



**LONG  
ROAD** SIXTH FORM  
COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

# Long Road

*Writes...*



ASSOCIATION  
OF COLLEGES

Creative Writing Project

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# The Project

In December 2021, Long Road students took part in a creative writing project, in partnership with the Association of Colleges. This magazine is to share some of the wonderful writing produced as part of the project.

## Editor's note

*The work you'll read here is largely unedited. This was not a test of spelling/punctuation; it was about expressing ideas and feelings freely and creatively. I've only changed a few words for clarity, so you might spot some errors. Occasionally I have added a title, if the writer didn't originally include one.*

# The Brief

The project was completely open: entrants could write about whatever topic they chose, in whatever form they wanted. We received poems, short stories, long stories, parts of novels, articles, personal writing, and even some powerpoint presentations (which unfortunately I couldn't find a way to include in this magazine!)

Some students took one of these prompts as their starting point:

“I remember...”

“What the world needs is...”

“I knew my life would change for ever...”

“When we met...”

“We're running out of time...”

And others started with their own ideas and inspirations!

You might notice some pieces of writing that start out with the same idea or line, then explore it in different ways!

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# Prizewinners

While this was not a competition in the sense of awarding 1st, 2nd, 3rd prizes, we did want to commemorate the amazing work our students produced. We have chosen 5 pieces of writing to receive the following category prizes- it was a really tough decision!

## **Best character**

Tim Bull's short story 'Escape from the Lock'

## **Best writing about an issue**

Jennifer Wolfe's poem 'Dysclimate'

## **Best plot twist**

Akaziwe Bafanah's short story, 'Psychic Daughter'

## **Most moving writing**

Elisha Reyes' World War I inspired writing,  
'The Deepest Sleep'

## **Most informative**

Eddie Jackson's article, 'Ableism in Society'

# Escape from the Lock

by Tim Bull

**PRIZE:  
BEST  
CHARACTER**

The water here is cold. That's what everyone says, but you can never really understand what they mean until you're in the water. Until you stand under the shower and feel the water, the water feels like a shot of ice down your spine. If it was any colder it would be ice. I've only been at the Lock for a week, but when I first felt the water, I almost screamed. Standing under water felt like hell. It was really really cold. I'm used to it now, having been here a month now. I just brace myself. Go in and go out, always shivering, but always at least a little bit cleaner.

Toto's always waiting outside, him and his waggy tail and crazy sniffing, I don't know what I would do without him. He has been there since I got into this place, with its loud corridors and patchy walls. It's warm, but cold. Colourful, but dull. Comforting but terrifyingly unstable. I don't know why I'm here. All the adults say that it's because I was in some sort of accident.

I don't know what they mean. Other than a scratch on my shoulder I have no memory or confirmation of an accident. I don't know why I'm here, I don't think anyone knows. Erie says she's here because her mom burned down her home. I don't believe her, that sounds a bit too crazy. But I mean I guess nothings much of a surprise to me anymore. The things I see sometimes make me think that what she says is normal. No one ever tells me why I'm here, I hate it. I want to know, I want to understand what happened. What accident, what happened to me, why am I here, why am I seeing faces in the sky. Jerold says all of us are in a simulation. He says we are all in here because we have the ability to break from the simulation. Were a danger he says, that's why we are here. I don't believe him, if we are a danger why don't they just get rid of us? If I was them, I would just shoot us all off to heaven. Erie says society is scared of us so that's why we are in here. I asked toto, but I don't speak dog so all his barks were just gibberish to me. I have a plan on how I might find out how I got here, but ill have to escape first. I don't like it here, it's cramped and uncomfortably crowded with too many people I can't understand. Toto and Erie are some of the few people in my life I understand.

Though I don't speak dog, toto is always there when I feel down, always there to bark and yip and tell me it's ok. I don't really know where toto came from. His furs a deep dark brown, and his eyes are deep and black, and his little tail stub always wiggles around when he gets excited.

He's barking at me now actually, he always likes to go outside and play fetch after I've finished showering. He loves playing it but he's quite bad at it. I always throw the stick, he chases it, but then instead of bringing it back to me he just stands there waiting for me to collect it and throw it again. It's kind of like a treasure hunt for him.

Usually he doesn't even find the stick I threw. I run over and he's standing in from of the wrong stick. He still always expects me to throw it again, he doesn't care and neither do I.

Today is the day I plan on telling Erie about my plan to get out of here breakfast so it time for us all to come inside. The corridors are loud, too loud. Thankfully Jerold's nowhere in sight, he always likes to

push me around when we go for breakfast. I'm not sure why, he says it's because he finds me annoying, but I don't know what I've done wrong. Toto runs by my side as we walk into the cafeteria and it's just as noisy as ever, to many kids, too much noise. I see Erie, grab a plate of food and run over.

"So, I heard you had a plan to leave again." Last time we tried to leave the adults caught us and we weren't allowed to leave our rooms for a week. I begin to explain, "Yes, I do. A great plan, that'll be better than all the others that came before."

Erie, rolls her eyes and continues to wolf down her food, she reminds me off when Toto eats.

"Ok, so unlike last time, I now know that the adults will stay up till around 12 to 1ish, then they all sleep. Last week I stayed up till 2 and by then I couldn't hear anyone anymore. So, if we sneak out of our rooms and leave through the corridor and out the front window, we could escape."

Erie now looks interested. Her eyebrows are sticking up like Toto's ears when he hears he's getting a treat. In fact he's yapping at me right now, I think he wants some of my bacon. I tear of a piece and place it down in front of him. He likes to lick the food you give him, he never even eats it usually he just likes to lick it. Erie looks at me funny and then stares at me intensely, "So, what will we do when we escape. You have a plan, but what's the goal." I try to speak, but my tongue gets twisted, my head starts to hurt. I speak, "I want to leave this place. My mind hurts with all the noise. Every night I can hear the cars making there honking beeping and rumbling, it's too much. I want to leave and find a place that's quite, thars nice warm and kind to my mind. We can escape, by that station. Its open all night, always making noise, we could get on and get away from here." Erie's face settles, her eyes drift to the table. She whispers, "Your right. How about this, instead of waiting for later, let's leave, tonight."

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"Toto, Toto, come on, shuuushh shuushh. It's ok, quietly now." The corridors are silent, Erie and me planned to meet at the front window. The floorboards are kind to me. I can hear, something, a mumbling, maybe it's me, I might be mumbling. Its dark, the moon is cut in half, kind of like a cookie.

The mumbblings getting louder, Way louder, to loud, my ears are starting to ache, colours are flashing before my eyes, Toto, is changing. I stumble. The floorboards scream. I gasp for breath. Toto, is back to normal. I hear, a noise a murmur. My head swims, but I know I need to move, fast. I scurry down the corridor. The murmuring gets louder, I see Erie, she has the keys, the window is open, I bolt toward her. The corridor bursts in chorus as the floorboards snap and crack and cry. I finally reach Erie, "Ok Ill lift you up with my arms then you pull me up". I put out my palms, she leaps on them and pulls me up. I fall to the wet grass, the air, is cold. Then I remember Toto, he's still in the house.

The muttering has turned into shouting now. Erie is already running down the hill. "ERIE, WAIT" She quickly turns round confused. "Toto is still inside. We can't leave him." Erie's face deforms, her fear is plastered all over it, her mouth is in a conflicted slump. She shouts, "I'm sorry Reece, if we stay we'll get caught". What is she saying!? "ERIE, TOTOS STILL IN THERE!!" The chattering behind me is getting closer. Erie turns away, and runs, I scream, this wasn't part of the plan. How could she do this to me!! If that's her choice then fine. I turn quickly to the window. I jump to the window and lean down to see toto, he's waiting to be lifted up. I reach down and pull him up, he barks loudly. I hold him tight and run. Fast, as fast as I can. Down past the tree, past the bushes, past everything. I can't see Erie, she's left me now. I'm alone, toto is all I have left. I keep running, the wind is strong and it drowns out the screams of the people chasing behind me. I quickly stop to catch my breath and Toto drops down and turns to me, his eyes say it all, he doesn't understand what's going on, he doesn't know why were running why we left. "Was it right for you me to take you Toto? Is this not fair, should I have just left you in that place. It's warmer than out here, maybe, maybe Erie was right." Toto barks and then turns and runs. I hear the

teeth and chase after Toto. The cement feels brittle under my shoes and the air is frosty like ice. I see Toto, he's running toward the train station, the one we planned to leave on.

The train station is huge, there something menacing about the place, the trains are giant in size. And the tunnel where they come from is deep. Toto, is, nowhere, to be seen?? "TOTO???" he's not on the island platform where you can watch the trains from. Where is he?? I run up the steps to see, one or two people, but no toto. I quickly run into the stalls to the left he's not in there. My heart stops in my throat, there's only one other place he might be, I hear a man chattering confused and flustered "who's that boy" I run to the dip in the rails, the dreaded tracks that lead out of the tunnel.

Guess who's fallen on the tracks, Toto, I scream, loud. He looks ups, he's running in circles confused flustered, a woman comes over and tries to pull me away from the tracks, "what are you doing child, the train is coming, get away get away!!" I push ,myself and pull, but another arm grabs me and then another and I'm dragged away from the tracks in can hear toto, he's howling he's creaming for help but no one is helping I struggle and wriggle as much as I can but to no avail.

I feel a rumble in my gut, my stomach begins to swim, I hear the train. I see the light, I feel the engine plummet through the tunnel. And then, I a flash of metal and smoke surge through the tunnel. My eyes water, and my arms shake, the train moves on. The grip loosens for a split second, I charge for the tracks and look down. There's, no body, nothing, no toto, nobody, he gone, Toto is gone. I'm ounce again pulled away from the tracks, I can feels my arms flail, I can hear voices, some I know, some I don't. I can hear my voice, it's louder than all of them "toto, toto." Someone holds me close and says it's ok. Its, not. Toto is gone Erie is gone, I'm alone again, just like after the crash. Alone again.

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**NAME: Reece Stator Borig**

**Date of birth: 14th of January 2007**

**Condition: Schizophrenia**

**Taken into the "Alleys children's home" after a crash left his father and mother severely wounded. The only Casualty of the car crash, was the child's dog, Toto.**



# Dysclimate

by Jennifer Wolfe

**PRIZE:  
BEST WRITING  
ABOUT AN  
ISSUE**

A snakeskin of road, rushing of tyres  
That wind through the land of wildfires  
Too hot to breathe, to scream and cry  
    Fenced away we quietly die.  
Schools of plastic sail empty seas:  
Bags, bottlecaps, parts of SUVs,  
Held together with chains of zipties  
Succeeding millennia fail to prise  
    Roughened, the broken nails of time  
        Scratch markless through the microgrime.  
Axes, chainsaws, guns and blades  
Chop and fell, over countless decades  
Soon the only trees left in the land  
Are the metal pylons by which it is spanned.

# PSYCHIC DAUGHTER

*by Akaziwe Bafanah*

**PRIZE:  
BEST PLOT  
TWIST**

One night, Paul puts his little daughter to sleep and as he leaves the bedroom, he hears her praying. "God bless you, Grandpa, Mom, Dad and Grandma, rest in peace, Grandpa," she says. Paul runs back to the bedroom and asks, "Why did you say the last part?"

The daughter replies, "Because it is necessary." The next day, Grandpa dies of a heart attack. Paul is worried about his daughter, but thinks "it's just a coincidence". That night, he puts his daughter back to bed and hears her prayers again. "God bless you, Mom and Dad, rest in peace, Grandma," she says. Paul is now very worried and thinks, "Can my daughter really see the future?"

The next day her grandmother dies, and now Paul is convinced that her daughter can predict the future. Nothing happened for the rest of the week, but on Sunday night Paul leaves his daughter's bedroom to wait outside to hear new prayers. Of course he hears her say, "God bless you, Mom, rest in peace, Dad." Now Paul is really embarrassed and thinks, "Oh my God, I'm going to die tomorrow!" The next day, Paul is completely confused at work all day. Real nerves. He constantly looks at the clock and looks around his room, always standing on the brink of death, anticipating death at any time. He is so nervous that he doesn't leave his office until midnight.

At midnight he says to himself in relief: "How is this possible? I must die!" He walks into the house and when he enters the house he finds his wife sitting on the sofa with a terrified look on her face.

She asks him "Why so long?" Paul replies, "Baby, today wasn't my best day," and he tries to tell her what happened when she starts crying and said, "Yesterday I saw the postman die!"

# The Deepest Sleep

by Elisha Reyes

**PRIZE:  
MOST  
MOVING**

Cold, the coldness took over my body, like a puppet attached to string, instead of being played with I was thrown to the side, abandoned and left alone in the mud slowly withering away becoming one with the mud. The mud was my only comfort, seducing me with its warmth into a deep, deep sleep.

"Charge! Charge!" the faint shouts I could hear were slowly being replaced with a ringing sound, turning into a melody. I wanted to lift up my feet and dance, my mouth sculpted into a smile, "what were these feelings?" I started to question myself but was interrupted with a bright light, the light sang an angelic, comforting soft voice harmonising with the ringing sound creating an elegant song, closing my eyes focusing my attention more on the music slowly being hypnotised.

"Dad!" a voice quickly replaced the mesmerizing songs that filled my ears.

Out of curiosity I shifted my focus on this mysterious voice, my eyes started vomiting a stream of salty water, I was crying, crying not from sorrow but crying tears of joy. "Son!" I screeched out, spreading my wings like an eagle ready to take my son in. I cherished him in my arms having no intentions of letting go. "Dad! You're really back, you're really back!" he placed his soft petite hands on my face, caressing my face to see if it was really me. "It's me, yes it's me it's me!" I tripped on my words, not having a care in the world, placing my lips upon his soft cushioned cheek.

A woman with a floral flowy dress that hugged her body tight approached us, "you haven't forgotten about me have you?" the mysterious woman said in a sorrowful voice, I turned my head out of pity, my heart started to beat fast, bum, bum, bum, I could now hear it in my ears, my face painted with a rosy red and my eyes were in awe. I pulled her close without hesitation, we were now all one happy family back together again

"Dad don't ever leave us" I laughed in amusement "of course I won't" he said in return, "dad don't leave us", I now laughed again but in confusion "dad don't ever leave us" he repeated again, and again and again.

"DAD DON'T LEAVE US" a boy screamed that echoed throughout the hospital, "Doctor there must be something you can do...please I'm begging you" a women said in a pleading voice. Tears were flowing down her eyes that were covered with eye bags. "I'm sorry miss but there's nothing we could do" the doctor said leaving a trail of guilt exiting the room.

Warmth, was now the only feeling I felt, the bright light filled my body with euphoria and comforted me, I felt tired, my eyes hung low to the point where my eyes were now fully shut, the ringing was a lullaby I slowly fell asleep to, I was ready to go into a deep, deep sleep.

# Ableism in Society

by Eddie Jackson

**PRIZE:  
MOST  
INFORMATIVE**

**Ableism has always been an issue when it comes to the process of mental health disorders and society. However recently this has been a more frequently talked about issue due to the development of society. Having a diagnosis for autism and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) myself, I would like to show a first hand experience on how ableism can seriously affect someone just trying to live out their life.**

## **Lack of education, ignorance and dismissal.**

There has always been support handed out towards neurodiverse people although it depends on how useful that 'support' is.

For example, many years ago the lack of understanding in this world was astronomical and people did not have the education to understand mental disabilities. In example, if someone were to have a learning disability in the Victorian era, they may well have ended up in a mental institute due to their 'unstable conditions'.

Although of course this type of 'help' is not in place now there are certain companies that may have a similar effect to someone as a mental institute may have done.

This brings me on to my discussion about the famous autistic support group "Autism Speaks". Which is known to be an incredibly controversial support system for autistic people.

You may be aware that last year Sia released her own movie called 'Music'. This movie follows a non-verbal, autistic girl called Music. Sia also openly supports "Autism Speaks" in this movie. It is also important to acknowledge that the actress who played Music,

Maddie Ziegler is a neurotypical young women however she did refuse this role multiple times knowing how harmful it would be towards people. The reason she ended up accepting it was due to peer pressure from her mother and Sia herself who is known to be her Godmother. Through this information it is clear that Sia was very persistent on having Maddie play Music.

## **So why is this movie so damaging to the autistic community?**

To begin with it was very upsetting to hear that someone neurotypical was performing as a neurodivergent character. There are many neurodivergent actors spiraling around agencies who also get limited opportunities for roles compared to neurotypical people due to potential help being put in place. A good example would be the account 'chloeshayden' on TikTok who has brought up issues about Sia multiple times and is an autistic actor. On bringing up these issues, Sia was quick to respond by blocking her and ignoring the issues which Chloe had stated.

Upon casting Maddie, Sia got a lot of hate due to Maddie being neurotypical. In Sia's response she said that she had originally cast an autistic girl, however she did not react to the overall experience as well and was ultimately fired. First of all, there have been multiple convictions that this statement may be false, and it was Sia's way of getting out of being cancelled. Secondly, the whole statement in general was disgusting. If someone finds the experience

hard you edit it for them and make it more comfortable for them. If this is still not possible there is this knowledge that Sia could have just found another neurodiverse actor instead of making a beeline for Maddie.

This of course though is not the full issue of why Sia's movie is so controversial.

In some of the scenes Music is seen being restrained by her peers. This caused an outrage when the movie was first released. This is due to the knowledge that some people who are uneducated when it comes to the autistic spectrum will believe that this is the right procedure to carry out on someone. The particular method as well is a method which has known to be dangerous and can actually kill the person being restrained in certain situations. The method being used is a form of abuse and is not to be carried out upon anyone.

So why would Sia use that in a form of her own media? Sia is an open supporter of "Autism Speaks" and it is known that she would have gotten her information on autism from them.

However, it is a fact that needs to be stated on why "Autism Speaks" is such an awful corporation. "Autism Speaks" has a strong and powerful appearance over the community of autism, especially in America as it is the largest research community for autism in the US. There 'help' is there to reach out to families and people who have autism in an effort to support them within life.

"Autism Speaks" is a community that seeks a 'cure' for autism and views it as a 'disease' rather than understanding that it is due to differentiations in people's brains and the fact that it cannot as such be 'cured'.

A popular theory which has of course been proven fake in all reasonable studies and has scientifically been disproven is the idea that being vaccinated against potential threats can cause autism. This is not true. Autism is caused during pregnancy; hence you are born with it, it cannot be gained. However, for a long period of time "Autism Speaks" were trying to prove that autism was caused through vaccines and that people who protect themselves against viruses are more likely to have autism.

### **Why is all this information on Sia and "Autism Speaks" so harmful to the autistic community?**

This is due to how people with autism are treated in society. Neurotypical people who are uneducated pick up on this information as it is the easiest to acquire and this inevitably shapes them in to how they believe they should treat people who are within the autistic society. However, the worst part is due to when people with autism are diagnosed and how society treats them depending on this. If autism is picked up at a young age (around 1-6 years old) society is likely to act babyish towards the person with the diagnosis. This damages the directed persons mental growth as they aren't given the chance to mentally mature in the same way others are as society decides that they are less likely to be able to mature within life which is entirely incorrect.

So, what happens if someone is diagnosed later on in life? Most likely people ignore the diagnosis. They act as if it isn't there. Unlike the people who were coddled growing up, people with a later diagnosis were not so they had the time they needed to mature. Since they know how to live within society, the society deems that they do not need any extra support and expects them to act much more neurotypically than others. This is, in my opinion a really important issue as it shows that you are either overly protected or not looked out for enough which depending on the situation could be really mentally painful for the person experiencing society's response.

## Is it social media's fault?

As someone who is neurodiverse, I actively follow others on social media who also deal with neurodiversity but with other disabilities so that I can educate myself and make myself more aware on how others may be affected by a neurotypical stabilized world.

One of these I constantly look upon is Tourette's Syndrome. Though I do not have Tourette's myself, I have a friend who deals with it so I began researching it around a year ago so I could try to better understand what they have to deal with.

While scrolling through TikTok I came across a popular account called 'ThisTrippyHippie'. This was an account held by a girl named Evie who suffered from Tourette's syndrome. Her account was of her sharing her experiences and generally her just living her life and having fun.

So, what's wrong about a girl sharing her life and having a good time?

Recently there has been an increase in young people developing tic disorders. Tics are caused mainly to stress and pressure. An increase in Tic disorders among young people scientifically would be blamed upon schools. Due to COVID and the up rise within pressure from schools and workload, (this is ignoring the fact that family life may also be included in some circumstances) this would indicate that an increase in Tic disorders should be blamed due to schools and dealt with accordingly.

Are schools getting the blame though? No, social media is. In particular, Evie, 'ThisTrippyHippie'. During COVID the increase in people downloading TikTok became astronomical. Meaning that many young people were using and enjoying the features of this particular app. It also meant that current creators got a lot more gain on their account and publicity. It is also important to state that people who suffer with Tic disorders can quite easily pick up other people's verbal and physical Tics.

The rise in Tics ended up becoming so bad that the news got ahold of certain information. After following Evie for several months I have noticed that she has been getting multiple news articles fully blaming her for the increase in Tics among young people. But why her? Evie has a particular Tic which is quite regular and is noticeable in many of her videos.

The Tic in hand is her saying beans. As already mentioned people with Tic disorders can pick up on others Tics. The news also seems to have picked up on this as they have been mentioning an up rise in a 'beans Tic'. Where multiple people have the word beans as a particular Tic. Hence, the news are blaming Evie for it, which of course is not her fault.

There is however another issue with Tourette's Syndrome which is problematic on social media. This is the increase in people faking Tics. It is disgusting, mocking and ableist. Although it is normally very clear that people who are faking Tics are faking them. This is due to the fact that they are being very aggressive and overacting within their actions within a way which wouldn't be common with people who generally suffer with a Tic disorder. The people faking normally also do not show their face on social media and also talk about their 'disorder' in a very clout seeking way.

It is important however to give people the benefit of the doubt when presumed to be faking as this could be very damaging on them if they are diagnosed with a Tic disorder as they are very hard diagnosis's to live with.

So, why is blaming social media becoming an issue?

This is due to the fact that it is giving a bad prejudice towards Tourette's Syndrome and the people circling social media who talk about it and introduce their experiences to the world. It is also the fact that it is muting the real issues on why Tic disorders are becoming more common. The problem with this muting is that it is stopping people from being able to address the real issues in why there is an increase in Tics and then dealing with them correctly so that hopefully not as many people have to deal with them again.

### **My personal experiences with ableism.**

Having previously mentioned that I have autism and ADHD I would like to share my responses society has giving me while growing up in a neurotypical world.

My first real shock was the irony that I was lucky enough to receive my diagnosis' earlier this year. I had known for a while that there was a large chance I had these potential diagnosis' however I did not feel comfortable self-diagnosing incase there was a chance I did not have them. So why was this a shock?

It wasn't actually the shock of receiving these diagnosis' however the shock that they did not come earlier for me. However, I ended up understanding that we live in a misogynistic, sexist world.

The reason I was in shock is due to the fact that my catchment primary was also a school that specialized in special needs. However, my school, at the time, was clearly only interested in AMAB (assigned male at birth) symptoms. I notice this now as I am aware that almost every AMAB person in my class had a diagnosis. Why am I shocked by this? Not a single AFAB (assigned female at birth) person in my class had a diagnosis. Looking back on this I understand that when diagnosing people, my primary was looking for specifically AMAB traits. The reason this was bad is, for example, when diagnosing ADHD, AMAB and AFAB people express very different traits and yet they may both have the same severity of ADHD.

I am glad to hear however that my primary is improving and I hope that this will mean some AFAB people may be lucky enough and be able to get their diagnosis' a lot earlier in life than I did.

Something else I experienced an awful lot of growing up was bullying. Especially when people began to mature and I learnt very quickly that I desperately needed to start masking more than I already did. This was the most hurtful and upsetting thing I had to do. In year 5 I became obsessed with the g4 version of My Little Pony. Since everyone was still only 10 at the time, I was fine expressing my love for it and getting little hurt for enjoying it. However when year 7 hit, I quickly learnt that the world was harsh and was not equipped for an 11 year olds special interest. The world was so harsh in fact, that I had to move schools. As a 12 year old moving schools I understood that nobody could know anything about me in my new school. In actual fact, the only person who new about my current special interest was my best friend, who

I eventually grew out of that special interest and have moved on in life, but growing up I learnt that bullying was inevitable, people were harsh and the world is not accepting of a neurodiverse person. People still to this day judge me for how I act, what I like and my expression in general but luckily I am more comfortable unmasking around people today and although sometimes people will still upset me, I mustn't listen to them as they aren't worth my time.

### **Conclusion.**

I understand that this 'brief' introduction to some factors of ableism and society being harsh towards neurodiverse people was lengthy and wordy. However, I hope that whoever may read this has taken the knowledge to understand just how hard society is against disabled people and how there needs to be a change.

Society treats anyone who doesn't act neurotypical and perfect disgustingly and there needs to be a change. People need to be aware of what others face on the daily and to stop being so judgmental.

But at the end of the day as Plutarch Heavensbee says in The Hunger Games: "Collective thinking is usually short-lived. We're fickle, stupid beings with poor memories and a great gift for self destruction."

# Writing about War

Some GCSE English classes used the writing prompts as part of a project on writing about experiences of war. Some were based overtly around war, for example experiences of evacuation, or as soldiers, while others took ideas like betrayal, loss and hope as their starting point.

**Special mention:**  
check out Oskar  
Lavelle's beautiful  
descriptive  
writing!



# War

by Cafer Zorba

Everything is for my family! I remember my daughter running around the house with a smile that gives everyone energy and her voice was like the best sound in the world. However, the memory of her sweet smell is no longer in my nose anymore because I am here right in the middle of the war, fighting for their future and the smell of the mud clings to my nostrils which makes me forget her smell.

I hold a flask of tepid liquid which only tastes of mud and water. My hands are frozen from an angry wind and my feet are all covered in wounds by the sticky mud that is everywhere in the trench and the stench of the mud and the rotting clothes fills nostrils. The loss of my soldier friends reminds me that my destiny is not so different from theirs and a life is fragile and can end at any time, especially, here where I am every day. It's only a matter of time before I die from blood poisoning from one of my wounds. I remember my friend Jack drowning in the first gas attack. He plunged at me, guttering, choking, drowning and all I could do is watch the white eyes writhing in his face, his hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin.

Did you hear about Emily who comes every day to bring water? Clear, fresh, pure water just like she is. The water and Emily always turn the darkness of the trench to sunlight. She is the brightest moment of my day. Her dazzling smile with her red scarf that reminds me of my daughter. I hope my daughter is wearing her scarf to stay strong against this wind as well. I won't give up because I want to see Emily and be reminded of my daughter which makes me strong every day.

# The Day I Knew My Life Would Change Forever

by Morgan Hughes

I knew my life would change for ever when my dad went to war but now he is coming home. It is crisp, freezing Saturday morning and the clouds are pregnant with rain. I awake up early and sprint down stairs excitedly because I am meeting my dad. I can smell and taste mouth watering melt butter and honey toast. "Come on now or we will be late". My mum announced. "Coming" I replied. I wrapped up warm because as soon as I opened the door a blizzard of wind blow into my face. We run, run and run until we reached the port of the boat dock. I can hear and see the boat coming in. I hear all the children and parents laugh, cry and jumping down with joy, hugging their dads and husbands.

I am still waiting for my dad to just come and pick me up his hands. I feel him hugging, kissing me and lift to the sky like his brave lion. I see my mum crying, I am worried. I freeze. I feel like my feet are glued to the floor. I want to speak but how and what will I say. "Mum...mum are you ok, is dad coming?". I ask at least my mouth becomes unstuck. Silences, silences and silences. I start to shake and pace up and down the dock as if I am rocket that need to blast off but can't.

The more I wait, the more I can see my mum cry. I can't wait any longer. I need to know if my dad is ok. Is he coming home? Was he on the ship? What if something has gone wrong? Maybe he is on the next ship? Or we got the dates wrong? I brain keeps going in circles like a dog trying catch his tail. I see the clock on the dock going around slowly, tick, tick and tick.

"Dad", "Dad" and "Dad" I hear other children shouting and hugging their dads. I stop and I just stare into the distance and look at all the children hug their family and them reuniting. I hear my mum calling out to me, "Come on now or we will be late", "Come on now or we will be late" and "Come on now or we will be late" rushing in my head.

I then I see a strange figure walk on crutches towards us, it's too foggy to see who it is. I start think that it is him, my dad. It has to be because everyone is gone home. The more they jerking forward, thump, thump and thump. The more my heart beats, boom, boom and boom. Could they be my dad? or someone else?

# The Reunion

by Daisy Cramb

I remember back when the war started my father volunteered into the army. He took up this opportunity to go and fight for our country and for it to become a better place. He wasn't fighting just for our country he was fighting for me and my family! He was fighting to let us live a safer life.

I remember when I last saw him, and his big blue eyes were looking at mine tearing up in front of me. My heart was hurting knowing I might never see him again. It was very upsetting and emotional environment at the time, it was a sensitive day for me that I will never forget. The worlds need a strong independent man like my farther this was so hard to see him and let him go. I was only five. I was feeling hurt and abandoned not knowing what he was going into at that age. My heart was aching as I watched him walk away from me and disappearing into the distance Infront of my eyes. He turned around waving and mouthing 'I love you' my mother and I stood there is broken pieces knowing that could have been the last time we see him.

Years went by and we heard nothing. I was now eight and having to be reminded of where my farther went and what happened was hurting me inside, knowing my farther had left me at such young are, but I had to remember what he was doing and who he was doing it for, he was doing it for me! A couple month later we thought we lost the only man we bother have ever had in our lives. A couple more months later we received a telegram quoting 'The secretary of desires me to express his deepest regret that your husband has been injured in action on the Twenty Seventh July in France. Me and my mother sat there is devastation knowing we might have just lost the only man in our lives. Weeks later we were both still hurting over the news since we hadn't heard anything more. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. We opened it and there he was standing there, be looked battered and dirty he looked so hurt standing there wobbling on crutches still in his dark green uniform. I couldn't believe it was him, I ran into his arms crying; mother was sobbing, I can't believe he is home.

# Memories

by Daisy Basquine

I remember when we met again, the gust of winds that flew past my face tangling my hair. My yellow dress that I chose especially for that day was blowing around lifting up every so often. The smell of smoke floating around us as well as everyone else. Trains bellowing their goodbyes and hello's to new passengers.

My dad, the war hero. Me, the daughter. It's always been just the two of us since I've known. I had to go to another family as I was evacuated, I think that's what it's called. I haven't seen my dad for years. So many birthdays and Christmases together lost. But it's for a good cause, I guess.

"Hey dad" I squealed at him excitedly while running over to him. Once I got near him I leaped in his arms and hugged him the tightest I've ever hugged. "Hey sweetheart, I missed you.," I replied with a smile against his shoulder with a tighter hug.

# I Remember *by Oskar Lavelle*

I remember... the feeling of fear rattling around my body as my mother walked me to the platform. My mother and so many adults told me my journey to the countryside would be temporary until the city (my home) is safe again but for some reason I felt like it was a lie. As I approached the dull smoke filled platform I look back at my mother and I cried, screamed and begged her not to leave me like so many children around me but like every parent around me my mother smiles and turns her back on me and walks away with no emotion. I feel betrayed! My grief and I stumble on the train of screaming children trying to process the feeling of abandonment. At least I'm not the only one who feels sad. As time goes by the screaming and crying fades out into the daunting sound of silence. The only sound I can vividly hear is the heavy exhales from my supervisors as they chain-smoke their tobacco.

I try and breathe in but it's difficult to because of the endless smoke from the exhausted engines, the heavy smokers and the smell of unclean children around me. A few hours pass and I've calmed down a lot more – well I can breathe. I can barely look out the window as it's covered in thick, gritty soot. What I can manage to see out of the window is beautiful – endless fields and flat green land with barely any man made buildings just nature in its natural state.

I've never left London as I have never needed to. It's pretty scary seeing strange animals, like cows- I have only ever eaten them and not seen them. Their faces look like bicycle seats and their skin has black and white patches just like the zebras we have learned about in class but I thought these animals only existed in tropical climates – not a few hours down the train track. It is mid-day when we make it to our temporary homes. I step of the rust tin can that they call a train and breathe in the fresh air of the countryside. For a split second, I felt like a bird set free. It was exciting and pleasant to breathe in air that doesn't smell like a rotting goat.

The air in the countryside was pure and unpolluted. I smelled the freshly mowed grass and then I suddenly heard the scream from an old crow "line up kids, you know what to do". We were put in a perfect line of formation as the mean looking families swarmed in. Then the families started picking which families they would take in. I'm really worried. What if it's a horrible family that takes me in? I feel like a sheep that knows it's going to be slaughtered. The sophisticated well-dressed children are taken in first by the posh family. As the children fade out of the line so does the upper class families, I'm forced to acknowledge that my battered shoes and worn out clothes would not get me a spot with a decent family.

# Betrayal

by Shaun Abraham

I remember when you left. It'd been 3 years since I last saw you. I wished that I'd see you again and my wish came true. The weather was warm, although I felt cold, I just wanted to see you.

I waited patiently, but out of nowhere the train arrived. My heart was beating like a cheetah and I was just waiting till I could see you. And then as the train stopped and all the men wearing their military uniforms stepped outside I was looking everywhere trying to find you. Suddenly, in the corner of my eye I saw you... I couldn't wait anymore so I rushed towards you, you opened out your arms and I ran at full speed and hugged you, finally.

Mysteriously, I felt like I went back in time. I opened my eyes and I was back at home only with my mum. I was so confused about what just occurred yet it felt so real, I could remember that specific day and it was the first day I saw my mum cry. Though, I don't think she's ever cried in front of me, because she feels bad and doesn't want to show me her tears. Nevertheless, she cried for the first time and it was probably because she missed him.

In a flash I returned back to the present. I was in tears and as I looked at him I realised it wasn't him... I froze and didn't move. I couldn't even think. The man who I hugged had a pale and cheerless face and it felt like slow motion and his lips slowly said "your dad didn't..." he couldn't say the final few words. But I knew what he was going to say. I thought he was joking but in my heart I knew he wasn't. My mum was also walking towards me and I couldn't comprehend what she'd do if she found out. But then I had a thought. The flashback I saw of my mum crying, I thought to myself did she cry because she found out all the way back then? Nothing felt right. All I was thinking in my head was that you told me you'd come back to see me before I knew it. But you lied.

# I knew my life would change forever ...

by Matt Rose

I knew my life would change forever as soon as I let you go, I didn't want you to go to war but here we are me in my room opening a box full of memories thinking of how good of a father you would have been to me. I was only 4 when you left. I still remember the tender kiss of you as you left to go to the war and the clouds blocking the sun and making me shiver as the feeling of you leaving settling in as I cried.

It would always be you and me doing everything together but when you had to go to work it was always hard whenever you got your tidy uniform out to iron it for the tenth time in the same day always made me worry about you going to war but now you are gone it makes it worse I have loads of memories of us together but they make me sad now.

I think what upsets me more is that you are "missing in action" and not "doe" which means you could still be out there but I would never know. I'm 17 now dad and I wish you could have watched me grow up and help mum, ever since you left mum hasn't been the same and I've had to help her up till now, she is in hospital and her last wish is to be with you for the last time.

I have a boyfriend now and lots of friends I mean I even have a job even though it isn't a job you would think I have. I have my own apartment and I'm very happy but just know that you have made me want to join the military, I always wanted to as soon as I found out you wouldn't come back just to see if I would be able to find you.

I'm signing up now, I wish I could make you happy dad and hug you for the last time but I know deep down that I might not see you again so I guess this is my fair well to you and just know I will always remember you, I love you dad.

# Horror

Several entries chose to write horror stories... read on for some spooky scares!

**Special mention:**  
Will Ucan's story  
is particularly  
grisly!



# LOST IN A NIGHTMARE

BY COSMIN PETRARIU

As I wandered through the strange hallway, I realized that my torch, the one that I had been holding since I got lost in this alternate world, started to flicker green and purple. Then it just stopped. My whole head started to spin, in a second there was not any evidence of light. It was completely dark, the kind of darkness that your eyes could not adjust to. Usually, one can see some piercing light somewhere in that building, but in my case, I was somewhere with no windows, no doors, no living creature of any kind.

The reason I am in the school hallway was because I hate living with strangers in the same house. My mother died when I was born, and my dad died in a car accident a year ago. The day after my dad died, an old lady, who is in her 50s, told me something about adoption and having other parents. In that moment, my heart stopped, even though I was only 8, I was smart enough to realize that my dad died. The strangers that I am living with are my "new parents". Those people adopted me only because they wanted to save their relationship. They are not bad people, it's just that we never got that spark between us, because of that we never understood each other's feelings.

I suddenly hear something moving. I start to panic. What do I do? Do I run? Do I hide? That was all that was on my mind at that time. I suddenly see a glimpse of light. Because I've only seen darkness for a few hours, that light is blinding me. I started feeling something wet on my leg. It smells very metallic. I never smelled something like it before. I taste it. I have a strong taste of iron or something metallic. I finally realise what it is. I am completely paralysed. IT IS BLOOD!

It was coming from me. But from where? It was too dark to see. I knew that if I lose too much blood I might die. Suddenly the light got bigger and bigger. I didn't know what to do. Should I run? Do I ask for help? Do I hide?

I did nothing. Even if I was constantly thinking to do something, I got to the point where I was standing still looking at the light coming to me. A few minutes later I was looking at tall man. He seems to be the school janitor. He was looking at me like I was a bug. When I saw him, it was like I am seeing my salvation, my escape, my help.

For a moment we both didn't say anything. I tried to say a word, but all I could do is open my mouth and look straight in his eyes. But after five minutes of staring at each other, he, very impatiently, said to get out of the school grounds. At first, I didn't realise what he meant by that, but then I remembered I'm still in school. I finally told him that I'm lost, and I don't know how to get home. He sighs. He asks me about who my parents are, and at first, I didn't want to tell a stranger anything about my life, but at that moment, I had to tell him anything that would help him get me back to safety.

I don't think he realised that I'm injured and I'm losing blood, but I don't want to tell him that, because that will probably make him even angrier, because he must clean all that blood, and he might not help me.

I see a white ceiling, and sunlight screaming through the windows right into my eyes. I was confused, didn't know what had happened. I see next to me a doctor who was saying something. I was way too sleepy to understand what he was saying. But apparently, I lost consciousness from the blood loss, so the school janitor brought me to the hospital. My "parents" were still not next to me, even if I almost died.

# THE CHAPEL OF DEATH

by **Jude Jelacic**

A village, the first sign of civilisation I'd seen all night "finally," I thought to myself but as dark as the humble village was, I pushed my way through the crops and fields of tall grass shrouding the village. Stumbling on every rock through the fields, an odour so maliciously pungent filled the air but I was persistent my eye lids were getting heavy and my body started to grow weary, legs shaking from fatigue. The closer to the houses I got the more of an instinct to call for help was beaten out of me, I soon found myself in the middle of the dirt roads and pathways dividing the sheds, shacks and poorly built wooden houses. The streets were dotted with the occasional horse drawn cart and wagons of hay; with every step I took through the village I felt observed.

The pungent and vulgar odour grew stronger robbing me of air. Light gleamed on the ground ahead of me, a drop of hope was returned to my helpless soul. Around the corner the only building with open arms appeared warmly glowing, a chapel, seeming to be Christian. In my situation I didn't care, it was the only warm and welcoming looking building placed in the village. Approaching steadily I could feel my legs weakening further, was I just tired or was I scared?

All went quiet, the cricket chirps died out and the wind's howls silenced, the gravel and dirt stopped crunching beneath my feet when abruptly the chapel a mere seven or so meters ahead illuminated in song, the beautifully eerie choir melodically serenaded me with a biblical song "amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost, but now I'm found, Was blind but now I see."

Paralysed I was, the evil odour leaked from the chapel. I knew that if I stepped through the big wooden doors of the building I'd see something so unrealistically evil I'd never be the same again, these were not holy grounds and I was not in a good situation.

My hands pressed up against the cracked water damaged doors of the hell turned chapel when the singing of the demonic choir halted, I mustered up the strength and swung the doors open with such might, the sudden realisation of my mistake on entering this graveyard of a village occurred to me. Greeted by the corrupted air and evil, the rafters of the chapel were lined with rotting, bloody bodies hanging from such mangled necks, intestines drooped from their lifeless carcasses. Women and men, young and old the sight was of such malice than it disgusted me, I noticed my feet splashing in the puddles of stale blood that dampened the old wooden floor boards.

A deep and raspy male voice interrupted my gawking. "Sinners" the voice uttered, "they were the real sinners" the voice viciously hissed "they... they worshipped whom they call their god, a false idol, a coward and they paid the price with their worthless lives." The bodies that loosely hung from the roof dropped to the floor, "you... are... a... filthy pig" growled the voice. Abruptly the corpses rose to their feet.

***Missing twenty seven year old's body found crucified in Autumn forest.***

# HORSE IN THE LAKE

*by Ross Cavan*

A lads night coming to an end, I decided to walk home by myself eventually walking past the gloomy lake, that I've always feared. Now passing the lake I noticed a transparent figure moving around but I couldn't see it clearly. As I slowly shuffled forward, the foggy figure became more visible.

Shining from the moon the long reflections, the steed hovered above the glistening water. The galloping echoed throughout the dark skies along with the chains eternally attached to the horse.

Seeing this made me feel like an imp loosing sanity, surely this cannot be real? One too many?, Nope I made sure I didn't exceed my limit. Lifting my phone up in fear to message the group chat in hope of rescue, I noticed I had no service bars, A classic problem which I never thought would happen to me.

Now on my own, I look back up, and see the transparent steed halt almost instantly like someone pressed the pause button, Spooked I noticed vaguely the horse's head pointing almost directly at me. Silence, it felt like the steed was staring right through me like I was doing to it. Staring at me like it wanted a reaction like I was in its world not the other way round. Rearing gaudily, I could see the breath coming out of the flared nostrils you could spot from a mile away. Obviously spooked by another form of life. Or another dead form of life.

Noticing this I saw the stallion gallop away and going at blistering speed towards the motionless pier. Me expecting a crash sound or something. I couldn't bare to witness it again. The horse went straight through the pier and into the earth it returned leaving silence around the lake, The chains no longer making a sound.

Me realizing that now it has run away, then whatever it ran away from is still here.

# Father's Eden

by Will Ucan

## Chapter 1: Heaven

He blinked a few times, his bloodshot eyes darting around the room attempting to understand where he was. The room was completely blank, its white stainless walls bought a sense of uncomfortable cleanliness. He the lying atop a smooth stainless-steel counter so clean that the Fluorescent lights chained to the ceiling swung in it's clear reflection. A low hum of ventilation droned throughout the room, it felt as if a drill was boring its way through his skull into his very brain. Covering his eyes was his hair, it was nothing more than wiry strands barely hanging on to his scalp.

His thoughts gradually came to him as if it were a wave of nausea building a picture of the previous nights like a demented puzzle; His name was Kristoff Wiessman, a Swedish born and English raised electrician who had a horrible time at work the previous day. His boss moaned at him during his break and the elderly woman with the broken oven had sneered at him on his way out.

Due to his father he knew what the best ways to deal with all his problems were. Alcohol. Drowning your sorrows is a remarkably easier task then actually dealing with any of your issues, at least that was his father's philosophy, God rest his damned soul. Kristoff had never liked his father and his father held a similar sentiment, proven by the hideous markings that laced his arms and legs. His father had mastered the art of corporal punishment. Using whatever item may have been in his possession at the time be it a lit cigarette or a sewing needle. Kristoff always preferred watching his grandmother's crochet due to a lack of sharp objects.

With little warning his head screamed as if its hardware had been melting. Bringing him out of his momentary lapse to the past. Recounting a majority of his night was no matter, He had gone drinking at one of his favourite pubs "The thankful worker", he drank and drank and drank and drank some more. Until he stumbled into a dark and rather dank alleyway and spewed the contents of his guts onto the pavement below him, creating a rather large splash zone, unfortunate for him and the single neatly-dressed passerby, anything beyond that was simply a foggy blur to him.

He had moved to brush his wiry hair out of his face a few minutes ago, yet his hair was still obscuring his view as if his hand was unable to locate his own face.

Was he still drunk? Obviously not as he felt as though he had never had a lick of whiskey last night. He tried again to no avail. Irritation washed over him, simply nothing wanted to go his way. After struggling for some time, he had knocked the counter over with a large crash smacking his temple into the hard stone floor that was spread across the floor, destroying the clandestine silence that previously had suffocated him. He lifted his

head, flicking his hair away from his eyes with a heavy grunt. Kristoff lay on his back again, trying to shake off the pain of his tumble. It took him a few moments to see clearly and what he saw made him just as confused as before: Pairs of black shoes lined the skirting board. The leather of the shoes had been shined so meticulously that not a single place was left untouched. He felt as if he had seen such shoes recently but he just couldn't draw out the memory.

He turned back towards the counter where he had been previously. It had a similar appearance to the Autopsy tables he had seen many times in the crime dramas he had watched at home; the small wheels attached to the bottom swung with little friction only leaving a miniscule squeak at the apex of its swing. It's polished surface gave him a clear and unobstructed view of himself and he began to understand why he could not sweep away his hair. His face contorted into an amalgamation of fear and despair. He couldn't believe what he was seeing before him. He shut his eyes tightly, as tight as he could and threw them open again as if it were actually going to change anything. Whatever was being reflected in the disgustingly clean surface was not "Kristoff". It was alien to him, a monster. Simply a hulking mass of flesh. Tears streamed down his face and chest. His arms and legs had been removed cleanly. So much so it felt like it had been done by the horrifically sanitized room he was slumped in.

He wanted to leave.

He had to get out. His mind was screaming for him to wake up from this hellish nightmare he'd found himself in. Adrenaline was racing through the remaining arteries that had not been severed. He mustered the last of his strength and he floundered to a nearby door that was left ajar, his sweat leaving a slug-like trail across the room. He needed help - from anyone. He absolutely must find someone that can help. He flopped through the opening to be greeted with what could only be described as hell. The room was a blazing red, and in the centre was a group of swaying chains, the end of which were adorned with the various pieces of "Kristoff". The door slammed behind him clicking simply as if to let him know it was now locked. He screamed, what else could he do? All he had been left with was mind and the unending despair that was held within. He rolled onto his back saving all his energy for crying out for help.

Useless. It was the only way you could describe his actions. He spent hours crying out in hysterical desperation, ghostly wails bounced around the bloody room only to fall upon the holes which had been once connected to his ears, his voice was ruined beyond belief, all he could continue to do was make a sick, raspy noise similar to a drowned dog; He was drowning in his own despair. His head fell to the floor. His flushed cheek slapping the floor, he shut his eyes slowly, wishing he would wake up at home, but unfortunately, he would never wake up again. He could feel himself sinking, as if his spirit was being forcibly dragged out from his ruined and ragged body, his vision became dark, his eyelids felt incredibly heavy, as if they were curtains closing on the world's worst theatre.

# Many genres

We were blown away by the diversity of the writing we received- this section contains a mixture of genres, including fantasy, autobiography and non-fiction.

## **Special mention:**

Marianna Kouznetsov's story includes some amazing imagery

## **Special mention:**

Alfie Turver and Ryan Martin both wrote epic fantasy stories

**Both were long, complex narratives, so we've just printed an extract here**

# Spectrum

by Marianna Kouznetsov

She has grey eyes, although she insists that they're blue.

You point out the different shades of blue, layered from weak pastels nearer the horizon to where they slip upwards into darker navy, so rich it's almost purple, and then: just black. You tell me about something you learned in Physics, back when you paid attention. I can only watch as the sky starts to sink into itself. Almost imperceptible, but then it's sinking, like quicksand, everything pulled downwards into a terrible spiral, a mountain range suddenly circling a storm drain. Sinking down into blistering blacks, everything eroding, clouds moving in, sunlight knifing between them in quick thrusts, and I want to take you by the cheekbones and hold them, and I can't. The day's end looks like this: inching on our backsides down a wet hill, and I'm far behind you as we run back to the car, straining to follow your outline in the dark.

The light has returned when I wake, like nothing happened at all. You take me to the beach, and I don't have ribs anymore, breathing so deeply I'm made of just that. Dipping in the surf, mirth dripping from your mouth, tripping on the rock and the earthy rain-soak, watching as the smoke makes your eyes roll back. In this light, maybe they're blue after all.

Two nights we stay in the city, and you tell me exactly what to do. My heart jackrabbits at every look, every held breath, every time you beckon me to come here. This is it. This is it. This is it. I'm fumbling around in the dark, trying to grasp onto something, my fingers catching on something warm. I'll keep pretending it's something that it's not. I'm here, come find me. Making me chase you down the street, pulling away as soon as my hands close around your shoulders. I forget, sometimes, what you keep claiming to hate. There's a restaurant on the corner, but to me, it's just a room. You say I can have anything I like, but I end up not having anything at all.

Lights off, you say, and the lights go off. Your eyes have greyed, now. Maybe your hair has, too. Hurried breaths as we change in thickening silence, and suddenly I'm back there, surrounded by the four walls of the cubicle, protecting me as I squirm and shuffle into clothes that don't feel like mine, digging my nails into my palms and squaring my shoulders before I walk out to face all the rest of them. Promise you won't look; promise you'll keep your back turned.

I keep your promises. I keep my mouth shut, and I keep my back turned. I already know who you are.

# Grandfather

by Rose Maydon-Smith

There once was a person and this person was young. Her life was nothing more than a huge misunderstanding. You see when this young girl was about five years old she was a happy, pleasant little bundle of cuteness and spread joy to everyone she met, but one day the little girl met a very awkward ending to her happiness because her great grandfather had come round just to say goodbye and I'll see you all again tomorrow and went off down the road on his horse and cart, but had sadly passed away that night. Now, what five year old is going to understand that? And what five year old would understand the meaning of death? And what five year old would understand that she would never see him again and that tomorrow would never arrive?

No five year old understands death. I mean does it really ever get understood. This event happened in 2010. The little girl still lives. Still breathes. Still keeps up the courage to go on. Now 11 years later in the year of 2021 the girl is now 16. She has seen many things since then but still hasn't left the thought of that tomorrow. The thought of leaving him behind. The thoughts of the memories. The painful, excruciating, sad ones. The kind of memories that haunt or your worst nightmares. The trauma will never leave. Once it leaves its mark, that mark will never go. It is permanent. That girl by name is Rose. It was me.

I am never afraid to stand my ground. Like my grandfather always told me all that time ago, "Believe in yourself and you will grow stronger." I have never forgotten the last time I saw him. The last hug. The last Words. The last horse and cart ride.

Now 11 years later at 16 years of age I am afraid of everything. Even walking into a room by myself. I am so scared that I will keep continuously getting bullied for something like my height. For what I have to fear is fear itself.

All the memories of the stories my Grandfather used to read. All the memories of the sweets or chocolate I used to get. All the memories of the games I used to play. All the memories of the horse and cart rides I used to get when spending time with my grandfather. It is so unfair that they have to be taken away so young, so soon. I always have felt so alone and so far away from my family since that I cannot bear to think of him, neither can I bear to bring up the happy memories I have left of him at Christmas because he has been so long parted and is so upsetting at the thought that he was never there at Christmas. I was so close to my grandfather you know. Just as any Five year old would be.

But do you know the most painful memory of them all? No. It was the horse and cart rides. The one that always seemed like such a tiny act, actually turned out to be the most memorable part of being an average five year old kid. I would give anything to just have that back, those horse and cart rides, because to me they were an adventure. An adventure worth having. Don't get me wrong it may have only been down the road and back but to a five year old it meant everything. It was still an adventure nevertheless. Even now at age 16 I would still wish to share that adventure, even if it would cost me my life. I would love to have you back, even for as little as 1 hour, just so I could have that time with you and give you the biggest hug and take a horse and cart ride down the road and just do everything I can with you. I know that isn't possible, and that is what hurts the most.



His presence can never be replaced; for he is irreplaceable. And I shall never be the same. I am 16 now. The big 16. It feels like I am missing something I long to have back. Oh if only I could travel back to when life was normal. A time when I was happy and I had nothing to worry about. Life was so easy.

I was so close to you grandfather why did you leave?

You helped me through everything; even my first back operation. I have had over 30 operations since then though; and all you were not there for. I am glad you made the very first one though. I have metal rods in my spine now you know Grandfather. They help my spine to stay straight, because I have a condition called scoliosis. This has been put in place ever since I can remember. And that is a long time. I have had a few tears and angry sessions while in the hospital you know. I mean I was only 2 months old when the operations started, I grant you that point, but I still was scared. I was only little. Thank you for being there for me on my very first big operation. I miss you. I still have to have x-rays and scans to see if I am ok and if my back is doing ok; but the operations I still am scared of. It is like I feel a very funny feeling to the stomach every time anyone in the family mentions the word hospital or operation. I just hate them. The best bit of the operation day is that I get lots of presents and I get to eat Pringles. Honestly, the Pringles are always the best bit. I miss you. There isn't any day that has gone by that I haven't missed you. I wish I could see you again; and give you the biggest hug and say "I love you". There also isn't a day that goes by that I would not dream to spend with you and going to the park and taking a horse and cart ride down the road.

I wish you could see me now. If only you could see me now. Age 16. I am in sixth form now. I am at Long road. I love it. I will miss you forever. Goodbye.

This goodbye was an incredibly sad one as it would be the very last one. The only one of its kind. The era of death. The goodbye that causes so much pain, so many memories and the beginning of so many problems. I hold back my tears. The tears that are longing to escape from me, but alas I am too afraid to show any sign of any emotions.

I will always remember that last goodbye, it has stayed with me all these years. All I keep asking myself is has it really been 11 years since my grandfather's death?

11 painful years, 11 long tiring years, 11 lonely, depressing, miserable years. Will you come back to me? Can you come back to me? Will I ever smile again?

You know I mentioned my operations grandfather? I was always wishing that you were there for all of them, every single one. I was always so upset, when they told me that you left a gift for my operation when I was 16. It was a handbag for the Christmas of 2021. The Christmas of when I was 16. Why? Did you know that they give presents out at Christmas, Easter eggs out at Easter? But I would not say much to the food. Some of the food is nice, do not get me wrong, but there are parts of the food the hospital gives you that are the opposite of delicious. The best thing about the hospital wards is either the playroom or the nurses. I really enjoy being around the nurses because they always make me happy and joyful in times when I am down or in my hour of need. The nurses are always kind and caring and make me laugh. The playroom is always the best place to be within the ward you are staying in because you can make loads of new friends and can always have some fun, even when you cannot move that well or even are terminally ill. I just wish that you were here with me. Even if it was just one hour, I would still wish so hard for that time with you to come back. But no matter how hard I try it will never come back, will it?

Of course I'm the last kid standing there like a statue slowly rotting away over a long period of time. My outdated fat supervisor then tells me "All right kid, the O'hearn family aren't around to house you so it looks like you're going to have to sleep in the barn like I lord and saviour Jesus Christ did" I want to drown myself in the sorrow I feel but I have shed more tears than I am comfortable with – I need to man up! Its night time and I'm freezing. I then waddle over to the barn like a penguin heading to its igloo. The barn smells like death and poo with outdated broken wood (with an uneven coat of musty worn out white paint) to support the hollow walls and roof of this forgotten place. The old crow (my "beloved" supervisor) lays an unfinished knitted grey blanket on top of the hay and he tells me in his hoarseness tone "I'll make sure the O'hearns meet you here first thing in the morning – sorry I hope you can forgive them there just so occupied with raising all those children, anyways I'll let you rest now." He lights his wooden pipe and slowly walks away. I then surrender to the ground were the shards of hay inject me. At least here in this hollow room I feel safe from the bombs but at the same time I'm sad I can't see my mother nonetheless I'll leave this room and be united with her after the war has ended.

I sleep with the freezing temperatures next to me and wait patiently till morning. The countryside screams through the birds beautiful singing, awakening me to my bitter – sweet surroundings. I hear a gentle knock at the door "hello, lovely it's me Miss O'hearn and I can't wait to welcome you to your new home." She gives me a yellow wool knitted jumper and we then make the journey to my temporary house. We approach the house from a distance and I'm completely shocked. It's big and fancy like a castle in a fairy tale book. It's covered in colourful vines and tress with old stone for walls. With joy and enthusiasm she said "Welcome to the Ivory house, home for lost boys". My heart stops. "I'm not lost, I'm returning home to my mother when it's safe, right?" "Did no adult inform you? Uhhh... your mother couldn't afford to house you so she gave you to us... this isn't temporary like the other children you came with". In this moment I felt my whole world dissolve. "Now let's get you settled". This is a moment in my life that still haunts me. One which I will always remember.

# Rex Mortis

## Extract from a longer story, by Alfie Turver

He could see it in his mind.

It came into his dreams.

It felt like a vision.

It was a memory.

But not his. Not yet.

In the memory, he didn't have a body, he couldn't feel, he couldn't touch, he couldn't move. The only thing he could do was observe the memory.

In the memory he was in a mighty cruel deathly ice fortress, in the spire part to be exact, that overlooked a hollowing arctic biome as far as the eye could see. It was during the day, but the thick gray clouds covered the skies, it was nearly impossible to be certain. There was a pair of two massive icicles that each had a stone and ice immobile gargoyle beast that had diamond blue eyes and a larger diamond in their chest. The gargoyles beasts, despite being immobile, were guarding a long fleet of ice carved stairs that had fresh snow on it, if you looked carefully at the ice stairs you could see frozen perfectly skeletons of all sizes, some that could tower over men with ease, these skeletons formed a line of symmetry until the top. At the top of the ice stairs was a throne made out of a mix of dark metal, ancient bones and cursed ice, and that had ten symmetrically huge icicles that protruded from the back of the throne and wickedly formed upwards, sideways, downwards, backwards and forwards. The only living thing in the cold dead throne room was sitting on the throne.

The man on the throne dawned an old sliver grim armour that had a brass trim on the edges, it had skulls on its knee and shoulder pads, that had small horns sticking out'. the armour's aura that stroked him with fear, which amused him.

Underneath and only near his armour plates, was the skinned fur of an arctic leopard that was only

held down because of the armour and its brown leathery straps and, underneath all that and in areas where there was gaps in his armour, he wore black clothes, so majestic that looked like they were made for a king and was very gothic in design, as well as having a grey long cape that was pinned to the armour skull shoulder pads, in the places where the cape meets the shoulder pads there was also presence of fur of an arctic leopard again, that too was pinned to the old sliver grim armour. Despite the terror that was his intimidating grim armour there was one part of this man's figure that seemed to want him to revert his vision from, but also demand his attention at the same time. This dreadful area felt like it was sucking in the life force of life itself, like a black hole, and replaced it with its own haunting presence, but deep down it felt...welcoming.

It was his head, to be more specifically, it was what was on his head!

On the man's head was a dreaded helmet that doubled as a deathly masked and a hollow crown. The helmet was made of black iron, the part that masked the man's face was sculpted to a human skull with the only parts that revealed the man's flesh were open were the nostrils and eye lids, the man flesh that could be seen was very pale, like a corpse. the part that resembled a crown on the helmet was made from pure gold, which circled the top bit of the helmet and had five thin pikes that spiked of the helmet, three of the thin pikes were at the front of the crown area, while the other two thin pikes were on the back of the crown. There was a shiny grey jewel that rested in a slot where the forehead of the mask meets the bottom part of the crown, the grey jewel felt...odd, in a way, the grey kept shifting between black and white, never stay as one shade of gray.

This was no simple man, but a lich lord, wight prince! No. the death king!

# We're running out of time

by Yuki Wong

You do not need me to tell you our planet is running out of time. So now we need to make some changes to save our planet.

Firstly, our planet has fewer trees than in the last century. According to the UN, Food and Agricultural organizations' report on the world's Forests 2020, equates to approximately 3.9 billion trees removed in the past 100 years, especially the forests in the Amazon. By the year 2018, 17% of the Amazon Forest was reported as having been lost due to deforestation. That means we need to take some action to protect our planet. On the other hand, our planet is still having some problems. The most major problem is the global warming situation, that makes less food and more diseases, because the earth has more desert, people cannot make food to eat or to sell to other countries. Why is our planet becoming so much worse? The main reason is people around the world eat more meat because peoples' quality of life is better than before.

Secondly, what can we do for our planet? We can respect and protect green spaces because green spaces are important. They absorb carbon dioxide and associate it with lower air pollution. People can eat less meat and dairy products. Avoiding meat and dairy products is one of the biggest ways to reduce the environmental impact on the planet. Eat fewer or smaller portions of meat, especially red meat, which has the largest environmental impact and reduces dairy products or switch them for non-dairy alternatives. Listen to me! People can try to choose fresh, seasonal produce that is grown locally to help reduce the carbon emissions from transportation, preservation and prolonged refrigeration. That is helping our planet, your action is important to our planet. You should understand that we can leave the car at home because cars contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Walking and cycling are more enjoyable and have physical and mental healthy benefits, imagine the fresh air in your lungs and on your cheeks bracing you for a productive day at college- so much nicer than being stuck in the traffic- to think of the money saved! Also, for longer journeys we can use public transport or try car sharing schemes.

Furthermore, if we did not do all this, what might happen to our planet? This is a big problem we need to think about. There will be many effects to the future generation. Therefore, extreme temperature leaves many families living in poverty with less food, less clean water, lower incomes, and worsening health. The children's immune systems are still developing, leaving their rapidly growing bodies more sensitive to disease and pollution. This would be a worse situation to our children and our future generation. If our future generation cannot have a good environment, how can they have a better future? How can they make their dream come true? Listen to me! Because of extreme events, it would destroy homes and schools, you need to understand that droughts and flooding also destroy crops and cut access to clean water, this would make our children get into a worse situation.

Finally, I urge you to listen to me that the problems that have happened on our planet are urgent. The people around us like to say that there is no problem we can solve. But now you can see all the terrible situations on our planet. So, we need to save our planet and our future generations, it is not just my duty, it is our duty- we need to save our planet together! I know that we can do it. And now it is time for us to solve all the problems together!

# Mistwood

## Prologue to a longer story, by Ryan Martin

The night was dark and full of peculiar sounds which sent terror through Jon's spine, yet he pushed forward his feet slipping in the mud beneath him. It had been raining all evening and the quickening darkness of the sky above made it even more difficult to navigate through the Mistwood forest; the Mistwood forest was a beautiful place in the day, tall trees with emerald green leaves and rich dark trunks, vibrant coloured flowers littering the ground, and luminescent mushrooms which glowed all colours of the rainbow where to be found all over the forest floor. However in the bleak dark of night the Mistwood had an entirely different atmosphere, the leaves above prevented most moonlight from reaching the ground and the glowing of the mushrooms was accompanied with an eerie humming which made Jon uneasy. As he made his way deeper into the Mistwood forest Jon was sure that, beneath the usual rustling of leaves and howls of the wind and humming of mushrooms, he could hear something not too far back making noise, snapping twigs, rustling leaves, following him. As he continued he kept looking behind him and whenever he did, it seem as though the entire forest went silent. Jon couldn't hear nor see anything behind him down the narrow path he was on, yet this did nothing to settle his mind. After a little while Jon decided to abandon his irregular pauses to check his flank and ignore the uneasy feeling in his gut in order to focus on the way ahead which was becoming wilder, he considered trying to conjure a small flame in his hand to help light his way, as well as to keep him warm, however he decided against it as he was never very good with spells, even the most basic ones he had tried in the past had either failed to cast at all or went badly wrong.

As he reached a clearing in the forest, Jon decided to stop and rest for a moment. The rain had all but stopped and he hadn't heard any unusual noises in a while. His feet were aching and he was starving as he hadn't eaten since leaving The Silver Flagon, an inn on the outskirts of the Mistwood forest. As Jon searched his bag for some flatbread he had brought for his journey, he saw the letter he was tasked with delivering to the lord of some castle he had never even heard of. Jon knew what the letter said as he had opened it not a day after he was tasked with its delivery; the letter was a warning to begin gathering soldiers and start training new recruits, as a mysterious cult which had been raiding villages and causing havoc had grown far larger and more dangerous than anyone had expected. While Jon was sat munching on his flatbread which had already begun to go stale, his brief moment of rest was interrupted by the sound of movement in the trees and bushes surrounding the clearing. Jon sat as still and as silent as he could. Listening in attempt to discern where the sound was coming from, Jon thought he could hear people talking in hushed whispers. He got to his feet slowly and pulled his short sword from its rugged leather scabbard. Jon gripped the handle tightly as fear was beginning to mount in his chest making his heart beat fast, he took a deep breath before shouting "show yourself" he had tried to keep the fear out of his voice but it hadn't worked. "I warn you" he yelled again "I'm armed".

There was no reply, but before Jon could speak again he heard something charging at him from behind. Jon, without turning, jumped into a clumsy roll to avoid being caught and stood again holding his sword in both hands. When he looked back at what had tried to attack him, Jon saw a large hound slightly bigger than a wolf with jet black fur and flaming red eyes; its yellow teeth bared in low rumbling growl. It was a beast used by the cult to track and hunt down their foes. Before Jon could move the hound charged him again leaping at him, Jon swung his sword wildly slashing the beast at

its side before being knocked to the ground dropping his sword. The cut seemed to have barely drawn blood as the hound was already upon him again and before Jon could react the beast had savagely bitten into his left forearm causing blood to stain its muzzle. Jon screamed in agony as fangs punctured the skin and tore muscle. As the monster bared down upon him it shook its head violently, Jon managed to grip the handle of the dagger he kept on the back of his belt and thrust it deep into the hound's throat causing warm, sticky blood to cover his face. The hound clasped heavily on Jon's chest making it difficult to breath; however with his unmaimed arm he managed to push the corpse off of him and struggle to his feet. Jon looked down at his arm which was bleeding and ruined, he rushed to his bag and searched for a small red glass bottle which he emptied onto his wound. The potion inside slowed the bleeding but Jon would still need to dress it properly and see a healer soon if he ever wanted his arm back to full health. Before he could start dressing the wound however Jon heard footsteps behind him. He rose to his feet again to see two men and a woman all dressed in dark crimson robes with large hoods watching him. Without speaking the man in the middle moved forward and stretched his arm high above his head as if he were trying to pull a star out of the sky. When the man opened his hand a pale blue light shone from his palm and circled down his body causing dark ebony armour to appear and when the man lowered his hand, Jon could see it was now clutching the handle of a savage looking sword made of metal that was darker than the night sky. Terror now flooding every inch of his body, Jon tried to run towards his sword which still lay on the ground by the dead hound's body. Just as Jon was about to pick up his sword he saw the woman reach out and hold her hand up with her palm facing Jon as if she was refusing a drink at a tavern, and suddenly Jon was knocked to the ground painfully as though he had been hit with a war hammer. Before Jon could get up the first man donned in his armour stood over him.

"Please" Jon begged, afraid and hopeless "have mercy" but before he could plead anymore, Jon felt the dull pain of the sword's blade being suck through his chest. Everything got darker and darker until he couldn't see anything anymore and all the pain seemed to leave him. Jon closed his eyes and after a moment he was gone.

# Poetry

Many students chose to submit poems for the project. We loved the range of topics covered, and the way they used language and the structure of their poems creatively and surprisingly.

**Special mention:**

We loved the imagery in Millie Mitchell's poem

**Special mention:**

Maisie Rozzo's poem was really thought provoking

**Special mention:**

Scott Leitch's poem had a real emotional impact

# Pending

by Maisie Rozzo

We are left in pending, paused and waiting,  
too young to speak for ourselves.  
Suddenly  
On the mid teen track,  
We are dumped on cold tarmac  
And told to crack on.  
Trawl our bodies through rubble  
Scrape our knees on walls  
Heave our limp limbs through our mundane lives.  
Told "everything is alright,  
Don't be foolish,  
Knuckle down  
Get a job!"

I'm wearing 3D glasses.  
Seeing reality has become a superpower.  
Your eyesight is so bad,  
Can't you see the crippling storm on the horizon?  
Heck..it's even raining on us.  
Can't you not feel it?  
It's acid turning you toxic, thwarting your vision.  
Your senses are numb,  
Your glasses are rose tinted.  
Creating fantastical illusions.  
Boxed in your reality show.  
You ask me what I want to be?  
And the only thing that goes through my mind is the slideshow of  
disaster chaos havoc turmoil catastrophe tragedy.  
Alive?  
No matter how I put,  
No matter how you portray it,  
It will always be the same.

You are frying us with a taste of our own medicine, CO2, our daily dose.  
No stronger prescription can remedy the scene.

The screen is shattered  
It's time to guide the blind into the blurry skyline  
Picking up the shards of a distorted perception  
We switch off and stride.



# Seethe

by Megan Bonley

Six million years of evolution,  
You'd think equality would be found.  
With multiple attempts at revolution,  
Injustice is all around.

Humans grow, learn and multiply,  
But mistakes - they stay the same.  
How many black people have to die?  
No life is just a game.

1993 – Stephen Lawrence died,  
Police ignorance was obscene.  
Tears filled the community's eyes,  
White youths as killing machines.

Breonna Taylor shot in her home,  
In the 'safety' of her bed.  
The guilty police continue to roam,  
'Just' another black person dead.

George Floyd was forced to the floor,  
Pleading he could not breathe.  
Yet Derek Chauvin still gave him more,  
...and the world began to seethe.

Six million years where black lives have mattered,  
Yet the movement still needs to exist.  
White supremacy must be shattered,  
For no soul should have to resist.

# I Remember

by Scott Leitch

I remember when the world span round.  
The people not yet downed,  
No one frowned,  
Playing on the ground,  
And I could hear the sound,  
Of happiness all around.

I remember when the world tripped  
The peace had slipped  
The cycle had been skipped  
Our wings had been clipped  
Our futures had dipped

I remember when the world's waters rose  
The wind began its ferocious blows  
It was as if we were being sacrificed to the  
Gods who chose  
As the earth slowly froze

I remember when the world began to die  
And what had once been a peaceful July  
Was now a wasteland where no one could  
fly

I remember when the world wasn't  
watching me dying  
And that's when I started denying.

I remember when the world... I...

I remember when the world was full of  
beautiful people  
All as sweets as a freshly made treacle

I remember when the world was full of  
plants  
With their beauty that enchants  
Their leaves taken by the small ants

I remember when the world was full of  
love  
From humans to a little dove  
Even I had my own love of...  
...why can't I remember?

I remember when the world was full...  
Full of...  
I can't remember?  
Why now? Why now?  
I want to remember, I don't want to forget

I want to remember when the world was  
full  
I need to remember when the world was  
full  
I can't die forgetting it  
I refuse to  
Is that fair to let me die forgetting?  
I wish I could remember as the light left  
my eyes.

# Till the Hourglass Stops

*by Millie Mitchell*

We're running out of time,  
You and I.  
Always watching as the timer  
Ticks down.  
We know it'll end,  
It always does,  
But that doesn't make it  
Any easier.

The anticipation beats  
Alongside our hearts,  
Chiming and knelling,  
Squeaking like our coffin's hinges.

The black and white roses,  
The spirals and the clocks.  
A monotone skeleton  
Of the decaying memories  
That slip away like sand  
In our fractured hourglass.  
A formalin desperation  
Drowns our thoughts,  
As we scramble to preserve  
Our remaining days.

# TIME FROZE AND MISSED SMILES

by Simran Colaco

You were the smiles to everyone's face  
 There is this bitter space, in between  
 Froze. Time tick.  
 When heard the news, that you were no more  
 My lungs filled with pain of explosion  
 I panicked and begged for the News to be unreal.  
 It was like someone snatched a part of me  
 It's harder to deal with the way I feel  
 Even though we had a long distance  
 All the memories are having a spark like your laughter ringing in my head  
 There's this needle poking holes in my heart.  
 Trying to stitch and mend it  
 I can see the thread going through making way in different directions to find you in the  
 blue.  
 Now how can I speak to you  
 I wished this was a petrifying nightmare  
 That we didn't have to glare or bare  
 Uncleared Silence Struck.

## Sharp words through my heart

by Simran Colaco

I see the colours you're hiding behind the lifeless words.  
 You made me hear everything without knowing how I felt  
 Your words just went across me like a sword  
 It's just not about who is real to your face  
 Words get around and travel in circles  
  
 I know you're a person with no self-esteem  
 You have so many insecurities  
 Go deal with yourself first then with others  
 You better understand yourself before fixing someone else

Some people are polite, some are real but never mind there are fakers too  
The bullets from your mouth are stuck into my head  
You just broke our hearts with all the crap you said  
Did you know the trust we had upon you? .....

There's no guilt and there is no self-shame that I can see in you  
How many more colours are you concealing beyond the phrases?  
I need to admonish myself that the world is not innocent  
Some are friendly, some jealous and some are selfish and some you never want to know

I know you're a person with no self-esteem  
You have so many insecurities  
Go deal with yourself first then maybe glare at others  
You better understand yourself before moving towards other hearts

I didn't wanna destroy the beautiful memories of all the good times we had  
I hope that one day you realise what you have done  
I didn't expect this from you or maybe I did  
Never mind I have heard the words or rumours that came flying across me  
There's no point of releasing now

I see everything but I was turned back from the words I wanted to say  
cause I didn't want to create a scene  
I thought of every moment for now  
But next time you never know I won't have the patience you see.  
I have a rage burning through my veins wanting to say everything that's banging in my head  
I can't pretend to be nice anymore.

I had to say this out loud to get it out of my chest.  
You can't break me down  
Cause I have the power to stay brilliantly courageous  
Now I have expectations while trusting anyone  
Sometimes I don't really care about you but I'm forced to do so.

# I Remember

by Molly Brothers

I remember hearing the cries of goodbye,  
I remember walking closer and closer,  
I remember my clean fresh uniform buttoned up my neck,  
I remember the boats yelling to board.

I remember my baby clawing on my leg,  
I remember lifting her up seeing her beautiful face for the last time,  
I remember tasting her salty tears on her cheek as they fell to the ground,  
I remember her smile facing down.

I remember the families around me with their hearts beating as one,  
I remember the birds singing, cheering us as we boarded,  
I remember carrying my life in this one bag,  
I remember

I remember letting go of my baby's little hand,  
I remember her glowing red eyes looking back at me as I stepped on to the boat,  
I remember the crowds blocking her out of my view,  
I remember never seeing her again.

I remember not knowing where to go  
I remember no seats available  
I remember arriving at the war zone  
I remember fear

I remember how I can't remember much,  
I remember how no one could understand how bad it was there.  
But the worst thing I remember is how my daughter won't remember me.

As I float into the light all I remember is love.

# Poem

by Rose Maydon-Smith

There once was a person, this person was alone,  
alone and afraid, afraid of the future and ashamed of  
Her creation, one creation was enough said she, but that  
Didn't stop her from becoming any less of a person,  
Her name was unknown, unknown to the extent that no one knew  
None the less who she was or who she was meant to be.  
The question is, is she really there?  
Or is she a shade of imagination?

Out of the darkness into the light, fight for the day but right back in the shadows.  
Push me away I come right back at you. Think you are any better then I'll come right  
Back at you. Think like a bully, then you might regret those actions for as I always  
Say treat others as you would like to be treated for actions have a way of coming  
Back to you.

Happiness isn't something you can always find, but if you look deep inside you might  
Be able to find a friend within your self.