

# ILLUMINATE

Rugby High School's creative writing magazine

Spring 2017

Inspire

Imagine

Illuminate

**Welcome to the latest edition of “Illuminate”, Rugby High School’s creative writing magazine. As always, there is an abundance of creativity, wit, observation and truth in these pages. This edition includes the shortlisted and longlisted work from the Jessie Wright competition, the theme of which was “marking the moment”.**

**As a school we have been enjoying many creative achievements of late. Emily Stephens has been nominated as Warwickshire Young Poet Laureate. Rugby High School was one of the most successful school in the country in the First Story National Poetry Competition: Annie Fan was longlisted in the Key Stage Five category, I was shortlisted in the teacher category and Lucy Tiller was the overall Key Stage Five winner, enabling a group of students to attend a week’s creative writing course at Lumb Bank at the Arvon Centre. Moreover, the depth and breadth of creative talent at the school is evident in work produced in clubs, lessons, displays – and is celebrated by the whole school community.**

**Read and enjoy**

**Olga Dermott- Bond**

**Editor**

## **bats in the attic**

this song takes me back to twelve.

this song takes me to backstage sweat hairspray sweat

this song this song it takes me back to the bubble of held breath, a raindrop with a hard skin on it  
a sprint between the back of the school hall and the stairs onto upstage right.

this song takes me to whispering at a year nine in the opposite wing

takes me to long blacks sweat hairspray sweat

to my hair caked in the cheapest superdrug hairspray hardened into a shell and  
crackling like dried seaweed layers of foundation till i

am unable to screw my face up small

peanut-crunching fish and chips before the show small girls in big camouflage flairs

to *quicker on your cues to this scene is shambolic and i will cut it if it's not sorted*

to being scooped out inside breathing in like the air hits the bottom of my

toes when i get back from an all-day rehearsal because

there is nothing left inside me to stop it sweat hairspray sweat

this song takes me to taylor swift and dancing in the drama studio

strong sugary strawberry squash and asda's own custard creams in the interval

this song oh this song it takes me back back back

and then dissolves like a pear drop –

Lucy Tiller

## **Election Blues**

That's it.

I am never ever, ever, ever going out

Ever again!

Never.

Why am I so awkward? Oh god everyone is laughing!

Why me? A scarlet shade of shame

If I cover my cheeks they'll know I'm blushing.

If I don't they'll see scarlet, brick, burgundy, ruby.

Oh well I guess they'll see red anyway.

Is it possible to die of embarrassment?

Is there a morgue for the mortified?

I shouldn't have ignored

The elephant in the room

I have been well and truly

Trumped.

I'm going to cry.

Is it possible to turn invisible in a nation

Stained in red?

The swing states are not my fate

My ego crashed along with

Canada's immigration site

A different kind of Bill is needed

To win

I've fell off the wall

It seems Trumpty Dumpty stands tall

I shouldn't have ignored

The elephant in the room

Ellie Wedgbury

## **One Breath**

She was there, but she was gone.  
One breath, my breath.  
That was all it took for the  
Cracks, crashes, screeches,  
Wails, gasps, howls and;  
The thud.

She was there, crumpled like paper:  
Inconsequential,  
Fragile and torn and crushed and  
Splattered with red ink,  
Ruined, and yet;  
Vital.

She was gone, like paper burnt.  
Ashes remained.  
A metal monster consumed  
Her, and the lasting  
Smell was rubber  
Burning.

She was there, and I breathed in.  
I took her breath,  
She needed it more than I,  
Shock choked me, and I  
Selfishly stole  
Her life.

She was gone, I held that breath.  
I won't breathe out;  
It brings numbness, white noise and  
Oblivion, as  
I feel my own  
Heartbeat.

Anna Bridgeman

### **Lot No. 37: A Cherished Memory of the Wonderful Stranger**

You'd introduced yourself before the show  
And we chatted during the interval like old friends.  
You were an American,  
A Bostonian to be exact.  
Your name was Walter  
And you were travelling the world.  
Making the most of your retirement.

You sat next to me  
Row J  
Seat eighteen  
And had decided to say "*hi*".  
This was not the first time you'd watched the show.

But as the performers took their bows  
There you stood  
Teetering  
On the edge of my peripheral vision,  
Wiping the silver tear tracks from your age-spotted cheeks  
Clapping as hard as the frailty of your mottled hands would allow.

We stepped onto the blackened, time-worn pavement,  
Back to reality.  
I took your hand and shook it,  
Wishing you a safe journey to your next adventure.  
You smiled at me  
The saddest smile  
I'd ever seen,  
Silently beseeching me to take care of myself  
And have a brilliant life.  
Then you strolled casually away.

I began to walk away too,  
But somehow  
I knew you hadn't finished saying  
Goodbye.  
I turned, and just for a moment,  
I caught a glimpse of you, Walter.  
Standing there.

Grinning from ear to ear.

Ella Roberts

father.

your lips a scratched brush  
that savaged my sweet childhood.  
Gone were those days as innocent as a  
Fresh, pair of white lace sneakers.  
Replaced by full stops, exclamation points, semicolons,  
Marking my teens. With each new lie, a new blotch.

Your words a muddy, pathetic excuse attempting  
To polish and shine what was once so pure. They clamber  
Inside of you, fighting against their imprisoning laces.  
eroding the air around you with each individual breath.

Your family tying you together in a neat bow –  
but with each individual lie you fray.  
Was she good enough? Was she worth the cost of  
your white calla lily? Your sneakers pristine –  
the pain, boredom, commitments scoured away with  
A scrub of her tongue.

Yet here you are; choking, suffocating  
us with your thick, black, sole of lies. I look at  
your slowly frosting hair as you turn away.  
Leaving behind, discarding, forgetting my white,  
battered sneakers, stamped with the last of your  
full stops, exclamation points and semicolons.

Becky Nown



### **Where we spent years**

At the end of the splintered dock  
Surrounded by weeds and mud,  
I let the gentle summer air  
Take his ashes,  
Like it used to do with his fur  
When I'd brush him here every day.  
Our favourite place  
Where we's spent years.  
He can wait for me here,  
Until next summer.

Izzy Herne

## **A Moment in Time**

A pot of tea is freshly made,  
Fingers of steam crawl out of china cups.  
The teapot is cracked and well worn,  
Its memories forever cherished.

The clock strikes twelve.  
The chair is untucked.  
The stove is unkempt.

Our child's pictures hang on the wall.  
Always remembered, always loved.  
Our child is gone.  
All that is left is one suitcase of memories.

A paper bird, clumsily made, rests above.  
Watching, missing, loving.

Roshni Prema

## **Under the lilac trees**

Slowly the car approached,  
Creeping up the drive.  
Quiet except for this,  
Under the dripping bare lilac-trees.

Gently the door swung open,  
As she emerged.  
Perfectly beautiful was she,  
Under the dripping bare lilac-trees.

Her tilted lavender hat,  
Hid her wondrous eyes.  
She tilted her head to him,  
Under the dripping bare lilac-trees.

All was almost perfect,  
Until they came my way.  
Then the moment was gone,  
Under the dripping bare lilac-trees.

*Inspired by "the Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald*

Georgia Smith

## Cold

Trace curls and flourishes  
of hoar-frost over my skin.  
Unzip me with icicle fingers  
and bury frostbite beneath my bones.

Exhale your sweet nothings into  
shivering clouds of cirrus breath.  
Freeze my warmth away until you no  
longer melt in my hands and mouth.

Thread my glacier tears onto a silver  
chain and wear them at your throat.

Cleanse me of my colours with a river of cold  
and repaint me in a symphony of icy blues.

Show me the fist of glass hidden  
behind your branching ribs.  
Glaze my eyes and mouth and cheekbones  
and hold me to an ice-ringed moon.

Wrap your chill around my shoulder  
blades and collar bones  
and pause my heart in slow glaciation.  
Exchange my chiming vertebrae  
for silent, frosted granite.

Shroud me in a bruising, blue-lipped kiss  
as the cracked lake threads strings of bubbles  
through my hair.

Make a snow angel of the clinging  
shreds of what I was.

(But the deepest cold was always in your eyes  
And I should have known  
That when you'd laid me to rest in my frosted sepulchre  
You'd be gone to chase the spring again.  
Because, after all,  
I was only ever a little girl in love with Winter.)

**Shona Whelan**

## **Boy**

*“You’re all that each other will have one day”*

Your eyes rolled so far back I thought that they would get stuck  
And I would have to guide you as you stumbled through the streets  
And introduce you to my friends as the kid with white pebbles for eyes  
Which I’d never see again

Your eyes

Her eyes

Our eyes

But they returned with vengeance and stared and I thought they would impale

Me small and quivering and

You left and I followed babbling and apologising though I didn’t know what for

And you’d ignore me

And I’d get angry and spring up and my paw would tap tap no slap

And after twenty-three you’d hit back and I would scream and we’d start

All over again.

Then one day came at the end of the world.

We waited motionless as the night which hardened outside the walls

Time standing useless in the doorframe watching us

Slumped there on the stairs while shards of the world were

Being picked up from across the hall.

The flecks of gold in your eyes dulled and melted down your cheeks in a way I’d

Never seen before.

I felt your heavy arms around me and in that instant I felt like a feather

And I understood.

As if you were reading out a shopping list or reciting some superfluous fact

You’d had memorised for moments such as these,

When nothing could be more inappropriately appropriate,

You spoke to me so quietly that if I blinked I would have missed it.

And I almost smiled.

**Ria Sangal**

### **Three wishes**

I had a dream once  
About the lamp within the caves  
Where the monsters lurk  
Where fear sticks to you like glue

I took the lamp  
Because I knew what stays inside  
The genie  
“The genie” I whispered

I rubbed the lamp  
Once or twice  
The genie flew out of the lamp  
Ready to give me my three wishes

He gave me the rules  
“Don’t wish for extra wishes”  
He said to me,  
“Three is all you get”

I’d wish to never forget  
Every second ever had  
When it rained and we danced...  
Your voice singing in my heart

I’d wish that I could have a moment  
One last one with you  
See you left me alone without a goodbye  
I’d just want to see you again

But before I could state my wishes  
Not a word could come out of my mouth  
For the genie said to me  
Your voice coming out of his mouth

“One more second, I know  
I know that that is what you want  
I see your heart  
I see your thoughts”

The genie changed.  
He changed into you  
Exactly how I remembered  
Your eyes the same green

“Dead” he said  
DEAD  
GONE GONE GONE  
Never again

When I awoke  
I screamed  
I screamed for you  
And my three wishes

They’ll never come true.

Mianika Sikabofore

## Red Docs

Dark, rich, merlot  
smoothed polished leather  
Through rain or snow  
Fedex delivers any weather

The same pair of shoes  
sent back and forth  
Untouched and unworn  
and sent down from up north

When he was a teen,  
he was desperate for a pair,  
Back in 83' when he still  
had all his hair

Now time has gone on  
And he's grown out of the style  
They stay on his shelf  
...at least for a while

Sophie McGuigan

## **Being**

hold me why don't you,  
for a short while. 30 minute break.  
whilst these papers,  
forced at my chest, barricade  
my heart. these tasks,  
without devotion,  
are meaningless it seems.  
getting me to places in which  
i don't want to be. let me love

and shake paper cuts of red,  
come sweet, slice me up.  
simply in wooden bed or leave,  
back to metal forests,  
and hide in branch machines?  
we all know but can't face  
screams. to escape routine,  
and love ourselves for being.

*em jane Helen*

*Emily Stephens*



Dearest Darcy

Dearest Darcy, I have not been in the slightest subtle,  
From the day that I met you, I followed thou as a shadow.  
Compliments, flatteries, giving everything and anything.  
Though back at me you throw all that I know.

From the age of eleven, I was taught how to court.  
How to entice and beguile a fly of a man.  
Into the web of marriage that awaits all hopeful women.  
Therefore, the spider's web for you began.

Am I not handsome enough? Are my silks not fine?  
Many a man does find me perfect for them,  
But alas, only you are to be my king  
We could've danced at a ball. I could've worn a diadem.

So why Mr Darcy do you ignore me so,  
And cast your fancy to Eliza Bennet from the ball.  
Her clothes are dirty and her hair a mess.  
What does she have that I don't at all?

You and I are alike, Darcy can't you see?  
My dowry exceeds Miss Bennet's by a mile.  
Diamonds drip from my ears and rubies my neck.  
Yet only the prospect of her is what makes you smile.

I want you to know that you're all that I think  
Such a life could I live married to Darcy the prince.  
Please realize that I am the one for you  
For the thought of your rejection makes me wince.

With such mother and father and such low connections,  
Do you really think Elizabeth could be good for you.  
I'm ever willing to let this crush pass.  
At the end of the year we could just be two.

I know what is said, that I'm spiteful and cruel,  
That my heart is not loyal and full of deceit.  
But for you Mr Darcy I'd travel the Earth,  
I'd promise to never look down on or cheat.

So please Mr Darcy, I beg you to see  
That a life with Miss Bennet could never be kingly.  
We know you're a man of good fortune, in need of a wife,  
So do us a favour, and choose Miss Bingley

Rachel Coates

Moving on

A moment:

so tiny

and

insignificant,

lost in an instant.

A single drum beat

with no meaning or

value

other than as a reminder

of past people we have been

to prove

with each day

a new stranger is lost

to time.

Freya Davis

## **By The 23<sup>rd</sup> You Were Gone**

In tribute of Emma Bobby Cockerill (1999-2016)

We were once fresh skinned;  
Our bones were brittle, bodies frail;  
And danger lurked 'round every corner;  
We were the three Musketeers;  
Brave, good as gold;  
But your time on this earth was soon up.

Our rebel age came;  
Stinking attitudes, tantrums and fights;  
But we three were inseparable;  
We pulled each other's hair;  
Fell out and cried;  
Knowing little how much time you had left.

Two of our birthdays are one day apart;  
And we celebrated them together;  
But your birthday was always the best;  
You'd turned 17;  
We drank alcohol and smoked weed;  
Merely enough time we had left with you then.

2016 suddenly appeared;  
So many memories we'd made;  
And January was going so well;  
Until the hospital called;  
Leaving two of us woeful and crying;  
For by the 23<sup>rd</sup> you were gone.

Rachel Giltrap

## A Discordant Journey

Every day I board a metal beast  
And climb into its steel jaw  
Then starts a song that doesn't cease  
As my footsteps thrum down the narrow floor

Horns intermittently bellow;  
Indignant at our steady speed  
Victims to a turgid flow,  
A chorus sung by an impatient stampede

My headphones sit in my ears,  
Shouting to be heard  
Mixing with the yells of my peers;  
A melody quite absurd

An empty bottle rolls aimlessly  
Tossed through a sea of feet  
Tapping the floor ceaselessly;  
A steady plastic drum beat

Every day I board a bus  
And climb into an empty seat  
Then starts a noisy fuss  
... For a moment bittersweet

Faith Gibbins

## Titanic

Blurred eyes and racing hearts,  
fingers weaved together and souls entwined  
Lights are dimmed and hushed conversations  
bounced off the ash-like walls.

Starry eyes and pulsing hearts,  
skin glided over skin like silk.  
In the cold cavern-like room,  
warmth clutched to them.

Closed eyes and still hearts,  
the days merged into one endless dream  
Drifting away as the ship rolls over,  
wave after wave  
They slept, they laid beside one another, never apart  
They were infinite as the sea swallows them whole.

## Alishah Thatcher

### Tempus Fugit

A man and a woman under an oak  
“A laugh for today and a kiss for tomorrow,  
there will be a lot of tomorrows for us” he says.

they are pretty and they are young and they are in love.

It's a picturesque image.

Although the novelty may have worn off,

they remain precious. (to each other.)

Now under a sycamore, they bask in devotion.

He is her knight in shining armour.

They have changed eyes and they sing cantons,

oblivious to the world surrounding them and

they sit, in the very ecstasy of love.

She's sat in a stunning magenta dress.

He is staggered by her elegance and he

offers her a toffee. She is bewildered.

It is phenomenal how crushed they are on one another.

He goes down on one knee.

"Babes, marry me?" "Of course bae, I love you"

They share a selfie and off they pop.

Hand in hand, they are as happy as Larry.

Rachel Marlow

Appendix:

- *Changed eyes – a Shakespearean phrase meaning 'to have fallen in love' – The Tempest*
- *Cantons – love songs – Twelfth Night*
- *'the very ecstasy of love' – Hamlet*
- *Crushed – to be in love with – Victorian slang*

A Moment in Time

We walked

We talked

For a Moment in time

The rays of '*le soleil parisien*' encompassed our entire '*rendezvous*',  
Whilst we *parlé*d the day away  
For a moment in time

Primavera touched '*il mio cuore*' as we sauntered through la *Galleria degli Uffizi*,  
As did you,  
When your hand comforted mine in the cobble '*strade di Firenze*'  
For a moment in time

The day you captured my heart,  
I was unable to look back  
As your eyes seduced mine,  
Three words waltzed through my mind.

As we walked  
and talked  
For a short moment in time

Tanya Kasinganeti

**ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> OF SEPTEMBER**

i saw his body licked by a wave

lamenting the unsuspecting life it could not save  
his blue battered body toppled the earth into mourning  
its final warning  
yet the breath of a prayer passed and we carried on soaring  
another futile tear  
dripping  
soiling the paper of history  
another year wallowing in misery

on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of september i was choked  
by the pathetic  
debating the importance of so-called journalism  
“ethics”  
but whilst this perfumed defecation splattered across the news  
rafts continued to be swallowed, broken and bruised  
along the rhythmic ebbing tide  
more lives uncovered  
yet not the same heart ripping strings  
that young boy smothered  
his life gagged by the soiled fabric of freedom  
he would never be able to taste  
but his age, the robbed youth  
the utter disgrace  
for we have become accustomed to the horrors  
another boat, another life, already covered  
by reporters  
the blood that once wrenched the souls of those watching now nothing  
but scarlet paint in the ocean drowning  
seeping from the corpses of those we never fed  
where is a new story? where is the tragedy?

perhaps aboard that wobbling boat gargling another dozen of muffled families.

Camila Rusailh