



'22

POETRY | PROSE | ARTWORKS

NEW
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The following people helped the students make this edition a reality: Billy Stevenson, Daniel Swinton, Rosie Ryan, Elisabeth Drysdale (editorial) and Rebecca Carr, Jia Jia Koh (design).

Foreword

BILLY STEVENSON

The theme for this year’s edition of *New Enigma* is ‘Constellations’. It’s a symbol for the different types of writing and editing that have gone into the publication.

Many of the works that you read here are excerpts from larger pieces or portfolios that have been developed in the *New Enigma* editing lab. Twice a week, students meet to share their ongoing writing projects, provide constructive feedback on each other’s work and reflect on the editing process more generally.

Other pieces of work reflect the breadth of writing that takes place across the College community. The spectrum stretches from Year 7 poetry to excerpts from Year 12 major works. These pieces are typically the result of editing within class, or editing in combination with a classroom teacher, and have frequently been through many drafts.

The publication is thus a testament to the constellation of collaborations that animates writing at the College. Writing at Newington is a shared endeavour, a way of articulating our commitment to diversity. The *New Enigma* team hopes that you enjoy the works within these pages, as well as the terrific design that the Communications team has provided for it.

Heart of the Matter

OLIVER MANKS YEAR 9

In a shroud of swirling steam, the boiling ceased. With fixed ambitions and at almost impenetrable speeds, she launched into the abyss of dubiety, where Sins-breeder, in his works, grinned, muttered and mumbled words of amusement. With fast, calculated strides and pensive decrees of direction, she had begun the trail.

The prolonged scurrying that galvanised contemplation. Perhaps it was that last backwards glance. Perhaps it was her situation in the openness of the arable fields.

Perhaps.

Her reverie was soon aroused by the stumble upon a spinifex. The sudden realisation that this was it, and that she wasn't going to capitulate and let Man transcend, befell her.

Instinctively, she manoeuvred her head. She observed the corrugated epidermis of Man, worn down from decades of adamance and balefulness, the very crinkles a vehicle to the scrutinisation of soul; this soul of emptiness was like a journal received as a gift. She scorned at Man's slow, yet unwavering and forceful strides, asserting its placement on the composition of life, and with it, eradicating the beauty that resides within, in attempts to annihilate the picturesque realm of exploration. And, the worst of all, Man's catalyst for such annihilation. As projectiles pierced layers upon layers of tissue, she asked herself in a state of qualm: what is the purpose of Man?

To live? To harm? To seek pleasure?

Now, she had been running for unfathomable counts ... boundlessly sprinting and seeking for hope, a mirage concealed behind the facade of yearning and miracles. She had grown more and more doubtful as time endured, with Man nearing and bullets closing to bullseye.

She then took sight of the cavern before her, its hollow, comely creaks and crevices begging to be inspected, entrancing and encapsulating its serendipitous viewers. She assessed its openings ... Man couldn't fit, and she would be safe. Swerving her focus on the extent of the now barren desert, and with now an apparent aim, she fixed her attention on the cave ahead. Taking one final glimpse of heaven's-candle, she pushed further. Not compensating for the rigidity of the gate, she stumbled into the threshold.

It grew darker and darker as she progressed further into the underground labyrinth. Only the scattering of luminous lichen suggested any prospect of warmth and comfort; sprinkles of salt placed on a pitch-black table. The air laden with humidity resulted in overwhelming delusions, as controlled breaths converted to shallow, ragged gasps. She trekked on the damp foundations with precision and care, cautiously avoiding the potential impairments. The only audible sound was the drip of water from the stalactites, drops of tears meandering down from the ceiling, tickling the rock profile and, as they congregated anxiously at the pointy end of the

rock formation and drop, enunciating a constant, incessant sound of drip, drip, drip. As mirages grew more patent, visions of loitering figures emerged. As she dispersed herself amongst the chamber, she located an opening, another opening. She proceeded towards the last residues of hope.

It was now night. Amid the black heavens above, the warm, milky glow of the moon bathed the infertile land, its light providing consolation and succour to her and her surroundings. Man was gone. After immersing herself in all the moonlit beauty, she headed home. On her stroll, she noticed an ant scurrying from a bellicose beetle. She grew more heedful and alert with every stride.

She was now at the footing of an extensive mountain, embarking upon its firm underpinnings, attempting to locate her whereabouts. She passed through a grove of acacias and hesitantly continued. With eyes down, she failed to see Man concealed behind the silhouetted trees. He walked with ease and restraint, following her footsteps methodically. At the brink of the mountain top, she observed, comprehended and turned as she observed the ordeal in dread. There was nowhere to run. They locked eyes, one of malignance and one of misery as Man cocked his gun. She took one last glance at the chasm beside her and jumped.

She thought, *Man will never claim my spirit.*



Prose

The Beach

LUCAS ROSS YEAR 7

The sun sets over the broad, dark ocean, sitting still under the orange light. It's like a layer cake of colours, blood red on the bottom, then a rich orange, and then a deep, deep violet icing on the top. Little clouds dance around it like decorations, wispy in the crisp, salty air. Waves roll onto the shore, bringing a chorus of whispers with them, backing up the melody of the birds to form the choir of the ocean. A breeze penetrates the stillness of the cool air of summer nights, lifting off the thin layer of moisture gathered around my temple. White sand crunches beneath my feet, molding to their shape like play-doh. As I look along the length of the beach, it stretches far out before me, leading up to a hill. Atop this mysterious hill sits a lighthouse, sending out rays across the sea. Little specks of light on the horizon hang like stars, illuminating the darkness as the sun goes to rest for the night.

‘Honk!’

A car horn breaks the serenity of the beach. As I look around, I see the lights on the pier turn on. Restaurants set up tables and chairs, and cars are pouring in. It is the cycle of the beach.

Artwork

Concordia Tap

ABRAHIM ALI YEAR 12

Film Review: *Sicario*

VIVEK GUNJA YEAR 12

After rewatching it a year later I can’t stop thinking about *Sicario*. It is an excellent masterclass on suspense and tension, while representing the disruptive and horrifying savagery of the war on drugs in the United States. Among films such as *The Dark Knight* and *Argo*, *Sicario* is a film that addresses terrorism and reacts to the moral dilemmas that currently face our world. This film additionally provides a unique look upon character motivations, and the reasons why such violence and dread can occur in our reality. Denis Villeneuve’s *Sicario* is a movie you don’t want to miss.

Based on an anxiety inducing script from Taylor Sheridan, *Sicario*, a translation of ‘hitman’ from Spanish, is a crime thriller film about a principled FBI agent Kate Macer (Emily Blunt), enlisted by a government joint task force overseen by an unethical and unrevealing Matt Graver (Josh Brolin) and the secretive and mysterious Alejandro Gillick (Benicio Del Toro) to track down and capture the leader of a ruthless Mexican drug cartel. Kate is often kept in the dark from information about what is happening in the investigation, creating a compelling and terrorising story that won’t leave audiences unhappy. This is probably the most underrated film in Villeneuve’s filmography and I think it is one of his best.

Simultaneously visceral, affecting and subtle, the film addresses deontological and consequential ethics by providing an intense and shocking story about morality and the fine line between self-righteousness and moral principles. Villeneuve miraculously and exquisitely paints a realistic and unnerving picture of the American-Mexican war zones that have become so prominent in our current time, in releases like *Narcos*, *Breaking Bad*, *Better Call Saul*, and *The Wire*. *Sicario* also provides a ton of twists. Known for directing pictures that question or investigate human nature (*Prisoners*, *Blade Runner 2049*), Denis Villeneuve uses these twists to craft a cinematic experience that transcends all five senses – heart tightening, bone chilling, and completely desolate. *Sicario* is one of Villeneuve’s best directions.

From the first scene in Arizona, to the last scene in Kate’s apartment, audiences will be left on the edge of their seat. Jóhann Jóhannsson’s score creates a violent and terrorising tone that increases the tension of the events that happen as the film progresses. One particular track, ‘The Beast’, is a booming sequence that, like the timeline and events of the film, continues to grow ever louder, more mysterious, and suspenseful. Roger Deakins’ masterclass in cinematography promotes and motivates the story with both beauty and horror, displaying the gorgeous and

picturesque landscapes of the Mexican borderlands and the dark and gritty events that accompany Villeneuve’s direction. From the opening sequence of the bomb exploding in a deserted house in Arizona, the convoy of black SUVs zooming across the urban landscapes of Ciudad Juárez, and the night vision display of the dusk attack in the tunnel, it is obvious that Deakins’ effort and tenacity is unparalleled.

Without a doubt, Emily Blunt gives a career-best performance as Kate. Normally in movies like *Sicario*, it is expected that people like the protagonist. Normally protagonists go through challenging experiences and collect new information as part of the hero’s journey. But instead of doing that, Kate is more interested in doing things “by the book” and is focused on the investigation itself, making for some dynamic clashes with Alejandro. Benicio Del Toro incredibly embodies this character as a grief-stricken human being invested in bringing the chaos and violence of the drug war to an end. Along with Blunt, Del Toro and his remarkable performance are the true standout of *Sicario*.

Sicario is an eery, engrossing and deep delve into the mysterious world of FBI investigation, the war against the illegal drug trade, and an interesting character analysis that shows all sides of good and evil. This is Villeneuve’s magnum opus on how to get crime thrillers right, from his trademark direction to Taylor Sheridan’s unhinged story and the two lead performances. With incredible acting across the board, a picturesque cinematic score, and outstanding shot composition among many other ground-breaking technical aspects, there is nothing that *Sicario* can’t do to please audiences. *Sicario* is one of the best movies I’ve ever seen, and it is definitely worth your time.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Rating: 5/5 Wyverns

Music Review: Tim Hecker, *Virgins*

WILL NAUFAHU YEAR 12

Often, ambient music is able to grasp a cinematic quality that is sonically transcendent in practicality yet also wonderfully cosmic. By dwelling on specific melodies or intense forms of minimalism, ambient artists are able to construct densely scenic soundscapes - an ethereal juxtaposition of minimal recording for maximal effect. Such is appropriate to acknowledge when admiring Tim Hecker's deeply unnerving *Virgins*, a twelve-year cultivation of fractured ambience and distraught minimalism. *Virgins* proves itself as an album of torment and contradiction as soulfully solaced ambience is constantly provoked by the stabbing of noise and distortion. 'Live Room' presents the erosion of piano chords being repeatedly ravaged by a static that relentlessly tortures. 'Virginal II' bestows power back in the piano as Hecker draws upon the profundity of simplicity – a disorienting piano melody that walks itself back-and-forth whilst liquidated drones circle around.

Minimalism is pushed to a plane of beauty when the song strips itself back to reveal a flickering synth tone that pulses in and out. It is equally impossible to ignore the preternatural scope of 'Incense at Abu Ghraib', which sonically evokes the torture and abuse committed by United States soldiers at Abu Ghraib in 2003.

The album artwork appears as a manifestation of a photo taken of one of the many tortures, echoing the iconic shot of a cloaked prisoner 'who was told he would be electrocuted if he fell off the box.' Aside from 'Incense at Abu Ghraib', *Virgins* is not directly adorned in any social or political sentiment, although it percolates throughout its soundscapes. From track to track, Hecker disrupts the conventionality of sonics. No sound is safe in *Virgins* and abrasion rules over everything. Once haunted, now he's the one who haunts.

Artwork

Bushells Factory

ABRAHIM ALI YEAR 12



Film Review: *Memories of Murder*

VIVEK GUNJA YEAR 12

Where to begin? This movie just rules. A masterclass in how to get murder mysteries right.

Most of the time when I watch murder mystery movies I can get a little bit confused by the plot and character motivations, but this film engrossed me at every turn.

Memories of Murder is a fable that is incredibly tense, terrifying, and destined to keep audiences on the edge of their seat. It is a mournful crime drama that makes us think about morality, humanity, how justice can be shunned by others, and how attempting to create order can ultimately create chaos.

This film is heavily redolent of films and series involving a string of murders, especially David Fincher's *Se7en*, *Zodiac* and *Mindhunter*.

It’s full of thrills, chills and of course ... spills.

With zero coincidences, plot holes, or useless information, *Memories of Murder* displays a mindboggling murder investigation that consistently and appropriately feels thrilling, gripping, tense, chaotic, and impassioned. From scenes of the police yelling at each other, to yet another corpse being found, to chasing or interrogating suspects, to the detectives finding new leads, there is nothing in this movie that won’t impress or entertain audiences.

Put all that down to Bong Joon-Ho, who is probably one of the best filmmakers working today. For me, this surpasses all of his other works, including *Parasite*. While *Parasite* was ingenious in the thriller genre, and an incredible anxiety-inducing satire about class and socioeconomic status, *Memories of Murder* is even more compelling.

I believe Song Kang-Ho, who plays the protagonist here, is also one of the best actors living today. While his performance in *Parasite* was a career best, he’s equally good as Detective Park in this movie – a character who is both despicable and likeable, especially since his actions, motivations and morality become more and more unclear throughout the murder investigation.

The cinematography, score and production design perfectly complement the film’s story, themes and direction, displaying a picturesque colour and tone to the film that again reminded me of Fincher. In one still, a corpse tilted like a cross stands in the rice field – the perfect symbol for the film’s distinctive melancholy and morbidity.

Memories of Murder is a cathartic and transcendent film that will leave audiences stunned, thrilled, and entertained. I can’t recommend it highly enough.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Rating: 5/5 Wyverns

Dedication

NICHOLAS DISHER YEAR 12

Who is deserving of these works being inscribed to their name?

Often Maecenas was praised by Horace in his work, as did that book, which Catullus slaved at, thank his friend Cornelius Nepos.

As for me, I have but one friend – Theomasus – to give this prize.

He who is partial to verse written in classical metres, though he himself still prefers experimental iambic lyrics.

He who is forgiving of my frequent allusions to Virgil.

Theomasus is indeed most worthy of a dedication.

Look how far our world has progressed since those days long ago when

Gods would meander the Earth and heroes would battle with monsters.

Not far enough, it seems. For we still fear the Fates and strive to match all those heroes still and still fight all their ancient evils.

Theomasus, tell me, where does poetry lie in all of this?

All these old metres, can they encapsulate the rhythms of today, during an era of such stark listlessness? Where are the answers?

I think to start in the past, you think that they lie in the future.

Have all my poems here just as they are, whatever their worth, for yourself; you that has provoked me to undergo the long task of scrutinizing this whole work with quite a competitive wager.

May the Muse, sacred to this art of poetry, venerate this work.

Which, with the passage of time and words of soft blessing, might sweeten, to let the judge look on these lines with a most favourable pen.

Film Review: *Top Gun: Maverick*

VIVEK GUNJA YEAR 12

Thirty-seven years ago, the world was treated to a global hit, featuring a well-acclaimed actor that proves action films can be fun, emotional and aesthetically pleasing. Thirty-seven years later comes a sequel that improves upon its predecessor in multitudinous ways and leaves audiences with a smile on their face.

Released late May 2022, *Top Gun: Maverick* stars Tom Cruise, back in the shoes of top Naval aviator Pete ‘Maverick’ Mitchell. After decades of service for the Navy he is recruited to train and instruct a graduating class at Top Gun on a dangerous mission, while at the same time is forced to confront the guilt of his past and face his fears, in a reboot sequel to Tony Scott’s 1986 original.

Viewers of this film will not want to close their eyes for a single second. It is full of action, romance, drama and of course a soundtrack that feels brand new and nostalgic at the same time. It is as much of a sequel that long-time fans would want; a fast-paced action drama where audiences are transported into the cockpit travelling at 10 Mach. In an era where many reboot sequels are being made, *Top Gun: Maverick* receives a much higher rank as one of the best sequels to ever exist. This movie is a homage to *Top Gun* and improves upon the original from perspectives of storytelling, stunt coordination, sound and visual design, character development and everything else.

The film starts with the *Top Gun* anthem playing, followed by the song ‘Danger Zone’. The beginning also features the *Top Gun* opening titles and the aircraft carrier montage that has become so iconic from the original film. This opening sequence only electrifies audiences for what’s to come, building up to a joyride of emotions, action and entertainment. *Top Gun: Maverick* proves that action blockbusters can be fun while also having a compelling narrative with emotionally developed characters and awe-inspiring stunts, encompassing thrills and chills. This film defies the phrase ‘They don’t make them like they used to.’

In front of the camera are well-known actors Miles Teller as Goose’s son Bradley ‘Rooster’ Bradshaw, Jennifer Connelly as Maverick’s love interest Penny Benjamin, Jon Hamm as Vice Admiral Cyclone, and Val Kilmer reprising his role from Top Gun as Admiral Tom ‘Iceman’ Kazansky. Along with a bunch of newcomer actors, their camaraderie creates a culture that feels original, unique and compelling to *Top Gun*’s legacy. The film features a lot of brilliant artists working behind the camera, including the holy trinity of modern-day action blockbusters: Joseph Kosinski (*Tron: Legacy*, *Oblivion*) in the director’s chair, Christopher McQuarrie (*Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation* and *Fallout*) as co-writer and Tom Cruise producing and starring.

Their collaboration makes for a swansong of thrilling action that is compiled into a fully realised, overwhelmingly powerful auditory and visual experience. It heightens the viewer’s senses to a point of transcendent ecstasy. Speaking of which, Tom Cruise gives one of his greatest acting performances here, at the same bar of his work in *Magnolia* and *Collateral*. With the previously mentioned trio of talents on board, *Top Gun: Maverick* more than lives up to the hype and expectation that it has received since its announcement in 2019. Tom Cruise’s passion for the art form is clearly expressed in this love letter to aviation, in a sequel that has finally come to fruition after years of drafting and pitching of sequel ideas. It was definitely worth the wait.

Stunts, story and characters aside, *Top Gun: Maverick* has a narrative that balances aviation and drama until they are both slowly intertwined into the climax of the film, creating an emotional as well as epic continuation of the impact the *Top Gun* franchise has made upon the film industry and audiences. This film presents a plot and an abundance of characters that hint at elemental themes of individual altruism, personal and mental issues, redemption and having to deal with trauma and grief. This is all implemented into the hero’s journey,

Maverick here being the hero, a node for symbolic tropes of heroism, competition, family, sacrifice and self-examination. These themes are what I believe allow *Top Gun: Maverick* to be the most successful mainstream film this year has offered us so far.

Top Gun: Maverick is an experience that features remarkable aviation stunts and a story that is incredibly hard for audiences to dislike. It is a sequel that feels way ahead of its time, pairing an abundance of nostalgia for the original film with brand new perks that feel appealing to our current generation and attuned to our modern society. *Top Gun: Maverick* is one of the best films of the decade so far, a thrilling and exciting adventure that you don’t want to miss. See this film in the biggest screen possible so you can feel the need for speed.

★★★★★

Rating: 4.5/5 Wyverns



Artwork

Mak Sai Ying

TYLER KANG YEAR 12

Prose

Two Feet in a River

TYLER KANG YEAR 12

The writer stands by the edge of the boat, pen in hand. He scavenges through the vastness of the ocean, in search of a story to tell. But he cannot see beyond the river’s murky surface. He listens eagerly for the harmony of native birds singing. But the violent engines drown them out. This wasn’t the inspirational return home he quite pictured. But a deadline was encroaching. So, he writes from the sanctuary of his own memory:

By the sacred river, borne aloft, my father drifted down the rustic stream. A songkok cap sheltered him from the bitter Gopeng sun. Strips of fading blue paint on the side of his fishing boat revealed countless stories of untold voyages. Despite the harsh current, he sat there in eternal stillness, patiently waiting for his next prey. He’d been out there all day, retrieving food for the local restaurant. I sat by the shore, with two feet in the river. The waves clashed against my naked skin, as if trying to take me some place.

A single splash of water lands on the writer’s scrapbook. He wipes it away with his finger, leaving a smudged trail of black ink across his next line:

After dark, he would reap his rewards. I peered into the bucketful of fish. Their fins still flapping, desperately clinging onto whatever little life they had left. They stared at me soullessly with their opaque eyes, mirroring the futile trajectory of my own future. Son of a fisherman who was son of a fisherman, how could I be anything other than a fisherman? I had dreams of being a writer, or a poet of some sort, but he told me writing was for the rich and educated. I stood by the bank, skipping pebbles into the misty abyss of the West. I wondered if there was anything beyond it.

The writer glances up. For a mere moment, he became victim to the fading horizon, before continuing to write:

I don’t exactly remember how I ended up leaving. But I remember walking back from the river when a foreign poster caught my eye. ‘The land of opportunity’ was imprinted in bold red writing. With eyes of envy, I looked up to the face of freedom that was America. On the poster, a black coated wanderer stood above the clouds of discontent and whispered for me to join him. Finally, a way out of this mess.

The writer becomes distracted by a yellow bird stretched across the sky. The westerly winds take it across the river, before it dissolves back into the clouds. He grips his pen again:

I broke the news to my father when he pulled into shore the next day. I looked to him for a response, but he expressed no emotion. We sat there in a thick silent silk with our eyes focused on the horizon. The river’s violent current stood still for one eternal moment, while the sun blossomed in poetic red streaks. The white stars flickered over the deep blue waters. I admired it in all its glory until it turned dark. Then he turned to me and said, ‘you never step foot in the same river twice. The water is constantly moving and free, never still. The river you stand in now, will be long gone tomorrow.’

That was twenty-three years ago.

The writer dangles his feet into the river’s tide. It feels much colder than it used to. Finally, he sees through the façade of the misty abyss.

The Decisive Moment

TYLER KANG YEAR 12

Behind the camera, I feel like I am underwater. Not drowning, but swimming in an alternate reality. I watch life pass by me on the surface, without noise or chaos ... just silent pixels. I spent an entire career floating along the tide set by Henri Cartier-Bresson, patiently waiting to photograph ‘the decisive moment’. To capture the essence of an event in a single image seemed to me far more fulfilling than experiencing the moment itself. Yet here I am, on the corner of Broadway Avenue, tracking the man falling from the World Trade Centre like a butterfly in the wind.

My lens sees everything,
but I feel nothing.

Quite soon my photo would land itself in The New York Times. Millions of Americans would read:

‘A person falls headfirst after jumping from the north tower of the World Trade Centre.’

I didn’t bother reading any further; for each blurry pixel was far beyond what words could describe. At first glance, it seemed too idyllic to be part of reality, more like an outtake from a Hollywood movie set. His body aligned in intoxicating symmetry with the burnt-out tower lines. He stares directly into the lens with his blurred eyes of betrayal. He confronts me, as if a stalker through a shower window, before diving headfirst into doom with the precision of an arrow. Despite falling at 250 kilometres an hour, he appeared as inert as a statue, undefined by gravity’s divine suction. Although he didn’t choose his fate, he embraced it in his final moments of living.

I remember the first photo I ever took; I didn’t believe it to be anything other than a plain image of the ancient tree in my front yard. But when I got it developed, I noticed a tiny leaf floating on the black and white surface. When I went to wipe it off, I realised, it was a part of the image, although I never saw it fall, nor saw it land. It had its own story, its own life, which was as oblivious to me as I were to it. Only the camera could connect us. When I showed my Pops, he didn’t get it, he said that it would make a nice painting.

Weeks later, the photo would spread across the globe, igniting controversy from continent to continent. The image itself became a blur in my mind, it was described as ‘angelic but lawless and gospel but fiction’. On one hand, I received my first award as a photographer, but also my first death threat as a human. Perhaps, that was the sublimity of the image, its delightful terror. You know the man is about to die... but there is no blood, no guts or gunshots. He may as well be flying. I think back to Eddie Adams’ photo of the Saigon execution. In a microsecond of anarchy, as a bullet enters a man’s head, a camera freezes time. Although death was inevitable, the still photo seemed to breed life. Pedestrians running in the near background, like extras in an action movie. The shooter’s tensed arm calculating his own fate. An open mouth with one last input into existence. The true crime was to label the artwork a photo of one’s death.

Many years later, long into retirement, I would flip through the countless photos I’d taken throughout my career. Yet no photo would make me feel the way I felt that day. I realise that in all my images I gave birth to a world, where everything inside it looked up at me like I was a god. But that photo ... that photo had its own agency. When I looked at it, I felt like it was commanding me. Staring back into the photo I could picture my own distant fate ... falling into my grave like he fell from the sky. My epitaph encrusted on the gravestone: ‘The guy who photographed The Falling Man’. It makes me wonder, was the decisive moment I dreamed of just some Faustian bargain? For when I released that shutter, I traded my life for a photograph. While he lives eternally in that image, I only truly lived for one moment.

The Beach

ALVIS SHI YEAR 7

The azure ocean water drifted across the golden sand like a blanket of sapphire. It receded to evanescence again, the lifespan of the wave lasting the lapse of seven seconds. Again, bodies of crystal monuments fractured above the tranquil surface, aquatic deities of surreal grace in their naturality. It was a peace-inducing visual, one of open embrace and mental haven to the mortal eye. Yet this picturesque scenery was only nature’s façade for the malignant behemoth lurking beneath the water. Yes, beneath the water lay the sepulchral fate of many, the atramentous ink of darkness that gluttonously consumed and the open clutch of Lucifer. Below, the water was as tenebrous as Death’s ebony cloak, a Stygian crater of an irresistible event horizon. People were lured through the splendid blanket that beckoned with clear blue and white froth, beckoned to their doom in the silent struggle beneath the aquatic smokescreen. Humans were impulsive and clueless prey that fell to the trap, notably the one named ‘Mad Macka’. And if his corpse hadn’t succumbed to two other foolish individuals hauling him up, it would have laid there for millennia, insidiously dissolving and eroding in nature’s tomb. Hence the ocean would devour his soul, grinning sadistically as it tore the life through the flailing of muffled screaming, unsuccessful gasps, the frenzy of waving arms and wisps of scarlet sifting as a blemish in the blue. Then, silence – a resolution. The pain, the suffering, the life – they would all come to the abrupt demise and sink slowly to the ocean floor.

That was the ocean.
That was its treachery.

The Power of Motivation

EDSON WHATTAM YEAR 12

What is it that gets you out of bed each morning?

What is it that pushes you through the fence where the grass may be greener? Was it a particular person in the past, present or future? Do you have a life passion that drives you to succeed? Do you have a reason to prove others wrong or do you just want to be happy? There is an unexplainable necessity within us to have something that inspires and drives us to become the best version of ourselves. Some dedicate their whole lives to fulfilling this passion or goal. For some it's charity work, for others it's to prove doubtful people wrong. No two types and forms of motivation are the same, but each will fuel life's journey.

For me, it's proving myself and making my friends and family proud of me. I am proud to be a loyal and caring person who sticks by friends and family through the good, the bad and the ugly. I found that the great Shane Warne was also motivated to help and care for others, but on a much larger scale. As we heard following his devastating passing recently, he was deeply motivated to support ill and underprivileged Australian children through the Shane Warne Foundation, to get many children to the greener grass on the other side of their adversity and disadvantage. Despite closing in 2016, the charity raised over \$7.8 million in 12 years, benefiting thousands of young lives, and providing many with unforgettable memories of knowing the Australian legend.

It is interesting to listen to Shane Warne talk about his foundation. I now know he is a true legend. I hope everyone knows that and is inspired by him in some way. I didn't realise he was so much more than one of the greatest bowlers of all time, because charity work doesn't normally dominate the front or back page. I am thankful I know he is a special person who breaks down people's fences towards a better life. I am saddened that I had never got to meet a man of his charisma, as are many.

I remember staying in a Gold Coast hotel with my family and going to the pool, observing my mum with a bag of three juggling balls, throwing them in the air and trying to catch them and throw them up again. It was bizarre. They weren't even specialised juggling balls. I can still see her trying and trying and trying to learn to juggle by herself. I also remember my egocentric, 10-year-old self approaching my mum and saying 'I can do it easily' before failing miserably. I left it at that, pretty embarrassed.

I didn't try juggling again ... until I was at a training session years later. Instantly, I reminisced about that traumatic day on the Gold Coast. I couldn't embarrass myself again, so I focused ... and failed again. I was more content with failing this time as my ego had deflated since my earlier teenage years. However, instead of accepting defeat to three spherical shapes, I gave it a crack. What do you know? The grass was greener on the other side, and soon enough, I could juggle. I find it interesting that there's sometimes a turning point where we seem to find motivation to drive us through difficult circumstances. For me, it was to prove myself wrong. To overcome the trauma of

failing and learn to juggle. For some it may be to prove others wrong. It is a common theme with professional athletes to have the mental strength and determination to prove critics wrong when their ability and passion is doubted.

West Ham United were written off as losers after drawing the first leg 1-1 of the Europa League quarter-final at London Stadium against Lyon. Players from Lyon expressed their confidence on social media – 'We don't see how we won't make it through [to the Europa league semi-final]' – but this just spurred on Declan Rice's West Ham team. Lyon also tweeted 'Are you really acting like there's a chance we don't go through?' ahead of the second leg game in Lyon. Rice revealed that Moussa Dembele also winked at a camera, after their first leg draw, mocking West Ham and Declan Rice. Yet Rice also revealed that after their 3-0 second leg win his men were motivated to stay quiet on social media and speak only with their on-field performance, rather than behave like the French players.

Their courageous effort in the second leg saw West Ham win 4-1 on aggregate and qualify for the semi-final on 28 April against Eintracht Frankfurt, for a spot in the Europa League final. When I heard this story, I thought they'd already achieved silverware, symbolically, because the strength to overcome barricades put in front of you by others is truly inspiring. Yet proving others wrong can be seen in professions other than professional sports.

Marshall Bruce Mathers III, also known as Eminem, escaped the barricade of the rough and rugged downtown streets of Detroit, Michigan (near 8-mile road) to walk amongst the greatest rappers of all time. As demonstrated in his biopic *8 Mile*, Eminem fought with family and friends in downtown Detroit before fulfilling his desire to move away from his hometown and make a name for himself in the outside world. In his youth, he was interested in writing comics, and this transferred into his skill in hip hop music later in life. While visiting the West 7-mile in Detroit, known as the epicentre of Detroit rapping in the 1980s and 1990s, Marshall developed his rapping ability with his childhood friends and developed his rap-tag 'M&M' based on his initials (Marshall Mathers).

I find Eminem's persistent chase of his rapping passion truly inspiring. Despite facing numerous challenges and failures in his life, he made his passion and dream a reality, and proved many doubtful people wrong through his unbelievable success. At the beginning of the movie, Eminem participates in a rap battle where his nerves get the better of him and he forgets his prepared lines, leaving the building. Furthermore, after being assaulted during an altercation with other rappers, he takes part in another battle against the group who humiliated him, in front of a similar crowd. Mathers's character 'Rabbit' wins the whole competition single-handedly, beginning his crusade as Eminem. His humble beginnings forged his path through infinite barriers towards global fame and success, allowing him to provide for his family, and succeed in chasing his passion and life motivation.

The Innate Need for Belonging

GUS MOSES YEAR 12

When I was younger, I took a trip to America and was introduced to the marketing phenomena of Starbucks. I quickly found myself becoming entranced and identified with the brand, purchasing their useless commodities, and extravagant drinks with swirls and whipped cream. I brought this obsession home with me, where due to Australia's awful version of American Starbucks, I quickly lost interest. But in doing so, I realised how my identity, for a brief period, had become completely dependent upon the mass-marketed icon of Starbucks.

It's odd isn't it, how we can become so convinced and intermingled with the need to belong that we lose sight of the real intentions of our 'group'? In this case, the intention was to keep me in the store, trying drink after drink. Some groups prey on this innate human desire for belonging for even worse reasons.

Take Stalin's construction of propaganda, which blinded people from impending issues within the Soviet Union. Stalin's formula for propaganda was terror, overexposure and pressure. He would create statues, portraits and posters which captured himself as a father figure of the nation, an emblem of Marxist ideology and the final piece of the puzzle towards a communist utopia. Stalin made himself and the USSR seem appealing, like a winter coat offering the safety and warmth of belonging. He pursued an omnipotent image of excellence which was pushed down the throats of Russian society, through an overwhelming multitude of messages on every street and sidewalk imaginable.

Terror and pressure then worked hand in hand, not only convincing people of this propaganda's truth but creating a cult-like following of Stalin in the process. 'Society' became a group of blinded disciples, reprogramming people into a nation of automata, by playing with their innate desire to belong. Although making a comparison between Stalin's propaganda and the marketing schemes of the modern capitalist world seems extreme, there are some links in

their fundamental strategies. The techniques of applying pressure and creating overexposure are common to both political systems, and have found their way into modern marketing, moulding people into disciples of brands and industries alike.

In our society, one of the most dangerous manipulations of this human desire for belonging takes place via social media algorithms, and their ability to feed you tailored information that trick you into feeling belonging. They manipulate the chemicals in your brain such as dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins, which all make you feel happy and connected. Such a manipulation can appear harmless but within the wrong hands it can cause chaos. Some people and groups have understood and been able to command the algorithms, creating cult-like groups of flat-earththers and QAnon conspiracy theorists, whose only source of information comes from the insular loop of their interests.

These people are now not assured by science or fact, but by an almost religious experience that these social media algorithms offer. In calculating your interests by calibrating your posts, clicks and accounts, these algorithms create a loop comprised only of what you desire. If people find flat earth theories interesting, they will be bombarded by false flat earth theories and perhaps end up being connected with the flat earth community, which now involves one of America's top basketball players, Kyrie Irving. Not only does this feed a false sense of connection but it causes people to become addicted to the short dopamine release experienced with social media. Cults are thus born out of a false sense of belonging, meaning we must think critically about what it means to belong,

in order to truly belong.

Artwork

The Queen is Dead

TYLER KANG YEAR 12



Culture and Unity

LUCAS HEAD YEAR 12

The relationship between culture and unity is strange.

When I was eight, I was eating dinner at a restaurant with my family, when a funky, white hipster walked in – suit on, man bag strapped and filthy dreadlocks frolicking. I thought to myself ‘This guy is the sh*t.’ I loved his whole style. I loved the suit; I loved the man bag, and I absolutely loved the dreadlocks. In the car trip home, I told my sister that I wanted dreadlocks, just like that guy. As I was a white kid this was amusing to my sister, but at the time I was confused about why this was funny. Nine years later I understand this was cultural appropriation: it was a dominant culture taking aspects of historically subjugated cultures and using them for its own creative and commercial gain.

I find it interesting how postmodern society continually pursues unity, yet within the world’s cosmopolitan breadth of culture we still partly define ourselves based on our differences in cultural identity. This often makes me question: is cultural unity possible? In the 1960s, a supposedly liberal Hollywood targeted Asian people as cultural caricatures, determining their acting roles on racial stereotypes. They were often menacing villains or laughable

caricatures, who knew kung-fu, were nerdy or owned the local corner store. Take the bucktoothed Mr Yunioshi from Blake Edwards’s movie *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961). Played by Mickey Rooney, the character is yellow-faced and his ‘Engrish’ accent mercilessly mocked Asian people.

In the 21st century, there have been slight reductions in caricatures, but they still represent the stereotypes engrained within Eurocentric perspectives, making the ethnographic genre (documentation of culture) very controversial. Many people appreciate the unifying effects of ethnography, as it grants subjugated cultures a voice that subverts ‘the false image of the Orient or the East that has been fabricated by western society,’ as Edward Said put it. But it can also be questionable when Western media documents other ‘exotic’ cultures for its own capitalistic gain. At its worst, it Westernises them and misrepresents them through a Eurocentric bias shaped by exposure to centuries of racial stereotypes. When first hearing about these issues, I struggled to understand them and thought misrepresentation and cultural appropriation was trivial – until I experienced a microcosm of this myself.

I believe literary boundaries are limited to experience, so what do I write about? My hectic win at footy? My teen angst? Or skateboarding? I’m a privileged, white, private school boy who’s barely experienced anything, but over my 12 years within the

skateboarding community I’ve learnt a lot about authenticity. Skateboarding has based itself on authenticity since the creation of VHS filmmaking in the 1990s. The democratisation of film granted subcultures like skateboarding voice to project their own identity, and yet this was almost immediately targeted by corporations keen to use skateboarding as the next trend for their own capitalist gain. Skateboarding reacted against this by developing its own ‘scopic regime’, using fish-eye lenses and low-dolly shots to craft a distinct visual aesthetic that signified cultural authenticity.

In 2021, the global skateboarding community was stunned by a Porsche advertisement that featured a woman skateboarding for no apparent reason. It was shot through a 35mm long lens and featured no low-dolly shots. It was inauthentic. It was clearly commodifying skateboarding for the aesthetic. Whilst you may think this is a positive sign of unification, the key goal of a subculture is to find a space outside the capitalist mainstream, a cultural milieu where critical thinking and genuine artistic experimentation can flourish.

After experiencing this feeling of misrepresentation, I understood the problems with ethnography in a more personal way. Jorge Luis

Borges’s *The Ethnographer* perfectly captures the challenges of this discipline, by way of an ethnographer who leaves America and lives among a tribal group for months. The tribe soon accepts him into their spiritual practices, but upon returning to America, he finds himself unable to translate his insights back into a Western lexicon: ‘I learned something out there that I can’t express.’ The way he’s unable to express their culture through the English language captures how ethnographers can’t belong to two cultures at once. Initially, his Western bias prevents him from understanding the tribal world, but once the tribe accepts him, the Western world becomes strange in turn.

Essentially, humans’ identities naturally gravitate towards groups of people their identity relates to, whether this is a tribal group or a contemporary subculture. There’s a fine line between communicating with a group and appropriating their values. Belonging is critical,

but so is empathy, understanding and a nuanced appreciation of difference.

The Beach

HAMISH TWEEDDALE YEAR 7

The ocean was calm. The sand below shone in the light of the sun through the crystal-clear water. The salty sea air drifted in a light breeze. A fish broke the surface. It was a big, shimmery groper, with scales shining blue, green, purple. They were like shards of coloured glass, its teeth like daggers gleaming in the crisp, morning sun. Its body twitched powerfully, with a hidden strength. It dived, down, down, down, towards the coral reef below. Small, bright flashes of light denoted reef creatures scattering for cover. The groper majestically soared through the water effortlessly, the king of them all. But then the bigger fish arrived. A dark shadow fell over the reef. Immediately, the groper darted for cover.

Too slow.

A flash of white teeth shot instantly across the gap and hit the groper like a battering ram. Flesh tore from the previous king. The blood spread slowly in the warm, lazy current. The small fish emerged first. First tentatively, then in earnest as they gobbled up leftovers. The big shark left, mouth full of prime, fresh groper meat. Soon the carcass was bare. With the absence of both massive shark and unlucky groper, the sea creatures returned to their usual living. The deep, warm, crystal-clear water calmed, the sand settled and the air was salty, with a slight smell of blood.

Artwork

Backyard

TYLER KANG YEAR 12



Prohibition

GUS SMALL YEAR 12

I couldn’t manage any more than a line at a time. Whenever my pen touched paper, I froze. I had all these ideas, good ones too, but for whatever reason that’s about where the buck stopped. Ideas trapped inside my pen. Anyone watching from the outside would have blamed the gin. It probably had something to do with it, but frankly, I couldn’t fathom writing without it. It got the creative juices flowing, you know? Of course, if anyone had been watching me, I’d probably be arrested sooner than given advice on novel writing. That’s why I kept the windows shut and got aimlessly drunk, initially from a glass, but eventually straight from the bottle, from my very livelihood.

For the life of me, I couldn’t tell you why I got into the brewing business. It all seemed so exciting at first. The idea of running my own brand of gin from state to state under the cover of an unconvincing tarp, driven by an overly confident drunk with no chance of outrunning a police car, was, for whatever reason, remarkably appealing. When it was all outlawed all those years ago, me and a few of my buddies from the mechanics figured it would be a right laugh to get involved with the brewing business. It was at first, I’ll admit. It only took a few months for the police to catch on though, so it’s probably more work than it’s worth, but it more or less pays the bills while I write, and it’s a hell of a lot more predictable than the farm, so for now, it’s not going anywhere.

I stood up, partially out of fatigue, and partially out of frustration at my creative inabilities, and turned to the windows, my bottle of gin leashed like a dog to the palm of my hand, and parted blinds, enough that I could see outside, but outside couldn’t see me. It’s a sorry sight at the moment. Open fields lie void of life, the patches of yellowed grasses offering little in the way of inspiration. Not too long ago, wheat ran end to end, waving at me while I’d write on the lawn chair on the porch. Like I said, I don’t trust the farm.

I miss writing on the porch. The wind blowing my paper everywhere I could live without, but back when I could pour myself a tall glass without fear of being arrested, all I did was write. I’d only stop to take a breath when I absolutely had to and kept pace with my violent heartbeat, writing like I could only fantasise about now. There was one story, an earlier one, of some mechanics that discovered a terrible government secret, and were on the run from the men in black. The boys from the shop loved that one. They all seemed to think it was about them. I don’t blame them. Life was pretty dull looking back. God knows what got the creative juices flowing back then.

It was probably the dumbest thing I’d done in a while, but I swung the front door open, leaving nothing to the imagination. Even the boys would have called me stupid. I like to think it was the bottle of gin that was nearly empty that did it, but I’m not sure that makes it any better. What a strange sight I must have been. A man in his mid-fifties, sitting alone on a lawn chair, a copy of *A Tale of Two Cities* in one hand and a newly emptied bottle of gin in the other. The wife thought it would be funny to get me a Dickens book back when I first started writing. I can still hardly read it, but at least now I’ve managed to convince myself I know what’s going on. A faint humming scores my left ear, and I turn. ‘OKPD’ it says on the side of the car. My bottle finds a hiding place behind the leg of the chair, and I know I’m too drunk to be nervous. The black of the car window rolls down and a smug looking fellow, donning aviator and a scowl, judges me from a distance. I smirk, offering a snarky ‘Evening officer!

The window winds itself up.
The humming starts to fade.

Camilla in Love

NICHOLAS DISHER YEAR 12

‘Tuscan, did you really suspect that you were hunting beasts through these woods? The day has arrived that will refute your boasts with the arms of a woman. All the same, you will bear no small name on your ancestral spirits – For you were killed by the spear of Camilla!’

Virgil, ‘Aeneid XI’, 686-9

Out from war’s monochrome chaos, Camilla spies
with the cultured acuity of a woman’s eyes,
the iridescent mosaic of Chloreus.

Drawn by splendour, in love with his armour, she nears
him upon on his steed, prancing around the spears.
How a tigress would look longingly at its prey.

Tracking him, while a fire within her marrow burned.
She did not think to shield herself when Chloreus turned
himself. She halts in the presence of his armour.

Poison takes its effect slower than greed or lust,
or the narcotic of spoils which turns the mind to dust.
Thus, Camilla was doomed when the light touched her eyes.

Now she imagines a duel against Chloreus,
skewering him like a prismatic albatross.
Her spear would sap the blood out from his panoply.

She would raze the camps of the Trojans, then
drag his white bones around all of the Trojan men.
Just like Hector on the far beaches of ancient Troy.

Might she nail this armour to a temple’s door,
offering it to the Gods as a spoil of war?
No, no, she could only wear it for herself.

Drunken, tottering, a captive in her own mind,
an arrow is shot through her undefended hind.
She saw not who slew her, but the sun bleed through her.

Now what name does most wretched Camilla bear
to Hades and her ancestors that dwell there?
Only one who died in the most disgraceful way.

Poetry

The Promise

JAMES GORMLY YEAR 7

As I step into the damp rainforest,
With trees as high as the clouds,
White box, oak, birch, and gum,
Dew that covers and shrouds.

Animals stay and wait there,
Oblivious to the danger at dawn,
Smoke spreading over the horizon,
As the Phoenix from embers is born.

We dash towards the river,
Its water refreshing and sweet,
The earth around us charred and black,
The fire around my feet.

The panic and terror subsiding,
The trees as low as the shrubs,
Everything dry and brittle,
Smoke that covers and hugs.

The forest is a wasteland,
Filled with agony and despair,
But as I look at the new horizon,
A plant is growing there.

Prose

Book Review: *Scythe*, Neal Shusterman

JUSTIN ZHANG YEAR 7

Scythe is a novel written by Neal Shusterman and is set in a perfect world, where disease, death and war have all been eradicated. No one has to work as they receive money for simply existing – though some still choose to. This utopia stems from an omniscient computer program called the ‘Thunderhead’ with complete control over everything governments would typically oversee, including housing, welfare, finance and education. Everything except death. Anyone can also talk to the Thunderhead for advice, and it acts as a search engine as well. As the population still needs to remain at manageable levels, ‘Scythes’ have been given the power to glean (kill indefinitely) a certain amount of people every season. The ‘Scythedom’ is the only body unmanaged by the Thunderhead and has a separate system, which is less efficient. Scythes also have the power to grant immunity to anyone who kisses their ring.

Two teens from this perfect world, Citra Terranova and Rowan Damisch, are chosen to become apprentices to Scythe Michael Faraday (each Scythe has a patron from history). However, only one of the two will become an actual Scythe. They learn the intricacies of ‘kill-craft’, how to dig around in the ‘back-brain’ (Scythes are not allowed to consult the Thunderhead) and the rituals of Scythe ‘conclaves’, meetings that are held four times a year. Things take a horrible turn when it is decided that the apprentice that becomes the Scythe will have to glean the other. Scythe Faraday then apparently self-gleans, though the competition is not over, as Scythe Curie takes Citra as her apprentice, and Scythe Goddard takes Rowan as his apprentice. Soon it is alleged Citra is the one who killed Scythe Faraday, though this is found to be false, since Scythe Faraday has secretly retired from being a Scythe.

A key concept in this book is death, and what you should feel after taking a person’s life, as all Scythes have to take lives nearly every day to meet their quota, no matter how they reach it. For Scythes, the only other option is to self-clean. Chillingly, some ‘new-order’ Scythes like Goddard embrace this killing, gleaning entire airplanes or food courts at a time. While Goodard is supposed to be punished for gleaning with bias and going over his quota, he often finds that the Scythedom respects his commitment. This raises some big questions:

is gleaning wrong if it benefits society as a whole? Is there a humane way to kill someone?

The Scythes are greatly respected not simply because they generate fear, but also because they are the only way population can be controlled – a vital sacrifice. ‘Old-guard’ Scythes stick to the beliefs of the Founding Fathers and say that your conscience should be your most cherished valuable, even while you spend your days murdering people. All of these considerations make *Scythe* a work of philosophy as much as of literature, and strongly recommended for readers interested in the big ideas.

Excerpt from ‘Environmental Catastrophe and Modern Climate Fiction’

ANGELO KAMBOS YEAR 12

Building on the established foundation of ecocriticism,¹ climate fiction or ‘cli-fi’ heralds in a new criticism of the inherently fractured and destructive relationship humankind has with the environment. The climate fiction genre emerged in the early 21st century, transforming literary form and style to reflect the relationship between humanity and the environment.² Underpinned by a cautionary message, the genre has challenged traditional literary forms to undermine the pervasive power of climate scepticism. As the social and environmental phenomenon of climate change and climate action shifts, so too does the literary form, which has shifted from a genre intertwined with science fiction and dystopia to a more realism-based tone associated with climate speculation and contemporary circumstance. The climate change genre parallels the urgency and immediate threat climate change can pose, ruminating on how the ‘future can slip into the present’.³ The versatility and malleability of the cli-fi form have encouraged its constant adaptation and revision, with authors constructing new realities to respond to the ever-present and ever-changing threat of climate change. Offering a clear cautionary message, the existence of the climate change genre raises the question whether fiction can change minds⁴ and whether the increased awareness that climate fiction inspires is synonymous with climate action.⁵

Alexandra Kleeman’s novel, *Something New Under the Sun (2021)* stands as a cautionary tale in the 21st century cli-fi genre, set within climate-stricken California.⁶ Her novel reflects on how the detrimental climate catastrophe shifts the landscape in a metropolitan, commercial world. Through deconstructing the commercialised

nature of contemporary Western society, Kleeman rejects capitalism, which is built on foundations of exploitation and damage of the environment. For example, the novel’s setting features an ongoing catastrophe of permanent wildfire. However, the obscurity, mystery and disregard of the fires provides a clear satirical critique of the ignorance and complacency of humanity in a time of emergency. This is reinforced by the profound pessimism of the ending, where the poisonous, commercialised water substitute WAT-R becomes part of the North American precipitation cycle and is presented as the harbinger of a global mass human extinction.

Kleeman’s novel thus emphasises the causal link between destructive capitalism and the environment.⁷ The plot revolves around a writer, Patrick Hamlin, who has travelled to Los Angeles to work on the film remake of his novel. Along with the rebellious actress Cassidy Carter, he discovers that the film’s producers are responsible for the new brand of WAT-R and that it is chemically toxic. In a subplot, Patrick’s wife Alison has suffered a breakdown in response to the growing horror of environmental irresponsibility and has travelled with their daughter Nora to an environmental commune, known as Earthbridge. As the plot progresses Patrick and Cassidy discover that WAT-R is the source of a type of rapid onset dementia. As this is uncovered, the apocalyptic fires around Los Angeles remain unexplained and all but ignored by most of the Los Angeles inhabitants. In the chilling conclusion to the novel, Cassidy and Patrick are killed, the WAT-R infiltrates the rain cycle and the novel finishes with images of total human extinction and apocalyptic fire.

Throughout the novel, Kleeman makes several powerful satirical and ecocritical⁸ points. The fires that constantly burn in the background and seem all but ignored by the narcissistic or desperate Los Angeles population, are a parallel for the broader climate catastrophe. In addition, Kleeman deconstructs the power of capitalist corruption, asserting that the growth of corporate America can be attributed to the vast environmental destruction of wildfires throughout Los Angeles. The protagonist Patrick Hamlin, a filmmaker, and his wife Allison are foils for one another. Allison, an environmental activist, has a profound awareness of the ecological crisis, and indeed

suffers a form of breakdown in response to it. In contrast, Hamlin, driven merely by capitalism, highlights the effect of complacency and ignorance. In addition, the commercial forces that allow the production of WAT-R to replace its free natural equivalent are shown to be responsible for the apathy, hallucinations and disillusionment which prevents any real action from being taken. In this way, Kleeman challenges the metanarrative of capitalism through illustrating the hegemony and power of capitalist complacency on the environment.

* * *

¹ Lawrence Buell, ‘The Ecocritical Insurgency’, *New Literary History* 30, no.3 (1999): 699

² Heather Hansman, ‘As the Climate Changes, so Does Fiction’, *The Atlantic*, 10 May 2022

³ Claire Armitstead, ‘Stories to save the World: the new wave of climate fiction’, *The Guardian*, 26 June 2021

⁴ Amy Brady, ‘Can Fiction Change People’s Minds about Climate Change’, *Chicago Review of Books*, 24 July 2018

⁵ Amy Brady, ‘Climate Fiction for Climate Action’, *Chicago Review of Books*, 21 January 2020

⁶ Alexandra Kleeman, *Something New Under the Sun* (Hogarth, 3 August 2021)

⁷ George Monbiot, ‘Capitalism is killing the planet – it’s time to stop buying into our own destruction’, *The Guardian*, 30 October 2021

⁸ Derek Gladwin, ‘Ecocriticism’, Oxford Bibliographies, 3 June 2019



Artwork



Self-portrait

BOYD CORNISH YEAR 11

Excerpt from ‘Social Realism in the Rust Belt’

LLOYD TOOGOOD YEAR 12

Philipp Meyer’s critically acclaimed debut novel *American Rust*, published in 2009, presents the contemporary economic hardship of the North American ‘Rust Belt’, the term that is generally used to signify the American States around the Great Lakes region of the north-west of America stretching from Wisconsin to Pennsylvania. This region’s prosperous economic outlook was predicated upon the growth of coal mining, steel production, heavy industry and manufacturing in the aftermath of the Second World War. The growth of community in the region was centred around an industrial framework that facilitated social and cultural interactions outside of the employment opportunities provided in the region;¹ however, during the 1970’s and 1980’s this idealised American occupation was either automated or outsourced to emerging economies where labour was cheaper and corporate profits were greater.

This situation was only worsened by the rise of China’s manufacturing prowess and the Global Financial Crisis in the early 2000’s. These former manufacturing heartlands would ultimately facilitate the election of Donald Trump in 2016, due to the frustration and despair that lay at the heart of a community unable to see any kind of post-industrial future. Trump would appeal to these individuals occupying towns ‘rusted out ... scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation’,² promising to return these avenues of employment to a generation that largely hadn’t experienced industrial work and employment. Anticipating many of the issues on which Trump would capitalise, *American Rust* elucidates the increasingly existential despair of the region and the destructive frustration experienced by those immediately displaced by loss of employment and the transgenerational implications of a deindustrialised landscape. Through the introduction of six narrators spanning generations, genders and classes, Meyer illuminates the differing mentalities and predicaments of individuals in the region reconciling the consequences of a post-industrial Rust Belt through each respective protagonist.

Meyer’s *American Rust* is the latest iteration of social protest novels that are a staple of both the British and American literary canon. In Britain, Meyer is a continuation of the ‘condition of England’ novels which began with figures like Elizabeth Gaskell in novels such as *North and South* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley* which ‘give some utterance to the agony... from time to time’³ in order to ‘convulse ... people’ into recognising and understanding the struggles associated with poverty and neglect. In *North and South* and *Shirley*, the authors represent the harsh nature of industrialisation and exploitive work conditions of modernised England. In an American context Meyer has repeatedly been compared to John Steinbeck, described for example as ‘working on the same broad scale, using the struggles of a few desperate people to portray the tragedy of life in a place that offers no employment, no chance for improvement’⁴ that Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) observes. In this way Meyer continues the literary tradition of ‘social protest’ novels that illuminate contemporary injustices and consequences of economic decline.

Like the Joads in *The Grapes of Wrath*, who navigate the stark material reality of the Great Depression, the two leading protagonists of *American Rust*, Billy Poe and Isaac English, confront the socioeconomic and cultural turmoil resulting from decades of outsourcing and institutional neglect. This relationship between the boys drives the underlying plot points as they navigate the increasingly complex cultural parameters that mandate a subscription to American exceptionalism despite the schism between this aestheticised ideal of home ownership and a stable family life and the material reality of the region. However, whilst Poe recognises the impossibility of seeking to escape Fayette County, Isaac is an intellectual with aspirations for studying at a Californian university, predicated on his sister Lee’s scholarship to Yale. Despite these aims, the lives of Isaac and Poe are irrevocably changed when Isaac unintentionally murders a drifter in an abandoned industrial estate in Poe’s defence, and the novel’s primary narrative of redemption and honour is established. The revolving plot sequence of the text revolves around Poe, Isaac and Lee’s internal

anguish that more broadly illuminates the identity crisis about what it means to live within a post-industrial Rust Belt. For example, despite Poe’s wrongful incarceration for Isaac’s initial crime, his sacrifice for Isaac provides a means of masculine agency, the only form of masculine expression available in the absence of identity facilitated by industrial work in the aftermath of deindustrialisation.⁵

Meyer presents a 21st century evolution of Bakhtin’s concept of the polyphonic novel fusing modernist form with social realist themes through multiple narrators. In addition to the chapters narrated by Poe and Isaac, Meyer introduces another four narrators: Issacs’s sister Lee, Poe’s mother Grace, Isaac and Lee’s father Henry English, and local sherriff Chief Harris. Throughout the duration of the text, Meyer alternates between these protagonists providing differing perspectives and evaluations of the same events, often presented as extended stream of consciousness passages.⁶ Furthermore, the introduction of multiple narrators captures the consequences

of industrial decline beyond those initially displaced from the outsourcing of manufacturing employment, thereby capturing the anxieties of the protagonists in *American Rust* that transcend class, nationality, education and age. Meyer’s construction of ‘voice’ is integral to individualising and dissecting the emerging and existing predicaments of the region. Furthermore, Meyer’s characterisation of this ‘voiceless’ region helps subverts the socio-political and cultural nexus that defines these regions of industrial decline that have been displaced and alienated by mainstream discourse. Within *American Rust*, Meyer reveals nuanced, thoughtful, and deeply personal human sensibilities who maintain their own desires and aspirations, opposing the dehumanising stereotypes of ignorant rednecks concerned with the rodeo and moonshine. In this sense, Meyer foreshadows the political repercussions of the continued disillusionment of the region culminating in the ultimate rise of a figure like Donald Trump.

* * *

¹ Ben Chu, ‘What has Donald Trump really done for the rust belt states?’, *The Independent*, 31 October 2020

² Ibid

³ Sophie Ratcliffe, ‘The Condition of England novel’, *Discovering Literature: Romantics & Victorians*

⁴ Ron Charles, ‘Book World Review: Philipp Meyer’s “American Rust”’, *The Washington Post*, 25 February 2009

⁵Sherry Lee Linkon, 2018. *Half-Life of Deindustrialization: Working-Class Writing about Economic Restructuring*. University of Michigan Press

⁶ Lenore Taylor, ‘Philipp Meyer: “We don’t have a good context for where we come from as Americans”’, *The Guardian*, 21 July 2013

Poetry

Shane Warne

LAURIE CARVETH YEAR 7

A player like no other,
A legend of the game.
He took a fair few wickets,
Shane Warne was his name.

Walking into bowl,
Now starting to jog.
He delivers the ball,
And the batter has a slog.

The ball turns sharply,
And then drifts in the air.
It hits top-of-off,
So starts the batter’s despair.

His first ball in England,
And he’d bowled a player out.
The best player of that test,
Of that there is no doubt.

He took so many wickets,
Over 700 of them.
But he wasn’t quite the best,
Because of Muralitharan.

That great Sri Lankan bowler,
And Warnie were the best.
1500 wickets together,
Not many passed their test.

Murali was a chucker,
A lot of people stated.
But he had a bent arm,
So a new rule was created.

Shane mastered every country,
Knew how to bowl everywhere.
Except for the Indian pitches,
Warnie never bowled well there.

He took a lot of wickets,
He bowled the Gatting ball.
Our greatest bowler ever,
He was loved by us all.

Artwork

Founders

FELIX XIE YEAR 10



Poetry

Achilles Before the Scaean Gate

NICHOLAS DISHER YEAR 12

Achilles
O Myrmidons that toil the fields of stern Ares,
who fertilise his soil with decomposing corpses
and nourish his crops with the oil of Trojan blood;
let Achilles speak with you on equal footing.
Before you all, I dare the Gods to question your
ability to weather the tides of fate and war.
Those possessing of bravery among you, I
dare now to join me in one last attack on Ilium.
Once Trojan breasts sheath all our swords and spearheads,
we shall then plunder the last gem from their hoards and
unleash our rage with the seething fires of conquest. But
when war is quelled, we must return to peaceful homes,
and temple walls shall hold our weapons on mantles
while famers’ tools will occupy us with their labours.
Else will arrows pin and a falling spear plunge
us down to the desolate halls of callous Death.
Alas our fates in life are kept uncertain.
My father, Peleus, said to me as a boy
that piety rewards a fine seat for old age.
Yet why must we resign ourselves to tired farmlands
when Troy is vulnerable and the Scaean Gate
is pregnable? While we delay, the nine muses
keep their hands poised at ready instruments to sing
about our victories for thousands of years.
Hark! I hear Trojan war cries and their shields clamour!
Forward with swift feet and bright swords you Myrmidons!
If not to Troy, then jointly to Elysium!

Gothic Literature and the Feminine

GUS MOSES YEAR 12

The construction of female identity is essential to Gothic literature, as the presentation of an altered zeitgeist of womanly autonomy can completely modify the reader’s interpretation of society. In the narratives of Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) and Emily Brontë’s novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847), women are presented as objects of erotic allure; maternal figures often intertwined with the spectral, defined by their biological roles. Nevertheless, it is the transition between these typecasts that allows the author to undermine female Gothic ontology. By allowing female characters to break free from stereotypical constraints, the writer creates obscurity and suspense within a story. An even more powerful mode of female validation is through challenging the masculine role in the repression of female promiscuity, such that the outdated parable of social decline presents not as a fault of women, but as a result of male anxieties surrounding female promiscuity and the possibility of emasculation.

In the work of William Godwin, inspiration from Mary Wollstonecraft manifests itself in the form of nested narratives, designed to denaturalise male authority and liberate women from oppressive phallocentric rule. Accompanied by Godwin’s confessional alignment with his protagonist, bolstered by an inaugural espousal of a reformed romanticised perception,¹ his novel *Fleetwood* (1850) characterises its protagonist as a sympathetic yet misguided confessor of his own sins; ‘to write is an act of penitence and humiliation’.² Rather than rebuking the anti-hero for his lapse into misogynistic libertinism, Godwin is more intent on showing how the coercive pressures of dominant ideological institutions such as education and law, bolstered by rigidly gendered cultural customs and traditions ‘make monsters of individuals who fail or refuse to perform their prescribed socio-political gender roles’.³

Godwin charts Fleetwood’s collapse into irritable misanthropy, through fabricating his overtly romanticised upbringing, thereby constructing what Godwin believed to be the epitome of the man of sensibility, and upholding characteristics which clashed with the prescribed male role within his genteel society. Early in the

novel Fleetwood defines masculine behaviours as: ‘the jarring passions of men, their loud contentions, their gross pursuits, their crafty delusions, their boisterous mirth ... objects which, even in idea, my mind shrunk from’.⁴ Seeing himself as distant from the repulsive demeanour of man, unveiling himself as ‘habitually a lover of the sublime and romantic features of nature’.⁵ Godwin’s blatant alignment of Fleetwood with Romantic ideologies, coupled with the coercive Gothic form, preludes the potentially catastrophic nature of anti-rational responses in a period of Romantic growth.

As the novel progresses, Fleetwood’s principles seem perversely deaf to any conception of gender neutralism, natural sublimity or any iteration of feminist thought. Even the rehabilitative efforts of MacNeil, an intertextual philosopher who acts as a mentor for Fleetwood, prove falsified by his essentialist rhetoric. Following Fleetwood’s confessional lament, in which he confides misogyny to be at the heart of his misanthropy, MacNeil responds with marriage as the resolution to his cynicism, but this only further aggravates Fleetwood’s domestic rumination:

‘Choose a girl whom no disappointments have sourced, and no misfortunes have bent to the Earth ... If your habits are somewhat rooted and obstinate, take care that there is no responsive stiffness in her ... Let her be all pliancy, accommodation, and good humour. Form her to your mind; educate her yourself. By thus grafting a young shoot upon your venerable trunk, you will obtain a new hold of life. You will be another creature ... as alert as a boy, and as free and rapid in your conceptions as a stripling’.⁶

A horticultural metaphor exposes MacNeil’s underlying ideological alignment with courtship-education, a model in which the allocation of gender-specific traits is skewed towards male supremacy,⁷ while the process of ‘grafting’ is used as a natural motif for the unintentional condescension of the female role. Consequently, Fleetwood justifies his misogyny through the tokens of ‘herborization’ and aligns himself with Henri Rousseau’s ideals of gender essentialism. Through botany,

Godwin highlights the patriarchal despotism that forms Fleetwood’s gender politics, aligning his anti-hero with Rousseau’s mythos through explicit references to *Emile* (1762). These pedagogies of benevolent sexism are embedded in the histories of Fleetwood’s mentors Ruffigny and MacNeil. Together, their narratives bring about and epitomise Rousseau’s statement regarding the ‘tissue of fables’,⁸ intertextually reiterating the mentor’s gender essentialist view of education. However, this natural supremacy comes with a focus of male disposition,⁹ challenging the model of male aggrievement to which Fleetwood has confessionally subscribed,¹⁰ thereby expressing how exterior forces ‘hail the individual into conformation with ideologically prescribed gender roles’.¹¹

Additionally, Godwin challenges Rousseau’s model of ‘history as a tissue of fables’.¹² Whilst Rousseau argued that fables are flawed due to their ‘disproportionate and mixed ... morals’,¹³ Godwin sees myths as a way to temporarily revolutionise schools of thought. However, because certain myths aim to challenge established ideology, they are met with resistance, which immediately reverts the attempted change. Thus, to chart his anti-hero’s path from sensibility towards hyper masculinity, Godwin uses the classical motif of the Siren¹⁴ to dictate the transcendence of his ‘man of feeling into a masculine monster’.¹⁵ The Siren is used to reiterate the importance of fables as cautionary didactic expressions of social iniquity, diametrically opposed to Rousseau’s conceptions. The Siren within the dialect of Godwin stands as a symbol of female autonomy and the seductive feminine mannerism of the 18th century ‘New Woman’. The word ‘siren’ derives from the Greek meaning ‘to bind or attach’, and Godwin uses this classical iteration to characterise Fleetwood’s companions. Throughout the novel, Godwin stages several encounters between Fleetwood and various ‘masculine sirens’,¹⁶ who appear as ‘men of feeling’ but lure and attach themselves to Fleetwood, altering his sensibility and perspective on masculinity.

The first male Siren encountered is Charles Glead, who lures Fleetwood ‘against the rocks that awaited him’.¹⁷ Under the influence of Glead, Fleetwood finds himself acquiring new personas through mimicry, adapting to artificial conventions of language, dress and etiquette. Fleetwood frames this process by recognising that he ‘fell but too easily into the maxims and manners then in vogue in the court of France’.¹⁸ Fleetwood also confesses himself to be ‘too tremblingly alive, to be well adapted to the commerce of the world,’¹⁹ yet, by associating with Glead, he becomes ‘hardened and brutalised to a certain degree,’²⁰ a ‘player in the exchange of women between men’.²¹ Such manipulation results in Fleetwood’s masculinity becoming dependent upon a prescribed feminine identity and once this identity is undermined, he essentially loses his ‘prescribed male dominance’.²²

Additionally, Fleetwood admits that his first mistresses’ autonomy was the result of their separation, and that ‘her passion seemed particularly to prompt her to the bold, the intrepid, and the masculine’.²³ At this point, Fleetwood shows a conventional understanding of the feminine and masculine role within the public sphere. He abides by these ideals and allows his mistress a physical but not a vocal presence. Although he is in awe of the Marchioness’ physiognomy and figure, he feels effeminised by her active and articulate role in public, where she promulgates ‘an impudent Amazonian stare, a smack of the whip, a slap on the back, a loud and unexpected accost that made the hearer start again.’²⁴ His masculine portrait of the Marchioness, like Glead, turns her into another Siren, who instead of giving him pleasure, tortures his sensibility and ‘urged me almost to madness’.²⁵ Furthermore, Godwin’s work comments on the male disposition as the recurring repressive element to female autonomy, dissecting the sensibility of man within the discourse of misogyny and masculine fragility. In this way, he utilises the Gothic, and traditional mythology, to challenge preconceptions of female promiscuity and self-expression, and in doing so destabilises a phallocentric society founded on ‘prescribed male dominance’.²⁶

* * *

¹ Edmund Burke (1986), *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. C. C. O’Brein (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics) p. 92

² William Godwin (1805), *Fleetwood: Or, The New Man of Feeling*, (Public-Library.Uk.) p. 6

³ Willemijn Ruberg, Kristine Steenbergh (2011), *Sexed Sentiments: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gender and Emotion* (Brill) p. 121

⁴ William Godwin (1805), *Fleetwood: Or, The New Man of Feeling*, (Public-Library.Uk.) p. 4

⁵ Ibid p. 3

⁶ Ibid p. 166-167

⁷ Alan Richardson (1994), *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832*, (Cambridge University press) p. 186-190

⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), *Emile, Or Treatise on Education* (T. Becket and R. Baldwin) p. 236-240

⁹ Mark Philp, Pamela Clemit, Martin Fitzpatrick, William St. Clair (1993), *The Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin vol 5*, (Routledge) p. 215-16

¹⁰ Ann Chandler (2004), ‘A Tissue of Fables’: Rousseau, Gender, and Textuality in Godwin’s ‘Fleetwood’ (Keats-Shelley Association of America, Inc) p. 51

¹¹ Willemijn Ruberg, Kristine Steenbergh (2011), *Sexed Sentiments: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gender and Emotion* (Brill) p. 12

¹² Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), *Emile, Or Treatise on Education* (T. Becket and R. Baldwin) p. 236-240

¹³ Ibid p. 113

¹⁴ Willemijn Ruberg, Kristine Steenbergh (2011), *Sexed Sentiments: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gender and Emotion* (Brill) p. 124

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ William Godwin (1805), *Fleetwood: Or, The New Man of Feeling*, (Public-Library.Uk.) p. 21

¹⁸ Ibid p. 24

¹⁹ Ibid p. 24

²⁰ Ibid p. 28

²¹ Willemijn Ruberg, Kristine Steenbergh (2011), *Sexed Sentiments: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gender and Emotion* (Brill) p. 124

²² Ibid (Abstract) p. 117

²³ William Godwin (1805), *Fleetwood: Or, The New Man of Feeling*, (Public-Library.Uk.) p. 26

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Willemijn Ruberg, Kristine Steenbergh (2011), *Sexed Sentiments: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gender and Emotion* (Brill) p. 124



Artwork

Self-portrait

ROWAN BHATIA YEAR 11

Poetry

Dr. Strange and Baron Mordo v. Kaecilius in the Mirror Dimension

NOAH NADANACHANDRAN YEAR 9

Reality was crashing around them,
as the once navigable streets of New York
collided and slid amid disastrous tumult.
As buildings fractured and contracted,
Strange's thinking organ was overwhelmed,
his ocean of knowledge had no spell.

He let his world seers lead him across
the changing maze of calculated chaos.
The hopelessness was more apparent,
the natural order manipulated
like the ground beneath their unsure feet.
Gravity answered to its master, throwing
Strange's mind into further confusion,
and his body, into a bus.

He jumped on, and started sprinting,
across a skyscraper, his path clear.
But as a sea of chaos does, nature twisted,
as waves were sent through glass like it was liquid,
and Strange's portal was interrupted.
The groaning of the glass tower was followed,
by the sudden twisting of reality,
as Strange was flung into the ocean of turmoil.

They fell into a collapsed infinity,
where gravity had free reign, with no rules.
Once again, spacetime became a toy,
and they saw structures rising, and twisting.
Caught by the everchanging railings, fire escapes
That had been stripped away from buildings
created an unpredictable path that answered,
only to those that were trying to kill them.

The Third of May

ABRAHIM ALI YEAR 12

BBC broadcast May 1982:

The Syrian Army has continued to push into northern Lebanon leaving a trail of death and destruction. 18 civilians are dead, dozens more are badly injured, many still hardly breathing under the rubble smothering the village of Kesab.

* * *

Damascus Countryside

It was a lazy Friday afternoon. A squat apartment block with a stone veranda overlooking an orange orchard sat baking in the sun. Three men and a boy sat silently juicing ripe oranges into their mouths, before peeling and eating them, spitting the seeds onto the dusty earth. Sometimes the youth tried to spit the pips over the waist high wall in front of him, over which freshly laundered clothes hung on lopsided rope lines, secured with broken pegs. This was one of the first times that Abdullah felt content to sit among the men; as a child, he wanted to play and needed them to join in, but now he understood why they kept silent, and he joined them.

Abdullah’s uncles gently rolled cigarettes between their fingers as the call to prayer rang in the distance, a call they seldom answered. Two of them had continued the family business as fruit grocers but the third couldn’t smarten his act, as Abdullah’s grandma often scolded, so he’d joined the army instead. He had earned himself the title of Captain through grit, but the honour had nevertheless had to be accompanied by a bribe – a bribe that brought heat to the Captain for doing so. Corruption percolated all throughout the country, but one had to turn a blind eye when high ranking or officials partook in the sinister practice.

As is often the case, mentioning anything government-related is cause for suspicion with the Air Force Intelligence Directorate – Mukhabarat, or ‘secret police’. They are the single greatest cause for stress; Abdullah knew from his limited experience he didn’t want to disappear without a trace. Everyone has had a run in with them; Abdullah’s older brother was almost arrested for dissent regarding some ill comments about the finance minister. However, he was let off for the simple fact the officer supported the same football team as the older brother.

Each of the uncles were a good way into their smokes and close to dozing off amidst the peachy sunset glimmering behind the oranges. The whirring of motors and honks faded in the distance. Yet, one motor kept getting closer till it rustled up the dirt driveway. The two grocers saw to it, but the Captain remained seated while taking a long, deep drag. Below the dancing oranges indistinct voices neared Abdullah. The Captain held his cigarette with pursed lips and fiddled with his cargo pockets to scrounge some gum, which he passed to Abdullah. It was his nicotine gum. Abdullah took his token cigarette and chewed. Shortly after, the grocers came from the orchard, each lumbering overfilled bags followed by a family of five. With such silent urgency it was adults’ business. They all went upstairs and started a quiet talk.

Captain and Abdullah remained on broken plastic chairs. The Captain darted his head around, then pulled in Abdullah’s head close. They both waited for nothing then the Captain interjected, asking Abdullah if he knew what was going on. He tentatively shook his head in disagreement.

‘These are friends of mine here to stay for a little bit. You’ve seen the news ... right?’

Abdullah nodded.

‘And?’
‘The Lebanese got to them?’
‘It would be easier that way. If I could show you Kesab, I would.’

He started wriggling his toes and gently picked at a hangnail on his thumb. ‘Why are they here?’

The Captain again wrestled his pockets and pulled out his military ID, pointing at the Syrian Arab Army insignia, followed by a slicing the air horizontally with his flat hand going to and fro.

‘Was it us who are gone?’
He shook his head. ‘We flattened it.’

Captain repeatedly combed his hair with his hand looking around for some reprieve.

‘You won’t hear that on our radio, because as far as you or I are concerned we didn’t level it.’

Abdullah looked up to the apartment.

‘So they don’t have a home.’
‘Yes, and my colleagues ensured that.’

Captain finished his cigarette, snatched it and rubbed it with his thumb.

‘Why would you tell me this?’ I whispered.
‘You’re a smart boy or else I wouldn’t have told you this.’

Abdullah wasn’t sure he understood but he sensed what his uncle had told him was more important than any maths or science lesson. The truth of his world had suddenly become elliptical like an ant under a magnifying glass. All that remained was the story.

But whose story?
And could it be trusted?

After the Captain finished, Abdullah could hear the clamour of what he rightly guessed was the dishevelled father of the family coming down the stairs. He watched as the man passed a wad of cash to the Captain, sat down, rolled a cigarette and sat in a broken chair in silence, watching the evening descend over the orange orchard.

* * *

Damascus Radio:

“General what has been the Army’s response considering the recent attacks by the Lebanese Front?”

“With the help of our intelligence directorate and operations we have been able to pinpoint and target dangerous individuals and their hideouts.”

Daenerys Stormborn vs the Lannister Army

ALEX XU YEAR 9

Note: The two sides in this conflict are the Dothraki, a race of half savage humans that survive on conflict, and the Lannisters, a rich and noble house. Both are taken from the Game of Thrones universe.

‘Spears and shields! Spears and shields!’ The bellow echoed across the Seven Kingdoms, accompanied by the manic movement of Mere hundreds of green un-blooded. As the story goes, even The carrion crows stopped feasting as silence cut through The valley like Sutr’s blade. Even the northern kiss of wind Held its accursed breath as fog gripped the land with an iron fist.

From afar, yet tantalisingly close, came the black song Of the Dothraki, the silken strain of the supernatural That careened craven and brave alike into a titter. And over the hills, washed over an innumerable Sea of Dothraki, unshaven faces and naked physique Each yelling in their own tongue, each brandishing blades that took The sun’s sheen and multiplied it tenfold. And yet the shield wall remained strong.

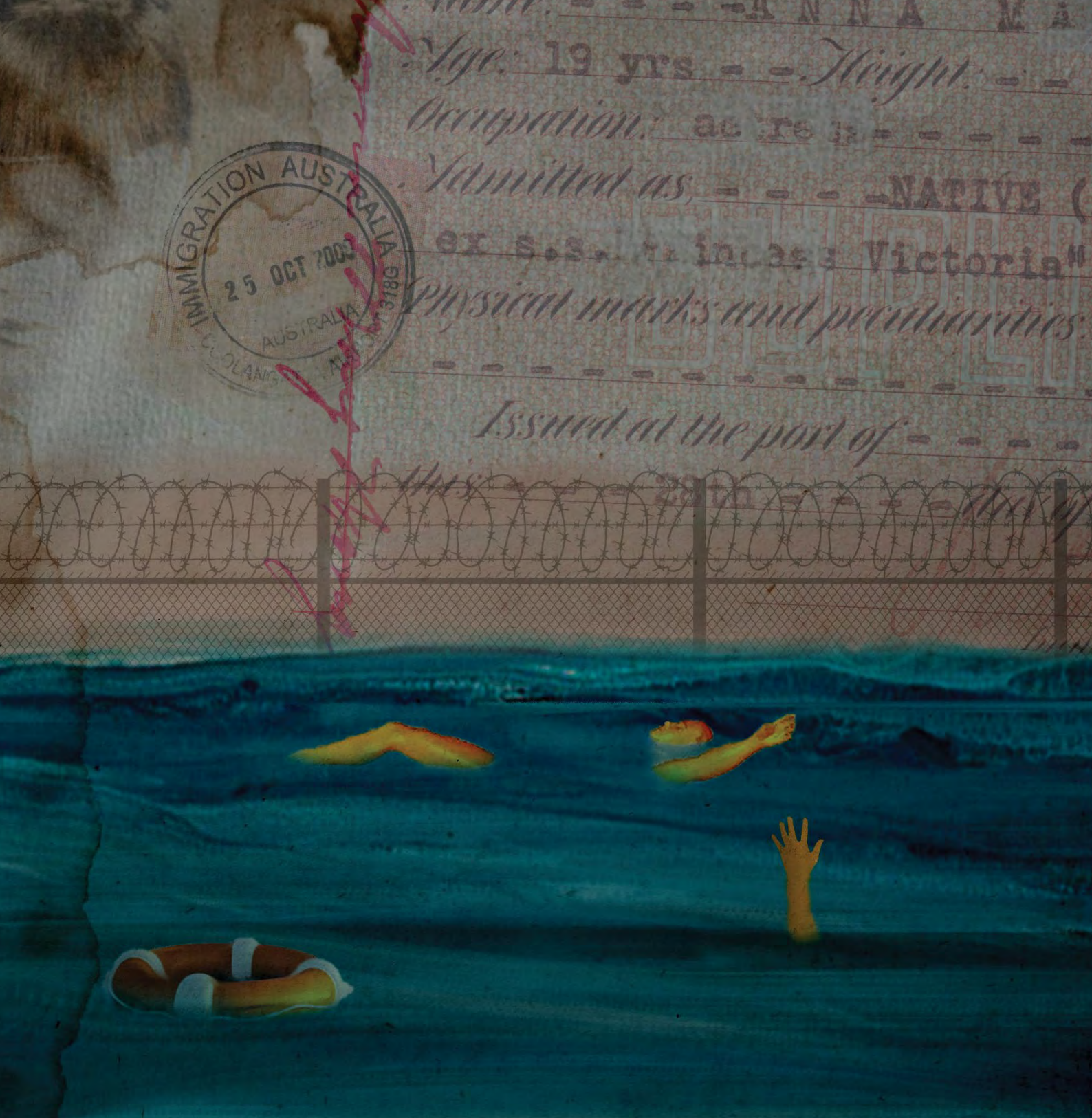
However, it was the scream, that maledict shriek of the Dragon, that broke the iron wall. It was the dragon, That now made even the fearless desire a straw death Opposed to an honourable one. The sinewy frame and Leathery wings cut through the wind like some vassal of horror. Its bone tipped claws raked at an invisible yet potent foe As its mouth sprayed fire like poisonous bile.

From the rear of the shield wall, came the whistling of a thousand war needles, falling like death incarnate upon The Dothraki. Man, and steed alike fell from this heinous rain And yet for every man that fell, two more replaced him. Metre by metre, the Dothraki was gaining clear ground And yet the shield wall remained strong.

And remain strong it did, until the dragon, black as sin, Descended upon the masses of the Lannister army. The dragon opened its scaly jaws and now mingled Among the sounds of war was the bloodcurdling sound of Men dying. The fire grew like lichen on rotting wood, So was its power, hungry for the consumption of humans. The shield wall now absent of stability, the riders Of the free cities cut through the green boys of the south like A flaming sword through flesh. The whinnying of the horses Had disappeared as the riders emerged from the flames and All throughout the land, the only sound you could hear was the Mourning sound of Lannisters dying.

And the trash for honour Lannisters, those who harrowed The souls of men, and mocked the old and new gods alike Found themselves either dead or dying, and above, the crows Were cawing like flapping jesters that awaited the Inevitable feast that entailed the battle was over. And over it was. The Lannister company had less than a hundred standing, Their brothers and liege lords lay face down in the dirt Hearts no longer pumping.

As the dragon finally closed its jaw, the scarred and maimed Land was all that was left, its vegetation now absent And its rolling hills terraformed into charred fields that Will never hold harvest again. As it surveyed its destruction, It raised its head and screamed.



Poetry

Basketball

JAMES GORMLY YEAR 7

I may not score the most,
Or dribble the best,
Or try to be flashy,
But I'm the backbone of the team,
So strong the floor becomes ashy.
When you are rock,
Are boulder,
Are mountain,
The centre of the body,
The heart,
The foundation,
You are the core of the team.
I rebound,
And steal,
And make beautiful passes.

Artwork

The Deep End Blue

TYLER KANG YEAR 12

Hercules and the Hydra

MARCUS KE YEAR 9

All was silent.

The story goes that even the birds of the mountain-air were not chirping, nor the crickets chirruping. An ominous, weighty silence befell the pair as they crouched through the tropical marshes. An impenetrable fog groped through the sunken soil, its skeletal, white fingertips searching to blind, Apollo's beacon repelled by the writhing dark. And from that murky, stagnant breeding ground for blood suckers, came the roaring bellow of the Hydra. It raised its looming head over ten stories tall, the blood of the earth sliding off its pearly, faintly luminescent scales. Its fangs glinted dully in the night's candle. The very shadows shook and trembled, huddling together for warmth in its presence. The boughs of the trees seemed to lean into each other and conspire behind backs as a stealthy sail slayer crept through to search the gaping newcomers. Whispered stories at the campfire passed down

the generations told tales about the Lernaean Hydra; no violence could conquer it: its nine heads, which monstrosly grew back into two identical others; its poison could corrode the strongest of chainmail, the sharpest of iron swords, the boldest of hearts; the immortality of the beast, of the single head that made it indestructible. And Hercules leapt, bravest of hearts, strongest of men

Accounts say that as Ares' blizzard blew, one wielding venom and the other bravery, century-old swamp mahogany trees that had averted their eyes against the horrors in the blood-soaked soils of the marsh, were snapped cleanly in half, branches stripped and large cracks indented. Some say they saw flashes of a feeder of ravens leaping from neck to neck, muscular but impossibly lithe, the rich golden lion cloak rippling in the attacks. Blurs of movement, flashes of teeth, cracks

of bone filled the decrepit marsh. The ground trembled and rattled in its attempt to hide its eyes from the battle. Venom spewed and fizzled on the ground, creating small, circular tunnels straight to Hades, such was its power. Strongest of men against most vicious of demons, so was the battle told in the stories to come. Hephaestus' furnace gleamed between the trunks: great leaping tongues of fire that embraced the headless snakes. Each wound was cauterised, burning it black and shrivelled, shrunken, so that no head may have grown there. Shrieks echoed through the misty marsh, choked, strangled screams that were cut off, gradually.

The story goes that Hercules had sliced each head off, one after each other, jumping between the sprays of venom, until a single head remained: the immortal head of the Hydra. With a single efficient downstroke of a slice, he carved the head from its neck. The Hydra was no more. Among the cheering and the shouting of the villagers, who envisioned dreams of prosperity from the land, Hercules, boldest of hearts and strongest of men, knelt to the ground and prayed to the gods. He tipped his arrows with the poisonous fate of those who befell his path.

Andersen’s Deal with the Devil

EAMON JIA YEAR 9

The heavens rumbled turbulently as a fatigued George Andersen clacked away at his keyboard, typing away at his latest report to the European Chemical Society about his research into quantum chemistry. Bloodshot, almost crimson eyes tilted back, meeting the dark gaze of the ceiling as he finally clicked the almost paradisiacal send button glaring on his dimly lit screen. The email shot away into the vast web of the internet, as George leaned back in his full grain leather recliner, shutting his eyes, and falling asleep. This being was driven by a flaming passion for one thing.

Knowledge.

A cold, lifeless mist hung over the Andersen Estate, as a wisp of smoke snaked through the freezing night. Curling through the chimney of George’s room, it materialised into a tiny vampire bat, landing softly on the rich carpet, elegantly folding away its wings, then melting away as if it was a butter slice on a frying pan. The viscous fluid flowed through the shag wool, producing a wide circular symbol. *The Sigil of Baphomet*. The symbol synonymous with the devil; the pentagram of hell. The liquid suddenly blazed radiantly, as the room instantaneously swirled in a whirlpool of phosphorescence.

George jolted conscious, involuntarily jerking into a sitting position. His luxury recliner stood perched precariously on the edge of a precipice, overlooking a colossal cavern, on the opposite side of which a single elevated platform was carved into the outcrop,

glowing with fire. The floor of the cavern was not visible to man’s eye, a fathomless chasm into the fires of Gehenna. On the rugged platform stood a solitary throne, leather crafted from the skin torn from a thousand tortured souls, wood rendered from the bones of those deemed unworthy of paradise, and on it sat the silhouette of sin, the dark figure of the prince of hell, Satan himself.

‘I shall grant you infinite knowledge of the universe. It is a guarantee, but to accept my offer is to forever hand your soul over to me at the termination of twenty-four hours.’ George held the only thing he had ever wanted in the palm of his hand, and to grasp it was to commit suicide. But to have his fingers closed around it, even for a moment, was in George’s mind worth eternal torment and suffering. He knew that to close his fist, all he had to do was to think it.

‘Yes ... ’ George’s screams cut off his thought as he spasmed in agony, blood spurting from his arm as if stabbed by an invisible stiletto. His muscles and nerves tore apart as blood levitated into the air, congealing and twisting like red ribbons into his signature, the words George Andersen snaking across the ravine, deliquescing back into blood, and flowed into a chalice by Lucifer’s side. The devil put the cup to his lips, drinking the contents in one swallow, a roguish smile cutting across his face.

George awoke, crumpled in his recliner, intense sunlight cascading through the window. He clambered to his feet, gripping the windowsill as vomit surged out of his mouth, an intense migraine developing as he gasped and panted, skin mottled like white marble.

However, his physical pain was entirely quelled by the mental ecstasy he was experiencing. Right then, right there, in George’s mind, throughout the heavens and the earth, he alone was the honoured one, his mind was inundated with every truth of the universe.

* * *

23 hours later

A blazing light shone as the archangel Zadkiel materialised in front of the contorted frame of George.

‘Child of Abraham, you have one chance to redeem yourself. Forgo the knowledge given to you and live out your life as an innocent beggar, and you shall have the chance to enter God’s realm upon your death. Refuse this offer and in one hour you shall be lost to Hades forever’. When the maniacally grinning face of George Andersen lifted to gaze up at the angel, the sound that emerged from his throat was that of a raving madman.

‘I care not for the palace of God, for the rest of this hour I live as the God of this world. Leave me, angel of the sky, your words are unfit for my ears.’ Zadkiel looked sorrowfully at George as he vanished in a brilliant blaze, leaving the delirious figure alone as the hour faded, the creatures of the abyss materialising from the blackness of the shadows, to take George away to Hell for eternity.

The Reef and its Secrets

ASTON ROSE YEAR 8

Often when I look at the sea, the top of the waves being blown off into white foam, I wonder about the friend my grandfather used to go sailing with.

His friend, Scotty Scruff, was never afraid of the vastness to the horizon, nor of the thunder that would send lightning straight down to meet the water. He just grinned, pulled his hat hard down on his head, buttoned his yellow jacket all the way to his chin, and appeared to not have a care in the world.

This was just another day away from dry land, the smell of polished wood, the feel of sea spray, just the ticket for a fun afternoon.

Rain, hail, or shine, ‘it was no use only being a fair-weather sailor,’ whatever that meant. Mr. Scruff said it even louder whenever the wind got up.

I could not tell whether this friend was human, or in fact a long haired, shaggy dog! He was simply someone without whom my grandfather would never leave the shore.

One morning my grandad set out to fish in a bay he had not been to before. Other fishermen had said that the fish there had been many, so many, they almost jumped into the boat. Still, some anglers were known to exaggerate.

It was not that far from where they sometimes went, so long as the wind was not blowing from the south. The southerly could be a gentle breeze, but when it was not, it could also be ferocious, bringing with it heavy rain, and gale like winds. Today, the breeze was light, the sun warm, a typical start to a fine summer’s day on the harbour.

That morning, the boat was packed with all the fishing gear, and fuel enough to get there and back. Snacks to eat on the way, fresh water to drink. Fishing could be hard work sometimes and once the fish started biting, who knew when the next chance to eat would be? Two yellow raincoats or macs, my grandad called them, were placed on the two pegs just inside the cabin, along with the matching yellow hats and rain boots.

With the anchor stowed, the boat set off at a steady pace into a gentle breeze. People waved from the shore as they passed.

Mr Scruff would sit and doze up front at the bow until something, a low swooping bird, or the sight of fish jumping from the water would disturb him, even through closed eyes. He would then point with his nose and in a low growl say quite distinctly, ‘slightly left, or straight ahead, not too fast now, don’t want to scare ‘em.’

No one believed my grandad about the navigation skills of the dog, because no one could honestly say, without doubt, that the dog did anything other than bark.

My grandad knew better.

After a few hours, nose pointing left and right, a low growl to steer around other boats and a reef that had its share of wrecked and rotting frames just visible above the waves, they found themselves alone, far from every other boat.

The strengthening breeze could be heard in the rigging, and the swell started to cause the boat to roll from side to side. Waves began breaking over the bow, and they both put on their wet weather gear,

Mr Scruff tying his hat for the worst. ‘Not far now’ came reassuringly from the front.

The bay looked exactly as they had imagined it from the chart. The curve of the shore, the trees on one side almost touching the water and rocks, and a stern warning of ‘do not enter this shallow water’ – all right there.

‘But,’ they almost said together. ‘I wonder what this little inlet might be like in a howling southerly?’

After the second run along the length of the little cove, they decided to try a different direction. The little boat now turned its bow for the other shore.

All of a sudden, Mr Scruff called out ‘better batten down the hatches,’ and the pair stared in disbelief as the white, fluffy clouds of the morning gave way to thick dark, rain-filled monsters.

They had not noticed the dark patches on the water marching their way across the harbour, straight for them. There was nowhere to hide, nowhere to shelter. The wind had changed direction, it was now blowing from the south!

‘Quickly now,’ my grandad yelled. ‘Let’s pull in those nets, see if we can escape around that headland.’

As the nets were reeled in, the whole stern was pulled down towards the water, while the motor bringing in the net began to make a strange whirring sound.

Straight away, the ‘Stop’ button was pushed. The net ground to a halt. The rear of the boat was inches from taking on the angry sea. Mr Scruff grabbed a fishing knife from his belt and began cutting away at the net. My grandad reversed the motor to slacken the load threatening to capsize the boat. No fish was worth this.

Just as the last of the net was thrown off and lost to the sea, Mr Scruff recovered a gold coin from the waves.

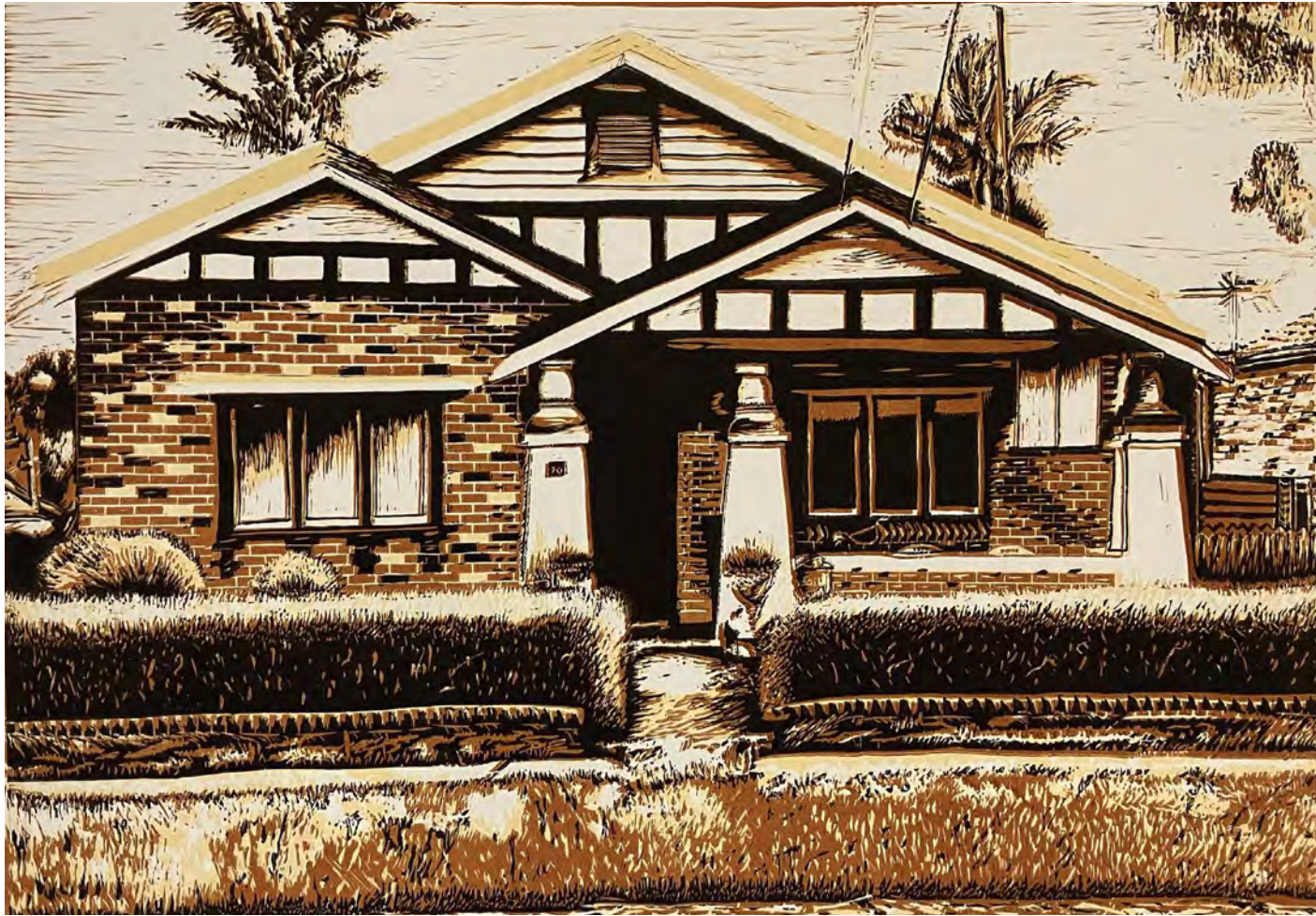
The map was brought up from below, their position found, and right there they put a mark.

Next day in the town’s library, my grandad started searching through old newspapers, for news of a ship lost, perhaps in a storm, that could give some clue, no matter how small, of what he and his friend had found.

There was nothing but old news stories. Then, late that afternoon, on the front page of the evening paper, more than a hundred years before, was what they were looking for,

‘Storm claims one more boat, fortune lost ...’

Both my grandad and his dog are now gone, but when I think back to sitting in his study, talking as we often did for hours about his sailing adventures with his friend Scotty Scruff, I cannot help but wonder if that bunch of rocks, just off our favourite beach, where he taught me to throw a line, was named in honour of his friend, Scruff Reef?



Artwork

Concordia

ABRAHIM ALI YEAR 12

Poetry

It's Time to Listen

JASPER ROCK YEAR 7

Let their names be heard.
How is this fine? It's absurd.
Let them have freedom,
someone to step up and lead them.
Lots of people choose to be quiet,
claim that others start a riot.
Everyone is human,
but some spread confusion.
We are all different
like alien immigrants.
Let their names be heard.
How is this fine? It's absurd.

The Prophecy

DANIEL CARTER YEAR 9

Prologue

Tiniminit

For the Greater Good

* * *

Gold particles of light coalesced into a glowing golden form. Tiniminit strode out of the light and set foot upon the hallowed ground of Chyros. The island was filled with mountains, and the highest peak was set at the centre. It was there that she, and the other nine Gods, set off to. They walked quietly, a sombre tone enveloping the event. Their goal today was not a worthy one.

The war had gone on too long. Their beloved people, the humans of their world, were being destroyed. These ones had never yet seen peace, despite how young the world was. They had been born into suffering, pain, anguish and war. She secretly worried that after this, they would still fight each other. A dog trained from birth to kill in an arena would still want to kill when taken away. But she would still try to save them.

‘Gratitarg! It is time.’ This voice came from the front of the line. It was Kharaninarahk – our leader and our king. He halted the line as they reached the base of the great peak. From behind her, a huge, hulking figure stomped up the line. Gratitarg looked much like the element he had been named God of. He had the same build as that of the earth – hard, rocky, tough. He walked in front of Kharaninarahk and raised his hands as if pushing the stone at the base of the mountain away. The stone responded in turn, sinking into the ground and creating a natural doorway. Inside, it was dark, darker than pitch. Qratitarq pushed his hands forward and specks of light pushed out – Fire Kek, the spirits of Fire. They flew through the cavern and lit the torches on the wall. The cavern slowly illuminated, and what it revealed still awed her. The mountain was hollowed out, and so the inside stretched up

into the sky, further than she could see. The cavern stretched down as well, further, and further, eventually into an abyss. Every section of the wall was carved in intricate detail, showing an event that the Gods had partaken in – a war they had won, a negotiation they had succeeded in, an object they had created. The mortals who had chiselled this stone truly adored her and the other Gods. She did not know why – for if they had known what the Gods had ordered this tomb built for, they would have surely lost faith.

Along a thin bridge, the nine walked from the mouth of the cave to the dais at the other end. On either side of the bridge, the ground dropped in a sheer cliff, stretching down. For such a long drop, she had trouble comprehending how such small pillars could hold the bridge. So much care had been put into this cavern, so much that the walls beneath her and the pillars of stone still had etchings of the Gods’ exploits. But not only of the ten; not only of the New Gods. Also, of the others – the reason they were here. The Old Gods. The primordial Gods of everything, the parents of the New – the enemy of the New.

As the nine reached the end of the bridge, they walked onto a platform. This was even more intricate than the rest. Gold and silver had been woven into the engravings; gemstones set for the eyes. Nine frames of pictures, each depicting the nine New Gods and what they did. At the top was Kharaninarahk. The God King and the leader of all, depicted as he appeared today – tall, thin, old, with a wispy white beard and simple blue and white robes, holding his sceptre and looking out, thinking.

Beneath him was Kidinidik. The God of Wisdom. He was Kharaninarahk’s most trusted, and his closest friend and advisor. Kidinidik was shown wearing brown robes, with a shaved head and dark skin, his owl perched on his shoulder. The owl’s black eyes followed Kidinidik’s own. Both watched keenly, staring straight ahead. Just like in real life, those eyes pierced into the soul of those they watched.

On Kidinidik’s left was Brakarb. The God of War was shown well, his prickly and offensive nature captured in stone. Easily provoked, and quick to a fight, Brakarb always appeared hostile. He wore traditional

The Prophecy

battlegear – a leather tunic and iron pauldrons, shinguards and chestplate – and was armed with a shortsword and shield, in a menacing pose. His left eye was cut and scarred over, and he chose not to heal it – rather leaving it as a memory of his past failures.

Continuing down in a pyramid was Gratitarg. The God of Earth. He was shown as very bulky and rough, just like in real life. Mountain-like protrusions from his shoulders made him look like he grew spikes there. He wore a simple bear skin, wrapped around him. He didn’t speak much, preferring to get his job done and move on.

Next to him was Tiniminit. The Goddess of Life herself. Many confused her domain with Gratitarg’s – while Gratitarg controlled the physical formation of the land, she controlled what grew on it and where, and what beings survived on those plants. The humans chiselled her as a beautiful woman, draped in leaves and vines to form a natural dress. Underneath her feet, the grass bloomed, and many animals walked with her, a parrot on her shoulder and a hound by her feet.

Qratitarq was etched on her right. He was the God of Crafting and Forging, controlling the creation of humankind’s inventions, and making each God’s own magic focus. He was dressed in a leather apron, with long brown hair and bronzed skin, soot covering his face – appearing just like he did after a session in the forge.

Underneath Qratitarq was Dharahd – Death. He was tall, thin and skeletal, dressed in black robes with sunken eyes and a gaunt face. His skin was unnaturally pale, and only seemed to cover his bone in a centimetre thick layer. He held his greatsword and was looking down, as though peering into the underworld.

Next to him was Covoc, Goddess of Relationships. She governed love, friendship and family, and wore a light, white dress. Barefoot and beaming, she seemed to radiate energy and joy. She almost looked the polar opposite to Dharahd. In the picture, Covoc was shaping the air around her, as though it was clay, and pulling people together, creating – and destroying – relationships.

Daniel Carter

The final of the nine was shown next to Covoc. Kremerk, God of Travel. He controlled the travellers, those who didn’t fit in, or were always on the road. He was the same, never really being a part of the Gods. He was shown in travelling gear, high boots, comfortable clothes and a pack slung over his back, a walking stick in hand. He was massive in the picture, walking next to humans in miniature, wearing just the same clothes. He lingered at the back of the group.

The nine skirted around these holy pictures and approached the dais. Upon it was a lectern, and an ancient tome rested on that. It was written in an alien script, and dust had settled over all the pages, thick as a finger. It had been here long. It was the reason the Gods had ordered this temple built. To hide the danger that book possessed. Everyone a part of the build had been killed upon its completion. It had turned into a tomb – and now they would bury someone else here.

They walked around the book and Gratitarg raised his arms again. The stone split beneath them, revealing a set of stairs going deep. In stark contrast to the rest of this now-tomb, the new passage had been created without the aid of the workers. It had no etchings, no smooth stone. They followed the passage down, and down, and down. Qratitarq released more Fire Kek and lit the torches on the walls. Now it was truly a tomb. They were at the bottom of the hollowed-out abyss they had seen from above. And they weren’t the only ones.

After the slaughter of the workers, they had tossed the bodies down here, and here they still lay, untouched by the effects of nature. Heaps of bones lay in piles upon piles. Skulls and ribcages, legs and arms. And they were broken and destroyed, some shattered from the fall. Rotting skin still hung from some skeletons, and dried blood still lay thick and sticky on the floor.

The nine walked through, trying not to listen to the crunch of bones beneath their feet, or the sickening stickiness they felt as they lifted their legs. They approached the centre and pushed all the bones here away. Gratitarg drew four rocks from the walls approaching the centre in an x, though stopping before any of them met. Qratitarq drew glowing silvery chains from a backpack. They were ready.

The Prophecy

Kharaninarahk bellowed out, ‘Memory! Third of the forces, and binder of mind. Come! The Council of Gods calls you!’ They all waited with bated breath. Then a skeleton behind them began to rattle. They all turned to look and saw as bits from everywhere came flying to the skeleton. A toe from across the room, a skull from beneath Tiniminit’s feet, an arm from another side. Parts slowly formed together, the Gods watching in horror. Finally, a full skeleton rose. Then rotting pieces of flesh started flying across the room, sticking to the skeleton. Soon, an undead, reanimated body stood before them. It opened its mouth and spoke.

‘Kharaninarahk. King. You called me, enacting the Oath of Parshin. What do you require?’ The Living Memory spoke in a reedy, thin voice, some sounds not quite being produced, likely by lack of proper vocal cords. It was a chilling noise and was even worse because of the body it spoke from.

Kharaninarahk replied in his low, booming voice. ‘I called you to say...’ Qratitarq shuffled behind Memory. Kharaninarahk continued. ‘To say that I am sorry.’

‘Sorry for what?’ came the raspy reply.

‘For this.’ At the signal, Qratitarq threw the chains around Memory, binding it into its current body and restricting its movement. He threw the chains around the four rocks and tightened them. The reanimated corpse was pulled up and suspended in the air, between all of the protrusions in the rock. Qratitarq began the final process of the binding. He whispered incantations in an alien tongue to each of the chains and forged the final link where he stood. Four new links, each made to stop a certain aspect of Memory. Kharaninarahk spoke once more.

Memory flailed in the air, desperately trying to pull himself out of his body, or cut down the chains. He screeched a beastly cry of terror and pushed outward, straining the chains. But despite all his best efforts, he achieved nothing. Finally realising his efforts were futile, Memory went limp. It said one more thing.

‘Why?’

Daniel Carter

‘Memory, I am sorry. I truly am. But it had to be done. It was for the greater good. You are now bound, the magic in these chains trapping your spirit into this body. You cannot move, and the new links will stop your force from reaching its fullest potential. The links have been made to specifically stop all memory of the Old Gods. Without memory of them, and without belief in them, they will be reduced to mere breezes in the wind. And they will remain that way until you are released, and memory flows back. But alas, I cannot release you – nor any of the others around you. Humanity can now have peace.’ And with that, he turned and walked away, the other Gods slowly following. Dharahd – Death – was last, lingering, watching the body, before following the others.

As they left the abyss, Gratitarg closed the rough entrance back up, doing the same with the first door he made into the mountain. Two artefacts now sat in that tomb – and hopefully neither would ever be discovered again.

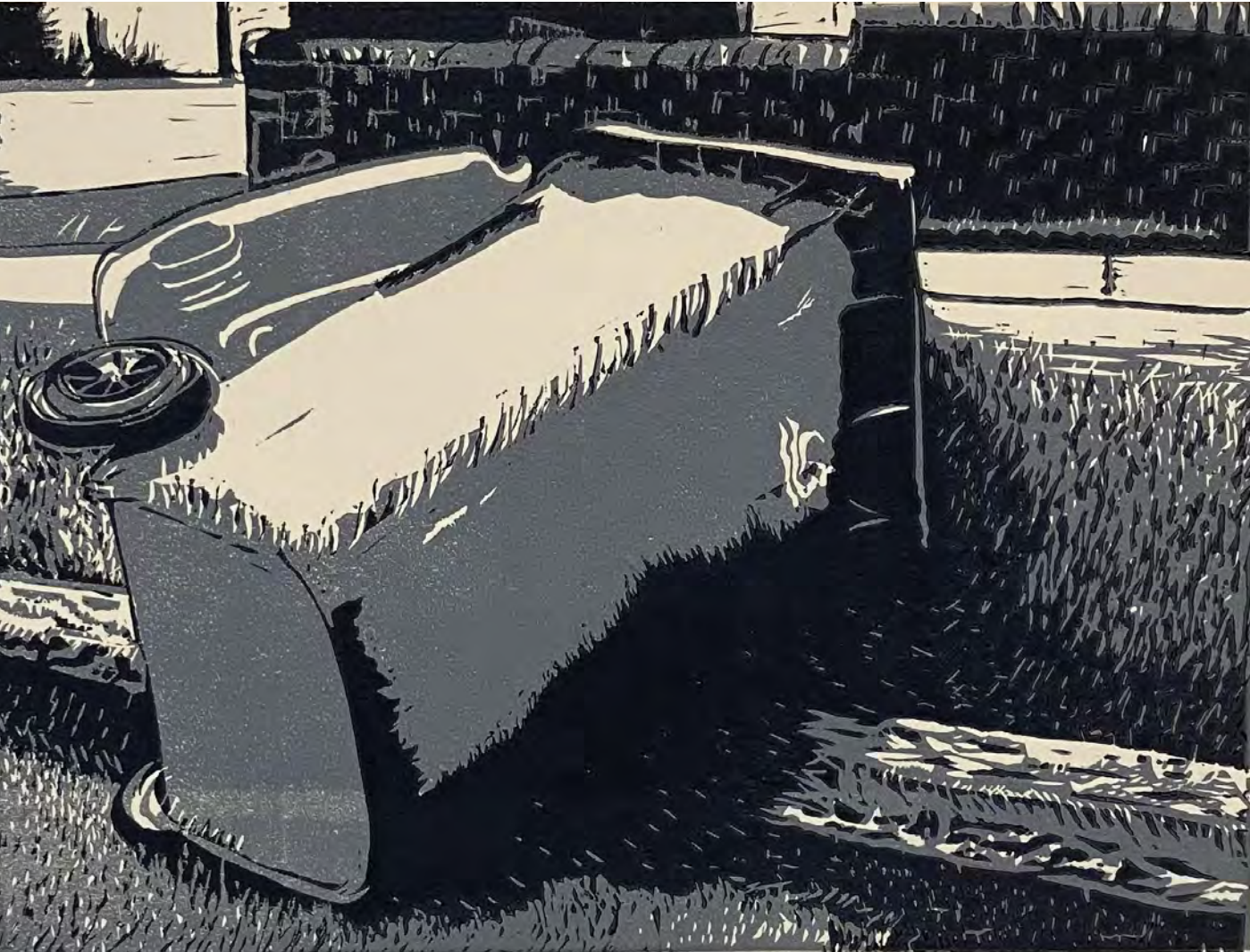
The Nine stopped outside the mountain, all looking at each other. They had all agreed on this course of action, but none felt happy with the result.

Kidinidik, the voice of Wisdom, was the first to speak again. ‘It had to be done. Be glad we have finished.’

And ever the realist, he spent no time mourning. ‘We must now not become those we just destroyed. I propose that we all return to Kinik and create a new oath. An oath of non-interference. Humanity must be allowed to continue naturally, without divine intervention. Any who breaks this oath will have the wrath of the other nine upon them. Are we all in agreement?’ Each God nodded. ‘Well then. Goodbye.’

He looked up and dissolved into gold light, disappearing. Kharaninarahk followed, then Brakarb, Gratitarg, Covoc, Qratitarq, all of them. Leaving Dharahd alone, surrounded by glowing particles of gold. He looked back. He lingered.

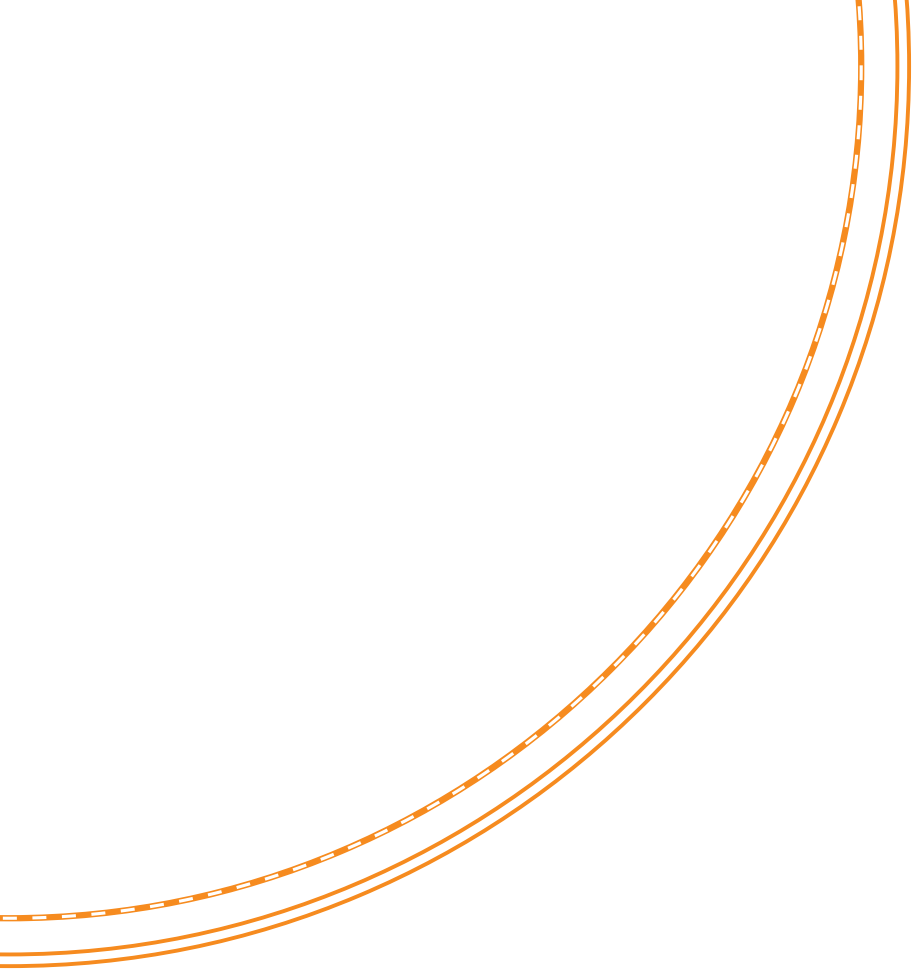
Then he looked up and all that was left of the Gods on this hallowed ground of Chyros was rapidly disappearing gold light.



Artwork

Canada Bay Bin

ABRAHIM ALI YEAR 12





Newington College

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