

Inspire

Imagine

Illuminate

ILLUMINATE

*Rugby High School's Creative
Writing Magazine*

A Special Edition:
Jessie Wright
Finalists 2016-
"Voice"

The theme of this year's prestigious poetry competition was "Voice".

The finalists all explored, experimented and found a unique voice through their poetry.

We hope you enjoy this special edition of *Illuminate*

Katy Ellis and Olga Dermott- Bond (Editors)

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Siren

I'm stranded surrounded all in white
You echo and pound and pierce
And I can't hear myself think anymore.
Your tongue brands a trail of salt in the lines on my cheeks
A whirlwind of sweet nothings laced in bleach
Leave my breath racing and flustered and knotted in my throat.
You pull me in closer
Until your hands are inside my stomach
And my eyes are delicately sewn to the skin of my neck.
They roll from side-to-side as if replaced by glass marbles
Tentatively waiting to be shattered in the hunt for pearls.
You whisper soft and slow.
A ravenous desire burns cool and lingers like a stench
Caught in the folds of a carefully-chosen dress.
All-consuming.
A lone rose lies at my feet— weathered and milky.
I lean in to admire and it bears its polished teeth.
A single bead of crimson falls from my finger.

Ria Sangal

portrait of the portrait

at last we type the last character,

on a young man who has written his book
and is staring at midday
through a kaleidoscope of broken

windows,
old ideas, a shredded
massacre of post-its,
hidden behind paper.

he stares at sunlight
only for
his path
down there's his path.
he treks alone through the paleon-
tological wreck of a plot,
swallowed by blanks like a fossil,
a fraction,
for a few rays of round, gilded letters;

then,
up there's
he goes

farther down these chipped ceilings
farthest down cigarette smoke.

my kitchen;
how long before he trips over
the waste of my laptop keys, of your pen
casings
and cup? how long before the neighbours

feel their world shaking
and invite him in for coffee? –

Annie Fan

Empty Space

A scratch

a scribble

a sneeze of letters

no self-expression

a reflection of what could be

Words gasping for air, for breath, desperate to be heard, my head is overflowing

but my pen is dry

and on my page

nothing

only a scratch

just a scribble

no meaning.

Grace Craggs

How Careless

"She's lost her voice."

"How careless!"

When she was seven, she lost her voice.

She knew it was somewhere, but...

"Where did you put it?" they teased.

Not misplaced.

Drowned out by the shouting of two armies in her home.

One day an army left, and she thought she would be able to locate it.

No.

Passed around, a cough, a tickle at the back of their mouths.

A frog in their throats.

When she was eleven, she found a new voice.

People didn't really like that one.

"Indoor voices!" they hissed.

Snakes to a lion.

King of her own world she refused silence, and began to roar.

One day she met another, a beast too but he wasn't loud.

No.

Neither quiet, nor silent; she could hear him unlike any other.

A pair of left shoes.

When she was nineteen, she found she had another voice.

Loving and caring and soft.

"It's gonna be a boy," she whispered.

Heart to heart.

Small bump on the road, on her stomach, in his mind.

One day though, she woke up, in pain and confusion.

No...

Hospitals, doctors and nurses, playing the patient.

"You've lost your son."

How careless.

When she got home, she realized she'd lost her voice again.

Did she leave it behind?

"Back at the hospital," they taunted.

Oh, of course.

An empty crib, an empty womb, an empty heart.

"She's lost her voice."

"Oh how careless of her!"

Rachel Robson

Dear Mr Holmes

You know him.

Everybody knows him, every beggar, every well to do snob, every criminal.

But I bet you don't know me.

I don't think anybody really does.

Another letter came today, one last week, one two days ago and one today.

It always happens like that, months of cocaine morphine and silence.

Months of hell.

And then the letters come again.

Dear Mr Holmes...

They always ask for help:

Solve me a murder Mr Holmes.

The dancing men. A study in scarlet. The abominable bride.

It's like there is some higher power, something even bigger than he is testing him.

The trouble starts when the letters stop.

That's what I have nightmares about:

That empty silver tray in the mornings.

It's such an innocent object, harmless most people would say but I know the truth.

The one thing I don't know that I need to is what goes on in his head.

How does he know everything about everyone as soon as they walk through the door.

Sometimes I think of committing a murder myself just to keep him occupied.

Of course I would not have to go that far if I just knew where he got the drugs.

At least in his comatose drugged up state I know where he is and that he is not in trouble.

Only danger.

He is always in danger.

If I had children still I may not have any worry to spare on him.

But...

Till I can face my own life I welcome the distraction of his, the worst part is that I don't even know if he knows.

He must do.

He always knows.

And there is only one man who knows more.

How can brothers be so alike and so different at the same time.

I had better take up this letter.

Before he gets out those needles again.

See he fills my life so that I become diluted. Nobody knows me and no one can ever know.

I can't even admit it to myself.

Charlotte Cockell

Smoke in the night, dust in the breeze.

It will hurt, seeing you.
At the sight of me,
You'll soon begin to falter,
Unsure of my name,
Confused by the love in my words.

It will hurt, listening to you.
You will start to repeat the same, muddled sentences
That shatter the pieces of my war-torn, broken heart.
These segments of shrapnel will soon be ground to dust
That floats away in the cool breeze,
Battered and beaten
By your uncomprehending choices of words.

It will hurt, watching you.
You will often stare into space,
With those beautiful, pale irises,
Pupils unfocused, unknowing.
Perhaps your mind will be reaching through the depths of the void
Where your memories once resided,
Trying to capture those precious memories
Like smoke slowly curling upwards
Towards the beautiful gems dotting the dark canvas of the night sky.

It will hurt, knowing you.
There I will stand,
Remembering every fond moment we have shared,
Every tender word, every loving smile,
Whilst you will slowly lose your grip on each precious memory,
No matter how hard you cling on.

And believe me,
I know you will have a vice-like grip
On the wonderful waves of nostalgia that are currently awash in your mind,
But soon the tide will ebb away,
And you, my dear will be left high and dry.

I know this will hurt,
And perhaps you do too,
But sometimes the best part of losing someone
Is that you get to tell them stories of everything you've done
All over again.
And my dear, dear friend,
We have all of the time in the universe.

By Ella Roberts

a voice

i haven't got the faintest idea what you just said but what i do know is
i agree with every last drop of sound
could you just remember your first love of a solid object for me
not a puff of shadow or a swift silenced whisper and
the deep dark fragile sky and the delicate expanse of pinprick stars
make me dream of trees but so do you so do you so do you
is it any good that in poetry i can be young and beautiful and
wear the dark red lipstick of the truly sophisticated when i
never meet you in poetry or paint i meet you in
city centres where the air smells of smoke and disappointment
and my hair has gone grey and frizzy from the rain and you and you and you
have touched the sky in the most mundane of places
but you have inhabited my mind for centuries or at least since november
i
missed you
while our hands might skid on the way to the sugar packets in some dumb hipster coffee
shop
that we take the piss out of but we all really love as we watch the streets
and say pretentious things that we laugh at and secretly believe
and i, i nod and smile and agree but oh your voice your voice your voice

Lucy Tiller

Eeyore

I wonder what they're doing
Up there.

I'd go and see for myself
But I can't climb that ladder
Up into Owl's treehouse like everyone else
And I'm too heavy to be carried.

Pooh takes piglet,
Christopher Robin has Rabbit,
Tigger jumps and Owl flies.
Guess that just leaves me,
Down here,
Alone.

It's just as well I have my house,
Or I'd be really cold. It's just behind the thistle bush.
I built it out of sticks this time
And it's really stro-

Oh...
Oh dear.

Looks like the wind's got to it
Again. But I can't blame him;
It's a very good looking house.
Well, it was.

He probably just wanted a closer look
And knocked it over by mistake.
But that's okay, I guess.
It's given me something to do now.

I just wish it wasn't raining.

Louise Humphreys

Voicemail

our voice

The first thing you forget is the voice

After someone leaves.

I lie down on the bed again and close my eyes

Phoning your cell again just to hear the voicemail

“Hi it’s me”

The soft sound of sibilant speech

sighing against your teeth

a dulcet wave of disappointment resonating in my head

“I’m out living my life”

A shriller trill as your sigh turned brittle

A guttering stuttering tone, my head aches

as the neighbours might hear.

“So leave a message at the beep”

It’s over again

A longer voicemail would have been the perfect gift

not money

or the house

these empty corridors with me talking to machines

with echoes of a vacant voice

neither here or there

No-one comes by anymore, no life or sound

or your voice laughing as you speak

it hurts again, that cavity in my chest twinges

I squeeze my eyes tighter

as some silvery insurgents trace the lines of my face

I reach for that green lifeline

A fog lamp in the dark and swirling mist

guiding me, pulsating as my vision blurs again

“Hi it’s me”

By Caitlin Mullin

If the shoe fits...

It's not fair! It really isn't fair!

It isn't easy being the ugly stepsister. I mean Cindy is constantly marooned with self pity, but what about me? Does a good looking guy ever dance with me at a ball? Not even in my dreams.

Does my fairy godmother ever wave her wand in my direction?

If she does she has terrible aim. The only thing rats have ever done for me is rummage through my rubbish!

You might think I'm green with jealousy, but honestly

that's just the belch- worthy broccoli diet I was on

to try and cram my muffin top into its case for the ball!

Okay, I admit I'm a little jealous... but who wouldn't be?

The most a pumpkin has ever done for me is tasted delicious!

With her beautiful blue eyes, who wouldn't get a little green eyed?

I mean, seriously... Cindy is lost in wonderland!

Cindy has lost her marbles! Cindy has got more than one

screw loose! Cindy is stark raving mad! Cindy is off

her trolley! Cindy is unhinged, unstable, a total whako!

But you won't believe me, I'm just the ugly, clumsy,

wicked, evil stepsister with masculine feet...

I mean seriously, normal people sometimes talk to their pets but Cindy takes it to a WHOLE new level! She has had full blown debates with our cat! Who does that? Of course... My lovely, perfect sister the all powerful princess! Talk about a mad hatter!

Can you really blame us for not wanting to let her go? Cindy is just plain rude! At best she describes us as haughty, vain and selfish. Yet The worst we did is jokingly call her Cinderella, since she sat next to the fire! I know our house is almost glacial, but if you sit that close you're going to be clocked in ashes!

Cindy is not responsible! She once snuck out, got so drunk that she lost her shoe! She even stole my gown- my gown! Can you really blame me and my sister for getting a little upset when she stole our stuff? Is that really so unreasonable? All the books, all the pantomimes, never ever mention that Cinderella was a thief! It seems that girl can do wrong!

But I feel sorry for Cindy... The death of her father was hard on her... It was hard on all of us. I have lost both my father and my step father. All of the fairytales and pantomimes fail to mention the death of my father. It's almost like he never existed. Cinderella's mother is dead too, but at least her mother loved her...

Maybe if I was blonde, petite and pretty this would be
MY story to tell not Cinderella's! Maybe you would
think Cinderella was the evil stepsister who repetitively
thieved and put down her poor, self conscious younger sister?
Maybe, just maybe, I would get a happy ending, riding into the sunset
with Prince Charming? I guess a girl can dream...

Oh well... I've got to go and powder my warts, pluck my ear hair and ensure that birds confuse my
hair with their nest. It really does take a lot of effort to look this ugly; I can't waste all of my time
dreaming like SOME people!

By Ellie Wedgbury