

Rugby High School

Creative writing magazine

# ILLUMINATE

Inspire. Imagine. Illuminate.

Summer Term | 2018

I am very pleased to bring you the latest edition of “Illuminate”. The vast majority of these poems were inspired by the theme of “Unsilencing the Library”, which was the theme of the Jessie Wright poetry competition 2018. In here you will read a selection of the shortlisted and longlisted entries, along with some other work from English Language A Level students.

I started to put this edition together on International Woman’s Day, and I was struck by how many of these poems celebrated women’s rights and women’s voices. The theme of “unsilencing the library” was interpreted in so many ways, and in here there are love poems, autobiographical pieces, brilliant use of personas and works of complete fantasy and imagination.

Enjoy this unique library of poetry.

*Olga Dermott-Bond*

*Editor*

## **First Edition**

Borrow a piece of me, a page of my soul.

Not for sale.

I've written pages of my heart of the paper of

My skin, your

Hands dampen them

Nervous.

Margins like silver scars stamped with handprints,

Imprinted with memories on the curl of the corner.

My spine covered with silk, embossed, fragile

Wishing it was leather. Sturdy.

Blood like ink.

A contents half-filled, room for a million more voices yet.

Twenty-six letters to say I love you.

Dissertation.

*Briony Havergill*

## **A Thousand Lives Lived**

It was the best of times, it was the worst  
Of times. Paris I adored, London now  
My new home. Charles Dickens welcomed me first.  
It's a sin to kill a mockingbird, how  
Could anyone forget, Jem, Scout and Boo  
All with me on the journey. It is a  
Truth universally acknowledged, who  
Reads is never alone, with you they stay.  
But is it the same? Just words on a page?  
All these stories you read, friends that you make.  
They can't see, they can't feel, they never age.  
Then why do their stories make my heart ache?  
Strange, the affect simple words can inflict,  
But a life of words is the life I've picked.

*Jessica Bedgood*

## **Listen**

I am kissed with gold  
Fizzling and crackling on my lips like  
Electricity in blue air  
I am made of sunlight it  
Touches my skin and  
Caresses my hair  
And dances with  
My eyes  
I am debauched in stars  
From my past and future  
My voice forges storms and  
Carves rock to sand  
Deserts move to hear me  
  
And I will speak

*Izzy Herne*

## Futile

The air gasps for a fresh breeze amongst the cloying dust – choking,  
books burst out of shelves trying to escape – screaming,  
spoilers writhe under the constraints of binders and spines –  
breaking bones without sticks and stones,  
ruffling pages, spilling words and worlds across pages.

The newspapers mutter about gossip and outdated sport,  
whilst lonely music sheets mumble quivering, lonely love ballads to themselves  
in the inky dark.

Aged records complain about *how they were there first* and moan about the  
weight  
of fat dictionaries and obese thesauruses on the rickety shelf above.

There is a shift in the air and a sense of all about to change.  
Rushing through the shelves – causing a whisper of shock and concern –  
The Library holds its breath.  
Hesitating, one faded book leaps for its freedom – tumbling,  
haphazardly reaching for the carpet caked floor.

It lands, folded at an unnatural angle,  
sending up a little cloud of dry, grey dust –  
dog-eared cover staring mournfully at the gaudily coloured Children's shelf.  
The landing echoes in the high-ceilinged room.  
The ancient clock laughs, amused by this futile attempt.  
*tik-tok tik-tok tik-tok*

*Holly Weston*

## **I Am The Librarian**

Whose idea was it to “un-silence the library”?  
Who thought of such nonsense?  
Why, the lack of responsibility –  
Preposterous

I am the librarian  
Clean, composed and competent  
Living in a silent world  
Perfectly in harmony

Words of history  
Stacked neatly, alphabetically  
Telling their own story  
In the silent and best way

Whose idea was it to “un-silence the library”?  
Who thought of such nonsense?  
Why, the lack of respect!  
Preposterous

*Mary Waterman*

## Untitled

They can look but they can't touch

But I want to feel

I want to feel the delicate brush strokes that created me,

The oil that dried strong on my outline, all across me,

Plastered on the white canvas.

I want to feel the flowing water colours bleed over me,

Like the endless flowing pool of people filling in front of me

Who can look at me, stare and analyze,

But they cannot touch me.

I want to stretch my arms beyond this wall

And I want to feel the 'do not touch' crumble under my feet.

Watch as I throw it to the ground.

People will reach over and embrace me with all senses

Feel the fine lines and ridges that created and make me.

I can feel an endless flow of hands,

Like a tide gently brushing up on the shore.

People adding their own touch to my untouched canvas.

*Ellie Taylor*



## **The six wives club**

Oh ladies please!

Seymour pipe down and just wait a minute

We're dead already, not much else to do but wait

Has anyone seen Anne?

Right here

Not you Boleyn

No poor Cleves doesn't come to these anymore

Why ever not

Calm down Seymour

She was only married to that oaf for seven months

Excuse me that was my husband

He was all Husband to everyone of us Parr

Well he was *my* husband last

At least he didn't have an ulcerated leg when we were married

Christ Aragon that was years ago

*This* is why we never get anything done

Howard's right we need to start organising

Well it's quite hard to be the six wives when there's only five here

Are we going on tour again?

Boleyn it's not called on tour

Well are we doing a Christmas party

Dear Lord no Cleves is sensitive round Christmas

Anniversary time again

She should just get over it, I was married for four years

So was I, I'll have you know

Only because he couldn't be bothered to get rid of you Parr

Rather that than be beheaded

Oh ladies please!

*Rebeca Edwards*

## Stockholm Syndrome

I can't help but notice that where there once used to be fire,  
there are now ashes

The pages were black and white  
silent and still  
undisturbed

Just when it started getting its colour back,  
it shot me  
and I've been dying ever since

I drown in the words, filled in the pages  
to wash your scent from my mind  
but I can't forget

The pages are filled with sounds from songs that we'll never dance to

*You're posting a lot of song lyrics  
and we're all worried about you*

but you took, took, took  
so I sit and try to refill myself  
with meaningless, never ending stories

I keep telling myself I'll stop writing about you,  
Instead I write until my hands bleed

I hope the initials of my names are printed in bold black ink,  
like the cover title of a book,  
on your tongue  
because unlike people,  
words are permanent  
and you can't erase me.

*Nethmi Fonsek*

## All Night Atlas

An egg, cracked open and tilted,  
north- the smooth tundra, white  
of noise statics quiet in  
afternoons:  
flicked ashen from  
the desk.

Svalbard, the webbing  
lines span out  
in the blizzard  
of lost twilight hours.

Crumpled again. Again.  
cysts of paper grow cancerous  
as the drip of ink  
blots salted hands.  
The sea south spreads,  
tests me, ice melts in the morning.  
As the sun rises, regular as clock  
work.

Pulling nights  
from shelves,  
Every waking hour sees the moon  
and sleepless nights fall  
forward into Nuuk,  
Capital  
letters blur glaucomic  
in the dawn.

*Caitlin Mullin*

## Unsilencing the Library

The library held a hushed exaltation,  
as though the cherished volumes were all  
singing soundlessly within their covers,  
as you caressed your hand along the shelf listening to  
the shuffle of you fingernails gliding across  
their dented spinal cord's like a glissando.

*Wuthering heights*, you smelt an earlier time,  
leaking out the pages, an odor of knowledge, emotions  
That have been calmly resting, waiting between  
the cover that you return to the shelf. I watched  
you satisfy your curiosity, in a place where the  
only entry requirement was interest. Admired, it was  
Your finely tuned ear for a library's accumulations of  
echo and desire, that made me realise

Libraries are anything but hushed.

*Lottie Duffin*

six million

*It was a pleasure to burn.*

We could see them burn. Smell the  
ink drop off and  
the leather binding  
melt. Onlooking with white knuckled fists swearing  
the years to come would not come and  
would instead end before beginning  
and all of us would be, *home in time for Christmas.*

But we weren't in time for Christmas  
not that Christmas existed.

All that could remain was to cling to the memories  
and remember the facts to survive beyond that of the criteria honoured by blind  
men,  
their values entrenched as sharp as the yellow filled air by which we were all  
condemned.

Those images to scar, scattered among the bodies  
until we returned. a damp tea towel thrown down,  
the leather bound sewn back up,  
Retraced the ink onto fresh crisp transcripts.  
Smoke lingered on our breaths and gas in our lungs.

death breathed into new life to next lives  
to live on through the next.

*Anna McAlinden*

## **Broken Dreams**

billowing smoke like  
breath against the darkening sky  
warm with the anger of men  
who don't understand the beauty they burn

cream pages  
from smooth to curled  
with blackened corners rolling  
a cigarette in his mouth  
an explosive laugh between his teeth

i watch them from a pane  
of glass a fragile shield to protect  
me (from what?)  
yet all I want is to throw open the windows  
to inhale the remains

of knowledge  
and truth  
and hope

but  
all that is left  
a pile of ash  
that dulls the sound of

broken dreams

*Mianika Sikabofori*

## 19<sup>th</sup> of July

It was the library on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July,

I saw him, and let out a stifled cry.

He held books of espionage, Shakespeare, and science in his hand

His knowledge intrigued me, yet his attention I could not demand.

From my position the book 'Sherlock Holmes' I could descry,

And even though BBC Sherlock was stood right there! I was too shy.

If only I had the courage of the intrepid John Watson

Or at least the determination of Miss Havisham.

You see, the power of books to inspire is a beautiful thing

Most definitely most attractive than some glistening ring.

Right then I could really have done with some inspiration

Because all I was experiencing was nerves, worry, and hesitation.

My anxiety was like a barrier; it only held me back

So that day in the library? I did not meet Mr Cumberbatch.

*May Burke*



## Women Dream?

I'm washing their clothes  
Picking up old socks  
Changing old bedsheets,  
Soaping their frocks.

I defrost the meat  
For our evening meal.  
Mixing the gravy,  
Trying not to feel

Overlooked by my family,  
As I run the whole house.  
Without me, they'd crumble.  
Run by my spouse!

Yes I know that he works,  
But I work too.  
And then he complains  
Of the texture of *my* stew.

Yes I will cook.  
And yes I will clean.  
Little do they know  
At night I dream.

Prime Minister of England!  
I'll set some new laws.  
All of the family  
Must share in the chores!

Remarks about sandwiches?  
Punishable by death.  
No, *you* get back to the kitchen.  
And in my next breath.

Free tampons for all!  
Wave them in the air.  
Yes, pads too,  
We can all share.

Education will change.  
As all of our girls  
Will see science and maths  
As part of their world.

"Sexism at work"  
I hear your cries.  
Guess what. I believe you!  
We'll get rid of those guys.

Make up? Brilliant.  
No make up? Great.  
You want a short skirt?  
I've got you mate.

Our brand new England  
Of you and me.  
Will have a new anthem:  
"EQUALITY"

Yes, this is my dream.  
It's too late for me  
But you, young women.  
Go, set us free.

*Rachel Coates*

## Unsilencing the Library (Cento)

All examination questions  
Include command on action words  
These will tell you  
What the examiner wants you to do

In today's world, many seek  
Knowledge about places, people and cultures  
Had the social novelists really  
Been pioneer thinkers

The documents which followed are intended  
to be read with questions in mind  
Imagine the following men:  
A loving husband and father and caring friend

Soldiers, convicts and labourers  
Built a wall to keep out northern invaders  
The betrayed wife, The temptress  
The good woman, The ugly sister, The bad girl  
And finally The mother figure

It is a detective story concerning  
your own ancestors in the dark ages  
Much material never before in print  
And previously not considered to be exist

It was a human disaster  
on a scale never known before in history  
Each book begins with a chronology  
of the significant events in the in the life of

It was a day when nightmares faded  
and dreams came true  
"Woman's equal rights proclaim:  
Treat the mistress like the master"

Now if I were to write a book out of experience  
I should begin  
    "Women have no sympathy."  
Yours is tradition, mine is the conviction of experience

Our women are all on fire  
Striving through a gallant emulation  
to outdo our men  
-and never gave up trying  
Never gave up hope

It is people and not buildings or ideas  
who make history  
But sometimes, if we're lucky  
A voice from the past can jump  
through the time barrier and demand our attention  
I hope I will be able to confide everything to you  
and I hope you will be a great source  
of comfort and support.

*Sources in order of use:*

*GCSE Modern World History, Richard Staton and John Wright*

*Daily life at the time of Jesus, Miriam Feinberg Vamesh*

*Aristocracy and People- Britain 1815-1865, Norman Gash*

*Ireland 1780-1914, SR Gibbons*

*Oliver Cromwell, David Downing*

*Ancient China Discoveries*

*The Six Wives of Henry VIII, Antonia Fraser*

*The legacy of Arthur's Chester, Robert B Stoker*

*The Spitfire Story, Alfred Price*

*The Black Death and Peasants Revolt, Leonard W Courie*

*Stalin, John Phillip*

*People who have helped the World, Mikhail Gobachev*

*A woman's right; a billet to bright*

*Florence Nightingale*

*Women all on fire, Allison Plowden*

*Coaster girls and Mudlarks, Belinda Hollyer*

*Anne Frank's Diary*

*Hannah Wright*

## **Shouting for Sisterhood**

Paper. Books. Documents.

Erupting with debate, with arguments.

Stowed away for a lifetime,

Out of reach – it's a climb.

This fight of ours,

It's not all about flowers.

We chant in rhythm, in rhyme.

Its time.

Women's suffrage:

It never did see much coverage

From the media,

People believing themselves to be encyclopaedias.

Required to write under pseudonyms

We are the women set out to ruin him.

Bronte. Woolf. Rowling.

Bell. Odle. J. K.

Literature cannot be silenced

It cannot be more violent:

Paper. Books. Documents.

An immortal monument,

For the evermore fight for women's liberation,

Shouting for sisterhood.

*Sophie Hill*

## **Ashamed Anonymous**

Hello, my name is anonymous and-

No, no- I really have to come clean and own it.

Hello, my name is Georgia and-

Are you sure Miss Mason will never see this?

Hello my name is Georgia and...

I prefer films to plays.

And yes I know I do drama A-level and am therefore obligated  
to prey to our lord and saviour Hedda Gabbler Each night

And yes I know cinema cant offer authenticity and intimacy like  
theatre can- and it will be the death of culture

But I just cant hide it anymore

It feels so good to let it free

And no, me and Stephen Berkoff are not besties 5 eva 4 life

And I do happen to think Quinten Tarentino would beat Frantic Assembly in a  
fight any day because 'Pulp Fiction' is just waaaayyy better than 'Things I Know  
To Be True'

And I Refuse To Be Ashamed Anymore.

*Georgia Heales*

## Overdue

He handed me an overdue invoice,  
Weighed down with the tonnage  
Of his insecurities.

‘There’s only so much I can give you’  
He whispers with fearful repentance.  
He dreaded my judgement  
I dreaded his actions.

I immersed myself in his endearment freely,  
Rinsing him, like a rusted tree tap,  
Slowly bleeding him dry.  
His twisted heart came to rely on me,  
Using him, taking advantage of his mutilated soul,  
Pleading for my heart to parody his own.

His emotions flowed, like ink to paper,  
Painting his love across the pages.  
Lines dancing like ribbons in a winter breeze,  
Like silky locks tugged by the tempestuous tides,  
The tides of his twisted heart.  
He was my library, and I claimed book after book,  
Snatched page after page,



Fulfilling my own selfish desires,  
Until his tides changed.

In a hazen panic, I bare my heart,  
Weeping, scornful beseeching,  
Hoping for the tides to turn back  
Wanting him back in his hushed desolation.  
'There's only so much I can give you'  
And within this sharp blistering utterance,  
The waves shifted, the silence lifted,  
The books slammed shut  
And I crumpled, and I screamed  
And I raked my heart for a way  
Back to him.

*Saffi Graham*

## **The king of hearts**

I'm best known as the husband of the queen of hearts.

It's all about her and her tarts.

When the Knave of hearts took them I beat him till he was sore,  
He brought back the tarts and vowed he would steal no more.

Or at least that's how the story is told.

Im actually nowhere near as cold.

You see my wife has an addiction of cutting of heads  
But what no one knows is I pardon them when she's in bed.

She will blame things on anyone around,  
Especially if they're not wearing a crown.  
My wife is the problem, definitely not me  
But this is thing that people fail to see.

There are many details that people leave out,  
Yet they always like to mention how I am quite stout.  
But for now I guess I'll take my wife's hand,  
As we, I mean she, I mean her majesty, continues to rule wonderland.

*Alex Gaskin*



## **Hidden**

Darkness embracing me, keeping me hostage,

This heart of mine hums with sadness.

The cloth blocks more than just the light.

My wings,

My freedom,

All lost.

Agitation walls up inside,

Screaming inside,

Lying here, my heart no longer hums,

A slow, unsteady sound has replaced it.

The world, I guess, was just too dark,

For a light feathered Canary like me.

In freedom I fly,

In captivity, I fall.

*Harini Shah*

## **Stay away from the dark unopened books...**

The air tastes antique, sour and sweet,

I am standing amongst shelves and shelves of neglected stories,

There was an eerie silence in the air,

The only sounds coming from the turning of old pages, the isolated high-pitched shrieks of the floorboards and the ticking of the peculiar, ancient clock,

There was something strange about this library,

the white fluorescent lights buzz over my head, as if a method of determined annoyance,

the mid-morning sun glistens through tall, colossal windows onto the tops of uneven books,

the untouched, prestige surfaces are intriguing me,

unbent books lay neatly on a splintered shelf with no crumpled pages or folded corners,

but then there was something about this one book,

this book was whispering,

no one hears anything, but this book is screaming to me,

you could tell no one had opened it in years,

the covers sinisterly creaked as I lifted it,

my hand glides over the worn leather cover as I brush off the blanket of dust that covers it,

then I open it,  
a thunderous applause erupts from the book,  
and a harsh breath of madness gets blown in my face,  
there is a mixture of an old but magical stench drawing me in,  
I could already taste the magic at the palm of my hand,

the first sun-yellowed page crumbles at my touch,  
and what I witnessed was an image I cannot get out of my mind,  
An image that will haunt me for the rest of my life,  
I instantly close the book,  
My heart uncontrollably races,  
as I hurry out of the door trying not to shake too much,

The library is a sinister and malevolent place,  
A place where demons and spirits huddle in the dark unopened books,  
Waiting and waiting to be unlocked...

*Shenise Shoker*

## **A twist in the tale - Snow White and the seven princesses**

Once upon a time there lived a strong, brave intelligent man named Snow White. He often got teased for bearing such a feminine name however, the seven princesses who cared for him re-established his manly persona. As mentioned previously, he lived alongside seven beautiful, delicately graceful, princesses who served him daily. They were split into teams; Daisy, Lily and Rose did all his cooking and packed his lunches for when he was at work, Poppy, Violet and Tulip were responsible for cleaning the house and finally, Bluebell who was in charge of all laundry and ironing. Snow White lived contently in his perfect little house with his perfect little princesses and all he was responsible for was being the breadwinner. He worked as a lumberjack where every day he would strenuously chop wood and deliver it to all the meek, helpless housewives. He did this every day, six days a week until, one day one of the meek, helpless housewives offered Snow white a freshly baked batch of cookies. Graciously, Snow White chomped away on the cookie when all of a sudden he felt a sharp pain through his stomach. Poison he thought. (He was correct) All the housewives in the village had teamed up with his seven princesses and poisoned him to teach Snow white a thing or two about being a misogynistic pig.

*Shannon Smyth*