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NEWINGTON COLLEGE

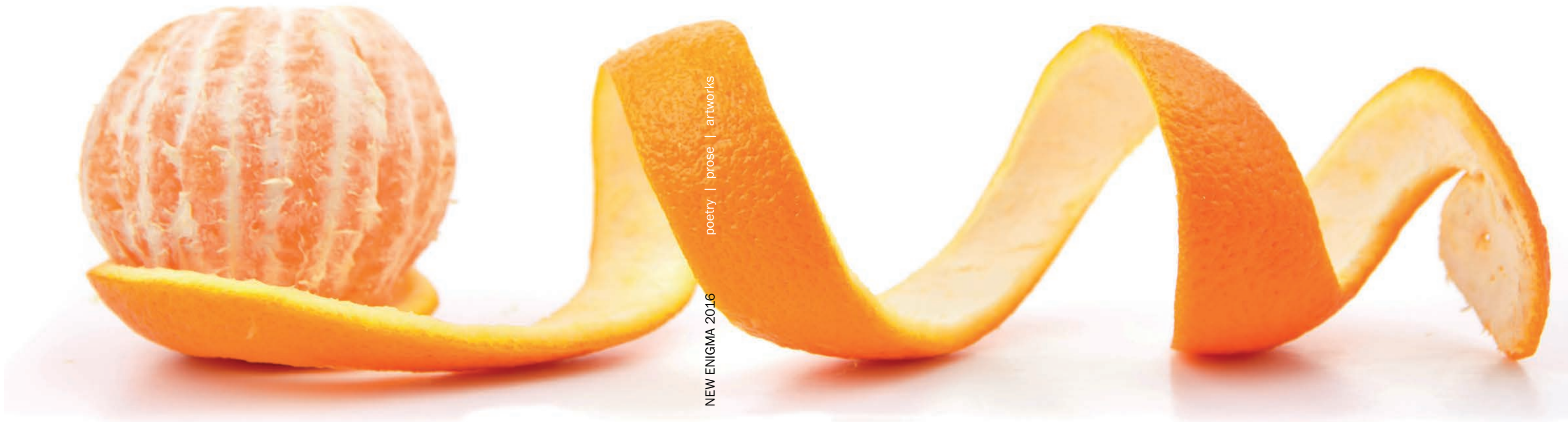
# NEW 16 ENIGMA

poetry | prose | artworks



poetry | prose | artworks

NEW ENIGMA 2016



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>> **Matt Putt (Year 11) landscape photography throughout:** Most of my photos are entirely dependent on light and composition. I choose settings where the light provides a starting point for the way I compose the shot. I mainly use a digital reflex lens camera (DSLR) so I can work on individual settings. I prefer to shoot handheld rather than using tripods, although the night photo “Star Road” did require a tripod and a long shutter speed.





# Foreword

>> Hello and welcome! You hold in your hands the 2016 edition of New Enigma, an annual publication that offers a place where we hear from the huge range of voices across Newington College; we have works here from Year 1 children all the way up to young men who have just graduated from Year 12. From artwork to poetry, New Enigma's purpose is to give creative imagination the spotlight. Our cover points to the unfurling fruits of the imagination that unwind from an inspired centre. Thoughts, ideas and dreams have "born fruit" or "fructified" in the works contained in these pages.

First things first; the editors would like to thank Dr Yvonne Smith for all the work she's done in co-ordinating the team and helping with this publication. We would also like to thank Ms Pam Hatfield and Ms Sarah O'Brien in the Communications Department for their design for this issue. Importantly, to all the boys who submitted their work for

consideration, we offer our thanks, with an apology for any that didn't finally get included this time. Next issue is 2017 – so keep writing, painting and photographing!

Our theme is valuing the imagination, a faculty of mind we each have and use every day. We use it to dream of times long ago and times yet to come; to envision opportunities or dangers ahead; to interpret the insights of ancient languages, and we use it better to understand our own humanity. You'll find imagination at work here in James Paoloni's fantastical scenes, in Matthew Putt's beautiful "Star Road" photograph, in Max Quinn's and Mitchell Long's intriguing translations and in the poetry of boys such as Oscar Bell and Ashutosh Bidkar.

Let your imagination engage your feelings as you read. Perhaps you will feel pride as you conclude Anthony

Gregoire's "Harmony's Puzzle" or joy as you encounter Conor Corcoran's "In Another Element". Ali El-Zein's collage of the homeless may touch your sense of sadness or shame at the plight of others, or maybe you will feel anger or restlessness. Or maybe you will be humbled by the power of nature in Jack McSwiggan's story "Seascape".

All we ask is that you let your imagination spark. The poet William Wordsworth writes in The Prelude of "spots of time in our existence" which "retain a fructifying virtue": the fruitful imaginative powers we have within us can, he says, be "nourished and invisibly repaired", especially in childhood and youth. Now is the time for Newington boys to "imagine what's possible".

The Editors, 2016

Jack Alscher, Arthur Kuan, Mitchell Long,  
Nicholas Peppercorn, Max Quinn

# Seascape

Jack McSwiggan | Year 12

>> The chatter of seagulls filled the air as I gazed out onto the sea. As a child, growing up in London, I had little experience swimming as most of the year the water would be too cold. But as I looked out at the sea for the last time as a free man, a tear began to glisten in my eye. All those opportunities missed, like sand slipping through my fingers.

It was almost ten o'clock and yet the sun had failed to show; dark clouds dominated the sky, and light struggled to creep past the guard formed by their mass. The ship came to a stop. The sea lapped gently at its hull.

The Captain stood at the rail looking down at us: the rabble, small-time criminals all the way up to murderers. I stood among them, accused of a crime I didn't commit, yet stuck with this bunch of sad, untrustworthy souls. We were headed for what they called "The Southern Land". It seemed to be all people could talk about since that Cook fellow stumbled upon it some years back. Some said it was a land ruled by savage natives who killed and

ate people on sight! I was not looking forward to exile in such a place.

Once the ship was moored, the Captain had the gangplank thrown across to the dock. It hit the hard wooden surface with a resounding bang as if sealing the final chapter of my life. The only remotely exciting part of leaving London was the chance to ride the waves on this trim ship. Even as a child of a quite wealthy family, I always envied the children whose fathers were traders. The sea was fascinating, yet I knew so little about it and the mystery only served to make it more desirable.

The marshal began herding us onto the boat as a dog would a flock of sheep. We were shown where we would sleep for the next few months. The ship's hull was lined with hammocks from one end to the other. Down the far side were the officers' and Captain's quarters. As I walked past, I noticed the door of the Captain's cabin was slightly ajar. No one was taking any notice of me, so following my curiosity I pushed the door open and looked inside. The first thing I took in

was the lack of headspace but there was a trade-off in comfort and privacy that I reasoned was worth it, especially when I saw the good-size bed in the corner.

\*\*\*\*\*

We had been at sea now for three weeks, and I found that with no one much to talk to the sea would be my only friend. As I sat near the prow of the ship, I could feel every movement as we crawled slowly over the gentle swell. I knew this couldn't be all there was to the sea. Back at home, I had seen a few storms breaking along the coast where great waves crashed onto the grey pebbles of a nearby beach. There were many moods to the sea, I thought. I still had a burning sensation at the back of my throat from days on end of vomiting due to sea sickness. The constant rocking of the ship had an unnerving effect on me for the first days, with the feeling of the ground beneath me always moving leaving me feeling vulnerable and exposed.

\*\*\*\*\*



The ocean had been as calm as a mill pond for the last three weeks. To-day, however, the mass of the ocean buzzed and heaved with power. All day I heard the mutterings of the crew as they managed the sails. The Captain stood next to the spoked wheel that steered the ship, looking out at the shifting horizon through a telescope. I had used one before to gaze at the stars. Such a magnificent device! As I looked now, I saw the sun suddenly disappear with the last glimpse of light fading like a protector departing from us.

That night a great storm hit and darkness lurched relentlessly over us. The clouds thickened as the sky seemed strangled of life. The moon and stars were blotted out. The waves outgrew the small ship like a child would a toy. Most of the other convicts had tied themselves to the mast so they wouldn't be washed overboard. Waves were approaching from all sides and I felt my heart rate rushing; my left eye started to twitch as it did when I felt fear. I found I couldn't move! Just ahead of me, a woman convict wearing a shawl was shouting and pointing over

my shoulder but her words were lost to the deafening winds. All I could hear was the howling anthem and the faint, muted voice of the Captain as he yelled commands to the crew.

I turned. Too late. A great wave hovered over me. I was just able to take a breath before I was engulfed by the sea, held in its limitless grasp. I could feel its power as I was flung across the deck, hitting the port side hard. My vision dimmed as I felt consciousness shutting down. The last thing I saw was the woman running towards me.

\*\*\*\*\*

As I awoke, I was assaulted by the sun's light. I waited until my eyes adjusted before sitting up. I looked around. I was still on the deck of the ship, next to what seemed to be other human bodies. Then I remembered the storm. I had to find help! Was the woman still alive? Or had she gone overboard after I blacked out?

I scrambled down the stairwell and found the Captain consulting a map with the other officers, trying to discern how far

off course we had been blown.

I asked about the storm and the woman I had seen, describing her. Apparently she and many others had been washed overboard in what was the worst storm the Captain had ever encountered.

I sat near the prow of the ship once more, mulling over what I had experienced in the past few days and weeks. I had watched the sea since I was a small boy yet only now had I felt the extent of its power. I wondered how many others had seen that incredible strength that was now like a new kind of knowledge in my body and soul.

As I climbed down the stairwell to find my hammock among the other survivors, I was surprised to see a telescope lying in the passageway, the glass cracked and the casing worse for wear. I picked it up to hand back to an officer for storage. No more would I gaze upon the sea in the same manner I always had. The way to the south was taking me into the secrets of its immensity.

# Perpetual Customs

Grant Anticevich | Year 12





# Martial 60, Book 6 – An Interpretation

Max Quinn | Year 11

>> (epigram by the Roman poet Marcus Valerius Martialis)

## Original

Laudat, amat, cantat nostros mea Roma libellos,  
meque sinus omnes, me manus omnis habet.  
Ecce rubet quidam, pallet, stupet, oscitat, odit.  
Hoc uolo: nunc nobis carmina nostra placent.

## Interpretative Translation

My Rome she praises, loves and sings my little book,  
I'm found in every pocket and every crook.  
Look! He blushes, gapes, startles, loathes and pales.  
This I want: now my poems tell real tales.

---



# View of a Room

Gabriel Bean | Year 9

>> My room. Rectangular in shape, with faded old light yellow walls and ceiling. The smell of plaster. The walls are mostly smooth, although water has seeped through the double-brick and formed small lumps that feel like larger-than-life braille.

Through a white wooden door is a small, white, modern set of drawers, with different coloured plastic trays that have the texture of the underside of Newington desks. White, red, green, white, red.

To the left is a bed, single, with an orange doona, cream blanket and light blue sheets underneath. The bed frame is wood, quite minimalistic, that feels smooth under the finger.

An open bookcase, from Newcastle. A dozen wildlife books sit on the bottom shelf while novels stand upright above. A plain white desk supports my favourite music books. A computer sits on it too, connected by wires running along the desk like black veins. The large wardrobe nearly reaches the ceiling.

On the wall opposite the bed is a fireplace, long forgotten, the grill sticking out like teeth in a grotesque mouth. The dust of decades resides in the recesses, yet the stink of burnt charcoal prevails. Above it is a mantelpiece, crooked from age, where a large plastic space shuttle and rocket are perched, ready to lift off.

Small objects are scattered about; a pencil, a painting of my name, with each letter made out of different animals from Hawaii. A plastic model kit of an A10 warthog, painted a menacing black. The taste of the air is soft and cool. A slow, crisp wind flows from the open window above the desk.

# Fact or Fiction?

Fearghas Flahvin | Year 12







Matt Putt | *Star Road*



# Ovid's Metamorphoses, Book XV, Lines 153-175

## Pythagoras's Teachings: Metempsychosis

Prose translation by Mitchell Long | Year 11

### >> Context

Numa, Romulus' royal successor, ordered Myscelus to leave his homeland and establish a new city in Italy, called Crotona. Pythagoras, a profound thinker of the time, was living in the city, in exile from Samos. He taught Myscelus many lessons, and this was one such lesson.

### Latin Extract

'O genus attonitum gelidae formidine mortis,  
quid Styga, quid tenebras et nomina vana timetis,  
materiem vatum, falsi terricula mundi?  
corpora, sive rogos flamma seu tabe vetustas  
abstulerit, mala posse pati non ulla putetis!  
morte carent animae semperque priore relictas  
sede novis domibus vivunt habitantque receptae:  
ipse ego (nam meminisse) Troiani tempore belli  
Panthoides Euphorbus eram, cui pectore quondam  
haesit in adverso gravis hasta minoris Atridae;  
cognovi clipeum, laevae gestamina nostrae,  
nuper Abanteis templo lunonis in Argis!

omnia mutantur, nihil interit: errat et illinc  
huc venit, hinc illuc, et quoslibet occupat artus  
spiritus eque feris humana in corpora transit  
inque feras noster, nec tempore deperit ullo,  
utque novis facilis signatur cera figuris  
nec manet ut fuerat nec formam servat eandem,  
sed tamen ipsa eadem est, animam sic semper eandem  
esse, sed in varias doceo migrare figuras.  
ergo, ne pietas sit victa cupidine ventris,  
parcite, vaticinor, cognatas caede nefanda  
exturbare animas, nec sanguine sanguis alatur!

### Translated Work

"Oh men, stunned by the horror of your chilling annihilation, why do you fear the shadows and empty names? Why do you fear the Styx, the stuff of oracles, the terrors of a false world? Do not believe that you can suffer any evil, whether your bodies are consumed by the flames of the funeral pyre or the wasting of old age. Our souls are separate from death and always, having been released from their former body, now live within new bodies and inhabit that which received them. I myself (for I remember), was the son of Panthous, Euphorbus, during the time of the Trojan War. It was in my heart that the spear of the inferior Atrides was once stuck. I even recognised the shield I used to carry on my left arm only recently in Juno's temple, at Argos, in the city of Abas.

Everything is changing, yet nothing is lost. The soul wanders, going this way and that, occupying whatever body it wishes, crossing from a wild animal into a human, and from our body into a beast, but it does not perish with time. It changes easily, like moulding a new shape from a piece of wax, no longer that which it was. It does not remain the same form that it has been, but still guards the same understanding. I teach that the soul migrates into other forms, yet it is always the same. And so, may the natural love not be subdued by the desires of our lust. Refrain, I tell you, from driving away souls with execrable carnage. May blood not be nourished by blood."



# Still Life

George Mardini | Year 2, Wyvern



# Marine Debris

Nicholas Samios | Year 6, Lindfield

>> Down the drain, swept by the rain,  
The cigarette butt, the lid and the cup  
Bobbed up and down, prancing proudly around,  
Slurped and sucked through the pipes  
To the bottom of the sludgy sea.

The turtle raced to nibble the cup, the lid and the butt,  
Felt the immediate pain rush through its veins  
The gulping stopped, its stomach stuffed  
with the butt, the lid and the cup,  
the turtle slumped, gave up.

---

# Among the Mountains of Mathematics: Letter to Grandfather

Angus Crump | Year 10

>> Dear Baba,

The article you sent me was very interesting, however, it was only after I started looking into its basic themes that I had a greater understanding of its messages. Here are a few lines in particular that interested me:

*"He liked to solve a problem not by the 'hammer-and-chisel method', but by letting a sea of abstraction rise to 'submerge and dissolve' it. ... Each new abstraction is eventually revealed to be but an avatar of a still-higher abstraction...With the grasping of these concepts, mathematics ascends a kind of 'ladder' of increasing abstraction."*

*"What lies at the top of the ladder? Perhaps, we might suggest with playful seriousness, there is one Big Theorem from which all of mathematical utility ultimately flows - something in the order of samsāra = nirvana. But since there are infinitely many rungs to climb, it is unattainable."*

The writer alludes here to a religious facet of mathematics: the concept of rising abstraction, an ultimate goal (unattainable), a pathos that reflects struggle and a measure of futility, concepts that are found in most religions. In Buddhism, for instance, there is the eightfold path, which

if followed correctly, will lead to nirvana (unattainable inner peace). Life is the struggle to end suffering, a battle waged through the four noble truths.

However, it may seem somewhat counterintuitive to draw parallels between religion and mathematics because it seems, at first, to be the opposite of revealed religion. In mathematics, you are required to take nothing on faith: something only becomes a mathematical truth when a proof is found, and each individual mathematician is responsible for following the proof to the point of becoming convinced of the truth.

But perhaps, there is something in this proposition. Maybe it goes like this: mathematicians create their own mental universes; maybe there is not so much difference between an algebraist beginning a lecture with "Let  $G$  be a group" and the God of Genesis saying "Let there be light". The second statement, we are told, called light into existence in the real world; the first calls a group into existence in the mental universes of the lecturer and audience.

From this perspective, if we say that mathematics is a human construct, do we also infer that religion is a construct? Is it a figment of our imagination in order to appease our desires? A false source

of hope and optimism? An interesting idea.

Another concept I found in the article that interested me was the metaphorical nature of mathematics. This is primarily represented through the ladder of abstraction and the beauty of mathematics. It seems metaphors play an essential role in mathematics. Some people say that our understanding of basic mathematics is intimately linked to our experience of the world.

In this belief we understand mathematics through conceptual metaphors (the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain, in terms of another).

Metaphors are not only used in other sciences but also in other ways of understanding the world, as in philosophy and ethics. It sounds reasonable that mathematics utilizes metaphors, as, for example:

Arithmetic is motion along a path,  
object collection/construction

Change is motion

Sets are containers, objects

Functions are sets of ordered pairs,  
curves in the Cartesian plane

Geometric figures are objects in space

I like the following quote from Yuri I. Mann's Selected Essays about whether mathematics is invented or a part of nature, a language used to convey messages:

*"Metaphor is the joining of like to unlike such that one can never become the other. At its root all language has the character of metaphor, because no matter what it intends to do, it remains language, and remains absolutely unlike whatever it is about. The unspeakability of nature is the very possibility of language. If mathematics is a language, then it is a metaphor. A very strange idea, as metaphors are usually associated with the abstract, whereas mathematics is conventionally logical and black and white (and if abstract, abstract in a different way.)"*

The real impact this article had on me was to cement the beauty of mathematics in my head. It helps to explain some of the patterns in nature, and does so in ways that are intrinsically beautiful, through symmetry and pattern itself – as in chaos theory.

Within the article I found another line too, which resonated with me. It comes from the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead: *"The science of pure*

*mathematics... may claim to be the most original creation of the human spirit."* If mathematics is the creation of the 'human spirit', it should resemble its maker to a degree, taking on the pure and beautiful form that is imbued within the human spirit.

However, the writer also comments: *"when mathematicians talk about beauty, what they really mean is pleasure. Outside this field it is considered poor form to admit that we are motivated by pleasure. Aesthetics is a way of reconciling this motivation with the 'lofty habit of the mind."* Maybe beauty is in the eye of the beholder so that some take for pleasure what others may take for beauty and awe.

I'll leave you with my favorite few lines from the article, which play on the origins of mathematics: *"mathematics has been taken as a paradigm of knowledge: certain, timeless, necessary. But knowledge of what? ...Could it be that pure mathematics doesn't really describe any objects at all, that it is just an elaborate game of formal symbols played with pencil and paper?"*

Angus

### **Writer's Comment:**

My Grandfather (Baba) lives in America and we have long philosophical discussions via email, including this one on the origins of mathematics. He sent me a book review by Jim Holt titled "In the Mountains of Mathematics" (The New York Review of Books, December 3, 2015) which commented on the book *Mathematics Without Apologies, Portrait of a Problematic Vocation* by Michael Harris (Princeton University Press, 2015).



# Degrees of Separation

Michael Li | Year 12

## Artist's Comment:

Degrees of Separation explores the role of dichotomies in elucidating one's personal and societal limits experienced during their lifetime. Originating from my experience of cultural displacement, separation as a theme has evolved to encompass the distinction between: man and nature, individual and pedestrian, emotional and physical dimensions.



# Crystal Caverns

James Paoloni | Year 12

>> Another night had graced this grove,  
Secluded, beyond Reality's realm,  
And now begins to grow again;

Another hole has surface broke:  
One of many, but one of substance, which  
May abound with earthy riches.

The wall is ruptured; explorers  
Swarm its halls, bathed in swimming ribbons of  
Luminescence, gazing in awe:

A single shard hangs from above,  
Dripping with glassy moisture, like melted  
Refined ice, glist'ning in silence;

Light's thin hands unveil the sacred  
Cavern, shimmering with crystal  
Flowers, moondrops, and patterned shards:

Solid streams of purity wind  
Throughout palaces of vivid hue and power,  
Reaching out with spindly branches.

Now, extending into the sky,  
Flowers and soft shards, sparkling in true light,  
Cloak the landscape, dripping Moon's tear;

And that river stretched its tendrils,  
Until even nine-mouthed Styx's delta  
Could not compete with true power.

Yet another world comes to mind,  
Belonging to no one's self, nor to mine,  
Whose secrets lie as yet uncovered.

# Extinction Phase

Adrian Lo | Year 8

>> (c. 8000BCE)

Far away, in another galaxy some 10 million light years distant, a Being flicked a switch. A gear turned, an engine whirred. A signal was sent. It would take over 10,000 years to reach its destination.

25 January 2025

My son and I were in the car, en route to the garage sale. We had already seen countless advertisements for it, although no one in the neighbourhood seemed to know of it. We arrived while the sun was at the horizon, which almost blinded us all. The old, derelict house creaked when we walked in, sounding very much like a voice whimpering in my ear. I noticed some pieces of dusty furniture covered in scratches and dents. A cute, discarded doll caught the corner of my eye. For just a second, I thought I saw a strange white glow coming off the doll but I dismissed it as a trick of the light. We left the sale soon after 10 am after buying the doll.

Later that day, I examined the doll carefully. Was it actually glowing?

My wife called out, "Josh! Have a look at this!" After coming downstairs, I saw the daily newspaper lying on the table and read the disturbing headline "Young man dies of a mysterious cause; Doctors shocked. - see page 3 for more details".

The doll waited silently on the desk, waiting for the man to sleep. At midnight, its head opened, a radio transmitter appeared. Its hand rose mechanically and reached for the signal amplifier. Two minutes later, it retracted its antenna and went into hibernation.

(c. 1000 AD)

Closer, in our galaxy, the Milky Way, within the Orion Arm, a Being received a message. It knew what to do. It flicked a switch. Again, gears turned, a generator whirred. On the generator there was an engraving: "To Aaron".

22 January 2026

Work had already begun about 3 weeks back, when another case of the mysterious death appeared. The young man displayed disturbing behaviour up until the time he was pronounced dead. There had since been a few cases of the same thing, although not many people seemed to care. It only seemed to target a few young people. On the other hand, I was scared like a person doing a sky dive from 4,000 metres up.

The next day was rainy and overcast, with bursts of thunder and lightning. The birds screeched as they hurried back to the safety of their nests. I arrived at my workplace late as the traffic was atrocious. Everyone seemed quite energetic in the office even though the weather was not the best.

I noticed that one person, named Aaron, looked completely blank: he had no facial expression, no movement, made no noises, nothing. As I walked up to him to ask him something he punched me so hard that it hurt. I was shocked and the injuries landed me in hospital for the next week. By the time I returned to work, he was gone. I checked the newspaper from two days before and read: "Man from local neighbourhood locked in barricaded room after series of attacks".

23rd May 2026

After all this, I knew what to do. The disease seemed to come in waves, each infecting more people than the last time. I knew it was lethal, or at least lethal to others. I realised the only way to stay safe would be to withdraw from society. We began preparing for the next wave, stocking tins of food, bottles of water, things like that.

I closed the lid on myself and my family in our concrete bunker, 4 metres down, with a power generator and supplies for over a year. People all over Australia were already preparing; humanity was feeling threatened. Many people had talked about the elusive "extinction phase" although no one really considered it seriously. After my planned year of isolation, I hoped that the disease would be eradicated.

24th May 2026

A tiny crimson light flickered. It belonged to a small robot doll. The robot's camera panned around the small bunker. It saw three sleeping people. The antenna on the robot's underside lit up. It sent a signal. One minute later, the self-destruct switch was toggled. Sparks flew, and the memory card was fried, along with the complex wiring. It was to leave no evidence of itself, and the message it sent.

3rd June 2026

A Being deep under the earth's crust awoke. It looked around. It received a signal. The Being floated over to a screen and swirled its finger on the delicate screen. The words on the screen said "To Josh".



# Harmony's Puzzle

Anthony Gregoire | Year 3, Wyvern

>> The sun glares down on the beginning of harmony.  
We are all one piece of a puzzle.  
Everyone can be involved to build a greater community.  
The greater a community, the better it is.  
It is as easy as ABC to work together.  
We can learn different languages and build knowledge in different ways.

Freedom is like a dog without a lead.  
You can be as loud as a cymbal or as quiet as a mouse,  
But you're the same to me.  
Peace will be with you every day.  
As days go by, peace will never die.

Every day stay yourself, at the end of the next day stay yourself.  
Don't try and be someone else, be yourself.  
That's what makes you, you.

---

# In Another Element

Conor Corcoran | Year 7

>> My bare feet leave the jagged, piercing pavement,  
And are caressed by the warm, supple sand.  
I'm met by the comforting sound of waves,  
Tumbling to a rocky crash on the beach.

The sea breeze cloaks me like a warm blanket,  
cuddling me with every humid touch,  
And its salty sharpness prickles my tongue  
As I excitedly race to the sea.

The screech of cheeky gulls is echoed by  
The screech of joyous children in shallows,  
As playful dogs gallop excitedly  
Leaping over waves like gleeful gazelles.

I follow, diving through foamy breakers,  
Until I surface beyond the chaos.  
Floating peacefully like a jellyfish  
Baptised by the sea, washed by the waves.

As the sun sets, purple streaks paint the sky.  
I return to shore, at one with this world.  
I trot home leaving a trail of footprints  
Behind. Washed away. Reborn tomorrow.

---

# Above It All

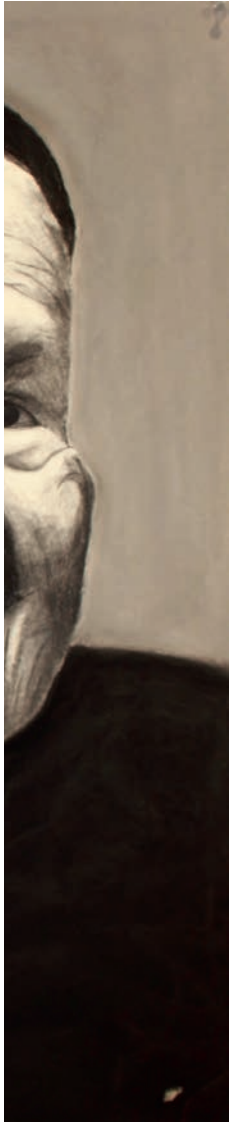
Hamish Brown | Year 12



*Day Flight*



*Buried Jars*



*The Wings Upon The Nine*

#### **Artist's Comment:**

I decided to find three women who rose above pain, fear and societal judgment and gained freedom through courage and faith; but also through their ascension, gave hope to others. These historical women are memorials to commemorate the women who struggled against the impossible and reached the calm sky at the end of the pilgrimage.

These three women are Irena Sendler (in the work titled '*Buried Jars*'), a nurse who smuggled Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto, Daisy Bates ('*The Wings Upon the Nine*'), a civil rights activist who helped the Little Rock Nine, and Nellie Bly ('*67 Day Flight*'), an investigative journalist who exposed the wrong doings in the mental institution on Blackwell Island.



# The Wave

Harry Quinn | Year 9

>> BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. The sound that I usually dreaded filled me with excitement and adrenaline for the first time as it buzzed unusually early. I tore the bed sheets away and hurled myself downstairs towards the clanging bowls and plates being prepared for breakfast. A big box wrapped in red glossy paper awaited me. I was tearing it away before my family could even approach me to say “Happy Birthday”. I ripped open the cardboard to reveal a brand new fibreglass surfboard. Another wave of excitement rushed through my body as I ran back to my room and dived into my wetsuit as fast as I could. I sprinted back down, jumping the last four stairs, landing hard on the floor and sending an earthquake through the house. I reached for my board and ran for the open door. As I opened it, Mum yelled from the kitchen, “Tom! Wait! I heard that...” SLAM. I ran off towards the beach.

The roar of the waves smashing down hard onto the reef overwhelmed my ears. They were barreling towards the south headland, perfectly formed like the ones you would draw in the back of your maths book. It felt like God’s birthday present to me. As I flung

myself into the ocean with my board under me a cold flush of refreshing water passed over my wetsuit. I dunked my head into the water, then pulled it back out leaving a salty taste in my mouth. Having scrambled onto my board, I started to paddle out towards the breakers, squinting in the flashing reflection of the sun.

As I paddled onto my first wave I felt for the first time the stinging in my feet. I must have cut them running down to the beach. I ignored the pain and paddled as hard as I could to get onto the wave. Standing up on my board, I was enjoying its newness and the speed it provided. I quickly bent down and got hold of my rail and pulled for a sharp turn as I flew along. The board was skimming along the water like never before. I stuck my left hand into the back of the wave for reassurance, soft foaming bubbles of water spraying out behind me. Looking up at the beautiful turquoise barrel smashing onto the multi coloured reef, it was impossible to keep a smile off my face. As I pulled out of the barrel and jumped off the back of the wave I saw an array of colourful fish swimming in the reef.

Even after two hours I was still enjoying God’s gift to me. Paddling onto my tenth wave, the biggest one yet, I prepared for an early turn. I felt more bumps than usual; it was going to be a turbulent ride. I looked up and instead of seeing a turquoise barrel I saw a rolling tunnel of darkness. Alarmed, I pulled out of the wave. Looking at the sky made my stomach lurch. The sky now surrounded me with dark, grey, angry clouds and the wind had picked up; with it came sharp needle water droplets that pierced my face. The waves had grown to twice the size. I considered if I should I try and catch a wave in but one error could be fatal. Should I paddle out the back and wait for the storm to pass? I couldn’t bring myself to catch any of the waves so I started to paddle out the back. I kept my head down, protecting it from the wind. When I paddled over a wave I felt like I was vertical and began to fear the message that my mother was trying to tell me as I raced off this morning. Was she trying to warn me about the storm?

When I could finally open my eyes I saw that there were two other people near me as well. They must’ve thought paddling out was the right choice too.

My ears were flooded by the sound of the waves crashing onto the reef. After an hour of waiting, exhausted from the rain, wind and cold, I could finally hear something else. It wasn't human though. Birds were flying in from the sea squawking and squealing loudly. The sky was a fluttering carpet of dark shapes flying in an arrow formation. I started to wonder if it was a message but I told myself to stop being so stupid. About ten minutes passed and then, suddenly, I felt I was being vacuumed further out to sea. I looked around and I saw that it was happening to the other two people as well. Their arms were furiously paddling against it.

CRACK! One of their boards splinted into pieces and the surfer was in trouble. A blooming rose of blood surrounded him. He was now in great danger. I looked over my shoulder and saw a gigantic dark wave looming over me. My heart froze. I peered to see where the other surfer was and realized he was frantically paddling to save himself and to get over the wave before it broke on him. I had no idea what to do. Should I save my own life or should I risk it to save the surfer in trouble?

The injured man was now screaming in agony and I knew that I couldn't leave him. As I paddled over towards him, the wave was a growing snowball rolling down a mountain. When I reached the surfer, I yelled to him to do what I told him. He managed a nod. I hurled him onto my board, ignoring his screaming, then grabbed hold of my surfboard and kicked hard. As I looked at him I realized there was a jagged wound where his left arm should have been. I gazed up at the looming wave now just ten metres away. I could imagine myself smashing onto the jaws of the reef below for the last time.

My legs were burning and I was struggling for air. The surfer was screaming, not in pain but in alarm. As we started to be sucked up the wave I gave up kicking; it was no good. I sucked in as many deep breaths as I could while the surfer calmed down and was doing the same. As we were hurtling upwards, I saw in the distance the other surfer getting smashed hard onto the reef. I took one last long deep breath and braced myself for the huge impact that awaited me. I could feel myself being inhaled by the monster of the wave,

then spat back down its barrel until, BOOM. We hit the reef hard, really hard.

Blackness and pain surrounded me and emptied my hope. All my air had been knocked out of my lungs. All I could think about was breathing. The pain was unbearable. I opened my eyes and saw swirling black, now turning red. I felt dreadful panic as I was being smashed around on the reef and could feel myself tearing up like paper. My ears were ringing, my heart was racing. I tried to blow bubbles to get a sense of direction but it was no good, I had no breath. With a sickening thump, my head hit the reef.

I was woken by a screaming siren. For the second time today I had been awakened by a noise but this time with not as much joy. Gasping and spluttering but still alive, I turned my head and saw another man writhing in pain and missing both legs. It was the one who had paddled away. I looked to the right and saw the man I saved lying next to me. He croaked, "You have done a good deed, mate." I wondered about "karma", and about words and waves, missed or taken.

# Wafer

Ashutosh Bidkar | Year 11

>> There is a remedy for all things except death,  
Funny when you come in a world of silver and leave a world of bronze.  
Fortune favours the rich, disease favours the poor,  
But you've heard all that before.

Cupid's straw bounces off with complete indifference,  
Venus and Vulcan no more, Mars cuckolds the blacksmith.  
Impartial Iuppiter descends on the green and blue,  
Every so often bedding mute jewels.

Graciously revel, rebel, understated haunts of Christ and Eucharist.

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## Poet's Comment:

I was influenced by T. S. Eliot's style in "The Wasteland" as I wrote this poem.

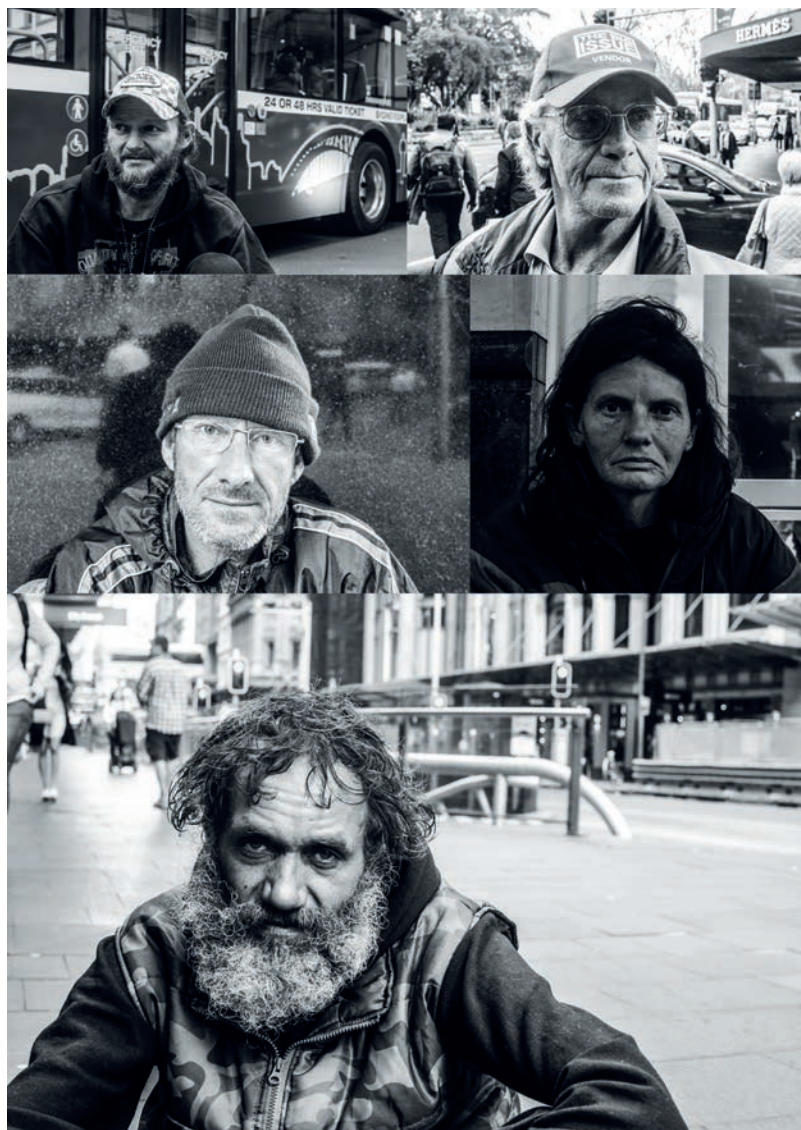


Matt Putt | *Window on Water*



# Invisible People

Ali El-Zein | Year 10



## Artist's Comment:

My aim with this collage is to invite viewers to see people differently. Homeless people are often ignored, so I thought it would be interesting to interact through photography and capture people who are outside the "average" view.



# Quay

Ashutosh Bidkar | Year 11

>> A little child cries, decrees, the mother surrenders to the incessant bawling,  
Train rumbles to a halt at the station and graciously accepts defeat,  
“The train terminates here, don’t get on,” condescension ripe

As the day Cook gazed upon the oddities for the first time.  
Vivid lights attract locals and tourists alike, and of course  
Young couples present to connect over a cuppa at Voluptas.  
Jug, jug, jug; the ferry Philomel ceases its movement at the wharf,

Hedone and Dionysus with complete sovereignty.  
The Fisher King despairs,  
As do we few, intellectually there.

---

## Poets’ Comment:

“I went to Circular Quay for the Vivid Festival earlier this year and these impressions arose in my mind afterwards from some of the things I saw and heard there.”

# The Magician: Prelude

James Paoloni | Year 12

>> In the beginning, the world was formed from rock, and the surface of the lands were ruptured; as such, the continents became isolated pockets of life, with only the oceans and streams left connected. When humanity first dawned within the Southern lands, they moved north, and discovered the many isolated ecosystems, cut off by the layout of the earth. The people who entered them had to build societies, and somehow survive in the terror of these wilds, where animal kind is fiercer than fire.

They succeeded, but not without much loss; thousands of people were killed by the wildlife, and many more would follow. However, they still established the kingdoms that now dot the landscape, separated by the environment and harbouring something wicked: hidden powers that were revealed over time, and were unique in their forms. For some regions, it was cleverly hidden away, concealed by the most intelligent and intricate people for their own personal use; but for others, someone consumed this power and used it to destroy the kingdom and rebuild it in their own visions. And this is most certainly the case for the kingdom of Tarolus, named after its power wielder, Tarot.

No one is certain where he came from, but it is estimated that the location may be somewhere within the Magician precinct. Legends tell that he acquired this power within the Topaz Forest, and

with it he created the famous Power Cards, which contained parts of his supernatural ability and omnipotent philosophies, and scattered them around the land. The leaders of the many cities found them, acquired them, used them, to build their own image of their domains; they were given rule without end. And as for Tarot, he vanished, leaving behind the remainder of the hidden power within the elusive XXX – Void. Even today, the whereabouts of it are unknown, and people continue to search for this key to god-like reign; hopefully, no one will ever find the card, lest the land be destroyed again.

\*\*\*\*\*

Vincia closed the heavy book in his hands, entitled Tabula Plena: The History of Tarolus and Its Surrounding Lands. He was a short lad, with brown hair, curled like steel wool, hazel eyes and a medium build. He threw the book onto his small bed, and looked out at the distant city through his large square window.

“Hopefully, it will never be found; he couldn’t be any more correct.”

With that, he walked down the creaky wooden steps into the main room of the rustic house, where his father was hammering another sword into shape upon the massive anvil.

“Enjoying that book, eh?”

The boy nodded, and began walking towards the stone furnace, the bellows already inserted into the gap.

“You bet. It’s incredible, Dad; stories of powers and card hunts, wars and alliances: all so fantastical. That tome of knowledge seems to cover everything.”

His dad laughed, grabbing the molten metal with his massive tongs. “That’s good. It cost a fair bit, so I’m glad you like it. Anyway, we need to up our work speed the next few days, kid; the head man in the city ordered more equipment, so we need to pump these out as quick as we can.”

He added slyly, “Whilst maintaining their quality, of course.”

Vincia laughed. “Of course. Can’t skimp out on armour and weapons for our leader, the harbinger of madness.”

His father wagged his finger at him. “Come on now, Vincia; don’t be slagging Potemor like that. He’s our main breadwinner, so slag him in your thoughts! Hahahah!”

They both laughed about it for a while, and then quietly resumed their work. They worked together like a machine: Vincia would tend to the bellows and heat up the metal, his father would mould and hammer the weapons and armour, and then finally the new weapons were dipped in water and

passed back to the boy to store. For some, this would have been a complex and slow process, but not for this father-son duo; by the end of the day, a third of the order was cooled and resting beneath large sheets of weighted fabric.

His dad dusted off his gloves and wiped the beads of sweat from his large forehead. “Whew. That’ll do for today, lad. Can you check the pantry?”

Vincia threw his gloves in his direction and ran to the door of the pantry.

“On it.”

With that, he swung the massive door open, and lit the large candle in the middle of the room. The flame revealed shelves of salted meat, veggies and other supplies; in the corner was a bucket of water, which would be used to clean them in preparation for meals. Thinking about a classic roast, the boy grabbed a big joint of meat off the shelf and some herbs from their box on the shelf below. Without delay, he brought them into the main room and slammed them down on the table.

“Can you prepare the coals?”

His father looked at the feast before him. “Good choice; nothing like a bit of meat every now and then.” He pointed out the tray in question to him. “Can’t let the ashes get in the way of our meal.”

Vincia nodded. “Agreed.” He brought the bucket out of the food storeroom, and began scrubbing the tray down with a simple sponge. The herbs were cleaned as the water was poured down the sole hole in the house, which served as a drain. Soon, the tray was resting on the

brightly-glowing coals, the oil sizzling, the joint cooking, the herbs’ flavours melting into the conglomerate of juices, culminating in the perfect final product.

They sat next to the newly lit fire, fuelled on the rich pinewood from the surrounding forest, and began carving and eating the meat, cooked to perfection as always.

His father patted his full stomach. “That sure hit the spot.”

The boy blushed. “Cheers, Dad. By the way, there’s a question I had been meaning to ask you.” The two of them sat in silence, backs against each other’s, the warmth of the fire coursing through their bodies.

As they enjoyed this moment, a thought occurred to the boy. “Hey Dad, when do you think you could request a work break?”

His father stared at the corner of the room in thought. “Probably after this shipment. Why do you ask?”

The reply was immediate. “Maybe we can finally do it.”

His dad laughed. “You still have that dream? Well, lad, I honestly reckon that could soon be happening.” He got to his feet and walked round to face the boy. “Tell you what: I’ll talk to Potemor tomorrow, and if he gives it, we’ll navigate the entire kingdom, just you and me.”

Vincia’s eyes lit up. “Yes! That sounds awesome!” He jumped to his feet. “We can take in everything: the people, the wildlife, all of it. Oh, I can’t wait!”

His father rose to his feet and laid a hand on his shoulder. “I understand your excitement, but first do your best to get these ready. Eyes on the prize, boy, eyes on the prize.”

The boy nodded. “Okay. Well, I’m off to sleep; don’t stay up too long.”

His dad chuckled. As Vincia walked up the stairs to his room, he called up the stairs. “Don’t worry; I won’t.”

The boy usually sat in his bed to watch the lights begin to illuminate the distant city, but this time he sat right up close to the flawless glass. It was like looking into a still pond at a dreamy reflection, staring in wonder and awe at the spectacle before him. The lights shone their purplish hue into the room, and painted a dappled twilight upon everything.

As he looked out towards the town, a train of thought hazily crossed his distracted mind: Why were these cards even made? What kind of person would create such powers, let alone wield them? Why did all of this have to happen?

All of these questions and more flowed like water through his confused brain; but, as is the nature of all questions, there must surely be answers.

### **Author’s Comment:**

This chapter is the introduction to a novel series I am writing about the philosophical journey through the tarot cards.

# The Gift of Ariadne

Liam Thomas | Year 12





**Artist's Comment:**

Throughout history hair, in particular long hair, has been seen as a symbol of femininity and in many cultures past and present it's seen as taboo for a woman to publicly display her hair, an idea I first explored through a series of charcoal drawings. This series served as the starting point for my focus on the symbolism of hair. The investigation of the works by Deborah Paauwe inspired me to experiment with photography and digital media producing "*Ariadne's Gift*".



# The Secret Name of Ra

Adrian Freiburg | Year 8

>> Ra created the world,  
Nothing more than his will power  
Forming the rolling hills, the  
Humid jungles and still waters  
Summer heat and winter chills.

He gave birth to the world,  
He fed it, watered it,  
He protected it like his baby.  
But despite all his love and care  
It turned around and bit him.

Isis knew how symbolic Ra was,  
As majestic as a lion,  
Smarter than millions of men  
But she wanted to rule as well  
So she came up with a plan for change.

As Ra aged he began to drool,  
He drooled everywhere and anywhere  
And in his drool there was  
A part of Ra's source of power  
Part of his true name.

Isis was cunning,  
She used his spit to spite him,  
With clay and spit she made a snake  
And left it on his daily path  
So it could poison and bite him.

Then Ra called all the gods  
As he lay on the floor in agony,  
He said he did not know what bit him  
But it hurt more than anything before  
And he begged the gods to save him.

Clever as Isis was,  
She offered Ra a cure  
Requiring a special ingredient,  
It required Ra's true name.

"I am the maker of the heavens,  
The creator of the waters,  
I am the light and the darkness,  
Khepera in the morning, Almu in the evening:  
I am Ra!" he proclaimed.

But none was his true name.

So Isis said again,  
"I need your true name, Ra.  
Tell me your true name."

In the way one trades  
Fruit or Bread,  
Amid his unbearable pain,  
Ra passed on his secret name  
And Isis chanted a powerful spell  
To drive away the poison.

His name revealed  
His power dwindled,  
He learned to share the rule of the world  
With Isis, now satisfied.



Matt Putt | *Golden Day*



# World Harmony

James Hardy | Year 3, Wyvern

>> Diversity is important,  
The population is never full.  
Harmony means be kind.  
You're a piece of a puzzle,  
You're a thread in a web.

You make everything special.  
Being different isn't tough,  
Though nothing is once you try.  
So go ahead, you're a star  
Don't listen to the bully.

Go ahead  
And bring world harmony.  
You will feel so special,  
Because we have been united.

Discrimination has a strong grip,  
But don't let it grab you,  
Turn away its cold heart  
Let's rip discrimination apart.

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# The Building of Us

Jason Hartill | Year 11

>> A building begins, with base concrete  
structure: pillars support,  
horizontal beams hold together  
the rest is just added, a cover for greatness  
or poorness of heart.

Our building began with a base of affection, lies  
held up the beams that themselves were  
so weak: our façade  
became broken and battered and bruised.

Why pause on the promise of tomorrow?  
We let in mistakes and regret so soon,  
our building hesitated, fell down.

But who is at fault for this failure of trust?  
Was it you that pulled out the beams?  
Or was I no pillar all along?  
With our perfect façade, who would have thought?

So you will forever remain  
a long distant memory:  
the end of one era that  
allows for this new one.

---

# Trial

Andreas Veryinis | Year 11

>> My eyes dash in a frenzy of panic. With every breath comes another one straight after. My heart balloons and shrivels within my chest to the beat of a bee's wings. Yet, my feet are planted firmly on the ground. Glued with a substance only conceived within the mind. Completely unable to move, I am trapped. Yet I am surrounded by no walls, linked by no chains or held by no enemy. But the cage couldn't be thicker, the chains couldn't be tighter and the army couldn't be stronger.

Time is ticking. The countdown till the end is reaching its final hour. Tic, Toc, Tic, Toc. Each passing minute becomes a minute closer to complete disrepair. The quiet whispers of other victims mellow around the complex. All diluted with fear and determination. Each footstep of the passing guards creates a mechanical thump against the cold floor; their captors dare not stare them in the eye, as the chatter like a wave dies down within a ten metre vicinity.

A bell rings. We commence. The clock moves to 2:45. Now less than half an hour remains before one of the most contentious events of my life. The object in front of me is dotted with a weird script. The words, gibberish from a planet afar. Yet it offers the key. The key that determines the outcome of my escape. The object is a story of my future, though only a few hundred words long.

It is the most important item that my worn, tired hands will ever get the opportunity to feel, yet it will only exist in my presence for less than a day.

Prior to this final hour was brutal. The demanding challenges were relentless and ever increasingly difficult. Time was more valuable than gold. Our minds demanded more but our bodies needed less. Judgement day was always within arm's reach but only ever fell into our palms once. Like the moon slowly spiralling towards earth, skimming off, then flying back into orbit. Every day was a test. Day in, day out people fell only to remain on the cold, hard, viscous floor. Only the strong willed survived. The challenge was a compulsory one but at the same time it was optional. The door was open at all times, with no punishments given if one decided to pass its frame. Yet only few dared to think of such an option. It was a challenge that everyone faced and only a few survived. I guess I wasn't strong enough to choose the door.

The deep grumble of one of the guards echoes across the vast complex. "15 minutes." The final stretch is upon us. Years of containment, years of complete isolation, come down solely to these last few minutes. Everyone in the room knows it. They know the weight that bears down on their shoulders. They know the consequences if they walk in and out of that complex empty minded.

They know only turmoil can come if they do not provide the goods.

An alarm rings. A clack of pens hitting the timber desks. Many are relieved while some have a face washed with concern. It is done, only time precedes this moment and destiny comes after. I look down and see my booklet with my pen neatly beside it. The cover has my exam number on it and the title "HSC English". The rest is empty.

# Structure

Alexander Goth | Year 12



# Coming Home

Noah Bass | Year 8

>> Where is he? He was supposed to be here before dark. How I hate being on my own. There is no point to me if I don't have company. Company is like food and water to me. I view the stretch of dead grass in front of me. I am a hopeless shape in the middle of nowhere. I look inside myself and I see a book. It says, "How to Grow Your Own Crops". How was he supposed to make crops here? Maybe he has abandoned me?

The malevolent clouds are getting furious and I see there is about to be a massive storm. I hope I'll be alright! Ahead, I see a proud mountain withstanding the storm breaking all over its rocky sides. I'm as vulnerable as a human trying to beat a cheetah in a race. The grey-slatted clouds glare down at me. I am terrified! Rain starts to tumble all the way down me and the wind presses fiercely into me.

The grim thunderstorm has stopped. I am still standing.

Days pass.

I spot a figure in the distance. He is so tired he is almost crawling on the dusty dry grass. He eventually gets to where I stand. There is a round well next to my left side and he almost falls over into the well, that's how thirsty he is. There's relief in his mind and body. He washes his face then takes off his shirt and washes it too. He lies down in the dirt that is so dry it has crevasses that stare into his eyes. He is almost relieved by the water from the well but now he needs food. Food? Food, here? What is he thinking? A heavy tear runs down his sweat-drenched cheeks.

Where would he have come from? Obviously, from a town far away.

Wait. I just remembered! I have food! He should get up, walk through my door and take a can of food from my pantry shelf.

He does lift himself to his feet. Now he walk through the door! I know that he is my new owner.

I am still a house, and soon may become a home again.



# Athenian Democracy

Jarrah Lindhout | Year 11

>> Athenian democracy  
Inducted primarily  
by Pericles  
and Eucleides  
replacing tyranny  
and instability  
by the end of the fifth century BC

The foundation of contemporary  
society  
Bedrock of equality.  
Yet appears more an oligarchy  
than legitimate democracy

“the right...to participate in meetings of assembly”<sup>1</sup>  
except for those in the community  
such as women, slaves, or ephebes<sup>2</sup>.  
The polis that claims the ideologies  
of morality  
and unity  
also cultivates exclusivity  
and manifest inequality

Athenian democracy  
Rather entrenched patriarchy  
Promoting racial hierarchy  
including male superiority  
and validating slavery

Power to the aristocracy  
who own the monopolies  
who practise their philosophy  
or astrology  
or astronomy  
Rather than taking responsibility  
for social priorities.

A society  
in which economy  
and military  
are ruled by seniority  
Decisions made in obscurity  
to protect against meritocracy  
or equal opportunity

Athenian democracy  
magnifying disparity:  
supporting the authorities  
providing them impunity  
whilst forsaking the majority  
who hold no prerogative in the bureaucracy

Yet impossibly  
we still idolise this ancient democracy  
amusingly  
perhaps foolishly  
Blinded by the tales of classical history

Equality  
merely hypocrisy

<sup>1</sup> Solon, Premier archon

<sup>2</sup> Adolescent male class

## 08.02

Eden Ding | Year 10



>> Charles glanced at his watch. The train would be arriving shortly. He scanned his Opal Card, turned left and took the stairs to Platform 1. A long line of figures emerged to take their places. Charles had learned to recognise a few of them by their faces, but as each month passed by, one by one, they would disappear. He wondered where they had gone. A new job? A change in routines? Perhaps they had met someone special. In the chaotic, whirling machinery of this world, Charles was the only constant. Monday to Friday, for the past 9 years, he had caught the same train from the same place; the 08.02 all-stops from Lidcombe to Museum.

He made his way down the asphalt platform. Along his path he categorised the people into the different caricatures he had created over the years. The people in suits. Ambitious professionals

who earned more in their first year than he did in his ninth as a band musician. The artists. He envied their fulfilment in their passions. The couples. Happier and more complete than he would ever be. The long line of figures began to trickle out. As he neared the end of the platform he observed the most recognisable caricature of them all.

The Charles. Himself. He reflected on the pitiful state of his life as he arrived at the usual isolated place at the end of the platform. His was a never-ending cycle of late nights at clubs and early mornings, of fast food and binge drinking, of useless information and internet porn. He was convinced he would die of heart disease by the age of 65. Long ago, he had decided to embrace his fate with silent defeat. Despite his endless hours of reflection, he chose to change nothing. Despair had

extinguished the fires of change. He was contemplating a doom which he would bring about himself.

His eyes drifted across the circuit of train tracks that connected the economic machinery of Sydney. He thought about the thousands of people standing on the platforms and in the carriages, each of them carrying out their own lives in energy, hope, indifference or despair. The vastness of the world never ceased to amaze him. He had secretly yearned to explore the world, living each day a different way. Such a bold thought seemed so tantalising that it almost frightened him. He shut it off with the same weariness that occupied his mind.

His gaze then passed over to the billboard on Platform 6. "Choose to be you". Bright colours were splashed across a picture of a young woman



playing an electric guitar, with a mobile phone superimposed on the bottom left corner. The same theme was repeated in the next billboard, and the next one, and on all of the billboards across Platform 6. “Choose to be you”. Charles repeated the words to himself. He couldn’t make sense of the message.

Which Charles could he choose to be? The Charles he thought he was? The Charles his friends saw? The Charles he wished he had been? He thought about the choices he had made in his life. The bold dreams he had decided to ignore. His acceptance of his mediocrity. The defeatism in his daily routine. It occurred to him that in every action he made there was a choice, and in every choice he made, there was a reflection of who he was and who he would become.

The familiar sound of the 08.02 train interrupted his thoughts. For the first time in many years, he recognised a choice before him. He could catch the 08.02 train, resume his usual routine and continue being the person he knew he already was. The other choice startled him in its simplicity. He could choose to stay on the platform. The stream of people crowding into the train had already turned into a trickle. Charles thought deeply about his decision. A leaping excitement began gaining momentum in his heart the longer he stood on the platform.

08.01:57.

08.01:58.

08.01:59.

08.02:00. The gates of fate closed with the carriage doors. The train pulled away.

He stood there, alone on the platform, smiling at the choice he had just made. A decision, an action springing from inaction.

Charles was determined. He took out his phone and called Michael, his manager.

“Michael, I’ve decided to quit.”

A few seconds passed before Michael blurted out a chuckled, incredulous response.

“What...Why would you do that?”

“I’ve decided to go ... somewhere,” Charles told him, reaching for words that suddenly caught the tail end of a dream.

“Where?”

“To Shangri-La”.

# Disguise

Sam Boiling | Year 4, Wyvern





# The New Roman Empire

Arthur Kuan | Year 11

>> “I believe you have had too much to drink, Your Majesty,” said El, politely but firmly. The Emperor looked at him strangely.

“It isn’t a hard concept, El,” he replied. He took up the little blue ball that represented Europa from his map of the Solar System. “Europa is in open revolt. I can’t accept that.”

El seemed stupefied. “But, it’s..... it’s.....,” he began.

“What don’t you understand, El, about the words ‘nuclear Armageddon’?”

“It’s Europa!” El shouted.

“So?”

“It is an economic centre for the entire System,” I broke in. I was scribbling down the dialogue furiously.

The Emperor didn’t seem to care.

“We shall use it as an example,” he stated.

“Six billion people live on the place!” El shouted.

“Six billion traitors!” the Emperor retorted, crushing the little blue ball that represented it. “Besides, anybody who declares themselves ‘The Fourth Reich’ simply doesn’t have the intelligence to survive.”

“Six billion,” El repeated. “You can’t be serious.”

“What? I mean to say, if you’re going to name your little blue rock after something, name it after a regime that lasted longer than twelve years. We’re not called the New Roman Empire for nothing, you know.”

“I’m talking about the people,” El said, becoming despondent.

The Emperor rolled his eyes.

“I’m not asking.” His hand opened and let the blue remnants of Europa fall onto the floor. “I’m commanding.”

El stood motionless for a moment.

“Six billion,” he muttered as he looked at his hands.

“I can’t trust anyone else with this,” the Emperor conceded.

El had a moment to think. “It shall be done,” he said, grudgingly, but he did say it..

“Good.” The Emperor drummed his fingers on the map. “Take an eighth of the nuclear arsenal. Obliterate it quickly. When you’re done, I want a radioactive wasteland comparable to Mercury.”

El frowned, already thinking about the challenge ahead. Obliterating an entire

planet was hard enough, but Europa had defences that would need to be dealt with.

His reservations pushed aside, he left the Emperor and I alone.

“You should reconsider,” I advised. He looked at me in surprise.

“I never thought of you as particularly concerned with lives, Urs.”

“I’m more concerned about the economic ramifications.” I twiddled with my pen.

He snorted, “Typical capitalist. Always caring about money, rather than people.”

“You are killing six billion people, sire.”

“And a million die on your asteroid mines every day.” He rubbed his head and added, “I don’t think you deserve the moral high ground here, do you?” He looked at his map again.

“You see this?” He shoved his palm on top of Jupiter and its satellites. “This is my Empire. Over a hundred billion people live here. I monitor them, I protect them - from themselves, from each other, and from the enemy outside.”

He leaned back in his seat and weighed each word carefully as he told me, “Six billion for over a hundred? I can think of worse trades, can’t you?”

# The Bird and the Bull

Grayson Richardson | Year 8

>> The beginning.  
 It is the time of the morning sun rising;  
 The blush of a pale sky ushering moonlight,  
 The spiteful chill of a first winter's wind;  
 The keen spindle of a spinning wheel;  
 A chorus of angels; the seedling of a bud,  
 Sprouting, rising from the ashes - a dancer  
 On the tips of fair feet she leaps,  
 As does the light from the dark as it rises,  
 a climbing staircase, sought by many, tread by few.

The earth cast aside, like a child's toy carelessly thrown  
 As he searches for something new; something better  
 For the light rises and abandons the prison, the cloak  
 Of Matter, chaos, and of our earthly bindings  
 As the caged bird longs to, for a free spirit lusts  
 to throw off its metallic bounds,  
 the light rose laughing, and the earth stayed.

Thus came Takama-ga-hara, a heaven  
 matriarch, and patriarch Izanami, and Izanagi  
 stood on the heavenly bridge, the light shimmering  
 like a cloak held aloft by a matador,  
 The water a bull, lashing, leaping, barely missing,  
 Falling back onto the churning chaos, everlasting.  
 The horns of the beast a reminder of what is left,  
 And what is to be made from the ashes of matter and  
 From the ashes of chaos and from darkness.  
 And what our home: earth, could once again become.

In Izanagi's hand, gleaming bright as a sun  
 Stood a weapon that glittered like starlight incarnate,  
 Shining more than the brightest day, towering  
 Over turbulent matter and darkness  
 A bird - heaven, over the beast that was left,  
 Its very being caught under the spear's gaze,  
 Gut spilled, body laid to rest  
 as the magnificent adorned weapon thrust  
 Lunging, dragging and turning its body through  
 The chaos and into the light and as  
 Izanagi triumphant, stirred the water tumultuous.  
 The beast, a storm of anger, lay silenced.  
 Izanagi, the one who invites, and now creates.  
 Thus the saltwater of the spear,  
 Drips, drips from the shining point,  
 Falls to the now still, static water and  
 Islands, like great animals rising from the depths  
 Break through the surface as each droplet connects,  
 Firstborn of Gods, an island  
 The creation.



Matt Putt | *Summit*

# Sun Splitters

Barnaby Haslem | Year 8

>> It was a hot Sydney summer night. The room was quiet apart from the whine of a mosquito, and the sound of a moth ramming its head into a light bulb. I sat upright in bed with the light on, as the thirty degree heat of the night prevented me from falling asleep. The city was experiencing an unusually extreme heat wave, and temperatures had risen to almost fifty degrees celsius. Thankfully, the air conditioning in my room kept it at thirty degrees, while the rest of the house was just under forty.

It was around three o'clock, when I heard a knock at my door. I rose up out of my bed and put on my pants and shirt, which I had taken off earlier because of the heat, and walked downstairs. At the time I thought it was most likely that the person at my door was a neighbour asking for some favour, or a council member telling me that I needed to turn off my air conditioning to conserve power. I opened the door, only to see no one there. All the street lights were out, so if anyone was hiding I couldn't see them. I was about to close the door, when I saw a medium-sized cardboard box in front of the door, with the words "for you" written on it. I felt an unnatural fear towards the box, perhaps from the recent terrorist threats, though why I would be a target is beyond me.

I brought it in, and opened it up. It contained various documents and books, all labeled "Sun Splitters".

I had no idea what this meant, so I decided to rummage through the contents to find some information on whatever they are. I picked up the first thing my hand grabbed, a single paper. The paper was about an ancient civilisation underneath what is now Sydney. Apparently it was founded by a mysterious and ancient cult known as the aforementioned "Sun Splitters". The other documents also spoke of these civilisations, which were in locations from Ukraine to Patagonia, but didn't say anything else about this cult.

The following morning I walked to the nearest library to do some research. However, all I could find was a small, old leather book on the history of a city in Brazil that mentioned them once in a section on "native culture". I searched on-line for some answers yet still came up with nothing. I kept looking, at other libraries, data bases, state archives and museums, until I found an old map labeled "sun splitter map" tucked away between some documents in a rare archive collection. It was a map of the sewer system and railway lines beneath Sydney, circa 1955. The map had a particular part of the sewer system circled, with the words "entrance one" written next to it. Part of the railway line was also circled, labeled "entrance two". There were around 20 of these "entrances", all of which were parts of the sewer and train systems that were long abandoned.

Excited that I had at least found something, I emailed Sydney Water, and after getting permission to explore the Sydney sewers, put on protective clothing and climbed via a manhole into the dark depths of the sewage system. The pipes and tunnels were dark and, in some sections, nearly flooded. After finding my way slowly for an hour or so, I arrived at a complex intersection of pipes. The entrance to the abandoned section was around one and a half metres across and covered up by a rough wooden board.

I managed to pull the board away, and I braced myself to climb through the small tunnel I could see beyond the entrance. The walls were caked in dried filth, which reeked of some bizarre substance. The tunnel went downwards, and according to the map was around one kilometre long, burrowing thirty metres further underground. After crawling for two hours, I finally arrived at the end of the tunnel, which opened up into a larger tunnel, with a stream of thick muddy water flowing along the rocky floor. I walked for around twenty metres until I arrived at the location of "entrance one" on the map. Surprisingly, it was just a large crack in the floor with a set of footholds fixed into the narrow side.

My curiosity made it too late to turn back, so I climbed down. The walls of the "entrance" were covered in thick moss, which smelled similar to the filth



on the upper tunnel wall. After a twenty minute climb downwards, I came to the bottom of the hole, which opened up into another large tunnel lit up with some sort of glowing moss. There was large metal railing on the floor, set far apart to suit any train line.

Suddenly, a bizarre human-like figure jumped out at me, nearly causing me to fall backwards. The figure was tall, pale, with thick hair and bulbous eyes. Its arms and legs were abnormally long and thin, and they lacked elbows or knees. It stared at me for a few minutes before I spoke to it.

“Are you... are you a Sun Splitter?” I asked. The thing looked at me blankly before laughing. “No, no, no my friend, we are not Sun Splitters. We worship the same master, however.”

To my surprise, he answered everything in perfect English, and sounded like a normal human being. He beckoned me to follow. I walked behind him, noticing he walked by grabbing onto the ceiling and pulling himself forward. After a while he pulled his legs upwards, and crawled on all fours across the ceiling like a spider. As I walked behind him, I slowly began to feel an intense heat, which radiated from the walls. After walking for what felt like hours, the bizarre “human” stopped at the entrance to a large cavern. It was filled with impossibly warped buildings, covered in the same glowing moss as the tunnels. I was too shocked by the

surroundings to notice that my bizarre humanoid guide was unemotionally staring at me like a snake.

“Who are the Sun Splitters?” I asked. He offered no reply, so I asked again. Still no reply. I asked again, but this time I got a reply. “They are old,” he said quietly, “older than this city, older than the first-ever cities of man, older than the first apes who walked upright, older than any mountain, older than the dragons of aeons past, older than the oceans, older than the sun or moon, almost as old as time itself. They are the fire from the stars, the servants of the trapped god above, the ghosts of the time of the burning heavens.”

He continued to ramble on about bizarre things like an “Eternal Thought” “Lylouyth” and the one who was apparently the Sun Splitters master, “Fyuthu”. After that he scurried up the cavern walls, disappearing into the moss. Suddenly, a patch of moss began to shrivel up and die, becoming similar to the substance that caked the first tunnel. Huge balls of fire began to rise out of the patch, and began to shriek “We are the Sun Splitters!”

My vision blurred, and I hit the floor. I went into a bizarre state, where I was fully conscious but couldn’t see, feel or hear anything for what felt like years. I started having visions of the long distant past, glimpsing the god Fyuthu who had a gigantic mass of tentacles the size of

the earth’s moon and a bizarre human-like face. However, something told me I was only seeing part of him, as his true form would be enough to kill me. I saw him take a physical form as our moon after bizarre abominations attacked him, while the Sun Splitters built great cities across the earth, before descending underground to form a subterranean empire as the earth cooled. I learnt other things too, that I am glad I can’t recall.

I woke up in a hospital bed. I wasn’t sure that the events with the Sun Splitters had really happened, and realised I was surrounded by family members and doctors. I had been found passed out deep inside the Sydney sewer system. Shocked but apparently unharmed, I was discharged and driven home by my brother a few hours later. On the drive back, I kept seeing distorted figures and odd shadows that twisted into the bizarre monstrosities of my earlier visions. I was shaken by this, but I mentioned nothing to my brother, not wanting to frighten him. When we arrived at my house, I felt a rapid onset of panic, which heightened after I left the car. Running inside, I collapsed on my couch. To my horror, I noticed something that made me nearly shiver: the box was missing.

# Earth Mat

Khai Vu | Year 1, Wyvern







# From 219 Parramatta Road

Jack De Lacy | Year 11

>> What happens to a dream deferred?  
I had a dream  
in whose symbolic shadow we stand today  
and all I see is black  
thick on your tongue  
metallic in your eyes  
and burning all hopes and aspirations  
Oh but I had a dream

Is not all art the reaction to an action  
a shift in the visual language  
one more concept on the object heap of trash?  
Unreal city  
Convolution Convulsed,  
The city contorts  
Unreal city I once knew  
Prevailing is a picture  
Tells a thousand words  
Too long didn't read  
Verbosity will be the end of me  
Cosmic paradigmatic  
Head on crash,  
Bent bonnets, post traumatic  
The visual language is so subjective it is entirely  
Objectively - black

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# Dance

Benjamin Nichol | Year 3, Wyvern



# Politic(al correctness) and the English Language

Luke Canter | Year 6, Wyvern

>> We live in Orwellian times:  
 “Never use a long word where a short one will do”  
 One of his principles to shape our thinking  
 Three score and ten years ago,  
 The cataclysmic warning was sounded  
 Of the English language’s demise.

Today, I’m not lazy. *I’m motivationally dispossessed.*  
 Nor do I need to study harder. *I’m minimally exceptional.*  
 I have no need for exercise. *I’m a person of substance.*  
 I don’t fail. *I just non-traditionally succeed.*

Less and less concise the vernacular becomes,  
 High syllable count rises and frank language falls,  
 Vapid verbiage overtaking  
 Contrived and false, putting veils over true meaning.

Now I’m not upset; *I’m just satisfaction-deprived.*  
 This wallpaper’s not ugly; *just over-under-attractive.*  
 I’m not insane - *I’m factually unencumbered.*  
 I never judge your poor grammar; *I just offer non-traditional praise.*

The diction grows more complex  
 Each passing generation,  
 Political correctness exponentiates  
 Shibboleths cushioned.

So many words we can’t say,  
 So many truths we can’t speak,  
 Yet ironically, Cole Porter said it so well,  
 Nowadays, anything goes.

# Going Under

Anton Lising | Year 6, Lindfield

>> The squeaking of the hospital bed wheels  
Echo around this unfamiliar place,  
Bright, white lights threaten to blind me.

My heart races as fast as Phar Lap round the track,  
Machines beep continuously in my muffled ears,  
Masked men and women tower over my defenceless being,  
He says a mosquito is biting my hand.

A tingling sensation drapes over me like a cloak,  
My mind is engulfed by a frosty blanket  
Soon turning to flames, eternal orange,  
I tumble  
On  
And on.  
I want to stop!  
Paralysed beyond my understanding  
I fall into deepest slumber.

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# Living One Way

George Papasavvas | Year 12

>> I looked at the bitter old man sitting in the passenger seat beside me as we drove to the local RMS office to renew his licence. Now more than ever the urge for confrontation was eating me. But how do you tell a man that his closed-minded beliefs are simply wrong, especially if that man is your seventy-five years old father? I could blame his mother for her national Greek Cypriot pride but you can't blame someone for thinking thoughts that had been hammered into her during her schooling years. Instead of being taught arithmetic and science, her mind was limited to war songs about the troubles. My grandmother was persistent in affirmations from her school days — "Den xehno! I don't forget!" — which was consistent with her denials and set views on anything related to Turkey or the Turkish people.

"You know what Niko?" my Dad said.

"What Dad?"

"I bet you the policeman who took my licence was a Turk."

"Never trust a Turk," I muttered to synchronise with his prejudice, although it was against my own inclination. Growing up, I could not begin to count how many times I heard that phase.

He was insistent on getting back his freedom to drive. His careless driving offences had caught up with him twelve months ago. He rarely drove anyway

even before he lost his licence, yet his ability to drive was like his protective shield against an unnamed enemy who always lurked in his mind.

"Baba, katse edo [Dad, sit here]," I said with my authentic Greek accent as we were ushered to the counter at the RMS office. As I left to meet with the instructor, my stomach churned as I glanced behind me.

"Mr Antoni Polycarpo," called the lady at the counter. As usual, Dad didn't raise an eyebrow. He was ruthlessly against the whole establishment since they took his licence, considering anyone affiliated with them to be "Turkish descendants". Having grown up with his voice and words so familiar to me each day, I knew this phrase was his highest form of abuse.

"I see you're from Cyprus too," she began excitedly as they stood on either side of the counter. "Poio horio? [Which village?]" she probed in a surprisingly original accent that proved to my Dad that she was worthy of his attention.

I was immediately sidelined as a silent spectator for nearly five minutes as the conversation took off in the Greek-Cypriot dialect. With its unique pronunciation and accent, the dialect was almost impossible to understand for the average Greek speaker who had not been exposed to it.

I could feel the beats of my heart accelerate as the conversation returned to English, ready to join in as the speakers changed their means of communication to suit them.

"You are a racist, Mr Polycarpo, not a Cypriot," she alleged, her face ripening into a tomato red as anger replaced her curiosity.

"Oxi! [No!]" Dad bellowed defiantly and repeated the historic words of the famous Greek president Iannis Metaxas who refused to accept Mussolini's ultimatum in World War Two: "I am not a racist! The Turkish people destroyed my country and killed my brothers in war."

Dad's head spun round towards mine as if searching for additional ammunition with which to defend the barrage of attacks he felt he was facing. He got no sympathy from me; I felt glad someone had finally pulled him up on his opinions. In fact, deep down, whenever he proclaimed his prejudice to others, I was always embarrassed for the father that God had handed me.

"Baba [Dad], you haven't been to Cyprus in 40 years! There is no war anymore; the wall dividing the Turks and Greeks no longer exists. It's you alone who still holds on to the past!" I spoke with an overwhelming sense of frustration that suddenly became empowerment — a lifetime of silent disagreement released itself.



But my exultant moment was short-lived. I noticed my Dad's olive complexion sallow. His eyes that just a few minutes before had been those of the determined soldier coming to the defence of his country quickly dimmed to the look of a defeated prisoner of war who'd given up hope.

"Baba, are you okay?" I asked, consciously softening my tone, not understanding how much damage I may have done.

"Pame Spiti [Let's go home]," he muttered in an unusually demoralised tone.

"Come on, Dad, let's just do the test..."

"Pame Spiti!" he repeated vehemently.

Sitting next to Dad silently on the way home, I felt frightened out of my skin. The self-liberating sensation I had sometimes dreamed about would occur when I confronted my father soon became non-existent. I realised it was selfish of me to humiliate him like that. But I knew why I had done it. Deep down, I wanted him to see his own racism through a mirror. The chance conversation with the lady at the counter had provided it. My modern education had convinced me I was better than my father — that I had a right to point out his flaws and take away his pride. Now I knew I had views that needed re-thinking too.

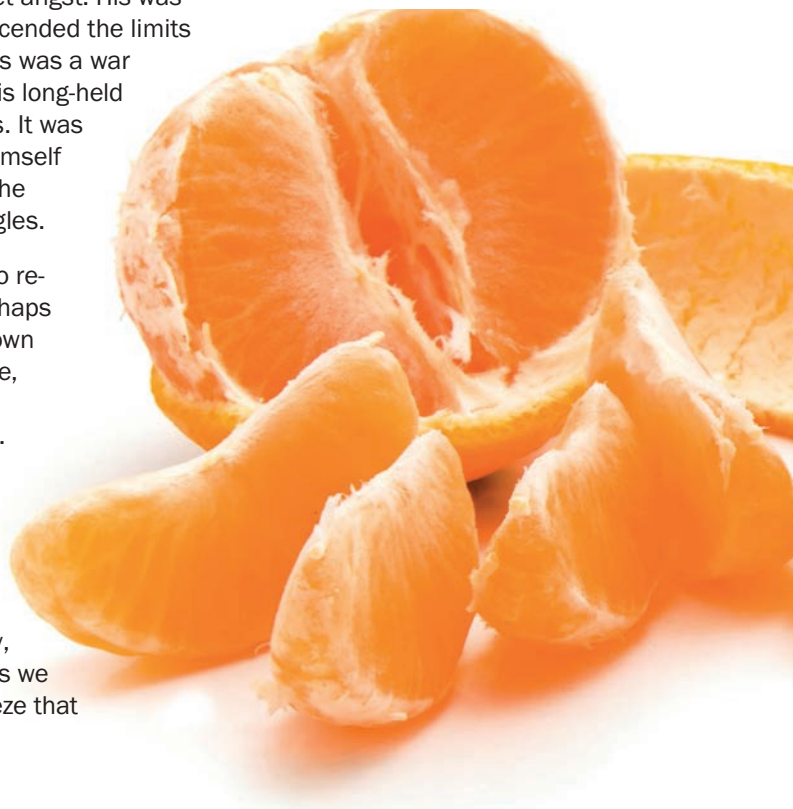
Two weeks later.

The roar of aeroplane engines made it nearly impossible to hear anything as we crossed the tarmac into the terminal. The air was lighter in Cyprus and although the temperature was above forty degrees, the heat was dry. I walked side by side with him, carrying suitcases for the both of us. Dad had come for the truth and he needed it to be first-hand. That would make the long journey worthwhile. The expression on his face was full of quiet angst. His was an inner war that transcended the limits of a physical battle. This was a war on his past, a war on his long-held beliefs and perceptions. It was ultimately a war with himself and how he had seen the world through its struggles.

I knew his desire was to re-discover himself or perhaps he had never really known himself in the first place, always seeing things through narrowed eyes.

We glanced at each other for a brief moment.

"Pame! [Let's go!]" we said simultaneously, smiling at each other as we caught the lift of a breeze that stirred the hot, dry air.







Matt Putt | *Mining Lake*



# My Chase

Max Tobin | Year 8

>> I fight through the overgrown grass. With every beat of my heart I feel my lungs contract, as they labour in vain for enough oxygen to power my relentless struggle. I trip. The beams of torch lights and the bark of police dogs come closer and closer. I muster all my strength to get up and use my last ounce of energy to push through and move on in this dense bushy terrain. I hear voices and dogs not far behind me. I run. I run. I run.

I make it to a clearing in bushland. The barking of the dogs pounds in my head; I look around frantically, hopelessly trying to find a hiding spot. Closer and closer come the sounds of my capturers. There, I see it! A hole just large enough for me to hide in. I climb in. Instantly the darkness encases me. With every breath I strive to get sufficient amounts of oxygen, feeling like the walls of my spider hole are caving in. "I could use some water right now," I say to myself. "I want a drink now... I need water now!" The voice in my head demands it. I fear for my safety but I need water.

The truth is, there are no dogs, there are no police nor beams of torch light. The only thing that's real now are the voices in my head. I have schizophrenia. I know that. I see things when they aren't there.

I hear things when there is silence. I have periods of time when I think everyone is trying to kill me. The only thing I am running from is the truth.

I was first diagnosed with schizophrenia seven years ago. I was eighteen then, young and innocent. After I was diagnosed, they put me in a psychiatric treatment centre. I was fed bottles of medication, packets of tablets, I was drugged so I would go to sleep! I hated it. I felt like an animal. I ran away. I ran. I ran. I ran.

That just happens to be what I am doing to-day; I go where the voices tell me. Sometimes I want to hurt people, other people. I walk up really closely to them, but I can't do it. When I feel like this I talk to myself. I like it when I talk to myself. We chat and we banter and generally have a good time (unless we argue). Myself never tells me to have my medication, myself never tells me to hurt people, myself doesn't even tell me to "tell me how you're feeling on a scale of 1-10". Myself always treats me like a human. Myself likes my psychiatrist who has taught me ways to cope with the voices. Now they don't shout as much, but often I am still in this dark hole.

I wish everyone knew what it was like to feel like me: to experience the pain and hardship, the trouble those voices give me. Oh, that everyone knew what it was like to be different!

# The Hawk

Oscar Bell | Year 8

>> The hawk perches high on the power-line:  
His jet black suit  
the parallel  
meticulous, white stripes  
embellished at a precise angle  
transversely across his sanitary tie,

The hawk's pristine  
feathery swallow-tail coat,  
his aerodynamic  
haircut  
for a swifter pace,  
for a better gloat,

The hawk strides across  
the insignificant grass,  
peering down upon others  
generously  
giving his business card  
to those starving,

The hawk lurches  
a greedy hand  
onto the greasy plate,  
A lonely olive,  
the last at the dinner party,  
snatched,

The hawk's eye fixes,  
motionless,  
contemplating,  
anxious,  
processing  
over the next deal.



# Lowering The Flag On The Remnants of Industry

Gabriel Pezzimenti | Year 12

artwork



# Harmony for Everyone

Jeremy Latham | Year 3, Wyvern

>> People get along like the words of a song,  
The chair squealed, the ground shook,  
Harmony is like a book.  
People fit together, for ever and ever,  
Different clothes, different hair, differences are everywhere!

Working together, should go forever,  
You can get along better until the end of forever,  
Singing a song, playing ping pong,  
These two simple things are getting along!  
Every single thing and thong, really needs to get along,  
Live together, play together, learn together, stay together.

Happiness, all should see,  
Because it is harmony!  
Walking, playing,  
Harmony's swaying.  
We are better together, forever and ever.  
Harmony is fun, for everyone!

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# Animal Respect

Charlie Carr | Year 6, Lindfield

>> From the dog who gives the blind man sight  
To the canaries who suffer a gassed air plight,  
For the ones who run around the track  
Or carry the Royals on their back

They adore and serve with loyal trust  
Obey and act as we bid they must,  
So for living creatures we must care.  
Our human task to make all aware

That animals who do what we need  
Should not be whipped and made to bleed,  
If they're filled with fear and strain  
We must hear their cries of pain

And as compassionate souls,  
With their lives, dwell.

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# The Presence of Absence

Alex Robinson | Year 12





# Eerie

Isaac Carriline | Year 9

>> I am fourteen years old now,  
So I'm familiar with my house,  
Yet no matter how many times I go downstairs  
Into the basement, I'm still scared.

I run down the damp, dark, musky basement corridor,  
Grab what I need and run the hell out of there  
Before the darkness consumes me,  
Shoves me into the unknown.

In the day the basement is ordinary and fine,  
Yet when its nine o'clock at night,  
And I need to grab the sheets, perched, drooped,  
on top of the old washing machine in the even darker laundry,  
I get down there as fast as I can  
Grab the sheets  
without touching the rusted metal cover  
of the light switch and get out.  
As fast as I can.

When you thump down the basement stairs,  
You have to spin left, and you need to pace cautiously  
down the pitch black corridor.  
And close your eyes and mouth to stop the cloud of laundry  
powder  
Burning your face.

You need to move fast along the right wall,  
avoiding the bathroom door,  
And then glide left to avoid the closet with the slatted vertical  
gaps  
Before the issue of the laundry comes into play.

The stained yellow plasterboard wall,  
The rusty light switch, the old washing machine,  
The green sink, the slimy floor.  
And then the sheets to grab.

It's probably just the wind, sliding and slithering,  
Under the door and over the washing machine.  
It may be, but even that is eerie.  
Wouldn't you agree?

# Interior

Sam Boland | Year 9

>> Dusty. Wooden. A wardrobe, modern, seemingly out of place. Smooth, white, and simple. Inside, large shelves, full of clothes, well-worn, schoolbags, and various other items of arguable significance. Windows worn, old, some cannot be opened. Blinds, modern, appear out of place.

Wooden floorboards, polished and comfortable underfoot. A scratched, wooden desk, drawers empty, save for dust, and a bookshelf, half full with volumes.

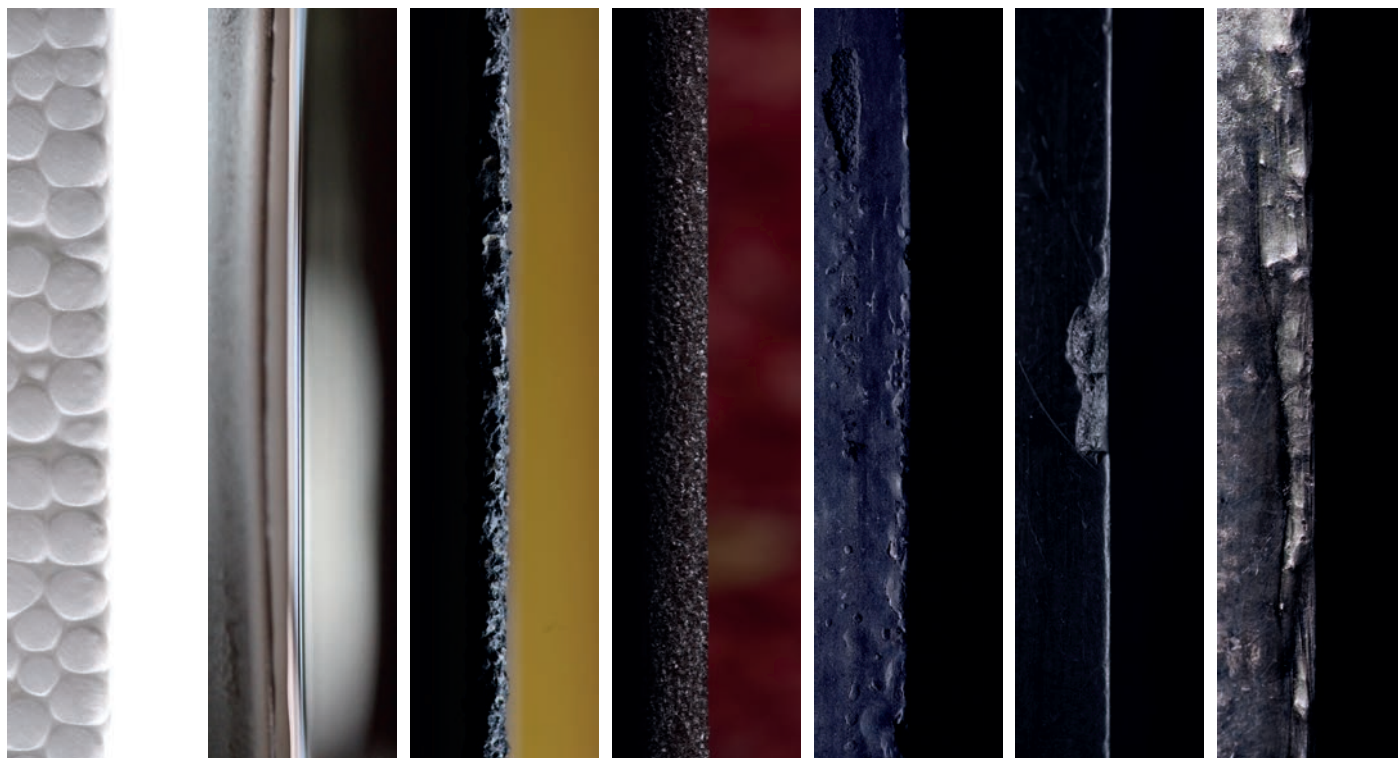
The sheets on the bed are determined not to arrange themselves in order. White wallpaper, though not pure white, is easy on the eyes. The walls are clean, empty.

A wooden ladder, splintery, and pointing nowhere. A vintage sign hangs lifelessly. A door, painted white, cracked paint up and down. It has withstood the test of time. The doorknob is beginning to rust.

It is a quiet space, interrupted only by the droning monotony of the ceiling fan, which spreads its dust and smell around the room. The windows are rarely open; when they are, the barely audible sound of ant-like traffic can be heard. And the calls of birds and pedestrians.

# The Edge Of...

Fergus Kinahan | Year 12





Matt Putt | *Lake Reflections*



# The Guardians

Alexander Short | Year 8

>> A family of foxes climbs the mountain itself,  
Their wish - to serve the harvest god of rice,  
The request is heard and taken off the shelf,  
The foxes named lithe guardians of the rice.

The foxes – stealthy wanderers of the field,  
Eliminating all who threaten to destroy,  
Become the needy rice's shield,  
Those fox guardians are deployed.

And each fox reflects the fields,  
Orange-gold fur like ripened grains,  
Full sheaf of tail like rice that yields  
Bounty for the harvest lands of rice.

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# The Reason to Live

Kevin Wu | Year 10

>> Frost clung to blank shop windows. Frigid winds drifted to and fro. The stark chill penetrated everything. This was winter in the northern city; white blankets of snow covered every pavement, road and street. This inconvenienced Albert in particular; his way was blocked off with heavy snowfall. Sighing, he turned and attempted to find a different way home.

The sky turned dark grey as night was falling. As he walked, his eyes darted about, squinting in the gloom. An eerie silence seemed to permeate all the vicinity. Uncomfortable, he paused, surveying his surroundings to see if he was headed in the right direction. He lowered his head and quickened his pace.

Approaching his street, the drifting snowfall dispersed, revealing a small-framed figure clad in black lying in the snow. It seemed desolate, almost inanimate. Upon closer inspection, he realized that it moved and that it was a child.

As he turned to walk away, the figure looked up. The boy's clothes were tattered, his hair dishevelled, but his eyes were distinct. Those clear blue eyes stared back at him and seemed untainted by the cruelty of mankind – pure eyes, a deep innocence that struck through one's soul. Albert averted his gaze. Sharp pain of confusion pierced through his mind like the prick of a needle.

Those blue eyes were so familiar.

\*\*\*\*\*

Years before, the heat shawled the city and hovered around him in a haze. It licked at his face and coiled around his limbs like a burning serpent. His sweat began to seep through, soaking his shirt. Annoyed, he pulled at his clothes, only to have them cling to him even more. Despite this, he was still quite excited about this day.

“The Leader has no tired tactical doctrines, to dim his vision and reduce his political imagination. His inflexible principles are joined with changing and flexible political methods that have lead to the greatest and most unexpected successes for our country.”

This was the speech spoken by his Deputy on the Leader's fiftieth birthday. There, among the thousands of others gathered to hear him speak, was Albert, a policeman, a pure-blooded patriot of his country. For him, these were divine words, solidified into his identity like diamond – unbreakable.

“One State, One People, One Leader!” he shouted, chanting with the rest of the crowd.

But amid the chanting, he noticed a strange shape out the corner of his eye. It was the silhouette of a small boy, no older than ten years, standing under a narrow archway, leaning against the

stark limestone. But as soon as he turned his head, it vanished. To any onlooker now, that same space was empty.

“What was that?” Albert thought to himself.

With his curiosity piqued, he strayed from the crowd and tried to find the boy but any traces had disappeared. He turned, but before he could react – pang! A speeding blur rushed into him. Suddenly overwhelmed, he fell, and before he could think, the boy was already on his feet, staring down at him. They locked eyes. Blue eyes, vast, deep and clearer than sapphire. Albert forgot everything, entranced. He forgot all about the Deputy's speech, the thousands of people chanting nearby. Turning on his heels, the boy bolted down the street. Albert picked himself up and continued to pursue him.

They darted and weaved through several streets, as a passer-by stopped to look at them. Many times Albert came close to catching up, but the boy cut around a corner as if whisked away by some magical force. The boy was a monkey and this was his jungle. Albert struggled to keep up as the young body jumped from street to street, not hesitating, not looking back, not even once.

Soon, Albert was in a neighborhood that he couldn't recognise. At last, the boy stopped. As Albert turned the corner,

he saw the boy sitting leisurely on a wall. He swung his legs back and forth and upon his face was the most carefree smile in the world.

He beamed at Albert, "You're the only one who has ever kept up with me."

"Who are you? What are you doing?" Albert panted.

But the boy ignored his question. He tilted his head to the side and looked up towards the sky which was particularly blue; bright rays of light lit up vibrant colours everywhere, white clouds drifted to and fro in air fresh with a summer scent.

After a long while, the boy said, "Humans, for what reason do we live?"

"What are you talking about?"

But once again, the boy ignored his question. He turned to Albert, a glimmer of sunlight shining from his eyes. He smiled once again, laughing to himself. Then he fell backward from the wall. Panic suddenly took hold of Albert and he rushed up and scaled the wall, peering over the other side. But to his relief, the boy was fine. He waved and called, "By the way, my name is Hewitt." And with that he ran off. A breeze rolled gently behind him.

"Hewitt...Hewitt...," muttered Albert. Then suddenly he burst out laughing. It was a genuine laugh, pure and bright. In that moment, Albert forgot any worries, any doubts, any fears.

"Ha, Hewitt, well he certainly is a little smart one."

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The brisk winter chill a few years later swirled around aimlessly in the northern city. Now and again, it would pass by unsuspecting pedestrians, robbing them of their breath and leaving bejewelled frost in their wake. Crunch. Albert trudged through the snow, heading to work. Naked trees lined the streets.

"Arghhhh! Help me!"

A shriek shattered the calm atmosphere.

"That voice! I've heard that voice before. Digging in his heels, Albert sprang forward, rushing towards the direction of the scream.

"No, please stop, Urghhhh!"

First he saw a pool of red forming in front of him. The crimson seeped deep into the sleet, creating a grotesque slushy mixture. He looked up. There encircled by a group of officers was a boy, naked, beaten. Among the officers was a slightly taller man. He wore a tight-fitting uniform of jet black. Upon his left arm was a red armband with a white circle and a black symbol. The sunlight seemed to glow on the line of medals on his chest, gleaming with pride, and on a badge on his hat. It was shaped like a skull and crossbones, with the eyes slightly aligned to the left. He was an Elite Squad member. As the beating continued, he noticed Albert to the side, watching them. A wry smile appeared on his face.

"Hey you, come over here," he said.

"Who me?"

"You're an officer here right, come join us."

"B-But why?"

Before Albert could retreat, he was forcibly tugged by the Squad member and pushed into their ring. Now that he was closer, he took another look at the figure sprawled in front of him. The boy looked up. Time froze. Albert felt a chill, far colder, far sharper, far more devastating, penetrating his heart. He could never forget those eyes, those sapphire eyes, now tainted with red – bloodshot.

"...Hewitt?"

Other officers were speaking to him, but Albert couldn't hear any of it.

"I can't believe it, there's no way, why is he here?"

A baton was handed to him.

"Beat him with it."

"What? I couldn't possibly- "

"He is a Prohibited Person. They want to bring chaos to our State and the whole continent. They are masters of deception, mimics. See, they even use a child to smuggle food to them; how despicable! Come, take the baton."

Albert was on the verge of leaping out and taking Hewitt far away, but then he felt a hard metallic muzzle against his back. Fear condensed into icy bricks freezing his legs. It slid up his body and infected his brain. He couldn't move. Hewitt was someone important to him. But despite this he could not help him. His palms sweated.

CONTINUE READING>>

He hesitated, scanning the faces of the officers around him, thinking of a way to persuade them. But as soon as he saw their faces, he could not speak. Each of them had an expression of indifference. They could not care less about such a boy. Albert stood there dazed, his eyes glazed over.

The Squad member whispered against his ear, "If you don't do it, I will."

Albert stood and watched as several of the officers proceeded to beat up this child, wearing a look of pure ecstasy. To them, this was a game of call and response. Every time they hit, there would be a whimper; every time they kicked, there would be a scream. And Albert still just stood there. He couldn't do anything to stop it but he forced himself to look. This was the first time that he had ever questioned the Leader's ways. Was this right? Was this the way to treat other people? To treat a child? Hewitt's words once again rang in his mind,

"Humans, for what reason do we live?"

He didn't know. He didn't know anything anymore.

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As the painful memories came back to him, the man shut his eyes. He took a deep breath and forced away his thoughts from those difficult years. He looked down at the child again: dressed in tattered rags, his skin torn and blistered, his hair dishevelled.

But the boy was no longer looking at him. He was turned around, his arms wrapping his chest, shaking. The man looked away, took one step, then stopped. He stepped back and crouched down, undid his coat and dropped it to the ground.

"I'm sorry."

After a little while, the boy stood up. He picked up the coat and looked around. But the man who had given it to him was long gone. He peered down and with the aid of the moonlight, the name tag was just legible above the left breast pocket.

It read "Albert".