



King's High School



The Junior & Senior  
Creative Writing Clubs'  
Collaborative Summer Anthology:

**Memories & Journeys**

# Plaguing Memories

by Gabrielle

*“Freya! Stop gazing out the window and get some work done! You are always behind in classwork and homework. It would be helpful if you could pay attention during lessons to help this change!”* I lowered my head in embarrassment and covered it with my textbook.

I never wanted to stay here after ‘the incident’. I begged my mum to let me move schools, but of course she refused and said I will get the best education here. I sighed and turned back to my vast textbook. I wished that I was in a different school with my friend. I wondered what she was doing right now, probably going out to town and having lots of fun without me.

*“Psssst!”* I was jolted out of my daydream by my friend Anna, who was already finished.

*“What!”* I hissed back. Anna smiled slyly and asked whether I wanted to prank the teacher. My thoughts drifted back to before the incident...

I laughed with my friends. We collected our books from our lockers and strode to our next lesson. Everything was perfect. We were planning the greatest prank ever and I was proud because it was all my idea. We were all together and would never be separated. At least that was what I thought...

*“Freya!”* My heart leapt ten feet as I tumbled sideways over my chair. My eyes met with the mocking faces of the whole class and the concerned face of Anna.

*“Freya, get up this instant! You better have a good excuse! Actually, I don’t want to hear it.*

*To the Head Teacher’s office. NOW!”* I trudged begrudgingly along the corridor until I reached the ominous, looming door. My hand started to tremble as I reached forward, my hand centimetres away from the door. Come on Freya, don’t be silly. Before I could change my mind, I found myself tapping at the door three times.

It was an age before the door creaked open and I was met by the stern, but kind face of the head teacher.

*“Freya. What have you done this time?”* She enquired with exasperation.

*“I was in History and I fell off my chair and forgot what we were doing,”* I muttered while staring down at my feet with embarrassment.

*“Oh Freya. You know that you must stop getting in trouble. You have been to my office more than anyone else in the whole school. If you don’t start trying to apply yourself, then I will have no choice but to inform your parents.”* As she said this, I saw the disappointment in her eyes. I couldn’t bear it. I wanted to make her proud. I really did, but I just couldn’t stay out of trouble. It seemed like trouble was pinned to me like a flag and I could not escape its hold.

*“I’m really sorry, Miss. I promise you that I will try my absolute best to make the most of school and be the best version of myself.”*

*“I know you will.”* She smiled as she led me out of the door.

*“So, I don’t get a detention?”* I questioned tentatively.

*"No, Freya. But I trust that you will turn things around"* I attempted a smile before I wandered back to my room.

I lay in bed, gazing bleakly at the ceiling. I waited for what seemed like hours for sleep to arrive, but when it did, it was haunted with nightmares.

I was in a field and in front of me was a figure. It did not move. I called out to it. It did not turn. I felt myself sinking in mud. I willed myself to move. To run. My legs stuck rooted to the ground. My shouts became more frantic as I slid **Deeper.**

**Deeper.**

**And Deeper...**

I woke up with a start. Sweat poured off my gasping body as I reassured myself that it was just a dream.

In lessons, I was as distracted as ever. I tried to focus, but my mind kept drifting back to the day of the incident...

*"Come on!" I whispered. We ran down the corridor and burst into our classroom. Thankfully, no one was there yet. So, we finalised our plans for the greatest prank in school history. We sat down behind our desks and waited for the lesson to start. Our teacher hurried into the classroom and that was when it began...*

*I was jolted out of my daydream by Anna, poking me hard in the ribs. I looked up to see both her book and the board covered in diagrams while mine was completely empty. I hastily scrawled it all down in my book then made my way to my next lesson.*

*Art. I had never been particularly good at Art, but despite that I tried to make my atrocious drawing of a shell presentable. I made my proportions as accurate as I could – which wasn't very accurate – and checked each part in detail. Just as I did when I was setting up the prank...*

*Once the whole class was seated it truly began. First was the rhythmic tapping, at first the teacher didn't notice, but then it got louder and louder. She asked whether we could hear it too and we of course said that she must be imagining it. How could I know the last part could go so wrong...*



*Our teacher tried to ignore the noise and led us outside for the investigation in our lesson as we all compressed our laughter while pretending that we did not hear the 'mysterious noise.' When we were outside, the sound died away and the teacher thought it was all over. How wrong was she? Our next part of the prank was to give her the scare of her life as horses galloped out of their stables all around the field. It was hilarious until without knowing it we had let out one of the bad-tempered mares and everything seemed to slow down.*

*My joyous face turned from exhilarated to absolutely terrified as the mare kicked one of the skittish horses and it bucked. We all ran for shelter as its legs kicked to and fro and then it began charging. Straight towards our teacher. She just stood there. Terror in her eyes. I felt a blood-curdling scream escaping my mouth. This seemed to bring her back to reality as she leapt out of the way. Unfortunately, it was a second too late as the horse's flailing legs caught her leg as she landed with a shriek of pain on the ground. Our riding headmistress came sprinting out of the school (having heard all the commotion) and immediately started calming down the terrified, injured horse.*

*I couldn't stop shaking as our teacher was wheeled away in an ambulance and that was the last we saw of her even though we were told that she made a full recovery. However, that wasn't the end. The teachers had to investigate what had happened, so they checked security cameras. Only to find video footage of my friend letting out all the horses and she was expelled with immediate effect. She refused to speak to me before she left. It was all my idea. My fault. I should have been expelled.*

*After that 'incident' many of the girls were removed from the school by their parents because it 'wasn't safe' and had 'bad influences.' All my other friends left as well. I had to start from scratch with my friendships and ever since I hadn't owned up. All I saw was my friend's sad and disappointed face as she left; the guilt building up inside.*

*I woke up with a start. It was time. I knew what I had to do.*

*It was lunch; however, I didn't feel like eating. I felt the pang of guilt yet again. The results of the incident pulled me down like a sack of guilt. I could never get it out of my head. I trudged through the rest of my lessons, waiting for the moment where I could go and collapse on my bed. As soon as the end bell for last period sounded, I darted off to my room. The memories came back stronger than ever...*

# A Journey through Time

by Amrit

It was everywhere, pictures, images, photos. Somehow a vivid segment of her past had made its way to her in every way possible. The soft linen cloth fell upon her gentle body a zephyr of air glided across her beautiful face, as her body lay still in the evening breeze. Her mind racing in the tranquility of her sleep, sound of overlapping laughter arose from one ear melancholic cries from the other, she could see scenes and adventures she had experienced through years of grief and desperation. Pupils wandered from one end of her eyes to another, as hope grew within her as she fell deeper into this trance. She lost her sense of direction as she was trapped never knowing how to escape this everlasting sensation.

Until she stumbled upon one memory, but she could not recognize it, faint laughter echoed while voices muttered simultaneously, muffled screams reverberated from the hallowed halls of her mind. Suddenly, a cold hand shook her vigorously, she woke up at once. The cold jarring sting approached her soon, but she did not know it.

Before she knew it, she was sucked into another memory, then there was silence.

Falling, towards the cold hard ground...

She was transported to a completely unique and diverse universe, she was trapped in an endless void of space, could not move, could not speak, no cries for help.

Suddenly, it was the end. Her last memory, the rain fell gracefully onto the windowpane as droplets of water sprinkled on the midsummer grass, a small girl ran and leaped over the overgrown hedges, trying to avoid the drenched puddles, a small bird landed on the brim of her small shoulder chirping merrily and the weather continued to pour down. And that little bird stayed with her from her childhood memories and for years to come.

Drops of sweat formed upon her brow. Her eyes opened to the darkness of her room. The rain had long since passed, but somewhere beyond her window she heard the familiar chirp of a bird.

Or did she.



# Sleeper Train

by Lola

Beep Beep Beep Beep! The rapidly closing doors on the 10.31am service to Brighton were battling the mob of people desperately seeking a place on the busy carriage. The passengers bunched right up to the windows made it almost impossible to see in, or out. 'Wait, wait!' implored a panic-stricken voice at the other end of the platform. A young woman, headphones draped over dark brown locks of hair, carried a suitcase in each hand. She hastily made her way over to the beeping door, delayed by masses of people jamming in, and finally with an even tighter squeeze on the carriage, everybody was eventually on board, and the doors were closed ready for departure. One spot somehow came up for grabs, a corner window seat. Dragging her suitcases along the aisle swarming in people like bees around a honeypot, she managed to sit down. The woman, whose name was Lucy inhaled deeply, she held it, and at last she exhaled. From then on, she tried blocking out the sounds of phone calls, conversations, food wrappers being unwrapped and solely allowed herself to focus on being calm, watching the serene countryside as the train rumbled along. Within minutes, exhausted, she drifted to sleep.

'Dear Passengers, welcome on board this service to Hawaii, calling at New York, Miami, Texas and Hawaii. Our next stop will be New York in approximately 30 minutes time. I hope you all have a great journey with us', announced the driver via the intercom. After half an hour or so, Lucy started scrambling hold of her belongings and began making her way to the door. Her eyes were amazed when the train pulled up to the station. On one side, there were rows and rows of train tracks, almost mesmerising to the eye and on the other, a wonderful view of the whole city, buildings, trees and parks that could be seen for miles.

Eager to explore the city, Lucy bolted out of the station after securing her suitcases and began sprinting to the park. Through the course of weaving through crowds of people she ran headfirst into a young lady wearing the most beautiful leather coat. As anyone would do so, she apologised immediately but also complimented her. The lady responded with an air of elegance, 'No worries whatsoever, thank you – I am a Chief Executive at Prada'. 'Well that explains a lot' Lucy thought. Intrigued by her job, Lucy kept asking the woman more questions about her exciting career. Instantly, the two clicked, and the woman invited Lucy for a shopping spree – all expenses paid! Of course she said yes! Later that afternoon the two women met up again and started shopping. They went to make up emporiums, shoe shops, clothes boutiques and bought drinks at cafés.

They had the most fun trying on dresses and selecting different colour and clothing options in the midst of making a 'dream outfit'. The two women were laughing, joking around and had so much fun together, they didn't want the day to end.

Lucy ended up with six dresses, twelve pairs of shoes, eight miniskirts and seven t-shirts, but her most favourite item was a matching leather coat to the woman. The two strutted around the city holding their shopping bags and drinks, also wandering over to artisan stalls. Once they had exhausted every shop in the city they sat down by a bench in the park to reflect on their fun day together. The two began talking whilst watching the sun set in the coral and violet lit sky.

'Oh no! I'm late for the train – I've got to hurry to the station now!' Lucy said dismayed. She thanked her new best friend for a wonderful day, said her goodbyes and fled off to retrieve her suitcases. Thankfully, she managed to make it on board just in time and settled down in her seat for a nap. It wasn't long before the shrill sounds of a baby crying in the carriage stirred her into consciousness. Feeling a little discombobulated Lucy looked down in disbelief at her new leather coat and felt deep into the pockets before pulling out a Prada receipt.



# *Extract from* The Great Migration

by Rhiannon

I nibble on the grass gently, surrounded by my colossal herd. There's over a million of us wildebeest. Every so often, I raise my head from the delicious grass and quickly search the area for predators. Right now, our most common predator would be a lion or hyena. Most other carnivores would struggle to attack anything of our impressive size and our horns could brutally injure predators. We are threatened by some other predators as well including African Wild Dogs and cheetahs, but such occasions are rare as they tend to be smaller and therefore struggle to eat us.

A deafening snort suddenly pierces my ears. An alarm. We're being hunted. I can't see the danger, being in the middle of my herd, which is in one way reassuring because hopefully the predator won't hunt me down. Everyone starts to shoot off over the grassland. I catch a glimpse of our attacker. Lions! My mind begins to spin as everyone starts to descend into panic. We run as fast as our legs will take us. The lions are gradually surrounding my herd. Suddenly, a shout echoes through the herd from the back. Someone's been caught by the lions. We all slowly come to a halt as the lions start to crowd around one of the herd members, who is fighting for their life. Another herd member decides to attack the lions. They launch themselves from the herd and gallop at the lions with their horns down. The lions scatter. All the wildebeest are on their feet now and we charge towards the great open savannah to escape the lions, to save ourselves and to continue our journey.

Many of us know that the lion attack won't be the only danger faced on our migration. We're travelling all the way to Masai Mara in Kenya from our home in Tanzania. I feel quite excited to arrive in Kenya, but I am also filled with worry about the dangers we may face. My favourite part of the migration is the food, the constant thought that we are always getting closer to the fresh grazing grounds full of juicy grass and bushes. Every step we take we are edging closer to this and keeping it within reach.

My mouth is starting to feel dry. I could do with a drink soon, but water can be dangerous. You never know what could be lurking underneath the surface. The migration is a constant struggle for everyone, members of the herd are beginning to slow and no one has the energy to run from a lion. We reach a waterhole for a quick stop and to fill ourselves with refreshing water. I can feel the chill of it running down my throat. I could stay here forever. A member of my herd shoots up and glances around the surrounding area. I slowly lift my head up from the water's rippling surface. A loud cacophony of alarm calls reaches us. We all dart our eyes around looking from left to right to discover where the danger is. Suddenly, a leopard leaps out from the bush pursued by a large troop of baboons. The leopard bounded towards the water and turned around to take on the baboons. The troop had over 50 individuals with all of them attacking the leopard.



# Dear Diary

by Riddhi

Dear Diary,

It was a stormy night, and I was hiding under my blanket in fear. *“Go to bed sweetheart”*, my mum said. As I slowly turned my lamp off, I felt something! Something deep inside me did not feel right. I couldn't go to sleep until...

I kept having flashbacks of all my bad times. I could not bare this anymore, so I put my eye mask on, then went to sleep.

The next morning, I woke up and I couldn't remember anything, so I decided to go downstairs, then there was a note... It said,

Sweetheart,

I am going on a cruise for an urgent meeting so I will not be back for a few weeks.

From mum.

My mind was blank, I could not remember a single thing. As I was walking towards the kitchen, there was this girl who I had never seen before. She started talking to me and I didn't know what to do. *“Mum's gone on a trip, so what do you want me to make you for breakfast”*. I ran, I screamed for my life and ran back to the room I came from. My sister came up to me and... *“What happened, do you not want any breakfast”?* *“WHO ARE YOU”*, I said in terror.

*“She didn't know what to do!” I am your sister and I don't know what has happened to you”*.

To be continued...



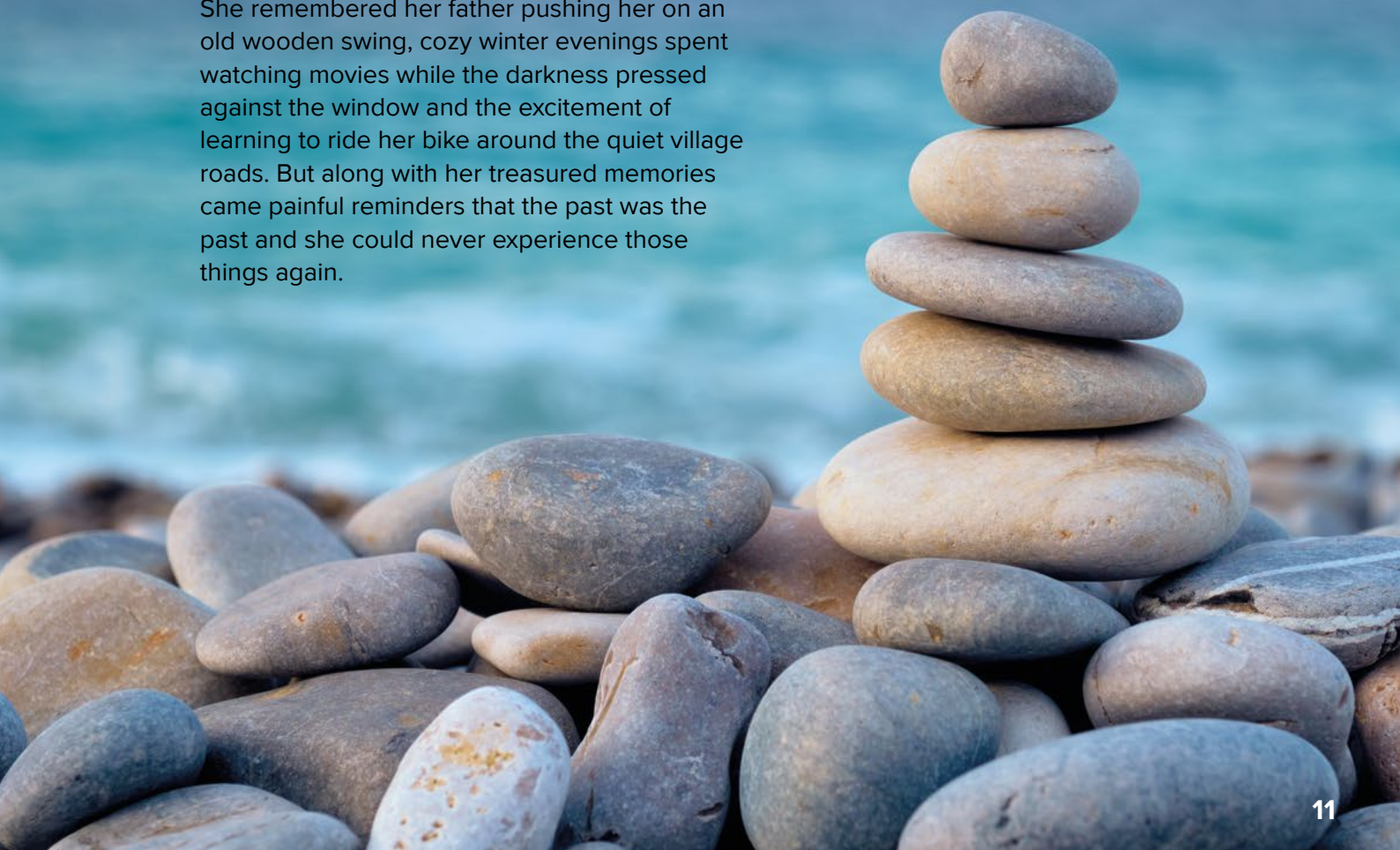
# A Journey Painted in Pastels

by Cecilia

The early morning light shimmered across the ocean waves. Quiet, peaceful, still. Hannah's eyes skimmed the breathtaking view as the morning slowly woke. A tear rolled down her pale cheek as she saw her father's reflection in the morning tide. She longed for one last word, one last hug, one last day. As calm as everything seemed, Hannah's head was filled with unignorable guilt, slowly crushing any sense of peace. It wasn't her fault, it never had been, that didn't mean that she felt the same way.

Gradually, she walked along the path, shoes crunching pebbles beneath her feet. Her beloved house came into view. So many childhood memories were tied to it, lingering in her mind like an echo that refused to fade. She remembered her father pushing her on an old wooden swing, cozy winter evenings spent watching movies while the darkness pressed against the window and the excitement of learning to ride her bike around the quiet village roads. But along with her treasured memories came painful reminders that the past was the past and she could never experience those things again.

Hannah paused at the gate. Spring had arrived and had brought colourful flowers and sunny skies with it. For a moment, she hated that the world moved on so easily? How was everyone still smiling? Was she expected to smile through her pain too? Her father loved the spring. She remembered his whisper reminding her that spring was the way that we are reminded that nothing lasts forever, that new things come and we can't stop it. As a child, she never understood those words, but suddenly they felt so clear. She took a deep breath and stepped through the gate, towards the house. The birds continued their song and around her spring unfolded gently, patiently and full of quiet hope.



# I Can't Quite Remember

by Isobel

I can't quite remember what happened. It was a dark time. I have been told a story about me being a veteran in the RA F. The year was 1941 in World War II, but it can't be I would remember if I was a veteran flying spitfires and Lancaster bomber doing daring feats up in the twisting cloud. My antique bureau started rustling and squeaking and just my luck I had accidentally kicked the rusted key from under the sofa it was so rusted I could barely recognise it. I eventually recognised the key it was my whole world when I was younger, but it soon faded away. I swiftly picked up the key and ambled over to my well-loved bureau. The key was so rusted it wouldn't go in so I gave it a hard rub on my jumper which was now stained with an amber coloured rust. Then with a bit of loving force, I heard a welcoming click and breathed a breath of relief as it slowly fell open and the hinge squeaked. Suddenly, a sea of letters and photos flowed out like a tsunami. I gathered the documents and memories came flooding back, dementia couldn't hold me back now. One letter caught my attention. I picked it up and a date stood out to me: Wednesday 24th February 1942. It read:

**Wednesday 24th February 1942**

Dear George

My love I have seen the light of heaven, but it soon vanished. I was rushed to the Oxford City Hospital I woke up and couldn't remember anything except a big bang and flames engulfing my spitfire. I could feel the spitfire tumble out of the air like a child late for school in the morning. I'm out of hospital now. I'm safe. Talk soon.

Lots of love Marline xxx

All of a sudden memories of George were restored; how I miss my darling George. Now I couldn't even remember who George was but somehow I could believe that I wrote a letter to him. Then from underneath the letter slipped out a photo it seemed to be a photo of a ecstatic lass in a stunning wedding dress and a handsome lad in a what looked like a hand-me-down suit with a tie that stood out so bright covered in foxgloves. I could remember it was my darling George and then a memory sprung to my head; foxgloves were my favourite flower that we would plant in the garden together. The photo it was of my wedding day it looked so golly so many relatives' that were no longer with us smiles captured on one photo hidden away for years. Many years. Suddenly, I noticed an official looking letter was squeezed in the hinges of bureau it was terrifying pulling the letter out in case it ripped in half; somehow it survived. The letter was adorned with golden swirly writing framed in the middle –

*"Letter of submission addressed to Marline Anderson, you are congratulated for a place at the Royal Air Force"*





I held the form in my trembling hands. I felt my mind unclearing as blurred images danced into my head of my Royal Air Force adventures. Now I didn't have to imagine that I was soaring through the skies. Now it was simply that of the past. What had been. What I had lived. I remember having to wait for my Spitfire to be repaired after daring combats in the sky against Luftwaffes and Messerschmitts. Hidden in the corner of the bureau practically encrusted into the cherry wood of the bureau was a second letter adorned with the same golden swirly writing it was a dazzling letter of congratulations for amazing combat and service. Under the writing was a small indentation with the petit hole the indent was shaped in a long line as if a badge had been there in its place. Then it clicked it was the letter that carried my Victoria Cross the most prestigious award one can receive from the Royal Air Force. Suddenly all I now needed in life was TO FIND THAT AWARD.

My brain started to replay my younger year it's like my brain was reliving my youth; whilst trying to find that badge as a major side quest. I caught a glimmer of gold with an overly fancy V. I knew that if I bent down to collect it for its dusty residences under the sideboard, I could only expect my back to shatter into tiny glass pieces.

Alas I faced the terror I bent down to finally clasp it in my hand I could hear my back pleading and screaming but when my hand felt the painfully cold badge, a wave of relief shock through my ancient body. I had fulfilled my all I wanted in life was complete. Now I was not an old decrepit lady full of despair I was now a strong, fierce pilot of World War II. I knew that I would definitely forget and all of it if I hid it away again but if it was at eye view on the mantelpiece framed and protected like the crown jewels. I knew I could never forget my adventures. Sometimes though even with all my memories on display still I can't quite remember.

# Do You Remember?

by Liv

“Do you remember? We used to walk to school together. We lived so far away that I had to get up extra early just to meet you – and even then you would never be ready. I would always have to sit awkwardly in your living room while your mum ushered you to eat your breakfast and your dad watched over me. You were terrible with timings, and by the time you were ready we were already late. Down the street we ran, you and me, and we used to try and avoid the branching cracks lathed along the pavement, jumping and hopping over them. The cars passed and the hot sun melted our clothes as we clung onto our bags, weighed with our colourful array of books and crayons.

Do you remember?

And when we reached school, we were barely on time, as we managed to avoid Miss Smith narrowly when we hurried into the bustling classroom. And even when we were late. She never really noticed. She was always more focused on the kids at the back who were throwing paper planes. There was that one time when they managed to wedge one in her hair—she was livid! I remember the walls in the classroom were this ugly muted green that always clashed with Miss Smith’s lemon-yellow dress and our navy school uniform.

Do you remember?

We used to have those English lessons that went on and on. You used to try and give yourself nosebleeds, and we would scuttle off to the nurse’s office to avoid our turn reading. She started to catch on after a while. Miss Smith used to get annoyed at the board as it glitched and flickered, and I never told her that it was because you spilled your juice on it during indoor break. Promise.

Do you remember?

We made up those silly hand claps, and you always insisted on making them complicated, so we forgot them and made a new one the next day. We used to giggle as we spun around and twisted ourselves into the weirdest positions. We had matching bracelets too that we hid under our jumper sleeves so we wouldn’t be dress coded. I lost mine once in year five and you got mad at me but bought me another—it wasn’t the same though.

Do you remember?

When the rain lashed down on the window and we were allowed to stay inside at break or lunch. I always had an orange for my snack—but you always had crisps. I stole them once because you had laughed at me about it. You were hungry and cried that day, but even though I felt guilty I thought you deserved it. I never told you that I’m sorry.

Do you remember?

On the days when the sky was clear we were allowed to go on the playground. I loved the monkey bars, but you could never hold on. So we would go down the yellow slide as we tried not to burn our legs on the hot plastic. We passed a ball around sometimes, but we always got bored by the eventual blur of blue that it became. We played fantasy, remember? I loved being an astronaut, and you did too, but eventually the girls who would snigger at the side of the playground laughed at us too, so we started playing families like everyone else. There was a fence that surrounded the playground where the high school children would walk by. They all looked so tired.

Do you remember?

We used to have those soggy meals in the lunch hall. I always had pasta and you called me picky, and I used to protest that I just didn't like anything else. I guess you were right. Eventually we convinced our parents to make us packed lunches. I used to have a cheese sandwich but you always had ham. We traded our snacks—half a KitKat for a Freddo, or some of your spring rolls for my oat bar. Sometimes we split everything 50/50—those were the days when your mum didn't pack her tuna rolls.

Do you remember?

It was in year 6 we wanted to head down to the forest like we always did, to play again even though we were teased for being too immature. We used to build forts and play games with only our imagination. There was an old tree that had fallen over and it made a bridge across the river.

You didn't want to cross that day.

I'm so sorry.

It's my fault.

All my fault.

It had been raining when it happened and the bridge was slippery and the river was high.

And I'm sorry.

But I can't forget it.

Do you remember?"

*The piece of paper rests in my hands as my eyes throb with tears and I sob silently. I can't see—my vision is blurred—but I look back down at the crumpled sheet. I continue.*

"I'm in high school now—big school, as you called it. You were so excited to finish primary school. You wanted to finish top of our class and become an author—even though we were both rubbish at literacy. You wanted to turn your life around and work hard, and then I took that from you, didn't I?"

All because of that stupid dare."

*The tears now stream down my face as I lift my chin to face you, and I set the note down next to you with trembling hands.*

*Next to your grave, because even though I have lived longer than you, I am no longer living.*

*And it's all my fault.*

*I'm sorry.*

*Do you Remember?*

*Extract from*  
**The memory of the  
Forgotten World**

by Grace

It was midnight, and she woke up again. This was not the first time this happened; it has been happening her whole life. Cindy was 6 when it first started, a voice speaking to her in a dark and secluded forest. The voice spoke with such kindness and light. It felt as if anything was possible just thinking of that voice. But the memories always came in snippets, never reaching far enough into the trance to find out why she was having these dreams. Always just enough to make her curious to have another dream. Always just enough to scare her. Always just enough to not want to tell anyone.

As I was saying, it was midnight and Cindy was just waking from another trance, this time she saw a doll, it was covered in leaves and soil, she picked it up and shook the soil off, then the voice started again, she couldn't remember what the voice said but the hairs on the back of her neck were standing up as if she had been burned. She lifted her fingers trying to feel something that was real and alive, Baba was coughing in the other room, mum snoring in the other. It was so boring in this house. She had no toys to play with, or friends, or anyone at all.

It was morning, mum had gone out to pick strawberries for the pie, and Baba was cooking root vegetables on the stove. Cindy was waking up all sweaty and wet. She had another trance, but this time she could remember a snippet of words, 'I will always remember you, in every dimension possible.' Apart from strange soil-covered porcelain dolls laughing and a bright soft light this was much more than she had got in her 16 years of living, after a couple hours it was evening and she was out in the forest picking brambly apples and she was very sleepy. 'Baba said to get 100 apples 99,98,97,96,95,94,93,92, 91...' she kept counting on and on like this until sunset, suddenly she felt a little breeze over her shoulder the wind was picking up, it was normal for horrendous winds to come across but not to, not to, crack the ground?

She started to run, it turned into a sprint, an earthquake? What was happening? Why was this happening? A billion questions entered her head, then, finally she fell. In a deep abyss of porcelain dolls staring creepily at her. 'This is another dream.' she kept repeating this to herself again, 'this is not real.' but she would soon find out what it was. She finally fell with a tumble, and a porcelain doll was in front of her, 'this is just a dream.' she had said this to herself for about 100 times now, 'maybe,' she thought 'I could finally find out what these dreams are about.' She looked up; it was like a rabbit hole, round and thin, hollow. After that, she decided to get up, but a little girl appeared, in a beautiful baby blue dress that reached up to the knees and a wavy but light petticoat; her hair was blonde, almost yellow and her face was like a baby doll, like a porcelain doll, but not so creepy. It looked kind and sweet. She looked oddly familiar, but she could not place exactly who she looked like. 'I am called Alice Plesance Liddell, but prithe, call me Alice.' She had a wonderful Shakespearean accent clear and softly speaking. Cindy thought for a moment, 'oh, hello Alice, my name is Cindy.' the girl looked at her for a moment, got glassy eyed and thought for a second, 'Welcome my gentile friend, to the wondrous land of wonderland.' Cindy was talking inside her head now she was wondering if this little girl had gone mad, no Cindy was just in a dream, right?

[from Cindy's perspective]

Has this little girl gone mad? Maybe, no, I am just in a hallucination or a dream! Yes, that is it, a dream! That explains everything. I hope, anyhow, after strange little Alice helped me up, we set off into an orange looking forest, it was her home? But anyway, Narrator can take over.

Back to the forest, it was orange and very bright 'this is where you will be spending the rest of your days Cindy.' Alice's words cut through the atmosphere like hot ice, 'what do you mean!?' Cindy was distraught; she could not understand what she had done to deserve this. 'My darling, haven't you heard? You have been forgotten...' her voice trailed off so thoughtfully 'H-have you been forgotten too?' It would have been nice if Cindy had a forgotten friend. Someone who could have her back during tough times. 'Ultimately, yes. You will find that everyone here has been forgotten, that is why, we are like we are.' At the time Cindy did not know what she meant by this, but she had a feeling that she would soon find out. At least, she hoped she would.

[from Cindy's perspective]

Thanks, narrator any who after we had tea in a small little cottage of hers, we went outside for some fresh air, when Alice mentioned something of a visit to the castle? But I still agreed after all I wanted to get to know the place a little bit more after all, 'I would be spending the rest of my days here' so we set off with some hot chocolate in a backpack and some blankets, in case it got cold. Narrator, it is appropriate that you take over here.

Of course! As they went on to their long stroll, it was a time of wonder and amazement for Cindy, a time of discovery. 'Do you miss said parents?' and an odd question to ask on Alice's part but still, Cindy was too relaxed to think about it. 'no' there was a long pause, 'Good, I am glad.' Cindy would soon find out what that meant too.

# The Memory that used to Haunt Us

by Charlotte

## Prologue:

*They say memories are the worst ghosts.*

*They haunt you and weigh you down.*

## Scarlet:

This is the story of the most haunting memory I have ever had:

That is what had happened to me, the ghosts of my past kept coming back. They would never go away until I came to peace with them but that was hard, that meant I had to tell her what I did and why, yes, she may never forgive me, but at least I would try.

I saw her the next day, my mum arranged it, said it would be a treat, at first I did not want to go but now I am glad I was unable to say no, because it meant I had a chance to tell her about why she failed the exam, why our dream of always being in the same school and maybe the same form was gone.

Just like that.

## Evelyn:

At first, I could never fully understand why I failed the entrance exam; I had studied hard enough or so I thought until I received the letter saying unfortunately that I had failed and so I was unable to go. But I could never forget the guilty expression my best friend wore when she saw my reaction when I opened the letter, after The Head had handed out all the letters at Morning Assembly.

So, a year later when her mother suggested meeting up in the summer hols, I knew this would be a perfect chance to find out exactly why she wore that face that day.

## Scarlet:

I was terrified. What would I say to her, what would I do and if I told her why it happened would she ever speak to me again would she go up in a puff of smoke...

Finally, the day came. I walked slowly to our meeting point in the park. Luckily my mum had said she had to go somewhere with Evelyn's mum. So, I was on my own waiting impatiently for her to turn up so I could get it over and done with.

Eventually 5 minutes later she turned up, we greeted each other friendly. Suddenly she asked...

**Evelyn:**

“What happened,” I asked, “why did you look so guilty about it. As if me failing the university entrance exam was all your fault when it can’t be though. It can’t! It could never be your fault I failed! It’s only mine!”

She looked down at her shoes, then still looking at her shoes, she said, “But it is, it is you see I did something dreadful.

“You know, when we had to do various written pieces in various subjects as part of the ‘Essay Section of The Exam’. After we did the one relating to Mrs McMeen’s subject she asked if I was good friends with you and if you were also friends with Rosalyn, I said yes-”

“What has that got to do with the exam?” I interrupted.

Obviously annoyed with the interruption she snapped “I was just coming to that bit!”

She then continued with the tale, “So I said yes to her question about both friendships, ‘can you do me a favour then?’ she asks I said yes only if she told me what the ‘favour’ is. Then she asked me if I could still replicate your handwriting, I said yes because I did not know why until she gave the written piece you had given her then told me to rewrite it but badly, but in handwriting identical to yours beac-“

“Wait. What! How could you! I thought we were friends!” I interrupted.

**Scarlet:**

“Lisen to me! I know you don’t want to. But... at leased listen to my reasoning,” I carried on, “she told me to do it because she thought her darling daughter Rosalyn would not pass her exam, she you know was running for the same uni and it also has high competition, and said if I did not obey she would personally make sure I was held back a year...”

The words were pouring out my mouth now and I could not stop crying.

“– so, I did. I was reason you failed... I’m so sorry. I understand if you never want anything to do with me ever again. That is why I looked so guilty, I regretted it immediately. I’m so, so sorry, I just could never bring myself to say this sooner. I’m sorry.” Sorry I was crying properly now, I felt terrible but at least I had told her, she was my best friend and always will be, I was expecting her to yell at me, tell me to go away, never want to have anything to do with me ever again, so, I was greatly surprised when she said:

**Everlyn:**

As she was speaking, I understood she honestly meant she was sorry, so I decided to forgive her and tell her my amazing plan. So, I said, “I believe you, and I except your apology. I have an idea: next term the is a resit for students who failed the entrance exam, so if I resit it, I will probably definitely be able to go.”

“That is an amazing idea. Let’s do it!” I agreed, “You are and always will be my best friend.”

**Epilogue:**

*The memory no longer haunts us we have made peace with it.*

# Once upon a Broken World

by Beatrix

I remember, when the world ended.


It was a day, unlike no other.

It was the year 2121 I was on my way to Old Joe's farm, looking for a couple pints of milk to feed for me and my family. Milk was rare due to the decreasing number of cows, or wildlife in general, so I had to drive the forty-five minutes to the farm. Old Joe had been complaining that the crispy and yellowed grass wasn't enough for them, and I couldn't argue with the amount of meat actually on them, or lack thereof. You can barely find grass anymore, where there weren't houses there was the hardened soil, cracks and all, pummelled relentlessly by this crippling heat. We had played so many experiments on the sun that it had begun to swell in size and turn a sickly colour; Climate change had truly caught up to us and now all that extra heat is stuck here. its nearly fifty degrees in summer.

"I can't get you much milk this week sir, I am afraid my 'ol girls just haven't got it in them, the best I can do is a few spoonfuls." I nodded solemnly at his words, I expected it, sure, but it was still devastating to hear. Food was low, everywhere and everyone was slowly starving, with the crops wilting and the animals dying. It was good to be skinny, in this heat. If you weren't you would live your life with a lingering heat exhaustion and grow crippling medical

illnesses. But now, me and my family have grown too skinny, and we relied on this milk more heavily than we'd like to admit. With a sigh I waved a smiley goodbye, which is more than most people can manage these days, but I smile through it all even though every bone, every organ, and everyone screams at me in despair. The world has fallen into a great and widespread depression, knowing that our children may not live to adulthood because of the things our parents did, or didn't do. But I won't dwell on the future, nor the past, or think about the present too hard. Just keep positive, for my family.

He didn't bother to smile back at me, he just looked at my blankly, eyebags blinking absent-mindedly, sorrowfully, before he turned around to tend to his skeleton and skin cows. I followed his example and turn on my heel, marching away as the smile and energy brought with it drains from my lips. We were taught to respect our elders after all. Surviving to even fifty was a feat to be praised now adays, though apparently it was only 'middle age' back then, they thought they would live twice that. Now by fifty our people are expecting death any moment. How nice, how lovely it would have been back then to live in two story homes, to eat the things we weren't supposed to but enjoyed, how nice to waste resources like they would always be there through all we put the world who produced

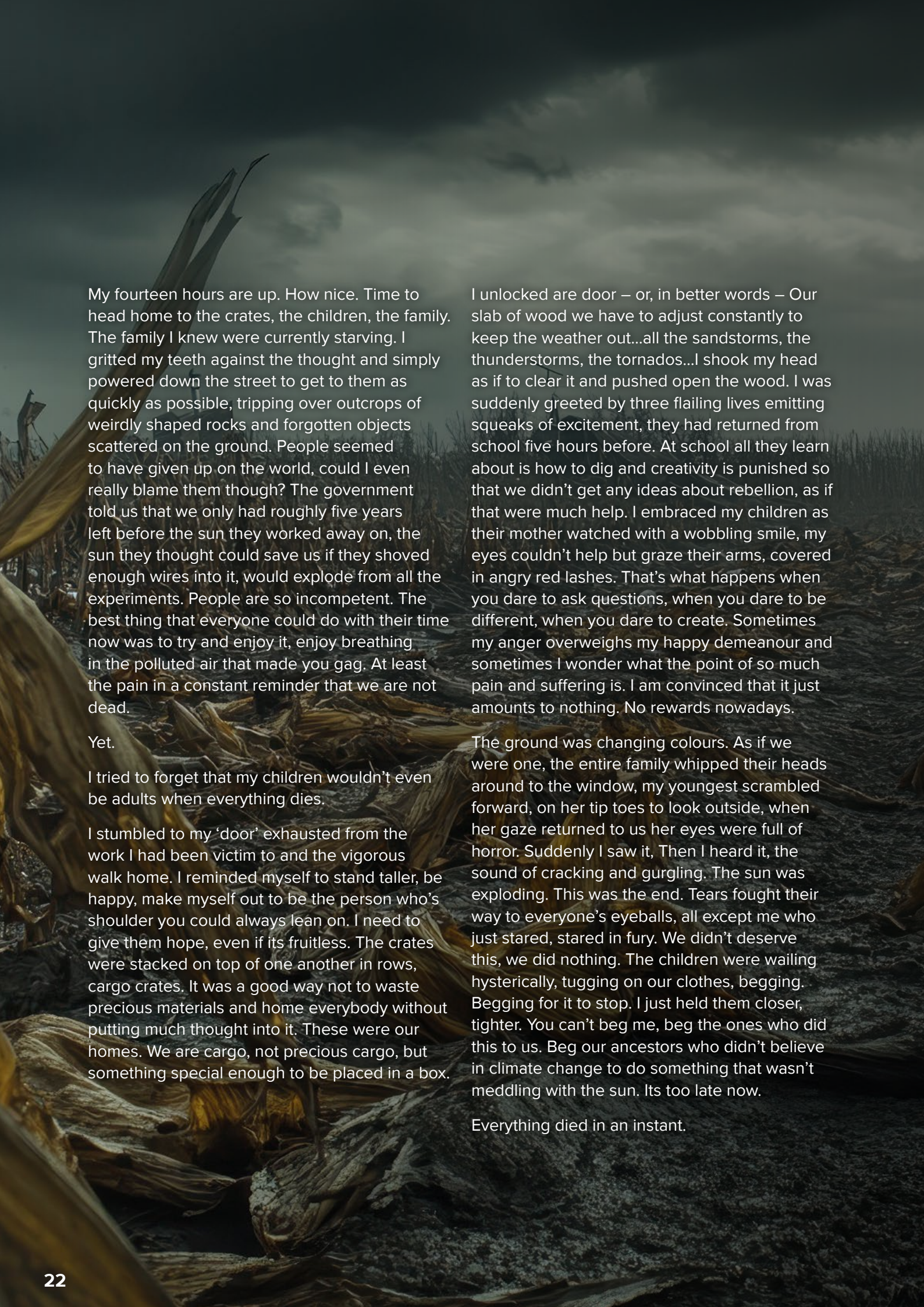


them through. Arrogance is bliss I suppose, but they never thought about our bliss, the people who came after, the ones condemned to the aftermath. My shoulders hunch, the heat is overwhelming and the sky blinding. I make my way, slowly, painfully, pitifully, through the barren wasteland which seemed to have only ever know grey. Its hard to imagine anything green besides the odd thin and scratchy blanket that did more harm than good.

I must go to work now. I frown deeper at the thought. My work is minimum wage, which is quite good pay in this modern, not-so-modern world so I shouldn't be complaining really, but the labour is brutal and unforgiving with hours that should be illegal. But they aren't. They aren't because right now the people need what we can scavage and the politicians don't care what happens to a couple people. Must break a few eggs to make an omelette after all, not that we have eggs anymore. I trudge down the path, dragging tattered boots behind me, bits of fabric peeling off like it was a wilting plant. We are all wilting plants. All I want right now is to see my family, they must be hungry by now and I don't think my wife will be able to bring back enough, I still have fourteen hours straight until I am permitted to return to the crates.

I thrust my groaning shovel into the hard earth, sweat pooling from my back and staining

my shirt. You'd of thought by now that the government had given up on finding any more resources within this earth we had already stripped bare, but no, we spend hours digging up nothing besides decomposing animal bones and rubbish. There is no shade. Me and the men working vigorously alongside me are all simultaneously fighting of heatstroke. Three have already fainted, one had a seizure and was carted off somewhere. I seriously doubt it was a functionally medical facility anyways, only the rich can afford more that a dew bandages right now-even those are of short supply and the prices are spreading like wildfire, which at this point has destroyed the entire world until there is no more to burn. Homelessness and disease have sky rock rocketed, the missions to live on another country have all failed, only adding to the waste gasses in the atmosphere. At least we don't struggle with overpopulation anymore, though the animal to human ratio is undesirable, the animal side being near to nil. The last animals are mutated 'monsters', though in reality they can be no worse than us. I do wish them well when we die out, maybe they could protect the world? Maybe it would heal? I don't feel bad for wishing the extinction of man. I gaze up to the purple clouds filled with strange toxins constantly choking us, it only ever rains acid here. I heard that once the clouds were white. Huh. How peculiar.



My fourteen hours are up. How nice. Time to head home to the crates, the children, the family. The family I knew were currently starving. I gritted my teeth against the thought and simply powered down the street to get to them as quickly as possible, tripping over outcrops of weirdly shaped rocks and forgotten objects scattered on the ground. People seemed to have given up on the world, could I even really blame them though? The government told us that we only had roughly five years left before the sun they worked away on, the sun they thought could save us if they shoved enough wires into it, would explode from all the experiments. People are so incompetent. The best thing that everyone could do with their time now was to try and enjoy it, enjoy breathing in the polluted air that made you gag. At least the pain in a constant reminder that we are not dead.

Yet.

I tried to forget that my children wouldn't even be adults when everything dies.

I stumbled to my 'door' exhausted from the work I had been victim to and the vigorous walk home. I reminded myself to stand taller, be happy, make myself out to be the person who's shoulder you could always lean on. I need to give them hope, even if it's fruitless. The crates were stacked on top of one another in rows, cargo crates. It was a good way not to waste precious materials and home everybody without putting much thought into it. These were our homes. We are cargo, not precious cargo, but something special enough to be placed in a box.

I unlocked the door – or, in better words – Our slab of wood we have to adjust constantly to keep the weather out...all the sandstorms, the thunderstorms, the tornados...I shook my head as if to clear it and pushed open the wood. I was suddenly greeted by three flailing lives emitting squeaks of excitement, they had returned from school five hours before. At school all they learn about is how to dig and creativity is punished so that we didn't get any ideas about rebellion, as if that were much help. I embraced my children as their mother watched with a wobbling smile, my eyes couldn't help but graze their arms, covered in angry red lashes. That's what happens when you dare to ask questions, when you dare to be different, when you dare to create. Sometimes my anger overweighs my happy demeanour and sometimes I wonder what the point of so much pain and suffering is. I am convinced that it just amounts to nothing. No rewards nowadays.

The ground was changing colours. As if we were one, the entire family whipped their heads around to the window, my youngest scrambled forward, on her tip toes to look outside, when her gaze returned to us her eyes were full of horror. Suddenly I saw it, Then I heard it, the sound of cracking and gurgling. The sun was exploding. This was the end. Tears fought their way to everyone's eyeballs, all except me who just stared, stared in fury. We didn't deserve this, we did nothing. The children were wailing hysterically, tugging on our clothes, begging. Begging for it to stop. I just held them closer, tighter. You can't beg me, beg the ones who did this to us. Beg our ancestors who didn't believe in climate change to do something that wasn't meddling with the sun. Its too late now.

Everything died in an instant.

# Grey

by Dulcie

But when I looked upon that house,  
Vibrant like the sun in July  
And loud like a roaring waterfall  
I didn't notice  
How everything was slowly fading to grey.  
I can feel the roughness of the walls so clearly  
The warmth of the fire amid winter's embrace,  
And I miss it.  
Oh,  
I miss it all.  
For when I picture the neighbourhood  
Back when the world had colour  
And words had meaning

And truth outweighed lie,  
I feel my heart wring  
And all the memories come tumbling out.  
Her face,  
His grin,  
Our gleeful giggles flooding the streets  
The end never in sight.  
How naïve, how innocent I once was.  
As when I look upon that house now,  
Dull like a stormy cloud  
And eerily silent like an alleyway at night  
I notice.  
How everything faded to grey.




# Water Under the Bridge

by Jess

I don't remember much about him. I remember that he was wearing a grey Nike tracksuit and that he's alive. I know for sure that I saw him get out of the water when we were struggling, bricks and stones falling around us in no particular order. I remember that he didn't care at all. That He knew what he was doing. There where people crying out to him, yelling for him to help them, women... children. But he ignored their desperate cries for help, for their and their family's survival. I remember thinking it odd to see someone wearing a woolly jumper in the middle of July. I felt the second-hand heat and sweat crawling all over my skin. I could barely breath in shorts and a tee shirt. It wasn't cold in the water though. I was driving to my sister's house for her birthday. Thank God the kids had suddenly been taken to the hospital with heatstroke a day before and where unable to join me on my journey. Anyways, I noticed that he was handling an object with a flashing light, but I thought that it was... a walkie talkie or something. I gripped my steering wheel and faced forward, only catching the tape out of the corner of my eye. My heart started to race, and my instincts from my previous job kicked in. I was a bomb disposal expert. so I pulled over to call the police. I parked my car in a restaurant overlooking the river, where the strange man in the grey tracksuit was messing around with the tape. I had begun having suspicions about the man from the moment he came into my line of

view. The clues didn't add up to a normal man trying to enjoy his Saturday morning by the river. I dialled 999. My breath was picking up and I was sweating despite the aircon that was relentlessly blowing my hair back. "999 what's your-" I didn't hear beyond that point because that's when he pressed a Butten. His gloved hands immediately went behind his forehead, morphing into cotton fists and pummelling his temples. He started running away to the surrounding forest. But he slipped and tumbled into the calm, docile water. My hands shot towards my face, covering my mouth and muffling my screams. I knew that if I stayed here, I would be blown to smithereens in a second, but I didn't want to risk going near the lake. So, I took in a sharp breath and drove back over the bridge. That was the most suspenseful part. Everything was perfect. The light, playful breeze. The warm summers sun. the perfect day for a park picnic, just what id been planning to do at my sisters.

You might be wondering why I didn't just drive to my sisters house the first chance I got. Well, the road was closed and I had seen a man directing all the drivers to take other routes another way. "Hello?" the voice on my phone replied to my silence. "I think, there's a man under a bridge" I swallowed "with a b- ". BANG.



I don't remember much else. Just the pain in my left arm and ice water flooding my body. It was like I had been filled with ice. Every part of my body from my toes to my nose was frozen in a furnace, so hot that it had burst into crystals of ice. I can't explain how I got into the water. I wasn't conscious. I remember suddenly coming to, soaked to the bone and freezing. I distinctly remember penetrating the surface of the lake, struggling in the water that struggled and grabbed to keep me as its property. It was then that I noticed the others around me, flailing and yelling for help that wasn't coming. Many of them had lost limbs or sustained serious injuries. My mind wandered for a minute, letting itself and indeed my body drift downwards into the murk that surrounded it. But when the water started to rush into my nose and mouth, stinging my throat with its temperature, I opened my eyes again, surveying the gruesome scene that surrounded me. I grabbed at air, forcing myself to make some movement towards the bank. I was so close. I was within arms reach of safety. I remember thinking so this was why mum forced me to take swimming lessons for 6 years. I almost smiled. I would have smiled had I not then realised the pain in my left arm searing through my body. I looked over, dragging my head like it was a 2,000-kilogram sack of flour. I wish that I had made it to the bank.

I don't know who he is. And I don't know where he is. All I know is that you have to find him.

# Re-Living the Memories

by Vinudi

They say when you are on your death bed, you relive the moments of your life that had the greatest impact on you. It's safe to say that happened to me, too.

The first moment I saw was my birth. I wailed loudly as light shone into my eyes, seeing the sight of the world for the first time. My dad beamed at my face as he said, *"Look at that, our new little girl,"*

I then saw my mother. She weakly smiled at me, gently poked my nose and said, *"Welcome to the world, my child,"*

My surroundings shifted to a building with multiple stories. The red brick wall stood tall on the delicate grass as the chatters of children spread across the area. There was a small puddle, so I used it to stare at my reflection. My black hair was cut short, and my red jumper had water spills on them. My black trousers were ripped at the knees, as I continued sobbing softly. I remember this now; this happened after I moved schools in year 3.

*"You'll be fine,"* My mum patted my head.

I walked towards the door, my arms clinging to the straps of my backpack as my mum followed me. I opened the door; the hallways filled with chatter. The walls were painted baby blue with heart patterns; the floors were rainbow tiles with smiley faces on them and there were pictures on the wall with children smiling. There were children from as small as reception to as old as year 6 sitting on the floor with their legs crossed, chatting and giggling. Some older years giggled as I walked with shame down the hallway. Suddenly, my vision went black...

Light poured into my eyes as I observed my surroundings. I was in my red and black volleyball kit. We were towards the end of the match and our scores were 18-18. A tie. If we messed up, it would be over; the end of the tournament. My face beaded with sweat; my arms formed goosebumps as I shivered with apprehension. Suddenly, the ball started to fly in the air. I raced towards the back of the area; my arms were close to the ball. I took a deep breath and hit it over the net. It raced in the air as I crossed my fingers. The ball hit the floor. We had won.

The arena was cheering and screaming as my teammates sped towards me. They span me around, cheering my name. I never felt so happy in my life!

It was now my first day of Secondary School. It felt weird, but it also reminded me of the time I switched primary schools. I stood outside the building; without my parents this time. I wore a black blazer that was definitely too big, a blue skirt that went past my knees, and bulky black boots. My bag felt like a boulder as I slowly limped towards the inside. The school was a lot larger than my primary school; the building had multiple floors and more classrooms, teachers, and students. The floor had sliver tiles; there were huge black lockers in the corridors, that towered over every student. It was loud, like the sound of talking was too hard to bear, piercing your eardrums. I remember the longing feeling of wanting to go home. Tears filled my eyes, and my surroundings felt blurry. I want to go home; I want to go home.

Then things changed again. I was in a black robe with a yellow string wrapping around my neck. I wore a black graduation cap placed loosely on my head. Everyone was dressed in the same attire and waited in their itchy robes in the boiling sun. Our headmaster waited at the podium, smiling at every student. We had gotten our diplomas earlier; we gave a speech and said thank you to our parents; all that. Now we were waiting for him to give us the signal.

*“Everyone throw your caps!”* He said, *“This is the end of your academic journey, well done and good luck to the class of 2026!”*

We threw our caps in the air; it felt like a whole sea of caps flew in the air. Everyone wooed and cheered, grinning in delight. No more school, no more waking up early, no more homework. Little did we know, life would get a lot harder from here.

I believed that it was 2 years since then. I sat near my counter tops, skimming through the pile of paper stacked neatly near me. *“Eviction Notice”* it said in bright red bold letters. It then followed with *“We will pursue legal action and remove the tenant from this property due to the amount to rent not paid,”*

I sighed, tears filling my eyes. Life wasn't great at this time, I had been let go of my job, my dad was in hospital, and my mom was older now. I had been going through jobs to try and pay off my debt; it had been working for a few months. Now I have been let go. They said that they were other candidates more suitable for my role. In summary, they were probably trying to say, *“There's people more talented than you, bye, bye!”* but in a more corporate setting. My life's gone downhill to say the least. I tried to follow my dream of writing but every publisher I've gone to rejected my work.

I sighed and grabbed my phone. I dialed my mom's number; my eyes were still watery and waited for a response. Voicemail, of course it was. It's always voicemail nowadays. I resorted to what I would do in my desperate and solemn times, writing. I grabbed a notebook and a pen and placed it out on my countertop. When I opened the book and tried to write something, my mind went blank. No thoughts about writing came to my mind, only the eviction notice.

Then I heard buzzing on my phone, it was my mum. She hadn't answered my calls in weeks, let alone the one I gave just now. I answered as I heard screeching and crying over the phone.

*“Mum?”* I asked her, *“What's happened?”*

*"He's dead!" She screamed, "He's dead,"*

She started wailing again as I dropped the phone on the floor. He's..... Dead? I screamed, I yelled, I let all my grief out in rage. I grabbed the eviction notice and tore it up into pieces. I felt the tissue in my throat slowly tear apart as I cried tears full of anger. I felt the bones in my knuckles crack as I clenched my teeth together. No... Stop.... I had to get my life together, that's what dad would want.

I stopped the tears and took a deep breath. I looked at the notebook, determined to complete it, and published it. I needed to finish the last chapter. I closed my eyes, trying to imagine the ending. They opened and the ink began to dance across the paper.

It had been a few days since my dad died; his funeral is next week. I completed the book, edited it, and then edited it again. I sent it to thousands of publishers, silence. I had spent the entire Sunday afternoon looking at my emails longingly. Then suddenly a beep came through. An email!

Simone, Sarah.

To: Juliane Pauline

Dear Miss Pauline,

I have read your book, and I must say I am most intrigued. I love the relationship your characters have, the plot is compelling, I love the tension, the thrill. Me and my team would love to work with you!

Kind Regards,

The Leaf Wood publishers.

That's m

My jaw fell to the floor. Finally, a person who sees potential in my writing after those who have constantly criticized my work, saying there was no depth in the plot, that the characters were dry and just complaining. There was a follow up email saying that there would be a webinar to go through the good and the bad of my work.

Something I could have never dared to dream about happened. After the Leaf Wood publishers decided to look at my work, I had constant sessions with my editor to try and improve my book. It was a tiring experience, but the result was worth it. I sat there, waiting with anticipation, in a bookstore. It smelt like ink and pages. It was warm with no air conditioning. After a few hours, people started lining up and before I knew it there was a swarm of people chatting near me. I signed every copy, the ink sliding across the page. Everyone left with a huge smile on their face.

It had been a few years since then; I laid down on the hospital bed. Tears stained my cheeks as I yawned; my eyes drenched in fatigue. The doctor told me that I had a condition that damages my respiratory system. I only had a few years to live. I had taken a break from writing; I had won a few awards but now my life has gone to waste.

My condition had worsened, to the point where I struggled to breathe. I was rushed to the hospital, and I laid on my bed. They say that I'm terminally ill, that there was no going back for me. I looked around me with my blurry vision and then I closed my eyes.

.y story



# Her/Him/There/ Nowhere

by Atia

It was a dream. There is no way that it was him.


Katerina Millwood, aged twelve, is a normal girl. She wore normal clothes, went to a normal school, had a normal family. But recently, she started seeing her grandfather everywhere. The strange thing was that Katerina's grandfather passed away a year ago. No matter where Katerina goes, she saw Grandpa Robert staring warmly at her from a distance. She loved her grandpa, but this was insane. How can Katerina see him in real life?

'It's just your imagination' they said, 'Are you alright, did you get enough sleep last night?' But Katerina did not believe them, she knew it is him. He was sending her a message, a premonition. It happened all the time in ghost stories. Although, in those tales, someone is either gruesomely killed or gets happily married and has three kids, but Katerina wanted none of that gobbledy-goop. Also, what could Grandpa Robert try to tell Katerina? Was it good or bad? Are her parents going to divorce? Was she going to get Straight A's?

Anyway, Katerina was in her mum's Hyundai, on her way to school. Just as she was reaching the gate, she suddenly saw him standing in front of the entrance. "MUM, WATCH OUT. GRANDPA!" Her mum, Mrs Millwood, abruptly stopped in front of the gate, searching for the body. Nothing was there. Mrs Millwood turned to her left, gazing down at her daughter, baffled by her comment and then shifted swiftly to face the school's car park. Katerina's mum cautiously drove on, her face showing no emotions, but Katerina saw a sudden flick of desperation and worry pass her mother's caring eyes. Mrs Millwood braked just outside the grand, ancient building, gesturing Katerina to go out of the car.

"Have a great day sweetie, don't repeat yesterday!" Mrs Millwood cried to Katerina, starting to drive off after her comment had been released into the thick air. Katerina, showing a mixture of gratitude and attitude to her mum, went out to start a lethargic day of Queensway High. Katerina had no friends after the appearances of Grandpa Robert started happening and everyone had called her, 'Ghost Girl' from each angle of the buzzing corridors. Whilst Katerina was walking to her form room, paper aeroplanes zoomed into her head, flying at Katerina with zero gravity, science textbooks chucked at her, bruising her shoulders. "OW! Stop it, it hurts like heck!" As soon as she reached her form room, Katerina was swamped; hair turned bushy, uniform untidy, shoes scuffed up. "Why me? Why me?!" Katerina thought, trying to fix her appearance.

\* \* \*



The rest of the day was horrendous. Also, to top it off, Grandpa Robert had been peeking out of the corner of her eye. Katerina could not help it anymore. So, she did the normal thing (for herself). Katerina sauntered over to the abandoned skate park, went into the massive dip, and screamed like a banshee, letting her rage overtake her. Facing her, Grandpa Robert stood in front of her and did that smile – the smile that told Katerina, “I love you, and I’m super proud of you!” He looked younger than she remembered... too perfect. The smile that she wished for every second of every day. Katerina longed for that smile. She wanted it, she needed it. Sometimes, she forgot that. Katerina gave way to her tears and lunged towards her grandfather to get a cosy hug. But POOF! Grandpa Robert just vanished into thin air. She no longer needed him – but, oh, she wanted him dearly. Although, she thought she needed him at that moment, she only wanted her supportive, ethereal grandfather. It was a sort of peculiar Nanny McPhee nonsense.

“Come back, please, come back. I need you” Katerina whimpered softly, hoping that a miracle would fall upon her. Nothing. At that moment, she is just a lonely, weeping girl in the middle of a filthy, litter-infested skate park which had been vandalised and abandoned for over thirty years. Right now, Katerina felt like one of those Victorian dolls. Empty. The gloomy clouds lurched over her in pity, the barren trees surrounded Katerina. Her pale legs paralysed themselves, frozen to the mouldy, concrete ground.

A patter of rain pattered against her, streaming down her porcelain cheeks. Even though the weather turned horrid and dismal, Katerina stayed outside for a little longer, sulking and crying, before she trudged off to her home. “Why me? Why me?!” Katerina wondered her clothes heavy from the rain; soon she will realise it was not a ghost, just a dream. A memory. Her favourite memory.

#### **A year later...**

Katerina is now in the beginning of Year Eight, and she is studying in a better, anti-bullying school where everyone is her friend. She is getting Straight As in all her subjects (except PE), and all her teachers love her! Grandpa Robert has not been appearing from the corners of her elated eyes and sometimes, still, she wishes that he were here. A speck in her rear-view mirror, as if she were amidst a trance; if someone loses a person dear to themselves, they must grieve. But eventually, they must also try to accept the truth: no matter how difficult. Keep them close to your heart, keep them in your mind, and remember the moments that made them yours.

Remember those moments with them. That is their remaining legacy left in the world. That is their footprint stuck on your heart.



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