

2017 - 2018

the best of
**CREATIVE
WRITING
CLUB**

INTRODUCTION

So much has changed since I took on the role of Writer in Residence at East Barnet School in 2012. I was very new to this kind of work then and I remember how nervous I was the first time I came through those gates! But I was made to feel at home immediately by staff and students and, really, I've never looked back.

Since then, I've done many, many school visits, started teaching creative writing to adults, and had an exciting move from young adult fiction to writing grown-up crime thrillers.

But my time at East Barnet School was special from the very beginning and it remains one of the very best parts of my working life.

I now have Sixth Formers in my writing club who had just started secondary school when I first met them. To see how they have turned into such wonderful young adults has been a true privilege. It's also lovely meeting the new, younger generation and one of my favourite aspects of the club is the way the Year 7s mix with much older students in the club in an atmosphere of real equality. I regularly bounce out of the after-school club with a huge smile on my face after another fun and creative session with the students.

As we say goodbye to Mr Christou, I would like to thank him once again for making me your Writer in Residence. Most of all, I want to thank those students who turn up to Room 324 week after week and make me feel so welcome at East Barnet School.



Creating New Worlds

*World building is a theme we come back to again and again in the club.
This dystopian cityscape piece was written by Eleanor Rachel.*

A city. Ghost-like. Made of whispered secrets, untold lies. A place where people never smile, never laugh. Faint outlines of buildings just managing to cut through the dense cloud of smoke. The smoke which rises off everything, the cars, the roads, the people. The smoke which clogs your throat, restricts your sigh and muffles your hearing. A city. Almost dead, just getting by. Built on a foundation of deceit. Slowly sinking deeper and deeper into the mud of despair.

But, even in this hole of darkness, tucked away in a far corner of this city, is a glowing child. A girl. Not yet six. Hidden away in the restricting walls of her bedroom. She sits on her bed, in her little bubble of light. Smoke doesn't touch her. Her innocence creates a shield, warding off the darkness which shrouds the minds of the people. Her parents, new to this city, are too kind to break to her the harsh reality of the world to which she now belongs.

So, she sits on her bed, clutching the last tie to the past life of freedom she barely remembers. A tiny wooden ring. Painted a deep purple, adorned with bright, glowing flowers. In her mind's eye, she pictures the green grass, the tall trees, the rich soil left behind at her old home. The bursts of nature that don't exist here, that can't exist here, that will never exist here.

And her desperation to leave this new, lonely world she isn't even allowed to see brings a single tear to her eye. It trickles slowly down her cheek, finding a path between the freckles scattered across her face.

Eleanor Rachel (Year 9)



War

This was a topic we looked at over a couple of weeks. We started by listening to the soundtrack of 'Dunkirk' by Hans Zimmer for inspiration, and then used picture prompts to inspire pieces of fiction.

An icy wind drives knives westward as ever into our leathered, hardened, carved faces. Who would have thought you'd get this much of a blow when we're six feet under the screams of our fallen friends? Of course, the weaving funnels of corridors we reside beneath were dug in the same manner as we live now, in a fleeting way and with no small amount of blistering. Week upon week I am joined by fresh-faced corpses-to-be that will inevitably complain of the cold, before falling, cold, themselves. Yet I am subjected to the relentless, pointless, hopeless refuelling of our barracks up the front.

Alex Schwaller (Year 12)

My eyes scan over the many pictures of her. My wife. My beautiful, beautiful girl. But she's gone now – left to fight for her country. I never agreed with war and battle, but then my girl was strong. Powerful. A roaring flame deep within her.

A telegram came though. I've been counting every precious day since my heart broke in two. She haunts me in my dreams. My life. Her sweet aroma would intoxicate the air... her dazzling dress would flow across the dance floor... her soft voice like an angels...

But I will never experience those memories again. Because she's gone. Never to return....

Lottie Rachel (Year 7)

There's an empty wind swirling on the beach, gusting the sand, slicing across the grey water. A hint of danger lies in those choppy waves and in the flat iron of the sky.

The men on the beach, that shapeless horde of bodies, hear the ticking in their heads running in time to the whirring propellers of the bombers. Fear slides silently amongst them, slipping soft fingers around their necks, down their shoulders, into their chests. Ripples shimmer through the ranks but no one moves. They wait for a sound beyond the slap of the sea on the jetty, the crunch of gritty sand beneath boots.

Silence.

No sound is scary. It lets them think.

Faces square against the wind, staring through the salted spray blown from the water. Watching. Waiting.

Then there's a whispering. Hardly stronger than silence. It gets louder.

And louder.

And louder.

The soldiers shuffle, then dive as the planes soar over them.

I'm scared.



Halloween

This is always such a fun topic to do! Who can resist stories about ghosts and monsters? Eleanor Rachel wrote about someone discovering their best friend wasn't quite what they seemed...

'Keep talking'

'No. I'm serious'

She looks close to tears. I decide to go along with it. For now

'Ok. When did you die then?'

'Well you remember that time I got knocked off my bike by that car?'

'Are you kidding me? That was about five years ago!'

'Seven and a half actually. But that's not the point. You know I went into that coma for a couple of days? Well . . . I never actually woke up'

I'm beginning to wonder where the nearest asylum is.

'You're telling me you never woke up from that coma'

She seems to think I'm starting to believe her, and the relief that flashes across her face is obvious.

'The doctors had no idea why the life machine failed but I woke up.'

'You know what I think?' I say slowly.

Her head tilts up hopefully.

'You're mental'

Her face drops.

'I thought you of all people would believe me.' she says quietly.

'I'm sorry, but it is a little hard to believe. You don't happen to have any proof, do you?'

She nods slowly. For a moment, nothing happens. We don't say anything. Then, unable to hold her gaze, I glance down. And gasp. Her feet are off the ground.

'You have got to be kidding me...'

Eleanor Rachel (Year 9)

I still haven't forgotten the expression his face had taken when I filled his veins with electricity. I keep that image in my mind every time I put on the mask, the face of my first kill, thankfully my only kill.

My name is Cherokee Japon; at least I think that's what it was three years ago, before the accident, before I gained my powers. After the accident I had to change my name; we all did, to protect our friends and families. You've probably heard my new name on the news before, after I saved Chicago from zombies, or when I finally defeated my nemesis, 'Mainstream.'

Alex Schwaller (Year 12)



Animals & Animal Spirits

This was a rich topic to explore, and we looked at everything from how different cultures explore the concepts of animal spirits, to rather more light-hearted prompts about everyday pets.

Within my stomach is a beast...I tend to avoid calling him a spirit animal but due to his direct ties to my soul, I guess I can't call him much else. His humanoid appearance is no more than a façade, he's a demon, a beast, that's what he told me.

As a child I was scared of the dark. I feared the two green eyes that lurked over me every night. But as I grew older I accepted him, his clawed grasp upon my shoulders and eager gaze now following me to school.

That's when I found out only I could see him. But I also found out he could understand me. He'd tell me the answers to questions I didn't know and would warn me of the whereabouts of bullies. He was my best friend for the entirety of my school life.

Kaya Alexander (Year 9)

Cat vs Dog

(cat is in dog's bed)

Dog: Last time you sat in my bed you peed. Get out.

Cat: No.

Dog: Oh come on, get up.

Cat: No.

Dog: Can you at least promise me you won't pee this time?

Cat: No.

Dog: Can I bribe you to get up?

Cat: No.

Dog: Will you negotiate?

Cat: No.

Dog: Even if I remind you I'm twice your size?

Cat: No.

Dog: Well you know what? Do you know what I'll do?

Cat: No.

Dog: I'm going to bite you!

Cat: No.

Dog: Yeah, you're right I'm not doing that. Please?

Cat: No.

Dog: Well there's only one thing for it. Woof.

Cat: No.

Dog: Woof.

Cat: Meow.

Dog: Now that's just out of order. Say sorry!

Cat: No.

Dog: I'll tell the human.

Cat: NO!

Dog: Yeah that's right, shift it.

(The cat moves away)



and the Award goes to...

Oscar night was a really fun theme for a session. Students – hilariously! - wrote and performed their own acceptance speeches. And hey, with this talented lot, who knows what might happen in the future? Rhianna Lewis wrote what might happen if two actors who hate each other in real life are forced to smile for the cameras.

Standing on the red carpet, and making my way to the building, my heart races like a wolf speeding through the woods at night. The flash of the cameras blind me momentarily, but I'm so used to it that I don't even blink. I always put on an I'm-So-Cool-And-Popular look in front of everyone, but inside, I feel like a big red panic button that has just been pressed.

The sweat that drips all over me makes my tight-enough dress feel even tighter. Anxious to get away from screaming fans and questioning paparazzi, I practically run down the carpet and burst through the glass doors and into another world of coolness and sweet-smelling popcorn. I got a bit apprehensive about how my appearance looks, so I make a super

quick trip to the bathroom, just for a really tiny touch-up.

Half an hour later, I am totally satisfied with how I look. My auburn hair tumbles below my waist in thick curls, my opal earrings glisten, my make-up is about 30 inches thick, my floor length, elegant, ruby red evening dress all perfected, and my lucky silver pendant shining round my neck, I feel ready. Ready to face Him. Oh, I'm so going to beat Him.

It's nearly time! The actors who starred in *The Thing Behind The Door* are about to get announced! Through the corner of my eye, I can see Him, his pearly teeth showing through his smile and that excited gleam in his eye, the one I know oh so well. Well, he'll NEVER get picked. Right?

Rhianna Lewis (Year 7)



Screenwriting Magic

Eduard Tepes is incredibly knowledgeable about movies and I really wouldn't be surprised if he ends up becoming a screenwriter in his adult life. (I'm hoping he will invite me to his first premiere...) He has been working on a screenplay for some time and here is an extract. It sounds like a very exciting story in development.

Jacket goes inside his room, where he takes out his pistol and puts it in a coat holster. He then takes his keys and puts on his jacket- which is now red - then leaves the apartment.

(jump cut to:)

Jacket at a convenience store. He buys a beer can and a pack of cigarettes. He nods at the shop assistant then leaves. He goes to sit down on a bench outside the shop and sips at the beer. A few seconds pass before a black van arrives and pulls over in front of Jacket. The doors open. Jacket is perplexed. There are two men dressed in black with assault rifles. One of them points his rifle at Jacket.

Van Goon

You. Get in now.

Jacket stands up.

Jacket

Just let me finish my beer.

He glugs what's left in the beer can, crushes it and drops it. He sits down in the van.

Van Goon

Wow, you're a smart guy. I like you already.

Jacket

When you point an assault rifle at someone you think they'll argue?

Van Goon smiles. The driver turns around. It's the same goon who punched Jacket in the face.

Third goon

Hey, ****head, remember me?

Jacket

Yeah, you're the **hole who punched me yesterday.

The goon smiles and turns back round. Jacket tries to pull his pistol out but the other goon pins his arm against the window, making him drop the gun. The other goon picks up the pistol. He closes the van's door and they drive off. Jacket is holding his wrist.

Jacket

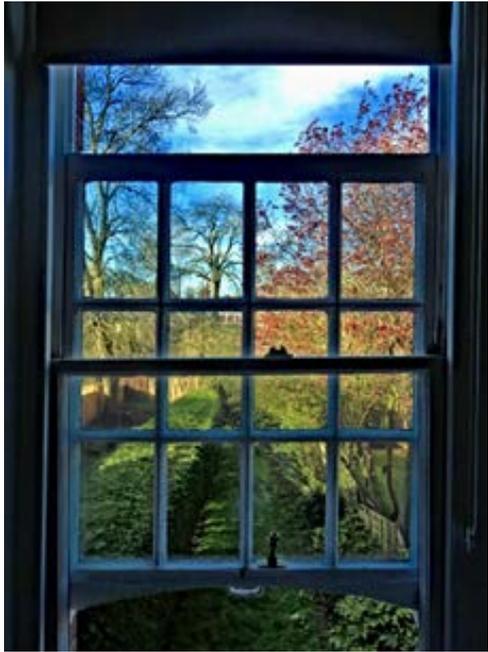
Where the hell are you taking me?

Van Goon

We can't tell you that. It's a surprise.

Jacket

You know, I'm a war veteran. I've got myself out of situations worse than this.



Picture Perfect

The 'Harris Burdick' pictures are a popular topic in the writing club. I'm still grateful to Miss Colangelo-Lillis for introducing me to these strange and wonderful images. Each one seems to hint at a multitude of different stories.

The Third-Floor Bedroom

"It all began when someone left the window open"

The day was a sunny one, the sun blinding bright on the flat white houses. Upstairs the cleaner had left the window open in the baby's room. A light breeze wafted the curtains and gently rocked the cot back and forth. Except for its creaking and the low whine of an air conditioning unit everything was quiet.

The wallpaper of the room was of a rather unusual sort. It was a soft, powdery blue that matched the sky above the street, and was decorated with hundreds of white doves in straight columns.

As the breeze continued to blow, a strange, papery rustling came from the wallpaper. As though this was a usual occurrence a bird unstuck itself from the wall and began to flap around the room. Slowly, slowly every single dove unpeeled itself, until a blizzard of white wings filled the air. The baby gurgled in delight as they glided smoothly around the cot.

When Tom walked in he rubbed his eyes as if to clear them from sleep.

Lily Rachel (Year 12)



Music, Maestro

Songs are just another way of telling stories and we often have sessions in which we listen to music and use the lyrics to inspire our creative writing.

A popular choice this year was the powerful song 'Zombie' by The Cranberries.

Another petal falls crippled, my mind messed and meddled.

Wilted faces, yet no more empty spaces;

for the happiness of mine is outdated.

Dream and dreamt of what this meant, but 'meant' means nothing no more.

Drowsy minds, and feeble cries - to what do I owe this pleasure?

Welcome you home, lifeless - yet remorse, for what remaining hope?

The sun is foreshadowed, black and blue - but the irony of dreams seems as ironic as you!

Hold me closer once again, nothing lasts forever, everything will end.

Temper my loneliness, in a passionate whelm of infamous,

contemplate upon this darkness, and mock to the suns last fall.

There, upon my eyes lay a tree, the pathetic irony of life that belittles me.

I paint in crimson and draw colourful smiles.

Hung upon my branch, lay my happiness - a brief while.

This momentous euphoria that burns obsidian light,

plagued upon my meaningfulness, in a heart 'fashioned' white.

Abigail Darwish (Year 10)

Another head hangs lowly. Tautened pink silk stretched over raven hair. Another mother waiting for her children to return.

Her hut is perfumed with spices and sticky heat. But there is something else. You can almost touch the fear, the sense of anticipation emanating from her quivering, golden hand as she ladles the soup into three aluminium bowls.

She never owned a clock. The strange numbers and lines were confusing to her. Instead, she judges the passing of time by the growing of shadows and the dipping of the sun.

Its rays, now, reflecting off the opposite house, transforming the brilliant white paint into a soft orange. The light in the hut is rather subdued. Which means it should not be long before her two scrawny children will light up the room with a cheeky smile and a "What's cooking, mama?"

The thought of this momentarily lifts a shadow from Alsana's face. Steam wafts up from the bowls, swirling silver droplets drifting into the air. The soup will soon be cold. Her body shakes as she exhales. "They will come back" she announces, eyes wide and defiant. Of course they will.



Summer in the City

In the rising temperatures of the summer term, we used the weather as inspiration for story-telling. Eleanor Rachel wrote this rather chilling piece in a sunny setting.

That's when I noticed the crowded beach had fallen into total silence. I froze. No one was moving. My eyes darted from person to person, face to face. Where was Johnny? I couldn't see him. But there – yes. He was staring at me, eyes wide with fear. He opened his mouth. I shook my head fractionally.

Without warning, an ear-splitting scream pierced the air. Than another. And another. Suddenly everyone exploded into action. I sprinted towards Johnny, but there were too many people in the way, all trying to go in a different direction, all trying to find someone, something, someplace that would protect them.

"Johnny" I cried out. Nothing. I could barely hear myself over the cacophony of screams, shouts, tears. And then he was there, running into my arms, pressing his face into my chest, heaving with sobs. "It's alright Johnny. It's fine."

He nodded, still trembling. I grabbed his hand, started to move. And that's when the world erupted.

Sand. Everywhere. Clogging mouth, nose, ears. Silence. No. a dead ringing. Shock. Johnny? Lift head. Blood. Too much blood. Johnny. Lying there. Head turned away. Not moving. Not moving. Not. Moving.

"Johnny" I screamed. I gripped his shoulders, shaking him, shouting at him, begging him to move. He did nothing. Why wasn't he moving? I could see the pool of blood and flesh where his chest should have been. But no. not him. Not Johnny. Too young. He didn't deserve it. I lay on my side, tears running down my face, gazing at nothing. Why him? Why him? Why. Him.

Eleanor Rachel (Year 9)



Holidays from Hell

Still part of our summer-themed prompts, Muneeb Alam wrote this piece about a sinister hotel visit.

A man went to a hotel and walked up to the front desk to check in. The woman at the desk gave him his key and told him that on the way to his room, there was a door with no number that was locked and no one was allowed in there. Especially no one should look inside the room, under any circumstances. So he followed the instructions of the woman at the front desk, going straight to his room, and going to bed.

The next night his curiosity would not leave him alone about the room with no number on the door. He walked down the hall to the door and tried the handle. Sure enough it was locked. He bent down and looked through the wide keyhole. Cold air passed through it, chilling his eye. What he saw was a hotel bedroom, like his, and in the corner was a woman whose skin was completely white. She was leaning her head against the wall, facing away from the door. He stared in confusion for a while. He almost knocked on the door, out of curiosity, but decided not to.

He crept away from the door and walked back to his room. The next day, he returned to the door and looked through the keyhole. This time, all he saw was red. He couldn't make anything out besides a distinct red color. Perhaps the inhabitants of the room knew he was spying the night before, and had blocked the keyhole with something red.

At this point he decided to consult the woman at the front desk for more information. She sighed and said, "Did you look through the keyhole?" The man told her that he had and she said, "Well, I might as well tell you the story. A long time ago, a man murdered his wife in that room, and her ghost haunts it. But these people were not ordinary. They were white all over, except for their eyes. Their eyes were red"." Just don't do it again" he said with a menacing leer"." Who knows what will happen,' he said as his... eyes.... went.... red...

Muneeb Alam (Year 9)



Playwriting Competition

Some of my talented Year 10s entered a national playwriting competition this year and Ella Moss got through the first round, which was extremely impressive. Tym Pecherzewski wrote a play called 'Lizzie, Me and LSD'. Here is an extract to give you a flavour of the overall piece.

Scene 4:

Clay and Lizzie rush into the room holding hands; they have various boxes and packets stashed under their clothes, the shapes clearly visible. Clay opens his jacket, the boxes hidden there fall out.

Lizzie: Nice haul Clay, never took you for a thief.

Clay: I just stole things from a shop.

(He looks regretful, his keeps looking down at the boxes. Lizzie puts her arms around him.)

Lizzie: Think of yourself as Robin Hood, stealing from the rich and giving to the poor.

(Clay shakes himself off her)

Clay: But we're not giving to the poor are we? We're keeping it for ourselves, that's not what I signed up for Liz.

Lizzie: What did you sign up for honey, a nice holiday with Auntie Lizzie. Look, we're not exactly drowning in cash and I'm sure Asda can afford to have a couple of teenagers rob them once in a while.

(Clay thinks for a moment)

Clay: Fine, but only till we can afford to buy our own food.

(Lizzie holds out her hand)

Lizzie: Deal?

(Clay shakes her hand, then he sits in a corner opening a box of Jaffa Cakes.)

Clay: Is there actually honour amongst thieves?

Lizzie: I guess, from experience it's more don't snitch on me and I won't shank you in your sleep.

Clay: From experience?

Lizzie: Remember that thing we said about secrets, let's not reveal everything all at once, it'll just be boring then.

Clay: At least give me something to work with.

Lizzie: Ok, I started life poor, like proper poor, today's not the first time I've shoplifted out of desperation.

Clay: Shit, I didn't know.

Lizzie: Yeah, well now you do, I don't need your sympathy keep it to yourself.

(An awkward minute of silence passes)

Clay: How about that pizza?

Lizzie: Does the oven even work?

(Clay goes over to the kitchen, he twists a few knobs, Lizzie looks at him and giggles)

Lizzie: You have no ****ing clue how to use it, do ya?

Clay: Nope.

(Lizzie walks over to the hob and turns the oven on.)

Lizzie: You're like a child, I swear to God.

Clay: You swearing to God? That's like a drug dealer showing up at a police barbecue.

Lizzie: You laugh but I bet that's happened more than once.

Clay: True.

(The stage goes dark, the light of the oven stays on for a short while but it too fades out.)

Tym Pecherzewski (Year 10)



Fantasy Fiction

This rich topic is one we will return to again and again in the writing club.

The Heroic Tales of Me

I enter the small, dimly lit pub on the outskirts of a forest, advertised as “Sleeping Dragon Tavern and Inn”, desperate for a drink. All I see is a goblin playing chess against himself, a mage that is high as a kite on some sort of arcane dust, a paladin writing a letter, and a few bandits counting their plunder. The first thing anyone notices when they enter, is the rancid odour of blood, sweat, and alcohol. The innkeeper walks out a kitchen door, an elf, unusual for a tavern as that line of work is usually saved for dwarves. He immediately recognises that I am new around here and shouts and gestures for me to come towards him.

“Welcome my friend, how can one help you? A room is 10 gold... I mean the room is 10 gold.” Before I can answer he speaks again “Oh I know, how about a song from our world class bard. Oi, Walgold will ya play a tune.” I didn’t even see this bard as I entered, but sure enough in the corner slumped on a stool, that looks as if it is about to give way, is this young halfling clearly too drunk to stand leave alone to sing a song . The innkeeper notices, my lack of interest in a song, says “You just want a drink don't ya? Why didn't you say something? “And again before I can muster a sound he begins “How about our world class Krokodile Dundee or our famous Windwhisper's dream, or our special?”

"I, uh, will take the special, I guess" I reply, the bartender's face lights up. As he dips beneath the bar, I hear a small crash and a mumble of eleven curse words. He slides a small glass along the bar towards my hand. It being called a drink would be glorifying it, it is more a vile concoction that I don't want to know the contents of. Popping his head above the grimy bar, the innkeeper says, "Don't worry if something moves." After he says that, I know that I will not drink it, however not to look disrespectful I pick up the drink.

I walk over to the bard holding the drink with as little contact as humanly possible. I begin to think of a way to give this drink to the bard, but he beats me to the case. "I guess *burp* that ya don't want the drink" drunkenly stammers the bard.

"Well, that's not it." As I peer over my shoulder to make sure the innkeeper doesn't see this, I say, "I just think that you... could make better use of it than me."

"Well if that's the case, I *burp* thank you," says the bard with a giant smile on his face and downs it.

Coming to this bar was a mistake, all I wanted was a drink, now I am looking for a way to leave unnoticed. Then through my mindless meander, I accidentally knock over one of the bandit's mugs of mead. "Oi, you mate. Are you looking for trouble?" he snaps at me.

"Sorry, this was an accident. Sorry. Sorry." I quickly respond, looking for some sort of way out of this situation and tavern.

Before I can respond, a giant fist collides with the side of the bandit's face. I turn to see the paladin with beautiful gold embroidered armour, he looks at me and is about to say something when a gargle of bandits pounce onto him. This is when I realise, this is the perfect opportunity to leave. I exit and nobody notices. As I leave all I hear is the ruckus that is continuing within the "Sleeping Dragon Tavern and Inn".

Lily Rachel wrote about a world in which lies appeared carved upon our kin.

'Show me,' said the old woman.

'No,' he said.

'Show me.' The deep creases and folds of her face were shadowed in the grey light of the shack. She sat facing the boy, both of them on splintered crates. A china bowl decorated with blue designs and filled with a translucent yellow substance lay on the floor between them.

'Show me,' she said yet again. There was a hardness in her eyes but beneath it the boy saw something he trusted. He began to unbutton his shirt slowly, using the fingers of one hand, all the while keeping his gaze fixed on the woman. When he reached the last button he shrugged one sleeve from his arm and held it out to her.

The pale skin was ruptured and melted along the length of his forearm. Bubbles of blistered skin weeped yellow pus and a line of deeper purple revealed the beginnings of muscle.

The woman tutted and shook her head. 'It's bad.'

'I know.'

She took his arm in her hands, cool and calloused on his burning skin. She picked up the bowl and began to drip the liquid on the wound.

He gritted his teeth at the stinging pain, searing along his arm.

'What did you say?' she asked.

'I-' he began.

'Tell the truth,' she interrupted. 'I don't have enough for another wound.'

Ergo

His heavy black boots crushed the snow beneath as he walked towards the steel gate which protected The Keep. Gun in hand he braced himself for what would be the final step of his journey, his reawakening, free of the lies fed to him by the Emperor's propaganda machines. Even now as he was standing on the vast concrete bridge the loudspeakers spewed their Royalist filth. Ergo readied his other hand, his power causing vibrant blue sparks to jump between the fingertips.

One arc of electricity took care of the loudspeakers, another fried the door control system giving him access to what he was seeking. An end to the tyranny of Emperor Qurynth the Merciful, he spat at the thought of the man.

The alarms were blaring now, alerting the guards of his presence within the compound. It didn't concern him, they were but ants to him, squabbling about trying to protect their monarch. Soon they would realize resistance was futile, there was no escaping his rage, no defence against the onslaught he would bring to these traitors.

At one point he had considered these men his friends, his brothers and sisters in arms but that had changed when they murdered her, when they took the one thing from him that he cared about, the only person that kept him sane enough to continue living in this sorry excuse of a world.

It was ironic, they'd spent so long keeping him from her that they created what would now destroy them. All that training, all the drills he had gone through to qualify as a protector of the crown would now help him destroy it. He knew their tactics, their contingency plans and he would use all of the knowledge they had provided to finally rid himself of these traitors.

Ergo laughed as he heard gunshots erupt down the long concrete corridor, the bullets headed in his direction. They were no risk to him, the projectiles melting as they came close to him, fizzing out of existence as they collided with the barrier of pure lighting. He could see them, the red lights shining from their helmets, of course he didn't need the lights, he could sense the jolts of electricity running through their brains.

He ambled towards the phalanx of black uniforms, their shields were up, gun barrels resting on the short wall they had erected. The barrels shook with the hands of their owners, Ergo didn't blame them for fearing him, after all, mortals should have fear for their gods. He considered that thought for a while, perhaps god was the wrong word, he wasn't omnipotent nor was he omnipresent, yet he was vastly superior to the men at the end of the corridor. Ergo was a predator, an apex predator and they were going to make great prey.

Tym Pecherzewski (Year 10)

I'm giving Kaya Alexander lots of space in this fantasy section. She is one of the most imaginative young women I have ever met and has entire universes in her head! Here is a selection of fantasy pieces she has written over the year.

Summer on the waves

The water glistened as our young ship bobbed on the waves. I looked out upon the deck and breathed in the fresh summer breeze. I watched the grass on the far-off shore sway and suddenly jolted back as my view was obstructed by a shock of flame red hair. "Mornin' captain!" He chirped, smiling, with his trusty fishing rod in hand. A sarcastic voice then yelled from below the deck "I'd hardly call two pm morning," I gave an awkward chuckle and rubbed the back of my neck as I stepped out of my cabin doorway "So... Where are we, Nerrka?" I asked the fisher stood next to me. "On course, we'll be at the kingdom by at least five!"

I sighed with relief and stared out to the clear blue sky overhead, a few pesky Draco-fowl circling us, intently watching our freshly caught basket of fish. Nerrka scurried over to shoo them away, batting his rod at them as they swooped down, hoping to grab a bite.

The last of my crew, Verso, finally rose from beneath the deck. He wiped the sweat and dirt from his brow and looked at me contently "All sorted. Everything is in perfect conditions and suited for any customer, even the king!" he joked.

The boat then jolted to the side, water flooding onto the deck as a huge, scaly white mass bumped against us. "RHEMA!" Nerrka shouted at the giant serpent, it's faded red eyes widening in shock, "BAD!! Bad Rhema!" the beast sunk its head down in sorrow as the flame-haired boy scolded it, giving only a sad, apologetic hiss in response.



The Devil's Diary

Dear Diary,

You know me, but I may very well not know of you. I, a mere terraformer of the heavens have taken on many names over the years, from my original, Satalinn, to the unfathomable number of names given to me by mortals.

I was made by a group of young gods who set out to make a paradise for the deceased. I was born to the raw energy of their elements and was instructed to make this paradise beautiful, pure and magnificent, so grand all mortals would desire it like no other. Within a week I had brought to them my blueprints. I sketched out palaces and beautiful fountains, gold and white embroidered on every wall and surface. Lakes and streams of perfect blue. I stated the koi and other elegant water dwellers may be placed here upon arrival. And finally, I showed them the concept of a gate, a gate grand and gold, made to keep out any unwanted company.

The gods applauded my design and worked on forming other beings like myself to help the construction of their desired land. Within hours I had began work with my team of 20 winged helpers. By a week the gate was completed, and I had a steady income of workers, I had at least 100 standing loyally by my side. By a month I had at least 1000 at my command, each dedicated to their role in terraforming and constructing this paradise, newly dubbed "heaven" by the gods.

While carrying up a large pillar to the second floor of a palace, one of my workers lost their grip and the pillar was sent tumbling down. This was nothing new, a few slip ups here and there happen, and had happened throughout the now 4 months we'd been working. But this was different. The pillar came crashing down upon two other angels. Crushed and mutilated, their bodies splatted beneath the weight of the rock. The screams... I was told there were screams. But I heard nothing, nothing but white noise. The ringing began to hurt, it felt as if my head was being ripped in two. I couldn't scream, I could only stare at the destroyed bodies of my workers. A comrade tapped me on the shoulder, "Sir? Are you alright?" His voice silenced the ringing, I could hear the panic now, a flurry of distress hit my senses and in a thoughtless moment I slashed out at him with the only weapon the gods had given me. He fell limp, the noise filled my head once more, blocking out everything as he bled out on the floor.

And it was at this moment I realised I had power. I did not need to follow the gods wishes, I didn't need to be their loyal pet. And so, one by one I slaughtered them all. Every last one of my workers, too loyal to fight back, they stood still and died like rats. A once gold and white paradise was stained red, and the horror upon the god's faces when they returned only made me laugh. In a fit of anger, they flung me out of their land and into what they thought would be my cell... An empty, unbearably hot land, blank as far as the eye could see. And so, I saw this land with my new twisted eye, I used what they had given me and made my own world, my own land for the dead... And so, I dubbed this place "hell", the opposite to their paradise.

Isolation Programme

It'd been twelve weeks. The dull walls around her were covered in paint, blood and ink. She stared at her creation, the grotesque beauty brought a grin to her fired pale face. Her hands stained red from her own blood. A quiet ringing fogged her thoughts as she smiled silently, breathing in the scent of paint mixed with blood, letting it fill her lungs to the very edge of bursting in every breath, the static filling her brain leaving her as no more than a shell in a stained cell.

Click-

The white noise silenced as the door swung open. She bit her tongue as he walked in, his tall figure looming over her "Alright... if this check-up goes well you get to go back to the others, if not, the DB isolation programme will continue as normal, do you understand?" He spoke calmly and in a sophisticated manner, holding a clipboard and adjusting his bow tie as he awaited a response. She said nothing. Taking a syringe from his pocket he crouched down next to her, injecting the thick red substance into her veins. "You're covered in dead ... I gave you two weeks to kill it and you only did it today? Your desire for attention, even from my failed abominations, is astonishing..." He paused to think and took a long hard look into her cold dead eyes. She bit her tongue harder, the static completely silent. The fluid burnt its way through her body, pumping her heart back into action, forcing it to create more of this horrific "blood". She hated the feeling of it moving around her system, she knew the others hated it too, and so when given his failures she'd paint the walls in their dead to stop their suffering from the sensation. Dead is not true blood, it is cursed, and painful for many.

She let out a long sigh and looked directly into his one eye, she'd grown used to his stitches, his intimidating physique was no more than normal to her by now. "Eye contact, yes, very good..." he said, scribbling down on his clip board "I'll let you into the main lab... DB social programme... Yes, yes..." he muttered, but she felt fired. She longed for the static to return, but all she wanted to do was run, but she couldn't move, only the horrible sensation of Dead blood roaming through her remained... And so, with all her ability she let out three words "I hate you..."

Kaya Alexander (Year 9)



Open Ocean

Open ocean, that's what he'd always loved. The sound of the crashing waves, the view, the abundance of life below. He adored it all. Captain of his own crew, that's what he always wanted, and he had achieved that dream. He was out on the water with a crew that he treated like family.

He should be happy...

But he wasn't. His world was falling apart at the seams. The waves thrashed like beasts, the storm above spun in circles like a vulture of death and came down in roars, cries of the end. Claps of thunder struck the sky, revealing only a glimpse of what was yet to come. And a glimpse was all he needed. He rose from his seat and went out onto the deck, the dark fog hid what was ahead, but he didn't mind, he stumbled out, water rushing along the ground creating rapids, sweeping his crew off their feet, yelling and screaming out for help.

He kept walking. He gritted his teeth and stared at the clouds in the distant darkness. Even the moon and stars had hidden their faces from the chaos. He stared onward, the rain striking him like needles.

The thunder clapped again.

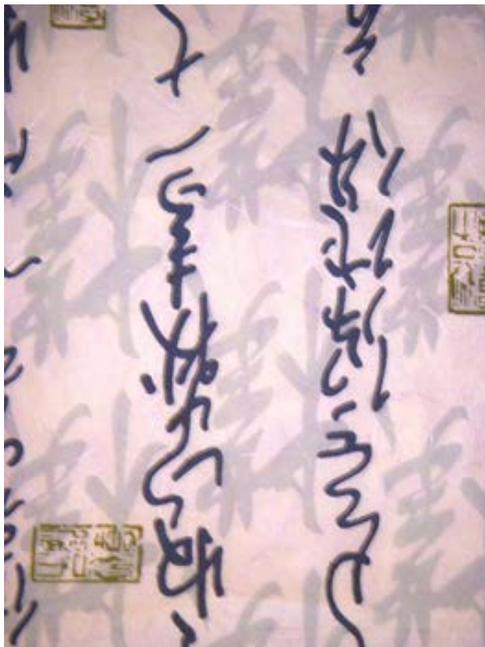
And for that one moment he saw them. The fleet, guns and cannons at the ready. His heart stopped, breath held. His eyes wide he spoke what few broken words he could muster "God... what did my people do to deserve my fate?"

And with that, the sound of Armageddon rained down.

Poetry

I have to confess that we have done very little poetry as a topic in the club. The reason? I don't write it! But I am enormously impressed by those who can.

I really liked this untitled poem by Alex Schwaller.



Can you all draw near
At the turn of the year.
Reflecting on times past.
Kind smiles and raucous laughs,
Sentiment sometimes overlooked
Carelessly in our over-booked
Rat races of lives
Enveloped in vicious lies
What have we done wrong?
Some people look back
Enveloped by old facts
Never again to manifest
In day to day, though it's for the best.
So history will never repeat.

Alex Schwaller (Year 12)

Ella Moss is our class poet and has turned many of the writing challenges into poems over the course of the year. Here are just two of them.

The Nights

Why should we care?
The alarm goes off but
Why should we care?
The nights are dark
And the nights are cold
But they're the best time
To be outside.
Outside of our houses.
Outside of work.
Outside of the shelters
And outside of people's view.
We're free at night
With the bombs falling
All around
We're finally free.
Dangers a rush
And the nights bring
Plenty of it.
I don't care.
The alarm goes off but
I don't care.
The nights are bright
And the nights are warm.
They're the best time
To be outside.
Dancing outside.
Singing outside.
Running outside.
Always sober outside.
We're free at night.
We're happy at night.
We're safe
At night.

The Secret

An array of colours all at once.

No end and no beginning.

It's always there

And always not.

It feels like love

It feels like home

But at the same time

There's guilt

And hate

And shame.

It sounds like

I love you whispered

In the dark and

Shouted from rooftops

But its silent and

Secluded and whispered

For a reason.

It happens when I

See her face.

When I'm walking home,

When I'm making lunch,

When I'm writing,

When I'm working.

It's always there

But always not.

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Dylan Hickey-Extra - Year 10
Saul Mishra - Year 11
Tym Pecherzewski - Year 10
James Tivey - Year 11
Lucy Pritchard - Year 9
Muneeb Alam - Year 8
Ben Craddock - Year 9
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Caroline Green, July 2018

Thanks for reading!