

HARROW FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

CREATIVE WRITING  
ANTHOLOGY

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**Summer 2022 - History and Legacy**

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# Introduction



Welcome to the second Harrow Family of Schools Creative Writing Anthology. In a year of celebration of Harrow 450, this is an excellent addition to our reflection about history and legacy. The creative talent, both writing and artistic, of pupils studying in the Harrow Family of Schools shines through in the quality and diversity of entries from page to page. Many congratulations to all the pupils who have contributed to this impressive online publication and deep gratitude to all the English Departments for the inspiration and encouragement they have continued provide over the course of this year, which has again seen significant Covid-related challenges in many of the schools.

*Mel Mrowiec* Chairman, Harrow  
International Schools Limited

*In a time where "the name and fame of Harrow" is celebrating its 450th year of existence, it seemed only appropriate to commission our annual edition on the theme of History and Legacy. Through the poetry and prose promoted in this issue, we hope to expose you to a diverse range of perspectives about the history and legacies of the school, our respective cultures and our own lives. With entries ranging from works inspired by Ovid to modern takes on urbanisation, we hope that this magazine will serve as the fruition of a vision first espoused by one of our editors over two years ago, and will do justice to the hard work of all its writers.*

*The Editorial Team*

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With Thanks To the English Departments  
of the Harrow Family Schools



Artwork by Mango Yue (Lower 6th), Harrow Shanghai



# *The Storybook*

*By Jasmine Yen (Upper 6th), Harrow Shanghai*

I open the fresh cover of an old tale.  
The throbbing sun burns the outer web of his thin flesh.  
His soles in the charcoal leather sink deep into the lone desert ground.  
He takes a deep breath,  
— quivering with delight.

Sensory cracks and crevices of the snakeskin carving  
Palpitates beneath the sweat of his fingertips.

He balances the foot between his lips  
And swipes the dip of his hat.  
Hardly yanking the reigns of his horse,  
He rides far away till dawn, his silhouette becomes but a mere shadow.

The coughs of the old man are still heard through the distance.

I close the taunted storybook, and put it in my purse.  
Standing outside in the pouring city rain,  
With cigarette stains puncturing the dips of my hollow eyes,  
And the end of the burning tip piercing my dull flesh,  
I light up another cigarette.

# In The Way of Progress

By Dylan Winward (Year 13), Harrow UK

To Whom It Won't Concern:  
Our Pastrami Joint, my Pastrami Joint, this Pastrami Joint,  
Is Shut.

Goodbye to the flat-mooded face-freshed tourists,  
Canned and reheated with their terrible jokes,  
Off the bus from London, Rome and ... Queens.  
Their camera dangling precariously  
From the necks of those who skuttled us on Yelp  
Who're never reading this far.

See ya never, to the stoners.  
The "artists", hippies and bohemeans,  
On the path to the grail  
That is the next big thing.  
Just yesterday you told us you were  
Nearly making it big, nearly making enough  
To pay us back;  
Who've read this far only  
Out of desperation  
For bread to sober up  
Before being kicked to cells upstate.

Farewell to all you  
Who first appeared  
Friendly, supportive, admiring:  
Taxmen, landlords and cashiers;  
Angred when unpaid,  
Vindictive in revenge,  
Repainting over fade.

But adieu to the few who stayed  
Keeping our turf edgy,  
Proving this is ours;  
Who never balked at date night  
Peering through roof holes at the stars.

They say "take comfort in knowing  
The block's a better place".  
But high rises, glitzy shops come only  
When our history we erase.



Artwork by Harrison Scott  
(Year 13), Harrow UK

# She

By Stephanie Webb (Year 13) Harrow HK

She can't keep their voices out of her head.

Every night, the same thing happens. She lies flat on her back, face to the ceiling, eyes glazed over. She stares straight ahead into the darkness that surrounds her, the gloom that envelopes her. Every night, in her own room, she is drowned by a sickly pool of dread, a pool of quicksand that slowly drags her deeper and deeper into an unending void of suffering, a pool in which she writhes and squirms, trying desperately to free herself from, and yet pathetically failing. The dread that their voices will return suffocates her. She is trapped. She cannot move. She cannot breathe. She cannot escape. The voices hold her captive.

It's been this way ever since she was a child. She always knew that there was something different about her. The moment she set foot in any toy shop, she would race all the way to the Barbie dolls section. She could spend all day in front of the rows and rows of plastic boxes, peering wide-eyed into each individual one. She felt a connection to them, always admiring their long luscious hair, those sparkling pink handbags, their elegant high-heeled shoes and their warm, welcoming smiles.

All she wanted was to join them in their boxes, to feel proud alongside them on their pink and purple pedestals. This dream was so close yet so out of reach, for no amount of wanting could ever transport her to the same realm as them. Although the dolls were strapped to the cardboard packaging, she felt that they were the ones who were free instead of her. It seemed like they were the ones looking out at her, observing her from

their compact boxes. And it was through looking into those tiny boxes that she gained a sense of peace, a taste of paradise.

But then the voices would come. As people brushed past her, she was made aware of her surroundings. Sometimes, their voices were not that explicit. People did not need to say anything aloud, but she could already hear what they were thinking. Echoes of their thoughts arrived in the form of inquiring gazes and furrowed brows and disapproving looks. They came up with their own theories, hypotheses, conjectures, in order to explain her behaviour. They thought they were being subtle. She knew all along what they were thinking.

She's different.

Is she just acting out?

Surely, she's just doing it for attention.

But they did not understand. How could they, after all? They had never been in her position. They had never felt how she felt. What she couldn't understand was why they tried to play the role of the expert, why they put on the persona of the older, wiser, all-knowing adult who had all the answers. When in reality they did not understand anything.

All they did was suffocate her.

It was normally around then that she would be ushered to another section in the toy store. The one where there were no sparkling accessories nor any pink dresses. The one where there were robots, cars and guns instead.

And that was that. Nothing she could do about it.

As she grew older, she hoped to seek comfort in her fellow classmates, the people who were her own age, who would hopefully be compassionate and offer more support.

Yet, she was treated more and more like an outcast, someone desperately trying to claw her way into their box. She was different and people knew she was different. Different was not considered good. If she tried to be herself, the girls sneered, the boys jeered, their frowns were deeper, their stares lingered and burned holes through her heart. At the beginning, there were only the occasional whispers here and there, but all too soon they grew into insults and mockery that seemed to haunt her wherever she roamed. She would hear them ringing in the hallways as she slunk past, echoing in the school hall during assembly, pulsating in the classrooms where she was surrounded and unable to escape.

Eventually, their voices became shackles that immobilised her. She decided it would be best for them and for herself and for everyone if she were to just slowly fade far, far away into her own secluded universe. She learnt to suppress her feelings and confine them to a microscopic, miniscule cage. She let her universe ebb away, surrendering to the tides of society.

But every night, as she lies down in her bed, as she is engulfed by darkness, the horrifying realisation that she will never be able to escape who she really is slams into her like a brick wall. At the same time, their voices swirl around in her head, forever sticking and staying, like a suffocating layer of thick tar.

The darkness is too much for her.

She sits up in her bed and reaches for the light switch, for a source of comfort. As the lights come on, the mirror taunts her with the image of a stranger. This person has a square jaw with stubble clinging to it. There's a lump jutting outwards in the middle of their throat. Thick, dense hair sticks out like bristles in every direction on their legs. This person is sitting in the same position as she. This person is in the same room as she. They have the same pillows, the same bed

sheets, the same furniture.

That is not her reflection. No, it isn't. Surely, it can't be.

But as tears roll uncontrollably down her cheeks like a chain of broken pearls, the same can be seen for the stranger sitting in front of her. She doubles over, not in physical pain, but an emotional one, a pain that crushes all of the air out of your lungs; a pain that consumes you as it spreads to every fibre of your being. As she falls onto the floor in a heap of exhaustion and weeps in utter disregard, so does the stranger.

She stares at the person sitting across from her, the stranger glares straight back.

This is whom they see, but this is not who she really is.

And all that's running through her head are their voices.

Why are they like this?

Why can't they see me for who I really am?

Why don't they understand me?

Perhaps one day, they will.

But for now, she can't keep the voices out of her head.

# Johann Sebastian Bach

By Manta Rawiwanna (Year 10),  
Harrow Bangkok

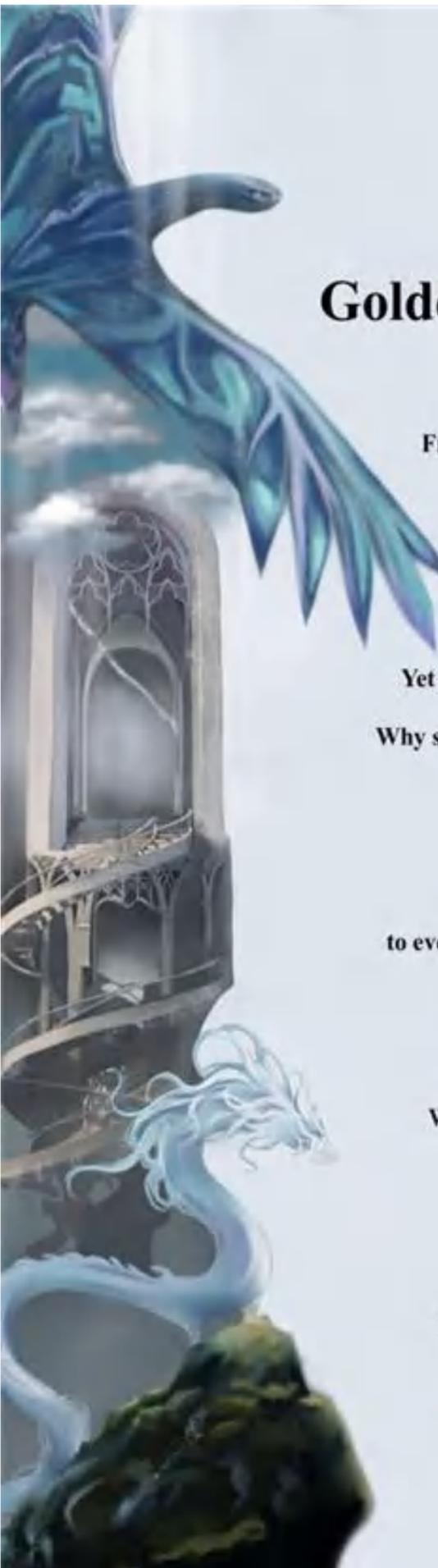
The sol G vibrates in the air  
Cast by the swift feather-brush hair.  
Frozen by the fiery fragment of black notes,  
The Dorian mode brought to life  
By the trills, as the score unfolds.

He who loved G minor  
He who was compelled by the  
Musical path.  
He who was the father of Fugue  
He who is the master of all time.

He engendered the ground, layer by layer  
From the inner core to the crust.  
He planted the root, deepest down.  
The sounds of two ribbons tie up  
The beautiful bow.

His name planted deep, his name known by all,  
His name was Bach, Johann Sebastian Bach.





# Golden Ticket for Humanity

The unease people like me receive,  
Due to ambiguity and deceive.  
From the golden times to the times of darkness;  
DNA of all types of spices...  
From saffron to paprika and cinnamon,  
The flavouring to spice up the chances,  
Of ever becoming!

I feel my cloak uplifting me  
To see the future possibilities  
Yet the universe perceives the ideology, that it is the  
path to failure  
Why should I prevent the possibilities of empowerment?  
To make my nation proud!  
As I lift up my golden crown.

I'm certain that one day,  
It is I in the history books!  
To be the first of my kind,  
to ever be crowned with the golden ticket of humanity.

The intricate systems that work within us,  
From damm to kahraba and hormonaat,  
Min love ila excitement ila sadness.  
Yet none of my kind has been announced,  
With the golden ticket for saving the universe!

So next time I ponder upon,  
The unease people like me receive,  
Due to ambiguity and deceive  
I'll remember all my flavourings!  
And I'll wear my crown with ease.  
To ensure that one day I break the stigma...  
Become the legacy of my nation!  
Become the first of many in history!  
To receive the golden ticket for humanity!

Noor Elabd

## When the Asters Start to Cry

### 1. *Novae-angliae: Carmine Red Aster*

Linth overlooked the meadow of asters stretching for acres and acres below her, reminiscing of a time when the meadow was the home for many. A simple time when the nation that she herself used to call home was still grasping onto a loose thread of life. Glazing over a sea of carmine red asters, the image of a massacre with piles of dead corpses buried in the ground overlapped with the seemingly innocent aster meadow below Linth. Memories of a time on the stairs of her family's estate, oblivious to what was to come; a time when war brewed over the horizon of the once purple asters planted around their estate crept stealthily into her mind.

She turned around, facing a gravestone wearied by rain, sitting in the remnants of withered flowers piled up like corpses on a battlefield: old gifts that she could not bear to throw out. Nothing was engraved on the tombstone; only a single annual aster remained the only memory of the dead on the top of it. Linth reached her hand out to touch the granite memorial, feeling the rough surface of a stone carved and engraved by a novice against her skin.

It was that day when the flowers bled red that a legacy crumbled to dust.

### 1. *Tanacetum vulgare: Tansy*

Silence echoed through the somber hallways of the aristocratic Ospel family. The corridor was long and narrow, empty, with no sign of ever ending; it seemingly stretched on forever. Flickering flames from a chandelier dimly illuminated a room on the left of the corridor and nearest to the stairs. Inside the room were two people hunched over a table, scrutinizing a map on a wearied wooden table. Besides the large map, there was also a vase of fresh tansies, originally intended to be in the middle of the table as decoration, but now posed as one of three paperweights weighing down the worn-out map. The shorter one of the two figures sighed and straightened their back, putting a hand on the other's shoulder, seemingly comforting the other. Through the thick door adorned with precious and expensive gold lining, only muffled sounds could be heard from inside the drawing room.

Athar stood at the foot of the stairs, feeling triumphant after successfully snagging a small piece of cheese from the kitchens when from the corner of his eye, he saw a small mouse dart out from under the stairs and into the only room emitting light in a long hall of darkness. In surprise, Athar involuntarily dropped the slice of cheese he was previously holding and raced to the door, giving chase to the mouse but in the process prompting another mouse to snatch the cheese away once it hit the floor. The small rodent slipped away from Athar's eyesight, squeaking triumphantly as it happily devoured the stolen piece of cheese on the other side of the closed door.

Having decided to abandon the plan of chasing down and catching the mice in his family's corridors, Athar sighed in defeat, slumping down against the door, opting for something else to do to evade sleep for just a little longer. The adolescent child observed the gap between the thick wooden door and the tiled floor, putting his ears against the middle rail of the door and listened.

It was all very muffled, of course, but even then, Athar could vaguely pick out the distinct tones of two people: his mother and one of his cousins. From the outside of the drawing room, he adjusted his position to further attempt to press his ears against the locked door of the drawing room so to maximize his eavesdropping experience.

"War is inevitable; therefore, we must put the family before the success of winning the war. It is not a question of how but a question of how long when it comes to a war; it wouldn't be the question of how we can all hide from a catastrophe waiting to happen, but instead a question of how long we can wait it out. In a war between two countries, there's always one side who reaps more than the other. One side, the victor of the two, will relish in the spoils of war, celebrating the lives of their soldiers, the other side, who will undoubtedly be the less fortunate one of the two, can only mourn the lost, unable to reap anything from their fields." Athar heard his mother sigh after speaking, pacing around their drawing room that was mostly devoid of any furniture because his mother sold everything off.

A moment of silence ensued before his mother spoke again. "It wouldn't be ideal to run away to another country and hide there."

A quiet protest came from inside the room.

"Loss is inevitable."

Athar pondered the conversation that he just eavesdropped; it was odd to him that his mother used the drawing room of all the rooms in house: it was the only area in the house that was devoid of life with its lack of furniture that it used to have. Before his mother, the head of the family sold nearly everything, the drawing room was a lively place where Athar and his little sister, Linth, loved to huddle by the fireplace, curled up in a ball on the armchair, and read books. 'Used to,' he thought, 'not anymore.' It was ten years ago when the first war between the two countries of Ebria and Ascea broke out. The two-year war cost the lives of many on both sides, including Athar and Linth's father and elder brother. After the passing of the treaty in XX97, their mother sold off all the furniture in the drawing room, most of which were things their father bought. Shortly after, their cousin, a quiet child not too far from their late brother's age, came to live with them, a choice made by Athar's mother that Athar thought was to try and fill the broken gap in her heart with something else. Their mother was not a sedimental person; she was strict and responsible, leaving no space for sedimentary in her heart after the first war took the lives of those, she held dearest. She only spoke when needed, appearing polite to guests, engaging in small talk to lessen tension, feigning a mask before others. It was rare for Athar to hear her mother's voice break a little; solemn in tone and filled with regret. The sound of footsteps drawing closer and closer to the door interrupted Athar's ponderings and he quickly ran up the stairs, the adrenaline of being almost caught ran through his veins as he closed the door to his own bedroom.

*Dianthus caryophyllus: White Carnation*

The loud ode played by a symphony of trumpets rung through the city, signaling the start of a war rung throughout the city, earlier than the ritual calling of the roosters, awaking the citizens of Iceril to a harsh reality.

The moment any citizen stepped out for their house and onto the front porch, they would immediately be greeted by the sight of flowers splattered with blood in the city square; occasional screams tore through the silence that overshadowed the city.

The wind cried harshly, rustling the leaves, and blowing away the field of asters surrounding the city square. The once lively cathedral was just a shadow of its former self, becoming barren and abandoned and the statue of a deity standing before the cathedral was smeared with dried blood.

It was dark and unusually quiet in the Ospel family manor, curtains were pulled down, covering most of the natural sunlight that shone through the windows, servants huddled close together in the kitchen for warmth and comfort. The entirety of the house was eerily quiet with a shadow of uncertainty, horror, and grief hanging about it—encasing the house and its residents in an opaque fog. Athar curled up in a corner of his bedroom, trembling in fear and helplessness every time a scream pieced through the air; there was nothing he or anyone could have done to save those crying for help at that moment. But despite the internal realization that he came to, there was a small voice in Athar's head protesting.

"If you'd just told the authorities about the war, maybe also those people wouldn't be dead right now." The voice whispered, "Maybe we would've been better prepared."

Athar shook his head, trying to drown the small voice protesting at the back of his head but to no avail. Contrary, the more he tried to clear his head and exterminate the thoughts, the worse they got: the singular voice multiplied, all of them hissed the same sentence. In agony, he flung open the door, ran out the door and down the stairs, his final destination being the underwhelming drawing room. Carefully shutting the thick door of the drawing room closed, Athar ran to the only remaining armchair left in the room and curled up into a ball. Despite slivers of light escaping through the curtains and into the dark room, somehow, despite the wind that blew softly amongst the trees outside and the signs of spring, it was dark and lonely. Completely devoid of life.

Eventually, the scared child fell into an uneasy slumber.

Despite the temporary moment of silence achieved by sleep, the symphony of voices continued to plague the back of his mind.

Story by: Angel Liang, Year 9  
Artwork by: Angel Liang, Year 9  
Harrow Zhuhai, China

1. *Lycoris radiata: Spider Lily*

Athar shot up from the armchair, awoken by another ear-splitting scream coming from outside the house. The scream emitting from the other side of the walls of the manor was like any other: full of raw pain and agony. But there was something else he noticed, a triumphant laugh underneath all the screams of raw grief. After that scream, there was nothing. No noise from the outside, no screams, nothing. Even the voices in the back of his head had disappeared. He waited for a few minutes, listening attentively for more screams, for the sound of footsteps walking closer. But there was nothing.

The little child could not hold his inevitable natural curiosity anymore.

And so, Athar stepped out of the drawing room and then clicked opened the front door.

Athar looked around the sea of dead corpses and studied them, frantically trying to find Linth, holding onto a sole speck of hope that she was at least alive. A particular face caught the side of his eyes and upon further inspection, his face paled in horror, realization flooding him as he came to realize the harsh conclusion that the face belonged to none other than his own mother.

Athar, sicken with grief stumbled before the statue depicting a hooded figure holding asters in her hand, so utterly oblivious to the chaos that ensued below her.

1. *Scabiosa: Pincushion Flower*

Linth stared at the annual aster, lost in memories.

"When the snow defrosts and spring welcomes you, those flowers over there will start to bloom." Her cousin pointed to a cluster of flowers to their left.

"Aren't those chrysanthemums?"

"No! Of course not! They're asters!"

"Isn't that the same thing?"

"Chrysanthemums have shorter and less spaced-out petals...They were dad's favorite, you know."

"Oh."

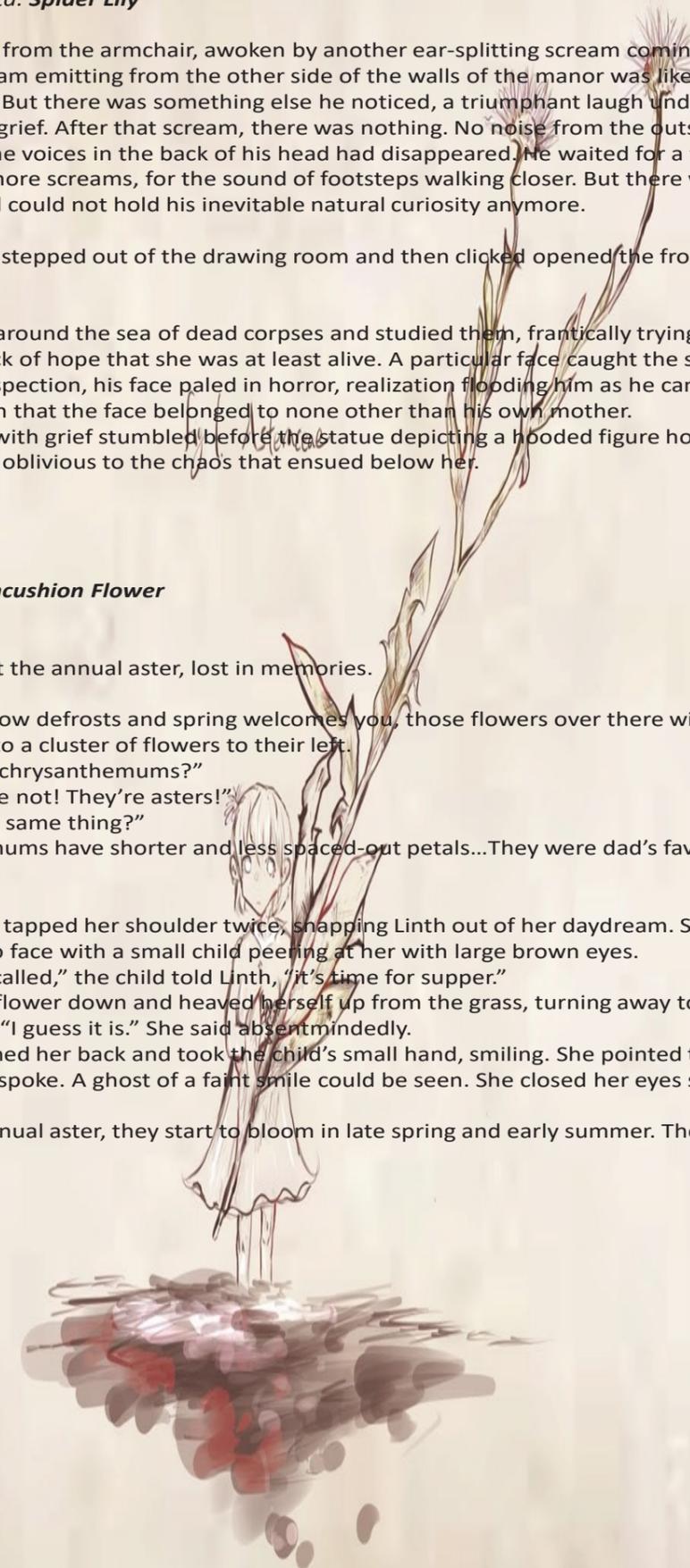
A hand gently tapped her shoulder twice, snapping Linth out of her daydream. She turned around, suddenly face to face with a small child peering at her with large brown eyes.

"Miss, Uncle called," the child told Linth, "it's time for supper."

Linth put the flower down and heaved herself up from the grass, turning away to look up and gaze at the setting sun. "I guess it is." She said absentmindedly.

She straightened her back and took the child's small hand, smiling. She pointed to the aster on the tombstone and spoke. A ghost of a faint smile could be seen. She closed her eyes slowly.

"That's an annual aster, they start to bloom in late spring and early summer. They mark the start of spring."



## Infinite Grains of Sand

This world is a beach. Our lives are sand.  
History is all the land we once touched.  
Legacy is all the lives we still touch  
when our own hourglass has  
run out of sand. Of life.

Our lives are sand,  
sometimes flying through the wind,  
sometimes trodden on,  
other times sculpted into castles,  
often moulded by the waves of change,  
sometimes quicksand,  
rapidly sinking,  
sometimes shifting into new shapes or to a new place.  
We travel. Every destination inscribed with new names  
scrawled into sand, like it's skin, marked with ink.

History is all the land that shook hands with our skin.  
History is every sign of historical sites  
landmarked on maps and plaques,  
but when the weather starts to change,  
and its writing has been worn down by wind and rain,  
legacy lives longer, pondered by passers-by,  
whose hearts were once held by the sands of lives long gone.

Becoming stories and murals and secrets  
spread across generations  
until found on the shores of tomorrow,  
where a child will find a legacy  
in the heart of a shell on the beach.  
Will hold it up to their ear and hear the ocean.  
Let it rest on their mantelpiece.  
Bring in the shell for show-and-tell.  
Pass it round the class until  
the chant has become a heartbeat.  
Until the sound of how to help, teach, inspire  
pulses through the room.  
When we build and invent and innovate,  
that legacy becomes oxygen.

Even when our footprints wash away,  
watch legacy live on far and wide,  
in the children,  
who heard wisdom shared like Chinese whispers,  
who grow up to change the tides.

By Aditi Banerjee  
(Year 12)  
Harrow School Online



# You Tell It As If It Were Yesterday

By Rena Rawanchakul (Year 13), Harrow Bangkok  
Artwork by Pam Noonpackdee (Year 13), Harrow Bangkok

You tell it as if it were yesterday  
You see  
I can see it in your eyes  
What lies within the murky depths of blue-grey  
Etched in your palms and held in the marks on your hands  
The crevices and folds of wrinkled skin  
And the dark blue veins that crawl up your arms and under the blue  
summer sleeves

You tell it as if it were yesterday  
The faraway look  
And the tears that threaten to fall when you recount  
Meeting Holocaust survivors  
Yourself coming from  
A Jewish family  
Being discriminated against from an early age  
And too much of a child to know why  
is being a Jew bad?  
But you sure knew  
It was bad enough

You tell it as if it were yesterday  
Plucking memories from your mind  
Formless  
Whilst gazing around you at the green that enveloped us to help  
you  
Remember  
Saigon  
During the Vietnam War  
Riding in cars with open sides in case anyone threw a Molotov in  
you could  
Throw it back out

And you  
You tell it as it were yesterday  
Wide mouthed smile wrinkling the eyes further  
So akin to your brother, in that moment, it almost catches me off  
guard  
Recounting interviewing Bobby Kennedy  
And how you adventured to Croatia with friends  
Young and a little bit on the wild side  
At one point you say 'People haven't changed. Cruelty has always  
been around - and so has - has courtesy.'  
And it feels like the banging of a judge's gavel  
Ringing in my ears  
Final, definite, consequential.

When we finish, I ask,  
Do you feel old?  
The automatic response:  
No. I definitely do not. I cannot believe how old  
I am sometimes.

Earlier  
When I asked you  
Nearing the end of our trip back into history  
Enthralled and a little bit breathless  
If you had ever considered writing all of what you have seen and lived through  
down  
The automatic response:  
No. Who would be interested in reading about a little old lady?  
The irony of our situation struck me

I said  
Me.  
I am interested.

What I did not say was this:  
I am interested in the way we human beings live and breathe and move through  
time and space. I am interested in what it means to be human, and to call this  
planet our home. I am interested in the shapeless, formless, breathless - time,  
memory, history.

And so  
When you tell it as if it were yesterday?  
I am spellbound.



## No More Birthday's

I'm Jay. Today was a very special day for me because it's my birthday! I had been waiting for this day for a year. And, today, my dad came back! He is a soldier, so I hadn't seen him in a long time, I missed him so much.

With the cake's smell, my dad came back, and all my family sung a birthday song to me. They asked me to make a wish---that's my favorite part. Let me think...Oh! Do you know that thing, it's called...fireworks! I had never seen it, but I'd heard it from other people, it can fly up to the sky with a loud sound. I wanted to see it, that's my wish, isn't that cool?

I closed my eyes. But I didn't know that I would see: the fireworks that I would never forget.

I heard a loud noise with the sound of people screaming. Wait. Is that the fireworks? But why is everyone screaming? Outside seems to have become a purgatory. My dad flew to me like a bullet and took me to the corner. I heard him say sorry to me in an almost inaudible voice. But why? He kissed my forehead and then went out with a gun. I'm afraid now. My mom is crying helplessly like a child; outside, there were screams everywhere: they made up my fear. And then, I saw my wish—the firework, with blood and despair. My home became hell, a wasteland. The smell of explosives and blood filled my nose, swallowing my hope bit by bit.

I heard some footsteps near the door. My mom hugged me, telling me how much she loves me. A bullet went through her chest and then she closed her eyes. I fear the extreme has happened. A man in black walked to me. No, he was no human---he is death. I look at him with begging eyes, pleading him to let me go, but he is hardened and unwavering upon hearing my plea. The gun pointed at me. The bullet went through my chest, blood gushed out of me like a fountain. My eyes became vague.

I am dead.

On my birthday, I am in the warm embrace of my mom's hug. But I still love this world, because it still has flowers, cakes, fireworks, and peace. However, it's not for me, but that's ok! I hope you can enjoy this world, enjoy everything you see, the sounds you hear and the things you taste. I feel sleepy now, we have to say bye and thanks for saying happy birthday to me.

Story by: Ceci, Year 9  
Artwork by: Natalie Lo, Year 9  
Harrow Zhuhai, China



Artwork by Jacky Guan  
(Upper 6th), Harrow Shanghai

## *Tea*

*By Finley Jones (Lower 6th), Harrow Shanghai*

You may sip from the cup of your morning brew,  
with the faint rays of sunshine greeting your gaze.  
Oblivious. Unpiteous. If only you knew.  
Now trek through the path of this time-woven maze.

Wars have been fought, revolutions begun,  
Over what boils down to leaves dried in the sun.  
From three thousand BC to the modern age,  
The trouble it's brewed cannot be undone.

It withers and rolls and ferments and dries,  
Plucked from the comfort of Asian blue skies.  
It's sold and shipped – Britain's greatest prize;  
We call it our own, and ignore others' cries.

It seems a surprise that one could resist  
The joys of opium. But we proved them wrong.  
The easterners sip on corruptible bliss,  
While the wealthy back home are sky high on Ceylon.

In Boston, the colonists brewed up the sea,  
And stained it with hues of Revolutionary deeds,  
In hopes that someday from our King they'll be free,  
And so they attack in the heart where it bleeds.

From the African plains to the east China sea  
Where the Empire expands, it will never be free.  
But the reach of our might won't eternally be,  
And such is the story of our 'great' nation's tea.

# The Way Back

Alyssa Wong (Year 12) Harrow HK

The emptiness of the train station clings to my skin. As the sun melts into the horizon, a dim warmth settles over the platform. Angular shadows spill over the ground, staining the walls. Stray strands of wind flutter through my hair. I stand still. I wait.

Then: the sound. A shuddering rumble, like boiling water, the shell of the earth cracking open. The glint of the train grows larger, hurtling towards the station. I force my feet forward. A heavy, uneasy feeling slowly drips down my throat. The train's headlights are twin suns. I nudge my toes past the edge of the platform. I imagine stepping off, and floating in nothingness for a single, mercurial moment.

But I don't.

I stumble back, tripping over the neon yellow line that marks where commuters should politely stand and wait. The train rushes past. My reflection flickers across its windows, a silhouette superimposed over the indistinct smudges of the few strangers inside. I glance away.

The doors slide open, cleaving my reflection in two. The soothing cadences of a familiar automated female voice echo from the speakers. I walk in and choose one of the seats at random. My journey home begins.

Time unwinds leisurely, snaking through the night. My limbs dangle awkwardly and I feel hollow, a doll abandoned on the ground. I am waiting for the journey to end. I am waiting for someone to hold me. I am waiting for them to move my body and guide me through the motions of playing daughter, student, friend.

I steal oxygen from the empty carriage unnoticed. The hushed breath of future ghosts warm my mind, a sense of ephemeral contentment. The blurred faces of people I have never met. They are telling me the way back. They can relieve this seabed pressure, reel me a fishing line, its silver hook ready for that first, piercing flush of red. I want to believe in a resurfacing, a resurrection, a mystic waiting for me.

The train hurtles onwards. I know tomorrow will circle back on today, and I will find myself standing too close again. Edging my feet off the platform. Waiting. But for now, I watch through the window as speed smears the view into the golden-grey of cities at night. I am already on my way back home. The train flies through the darkening sky, fearless. Yesterday falls away beneath the inky, undulating waves of the night.

Photography by Stella Liu (Year 12) Harrow HK

# Light

By Andy Li, (Year 9) Harrow, UK

Artwork by Liam Rienow (Year 12), Harrow UK

**Darkness. A bleak void, a fog of ink,  
A blank world devoid of idea.  
A spark. The ignition of the mind,  
A blinding ray of light,  
For from thought is interest.**

**A dance of society, a song of community,  
Two vast oceans in exchange of wisdom.  
The interest is spread among the crowd,  
The fire blazes and lightens the earth.**

**Sweeping the people into regularity and order,  
It spreads across nations and through conversations.  
It creates unions, friendships and links across borders,  
Taught from elders to new generations.**

**Yet the initial spark may soon be forgotten,  
Elegance may be lost and the culture may become irrelevant.  
New ideas will naturally replace old ones and eventually, a cul-  
ture may  
Be lost forever.**

**If we preserve history, the cause and the culture,  
May we make it everlasting in mind and effect?  
From beaks to bluers, from toshes to yarder,  
May we rejoice in the School forevermore?**

**Four hundred and fifty years have gone by,  
Let us forgetfully wonder for our past and our culture,  
Let us preserve the honour of the School,  
Forty, a hundred, five hundred years on!**

## Nitrogen

i want to step on wet concrete,  
leave ink prints on your legacy,  
martyr my bones for the face of  
history. i want to write a story,  
start a war, tell my fable to the stars.  
i want to steal a lake from its name,  
reach the skies with my fame—

i want the future to think of me,  
pearlescent dreams in blinked  
out darkness. the universe to  
kiss me, the sky to embrace me,  
the earth to welcome me.  
i want

my skin in wildflowers, my lungs  
in yawning teeth, i want my heart  
to beat in a sea otter's chest. one day,  
i want to fly.

by Anonymous, Harrow Bangkok



Illustrated by Áine Doherty (Year 12)  
Harrow Bangkok

# The Curse of the Stones

By Tony Shi (Year 9), Harrow UK

The morning of December 21st, 1849 was mild and misty. Shuddering in the somewhat chilling breeze, I walked across the silvery carpet of frost that covered Salisbury Plain. Soon, the great monoliths of Stonehenge towered above me. I stood in awe of this ancient wonder, with questions bustling in my head. Why did our ancestors create this peculiar phenomenon? What was the purpose of those strange stones? No-one has ever known, and most probably, no-one will ever know. Yet, ever since I heard of the discovery of Stonehenge in the papers, I had a burning desire to know of its origins. Now having finally seen this spectacle through my own spectacles, I wished to quench my unbearable thirst for knowledge; I had vowed to explore the mystery of this monument and find the secret of the stones.

However, the main purpose of my journey (which the University of Oxford had tasked me with) was to investigate a peculiar species of poisonous red lichen, fabled to only grow upon these mysterious megaliths. Legend has it that the lichen was dyed red with the blood of those sacrificed many millennia ago. In all honesty, I had heard of the barbaric human sacrifices practised by the Ancient Celts. Yet, this was sure to be another tale invented by those poor souls, who, entranced by the dark grasp of alchemy and witchcraft, were completely ignorant to science, our leader of reason. But even the shining beacon of science cannot always bring light to the dark realms of human history.

For a while, I searched the monoliths for traces of this red lichen. To my utmost surprise, there was blood-red lichen growing at the foot of every megalith, albeit in small, unnoticeable patches extremely close to the ground. These striking red patches were often concealed well by the long grass which grew on Salisbury Plain; if I were not specifically searching for them, I would never have found them. I gently pulled back the long grass to examine these specimens. The longer I looked at them, the more intrigued I was. For every patch seemed to represent a picture, as if they were paintings created by nature. Furthermore, I was amazed at the intensity of its redness, for it was an intense, dark red, almost identical to that of blood. From my observations, the monoliths were crafted from sarsen, a form of sandstone. My analysis showed that there was no mercury within this sarsen, and only a small amount of iron. Therefore, the dark, red hue of the lichen could not be due to either cinnabar or ferrous oxides. This strange finding placed an uneasy doubt within my mind: was the lichen truly dyed red with the blood of the sacrificed?

Fascinated by this mysterious lichen, I decided to collect a dozen specimens, and then examine them in detail within my laboratory. I spent no less than two hours carefully peeling this red lichen from the sarsen megaliths, always trying to preserve its intricate, original shape. After I had completed this arduous task, the sun had almost set. As darkness was smothering Salisbury Plain, I suddenly realised that it had been the Winter Solstice. I quickly hurried towards my inn, trying to arrive before it was completely dark.

The small inn which I stayed in was named The Hearty House. It was a traditional black and white Tudor house, with half a dozen rooms for guests. "How was your day, sir?" asked the innkeeper as I entered. "It sure was cold," said I, "But I made good progress too. Do you see? These are the lichen specimens I collected from Stonehenge today." I showed the red lichen to him carefully holding it in my hand. Suddenly, the colour drained from the innkeeper's jolly face. "No... No... No, this cannot be!" he gasped. Surprised at his drastic reaction, I asked, "What can be so peculiar about my red lichen specimens?" "The b-blood lichen of S-S-Stonehenge?" he stuttered, "N-No! It must only be a myth...only a myth! It cannot exist...cannot exist! The Curse of the Stones is upon us...is upon us!"

When he had finished speaking, the poor innkeeper was paralysed with fear, and collapsed. His head hit the cast iron mantelpiece. When I had rushed to his aid, there was no breath left within his limp frame, and a thin trickle of blood flowed out from his temple. It was the same colour as the lichen. I was overcome by a wave of cold shock. Was this lichen indeed cursed? And did its mere presence just kill a man, in front of my own eyes? It was hardly believable, but it was the hard, cold truth. I took one last glance at the corpse of the innkeeper. Suddenly, I frightfully exclaimed: "The picture! The same picture!"

The thin trickle of blood from the innkeeper had slowly flowed onto the floor, quickly drying on the slate. It formed the same picture as the growing lichen. But only now did I realise what it had represented. It was the image of a human heart. A severed human heart.

Then, I heard a loud rapping on the door. My heart froze in shock. What would they think of the innkeeper's death? Would I have a murderer's title added to my name? Murderer John Hart in the Papers? That would be the utmost disgrace to my dignity. However, the rapping upon the door became louder... louder... and even louder!

I had no choice but to open the door, for this unexpected visitor would otherwise smash it open with his ferocious thumping. I unwillingly unbolted the heavy oak door, hoping that the visitor would not see the innkeeper's body behind the bar. At first light, I would call the grave diggers to put this poor soul to rest.

Opening the thick, hardwood door, I perceived the vast dent created by the visitor's knocking. It was two inches deep, and around a foot in width. I was startled at this discovery. Who could possess such colossal strength? Then, I slowly turned my apprehensive eyes towards the silent visitor. I understood everything.

Standing in the doorway was a gargantuan man, at least seven feet in height. His long, golden hair was as wild and twisted as a bramble bush. The fire of fury blazed in his dark eyes of revenge. He was sure to be an ancient Celt, for vivid paints illuminated his scarred face with strange symbols and peculiar paintings. A dull, gold torc hung on his thick neck, like the arch-halo of Satan. Dark, coagulated blood coated his bare chest. Then, I saw the gaping hole in his chest. His heart had been torn out from his body. This was not a living man, but a spirit from the depths of Hell!

"Well, Dr Hart, I have finally found you in... the Hearty House it seems," declared the sickening spirit, in a surprisingly un-Celtic manner. "How very strange for a heartless man to say this!" Looking at the petrified Dr Hart, he added, "Apologies, I must have disturbed you. Please have a seat." Slowly, the botanist sat down in an armchair, shaking with terror. The gruesome spirit entered the inn and took one glance at the dead innkeeper, and the picture of the severed heart. "Ah, there is the sign, so you must know of the Curse already," he said to Dr Hart, "But you cannot know the full tale. You do not know why Stonehenge was built upon Salisbury Plain. It is time for you to know, time for the world to know. I shall finally reveal the Curse of the Stones."

"Five millennia ago, the last rays of sunshine vanished from Salisbury Plain at precisely four o'clock in the afternoon. It was the end of the winter solstice – a moment long awaited by the circle of richly robed druids. They stood solemnly within the stone circle, silent, though filled with menace. Bound to the great stone altar in the centre, there was a helpless man, a captive of war. There was no mercy. Death awaited this unfortunately soul. A fresh, human heart could ensure that the sun would rise again.

At the going down of the sun, the chief druid lunged towards the victim. A great shout of pain resonated across the boundless plain. A few moments later, the triumphant druid held a severed human heart in his hand. To the cheering of his companions, he raised the fresh, beating heart to the dark skies. Another innocent life was taken.

The next day, a shallow pit was dug, and the victim's body was dumped inside. Soon, the druids would erect another great stone above the corpse. This way, the victim's soul would be trapped in the pit forever, unable to reveal of its gruesome fate. Under every single stone, there lay a wretched soul. That was why Stonehenge was built. It was all part of the druids' evil plan." After finishing his tale, the heartless man glanced at Dr Hart. There was a stunned and puzzled expression on the botanist's face. "But who are you?" asked the botanist, "Were you the victim on that day?" The blood-covered spirit laughed a painful laugh. After pouring himself a glass of whisky, he continued, "Yes, I was that victim. But how, you may ask, was I freed from my spiritual shackles? How did I escape from under that rock? Well, Dr Hart, I must thank you for this. After my death, my soul was reincarnated, becoming the very lichen, which you are investigating. Every single victim of the druids was thus reincarnated. This blood-red lichen is our symbol, for it only grows in the shape of a severed heart. The spirit of every victim has vowed to avenge for his severed heart, by taking another human's. This was the Curse of the Stones. And red lichen is the sign of the Curse. However, though our souls resided in this red lichen, we were still bound by the druids' spell, for lichen is forever joined to stone... until you removed it.

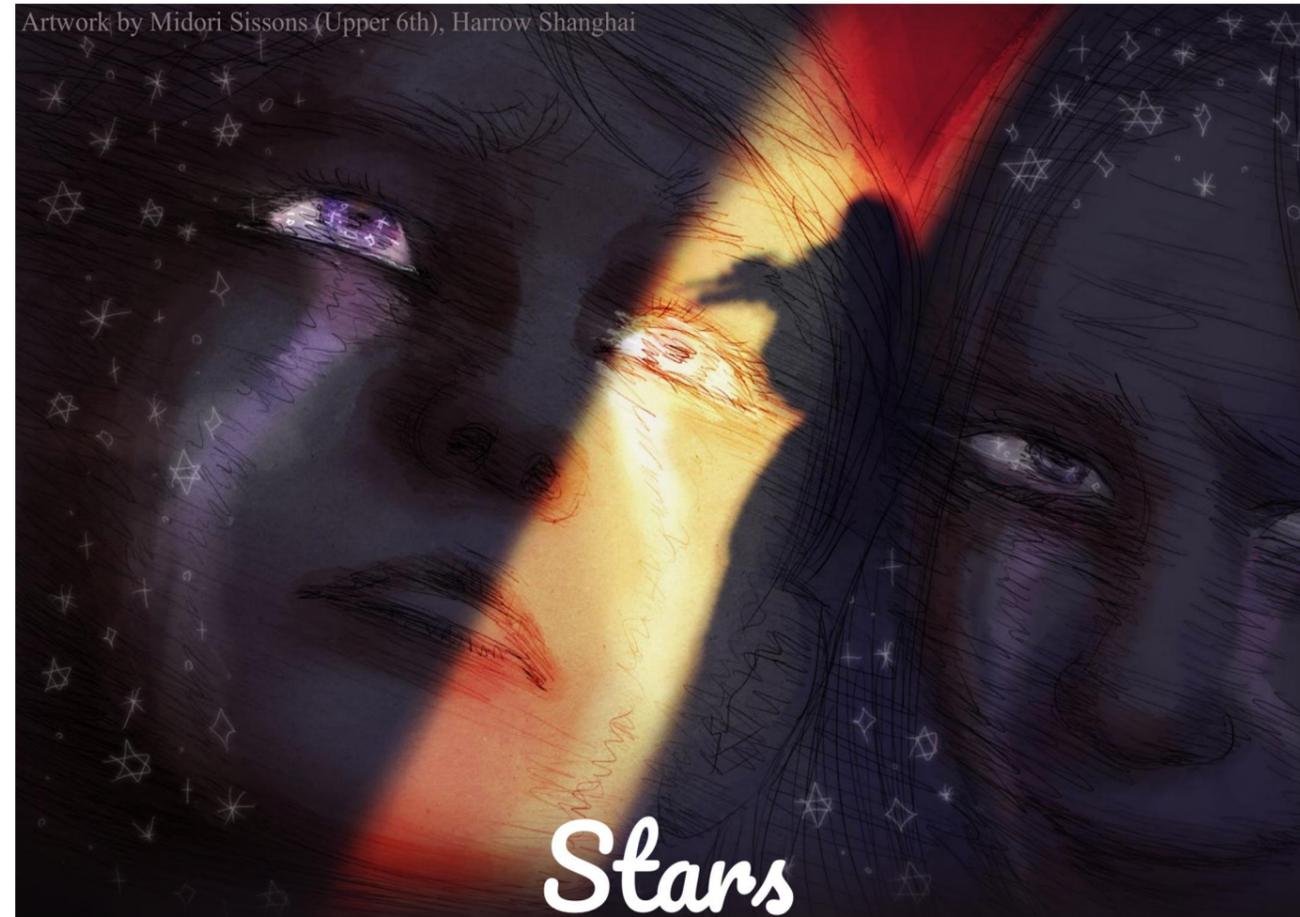
Dr Hart, if you wish to ask why I am here, please ask yourself. For you have summoned my spirit by removing the red lichen from the megaliths of Stonehenge. Thus, you have freed my soul, and the souls of my comrades. Now, my brothers and I can finally be avenged! Only beating, human hearts can satisfy our desire! But worry not, Dr Hart. You shall not be harmed, for you are our saviour." With these words, the horrifying spirit vanished in a swirl of dust.

Dr Hart was sipping a large cup of fine English Tea in his laboratory. It had been nearly a week since his expedition to Stonehenge. Hardly believing the experience, the botanist questioned himself. Did he truly meet the spirit of an ancient Celt? Had he genuinely discovered the mystery of the monument? Was the Curse of the Stones real? It was most probably a dream, for he had discovered the innkeeper alive and well the next morning. Yet, it seemed so real: the death of the innkeeper, the arrival of the spirit; everything seemed to have happened in front of his own eyes. But the innkeeper was not dead, the botanist reassured himself. It could only be a dream. That thought comforted him.

Then, Dr Hart heard the opening of his post box. It was sure to be the morning paper, for it was already half past seven. He leisurely strolled to his front door, delightfully remarking: "It was all a dream... just a dream." Then, he picked up his morning paper. He looked at the headline. His face paled. His body shuddered. Dr Hart collapsed onto the floor, gripping the morning paper in his cold, rigid hand. A hand to be forever cold, and forever rigid. When the Peelers found his body the next morning, they carefully freed the morning paper from his cold grasp. The headline wrote: Heartless Homicide: Ten corpses with missing hearts found at Stonehenge.

Artwork by Eddie Jodrell (Year 13), Harrow UK

Artwork by Midori Sissons (Upper 6th), Harrow Shanghai



By Adam Zheng (Shells), Harrow Shanghai

I remember seeing stars. Stars everywhere. Not just stars in the dark midnight sky, but the Jewish star, which we were told to wear around our necks and on our jackets when we went out. The Nazis just took over the country and were ruthlessly killing innocent civilians with no mercy. Just as I was about to go retrieve some water outside our village, a sudden flurry of gunshots marked the arrival of the Nazis. The villagers started to run as the gunshots multiplied, knowing what would happen if they were captured. Mothers screamed for their children, and in the flash of an eye, the village was painted in blood and consumed by haunting screams.

All around me, I heard soldiers with heavy guns yelling at us to get in line. My once peaceful village was ravaged before I understood what was happening. I covered my ears as I dragged my little sister behind me and ran inside the house and closed the door. I looked at her, gasping for air, her body trembling, and I pressed her close to my chest hopelessly trying to calm her. As I felt her heart beating quicker and quicker, I felt as if the world was ending. And of course, it was.

I told her to hide in the basement, and for the first time, she listened to me and ran downstairs. Gunshots pierced my ears and I glimpsed out the nearest window, seeing a man drop to the ground, blood pouring down his neck. I ducked my head in fear and from the fading echo of gunfire, I heard it. Footsteps were approaching the front door, followed by a loud knock which shook my body. I raced down to the basement, shut the door, and huddled with my sister. With our arms wrapped around each other, we held our breath as the footsteps grew closer and our hearts beat faster. We heard the flurry of footsteps reach the other side of the door. Then silence. The door to the basement flung open and a blinding beam of light shone on us. The soldier raised his gun and pointed it at us. I raised my hands instinctively in front of my face, and prayed.

It was then that I thought about the days when my sister and I would sneak up to the hill near my house, and sit down at the top. I would look at the shining stars above us and tell her the names I gave for each star. We would talk about how the war was going to end and we would see our parents. Just when we were immersed in the happiness, a voice dragged me back to reality. And then I saw stars. The last thing I saw was stars.

## The Memories of the Silk Road



**From time to time  
memories to memories**

**The sand carries the memories of  
every foot that has walked on it.**

**It has made its journey to a young  
explorer.**

**The unique journey led the world to  
China.**

**It united two kingdoms together.**

**Goods travelled along the journey,  
but the bad also did.**

**The disease couldn't bear itself to  
stay, so it had to leave.**

**It killed millions of innocents soon it  
was called The Black Death.**

**The disease died gradually, and the  
journey went on.**

**The exchange of culture  
expanded.**

**But not only the culture  
but also the love.**

**Thank you for showing  
us the unforgettable  
journey.**

Poem by Dorothy Tsui (Year 9), Harrow  
Zhuhai  
Artwork by Doris Kan (Year 7), Harrow  
Zhuhai)

## Unsung Glory

Through the travail of ages,  
Midst the pomp and toil of war  
Have Great Men fought and strove and perished  
Countless times upon the star

Great kings shouted in triumph:  
"Look upon my work, ye mighty! And despair!"  
Yet for some - nothing beside remains  
Buried by the sands of history

To those unsung heroes, I now beckon onto their names and glories

Where Caesar stood, Burengnong once stood too:  
"Pu Chana Sip Tit!" Hear their cries  
Now silenced by The Cross, the Steel, the Machine  
Blue-eyed modernity; merciless to the Romantic

And to the legends, I sing my Lyrical Ballads:

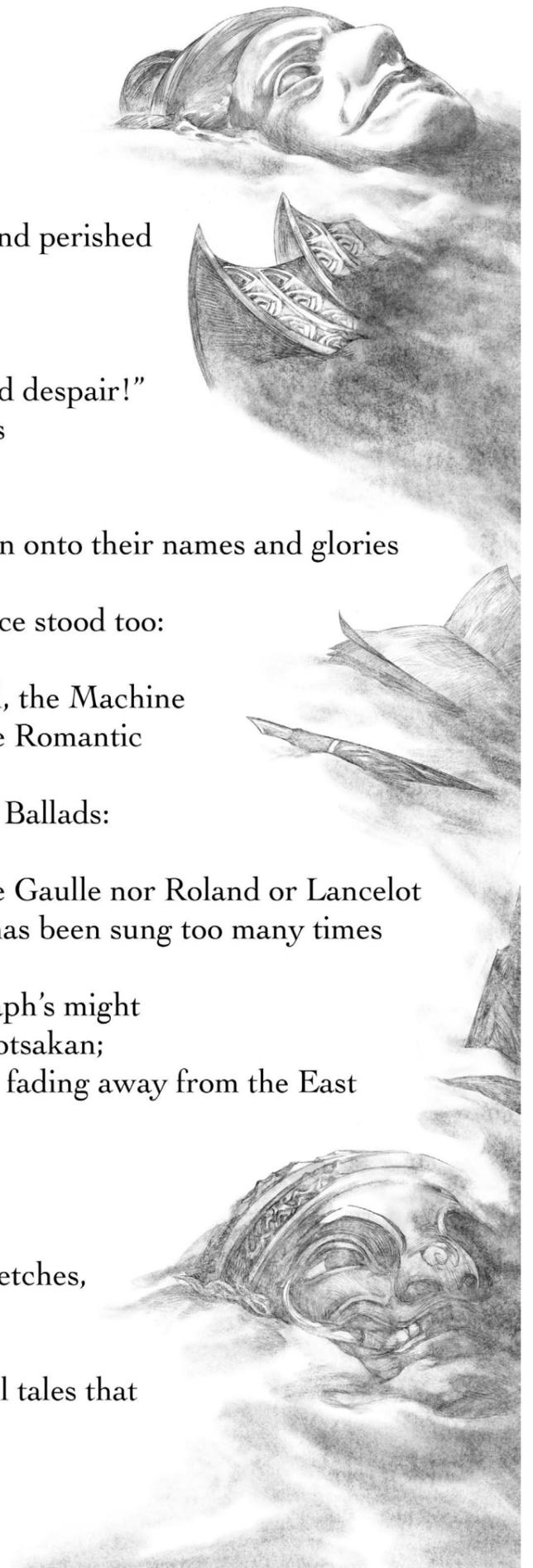
Not of Tirant Lo Blanc or Amadis De Gaille nor Roland or Lancelot  
For the deeds of King Athur's court has been sung too many times

But of Pipekh's sacrifice and Maiyaraph's might  
Loyalty of Hanuman and hubris of Totsakan;  
These tales - unheard of by the West, fading away from the East

So what buries and eternalises?

Were it the seas of which the saga stretches,  
the olympian height of the epic?

Or does the audacity of those who tell tales that  
tends the graveyard of time?



Great fools, of all realms of the earth, had draw tides of men  
into their hand

And write their will across the skies and stars  
For a sadistic mistress: the Victory Maid  
Who grants her illustrious favours with ineffable courtesy  
And rips it right back just as sudden

The forgotten look on to the immortalised  
And jealousy grew into a blade;  
Of rationality, reason, equality  
The cold steel struck  
And she wept  
For it killed cruelty, oppression, ignorance:

The uncaring  
The Romantic  
The Truth

And sets in a world of brutal objectivity, equally as blind

Glory faded.

No more of the foolish arrogant legends  
Or the ignorant bias: narratives of Heroes  
Only humans  
Striving  
Failing  
Dying

I reject such notion.

Where the bugles of Rorke's Drift and El Alamein echoes  
Yutahattee shall echo too  
And let King Naray-Suan's words ring true;

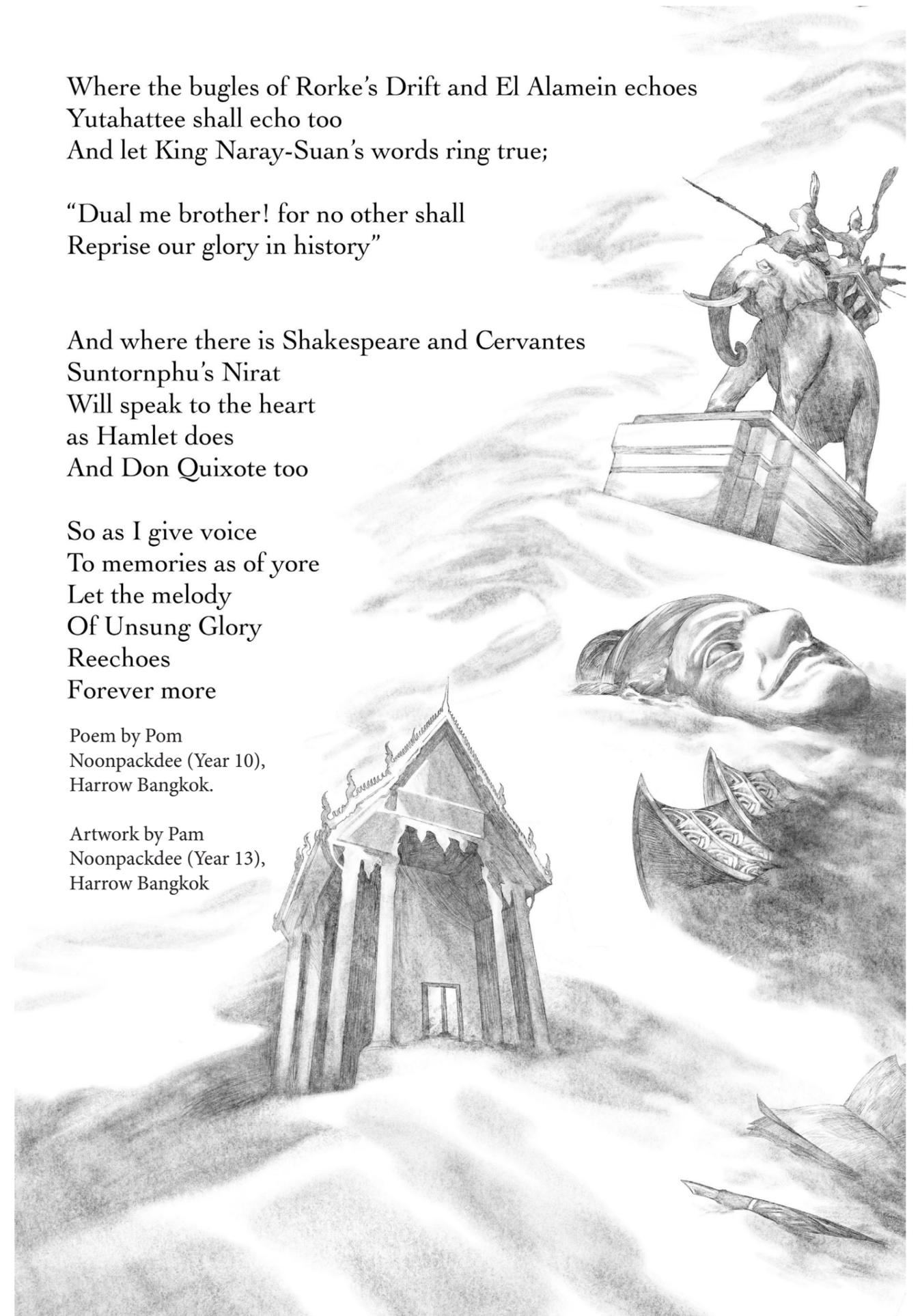
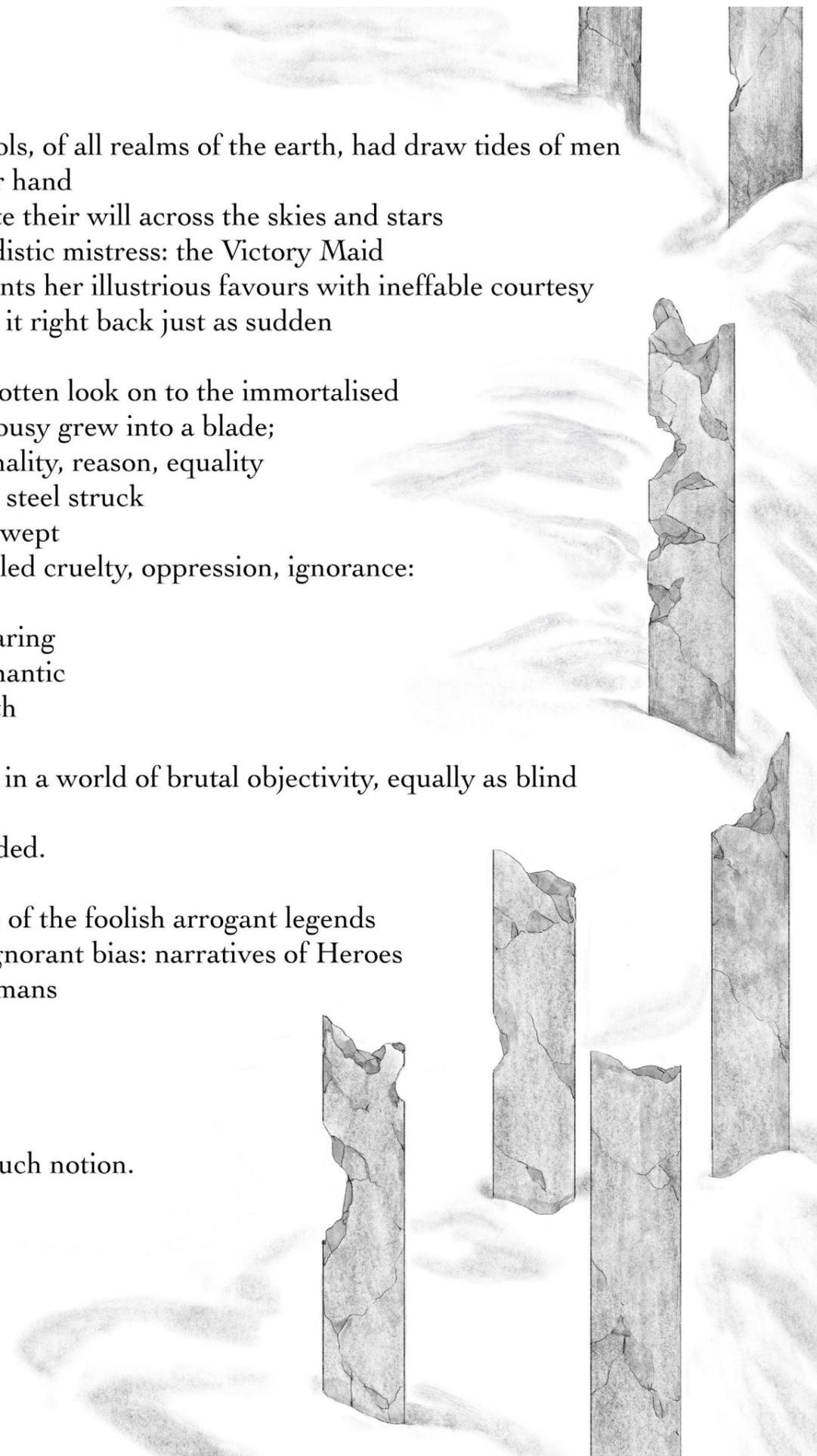
"Dual me brother! for no other shall  
Reprise our glory in history"

And where there is Shakespeare and Cervantes  
Suntornphu's Nirat  
Will speak to the heart  
as Hamlet does  
And Don Quixote too

So as I give voice  
To memories as of yore  
Let the melody  
Of Unsung Glory  
Reechoes  
Forever more

Poem by Pom  
Noonpackdee (Year 10),  
Harrow Bangkok.

Artwork by Pam  
Noonpackdee (Year 13),  
Harrow Bangkok



## When the Sun Doesn't Shine

Jack He (Y11), Harrow Beijing

### Part I:

It rose above the sky, smiling at me from above. Its warm light radiated me and filled me with energy.

I liked the sun. It made me feel like I was a little girl again, playing in fields of my mansion. My father would come out and say to me, “Time for dinner, made you your favourite!?” I would scream with delight and fly into his outstretched arms and he would raise me up from the ground and swirl me around.

My father was a billionaire. He created his own company from pure scratch and never bragged about it as well. People looked up to my father and respected him. Of course, he had competitors in his field of work but they never dared to snatch the title from my father.

The sun towered above me now as I walked along the mansion garden. Strangely, there were weeds everywhere and not as many flowers as I've seen before. But all was not lost: the beautiful mansion still rose before me.

I loved my job as a lawyer. I still lived in my mansion with my father, but every day I would go out and drive my car into town for work. Lawyer for me with not a hard job. Before my father became a billionaire, he was a lawyer as well. He taught everything from family law attorneys to how to be persuasive.

I walked back to mansion, singing and smelling the fragrant air of flowers. I hopped up the main porch and rang the bell. “Father, I'm home!”

The door opened, but it was not father standing from the other side. A middle-aged man, holding a candle stood before me. He was tall and his suit and e seemed like it might fall off at any second. Judging by the suit, I identified him as a servant. “Would you mind telling me where is my father?”

The man looked extremely tired though, like he hadn't slept for a few days. His hair was uncombed and his face dirty as hell. There was also something about him that stank. It was almost like the smell of rotten eggs. “He is on a business trip in Asia ma'am, trying to sign a contract with his Asian connections.”

This was weird. Father always went on business trip, but he would always tell me beforehand. He never left without a signal. “Oh, but when would he be back?” “In a couple of days ma'am.”

There was something about the man that made me doubt him. He looked sincere, but there was something in his eyes, that made me think twice. But I discarded that thought quickly. Father might have just forgotten to tell me. Besides it was just a few days, easy for me to handle on my own. “Thank you, you could return to your quarters. And report to me as soon as he comes back, okay?”

“Yes ma'am.” The servant bowed and left the main entrance.

### Part II

Someone was stalking me. It started happening yesterday, while I drove to work. When I turned a corner, it would turn a corner accordingly. It was a red car, with the nameplate DJ855. I thought about calling the police.

But the police couldn't do anything these days. They'll sit around, drinking their beer and doing nothing. If I was going to solve my stalking problem, I'm on my own.

Driving to work, I looked at the rear-view mirror. The red car was there, following me at a distance. The driver was an old man, maybe in his 70s. He looked straight at me and into my eyes, which made me feel very uncomfortable. He seemed oddly familiar thought, it was almost as if I've seen him somewhere.

I arrived at the last crossroad, the place that I was planning to lose the car. I slammed my foot on the gas pedal and my car zoomed from the stoplight, driving my back into my seat and leaving me breathless. The red car accelerated as well; it tried to weave itself though the traffic behind me but it was still too late. The light had already turned red. I took a detour around my workplace just to make sure that I've lost him. Then, I parked my car under my office building.

As I pulled the keys out of the ignition, I saw a note that I haven't noticed before. It protruded out, as if waiting to be discovered. The note looked old and musty. Its yellow edges indicated to me that it had at least been there for decades.

It was wrapped with a golden leather scrap, with pink hearts engraved on the fine gold leather. I opened the note, “To you, my love. I know that you are in misery, in pain. But your presence means everything to me. I would be anywhere for you, even if that place was in the most hidden corners of hell. I wish to remind you the poem that I wrote in that sunny afternoon.

‘You are my sunshine and my light. You are my soul in the darkness nights. Let me be the bird that flies you high, hovering together in the bright blue sky. Let my arms wrap you tight. Let me be your charming knight. Even when the sun doesn't shine, I would be there for your every life.’ —John Grey”

I closed the note carefully. It was a lovely poem and presented with such charming words. The part when the sun don't shine really stood out to me. I distinctly remember someone telling me that exact line, but I just couldn't remember.

But why was this note in my car? It must have been implanted in my car somehow, but how?

### Part III:

I arrived back to my mansion at 3:00. I rang the doorbell and a tall maid answered and let me in into the main entrance. I went up the stairs and into my room and laid myself on my four-poster bed. The bed was soft and smelled of cinnamon, like what my father made for me once in a while. It was freshly washed and laying on it with was pure heaven.

But I myself was not enjoying it, so many weird things have happened in the past few days. The stalking car, the love note, my family so could business trip, even the new servant. It might be a coincidence—I was sincerely hoping that it was. But I just couldn't ignore the facts, something was going on that I was unaware of and I need to find out what that was.

I fished out the note from my pocket. I read it to myself again. The poem didn't ring any bells, nor did the name John Grey. But John was a person somewhere in this world, that would be a good place to start. I sat up from my bed, planning to do some research to find out who John Grey is when I heard sniffing outside my door. I gently opened my door a crack, just for the eye to see.

It was the old man in the red car. He was sitting on the stairs, with his hands on his face, sobbing quietly. He murmured underneath his breath, seeming to repeat something again and again. I perked up my ears, straining to listen... “I lost her! I lost her! What should I do! I shouldn't have been so stupid...”

I shut the door and took deep breaths, trying to clear my mind. How did he get inside the mansion? How did he climb up the stairs, unnoticed? But all of that was unimportant. He was in the house and I needed to get out. I opened the door slightly. The old man was sitting on the side of the stairs, which meant that I could make a run for it. I considered this option logically for a while and decided upon it to be the best course of action. Seeing that it was my only choice, I decided upon that.

Taking a few more deep breaths, I braced myself, felt the energy coursing through my muscle and ran. The old man seemed surprised at first but he quickly reacted and tried to stop me. He caught hold of my legs and I squirmed to be free. “Stop fighting” The old man yelled. “No!”

I kicked and thrashed.

Suddenly, he let go of my leg and without any balance and tripped down the stairs and slammed my head against the carpet floor. The last thing I remembered was the old man giving a despairing howl and rushing towards me.

### Part IV:

“Please tell me that she's okay, please!” The old man sat on the hospital bed, staring at the old woman lying on the hospital bed. “She's fine sir. It was just a small bump on the head, nothing fatal.” “Thank the Gods!” The old man sat back, as if a huge weight was lifted from his shoulders.

“But sir.” The doctor said, “You need to tell me what exactly happened so that I could further help her to recover.” The old man sighed, “Monica's father was a billionaire of an oil company. But on the night of her 22th birthday, her father was murdered. She just couldn't bear it. Her father was about to leave his legacy to her. All of that money and property just gone. We married just one year prior. I never thought that I would marry an ambitious girl like her, but I guess that love had other thoughts. Shortly after her father died, she couldn't bear the fact that her father didn't leave any sort of will for her so that she could inherit his business. That's about when she was diagnosed with the Parkinson's disease. She has been hallucinating scenes of her early life ever since. Every day I would follow her to her workplace and see her working and talking to thin air. It was only yesterday, that she noticed me and I lost her in the traffic. I was so afraid! Then at the mansion, she tried to escape and I tried to stop her. That's about when she tripped”

“And what is your name again?” The doctor asked.

“John Grey.”



Christina Zhou (Y11), Harrow Beijing

# fireflies

By **Oscar Wickham (Year 11), Harrow UK**

Artwork by **June Hyun (Year 11), Harrow UK**



The ground shook from underneath the child's feet as the ship rocked to a halt.

“Stay close to me Sheru”, commanded the tired yet authoritative voice of his mother. He felt a chilling wind tremble through his ragged drapes as hundreds of hurried refugees pressed his cheeks closer into his mother. A salty odour rose from the wooden floorboards which creaked precariously every time a pair of feet passed over them, like edges of cliffs being eroded by a stormy ocean. “Portsmouth Harbour” declared a large imposing sign amidst the grey industrial walls, but Sheru did not see this. Sheru saw the orange sunlight of warm Indian evenings. Fireflies would linger in the air and soak in the warm breeze that carried all the sweet aromas of untarnished air. Amidst the chaotic, violent struggle to earn a meal, the few moments of serenity were perfect for Sheru and his mother and father.

The smooth ground underfoot, however, was replaced frighteningly soon by perpetual waves of rain, attacking defenceless shelters methodically and mercilessly. Despite Sheru's father's desperate effort to protect his family, he was helpless to disease-ridden water. It was not long that he lasted. The boy was too young to know of his loss but his mother's tears that flowed that day matched the flow of the monsoon. Within a few days Sheru's fate and future had been shifted, and he could do nothing.

It was the monstrous crowd of homeless mothers and children that Sheru remembered years later, in the dank air of Mumbai. Thousands of lives and millions of memories, thoughts and aspirations were bunched together onto a grey run-down ship that provided little protection from the sewage-ridden sea. Despite the apparent misery, however, it was hope that drove Sheru's mother through the turmoil, with the child at her side. Sheru did not even know their destination, but an unspoken confidence remained in him, originating from the safety of his mother's firm grip. Days passed, but his morale withstood the sparse morsels of food and the sickening smell of the sea. After what seemed like an eternity, the sight of land was received with great cheers from the miserable passengers. The devastation of the past did not matter to them any more. It was the future that kept them going.

So it was here, on this gloomy harbour, that Sheru found himself. However, his journey was not over; the constant bark of arguments erupted from a man behind a monochromatic desk, while desperate cries appeared from his mother, unfamiliar to his quiet nature. Sounds merged into one another, shouts and commands blurred together in a tremendous cacophony. “Please,” his earnest voice whispered. “Please,” he begged, more confidently. Gradually the clamouring subsided, and a glimpse of humanity revealed itself in the immigrations officer. At last, this struggle came to an end, and Sheru's mother turned his eyes away from the impossibly long and expanding line of those with a similar fate, and up to the sky, which had shifted from a pavement-grey to a mellower blue.

The sky continued to fill the air with a calmer pallet as the days and months ensued, like the bluebells opening up their vibrant colours and aromas closer to the ground. The past had not been kind to Sheru and his mother, but the Sisters of Fate seemed to loosen their grip on the strings of the two. His mother lived a long and onerous life, but it was to forge a path for Sheru. This was not an easy path; it was the path that led him, 17 years later, to wake up in the morning and see the dawn fireflies hovering outside.

Of Pound Cake and Love

Julia Hu (Y8), Harrow Beijing

Ding! Went the oven. Alice walked over, and took out a pound cake, and, placing it on the kitchen counter, took a spoonful, and sighed.

No matter how many times she tried, Alice could never get the taste of her mother's pound cake. With that thought, she turned around, and saw her mother, staring out the window expressionlessly. Ever since her diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease, nobody in the family cooked the pound cake anymore, and it was everyone's favourite. Her mother never wrote down the recipe, and Alice had tried countless times to bake it from memory, but it had never worked.

Sighing again, she took off her apron, and went over to her mother. “Mom,” she said, her voice gentle and cautious, like holding a delicate piece of china, “It's warm out today. I'll take you out for a turn.” The early September breeze was warm and soft, twirling through the houses and trees in the small neighbourhood. As they went, the two passed an old lemon tree, which had been there since when Alice was a child. She was suddenly struck with a memory of her as a child and the lemon tree, which was bearing its large yellow fruits once more.

“Mom, do you remember,” she said, even though she knew her mother would probably not understand and would definitely not remember, “When I was a child, you would always ask me to pick lemons from that old lemon tree in autumn, and have me with you when you cut the skin off and scrape it to make the zest, which I will then take them out to dry? Then when the leaves have gone all crunchy and fallen to the ground, we would get them back and you will back cake and let me sprinkle the zest inside, and when we finished you would get the whole family together and eat the cake to—” Alice suddenly stoped speaking, as if realizing something...



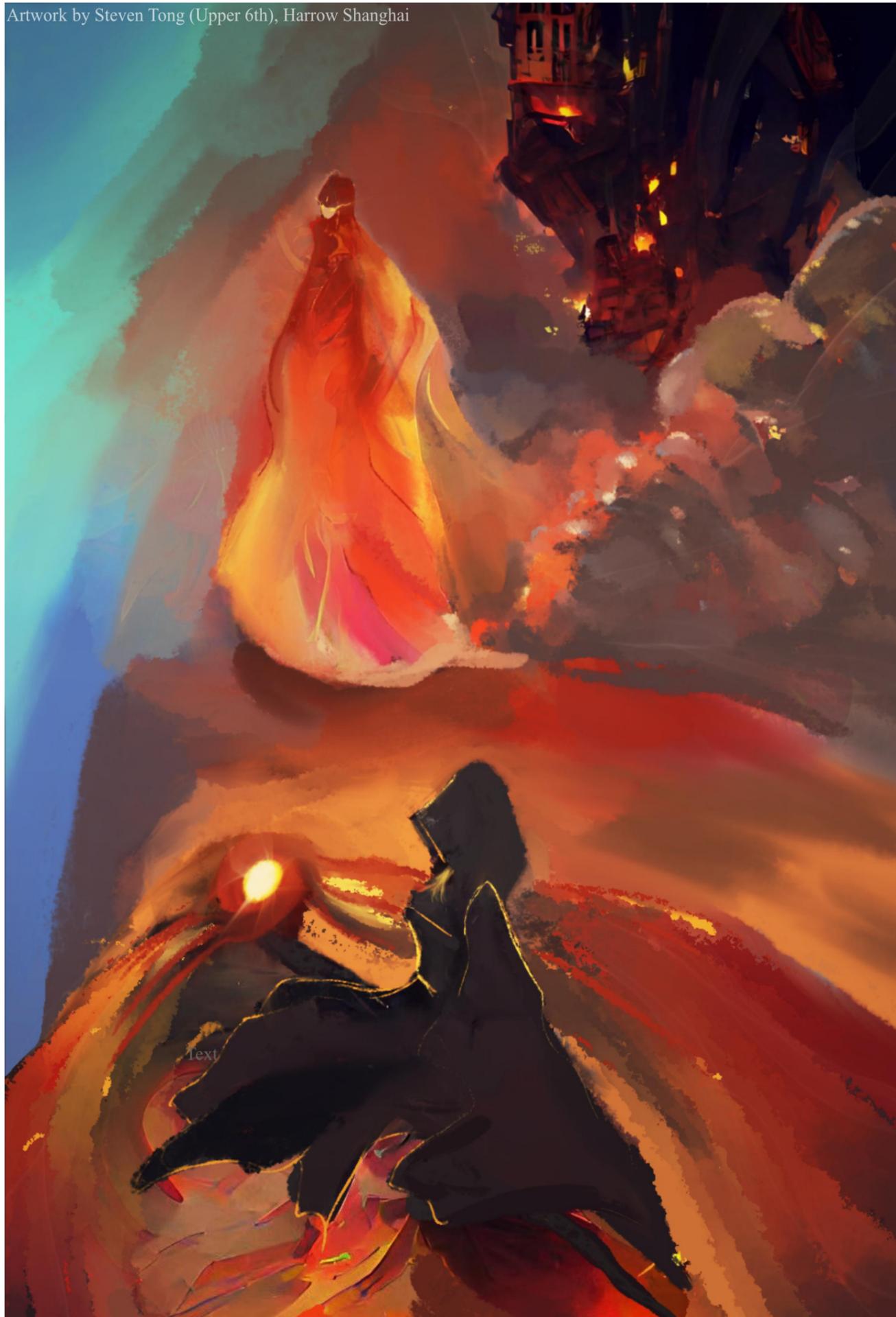
Artwork by Christina Zhou (Y11) Harrow Beijing

It was crowded in the living and dining rooms since the whole family's here, but Alice was the only person in the kitchen. She was cleaning the counter when the familiar “ding!” came from the oven. Excited, Alice took the cake out, and a familiar, bittersweet smell came rushing at her.

Everyone sat around the dining room, looking at the old woman look at the cake. Alice had warned them that she might not remember it, but she knew that everyone's hopes were high, especially hers. She looked on as her mother scooped a spoonful of the cake, fresh and warm, into her mouth.

She chewed for some time before the long-lost smile finally reappeared on her heavily wrinkled face.

Artwork by Steven Tong (Upper 6th), Harrow Shanghai



# The Legacy of the Mages

*By Tobey Castle (Removes), Harrow Shanghai*

Staring at the stars that hung helplessly in the midnight sky, Cassandra gazed at what she thought would be her last night alive. The other mages beside her were doing the exact same. The sound of the Aerdinian army reverberated around the fortress to the North. They had been waiting until they were fully capable of storming the gates of the mage's fortress, but it was too late. The impending danger of the Hjorden's army to reinforce the mages and exorcise the Aerdinians was getting closer. It was time to act.

Kassandra could hear the calls of the enemy officers on the other side of the battlefield, readying their troops for the inevitable attack. Cassandra's heart raced, she tried to calm herself down but nothing was working. She turned to her mentor, Hilda, and whispered, "They are preparing the attack, we have to move now, get our mages ready for protection and I shall cast a spe—" Before Cassandra could finish her sentence, the Aerdinians didn't wait any longer and fired a ball of raging fire, its capabilities far from the understanding of any human. Kassandra, being the well-refined mage that she is, jumped to her feet, pushed her hands out and cast a spell that would drive the ballistic ball of deadly fire off course. As predicted, the spell worked; the sphere of burning fire was driven into the empty forest beside them, harmless to the people in the fortress.

The rest of the mages watched as Kassandra performed this task, they rose to their feet as well to try and protect their fortress. Hilda stood beside Kassandra, in her long, elegant silk robes, her hair tied up in a neat bun. She readied her hands for more incoming attacks.

A few seconds later, the Aerdinian army ran towards the walls of the fortress that separated North and South. Spells were cast in both directions. The Aerdinian army, in their jet-black armour and golden swords, rammed against the well fortified wooden doors of the fortress while the mages above repeatedly cast fatal spells.

Time was running out; Hilda, Kassandra and the mages couldn't hold off the enemy army for long, as they were out-numbered 20 to 1. They tried as hard as they could to protect the walls of the fortress, but the Aerdinians below were too much for them to handle, as it seemed there was an uninterrupted flow of soldiers. All they could wish for were reinforcements.

Then, the long awaited Hjorden army crept over the distant hills, their helms reflecting the hopeful light from the sun. Their weapons glistening, free of the blood that has already been spilled. Hope grew in each of the mages' hearts, imploring them to fight to the very end, till victory comes.

Artwork by Peachy Phansaichua (Year 13),  
Harrow Bangkok

## Warmth

Reminiscing of solid green paint  
streaked on her cheek  
cracked and crinkled, the colour of moss  
on damp earth. Summer  
rain and little dandelions that spring  
up across the grassy field hidden  
between the folds of her scarfs, her shirt  
dried under her fingernails

400 kilometers away  
and your voice still finds me;  
In the little light that creeps in  
between the fluttering curtain cracks,  
lighting up the black wall  
like a swarm of dancing fireflies.

It doesn't feel so cold anymore.

I latched onto these memories,  
replayed them  
like a broken record,  
as the darkness in my mind slowly ebs away;  
dandelions fallen apart by the wind

- Sleep comes easily on those nights

NINETEENRAINCLOUD

From exquisite seed to budding flower,  
You and I have spent sixty-six days including those six rainy nights,  
Sometimes I place you on the shelf, sometimes beside the clover,  
But what you love the most is going outside, where there's the best sight.

Yet not today, tomorrow, nor within this week,  
Cause you and I shall stay at home,  
Not because of another rainy day where you can't go out and seek,  
It's the villain-virus that has a heart like a stone.

The present is a great matinal Saturday, zero-degree, snow in parts,  
You start to burst into bloom, where dewdrops float like swinging yachts,  
The yellow lantern is encircled by ballerinas whose show nearly starts,  
Can you remain forever, in this gorgeous and serene art?

The devil still seems far away as if it's nothing to do with me,  
As usual, wake up in the morning and begin to sing,  
Lay you under the casement, as sunlight is the key,  
That's when the archaic doorbell starts to ring.

An envelope delivers, covered with carnelian red,  
With the signature that I used to receive,  
Aunt Renee, who occupied my whole childhood and who never gets mad,  
Though it changed after her marriage, as their battles could never be settled.

## That Narcissus doesn't love rain

By Rachel Bu (Year 11), Harrow Beijing

I open them with my finest knife,  
Cautiously pull out the letter,  
Wondering if she's still in San Marino, being the best chef,  
But no, in Bergamo, where there's the severest matter.

Why? Why necessarily there?  
No, please, you must take care of your life!  
I take out my quill and start to reply, where I barely sense the air,  
Feeling like an irritable pistol who befriends with a knife.

I'm also a clownfish inside the net,  
Wanting a smarter solution than just letters,  
But I can't even go out; feeling freedom is just hard to get,  
Besides, I don't want to ruin her mood and upset her.

Now all I have left is you, who is strong like a toreador.  
I'm going to see if you're still that sparkling chandelier,  
Walking on the floor, across the corridor,  
But what I can only feel is the super sorrowful atmosphere.

I look at you, petals all over the ground,  
Like an old man who has shaved his head, the branches are just empty,  
You snuggle against the wall as if no one is around,  
I buried you in a wooden box, with my tears falling aimlessly.

Now it's just me alone, miserably!  
I want to get back to normal, but what is normal anyway?  
Something hard to catch or something far away?

And when it does get back to normal,  
Is it going to be a comedy, or a tragedy?

Artwork by Penny Yan (Y11), Harrow Beijing

# '2156'

By Luca Cox (Year 11), Harrow UK

Artwork by Harrison Zhao (Year 12), Harrow UK

Red flashes fade into neon numbers as I open my eyes. Sleep drains out of my body and is replaced by my senses, one coming after the other. Where am I? I pause for a moment to think to myself. The neon numbers read '2156'.

Then it strikes me; the cold twists my skin and bites at my ears. As I inhale the freezing fumes, my breath condenses in front of me. My view becomes blurry as I am overwhelmed for a moment and my mind twists into continuous spasms as my body participates in sensory overload. Colours flash in front of me; red, blue, green, red, violet, red; and then everything dissipates into a black void. I greet the void with an inward sense of pleasure; I let it engulf me.

Once I am able to open my eyes again, I use a second to observe my surroundings with a more collected head. Why is my breath not coming out in a perfect wisp of smoke? The fumes don't dance in the air like splendid ballet dancers dressed in white waving gowns. Nor do they linger around in the cold air, but they just stain the space in front of me in a thin, transparent coating. As I go to wipe the imperfection away, I feel a cold surface. The realisation of my situation hits me like a sucker punch; I am trapped. The walls engulf me, pressing down on me; I find it impossible to breathe. My breath just gets caught in my throat in an uncomfortable lump. The free-flowing air from earlier is replaced by rough grunts and dry coughs. Oh, how I long for air! The colours start to return, but before they can become rapid, I lash out in a spontaneous act of desperation. Smoke fills all the space around me as I hold my breath. How did I start a fire? How much longer can I hold my breath for? As if to mock me, my body begins to gasp for air. Saying my prayers, I allow myself a breath and brace for the worst. Instead I am greeted by soothing, warm air. The heat cradles me and rocks me into a gleeful daze. Suddenly all my worries dissipate, replaced by the result of a long yearning for warmth.

After a minute, the smoke has mainly cleared, and I can see into the distance. There are rows of pods just like mine, all with the same emblem over them. A neon sign is in front of each one, but they all read the same number as mine. Has the time really still not changed? Perhaps the clocks are broken, or at least that's the most satisfactory answer I have. On the wall there is a picture of a deserted field, one which is destroyed by craters and dead plants. 'What an odd choice of a picture!' I think to myself. Lost in thought, I almost missed a branch snapping off a tree bark in the picture and flying towards me. I jump back, but all it does is slightly scratch the frame of the picture.

How has it scratched the picture? When another piece of bark flies away into the distance, I realise that this is a window to the outside. What happened though? The last time I was awake I was playing in a lush field outside, surrounded by green pastures and blades of grass massaging my feet. What happened in the space of me waking up? I hear footsteps coming from the outside and a woman walks into the room. Her face is foreign to me, with her cracked lips and rough features. She looks like she hasn't eaten for months, with her arms standing limply beside her like slender twigs. She makes eye contact with me, and her eyes widen. Her pupils dilate into two pools of darkness, the hazel tints to her iris providing the earthy edges of a deep, dark cave. Before I can open my mouth to speak, her lips twitch and she stutters as she struggles to find the words on her mind. Her look of absolute terror and bewilderment makes me recoil and my posture collapses. Finally, she starts to speak coherently.

"You shouldn't be alive! How – I – How are you here? Who are you?"

"Where am I? I am Carl Morris, who are you? Where have you taken me? Why is the time not changing?"

This woman has a strange accent. She gazes into my eyes and judges me, assessing my threat to her and my face. Does she think I am joking? When she realises that I am seriously confused, she laughs at me. How have her emotions changed so quickly from utter terror to laughter?

"Nice to meet you, Carl. That's not the time, that's the current year. I don't know how we're here, and I don't know where we are. Does that answer your questions? Oh, my name's Cecilia by the way. You might want to get to know me. I mean, we are the only two people alive in the world."

# Echo and Narcissus

Angelina Lu (Year 9) Harrow HK

Being Narcissus would be a dream  
If you were my charming Echo  
In icy waterfalls and lush green glades  
We'll run and run  
Till we reach the top of Mount Kithairon  
Alone at last.

Though you can only echo  
I'll never grow tired,  
For your voice  
Clears the darkest skies  
Breaking the strongest of hearts  
With one cry,  
If anything  
You'll turn anyone into a narcissist  
Every bitter word leaving my mouth  
Turns sweet in yours  
Adorning each syllable and vowel  
Until I can't shut up,  
Hungry for a reply,  
Because no matter what  
My last word will always be yours.

No love can be as cruel as ours  
When I fall into madness  
Grieved by the truth of my reflection  
Who will you follow?  
I can only listen from above  
Ears open for an echo



# How I Want to be Remembered

by Emma Chua (Year 11) Harrow HK

When my heart gives its last squeeze, when my chest heaves for its last breath, when I embrace the world for the last time, this is how I want you to remember me.

When you think of me, I want you to think of a girl who isn't afraid to laugh until her whole body trembles, until tears gush out from her eyes uncontrollably, until her lungs struggle to suck in every new breath, and her feet whizz in different directions as she spins around, dancing with the surge of happiness gifted by her friends – totally and utterly drunk with euphoria.

When you close your eyes and picture me, I want you to picture a girl who would envelop you in a massive embrace if you were fighting hard to hide your tears. If you were down she would rack her brain for solutions, give you another perspective and reassure you that you did your best and that she was, and always will be proud of you.

When you try to describe me, I don't want you to describe me as "smart". "Smart" undermines the countless times I've recited Spanish conjugations to myself, trying to drum them into my brain; the hours I've spent hunching over my computer, biting my pen, trying to plan essays; the amount of times I almost crashed into a state of nihilism and was on the very verge of giving up, but didn't.

I want to be remembered as someone who cared: someone who cared for her family and constantly tried to show her gratitude to her wonderful parents who showered her with love and affection, and who taught her invaluable lessons. They taught her that she had to be humble and hardworking, that she had to know her own self-worth and in order to help others to recognise theirs, she must always strive to be kind, but also recognise when that kindness isn't reciprocated. They taught her to always search high and low for the silver lining and that life is what you make of it.

I want to be remembered as someone who loved: someone who loved reading about philosophical situations, situations that sparked her curiosity and left her hungry for more; someone who loved getting her energy out in boxing, who loved the rush of adrenaline it gave her even as she panted and her muscles groaned in exhaustion; someone who was fascinated by building, who loved seeing her hours of hard work displayed in front of her in the form of detailed wooden models.

I want to be remembered as someone who tried: someone who tried to improve. She knew she wasn't perfect – far from it in fact. She snapped at those who cared deeply for her; she let her mood swings overwhelm her rationality; she made promises she couldn't keep; she was stubborn at times. But she was constantly trying to improve and blossom and progress: one step at a time.

When blood no longer courses through my veins, when my chest softly collapses and releases its last shattered breath, when I fall back into the embrace of mother nature, I hope you'll remember me as "trying".

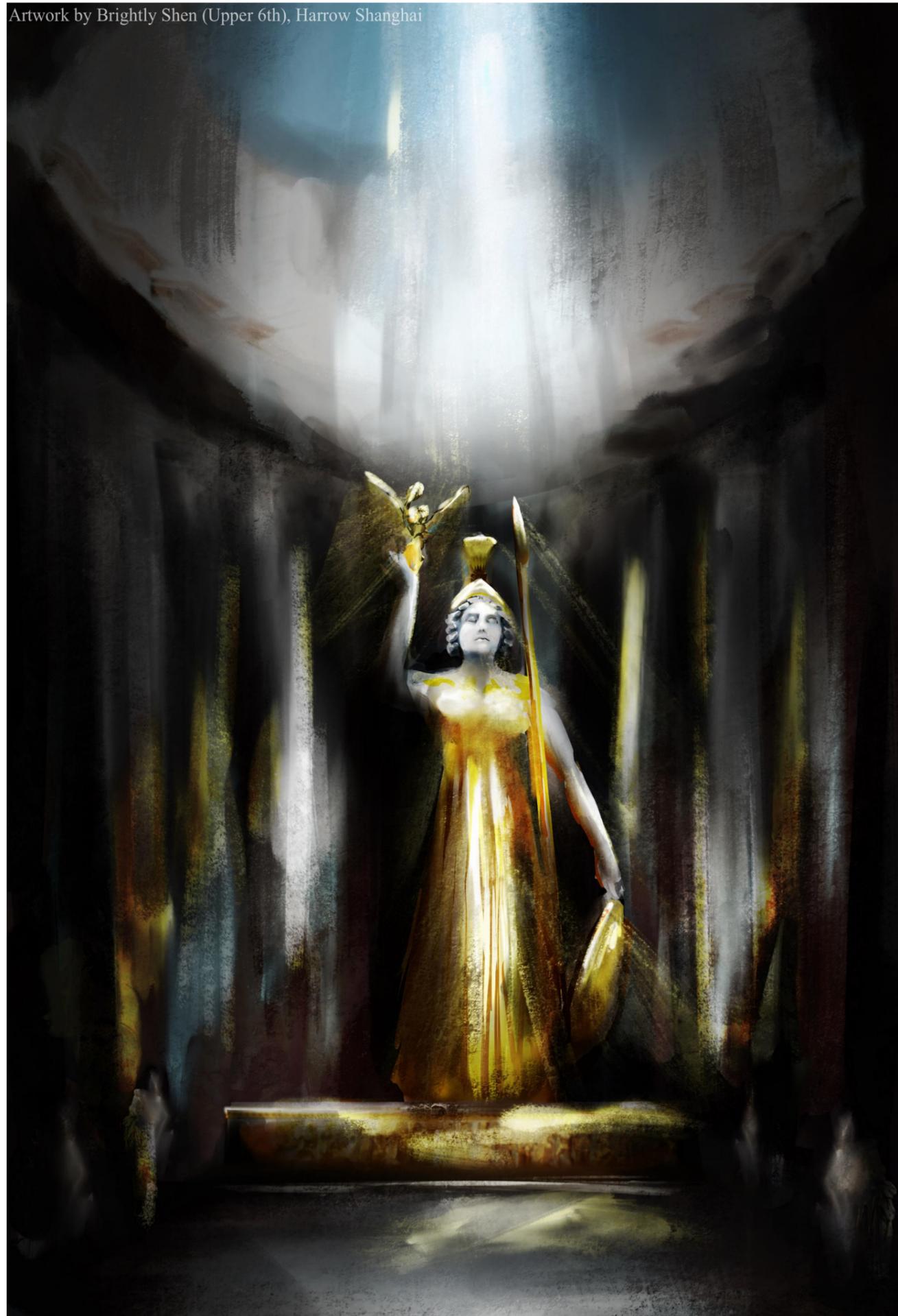
Photography by Stella Liu (Year 12) Harrow HK

# In The Eyes of a Pillar

By Lydia Daly (Year 12) Harrow HK

As the soft gentle breeze tickles my skin and the warm rays of sunshine brush across my face, my eyelids rise as though I have been awakened from a state of hibernation. The sound of little footsteps sprinting down the stairs fill my ears whilst notes of elation echo throughout the Temple and bounce from pillar to pillar. Their smiles like beams of light illuminating the darkest corners of the building; students and their teachers sharing the same sparkle of anticipation in their eyes as they anxiously wait for the day to begin. The time has finally arrived! A sense of euphoria conquers my body as I hear the sound "Ding ding, ding ding", realising that the once empty white building would be filled with exuberance again. Their lives have touched mine with their ability to bring every inch of the world into our community. From the new nervous students walking past me every day, who are oblivious to the adventure that awaits them, to the leavers gathering on the Astro to throw their boaters together in celebration of what they have accomplished here. They have formed the very fabric of my existence as I can remember all of them even though I know some never noticed me. Although my heart sinks at the thought of them departing, I know that everything must come to an end when I'm reminded by the long summer days finishing with a wash of golden hue. It is then, when there's nothing but deafening silence and I begin to drown in my own thoughts, the walls encircling me softly sing the sweet songs of the school's choir in reminiscence of the year that has just passed. Slowly lured into a trance-like state, I settle into dormancy once again.

Artwork by Brightly Shen (Upper 6th), Harrow Shanghai



# The Parthenon

*By Karen Martin (5th Form), Harrow Shanghai*

Strolling through the crowded market in the morning, you look through the wide array of fruits, clothes and furniture; a plethora of people were gathered to shop for the day and to admire the picturesque horizons.

After buying bread and fruits, you gaze at the faraway white temple, adorned with marble, on top of a mighty mountain. You squint at the temple's scintillating surface as it reflects the sunlight in all its glory. The tall columns with vertical straight ridges stare down at you, making you starstruck yet intimidated, lifting up the roof. You admire the intricate carving, with corners of the pediment depicting the passage of time over the course of a full day: the left corner of the pediment displays the horses of Helios's chariots, vividly ascending into the sky at the start of the day, while the other corner shows Selene's horses, struggling to stay as the day finishes.

As a commoner in Athens, you have never been inside the Parthenon, yet you have heard numerous stories and descriptions about it: inside the temple, Athena Parthenos, the statue of the goddess of wisdom, confidently stands on the east side of the main room, with her left leg slightly bent, heel lifted. Ready to defend Athens and her people, she wears a golden helmet with a colossal aegis around her shield and spear, carefully placed on the ground to her left, next to her sacred snake. In front of the omnipotent statue, a vast basin occupied with water reflects the external sunlight which enters through the windows on the sides, and illuminates the statue in her illustriousness.

Athena's ivory skin glows under the sunlight: she is so powerful that it can be felt all the way outside in the market, far away from the temple. Her lips rest in a neutral expression just like the other statues. Yet, she is remarkable and sophisticated because she dons a golden dress, composed of layers and ridges, reflecting light from different angles. On her right hand, she effortlessly holds a statue of Nike, bringing victory to herself and her people of Athens. In front of the base the powerful Athena stands on, portrays the story of Pandora's birth in the presence of twenty gods, embroidering the face in lustrous gold texts. Besides the striking Athena Parthenos, other statues occupy the Parthenon, yet they are insignificant in comparison to Athena – Athen's patron goddess.

As the number of people in the market gradually dwindles, you notice that you have been observing the glorious temple for a considerable amount of time, and you look down, humbled.

Hoping that Athena will guide you with her wisdom, you quickly gaze at the temple and saunter back to your house...

# LONG GONE

by Tanya Pabaru (Year 13) Harrow HK

<sup>2</sup>Photography by Joy Chen (Year 11 Harrow HK)

You learnt how to ride those extremely bony horses  
and travelled far, far away  
where the tops of mountains  
would touch the pink marshmallow clouds  
and stars and rainbows lit the sky,  
seeing wonders beyond your imagination.  
Only to find they had been bicycles all along,  
and you didn't get further than your driveway,  
before you toppled over  
and scraped your knee on the cold, hard, pavement.  
What if your best friend, the one who played with you  
even past your bedtime and helped you  
whenever you felt down, never actually existed?  
All this time it was just your shadow following you  
around,  
or a whisper on the wind, gone  
within a fraction of a second.  
What if your first love, the one you devoted all your time to  
under the majestic oak tree, over the red brick bridge  
was just a polished dream, a cold fantasy?  
Your favourite doll is sticks and leaves  
Crawling with spiders, tied together by weeds.  
Your favourite present is a wedding ring  
Etched in rust and held with string.  
And your favourite books, of princesses and princes  
are piles and piles of overdue bills and long paperwork.  
Wishing for the hand to stop.



HARROW  
FAMILY OF SCHOOLS