

T H E B E S T O F
**CREATIVE
WRITING
CLUB**



2016 - 2017

INTRODUCTION

When I first started working as East Barnet's Resident Author in 2012, I was sure I'd lucked out. It felt like a special place as soon as I came into the airy, light-filled building and experienced the positive atmosphere here. But, in truth I didn't really have much to compare it with. Now, five years on, I not only know the place well, but have visited scores more schools across the country, and I can say without hesitation that there is something special about East Barnet. I feel so lucky to have been part of the school for another year.

This year has seen some wonderful work from my Creative Writing club. There is always so much talent and creativity on show here, but one of the other aspects that makes it so rewarding is seeing friendships flourish across year groups. There's always such a lot of inclusive laughter on a Monday afternoon after school, along with the great writing.

As we head towards the end of the school year, I want to say thank you to Mr Christou once again for inviting me into the school and letting me be your resident author.

But most of all, I want to thank the students who come along every week and make me feel so welcome.

My afternoons at East Barnet are still one of the highlights of my working week, five years on from the first time I stepped through your doors.



TRICK OR TREAT

Halloween is always a good excuse for some spooky writing.
I mean, who doesn't love a ghost story?



She was always there. My perfect, my imperfect clone, who was all but a mirror image of me. Remove the colours and leave only a silhouette of my body in perfect, imperfect darkness. A smile from this doppelgänger is a perfect yet imperfect line of teeth. Like thirty-two mirrors, these teeth are pristine but like thirty two daggers; they horrify me daily. Yes, everything about her is perfect, yet imperfect, dropping into and out of existence continually like a baby being born and instantly unborn.

As both she and I age, we wither and wrinkle. Her body becomes as frail as my morality has always been. You hear 'pull yourself together,' from people who don't understand I couldn't be further apart from myself. That is, of course, when no one is looking.

I've tried a few times in my seventy-two years, to explain to people who spare the time. Only one man ever knew it and believed me. He was taken away by men in lab coats to Bedlam and I was once more left alone. Something this disturbing would never be so kind as to leave your quivering side or break your frightened gaze for a second. 'Just don't look,' they say.

But an image like this is burned onto the back of your eyelids. There is no 'away' to look to

when every direction seems the same. Local youths name me, 'Loco Lizzy' and avoid contact as if I were a fatal disease. But still, I board the crowded bus, and hope that someone's eyes are always on me.

Only today did I consider trying to make contact with this creature and so, as I see twilight coming I find a park bench and prepare for the worst.

She appears, but the ghastly appearance of her aged bones encourages me to classify her as an 'it'.

'Hello?' I say to the apparition, tentatively.

'After all this time... you now decide to enquire about me?' it replies, eerily stretching its half-rotten tendons.

'Who are you?'

'Don't ask that. Ask me what I was.'

Spooked, I reply, 'Then what were you?'

'I was a child never born. A life never lived. I was your twin. It's time. You've struggled over these seventy-two years and now it's time to stop.'

For once something made sense.

For once I wasn't scared to close my eyes.

For once I knew I could rest.



Another voyage. As usual. Just another day out on open waters, right? Well, that's never the truth, is it? I, as the captain of a three-man ship who sent everyone to work as normal, myself included,... knew something wasn't right. I was sure something else was aboard, but I didn't know what.

After I'd set everything out I'd asked the others if they'd seen anything, but the most they came up with was that they saw a pod of dolphins whilst I was in the captain's lodge cleaning out my desk. And no. It wasn't dolphins that were making me feel so unsettled. It wasn't the weather either. Something else was aboard our Asking Waves and, oh boy, was I unprepared!

Later that day - around 10pm - I just couldn't sleep. Which was normal, insomnia and all. But this time was different. It felt... weird. Like I wasn't alone. And that was odd because my quarters were empty. I leaned up in bed, and looked around the dark room.

The waves outside felt as if they were sloshing around in my head. Then I felt my head spin and fell back. I thought I was about to faint again but I didn't. It was so strange. I couldn't move and my limbs felt like something was clawing at them, trying relentlessly to either tear them off or eat me alive.

I tried to turn my head but only out of the corner of my eye did I see the face of someone I haven't seen for years. I swore he had died in flames... But there he was, bandaged up head to toe, one of his sea green eyes just barely visible through the bandages. There, my old friend. Trying to drag me away, trying to get me up. And he did. He lifted me from my bed, and dragged me by the wrist out to the deck. I swear I would have screamed if I could, but I still could not move.

I tried to look up at him but my eyes strained in the dark and I heard something that sounded like distant sobbing. It seemed to cry out, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" But I couldn't tell where it was coming from.

But then, and only then, did one of my crew mates scream and run to my side. "C-Captain? What happened?" he shrieked, and finally I could move again. I tried to explain but he said, "No," and pointed to my arm, where lines of tears in skin etched out the words, "I'm sorry".

KAYA ALEXANDER (Year 8)



MYTHS & LEGENDS

We spent some time this year considering myths and legends from around the world. We started with stories from our own islands, which included the siren, a type of mermaid who lures fishermen to their deaths with their songs, the 'black dog', which is said to be a harbinger of doom, and a Celtic creature known as the Pooka.



The ship draws ever closer and the captain's eyes glaze over. He won't know what he's doing. The singing has filled his ears and nothing will stop him now. I know what is happening because I have seen it happen before. I know the feeling of fog filling your head, erasing your opinions. I know this because it's happened to me.

That's why I am here, tethered to a boulder, forced to do the bidding of the Great Black Dog. It's because of him that I can sing so beautifully. Because of him that I have caused so many deaths.

Like others who come to their senses just before they hit the lethal rocks below, I hadn't had a thought of my own penetrate the mist for thirteen years until now.

She is weakening. She told me once that she is like a phoenix and that because of it I will be imprisoned until I die. She will always be watching over me. She said she would always be in control, have all the power. And I believed her. Until now.

But what she didn't tell me was that as she began to change, she would grow weaker, and that as my mind began to clear, I would get stronger. But I know now. I've seen her brooding. I have a chance to escape. She thinks I never will. Thinks I don't know how to undo the simple knot that binds me to this rock.

But she's wrong. She's wrong. My memory is flooding back, along with the cunning I used to have. The cunning that failed me the first time, but won't the second. The cunning that's been held away from me. Until now.

My memories are flooding back, along with a cunning that couldn't save me from her first time. But it will the second.



It had been a long day. Abbie's boss had demanded she get more paperwork done. And then more paperwork. There was no rest. Just work.

At 6PM she was squashed onto the packed tube train, a pungent smell of sweat lingering in the air. She squeezed past several people and got off the train at Hyde Park Corner.

She ran past the sea of commuters and didn't bother tapping out her Oyster card. She just kept running. It was a cold, windy day and there was a slight drizzle. She revelled in these conditions - they helped to clear her mind so she continued to run to run off the stress of the day, to forget about the paperwork, about rush-hour, about everything.

It was just beginning to get dark now, so she decided it was time to make her way back. A large cloud descended and her vision was hazy. Streetlights set off a faint yellow hue yet did little to illuminate her surroundings.

Anxiety crept up through her body and she felt herself shiver. She was not confident of her exact location, and knew that it would be difficult to find her way back. She began walking and then progressing to a speed-walk. Abbie felt uneasy and nervous.

'ARGHH!' Abbie let out a squeal as a big black shaggy dog pounded in front of her. She had not seen it coming. Her heart hammered against her chest as the dog inched closer.

She didn't know what was wrong with her. She loved dogs.

But not this one..

Tentatively, she took a step forward. The dog growled and flashed its teeth at her. She gritted her own teeth. Took another step forward and the dog pounced, his razor sharp claws scraping at her skin. She pushed her arms out in protest, her gaze locked on its scarlet eyes. After several minutes struggling the dog made a sudden exit, jumping off Abbie and plunging into the darkness.

She began to run..



The Pooka

With the setting sun, I start my journey home. Lit only by the dim street lights, I venture through the small woodland that leads to my house.

The woodland never surprises me and even on the most onyx of nights I can walk in the wood without a shiver of fright.

But today is different. I feel stalked in the green foliage. Animals don't usually follow me...

I hasten my pace, my heart beating at a faster rate. I can't explain it, but an unusual aura seems to be following me. A dark aura. I'm now at a run, hoping to get out of the dell as fast as possible. I hear footsteps behind me; they sound so close they are ringing in my ears. I stand transfixed on the spot with fear.

The footprints stop and my fear abates. I close my eyes. I count to a baker's dozen, taking steady breaths, and open my eyes. In front of me is a jet-black dog, beautiful and majestic. After what feels like an hour staring at its beauty I walk off. That dark aura is still as prominent as ever.

After exploring this rich vein, we looked to the more familiar myths such as King Midas and Medusa.



The loneliness of King Midas

He wandered, amidst the halls. The tall chairs glistened in the sun, streaming through the tall windows and showing streams of dust. He slashed his arm through the dust and watched as it fell to the ground in quick, beautiful succession.

In the chairs sat his loves, his friends, his children. Eating heartily... he had asked them to be that way. "The sun still falls, my children," he said, "and rises, come the morning..." He added "So where then is my son? Does he rise and fall the same? No. All my creations... turn to gold."

And so Midas sat in his golden throne, his face thin and wretched, his cheeks wiry and starved, his skin pale. Sleepless nights in golden blankets. Hungry days with golden food.

Thirty hours drift by and Midas can only think. He scans the frozen parties of his people: his father clasping an apple and smiling, a child in its mother's embrace.

There is nothing left to turn to gold. No spare fruit to change with his powers. He lacks the energy, besides. He takes his golden goblet and raises a glass. "To greed!" he toasts, "and all the twisted fantasies I dreamed. Alas, you are right. There is no comfort in the colour of wealth. How the grass and apples could please me now. And all the shining gold that would make a man's mouth water bring a tear to my eye."

And in his eyes welled a teardrop which rolled on his face and turned to gold.



Medusa works in Asda

Technically, she wasn't supposed to be here. If they found out what happened, she would be jailed for about three different crimes. Medusa sighed as she scanned yet another item and shifted around in her too-tight worker's uniform. It was becoming a severe discomfort as the cotton uniform kept sliding down her slimy skin and she'd had to hastily tape her uniform to her neck during her lunch break.

'Would you like a receipt, sir?' she said as she looked at her customer.

Big mistake.

The customer's face contorted and twisted as cracks snaked across his arms and face. He screamed as he realised he was unable to move his hands and as they started to freeze and turn grey, cracks began to creep their way along his rapidly greying body as he started to stiffen. The customer's eyes were now wide with fear as the cracks and the grey colour slithered up to them. His eyes were now coated in a grey shell and there was a cracked stone version of the customer in front of her.

After a few shocked gasps, Asda was emptied in a stream of screaming and stampeding customers.

One week before this, the interview had started and the interviewer asked her if her hair was moving. She got nervous and stared into his eyes and then had to move past the interviewer's statue. She stole a uniform and wrote MEDUSA with a biro on a name tag.

And now she worked in Asda.

Killing, stealing, and more stealing. No wonder those little bleeders that called themselves Gods had kicked her off Mount Olympus.



TO SLEEP, PERCHANCE TO DREAM

Sleep and dreams proved to be a creatively fruitful topic.

What would it be like if you could never sleep at all?



A man starts to film himself, in a small white room with a single porthole. This leads many people to believe that he is in a boat, but what is strange is that you can't hear the ocean or in fact anything bar the man's calm, soothing voice.

He then speaks. "Hello, I am Jonathan Charles Walker. The government has paid me to take these pills." He holds up a small pill jar. The oval pills have a strange glow to them.

The man continues: "These are a type of strong caffeine; they have an immediate effect of not allowing someone to sleep. The government has placed me in this room to monitor my actions after several days without sleep. I have a couple of possessions, such as a TV, a toilet and the laptop with a webcam."

He pauses to think. "If I go insane, I have already written my will." He leans in and turns off filming.

The video turns on again. The man then starts. "It has been 24 hours and I feel great. Actually, better than normal." He turns off the camera again.

The camera flickers on, he walks into frame, he ends up stubbing his toe and starts cursing.

"Sorry about that, but the effects of the pills make me extremely angry. But it has been days since I had any sleep." The man then screams and punches an object, the camera shakes and turns off.

It begins again with the man sitting there shirtless. "It has been a week since men in coats became interested. Now that I am insane..." The room is extremely dirty, it is filled with trash and half-eaten food smeared on the walls.

The camera turns on but he's not there, instead all the furniture has been pulled down and the porthole has been smashed with a slight smear of blood on the glass. As if he jumped out of the window.

The video stops now. I looked behind me to see a large ship with a brown hull and large majestic sails, but what really stood out was the single broken porthole with a smear of blood. Then I felt a slight sting at my lower abdomen, I looked down to see a large cut there. "Oh, it's me!" is all I could say.

DYLAN HICKEY-EXTRA (Year 9)

What if you woke up from a nightmare and went straight into another? And again...and again...



One more step then it's over. I have nothing here. I look down and think of what the world would be without me. The same. Is this selfish? My mind flashes scenes of past sorrows. I gradually shuffle forward, focusing on my balance. I'm still thinking hard about my next decision. I take the next step off the crumbling cliff and feel the wind relieving me of all my doubts. There's no going back now. Only forward. Way forward.

I wake up. In my bed? Heaven? The blurred surroundings come into focus. It worked! I see a virtual paper and attempt to grab it. Wow. The year is 2516. I walk around looking for anything I recognise. It's human instinct. Fear what you don't recognise and be afraid of new places that seem 'off.' Naturally, I start to panic. Where the hell am I?

I see a human then. Good to know they are not extinct. It turns its back to me and I see metal. A robot...no, an android. I shake my head, fascinated.

It turns to me. 'For your information, I am an android. What are you?'

I tell her I am human. She looks at me, analysing. Scared. She steps back in fear. Pulls out a gun and shoots...

I wake up. Oh no...



Angels & Devils

We looked at classical representations of these concepts, then thought about angels and devils in a figurative sense.



The figure stepped forward out of the shadows and it was the Devil.

The face was human yet it wasn't. Long and thin and poised it held the elegance of the prowling wolf but a trace of the goat played around the features. Below the brow the cold intelligence of the eyes was almost forgotten by the confidence of the slight sneer dancing across the mouth.

Surrounding him, a flock of devilish minions played. They wore the faces of children but they were soiled and dirty and a quiet menace flashed behind their eyes as they watched the bundle on the floor.

It was limp and ragged. Clothed in ruined robes and its voice, when it spoke, was a harsh croak: "Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned."

The Devil laughed but there was no joy in the sound and it echoed emptily around the chamber. "There is no Father here," he said.

The figure looked up with dazed eyes and a lock of golden hair flopped across its forehead. "Forgive me."

"I will not."

The figure began to wail and the dusty floor was stained blacker with his tears. He rolled forward and two great gashes were exposed at his shoulder blades. Blackened skin lacing white bone.

A single feather fell from the ceiling and the Devil smiled, glancing upwards towards the heavens. "Take joy in your pain and join the ranks of outcasts."



I was doing my daily routine of walking the dog around the park when suddenly a bright light appeared. You may call me crazy but I know what I saw and Blue saw something too as she was barking like crazy. The light landed not too far away, around a metre or so. I walked slowly up to it, not sure what to do. The light got brighter and brighter, almost blinding me. I think I must have passed out because all I remember was darkness.

The darkness overwhelmed me but at that moment I remembered my grandad's story about his life at war. In the middle of the no man's land he saw a dark red circle-like shape plummeting down until a loud bang shook the ground, knocking everyone off his feet. He walked slowly to the red dot as he held up the small white flag. He said he felt on fire, as he helped the red dot to its feet. Then he realized it was the devil.

I sat up straight, realizing that I was back in the park, Blue sitting next to me. Then a hand helped me up and I realized I was staring at a beautiful angel. Her dress was fine silk and her hair fell in waves around her. I heard soft music playing but then it stopped as she spoke. 'You are fine now. I will escort you home,' she said.



On the surface, she looks angelic. Her dazzling smile would be enough to put the most anxious person at ease, her radiating skin would entrance many a man. But those eyes. They glitter with malice. With blood. On the surface she is beautiful, but the devil lurks within.

Her eyes lock onto mine. I shift in my seat a little, twiddle my fingers and grit my teeth. Remember who she really is. What she did.

'Is everything alright, Tony?'

'Yeah...everything is fine.'

She leans closer and Chanel No5 blasts into my nostrils.

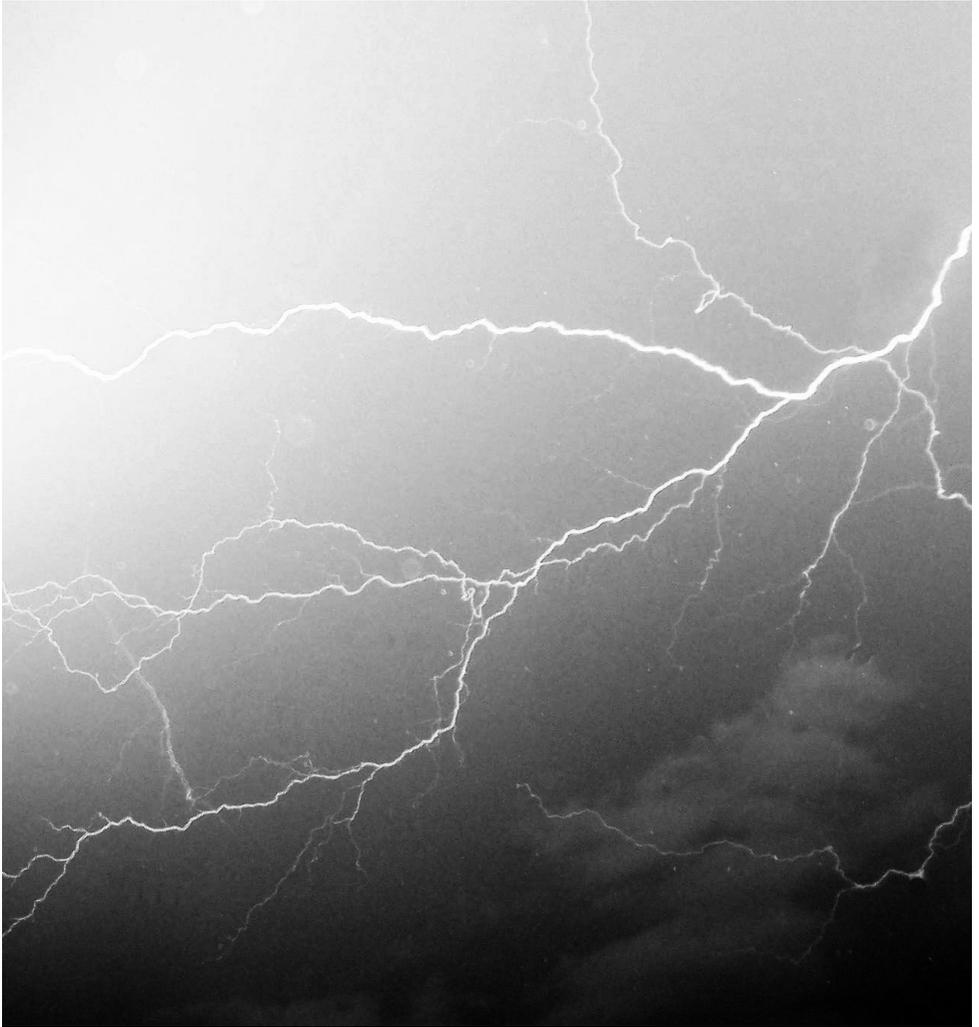
'It's just...you've been acting strange lately.'

I can feel myself colouring. I can't keep her gaze. She places her hand on mine. Startled, I look up at her, my heart fluttering.

'I know it must be hard for you, but I'll be there for, no matter what.'

Oh God, I can't take this. She's messing with my mind. Remember who she is. Remember what she's done.

I snatch my hand back and squeeze my head. She's almost hypnotic. Her words are like a melody, willing me to sleep. Her words are like a lullaby, lulling me to death.



Flash Fiction

Ernest Hemingway was once challenged to create a short story in only six words. He came up with this: For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn.

The students wrote their own stories in ten words or less.

Working to death, slaving to survive, the pain drives me.

.....

Everyday, dwelling on the thought that you will come home.

.....

Take your next step with caution or you'll regret it.

.....

I am a man imprisoned with my own fear.

.....

Never take a step back from hope. Keep it close.

SAUL MISHRA (Year 10)

Always trying, always going extra miles but never ever succeeding.

.....

Churchill, Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt. All good with words, not countries.

.....

Start the car. Drive a way. Make a new life.

.....

Run out of fuel. Stop and walk. Time to go.

ALEX SCHWALLER (Year 10)

She waited by the curb for him...he never came.

.....

He tried to listen, but the wind stole her words.

.....

Her face showed no cracks, but she was dying inside.

.....

His pen scratched terrible words across the paper; he smiled.

.....

She went on her tiptoes, face darkening at the sight.

.....

She draws him close, as if for the last time.

.....

Heart pounding, she ran into the forest, dodging the bullets.

Ink. Pen. Love in letters. Stolen my heart. No reply.

.....

Dancing in the sky, twirling, twisting. Air flows by.

.....

Tick. Tock. The pencil hits the floor. Ding. Dong. Opened door.

The marching stopped. Legs buckled. Mud stained bodies. Screams
echoed.

.....

Saying words. Hearing them. Not understanding. They echo around me.

.....

Time was stopping, the hands stood still. The dust settled.

.....

Death took hold, paralyzing. A cold body fell. He grinned.

.....

A puff of smoke. A monstrous roar. Rocks crashed down.

JAMES TIVEY (Year 10)



PEACE & GOODWILL

Christmas doesn't always bring out the best in people. Luckily,
this makes for some good stories!



**Chestnuts roasting on an open fire. Third world war
in the kitchen. Christmas as usual.**

When Sadie got home the house next door was gone. She stood still for a moment, looking at the heaped rubble, before hitching her satchel further onto her shoulder and continuing up the garden path.

Marc was sitting at the kitchen table. "Leave the glass," he said. "Next door's wall hit the window."

"Was anyone in there?"

"No, they were out when it happened. Don't know where they are now, probably with the displaced lot in the stadium."

Sadie winced and sat down, reaching for the teapot.

"The electricity turned off a couple of hours ago, you'll have to have it cold," said Marc.

"I'll pass." She swung her bag onto the table and began rifling through it. "Half the teachers weren't in today 'cos the roads got blocked with broken cars in the night so we got put with the little ones. They made me these." She held up a few tattered paper snowflakes.

"Nice," said Marc. "Shame they've got pictures of bombed out houses on the back."



Competitive Christmas

The cold ate my fingers, but I had to fight it. Who did they think they were, buying their lights from the same store as us? That was my store, my time to shine. How dare they steal my shop from me? I mean, do they have an eight-foot rotating Frosty the Snowman on their roof?

I allowed the cold to beat me, and so I walked up our twinkling driveway, red and green lights illuminating my view. I waddled towards our jumbo wreath, fingers fumbling with the key. With the door finally open, Christmas overcame me as our 32-spiced marmalade and cinnamon candles burn their way into our hearts. I called for my wife, only to complain about the neighbours, of course. She glided down the stairs, and so then began my rant.

"Oh, don't let them get to you!"

"I know, I know. I mean, they only got their Christmas tree, when, the beginning of December - we've had our up since September!"

"Don't worry, the holidays are nearly here, so we can illuminate Frosty!"

"You're right."

Balaclava in hand, I step out into the snow, all internal warmth whipped from me. I creep round the fence, and into the neighbours back garden. Their house seemed easy enough to climb, or so I fooled myself to think.

With a prayer and a cross I ascend the brick barricade, towards their gleaming rooftop. As I haul myself over the roof, I search for a plug or wire of sorts. Tumbling across the roof, I find the wonderfully black wire, and drawing my clippers, blue and red lights flash in the corners of my eyes.

Sirens raid my ears, and as I turn to my side, an army of neighbours surround the house, their tutting forming a symphony of disappointment.



WITNESSES TO HISTORY

What would it have been like to bear witness to some of the most dramatic events in history?

Pompeii, 79AD



The shaking came first. Then this... buzzing. Everything was buzzing, vibrating. A low rumbling noise echoed throughout the streets as people rampaged down the road. Pots were smashing to the ground.

That's when I saw it. A humungous cloud of black smoke billowing out of the mountain. Bits of grey dust fell from the heavens. Ash. The air was hot. Everything was hot.

The slight buzzing had turned into violent shakes as if a monster from the darkest parts of hell was trying to emerge. A thin line of red could be seen dribbling down the volcano from where I stood in the market place. It hurled towards me at an unbelievable pace. The hut closest to it was on fire and was then nothing but melted rock and ash.

One by one, hut by hut, the lava was oozing closer and closer but I couldn't move an inch. The place was deserted. All that could be heard was the faint screams of my loved ones in the distance and the constant rumbling now accompanied by the crackles of the fires I was surrounded by. Surrounded. Nothing but red and gold and the heat.

It was burning blisteringly hot, like my skin was melting. I couldn't breathe as smoke and ash filled my lungs with every intake. Just one word bounced around my head. Run. But, I was transfixed. It felt like forever but was only a moment. Nothing but burning light and then nothing but darkness.



COMIC BOOK NOIR

From January until May, I helped the Library run the Stan Lee Excelsior Award comic book club, and several of my writing students took part.

Tym Pecherzewski is a keen reader of comic books. This piece of writing seemed to combine the spirit of the art form with a certain hard-boiled noir style of crime fiction.



A bullet raced past my head as I rolled behind the yellow wreck of what once was a taxi. My taxi. I returned fire, aiming for his legs hoping to disable him and get the hell out of there. Of course I missed and the shot went wide, breaking off bits of brick as the bullet embedded itself into the wall of a nearby school.

A shriek rang out as the taxi flew against the wall taking me with it. What's that saying, oh yeah, stuck between a rock and a decimated taxi. I tried to wrestle free of the large lump of metal currently crushing my ribs but my opponents weren't having it. After all, the contract was for my head not the rest of my body. A knife thudded into the brick to the left of my head saving me a visit to the hairdressers. Ok, enough is enough. "Daemon, potentiam tuam, et fac ut animae viribus." I muttered as black tendrils embraced me, covering my body with obsidian plates and filling me with a newfound power.

I flicked my wrist and the taxi wreck flew at my assailants. I stood up, dusted my coat and pointed at the tallest of my opponents, an orc with a long silver braid and pierced tusks.

"Morior!" I hollered as inky javelins pierced the ground impaling his olive green form. His allies stared at me suddenly realising how much of a mistake attacking me was. I let out another shout "Uro!". This time sinister onyx flames engulfed the woman who had thrown the taxi at me. She was a banshee, her sable hair and white gown flowed as if they had a life of their own.

The banshee let out a final shriek as she was pulled down into the sinister fires of my dark power. Two down one to go. The remaining assassin turned on his heels and attempted to flee. I raised my gun arm and aimed. A loud bang resounded down the street as smoke flowed out of the barrel of my pistol.

Although calling it a pistol is an understatement, the IMI Desert Eagle is not just gun. It's practically a demonic handheld cannon, threatening to kill both its targets and its owner with every shot. The hooded man tripped, falling face first into the cobbled street.

First my car gets wrecked by some kid with an RPG, then I get assaulted by three assassins. Bit of a bad day right?

TYM PECHERZEWSKI (Year 9)



MUSICAL INSPIRATION

Songs that tell a story can be a good starting point for creative writing.

This was Jamie Williamson's piece based on *Common People*, by Pulp, the brilliantly pithy exploration of 'poverty tourism' and the exchange between a poor art student and a spoiled, rich girl.



She'd read in a textbook that every piece of great art came from the oppressed. Michelangelo, a servant of the church, and the monarchy. Picasso, subject to the brutality of General Franco and the bombing of Guernica. Van Gogh, whose peasantry spawned many a masterpiece.

From despair, there came about works of genius.

She'd never lived like common people. She'd never viewed the world from anything but the balcony of a hilltop escape, or a luxury penthouse apartment.

She told him her world, and he told her his. And she preferred it. She wanted to break free, to never go back home. She wanted it to be her and her art in a decrepit apartment in some suburb of London.

And he could show her that.

JAMIE WILLIAMSON (Year 11)

James Tivey wrote about New Order's Love Vigilante, in which a soldier is killed on a battlefield and gets one last chance to visit with his wife and child.



We'd been here for months. The day was almost over. The sun was setting, the noises were stopping. For now. The bullets pelting through the air paused, as if time itself has stopped.

The screams faded. Shadows of our comrades were all that was left. The darkness poured over the fields. I was frozen. Unable to move. Surrounded by the cold, stiff dead. The stars shone brightly and the moonlight covered the field of grass.

I lay there. Not knowing. I tried to get up and then I realised. There was a bomb. It had gone off not long before. I was bleeding out. I closed my eyes. My time had come. I knew that I couldn't go, couldn't leave yet.

All I wanted was a few more precious moments to say goodbye.

Suddenly, I could see them; my wife, my child. Crying. I could do nothing to comfort them. Only sit and watch. Fate is cruel. Cruel and twisted.

JAMES TIVEY (Year 10)



DYSTOPIAN WORLDS

We looked at world building and thought about what it would be like
to live in a dystopian regime.



In this twisted world I am gradually becoming transparent and vanishing. I don't have very much time. My left arm has already grown transparent. Like a hologram, it is see-through but it is still there, just barely visible.

My name is Luna and I am a perfectly normal human. Well, I was. Until the Green Flies arrived. I had the only sign of humanity that was identifiable; a giant birthmark on my left arm. It kind of looked like a hummingbird. They tried to remove it. It didn't go well. The laser phased through my skin, into my veins. It triggered something and since then my arm has been gradually disappearing.

All because of my birthmark. I never thought something that small could ruin my life. They made me something different. No longer human, but definitely not immortal.

Somehow, the more I think about it, the less clear it becomes. I was at home with my parents, about a month ago, when a group of people wearing green leather jackets charged into our home and dragged me out of the door. The only words said were: 'Left arm. Child. Now.' I was dumped in the back of a green van and taken to the surgery. They showed me through the door and tied me to a chair with a laser pointed at my arm. The only thing I can remember clearly was the pain.

The pain that started this whole disaster...



WALKING IN ANOTHER'S SHOES

What is fiction other than walking in another person's shoes? These pieces were inspired by a picture of a pair of old ballet shoes.



The shoes were new and bright when they were handed to her. Smooth and soft and pink as the first blush of colour on a rosebud. The blisters and sores disappeared as she took her first steps on her toes, poised at the beginning of a promising career.

Then the work began. And it was hard. As the years progressed her grace seemed to fall lightly from her shoulders as her feet failed her time and time again. Until, finally the dancer gave up.

She stood alone in the studio and cried, and when her tears had dried she ran to the empty theatre and onto the stage. There she felt the echoes of her dream vanish into the gods above. No one sat there now and no one ever would. Not for her.

Kurt was a spark of warmth in the chill air of a winter morning. East Berlin was quiet in the grey hours, only the snarls of cats slinking back from their midnight wanderings broke the silence. They seemed to be the only living things aside from Kurt.

His breath jarred sharply as he ran and his legs burned. He kept up a stream of constant backward glances as he pounded the streets; the guards would surely be looking for the loiterer they had chased away from the Wall.

He hadn't meant to climb it, only to look, just in case, but it was too risky now to go back within a fortnight.

Kurt's thoughts raced as he ran onwards until finally he skidded to a halt in a back alley, his boots leaving lines in the frost. A door stood before him and panicked he wrenched at it. It opened, miraculously, and he stumbled inside.

It was a theatre. The ceiling towered high above him and in front lay a sea of crumbling red chairs. With a sigh of relief, he sunk into one but jumped up almost immediately. He had sat on something. He bent down. It was a pair of worn ballet shoes.



Her movements were graceful and fluid. Fast and slow, intricate and simple. You could tell instantly that this girl was born to dance. I'd been watching her from the balcony. Everything about her was perfect. The way her pale blue dress floated and swirled around her, her shining auburn hair coiled up perfectly in a tight bun, not one hair out of place.

There was one problem though. The one problem that made her otherwise silent fairy-like steps heavy and loud. Her shoes. Great big black boots, tied up with frayed rotting string, smothered in mud.

And I looked down at the pair of ballet slippers clutched in my hand. Shoes I had been given years ago but had never worn. Shoes I could have sold except for one thing.

The words. In a way, these slippers were like a diary for me. I had written down everything on them, filling every part of them, even the laces. And now, I was giving them a new home.

I looked again at the girl. The boots she was wearing were probably hand me downs from the older brothers I knew she had.

Silently, I walked over to the little door hidden at the end of the corridor. Climbing down the stairs inside, I stopped at a pipe just big enough to fit someone my size. I slid through it until I came to a small, open space. The ceiling of the dance room.

Carefully I prised open the hatch in the middle of the room. Putting my face down through the hole, I watched the girl again. Her dancing was mesmerising, full of spins and leaps. How did she manage to stay on her toes the whole time, especially in those boots?

I unwrapped the laces of my ballet slippers from my hand. It was time. I lowered the shoes through the hole and let go. They fell to the floor with a slight thump, right by the girl's feet. She picked them up and looked at the ceiling questioningly, but I was gone.

I just had to trust that she would read everything on the slippers, maybe even do something about the story I had written there, my story, before they came and found me. The soldiers. The soldiers who took the rest of my family and wanted me as well.



TOYS

We thought about toys and I showed the group an image of a real-life science kit that was all the rage in 1950...until it was banned. The reason? It contained actual uranium!

Radioactive Aunt



I woke up on my birthday. It was a cold and miserable day as my mum and dad had already banned me from comic books because they said they were poisoning my attitude. We had always lived in a small run-down flat with old dusty wallpaper. You couldn't tell whether it was coloured grey or it was the dust clogging up the floorboards. They were so wafer thin you would always be afraid of knocking out the cardboard like boards.

I slowly walked down the decrepit stairway. "Hun, happy birthday," Mum said in her dull voice.

"Do you want to open your present?" announced my dull, lanky father.

"Fine!" I shouted.

"Is there something wrong, honey?" said my Mum.

"Nothing!" I groaned as four small presents waited for me.

One was an old sweatshirt, then an old record and a dull book as expected. The book was from my brother who was still lazing in bed. But the last one took me by surprise as my friends had not come around yet.

"Who could this be from?" I thought.

It said "science kit" on the box.

I ran upstairs holding the box. It was black with blood-red cellophane covering it. As I sprinted into my room I realised that there was a green glow to the box.

Of course, that made me tear the box to shreds to see what was inside it. Can you guess what happened next?

No, not super human strength and if you had guessed what was in the box, it was uranium, which put me in a coma.

No big deal. I quite enjoyed the time off school.

Oh, and don't worry about some strange person going around trying to put radioactive material in kids' toys. It was my aunt who had misread the label on the box.



TIME

The topic of time was a rich vein to explore for fictional purposes.

Tym Perchersewski wrote about someone with the ability to bend time to their will.

I stared at the simple brass pocket watch, such a beautifully intricate piece of machinery and yet people took it for granted switching to digital watches and then mobile phones. Me? I prefer things to be a bit more personal, a bit more analogue. Call me a Luddite but I enjoy hearing the quiet tick-tock of a watch mechanism.

There is one thing that I love more than a mechanical contraption: my sister Elizabeth, the only thing stopping me from breaking out of my cell. You see I have a certain gift, I can slow down time and not in a metaphorical way. I'm not some brilliant tactician who has everything planned out, I can literally slow down the flow of time around me while I myself am not affected. It comes in handy when you're wanted by at least three of London's most infamous gangs. That leads to the situation at hand.

I looked around the room, it was mostly empty bar the chair I was sitting on and an old white security camera in one of the corners. Probably a relic from the 80's when this place was built. The door was plain, wooden with a modern-looking handle which had a red light shining brightly from a small bulb slightly further down the door. Escape out of this place wouldn't be too difficult provided that the door wasn't reinforced in some way, even if it was I could probably cut my way through it.

I checked my pocket for the miniscule blowtorch that I usually

kept there. My hand was met with an assortment of various gadgets but the blowtorch seemed to be missing along with all the other curious inventions I had that I could have used as a weapon. Damn, these guys were pretty good at kidnapping, I'll give them that.

The light on the door flashed green and the door opened putting a stop to my planning. Through the door entered a rather odd looking gentleman, he was dressed in a white vest stained in multiple places with what looked like beer and trousers hanging onto his hips so loosely that they seemed to be on the verge of falling to the ground and potentially embarrassing our gangster friend. Various necklaces gathered around his neck, one of which was a simple silver cross hanging on a chain. A red bandana with a white square pattern covered the lower half of his face and from above it stared two emerald eyes with tiny specks of brown mixed into the irises.

"The Boss wants ta talk ta ya," he said slowly approaching the chair. Suddenly, he realised that I was no longer bound to the chair and that I was in fact staring right back into his emerald eyes. "Boo!" I whispered as he stumbled back, swearing in Spanish. His fall was slowed to a gentle descent as I slowed the time around us, walking around him and out of the room locking the door behind me.

"Guess it's time to talk to the boss," I muttered walking down the empty white corridor.



Relief overflows me, as in my cluttered office I finally finish making "The Timeless Room". As I enter I get the adrenaline rush of going into the unknown, the fear of not knowing what is inside. I close my eyes, and just walk in, I feel my heart stop beating, my blood stop pumping. I get the feeling of nausea, I open my eyes and all I see is the small empty snow-white room with the clock I had put in, but the hands aren't moving, it must be broken. Then it hits me, the hands aren't moving because time isn't moving!

Joy overflows me, as I realise I have just made the biggest advancement in science ever... I have managed to stop time! For a few seconds I jump around with delight. Suddenly something catches me at the corner of my eye, it was the clock. It still wasn't moving, I couldn't put my finger on it but something was wrong. I finally comprehended it was the date; it read '13.04.2117' the clock seemed to be a hundred years ahead. Then the spark ignites. "I have created time travel," I whisper to myself in the empty room. I must tell someone of this creation.

Panic overflows me,. As I run out of the room I hear a 'SNAP'; all the bones in my body start to break like dry twigs on a forest floor. My age is starting to catch up with me. I now understand that I will not be able to leave this small empty room for the rest of my life. I will be stuck in complete isolation.



STEAMPUNK

This blend of Victoriana and futuristic fantasy has been described as a world where steam power still reigns and the digital age never happened. It was such a popular topic and produced wonderful writing from the group.

Answering the Ashes



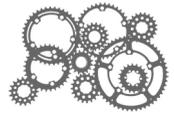
Emmeline had agreed to meet him outside the Crystal Palace that morning, but when she saw the airships looming overhead, she knew she might never see him again. "Oscar", she screamed shrilly. Stupid. STUPID. If she wanted to live, her best chance was not to be heard.

Emmeline crept around the Palace, searching for Richie. He was one of the kinder ones and she hoped against hope that he would have some information for her.

She turned the corner; and was immediately felled with a blow to the face. "Your presence is not required here", intoned the automaton like the machine that it was. Emmeline rose, shielding her face - there was no point in arguing - and limped away. Tentatively touching her rapidly bruising face, she thought. If the Militia knew that she was here in Montagne and were coming to find her, she had to escape. Her soldier training kicked in. If they were coming, let them come; she would take them down from the inside.

Emmeline sprinted as fast as she could bear towards the air docks, until she reached the Militia's leading fleet ship. Looking up, the view almost made her keel over. The airship reminded her of a beast, sharp and spiky with metallic scales. Large atomic cannons lined the port and starboard, and its large, angular frame was imposing, inhuman.

Steamy Sky



The sky turns grey with the steam coming from the airship's exhaust. The silence is broken with the rattle of the cogs as the airship begins to slow down. People are waving from the deck of the airship. There is a loud bang with a cloud of steam exiting from multiple pipes.

This is no an ordinary vessel, it is the beauty, *'the Archaeopteryx'*, the grand ship known by the locals. The gangplank draws from the hull. Out strides a man proudly from the gloom. Unlike many of the other aristocrats, he is different. His suit is untidy and he has several automaton birds flying around him. He holds firmly, with his right hand, a mahogany walking stick with an eagle head ferrule. His left arm is made of brass with cogs protruding from the side.



PICK 'N' MIX

Finally, here are a few pieces I liked over the year that didn't fit into a specific category.



Little Red Riding Hood

Sick grandmothers are incredibly worrying. In fact, Little Red Riding Hood felt so anxious, her stomach backflipped to the point where she felt ill herself. It couldn't be from infection. She hadn't seen her grandmother in weeks. It was paranoia from an impending sense of danger, casting a shadow darker than the one her crimson hood made over her face.

Striding with determination, leaves and twigs crunching under her heavy steps like discarded paper and a thick smell of pine air freshener invading her senses, she couldn't help but feel a pair of eyes following her every move, sending chills down her spine.

She paused her steps, clutching the wicker handle of her basket filled that was with her grandmother's favourite beverage- lemonade - and freshly baked cake, until her knuckles glowed white.

The sound of strained quick breaths, almost panting, tickled her shoulder and a heavy wet drop splashed on her collarbone. Wait, was that drool? Disgusting!

She stood on the spot, almost as still as a statue, squeezing her eyes tightly shut and holding back a ragged breath.

The thing turned its head and fur-like bristles on an old worn paintbrush scratched against her earlobe. A rough voice closely resembling a growl began to echo in her ear drum.

The dog that belongs to a homeless person



I flopped my head on my shaggy paw and gazed up at him, his stubble like blackened knives stabbing through his pores. He ran a gnarled hand down my spine, my fur rippling as he did so.

His eyes were like dark pools of oil, a looking-glass to a mind filled with unwanted thoughts. I was suddenly diverted as a young girl skipped past with a hot crêpe enveloped in her small hands.

I jump up, and he grabbed my collar, preventing me from the first meal I would have had in weeks.

My stomach ached with hunger, and my eyes had been failing me for days. I had wished for the arms of death to grasp me, but no such justice in life exists.

Fog



Black fog covering the forest, moving slowly towards a clearing. This fog grazed the tree tops and covered a large area. Slowly and gradually this fog flowed like smoke through the trees. Nothing through this fog was visible and in its wake it left a trail of dead animals. Crows, squirrels, canaries and even the odd deer.

Approaching the clearing...

Animals screaming and a menacing grumble emitting from whatever is causing this massacre. Clearing drawing near...

The snarls grew louder and the birds scatter. The fog is now consuming the clearing.

And then.

The fog vanished.

And as it disappeared, a long, black-purple scaly tail covered in big spikes with a human-like eyeball floating around it snuck into the shadows on the ground.

The Ball



The hall is bustling. Flowing gowns and crisp cut suits cloud your vision for everywhere you look, a new distraction awaits.

As you make your way down the golden staircase towards the overflowing dance floor you pass face after face each guarded by thinly cut fabric; masking their identities but in no way their beauty.

The band stands at the head of the hall filling every space with the soothing sound of instruments you haven't even heard of as the sea of wealth sways perfectly in time, like waves moving one way and then the next. And then they spot you. And then they stop. Some gasp. Some even scream. Your mask doesn't hide who you are. Who you truly are.

As you step onto the floor they part like the Red Sea. How ironic. They stare and they stare and so you put on a show. Extending your arm, offering your hand to the only reason you came to such an extravagant party. Together you dance around the room.

Dipping and skipping in all the right places, in front of all the right people. The music fades and so you recoil.

Gliding back up the golden staircase and away from the now silent hall; one dance was all you needed.

In the Woods



One gloomy winter's evening, delicate snowflakes so unique and beautiful gracefully danced down from the sky and landed on the tip of my frozen nose. The atmosphere was overwhelming, peacefulness surrounding me.

Normally, I would be petrified, strolling alone at this time of night, but strangely this was different. I felt a sparkle of courage being sprinkled over me. Suddenly, I was a new person; I believed in myself. No longer was I timid Amy, I was strong, courageous Amy...

As I turned to my left I saw the outline of two figures in the distance. I may not have seen them clearly, but I defiantly heard them!

It seemed like they had both stepped out of the car and were arguing, this I was quite sure about as I could vaguely see their hands flapping around in the misty air pointing at the car.

So, I took an educated guess that maybe their car had broken down and they were lost. Now I could just about see their faces as the mist began to clear.

A lady and a man, the lady was angrily walking towards me holding her phone in the air trying to get a signal. This poor lady, she was wondering around the isolated forest for at least half an hour while the man (who came across as extremely lazy) was sitting on the car boot reading a book.

This book became very useful though. Clumsily, he dropped it onto the damp dirty soil. Surprisingly, he then picked up a rusty key which had the word 'cabin' engraved on it. He called the lady over to show her, but she didn't think anything of it.

Even so, they stomped through the mud and eventually found a cabin. Thoughts were probably racing through their heads at the speed of lightning! Is this the cabin? Will we be lost here forever? What if we die of starvation?

The key was turned anxiously and the door squeaked open gradually. All the lights were off but as they went to switch on the lights a large shadow appeared at the top of the wooden stairs.

They got a feeling that someone had beaten them to the cabin. They were not alone.

The Creative Writing Club hopes you have enjoyed this anthology.
Thanks for reading.

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