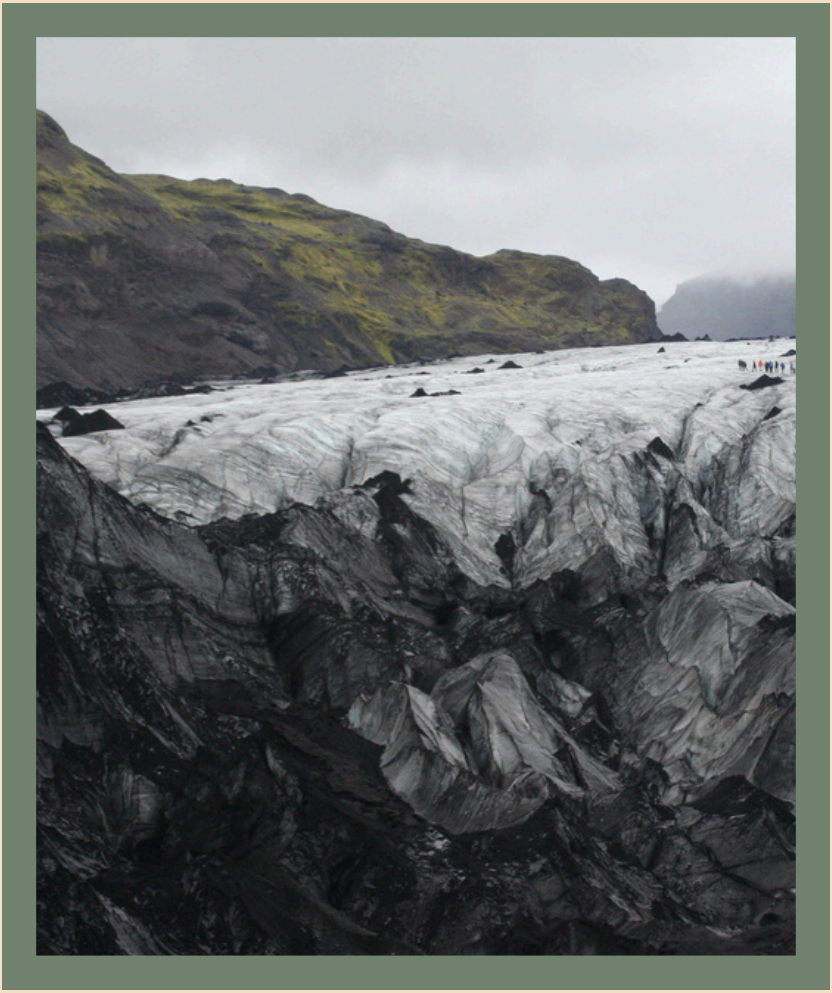
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ISSUE 3

PRISM

RUGBY HIGH SCHOOL'S LITERARY MAGAZINE



COVER PHOTO BY AZRIEL HOGAN

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PRISM

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Hi all! We are so excited to bring you the third issue of Rugby High's very own literary magazine, Prism! First of all, we'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who submitted their work for this issue. It has been such a pleasure to read all of your pieces, and we have been amazed by the creativity, imagination and talent shown throughout the submissions. We'd also like to thank Mr Bond for his continued support, organisation and guidance in helping us bring this issue together.

Our team has loved putting this issue together, and we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed creating it. If you have a piece of writing or artwork you'd like to see in our next issue, please send your submissions to prism@rugbyhighschool.co.uk – The Prism Team



BY HARRIET HUMPHREY

ELEUTHEROMANIA

Eleutheromania is the intense and irresistible desire for freedom. However, liberation, freedom, isn't just akin to a hawk swooping through the chilling air above an emerald valley, liberation can be through art, through music, through literature – through Death. Poetic death that waltzes you away from the anguish of life, twirling you into the next.

One must find their liberty before they ensnare themselves in society's binds.
Society traps an individual through its unattainable standards and bland norms. Normal is subjective, normal doesn't exist, so why must we force ourselves into ever-changing moulds? Perhaps clinging to set moulds is easier than pursuing the truest form of themselves. Or perhaps humans are too lazy to seek their own self.

Standards are as fickle and tumultuous as time itself and time waits for no one. Time presents us with opportunities but only the prepared know how to take them.

Are you ready to take the opportunity you've been given?

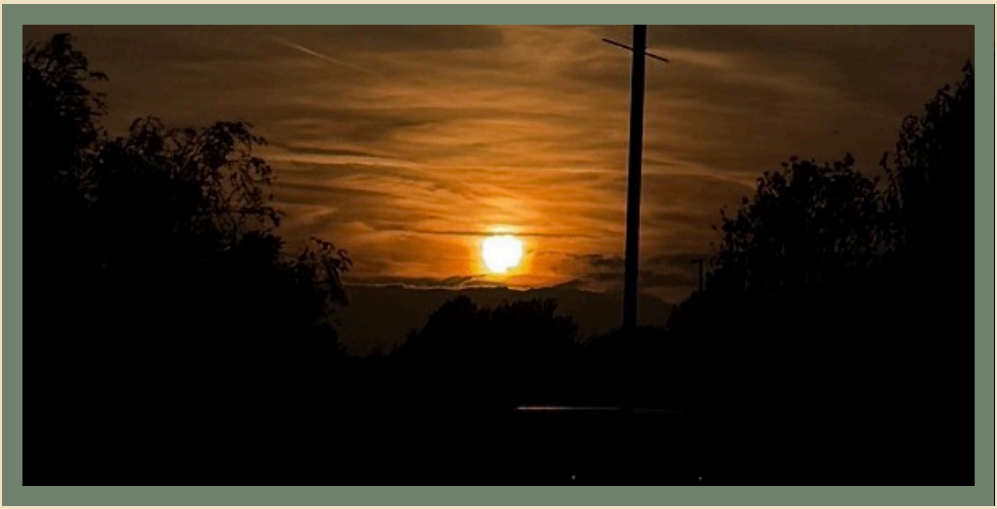
Are you willing to live this life with no regrets – to live recklessly?

Think, think carefully before you move on, for once you start, turning back is near impossible. Although, people turn back to reflect all the time, only to be dragged back by the collar into the churning depths of their past and regrets. Try as they might, the porcelain mask they hide behind is bound to break one day – it shatters into a million minuscule shards that twinkle viscerally in the morning light. Once they see the world through their eyes instead of through the lenses of society, only then will they achieve pure, unbridled joy.

This is for all of us eleutheromaniacs out there.

I welcome you into my world.

BY STHITOPRAGYA MUKHERJEE



BY ELYSE CHENG



“LIVING IN LAYERS” BY ARLO R

“LAYERS”



BY IZZY S

REMEMBER

Remember, even though most forgot, I do.
Every struggle, pain and suffering you went through
Memories can never be lost but can be found.
Etched in a stone, symbolic and round.
Melancholy wept over you, as we cried
Because excruciating was the way you died.
Everyone knows this truth inside,
Remembering ensures your spirits abide.



REMEMBER

BY TAPASYA KALAHAST

ANNIVERSARY

Happy anniversary,
Here is a folded piece of dried tree mulch.
I decorated it with scribbles for you to read
and although you won't admit it,
Dispose.
In return I'm handed a string of compressed carbon.
It's clearly expensive, but the thing is,
my favourite gemstone is an opal.
But I don't expect you to know that.
So I'll wear itjust for today.
And then I'll leave it to rot in my jewellery box.
I promise I'll dust it off next year,
but now I'll smile until my face gos numb and say thank you.
Thank you.
Now you'll give me the hollow speech wrapped in silk and empty promises.
And you'll tell me you'll love me forever.
You might.
I won't.
Because I don't like the way you say my name.
Flippantly.
Like you're talking about your dog.
You deny it but I can see the guilty tightening of your eyes
but you're a good liar so I'll let it slip.
Again.
And again.
And again





‘DISTORTION’ BY EMILY G

RAW AND VIOLENT RUBY

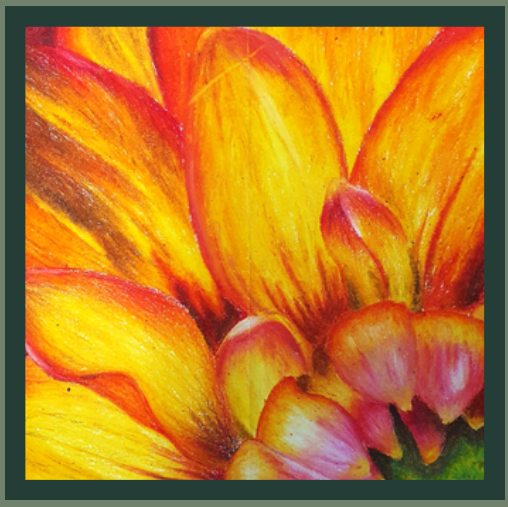
I want to tear at my chest with hands and with teeth
Until my ribcage lay torn open
And my hands raw and violent ruby
Sinews of gore sunk deep beneath my nails
Thrashing at my heart
To cease its pounding

A cacophony will pour, writhing and red, from my shredded lungs
And the low electrical hum in the static under my skin will stop

and I will be numb, the kind you feel after a tooth extraction
Once the plaque has been carved away from between my ribs
Carved in stretched divots on my shoulders and hips
Carved claw marks in the surrounding earth

This rotted, ripe, repulsion will leave a chasm in my chest
A nuclear shadow if where it once festered
Branded deep in my skin

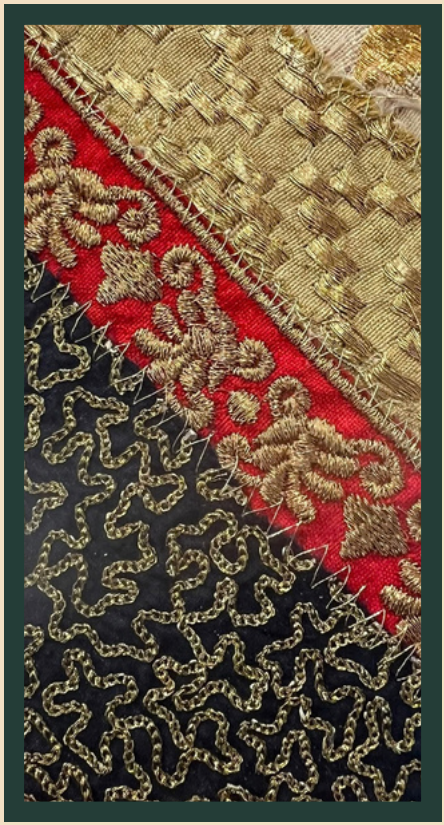
BY MAX LUNTLEY



BY SOPHIA K

TEXTILE WORK





BY SANA SAFI



BY IZZY B

WHAT WAS HOMER THINKING?

BY SHIVI THAKOR

Perhaps the moon slept
Like a child upon the crest of the hill,
And in that moonless night, the Iliad was born.
Borne out of skies freckled with stars and the wishes
That dance along the arrow's shaft
Before it is shot.
Those frivolous wished danced into the grass and
danced into people
People like brushstrokes
On the canvas of Homer's mind
Always twirling, always spinning,
Always dancing the arrow's shaft
Before it is shot.

ARTWORK







BY ELISE MARLOW

ROOM 64

CHAPTER 1: THE GIRL

I shivered. The cool night air billows amongst the ratty curtains of Room 64. My mother's room. The ancient hospital walls peel, cracking like the window I'm forcing open further. The rotting door swings on rusty hinges, banging into the crumbling doorframe, and making me jump. I spin round, knocking into the bed and sending the wheels squeaking and squealing across the once laminated floor. Breathe, I remind myself. Get answers and leave. That's all it takes.

I sit down on the worn comforter, my heart speeding out of time. In doing so, my wide eyes catch on a small, patterned trunk, lying discarded on the floor. Curiosity spikes. The one thing I need is there in front of me. I stumble on shaking legs towards it, sinking to my knees before it.

"Dammit!" I curse to the empty room. Locked.

I channel every ounce of my strength, yanking, until it eventually bursts open with a hiss of pressure. Reaching into the black hole, I choke on the sudden rush of stifling dust. And then, it disappears.

Odd. Deep breath. I try again. My shaking hands brush the still soft fabric of a flowery nightgown, before rummaging deeper. Further still, an alarm clock, and deeper yet, an old toy. Faint visions of the blue bear crowd my head, so strong that I shake it, to rid myself of the tainted happy memories.

Deeper. My hands collide with the cool cracked surface, smooth in comparison to the ragged frame. I wrap my fingers around the edge, tugging until it is free from the confines of the box.

The broken mirror.

The one that cursed my mother to a second life of eternal pain and loneliness. Holding it to the weak light, I see a reflection of a girl, a shadow of myself, lost, broken. And far in the background, a woman.

My mother.

I pull away, reeling from the stab of pain, whipping behind me to glare wide-eyed at an empty space. Suddenly, my vision blurs, and three bold words scroll before my bleary eyes:

ALL. HER. FAULT.

And then it all goes black...

CHAPTER 1 BY ZOE CHALLIS
CHAPTER 2 BY EVA SAVAN
(INSPIRED BY BACKGROUND ON THE RIGHT SIDE)

CHAPTER 2: THE MOTHER

It smells like rotting flesh. Its sour, foul essence hits like a wave. You would think, wouldn't you, that I would be used to it, by now. I lay in the blood-stained sheets of my cot, the frame decayed, the mattress mouldy. The walls are peeling, in this death yard. This hospital. I feel as if I've been lying here for an eternity, this place, where my life ended.

There's a girl in my room. She was there the day it happened. And she hasn't left since. Her presence has been a plague on my reality, a ruination of my remaining sanity.

A screeching pulls me out of my self-pity. The bed that that gaunt, pale girl has fallen upon. She doesn't know I'm right here. She sits on my bed, heaving a heavy, heavy sigh. I rise from the shabby cot, limbs shaking and twisted at unnatural angles. My body is broken, my soul is dark, my heart is shredded and my thought every day is. SHE MUST DIE. For what she did to me.

She stands suddenly, jolting my cursed bones into action. I follow her eyes, the insolent glare forever on her face. It points to my trunk, patterned with roses. The one beautiful thing in this room. The one thing she cannot see, she must not!

Rage and anger strike me again, clouding my vision, and the next thing I know, I'm holding down the lid with my ruined fingers. This maggot is nothing compared to me, my strength, the revenge that powers me. She shifts her grip, and her fingers brush mine. Dust and excruciating pain shoot through me, forcing my hand off the trunk. As I drown. In despair. What will she see?

My vision is spotted with black, until my eyes shutter closed into the dark silence.

SHE CANNOT FIND IT.

My eyes, the gaping holes, open. The girl is holding the mirror. 7 years. Bad luck. Visions and memories run through my corpse. My mouth is open.

Screaming.

Screaming.

Silent.

She's seen me, I know it in the way she turns and frowns, the way she jumped. The way her eyes widened.

But what she does not know is that it is. ALL HER FAULT

EMPTY SAND-TIMERS

We are all empty sand timers
And scratched plastic circular counters
In glowing primary colours
Lost under sofas and behind shelves
We have rolled out the door and under a bush
But we will not turn to mush
Because we are polished trophies
Displayed on mantlepieces and windowsills
Packed up into cardboard boxes in the loft
And one day these rooms will be emptied
We will be found in our hiding places
Wrapped in curtains stained by pasta-sauce-fingers
And we will be shaken like dust from the fabric
And rolled up in ink-splattered carpets
Scraped off the wall with the Blutack from posters
And tucked into boxes folded in that magical overlapping way
We will be teary farewells to a house we'll never be part of again

BY ADDY WOO

JESSIE WRIGHT FINALISTS

The prestigious Jessie Wright poetry competition at Rugby High School has been running for over 25 years in memory of Jessie Wright, a former pupil. Students in all year groups are invited to carefully craft a poem on a chosen theme; this year, the theme was 'Metamorphosis .' After being carefully deliberated the finalists' poems, which have been included below, were selected , and attended a magnificent poetry evening to read aloud their poems to family members and friends. The winner this year was ... with their poem ... which ....

DEAR BUTTERFLY

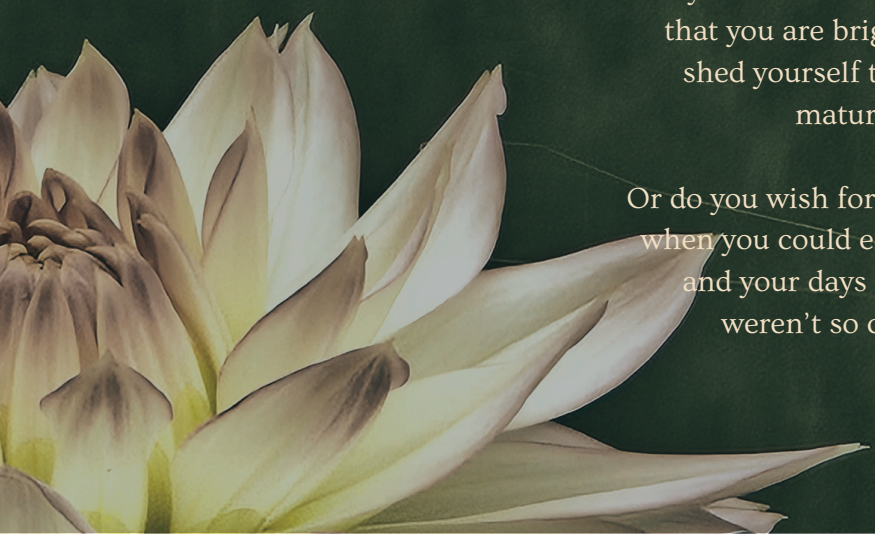
BY ADDY WOO

Do you feel more beautiful now
that your wings have unfurled
and the cage has cracked to
free your new form

Or does residue cling cloying heavy
like the looks you get now
wide-eyed, appraising
stares

Do you feel more beautiful now
that you are brighter having
shed yourself to blossom,
matured

Or do you wish for a simpler time
when you could eat as you wish
and your days of freedom
weren't so counted.



"BUT WHAT IF?"

BY ALEXA HOLLAND

But what if the cocoon opens
And nothing beautiful emerges?

Teachers speak like prophets
of what's to come
and how to make it
a simple reassurance
should help me shake this

shake this feeling
that it'll never be enough-
It's so conceited
to doubt myself this much

Now I'm swallowed up by life
Consumed by this whispering
of "you'll never be enough"
It's so revealing

So, I waited for it...
The moment everything would click
Instead, I fear
I might have missed it

This chrysalis of fear so deep
Where dreams and aspirations
quietly weep

SPLIT

I knew it was her by the way she cradled me with her fingers.
Her eyes bore onto my surface,
as she picked me up and peeled back my skin.
I watched as she picked me apart,
My crimson dripped from her sweet mouth,
and how my bones cracked under the ridges of her teeth.
Her stained hands dragged across her face as she tried to wipe me away,
humming at my taste.
She discarded of my remains
and picked away where i clung onto her molars,
but we had become whole since
her first bite.

BY LILY LIEVERSLEY-MARTIN



"TAXIDERMY TEXTILES" BY LILY L-M

HUMAN PLANT

BY TIANA TEHRANI



A sharp pain
erupts
A splinter through my heart
Moss grows
in the very marrow
of my bones
My blood
replaced with sap
Hard shoots interweaving
through delicate veins
Leaves trying to sprout
burst
my skin stretched taut
Searing pain
through wooden limbs
Rose thorns rupture
my eye's sclera
its viscid white
like petals on my pallid face
My bruised ribs
turn to branches
My mottled skin
to bark
Like roots I spread into the dirt
searching
searching
Searching

I wither before I can find it.

THE ALTERNATING AMERICAN DREAM

BY GRACE HEDDITCH

The sixties shimmered with rebellion.
Young voices bloomed like wildflowers through the streets.
Guitars strummed music into the open sky.
Revolution. Rhythm. Radiance.

The seventies swayed with bright lights.
Old certainties cracked, questions lingered.
Disco balls scattered starlight across crowded floors.
Groove. Glitter. Glam.

The eighties flashed with neon streaks.
Confidence strutted tall beneath wide skies.
Synth beats blasted from one room to another.
Power. Pulse. Percussion.

The nineties hummed with a defining optimism.
Life suddenly felt full of new opportunities.
Rock chords tangled with friendly sitcom laughter.
Shift. Spark. Smiles.

The two-thousands flickered with silver screens.
Everything felt different overnight.
Pop anthems boomed loud enough to drown the noise.
Change. Connection. Charts.

The twenty-tens and twenties blaze with fast filters.
Everyone has something to say, and no one stays quiet for too long.
We binge, scroll, repeat, and never really log off.
Digital. Dynamic. Divided.

THE LIGHT WE COULDN'T KEEP

We were ten and feral with glue on our fingers
kings of the lost-and-found cupboard,
Believers in lunchbox alchemy.
The science fair smelled like dust and hope
and the janitor's mop water.

Someone stole a wheel form a broken trolley –
or maybe it volunteered
We named it destiny
We ran it between two chairs like a secret,
Palms blistering, sneakers screaming on linoleum
the wheel spinning so fast it forgot
what stillness ever was

The teacher said 'energy transfer'
But we heard summoning
Wires trembled like veins
A bulb -small, timid, colonial-
waited to be convinced

We ran harder.
Time bent
Recess dissolved
The wheel howled like it knew our names,
and then-
light.

Not the polite kind
A rude, buzzing proof
A sun no one had predicted
born from sweat and bad math
and the faith that if you move fast enough
the dark will panic

For a second the room believed us
Even the posters shut up
We stood there glowing, half gods in Velcro shoes,
Faces shocked by what our hands had done.

Later they told us Edison did it first,
Later the bulb went missing
Later we learned light is old
and doesn't belong to children.

But I remember-
how the wheel kept spinning
after we let it go,
how the glow lingered like a lie you wish were true,
how for one crooked afternoon
we didn't discover light-
we made it run.

BY AARYAN PATIL

REALITY TV

BY LIV BEXON-WALSH

Ill temperament spread faster than disease,
brain decay flutters through the breeze,
an ice age in half a decade,
a broken scale to serenade,
the dismissal of social construct and cues
people fighting through the constant of blues.

Life now an alien concept of fine that blurs and undulates in my mind,
No one seems to care there was a whole generation born blind,
With screens for eyes and pixelated memories of events in their lives,
Religion, gender, rights any reason to fight, to bring back archaic knives,
Like millions of colonies of bees buzzing for the nectar of a grain of flour,
The static noise we've come to know only ever growing louder.

We are like a bike advancing towards the finish line,
but the pedals have been left between exploitation and a shrine,
the powerful augment their philanthropy by letting the weak bleed,
they want to control the narrative and they succeed,
likes and views become the reason for good deeds,
allowing corruption to spread like weeds.

We've become used to having missing limbs,
blocking the decayed world we've reinvented on sims,
we discarded the bell of bike it landed near impossible sanctions,
ripped off since it wasn't sound coming from humans fatal actions,
We're caging the humans race by dressing up sheep as wolves with bloody jaws,
labelling as separation as safety, backed up with legislations and laws.

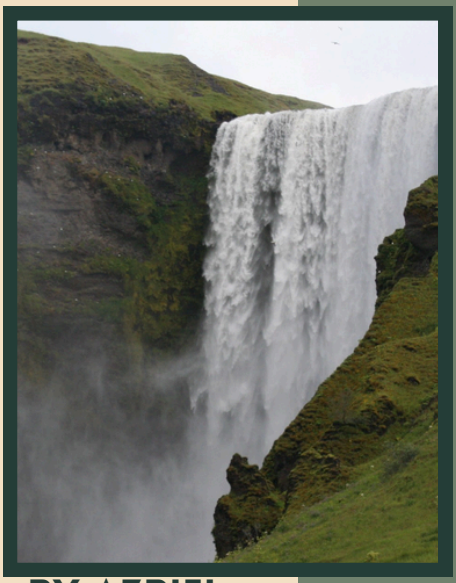
I think it was a turning point,
a cacophony of cracked joints,
neurons unlatching like a tranquillising machine numbed us one by one,
a virus tiring us of our humanity leaving us with none,
metamorphic is too pretty a word for what we've let this world become.

THAW

BY SOFIA ALLEN

Silence: the hymn of winter,
Echoes through skeleton trees
Trapped beneath frosted soil
And ice, roots, dirt.
The sun hangs weak and confused
Painting translucent skies
Blue and crystal and delicate.
Below, a robin chirps
No answer
Nothing to answer

Yet, something stirs
A stream gurgles excitedly
The ground rumbles- trembles slightly
As the ice loosens its grip.
Verdant meadows emerge
Peppered with jewels:
Snowdrops, primroses, crocuses.
Young hares and lambs
Tottering in soft spring light
Answering the silence.



BY AZRIEL HOGAN

CHANGING

BY MICHELLE BOATENG

I used to measure life in summers, in scraped knees and pinkie promises that felt like they could last forever. Back then, my world was small and everything felt certain.

But things changed. Hallways got longer, comments got meaner, and laughter didn't always feel the same.

Old friends became pictures on my phone— smiling versions of us that didn't exist anymore. We didn't fight. We just slowly drifted apart.

Suddenly, new people walked into my life like unexpected seasons. Some like rays of warm sunshine. Some like thundering storms. Although not all of them stayed.

Love changed too— from primary school crushes to late-night secrets that I whispered and giggled about a hundred times.

But maybe metamorphosis isn't one big moment. Maybe it's all the small changes— the outgrowing, the letting go, the learning who grows with you and who doesn't.

I'm just changing— slowly, painfully, and maybe beautifully.

YOU'VE CHANGED

BY AMELIE BUCKINGHAM

I remember just passing time lying in bed -
Pulsating heartbeat in my eardrum on my pillow
and playing the same song over and over,
I watched a change in you
as if you knew what that meant.
Suddenly sandstone skin turned scaly to touch,
bags once packed for adventure strewn
under eyes - no longer inviting, but
a needlepoint of darkness.
I looked away
ashamed.
Couldn't even bear the mirror,
a sickening mockery of who you were,
staring at the exoskeleton you've become -
I've watched you change.
But hindsight is a wonderful thing, isn't it?
Never noticing in the moment,
shouldn't have said that.
Shouldn't have done that.
Now all the mistakes replace me with a brittle shell of contempt,
my broken antennae crushed in the ground.
Then I laughed
at the sorry scene laid out before me.
How did this happen?
Who is this shadowy figure of doom?
What was your name again?
You've changed

THRESHOLD FOR TITLE CONFISCATION

BY SARAH CARBUNGCO

Say an - inanimate object. A clock.
Is it defined by its circular silhouette? Its ticking sound with each passing second? Its ability to tell us the time?
How much could you distort and deform it before it loses the entitlement to its own name?
Now. With a human. A bit more complex.
Where do you think the limit is?

Lets say we begin with the physical form.
Don't worry, you wont feel a thing!
In fact, you wont even notice.
We quietly work our way from the centre to the outside
Replacing the old and rotting parts
From rusted wires to flaking clay.
Now these jigsaw pieces may not interlock the same as before,
But the completed work still remains
The same way it sat in its original display
Still fits the frame, still fills every corner.

How about your mannerisms?
Lets sharpen these dull consonants,
And reinforce these cadences.
Now maybe you'll slip up, make a click of the tongue
Which pierces and quivers against the grooves
Laid in the minds you forgot you had etched.
Which acts as the conductors deep inhale
Signal for the ensemble. A Miscellany of fragments.
The cue for your montage to begin

We are not getting anywhere.
Perhaps the threshold lies within the cognition?
Use our nifty tools to blend the horizon line
Between black and white.
Two-factor authentication for sudden sparks.
We constantly update this framework over time
But, still no.
Now, though these gears have been oiled and refined,
They still seem to jam in the same place they always have.
Nothing we can do. It seems so.

Lets try something new.
What acts as resin, sealing the self -
The ink that stamps your title into the minds of others.
Inundating these marks with your colours.
At the end of the sea,
When we take away your memories,
your charter now black,
would you still be able
to sail the ship back?

BY HARRIET HUMPHREY



32 AGAIN

BY IRENE BABU

I'm 80 years old and I wake up 32 again
I wake up with little arms tugging at me.
my babies they are small again
I used to rush through mornings
stressed for the day, never living in that moment
Except this time, I allowed myself to feel
Soaked in their laughter, their messy hair,
The way their eyebrows scrunched when they spoke
All things that faded unnoticed

I catch a glimpse of my reflection
No grey hair or wrinkles
But my 32-year-old self-staring back at me
I thought I looked old at 32 - What a silly thought
I used to rush through my youth
Never truly realised how beautiful she was

I see my husband making breakfast,
I hug him and he looks surprised
Maybe I didn't hug him enough at 32
We talk about the day
And this time I linger on every word
All the usual plans feel big , feel exciting.
I look at my house
except this time, it was a home
A home with memories drawn on the walls in bright colours
Memories I used to tidy away

I arrive at work, ready
I used to get tired, call days off
But this time I was early
Talked to every patient a moment more
I never realised how privileged I was
to be able to help others with a purpose
to pursue what I dreamed of every day

Dinner is loud and disorganised
Everyone jumping up off their seats
Laughter , arguing, and tears all at once
There was so much life.
This time I don't clean up straight after,
I used to hate clutter
But this time I didn't
I knew I would miss our messy home
Because my house would be spotless and empty for many years to come.

The sun sets and I slowdown
I don't want this day to end
I don't skip over pages reading bedtime stories to them
Instead, I act out every sentence, every word I pause
And this time, I ask them, could I read one more.

I think back to 30, and 25
To 18 and 7
All the things that I missed
That Change
The Change that grew unnoticed
I close my eyes and hope
Hope to be 32,
32 again.

PHOTOGRAP
COLLECTIO

BY ZAHRA NADEEM

PHY
ON

BY ADDY WOO

BY SOFIA WONG

THE PRISM TEAM

HARRIET HUMPHREY

ADDY WOO

SANA SAFI