



# ILLUMINATE



Rugby High School's creative writing magazine  
VOLUME V: DECEMBER 2016

**Welcome to this edition of “Illuminate”**

**In this edition you will see, as ever, an astonishingly wide range of creative writing. Much of the work in this edition has been generated through classwork, and some has been inspired by the Rupert Brooke Competition.**

**There is darkness here – but also light. One recurring theme is the natural world – the other dominant theme that emerges in the collection is childhood and family, and the writers pinpoint with such poignancy the beauty, pain and complexity of relationships.**

**Some of the work (particularly by Year 11 and Year 12 students) has been inspired by Carol Ann Duffy – so you might be able to spot the students’ work whose style and form is inspired by the Poet Laureate.**

**I am sure you will enjoy reading these pieces and be impressed (as I always am) by the wealth of creativity, originality and perception that the students show.**

**Olga Dermott-Bond**

**Editor**

## **Writers featured in this issue:**

Eleni Evangelinos / Olivia Mackie / Josie Allen /  
Aimee Spilletts / Katie Curzon / Faith Gibbins / Emma  
White / Ishita Yudav / Ella Roberts / Rachel Coates /  
Katie Wang / Eleanor Thompson / Thea Dudfield /  
Lucy Tiller / Freya Davis / Annie Fan / Hannah Spurr

## **The Snitch**

Looking to the older boys. I saw  
an exuberant menace. Glistening eyes.  
They launched their weapon of choice.  
A white sphere of numbing shame. *Ouch!*

The warriors applauded. Ross David whimpered,  
as he did every winter when the glacier ball ricocheted  
off of his Specsaver frames and left a red wound.  
A battle scar.

*Snitch!* It wasn't me, Mrs David. Honestly it wasn't.  
Did I see anything? No. I pinkie promise I didn't.  
My brother and his friends smirked at each other  
but no-one was Spartacus.

Freed of all war crime we retreated;  
not to an ice palace but to a 3 bedroomed house.  
Cymbeline way. With frozen feet and waterlogged wellies,  
we returned to civilian life.

Eleni Evangelinos Yr 12

## **The New York Hustle and Bustle**

People ran through the streets shouting like a crowd of protesting citizens,  
They rushed as if lions were chasing them,  
Shoving People out of their way like vicious rugby players,  
They were a stampede of hurrying buffalo.

The cars were like millions of clueless fish swimming aimlessly in the flooded road.

Heavy rain fell from the skies like a thousand hooves pounding against the stubborn ground,  
The unstoppable force drenched everything that got in its way.

The immense buildings stood towering over everything giraffes in a crowd of zebras,  
Intimidating the cars as they scurried past.

The Chinese restaurant glowed like a torch in a dark room,  
Full of hungry workers forcing their way for the mouth-watering Chow Mein.

Olivia Mackie Yr 7

## **Blackmail**

Her bike was scarlet, the wheels ticked as she cracked  
another nail, and her howl silenced the birds and trees.  
The graze was a rusty penny, 'It's your fault', she accused  
me, my own bike garish with glitter and hearts.

Raleigh. The seat embroidered with my name was  
a warning to the girls on the next street, the ones  
that parade on my scooter like a horse drawn  
carriage, the thread gleamed like the brass

knocker on my front door. I backed away, if I  
had left then, no one would have known. 'I'll tell her',  
sweat oozed at my temples, my knees hammering  
an unmeasured rhythm. A week was her bargain.

Not a word of it, the crime that was deemed my  
purposeful doing, ever made it to my mother's ears.  
The bloodshot bike leant against the garage wall for  
a whole week, while the fibres were unpicked.

Josie Allen Yr 12

## Who Am I?

*(This poem is designed to read both ways – from top to bottom and bottom to top)*

I am just a number on a federal form

And I do not believe that

My life has meaning

Fear rules me

Not

Courage

I understand now that

Someday I will die

What defines me

Has been

Cancer

Not

The world

Peers tell me that

I will never amount to more than this small town

I do not agree

I will make a difference

In society

Hatred and anger will always replace love and kindness

No one believes that

One person can be the change

It is clear that

I mean nothing

I am a child pretending that

I am strong, beautiful, intelligent, kind and hopeful

Aimee Spilletts Yr 8

## **Daniel**

The leaves crunched beneath the boy's feet. Snap, Crackle and Pop; like little rice crispies being drowned by a sea of milk. His brother had been gone for a while now, but a thought didn't run through his mind as he was only a toddler. He kicked the leaves - they flew everywhere filling the sky with amber, caramel, scarlet and sienna. The spectrum of autumn shinning down on the world like the gods were celebrating the harvest festival. He ran into the leaves throwing them over his head. Daniel felt as if he was on top of the world he jumped off the rotting tree stump, and for a while he felt as though he could fly. Nothing in the world could stop him. Then a gang of older boys came along. They wore hoodies and jeans. They cycled past and smiled at Daniel. He thought they were amazing. He wanted to follow them; to watch them for longer, but he knew that his brother had told him to stay there for reason: even if he didn't know what it was for. So instead, he raced himself, he loved to do this. It made him feel as though he was invincible. The wind was rushing through his hair, the wind was on his face, the wind blew the leaves off the tree: and as they did the largest leaf on the tree floated down, down, down, down and laid in peace on his Brothers lifeless body.

Katie Curzon (Yr 9)



## **An Echo**

Do you ever get that feeling?  
I can never remember its name...  
A memory that's whispering,  
That something is the same.

A scent of food you have yet to taste,  
Its presence an echo on your tongue.  
A man whom you can't greet by face,  
But know his voice a choir among.  
A hole in your memory,  
Where faceless shadows reside.  
A name on your breath ready,  
Your brain refuses; denies.

A nondescript silhouette,  
Dancing across your mind.  
Searching for something you haven't lost yet,  
But so desperately want to find.

That sense of repetition,  
Like you've done something again.  
A little lurking suspicion.

I can never remember its name

By Faith Gibbins (Yr 10)

## **Father, 1956**

My cold pale cheeks moulded by a  
Practised fake smile- shadowing yours.  
Affection saved for the uncreased  
Clothes draped across your  
Heart like a barrier-  
A fortress. Firm against my love.

In the shadows I lived.  
Your towering presence, Strong. Starved.  
Starved of light and warmth  
Reaching in vain hope  
Towards any glimmer of  
Your love.  
Cold love.

Scratch, Scratch, Blotted out.  
Your back turned, all you see  
Is my shadow perfectly poised.

I was always dead to you.  
Like you are dead to me now.

Emma White (Yr 11)

## **In the Woods**

I sprint through the wild, withering woods. The forest floor is carpeted with leaves in over a million colours of red, orange and brown. All the trees are bare, its crooked gnarled branches reaching out for me. The smell of damp leaves and moss fills my nostrils. It feels so amazing to finally be here again. As a sudden gust of wind, smothered my hair on to my face, I savour the moment. I start to jog and progress into a run. The adrenalin hits me. Sweat trickles down my face; I know I should turn back but I can't let go of this moment. Suddenly I hear a loud shriek, more like a cry of agony. I think that I've been caught red-handed. If anyone found out then I would be arrested. I quickly glance back I see the silhouette of a girl and someone else tugging at her arm. The lighting of the woods are dim but as I squint to see. I hear another piercing yell and see a struggle in the shadows. As I realise that this could be my last run in the woods, without looking back one last time. I race home, exhilarated.

I flop on to my bed and breathe sighs of relief, just like I always do when I make it back home and know I've not been spotted. I take off my old battered trainers and try to sleep. But when I close my eyes I find myself remembering what I saw in Darkwood. Was the girl in the silhouette OK? If she was then why was she screaming? Or maybe they were squeals of joy? I can't remember clearly enough. Should I have tried to help her? But she could have reported me to the police then and everyone would find out about my guilty secret. Thoughts race frantically through my mind. As I take a deep breath I push all of these theories to the back of my mind. I concentrate on trying to get some sleep.

"Trrrrrring!" my alarm screeches. I rub my eyes and stretch as my mom comes to greet me usually she is wearing her rose perfume and her favourite apron. But today she is still in her nightgown and her face is solemn. She blows her nose and gently explains to me:

"Elsie is no more. Her body has been found in Darkwood this morning. Investigators say that it was a suicide because both her wrists have been slit open".

By Ishita Yadav (Yr 8)

## **Pathetic Fallacy**

Roll over and allow  
yourself to just feel.  
Outside,  
the rain drizzles steadily,  
creating a  
soothing symphony  
of drips, splashes, and pitter-patter  
on the rooftops.

Your heart begins to slow  
to a languid pace,  
keeping in time  
with each drop of rain.

You become hyper-aware  
of your surroundings.  
Hyper-aware of yourself.

You can feel your breath  
tickling your chapped lips  
and the gentle blink  
of your eyelids.  
The rain is lashing down now.  
Big fat droplets  
bounce on your windowsill,  
creating a  
transparent constellation  
of splashback

on the glass pane.

Through each liquid star  
you can see your world,  
magnified in miniature,  
the colours swirling  
to form a palette of beauty.

The rain slows,  
before eventually conceding defeat  
in its battle to saturate the soil.  
But, lulled to sleep  
by its soothing tattoo,  
you don't hear it stop.

Ella Roberts (Yr 12)

## Quiet Night in

Hot. So hot. You need a glass of water. Heave yourself up. Swing the left leg off the side of the bed, then the right. Rub the sleep out of your eyes and itch your nose. Eyes adjust to the dim light. Stand. You pick your way across the room. Remnants of the night before littered on the floor. Quick glance in the window at your reflection. Yep, still you. Same tired mouth, smudged with red lipstick. Same tired eyes smudged with red eyeshadow; evidence of a good evening. Same bushy hair that you've been trying to tame for your whole life. No, you didn't turn into a supermodel overnight. Yes, that was just a dream. Walk to the bathroom corner.. Tap on. Cup under. Tap off. Drink. Smash the cup against the grey wall. Ah yes, now you remember. You look around, grinning. You gather your few belongings, spare change of identical clothes, hairbrush, toothpaste, and the pocket-knife that you'd managed to keep unnoticed under the rim of your mattress. One last quick look around the moldy, dingy, square cell. Careful to step on as many bloody, dismembered prison guards as you can you wipe their dried blood from your mouth and leave through the wide open prison cell door.

Rachel Coates (Yr 10)

## Alright

It's the night before the wedding you hardly speak of  
and grandma's giving you a stuffed toy dog-  
"A good luck gift", she insists, forcing it in your arms.  
You take it and smile and I can see your  
quivering lips and shaking hands. I hope you're alright.

and then you're walking down the aisle and dad says I Do  
and then they're waiting for you and you swallow  
and I see you looking backwards. I see you  
and you look like a parrot being shoved in a cage  
and it comes tumbling out- your garbled I Do and-

Twenty nine years and two daughters later,  
you and I take an eight hour flight to your homeland.  
I take your hand as we set flight, like doves soaring free,  
back to yuans instead of pounds and flats instead of houses  
and freedom instead of How much did you spend this month?

Grandma tries to force the stuffed dog in your suitcase.  
You say no and no and no, we have no space left  
and it is old and falling apart and not the same-  
I pretend to not notice the shimmering eyes.  
Your swallow's like the one three decades ago. I hope you're alright

Katie Wang (Yr 11)

## **Valour**

'Mum's crying!'  
Each room had a name, to disguise  
The stench of demise that  
Clung  
And climbed into each door crevice  
Like the wrinkles of old age.

Each door could have been cling film,  
For they hid nothing.  
The coughing and crying so invasive  
That the doors bulged with the pressure.

'Daddy, quick!'

'Valour' was etched into the door  
Attributing him with the courage  
That was dripping off him  
Like sweat  
From the strain of living.

'Mum's crying!'

I clung to his hand, my innocent mind  
Too minute to comprehend  
How quickly a draught can drain  
A pool of rain.

Eleanor Thompson (Yr 12)



## **“Fluttering through the seasons”**

Fluttering their wings,  
Vivid terracotta and bold indigo.  
Darting through the gaping air,  
Wintry clouds casting a shadow on their delight.

Spring-time sun floods the skies,  
A mustard yellow splashed with luminosity.  
Perching on blossoms with mauve and white petals,  
A vast canvas of cerulean blue above them.

Summertime smiles as it rolls into occurrence,  
Incandescent flowers blooming before musky salmon sunsets.  
The scent of lavender and rose,  
The splashing murmur of the azure ocean.

A downwards rampage of crisp coffee-brown leaves,  
A frosty carpet of crunching nature.  
Vibrant carmine and dazzling bronze,  
They flutter their wings.

Thea Dudfield (Yr 8)

*an older friend*

in spring there is a local election. you are a month  
old enough to vote, and in your matter-of-fact look-at-me-  
i'm-an-adult type way, you peer over your glasses  
(which are not reading glasses) and tell me you are a  
socialist. you pick up today's guardian to prove it and the  
chain-store coffee you bought sits between us on the table, trying to bridge the  
gap between childhood and you.

in summer they call a referendum so you tattoo fourteen stars  
in a circle on your inner wrist in a poorly researched stick-and-poke  
and when i point it out you laugh mysteriously, tell me to  
use capital letters in my poems and drain a sherry that  
you don't share with the children. i go back to my history text-  
book and you flip open *hollywood wives-the new generation*  
inside a jane austen dustjacket.

in autumn i turn eighteen and buy my first sherry. you  
look a little lost as you push up your round glasses and sniff, and  
recommend i read the *selected poems of robert browning*. reaching for  
your £25 labour membership card and a bank statement you say:  
when i was your age i'd already voted socialist once-  
what have you ever done for britain?

Lucy Tiller (Yr 13)

## Watercolour

I paint in shades of grey.

A wash of water rests upon the window pane,  
framing the soft glow  
of evening light as it warms  
the empty room,  
behind the wind turbines upon the horizon.  
Electric silence is accompanied  
only by the forgiving swish-swash  
of my paintbrush in the water  
on the table in the kitchen.

I caress the burning palette of Byzantium,  
thinking back to past times  
no longer the carefree, empowering highlight  
of my once naive world.  
Shameful amethysts and remorseful rubies  
no longer seem fit to represent a queen  
such as I.  
Plum and raspberry,  
a refreshing fruit salad  
contaminated with antsy aubergine,  
a scorching sensation clinging to my tongue.  
Lavender and orchid?  
My mauve mind remains indecisive.  
Lonely lilacs, pitiful pansies and  
pathetic palatinate purples,  
are not colours I want to feel today.

A turn to compassionate copper leaves me without hope.  
Red wine, my mind now  
indifferent, but desperate to begin  
my painting.  
Catawba, cadmium and coral,  
a crushing crimson crunch of care.  
Yet, I remain afraid to delve  
into unknown territory.  
Uncomfortable, I see salmon,  
beside a sensitive scarlet,  
Sympathetic and sorry.  
Even on this day,  
I cannot bring myself to splash  
imperial red on my tender page.

Across the colour wheel, no changes take place.  
Acacias and ambers don't take my fancy,  
while cynical citrine would stain my sky  
with a sunflower-sun of grouchy gold.  
I would much rather protect  
my painting  
from moody mustards and miserable maize as  
lemon is far too sour to be kind on this day.

I will not allow cerulean frost  
to cling to my rooftop, critical  
and concerned.  
Beryl berries would be far too judging,  
azure is too apprehensive to make an appearance,  
anxious and alone.  
Why should I taint my canvas  
with bitter bluebell or scornful sapphire?  
Even cornflower blue would poison the page.

Palettes upon palettes await my approval,  
Only to be constantly denied, idle and hopeless,  
concentrated via lack of use.  
I paint only in grey, finding myself paint  
the same image time and time again.

Radio silence blasts through my ears,  
my stuffy head clouded with white noise,  
screaming.  
My painting explodes in technicolour,  
an overgrown forest of intertwining shades,  
a sickly soup of dyes bursts through the barrier;  
my painting is no longer safe.  
I didn't plan this mishap so I stare  
while the dysfunctional dandelion and melancholy magenta  
blend. The sea bleeding on my page equals  
how much it hurts  
to watch my plain painting  
masked with colour.

I shut the blinds, hiding from the  
overwhelming radiance shining into  
my now overly colourful world.

For once, I realise:  
my painting is dull

without a splash of colour, yet I still struggle  
to find the reason that, while enlightened,  
I always choose to paint in grey.

Freya Davis (Yr 10)

## Immigrant Epilogue

And here's our father deep in mechanics,  
elbows splayed hyperbole as he spills green tea over  
the table, now a line of itself, a turbine, a sun,

a function to hide behind. Last November, cut work,  
glazed coins with spit, rumped fivers. Blurry  
in the nights he rubbed sores with shea butter

and wrapped cold yellowrice with foil – prepwork  
better than hungry, he tells the open windows and finds  
a wasp splinched on his tongue, honey seams rich

with lino grease – silver burr dreams, drawn  
like slick gasoline. I saw him wake footless  
at sainted midnight, lose struts, remember how

he wrapped bruises with cheaper sums:  
eyes pressed together forcelessly, telling me  
ways to fit the voice into a net, boxed and left

sucking past an engine he tore apart  
in sighs; this night when he sleeps  
softboned – neat vigour run from one point

to another, my father adds the ways he split himself:

with parapets and right angles, us like a fleas inside  
a vacuum. Translated sideways, until he was on

his back; his dreams where England bruised the same  
way as a morning when I woke to totaled car

and kept walking on; he is imaginary.

Annie Fan (Yr 12)

## **Rubato**

Expanses of ice cascade, disrupted only by the blooming of a single flower. Much like Mount Pinatubo, petals erupt and bring about destruction. Yet, it is the leftover shards that cause chaos – Bronchitis inducing as they wedge themselves between layers of flesh. How ironic it is that these crocuses unveil in March.

June. Heated arguments are the singular cause of the dense condensation that hangs here, restricting. Through the haze, an orange glow brightens, soon to be dulled by the ever-rising fog. Nimble fingers busy themselves with the task of wool knit gloves, and it becomes hard to differentiate between the rhythm of life and the rapid *knit, knit, purl*.

July and August lose themselves in an obscurity.

The pace of Bolt as he races around the track is perfectly echoed in the month of September. Somehow, the warmth of such exercise is reassuring, yet the bile that begs to protrude into the open disagrees. This nervous fluttering continues through October.

Finally. November accepts (yet, is still unsure).

**Hannah Spurr (Yr 12)**



