hey Lucky, I can hear your loud screaming from here".

Today I was going to Lucky Plaza. When I was walking around the plaza I saw a Lotto

shop. I saw some writing on a poster, saying that at Friday there was going to be five hundred gazillion dollars drawn, and if you want to enter write a short description on the piece of paper below. I wanted to enter and I chose to enter because this could change my life, me changing to a gazillionaire would be awesome. I wrote a small description and wrote my details and gave it to the counter. When I left the store I was thinking about what I would buy if I won that beauty, I should buy a car, house, a company and I would buy many more expensive things. When I came home I found a piece of paper, I unrolled the paper and read what it said on there, it said "On Friday you will win the lottery and you will find treasure which you will keep them all to yourself". That's unbelievable, if that was true I must double check with the fortune teller tomorrow.

When it was ten o'clock at Thursday I travelled to a place called "Data Market", it is a place where you can go to shops and buy things on the desktops if they don't have the item. When I was walking around I saw a shop saying "fortune telling". I went there and asked her "Am I going to win the lottery this Friday?". She replied "I can do that but I need you to place your leg on this table please". I did what she said and she was saying something in her head.



She was finished doing her things and she said exactly everything which was on that paper. I think this is going to happen in real life.

When I came home I went to the backyard when I saw a treasure chest buried in the garden, I took the chest out and tried to open it, but it wouldn't budge. I tried smashing it with a hammer, I heard a loud sound from the chest, oh it was the chest getting unlocked. I opened the treasure, I could see my life there, it was like four hundred kilograms.

Now I have to wait for the lottery. In the future would I be like a lucky guy or am I unlucky, I just wish that I will never be melancholy because at fun times you have fun but melancholy times you are sad.

It was Friday and they are getting ready for announcing the winner. They were welcoming us on the microphone, it was time to announce the winner, they were picking a description. They picked one up. "The person who is going to have this award is Lucky Un!". Yesssss! I am lucky from now on. They gave me a cheque, now this is called a lucky time. Now that we became lucky we should change my dad's name to... um aha... got a name for you dad, your name is Lucko. You see how this changed my life back on track. My wish came true and now let's go lucky shopping. End of my unluckiness back to luckiness. Bye!

By **Pravin Taiyatesvarun**  
Year 3, St Luke's Primary School  
LALOR – VIC.  
Teacher: Ms Tardio

## The Day the Seasons Went **PSYCHO**

The seasons have smashed  
Oh dear oh dear  
It's meant to be summer  
All hot and sweaty  
Instead it's cold with flicks of snow  
The leaves are all orangey red too  
some have a little black  
there are baby chicks being born as well  
what is happening to the seasons?

By **Holly Crocker**  
Year 4, Nambour Christian College  
NAMBOUR – QLD.  
Teacher: Mrs Chamberlain



And as the Spring comes, snow concedes – behold!  
 The grass appears, and smears the land with green,  
 for light has overwhelmed the biting cold,  
 presenting what the scented land had been.  
 And creatures once again will come to life.  
 And as the sun no longer shades his strength,  
 his scorched and searing eyes will burn and rise.  
 And life itself cannot bear heat at length,  
 hence nature leaves the sun to reign the skies.  
 And nature once again will rest in peace.  
 And as the warmth escapes; the land reshapes.  
 The trees become ablaze with cloaks of flame.  
 And fiery quilts meet Autumn’s warm embrace,  
 to grace the hues that face the Autumn’s fame.  
 But once again the cold of Winter comes.  
 And as the daunting cold swaps red with white,  
 his screeching winds come snarling with his voice.  
 The menace reigns, for cruel is Winter’s plight:  
 an isolated hell where none rejoice.  
 Yet Spring will once again burst into life.

By **Jason Chi**  
 Year 8, Scotch College  
 HAWTHORN – VIC.

## Flying Memories



Embarked on the wind again one dawn,  
 Witnessed the nature rouse and yawn.  
 Aspired to climb the heights,  
 Like I had all the rights.  
 Raced the clouds to the edge of the stream;  
 Striking reality as if it’s a dream.

Immersed my wings in the golden glow of the fire;  
 Birds tweeted, leaves rustled as if set up for a choir.  
 An accustomed sensation of pleasure hit me;  
 Inside, pride and glory built me.  
 An affectionate touch of a tender breeze,  
 Who knew these days were about to cease?

Then occurred the moment when the dark appeared,  
 The colours, I saw ahead were smeared.  
 Tried to lift myself but was unable to gain,  
 One of my downy wings throbbed with pain.  
 Threw a glance at my bruised spot,  
 And all I saw was a blood red stain.

Inch by inch, the sight dissolved  
 And all I felt was a painful, sudden thud  
 Senses travelled back, and I realised that,  
 Wrapped me were these beryllium bars  
 Took for granted my blessing of freedom,  
 Now taught me a lesson, this lifetime scar

Cut from rest of the world I cry in grief,  
 I hope and wish this cursed part would be brief.  
 Good memories now rest in my earlier life,  
 Though not comparable to my present life.  
 I tell myself be thankful but now agony is in my nature;  
 After all, it takes time to cure and heal a suture.

By **Reesha Kashif**  
 Year 8, Australian Islamic College of Sydney  
 MOUNT DRUITT – NSW

# Mikayla

## Log entry #548, 01.06.17

I have made a discovery. What is it that we humans crave? That we endlessly search for, strive towards? Life. Life without end, without the futility of its own inevitable end. And here it is.

A girl, unremarkable in her appearance. Age 12, height 150 centimetres. Brown curls, a pretty face.

I found her in an abandoned mine along the path I was walking on. My husband Harry and I were four-wheel driving, and I was out to stretch my legs.

The girl was sitting just out of eyesight inside the entrance, knees huddled to her chest. Her hair fell limply down over her face obscuring what was there, and as I walked over I realised she was asleep. It wasn't a peaceful sleep however; it seemed as though she was fighting to retain her consciousness.

Somewhat shocked, I picked her up and took her back to the jeep where Harry was waiting for me.

"Oh my god."

"Yeah, help me get her into the car will you?" I replied. We strapped her in, head lolling onto a barely rising and falling chest. Hair clung to a pallid face, damp and tousled.

"She was just inside the entrance of an old mine", I explained. "Nothing there at all."

"She can't have been there for long, then", Harry remarked. I nodded, and turned to look at her. She wore cargo pants, trainers and a plain white top. They were in a terrible state, dirty and torn to shreds; as though she'd run headlong through some form of thorny vegetation. The right leg of the pants was ripped from the hem to the hip, the skin underneath red and bleeding.

I hooked the first aid kit out of the glove box and slid into the back seat next to her, taking out bandages and antiseptics. We drove home, and put her in the spare room. She slept for eighteen hours.

## Entry #549, 02.06.17

I may have been generous with the use of the word sleep. She tossed, turned and cried, but all the while remained trapped in whatever tortured world she was in. I spent those eighteen hours in a chair beside the bed.

She woke up at 8am on a Monday. I led her gently downstairs by the arm, and sat her down at the table. She had buttered her own toast, but when I came to take the plate away she held onto the knife.

I didn't protest until I saw her draw it across her left wrist, agonisingly slowly. The thin red line it produced flowered and spread down her forearm as I cried in shock, rushing to her side. But the steady trickle halted, seemingly of its own accord – and retracted. The crimson fluid flowed backwards into the cut, and the incision disappeared. As I looked, paralysed, I met the girl's clear blue eyes, and saw them well with tears.

It was instinct that made me embrace the now sobbing child. I was terrified, yet still clung to her.

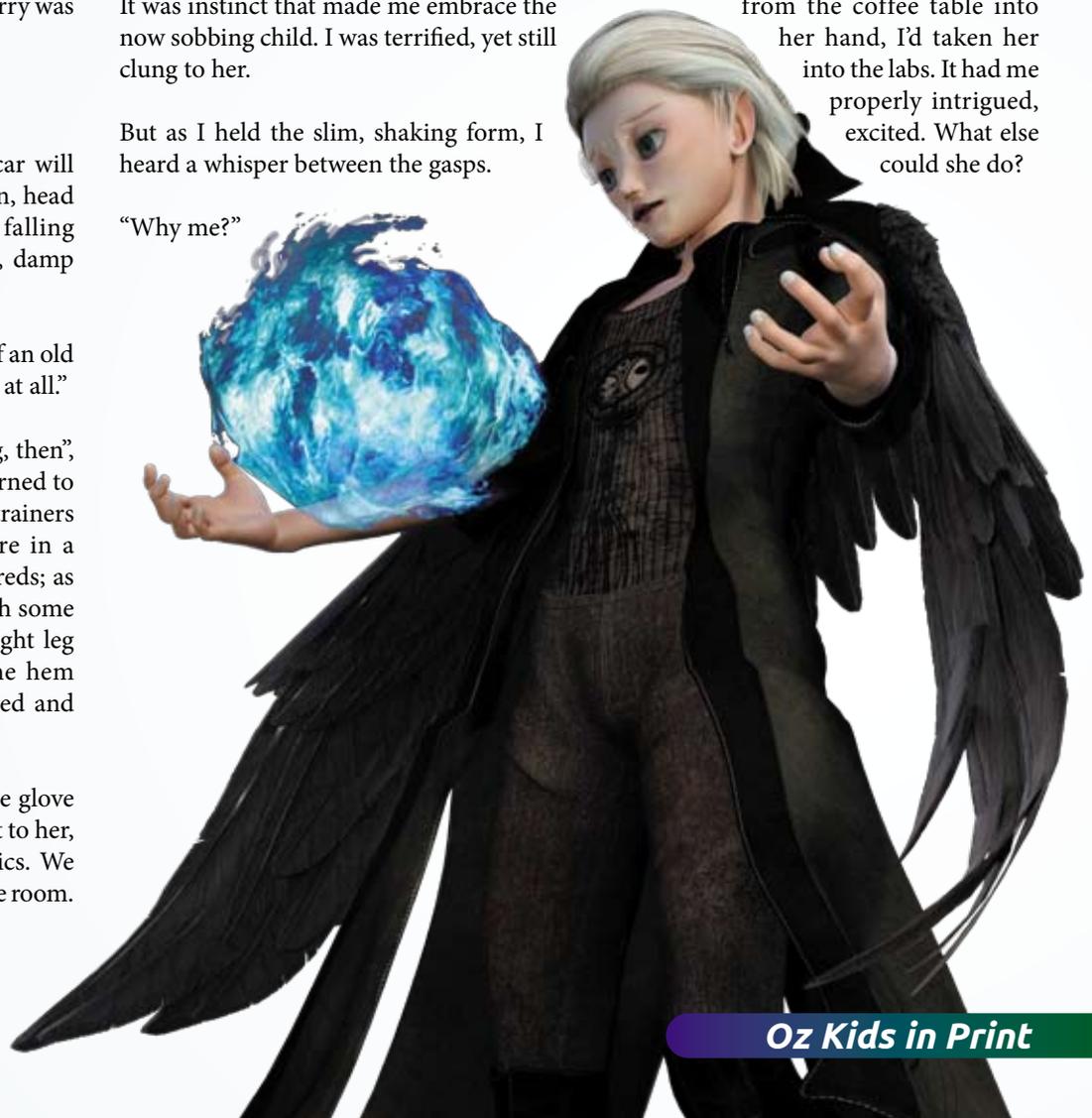
But as I held the slim, shaking form, I heard a whisper between the gasps.

"Why me?"

## Entry #554, 07.06.17

DNA structure nothing abnormal. There's nothing obvious pointing to why or how she can do these things. Harry suggested a neural scan – again, nothing abnormal. The closest I have come to a theory is that she can somehow manipulate energy; direct its flow, tell it what form to take. She's incredible. I plan to continue running the experiments, collecting data to see if I can find anything. As soon as I come up with something tangible I'll introduce her to the professors at the university. They'll have more to say on the subject than I will, but I don't want anyone taking credit for my work.

She doesn't talk much. I began testing on Mikayla a week ago now. After the knife incident, the occurrences had only continued – I'd found her standing in the backyard surrounded by a ring of flames that rose and fell at the motion of her palm. I'd seen her move from the other side of the room to catch a falling mug in the blink of an eye, and after I saw a TV remote fly from the coffee table into her hand, I'd taken her into the labs. It had me properly intrigued, excited. What else could she do?



**Entry #569, 16.07.17**

I'm not sure what I expect to find. I'm continuously sifting through swathes of new data but there's nothing I can see to suggest an abnormality in her genetic structure. I've had a look at her cells, and they regenerate and multiply far faster than the normal rate – but I'm a geneticist not a cellular biologist. I don't know enough about the data I'm uncovering. I need a breakthrough with regards to her DNA; there has to be something.

**Entry #613, 27.08.17**

Still nothing. I have noticed an irregularity in her control over her abilities, as if she doesn't quite have a complete handle over them – she's smart though. Good learner. She doesn't just demonstrate destructive potential, she can perform a multitude of tasks – she's fit and strong, not even counting the fact that her body can't be physically harmed by any means I've discovered. She feels pain for certain, but I don't plan to run any more pain reception tests.

I just don't know how much longer I can keep this under wraps from the university. They're sending letters. Not happy with all the "fruitless" hours I'm spending in the labs. Of course, it's only fruitless because I haven't told them anything. I don't know when, but I will find something solid.

**Entry #680, 04.01.18**

She's grown. She really has, and try as I might I just cannot convince her to eat her veggies. She hates washing up, loves it when I let her help me do my makeup, and has a slowly developing interest in boys that I'm doing everything in my power to stop. She's immature. It's too early.

We had a phone call yesterday. A man from the university, saying that my professors needed to see what I'd been doing for all this time or I'd be canned.

I've burned all the hard copies and everything else is safe on my hard drive – I can't let this get out, or God knows what will happen to Mikayla.

**Entry #720, 28.02.18**

University dropped me long ago. I try to keep Mikayla with me as much as I can, but I can't confine her too much – she has to get outside. Being cooped up in here won't do anything for her.

**Entry #747, 16.04.18**

University reported me. Abuse of materials apparently. I haven't returned letters or calls. I won't leave Mikayla.

**Entry #800, 12.05.18**

She was scared. I don't blame her, and I'm not angry. That policeman had no right to grab her, and even less right to be pointing a revolver at her. She answered the door and he stormed right in. It suffices to say that she's dangerous when she's threatened, but isn't anyone? I'm staying put. I'm afraid, terrified. But I can't leave her, and there's nowhere we could go anyway.

**Entry #801, 01.06.18**

They're coming. Military police.

I've barred the door.

Mikayla's upstairs.

I love you.

60.

★ ★ ★

The general snapped the book shut, and silence echoed around the room. The photos of the twelve men who had stormed the house on that day, twelve men who never came back, stared across at us all.

*"Find her."*

By **James Brasington**  
Year 12, Scotch College,  
HAWTHORN – VIC.

# A Tragedy

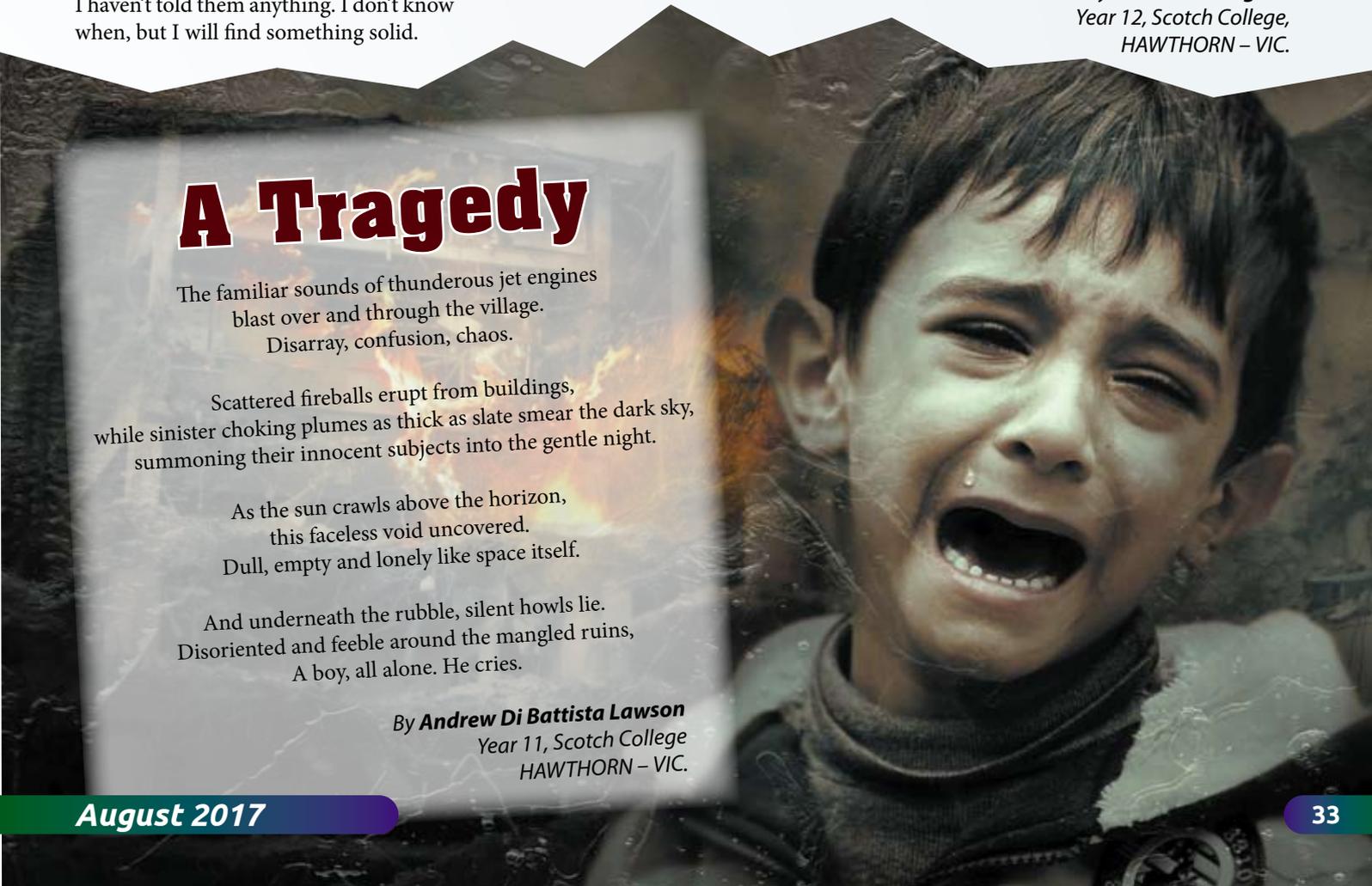
The familiar sounds of thunderous jet engines  
blast over and through the village.  
Disarray, confusion, chaos.

Scattered fireballs erupt from buildings,  
while sinister choking plumes as thick as slate smear the dark sky,  
summoning their innocent subjects into the gentle night.

As the sun crawls above the horizon,  
this faceless void uncovered.  
Dull, empty and lonely like space itself.

And underneath the rubble, silent howls lie.  
Disoriented and feeble around the mangled ruins,  
A boy, all alone. He cries.

By **Andrew Di Battista Lawson**  
Year 11, Scotch College  
HAWTHORN – VIC.



# The Trouble with Pigs

**T**HIS is the story of an old lady named Miss Darcy, her adopted son Chip, a flying horse affectionately called Sunny, Snort, the mean pig, and a whole parade of others I need not mention yet. They all lived on an ordinary-looking farm in Emerald, Australia. But once you were there, there was nothing ordinary about it.

It was mid afternoon when the trouble started. Miss Darcy was inside the sweet little cottage, nosily preparing tea. Chip was relentlessly demanding that Buttercup stand still so he could milk her, and have a milkshake, because he had spent an hour cleaning her stall.

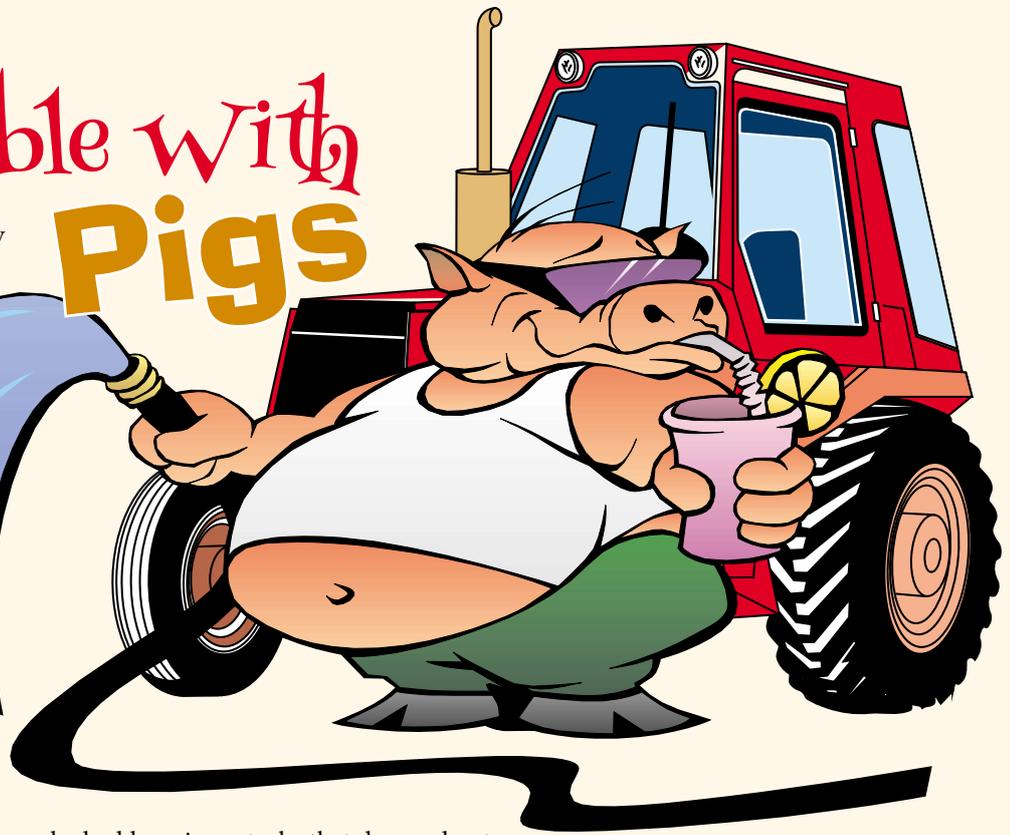
Buttercup and Daisy were cows. Buttercup who had always been a jittery creature, gave milkshakes in chocolate, super berry, caramel, and banana. Daisy gave flavoured milk, in strawberry, chocolate, vanilla, and plain.

The gold egg laying geese, who were lazily paddling on the still water of the pond, had recently started laying silver eggs. Silver eggs were the ones chicks hatched out of. But their gold ones were the nicest. The gold eggs shone like fallen stars.

Sunny was whizzing around the apple trees, attempting to haul the thick, flying-horse proof nets off. Unfortunately for her, they were stuck fast. Little golden feathers drifted down from her long, beautiful wings as she darted through the sky. When Sunny realised she was getting nowhere, she glided down and began to munch tufts of grass instead.

Suddenly, the air was filled with the smell of petrol. "Broooooom, broom broom!" Everybody looked up, startled. Who could it be? Then a crimson tractor roared into view. Aboard the machine was a fat, dirty pig. Snort. Snort was mean. Snort was ugly. Snort was horrible.

Snort was the only pig on Dustyhill farm, as Miss Darcy didn't like pigs. The only reason Miss Darcy kept him was because



he had long ivory tusks that dropped out every month or so, and then regrew. Miss Darcy wanted to stop the ivory trade, so she would trade in two tusks in return that an elephant be moved to a sanctuary. Snort waved a totter, and thundered down towards the chooks. "Bergerk! Squaaawk!" All the chickens flew and ran as the red tractor nearly ran them over.

"HEY!" shouted Chip angrily. "Snort! Come back here right NOW!!!!!" screeched Miss Darcy. But Snort just started chasing sheep. Miss Darcy, Chip, Sunny, and all the animals of Dustyhill farm stared in horror as Snort ran over a lamb's floppy tail.

Angrily, Miss Darcy leapt onto Sunny, who quickly began to gallop after the cherry red tractor, and started screeching like a cockatoo. "You flamin' pig! You get your fat butt right back here!! NOW!" screamed Miss Darcy. She was violently trembling.

But Snort didn't listen. Instead, he turned around, put the power on full throttle, and raced towards them! Sunny jumped and fluttered her wings. She narrowly missed being run over.

Snort drove round back. Strange noises came from there, clanging and banging. Snort drove out, and attached to the front of the tractor was a claw-like grabber. He began to pick up terrified sheep, and place them in the pond. "Baaaaaaaaaaaa!" cried the sheep.

Chip ran into the house, and returned

with a box of pins. He handed them to Miss Darcy, who scattered them in the way of the tractor. When Snort had finished giving the poor sheep baths, he didn't care about the pins. He simply drove right over them. They didn't even pierce the rubber. All the farm animals were hidden, in fear they would be given a dunking too.

Next, Miss Darcy grabbed a long piece of strong rope, in the shape of a lasso. She hurled it at the pig, but because she was a rubbish shot it wrapped itself around her, tying her to a tree. Snort laughed so much he fell off his tractor.

After Chip had released her, he went into 'think mode'. And soon he had a plan. He looked outside and saw Miss Darcy, who was tired of yelling, whisper into Sunny's ear her new plan.

Miss Darcy hated it when her animals had arguments because it was so stressful (Man, did she hate stress) and all she wanted was a mostly happy life. She had spent the last half hour attempting to entice Snort to get off that damn tractor. Unfortunately, it was not working. She would hold out a bowl of sweet clover, or skim milk, and call, "Here little Snorty, come and get some yummmmy food!" and the like. But Snort would just drive very close and snatch whatever Miss Darcy was offering.

But now Chip put his plan into action. Immediately he rounded up the farm animals and Miss Darcy. Then he began

to explain his idea. "First you chickens and geese will fly up into Snort's face. Sunny and I will turn off the tractor. Then Gruff the billygoat can pop his tyres. Mum, you can drive the green tractor, right? Great. Mum, you'll use the other grabber attachment to pick up Snort and drop him in the pigpen." Everyone nodded. "Okay, let's go!" shouted Chip.

Outside the house, Snort was having a grand time doing wheelies and burn-outs. Since he was so engrossed in wrecking the yard, he thought nothing of the huddle of fowl by the chook house. Meanwhile, Chip and Sunny were putting boards and locks on the pigpen so when the swine was dropped in, he couldn't get out. When they were finished, Chip made the secret sign, twisting his thumbs together and flapping his remaining fingers like wings. With a terrible "Squawwwwwck!" the chickens

broke their huddle and went screeching towards the tractor. Suddenly the air was full of flying chook feathers. Snort waved his trotters, swatting away angry poultry. "Oink! Go awayyyyyyy!" he squealed. "Now!" cried Chip.

Right on cue, Sunny dived down and drew level with the tractor. Chip reached over and flipped the 'OFF' switch. The tractor trundled to a stop. Gruff rushed up, and with his sharp horns popped the tyres. "Woossssssssssh!" went the tyres. Snort, because he could sense a trap, roared and whacked more violently. Miss Darcy, with a grin the size of a watermelon slice, drove the green tractor over. Using the metal claw, she grabbed the nasty swine, drove into the barn and dropped the pig in. Snort, who began to bash his bulk against the bars, was hoping to break them. But they held firm.

Chip and all the other animals had a huge party to celebrate the end of farmyard terror. Though life on Dustyhill farm was never normal, it did settle down. Soon the geese had goslings, from the silver eggs, and went back to laying gold eggs. Miss Darcy saved hundreds of elephants, and was offered a knighthood, but she declined, saying she didn't want any reward.

Snort never did quite change his ways, but he did apologise, and was let out. Chip and Sunny became the world's only flying horse stunt team. Though many more arguments did happen, they all lived quite happy lives.

*By Emalyn Nohlmans  
Year 6, Homeschooled  
EAGLE HEIGHTS – QLD.*

## Wishful Thinking

Outside up in the sky dark clouds amass  
Water streams down from heaven  
Each breath is visible against the window pane  
And in the absence of any distraction  
I am left only with the thoughts running rampant in my head  
Those of wishful thinking

For a cause that's an outcast  
Quiet and without campaign  
Here I am and I could  
Make the choice



Stand up  
Form the movement  
As the lonely figure in the crowd  
As the speaker for the voiceless  
The ones left behind  
Only a small crack

Escalating  
Suddenly an explosion that shatters the silence

Set free unspoken words  
A red balloon floating forevermore

But the world will keep spinning  
The same way it did before  
This place that used to mean something  
Now only bearing too many mistakes  
Handle it with care

In the crushing, screaming silence  
Be the lone footsteps  
In this mausoleum we've made

Yell a little louder  
Fight a lot harder  
Catch a dream or two  
Hold on for dear life  
Dancing alone to a rhythm only you may hear

There's no control outside  
Where life is, on the streets running wild  
But here against the window  
Staring at a grey sky  
Only solitude  
And of course  
Wishful thinking.

*By Bella Sweeney  
Year 9, Methodist Ladies' College  
KEW – VIC.*

# THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS

“PLEASE start boarding the eight o’clock train now”, the speakers blared as I looked at my ticket and the large, platform clock that seemed to be running a few minutes late. I quickly heaved my trunk on a trolley and wove through the bustling crowd like a needle weaving through a tapestry.

The train’s engine started to pump clouds of white smoke into the air and made the place even hotter. I was already sweltering and I wiped beads of perspiration from my forehead, whilst negotiating my way around families waving handkerchiefs to children and relatives hanging out of the train to bid farewell.

The whistle sounded. I put the trolley away, pulled my trunk along with me and clambered towards the Captain’s cabin.

“Good morning”, I said, as cheerfully as I could.

Mr Gavel grumbled half-heartedly. “I’ll take her halfway. You’ll take over the rest. All right?”

I nodded and settled into my chair. Mr Gavel walked to the pilot’s seat as our wheels turned and I watched the families, some of them laughing, some crying, running to keep up with the train until it gathered too much speed; then they fell back and waved like a memory.

I opened the grubby window and mused about not very much as they grew smaller, and my eyes traced the line of the horizon where the land touches the sky.

Steam and smoke filled the sky above my head and left a long trail of white, fluffy cloud behind. I noticed some ominous clouds, lit by the sun in the late afternoon light, gathered above the distant alps, but dismissed them with a sigh. Then I closed



to brake the train, but I was too late.

The train lurched forwards and smashed into the face of the mountain. The following seconds and minutes felt like hours. Days. The terrible shriek of metal shredding and ripping by ancient rocks deafened me. Sparks and flames erupted from the engine, which luckily took the brunt of the collision, and Mr Gavel appeared with a deep cut on his cheek.

the window and turned my mind to the long journey ahead.

“Mr Jones. It’s your turn to drive now”, Mr Gavel said wearily.

I immediately took my post at the controls. Everything seemed in order as we left the low country. The needle read 200kph and the sun had well and truly set. We moved across the land in darkness, like an enormous snake born for a single purpose.

The radar indicated bad weather ahead and I said, “Mr Gavel, are those storms to the nor’east?”

“Nothing to worry about. They won’t bother us”, Mr Gavel said, raising his eyebrow.

“All right, then”, I said. I took a deep breath and concentrated. The rolling plains passed endlessly in the darkness and I noticed that the stars were hidden. In the ensuing hours, the mountains loomed like giants that appeared only with flashes of lightning. Stormy clouds grew with malicious features and I handled the train’s controls cautiously.

The train chugged closer to a well-known bend near a bridge. In a blinding flash, slabs of ice dropped onto the bridge. I saw the track and superstructure tremble and then collapse. I pulled the lever desperately

“Go, begone! Look what ye’ ha’ done and how abominable I look now. Go away or else we will all die!” he roared.

“Mr Gavel, we can ...” I began.

The metal screeched and whined against the pressure from the ice slabs. I lunged forward and grabbed a pole while everything around me tumbled and crashed into the walls.

Lightning struck the train blistering my body with burns that surged through my body like knife blades slicing my skin. Red spots appeared everywhere and flickering images twirled around me.

My muscles slowly failed me. Sharp gulps of breath made ash sear in my throat and burned my chest.

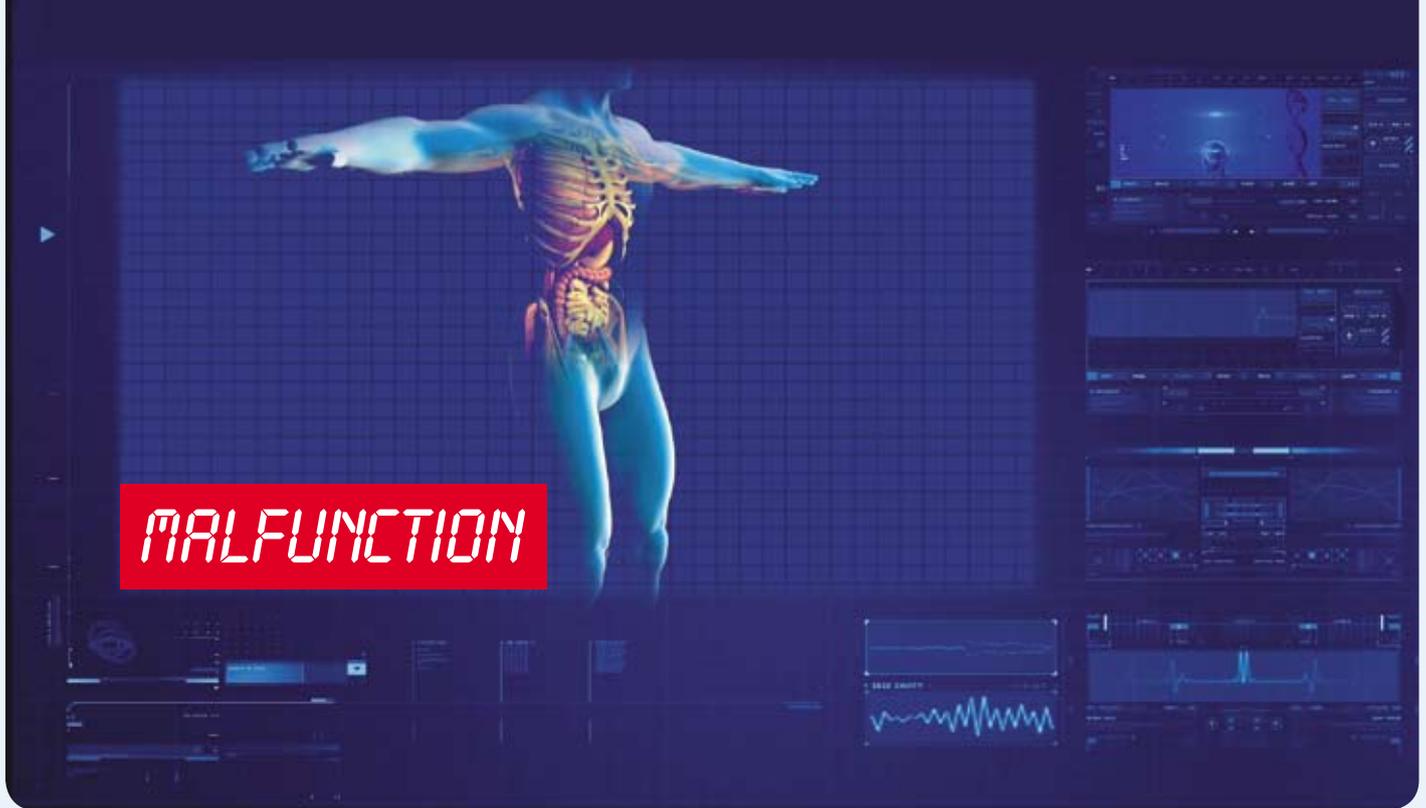
“Mr Gavel! Hold on!” I croaked with pain.

“I can’t ...” he screamed.

His body swaying like a mutilated doll as his pleas for help echoed ... leaving my hand empty.

Darkness filled the air and smoke engulfed the whole world around me.

By **Calvince Tan**  
Year 7, Scotch College  
HAWTHORN – VIC.



**T**HE Technological Revolution in the early 21st century,' said Professor Parker to the rows of half-attentive students, 'saw a dramatic change in the way we live and eat. Before the Revolution, societal stereotypes were the opposite of today. Slimness was associated with the poor, and plumpness, ironically, with the rich.'

The professor paused, and an uneasy murmur rose and died.

'Furthermore, terrible, unthinkable diseases such as diabetes, obesity ...'

The class bristled in a collective shudder.

'Of course, all this monstrosity was fixed through the invention of the ...?'

A hand shot up immediately from the first row.

'Yes, Sarah?'

'The NutriBot, 2038, by German scientist Nicolas Pasche. It is a small machine in the oesophagus that tracks the nutrition taken into the body and gives you a guideline for your diet.'

'Correct. After this revolutionary invention, the NutriBot has been an essential part of our lives, with ninety percent of our population using it. The ten percent, of course, are the unfortunate class of people whose parents could not afford the NutriBot at their birth.'

The class sagged in a groan of sympathy.

That night, Professor Parker sank down in his pneumatic armchair, relaxed and content. He leisurely pulled up the screen of his NutriBot and noticed that he had only taken seventy percent of his day's protein. He reached out to his drawer and pulled out a packet of lemon-flavoured protein substitute tablets.

Shortly after he had popped one into his mouth, a shrill sound pierced his ears. It was the first time in many years he had heard that sound. The last time he had was as a child, when he had secretly eaten two whole slices of his birthday cake.

Slightly disturbed, the professor opened his NutriBot screen again, and saw that his protein bar had far exceeded the recommended daily intake. The bar was crimson red, silently criticising him of his shameful indulgence.

He immediately ran to the treadmill, turned the machine on with fumbling fingers, and started running. After twenty agonising minutes of frenzied exercise, the red bar meliorated, turning into a warmer, gentler yellow, and finally back to a comforting shade of green.

*Disgraceful, Professor Parker thought. How could I, at this age?*

He stumbled over to the kitchen counter and poured himself a glass of vitamin-milk. As he greedily gulped down the

liquid, soothing his raw throat, he heard, yet again, that terrible, piercing sound.

Professor Parker yelled out and dropped the glass, which shattered at his feet. With shaking fingers, he opened his screen, and was enveloped by a sense of dread when he saw that his vitamin bar was red. The professor turned and threw up into the sink.

He paused for a moment, wiping the cold sweat off his face. Then, with a look of weary determination, dragged his unwilling feet back to the treadmill.

The Professor did not show up to the lecture the next day. By the third day of his unexplained absence, the school called the police.

Two police officers knocked on the professor's door early in the morning. There was no reply. After ten minutes of calling and knocking, they made a forced entry. The only sound that filled the house was the gentle hum of the electro-magnetic treadmill.

The two policemen walked towards the source of the sound, but jumped back in horror when they saw the treadmill. It was on its highest setting, whirling manically, scraping the exposed and bloodied flesh of the professor's back with every turn.

By **Matthew Lee**  
Year 10, Scotch College  
HAWTHORN - VIC.

# BETRAYAL

**S**HE waited until her husband had shut the door. When she heard the car back out of the driveway she darted to his desk. She ripped open the top drawer and shuffled through his letters, and found the one she was looking for. She dropped to her knees, her hand clapped to her mouth. She knew it. She knew he had a secret.

2 days before...

They sat silent at the dinner table, the only sound was the clinking and scraping of their silver cutlery on the plates. Sofia took a sip of wine and placed the glass down on the table, sighing.

"What do you mean?" she looked up at her husband who sat on the other side of the mahogany table. His dark hair was ruffled and his face unshaven. There were dark circles under his eyes as he reached across the table and took Sofia's hand in his.

"It's only for two days. That's just one night and I'll ring you, there's no need to worry. Yes I'm so sorry, I'll lose my job if I don't." He shrugged his shoulders, "Frankfurt is boring anyways, you won't be missing out on any fun".

The next morning, Sofia's husband had left early for his business trip in Frankfurt. She

rolled over in bed and gazed at his empty side. Her heart sank when she saw that he had left. She rolled her eyes, and got out of bed, slipping her well-manicured feet into her slippers. She walked into the kitchen and began to make her tea. She flicked on the radio and listened to the news.

*"..and now to the weather, here's Otto. Guten Morgen! Nothing special for the weather today, overcast with a chance of snow, and very similar for the next week. Auf Wiedersehen! Heil Hitler."*

Sofia pulled on her thick coat and walked out the door. Her lips cracked immediately as a cold rush of air pinched at her skin. She folded her arms to her chest and scurried off to the grocery store. There was barely any food left, possibly because the stupid British bombed our farms, she thought in anger. She picked up some eggs and milk and placed them on the counter.

"Hallo Frau Göring! I heard your husband went away for a few days?"

"Yes, to Frankfurt on a business trip." She placed some coins onto the counter.

"Frankfurt! Darling I think he lied to you, he's in Rome!" she picked up a newspaper from a stack behind her and passed it to Sofia.

"Page 13." Sofia flicked to page thirteen and furrowed her brow in confusion.

"What, I don't see anything!" she looked up, beginning to get annoyed.

"No, no, do you see this photo? Look very closely." Sofia brought the newspaper up close to her face. There was a photo of two men Sofia recognised as politicians shaking hands, and there was a house on the left, but something in the background caught her eye. Her husband was inside the house.

"It's Hermann! Hermann is in the photo, look! And he is in Rome, look at the caption!" But her face sank as she looked at the photo again. He was inside the house, but there was another woman that appeared to be talking intently with him.

Sofia marched back home with the eggs and milk clutched in her arms, also with the newspaper she had rushed out of the shop with. Her mind was racing. Horrible thoughts swam through her head. Who was that other woman. Why was he in Rome, the most romantic city in the world? And worst of all, why did he lie to her?

Lost in thought, she hurried through the streets, until a car horn brought her back to her senses. She jumped in fright and



gasped with shock as the contents in her arms flew into the gutter, making a puddle of eggs, milk and bread, splashing on her expensive boots. She rushed with anger as she picked up the soaking newspaper with her forefinger and thumb in disgust, her little fingers sticking up. A shabby looking man scurried over and scooped up the bread.

“Revolting scum”, she scoffed as she strutted away from the poor man.

Hermann arrived back home the next morning, and Sofia tried her best to not act suspicious towards him. She stood leaning against the kitchen bench with a hand on her hip while a soup was simmering in a pan, and their maid was dusting in the next room. Hermann pecked Sofia on the cheek, but didn't make eye-contact. He claimed that he was exhausted and headed to bed. That night, Sofia sat in the drawing room, in the dark silence under the light of a dim lamp. She sipped at her hot tea and examined the photo in the newspaper, she had cut out the article about the politicians and the photo of her husband. She was determined to find out who this woman was, but she had no leads. A thought struck her, she jumped to her feet and quietly prowled on the tips of her toes. She gently creaked open the door to the master bedroom. Her husband lay snoring on the bed, as she snuck past him through to the study. She froze.

“Sofia? What are you doing?”

“Uhhhhmmm, I'm just, um, looking for my slippers, to um get a cup of tea” she said quickly, and Hermann looked down her feet quizzically.

“You're wearing them, and you're holding your tea.”

“Oh, yeah I found them and I'm coming back to bed now”.

The next morning, after Hermann had left for work...

Emmy wiped the droplets of sweat off her forehead with the back of her hand. She felt a lump grow in her throat and she blinked away a tear, a trillion shards of glass punctured her chest. She held read through the bundle of letters, her hands shaking. The letters were vague, but she supposed they had to be, so they wouldn't be caught. “...meet me inside the house... come to

Rome... we need to talk... see you back at headquarters... what's the address... 184 Wilhelmstraße Berlin...”

Throwing her coat around her shoulders she strode out of the house. She marched, through streets, across roads and around corners, gradually warming up underneath her coat due to her fast pace. Clouds of fog escaped her mouth into the cold air as she muttered the addresses under her breath. She slowed down as she passed 178, 180, 182...

Stopping to a halt, she looked up at a huge building with dark windows and a tall menacing gate. This wasn't where Hermann worked. But she felt like she didn't know anything about him any more. She approached a soldier standing outside the gate, they were everywhere at this time so she ignored him and walked towards the gates.

“Halt! Where do you think you're going!” Emmy stopped and slowly turned to face the soldier, her heart racing. She shuddered when she caught sight of his rifle.

“Entschuldigung. I am, ah, Frau Göring, look, here's my identification.” Emmy thanked God she brought it, and placed her identification back in her coat pocket. She hesitated. “I am here to speak to my husband, Hermann Göring.”

“OK, go right in.” But she didn't. Just as she had finished speaking to the soldier, a woman walked out of the gates. Emmy's eyes went wide, it was the woman from the photo. The nasty mistress.

Stalking behind the woman, Emmy followed her, carefully sliding behind cars and keeping a safe distance behind. The woman walked for what felt like ages, until finally she turned into the front gate of a house. Emmy sprung behind a bush and crouched down. The woman approached her door, fumbling for her keys. Emmy stole up behind her and when the woman open her door she followed and when inside, Emmy pushed her way in before the woman could close the door.

In fright, the woman let out an ear-splitting scream.

“WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!” The woman stumbled backwards, her hand over her chest, panting with shock.

“NO, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!” Emmy stood in the doorway, exploding with anger. “WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY HUSBAND! WHY ARE YOU HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH HIM! HOW DARE YOU TAKE HIM AWAY FROM ME!”

Emmy looked as if steam should start coming out of her ears. All her anger and frustration from the past week, had exploded inside of her. She took a step towards the woman.

“What! What are you talking about?” She took a step back.

“You know exactly what I am talking about. My husband! Hermann Göring! Your new lover! You were with him in that house in Rome!” She took another step forward. The woman's back was now pressed against the wall, the roaring fireplace to her right.

“Hermann? You don't know! You don't know what your husband is!” Both of them were panting, their nostrils flared and their brows furrowed with anger. Emmy stopped in her tracks.

“Your husband, is not who you think he is.” The woman's breathing slowed down. “Your husband is a military leader, a leading member of the Nazi party.”

“WHAT” Emmy charged forward, “My husband is the owner of a business that manufactures guns!”

“No, I'm sorry, but I am Hitler's wife, and Hermann Göring is Hitler's Second in Command.”

“NO!” Emmy, in a spur of the moment pushed the woman back, but the woman tripped on the edge of her fire place. She would have lived, if the fire iron wasn't sticking out.

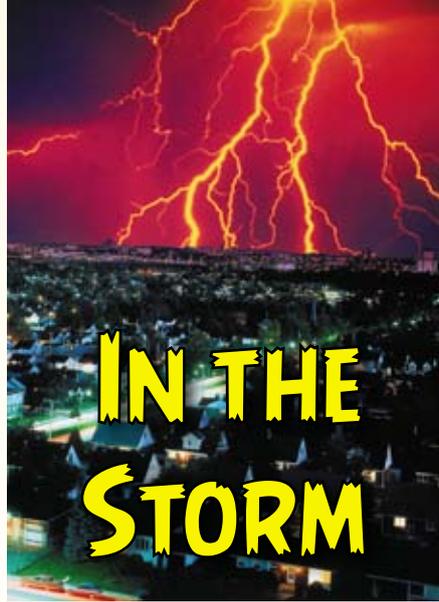
The woman fell, Emmy saw it as if it was in slow motion. She didn't want the woman to fall straight on the fire iron. She didn't want blood to spill onto the woman's coat as she got impaled. And she didn't want the woman begin to burn, half alive in the fire place.

By **Annika Price**  
Year 10, Caringbah High School  
CARINGBAH – NSW  
Teacher: Ms Paabo

**P**UTTING the sandbags down was messy, but I could only think about the mess that the cyclone was going to make. The trees were waving in the wind, like they were trying to warn me. I could see the roads starting to flood, which frightened me even more. My dad was herding the cows onto the truck to transport them somewhere else. I could feel the droplets of rain finely falling onto my shoulder. I knew the storm was close, and so did the animals on the farm. The storm had started...

Everything was soaked and it was bucketing down with rain. Hail stones were flying everywhere. There were muddy puddles that were almost deep enough to drown in. I was startled to hear the crash bang of the lightning while it shook the ground.

I was drenched and I wanted to go inside urgently as the strong wind blew my hat off. The black sky was darkening as I ran into the barn that would keep me and my family safe. The rumbling of the thunder



made the neighbourhood dogs howl; they were petrified, so was I.

The aftermath of the terrifying storm was a mess. I came out of the barn that my family and I sheltered in, while the storm continued all night long. The veggie garden was demolished and the stable had a big tree trunk leaning on it. It was cold, wet

and silent. I went back in the barn to see if anyone was awake yet, but when I turned around, something was missing...

“Buddyyyyy!”

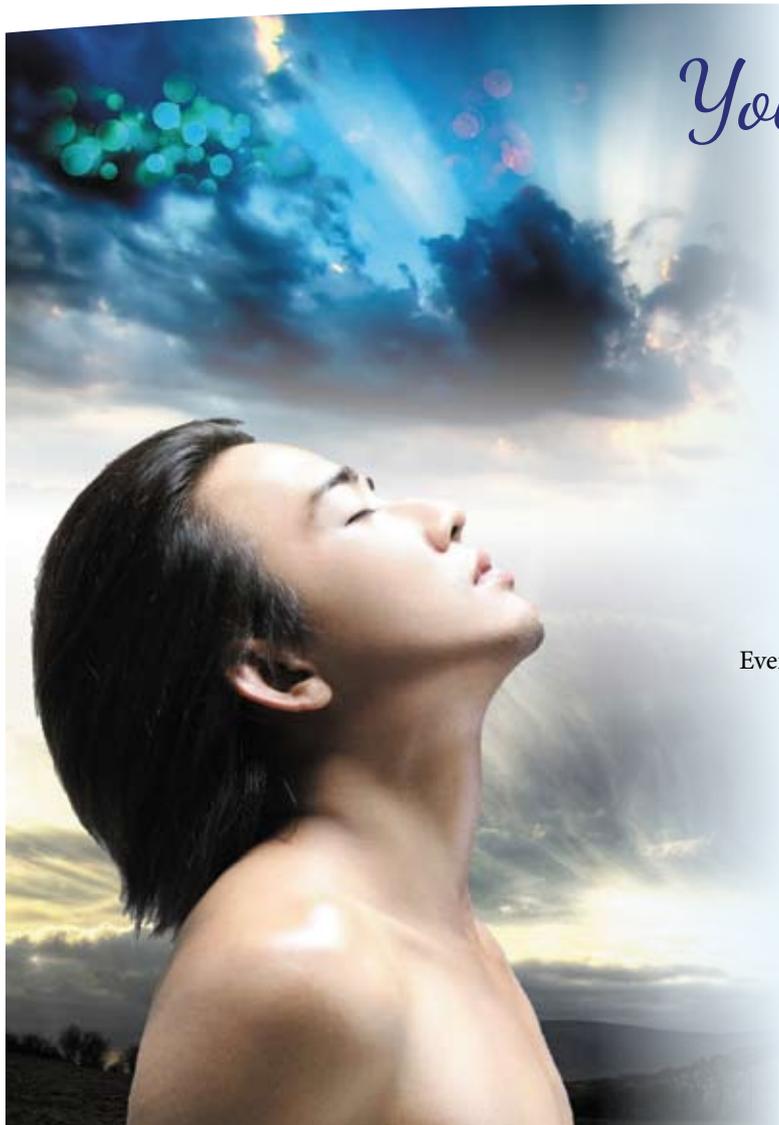
“DAD, WAKE UP! Buddy’s not here!”

A shiver went down my spine at a million miles per hour. I was trembling. I sprinted out of the barn as fast as I could to save my beloved dog. A big ditch in the ground made me fall over!

“Ouch!!” I screamed out. I was in shock.

When I was lying on the ground in pain I felt something wet on my face. It felt like a tongue. I looked up and I saw my dog that I loved. I found Buddy, or should I say – he found me!

By **Audrey Oastler**  
Year 7, Oxley Christian College  
CHIRNSIDE PARK – VIC.  
Teacher: Sharon Sandison



## You Could See Him

You could see him traversing the sky  
As humanity changed  
All the lonely people  
By day they dissembled  
By night they sought

As his face changed as the days went by  
Growing deeper into thought  
His time had finally come  
He disappeared forever  
I didn't see anyone  
All the lonely people  
By day they dissembled  
By night they sought

Even though society had a abandonment of friends  
The loneliness still followed  
All the lonely people  
By day they dissembled  
By night they sought

You could see him traversing the sky  
As humanity changed  
All the lonely people  
By day they dissembled  
By night they sought

By **Mia Romanella**  
Year 5, Beaumont Road Public School, KILLARA – NSW  
Teacher: Marguerita Christowski



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# Ever's Eternal Slumber

**I**N A time long forgotten in the decaying pages of history, a tribe of colossal beings remembered only in myth, contentedly roamed the Earth. They had not a care in the world and treated the land as they did their children. They were...

... the GIANTS!

There was just one thing the giants ever had to think about; There had been a rule for centuries that they were to venture underground every night before the stars dominated the sky. No one was entirely sure what would happen if the rule was broken however the great giant ancestors had warned of terrible happenings occurring to anyone who disregarded the rule.

One giant, named Ever, was a renowned daydreamer amongst the giant-folk. He would always be found staring off into

space, eyes glazed over, in his own little world.

One day Ever was daydreaming – as always. His thoughts were so distant that he completely lost track of time. The moon rose and the sky darkened around him and the rest of the giants began to make their nightly trek underground. They called out loudly to Ever to follow them but Ever wasn't paying any attention at all. When the last of the giants disappeared to the safety of underground, Ever finally snapped back to reality. He frantically scrambled to the underground entrance like a fish out of water, desperately seeking its aquatic sanctuary. Just as his ginormous legs disappeared underground, the first star began to twinkle in the sky, closely followed by more and more until the entire sky was dotted with bright spots of light. The consequence of the dreaded rule then

was discovered; His head got firmly stuck above ground.

The next day, as the giants crowded around Ever's head, they watched on in horror as it slowly metamorphosed into solid rock.

Over time, Ever's excessively elongated head grew thick, lush grass over it, reaching towering heights above the Earth. His head was so tall, in fact, that it received snow at its peak. Ever's careless actions served as a severe warning to many more generations of giants to come.

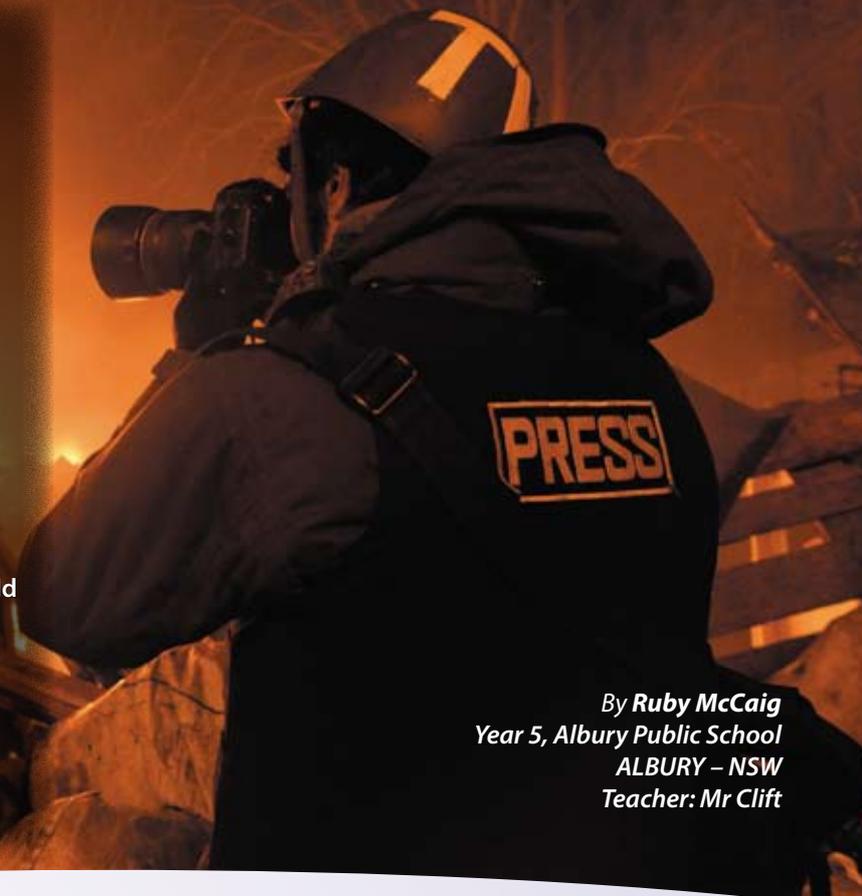
Ever is now known, to us humans, as Mt Everest; This is the place where, forever, Ever will rest.

By **Taylor Racey**  
Age 12  
AVELEY – WA

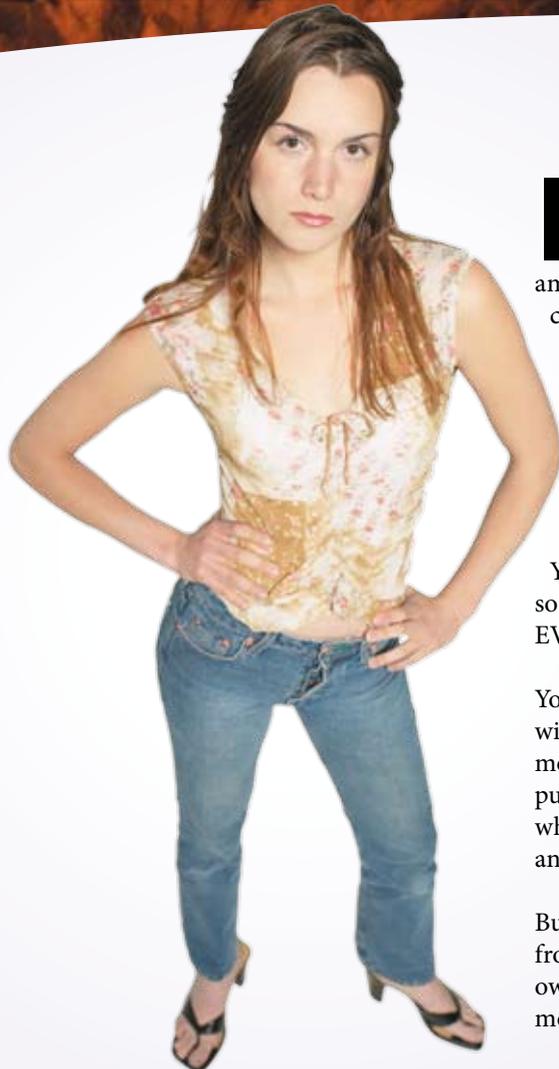


# MY WAR POEM

My eyes are filled with tears  
These were all my dreadful fears  
A large crowd grew  
among the TV crew  
They all stood in awe  
as he read more and more  
In his hand was my special note  
I felt like I was drowning, I need to keep afloat  
Why did my father die  
my mother had cried  
I wish he didn't go to war  
Why couldn't it be like it was before  
It was all because of me  
he did it for our country  
so my family could be free  
I looked at all the crowd  
they had cameras I spoke aloud  
Maybe they cared about my father as much as I could  
or as much as my mother would  
If only I was brave enough to ask  
it was a very simple task  
No one spoke  
except one townsfolk  
I was so desperate I couldn't see  
I couldn't see the future in me



By *Ruby McCaig*  
Year 5, Albury Public School  
ALBURY – NSW  
Teacher: Mr Clift



# MY OWN PERSON

I PROMISED myself that I wasn't going to be that girl. The one that writes the sad love letter to get back the guy. I am my own person, not one to follow clichés.

But I forgot. I forgot about that promise when you were feeding me your own, telling me these lies, telling me that you cared... when in reality? You did nothing of the sort.

You went behind my back. It hurt. It hurt so badly, that I vowed that you would regret EVER treating me as bad as you did.

Your words tore, your actions burned, and with every move you make I am forced to move too, because you have made me your puppet. My lifeless figure is what you see, while inside, there is the brewing of anger and loathing, and... It hurts.

But I am finished. No more will I suffer from you. I am my own person. I am my own person. You do not control me any more. I AM MY OWN PERSON!

I promised myself I wouldn't write a sad love letter to try and get you back. So I didn't. I hope you get this and you realise what you did. I hope you realise that the games you played, were fun only for you.

I hope you realise that the tears running my cheeks are not from longing or miss for you. They are because I wish I could get as far from you as possible, to never have to touch, or see, or even have you cross my mind again. I am my own person, and you will only weigh me down.

So no love letter for you. No apologies, saying I'm sorry I wasn't good enough. You took advantage and you used me, but I broke away from the cycle.

Because I am my own person.

By *Jade Simms*  
Year 8, Siena Catholic College  
SIPPY DOWNS – QLD.  
Teacher: Miss O'Donohue

**"R**UN, boys, run!" screamed my mother as she was taken by the Nazis. I didn't quite understand at the time but I now know it was because we were Jewish. The shouts and screams I heard that night was of the pain the Nazis inflicted. I ran as fast as I could. As I ran, I saw the shattering glass fly over my head like little crystals that lit up the sky. These stars shone above me. I got to the end of town and into the fields beyond. It was dark out here, in the wheat fields. The softness of the wheat as I brushed past it calmed me down from the horror I just saw. I looked back at the light of Berlin and the small fires that arose from it. I then turned and kept running.

"AHH!" I shouted as I was pulled down.

"Shut up! Do you want to die!" said Jacob my brother.

"What's wrong Jacob!" I asked.

"Look ahead, it's a blockade", he whispered.

It was a massive line of soldiers walking in a line as big as the village. But they weren't just any soldiers, they were Schutzstaffel soldiers. They were the Fuhrer's personal guard and they won't hesitate to kill a traitor of the Fuhrer. The blockade looked like a roaring fire heading towards us. The Fuhrer's fire.

"Jacob, what do we do!" I sobbed.

"Run back to the village!" he told me.



"But they'll kill me!" I cried.

"Don't worry, mother was the last one taken. It will be free of Nazis back there", he explained.

"What will you do!" I cried harder.

"Don't worry, just run back home as fast as you can, I'll distract them", he ordered.

"OK", I sobbed.

"Run, Josef, run", shouted Jacob.

So I ran and ran all the way towards home. I looked back and Jacob was running in the

opposite direction towards the soldiers. All of a sudden he was ripped to pieces by the soldiers' guns and then he fell.

"No!" I shouted.

The Nazis couldn't hear me because my cry was drained by more shots into Jacob. The anger I felt. The pain, the anger. That night is now known as Kristallnacht. I survived Kristallnacht. I survived the Fuhrer's fire.

*By Benjamin Springhall*

*Year 7, St John's Lutheran School  
KINGARROY - QLD.*

*Teacher: Jodie Springhall*

## COURAGE

**"H**AVE a little courage, would you?" Carson emerged a look at me then rolled his eyes.

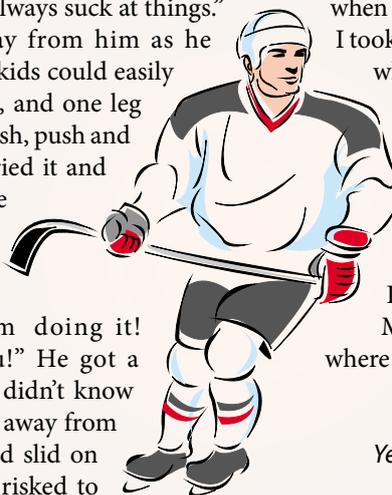
"Can't you see I'm trying?" He pulled up his sleeves as I left to start my journey around the court.

"Blahhh! Boosh." He slipped as his body got dragged on the ice, I swept by him to see if he was okay but as always he wasn't.

"Don't help me, I can get up by myself." He fell again.

"For Pete's sake just get up, Carson. When I asked you if you could play ice hockey, I had hope. You just always suck at things." I shifted right away from him as he watched how other kids could easily play. "One leg there, and one leg here." He got up. "Push, push and sweep sweep." He tried it and succeeded. Maybe he could actually play!

"Look Aurora, I'm doing it! I'm coming to you!" He got a little too close, and didn't know to stop! I had to get away from him before he would slid on me. "Noo! Wait!" I risked to put my hands out and stop him



when him fell on me. "Whoops." It was so awkward as I laid on the floor there when he got up. "Here, I'll teach you." I took his hand and skated with him while teaching him the skills of ice hockey.

And now I stand here thinking about what happened 15 years ago as the Champion of Talicons Ice-hockey team, Carson Midwood plays the finals. That's where his life started.

*By Lorraine Habib*

*Year 6, St. Luke's Primary School  
LALOR - VIC.*

*Teacher: Mrs. Curtis*

# Laurence Plump



There was a boy named Laurence Plump.  
He himself was a fatty lump!  
He ate as many sweets as he could each day,  
And made it known with tooth decay.  
Chocolates, caramels, lollipops and fudge,  
He'd eat them for breakfast, dinner and lunch!  
Laurie's parents were actually proud,  
They thought their son's eating was astound!  
The records he held were hard to beat,  
He ate 90 sweets a minute and did not cheat!  
His favourite game, he'd play in a hall,  
His friends and he would call it "Laurie the ball".  
At one end, Laurie would lie on his side,  
And with one little push, he would roll, he would glide!  
In general Laurence was quite obese,  
He never keeps track of what he eats.  
So please, my children, don't follow along  
don't go round eating all day long  
Please have a normal supper and lunch  
Resist going round eating sweets by the bunch  
Please don't eat all that delicious dump,  
And you won't end up like Laurence Plump!

*By Ashlee Palmer  
Year 5, Greenslopes State School  
GREENSLOPES – QLD.  
Teacher: Miss Rankin*

## We Come in Peace

**I**T WAS Sara's first day on Mars! She was so excited.

"I can't believe we're on Mars" said Sara to Stephanie. "Yeah" Stephanie agreed. "How about you Marsh?" Stephanie asked. "I don't know, this place is kind of boring" Marsh responded. He was more of an Earth person. "Then let's go and explore, we can find something that you like around here", said Sara. Two hours later, "I can't believe it, there's absolute nothingness everywhere" said Sara. "Look", Marsh said, as a really cute alien approached. It looked like a dog. It was an alien pug. Sara, Stephanie and Marsh hid behind a bumpy alien rock. They watched the alien pug when suddenly the rock moved and the alien pug saw them! "We come in peace", said Sara. "Yes, we won't harm you", said Marsh.

"How do I know that?" barked the alien pug. Stephanie said "No I don't—". Just then the ground started shaking, something went into the atmosphere and hit straight on the ground with a loud BANG! An alien cat fell out of the crashed space ship that she was travelling in. She got up and ran to the alien pug and said, "There's an asteroid

coming in one day, oh wait, today!" "You know how you said you would help us, well, today's the day", the alien pug said.

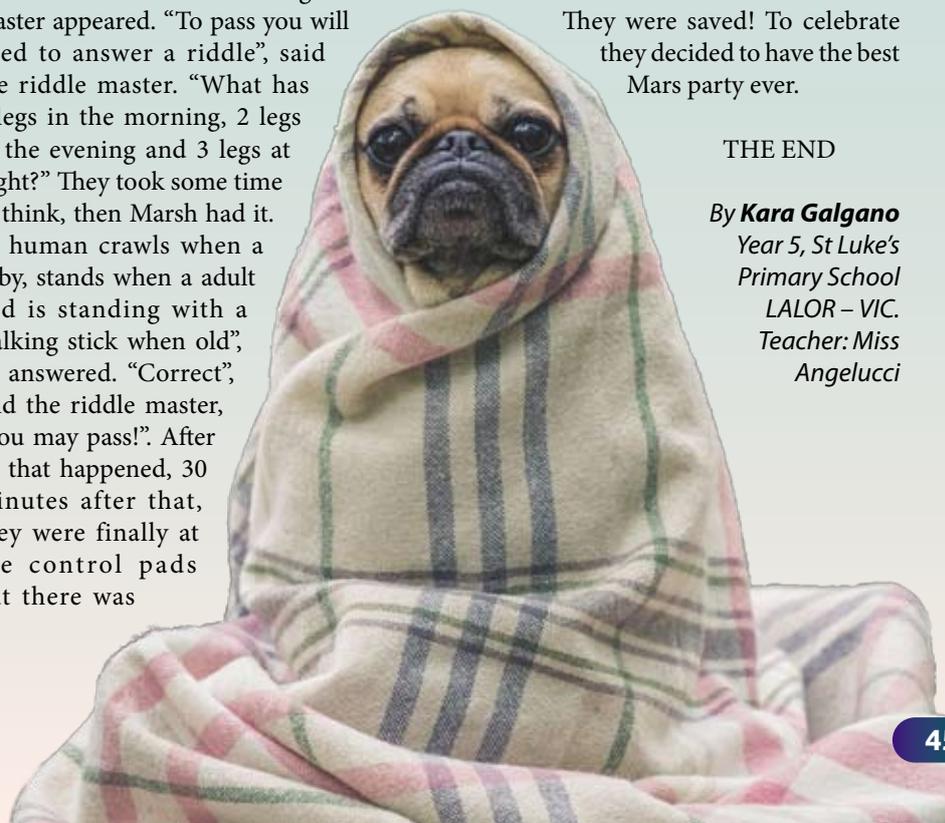
"All we need to do is run to the Mars centre and block the asteroid from getting into the atmosphere." One hour later they were almost there when a magic riddle master appeared. "To pass you will need to answer a riddle", said the riddle master. "What has 4 legs in the morning, 2 legs in the evening and 3 legs at night?" They took some time to think, then Marsh had it. "A human crawls when a baby, stands when a adult and is standing with a walking stick when old", he answered. "Correct", said the riddle master, "You may pass!". After all that happened, 30 minutes after that, they were finally at the control pads but there was

a bang and the asteroid fell into the atmosphere. "What are we going to do now?" said Stephanie. "Move over", said Sara, "If we put the planet on bouncy mode, the asteroid will bounce off and we will be saved". She quickly put it on bouncy mode and the asteroid bounced off.

They were saved! To celebrate they decided to have the best Mars party ever.

THE END

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**T**HE ROOM with the grey carpet and walls called out in desperation. The feeling of abandonment was evident as the dilapidated house stood on the lonesome street where it had been for decades. The creaky door was like the entrance to a labyrinth, never-ending and complicated. As he entered the childhood home, he was faced with pictures of himself, smiling and happy. However, times had changed and he no longer remembered the person he used to be.

The battered couch was placed across from the television set, a perfect fit, in such a chaotic room. It gave a sense of comfort as he inched closer, taking a seat as he observed his surroundings. In front of him laid a grey oak coffee table as four VHS tapes sat there, taunting him with a mysterious aura.

The first tape was labelled 'Baby Dau'. His eyes scanned the screen as the eyes of his mother reflected the happiness radiating from her face, in the moment, where she held her new baby boy.

"What's his name?" his father called out as she turned to look at the camera, "Dau Ha Nguyen, a fighter who brings sunshine and warmth to our Earth." A coo then erupted from his mouth, and that was when Baby Dau's life had just begun.

A glimpse of light was seen through the window, as he felt the joy which radiated

# Fighter

off his mother's smile – a type of joy he hadn't felt in years. It was the joy which people experienced with their loved ones.

The second tape was labelled 'Freedom'. He watched as the youthful boy with the rounded glasses ran around the fields, as free as a bird. He was carefree as he ran along the hill, his mind clear.

He squinted, covering his face as the sun shone down on him. Placing his glasses upon his nose, the view was no longer blurry, but as clear as glass, where he could see the mountains and forest ahead. It was as if an incredible force was pushing him, and as the force grew stronger, the future could be seen. And that was when he started running.

A stray tear escaped as he reminisced. He no longer felt the need to have the rounded glasses fixated on his nose as they created a barrier between isolation and freedom. And as time went by, he began to feel fearless and indestructible, and was finally ready to let go.

The third tape was labelled 'Lost'. A misplaced figure in such a put together world was what he was, where no matter

the circumstances, he couldn't seem to place himself in the right position.

The rain poured as the young man with the cracked glasses sat there alone and frightened. He was like a tree in blossom in a world of dull, dead branches where nature was in turmoil and he was no longer considered abnormal. But instead he was unique, the unique young man with a sense of hope in his brown eyes as he watched the flames erupt in front of him.

The crackle of the fireplace was the warmth he yearned for many years as he changed as a person. It was the warmth he craved to surround him and protect him when things weren't all right – when he wasn't all right.

The fourth and final tape was labelled 'Now'. The room was fully alight, the sun shining and his reflection clear in the television. Now was the present, the man he accepted. The man who was a courageous elder who no longer felt abandoned or lost. The man who watched his grandchildren run around the fields as he stood there like an owl, quiet and observant, but the wisest of them all. The man who was content with his life as he finally remembered who he used to be. Dau Ha Nguyen was a fighter.

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*Teacher: Ms Shelda Rathmann*





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