

WORDSMITHS

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Tell me, I forget; show me, I remember; involve me, I understand. (Carl Orff)

One of the guiding principles of Waldorf education is experiential learning. As teachers we know that the only way for children to truly learn is to allow them to experience the world for themselves. As such it is rare to find oneself simply relaying information, and visitors to our school are likely to find, in every classroom, children engaged in practical and creative activities, their heads being educated by way of their hands and their hearts. This is also a useful tool for teachers because physical activity produces visible evidence of our students' progress.

In the study of literature there is a wealth of practical approaches, such as working through recitation and drama, which help us see how well our students have understood not only the meaning but the emotional nuances of a piece of writing.

However, there comes a time when all students must simply sit and write, and for a while their learning becomes invisible. Between classroom discussion and the submission of written work there is a void over which we must take a leap of faith. I must trust that they have made a connection with what we have read, and they must trust that they hold, within their heads and their hearts, all they need to engage deeply with the narrative musicality of literature.

For the best part of a week, the classroom falls silent, my students disappear into worlds of analysis and creation—and I wait.

Then... miracles appear. No matter how well I know my students, or what I can predict through observation, the essays, the poems, the stories I receive are always revelatory, affording me glimpses into the usually invisible understanding and abilities of these young people.

I am proud to say that the standard of written work in our High School is high, and as a result I have been extremely selective about what to include in this collection—even with the most critical eye I have ended up with no fewer than twenty four pieces, all of which go far beyond the expectations of formal assessment.

It is my hope that this journal become an annual publication, and that, year after year, through the work herein, these young adults can give to you what they so often give to me: new ways of seeing the world.

— Stella Ottewill

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Haunting: a wide reading

Pearl Kelly (Cl. 12)

In September 2021, Level 5 (Cl. 12) English students undertook the challenge of close-reading a wide range of texts. They looked at films, poetry, a novel, a play, a graphic novel, and a short story, and in lessons discussed the manifold ways in which these texts exemplified and explored a range of themes. Pearl chose to write about *Parasite* (dir. Bong 2019), *Jane Eyre* (Brontë), 'Eurydice' (Duffy), *The Royal Tenenbaums* (dir. Anderson, 2001), and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Williams), producing an exceptional piece of work that explores the effects and very nature of haunting.

The experience of being haunted is to be plagued by an unwanted spiritual presence. However haunting is not constrained by the bounds of the supernatural, it manifests in a metaphorical sense; one can be haunted by feeling. To demonstrate this I will investigate the theme of haunting in a range of texts including: *Jane Eyre*, Carol Ann Duffy's poem 'Eurydice', *Parasite*, *The Royal Tenenbaums*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The role of this essay will be to examine the distinction between a physical haunting and a metaphorical one.

In *Parasite*, although they are unaware of it, the Park family is haunted by a ghost. Outside, in the real world Geun Se is dead, he no longer exists in the land of the living, only in the sallow green confines of the family basement. Within our texts the corporeal existence of phantom-like characters, like Geun Se, exercise supernatural tendencies. Each day from inside the walls of his makeshift home he gives thanks to the great Nathan Park, controlling the lights switches that are thought to be automatic.

The presence of a spirit or supernatural entity is often signified by the moving or changing of a physical object, evidencing the breach of the natural world from an uncanny being. Often these changes are the flickering of lamps, or the extinguishing of candles, in this case they are the definite timed actions of a man playing a phantom. Not only is this Geun Se's daily ritual of gratitude, it is also his form of communication from his world to the Parks and to Mr Park himself. An unwanted presence making itself known is a classic haunting trope. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha Mason, like Geun Se, exists unknown to Jane for most of the narrative. She too feels the need to assert her presence, although it is safe to say it's not for means of gratitude.

The secret that enshrouds Bertha Mason's existence haunts Thornfield manor day and night. Bertha's ghoulish laughter penetrates through the



Stills from *Parasite* (dir. Bong, 2019)

walls, but it is not until she sets Rochester's bed on fire that Jane's suspicions of a secret come into being. These queries are further heightened by Bertha's sudden appearance in Jane's room, a few nights prior to Jane and Rochester's wedding.

Just at my bedside, the figure stopped: the fiery eyes glared upon me—she thrust up her candle close to my face, and extinguished it under my eyes. I was aware of her lurid visage flamed over mine, and I lost consciousness: for the second time in my life—only the second time I became insensible from terror. (p.327)

As Jane is still unaware of Bertha's identity she refers to her as a figure, which only adds to the spectral image we have of her in this passage. This is contrasted by the 'fiery eyes' proving to us Bertha's flesh and blood existence. The mention of fire also echoes Bertha's initial warning when she sets Rochester's bed alight. The use of a candle as means of controlling a situation by controlling light is paralleled by Geun Se's controlling of the light switches. However in contrast to *Parasite*, at the end of their brief encounter, Bertha and her 'lurid visage' tower over Jane, the ghost who has come out of hiding holds all the power. At the end of *Parasite* when Geun Se comes out of hiding, Mr Park towers over him, and he holds all the power, revolted by his appearance, as Jane in turn is of Bertha's. Jane closes her recounting of events by referencing her experience in the red room. By bringing back this

childhood trauma we get the full emphasis of Jane's terror. That initial experience ignites a series of events leading Jane's life to upturn and for her to leave Gateshead. Similarly this event is soon followed by the true revelation of Bertha Mason and Jane's life once again being uprooted.

One could argue that before Jane finds the strength to leave Thornfield, she is still a child. It is only after the revealing of Bertha's existence that Jane leaves. Forced to fend for herself she must shed her infantile tendencies, and move from child to woman. Although in this case Jane has no desire to bring about Bertha's existence, the process of willing something into being is a pertinent human process. Our subconscious knows our actions before our conscious mind gets a hold of them, and our unknown desire for a certain outcome is often inadvertently brought into existence. In keeping with this logic perhaps then as a reader we subconsciously hope for the revealing of Bertha's existence, as we know Jane will not leave Rochester without a reason.

The precursor to this encounter is Jane's anxiety induced dream. The dream abstractly represents Jane's apprehension of Rochester's sincerity through the crumbling of Thornfield manor; an inherently prophetic idea as it is this state Thornfield ultimately comes to inhabit. This agitation in everyday life, so

intense and persistent that it leaks into one's dreams, is a universal experience.

Aside from the obvious reasons Rochester's aversion to Bertha is that she serves as a constant reminder of his past. This is often the role of ghosts, existing to remind one of a past they cannot be rid of. Royal Tenenbaum performs this role throughout most of the film *The Royal Tenenbaums*. As opposed to Geun Se, he takes lodgings in the upper most creaking floors of the brightly painted Tenenbaum townhouse, and from there haunts his three children by serving as a constant reminder of their apparent failures.

The lifelong need to acquire the admiration and acceptance of a parent, particularly if that parent refused the divulgence of such emotions in childhood, is a complex relationship that can be broken into many different categories. A prominent emergence of this theme is the search for a paternal figure to satisfy an unquenched childhood love. These paternal qualifications are often found in a lover, as Jane finds with Rochester, culminating in the more crude terminology 'daddy issues'. Margot Tenenbaum's ever unsuccessful search for love results in her marrying a man not only twice her age, but who's first name Raleigh (St Claire), bears similarity to her father's middle name (Royal) O'Reilly (Tenenbaum).

Orpheus firmly illustrates the 'ghost from the past' theme as he literally represents Eurydice's entire past life. Additionally in terms of location serving as a factor in haunting (as with Royal and Geun Se) the case of Orpheus and Eurydice is particularly interesting. Where in the typical sense of the story Eurydice's absence from the world is what haunts Orpheus, here our inverse spin of the narrative in Carol Ann Duffy's poem, allows us to see that Eurydice, in the land of the dead, is really haunted by Orpheus.

So imagine me there,
unavailable,
out of this world,
then picture my face in that place
of Eternal Repose,
in the one place you'd think a girl would be safe
from the kind of a man
who follows her round
writing poems, (*Eurydice* p. 58)

Although the underworld is technically the afterlife and in that sense *is* the 'place of Eternal Repose,' the idea of the underworld in Greek mythology conjures such vivid connotations of Hell that by Eurydice naming it *her* place of Eternal Repose, *her* heaven proves just how hellish life on earth must have been. The contrast of being haunted



Stills from *The Royal Tenenbaums* (dir. Anderson, 2001)

by a living person in the underworld ties to the theme of natural beings having supernatural tendencies: Orpheus, a living breathing man, manages to transform into a ghost through his cross world obsession with his girlfriend. Similarly it is in part Geun Se's obsession with Nathan Park that pushes him to cross from his world to theirs. Throughout this poem we are met constantly with inversely spun points of view. Eurydice only feels 'safe' now that she is dead, and from a man whose only assault is writing her poetry. Using 'girl' has a particularly modern ring to it; it calls out to a turn of the millennium audience, humouring the underlying fear of men that is so prevalent within our society. By our rule books the one place a girl would be safe is amid a busy street of keen witnesses, or the reassuring confines of one's home. Eurydice however is comforted by the cold unknown planes of Hades, for only there is she safe from her lyrical predator.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire* Blanche Dubois' sudden presence in her sister's new life serves decidedly as a symbol from the past. She floats into the suffocatingly small New Orleans apartment, and takes residence as a phantom of her former self. In the only way she knows how she instantly begins to exercise her stagnant upper class southern ways. Her constant unwanted presence, floating between the two dingy rooms, clad in spectral white satin robes and dripping in paste diamonds, serves as a constant reminder of the past Stanley has effectively erased from Stella. However Blanche's presence slowly begins to remind Stella of the life she left back home and how unsavoury Stanley is in comparison, filling her role as a ghost of Stella's past, although her haunting is ultimately of Stanley.

STELLA: Mr Kowalski is too busy making a pig of himself to think of anything else!

STANLEY: That's right, baby.

STELLA: Your face and your fingers are disgustingly greasy. Go and wash up and then help me clear the table.

[*He hurls a plate to the floor.*]

STANLEY: That's how I'll clear the table! [He seizes her arm.] Don't ever talk that way to me! 'Pig--Polack--disgusting--vulgar--greasy!'--them words have been on your tongue and your sister's too much around here! What do you think you are? A pair of queens? (p. 77)

By abandoning the use of his first name and calling him 'Mr Kowalski', Stella detaches herself from her husband. Referring to him in a formal sense she momentarily isn't playing his wife. Comparing him to a pig is not only demeaning but also echoes Blanche's

prior animal comparison of Stanley which Stella previously rebuffed. That she now adopts it speaks to Blanche's influence. Earlier in the play Stella would never so demandingly order her husband around, insulting his appearance in the process. She does so now as a result of Blanche's persistent reminding of Stanley's repulsive 'common' behaviors, and that as one who has married beneath themselves she has the right to treat him thusly.

Stanley's sudden outburst, although in some sense justified, only proves the ever growing opinion his wife and sister-in-law now have of him. He reverses the power dynamic by ordering Stella to never speak to him in such a disrespectful manner, and throws her own insults back in her face. He condemns Blanche and Stella's frequent, insulting language and alludes to their superior opinions of themselves by saying 'What do you think you are? A pair of queens?' Blanche's frequent condemnation of Stanley's undignified character parallels the Park family's revulsion to the lingering basement smell, which is essentially their aversion to the lower classes.

Like Stanley, Eurydice is also haunted by how she is perceived. Although she is Orpheus' muse she is ultimately just his version of herself, the inspiration he draws is simply a reflection of himself in her being, a self portrait.

rest assured that I'd rather speak for myself
than be Dearest, Beloved, Dark Lady, White
goddess,
etc., etc.

Here we have several framings of Orpheus's Eurydice. She is his 'dearest beloved'; she is purity, desire, she fills each role of Plato's tripartite soul without even trying, or at least that is how Orpheus sees her.

In the case of *The Royal Tenenbaums* it is also Royal's expectation of his two sons and adopted daughter that truly *haunts* his children. His sudden emergence in their lives serves as a constant reminder of Richie's failed tennis career, Margot's lack of blood relation and Chas's own paternal shortcomings. His children, who have never fully breached adolescence, come home only to reveal that they are individually depressed. Fuelled in part by the lives and relationships led outside of their family home, however overwhelmingly by the lack of love and acceptance they failed to receive from their own father. The lack thereof was replaced by an expectation of success which try as they might the three cannot fulfil or maintain, and are therefore never fully enough for Royal.

As this essay demonstrates, physical and

metaphorical haunting can scarcely be separated. By examining the distinction of haunting in our texts this knowledge has become exceedingly prevalent. In *Jane Eyre*, Jane is haunted by her doubt of Rochester's honesty, which ultimately leads to the discovery of Bertha who in turn acts as Jane's physical phantom. In *A Streetcar Named Desire* Blanche's presence physically haunts the Kowalski household, and her snobbish tendencies haunt Stanley's ego. Royal Tenenbaum serves both as a physical ghost located in the upper floors of the Tenenbaum house, and as a phantom of his children's past failures. These alone exemplify the close knit relationship the two realms of haunting have, leading us to see haunting as perhaps an inescapable part of human life.

Connections between *Northern Lights* and *Paradise Lost*: Religion, Other Worlds, and Intertextuality

Lexie Skilbeck (Cl. 12)

Class 12 started their year with a core English/Humanities block, which aimed to develop the students' close-reading, thematic understanding, and contextual knowledge of a range of texts. Central to this study was Philip Pullman's Northern Lights. Having drawn a range of themes from this wonderful book, the students then compared these ideas in other texts such as Paradise Lost (Milton), The Snow Queen (Anderson), Alien (dir. Scott, 1979), The Truman Show (dir. Weir, 1998), The Matrix (dir. Wachowskis, 1999), and 'Sardines', Inside No. 9 (cr. Pemberton & Shearsmith, 2014). Out of this block Lexie produced the following essay: an extraordinary study of two texts that not only explores themes but places the narratives as though they themselves exist in parallel universes.

'I have just brushed ten million other worlds, and they knew nothing of it. We are as close as a heartbeat, but we can never touch or see or hear these other worlds except in the Northern Lights.' (p. 187). As Phillip Pullman writes this, he reveals the idea of many worlds existing in separate realms. It is with this idea that I have chosen to interrogate *Northern Lights* and *Paradise Lost*, as if at the same time Pullman writes about Lyra Belacqua's journey to the North, in a parallel universe John Milton is dictating verses of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to his daughter, and at certain moments in the texts, these two realms brush briefly past each other. With this thought, I will be looking at the connections between *Northern Lights* and *Paradise Lost* as well as the theme of 'other-worlds' and religion within the texts.

The opening words to *Paradise Lost*—'Of Man's

first disobedience, and the fruit of the forbidden Tree' (Book I, ll. 1-2)—introduce the idea of 'original sin', a concept Lord Asriel explains to Lyra in chapter 21 of *Northern Lights*: 'Human beings can't see anything without wanting to destroy it, Lyra. *That's* original sin.' (p. 375). In the story of *Paradise Lost* Eve eats the forbidden fruit, this being 'Man's first disobedience' or Man's 'original sin' and in turn 'destroys' her innocence and condemns herself and Adam to expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The opening line of *Paradise Lost* also aligns with a segment from chapter 2 of *Northern Lights* describing the relationship between Lyra and the Oxford Scholars. They 'chased her away from the fruit trees in the Garden' (p. 19). This is an example of Lyra's earliest disobedience, tying into "Man's first disobedience". The capitalised G in 'Garden' is also pointing to *the* Garden of Eden rather than just any garden.

Lyra being kept away from the fruit tree is an early textual indication that Pullman's Lyra *is* Milton's Eve. This is a moment in which the two texts touch, revealing an other-world which is both 'then' (*Paradise Lost*) and 'now' (*Northern Lights*). As Milton writes *Paradise Lost* it collides with Pullman writing *Northern Lights*. For the contemporary reader both texts exist simultaneously, not divided by 400 years. Eve and Lyra's stories are intertwined to the extent that they not only refer to each other but co-exist: "Because they live so close to the place where the veil between the worlds is thin, they hear immortal whispers from time to time" (*Northern Lights* p. 175). In this quotation, Pullman illustrates the closeness and echoes of multi-verses. The word 'veil' implies that the other world will be revealed, as in the lifting of the veil. 'Immortal' (as in undying, with immortal having the implication of being eternal) is immediately followed by the juxtaposition of 'time to time' (as in 'now and again'). 'Time to time' is also a double meaning and could be read as from the beginning of time to the end of time, meaning that the voices are truly immortal. The reader is invited to consider the possibility of multiple universes co-existing. When Eve is hinted at throughout the novel, these are moments in which 'the veil is thin' between *Northern Lights* and *Paradise Lost*.

Both *Paradise Lost* and *Northern Lights* question Church doctrine. The doctrine of original sin (Eve's eating of the apple that led to the damnation of humankind) is the foundation of all organised Christian religions. Milton challenges this doctrine in an interaction between Michael and Adam after Eve has eaten the fruit. 'This having learnt, thou hast attained the sum / Of Wisdom' (Book XII, ll 575-576). Michael is saying to Adam that now,

having eaten the fruit from the 'Tree of Knowledge' Adam and Eve have been bestowed with Wisdom in its entirety, as shown with the capitalised W. It is not just wisdom; it is the Wisdom of the universe, of eternity. It is another moment in which the veil between *Paradise Lost* and *Northern Lights* thins: 'Something in the way he said it made Lyra imagine Dust with a capital letter, as if this wasn't ordinary dust' (p. 22). Pullman makes this connection clear in chapter 21 as Lord Asriel explains Dust to Lyra: 'The Magisterium decided that Dust was the physical evidence for original sin' (p. 369). The passage from *Paradise Lost* ends with 'To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess / A paradise within thee, happier far.' (Book XII, ll 586-587). Milton is saying, despite Adam and Eve being expelled from Paradise, the knowledge they have gained will create a new paradise within them. The capital P in the first 'Paradise' in contrast to the lower-case p in the second makes the reader understand that whilst the Adam and Eve will be able to create their own paradise within them, it will never be *the* Paradise they lost when they ate the apple and were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

Pullman addresses this theme in the final chapter of *Northern Lights*: 'Behind them lay pain and death and fear; ahead of them lay doubt, and danger, and fathomless mysteries. But they weren't alone. So Lyra and her daemon turned away from the world they were born in, and looked towards the sun, and walked into the sky.' (pp.396-397). In these quotations, Lyra is choosing to take on the burden of knowledge and move forth into the next world, as opposed to remaining in her familiar, safe world. The first half of the quotation is balanced, with the 'ands' being fulcrum-like, supporting the scale, however, 'fathomless' breaks the sentence's rhythm and tips the scale towards the future, showing us the direction Lyra is going to take. The latter section also uses a repetition of 'ands' but for a different purpose. Here, the 'ands' add rhythm to the line and move it forward, much like the improvisation method of 'yes, and', driving the story forward and making the reader hear the movement of Lyra walking into the sky.

The last line of *Northern Lights* goes 'hand in hand' with the final line from *Paradise Lost* in which, like Lyra and Pantalaimon, Adam and Eve leave the world they were born in and make their way to a different world, harbouring the knowledge they have gained from the forbidden tree 'They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow, / Through Eden took their solitary way.' (Book XII, ll 648-649). This sentence contains the oxymoron 'hand in hand' and 'solitary'. In this final quotation, Milton plants the

idea that Adam and Eve, though still having the companionship of each other, have separated from God, making them alone in the world, much like Lyra and Pan, together, but separating from the world in which they were born.

Together, Milton and Pullman challenge the Church's doctrine and practice that ignorance is greater than knowledge. Phillip Pullman was writing *Northern Lights* at the turn of the millennium, a time when standing on thresholds, and moving into different worlds metaphorically described the unknown of what was to come. Pullman was also writing during a rise in fundamental religion, including Evangelical Christianity and fundamentalist Islam. Milton was writing *Paradise Lost* at a time of political and religious turmoil (the English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell's rule, the restoration of the Monarchy) a time of unknowns. Both writers were writing in opposition to repressive organised religion: 'Ever since Pope John Calvin had moved the seat of the Papacy to Geneva and set up the Consistorial Court of Discipline, the Church's power over every aspect of life had been absolute.' (*Northern Lights* p. 31). In this quotation, Pullman criticises two significant branches of Christianity by referring to the Pope (Catholicism) and Calvin (Protestantism). In saying 'the Church's power over every aspect of life had been absolute', he is asking readers to question the grip organised religion had over society, an echo of the moral authority the Church had at the time *Paradise Lost* was written.

'A bridge between two worlds...' (*Northern Lights* p. 191). Pullman brings both *Paradise Lost* and *Northern Lights* together with intertextual hints, such as the similarities of Asriel, Uriel and Abdiel, whilst also connecting Lyra's world to our own, with descriptions of London and Oxford. By doing this, Pullman is creating an other-world in which *Paradise Lost* and *Northern Lights* exist simultaneously for the reader, whilst also co-existing with our own world. Both Milton and Pullman were asking the same questions and challenging similarly repressive religious structures at different turbulent points in history. Pullman's retelling of *Paradise Lost* contains hints throughout that link Lyra to Eve and weave *Paradise Lost* into the world of *Northern Lights*. The similarities between their two worlds, though 400 years apart, could be what drew Pullman to the need to re-reveal *Paradise Lost*.

In the Autumn of 2021 Eleni Karakonstanti and I collaborated on a Greek Drama block in Classes 10 and 11. Over the course of three weeks the students worked on chorus recitation, mask making, and were told about the development of Ancient drama. At the core of this work was an in-depth study of Sophocles' drama, Antigone, and it is this play which is explored in the following trio of essays.

Death and marriage in *Antigone*

Daisy Meaker (Cl. 10)

In my mind, death and marriage share many similarities. Both are steeped in tradition and ceremony, they are an end and a beginning, the end of one's life (alone), and the beginning of eternity. Even within marital ceremonies, it is promised that only death can divorce the lovers. In this essay, I will be exploring these themes in Sophocles' *Antigone*, looking at scenes critical to the execution plot.

Throughout the play, there are many references to marriage having a relation to death. 'Antigone, like a young bride, / Going to her bedchamber, to marry the dead / And share their everlasting sleep.' (p. 35) This is from the powerful stasimon following the decree for Antigone's death sentence. It takes on a softer note in this passage, the mood subdued. Softer consonants hold the line close around your tongue. The punctuation feels like waves of tiredness, the drifting pace like the moments before sleep. The use of 'bedchamber' and 'sleep' evoke a drowsiness, and for her to 'share their everlasting sleep' feels like an acceptance of her fate, possibly even a welcoming.

Antigone herself states 'To my grave then. My honeymoon bed.' (p. 38), which I understand as a form of acceptance. She recognises her fate and is expressing sadness at what she will miss out on. The short, stop-start sentences arouse a sense of finality and make it harder to read, yet no less compelling. I think because it is Antigone who says this, it is easier to empathise with, and as she isn't granted the comfort of a death-bed, the comparisons of her to-be death-site and beds/bedchambers feel almost cruel. This quotation in particular makes me sad because she is so close to the ultimate expression of love—devoting her life to Haemon—only to have it taken from her. Another thing to note is that she and Haemon end up dead in each other's arms, almost akin to the honeymoon bed.

Later, her death is compared to that of Danaë: 'Both prison and tomb / Became her wedding chamber at last.' (p. 40). This holds strong imagery, and elicits some questions in me. Could this be referring to marriage itself as a form of imprisonment? And what business does such a strong

theme of matrimony have in a tragedy? I love this analogy; it's bold to compare what is traditionally a very joyful celebration to an anguished event of this calibre (the miscarriage of justice, resulting in the death of a young couple) and it is executed well.

Again with the theme of prison, marriage, and death, 'To the prison cell furnished with stone / That served as a bridal suite for the girl / Married to death.' (p. 50) has a lot to unpack. The prison cell can be taken literally or metaphorically. She is literally going to be bricked into a cave, imprisoned in the strongest sense; yet she is also having to live with the knowledge of her imminent demise, which could be a mental prison of its own. The comparison of her cave-prison to a bridal suite feels like an attack on marriage itself. Is the bridal suite the prison before the end of maiden-hood? And the honeymoon bed, the grave in which the newlyweds lie? The last line changes how I see the analogy. It goes from marrying Haemon, to marrying death itself—committing to never leaving its side—which further stresses its permanent nature. Earlier in the play, Antigone expresses a similar sentiment: 'Death be my bridegroom' (p.36).

'So now they're together, two corpses, / Joined in death. He got his marriage, / [...] it was solemnised in the grave / Where there are no celebrations.' (p. 52) By this point, Antigone is dead and Haemon has committed suicide in the cave with her corpse. Haemon's wishes to wed Antigone weren't futile; he got his marriage, 'solemnised in the grave'. The intimacy of dying with her could symbolise the sacrifice and choice you make in marriage; committing to spend the rest of your life with one person. 'Joined in death.' is such an abrupt sentence, and could almost be the full-stop to their lives.

Death is always a strong theme in tragedy, whereas marriage is usually associated with comedy. The duality of the two concepts and how they are used leaves me with many questions as to the intentions behind this choice. Marrying a joyful occasion with one of such anguish creates a powerful and layered narrative. It also challenges an institution fundamental to how society has developed and functions. I finished the play with an ache in my chest for Antigone's unjust fate, and I think this analogy had a lot to do with it.

Civil Disobedience in *Antigone*

Barnaby Michael (Cl. 10)

In looking at civil disobedience in *Antigone* I've taken extracts appearing at the beginning of the play, spoken between Antigone herself and Ismene. The extracts illustrate two different reactions to an edict that is perceived as unjust. The secret conversation that the sisters have demonstrates Antigone's willingness to defy the King and perform an act that she believes is just, but it also shows how people can be cowed by fear of the state and, rather than stand up against something they feel to be unjust, they acquiesce to it.

Antigone is willing to defy the state to do what she believes is just. She says 'I am going to bury my brother, and if I die in the attempt, I shall die in the knowledge that I have acted justly.' (P.7) Where 'die' is repeated twice, it really emphasises the subject at hand: death—and death on multiple accounts; the first is the most obvious and straightforward, the dead brother, and the second is the fact that if they were caught going against the decree and burying their brother the consequence would most certainly be death.

I feel another reason she could have such a motive to bury her brother is that she loves or rather loved him very much, and with his sudden death she still has a lot of love for him but nowhere to put it. It's almost like she needs to feel a sense of closure by burying him.

Ismene, in contrast is too frightened to stand up against the decree of the King, 'I have no choice!' She feels helpless. 'How can we fight against the institutionalised strength / of the male sex? They are in power, / and we have to obey them [...] state power / commands, and I must do as I'm told' (P.7)

I want to draw attention to the fact that in this extract, powerful words are used: 'institutionalised strength', 'power', 'obey', 'commands', 'barred'. These are all examples of words which are controlling. Ismene, it seems, feels powerless and small, the words she uses to describe the power the state has over the people are dictatorial. The force of words such as these are used to make us empathise with Ismene's fear to stand up and fight.

When Ismene says, 'There's a fire burning inside of you Antigone, / But it makes me cold just to hear you!', the words 'fire' and 'cold' show the juxtaposition between the sisters' personalities. The fire describes the passion inside of Antigone, her desire to fight. However, the fire inside of Antigone can also be perceived as a symbol of cleansing, burning the old for the new to come through, just like

a farmer burns his field after harvest for the next. The fire in *Antigone* is destructive, there to destroy the decree of the king, giving space for balance and equality to come through.

Ismene on the other hand describes herself as feeling cold in the light of Antigone's fire. The cold symbolises fear, lack of passion and inaction. She describes herself as 'powerless', 'frightened', 'weaker'. She fears Antigone's passion and uses emotive words like 'headstrong', 'mad', 'wild' and 'madmen' to describe Antigone's actions.

The approval of the dead is everlasting, And I shall bask in it as I lie among them.

Antigone and Ismene have lost so much: mother, father and brothers. But Antigone doesn't fear death, she is ready to die and believes that if she dies in this endeavour, it will be better than living with the laws of the king.

She is looking to the afterlife and to being reunited with her family. In the quotation 'For the criminal act of seeing him at peace' the words 'criminal act' and 'peace' are used as a contrast for the two extremes: the idea of a criminal act is defiant, disruptive and destructive, the opposite of peace, and yet, Antigone would perform this act to bring peace.

What I find fascinating is even though the play was written in 441BC, the theme is still so relevant today and has been throughout history. Laws are made to protect us, but within society governments need to be able to punish those who go against the laws. It is a delicate balance to keep sustained. But what is it that makes some people willing to stand up and break the rules while others remain too fearful?

We saw with the Black Lives Matter movement, directly following the death of George Floyd, people were so outraged at the abuse of power that they rose up. Many of the protests descended into chaos with shops being looted and set on fire. The control that had existed over the people was shattered and those who initially stood up gave courage to others to do the same. This is why people like Antigone are so feared by those in power, because one small voice of dissent can start an avalanche.

Exploring the theme of civil disobedience in *Antigone*, brings up the question, and you as the reader can also ask yourself, who would you be? Would you be like Antigone, rising up against the state and fighting for what she knows is right, or Ismene, cowering in the corner out of fear of the state and law? I don't think it's possible to come to a satisfying answer to this question, unless you are put in this position.

Divine Power in Contrast to the Power of Will in *Antigone*

Hannah Edsell (Cl. 10)

Power is a strength, a choice. It has command over belief, and is an influence for protest. Power can be thrust upon you or pulled from within. It is a shield for uncertainty, and aid for confidence. Sophocles' *Antigone* contains examples of power from a commanding figure, from ancient beliefs and a helpless fight for justice.

When we first encounter Creon, he makes this remark to the state:

I claim the throne, and all of its power
Both city and kingdom. I claim it and hold it
From today, as mine by right. (p. 11)

The possessive 'I' and 'mine' are used in this quotation, creating a powerful figure in my mind, one person in control. However, Creon doesn't take responsibility for what *he* is doing, he stands behind the shadow of the state to protect himself from the consequences. 'Whatever she does, there will be no guilt / On me or the State.' (p. 38)

This tragedy portrays Creon as a bad person, but every story has two sides. All of the hatred and dishonour he shows, all of his corruption, despicable actions and arrogance; he engenders hate at every turn. His decree was unjust in common decency, and moral right, but deep down he is a man who followed his values. Polynices burnt down the city, and killed the Theban kings—Creon had to make an example.

Aristotle says that the two most important aspects in a tragedy are (1) that the characters should be good, but (2) not too good, so they are relatable. The characters should make mistakes that cause tragedy so they can learn from them by suffering, allowing us, as human beings, to feel pity and fear. To be human is to have good intentions but make mistakes.

When Creon questions:

And yet you dared to disobey the law?

This is Antigone's retort:

Yes, I did. Because it's your law,
Not the law of god. Natural justice [...] recognises no such law. [...]

And no man's arrogance or power

Can make me disobey them. (pp. 21,22)

She is essentially saying that justice is eternal, even if our understanding of it is not. The gods have power over all mankind, while Creon's rules are mortal, and therefore worthless. Antigone was prepared to hang herself in protest against patriarchal authority. Her values towards ancient justice, are unwavering in the face of regal power.

Although broken into pieces, when spoken, this

quotation catches your tongue. Your mouth has to get around harsh sounds as does your head. Nothing Antigone has to say is easy, but understandably so, considering the situation at hand.

Power is a concept, which creates the possibility for command. Having power means that you can exert your will, but to do so you need the support of people. An army has to put trust in their general; with their lives on the line they cannot protest, or it will end in disaster. But holding power over someone comes down to whether that person accepts that you are in control; Antigone does not. Often we are too scared to stand and protest against injustice. Drawing from modern society, people with seemingly no power have overturned kingdoms without violence; the most obvious examples are Gandhi and Mandela. The citizens stand behind Antigone too, but in silence, too scared to shout; even her sister, Ismene, refuses in fear of consequence.

Sophocles names the protagonist Antigone, Anti (ἀντί) meaning 'against', and gone (γονή) meaning 'birth, offspring'. 'Conceived in incest' (p. 37) her very existence is a protest. Even the eponymous tragedy is powerfully named.

Antigone is realising her fate, but won't give in without a fight.

They must justify me. [...]

What moral law

Have I broken? [...]

I'm sure of that. No help, and no hope. (pp. 39, 40)

It is Antigone's last chance to persuade her uncle towards sympathy but she will not surrender her power in the attempt. The way this passage is written, with lots of punctuation, shapes the image of her finality. The negative sentences are staccato as the strings of fate are being cut, one by one, until her life is broken. Saying the word 'broken' breaks the flow of speech too, leaving an unanswered question.

If you look at any narrative from the antagonist's point of view, they are all humans, struggling with the same reality, ending with the same results. Just as she did, Creon suffers from the loss of his family, and the power rests in Antigone's death bed by the end of the play.

In the end

The gods will bring him to grief. [...]

We have seen an old man, through suffering, become wise.' (p. 55).

Sophocles has recognised Creon's humanity by saying 'become wise' at the end. This implies that the moral has been told, he has learnt from his mistakes, and allows you to feel pity for Creon, as loss and love aid and teach in tragedy. With no one behind him, he

has no power. The laws of justice are what every man is bound to, and what every man's fate comes to. Alone and in pain, Creon had the power to accept his mistakes while Antigone had the power to change a man, to change a king.

At the end of the Michaelmas Term those Class 12 students specialising in English completed a module on Modernism. As discussed at length during this module, Modernism defies definition, although it can perhaps be characterised by reading such texts as The Waste Land (T. S. Eliot), Ulysses (Joyce), and Mrs Dalloway (Woolf) — all three of which are concerned with the everyday and inner human experiences, whilst being extremely innovative in their use of form, and monumental in the history of literature. Modernism is my particular specialism, and so it is always a great pleasure to be able to bring this movement to my students, but I could not have predicted the nuance and subtlety they would bring to their own work, which is exemplified in the following essays.

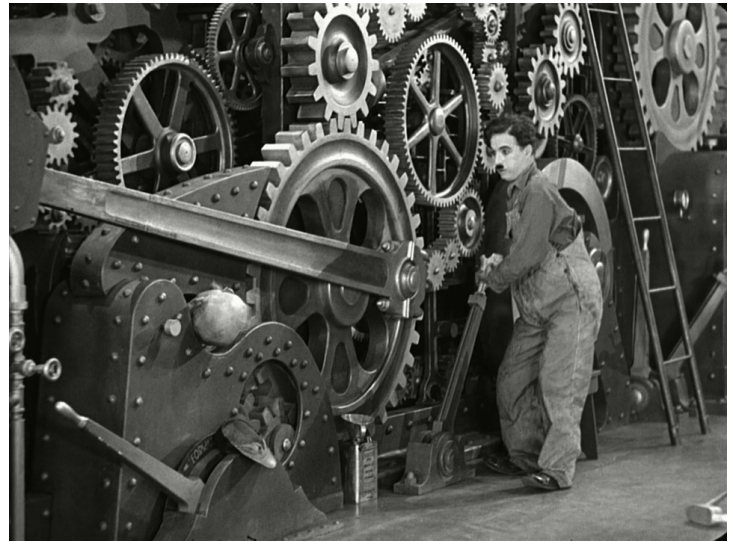
Man as Machine

Molly Meaker (Cl. 12)

Eliot's publication of *The Waste Land* in 1922 appeared at an intense point in history when British society was left fragmented and depressed after the First World War and the Industrial Revolution. The factory line work and growing materialism led modernist authors like Eliot to explore these effects on the human experience. In this essay, I will argue that Phlebas the Phoenician in part IV 'Death by Water' exemplifies the relationship between man working as a machine and his loss of humanity in modern life.

The first line of the poem opens with 'Phlebas the Phoenician,' which introduces the reader to Phlebas and his identity. Phoenicians are known as traders, merchants and sailors due to their civilisation's commercial and maritime prowess. When the polysemic word 'current' appears in line 4, it perhaps implies two meanings: a current in the ocean and a modern economic term for a country's 'current' account, which records the value of exporting goods and services. The poem paints two parallel narratives; although Phlebas is a Phoenician trader, he also represents a modern day office worker in economics or trading. The contrasting ideas of an ocean current and a banking current stresses the juxtaposition between ocean and country, therefore nature and the man-made world.

The second and third lines of the poem state that Phlebas 'Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea



Modern Times (dir. Chaplin, 1936)

swell / And the profit and loss,' which poses two ideas. In death, ('a fortnight dead', line 1) Phlebas forgets both the sounds of nature and of modern working life; yet in life, though working as a merchant and travelling regularly on ships surrounded by the cries of gulls, he lets the sounds of profit and loss take over his connection with nature. The former suggests a nihilistic view that death becomes all and nothing matters in the end. Considering that *The Waste Land* was written in 1922, the tragedy of the war was felt acutely by society; this is also explored in pieces of war poetry from the time. Perhaps the latter metaphysically explores Phlebas's loss of autonomy and individuality as his work (in a modern setting: an office job) takes precedence, especially when considered with lines 9 and 10. Both readings of lines 2 and 3 connect to a fundamental point; the picture the poem paints of modern society forces Phlebas (therefore the implied office workers) to prioritise their work over a sense of individual self expression.

Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* explores similar themes and ideas of a modernist society: the loss of individuality, becoming a cog in the machine and working a monotonous job without autonomy. Chaplin's character 'The Little Tramp' bares similarities to Phlebas in the way that both have worked themselves to the bone while chasing the dreams of society (line 5, 'Picked his bones in whispers. '); while Phlebas is now dead and Chaplin's character lives, we can imagine that Chaplin has a similar trajectory to Phlebas. Chaplin demonstrates through his comical character that those who possess a strong sense of self and an active thought life cannot thrive under factory line work, and eventually this leads to his arrest warrant and inability to maintain one job.

Mrs Dalloway as autobiography

Pearl Kelly (Cl. 12)

In 1922, argued to be the defining year of modernism, Virginia Woolf packed up her large Richmond townhouse and moved, after nine years of absence, back to Bloomsbury.

London was an undeniable influence on Woolf's character, not only was she raised there, but spent her early perhaps defining years in the bosom of the city, and wrote her greatest works amongst its bustling streets. It was here in the wake of the first world war that people turned to art in all forms to express the horrors they'd witnessed four years previous, and what would come to be 20th century classics such as Joyce's *Ulysses* and T.S Elliot's *The Waste Land* were born. It was amidst this chaos of 1920s London society that Woolf made her grand return, the seeds of *Mrs Dalloway* 'her most dramatic mixing of autobiography and history' (*Virginia Woolf*, Hermione Lee pp. 341-342) already germinating. Entering middle age, and 'needing to respond to the challenge of her contemporaries' (Lee p. 83)) she found herself nostalgic for a less complicated time, a universal feeling Woolf illustrates through the tendency of Clarissa's character to live in a perpetual loop of past and present. What follows is an argument that *Mrs Dalloway* is autobiographical—a way for Woolf to express parts of herself she otherwise could not.

It was protective, on her side; sprang from a sense of being in a league together, a presentiment that was bound to part them (they spoke of marriage always as a catastrophe), which led to this chivalry, this protective feeling which was much more on her side than Sally's. For in those days she was completely reckless; (*Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf, p.37)

Clarissa's protective instinct comes from the knowledge that her relationship with Sally could never eventuate to a reality, as at the time homosexuality was not only highly controversial but illegal. It also speaks to the impending climax of their teen years, 'growing up' being an undoubtable theme. 'Being in league together' has slight childish connotations which relates to the picture later given of Sally and Clarissa's time at Bourton. 'There they sat, hour after hour, talking in her bedroom' (*Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf p.36). Assimilating their relationship with childhood gives it an illegitimate quality which wholly encapsulates the perception of homosexuality at the time. More specifically it also speaks to queer women often being disregarded in the light of gay men.

she was coming down to dinner in a white frock to

meet Sally Seton! She was wearing pink gauze—was that possible?

Mrs Dalloway, Virginia Woolf p.38

The white represents Clarissa's inexperience, and Sally's pink as a watered down red. She is passionate but remains in the same league of youth. The addition of gauze gives us further insight into the absurd, reckless splendour of Sally's character and how ridiculous the act of wearing gauze is to Clarissa.

The traits of this brief relationship can be found in Virginia Woolf's affair with Vita Sackville-West. The two met in London in 1922. Virginia was Vita's senior by ten years and despite her current authorial superiority, was at the time only just receiving recognition for her work, whereas Vita, the glittering aristocrat, was already a highly acclaimed writer. The attraction was instantaneous. Vita was enamoured by Virginia's mind, and Virginia by Vita's body.

She is a stag like a racehorse... and has no very sharp brain. But as a body her's is perfection.

(From the diaries of Virginia Woolf)

This description of character aligns with Clarissa's perception of Sally. She compares her to powerful, masculine animals. Sally's dark handsome features and gregarious nature also feed into Vita's personality. 'As a body her's is perfection'. In her diaries Virginia elaborates that by body she is not solely referring to her lover's physique.

her capacity I mean to take the floor in any company, to represent her country, to visit Chatsworth [...] her being in short (what I have never been) a real woman. (VW diaries)

This homage to Vita coupled with a review of her own character is also exemplified by Clarissa in the text when describing Sally.

With the quality which, since she hadn't got it herself, she always envied [...] as if she could say anything, do anything; (*Mrs Dalloway*, p. 35)

Virginia loved and valued Vita's extroverted character, and 'her body' referred to this quality. Woolf famously despised big gatherings and often felt not up to the task of hostess. She felt she lacked the ability to command a room as Vita did, a feeling expressed through the relationship between Clarissa and Sally.

Throughout her life Woolf was a victim of mental illness, and subject to many debilitating nervous breakdowns which took months of recovery. Even when she did recover, her condition dictated a future fringed by potential madness. Upon her return to London the threat of another breakdown was so potent that she was forced to live two lives in one. As Alexandra Harris writes:

So Virginia Woolf in her early forties felt both at

the very centre of things and on the periphery; she was well and buoyant, but aware of illness on the sidelines [...] She was holding together different versions of herself and those differences gave her the framework for her novel. (*Virginia Woolf*, Alexandra Harris, p.84)

The benefit of her fragility was that it inspired her writing. A key aspect of *Mrs Dalloway* is mental illness as a result of war. Septimus Warren Smith is the prime example of this theme. A shell-shocked WWI soldier who, throughout the narrative, remains in constant present tense, (if at times dragged into the past), and is subject to several traumatic episodes. 'Throughout this day of June' (*Mrs Dalloway*, p. 3) the two characters lead separate, parallel lives.

the whole house was dark now, with this going on, she repeated, the words came back to her, Fear no more the heat of the sun. She must go back to them. But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him – the young man who had killed himself. She felt very glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living. (*Mrs Dalloway*, p. 204)

What is striking here is the line 'fear no more the heat of the sun' a reference to Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, and for Clarissa a reminder of the importance of living. She aligns herself with Septimus, she congratulates both him—for managing to end his suffering—and herself—for continuing to live and for not being consumed by the darkness. In Woolf's own life the battle between her mental illness and her outward character are represented here by Clarissa and Septimus. The two characters never meeting in the book is Woolf's determination to suppress her weaker, sicker side. She lived with her mental illness, continued to work and appear to the outside world as a woman of society. This victory for Woolf is represented through Clarissa's victory over Septimus's death. A young man dies but she gets to keep on living, she will 'not fear the heat of the sun'. Septimus's death, the death of mental illness in the book, is also perhaps an attempt to bring an end to her own mental sufferings. The irony being that the two eventually did meet; Virginia committed suicide in 1941, her mental illness consumed her and unlike Clarissa she could not go on living.

This book about the strangely entwined fates of two people bears the name of only one of them and it is she, the survivor, who stands there at the end.

(*Virginia Woolf*; Harris, p.90)

Some believe all art is a self portrait. Mrs Dalloway not only paints us a picture of Virginia Woolf but of life at the time, wholly encapsulating modernism, and in that sense is the biography of two entities.

Ballads

Upon entering the High School, Class 9 students begin to develop their creative writing. Typically this begins with the writing of ballads, which are narrative poems. The word 'ballad' comes from the French term 'chanson balladée' which is a danced song. The strong dance beat can be felt in the regular rhythm of ballads. This year Class 9 read Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, and having written ballads in pairs earlier in the year, were challenged to choose a character from the book and write a ballad about that character, independently. The following are three character ballads followed by one co-creation from earlier in the year.

Dolphus Raymond

Sophie Mair (Cl. 9)

Dolphus Raymond the drunk of the town,
The man no one wants their kids around.
The wealthy man who chose black over white,
Whose children in Maycomb are one rare sight.

Not long ago was Dolphus engaged,
Until his fiancée found out with rage,
His affair with a black girl he'd prefer be his wife,
After finding out, put an end to her life.

Dolphus Raymond the drunk of the town,
The man no one wants their kids around.
The wealthy man who chose black over white,
Whose children in Maycomb are one rare sight.

Dolphus Raymond, although he deems,
Is not as low and drunk as he seems.
In fact he's one of the bravest in town,
He won't let opinions ever get him down.

Dolphus Raymond the drunk of the town,
The man no one wants their kids around.
The wealthy man who chose black over white,
Whose children in Maycomb are one rare sight.

People like Dolphus are rare to find,
He won't let society make him blind.
He believes in equality and sets out to get it,
Even if he's ruled out by the town — 'unfit'.

Dolphus Raymond the drunk of the town,
The man no one wants their kids around.
The wealthy man who chose black over white,
Whose children in Maycomb are one rare sight.

His iconic brown bag is not what it seems,
It holds within it less fermented themes.
Instead giving all of Maycomb a reason,
So as to not connect Dolphus to treason.

Dolphus Raymond the drunk of the town,
The man no one wants their kids around.
The wealthy man who chose black over white,
Who'll never go down without a fight.

The Unnecessary Suffering and Untimely End of Poor Ol' Tim Johnson

Walter Kelly (Cl. 9)

I grew up in a garden fair,
With bees and birds, here and there.
They'd flutter as I'd try to catch
The ones above our cabbage patch.

My owner Harry loved me so —
He loved me so and before he'd go,
My food he left out upon the porch
While in the sun I'd lie and scorch.

The lazy, languid, limp of days,
They'd pass by slow as I'd sit and gaze
At children playing, rolling tyres,
Gunshot sounds and house fires.

It all went black — I don't know why,
It was just a squirrel passing by,
His foaming mouth and bloodshot eyes,
They froze my soul as he nipped my side.

The shivers sent my senses wild,
His bite it traveled, as I beguiled,
My brain it held, I lost control,
The porch I left, on parched patrol.

The path I trod was wrong and right,
Towards the town — towards a fight.
NO! — Inside I fought the fiend,
But all sense was lost, my legs careened.

Upon the road, two kids I see,
Pointing, staring, at poor old me.
I trudged along, in a state entranced,
Run kids Run! See my rabid advance.

They skipped away and returned again,
This time, a lady stared with them,
I felt like a figure, a museum piece,
Stop looking I howled, as my hate increased.

They left for good — my anger quelled,
With body on fire, I twitched and swelled,
The roar of tyres and diesel smell,
A car pulled up, two men entail.

The first got out and stared me down,
His face was square, his hair was brown,
The second man, tall and thin,
His kind composure drew me in.

His glasses lens caught the light,
As he stared like a hawk down the sights,
The barrel pushed up against his shoulder,
His experienced stance had my guts fold over.

My mind flitted to running away,
But my rigid body no commands did obey,
I knew what this was, it had to be done,
I traitorously hated what I had become.

Why had this happened? What had I done?
I was a good old dog, never away did I run.
I was a loyal companion, man's best friend,
Did Harry not love me? Was I just there to defend?

They say dogs can't cry, but I felt my tears flowing,
In despair I prayed they would make quick my going,
Why was it me? It wasn't my fault,
Please let me live — I'll make no assault.

The end closing in, as my hopes dwindle,
An unfortunate victim of nature's great swindle,
Will this man let me live if I show no fang?
I'll move far away, to hurt no — "BANG"

Calpurnia

Bo Holden (Cl. 9)

With hands of love and great devotion,
She offers a still point in all the commotion.

Her face is soft with gentle eyes,
Her voice is firm, her words are wise.
She moves with subtle grace and ease,
Her refined presence not hard to please.

With hands of love and great devotion,
She offers a still point in all the commotion.

The mother the children never had,
The Finch family she held in the palm of her hand.
Sheltered by Atticus, from the threatening world,
Safe under their roof, the town around her whirled.

With hands of love and great devotion,
She offers a still point in all the commotion.

One day, to the children's utmost dismay,
Aunt Alexandra demands Calpurnia's turned away.
But Atticus set her back on track,
"Calpurnia, has been with us too long to go back."

With hands of love and great devotion,
She offers a still point in all the commotion.

Her life over time was becoming more clear,
The children stared and wandered near,
Calpurnia as she held their hands
And walked them through church — her home, her land.

With hands of love and great devotion,
She offers a still point in all the commotion.

The day Tom Robinson's death took place,
Was a shock to the stomach, for both race,
Though Calpurnia was not surprised.
The people of Maycomb said change was coming.
She did not believe their lies.

With hands of love and great devotion,
She offers a still point in all the commotion.

As the children mellowed slowly,
Calpurnia is left here lonely,
Calling on memories, countless there were,
The forgotten aspect, were all because of her.

With hands of love and great devotion,
She offers a still point in all the commotion.

The Ballad of Bartholomew Smith

Malaya Dodds e³ Sophie Mair (Cl. 9)

Shall I tell you the tale of Bartholomew Smith?

His story, they say, goes something like this.
He worked at the bank and walked home every night,
Through Fleet Street and Strand in the dim eerie light.

On that dark stormy night, as he walked down Fleet street,
His heart in his chest did rapidly beat.
Case in his hand, coat o'er his shoulder,
He felt that the air grew colder and colder.

All of a sudden he took a breath,
And smelt a stench far worse than death.
The air grew thick, he stopped to see,
Black smoke above the bakery.

Miss Lovett's pies, they were the worst,
Some people said the place was cursed.

Now there are stories I could tell,
Of what did cause that awful smell.

They'd make you shiver and make you shriek,
Let's save that for another week.

Bartholomew peered through a window pane,
And saw what he could not explain.

He didn't try to understand,
The mystery of the twitching hand,
That stuck out of the big brown chest,
Where the barber laid his vest.

He thought it best to just go home,
But then he heard a dreadful moan.

A body lay inside the chest,
And red blood stained the barber's vest.
Bartholomew ran like he'd never before,
He went straight home and locked the door.

As Bartholomew went to work the next day,
The thoughts in his head would not go away.

He sat at his desk, spun round in his chair,
"You couldn't have seen what you thought you saw there!"

On that dark stormy night, as he walked down Fleet street,
His heart in his chest did rapidly beat.
Case in his hand, coat o'er his shoulder,
He felt that the air grew colder and colder.

He walked by the shop, and suddenly saw
Miss Lovett had new pies in store.
Now there are stories I could speak,
They'd make your heart feel cold and weak,
Of what Miss Lovett put in her pies,
And why the meat had grown in size.
But I will leave them for today,
Or you might stop listening, and run away.

As Bartholomew pressed his ear to the door,
It all became clear what was not before.
The barber held out his razor to exclaim,
"At last my arm is complete again!"
He looked at Miss Lovett, began to speak,
You could see that she loved him, her legs went weak.
*"He said he'd come before the week's out,
I'll kill judge Turpin, there is no doubt"*

Bartholomew froze, he began to shake,
He felt that all his bones would break.
The barber killed people, turned their meat into pies,
And that's why dark smoke flew across the sky.

Bartholomew walked home—he could not run—
It scared him to death that these things were done.
He knew that night, with the chime of the bell,
He'd see for himself what Miss Lovett did sell.

On that dark stormy night, as he walked down Fleet street,
His heart in his chest did rapidly beat.
Case in his hand, coat o'er his shoulder,
He felt that the air grew colder and colder.

Did he want to see? Did he want to know?
The light in the shop began to glow.
He knew this wasn't the right place to look,
So went down to the cellar, great courage it took.

He walked down the steps, and suddenly saw,
Dead bodies were strewn all over the floor.
Alight with souls, the fire was burning,
To run away his heart was yearning.

But Bartholomew knew he could not run away,
Or the thoughts in his head would forever stay.
The next few seconds were filled with doom,
As Sweeney Todd watched from the dark of the room.
Bartholomew ran for his life to the door,
But his vision went black, not a thing he saw.

He woke up the next morning to hear a scream,
And telling himself it was all a dream.
He'd forgotten the events of the night before,
After he ran for the cellar door.

On that dark stormy night, as he walked down Fleet street,
His heart in his chest did rapidly beat.
Case in his hand, coat o'er his shoulder,
He felt that the air grew colder and colder.

In front of the shop, he stood so still
He looked at it, then felt quite ill.
He knew within that souls were burning,
But to go inside his heart was yearning.
Once again, Bartholomew saw,
Miss Lovett had new pies in store
Bartholomew wasn't the nicest guy,
So he waved his place in heaven goodbye.
He knew that he'd be going to hell,
When he thought to himself, *"what a lovely smell!"*

He picked up the pie, and took a bite,
And then he realised with a fright,
That particular label that had caught his eye,
It read in bold letters, *"BANKER PIE."*

On that dark stormy night, as he walked down Fleet Street.
His heart in his chest had ceased to beat.
Coat o'er his shoulder, and case in his hand,
The ghost of Bartholomew turned onto the Strand.

Haiku

Haiku is a form of poetry which originated in Japan. Unlike English in Japanese each syllable in a word is given the same emphasis. Therefore this form is structured not around rhythm but around the number of syllables: seventeen, divided into 5-7-5. Furthermore, haiku are traditionally used to depict nature, exemplifying a particular season. The following are from our Class 9 Poetics block.

Three Haiku

Peter Beugelink (Cl. 9)

Wind making trees sway,
Leaves singing their autumn tune.
Lovely autumn day.

Glassy dew filled grass,
Gleaming in the morning sun.
Stunning autumn morn.

Fast clouds speeding past,
Moving for their queen, the sun.
Silently I watch.

Vers Libre

Although my primary aim in teaching poetry in the High School is to instil in my students a strong sense of the rhythm and music of language there is also space for less structured poetry. This comes first in Class 9 in the form of memory poems. This form was (unknowingly) created by Norman MacCaig in his beautifully honest portrait of 'Aunt Julia'. After studying this poem, Class 9 students are invited to draw on deep sensory memories of their own loved ones to create vers libre (free verse) poems. Following this exploration, there are always a handful of students who continue to develop the skill. It may seem like an easier task, to write poetry without the constraints of a particular rhythm, rhyme scheme or number of lines, but it actually takes a remarkable sensitivity to both the visual and aural elements of language to position the right words in the right place without a formal structure. The following are two poems which exemplify the vers libre form: one, a memory poem from Class 9 and the other, a poem from an independent creative writing project in Class 12.

Michael Standish

Walter Kelly (Cl. 9)

Mike is a set designer, a red faced comic with spiritual knowledge.

He is a bushy
beard
that gets
scratched when he talks.

He is a deep un-waking sleep,
pure relaxation with a new mattress each week.

Eve
caspar
simba
a cuddle down collector.

A meditation guru,
spiritual student,
on a mental journey,
he is loooooooong,
trips to India,
where his mates are monks.

He consumes a steaming bowl of dahl,
so slowly,
so slowly,
open-mouthed and breathing fast to control the heat.

He is quick with a joke,
a comedic being who sparks a laugh on view,
his eyes are funny,
his nose is funny,
he IS funny.

An owner of eloquent rooms,
a designer of relaxation,
he is sofas you sink into,
surrounded by antique lamps,
from antique markets.

He is warm lampshades hanging from high
ceilings,
beautiful art nailed up on the painted
wall,
and Persian rugs hugging the oak plank
floor,

He is that comfy collected character,
two sides of the same coin,
spiritual and sporadically funny,
calm and safe,
he is Mike, a set designer with a round smiling face.

I Think of When I Thought of You
Molly Meaker (Cl. 12)

My tea steeps as my thoughts brew
 My threshold moment came when you
 Left. I believe I am right.

I am happier than I've ever been,
 I am mellowed and at perfect strength—
 But I'll sting your tongue
 If you drink too early. If you take what
 you think is yours too soon.

Now I am ready, in full bloom;
 I am here yet you appear withdrawn.
 Perhaps the chase is what you like
 But I—
 I won't be chased.

I sit and wait.
 I brew and steep.
 My thoughts become
 Unkempt and weak.
 A little bleak,
 Which like my tea is cold.

I am cold, colder still.

A snowy peak, my mountain view,
 An endless clip tainted blue.
 I watch you fade,
 I watch me fall,
 I watch our warmth turn to cold.

I watch as we died out.

My tea now spilt, my thoughts are through,
 I think of when I thought of you.

Sonnets

When it comes to poetry, perhaps the most exulted and most difficult form with which to work is the sonnet. Immortalised in English by William Shakespeare, sonnets not only adhere to a strict form but traditionally deal with high human ideals through allegories of nature. In our Renaissance block this term, students in Class 11 were challenged to observe nature and compose their own sonnets. As this block was shared with Class 10, several younger students also took up this challenge, with miraculous results.

The purpose of a bramble!

Hannah Edsell (Cl. 10)

A single leaf carved strong by veins, I see!
 Still tied by rope of thorns, to growing shield.
 A lonely pawn left sacrificed, shall be,
 In battle that this meadow here, must yield.
 This barrier of mean and spiky chance;
 A train that flashes past without your part,
 It holds a secret of which lips do dance,
 Both light and dark so sharp, the taste is tart.
 Now, foes do grow with purpose of a bramble,
 Without a seed or act of human life.
 The steady try to fight this brainless ramble
 —Corrupting perfect gardens— with a knife.
 This little leaf begins a testing war,
 And ends with step, so gentle on the floor.

Almost the end!

Hannah Edsell (Cl. 10)

Let windows slam with silence of a thought,
 Let cough ring through a line of teacher's script.
 Let children scream an echo never thought
 And interrupt a blackness, quite unchipped.
 A pencil poised about to write a word,
 A chain of letters balanced on a line!
 Imagination chirping like a bird
 While information follows up behind.
 The scratching of a pen on knowing page,
 As smoke starts forming in an empty brain,
 The window slams again in sleepy cage
 While everyone endures this endless game.
 The clock is ticking on a plastic wall,
 And sun still cloaks the building like a shawl.

Song of Summer
Chloé Grant (Cl. 10)

Oh joyous Summer, heaven smiling down,
 The golden day gives way to tender night,
 My eye is held by sunset's coral gown,
 Above, the choir of nature sings delight.
 Perhaps the fairest: rose of perfume sweet
 Which fills the air and calls upon the bees.
 Leaf dappled light bestows glad shade from heat
 The great blue sky, a mirror to the seas.
 But glorious summer why must you depart
 To leave us longing, counting down the days
 Until you bring your light to lift the heart?
 Awaiting your arrival, golden haze
 Perhaps it's wise, you do not stay year long
 Savoured your beauty, so heartfelt your song.

Sonnet II
Lucien Coombe-Postle (Cl. 11)

The night is dark, the towns are flashing by,
 With power and purpose leviathan goes on.
 To know the destination, I don't try,
 Where'er it is I'm sure I won't belong.
 The rumbling engine, tearing up the night
 Past valleys deep and over mountains tall.
 Relentless weather, windy wet and wild,
 Further I go, behind I leave it all.
 While those around display serene tranquillity
 Be cool as them, I cannot quite achieve.
 For in myself there's raging instability
 Of scale that I cannot yet quite conceive.
 Perhaps when over, I will reconcile,
 But as for now I'll remain in denial.

Sonnet I
Alice Clifford (Cl. 11)

When first I gazed upon the scene of spring,
 With leaves of green and flowers of blue and white,
 The air with life and happiness did sing
 And through the trees it shimmered—dappled light.
 But soon the peace was split by blaring sound;
 With ire the folk have come and won't depart.
 I wish away the noise so I might ground
 The fast and fretful beating of my heart.
 The peace the light allowed my soul to take,
 Then broken by the agonising rise
 Of sound. My pain returned with inured ache
 And clashed against the morn but sang with cries.
 To sit and mourn on such a lovely day
 Should be a sin—with pain I have to pay.

Sonnet II
Alice Clifford (Cl. 11)

To love the spring is beautiful and sweet,
 But all the flowers cannot compare with you,
 Your eyes do shine; your hair like summer wheat,
 Your irises—like grass—lips pink in hue.
 The morning frost, like daggers, pierce my skin,
 But your gaze cuts too deep, my heart destroyed.
 My passion scorned and yours has now worn thin;
 My life to pointlessness, my mind a void.
 —But does that mean I should not love again?—
 My love did drain my soul till it was dry,
 But come what may, love's gifts are worth the pain.
 To love's a human trait, a cause to try.
 To love the spring is safe; to love you burnt
 But I would take your love for what I learnt.

Short Stories

Throughout their time in the High School students are often given the opportunity to write short stories. This begins in Class 9, when the students study story structure and different emotive elements (comedy, tragedy), often followed up in Class 10 with a short story writing course, where students look more closely at how to form short fiction. However, short story writing is most often taken up independently by students who have a particular interest in creative writing. Here we have two examples: the first is part of a Class 12 Project on fairytales, and the second came out of the Class 9 Narrative Form block. A warning that this second story deals at length with death and grief.

Wings

Rose Dowling (Cl. 12)

Past the old slate buildings where the meadow grass sang and willow wisps soughed, there sat a little fairy. And as her younger sisters danced amongst the meadowsweet and the shedding poplar trees she watched in envious spite, for their little backs had budded whilst hers was bare.

"Where are my wings? Why have they not found me?" she thought and bowed her head and weeped. "Without my wings I cannot fly, without my wings I cannot fly!"

When winter came and the frost glazed the fields her sisters flew to the south, where the sun tinged the land. The little fairy was left alone and trod through the icy hush in search of her wings. The cities were barren at this time of year, strewn with chips of rusted tin and shards of pointed glass. Swallows circled the misted air and as one stopped to sip the tincture of puddled water, the little fairy drew a blade of glass and cut his wings right off. She sewed them on with twines of wire and though the blood pooled round her toes she smiled.

"I have my wings, I can fly." But, as she reached up to the clouded sky her frail body was too small to carry the burly wings and she fell to the ground in fright.

By the forgotten railway tracks where tumbleweed meets violet and rust, an ancient mechanic set to work.

"What a marvel if man could fly," he thought, as he twisted copper and hacked at wood, fashioning a pair of beautifully mechanical wings.

It happened that the little fairy passed these ruined tracks and saw the wooden wings sitting upon the windowsill of his home.

"My wings, I have found my wings," she chirped, and the mechanic who heard her wistful cry opened his door and let her in. He fastened the wings on her

feathered back and she lifted into the air.

"Now open the window and let me free," she called. But the ancient mechanic shook his head.

"If you go, so will my wings."

The little fairy's face dropped, for what was the use of wings if she was not free?

Now the ancient mechanic didn't like to see her sad and he fetched a spool of cotton.

"You may fly away, but I will always have you on the end of this string."

The little fairy agreed and off she flew through the tundra land. Yet now and then the string tugged at her leg and scraped her skin and it wasn't long till she could fly no further.

"This isn't my wish, I need to be free," she said. But the ancient mechanic had fallen in love with the little fairy and wouldn't let her go. So with razored nails she clawed at the cotton thread and bit the wings off her feathered back and ran to the soundless wood, where lost women go.

By the silver birch, a wingless sparrow lay nestled in a bed of hay.

"Little fairy do you have my wings?" he croaked. The fairy shook her head. They sat together by the silver birch, and shared a homity pie and a bottle of ginger juice and thought about growing up and growing old.

"When you are old, do you return?" asked the little fairy.

"Return where?" enquired the sparrow.

"To the way you were," she said.

They gazed into the roofless sky, as the sparrow whispered back "No need to return. You will always be there."

In the Rose Garden

Maxine Toonev (Cl. 9)

They say it is always darkest before dawn. But for me night fell hard after a beautiful day of sunshine, and enveloped me in cold, hopeless sorrow, the likes of which I have never experienced, and from a taint I shall never be rid of. I had seven golden years, which encompassed all the joy, laughter and peace of my life and brought them together to gather around one person. Michael. I was old when he first came into my life, old and sad with the knowledge that I was incapable of having children. Michael appeared utterly by chance, and it seemed that from the day he was born, I was a better woman, a happier person and a kinder friend. A powerful mutual bond always intertwines mother and child, and the attachment I shared with my son was unrivalled in its abundance

of love and affection. I was utterly devoted. No trivial ailment of mine could impede his happiness, and I rejoiced in the work that God had given me in caring for a child. Every little sacrifice on his behalf, every minute I suffered to aid his peace felt like a reward and a blessing, and there are no regrets that plague me from that heavenly span in time.

The memory of his death, so poignant in its bitter sorrow, still haunts me by the day, trailing my steps like a shadow and rendering me passionless and alone in a world that has somehow continued to turn, moving on in its customary manner around me, and leaving me suspended in a place of misery and regret. I remember it as the day the Devil rose from beneath my feet and cursed me for some wrong I must have once committed, the day God forsook me and left me to the mercy of the spirits of despair. I was in the kitchen when my husband brought me the news. I had been baking a cake for Michael as a treat on his return from school. He never ate it. A car, belonging to one whose name I cannot bear to mention for the shadow it casts over my mind, had hit him as he strayed off the pavement, and there was absolutely no hope of recovery. Thus my angel, and the light of my life, was cut down in his youth like a young wallflower picked by a child, leaving me behind, broken and ignorant.

It seemed incredible for me to see, through the blue haze by which I was surrounded, everyday people laugh and talk, easy, conventional, and with minds free of a heavy burden such as the one I carried. Every day, solitary on my walk to church, I would see the children in the gardens before my house, dressed in white frocks and blue suits, playing their mundane little games of ball and skipping rope, and my heart would tighten painfully. My own figure was ever garbed in black, a tight cap hiding my hair and black gloves concealing my empty hands, hands that had once been busy in the caring of a child, and were now curled and useless. I found a weary solace in the cultivation of roses, to which I dedicated my vacant days. For me each exquisite petal symbolised one blessed moment in Michael's company, one shining ray of happiness that was now only a distant memory, impossible to forget and yet unreachable from the earth. I strove to keep my roses in bloom, and even those who called me queer and avoided me for my gloom-stricken countenance were impressed by their beauty and resilience.

Here my tale of woe directs to a path of yet more pain, now interlaced with fear and horror as the clock whirls forward to two years after Michael's death, on the very anniversary of his passing.

I woke up as usual at the early hour of five o'clock,

which, though unearthly to some, appeared to me to match the stillness of my soul. I rose, dressed in my customary black and descended the stairs in a catlike tread, so as not to disturb the silence that seemed to veil the entire neighbourhood. My feet directed me almost subconsciously towards the garden door that led to my mausoleum of memories, the rose garden. The cold of the January morning stung my nose as I stepped out into its chill, but, walking through one of the rows of crimson beauties, I pulled off my left glove, baring my hand and touching it to one of the flowers closest to me. As my fingers traced the delicate, silk-thin petal, a glowing remembrance flowed into my mind, an image of myself, happy and laughing, watching Michael as he galloped about the house on his first hobby horse, Charlie . . .

It faded as fast as it came and I opened my eyes. But somehow the image of his face did not fade, and remained with me as I returned to reality, reflected in the kitchen window. A wave of horror rooted me to the ground as I saw my son, exactly as he had looked two years ago on this very day, gazing at me through the window. A shuddering gasp escaped me and I rushed to the door, banging it to and proceeding to the kitchen with all the speed I could muster.

It was empty.

Stony silence fell, broken only by my husband's anxious footsteps on the stairs, though I barely heard them in the sharp realisation of my vision. My husband clattered into the kitchen.

"Laura! What has happened? God, you look deathly pale, as though you'd seen a ghost . . ."

I laughed when he said that, and he looked more than alarmed. But my chest seemed to have expanded and laughter, an element that had been a mystery to me in the past two years, took possession of me with a vengeance and I laughed hysterically to a climax that terminated in my collapse onto the kitchen floor.

"What you need, Mrs Glynn, is a good rest. Your nerves have suffered a severe shock."

I remained with my hands folded across my knees in the bed, staring down at the opposite wall. Doctors seemed to be human parrots. It was always 'a good rest' and 'shock to the nerves'. I told neither my husband, nor the doctor who had been called in what had really occurred and they were both labouring under the misapprehension that I had merely had a form of stroke. Compelled by I know not what, I kept my secret even from my husband, who cared for me indefatigably, and disobeyed the doctor's predictable prescription of a good week of bed rest, returning yet more frequently to my rose garden. I had, amidst the dread of seeing another ghost, a kind of guilty longing to see my son, illusion or not, once again.

My wish was granted only too soon. It was a dark, grey day, with clouds overhead that promised a storm, some two weeks from my anomalous encounter. I was tending to my precious roses, several of whose petals had wizened and dried, and who were causing me some vague anxiety, when my ears detected a slight rustling of leaves behind me. My body stiffened. Some say humans have a sixth sense. If so, mine became alert as a hound in that moment and I was aware of someone standing behind me. I turned stiffly, at the pace of a snail, both dreading and anticipating what may have lain behind me in the realms of the unknown.

It was Michael. He stood before me, neither actual nor entirely ethereal, dressed in the clothes in which I had last seen him, with his yellow backpack upon his shoulders. Tears flowed uninhibitedly down my face.

"My darling . . ." I whispered, choking on the sharp bittersweet amalgamation of joy and pain that encased my heart.

But something was wrong. The angelic face that I had pined for so long to behold in my material eyesight was unsmiling, and seemed somehow distorted and sinister, almost like a nightmare. My soul was suddenly impregnated with some unconditional terror. The paragon of Michael that stood before me seemed to be unaware of my presence, however fixedly his gaze was fastened upon me. I took a shuddering breath, frozen in place.

"Mother . . ." His mouth opened and spoke, but the sound that fell from his lips seemed to be a union of harsher versions of his own voice, rising in and out of pitch. I fell to my knees.

"Why have you come back, my darling?" I wept. "Where are you? Are you unhappy?"

"I am lonely, Mother." Silvery tears crept out of his illusory eyes, and I had barely time to respond before he vanished without any trace that might betray his visit back to the home that had loved him so well. Thunder cracked and rain poured down to drench me from head to foot, but I lay in the place where he had stood just seconds prior and sobbed.

Another week of bed rest followed my 'relapse', but the ghost's last words plagued me terribly. I began to have frightful nightmares of Michael in a fire pit screaming for me to save him, or trapped in a tower in darkness, and all the while being unable to aid him. Most nights I would wake up in feverish tears, incapable of drawing comfort from anything, despite my husband's fruitless attempts to ease my predicament. The days passed in a haze of echoing words and painful recollections of the strange nature of Michael's face.

It was early one morning, around my customary

rising hour, that I had my third visit from Michael's spirit, as I assume it was. I rose weakly for the first time in the week, and feeling my legs strong enough to support me, walked to the window. Pulling aside the red velveteen curtains that encumbered the sun's path through my window, my eyes were met with a horrifying sight. Every last one of my cherished roses was withered and dead, their brown, wrinkled petals gently dragged along the ground by the wind. And standing amid the gloomy scene, yet more unfamiliarly queer in appearance than the time before, was Michael. I grew cold with a mixture of fear and agony, but compulsion as a mother drew me to the garden door and towards my beloved child. Disregarding the destruction of my life's work, that was strewn lifelessly over the ground about his feet, I drew nearer to him.

"Dear child," I said tremorously, and the tears that seemed to flow from an endless fountain in my heart welled up once again in my tired eyes.

"Mother, I am suffering." Again his voice was an eerie travesty of his child's chatter, but he wept and I reached out to him.

"Let me help you . . ." It was agony. I could not reach him, for he seemed to warp away from my outstretched, pleading arms, and yet remain intact. He wailed in misery and I grew wild with the torment that he inflicted upon me.

"What must I do to aid your rest? Tell me!"

But he shook his head and spoke in the manner of a disorientated child, the swaying quality of his voice infused with melancholy.

"I'm all alone. I want my mother. Don't leave me all alone."

With these will-shattering, heartbreaking words he moved towards the garden door as though lost, leaving his lament to echo on the winds that shook the dead stems of my ruined roses. It took me some time to gain the strength to rise once more to my feet. I swayed unsteadily, but despair drove me forward, and I entered for the last time into a house that had sheltered both my greatest joy and my deepest grief. My husband lay asleep in the library armchair, exhausted with his efforts to care for me but I barely noticed him as I made for the front door, so consumed was I by the vision that led me.

The town was wreathed in a deep, dense fog. Not a soul walked the deserted pavements, and even the birds were still, ceasing with their shrill chirping. My heart drummed loudly in my chest as I caught sight of Michael's yellow backpack in the fog ahead of me. I increased my pace, my hair coming loose from the cap and falling freely across my face, which was red and white with emotion. I ran for five minutes, hardly

noticing where I was being led. Every time I stopped, losing hope, the ghostly figure of my beloved son would drive me to follow him, always vanishing into the almost abnormal whiteness of the fog before I could gain on him. The apparition had taken complete possession of my mind and soul, some unnatural force compelling me to pursue him, as though trapped in a nightmare, without ever getting close enough to stop him or pull him back. Finally I found myself by the river, easily distinguishable by the row of weeping willows that lined its banks, and became suddenly conscious of my physical state. I was not young, and had run for five minutes straight, through the cold air of a February morning. My chest hurt and my legs trembled as I stared at my blank surroundings through watery, smarting eyes. No yellow backpack appeared in sight, nor could I hear the patter of Michael's feet, the sound of which had urged me forward just minutes previously, and I leaned heavily on the railing that ran along the river's banks. The only entity that loomed darkly through the fog's spell was the bridge, a grey-stoned, towering piece of architecture which, though being the town's greatest pride, was also its ugliest landmark. My head spun and I bowed it, breathing heavily, but had barely time to recover my senses when a terrible, unearthly wail echoed through the air, chilling me to the bone and causing me to look up at the bridge, which seemed to reverberate ominously with the lament that had just wrung the air.

There, in the middle of the bridge, balanced precariously on its balustrade, was Michael, his sobs glancing off the water's surface and coming straight to my ears. In a moment, my reasoning was gone. My physical body no longer existed, and the simple reasoning that a boy who had been deceased two years since could not die again did not even occur to my exhausted and now imbalanced mind. All I saw was my child, my beloved son, perched in the grotesque imitation of a bird upon the threshold of a fatal fall, and I ran with every ounce of strength my body still possessed, ascending the three sets of stairs that led to the long bit of the bridge, and racing towards where I had seen him standing.

Time seemed to slow down.

My hands reached out, my fingers just grazing where his arm should have been but it was too late. I saw him fall, gently, like a feather carried by the wind, to the murky depths of the murderously swirling river, and my heart seemed to fall with him. Strangely, I felt a sense of peace settling over me like a warm blanket. My tired body made its last effort as I lifted myself onto the place that Michael's ghost had occupied before, and I let myself fall forward. A soft,

quiet stillness enveloped me, as though I were cascading down into a bed of soft white feathers. My mind was filled with rays of sunshine and memories of Michael, real memories of his dear smiling face, unlike the sad parody that had haunted me to my death, and for once I felt a true sense of tranquillity.

I was gone before I hit the water.
