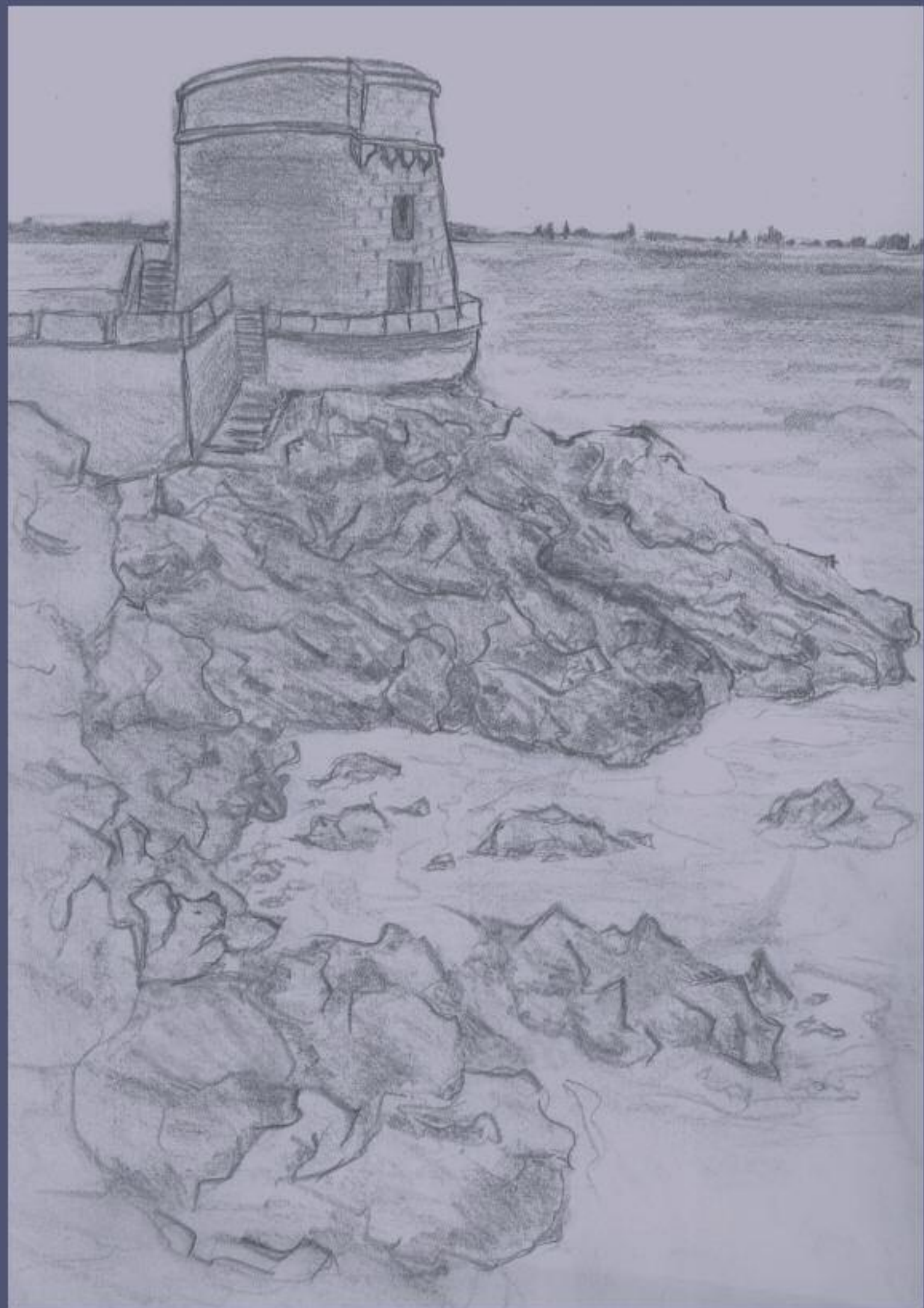


# The Wine Dark Sea





The Wine Dark Sea  
A collection of  
poetry and prose by the  
students of  
St Andrew's College,  
Dublin



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the twelfth edition of The Wine-Dark Sea. This year we had yet another bumper crop of prose and poetry. There is some wonderful reading in these pages, some deep thinking and some no thinking, something for everyone as it were. The range of subject matter, voice, style and humour is quite something. It has been wholly exasperating, but not without some joy to edit what you find in these pages, I hope your experience of the magazine is more of the latter than the former.

The aim of this magazine has always been to provide a platform for our students to showcase their creative talents. Thus, whether it is through poetry, prose or art, each piece bears witness to the flourishing myriad talent that exists within our school. That the students have this springboard and are encouraged to avail of it, is thanks to the teachers and parents that inspire them to create and have confidence in their creations. What is also unique and wonderful about this magazine is the inclusion of all students and all ages from the Junior to the Senior school. The key to fostering talent is to catch it early.

Therefore I would like to thank all those who gave generously of their time this year. Thanks to Mr. Godsil for his continued support of the arts in the college. Thanks to Hilda Quin, Conall Hamill, Ann Fitzsimons, Stephen McArdle, Nikki Carter, Stephen Gill, Gina Doran, Paul Reidy, Grainne Leddy, and especially Ruth Devane and Padraig Conaty for supporting their students in their desire (and need) to write.

Also, for the vital help that came from the Irish department great thanks are owed to Mary Keddy.

Thanks also to all the Junior School staff for providing wonderful encouragement to their students and ensuring that the entries from the Junior School are of the high standard we have become accustomed to.

Our thanks to the Art department- Mary West, Derek Walshe and Jen Daly- for the wonderful images that make up this edition and make this magazine visually exciting.

The Wine-Dark Sea owes its design to the skill of Ailbhe Garvey whose gifted vision and refined sense of style makes this a stunning and professional publication.

Congratulations to all who are printed within these pages. We hope you will continue to express your talents in future editions of this magazine. On a personal note I would like to say farewell to the 6th year contributors (many of whom have given regularly to this magazine), keep writing you are more gifted than you know.

Robert McDermott

### Alternative preface

Begob is it yourself is it; I haven't seen you in a while?

It is.

I have a grand thing here.

Where?

Here in me coat.

What is it?

I told you it's a grand thing.

Quite.

There, what do you think?

It's a magazine.

Not just any magazine but a grand magazine, a literary magazine, a literary journal in fact.

How did you come by it?

The brother gave it me.

Of course, is he keeping well?

Ah divil a bit, he's up in new digs, moved from Skerries to Blackrock on account of the noise and all the cricket that they play there, sure last summer he was taking a leisurely stroll through Balrothery when blammo he was clocked and nearly skulled by a cricket ball that came from nowhere.

Surely it came from somewhere.

Indeed, but for the intents of the way the brother told me the story it came from nowhere. Anyway, the landlady at the new digs sends her son to a fine local school and in this fine local school they produce this grand literary journal. Here have a look for yourself.

The Wine-Dark Sea, is that Homer?

No, it's the title of the journal, anyway I was havin' a read of it thudder day and I'll tell you it's choc filled with stories and poems as'd make you laugh to the heights of delirium and cry to the depths of your soul. A right good piece of work produced by the terribly talented students of the fine school. It would appear from reading the introduction that a great many of the teachers in the school assist the students with their creative endeavours.

Would these teachers be mostly English teachers?

Mostly yes, you can't run a school without a fine English department.

Quite so, may I borrow it?

The English department?

No, the literary journal.

Not a chance, that is, I'd happily lend it ya but the brother wants it back by the weekend he says it's helpful for producing mirth at the dinner table. Sure last week the brother had them in stitches there up in the digs. He was telling them about the state of the economy and all that when...

I think I see your bus.

Begob you're right, I'll tell you the rest of that story another time. Cheers now.





Metaphors be with you- Harvey Mindess

### Darwin

Just one simple observation becomes a ponder  
 Uncomplicated and straightforward  
 A thought, contemplation or the search for a solution  
 And it grows, it blossoms from the root  
 'Til its petals surpass countless raw minds  
 But it spreads, from a word to a thought  
 To a theory or explanation  
 Such an astounding vindication,  
 Just one simple ponder.

Aly Coyne

### Old Soul

I'm and old soul  
 that often acts young  
 when quite honestly  
 I don't find it fun,  
 to shop or paint my nails  
 to gossip or drink,  
 and if you asked me why  
 I'd say I think  
 it's because that stuff  
 isn't at all amusing  
 in fact I find adolescents  
 quite bamboozling.

Jane Ritchie

### Viewpoint

You can search  
 But will you find it?  
 You can look  
 But will you see it?  
 Most people  
 Go through life  
 With their eyes half closed.  
 Never seeing the full picture  
 Never seeing the entire view.  
 But to really live  
 You must open them wide  
 To see what's there.  
 To really capture  
 What many will never know

Saibh McCaffrey



### Live Wax

Bang! Bang! The thunderstorm popped over town. The storm got near the chimney of the Wax Museum. The sparks trembled down the chimney. The lightening went all over the Wax Museum. Sparks dazzled the Figures.  
They all blinked. They all moved. They all began to walk.  
The toad under Harry Potter began to jump. Harry waved his wand and turned it into ice.  
Freddy Kruger ran out of the Museum in search of nightmares.  
Ozzy Osborne began to sing Jazz music upstairs.  
Batman came running down the stairs. He popped his fist at Joker. Joker hit Batman with his cane.  
Homer Simpson ran into the café in search of doughnuts. Bart rode his skateboard up Mr Freeze's huge freezegun.  
Yoda trained Anakin with a light sabre. Darth Maul slashed his light sabre around Obi-Wan Kenobi.  
The only things that didn't come to life were the toys in the Museum gift shop.  
Downstairs Frankenstein groaned.  
The vampire ran out in search of blood.  
The sun began to rise. The storm was waved away. Everyone melted.  
The Dublin Wax Museum has never had a customer since the night of the live figures.

And now no one will ever know what happened that night except for you and me.

Luke Keenan P3

### A Snowy Dream

The snow covered roofs  
Look like distant mountains.  
My head tilts to them and I get a sense of freedom.  
How amazing would it be?  
To be there among the snow covered peaks,  
Surrounded by clouds.

I sit here and I dream.  
The roads are covered with snow,  
No cars go past, no people walking,  
This peace is only disturbed  
By excess snow falling off trees  
Like powder blown from a mountainside.

Leon Hrvatin Stancic



After flicking through the channels for what seemed like the hundredth time, Polly pressed the power button and watched as the ad for another insurance policy was cut off mid sentence. Daytime TV is rubbish, she thought to herself. Polly had been home sick with a chest infection for eight days now. It was quite fun at first, imagining her friends sitting in class while she ate ice cream in front of the TV. But now it was getting boring. She had read all the magazines Mum had bought for her and had caught up on all the TV programmes she followed. She was even getting a bit sick of ice cream! Her dad was away on business in Hong Kong and her mum couldn't afford to stay off work any longer. With nothing better to do, Polly decided to take a nap on the sofa. She wrapped the duvet around her tall, slim frame and sank into the soft leather. The afternoon sun poured in through the window and the warmth made it easy to fall into a stupor.

A few minutes passed. A dog barked from across the road. Twenty minutes. A car door slammed shut, the neighbour coming back from the shops. Forty minutes. A group of young children ran ahead of their mothers on their way home from school. Silence. Then...BANG! Polly's eyes flew open and all drowsiness quickly vanished. Unsure if the noise was coming from inside the house; she stayed still and strained her ears, listening. She definitely heard voices coming from the next room. 'Put that down, we want to leave everything the way it is,' said a high, squeaky voice. Something about the way the sound rang through the air made Polly think it owner was a girl.

'You're always telling me what to do! I'm sick of it! Anyway I was just checking if this metal thing was the key.' The voice was just a few octaves lower, a male's.

'No you idiot, that's a saucepan! They use that for cooking. We're looking for something that doesn't belong in a kitchen,' said the first voice.

'How do you know all about this? Human Studies was always so boring, how on earth did you stay awake? Get it? I said how on earth?' the second voice trailed into a low chuckle.

Who was in the kitchen? Polly wondered. Strangely, she didn't feel scared. The voices sounded friendly and childlike.

In the kitchen, X and Y were going through the kitchen cupboards. The girl, X, was getting frustrated. She hated working with Y, he always got distracted and lately he was preventing her from doing her job. She used to be the best Hunter in the Academy until she got paired with him. He was a rookie, only two months out of the Academy. It was common for all the rookies to get paired with an experienced Hunter until they learned the ropes. X had been successful in dodging the bullet until Alpha called her into the headquarters and told her she's be teaching Y. Everything about Y annoyed her. He made poor jokes (the earth one was one of the funnier jokes), didn't read up on the information and just didn't seem interested in being a Hunter. When would this job be over? He thought to himself. X was friendly enough and easy on the eye but he hated working with her. She always acted so superior and looked down on him if he got a few facts mixed up. Like the saucepan. How was he supposed to remember that?

They studied the basic things like that in Year One! As he opened the fridge he saw a batch of chocolate biscuit cake. If he knew one thing about humans, it was the food they called 'junk' although Y couldn't figure out why anyone would think junk sounded nicer than chocolate or biscuit or cake. He was just about to take a piece when the sound of Alpha's voice through the receiver brought him back to reality.

'Get out, the girl is coming! Get out!' Alpha's voice was similar to Y's although there was a definite note of panic in it at the moment.

'Don't just stand there. You know the drill,' muttered X to Y. She took his and focused her mind on the bush in the back garden. The next thing she knew she was hiding among the branches with Y, spying on the girl.

Polly slowly crept into the kitchen, careful not to make a sound. The voices had been coming from the kitchen, she was sure of it. But when she tiptoed across the threshold she found herself alone in the room. Too much TV is making me nuts. She opened the fridge to get a glass of orange juice (vitamin C was good for the old immune system) and noticed something strange. The plate of chocolate biscuit cake was still on the top shelf but there was a slice sitting alone on the bottom shelf. That's weird, who would have done that?

X listened with disbelief as Y told her about the chocolate biscuit cake, although if she was being honest, she wasn't too surprised. It was only a matter of time before he messed up a job. What if the girl noticed? Would she think she was losing her marbles as they say or would she think there was somebody else in the house? When Y was done, X began lecturing him on the importance of keeping a low profile and leaving everything exactly the way it was so the humans wouldn't suspect a thing. It was somewhere in the middle of this lecture that she heard a noise. Someone had cleared their throat as if to make their presence known.

Polly couldn't believe her eyes. There in her mother's buddleia bush were two squat blue creatures dressed in black. They were a little bit like Smurfs except they had the ugliest faces she had ever seen. They sounded much friendlier than they looked, that she was sure of that. However she was unsure of a lot of things. What were the blue creatures? Where did they come from? Why were they in her kitchen? And what was the key they were talking about earlier? I guess she'll never know. At that moment, after she had interrupted the hunters' conversation, something unexpected happened. X saw the endless questions forming in the girl's mind, it was all in the eyes. She took out a sharp little dagger from a pocket in her black clothes and stuck it through Polly's heart. There were some parts of the job that she really hated.

### Beth and the Magic Snowman

One Sunday morning when Beth woke up she felt rather cold. She then looked out of her window and saw snow. "Snow, snow" she shouted. Then Beth sprinted into her parents' room and asked if she could build a snowman. "After lunch is the only time you can build a snowman" said Beth's mum. So after lunch Beth ran outside as fast as her little legs could carry her. Beth started building the snowman while the wind blew past her. When Beth was finished building her snowman she felt rather proud of her work. While she was staring at her work she heard a voice saying "thank you very much Beth". Beth had no clue where the mysterious voice was coming from. She then ran into her house thinking that it was her parents but neither of them was calling her. The voice sounded like it was coming from the snowman. "Is that you speaking" said Beth to the snowman terrified. "Yes it is me, my name is Tom" said the snowman. Beth gave a shriek - a snowman that can talk! Beth then ran into her brother's room and told him that the snowman that she had just made had spoken to her. "No that is just nonsense" said her brother. "There is no such thing as a talking snowman. I think you need to lie down and take a nap since you must be very tired after making the snowman". Then Beth told her parents and even they did not believe her. Everybody thought that she was imagining it.

Beth felt very sad that nobody believed her so she went outside into the garden and sat down next to the snowman and told him how hurt she felt that none of her family believed her. The snowman felt sorry for her too. Beth and the snowman, Tom, became very good friends.

Every morning when Beth woke up she would run outside to talk and play with the snowman. They would play many games like catch and Granny footsteps and would really enjoy themselves.

One day when Beth woke up the weather had changed and it was a sunny day. Beth ran outside to play with her snowman Tom but he wasn't there. He had melted and Beth was very sad. She sat down at the place that he used to be and wept. Beth closed her eyes and said goodbye to her dear friend Tom.

Anya Shorey P3

### Summer

Summer is nice  
Summer is warm  
Summer is wild  
Summer is gold  
Running through the grass  
Colour of yellow  
Colouring the flowers in their happiness.  
She leaves us every year with tears in her eyes  
She leaves us with Mr. Autumn.  
He's cold and strict  
He doesn't like flowers  
He likes potatoes and tomatoes  
He likes to steal the leaves from the trees  
And throw them on the ground.  
But  
Next year summer will visit us again.

Maria Owczarzak P4D



Helen was staying at her grandmother's house in the countryside for the weekend. Helen's grandmother had gone out to do the shopping leaving Helen alone and bored in the house. Helen had decided to go for a short walk in the woods at the end of the garden. She put on her coat and walked out the back door. It was a windy and dry day with the odd ray of sunlight here and there. The leaves on the trees were turning; orange, red, brown and yellow. The leafy undergrowth crushed and crackled beneath her boots. Helen wandered aimlessly around the forest. The trees were getting thicker and the undergrowth was denser. She spotted a clearing in the trees and headed in the direction of an old beech tree.

Helen sat down and leaned against the tree trunk. She watched the movements of little creatures scurrying around the woods. A slight breeze rustled the leaves above her head and she watched one fall landing gracefully beside her. The leaf began to shake and it started to sprout little arms, legs and a head. After a few moments it stopped shaking and there stood beside her a little greenish yellow leaf man.

Helen gasped and uttered a little "oh".

The little leaf man looked at her and cried,

"Oi what you doin' 'ere?"

"I...uh...I was resting."

"Restin'? What for? You could spend a lifetime restin' an' you'd never get anythin' done."

Helen looked at her feet, the little man was intimidating.

"Get up. Get up would you! Don't you realise that you are sittin' on me friends? You idiot girl."

Helen jumped upwards at once and immediately heard little cries and groans of pain. She looked at the spot where she had been sitting and saw layer of newly fallen leaves getting up onto their feet.

"More of them," she whispered.

"Well little lassie don't you ever stop and think about what you might be sittin' on? Look around you all the fresh leaves are little leaf men and women too afraid to move because of you. But not I! No I ain't afraid of no human!"

Now all of the beech trees little leaf men had started shouting their disapproval at her.

"God damn you child!"

"Kill the girl I say!"

"After her!"

Helen started running with the leaf men in full pursuit. She dashed through the trees avoiding branches and crying out for help. Helen was lucky that the leaf men's legs were a lot smaller than hers which made them much slower than her. She changed direction and ran straight into a gnarled oak tree. Feeling dazed she started to climb the tree. Pulling herself up into the tree she lent her foot against the trunk in the middle of the tree.

"Ouch my eye."

The voice was coming from the tree and Helen gasped when she found that she had stepped in the tree's eye. A pair of wise looking brown eyes opened and in a crack in the tree mouth opened as well.

"Oh my!" Helen exclaimed. "Sorry about that."

Helen didn't feel too shocked to be speaking to a tree. She was getting rather used to it by this stage though Helen couldn't help thinking how strange she must look to be talking to a tree.

The tree started speaking again.

"You ought to be more careful child," the tree boomed. "Why is it that you have climbed my tree?"

"I'm in the middle of being chased by little leaf men," Helen replied. "And I thought your tree would be a safe refuge."

"Leaf men? From the beech tree? Yes they can be very feisty sometimes. I'll soon put a stop to it don't worry."

"But how? They want to kill me!" Helen broke into sobs.

"Pull yourself together girl," the tree growled.

Helen could hear a distant rumble of footsteps. The noise became louder and from all directions little leaf men were surrounding Helen and the tree. All of sudden a powerful gust hit the oak tree and all its leaves fell gracefully to the forest floor. It was a tremendous sight. The oak trees leaves turned into little leaf men just as the beech trees leaves had done. They lined up into orderly lines with the military precision of the likes of the Roman army. Suddenly shouting war cries the oak tree leaves charged at the beech tree leaves. The battle had begun.

The two armies collided with an almighty crash. The scene was a flurry of green, orange and yellow leaves brandishing sharpened twigs locked in combat. Helen could hear cries of agony and see splashes of dark green blood.

Meanwhile the other trees all around them were egging on the fight and some seemed to be considering joining in.

The oak tree Helen was sitting on was shouting out commands to his army. All the excitement made Helen in a wild rush of adrenalin want to join in. Yet the battle was going badly for the oak tree. Other trees leaves had joined the beech trees leaf men.

Then without warning the oak tree started to vibrate violently. Helen had to wrap her arms around a branch to stay put. The oak tree seemed to be rising up out of the ground.

"What's happening?" shouted Helen.

The oak tree didn't reply. Then the vibrating stopped as quickly as it had started. Helen looked down all the trees roots had been pulled out of the ground and its trunk had been split in two to make what looked like two legs.

"What? How d'you do that? You have legs?"

"I'm going to take you out of the forest," The tree replied "it isn't safe here for you."

Then the oak tree started walking each step went with a thundering bang. When they left the battle behind them Helen broke the silence.

"So how did you just do that?"

"It isn't usual for us trees to move it takes a lot of energy and willpower to do so. Mother Nature didn't mean for trees to move we are supposed to be grounded beings unlike humans. I'm going to take you out of this forest."

"Where are you going to go?"

"I'll find somewhere to go. Remember to never set a foot in this forest again though trees have an excellent memory."

When they reached the edge of the forest and when Helen could see her grandmother's house the oak tree let her down.

"Well, see you and thanks for your help I hope I haven't caused too much trouble."

"Yes goodbye, what was your name?"

"Helen."

"Goodbye, Helen."

And with that Helen ran off back to her grandmother's house.

### The Orchestra

I found her wandering  
Among the yellow grass of summer,  
Her movements were at one with the swaying  
heads, or more  
Her chubby fingers seemed to conduct them  
As if she alone could extract their sound.

And deaf to that certain pitch  
I could only listen with my eyes,  
As she danced and swayed  
In a sea of gold lustre.

The breath of life; suspended mid flow,  
And all that moves, all that sings  
Is silent and still for her orchestra.

And then, a hushed rhythm entered my veins,  
Descending through the nerves of my body to my  
fingertips.

I let it resonate there, and soon, it filled my ears.

Aoife Franklyn

### I Woke With Salt on My Lips

I fell into the ocean  
And sank for one hundred years.

Beneath the toss and turn  
Of the sleepless waves  
She cradled me,  
Riptides and soft skin.  
And told me not to cry,  
For my lungs were already filled with tears.

“Sleep”  
She sighs in a hushed, blood rush whisper  
And then the witch is tracing the curve of my spine  
And as my lids flutter shut I feel  
Urchins on my chest  
Anemones sprouting between my toes.

I am too afraid to ask if I am drowning.

I woke with salt on my lips  
In a phantom's arms  
In a stranger's house  
And felt the sea breeze in her breath on my neck,  
And tasted the ocean in her kiss.

Isla Jeffrey

### The Dreamer

Colours surround me.  
They flow out of the crowd in a blast.  
An explosion of colours.

They hide inside us all.  
When set free they explode in a show of fireworks.

When the music plays and the band sings,  
the crowd melts into yellow and blue.  
Bright and beautiful; fiery floodlights.  
They caress the air and kiss their vessels as they fly up in a blast of emotion.

The black sky turns to sapphire blue and lemon yellow,  
To rose-red and tiger-lily orange.

They glow bright the ghost of the peoples past released.  
They linger on our fingertips and leave when life is acquitted.

They are the conscious mind we call our conscience.  
By them, we're guided through it all.  
Though anger haunts them,  
they stay a glowing blue,  
a curious red.  
They remain a luscious green,  
and purple-pink.

Sarah Hashmi



### Mr Bottomley's wall of fame

Nobody likes science, even if you have the most wonderful teacher in the world you'll find it difficult, whether it's biology, physics or chemistry. I had the worst science experience in school because I was unlucky enough to have Mr Bottomley. He was old, disgruntled, mean, ugly and had eyebrows that resembled two giant, grey hedgehogs. He had taught in the school for about a million years. His room was bland apart from one wall which had the photos of him over the years, he looked depressed in every single one, it's as if didn't ever want to be a teacher.

The first photo was in 1966, he was young but didn't look eager. His hair stuck up the same way it does today. The photo was black and white so I wasn't sure of his hair colour. The next photo was taken in 1975 and I saw that his hair was the colour of fake tan, but he wore the same expression. He doesn't change at all until 1987, when his hair starts losing its radiance and a small bald patch begins to form. From then on he started to look more and more like a corpse, but his face stayed the same all through those years; something was upsetting him not that anybody cared.

Although I was unlucky to be taught by him I was lucky enough to be part of the week before his retirement. It was a Monday morning and we were sitting in science talking and making noise like we usually did just to aggravate him, but he sat there unmoved by our petty torments. He didn't even bother trying to teach us anything. Instead he started taking his photos off the wall and putting them in a cardboard box. At first we didn't take any notice but when he started taking various chemicals out of the cupboard; we started to take notice.

Without any warning he left the room and headed for the rugby pitches, we followed curiously. He placed the box on the field and started pouring the chemicals in, and then he set a match on all the photos. They burst into flames, the flames were multi-coloured and they were massive, they leaped about as if they were doing a dance. We all looked in amazement but Mr Bottomley didn't change, his hair still went up in air a metre, he still had two grey hedgehogs covering his eyes and that same upside down smile. When the flames finished we saw a real miracle. Mr Bottomley's face lit up. He had a smile going from ear to ear.

We spent the rest of that week doing fun things in science, the kind of stuff you see mad scientists do on TV. He also told us about the dreams he had of becoming an astronaut, and how becoming a science teacher had put him in a permanent state of depression. Now that the photos were gone there was nothing holding him back.

That Friday when he finished up I watched him walk to his car, I thought of the dull times I had spent in his class and for all the boring lessons, the tedious homeworks and droning on and on about stuff that didn't interest me. But when he drove past me and I saw the wry contented smile on his face I couldn't begrudge him that.

Good luck Mr Bottomley I whispered.

Sofia Sotgia

### The Third-Floor Bedroom

Lucinda woke up with a start. Was it real or was it a dream, was the sun actually shining? She drew back her curtains ....but no it was as cloudy and as miserable as ever. Lucinda sleepily rubbed her eyes and walked over to her calendar, on her dove-painted wall. Her walls were painted beautifully. They were covered in snowy-white doves. Her father, George had painted them when they'd moved in. He had left to go and fight in the war and she hadn't heard from him in ages.

Today was the day, the first of April 1945. Lizzie was moving away. She got dressed and ran down the flights of stairs. Her mother was in the kitchen, packing up the appliances. "Hello Lucinda. How are you darling?" said her mother cheerily. "Terrible I don't want to move" Lizzie mumbled. "Now, now we've already had this conversation. We are not moving for the good of my health. It's not safe here. Eat your breakfast and then finish packing your clothes."

Lucinda ate her breakfast without talking then dragged herself up to her room. She grabbed her clothes and threw them into her open case. Lizzie jumped onto her bed and began to cry into her pillow. She was afraid about the move to Cornwall and about her father. She might never see him again. She dried her eyes and went over to her window. She opened it and stared out. Lizzie lived in London. Most of the buildings in her area were turned to rubble. There were people selling newspapers, begging for food and looking for shelter. Smoke was coming out of buildings. Lucinda turned away. She couldn't look any more. She grabbed her case and went downstairs to the car, leaving the window wide open. In the car Lucinda fell into a deep sleep. She dreamt of her father fighting. All of the soldiers had given up hope. They were full of longing and sorrow for their families. They felt the same as everyone in England. Lizzie was woken by her mother calling her. "Lucinda, wake up Lucinda". Only Lucinda's father called her Lizzie. Lizzie's mother preferred Lucinda but Lizzie didn't. Lucinda stepped out of the car. In front of her was a cottage with white-washed walls and a thatched roof. It could have been prettier but the weather was so grey.

Back in London the smallest bit of sunlight escaped from the gloomy clouds. The ray of sun went through Lucinda's open window. No one had, had enough money to buy the house. The sunlight hit the walls and the room came alive. All the doves flapped their wings. The millions of doves peeled themselves off the walls and zoomed around the room. Some minutes later the birds formed two separate flocks and flew out the window in different directions. One group of doves soared up and up and up over the clouds. They flew over seas, and to the war. These magical birds flew over no man's land and to the English soldiers. For one magic moment all the Eng-

lish soldiers looked up from the trenches and mud. They were held spellbound by the doves. It gave them new strength and courage. There were whoops of joy and cries of laughter. All the soldiers stood up and sang. The dove's job was over.

The other flock flew all over England giving out rays of hope. They travelled across London. Women and men cried and rejoiced. Children ran out of schools and danced in the streets. One old man on his death bed asked to be brought outside to see this incredible sight. The newspaper headlines used to say "The Unwinnable War". They now said "We Can Win" and "It's Possible!" The whole country celebrated.

Two children followed the doves all the way across the cliffs of Dover. Finally the doves reached Cornwall. When Lizzie and her mother saw the doves they ran out into the garden and spun each other around and around, crying and shrieking. The whole country shone like a star.

A few days later Lucinda and her mother received a letter from Lizzie's father. A month later England won the war and Lizzie's father and many other men returned. The family moved back into their old home. Lizzie raced up to her room but....the doves were all back like they'd never left. When Lucinda grew up she wrote a book about this miracle. She started by simply saying "It all began when someone left the window open".

Amy Norman P6L



### The Lake

Slowly but surely from the edge of the lake  
 Long icy fingers make an escape,  
 growing longer and thicker till they won't break.  
 All of us know cold is the make.  
 After a while the lakes almost white,  
 somewhere close a fish swims by  
 And now, on rolls some fog,  
 In the sky flies a sky lark  
 Heralding the morning, chasing the dark  
 Now we start waking and WOW.  
 The whole lake is white  
 And all of this happened just in one night.

Pierce Hanley P4D

### Hide and Seek

"Ready or not, here I come!"  
 "Fee, fi, fo, fum I smell the blood of an English man."  
 We quickly run and get our place,  
 But, oops I trip up on my lace.

I hear footsteps, where should I hide,  
 I look around me side to side.  
 I jump up behind a tree,  
 But on the way I scrape my knee.

Oh ow! Oh ow! This really hurts!  
 But then I spot two other shirts.  
 I hold my breath on and on,  
 I really do hope they have gone.

Then I hear voices, "You won, Jake, you won!"  
 I slowly reveal myself from the tree,  
 In order to claim my victory.

Sophia Carr P6P

### Matilda and Friends

Matilda is a girl  
 Who goes to Trunchem Hall  
 She is a whizz with maths  
 The answers, she knows them all.

Miss Honey her teacher  
 was very impressed.  
 Out of all the children  
 Matilda is the best.

Miss Trunchball the head teacher  
 was as mean as can be.  
 She snorted in the hallway  
 And slurped while drinking her tea.

Stephen MacCann P4D



### Glass Case

I remember,  
It,  
Standing in,  
The corner.  
Inside,  
Trinkets,  
Memories,  
Simple,  
But,  
Valuable.  
Precious,  
Priceless,  
A complete,  
Collection.

Sarah Clarke

### Lonely Darkness

There is no sound  
no light,  
no one.

Look up at the sky  
It's not much to the eye  
This faint cover of moonlight.

Scared of the dark as if it were a  
dangerous stranger,  
a cold gust of wind reminds me of  
the loneliness.

First fallen snowflakes fall upon my shoulder  
standing waiting  
every minute I get older  
every minute I get colder.

Sparkle Antoine

### But You Did.

I sat in class,  
Alone, as usual.  
Answered questions,  
But mostly stayed quiet.  
You got in trouble,  
I can't remember what for,  
And you were moved next to me.  
I was slightly annoyed,  
I have to admit,  
But made room for you to sit down,  
And shared my book;  
you had none.  
We started talking,  
It was a long class and  
I got bored trying to ignore you.  
I teased you, you took it in your stride,  
Mistakes were laughed at on both sides.  
It's funny, but when the class was over,  
And we packed up our bags,  
I wanted to write you this.  
I didn't think much of you before,  
Didn't speak to you, really,  
But out of all my friends,  
And the people I thought I would have loved,  
If the chance came,  
None of them inspired me.  
But you did.

Amy O'Donoghue

### The Boot

I am a boot,  
I do not see,  
I do not feel.  
Where my owner is, I do not know,  
Though I expect he is lost,  
Like so many other men,

For I am a soldier's boot.

I have been to the worst places imaginable,  
Where the worst things imaginable have hap-  
pened,  
Where cries fly into the night,  
But,  
I am a soldier's boot,

I have no fear,  
I do not see,  
I do not feel.

Andrew Ruttle



### The Cheese report

Poets have been mysteriously quiet on the subject of cheese. Their somewhat ominous secrecy on the matter is quite puzzling. Throughout the years there have been subtle indications of a connection between the two, starting when in 1956 Gusteau Fromage, an obscure French psychologist, published an essay which suggested that Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* is ultimately about mature cheddar. Fromage disappeared a year later, and was eventually found wandering in a soap factory. Since then he has only been able to say the word 'beaufort' on a continuous loop. Nonetheless, his work sparked a worldwide investigation, and rumours about the influence of brie on Yeats' work spread like wildfire. Sky News eventually did a report in which it was claimed that Yeats only visited Coole to avail of the buttermilk which he would churn until solid and then sculpt it into the shape of Ben Bulbin. Yeats devotees flooded the streets in protest. Cheese shops were burned to the ground, tabloids ran stories with headlines such as 'Roquefort rebels' and 'Gouda gurriers'. When asked about Cashel Blue and a middle-aged woman from Cork was reported as saying 'it's too smelly...it's just too smelly.'

The violence continued for months, and harsh laws were passed to satisfy the protesters. It was decided that anyone found to be distributing cheese would be either put to death, or have to listen to Daniel O'Donnell for a full hour, given the choice most took death. The punishment for cheese producers was far worse. After much consideration, the Dáil reached the decision that the only fair way to punish cheese producers was to have them undergo the production process themselves. First they would be pushed out of a cow's udder (or goat's if they were lactose intolerant) and then quickly made into curds. At which point they are drained and pressed repeatedly, packed into a mould, and weighed. On his way out from the Dáil, the minister for justice was overrun with reporters: "Minister, is it not hypocritical to enforce such harsh punishments on cheese producers when you yourself are making cheese in the process?" In response, the minister mumbled incoherently and munched on a camembert.

With all the gossip and politics surrounding the issue, people began to forget all about the connection to poets and several photos of Paddy Kavanagh and Dylan Thomas skullin' pints of cheesy stout went ignored. But in 1996, something major happened. A reckless minor poet by the name of David Double-Gloucester suddenly revealed these secrets in a final untitled work. Unfortunately the paper was eaten by his pet pine marten, Whiskers, and was only ever read by his secretary- Colin Beaumine who, when questioned on the matter, always replied, "Not now, I'm eating." Colin liked to eat, and died from a massive coronary in 1999, at which point it was officially decided that no one cared anymore.

Oliver Eagleton

### End

The world blurred around me.  
 Words were drawn out and slurred.  
 There was a numbness throughout my limbs.  
 I could see smudged shapes  
 Moving towards me,  
 Talking to me,  
 Calling to me.  
 I tried to sit up,  
 Tried to push away the people  
 But I couldn't move.  
 I looked down  
 And saw my hands  
 Covered in red.  
 I saw the blood.  
 Seeping out  
 And I felt nothing.  
 My head was heavy with fog.  
 Everything started to spin.  
 And I was plunged into darkness.  
 Is this what it is to die?

Saibh McCaffrey

## The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Eleanor put two black shopping bags down outside her front door and took out her keys. With her thick woollen gloves on it was hard to pick them up. She fumbled with them, and chose the correct key, put it in the lock, and unlocked the door. She carried the bags inside and quickly closed the door to keep out the chill. She hurriedly turned the radiators on and set about clearing the surfaces in the kitchen, wiping them down, and taking out several items of food which were to be ingredients in the meal she was to make tonight.

Being Christmas Eve, the normally very bare sitting room was taken over by the branches, the scent, and particularly the scattered needles of the Christmas tree. The branches were laden with baubles, tinsel, fairy lights and various other ornaments, and anyone taking a passing glance on this spectacle of painted Polish glass and tiny light bulbs would be forgiven for thinking that it would collapse under the weight at any moment. Eleanor hung up her coat, removed her scarf and gloves, and hung them up on the coat stand beside one of the radiators. She returned to the kitchen, put the kettle on, and set about preparing dinner. A short while later potatoes were arranged on a tray and Eleanor was inserting cloves into a leg of ham that she had scored and glazed with honey. She walked through the sitting room and on in to the dining room, where she began laying the table. A white tablecloth, heavily starched, was spread over the table her father had made. Before each chair she placed a plate from the 'special occasions' crockery set, and cutlery on either side, along with crystal wine glasses. At each place she lay a napkin, and beside it, a Christmas cracker. Her children, she reasoned, would never be too old for paper crowns or stale jokes. She counted the places. One for herself, one for Dermot (her husband), one for her mother, and one each for Colm and Mary, Harry, Bridget and Mary's son Sean. None of them would ever be too old for Christmas crackers.

With the table laid, she went back into the kitchen, to make desserts. A Christmas pudding had been made weeks ago, but she wanted to do fresh mince pies and a Yule log. The second oven they had installed as a part of the 'Great Kitchen Renovation' of 2004 came in handy on the odd occasion.

Two hours later the house was bustling. The Yule log was in the fridge, liberal amounts of eggnog had circulated, and on the stove a saucepan of mulled wine was simmering. Dermot had not come home yet, but he had instructed them to begin. They all took their places. Across from Eleanor was Colm. He was, at that moment, working on the new European headquarters for a large American pharmaceuticals company. His wife Mary was beside him to Eleanor's right, and Seán was on Mary's other side. On Colm's other side was Bridget, who was at University in Trinity. On Bridget's other side was Eleanor's mother, at the head of the table. Eleanor wasn't entirely certain that her mother was 'all there' anymore, but she was smiling away, as usual, seemingly content. Opposite her at the other end of the table was Dermot's empty seat, and beside that seat, next to Eleanor, was Harry, their other son, who was working in Limerick.

\*\*\*\*\*

*I can't understand why a person will take a year or so to write a book when he can easily buy one for a few dollars-*  
Fred Allen

Dermot walked in the front door of his home. He had lingered at work, even though it was a half day. The thought of an almost-empty home at Christmas did not appeal to him at all. He heard laughing, and his heart jumped. Who was Eleanor talking to? He was glad for some company. He proceeded into the dining room.

There was his wife, a paper crown on her head, sitting alone at a table covered from end to end with plates of turkey, ham, Yorkshire pudding, potatoes and salads. She was talking to herself, laughing at jokes that were never said. He counted the plates and he understood. Judging from the lack of any salads on the plate opposite Eleanor, their son Colm was supposed to be seated there. Next to this plate was one devoid of meat, clearly intended for Colm's vegetarian wife Mary. Next to hers was a plate with substantially less food on it, intended for their young son Sean. Mary had been employed in the HSE, and had taken a voluntary redundancy package when Colm had lost his job. Apparently there's still demand for engineers in Canada, so that is where the three of them had gone. The extra salad and lack of any potatoes on the plate on the other side of the plate intended for Colm indicated that Bridget was supposed to be sitting there. Bridget had completed her degree at University earlier that year, but rather than attempt to find a job where there were no jobs, she was off travelling, a 'working holiday' as she put it. A highly skilled young person performing tasks that require little skill, Dermot thought that 'working holiday' was an oxymoron.

The head of the table was where Eleanor's mother had always sat, and Dermot saw that this was still the case, even though she had passed away after her heart had given in. The death of her husband the previous year had hit her very hard, and she had been shocked that her pension, made up mostly of bank shares, was worth substantially less than she had imagined.

At the other end of the table was an empty plate-for him he assumed. Next to it was a plate he figured was intended for their other son Harry, who had moved to Australia when the Americans had left Limerick.

Dermot sighed, served himself a plate, sat down in his intended place, and ate in silence, while Eleanor stared at him, her mouth open slightly, tears rolling down her cheeks.

Fionn McGorry



### Lost In the Trenches

My name is Paul I think I am in France. I think I have been here for years, I think something has gone terribly wrong. I have lost something important...I have lost my mind.

I'm at home with Josie, my sister, and Mum and Dad. I'm lying on the couch listening to the wireless. Mum is sipping tea on the old brown chair. Mum asks me what I would like for dinner. I am about to answer her when without warning I find myself in a hospital.

"Where are Josie, Mum and Dad? I wonder.

A nurse comes over to me, she looks kind but she is not Mum. The nurse tells me that I am in France, that I have just left the trenches, that I am a soldier and that I have shellshock. She puts a damp cloth on my head and tells me that I am running a fever, that I have lost a lot of blood and that my body is still in shock. She also tells me to rest but the groaning and shouting from all the other soldiers in pain makes it hard to sleep.

I wake up the next morning feeling tired. The nurse comes running over to me with a smile on her face (which is a surprise to me seeing that the place is so miserable).

"We just got a message saying that you are due to return home tomorrow, orders from on high" she says very excitedly.

That is the best news I've heard since coming here, I think to myself.

I lie back and let my head rest into the pillow but as I drift off I am filled with a feeling of doubt. I wonder what will happen when I wake up.

Shona Cooney P5W



### Spórt

Is aoibhinn liom spórt ar an teilifís,  
féachaim air arís agus arís  
tá sé corraitheach nuair a bhíonn an bua ag Arsenal  
ach níl sé corraitheach nuair a bhuann Chelsea  
faighim suaimhneas is sos nuair a fhéachaim ar spórt  
ar an bpáirc nó ar an gcúirt,  
peil, cispheil, haca agus rugbaí.  
Is cuma liom, i ndáiríre!

Stuart Wiley

### Sneachta

Sneachta geal is bán,  
Sneachta mín is bog,  
Sneachta fuar,  
Is breá liom an uair.

Déan fear sneachta,  
tabhair ainm dó,  
bí ag súgradh leis,  
déan cairde breise.

tagann an ghrian  
is ansin a imíonn  
mo chara nua,  
nach mór an trua.

Alexandra McCreery

### Aoir Ghaelach – Dán Ó, An Ioróin!

I rith an gheimhridh, déanaimid gearáin faoin aimsir-  
Bíonn sé de shíor ag cur báistí,  
nach mbeadh sé iontach dá mbeadh sé grianmhar!  
Bheimis abálta gearáin a dhéanamh faoina bheith dubh dóite.  
Ó, an ioróin!

Déanaimid gearáin faoin gcailín sin ag am tae -  
An cailín a bhíonn i gcónaí ag magadh faoi dhaoine eile  
Go háirithe nuair nach mbíonn said ann le hiad féin a chosaint.  
B'iontach an rud é dá stadfadh sí le bheith ag magadh!  
Bheimis abálta gan chaint fúithi agus í as láthair.  
Ó, an ioróin!

Agus muid ag dul thar bhráid sa chathair,  
Déanaimid gearáin de shíor lena chéile.  
'bhfuil tú cinnte nach bhfuil deoch uait?  
Tá gach duine eile ag ól -  
Dá n-ólfadh an duine sin,  
Bheadh sé ar ár gcumas cúlchaint a dhéanamh  
Faoinár dtuairim go bhfuil fadhb óil aige.  
Ó, an ioróin!

Briony Morgan

### Mo Ghuí Duit

Cairde maíthe is dílse,  
pé áit a théann tú.  
Beannacht na síochána ar do shaol  
le gliondar a mhaireann le fada.  
Go dtuga na séasúir i do shaol  
na rudaí is taitneamhaí duit.

Caroline Gowan



## The Infestation

(Originally called St. Patrick but my Dad suggested I change the name as he said the concept might be too subtle)

The infestation had been unexpected. Never before had I seen a house as spotlessly clean as ours, and yet somehow it seemed we had been granted the unfortunate blessing of having small creatures inhabiting the interior of our walls. Cleverly they had situated themselves in a nifty spot at the back of our biscuit press right by the exact shelf where our sugary treasures were kept. Their existence came to light one morning at the discovery of randomly scattered miniscule black droppings and a small hole scratched out through the plaster. My mother was horrified. Not only that, we later found that they had attacked the two unopened packets of custard creams, knowing full well to leave the stale digestives behind.

As mentioned before, what made the event so unexpected in our house was that my mother was of one of those who seemed to always be in a constant state of house cleaning. To find one smudge on her pristine granite worktops could be a feat compared to climbing Everest. While under her merciless eyes a toast crumb on the table was a heresy near worthy execution. Our house seemed to be a never ending witch hunt of who didn't change the loo roll, why are the cushions crumpled or how many mugs are there under your bed? I have spent many an evening victim to cold accusatory glares after committing some unspeakable crime such as leaving rings on the coffee table which no one else could see. Long lost friends could be ringing her for some sort of rendezvous yet she could never depart her dear household without completing the routine mid morning Hoover.

We had been arguing over breakfast about who was guilty of never closing the cereal boxes properly. My mother had got up from her chair and had opened the press to prove a point when out she let the low growl of a she wolf whose commandment had been broken. At the table our bodies tensed and we stopped eating. A much larger crime, first believed undetected, had in the end seemed to not gone unnoticed. We had no choice but to wait out the scene of whodunnit and pray that whatever the fault, the blame would be on the other. There was silence. Staring at our plates we felt a dark cloud of tension loom above us. Even the dog looked at the floor in shame, guiltily thinking of uprooted flowers and dead bumblebees. As we felt the cloud grow ever darker it seemed our judgement day was near. It almost became too much and my conscience was close to making me cry out, "Forgive me for I have sinned!" But my mother spoke before I could have done anything as foolish.

"I think we have vermin."

Instantly the cloud dissipated. The fear of condemnation melted away and we continued on with the process of chewing our food. I almost found the statement disappointing as I had been prepping myself for excessive punishment. My raiding of her rice cakes had gone unnoticed.

"Did you hear me?" She demanded and looked at my father expectantly.

He swallowed the mouthful he had been chewing. Then reaching out for his mug, he took two deliberate gulps of coffee. Placing the mug back on the mat he turned to his awaiting wife.

"Yes."

"Well," her voice the epitome of exasperation, "do you want to see?"

"No."

My mother looked around at us in disbelief. With hands on hips and chest stuck out in a somewhat heroic manner, she seemed to be genuinely shocked that no one wanted to peer in at mice droppings at half ten on a Saturday morning.

"Well what are we going to do about it?" Once again my father let there be an overly long pause before giving an answer.

"We'll get some traps."

"Well we'll have to get them today because we can't go on like this."

My father said nothing and began to butter another piece of bread while my mother just stood looking in at the press. Her brow was furrowed with the stress of the situation. It seemed that the beloved "Windowlene" was not going to be able to fix this one.

For the rest of the morning, my mother was a bundle of nerves that not even an aggressive bout of hovering could calm. We stayed out of her way as much as possible, each in separate rooms; we wouldn't even go to the bathroom for we were too terrified we might bump into her in the hall.

The house finally calmed down once she and my father left for the local DIY store to purchase some sacred items to rid the house of our problem. I went down to the kitchen ready to take another rice cake when I remembered that the rats might have got them first. My mood darkened and I allowed myself to think evil thoughts as I waited patiently for the kettle to boil. On their return we all crowded around the purchases to see the objects which were going to rid us of our problem. Ordered to back away as my father opened the packet we watched him carefully set two of the traps. Solemnly, my mother opened the press for him and in my father carefully placed the device as if it was something holy. With his pinky he jabbed the trap in slightly further.

"Careful!" my mother hissed, "You'll chop your finger off!"

After doing the same with the next trap the door of the press was closed quietly and we walked away.

A week later three rodents had been caught in the traps then quickly cleared away by father before we could get a chance to gawk at them. The hole in the wall was quickly patched up and betrayed no signs of their once existence. Since the incident my mother isn't able to get 'cleaner's high' and no matter how much she scrubs those shelves she still can't get her fix. Now whenever anyone opens the press they're hit with such a stench of natural-sweet-citrus-fresh that we subsequently no longer bother with her rice cakes, something which she should thank the mice for.

Jill Murphy

## Ten Commandments

Little whispers of smoke floated out of the cigarette clenched between Vinnie Cicero's lips. His fat, pinky ring-embellished, fingers pinched it out of his mouth. His hand drew it down, brushing against his silk tie and immaculate white suit, and with a hasty flick the ash cascaded, settling at the edge of his monochrome brogues. His watch told him he was late - that thing had always been a cheeky little rat. He was never late. Vinnie may have moved slowly, but it was only because Vinnie didn't have to move for anybody. He was a made man.

A sharp thud sounded as a shoe smacked his greased back hair. Looking up, he could see the vague outline of a human figure standing at the edge of the Citibank building, nervously scanning the ground below. A suicide, thought Vinnie. Well, he's not gettin' any time of day from me - no schmuck disrespects me like that, suicidal or not. Anyway, Vinnie was on his way to see a man about a dog, and Commandment Number Six: 'Appointments must absolutely be respected.'

As he was brushing the shoulder of his suit, an elderly woman's fragile frame clung to him - Mrs. Falcone, Billy's mother. She flung a frail finger in the direction of the suicidal figure and began to weep. 'Go get him Vinnie. Go get him. Look at him up there, like a scared little bird. Help him!'

'Mrs. Falcone, with all due respect, I've got an appointment to -'

'You boys and your goddamn appointments!'

While he wished with every freckle on his body he could shut that old bird up, he wearily reminded himself of Commandment Number Seven: 'Wives and mothers must always be respected.' So he trudged up the rickety back stairs, lighting a cigarette and thinking how lucky this joker was not to be ending up in the back of a meat truck - no one wasted Vinnie Cicero's time.

From the roof he could see everything. This was his town; he liked to take a look at it from this perspective every now and - but the little rat standing on the edge of it was dampening the ambiance. As he neared closer, Vinnie realised he recognised the guy - Jimmy Inganno, cousin of Henry Inganno. Henry was a close associate of Vinnie's, so he decided to lay off Jimmy a little. 'Jimmy, my man. What are you doin' up here, huh? You scared the life outta Mrs. Falcone. Billy'll be on your case.' Jimmy said nothing, an anxious twitch was the sole response he gave. There was something peculiar about his stance; although he looked as Vinnie expected he should in his situation, it was almost as if he had been expecting Vinnie to arrive. Anyway, he wasn't moving, and Vinnie needed to get him off that roof before any more fuss occurred. 'Listen Jimmy, someone once told me that he who is silent and bows his head dies every time he does so. He who speaks aloud and walks with his head held high dies only once. So look me in the eye, tell the cat to give you back your goddamn tongue and I'll buy you a drink.' Jimmy hesitated, his frame remained immobile. Gingerly he began to turn his head, and gave Vinnie a look that confused him; although he seemed meek, there was a glint of something else, a sense of misplaced determination. After peering over the edge once more, Jimmy dragged his feet towards Vinnie reproachfully. 'Good fella.'

Upon returning to ground level, the pair walked with

purpose, as Vinnie always did. Jimmy's first words were 'so, uh, where we goin'?' Vinnie shot him a scrutinising glance - he seemed to be adjusting awfully quickly to life back on the pavement. 'You see Lucchese's over there? When I finish my smoke that's where we'll go. Happy?' Jimmy looked calculating, and was quick to suggest an alternative. 'How about The Annexe, instead, huh?' Vinnie grunted. Commandment Number Four: 'Never be seen in pubs or clubs'. 'Listen, Jimmy, who's buyin' the drinks here?'

'No, no, no. Lucchese's is alright, I'm alright with that Vinnie. I'm alright with that'

'Fast learner, I see. Good fella'

With another little clump of black ash smeared on the pavement, the two made their way to the diner. Tony Lucchese's wife ran the place, a nice little joint. On their way, they passed a cop car. When those rat bastards assigned a whole army to stop Vinnie, what'd he do? He made them partners. The cop in the front, with a face like a battered fish, exchanged a mutual nod with Vinnie. He contemplated stopping for a more comprehensive exchange, but, Commandment Number Three: 'Never be seen with cops.' In the diner, the pair shifted themselves around a gleaming, cheap-looking table. Vinnie stared Jimmy straight in his beady little eye. He'd never quite understood that guy, there was somethin' not quite right about him. He seemed to operate on the edge of society, never got involved in business. He knew nothing, seemed pretty vulnerable. He was just one of those types, thought Vinnie.

'So what is it that you do, Vinnie?'

'What is it that I do? Why you askin' me that, huh? Why wouldn't I work for bum pay checks and take the subway to work every day, and worry about my bills like every other fella in this town?'

'I didn't suggest nothin' otherwise.'

Vinnie leaned back in his chair, his heavy frame extracting a creak from the furniture. Who was this broad, anyway? Comin' in here, leechin' a drink off him and gettin' cheeky with him like that? His wit infuriated him, he didn't like anybody getting cheeky. But Vinnie couldn't help thinking, there really was somethin' about this guy. Maybe he shouldn't be such a stranger to the business, new recruits were welcomed if deserving, and Jimmy's conversational tactics were impressive; he wouldn't need much training. But Vinnie remembered Commandment Number Ten: 'People who can't be part of Cosa Nostra: anyone who has a close relative in the police, anyone with a two-timing relative in the family, anyone who behaves badly and doesn't hold to moral values.' Jimmy had already broken the moral values of Cosa Nostra; taking your own life is seen as a betrayal of loyalty, respect and trust to the clan and to yourself as a member.

'So, what is it?'

This broad really didn't give up, thought Vinnie. A good quality; interrogation is vital. He didn't know how to answer him - Jesus Christ, Jimmy was beating him at his own goddamn game. He thought about it for awhile, and keeping in mind The Eighth Commandment: 'When asked for any information, the answer must be the truth' he replied: 'Listen Jimmy, I do what I do. I live my own life, I take care of my own business. We're just two fellas sittin' havin' a drink, talkin' bout the weather, the stocks and the women. There don't gotta be nothin' else to it than that. Alright?' 'You're good with words Vinnie. Why do you gotta be, somethin' those words need to conceal?'

The vein running down Vinnie's forehead began to throb.



Who was this joker, this nobody, comin' in here and actin' brave with him? If this was outta town, Vinnie would've pulled his nine millimetre on that rat so fast he wouldn't know what hit him. He was out of his comfort zone-or rather, in it, so he couldn't operate as usual in a situation like this. He thought about pulling a quiet one-to-one on Jimmy: discreetly threatening him with the gun, and robbing that cheeky bastard. But, he reminded himself he was in town now, home is home and work is work. Also, The Ninth Commandment: 'Money cannot be appropriated if it belongs to others'.

Vinnie was verging on an outburst, his palms flowed with sweat and he was about to unleash verbal threats upon Jimmy, when a woman's figure appeared at the table. He glanced upward into the face of Janice Lucchese, wife of Tony and owner of the diner. She was a fine-looking broad, a nice girl. Tony was always east with that mistress, and Janice really was no, Vinnie thought. No, no, no. Commandment Number Two: 'Never look at the wives of friends'

'Hello boys, is there anything I can get you? Vinnie darlin', how are you? Tony's been lookin' for ya to take care of that thing for him. Hasn't been home in a couple weeks though, says he's takin' care of somethin' in Jersey'

'Don't worry Janice, I'll see he gets home soon, it's about goddamn time, huh? Us boys don't need anythin' though, we were just leavin'. Right Jimmy?'

'Right'

'So I'll see ya Janice, God bless, and you'll be seein' Tony soon.'

'Thanks Vinnie, you're a dime'

Vinnie was ready to go, all he needed to do was get Jimmy in the car, get out of there, and he'd take care of it. That rat would pay, and Vinnie wanted to make sure of it. He was a nobody. But upon stepping out of the diner, his phone began to blink. He read the message and his face dropped. Something else to take care of. He wanted to put a bullet in that broad's head so badly, he needed to be taught a lesson about respect. He knew he had to go, though. Commandment Number Five: 'Always being available for Cosa Nostra is a duty-even if your wife is about to give birth'. He stared Jimmy in those goddamn beady little eyes. 'Now you listen here. I've got somethin' to take care of, but by tonight I will know where your pigs of a family live, and believe me boy you're gonna pay. If you thought you could disrespect a man like me like that, well you were goddamn wrong. Go home and warn your mother; she's first'.

Jimmy stood and watched Vinnie strut away. He chuckled to himself. Vinnie was always so confident, he carried his title like a trophy. A 'made man'. Nobody else was making it in this town, not really. Only if associated with Vinnie. Well, let him believe, thought Jimmy. Let him think he's on his way to another meeting, another deal like any other. Let him think his car is still where he parked it, his wallet still in his pocket and his family still alive. Let him think nobody's waiting in that back alley he knows so well, the one where he likes to 'take care of things'. Let him think he's not the one being taken care of today. A smile crept steadily across Jimmy's face as he contemplated The First Commandment: 'No one can present himself directly to another member of the Cosa Nostra.'

### Inverno

Viene il vento forte,  
porta via il suono,  
porta tanti fiocchetti bianchi.  
Lentamente  
ci coprono  
e diventiamo pesanti.  
Un buco nero,  
ci chiudiamo come un fiore  
siamo stanchi, dormiamo.  
Tutto... stop!

Una sfera,  
lo strato esterno di neve,  
l'interno di grotte,  
il cielo di notte,  
con ghiaccioli e diamanti  
brillanti.  
Tutto è fermo,  
anche il vento è calmo.  
Nel nostro mondo privato e chiuso,  
contenti della bellezza.

Lo sgocciolio di ghiaccioli  
è il primo segno di nuova vita.  
Sento un uccellino cinguettare.  
Un raggio di sole entra da un buco.  
Si espande.  
Viene un vento freddo,  
porta via la neve  
pesante  
e ci fa leggeri.  
Ad un tratto  
Tutto cambia.

Sofia Sotgia

### I am the wife

Every night I wait  
Shaking, filled with fear  
but knowing it is worth it,  
for my money will be here.

Every night I put the children to sleep  
but I know they can still hear  
the deep voices that arrive  
and soon after disappear.

Every night I lie in bed  
after my work is done  
and cry when I look around the room  
and see what my life has become.

Every night I clutch his photo  
to convince myself he is still real.  
I dream of the day he will come home  
and my heart can finally heal.

Every day I'm scared  
for the night that is ahead,  
for my children, for myself,  
for the lack of milk and bread.

But I put on a brave face,  
I try not to get upset,  
and every day I hope,  
I hope that he won't forget.

Rosie Woolfson

### Empty Spaces

If you were a bird  
I'd be your tree,  
You could sit in my branches and sing to me,  
So never again will I be lonely  
Until you fly away.

If I was the moon  
Up in the sky,  
I would silence all the wolves that howl at night,  
Surrounded by dark I'd be forever in sight  
Until the light of day.

Euan Murphy



### Get off the Stage

After the four part intro, the vocals kicking in  
 My voice it starts off quiet, so far the plot is thin  
 I'm strumming to a beat that is playing inside my head  
 The pitch presently is quite low, did you hear just what I said?  
 So I decide to raise my voice so you can hear me sing  
 But no one's listening to the words they could be about anything  
 I try to build up interest by bobbing up and down  
 The only thing that succeeds at is making me look like a clown.

This isn't turning out well, I guess I'll go on and start the chorus,

You don't care about me, my song, or what I've got to say  
 The only thing you want me to do is to get right off this stage.

My fingers are getting all cut from strumming strings too hard  
 Why didn't I bring a plectrum?  
 I'm such an...idiot.

I'll cut that verse short and sing the chorus once again,

You don't care about me, my song, or what I've got to say  
 The only thing you want me to do is to get right off this stage.

This is where I repeat myself and get progressively louder  
 This is where I repeat myself and get progressively louder  
 This is where I repeat myself and get progressively louder  
 This is where I repeat myself AND GET PROGRESSIVELY LOUDER  
**THIS IS WHERE I REPEAT MYSELF AND GET PROGRESSIVELY LOUDER**  
**THIS IS WHERE I REPEAT MYSELF AND GET PROGRESSIVELY LOUDER**  
**THIS IS WHERE I REPEAT MYSELF AND GET PROGRESSIVELY LOUDER**  
 MY THROAT IS SORE, BUT I'M SINGING THE CHORUS ONCE MORE  
 You don't care about me, my song, or what I've got to say  
 The only thing you want me to do is to get right off this stage

Euan Murphy

### Ice Attack

Once in a land of Ice, there lived a race of Ice men. Nobody knew anything about them, except that they were not human. They could live only where it was freezing and covered in ice, Glaciers.

One day it was snowing, that was when it happened, they decided to invade Ireland! First they dropped ice bombs, then they froze us completely with their ice breath. Only one part of the country was still green. This was holding us together, when they started the invasion.

They froze our lakes and broke down our doors. We decided to fight back and rebuild Ireland. We made a shield of Metal, and covered the earth in soil and then we planted seeds, millions and millions of them. Fifty years later Ireland was back to its beautiful green self, but I knew they would be back!

Eoin O'Neill P 3

### A Difficult Haiku

My homework is hard  
I'm struggling with my Haiku  
Too tricky to do!

Alice O'Gorman P4P



### A farmer and his photos

Paddy-Joe O' Shea was a well-known and well regarded farmer. He looked after his farm animals, grew crops and all that malarkey. And despite being a farmer who had to work long hours and so on had a fairly simple, laid back life. His wife, Aileen, was a lovely woman. She had made a significant contribution to the production of their four delightful children; Jim, Mary, Seamus and Gabriel. Together as a family they lived on the side of a mountain in a cosy cottage, obviously on a farm. Just for the record, I mean cosy in the sense of comfortable and not in the way auctioneers use it.

Anyway...

Paddy-Joe loved being a farmer. However... there was a slight problem... Whenever Aileen and the kids had gone to bed; Paddy-Joe had secret time to himself. During this time he would sneak out to the cows that were asleep and would tip them over. Not only that, but he would also have his digital camera with him and would take photos of their udders. He kept these photos all over the walls in his shed. He would sit for hours staring at them.

By day, Paddy-Joe was a lovely old fellow, salt of the earth type and all that, but by night... saints save us, Paddy-Joe was a monster. A right monster, a right weird monster with his weird shed and his weird photos, the weirdo.

One morning, Paddy-Joe came into the kitchen and helped himself to a cup of tea. Aileen sat there, grinning.

'Ah jaysus, Paddy-Joe, you really are a fine young man,' she said.

Paddy-Joe gulped. 'Yeah, cheers for that, Aileen. I'm an old man now. I hardly have the energy to farm anymore.' He replied, pulling a face of fatigue.

'That's why I'm getting Gabriel to help you with the farming! He can help with the farm at dusk so you can get an early night in. Oh Paddy-Joe, Gabriel is the best person to help you with this. He is our best son for the job.' Aileen said, getting up to dance around Paddy-Joe.

'Arra here, you're out of your mind, love.' Paddy-Joe said, standing in the same spot without moving.

'Ah, I'm not! Come on now, you have got to let him. Even just for a day!'

Paddy-Joe gulped again. What was he supposed to do here? He couldn't give up his ghastly hobby of the night. 'No, Aileen. I don't need help. I don't WANT help.'

'Okay then. FINE. If you don't want the help, we will get a divorce!' Aileen said, her face turning flaming red with fury.

'YEAH ALRIGHT THEN, AILEEN! I'M SICK OF YOU ANYWAY! YOU'RE BORING AND I HAVE THE COWS OUT THERE, THEY'RE NICER THAN YOU.'

And with that, Paddy-Joe ran out of the house and down to the field to his cows.

Later that day, Gabriel found his father chatting to a few of his cows in the field like a crazy old man.

'Dad... are you okay?' Gabriel asked.

Paddy-Joe got a fright, and replied 'Arra G'WAY YOU! You're the whole reason for this divorce.'

Gabriel burst into tears and ran away, not wanting to provoke his father's anger anymore.

Paddy-Joe then felt very bad. He decided he couldn't be like that towards his family, or he'd lose everything.

That night, Paddy-Joe snuck out to his shed and burnt all his photos of the cow's udders. 'THERE! YOU STUPID PHOTOS, YOU RUINED MY LIFE, NOW YOU CAN'T EVER RUIN IT ANY MORE! BE GONE!' And, with that, the photos were no more.

The spell had been broken.

Paddy-Joe ran to Aileen back at the house and yelled 'OKAY! GABRIEL CAN HELP ME! I LOVE YOU AILEEN, I NEVER WANT TO PART FROM YOU EVER AS LONG AS I LIVE!'

Aileen burst into tears of happiness and gave him a hug, meanwhile the kids all covered their eyes in case their parents went over the top with romance in front of them, as they occasionally did by accident, getting caught up in the moment and, well you can figure it out for yourself.

Gabriel gave his father a hug too. 'OH DAD! I LOVE YOU!' He cried.

Happiness on a little farm, that's what happened there.

Ailsha Davey

## Bluebells and gravel

He remained in the grave for five minutes, executing the posture of a corpse. I knew he wanted to lie in the place we would confine my mother to until someone dug her up long after this civilization crumbled away.

I knew my father had longed for death even when my mother was sick perhaps to not feel guilt for breathing every day while his love lay wasting. I guess it's the same when a couple are on the phone and can't decide who will hang up first, and the one who does feels a sense of betrayal. In a selfish way, I was offended that I could not hold either of them to this world, that they would want to die while my heart was still beating so fast.

My mother was sick so when she departed we did not cry for all the tears were in our pillows and we could not hold anymore sadness in our porcelain bodies. The night she died, I had a dream, a strange one which faded away in the early morning and one which I cannot remember but it left clouds in my heart so that when we saw my mother's body, cold from death but warm from the bed sheets, all I could think of was my dream and all my father could think of was what size her coffin should be.

He had lain in her coffin too, despite him being a head taller than her, and I just watched and thought it depressing that he longed for a box in the ground. And all I did was sit on a chair and watch him try to die in his wife's matchbox because I couldn't do anything else.

We didn't talk anymore because we had nothing to say and we knew what we were thinking and that was enough. There is nothing to describe grief and there was no consolation, so we didn't try and we didn't want to.

They put her in her box, in a dress she never wore but which matched the silk lining. And she looked different, not herself, the make-up covered the death on her face, a mask to conceal the fact that there was no expression in her body anymore except the sickly peace on her brow.

And everyone came to look at her shell and drink the tea I made and plough their minds for a memory with her that they thought was meaningful to us. My father went upstairs and sat in the closet to smoke. I went up to the tree house that was so rotten the step broke off into soft, damp splinters and snowed black on the grass, because after a while the guests take care of themselves and forget you're there anyway and only remember again when they leave.

I used to play "Lion King" in the tree house until I saw the bats which hid up in the rafters and watched me be a lion all day until I finally went to bed and they could eat the insects that chewed up the tree house. I used to sit up there and spend all day putting little slices of banana on the windowsill, a lopsided square cut through to the outside. I don't know if they ate it or if it was the birds but it was always gone in the morning. I liked the bats, my mother didn't though. I was adopted and we didn't share a lot of things. She called them rats with wings and good hearing. I thought they were like little black birds with big ears that liked bananas and things that ate my tree house.

The bats weren't there any more; they left when I went to college or so my father told me. He checked on them regularly, putting out banana for them, maybe he thought if they stayed it would make me come home, or maybe he liked them too, but they flew away and I never

saw a bat again until last week when one flew into my dorm room and got tangled in the curtains. My roommate started crying but I just picked it up and took it outside and watched it fly away, just like I had watched my mother fly away for four weeks of sweating out pain and sour tears. And after she was gone I watched my father trying to follow on wings clipped for life.

Everyone left, the living room didn't feel like ours with the emptiness it felt when everyone was gone. For a week after the funeral we ate sweet food that people had sent us. Sweet food we ate one bite of and then threw away because it tasted like the warm, damp, sweetness of death. Everyone cried at the funeral except us, people who didn't even know my mother but found it sad that she was dead anyway. All the characters of her life were gone now too, had died long before she had, leaving my parents as the last of them who still played on the border of life. We didn't go to the burial and I heard they delayed it for twenty minutes because we weren't there but I didn't want to go in case my father jumped in the grave after her and he didn't want to go because he didn't want to see people through roses at his wife. We didn't want to have to pretend to say goodbye anymore when really we felt stupid saying it to her body when there was nothing in there to hear it.

Whether you believe in heaven or not she wasn't there. And if she was I doubt she'd go to her own funeral when everyone (except her husband and me) she had cared about is with her already.

My friends from high school came around to say they were sorry. For what? I would reply each time and there would be an awkward silence. They all married each other and had kids and I was glad I moved away. I said goodbye, a word I use lightly now after using it so seriously. My father was still smoking in the closet even though no one was there except me, who had known about his 'secret' smoking habit since the age of five when he taught me how to clear the smoke that smoldered in your throat and nose. I was bored sitting downstairs while he smoked in a room full of clothes that would never be worn again so I read *Beloved* again and played scrabble by myself.

Every night my father said goodbye to me, completely certain that he would die that night and the next morn-





ing he would come downstairs disgruntled and take the coffee that I offered him in the cup I had made on father's day fifteen years ago. One morning he told me to leave, to go back to Boston and school, that I was a jinx and that his body felt guilty when I was around and couldn't die with such a responsibility so near. I left and a week later he was gone. I felt the heat ease out of his body but I didn't try to squeeze the cough of life that stayed in his lungs until, after a few days, it just fell into the air and went away.

Everyone saw me as unfortunate, that my second set of parents had stopped living before my twentieth birthday. So after I put my father in a suit which matched his box and buried him beside the grave he had laid in just two weeks before and carved bats into the soil that covered them, I went back to Boston where no one cared whether my parents breathed or not, where I could read *Beloved* again and smoked in my closet, pushing away the smell even though my roommate didn't care.

I wasn't sad but I had an aching melancholy at the back of my stomach which screamed from the white pages whenever I wrote something. And only once I cried again when I saw the bat fly away, a tear tumbled down my cheek like silver and then it was gone. Falling to the ground where nothing lay but bluebells and gravel and sunk softly into the night.



### Night

What happens at night when the moon replaces the sun?  
What happens to all the colours and the children having fun?  
From my bedroom window I can see the distant lights glow,  
And the stars in the sky, they seem so low.  
The sea is like a swirling, twirling pool of black ink,  
Which shines so magnificently when the lighthouse blinks.  
Every boy and girl is snuggled up in their bed,  
Resting their eyes for a new day ahead.  
The colours are drowned by the darkness and replaced by silver, black and white.  
I think this is a very spooky sight!  
Some like the night some prefer when it's bright but just for now,  
I wish you good night!

Hannah Walsh P5M

### Night Visitor

The evening is dark  
Especially in December.  
All the children are asleep  
In their warm beds.  
While tonight a visitor  
Awaits in the sky.  
Dressed in red and white  
With a million presents in one big bag.

Down the chimney he comes,  
He finds cookies and milk  
He cries with glee "Yippee"  
He gobbles them up  
He puts his bag on the floor  
And brings out presents  
Climbs up the chimney  
Onto the snowy roof  
And flies away in his chariot

Can you guess who he is?

Paula Perez Climent P5W

### Appearance versus reality

Just awful funny,  
And horrid nice-  
A certain gamble,  
A fair price-  
This guilty victim,  
And their Venus fly trap-

My tragedy was your comedy  
But my victory was your loss.

Briony Morgan



## Don't Give Up

Neither of them would have chosen to be here. They both felt trapped, stuck. One was trapped by his own doing and the other, well, she had no choice. In separate rooms, on separate floors, in completely separate wards, two people had the same thought, "I'm hungry". It was with that coincidence that James Sweeney and Rosa McAdams met in the cafeteria of the city hospital.

Running her hand along the smooth, grey walls of the hospital corridor Rosa made her way to the cafeteria. She had a strange desire for more of the suspiciously bright yellow jelly that they sold. As she swung the heavy doors open she was met by the glaringly bright lights and a silence that would rival a graveyard.

Glancing around the cafeteria she saw that it was practically empty, except for the one lone figure hugging the shadows in the corner. Rosa having made up her mind confidently bought her jelly and sat down at the table across from the hunched figure. Upon closer inspection she saw that he was close to her own age. She saw that his long, pale hands were nursing a mug of tea. Thinking that he had not felt her presence she whispered a soft "hello".

Her soft greeting was met with the harshness of silence and a glare that told her that if looks could kill, she would be dead, ten times over.

"Tough crowd," she thought to herself. Rosa continued to sit with him, eating her jelly until she had grown tired. As she bid him goodnight she once again received nothing but stony silence. And so began their nightly routine. After two weeks of their silent meetings the routine was broken. He spoke.

"James," was all he said to Rosa as she down.

"Rosa," was her reply, too shocked at hearing his cracked voice to say more. It was obvious from the weakness of his voice that he did not speak often. From that night on they began speaking more to each other. They talked about everything except for their reasons for being in the hospital. Rosa found her escape from her harsh reality through her talks with James. It seemed that they both just wanted to forget about their respective realities. To forget that they were sick, or that they were not leading normal lives like their friends, and never will. They found comfort and warmth in their friendship, which weeded out the cold loneliness that hospitals left in people.

Rosa wanted their relationship to stay exactly as it was. But her curiosity got the better of her. She wanted to know why James was in the hospital for so long and she had not once seen him look poorly.

Often Rosa would come down to the cafeteria with dark rings under her eyes, or an IV drip in her arm, but James would never say anything. He would just silently leave and get her some jelly as she would tiredly lower herself into her chair. No matter how sick she felt she would always come to the cafeteria every night, to see him. But Rosa found that she did not have the self control that he had and she just had to know his story. She also felt the need to tell him her story, she felt like she was lying to him by keeping it a secret.

As they sat in one of their comfortable silences Rosa plucked up the courage to ask him.

"James, why are you here?" she asked timidly.

"To see you," he replied simply.

"No," she smiled at him, "why are you here in the hospital?" she clarified.

"Oh, right," came his dejected reply. He bowed his head and seemed to find a sudden interest in something floating in his tea mug. She feared that she had pushed him too far, that he would revert back into his self imposed reclusive shell. Her doubts were interrupted by his voice.

"I tried to kill myself...twice," he said, staring straight into her blue eyes, as if daring her to look away from him. She could honestly say that she had not seen that answer coming.

"But...why?" Rosa managed to strangle out incredulously. James seemed to struggle to find an answer. She saw his inner turmoil depicted in his green eyes. It seemed as if no one had ever asked him that question before.

"The world was too ugly and painful to live in anymore, I couldn't cope, so I gave up," he answered coolly, leaving a shocked Rosa sitting opposite him. She couldn't believe that he had tried to take his own life. As they grew to know each other more she had found that he was a colourful and vibrant person with hilariously bad jokes. She wondered what must have happened to make him view the world in such a cynical way.

She knew from her own experience to never give up. She had been fighting for her life for three years and she never gave up, even when the doctors had. As she told James this she saw pity and understanding dawn in his eyes.

"You've got cancer?" he asked in a quiet voice.

"Yes." She replied, even quieter.

"How long do you...have left?" It seemed almost painful for him to say those words out loud.

"The doctors say that I should have died two months ago, but I never gave up," she emphasised the last part of her sentence.

As they parted ways that night she made him promise to never give up on life again. He did. The next night James sat in the cafeteria by himself for two hours until he began to get worried. Rosa had never missed a night with him in the month and a half that they had known each other. Worriedly he decided to go to her room to check on her. When he reached her private room horror filled his eyes. Her bed was empty, her belongings were gone and the night nurse was gazing sympathetically at him. He knew what that gaze meant. He knew that she was gone. Her light laughter lingered in his ears as he remembered his promise he made to her just the night previous.

"I won't ever give up," he whispered to the silence as a single tear trickled down his cheek.

Heather Byrne

## Eachtra Mhailí Mhála

(winner of Clóbeo the transition year interschools competition sponsored by Foras na Gaeilge)

Lá amháin, bhí Lara ag siúl síos sráid Ghraiftiún lena cara, Sarah. Bhí mise, Máilí Mála breá sásta ag crochadh ar ghualainn Lara. Bhí an ghrian ag scoilteadh na gcloch agus ní raibh aon scamall sa spéir. Chuala mé na héin ag canadh go binn ar an gcrann agus bhí dea-iúmar orm. Bhí an sráid plódaithe le daoine de gach saghas mar thosaigh na díolacháin samhrai sna siopaí. Bhí an t-atmaisféar sceitimíneach agus gnóthach sa chathair. Fad is a bhíomar ag siúl agus mise ag éisteacht go géar leis an gcaint idir Sarah agus thug mé faoi deara fear aisteach ag siúl inár dtreo. Chaith sé geansaí dubh agus briste dubha cé gur lá breá brothallach a bhí ann. D'fhéach sé orm agus bhí cuma gránna, eascairdiúil air. D'fháisc mé mé féin ar ghualainn Lara ach níor thug Lara faoi deara gur mhothaigh mé míchompordach agus míshuaimhneach. Díreach ansin bhí an fear mór gránn ar ár sála. Bhí mo chroí i mo bhéal agus lig mé scréad mór asam. Sciob sé mé as lámha Lara gan choinne agus bhí sé imithe ar luas lasrach agus mé brúite faoina ascaill. “Cad a tharla?” arsa Percy Peann.

“Níl a fhios agam!” a d'fhreagair Polly Páipéar le hiontas. Go tobann osclaíodh mé agus brúdh beirt eile isteach ionam. Cara Cocaine agus Gary Gunna a bhí ann agus iad go mór faoi strus leis an gcíor tuathail ina dtimpeall. “O a Dhia!” a scread Polly Páipéar. “Goideadh Máilí Mála! Ó A Dhia! Cad a dhéanfaimid?” Cheap mé go raibh mo phort seinnte, gan aon agó. Chuala Polly Páipéar an fear ag caint lena chara ar an bhfón póca. “Rachaimid go Dún Laoghaire agus tabharfaimid na drugaí do na drongadóirí ag an mbád farantóireachta” a dúirt sé le guth íseal borb. “Cabhraigh linn, cabhraigh linn!” a scread Percy Peann agus Polly Páipéar d'aon ghuth, ach b'obair in áisce é. Níor chuala aon duine iad. Bhí mé réidh le tabhairt suas nuair a rug Percy Peann ar Pholly Páipéar agus thosaigh sé ag scríobh nóta chuig Lara

A Lara, a chara

Cabhraigh linn. Táimid gafa le fear scanrúil. Rachaidh sé go Dún Laoghaire ar a seacht a chlog anocht. Rachaimid go dtí an bád farantóireachta le Cara Cocaine agus Gary Gunna inár measc.. Cabhraigh linn!

Percy Peann

Ansin, Rinne Sally Siosúr poll beag ionam. Bhí sé beagáinín pianmhar ach ba chuma liom. Thit an Polly Páipéar tríd an mbearna ionam amach ar an gcosán. Bhí eagla an domhain ar Pholly Páipéar a bheith caite amach ar an sráid ach bhí a fhios aici go gcaithfeadh sí a bheith cróga agus stuama. Luigh sí go ciúin ar an gcosán lasmuigh den siopa Topshop ag iarraidh cosa na ndaoine ag siúl suas agus síos an tsráid a chosaint. Idir an dá linn rith Lara suas an tsráid go mór trína chéile. Go tobann, d'aithin sí

Polly Páipéar ina luí ar an talamh agus í beagnach scriosta le smúit ón gcosán. Le fiosracht phioc sí suas í. Bhí iontas uirthi nuair a léigh sí an nóta a bhí scríofa le Percy Peann. Bhí said i ndáinseár! Cad a dhéanfadh sí? Gan an dara smaoineamh léim sí ar an Dart agus ar aghaidh léi go Dún Laoghaire. Bhíomar ag an mbád farantóireachta ag crochadh timpeall ag feitheamh leis na drongadóirí drugaí. Bhí an bád le teacht i gceann deich nóimead, agus ní raibh Lara le feiceáil in áit ar bith!! Ansin, chuala Percy Peann an glór aithníúil. ‘Stopaigí anois!! Sin é mo mhála! Beir orthu’ a scread Lara in ard a cinn is a gutha. Lig Percy Peann, Sally Siosúr agus Mailí Mála osna faoisimh astu. Gabhadh na gadaithe agus d'fhill mé le háthas go gualainn Lara gan dochar déanta. Shocraigh Percy Peann, Sally Siosúr agus Polly Páipéar síos arís chun a scíth a ligean. Agus Gary Gunna agus Cara Cocaine? Cuireadh i bPeann Príosún iad – agus ní raibh siad le feiceáil arís!

Lucy Bowen agus Leanne Ní Chuinneagáin



### Three haikus

Boredom is a weight  
that sits on my tired back  
and closes my eyes.

Teenage poetry  
God it almost make me sick  
ugh, melodrama

A flash in my mind,  
Till pen is put to paper,  
The idea waits.

**Jane Richie**

### Snooze

It's a gentle darkness, soothing, comforting  
You savour it, knowing that it won't last forever  
Oh! But right now it seems too good to end.  
No, it won't end. Saying it, willing it will make it so.  
If you just wish hard enough-

BEEP BEEP BEEP- "snooze"

-Well, that was unpleasant; an uninvited interruption  
In your delicious heap of blankets and pillows.  
Let's just forget about it.  
Burrow down again...

BEEP BE- "snooze"

-Again?! It's going to be almost impossible now to recapture that dream.  
Already you feel the plot slipping away  
As your consciousness slowly returns...

BEE- "off"

S t r e t c h  
Like a cat

...then shut your eyes again.

**Rebecca Murphy**





### Helen Houdervick

Helen Houdervick is a horrendous brute.  
Hurt and hounds you until your mute  
Nothing to say to the horrible Helen!  
She bites, she claws, she spits, she mauls!  
You can't escape the horrible horrendous Helen Houdervick!

"Ouch, ouch! Help me, help me,  
"No they won't 'because you're not wealthy"  
Punch, Kick!  
"AH! Why do you do that?"  
"Because your dress is ugly and you look fat!"

People think girls can't be violent,  
But that's not true, but we all stay silent.  
We don't want her to be enraged,  
Like a lion, just let out of its cage.

I wish someone would tell the teacher,  
But no one wants tell on that horrible creature.  
She'll punch you until she see blood,  
And when she does she'll throw your bag in the mud.

I've made up my mind,  
I'm telling tomorrow!  
I'm sick of all the pain and sorrow.  
Or maybe I won't...  
I'm much to scared!  
I wish that someone really cared!

Zara Kramer P6P

*A man came to my door and said 'I'd like to read the gas meter.'  
I said, 'whatever happened to the classics?'* - Spike Milligan



## Minor bumps, falls and trips into the AU

Mera could not move from her current position, drooped to one side, mouth agape. It was as if the curiosity of the situation was pulling her down. She swayed a little, almost falling, but quickly regained her consciousness. She blinked a few times to make sure what she was seeing was real. Her lips tried to form words but all that came out was a very confused-sounding “uh.”

There was a small man sitting calmly in the bottom of her armoire, he was smoking a miniature wooden pipe. He looked almost gnome-like due to the cone shaped hat he wore atop his head that appeared to be made of tinfoil. The majority of his outfit was shrouded by his heavy, green, wool coat, but Mera could still see his little legs crossed underneath. The man's pudgy fingers rubbed his nose and he looked up at the stunned girl.

“Oh, you're finally here.” He stated simply. The gnome-man stood up and walked out of the armoire, ducking his head under the hanging coats. His stature was of no more than three feet, hat included. He stuck out his hand in front of her. Mera deftly extended her own hand and shook his, not exactly sure what to do. “My name is Prenskey Pertton, how do you do?”

“I...ah...you...” was all Mera managed to say before her vision started to darken and the world fell out from under her.

She awoke a few minutes later, quite confused as to why she was lying on the floor, still in her pantsuit from work. Mera closed her eyes and rubbed her temples, trying to remember what had happened. When she opened them she saw Prenskey's upside down face standing over her, mere inches away.

“Most people pass out in the first 5 seconds. You did quite well; I clocked you at a whole 22 seconds!” he said gleefully, looking at his wristwatch. Mera felt her dizziness returning and she thought she might faint again. She sat up and scooted as far away as she could, her back pressed against the wooden dresser.

“Who...w-what are you?” she asked pointing a shaky finger at him.

Prenskey gave an exasperated sigh and rolled his eyes.

“Are you like a gnome or something?”

“Why is it always a gnome?” he pondered, rubbing his chin. He took another puff of his pipe and folded one arm behind his back. Prenskey began to walk back and forth in front of Mera with short little steps in an impatient manner, like this was far too common an occurrence for him. “As stated before, my name is Prenskey Pertton. I am a retriever and I have been sent here to return you to your original world.”

“Wait. What? My original w-”

“DO YOU MIND?” Prenskey shouted, turning on his heel, leaning down to look at Mera who shut up immediately. He put the pipe back in his mouth and continued his calm pacing. “Now, you asked

me what I was, well am. For I am presently still in existence and therefore my being stays the same, correct?” Mera silently nodded in agreement, having absolutely no clue what he was talking about. “I am a Jelthorpe.” He said. “In my world, Jelthorpeians are retrievers and we restore people to their own worlds. You, my dear have been placed into an ‘Alternate Universe’ here he made finger quotations, “by accident” and must be escorted home by me. I doubt you've noticed any difference from this world and your old one; not many people do for it is very subtle at first. This is due to the fact that in this current world, time moves in the opposite direction. That's not to say that time goes backwards, because of course that would be highly conspicuous to someone in your position. Here, instead of progressing, things slowly deteriorate and the entire universe is destined to fall to ruins. Am I going too fast for you?” he asked. Mera shook her head, still futilely attempting to make sense of this absurdity. “It is suspected in my report that you fell out of bed Tuesday night at approximately 1:13 a.m. and that the impact must've forced you into this Alternate Universe.”

“But nothing's been different!” Mera finally spoke. “Well, except for you, that is...”

Prenskey sighed once more. “Dear, I think I know more about this than you do. Besides, I'm the one with a degree in minor bumps, falls and trips into the AU so let's just leave this to me.” He said smartly, adjusting his tinfoil hat. “Now then, I suggest we make haste if you wish to return in time for dinner. According to my schedule, you will be preparing a slightly burnt casserole this evening.” “Well how exactly am I supposed to get back to my world, assuming that you're right about all of this?” Mera questioned.

“Ah, yes, you see that's the slightly more difficult problem because no two people's methods are the same. We'll most likely have to endure a long, grueling and potentially perilous journey. I'll warn you now, many foes will attempt to do you harm throughout this process and you must be willing to possibly lose a few fingers or toes for your return.” Prenskey said nonchalantly.

“My...fingers?”

“Precisely.”

“But I need those! And my toes too! There has to be another way to get there.” Mera said desperately.

“Oh fine! If you want to be boring I guess we can take the easy way back.” He sneered. Prenskey looked thoroughly displeased with Mera for being so difficult. She sighed in relief and enthusiastically asked what the easy way was. “We simply put you back the way you came in. Mera frowned.

“Through the floor”, said Prenskey nonchalantly.

Addy Santese

### Premonition

I faced Isabel on the winter evening of 14th February 1998 in the local cemetery, the same place where we had met two years before. Just there, next to the graves where her dear parents were resting, we celebrated St. Valentine's Day. I gave her a beautiful red rose and she surprised me with a book of poems. I opened the book on a random page and I started to read one of the poems in it, "Maybe" by Ronald Langereis, a Dutch poet:

Maybe I'll weep before I die  
Lying by you, my love, and cry  
Feeling your heart beat close to mine  
Probing your eyes for the last time

Maybe your tongue will taste my tears  
While your sweet words will soothe my ears  
And with my face I'll touch your hair  
Its fragrance shielding off despair

Maybe I'll run my fingers close  
Along your lips, your brow, your nose  
As to remember beyond death  
Their subtle lines and how they met

And while we're holding us so near  
Then Death, the Still One, may appear  
The breath from my kiss He takes away  
And bids me come without delay

I'll feel Him stealing your embrace  
Your very face becomes His face  
My mind, my soul He turns to Him  
My heart grows faint, my eyesight dim

Already I am facing black  
And when I struggle to look back  
Maybe I'll catch a fleeting glimpse  
Of you holding still my lifeless limbs...

Suddenly, I felt like as if the ground under my feet was sinking and I was going to fall into an abyss, deep and dark. Then, my eyes saw the light again and I realized that I was still in the graveyard but that my girlfriend had disappeared from my side. The sky was painted grey and the fog prevented me from seeing anything apart from my hands and shoes. I started to call for Isabel, but nobody answered my cries. I decided to walk to find the exit of the cemetery but I couldn't find it. There was so much mist. I felt trapped like in a labyrinth. I looked desperately around me to find a clue as to how I could get out of that horrible place, but I only saw a furious flock of huge and black

like coal crows looking at me with hungry faces. They started to bite me so I ran away from there as fast as I could. But on the way, I fell down. I covered myself to protect me from the expected ravens attack but all the birds that had been following me were resting on a marble tomb, white and shiny. In front of the grave there was a strange man with a book in his hands, reciting a poem, whose last words I was able to hear: Of you holding still my lifeless limbs...

At that time, the book fell down from his hands and his shape disappeared as if by magic. I went near the grave and I saw that the book he had been holding was none other than the same book as Isabel had given me as a St Valentine's present. I started to shake when I realized that the weird man had just recited the same poem as I had read to my dear girlfriend and that on the marble tomb there was a red rose splattered in blood. So, I lifted my sight to see the name that was on the grave and...

I woke up when I heard the screams of Isabel calling my name and shaking me vigorously. She explained to me that I had fainted. I felt really confused because I couldn't forget my strange dream and I was on the point of telling Isabel about it when she told me that it was a good idea to go back home to rest from the incident. I paid attention to what she said and with her help I stood up and we went to my house that was not far away from there.

We said goodbye on my porch. When I was just about to open the door I heard a heavy thump. I turned my head round to the street that was just behind me. There, my girlfriend was lying on the middle of the black asphalt.

I hurried to get to where she was and when I tried to raise her head up, I discovered that there was a big pool of blood under her, but she still had in her perfect hands my beautiful red rose. It was now covered in her blood.

Isabel, my dear and inseparable love had died and I, at only 26 years old, had to continue living carrying on my shoulders the weight of a death that maybe I could have prevented.

Gala Gil Amat



### Balance

(inspired by Delilah Vincent Debonair)

Far away in a distant land, there were these four kids that grew up together...

Normally these four were friendly but sometimes they were enemies,  
They fought the battle accordingly but without each other,  
They were a quarter of what they ought to be.

First there was Ambition,  
She was simply on a mission without fears or inhibitions,  
A mission to succeed in her life and to lead it without limits or strife,  
To grab the bull by the horn but because of envy she was torn,  
Always comparing to the one that she was beside,  
Instead of holding her own and walking with a broad stride,  
Because she from herself would her weaknesses hide.

Then there was Talent,  
He could be flamboyant or silent but always gallant,  
For he himself knew how he was audacious and vibrant,  
Without Talent, Ambition had nowhere to go,  
Without Talent, Pride had nothing to show,  
But when Talent and Pride came to meet,  
Talent became arrogant and he felt elite.

Oldest was Envy,  
She was always alone and in one of her foolish kind of frenzies,  
For she lived her life falsely,  
Always watching talent and she was green-eyed,  
But as she grew, she found that she was just insecure inside,  
None of the others admitted to being friends with,  
No matter what she did, perception of her was all dented by myth.

Last there was Pride,  
He greeted Talent with arms open wide,  
For he was well secure inside,  
Some kids tended to hide from him,  
Not knowing whether they loved him or feared him,  
His confidence could never be put behind bars,  
After all, pride is a rocket that emulates the stars.

So the years went on,  
Each road they took was a pathway foregone,  
These four firm friends became four feared forces,  
Too wrapped up in themselves to listen to the other's voices,  
Each unaware of the supremacy of their choices.  
Now when they meet up, conversation seems to flow awkwardly,  
So they live separate lives thinking 'there used to be more to me'.

Aly Coyne



### Just a Dream

When my eyes are closed,  
When I am in my element,  
You are there.  
Magical,  
Mystical,  
A mirage.  
You are,  
A perfect reflection of my wants.  
You know everything about me,  
You are everything I need.  
You are my midnight treat,  
Though not an indulgence.  
I long for those hours,  
The hours which feel like seconds,  
The hours devoted to you.  
You are all I think about,  
When I am awake,  
And asleep.  
You distract me through the day,  
And humour me through the night.  
Our adventures,  
They don't have to make sense,  
They just have to last until morning.  
It is true to say,  
You have taken over my dreams,  
And you are slowly soaking up my daylight world.  
You are a perfect vision,  
From your shining eyes,  
To your lined hands.  
You are my darkness' pleasure,  
You are what I live for.  
You are,  
Just a dream.

Sarah Clarke

### Couples

The thought of you, now  
Weighs like lead.  
You are grunge and dirt and dust, and I  
Am debris  
In the dusk. You are phosphor  
In the waves, and I, the shadow  
Of your shade.  
The knot fit your fingers, tightens  
It's hold.  
Your freedom is rebuked, little  
Sail boat  
Moored at the docks. Frowning blankly  
At the busy breeze, as one would at  
Couples by the sea.

Aoife Franklyn



### Misconception

The misconception that seems to me,  
To be engraved in my brain is my misconception of time.  
I think I can get to the arranged meeting point in 10 minutes,  
Whereas in reality I will be waiting at least 10 minutes for the bus,  
And will spend at least another 20 minutes on the bus.

However I have sourced the route of my problem.

Back when I was four and would get dropped off at the crèche  
In the Frascati shopping centre,  
My mother would assure me,  
'Just five minutes'.  
Yet it would always consist of at least a half an hour,  
Of sticking play dough in my ears,  
Adding my ideas to other children's drawings  
And generally causing havoc.  
Until I would peer out the window,  
See my mother coming,  
Quickly position myself flat on the floor and wail  
'Five minutes is way too long'.

So it's not my fault after all, it's genetic!

Frances Roche

### Condemned

These knots that bind are taut and tighter as  
I struggle to break free from bonds of suppression, oppression.  
I am a muffled voice as  
every wall closes closer to the point of suffocation.  
Yet I still struggle on, no care for what they say.  
No care for what they want to hear.

And they...

they are deaf to my cries but yet I still call,  
pleading my innocence. Echoes bounce off  
these prison confines. Ropes tighten by the collar.  
Yet I still struggle. What do I have to be afraid of?  
I have already fallen to the bottom of the pit and have smelled  
the fire and tasted the brimstone.  
Hammered lower I cannot be.  
Suppressed more I cannot be. Oppressed no more can I be.  
So I rise and struggle on. Fathom my belief or not,

I care not.

I will reach beyond the fiery fort and escalate beyond the clouds on high  
with God's grace, and feel once again truly alive.

Ihab Jameel

## The Collector

The train chugged and rumbled its way along the track and the carriage swayed slightly to the side as it reached a bend. It perched dangerously on the edge of a steep drop and the Collector held his breath. The carriage regained its balance and he released the breath in relief.

Mentally he kicked himself. They told him it would be different, that it wouldn't be a usual accident.

A train derailing would be a disaster but it happened all over the world. What was going to happen was supposed to be bigger. Even so, with every thought his body tensed. His mind wandered to many things, many ideas of what could happen.

When Collectors knew what would happen they had a slight urge to stop it. Who could blame them, he thought? The human still within them shone through at points. So he waited in suspense. He couldn't stop it if he knew anyway, you can't change the way the world works. People die and people live. Death isn't happy when he is cheated and he would pay the price if anyone was saved. The lucky ones fade and go beyond after death, the others stay behind.

He was one who stayed behind. It wasn't a punishment for what he had done in his life, he was just unfortunately chosen out of many because his life force burned that little bit brighter. His job was to follow the world and collect the souls who would stay behind with him, to be a Collector. It wasn't an easy job but he got used to it, sort of.

"Don't think of them as people, just as little lights that go out and you need to save the brightest ones."

His mentor had told him that every day, until it stayed in his mind. It helped thinking that way. When he looked around the carriage he could see small glowing white lights inside the bodies of the people. Ignore what was around the light, ignore that a person housed the life force. But as he sat in his small compartment, a person joined him. Someone he couldn't ignore.

Shoulder length ringlets framed a small smiling face. She had striking sapphire blue eyes and a small button nose. A small worn doll was cradled to her chest. She was eight years, two hundred and sixty four days and ten hours old. Her light burned brighter than anyone else on the whole train.

Eight years old.

He had never collected anyone so young before, could he be registering her right? He didn't think anyone could build up such a strong life force at that age. Most Collectors were never under twenty five at least.

The girl smiled, "Are you going on holidays?"

This threw him for a minute. He'd never had a conversation with humans on the job. Usually no one could see him unless they were future Collectors.

"Um, no I'm working," He gave a half hearted smile and his eyes slid to the ground. He shouldn't be doing this, he should leave right now. You can't get attached.

He didn't leave, and for a few moments he thought that would be the end of the conversation but then the girl spoke up again,

"I'm going on holidays," she was speaking more to the doll than to him but when he didn't answer she looked up, "My mummy and daddy can't come so I'm going on my own like a big girl,"

She was one of the relocated children, the ones who were sent to the country to stay safe from potential bombings.

The war had barely started and people were already expecting the worst.

"That's good, where are you going?" He asked.

"Penzance,"

He had been hoping for a closer station, so she would have more chance of living but that was the last stop. She went on talking,

"There's this woman who's coming to pick me up who is going to look after me for a while until my mummy can come. Daddy has to stay in the city though," Her face fell slightly.

"But I'm sure he'll come visit," He reassured her. He didn't want her to cry, it would just make things harder. It seemed to cheer her up slightly but there was still a hint of doubt lingering.

"Do you know the woman who's collecting you?" He asked.

The girl shook her head, "She's a friend of Mummy,"

"I'm sure she'll be extra nice then,"

How ironic, thinking they were sending their daughter to safety, her parents had sent her to death. How much pain would that cause them? What would the mother's friend think when she realised the girl she was waiting for would never arrive? Would she break the news to them herself or would they already know? He pushed down the pity as much as he could.

Just do your job, leave now and forget about her.

"Are you alright?" The girl enquired, her eyes worried. "Are you sick?"

The Collector shook his head, and looked to the window. His reflection was tense, lips thin and eyes tight. The palms of his hands were sweating.

He started to get up but as he did the girl rose as well and started to follow him out the compartment door. "Where are you going?"

The Collector had not expected this; he had hoped the girl would stay in the carriage. "I'm just -"

"Can I stay with you?" she asked, cutting him off. "I don't like being on my own," her eyes sank to the ground and she gripped her doll closer.

There were a few moments of silence. The Collector looked down the carriage; he couldn't sense anyone else her age on the entire train. Was there not someone with her? Was she really all alone?

He looked back to the girl. She fidgeted with uncertainty, still not looking at him.

The Collector suddenly felt a shiver run down his spine and the air around him became colder. Death was near, he could sense it. That helped him make up his mind. He gently took the girl's hand and led her back to compartment without a word. He shut the door and leaned his head against it for a few moments, before sitting back down opposite her.

"Thank you," The girl smiled and held out her doll, "You can hold her for a while if you want,"

The Collector hesitated but took the doll from her.

"Her name is Rosie. She likes tea parties and reading. I read to her a lot. I'm the best in my class in school,"

The Collector let her chatter on about the doll enthusiastically. Every few minutes he would look out the window or send out his awareness to the rest of the train. Nothing yet, but it was close, very close.

The girl moved to sit beside him with a small brush, and started to stroke it through the dolls hair. "Why are you



sad?" she asked.

"Do I look sad?"

The girl nodded.

I'm sad because I'm going to let an eight year old girl be collected and used to do death's work.

"I'm just a little tired and worried about my work,"

"Is it hard work?"

"Extremely,"

"My daddy works in a bank; he comes home late a lot. Do you work in a bank?"

The Collector shook his head and looked out the window again. Then he saw it, the end for this girl. How could he have not thought of it before?

"Do you work in an office?"

The Collector shook his head again, keeping his eyes on the sky. The plane was familiar; he had seen it many times. So much death caused by that symbol.

"What do you work as then?"

He turned back to the girl, but the German swastika was imprinted on his mind.

"I help people find their way when they die," His voice was a whisper. Save her.

The girl frowned, confused by his answer. "Like god?"

The Collector shook his head and put his arm around her.

"Sort of, you could say I work for god," Though whether there is a god I wouldn't know, he thought.

The girl smiled, "You can be an angel!"

"Maybe," he whispered and pictured the field just outside the train in his mind. It was whizzing past so they only had one shot. "Don't be scared," he said. He kept the image of the field firmly in his mind and within seconds he could feel their bodies slip through the train walls and he teleported them both out of the compartment.

The landing was hard but he kept a firm grip on the girl.

Teleporting could have nasty results if he let go too soon.

They stood together in a field only a few metres away from the track. The train was chugging by.

The girl struggled in his grasp, shouting in panic. "Let me go! Let me -"

The high pitched scream of a bomb plummeting to its destination cut her off and her body froze with terror. The Collector pushed the girl back and stood in front of her, blocking her view of screeching shards of metal and small orange balls of flames reaching for the sky.

An invisible force threw them back like ragdolls flying through the air. The girl's hand slipped from his grasp and he landed a few feet away from her. His head smacked against the hard ground and his vision blurred slightly as he scrambled to get back up again.

The bomb was small and landing at the back of the train but it would set off a series of bigger explosions as flames moved down the train. He'd seen it before, only a matter of time before the flames hit the engine. The heat pricked at their skin and ash started to cover their bodies.

He saw the girl in front of him, she wailed in fear and pain. She cradled her arm close to her chest and tried to stumble to her feet.

Then horror struck the Collector as he watched it explode. Was she far enough away? He started to run towards her but the fast movement made his head spin. He called out, telling her to run but she wasn't listening. She was trans-

fixed by the image of the burning train. She let out another piercing scream as the train exploded right in front of her. It happened within a second. The Collector barely had time to blink. The image of the girl staring at the train with frightened tears streaming down her face was imprinted on his mind and he couldn't take in what had replaced it. He should have left her on the train; a swift death would have been more humane.

A large shard of twisted, glinting metal was buried in the ground, pinning the girl down like an insect. It had gone straight through her back and burst through her chest. Blood trickled quickly down the metal stake, staining the grass red.

The Collector was breathing heavily, doing his best to remain calm. He'd seen worse in his job. But I'd never caused the death of anyone, a voice spoke in the back of his mind. Eventually he managed to walk to her and started to slowly pull the girl off from the metal. It wasn't right to leave her like that, he decided. Blood flowed more freely now and covered his clothes. Laying her on the grass he looked at the train wreck in front of him. The glow of people's life forces went out one by one but he didn't move to collect them. He sat in the field with the girl, waiting for his superiors. There would be a severe punishment for this, he knew. No one cheats death.

Lauren Moore

*Poetry is sissy stuff that rhymes. Weedy people say 'la' and 'fie' and swoon when they see a bunch of daffodils-*  
Geoffrey Williams





### Gravestones

A little robin carved in stone  
Atop the heap of flesh and bone.  
A date of birth, a date of death,  
A date of first and final breath.  
Beside it lies a single flower  
That gets replaced each Sunday hour.  
But winter brings a sheet of snow,  
And it only comes to find it so,  
Without shivering, it turns all white  
And the flower has died within the night.  
But until Sunday no-one comes to change it  
Or with a bunch, not rearrange it.  
But silently it does its job,  
Without a word, without a sob.

Lydia Stephens P5W

### Winter

Winter is a snowy white morning  
It tastes like snowflakes on your tongue  
It smells like a new fresh start  
Winter looks like a shining new ice rink  
And sounds like the cold chilly air around you  
Winter is a time for warm hot chocolate and melt-  
ing marshmallows... YUM!

John Denvir P6L



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“No great artist ever sees things  
as they really are, if he did he  
would cease to be an artist.”

