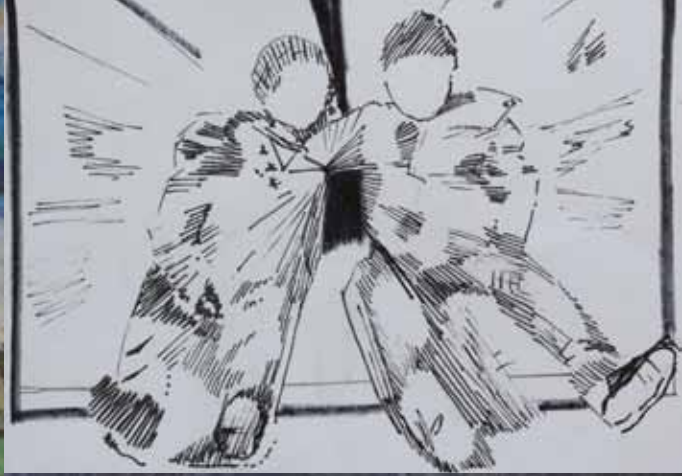


**THE
WINE
DARK SEA**



The Wine Dark Sea

*A collection of poetry, prose
and art by the students of
St Andrew's College,
Dublin*



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the twenty-sixth edition of The Wine-Dark Sea. It's quite something to consider that this publication has been around for a quarter of a century. Though this might seem like an aeon for the students whose work is featured here, it really has vanished in the blink of an eye for some of us older folk. It puts me in mind of Robert Frost's pithy response when asked what he had learned about life upon reaching his 80th birthday. Frost responded, 'it goes on.'

These pages are a testament to Frost's observation. Ranging from deep reflection to delightful whimsy, there is something for everyone here. The subject matter, voice, style and humour is eclectic and engaging. It has been occasionally exasperating, but not without some joy to edit what you find in these pages, I hope your experience of the magazine is more joyful than exasperating.

Creating art reminds us that after the darkest night a bright dawn rises.

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 the members of the English department for supporting their students develop their writing talents. Thanks go to the Irish department for similar dedication. I hope you take time to read them.

Big thanks go to Breda Brennan for the wonderful French and German pieces in the magazine.

Thanks also to 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 to which we have become accustomed. I am especially indebted to Jonathan Adair and Kathi Scarlett.

Thanks go to the Art department for the wonderful images on display in this edition and which make the magazine visually exciting.

The Wine-Dark Sea is not only a tapestry of wonderful words, it is also a sumptuous feast for the eyes. This is down to gifted vision of Ailbhe Garvey whose impeccable sense of style makes this a stunning and professional publication. Every year the artwork complements the printed word so perfectly.

Significant congratulations to all whose work appears 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, there are certainly worse ways to spend your time.

Robert McDermott

The Pony Game, side-story

(Mark's logbook)

Nil sicut videtur

Hello dear reader, this is my logbook.

My name is Mark, Mark Steward. I am 25. I have brown hair and eyes and I live in California. I am like any other guy in the world, trying to make it through life and achieving dreams and ambitions. The year is 2010.

I am a solo video game developer. I work for ITC (Imagine, technology, create) company, which is known for making some of the most well-known games in the USA. I get along quite well with my co-workers as they are nice, likeable people. My boss is also the same and is great crack but sometimes he can be grumpy, usually when he's having a bad day. Which is most days.

Recently I decided to start a new project as my last project did not go as planned. My new project was going to be about a video game about 'everlasting friendship'. A video game for younger audiences, a game about ponies living together on an island, split into 3 regions, for each type of pony; Pegasi, unicorns and ordinary ponies, all facing small challenges while expanding their friendship. The idea was that you didn't have an avatar in the game, but you must solve simple puzzles to continue the game. After planning the story for the game, outlining the game design, creating the game was the hard part. Not to mention, my computer is ancient, which makes all the progress much slower and more difficult due to security vulnerabilities and compatibility issues. After dealing with the technical issues and glitches, I finally finished the game. Even though I had finished the game, I still had to test it.

After testing it over and over again. Something strange happened.

My NPCS, the ponies started to move on their own, talk on their own, THINK on their own. They were alive. They were aware. But not fully aware. I tried to interact with them outside of the screen, waving at them, talking at them, but it seemed they could not see or hear me. Even though they did not know that they're part of game or know of anything outside of their 2D dimension, they soon started to question their existence and the meaning of life.

That's when I made a huge mistake.

One day, as I returned to them, once more, it had seemed that they had all gathered around outside of the town hall, in the town square, in Elderdane,



the town in the middle of the island. One of the trees was blocking my view of the ponies, and without thinking or hesitating I put my right hand on the mouse and moved the tree out of the way. The ponies noticed.

They then started to question what moved the tree.

'Some kind of magical, powerful, mysterious, unknown force?'

A Pegasus assumed whatever moved the tree came from above the clouds and flew up to see if there was anything up there. The Pegasus flew higher, higher, higher, higher, higher and higher until it collided with the boundary that limits where a NPC could go. Its body started to malfunction and mutilate. The Pegasus fell back down to the ground, but when other ponies reached the Pegasus, it was no longer alive.

In panic, fear and confusion, the ponies went into hiding.

They hid in cottages, buildings, wherever they could. They clearly thought whatever force was out there was not friendly.

Days passed by, and the ponies would not come out of hiding.

I immediately regretted my decision to move the tree, as I would remind myself every time each day and was worried that I would scare them into hiding forever.

Eventually they all came out of hiding.

I was relieved and thankful. At that time.

After the ponies came out of hiding, they started rebuilding more homes and buildings, while expanding territory. They even built this statue of three ponies, a unicorn, a pegasus and an ordinary pony, standing together, strong and proud. It seemed to be a representation of the friendship between the ponies.

It also seems that the ponies have created their own religions.

Rachel Leeson

Echoes

Day in, day out, all around the clock, elegant couples waltzed across the marble floor, champagne glasses clinked, and merry laughter rang out from every corner, bouncing off the high gold-rimmed ceiling and catching on the glittering chandelier. Women were twirled round and round in perfect harmony, expensive silks fanning out like petals. In the midst of all the glitz and glamour, there she was. Radiant as the sun, she made the sea of stars seem dull in comparison. Bejewelled from head to toe, the dazzling hostess floated across the shining floor, her eyes resting lightly upon slender, gloved hands holding tall, bubbling champagne glasses, dark green bottles upon spotless, crisp white linen tablecloths, and showers of golden light upon the floor as endless feet moved across them. She smiled with quiet approval at her creation - her perfect creation. Every minute of every hour, this paradise continued, as the decades piled up effortlessly. Time did not seem to exist here – the dancers never tired nor aged, the orchestra never faltered, the laughter never faded, and the movement never slowed. The hostess' heart was always full as she enjoyed her endlessly beautiful creation, untouched by the decays and corruptions of the outside world. One evening, she ascended gracefully up the grand staircase to observe her creation from above. On the balcony overlooking the opulent hall, her knuckles suddenly turned white as they gripped the polished mahogany rail, and her eyes widened with horror. A sharp, mangled breath caught in her tight throat. For there she saw herself on the dance floor, radiant and eye-catching as ever. But there were no couples waltzing. No champagne glasses clinking. No merry laughter ringing. The ballroom lay vast, cold, and empty. Only the echoing tip-tap-tap, tip-tap-tap of her heels followed her on the marble, dancing with shadows.

Philippa Dunlop

Go and Open the Door

Inspired by Miroslav Havel's poem *The Door*

Go and open the door,
Like I did once,
Even though I never played,
I gave the rugby camp a try.

Go and open the door,
Like I did once,
Trying something new might feel scary,
But you'll regret it if you don't.

Go and open the door,
Like I did once,
You might even enjoy it,
I know I did.

Go and open the door,
The feeling is like turning a page in your life,
The result is worth the pain.

Cait Gallimore

The Challenge

It all started with a dare, I was playing truth or dare with my friends at the park when a man came up to us, he had brown hair glasses and blue eyes, I don't think I've ever seen anybody with blue eyes and brown hair, I guess it must be very rare. He was also wearing a brown coat and looked in his mid-forty's. He suddenly came up to us and said, 'hello boys and girls I have a little dare for you' It was a bit scary but at the same time we were very eager to know what it was. He told us that he went to Venice for the summer holidays and he loved it but then he told us that he had lost one of his precious watches. Then he said, 'the dare is to retrieve that watch and there will be a prize at the watch for whoever got it and gave it to me first.' When he finished everyone started to laugh, except for me, he looked a bit confused when everyone laughed, when the laughing stopped, he looked me dead in the eye like he knew I was the only who did not laugh and started to walk away. I felt something in my body, and it felt like it was telling me to go try attempt the challenge, but now he looked too far to reach but if I was going to attempt the challenge, I knew I could reach him I started to run faster and faster, I started to feel like Noah Lyles running the 100 meters in the Olympics. When I looked back, I saw all my friends faces looking confused as I ran towards him. When I finally reached him, I felt like I had won the Olympics gold for 100 meters. When I got there my legs actually felt like they were going to fall off, we started talking a bit more about what the watch looked like and he gave me a map and a place to stay but he told me not to open the map until I got there, I was quite intrigued by this but I thought I had to do what he said. The next thing I know I am on flight 30,000 feet in the air watching as I soar across the sky praying, I will be OK when I finally arrived, I walked to the terminal and there was a man standing there in a tuxedo with a sign reading 'Bob Norton' 'I have come to take you to you to your hotel there will be no further help from here you must find the and meet me back here in 48 hours.'

When I got out of the car, he let me out and said your time starts now. When I finally opened the map, it showed an X, but it was a small X, and the rest of the map was blank, I was a bit confused and pretty worried that I had come all the way here and it was all a lie, it looked like it was pointing to a nearby bus station. After the 2–3-minute walk I had arrived, So I took out the map and there it was a new X, in the corner of the map, I decided to take the bus and sure enough I was there in a few

minutes, so I got off the bus and walked down the main street, I kept following the X, and it led me to a chocolate store, so I walked down the aisle past all of the Lindt, dairy milk ,milky bar and much more, so I took out my map and there it was yet another X, but not only that there was writing that said 'You have 1 more X to go find it and you have won,'

So, I ordered a taxi, and it brought me to my location. But this was not like the other X's because it was not a chocolate store or a bus station, no this was a creepy alleyway like the ones you see in Harry Potter for example, and there it was a brief case with my name on it and a watch lying on top, this was not a normal watch though it had It had five circles with five different time zones on it, so I took both the brief case and the watch and got back in the taxi, when I got back into the taxi I opened the brief case, in the brief case was a letter saying... if you have got here that means that you have completed the challenge well done. So, I took away the letter and underneath were... Gold! Lots of it also diamonds! And Rolexes! Gold ones at that and the taxi driver looked at me in astonishment. When I got to the man in the tuxedo standing beside him was the man from the park, applauding me while laughing, so he brought me on his private jet and took me home.

Robbie Shields

The Dursey Boat Trip

It was the 3rd of July and Alice was well-settled into her relaxing summer break from school. Lazy mornings and late nights were much better than school-term early mornings and bed by 9pm! Just like every year, Alice and her family (the Charlesons) were on holidays in Cork. Alice loved Cork – it felt more like home than home itself!

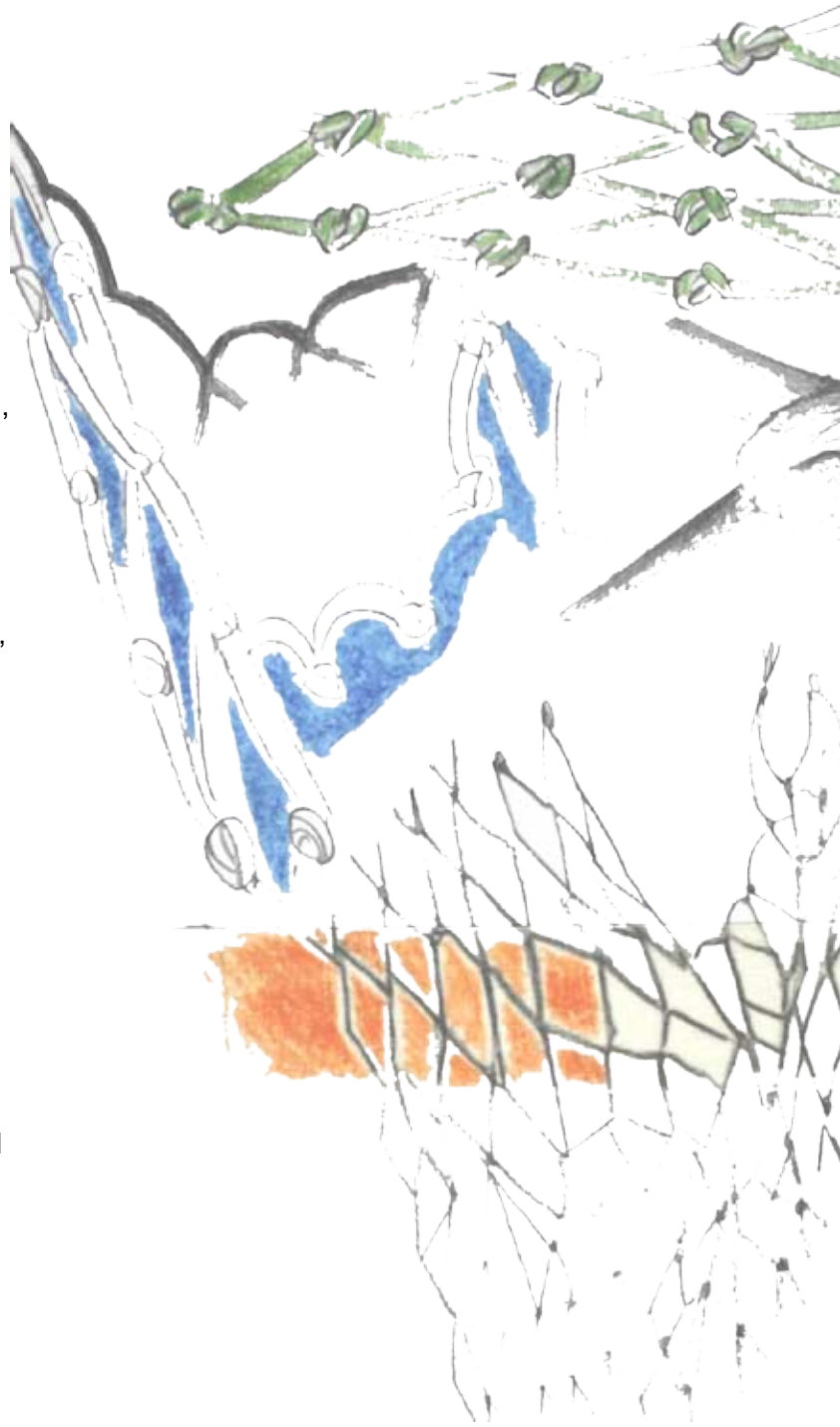
That morning, Alice woke up to the smell of the breakfast her dad was making and went downstairs. When she got down there, there was a warm plate of waffles and fruit waiting for her. 'Morning Al, ready for some breakfast?' dad asked, Alice nodded still too asleep to speak. 'Are you excited for the boat trip?' Alice took a deep breath knowing that she was going to have to speak at some point, and she thought that when dad was asking such a silly question she might as well reply to it. 'Of course I am excited! You know that I love the boat trip! What kind of question was that?' Once dad heard that he had a big Cheshire Cat grin on his face. Alice finished her breakfast and got ready for the boat trip.

'Well, well, well look who we have here, the Charlesons, back again for my famous boat trip' 'Hi Petey' said mum and dad together. Petey was the beloved boat driver on the Dursey Island boat trips 'Petey!!!' shouted Alice's little brother Jamie while running over to give him a big hug. Alice wanted to give him a hug too, but she had just turned 13 and she thought that it would be too baby-ish to give him a hug, so instead she gave him a high five and a warm loving smile.

When they got on the boat; Alice sat with dad, and Jamie sat with mum. Every year they try to get on the earliest rib boat, so they are the only ones on it and can scream as loud as they like. Alice likes sitting at the front of the boat so she can feel the thrill of crashing up and down and feeling the water spray in her face, Jamie however hates the waves and always manages to sit in the driver's seat where it is safest and at the very back of the boat so he never gets wet. Alice and Jamie are very different, and Alice sometimes wonders how they are related to each other.

When the trip started the boat was quite slow and it was just coming out of the bay but once they got out onto the open water it was rough and cold and fresh and free! This was why Alice loved the boat trips, when she was out on the water all her thoughts just went away and all mattered and all she could see was the royal blue sea and the clear blue sky.

They got back to the pier and Alice really didn't



want to get off. 'Come on Al, we have to get off' mum told Alice 'But I really love the boat trip! Can I please go on it again?!' Alice pleaded 'Not until next year' mum told Alice even though she wanted too as well 'Fine.' Alice replied, 'At least it will give me something to think about for a year.' And that is what she did. She came back every year from then on.

Emma Foley

The Potato who took over the World

It was a stormy Saturday in Bob's farm. The Potato family were sleeping in their beds. Suddenly a bowl of water was poured over them. 'WHO SPILLED WATER ON ME!' screamed Timatheta. 'April fools!' said Timmy. It was the 15th of June. Timatheta was about to fight back but she was interrupted by Bob, the farmer. 'Wake up potatoes' he called. 'Today's your lucky day! A family is here to buy potatoes so act like you're not alive' he told them. Timmy thought to himself 'A human huh what kind of evil things can I do to them...'. Ding a ling a ling, the family were here. Timmy made sure to look extra tasty so he could get picked. Mum and dad were asleep and didn't know what was about to happen.

Sunday morning Timmy is sitting in a fridge next to an old, mouldy, rotten fruit salad and some milk. The door opens and Bob is yawning. Apparently, it was his family who bought the potatoes. Timmy quickly ran out of the disgusting full fridge and took Timatheta with him. He took a small backpack for snacks. When Timatheta woke up she was in the white house. Timmy was talking to the president, President Lily. 'LET ME HAVE IT!' Timatheta heard Timmy shout. 'OR I'LL TAKE OVER THE WORLD STARTING RIGHT HERE!'. Uh oh what was he up to. The last thing she heard was a scream and when Timmy came out, he told Timatheta the plan. 'OK first we are going to go to a school, find some innocent kids and make them a part of this.' says Timmy, 'A PART OF WHAT!?!' shouts Timatheta 'Be quiet they'll hear you!' Timmy tells her 'Now listen to me and it'll all make sense. Next, we will take over the school and then the country, then the continent AND THEN THE WORLD!'. They go to the biggest school in the area, 'Lilys school that's big'. They found three students: Amelia, Emily, and Elizebeth. They led the potatoes to the principal who thought it was cute, so she let them take over the school thinking it was a joke.

They realized they already took over the country with the president. 'OK now how do we take over the world...' said Timmy, 'What if we went to the king of the world!?' Emily and Elizebeth said together 'King Bob' said Amelia. So, they made their way to his palace. 'So why do you guys want to take over the world' the girls asked, 'Why not?' the potatoes replied 'well... it's not exactly...' said Emily but trailed off when she saw the palace. 'It's so different than I imagined' Amelia said 'I think I've been here before...' the potatoes said together. They were back at the farm! 'OK' said Timmy 'I'll go in. I was always Bob's favourite' the rest of them agreed with a little argument from Timatheta.

When Bob agreed Timmy came out with a fake frown. 'Oh no, did he say no?' the rest of them said. Timmy grinned and told them they were going to rule the world!

Yagmur Sahin

Run

Crystal-like tears poured down his scared face tired from running, his legs ached and he wouldn't be able to keep up the pace much longer but all he could think of right now was to leave, away from his mother, his father and everybody who he ever knew and who lied to him and he would never go back to that horrible place. He wiped of the tears from his face, closed his eyes and dropped on the cold hard floor, he heard movement next him, maybe even voices, but all he could do was to lie there, too tired to fight back or even talk. There he lay he saw his whole life flash before his eyes, from the moment where him and his mother left his home to the moment where his brother was holding his hand skipping along, his parents talking behind them, laughing, playing, but that was all over now, no more big happy family, no more playing, it would never be the same. All that kept him going was the thought of seeing his long-lost brother again.

Beatrice Ringholz

Beach

Scrunch, scrunch, scrunch goes the sand beneath your feet.
Squawk, squawk, squawk cries the seagull searching for food.
Crash, crash, crash go the waves as they break against the rocks.
Woosh woosh woosh, the light wind on your face.
Squelch squelch squelch your running on the wet sand into the sea
Feel the sand between your toes,
feel the wind brushing your skin,
and for just a moment forget.
and simply be.

Frankie Devitt

Snow

Snow flows down in a quiet night sky,
Soft as a feather in the quiet night sky,
A fleeting star leaves the quiet night sky.

Blankets of snow fold in peaks on a quiet winter night,
Kids dreaming for the morning on a quiet winter night,
To play in lush white snow after a quiet winter night.

Building snowmen on a cold Christmas day,
Making snow angels on a cold Christmas day,
Having a snowball fight on a cold Christmas day.

Nora Gavin

Reckless

“Ruby, baby?” Mum released me from her death-grip hug and instead squeezed my hands like stress balls.

“Yeah?”

“Promise me. Say you promise... Can you look at me?”

I fixed my eyes onto hers. “What?”

“If you ever think you might... If you ever need to. Remember that emergency beacon. If you ever think you aren’t going to make it, please honey, please just use it. Promise me?” Tears filled her eyes again.

“Yes Mum. I will.”

“Don’t be too proud about it. Just stop climbing and use it. Look at me. Do you promise?”

“Yes, Mum. I promise”

The conversation went on like that for another ten minutes until finally she pulled me into a crushing hug and told me to take pictures for each summit I reached.

Then I weaved my way out of her house and into the taxi, waving until she was a speck in the distance. I spent the ride to the airport chatting with the driver, who was amazed (to my pleasure) at my ambition.

“Everest? Really?”

“Yep,” I said, smirking.

He made a sound as if he were doing an impression of a spaceship lifting off and then went into a series of questions, flattering statements and other similar nonsense sounds. I enjoyed that conversation more. When we arrived, he gave me a wave and a wish of good luck, grinning ear-to-ear.

I spent the plane ride sleeping easily. Upon arrival I got another taxi to my hotel. It went similarly to the last one. Best get my fill of it while I can.

Nobody to sing my praises up on the mountain. I bought the rest of my supplies which I couldn’t’ve gotten through airport security (though I was really quite appalled at the price – mountain climbing is a dangerous hobby for one’s wallet). The next day of preparation was like purgatory. I just wanted to go. Thankfully my salvation came early the next morning as I was taken again in another taxi (same story again) to the start of my big climb.

As I stood at the bottom of the tallest mountain in the world, I honestly can’t say much was going through my head other than pure excitement. Some electric magic possessed me as I began racing up. My feet didn’t tire as I climbed and climbed until I couldn’t see the bottom anymore. Before I knew it the sun had set and I laid down to rest on the progress I’d made.

And so, the next few days went. My first big verti-

cal stretch went well with no real issues. My hands gripped the rocks like glue and in a remarkably short time I had reached the first summit camp. I carved my name proudly into a rock – Ruby O’Connell was here. Still bold, I made my way past more summits. I found myself tiring easier, but that was to be expected as the air stretched thin. It was only at my fifth summit that I first looked down – really looked down. It was clear for once, and I could see the land stretch out for miles and miles and miles and miles...

It’s kind of embarrassing to admit, but I never really imagined what the ground would look like. When I thought of the top, I had only pictured me, proud and victorious. Cloud swirled around me. I was the eye of the storm. I never thought about how looking down would feel. And now that I was looking down, I felt something I hadn’t expected: fear. In my mind, the ground was only something a fool or a coward would fear. I was above it, surely. In that moment that idea shattered.

But I wouldn’t let myself be stopped by fear. The ground can’t reach me all the way up here, I told myself. I tore my eyes away from it and started immediately upwards again.

As the climb continued, little flashes kept appearing in my mind. Images of broken and shattered bodies, eaten by worms; my mother squeezing my hand again, snapping my bony fingers... I thrust my pick into the ice. Little flakes flew out and fell down so, so far. I had to force myself to keep looking up. I stabbed into the ice again, again, again, again... I couldn’t even see the end of this stretch. As I pulled my pick out of the ice, the other one slid down. All the little fears flooded out like a tsunami. My legs flailed as I felt the pick slipping out...

I found myself suddenly stable. My free pick was now safely lodged in the ice. I hung there for a while and watched my ice-drop tears disappear into the endless space beneath me...

I collapsed on the snow, arms and legs ready to fall off. It was over. Over until tomorrow. I wished I could call Mum, but there was no signal up here. There was nobody.

The next morning my mind was quiet and the whole world felt grey as the snow and rock I climbed. Progress was slow and cautious, but it was something, at least. The fog was so thick I could only see about a foot in front of me. This continued for the next few days and made the ‘purgatory’ of the day of preparation look like a shop queue. It was just me and the next hold. I thought to myself, what kind of adventure is this? I might as well have gotten a job filling spreadsheets in an





office.

I reached the next camp and finally felt myself smile again as I carved my name into the stone. The next day as I set off, I felt I had regained a bit of that boldness I'd started off with, and the climb began to feel almost tolerable again. I reached summit after summit, slower now, but still building up and up towards my goal.

Then one morning as I prepared to start climbing again, I checked my supplies. Ice picks in good condition, oxygen tanks are full, clothes are fine... I'm running out of food.

I sat there in the snow, mind filled with horrid images and memories. I remembered what Mum had said as she squeezed my hands and cried her warm, liquid tears. The emergency beacon was attached to my jacket and I could activate it easily. It would alert a rescue team to my exact location, and after a few days, they would arrive to bring me back down. A helicopter, thrashing in the wind would come with a long rope to rip me away from the climb and prove that I wasn't the climber I thought I was.

I wanted to get further up. I at least wanted to make it to the next summit. I didn't activate the beacon.

As food turned scarce, my body felt colder and my muscles felt weaker. Progress was slow. Achingly slow.

In the middle of a long vertical stretch my vision went dark for a moment, and I shook myself back, terrified and desperate for the summit.

I can't remember what happened after, but when I finally reached the summit, I was completely out of food and my stomach ached and cried and groaned. I couldn't even carve my name this time. I couldn't even think properly. I remember two things from the camp: first, that the rock had much fewer names carved into it; and second, I knew I was going to die. I was barely awake when I went to bed.

I woke up freezing cold and exhausted. I knew that I was on the verge of death. My hands fumbled at my jacket.

I have no memories except for dreams about worms and my mother's tears, no memories until I found myself warm, listening to people murmuring, a machine beeping, and a hand holding mine.

Daniel Molyneux

Up For Adoption

Hi I'm Ted. I'm a two-year-old German shepherd. I live in a small shop with my friends.

Meeeeooooowwww...!!!

That's Kat she is the cat next door. She's a bit dramatic but what do you expect from a hairless? Sam the hamster is in the cage next to Kat's. He's what you call an athletic animal, he jumps, squeaks and does not stop exercising. On the shelf above Sam is Old Man Rodger. He's slow and always relaxed. Oh yes, he's none other than a turtle. And then Willow a perfect golden retriever with the most luscious fur! She's what I call excellence.

DING!

The shop door opened. A lady in a green suit walked in holding something. I couldn't see because of the light shining through the window. Then I heard a low voice saying 'howdy there! I'm Chip. A pug... if you can't tell'. 'Who?' asked Kat, staring awkwardly.

Chip grinned and started to talk about his life story until...

DING!

A man walked in, wearing a dirty tank top, a brown bucket hat and his full body was covered in tattoos. I could only hear every second word. He said something like 'ahh! Ye, the girl, Willow you said?' The lady took Willow out of her cage. 'That will be €50' she said and the man walked out with Willow! I couldn't even say goodbye. I needed to save her! I knew the man would only give her a raw piece of meat instead of the yummy food we were given here. I needed to get her back; I told the others we needed to save Willow but all they did was laugh. Except Chip! He started to shake his tail and bark. Chip and I would make a great team. DING!

Once again, the door opened. A little girl and her mom were standing at the other side of the shop. The girl was holding a German shepherd teddy. I knew how we would save Willow! 'I'll get adopted,' I told Chip. 'I'd save Willow! The little girl pointed at me and the lady in green took me out. I left the shop; my mission had started!

I decided to stay at my new owner's house for one day then the next morning I would leave! So, in the morning I left through the back door. I didn't know where to go but I just trusted my guts and then saw Willow!

She was tied to a fence and the man was sitting on the steps in his back garden. I slowly walked up to Willow. There she was beautiful as always, dreamy, perfect! I wasn't sure why, but I could hear the song 'Can't you feel the love tonight?' playing in the background with hearts all around her! I



bit down on the string and SNAP! The string flew across the garden and me and Willow escaped. Willow and I went back to the shop where Chip filled us in on everything that had happened when we were gone.

A few days later the same little girl and her mom who got me came in and said they wanted me back, but I wouldn't go without Willow, and I didn't! Willow and I live together. Chip got adopted too and we see him every day in the park. Old Man Rodger lives with three toddlers; Sam lives with an exercise coach and got his own treadmill and last but not least Kat lives with 25 other cats on the top floor of an apartment. So, in the end we all got adopted and lived happily ever after, well sort of. WOOF!

Ola Kurzawska

Mo mhadra

Tá Peata agam.
Cooper is ainm dó

Ní bó é
Is maith leis a bheith ag spraoi

Níl a fhionnadh buí
Is maith leis imirt sa ghairdín gach lá

Is maith leis dul ag siúl ar an trá
is madra é

Harry Tilson



Scoil

Tá mé trí bliana déag d'aois inniu,
Ag fás aníos, ach fós óg go leor, is fíor.
Coláiste Naomh Aindriú gach lá a théim,
Le mo chairde liom, nílim riamh i m'aonar ann féin.

Ar maidin bíim ag rith go tapa,
Mo mhála ar mo dhroim is bróga leath-cheangailte agam,
Ag gáire sna hallaí, ag caint is ag spraoi,
Is na laethanta ag imeacht go tapa uainn i gcónaí.

Tar éis scoile bíim amuigh ag imirt,
Leadóg, haca, ag rith gan tuirse ná tuirse orm,
Ar an uisce ag rámhaíocht, ciúin is réidh,
Ag bogadh liom féin, is an domhan ag dul i gcéin.

Emily Tedd

An Trá

Is aoibhinn liom an trá
Suaimhneach agus Síochánta

Tithe solais tá dhá cheann ann
Tá gach rud calma

Tá a lán sliogáin mhara ann
Is gráinní gainimh,

Fuaim, farraige, flúirseacht
Tá gach rud calma

Daoine ag siúl a gcuid madraí
Daoine ag snámh

Daoine ag rith lámh le lámh
Tá gach rud calma

Samantha Engels

Spórt

Spórt , Is aoibheann liom spórt
Cishpheil,

Peil
Galf,
Camógaíocht,
Leadóg,
Haca,

Éagsúlacht gan teorainn
Ceann dó, di, duit & dom
Ceann do chách
Cuma cén chumas

Erin Matthews

The Umibōzu

Wednesday, 19th of October 1938

One day in 1938 off the coast of Japan 2 fishers named Takashi and Hiroshi were fishing near an island called Okinawa when suddenly they hear a scream coming from the fog up ahead which almost looked like a shadow wandering through the fog. So, Takashi said to Hiroshi 'we should go of course to go check it out!' Hiroshi nodded and agreed so they both decided to go check where or what this sea creature is. When they got there, nothing was there.....Until BANG! Something has hit the bottom of the boat and water started leaking into the boat, and they are frantically trying to scoop the water out with their buckets. Then the creature hits the boat again and then suddenly the shadow figure emerges from the deep, black, and freezing water and drags both sailors into the depths of the sea. Then the next day the fishers do not return home so their wives become anxious about them, so their wives decide to contact the police, and the police have a search party around the coast of Japan. Hours have passed but there is still no trace of the 2 fishers, so the police declare them as dead. Several years later a fishing group named HUNTERS sent out an exploring team to explore the deep part of the ocean, so they launch a submarine with 5 HUNTER scientists in the submarine, so they decide to go to the deep part of the ocean in Japanese water because there have been claims of a shadowy figure lurking in the foggy zone called the fog zone. A few hours have passed and the scientists have not found a trace of this supposedly claimed shadowy figure, so the scientists decided to spend the night in the submarine to try to catch the shadowy figure. The time is 2:35am and that is when they hear a signal on the radar and it sounds like a screeching sound, so the scientist decides to call for help and the rescue team said they will be there in 30 minutes and the next moment, they hear BANG! And water starts flowing in and another BANG! Then the black figure picks the submarine up and the scientists see the black figures face with large glowing white eyes, and it drags one scientist in and another so the one of the scientists named Hokkaido decides to jump in the freezing cold water and hangs on to one of the fallen pieces of the submarine and hangs on for dear life! Until he hears a whirling sound and he looks up to see a helicopter but when he turns around the black figure is gone along with the other 4 scientists and the submarine. Then the helicopter drops a ladder down and brings him back to the HUNTER base in Japan and they ask the scientist to describe what



this creature look like and he turned around trembled with fear and told them 'He looked like a black figure with glowing white eyes.' So, the HUNTERS decided to call him Umibozu which meant 'Giant, black humanoid being' And until today the people, sailors, fishers, and scientists are still wondering if the spirit of the Umibozu still lurking around the deep-sea haunting sailors or if he is lurking in the depths of the abyss.

Winston Wang

Italy Kicking Sicily

This is Italy
Kicking Sicily
Into the Mediterranean Sea.

Hugh Scully

Last Day of School:

Last day of school, a warm breeze fills the hair,
of Kids running around, not ever a care.
While the smell of pizza wafts through the air.
Last day of school, kids high in the trees,
leaping down to reach the tasty smell of cheese
the science fair project and our favourite books,
and memories made in our classroom nook,
P6 is approaching, the big looming thing,
like being thrown into a heavyweight ring
But for now, I'll relax, take a chill pill,
just relax for a bit, before I refill
And I'll remember all our moments, both big and small,
because P5 was amazing, the best one of all
(so far).

Charlie Christiansen

Dark Times

He was gloomy
He was red
Nothing could be said
He felt the droplets
Streaming down his head
He was frightened
He was scared
There was no chance that he was prepared
If he would've witnessed what he's just done
He would've stopped it
But his head just spun
He was there
By himself
All alone
No one else
He starts pacing
His heart was racing
Didn't look back
Didn't think much
If no one knew
There was nothing left to do.

Daniil Sorgassi

Decisions

Happy or sad,
Scared or mad,
Which one am I,
Am I cold or hot,
Am I starving or not,

Is it dark or light,
Do I want it to be day or night,
How do I see which one I want to be,
How do I know,
How do I decide it's just too much I don't know why!

Magdalena Pintar

Unmapped

Ezra was no ordinary boy; he was different from everybody else. He never went to parties or went out often; he always had his head stuck in a book, but one day when he was outside, everything changed...

Ezra was just 13 years old at the time when things started to happen. At first it was just small things like the fountains bursting, and random landslides popping up on the news. But slowly it got worse; wildfires, floods and strange tremors that seemed to be coming from nowhere. He was just starting 2nd year in school and as he sat down at his desk, he heard everybody talking about the recent disasters and about who liked who. He tried to tune everybody out, as he drew doodles on the margins of his copybook, but he just couldn't, something felt wrong, he kept the feeling that something was wrong up to the last class of the day, he didn't have any friends to walk home with, so he just went up to the library to read. Ezra entered the library and stopped as he heard Mr. Davis say something. 'Back already, Ezra?' He asked from behind his desk. Mr. Davis was the librarian and physics teacher in his school and Ezra's favourite. 'It's way too loud today' Ezra explained as he made his way to the desk. 'I don't blame you, anyways I just got some new fiction books if you'd like to check them out?' Mr. Davis wondered. So, Ezra went towards the fiction shelf and grabbed a book. The ground suddenly shook for a second, as a book fell from the highest shelf of the bookcase. 'That's weird. That's the third time that happened today,' Mr. Davis muttered. Ezra looked down, and the book had spilled open. He lifted it up so that he could read it. It was a book mapping below the earth's crust. 'Boring stuff,' he thought. As he brought the book back to its original spot on the shelf, something slipped out. It was a separate map; the map showed a place he had never seen before. It showed a place underground, near the mines, near where he lived. It had a note, it said 'Be warned, this place is not what you think...'. Ezra stayed in the library up until the clock hit 4. Usually he would wait a moment, until the hallways quieted down but today, he felt uneasy. He slung his bag over his shoulder, slipped the note into his pocket, and stepped outside. The sun was blinding but the air was thick, almost heavy. As he made his way out of the school grounds, he thought about what that note had said. 'What was 'this place', and why should I be warned?' Ezra said aloud. As Ezra walked, he was checking over his shoulder, jumping at every car that went by. By the time Ezra reached home, the sky had



turned pinkish red even though the sun had just started to set. He hurried up the steps and fumbled with his keys, the note in his pocket feeling heavier by the second. His fingers struggled to fit the key into the lock. Suddenly the ground shook as a brutal jolt threw Ezra forward, slamming him onto the porch. The ground shook harder, as if something massive was about to happen. Ezra pulled himself up, heart racing. And then he saw it, the crack on the earth's surface rushing towards him. He stood there, frozen in fear. The crack reached his feet. As he fell headlong into the abyss, his thoughts centred on one question: Where was he going to end up, and did it have something to do with that note?

Millie Strauss

Uninvited Guests

Mr. Philips was not an ordinary man, not after his what happened his family, his wife, his kids. He felt like he was stuck in loophole of grief, desperate to make himself feel all the pain thinking it was his fault what happened to them. Mr. Philips was sure that whoever did that to them was looking for him next and wanted him gone.

Mr. Philips dropped everything and went to Oklahoma, far away from San Francisco. He had no job, no money, no house, and especially no family. Mr. Philips didn't know where to go. He was lost without his family he just wanted to get away from whoever killed his family and he wanted to find out who did that to them and that was all he knew.

After about a year of living in Oklahoma he was still grieving about the death of his family. 'Who did this?' he thought staring at the board with about barely as much information from when he began. It was about 12.00am and he was tired. 'I'll just go to bed and deal with this in the morning' he thought yawning. He started turning off the lights and going up stairs doing his usual routine checking the windows to see if anyone was there. No, no one was there. He started walking up the stairs.

His heart was pounding. He was sure he had heard the doorknob turn. Mr. Philips stood there frozen not knowing what to do. He took a step down the stairs and looked at the door. Yes, the doorknob has definitely been turned. Mr. Philips ran up the stairs grabbing his bag that he had packed a while ago just in case something might happen. Petrified he ran down the stairs to the backdoor shaking, his hands clasp the doorknob. He turned around and the front door was open. Without thinking he ran outside, but it was too late the murderer had planned this along.

He was waiting for Mr. Philips, he knew that Mr. Philips was going to find out what happened. It was not a hard murder to crack. Mr. Philips knew this man, but he just didn't know how. With his last bit of strength, he grabbed the mask the unknown man was wearing and tore it off. Little did he know it was his own brother.

Isla Neylon

Home

The muddy hills I call my home
Down to the sea I won't go alone.

The crisp breeze creeping upon my back,
The sound of the waves rolling I could never leave that.

I breathe in the freshest of air,
As the forgiving wind is in my hair.

Walking down a small village lane,
Past fields of barley and ribbons of grain.

Stone cottages lean where the roses climb,
Their petals slow dancing with passing time.

In the evening, the pub is bursting with light,
Unlike the morning when it was a pale sight.

Full of weary workers,
Freed from daily pull.

They raise their hats as I walk past,
And drink to Galway Bay.

The Penguin Who Could Fly

There once was a penguin called Fred but Fred, he wasn't an ordinary penguin no not at all. He was a penguin, a penguin who could fly! You see a few years back there was another penguin who could fly his name was Mathew he was the father of Fred and he and his wife Sandra were rich but when the Antarctica government found out he could fly they took him away from his home into a secret lab where they could do experiments on him, they treated him like a lab rat until one day the experiment went wrong and Mathew disappeared forever...

It was a normal Tuesday morning the sun was shining on the icy rooftops it looked like a scene from a movie well especially considering there was something flying in the sky that did not belong there, of course it was Fred he was flying to school his mom didn't have a car you see when Fred was born and the government found out he could also fly, they tried to take him but Sandra offered to pay all the money she had to let him live a normal life and the government took the offer and left him alone like promised.

He arrived at school just as the piercing sound of the bell rang. He sprinted to the gate realizing he was late for class. He still had to get all his books out of his locker. 'Hey!' Screamed Grace running over to him Grace was his only friend, the only person in school who didn't think he was weird just because he was different 'feathers! I told you not to scare me like that!' He said clearly a bit annoyed at his friend 'sorry but it's so funny when you scream feathers' they both laughed 'come on were late for class let's go!' Fred shouted. They both rushed down the hallway until they spotted a huge group blocking the way! Fred pushed through them when he finally got through them. He started sprinting again, he whirled his head around to look at his friend who was still struggling to get through the tsunami 'come on grace! We're going to be late hurry up!' he enquired until... He ran into another penguin! 'What is your problem?' he hadn't looked up to see who it was, yet he was hoping it wasn't the person he thought it was finally he got the courage and there towering over him was a huge figure and of course it was Brenda. Suddenly he felt sick, 'stay out of my way freak!' she shouted and she marched away. 'Are you ok' Grace asked 'yeah I'm fine just going to go home I'm not feeling too good' he waddled away looking at his feet. He left the school and began to fly home.

On his journey home he spotted a parrot up on an ice burg 'what the feathers? There's never any parrots in Antarctica!' he flew down to see what



the matter was 'excuse me'. 'I'm Tod I work for the non-flying birds' company I can make birds not fly anymore. Fred's heart suddenly started beating very fast 'NO WAY! Can you make me not fly anymore? Fred had heard about this company but never had enough money for it. 'But you're a penguin you can't fly' Tod said confused 'actually I can!' 'Ok...? I guess I can help you if you help me find someone their name is Brenda' 'I know her she's in my school can you help me now please???' Fred pleaded 'ok just wait here I'll be back with the medicines' before Fred could reply Tod flew off so Fred waited and he waited, and he waited until he saw a figure moving in the snow 'Tod? Is that you' then a donkey appeared 'hi a! My names Cindy! What's a young penguin like you doing out her alone in the cold?!' asked Cindy she had a sweet but annoying country accent: 'I'm waiting for my friend Tod to bring back my medicines these medicines won't make me fly anymore I'll be normal.' he smiled a weak smile at Cindy 'you can fly! Well, that's so cool why are you getting rid of it it's a miracle' she said 'well I get bullied for it and I want to be normal' said Fred 'you shouldn't change yourself because of what others think your unique you should celebrate this' replied Cindy shocked Fred would want to give away his superpower 'actually your right'. Fred decided to fly home when he got home. He lay in bed and took a long nap.

Lily Hennessy

Train Thoughts

My eyes water and my throat swell, as a Nirvana song blasts in my ears. I can feel everyone's eyes on me, my cheeks ruddy with anger and adrenaline surging through my body. I take long strides, travel card clenched in my palm. Thoughts dart through my head as I try to figure out why she's so awful to me but I'm too infuriated to even concentrate. My tears have dried, leaving faint, discoloured lines on my face. I force my travel card on the sensor almost snapping it in half. Tilting my head down, I scroll through my phone to find another song. I'm just in time. The headlights of the train blasting through the dark, creating a little fuzz in my eyes.

The train slowly comes to a halt, as I plod up to the illuminating door and press the button. Inside the carriage my eyes scan the seats, searching to find a perfect place to mourn quietly and look out the window. I hesitate, but no seat really calls me. There is a spot opposite a very smiley old lady that doesn't look very outgoing, so I decide it's my best option. I saunter over, slipping my headphones off. Just before I sit down, I glance at her. 'She looks kind' I think a small smirk tugging at my lips. In her hands, she holds a black and white image that seems to resemble a young man. I look away minding my business and place my headphones back over my ears still upset about how awful and unthoughtful my mum is towards me. My eyes begin to water again. I close them, struggling to steady my breathing and calm the anger simmering inside me.

'Are you okay love?' a faint voice asks softly. My eyes open to be met with the same old lady sitting across from me, now grinning from ear to ear like the Cheshire Cat. Her bright blue eyes look weirdly familiar. 'Yes,' I reply blinking rapidly, trying to force the tears back. 'Would you like some tissues? I have plenty.' the lady says while pointing a packet of tissues towards me. 'I'm okay. I say quietly hoping to end the conversation. The lady leans back into her chair, readjusting her position and puts the tissues into the back pocket of her purse. Just then, my phone dings. 'Hey girl, want to come over?' I really need help with this homework, and I want to talk to you about something.' The message is read. I am not in the mood to see Sam right now. Swiping the message away, I turn my attention to the window. As the scenery rushes past, I glance at the reflection and freeze. The woman is staring down at the photograph, a faint smirk playing on her lips. I study the picture through the reflection. I know I recognize the man, but I can't place him. Her smile falters, and I notice

her eyes begin to glisten. 'What's Wrong?' I mutter under my breath. She looks up at me, nodding softly before having a small snuffle 'This was my father.' She continues. 'He was the only person that really cared for me and saw my potential.' She lets out a soft, almost wistful laugh.

My thoughts spiral as I begin to notice the similarities between us. Slowly, I stare at the woman. Her ice blue, sharp eyes are still a bit teary. Her hair, now completely grey but beneath it I can see the same brown, wavy thick hair that I have. 'By any chance,' I ask, leaning towards her, 'what is your name?' She glances at me, then quickly looks back at her lap. 'Luna.' My body rigid. My eyes widen. My jaw tightens. My heart stutters. The dots connect.

Out of fear, I briskly launch myself out of my seat and race to the door. I have no clue where I am or how far it is from home, but I keep slamming my hand against the button, panic flooding my chest. I glance back. She's staring at me now, just as startled.

The doors open. I stumble onto the platform as the train begins to move again. I risk one final glance through the window. She's gone. I exhale shakily and squeeze my eyes shut.

Very faintly, I hear it. 'Granny wake up!'

Emma Norton

Youth

Age doesn't define us
And maturity exists to guide us,
Youth isn't all that it seems to be
It's much darker and twisted and scary for me.

When I was young, I used to dream
Of how amazing it was to be a teen,
Though if I could go back in time I would
And try to fix all that I could.

Never did I think it would occur
That these years could be so absurd,
I never thought I would feel so alone
Feel so bad that I'd block out everyone I've known.

Feeling myself developing was really exciting
But the feeling of growing and changing was frightening,
I was so scared to say goodbye,
I didn't want to see pieces of my old self die.

But there was nothing that could be done
I was forced to let go and I went numb
I was scared of the change
Everything about myself felt so strange

I was forced to choose acceptance
Through doing this I found new pieces of myself despite the circumstance
It was hard to acknowledge that I would never be the same
It was like watching a bright light flicker and then die in a flame

The Teenage years are nothing like social media said
There's fear, anxiety, mental illnesses and dread
However, that's the beauty of life
Now it's time to move on and live without strife

Sarah-Beth Parker

Le Gel et Le Soleil

Le gel ressemble à la poussière sur la terre
Ça se collecte comme des gouttes d'eau
Et je ne peux pas me rappeler
La dernière fois que nous avons vu le soleil.

Niamh Creed

Hope

Hope is the last thing to ever truly leave,
But sometimes it would be easier to grieve.
'All hope abandon, ye who enter here,'
I wish I could make this unwanted feeling disappear.

It's emotional torture I feel like a clown,
And all it's doing is tearing me down.

Am I all consumed, do I feel too much?
It feels like I'm losing touch,
Fading slowly, fading away,
Avoiding life, causing only delay.

I stare at the nothingness, both in and outside,
A single question burning in my mind,
Etched in my brain, soaring through my skin,
A question I so desperately need the answer within,
And yet I am unable- or merely unwilling to ask it.

The sun and success escape me, as I plummet down,
Hitting rock bottom, with merely a frown.

However, here I still stand, unsure of my fortune.
Sombre faces, sullen eyes as my dreams, hopes and aspirations slowly die,
Soon I'll no longer see the disappointment in your eye.

The light seems so bright,
And yet there's still so much road yet to travel, so many obstacles to fight.
This illusion launches me forward, and just as I begin to feel free,
I realise it will ultimately fail me.

The saltiness in my eyes starts stinging,
As the world around me becomes a blur.
The expectations- once held so high,
Now sink, drown, choke and finally, peacefully die.

Francesca Ravassi

Neugierig

Neugierig auf Abenteuer, aber mit wem?
Ich gehöre zu denen,
Den freien Menschen,
Immer im Ausland
Ich denke an den schönen Strand
Ich fühle meine Hand im Sand
Der Sand glitzert am Strand.
Neugier treibt uns voran,
Stellt Fragen ohne Ruh
Sie öffnet neue Welten und lässt der Seele
keine Ruh.

Kalen Healy

Lebensfreunde

Ich habe eine Freundin
Sie ist hübsch wie die Sonne
Mit Augen wie Sternen und Haaren wie
Schokolade
Schokolade so süß wie ihr Lächeln
Schokolade so glatt wie ihre Haut
Haut wie Gold
Haut wie Seide in der Sonne
Die Sonne auf dem Gesicht
Das Gesicht meiner Freundin

Amelia Phillips

Welcome to Pripyat

I come from a small city. It was always a beautiful place, soviet-era brutalist houses to contrast with the stunning nature surrounding the town. In all directions you simply could only see dark pine forests for miles and tan mountains, not quite reaching the clouds. While the scenery was beautiful, the city was slowly coming to an inevitable end. Shut off from most nearby larger cities, importing or exporting was difficult, and the economy was failing. The residents would have left one way or another, but they ended up leaving earlier than they thought, and for reasons no one expected, or knew for that matter.

On a Thursday morning, people's old radios switched to an emergency broadcast frequency, and the authorities announced we must evacuate the city immediately. They gave no reasoning, but in that era, everyone knew they could not disobey government orders.

Ten years later, I decided to venture back into my old city, my old home. As I walked down the now battered road leading to the city, I noticed the sign by the town limits. 'WELCOME TO PRIPYAT' it read. After ten years the Soviet Union of course collapsed, and I had learned the reason we were ordered to evacuate. The nearby nuclear power plant had a disastrous accident, causing radiation to spread hundreds of miles. Nobody had been in this highly contaminated area for years.

I entered the city, every building was overcome by nature, bright green ivy and other foliage slowly breaking down the exposed concrete walls. I stepped inside an old apartment building, into an open apartment on the ground floor. Everything was rotting and decaying, but it was interesting to see the old items residents left behind in a hurry to leave.

That's when I heard it. A low growl emitted from a closed door and then scraping like someone was trying to break down the door with their nails. It went quiet for a second. The door flew off its hinges and crashed into a wall behind me, barely missing my head. An unsightly creature, an animal like none I'd seen before, almost the size of a human, charged towards me.

Paralyzed in fear, my legs refused to move as the beast sprung up, and it leapt through the air, its eyes soulless and unnerving. It landed right on my chest; I felt the air being knocked out of my lungs. The beast's fangs reached for my neck, and I closed my eyes. I heard a loud bang, like a gunshot. In my mind I didn't take much notice, as I knew I surely would not survive this beast.

Alexander Sierevogel

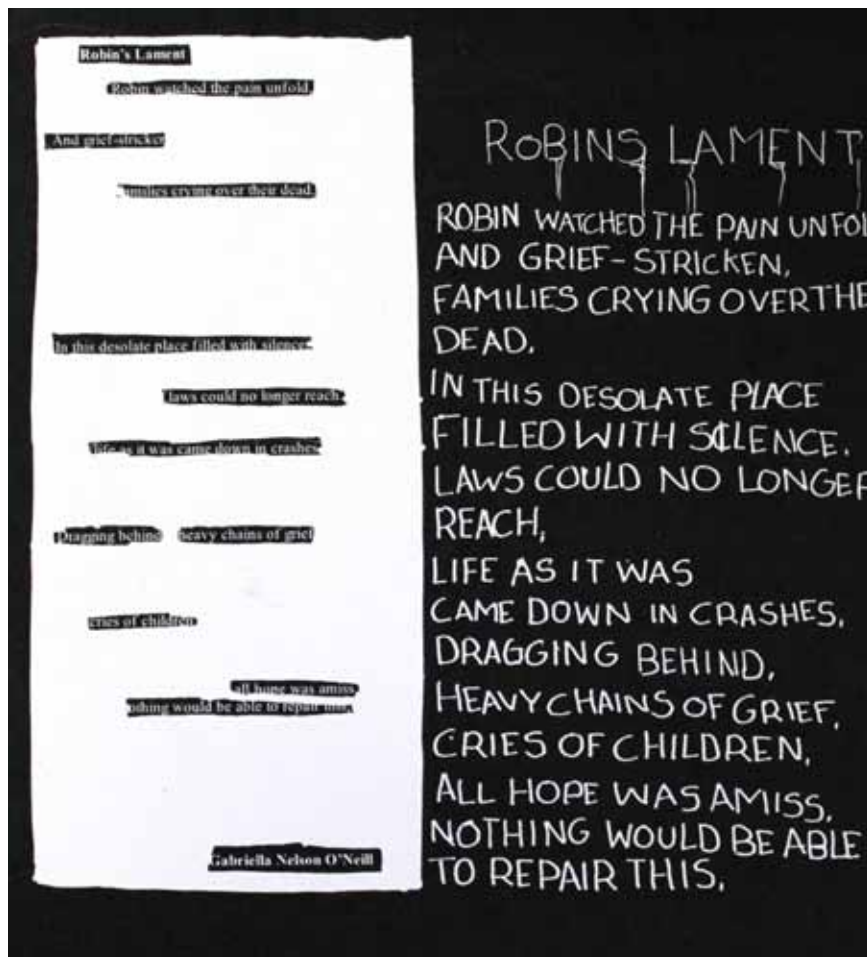
The Lightning in My Life

The dull, ominous sky awaits a spark of joy,
Until tonight a flutter of happiness like childish toy.
Its illuminous beam of flashes and sound of merry cry,
colours of blue, lighting up the sky.

Like an anaesthetic for the broken past,
hoping the crack of electric will last.
One of the first times of hope,
hoping that the abused roof will cope.

The final euphoric blasts of storm,
has yet the whistles of warm.
And nevermore shall the sky fill up with strife,
For you are the lightning in my life.

Hugo Bohill



What Remains of Us

(a found poem)

Let's talk you and I, let's talk about fear,
 She nodded and down the corridors they wandered,

'They catch fakes out in the real world, you know,
 'They catch 'em all the time,'

Well, have you lost your tongue?

'Besides, you know, you'll be in costume, and that makes all the difference,'

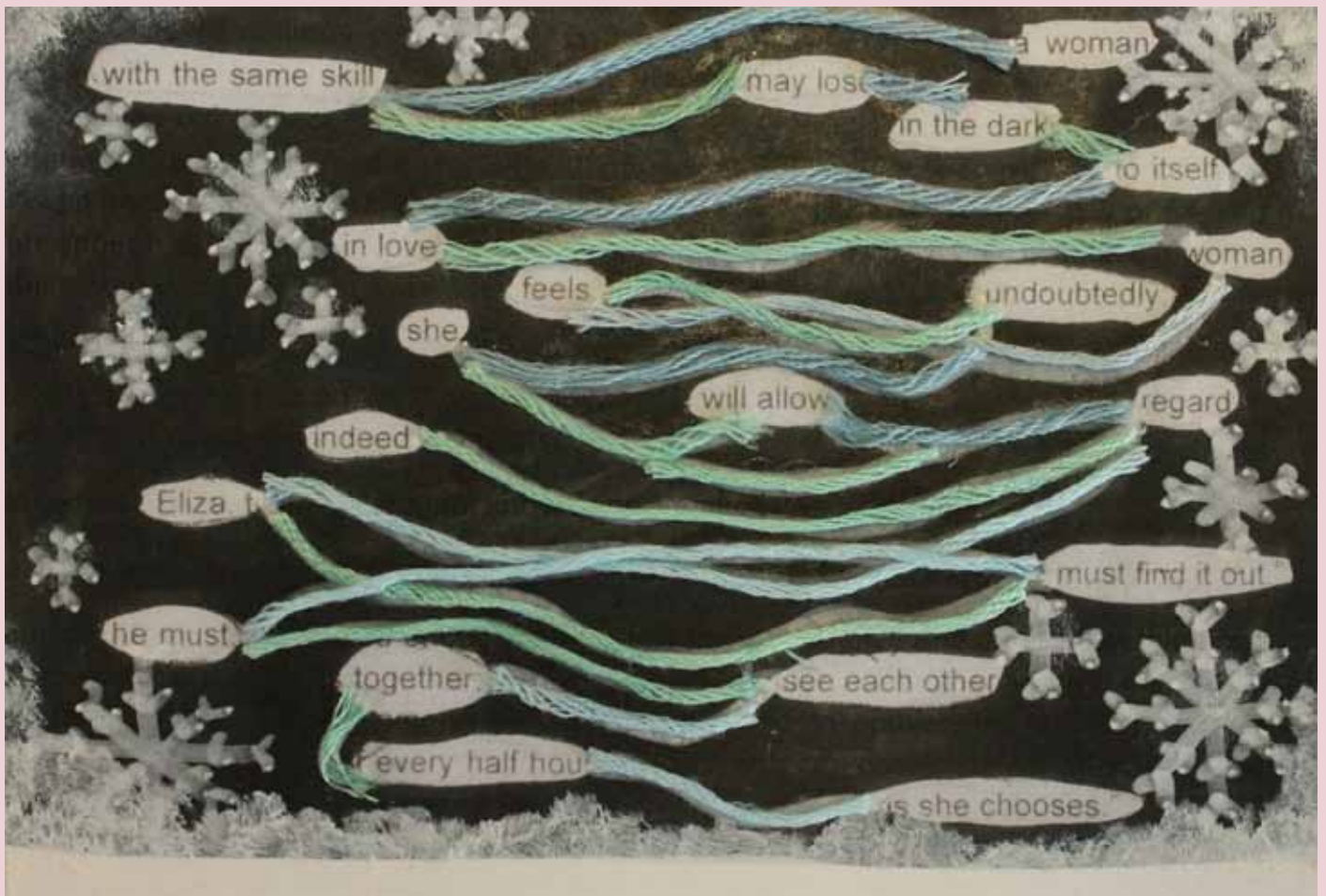
Don't touch that handle, the sign says, or nobody can climb the spiral stairs.

The heavy shock of this knowledge slows him down,
 He sees the light in the darkness, the clear in the cloudy,
 The speed in the slowness, the full in the empty,

'All our so-called civilization is covered with a veneer,
 There should not be animals like us, there should be no life like ours,'

The sun looked bright that morning to every eye in the village but his,

Betrayal is always a mistake
 And hell is other people



Equally in the DARK
Love without Encouragement
Affection Endeavour
There will be Leisure
for falling in Love

so eager a step
happy importance
wondering ignorance
understanding
began to
awake
so new an
emotion
so full of interest, wonder and joy

Three Friends, Thirty Minutes

My mind is a hallway with flickering light,
A hospital wing that forgets how to night.
The air smells like endings that never got named,
Like letters half-written then burned in the flame.

My thoughts are black oceans with anchors for lungs,
Old conversations still rot on my tongue.
Each memory drips like a leak in the roof,
Slow water that whispers you weren't worth the truth.

I carried our friendship like glass in my hands,
Like something too fragile for time to withstand.
But you dropped it so calmly, like dust in the breeze,
While I'm still on the floor picking shards from my knees.

Your silence was louder than riots at night,
A lighthouse that suddenly swallowed its light.
Unread messages lined up like graves in a row,
Little blue coffins that never would glow.

I keep autopsying the things that we said,
Performing surgery on ghosts in my head.
I stitch every memory, thread after thread,
But the patient keeps dying each night in my bed.

Three friends. Thirty minutes. A life rearranged.
Like someone rewrote me and signed it 'you changed.'
The silence kept spreading from screen into chest,
Like winter deciding my bones were its nest.

I miss not dissecting the air when it's still,
Not wondering which silence is planning to kill.
I miss laughing loudly without second thought,
Before every joke felt like something I'd bought.

Because now every friendship's a gun with a smile,
Every 'I'm here' is a rope made of sand,
Every promise a blade someone hides in their hand.
Even kindness now feels like a trick of the light,
Like warmth that exists just to vanish at night.

And some nights the dark in my skull grows so wide
It swallows the shore where my hope used to hide.
My thoughts start whispering quiet and slow
That disappearing might soften the blow.
That maybe the quiet would finally stay,



If I slowly erased every part of my name.

But something inside me, half-broken, half-breath,
Still fights like a candle refusing its death.
Still burns in the wind where the night tried to stay,
A stubborn small spark in the bones of the day.

Because losing you carved me, but didn't erase
The ghost of the girl you once called a safe place.
And somewhere beneath all the ash and the scar
She's still asking softly why people are.

Three friends. Thirty minutes.
A summer turned scar.
And I'm still here breathing
No matter where you are.

But some nights the breathing
Feels heavier than stone,
Like living is something
I'm doing alone.

Maria Karadzova

The Art of Letting go

The golden leaves have turned to brown,
And I can't remember the last time you were around
Bluest skies fade into grey
I'm still holding on while you are gone away

Are you breaking apart
Because you need to go far?
Are you hiding your heart like before?

Do you still stare at strangers
and dream of the changes
you'd make if you could've had more?

You always loved a game of chase
But now you're lost, stuck in the same rat race,
I see your eyes when I close mine
Wishing I could tell what's going to behind

Are you breaking apart
Because you need to go far?
Are you hiding your heart like before?

Do you still write on paper
Your notes to The Maker
How you wish that they gave you more?

Teach me how to fall asleep
When you are not next to me
Show me how the hell I dream
With my conscience on its knees

Tell me how far you would go
To try and sell out this whole show

I could to try to hold your hand
Tell you that I understand
You're the only one who can
Decide to be a better man

Where I'll find you I don't know
How to learn the art of letting go

Each time you try to change yourself
You lose a piece of you yeah I can tell
You say that's fine you'll lose yourself
But you forget I need you here

You're breaking apart
Because you need to go far,
You're hiding your heart like before

You're hiding away
Day after days
Fighting the need to be brave.

Bella Shields

Coláiste Naomh Aindriú

Tá mé trí bliana déag d'aois inniu,
Ag fás aníos, ach fós óg go leor, is fíor.
I gColáiste Naomh Aindriú gach lá a théim,
Le mo chairde liom, nílim riamh i m'aonar ann féin.
Ar maidin bím ag rith go tapa,
Mo mhála ar mo dhroim is bróga leath-cheangailte agam
Ag gáire sna hallaí, ag caint is ag spraoi,
Is na laethanta ag imeacht go tapa i gcónaí.
Tar éis scoile bím amuigh ag imirt,
Leadóg, haca, ag rith gan tuirse orm,
Ar an uisce ag rámháíocht, ciúin is réidh,
Ag bogadh liom féin, is an domhan ag dul i gcéin.

Emily Tedd



Letter from Booterstown

Still Here

I waited inside the hospital lobby and I wanted to scream. My insides bubbled up with immense grief and pain so ready to overflow, yet nothing would come out. I barely made a sound, just a whimpering cry for help. I could hardly force a tear out. I was numb. Completely, utterly numb. I stuffed my blotchy red face into my hands and felt my body tense. I squeezed my eyes shut. If I stayed beneath the darkness of my eyelids, then I would never have to see the darkness of a world that she didn't exist in.

A slow creaking sound caused me to jolt upright. My vision was slightly blurred, but I could make out a door to a hospital room opening across the hallway. I stood up suddenly and looked straight ahead. The hallway appeared almost never-ending, depressing and long. But one thing caught my eye. A petite girl with locks of hair as white as snow stood in the doorway of a now fully open, creaking door. Her face held a dim glow behind the darkness. That was the thing about hospitals no matter how sunny it was outside, they always seemed dark. Her eyes were just as pale as her hair and her freckled skin. There was something strangely familiar about this peculiar girl, and there was comfort in that familiarity. The kind of comfort that might even be able to heal a twelve-year-old boy who had just lost the most important person in his life. Like magnets, we walked towards each other. We were somehow intertwined, somehow connected. I had never been surer of anything than in that moment. I had to be with her. I had to help her. Maybe she could even help me. 'Who are you?' I tried to shriek into the darkness, yet it came out as just a fizzling whimper. 'You know who I am,' she answered in a singsong voice that was just as sweet and small as she looked. And she was right. I did know who she was. I just didn't know how. I took a step towards her and shielded my eyes from the intense light illuminating her face. I realised suddenly that the light was not coming from the hospital at all, it was coming from her.

'I'm not afraid of you,' I trembled. And I wasn't. In fact, I wasn't afraid of anything anymore. Not now that my biggest fear had come true. Not now that my nightmares had become my reality. 'Boo!' She threw her tiny hands in the air. I flinched; she giggled. 'And why would you be afraid of me, Charlie?'

My heart stopped dead inside my chest. Everything went quiet, inside and out. You could have heard a pin drop. I suddenly knew who this little girl was, and I now had a name for that comforting

sense of familiarity that filled my heart. She was no stranger.

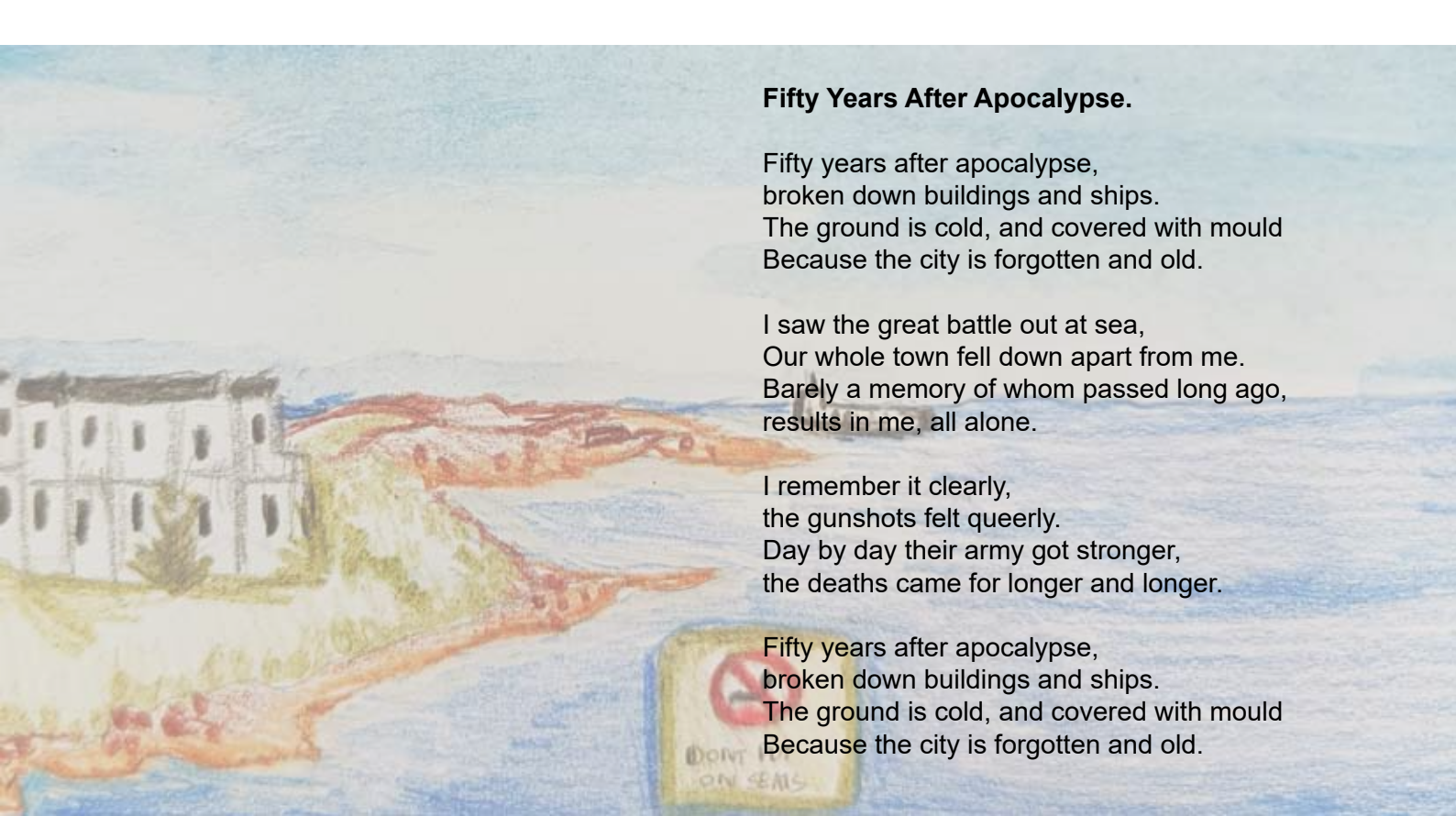
'Bethany,' I trembled. I didn't know what to say, but I knew I had to say something. I frantically searched for words to describe what I was feeling, but they were nowhere to be found, forever lingering in the space between us. 'Hi, Bethany,' I blurted out.

'Hi, Charlie,' my little sister smiled. My six-year-old sister, who had died of cancer that morning at 5:18 a.m. 'Your hair, it's back. It's curly,' I whispered, 'like a princess.' She swayed from side to side. 'Like a princess,' I winked through teary eyes. I hadn't seen her curls since she was four years old, the day my mum had shaved them off. But her hair wasn't the only thing that had changed about her. Her bronzed skin was now a glowing white, and her olive-brown eyes and hair had been replaced with that same pale colour. She looked so different, yet she was so the same.

'Come and give your big brother a hug,' I managed in a raspy, choked voice. She sprang into my arms. 'I love you,' we both whispered in sync.

I opened my mouth to say more, but my words were abruptly interrupted by my mother. 'Charlie, who are you talking to?' she stuttered. My mother had never looked so tired, dark bags beneath her sad, twinkling eyes, and hair that was once luscious and brown now dishevelled. My little sister wasn't the only one who had died that morning. A part of my mother had died too. A part of all of us had.

'Who were you talking to?' my mother asked



Fifty Years After Apocalypse.

Fifty years after apocalypse,
broken down buildings and ships.
The ground is cold, and covered with mould
Because the city is forgotten and old.

I saw the great battle out at sea,
Our whole town fell down apart from me.
Barely a memory of whom passed long ago,
results in me, all alone.

I remember it clearly,
the gunshots felt queerly.
Day by day their army got stronger,
the deaths came for longer and longer.

Fifty years after apocalypse,
broken down buildings and ships.
The ground is cold, and covered with mould
Because the city is forgotten and old.

Ben Rowell

again, her voice rising. 'Nobody,' I answered solemnly, giving her my best brave smile. She hesitated briefly before walking away. I counted to one hundred until the coast was clear.

I stared into the dark, endless corridor. The door was still left wide open. A snow-white curl lay on the floor. A gust of wind brushed against my face. 'You're still here, aren't you,' I whispered. The air stirred with a glowing warmth, like the feeling of you snuggled in my arms. 'I never left.' I squeezed my eyes shut, ready to return to my imagination where you still exist. Salty tears streamed down my face. When I opened my eyes, you were back, just as real as before.

'Stay, Bethany,' I cried. 'Please, I need you.' I grabbed at my chest. 'I can't,' she said, looking at the floor, swaying from side to side. 'You always told me I had to be brave. Now it's your turn.'

She stood up straight, making herself look as tall as a tiny six-year-old possibly could. 'But I'm not brave,' I swallowed. 'Of course you are. you're the bravest big brother I know,' she answered with conviction.

'I love you, Bethany,' I whimpered.

'I know,' she winked.

I reach for your hand, but it only touches air. 'You were just here,' I trembled. 'I'm still here, just not in the way I used to be,' the air answers back. I blink and you're gone. But somehow, deep down, I know you never left.

Olivia Cantwell



Madness in the village

Eamon was a boy who lived in a village called Red Marsh. He was such a naughty boy I don't even think you want to know what he got up to in school. He had three nice friends who would help him with his naughty mischief.

Eamon has always been a naughty boy ever since he was five years old. Eamon's friends were called James, William, and Henry these three boys never got up to any mischief before Eamon moved to Red Marsh. Eamon got them expelled from two schools and suspended a least once every month. The truth is that none of these boys even liked Eamon. They did not want to say anything because they all thought everyone loved Eamon and thought he was the wonderful boy.

One miserable afternoon, James decided he wanted to have a sleepover with his friends he did not want to invite Eamon because he knew he would just get them into shenanigans they did not want to be in. So that night James invited William and Henry over for a movie night and a sleepover. That night they were telling stories and William accidentally spluttered out that he despised Eamon. When he realised what he said James and Henry told the truth too. They all set off to hurt Eamon because he always does it to them, so they wanted to get pay back for getting them in trouble so many times.

They went to Eamon's house and told him to meet them in the woods under the oak tree at 11 o'clock. The second Eamon heard this he started to get ready because he did not know who it was who asked them to meet him, he was curious and wanted to get up to a bit of mischief. Although the three boys had bad intentions, they changed their mind once Eamon arrived. They decided to leave Eamon alone but never talk to him again. So, the three boys set off back James' house.

The next day when they were strolling to school, they saw a poster it said 'Boy Missing' All day long the boys thought to themselves where Eamon could be and why did not, he make it home that night.

Eamon was never found.

Eloise Condon

The Weeping Man

Always creeping
Never sleeping.

He just wants a friend
And not to be alone

For he has no home
As he likes to roam

His hands
Shine like chrome

The weeping man
Always creeping
Never sleeping.

He watches through your window
He just wants a friend

And not to be alone
For he has no home

He really likes to roam
His eyes shine like chrome

When you wipe away the foam
He'll remain in your home

And then he'll never be alone.

Zach Duffy

An Cháisc

Uibheacha Cásca sa ghairdín glas,
Dathanna geala ag lonrú sa ghrian.
Páistí ag gáire, ag rith go pras
Féile an earraigh, lán draíocht bhinn.

Alex Hoban

What the Tide Keeps

I go to the sea when my thoughts won't settle,
When it all feels too loud
And the waves roll in like a soft quiet kettle.

The sea needs no explanation, no excuse, nothing
It knows who comes to it shouting, splashing and daring the waves,
And who arrives with shoes in their hands and a weight on their chest.

I tell it the things, I don't know how to carry,

The stress,
The unsaid words,
The tiny regrets that I cling to

The fear that everyone is already moving on.

You stand where nothing stays
The sea says, in the hush between tides.

I think about the weight
Of what I might leave behind,

For the sea has held heavier things
Words swallowed by currents,
Promises dissolved into salt,
Regrets rounded smooth with time.

At night
It darkens, thick as ink,
Waves lift the heaviness I carry,
Folding my pain into its tide, into motion.

By morning
The footprints are gone,
The tide keeps what we leave behind,
And the people who stood
Walk lighter than before

The sea offers no guidance.
Only its flow.

And somehow,
That feels like enough

Francesca Kerr



Tantalus

Salt clings to the spray that caresses my face
Glistening waves glide inches from my feet
Light dances across the surface of the water
Beckoning, with the promise of cool release

Sunlight paints the world in grey and gold
Warming the sand, the sea, the air
Under the surface, sound is hushed
My worries washed away by the sea foam

This is the place that lingers in memory
Always there, yet just out of reach.
This is the place where I wish to be
When I'm drowning in the icy Irish rain.

Erin Gallimore

Psychopath

The air smells of wet dirt, exhaust fumes and fruit flavoured vape. I take a deep breath through my nose, taking it all in, and slightly run a red light. I get honked at, which hurts my feelings a little bit. Not much, though, 'cause I'm working on controlling my emotions nowadays, finding my happy place and all that. I'm normally a really responsible driver, but the surreal vibes of 3AM Dublin and the 2010s pop music thudding through my car's mediocre speakers fill me with a strange power. My head's bopping along to the beat. I probably look like some kind of psychopath.

My phone's buzzing with texts from Lauren. She and my roommates are off partying somewhere, and I'd be with them, but thanks to bloody Cillian I have to go and do important errands at 3:05 in the morning on a Sunday. I'm not too mad, though. I'm in my happy place, and we all have to do things for our friends. Besides, it's kinda my fault anyways. Because the car stinks of copper from the boot, I've got all my windows down despite the cold. The smell of salt wafts in, which means I'm getting near the pier. I park my car near a couple shops, and heave the suitcase out of the boot. It's really heavy. I grunt, and get a strange look from a guy in a puffy jacket. He can't see my face, though, and odds are he'll forget me entirely seconds after I leave him to his cigarette.

The moment I step out of the alley, the smell of metal and salt are forced aside by the smell of Asian food. I'm suddenly insanely hungry. I focus my will on the seafront before me, on the pier, and with a Sisyphean effort I pull the case across the street to the pier.

The wheels rattle against rough cobblestones. I run over a rock and the whole thing nearly spills over onto the road. Urgh, Cillian.

It takes me a moment to find my happy place after that one, but I manage to avoid growling on the street like a psychopath.

There's barely any life on the pier, as you'd expect. The further out I get, the more the noise drops away, leaving me with just a bad-smelling suitcase for company.

The end of the pier is quiet save for the sounds of the sea, and empty save for a seagull. It looks up at me from someone's dropped food as I pass. I wave at it. It stares at me for a moment, then goes back to its food. Well, here we are. I hesitate for a moment, and unzip the suitcase.

The coppery, metallic smell envelops me like a blanket. Cillian's empty eyes look at me reproachfully, unblinkingly. I give him the finger and zip the suitcase back up, leaving a hole to let the air out.



I'm still kinda mad at him. I can vaguely remember our argument. I was a little drunk, he was very drunk, I made an offhand remark about him being too bossy, always acting like he's better than us, et cetera et cetera. Heated words were exchanged, he pushed me and I stabbed him twice in the chest and three or four times in the stomach. Now I have to sacrifice my social life to get rid of the body. I look back at the seagull. It's staring at me again. 'No one will believe you,' I say to it, pointing the knife I keep in my pocket at it to accentuate the threat. I have to embrace the menacing murderer persona sometimes. The seagull keeps staring at me. Whatever. I kick Cillian's suitcase into the sea and watch it sink, water bubbling in. The seagull flies away. The air gets slightly colder, so I huddle up into my bulky coat and turn back towards town. Cillian's disembodied voice speaks in my head. 'Damn you, psycho.'

My mood sours a little. I get called insane way too much. Sometimes it's because I'm just strange. Mostly it's by people I'm murdering, which means they only really see one facet of my personality. I'm more than my killing sprees, though. I'm funny, sensitive, and thoughtful. I play the guitar. I'm six feet tall. I'm working on self-control, which means slip-ups like this where I let temptation get the better of me are gonna happen a lot less often. I'm not gonna STOP killing, like, 'cause it's what I do, it's my thing, it's a great stress relief, but you know. Everything in moderation.

My phone keeps buzzing as I walk off the pier. I yawn beneath my scarf. I'll never understand how Lauren can stay up this late. She must be some kind of psychopath.

Benjamin Phillips

The Photo

He claps the book shut. Blinks. He forgot he had left that in there the photo. Even with the quick glance he got of it before he swiftly shut it away, he can feel the warmth of the wind, feel the sand beneath his feet, and see the woman who had stood to his right. He blinks slowly again, and folds open the book once more, although making a point to not look as he picks the photo up and slips it into his pocket. Then, finding himself regretting even picking up the book to read in the first place the book that had been her favourite, to be precise he stands from the plump, orange armchair, and slots it back into its spot on the bookshelf.

In fact, it is all so overwhelming that he finds himself needing to leave the sitting room. He briskly bolts from the room, shutting the door behind him, and inhales deeply to try and calm himself as he removes his hand from the doorknob. He walks through the dim hallway dim like everything these days and into the kitchen. He walks over to the stove, ducking his tall head to avoid the hanging pots and pans, and grabs for the kettle. He makes his way to fill it up at the kitchen sink, and glances out of the window in front of him. Although it is April, and the sun is shining through the evening breeze, everything seems to have a chill to it, even the apple tree right ahead. It has been that way ever since it had a head of long, brown hair sitting under it with a book.

He promptly shuts off the tap and moves to boil the kettle, running a hand through his blonde hair in frustration at his silly mood. As it begins to boil, he searches for the teabags. God, where are they? Can this house even be a home if there is no tea, he thinks? He moves for one of the more neglected cupboards, suddenly remembering the emergency stash, but when he opens it, it is as though the only thing in there is the pill bottle. The painkillers. He can now only hear the beep of a life support machine and smell the sanitised stench of hospital.

He bangs the cupboard shut, strides across to the back door, and shoves himself out, trying to get the air to move into his lungs. His hands are moving everywhere, his neck, his chest, as if to claw an airway open. Suddenly, his hand lands on his trouser pocket, and he feels it. The photo. He shuts his eyes and slips his hand in to touch it. Not to look, just to touch. He can remember the contents of the photo as clear as day through memory. He feels the jagged edges of it, worn by time and homes inside the pages of various books. When he opens his eyes again, everything is as clear as day. The nose-nipping, salty Irish seaside is re-



placed by the blazing Moroccan desert. The sound of silence but for the crashing of the waves below is replaced by the sound of laughter and a camera flashing. And the biting loneliness he has felt ever since the day her life was cut short is replaced by a soft arm around his waist and the smell of lavender, and it was like she was still there with him, posing for the photo

Niamh Grehan



The Forest's Picturesque Heart

Morning slips in with a gentle gold,
warming the leaves in every fold.
Birdsong lifts to greet the day,
as sunlight pushes the dark away.

Here in the forest, the leaves take flight,
Spinning wildly in morning light,
Dancing softly through the trees,
Twisting and turning with graceful ease.

A mighty waterfall roars with power,
crashing down hour after hour.
Its voice has echoed through the years,
through sunny days and stormy fears.

Ancient trees stand tall and wide,
quiet guardians side by side.
Their cool shade gently wraps around,
a peaceful calm without a sound.

Dry leaves crackle under my feet,
their crunchy rhythm light and neat.
They dance away in golden streams,
like tiny ships in forest dreams.

Animals run through autumn's bright leaves,
swift as the wind that blows through the trees.
They hurry past with silent grace,
vanishing quickly without a trace.

Tall trees tower like clever thieves,
stealing sunlight through woven leaves,
casting patterns on the forest floor,
a living world I can't ignore.

The forest hums with whispered songs,
a secret choir that's lived here long.
Each note drifts softly through the air,
a lullaby beyond compare.

As twilight spreads its hue,
forest glows in silver-blue.
Stars peek down through branches high,
watching the woods beneath the sky.

Zoe Wang

Rainbow

The world is a rainbow
Full of lots of people
It doesn't matter if you are different
Everyone is kind and nice
The world is a rainbow
Choose your favourite colour
My favourite is red.

Ayako Quinn

La Patrie

C'est beau la patrie
C'est sacré
Sacrée pour ses personnes
Sacrée pour sa vie
Sa vie, c'est pacifique
Sa vie, c'est sa culture
Sa culture qui garde son histoire
Sa culture incarne ses gens
Les gens gentils
Les gens font la patrie.

Zoë McCarroll

The War of the World

The armies of the great ant nations converged at the Pass of Huns; the black carpenters and the red harvesters rushed toward the fire-ants and the white footed ants what ensued was the deadliest battle in ant history. The geography of the Pass makes its large cliffs on both sides of the pass with large crevices and cracks that are almost impossible to see, for the grey complexion of the walls and large shadows cast by massive boulders on the top that hang over so much that by the slightest touch they would all go tumbling down eviscerating anything in their way, make it all blend in and impossible to see anyone up there. Meanwhile in the flat bottom of the pass the armies finally met each other in the centre of the canyon. on the carpenters' side the positioned their largest soldiers in a triangle shape in the front with their best poison sprayers in-between them, so when the smashed into the enemy they would part them in two then spread chaos with their poison, causing the other side to lose all cohesion, so the red harvesters could sweep in from the wings and clear out the remaining resistance. The fire-ants had a more defensive plan; they would set up defensive positions all over the pass to hold the enemy at bay while their special forces would be at the top of the canyon and sneak behind the carpenters and surprise the red harvesters, who were more incompetent, with their allies the moths who would help airlift parts of the main army behind enemy lines to help with the assault.

Two days after the arrival of the armies to the Pass of Huns, the general of the black carpenters was getting tired of waiting for the arrival of two more divisions of red harvesters who would help to make sure the fire ants couldn't flank their forces. They had gotten stuck in a swamp a few miles away and were getting bogged down by around 750 white footed ants, Ruffley 1 division, who were sent as a guerrilla force to stop more forces to come to the aid of the carpenters. All this made the general very annoyed, as if all went to plan, they wouldn't have to worry about getting encircled, so that evening he launched his attack, the massive black carpenters overwhelmed the first row of defences and cut a massive hole in the fire ants lines, but they failed to scatter them so the fire-ants managed to take up positions in crevices and in the third trench line. The next day the fire-ants launched a counterattack and forced the black carpenters back to the second trench line, while fire-ants took the second defensive line, it was deadlock, though fighting continued in the large crevices on the cliffs.

By the morning the fire-ants secured a path up through the crevices to the special forces and it was planned that the next day would be when the moths and the special forces launched an attack in the back which would coincide with a large offensive in the trench line. The next day at 3:00 AM a white footed soldier ran into the fire-ant general's fort; it told the general that the 2 divisions of red harvesters had finally made it out of the swamp and if they didn't launch an offensive on the black carpenters now then by morning the enemy would have too many troops and the general's forces wouldn't be able to stop the overwhelming forces on the enemies side, for three more divisions of harvesters had joined up with the existing two divisions, so that they now numbered some 3750 ants.

That night at 4:30 the fire-ants launched an attack on the black carpenters in trench line two and forced them back into the space between the second trench line and the first defensive line. Meanwhile in the top of the canyon the special forces started to sneak behind the red harvesters. By 5:30 the black carpenters were pushed into the first defensive line but had halted the fire-ant's advance, but in the back of the pass the fire-ants and the moths had transported three more divisions into the back of the pass. At 6:00AM the five divisions of red harvesters launched an attack on the fire-ant's special forces decimating them and forcing the remaining ants up to the top of the canyon, the now overwhelming forces of the carpenters forced the fire-ants out of the pass and victory seemed assured.

7:00 AM

30 fire-ant soldiers and 3 moths picked up a stone, they flew over the top of the canyon and dropped it on the rocks. The rock fell on the armies of the black carpenters.

Declan Morrison

The Past

The past is a lantern with a flickering flame
Lighting old pathways like a memory lane
Old days go new ones come while
It lives in the dust of unopened doors,
In echoes that hum through forgotten floors
The footprint stays while wind still whistles and blows
A silent murmur while the day still passes and goes
Soft with the shimmer of half-forgot light
lingers in dust, in laughter, in things I did that would stay
A shadow on my shoulder, gently pulling and guiding me though the way
So, I walk on ahead, with the dark the shadows and the gleam,
letting yesterday fade and ombré into part of the dream.
The sun setting with a smile laughter and gleam
The past doesn't pull me it quickly and quietly stays,
A lantern behind me, softly lighting me along my way.

Scarlett O'Halloran



In der Morgenröte

In der Morgenröte
In der aufgehenden Sonne

Sonne scheint
Sonne besetzt den Himmel

Ein Himmel voller Vögel, die singen
Ein Himmel für die Ohren und Augen

Augen sehen das Rote Meer
Augen sehen die Schönheit

Schönheit für den Geist
Schönheit für die Seele

Fin Nolan



La Rose Bleue

La rose dans le vase est bleue comme l'eau
La rose est morte
Morte comme si elle avait été tuée de l'intérieur
Morte dans le vase blanc
Le vase blanc est en sécurité ont-ils dit
Le vase blanc avait une fissure
La fissure s'est agrandie
La fissure laisse fuir l'eau
L'eau était rouge
L'eau n'avait pas le parfum de roses.

Sole Poretti

Morgengrauen

Alles ist bedeckt in dem Morgengrauen
Morgengrauen macht düster
Der Himmel ist von Nebel bedeckt
Im Nebel sehe ich die Sonne
Die Sonne symbolisiert Hoffnung
Hoffnung auf den Frühling
Ich fühle mich erwartungsfroh
Ich fühle mich jetzt zufrieden im Morgengrauen
Im Morgengrauen

Sam Legge

Le Soleil en Irlande

En Irlande le soleil est doux
Il brille sur la mer et sur nous
Les collines sont vertes et radieuses
Avec de la faune partout

Les gens sont amicaux et fiers
De leurs pays, leur culture et leur esprit
Même quand le ciel n'est pas toujours bleu
Le coeur d'Irlande reste joyeux.

Georgia Beatty

Belle Comme Toi

Le soleil illumine la forêt
Le soleil se reflète dans mes yeux
Mes yeux, bleus comme la mer
Mes yeux qui plongent dans les tiens
C'est toi dont je rêve
C'est toi avec qui j'aimerais danser sur la lune
La lune que je regarde avec toi
La lune qui sourit avec les étoiles
Les étoiles, mon amour
Les étoile belles comme toi.

Nika Harte

Pluie éternelle

C'est la pluie qui tombe
C'est mon problème
Mon problème, mes cheveux mouillés
Mon problème, mes vêtements trempés
Trempe comme tout autour
Trempe comme une goutte dans la mer
La mer qui frappe le rivage
La mer qui prend et ne rend pas
Pas de pluie
Pas d'oubli.

Carolina Gaspar



The Death in War

War is one of the many forms of Death and Death is what lurks around us. Throughout the day, night and in the middle of big fights. Through the trenches, through the lines, even in places where you think we can hide. When the sun rises its shine is a hopeful light and the sounds you can hear are not to be pleased with love, for death is what makes us run in fright. In the lines on the fields the firing shells are shot through our ears. Death is what brings us many tears. 'Bang' instant seconds life is heard, and 'Bang' instant seconds death has won. In the fields where friends have fallen in the lines where many lie longing to go home to happy families but many fail with fallen legs.

Losing hope from head shot friends trying to think of home again. Lying down to an eternal sleep. Gunshot soldiers who can't retreat, they are the ones who now have to leave.

Death laughs when guns are shot, and bombs are dropped around us, but Death laughs in joy most when many are lost, we are like a lonely bird waiting for the guns to be heard trying to run from deaths grasp until our hopeless live are gone at last.

Shiv Aggarwal

A Good Day For It

The heat poured from the sky onto his face and forearms, and he lay stretched out in the chair, clouds bathing above him, white and buoyant. The grass before him was long and languid and dew-tipped, and it hummed with insects as it swayed in the breeze. The air was thick with flies. The sun glinted and caught on his lashes, making lazy circular rainbows. And the dog snored beside him.

It lay on the wooden deck, its head resting on its outstretched legs. Knobby, and grey, with no fur save tiny strands that stuck out from its body like hay. Its ribs rising and falling with every snorted breath. The man stroked the back of its head and its ears twitched. Skin warm and so thin he could feel its skull. Asleep, as it always was. Thirteen years old. When was the last time it had climbed down the steps into the grass? He looked away. He would kill the dog today. He would kill the dog today.

Edward Cahill

Shadows

Alone. A word she had become more familiar with than she would have liked. It followed her around, persistent, like a shadow she could not lose. Days passed her by, nothing more to offer than the same mundane scenes as the days before. She watched as they passed, one by one, the sun rising and falling, waiting for the slightest glimpse of anything new on the horizon. She was unsure, lost, confused but she could not explain it. She moved through her days as if she was rehearsing someone else's role, someone else's part, that she desperately wished they could play themselves. The kettle boiled, the clock ticked and the shadows moved, as they did every day, going unnoticed.

She had never really understood why she wasn't as happy as the others. Everyone she encountered seemed to have stories they were eager to share, but she never had one of her own. She just nodded and listened as they told theirs, letting them float aimlessly in one ear and out the other. Maybe that was why she didn't have many friends, she never really paid too close attention. She didn't see the point. She always thought that life revolved around her. That her story was the one which others were supposed to want to know, but no one ever did, and she never had anything to tell. She tried countless times to figure out what her story was, her purpose, but she always felt something was missing.

She never noticed that other people had their own problems and joys, and definitely wasn't aware of the fact that life was happening all around her, not just for her. She had always sought after the quiet, unoccupied spaces where she could go unnoticed. She felt safe there, as if she could hide away from the rest of the world, the only thing bringing her entertainment was watching her shadow twist and turn with the passing of the sun.

But then one day, she stopped, just long enough to notice the shadows moving independently as clouds passed her high above, realising none of them belonged to her. A baby duckling taking the first plunge, showing a life separate from her own, thriving without an audience. Maybe life didn't just happen for her, maybe, just maybe, all this time, it had been happening all around her, without her ever noticing.

For years, she had assumed that life happened around her, waiting to be watched. That her story, even if it wasn't much, was the whole story. She was the centre of existence. She had never noticed that life was everywhere around her, there for her to see. Even in the shadows and the quiet



moments, things were living complex, colourful, imperfect lives, adapting to the surroundings, just like she did. A sapling breaking through the pavement, raindrops racing down a car window or an out-of-tune piano being played for the first time in years. Turns out, life is more than meets the eye, and she in fact, was not alone, she just had to open her eyes to see. And when she did, she discovered a bundle of stories, unfolding alongside her own, adding to hers as each day passed. And suddenly, she didn't feel so alone.

Norah Tinney

Fernandez

In a town where neighbours are treated like family and front doors are left open to welcome the outside world, the line between friend and foe is often difficult to discern.

Far from such places, on a small sand-swept island off the coast of Mexico, the foundations of the powerful Fernandez family were laid. Their story began generations earlier with Miguel Fernandez, a Spanish soldier who fled not only war, but the man he had become within it. Miguel had not always been a coward, nor a deserter. Born into a wealthy Spanish family, he had set out dutifully with explorers in search of gold and glory, hoping to expand his family's fortune. But upon arrival in the New World, he found not riches, but ruin. The skies hung heavy with grey clouds, and the land itself seemed soaked in blood. The pursuit of wealth came at the cost of countless lives, and Miguel, tasked with tending horses and patching wounds, bore witness to it all.

Homesickness consumed him. Thoughts of his pregnant wife, Sofia, and their young daughter gnawed at his resolve. His hands, no matter how often he scrubbed them with soap and vinegar as Sofia had once instructed, remained stained. Blood clung stubbornly beneath his nails, impossible to distinguish between that of friend or enemy. It became a symbol of his guilt, a mark he could not wash away. The violence surrounding him began to seep inward, threatening to reshape him into something unrecognisable.

One night, under the relentless hum of mosquitoes, Miguel made his decision. Claiming he needed air, he slipped away from camp and into the suffocating dark of the jungle. He knew of a small trading port some distance away a place where ships came and went carrying exotic goods, letters, and the possibility of escape. After hours of running along algae-choked shores, he reached it. There, among hardened sailors whose skin was etched with salt, scars, and stories of survival, Miguel saw opportunity. These men feared little not the sea, nor the law. They lived for danger, collecting it like trophies. To them, life was not burdened by guilt or longing, but driven by adventure. Miguel approached them with a vision.

He spoke of an uninhabited island, distant enough to evade both the Spanish authorities and indigenous resistance. A place where they could build something new free from war, free from consequence. He promised land, riches, and freedom. At first, they were sceptical. But when he added the promise of Spanish women, fine wine, and the spoils of a new civilisation, their interest turned to



eagerness. An agreement was struck. Half of the men would remain behind to search for this promised island and prepare it. The others would sail to Spain, carrying Miguel's letter to Sofia and returning with his family, along with others willing to abandon their old lives. When the letter reached Sofia, she was in the courtyard of her home, enduring the relentless heat of a dry summer. The earth beneath her feet had cracked into a mosaic of dust, lifeless and brittle. Though heavily pregnant, she refused to rest, determined to maintain her duties despite her mother-in-law's protests. The arrival of the letter changed everything. Overcome with emotion, Sofia went into labour and, within the hour, gave birth to three daughters. Each child bore the unmistakable features of the Fernandez line: olive skin, heart-shaped freckles, and striking green eyes that seemed almost unnatural in their brightness. Exhausted but resolute, Sofia read Miguel's words. His longing mirrored her own. Though he could not return without disgrace, he offered her a future a new home, a paradise far from the decay of their current world. She did not hesitate. Driven by love and a powerful sense of purpose, Sofia began to prepare for the journey. She gathered not just companions, but builders of a new society: seamstresses, bakers, farmers, midwives, and healers. Women who could transform Miguel's promise into something real. Some of the sailors, now bound by ambition and desire, took Spanish wives, securing dowries of gold and livestock to support their venture. The ship, old and weath-



ered, was loaded with hope, desperation, and ambition. None aboard fully understood the reality of what awaited them. Back across the ocean, Miguel and the remaining men struggled. They hid from patrols, worked through suffocating nights, and searched relentlessly for a place worthy of his vision. The land they encountered was harsh thick with insects, rot, and unrelenting heat.

It was Roberto, one of the sailors, who finally broke from the group. Driven to exhaustion, he ran for miles along the coastline, desperate to escape the oppressive conditions. When he could run no further, he plunged into the sea. As dawn broke, he saw it. On the horizon, an island shimmered beneath streaks of orange and pink sky. A vivid green cut through the distance like a promise. Summoning the last of his strength, Roberto swam toward it. What he found felt like a miracle.

The sand was soft and white, untouched by the decay of the mainland. The air was clean. There were no swarms of insects, no stench of algae or rot. The land was rich with fruit-bearing trees, and wildlife roamed freely birds, boar, and other creatures thriving in quiet abundance. For the first time in months, Roberto slept undisturbed, unafraid. When he returned to Miguel, his story reignited hope. At last, the vision had substance. The island was real.

And soon, it would no longer be untouched.

Mabel Forsyth

Beer Belly, Bell Banging Bob Bamboozles the crowd and steals the show!

Last Saturday night there was a jaw-dropping appearance from the Irish supporter Bob Flanagan when he stepped into the spotlight to take the place of Troy Parrot after he snapped his leg in half going in for a header.

It was a shaky start from Ireland, and in the first ten minutes Tomáš Souček scored an absolute TAP-IN at the back post and shushed the crowd as his celebration. All Irish fans were disappointed, but the singing seemed to just get louder and louder, and the chants just kept on going on. Fights had broken out between Irish supporters and Czechia supporters in the North stands and in the heat of the moment Ireland made a quick break towards the Czechia goal just for Troy Parrot to be blinded by Irish midfielder Will Smallbone's shiny head and miss the ball, The Czechia goalkeeper Matěj Kovář picked up the ball and started a counter attack by sending an absolute missile of a pass towards the Irish goal which was controlled on the chest of Václav Černý and smashed into the top corner which left a deadly silence between all the Irish fans. As all the Irish fans were about to accept being knocked out of the World Cup when they heard that unmistakable DING, DING, DING sound of Bob's bells lifting everyone's spirits to the roof.

Half time was an evenly matched game going end to end with Ireland hitting the post and the crossbar while very nearly conceding yet another goal. It was nearing the 67th minute when young superstar Troy Parrott went up for a header just to be absolutely demolished by the Czechia bench warmer who had just come on, Patrik Hellebrand. Troy Parrott was then brought off in a stretcher and taken straight to hospital while Patrik Hellebrand was given a straight red card and was booed off the pitch by both teams' fans and players. That was when Irish manager, Heimir Hallgrímsson announced to the public that there was a deadly virus going around the Ireland dressing rooms and they needed someone from the crowd to sub in for the severely injured Troy Parrott. Every single Irish fan turned their mind to one man in particular, Bell Banging Bob!

It was quite a scene to watch as Bob stumbled drunkenly onto the pitch with a cup of beer in one hand and a cigar in the other, everyone new deep down that the long-awaited World Cup dreams were over in the hands of this mess but on the outside, they looked like they believed. The ball came to Bob just inside the halfway and BANG! He completely walloped the with is eyes closed

and his mouth open with drool flinging everywhere just to hit the crossbar, rebound onto the keeper's head and smash the back of the net at a gazillion mph with a flat-out cold Czechia goalkeeper lying motionlessly on the floor in front of the goal.

That was all the Irish fans needed to go berserk and start throwing beer cans everywhere knocking out the occasional unlucky innocent civilian caught in the crossfire. The match was now 2-1 and the belief was back. In the next 2 minutes the ball got back to Bob, and everyone watched mouths wide open as he rainbow-flicked the next 2 defenders and smashed it top bins!!!

The crowd were on their feet as bob rolled back to the halfway line ready for kick off. On the 93rd minute, Irish right winger Ebosele Zesty dribbled down the wing and took a shot... EBOSELE ZESTY totally slices it, but it lands at the feet of the one and ONLY Will Smallbone who then passed the ball to BOB who proceeded to dribble the whole team and do the most fantastic FLOP, which one him a penalty. At that point the whole crowd were chanting Bob's name, but he wouldn't get up. Nathan Collins called for medical attention immediately and a whole team of medics went on to help their hero just to find out that Bob was fast asleep and was unable to woken up!

All over Ireland people were screaming at their televisions trying to wake him up but nothing would work, but that was when the magic happened, Bob started to get up and walk eyes closed towards the penalty spot and proceeded to start the longest run up you have ever seen, the ref blew his whistle and Bob ran forward, brought his leg back and ... tapped the ball over the still unconscious Czechia goalkeeper into the back of the net. GOAL!

Through all the cheers and cries of the fans you were able to hear the final whistle blow and the game was over! Ireland had won the match! Bob was then carried motionlessly off the pitch with songs of his name left behind him.

24-year-old Danno Kelly was kind enough to give us his thoughts about the game, and I quote 'What a game that was, I never would have expected Bob to be any good at football, but that was some performance'.

Robert Gallagher

The Heir : Part II: Consequences

Hot, humid, and heavy. Hot, humid, and heavy. Those were the three words echoing dimly around Cyrus's head as he slumped drunkenly along an old column draped with ivy. He never remembered how he came to wake here, nor did he think about what his goal was. Hot, humid, and heavy, kept drumming in his head in a slow sonorous drumbeat. Never in all his life had Cyrus hated a place more. The vast forest draped itself in a warm, damp blanket that drew all the strength from a person's body and only left exhausted shells behind. He seldom remembered how it felt to be cooled now; the heat beat down endlessly, sweat pouring in rivers down his spine. Swarms of stinging flies accompanied him, leaving bloody pricks and swollen lumps. Enormous canopy eagles hovered overhead for hours waiting for him to collapse. Tall verdant trees and endless foliage blended into one green hell. But the pain was the worst of it. Cyrus never saw the enormous basilisk draped on that tree, until its long fangs bit down on his arm. The injury wasn't much as first, a mere graze, but once the venom set in his arm became a deformed mass of brown flesh and sick smells. That was when he knew that he would never leave this forest alive. Day carried to night, and night to day in an endless cycle of exhaustion and agony. As he began to black out again, Cyrus knew he was waiting for the end.

'This one may still have a pulse.'

Cyrus raised his head; he had drifted again. His eyes were working poorly, and he could only make out two dark outlines standing before him.

'Leave it to rot, I say, or give Morgai someone new to play with. This one failed in its duties.' The figure's voice was high and irritating, making Cyrus feel unnaturally angry even in his sorry state.

'No, no, you mistake me dear Elmor; he may have a use in court,' the first voice replied. 'The decision to keep all our allies on one measly vessel, and the manner of the Heir's escape, makes them wonder about our loyalties. Always good to have a scapegoat.'

Cyrus attempted to look at the two strangers, but he could hardly see; his vision was blurred; everything appeared like a distorted green picture. The disdainful one began speaking again.

'You'll find a better scapegoat from whatever manner of reptile lives this far south. A basilisk maybe? I believe our dear Cyrus has seen the potency one can find in serpent venom. Whatever took the Heir has more in common with those beasts than Cyrus here.'

The venom. Sudden exhaustion caught up to him again with the mention of the serpent. This time Cyrus expected to see beyond the doors of death. 'Oh, dear he appears to be dying.'

The statement washed over him, and he did not care. He was leaving the world; nothing else mattered now.

He awoke in darkness. His first thought was that he was in the afterlife. Nothing but shadows greeted his eyes. But blinking again, Cyrus found that he could perceive some surroundings. Or rather a lack of them. A large black door with intricate brass work loomed only a few feet away. Two lamps emitting a queer grey light stood embedded into either side of the doorframe. Everything else was pure darkness, except for a small table holding a pair of dark leather gloves, and a tall man standing next to them. No one had ever looked more like a long evening shadow in that strange grey light. Suddenly, far below some beast bellowed in vehement anger, echoing like thunder around the empty room. He swallowed, his dry throat working up some courage to speak.

'Am I in the afterlife?'

The figure seemed surprised to hear his voice.

'Oh, not yet. You are in a very special place; one I thought you might recognize.'

'The Council Hall,' Cyrus said suddenly, craning his neck to see the familiar cavernous hall where he and his men had stayed months past.

'Yes, back to where it started, but now I'm afraid I must depart. You of course have some inkling of why you're here?' A humourless chuckle came from somewhere.

'Failure is failure, and you are about to find out what it truly means to swear an oath to the Order.'

A sudden pale hand appeared before the desk and began to fit on those dark, supple gloves. Cyrus, starting to panic at the thought of what being abandoned in this dark place might entail, struggled to sit up, some unseen weight holding him down. He looked pleadingly into where he thought a shaded face might be.

'I have always served your Order faithfully,' he said desperately, 'I travelled across the world looking for that man, that Heir. I never questioned you, never your motives, and I have always done what was required. Release me and allow me to prove the worth I have already displayed to the Order.'

Silence greeted Cyrus's begging. It lasted so long he half wondered if the man had even heard him.

'Words might have saved you if only those you served cared enough. However, Cyrus, you chose the wrong side.'

The man turned, his long dark coat swaying suddenly in the light as he walked briskly away. His features, illuminated for that moment, unmistakably those of the Heir. As he left, Cyrus felt the shadows around him grow restless.





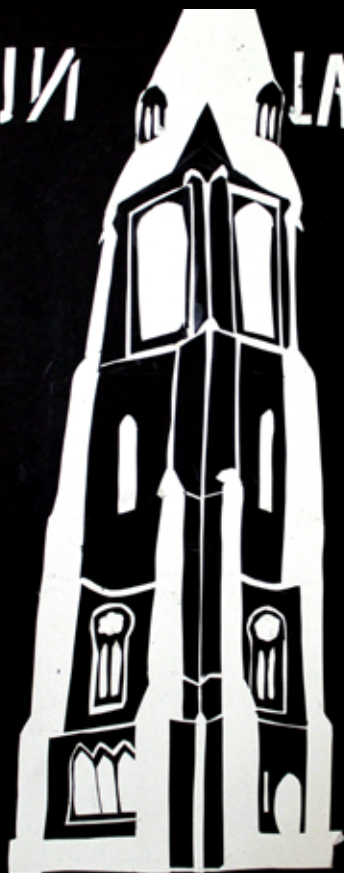
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LAOGHAIRE



BRADY



For our friends, Margaret and Andy

