

A MAGAZINE PRODUCED BY CREATIVITYUNLEASHED



From students of London Academy of Excellence Tottenham and their community.

# THE TOTTENHAM PHOENIX



VOLUME THREE 2024-25

## INTRODUCTION

What you now hold is more than a collection of words and images; it is the culmination of a year's devotion, imagination, and collaboration. Brought to life by a team of passionate student editors, and nurtured by our partners at CreativityUnleashed and LAET's outreach initiative Chrysalis East, this volume stands as a testament to the creative force of young minds when given space to speak and be heard.

Born from electrifying open mic-nights and soul-stirring workshops, blending poetry, STEM research, music, political commentary, fine art and more, this anthology not only captures the diverse interests of our community, but also resists linear form or static genre. Instead, it invites you into a dynamic constellation of voices and visions that begins in the shadows of the past, flows through the immediacy of our present, and arcs toward futures still imagined.

This is not simply a magazine. It is a carefully choreographed journey through time, a narrative tapestry that echoes the rhythms of life itself. Each page turned becomes a step forward, not just through eras, but through the intimate terrain of the human experience, itself shaped by memories, hopes, transitions and cycles. From ancient echoes to contemporary questions, and on to speculative possibilities, this journey invites you into profound dialogue with the pressing realities of today and the hopes of tomorrow. Within these pages, you will find truths, provocations, and offerings from a generation deeply conscious of the world it inherits and dares to remake.

We are honoured to feature the voices of our own LAET students and staff, alongside those of our partner secondary schools - Duke's Aldridge Academy, Gladesmore Community School, Park View School, Mulberry Academy Woodside - whose contributions, are marked by a  and enrich this volume with diverse perspectives and a shared sense of place and purpose. This year's magazine also features contributions from four LAET alumni, marked by a , all of whom have worked directly with LAET students this year to support their creative, academic and personal journeys.

Though a framework exists, we invite you to read on your own terms. You may wish to follow the arc of time from beginning to end, or you might stumble upon a single piece that arrests your attention and speaks directly to you. We also invite you to follow the embedded QR codes to explore longer pieces and listen to recordings of captivating music and powerful spoken word. However you journey through it, read slowly. Read with curiosity. Read with openness.

This magazine is both a mirror and a message, reflecting the world as we see it, and reminding ourselves, and you, that from the ashes of challenge and change something bright and meaningful always rises. So now, we invite you to begin: wander freely, listen deeply, and let these pages guide you through a living, breathing chronicle of our shared humanity.

**Cover by:** Jasmine Tran (Evolution of a Phoenix)

# Contents

KEY:

Poetry, Prose Fiction, Art, Photography, STEM, Humanities,  
Performance Piece, LAET Community Project

---

3	Emily Moldoveanu	Expression
4	Paris Udigwe	Ink
4	Zahrah Kasuji	Ray
5	Basar Kizildere	Me and the Guerilla
5	Maryam Harichane	Silenced
6	Lilia Cauchemez-Turmanidze	A Room of One's Own
7	Victoria Smuzna	Expression
8	Y12 Art Students	Evolution
9	Aimee Foster	Voice in Nigerian Literature 🌿
10-11	Andrei Petrache	It Too Shall Pass
12	Suraya George	Beyond Words
13	JiaQi He	Luminescent
13	Anonymous	In Every Glance
14	Samira Sharif	The White Willow
15	Imani Lawal	Visage
16-17	Israa Abid	Come Se Nulla / As If Nothing
16-17	Alex Ciuciula	Holding On
18	Y12 Art Students	Pieces of my Heart
19	Yusra Ali	Damaged, Decrepit and Old
20-21	Paris Udigwe	The Art of Nothingness
22-23	Krysiah Travis	Together
24	Jennifer Luu	Can Love be a Waste?
25	Samira Sharif	The Muted Mural
25	Rihana Ssesaazi	Sunflowers 🌻
26-27	Daria Chiric Absurdist	Philosophy in Literature
27	Noura Ali	De-forming
28	Alex Ciuciula	Blue Between Us
29	Eva Trayler	My Fear of Your Nightnurse
30	Archie Andrews	Mother
31	Eilidh Dobbie	Ordinary
32	Eilidh Dobbie	Dear Mum
33	LAET student community	LOVE NOTES
34	Amy Tran	To Myn
34	Esmerelda Gonzalez Guevera	Split
35	Haneen Barr	Nostalgia
36	Eva Smith	Is Knowledge Dangerous?
37	Christy Badila	Cryptography: Truly Unbreakable



37 Dominyka Ksivickaite and  
Blessing Antiwiwaa

38-39 Victoria Smuzna

40 Grace Olusegun

41 Yusra Weheliye

42-43 Bobby Scott

44-45 Kawthar Abdulkadir

46 Y12 Art Students

47 Ayesha Khan

48 Alexia Safta

49 Victoria Smurzna

50-51 Omolayomi Jacobs, Arthur Khan,  
Ying Bo Zang, Abdus-Samad Ally

51 Duke's Aldridge Drama Students

52 Saarah Patel

53 Noura Ali

54-55 Paris Udigwe

55 Hajar Khalisder

56 Leo Muhibzada

56-57 Alexia Malaluan

57 Kay Budka-Fox

58 Maysa Ahmed

59 Berenice Dienda and Tyra Omisanya

58-59 Eylul Gungor

60 Ayyun Muhammad

60 Daniyal Mohammad

61 Princessamira Abdullahi

61 Tetyana Chetin

62-63 Artiom Zagovorychev

64-65 Rumaita Ibnat

64-65 Amelia Malaluan

66 Vlad Grativ

67 Ayan Abdul

67 Imani Lawal

68 Eva Trayler

68 Mia Rolfe

69 Kay Budka-Fox

70 Anonymous

70 Alex Ciuciula

71 Abdirahman Ibrahim

72 - 73 Yasser Sahebzada, Tomisin Agbogbo,  
Azeez El-Dan, Tobenna Osuala

STEM Journalism

Words Taken from Me

Maths at the Heart of History

The Great Red, White and Blue

The Right to Protest

The Great Fluoride Debate

Viva La Evolution

Will China Surpass the USA's Political Dominance?

The Window From Block 12 🍃

Screams Unheard

Crime Writing

Beneath the Badge 🍃

Corruption in Dystopian Literature

Ghost

Complaint

Erasing

Oranges and Apples

The Bridge

Hip Bones

And Still I Rise 🍃

Reverence

Queen

Sand Angels

December

Gaza's Children 🍃

Heart in the Clouds

Gentrification

When I See Someone of My Colour

Hands

Notes on Ukraine

Assurance 🍃

In It Together

We All Bleed

Growth

Technology and Young People's Mental Health

IT

Let it Happen

The Impact of Working From Home

Nature Writing 🍃

74 Niki Nahvandi

74 Arthur Dolan

75 Daria Chiric

76-77 Ergi Osmani

77-79 Haneen Barr

80-81 Eilidh Dobbie

82 Rumaita Ibnat

83 Daria Chiric

84-85 Marwah Al-Murbarak

86 Nikhil Handley

86 Y12 Art Students

87 Felix Newton

88-89 Lily Hamil

90 Myra Matovu

90 Esmerelda Gonzalez Guevera

91 Safiyyah Kazi

92 Ikraan Ahmed

93 Jibril Rose

94-95 Yohance Anderson, Joshua Assouman,  
Ayomikun Daniel, Deiniol Matovu,  
Tyrel Nyirabega and Joseph Urmaza Faith

94- 95 Arthur Dolan

96 Matt Niedzielski

96 Noura Ali

97 Helin Erdogan

98 Zohana Abu-Lauz

99 Ayesha Khan

99 Tetyana Chetin

100 Jinn Yin Wang

Gains and Losses

At a Snail's Pace

Has Globalisation Failed?

Populism: Billionaires and the Working Class

A Zine for our Times

Homage to Seventh Circle of Earth

Lady of Shalott

House of Nafas

Femurs to Freud: Biology and Psychiatric Medicine

Decryption

Decrypt

Biofuel - a Step in the Right Direction

Place-Making at Wembley Stadium

A Fresh Start 🍃

Self Portrait

Girl, Woman, Other and the Future of Feminism

Ode to Ramadan 🍃

For Jesus: an extract 🍃

Love and Football

Brotherhood

Far Harbour

Lost at Sea

The Waves Still Crash 🍃

Letters in a Borrowed Tongue 🍃

Phoenix

Over the Horizon

Community

## Expression

Emily Moldoveanu



SCAN HERE

I initially wrote this piece for the Tottenham Phoenix Open Mic night back in February 2025. Because the event was themed around love, I decided to take a more emotive approach to writing it. I called this piece 'Expression' because it's deeply influenced by the Expressionist movement, allowing me to concentrate on raw feeling rather than the confines of structure or music theory.



## Ink

Paris Udigwe

The sun rises every morning.  
Deliberate rays stretch across the clouded sky  
The calculated tick of the clock,  
Never grows weary, never asks why.  
Eternity deems a long time for a pen to work  
But not for that clock on the wall.  
Each taunting second leaves a mark on my heart,  
Why is it that the clock can do it all?  
The pen can try to write without question.  
Hold its breath, never blink.  
But is plagued with the sinister knowledge,  
A pen is only useful until it runs out of ink.  
The ocean will forever flow,  
The sun forever rise.  
The resolve of the clock will never falter.  
So, if they can do it, why can't I?

## Me and the Guerilla

Basar Kizildere

There I make my way to his excellency  
Chipped wood barks as I walk,  
Amongst me torn sun stitched banners fly,  
Men drag me to Captain Zagrozi  
'The Champion of the un-championed!'  
According to some he's deemed the:  
'The Liberator of mountain ranges!'  
There I lay wake to his excellency,  
yet he acts foolish and recklessly  
Honours of heroics, yet preaches ridiculously.  
Captain Zagrozi, sworn by blood  
His butchering causing floods.  
Sun stricken fever devours his speech  
Sanity lays distant from his reach  
So there the excellency and I sit.  
Me and the guerrilla.

## Silenced

Maryam Harichane

All their armies,  
All their soldiers,  
All their tanks,  
And all their soldiers.

Against a boy,  
With a stone.  
Confused, Afraid,  
Alone.

I see the sun in his eyes,  
The moon in his smile,  
A helpless, mourning child.

It is that which makes me wonder,  
Who is weak,  
Who is strong?  
What is right  
What is wrong?

Yet all I can do, is wish,  
That the truth,  
Had a tongue.

## A Room of One's Own: Women Readers and Writers of the 18th Century English Novel

Extracted from an EPQ by Lilia Cauchemez Turmanidze

Lilia Cauchemez- Turmanidze

Virginia Woolf's thought-provoking 1929 essay *A Room of One's Own* explores the restrictions on women writers throughout history, and argues that women need financial freedom and a 'room of their own' in order to be able to write. In the 18th century, women perhaps needed a room of their own even to read – if only to escape suspicion and disparagement. For in the 18th century came the 'rise of the novel', a literary genre accessible to women as both readers and writers on a previously unimaginable level – and a genre which attracted plenty of gendered criticism.

Crucially, the rise of the novel coincided with the rise of the middle classes. High profits from trade boosted the economy, and this allowed the middle classes to pursue personal entertainment and leisure on a greater scale than ever before. Alongside higher literacy rates, this led to a massive expansion of readership – particularly amongst women. It also became easier to enter the literary world as an author, with an increase in the number of publishers, and changes in copyright laws. These factors enabled the entrance of women into the literary world. An exciting time for women writers, in theory.

But women were in fact criticised for both writing and reading novels.

Initially, romance novels in the 18th century were translated stories originating from France, Italy and Spain. Soon, English writers – both male and female – began to mimic the style. Thought to be poor quality, simple to read and made only for amusement, these romances were often criticised. They were mocked by George Eliot, for instance, in the opening of the essay 'Silly novels by Lady Novelists' (1856), where Eliot targets women writers in particular – although romance-writing was hardly an exclusively female enterprise.

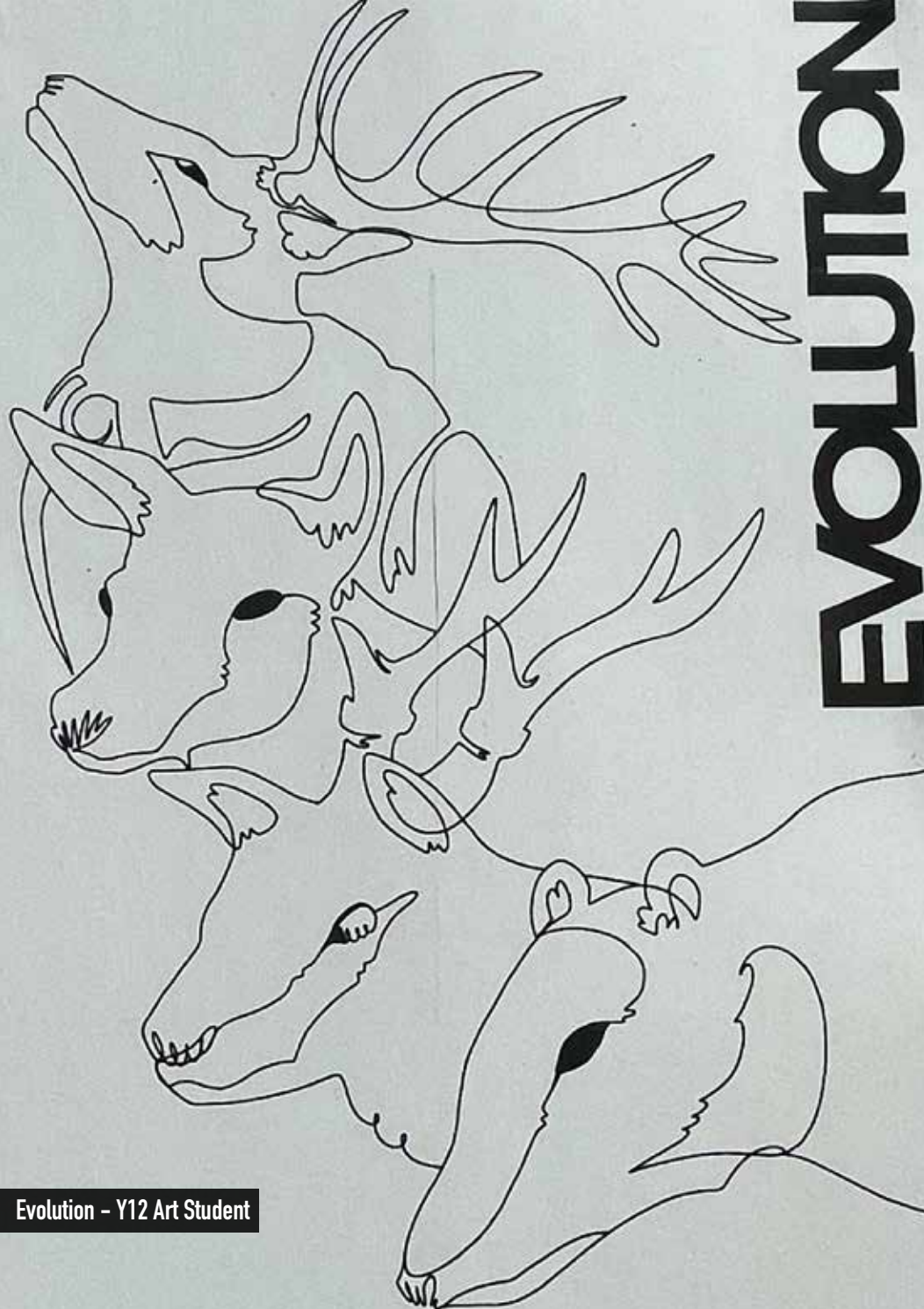
More emphatic than the stylistic criticism, however, was a strain of moral criticism. At core lay the belief that romance novels could corrupt the 'unconscious minds of readers.' Women, particularly young female readers, were considered more susceptible to immoral teachings; popular 18th century moralist James Fordyce warned female readers against novels since they 'carry on their very forehead the mark of the beast', and Thomas Gisborne's *Enquiry into the duties of the female sex* (1797) condemns novels as unfit for women on the basis that they are 'liable to produce mischievous effects.' Novel-reading was even viewed as a cause of hysteria for women, as suggested by physician Edward Tilt (1851).

Yet at the same time, many saw such novels as more appropriate for female readers than great literary works. Their simple prose and undemanding content was deemed a better fit for the 'limited intellectual capacity' of a woman; something by Shakespeare might drive her quite mad with incomprehension.

So it was a lose-lose for women – yet they continued to read, voraciously, and they continued to write, determinedly, and it is fascinating to explore how women novelists of the 18th century engage with, perpetuate, and challenge these cultural attitudes to novels, and to the women who read and wrote them.







Evolution - Y12 Art Student

## The Evolving Role of Voice in Nigerian Literature

Aimee Foster

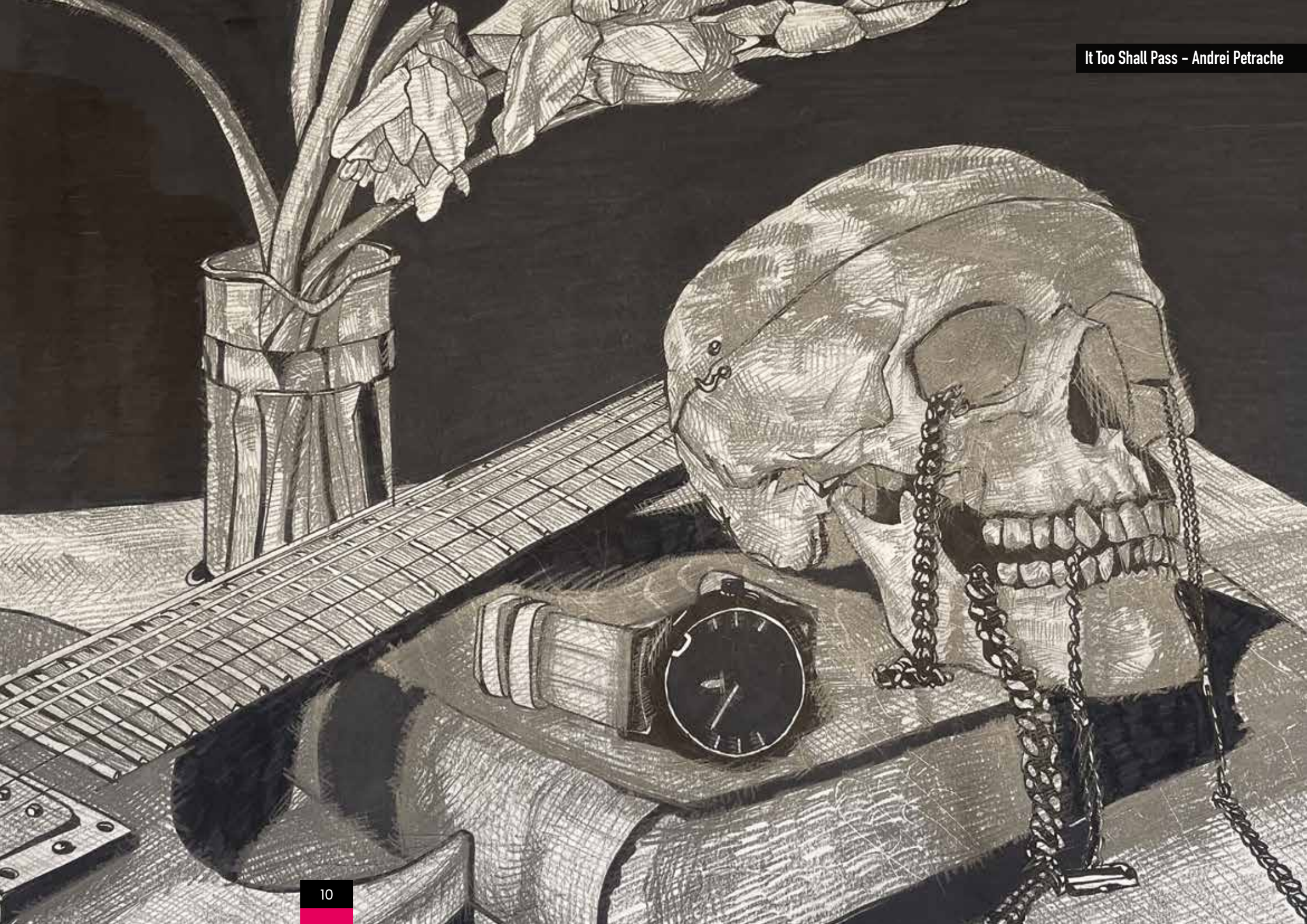
As a communal, fraternal society, oral expression is central to the life of the Igbo people, as captured in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958). From the novel's outset, we are immersed into 19th century pre-colonial Nigerian society, with a sense of Afro-centrism evoked through Achebe's choice to incorporate Igbo phrases accompanied with little to no translation. The Western reader is thus placed into an unknown literary and cultural space where English is not privileged as the essential mode of communication. One of the novel's few explicit explanatory frameworks is set in the statement that "among the Ibo the art of conversation is regarded very highly", underlining the status of dialogue within the culture, as one of the only world rules set out by Achebe for the non-Nigerian reader.

Achebe shows how oral storytelling is essential to binding familial generations, with orators having the vital role of delivering information in the village marketplace; the political and trading centre of Umuofia. The sense that vocality is the lifeblood of Umuofia becomes clear during Ezeugo's powerful public announcement that "a daughter of Umuofia" had been murdered, which emotionally stirs and galvanises the villagers, as well as the novel's plot. The importance of shared speech acts for the people of Umuofia is immediately underlined, as a society predating print and a community connected by plain speaking.

This idea is explored further by one of Achebe's most vocal advocates, the arguable 'daughter' to this 'father of Nigerian writing,' Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In her debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus* Adichie lays out the context to Mama's silence through the novel's first sentence, "Things started to fall apart at home": a tribute to Achebe and an indicator of the impact of colonial norms on an Igbo family. Adichie shows us the rupture of this family after Jaja, the eldest son, refuses to take communion, much to the dismay of his devout Catholic father Eugene, who throws a 'missal' in a moment of rage, destroying Mama's glass figurines. Mama, in a muted response, "nodded quickly, then shook her head to show that the figurines didn't matter." Mama is constricted from speaking freely as she avoids triggering her volatile husband further. Her dialogue, where it appears in the novel, serves the primary purpose of maternal peacemaking: she does not directly speak -for to speak is to confront.

Mama's silence is a symptom of living within an oppressive marriage shaped by a patriarchal Catholic culture, thus displaying the chasm between a post and pre-colonial Nigerian society which had always valued rhetoric, negotiation and discussion (see nego-feminism, for example). Adichie does, however, allow Mama to recover a degree of her autonomy, through casting aside dialogue for radical direct action by the novel's close.







## Beyond Words

Suraya George

There are million intimate things where lips don't touch  
What is it that makes a kiss enough?  
You've already touched the most sensitive, my mind  
Is the body so important that it can't be left behind?

## Lace your hand in mine

And I think there's something electric  
Behind your eyes  
That I can't seem to grasp  
And in the web of skin between your  
Thumb and forefinger  
That is a hood to I.

On a plane where love causes lust to resign  
Takes your breath and mine.  
But we are still on 'like'  
And I don't think my heart is ready to be changed tonight

It already has.

## In Every Glance

Anonymous

you speak and I catch maybe a word or two  
but best believe  
I haven't a clue  
for I have been mesmerised  
gazing into your wondrous eyes  
and then your sparkling smile begins  
like sunlight breaking the clouds  
soft and warm as sin

I'd give the world to be with you  
but if that's not enough  
and that pursuit is not victorious  
and that would certainly be tough  
my only wish is that you remain joyous



## The White Willow

Samira Sharif

I cupped you like water in porous hands,  
now the air lulls,  
a silence swollen with absence, tender as it breaks.  
I called you light, hoping you would be,  
but singed each hair  
that rose when I would speak your name.  
You remained still, shadowing what I longed,  
loving you like a prayer unanswered.  
And though my hands reached wide,  
they hungered ahead of me,  
to eat past their fill.

I see it now—the spaces carved  
where I once thought you were,  
leaving my gear at the surface,  
chipping away at my own skin.  
I mistook your comfort for devotion,  
your kindness for home,  
unlike your words of promise,  
I don't remember this tale of Sappho.  
Love is meant not to beg for breath.  
So I turn my cheek to the willow tree,  
stood in dry grass,  
its roots kissing Mother Earth,  
its shade offering the promise of forgetting.  
Like leaves caught in an exhale,  
I let this dove fly free,  
your name a whisper in silence,  
fading before it finds voice.  
My Willow is fleeting,  
so I tend to it with trembling hands,  
nurturing what still dares to grow,  
and I notice

the sand does not slip.  
Because finally, I can breathe  
an air that is not you.  
And finally,  
I am whole.



## Come Se Nulla / As If Nothing

Israa Abid

Ti ho visto ieri,  
come si guarda un film già finito,  
sapendo ogni scena  
ma sperando che cambi il finale.

Cammini tra la gente  
con la stessa camicia,  
ma non hai più  
quella luce negli occhi  
che accendeva le mie mattine.

Io non dico niente,  
sorrido appena,  
come se non avessi mai pianto  
nel tuo silenzio.

Le ore passano leggere,  
ma lasciano graffi,  
come il vento che finge carezze  
e poi taglia.

Mi chiedo se hai nostalgia,  
di quando eravamo un rifugio,  
una voce che allegra,  
un respiro che trova nell'altro  
il suo ritmo più giusto.

Ora sei lontano  
anche quando sei vicino.  
Hai mille parole  
ma nessuna che parli  
di me, nemmeno per sbaglio.

Io resto qui,  
a studiare l'equilibrio  
tra il lasciarti andare  
e il voler restare ferma  
dove sei tu, anche se non ci sei più.

Fingo che il cuore si svuoti col tempo,  
ma resta lì,  
pieno di quello che non dici più.

Come se nulla  
fosse stato vero,  
ma io lo sento ancora:  
sei un nodo in gola  
che il tempo non scolgie mai.

Holding On – Alex Ciuciula

## Translation

"As If Nothing"  
Israa Abid

I saw you yesterday,  
the way you watch a movie  
you've seen before,  
knowing every scene,  
still hoping the ending some-  
how changes.

You walk through the crowd  
in that same shirt,  
but the light in your eyes is  
gone,  
the one that used to enlighten  
my mornings.

I don't say a word,  
just a faint smile,  
as if I never cried  
in the silence you left behind.

The hours drift by gently,  
but leave their marks,  
like wind that feels gentle,  
until it leaves you cold and  
stung.

I wonder if you miss it,  
when 'us' was shelter,  
a voice that lit the air with joy,  
a breath that found its rhythm  
in the chest of the other.

Now you're distant  
even when you're near.  
You speak a thousand words,  
but never about me,  
not even by mistake.

And here I am,  
trying to balance  
between letting you go  
and the desire of staying where  
you are,  
even though you left.

I pretend time can empty the  
heart,  
but it stays full,  
of all the things  
you no longer say.

As if nothing  
was ever real,  
but I still feel it:  
you're the knot in my throat  
that time never unties.

## Pieces of My Heart – Y12 Art Students



## Damaged, Decrepit and Old

Yusra Ali

Damaged, decrepit, old love.

I hold up this pen and call it 'love' for its ink has run empty and the words it once formed: dried. Vanished. And discarded. If they ever existed, for love is deceitful, a fanciful dream that fills the void between sleep and death. A facade.

Damaged, decrepit, old love. Tale as old as time.

Love is an oath, the point of the sword used to knight oneself: survivor of the heart. Cursed to wear a morsel of flesh- it's stained maroon on their sleeve. A duty fabricated by an intricate web woven into the mind- sewn in fragments. An oath sworn to oneself, a passing silhouette dancing before it is met by red. Damaged, decrepit, old love.

'Love is not a feeling but the palpitations of a self-prescribed drug that is overdosed.

That oversteps. With its falsehoods from the whispers of folklore and the language of Hollywood. Its direct translation is loathing. The only substitute that makes sense for Damaged, decrepit, old love.

Love is the scar on your left pocket. The recession of responsibility that you say is an honour no one can wear. I rebuke this false god as I would any other for your love is a dark spirit worshipped as the divine.

It is damaged, decrepit, old love.

I wrote it out. I add ink to the pen in drops and I call this 'self-love': though the pen will never be full and the label given, never true. For my love is everywhere- greedy in its presence but shallow.

Infatuation.

Damaged, decrepit and old.



## The Art of Nothingness

Paris Udigwe

Let's play a game.

Below you will find three statements, and you will need to determine which of them are true, and which of them are false. Are you ready?

Helping those in need is a good thing to do.

Lying to others is wrong.

Knowledge is valuable.

At first glance, this supposed 'game' appears redundant. Typical philosophy student trying to trick me into picking the wrong answer - right? You wouldn't be entirely incorrect. What if I were to tell you that none of these statements are inherently true? These same fundamental 'truths' that have governed human existence from the beginning of time - morality, mathematics, knowledge, the law - are meaningless beyond the scope of human subjectivity and opinion.

Did that get your attention? Well, you wouldn't be the first.

This highly attractive, yet somewhat dangerous philosophical view took the world of philosophy and beyond by storm with its initial rise to popularity in the mid 19th century, with significant echoes of this belief still existent in the modern day. Welcome to an introductory guide on *nihilism*.

The word 'nihilism' originates from the Latin term 'nihil', which translates to "nothing" or "the absence of anything". Nihilism is the philosophical view that everything in life and beyond is ultimately meaningless. Through this lens, moral values, traditional principles and religious beliefs are 'senseless' and 'arbitrary', lacking any real foundation of truth.

At some point in our lives, I'm sure we've all been subject to nihilistic thoughts. Perhaps in the middle of doing a homework task, remembering you live on a planet which is essentially seventy trillion times smaller than the Milky Way, it suddenly becomes difficult to remember why trivial events, such as A-Level examinations, mean anything. Reaching an age when we start to form our own political and moral beliefs, we might also begin to ask the question, 'Why?'. Why is it wrong to lie? Why should we help those in need? While many of us may eventually become distracted away from these thoughts, a nihilist does not, and so their belief system begins to deteriorate until it reaches a state of utter nothingness. In this state, there appears to be no rational justification for the rules governing our existence. Why keep our values if they cannot "withstand the power of why"?

The origins of nihilism date back to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), who mostly indulged in political nihilism: the belief that all political and social structures are nonsensical, so they must be abolished in line with anarchist beliefs. Nietzsche believed that an overwhelming majority of Western philosophical and theological beliefs are pointless and that European culture is empty. His famous quote, "God is dead," arguably exposed humanity to the crisis of nihilism, where every human belief lacks any inherent value. Nietzsche actually hoped this could lead to the liberation of the human spirit, as we would no longer be confined by moral codes, societal structures or indeed government control. This was not simply a declaration of atheism, but a call for the abolishment of rules, and thus a call for freedom.

Despite the view's initial popularity, Nietzsche received backlash for not recognising the great dangers that came with the widespread adoption of nihilism as a primary philosophical belief. Let's also put his views to the test shall we...

Imagine you had a friend who was a nihilist. By definition, this friend would disregard any sense of morality; believe that Nazism was not evil, arson, terrorism, murder and even slavery had no inherently corrupt foundations. They would abolish all social structures and laws, believing that, for example, celebrating birthdays, showing kindness, receiving education, and respecting the right to life was essentially meaningless. Assuming that most of us with better judgment would not want to be friends with a nihilist, now imagine that this was also your doctor, this was your teacher. Then, imagine this was everyone.

Nietzsche later admitted that the impact of nihilism would be detrimental to human civilisation, triggering a crisis that would wipe out the structure of human life as we know it.

As for my opinion? - nihilism is a lazy philosophy. Rather than attempting to answer the 'whys' of human existence, it passively concludes that since we currently do not have a final explanation, there is no explanation. But perhaps these 'whys' may still have an answer. And Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) put forward a refreshingly optimistic alternative - existentialism. Rather than disregarding the meaning of all values, existentialists emphasise the importance of individual freedoms to create new values - highlighting that it is possible to find meaning in the meaningless. In my view, this philosophical view invites nihilists away from a state of inevitable hopelessness.

So, if you're going to be a nihilist, be an existentialist.

*"Life has no meaning a priori. It is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose. Truly, man is nothing but what he makes of himself."*

**Jean-Paul Sartre**





## Can Love be a Waste?

Jennifer Luu

'Thought and language are to the artist instruments of the art.' - Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Wilde writes powerfully in the preface to 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' on the moral conflicts one can face with digesting art. Art is often shared with vulnerability and the artist's raw nature, tender like a wound – it is daring to allow others to see and feel it. Due to this, many neglect the real value of art's telos, its original and ultimate purpose – self reflection. Upon sleepless nights and writing scratchy drafts, the experiences of the character Dorian Gray became uncomfortably akin to my own. The experience of art formed into a tool in steering me towards harsh, unsolicited introspection. It pushed me to acknowledge that whether artist or observer, art is an inevitable force within ourselves to grasp at our human conscience.

Though still in its nature, this writing will change with time and with the reader, as with every piece of art. One's first read of this will differ from the next - my hope is the emotions evoked will provide a blurred, yet painstakingly accurate mirror to oneself. And so through my art, I come to ask: can love be a waste?

phần cuối cùng?

"trái tim nhỏ của em / my small heart

như những con sóng nhỏ bên trong / like small waves inside

phá vỡ và đẩy về phía bạn / break and push towards you

tan và rơi đi / melting and falling away

và chỉ khi đó em mới có thể nhìn / and only then can i see

thấy sự vĩnh hằng của em / my eternity"

Loving is a timeless act, the opportunity to paint the real art of human beauty. However, our extensive capacity to love often comes at the cost of discomfort and fear of regret. This is perhaps because there has been a notable change in our expectations of love, with a shift in its value as a transaction. Love has become costly – with time and effort worth all but nothing. The reason? A profound, unspoken threat of vulnerability is among us - particularly those engaged in the act of love.

Yet we must patiently learn to accept that Love transcends the human need for reciprocity.

Love simply cannot be wasted if it is authentic.



Sunflowers – Rihana Ssesaazi

## The Muted Mural

Inspired by *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Samira Sharif

Beneath the heavy gilding, it endures—  
not as artifact, but as indictment.  
A rendering too exquisite to belong to time,  
its varnished surface gleaming with the lie of permanence.  
The face arrests the eye—unmarked, immutable—  
yet behind its fixed gaze, something shifts.  
Not light, nor shadow, but the quiet erosion  
of a love that once held shape, now scattered to silence.  
The brush betrayed its subject,  
capturing only what the world might adore,  
leaving the hidden fractures untouched,  
the invisible grief unstirred.  
How cruel is beauty when it holds no truth?  
How empty the perfection that pretends  
to carry the weight of memory,  
yet falters beneath its own brilliance?  
What remains is not the lover, nor the lost,  
but the echo of their collision:  
a hollow, resounding absence  
that even art cannot outrun.



## Absurdist Philosophy in the work of Camus and Kafka

Daria Chiric

"The absurd is the essential concept and the first truth" said Camus, capturing the tension between our desire to forge a rational path to meaning, and the impossibility of doing so. This absurdist philosophy interweaves with the structures of legal systems in both 'The Trial' by Franz Kafka and 'The Stranger' by Albert Camus; both novels use the idea of the trial to symbolise humankind imposing rationality on an irrational universe. Josef K. in Kafka's novel lives in existential angst and helplessness due to the trial robbing him of his agency and placing him under the thumb of an absurd court system. In contrast, Meursault in Camus' novel exists in perpetual indifference to any event in his life, including his own murderous actions, establishing him as the outsider to society's attempt to impose rational order.

Kafka's haunting work 'The Trial' follows Josef K., who is arrested in his bedroom by ostensible law-enforcers and put on trial for an unknown crime he never uncovers. The memorable opening line "Somebody must have made a false accusation against Josef K., for he was arrested one morning without having done anything wrong", perfectly establishes the irrationality that Josef, and others, are at the mercy of. This nightmarish event epitomises an individual's helplessness against an opaque and unjust bureaucracy. The invasion of privacy, public humiliation, and lack of explanation K. endures through "an arrest that has no greater meaning than an attack in the street by undisciplined young thugs", highlights his loss of autonomy to irrational systems of control. Although formally arrested, he is not taken into custody, leading a normal – yet guilt-ridden existence – somewhere between constraint and freedom. And so we witness K. having to live his ordinary life – as a respected bank clerk – with the looming threat of conviction hanging over his head; the knowledge that the gavel could fall at any time slowly drives him to an endless insanity. His mind becomes ensnared in the Kafkaesque legal system – a term encapsulating the absurdity of illogical bureaucracy alongside the circular reasoning of Kafka's characters in reaction to it. By the end of the novel, he is brutally executed outside the Law, stabbed in the heart "like a dog".

Kafka's austere style, gallows humor, and bleak despair heavily influenced Camus, as his portrayal of crime and punishment in 'The Stranger' is inconceivable without Kafka. Both novels delve into irrational and absurd judicial procedures, however, Camus – as the father of absurdist philosophy – focuses on the ironies of enforcing meaning in a void rather than highlighting injustice of an absurd system as Kafka does. The novel follows Meursault, a detached Algerian, as he navigates life with indifference to moral codes. The famous opening line "Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don't know" captures Meursault's absurd outlook on life, namely one that is free from meaning. Having committed a murder, his lack of emotion over his mother's death and failure to meet societal expectations of grief condemn him to execution. As Camus noted in 1955, "the hero of my book is condemned because he does not play the game." He is entirely detached from love, friendship, and ambition, rejecting his girlfriend Marie's proposal and a promising job offer. And Meursault's choice to remain truthful during his trial, despite knowing it leads to his

execution, solidifies his rejection of societal norms. Seen as a threat to established order, his fatal end is foreshadowed. His refusal to conform makes him an existential hero yet also deeply flawed. Indeed, his guiltless act of murder has also been interpreted to symbolise the mistreatment of Muslims under French rule, as the novel's publication in 1942 under Nazi-occupied France coincided with colonial tensions in Algeria.

The fundamental distinction between Kafka and Camus' artistic visions lies in the contrasting philosophies of their protagonists. Josef K. clings, albeit with anguish, to the belief that life – including God, Justice, and the Law – possesses inherent meaning. In stark opposition, Meursault rejects such notions entirely, viewing existence as devoid of purpose, with no God, and no objective morality. Unable to discern right from wrong, Meursault abstains from conforming to societal conventions altogether. These characters thus stand as polarized embodiments of immorality and amorality, united by their shared entrapment within the paradoxical frameworks of an absurd system.

De-forming – Noura Ali





## My Fear of Your Nightnurse

Eva Trayler, after the work of Alex Moore

### A note to the reader for My Fear of Your Nightnurse:

My grandpa is a beautiful writer and gave me a huge pile of his poetry the other day, some published some not. I read one that was written about his father suffering from pancreatic cancer and it reminded me of a poem I wrote about my little brother suffering from blood cancer a few weeks prior; a poem with a structure never finalised and always uncomfortable to me. I thought it would be a nice idea to adapt his poem about his experience with his father, to be about my experience with my brother, to finally satisfy my structure problem.

### Fear of the Nightnurse - Alex Moore

What is it, old man, that keeps you so calm  
As they pump their barbiturates into your arm?  
What stops you from keeping your unspoken vow  
Of pronouncing the sister an ignorant sow?  
What prevents you, old love, from creeping away  
At the dead of the night while the matron's away,  
Through the sheltering lanes of ambivalent dark  
To the square where the hospital doctors are parked -  
From driving away for a year and a day  
To the land where the caring and Caredabout stay?  
What makes you submit with such absence of fight  
To this cynically monitored denial of light?

The answers are easy, dear child of mine,  
My mind is unaltered, my medicine fine.  
It is not the disease that has turned me to bad.  
It is fear of the nightnurse, lad.  
It is fear of the nightnurse.

### My Fear of Your Nightnurse

How is it, young boy, you keep you so tame  
As your skin is so bruised, and your hair starts to fade?  
Who stops you from cursing a treacherous God  
As you bubble and blister, blood curdles and clots?  
What keeps you, dear child, from skipping away,  
Is it your fattening legs, or your adult dismay?  
please. run down the sinuous streets of blood art  
To the grounds where the killers and hunters are parked -  
Let me fly you away in my shiny toy car  
To the grounds where the Caring and Caredabout are  
While you stand in the basket and scream with such might  
Throwing your gaze away from the light.

The response is easy, oh sister of mine,  
My skin is not wounded, my treatment is fine.  
I just cannot answer your beaconing calls  
For your fear of my nurse means you call not at all.  
It's your fear of my nightnurse.

It is my fear of your nightnurse.

## Mother

Archie Andrews

The cool autumn sun glinted off of the familiar car parked in the familiar driveway of her familiar home.

The Mother watched with anticipation as her daughter strolled the driveway to her front door. It had seemed like yesterday that her husband had made that walk with her, both of them ecstatic to have a home of their own. Standing perhaps too swiftly for someone of her years, the Mother made her way through the now deserted corridors of her home; remembering the framed photograph which used to sit neatly in the centre of her mantleplace, recalling the display which had once proudly held the trinkets he had been so fond, the various antiques which had littered the hallways and the mat by the door, always stained by his muddy boots. All gone now, all given a new home.

The Mother greeted her daughter at the door, promptly locking it behind her as they made their way out towards the expectant automobile. Sitting in the passenger seat, she took one last look at her hall of memories. She kept looking; as her home drifted off into the distance like a dream long concluded, she looked as they passed the diner she had first met him in, she looked as they passed the drive-in theatre they had experienced their first date in, she looked through the thin pane of glass at her childhood home as it flashed by. She questioned why they all looked so unfamiliar now, why the colours had all faded and the memories had become obscured. She looked at the unfamiliar white complex as they slowly came to a halt, she looked as the faces of many unfamiliar people passed by, she looked at the kind young man as he explained the many intricacies of life in this new unfamiliar place. She looked but she didn't see, she was busy remembering- the smell of that first summer together, the face of her daughter not yet ten, the pride she felt as she watched as her daughter received her degree.

But it was becoming more hazy.

The cool spring sun glinted off of the familiar car parked in the unfamiliar driveway of her new home.

The Mother watched with anticipation as her daughter strolled the vast distance from the car-park to the building's main entrance. The Mother lay, watching the doorway expectantly, waiting patiently for her daughter. They spent many hours speaking about many things; her husband, old memories and more. But underneath her patient appearance, the Mother was fearful. So many of those things felt unfamiliar, like the vast sterile hallways of this unfamiliar concrete palace.

And they were becoming more unfamiliar day-by-day.

The warm summer sun glinted off of the unfamiliar car parked in the unfamiliar driveway of her unfamiliar home.

But this time, the Mother did not watch with anticipation as her daughter anxiously sprinted the vast distance from the car-park to the building's entrance. The Mother lay, watching the doorway expectantly, waiting patiently for her husband.

She didn't wait for long.



Ordinary – Eilidh Dobbie



## Dear Mum

Eilidh Dobbie

There were things I could only say when my hands / grasped the spherical invisibility / of imagined balloons. "Blow", you said / & I blew, the gathering of breath forming a concealed orange / in my mouth / particles of bitter juice spurting with its extrusion / peppering the rubber interior / when we sat on that purple sofa / frayed patches marking our territory: my head, your lap / it was warmer there. You softened the corners, Mum / the ridge of the sofa confronted your / wing bone / I was protected by your woollen jumper / adorned with dark imprints from my eyes. Flooded. "Tie it up", you said / & I fumbled / a neat knot / plastic stretching over my stubby fingers / trapping / the thoughts inside those fragile vessels. "Now let it go" / & I gasped / my little fists clenching / the comfort control provided / normalcy within my terror. "You can do it" / & I did. The nightmare danced / away / from my loosening grip / disintegrating in the dusk / only your arms were left: solid, permanent, there.

There are things I can only say when your eyelids close / trapping the darkness / inside. Shut. When I imagine those phantom balloons now / I think not of the violent extrusion / of breath / but of sound / not peppering but intruding: a bomb, a bullet, a bang / as they popped; an explosion of immediacy / plastic carcasses of bubblegum pink and baby blue / littered on the ground / the room lonely / the sofa grey-

Where are the balloons now?

Where are they?

In your face?

In your hands?

Beneath your tears,

Now I make balloons for you?

The balloons I forge don't fly away / I trap them within me, suffocating myself / so they don't stifle / you.

I'm sorry, Mum, for all those balloons we blew.

I'm sorry it didn't fix me.

Love,

Your son/sun/world/root/support/foundation/everything.

Thank you for being my best friend. You have shown me what love means in all the ways possible, and I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Alec Benjamin way back; thank you.

Happy Valentine's to my brother from another mother (duh) ♥

to my best friend Eilidh ♥

I love you. I ~~love~~ know we don't see it all the time but I don't think you know how much we only get closer and closer. I'm so grateful for you.

With all the love in my there's a bit! ← Shit NIKI

I love how my friends have made me the best version of myself ♥

To my mother, ♥

My anchor, my sunlight. I am forever indebted to you. Only am who I am because of you. Keep staying ♥

to my best friend ♥

We can't be separated by space or time. I ♥ U. ♥

Thank you and I am incredibly lucky for your love ♥

To all those who've loved before love again ✓

♥ 😊 ♥

My Baby Sister is the light of my world. She restored my faith in family - ♥

My brother is my biggest inspiration. I wouldn't be here without him. ♥ ♥ ♥

to my mother ♥

my rock I ♥ U ♥

**To Myn**  
Amy Tran

Alive in some way,  
A simple time I knew,  
Dancing along the arrow that pointed me -  
Unknowingly -

To you.

Warmth in death,  
Forcing my rebirth  
Relearn what I thought I knew,  
Diving back into my childhood.

In what she saw as fractures,  
I found my salvation.

In what she learnt as bruises,  
I learnt as a sanctuary.

(Some way, alive again).

**Nostalgia**  
Haneen Barr

حنين - (Nostalgia)

ارض، تحبها وتشتاق اليها، بعيدة عنك، ولكنها الاقرب لقلبك.  
تعزلك عن العالم بذكرياتها البرينة، تذكرك بالدفء والحنان الذين يتدفقون بكثرة في دم عائلتك، بعيدة  
عنك، تجعلك ترتجف ببرودة ووحدة.  
بعيده. بعيدة جداً. فالقارة الموازية، يفرقك بحر دموعك ودموع عائلتك.  
لقد خرجت منها ولكنها لم تخرج منك، تريك نفسها في افعالك واقتالك لتذكرك من انت.

Translation

A land you cherish and yearn for, distant from your grasp yet nestled deepest within your soul.

It shelters you in a cocoon of nostalgia, cradling you with the purity of memories that echo the love and warmth woven into the fabric of your family's essence. Yet, its absence leaves you trembling, cloaked in the chill of solitude.

Far away. So painfully far away. Across continents that mirror each other but are divided by an ocean—deep and vast like the well of tears shed by you and your loved ones.

You departed from it, yet it never truly bid you farewell. It lingers, whispering through your gestures and speech, a quiet reminder of the roots that anchor your identity.



## Is Knowledge Dangerous?

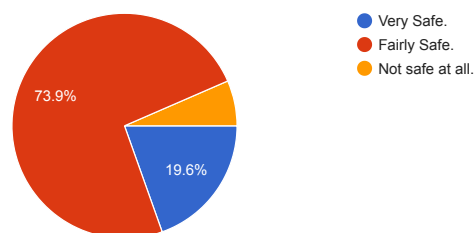
Eva Smith

In this essay I will argue that in an age of mass knowledge sharing, the related dangers are equally large in scale. In the context of mass data collection, the danger of knowledge lies within sources which claim to be representative but are not; sources aim to be complete but are full of serious gaps; and sources that say they are secure but are instead highly vulnerable. I will firstly examine the risks of the mass collection of civilian data, especially personal information taken 'sans' consent. Secondly, I will explore the risks of technological advances and the implications of data security breaches. Finally, I will discuss the potential for discrimination within healthcare, potentially becoming more prevalent due to biased data, showing how easily danger creeps in when data favours one group only to inadvertently pose risk to another.

A key danger of mass collection and storage of civilian data is the notion that companies use data for hidden purposes, breaking the implicit trust between consumer and company. So worried are members of the public about this issue that in an Ipsos poll (Lloyd & Jackson, 2022), 78% of respondents said companies should obtain their consent before accessing and using their data. This was echoed in a survey I did of students and staff at my school (Source 1, Smith, 2023) where only 20% of respondents said they felt "very safe" online. A sample of 46 is small but indicative nonetheless of deep mistrust.

Do you feel safe online?

46 responses



While trust in these companies does exist in some quarters (research from Mast (2020), shows smart watch data may have advanced our understanding of the impact of the pandemic) this trust can easily be lost. Health apps such as Ovia record personal information not required for the app to function but, instead, collected for sale to third parties. (Taylor, 2023).

Further problems arise when organisations have their information discovered by third parties. I believe real danger lies in the risk posed to political stability nationally and globally due to the digital revolution...

36



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## Cryptography: Truly Unbreakable

Christy Badila

It seems safe to say that most of us want to keep our secrets to ourselves. It might even be a fundamental part of the human experience to want control over who knows what about you - and to ensure that it stays that way. And yet with the constant emergence of new technology, this concept now starts to apply to how confidential information is transferred between units, not just between whispering people. But fortunately, there is a whole field of technology that holds the secret of how to keep our information safe: cryptography.

Cryptography is the deceptively simple practice of making data illegible so that it is secure enough to send over to its recipient. This is done with a key which works very similarly to physical keys; they make data accessible (decrypt) or inaccessible (encrypt). Cryptography is essential for the security of our data, but does the encryption of data necessarily mean that it's private - and are these encryption algorithms truly unbreakable?

For us to understand this question, we'll have to know some of the history.

Let's think back to the Roman Empire; believe it or not cryptography was relevant during this time, so much so that Julius Caesar would utilise the early practice in order to transmit secret messages and in turn created his own encryption method. To envision this let's put ourselves in Caesar's shoes. When you're on the brink of assassination by those closest to you, you're going to need a bit of privacy. His method was known as the Caesar Cipher, one of the earliest records of encryption. How it would work is that each letter in a sentence would be shifted by three spaces in the alphabet to create a cipher text or encrypted text. Straightforward? Sure. Secure? Not so much. What characterises good encryption methods is their keys having a degree of randomness to them to decrease the chances of anything predictable, to be long in length with most having a minimum of 128 bits (2<sup>128</sup> different combinations), and to have a relatively complex algorithm. So although the Caesar Cipher may provide temporary confidentiality if the system is not entirely understood, it is unable to match the demands of today's encryption standards and is incredibly of its time.

Fast forward to the 20th century, in the unwavering rage of WW2 cryptography was heavily relied upon to send messages integral to the continuation of the war. A fundamental example of this was the Enigma machine, used by the Germans and famously conquered by British mathematician Alan Turing...



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37





## Interdimensional: Maths at the Heart of History

Grace Olusegun

I doubt you've ever written down  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$  in your maths book and felt your mind wander to how the Pythagoreans were so disturbed by Hippasus' discovery of the irrationality of  $\sqrt{2}$ , he was thrown overboard. Or drifted off in class to reflect on how the scrap paper doodling of a French mathematician led to a discovery that could have changed the course of the Cold War. Well, this is perhaps because the curriculum has done a good job of portraying maths to be a two-dimensional binary system of right and wrong answers, mutually exclusive from other subjects - such as history, for instance. With that said, back to The Cold War and the fascinating role of mathematical discovery within it...

You may have assumed the nuclear arms race was inevitable. But what if I told you it never had to be? After the US dropped nukes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it was guaranteed that other nations would rush to develop nuclear weapons. Their unfathomable power made them the newest determinant of influence and control. With everyone rushing to get a slice of this new, potentially catastrophic technology, so came the need to regulate its development. Meetings with ridiculously literal names like "The Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests", initiated in Geneva on 31st October 1958 and (take a deep breath) "The Conference of Experts to Study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of a Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests," also held in Geneva in August 1958, were conducted to legislate nuclear testing everywhere possible: earthbound, underwater, in space and underground.

A partial ban was eventually signed in 1963, meaning nuclear tests were prohibited in the earth's atmosphere, underwater and in space. But why only a partial ban? Well, it was all to do with how nuclear detonations could be detected. Atmospheric detonations aren't difficult to verify. Radioactive isotopes produced by the explosion can be detected 1000s of kilometres away. Underwater, hydrophones pick up the definite sound caused by underwater detonations. Extraterrestrially, sensors in satellites monitor radiation consisting of gamma rays, X-rays and neutrons, emitted from nuclear detonations. Underground, well... There was no way to accurately deduce a subterranean nuclear explosion. You see, their radiation is mainly contained, the resultant impact in no way distinguishable from that of a seismic wave. And if you can't detect something, how can you ban it? And so what did the USSR or US do? Well, they took the nuclear arms race underground of course.

Given the newfound dangers of this loophole, it was clear that a method of detecting underground nuclear outbursts was needed ASAP. And this is where mathematicians enter the scene...



## The Great Red, White and Blue

Yusra Weheliye

With their guns, tanks and expansive crews  
A place sort of being political  
Yet truly cynical  
A so-called supremacy, however only indulging in bigotry  
A "home" where equality is seen to be a reward  
And voices are being ignored  
A world too tangled in its own sins  
Forced, to listen to humanities kings  
Contempt and distrust rise triumph from the dust  
Not a single drop of blood is necessary or just  
Why must we endure their half-hearted acts of humility, do we not deserve tranquility

### The great red, white and blue

As they preach for freedom yet act in hypocrisy  
All in the name of democracy  
Waving their blood-stained flags  
As they state human lives are priceless, yet the innocent lie rotten and lifeless  
Begging to be saved while their surroundings begin to decay  
Leaving the poor, bloody and sore all in the name of maintaining the law  
The men who are drunken to the sounds of cries, and pay no mind to the crying eyes  
So I ask when will the working class wake up to another wave of your demise?  
Shutting their mouths, and blocking their sight, these are the masterminds,  
plaguing poisonous whispers and creating a picture where they're justified and righteous.  
It's purely ignorant to act as though all is fine when  
economy seems to mean more than life

### The great red, white and blue

How much corruption and hatred has to happen before our country becomes no more  
than a fascist wasteland  
Which law will be changed next according to the whims of those in power?  
You may spread your bitter twisted lies but the tint on your hand can't be removed with  
simply just a shower.

### The great red, white and blue.

## The Right To Protest

Bobby Scott

While public protests may often be disruptive, they are arguably an essential part of democracy with as much entitlement to public space as pedestrians and cars. This right to protest is protected by both Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) - although only up to a certain extent. The authorities are expected to weigh it up against public order and safety, as highlighted in cases such as Northern Ireland and Rotherham, where protests have tended to cause violence and significant chaos.

Internationally, the ECHR enshrines freedom of assembly (Article 11) and expression (Article 10), which have been embedded into UK law through the Human Rights Act 1998. They are qualified rights and can be limited in order to ensure public safety, prevent disorder or protect the rights of others. This doctrine is illustrated in *Redmond-Bate v DPP* [2000], where the court ruled that peaceful protesters must be protected even when they employ provocative speech. The police in the case acted illegally by attacking the peaceful protestors rather than the disruptive bystanders. In *R (Hicks) v Metropolitan Police* [2017], this was elaborated upon when the Supreme Court affirmed preventative arrests for imminent peace breaches, even if no charges were brought, given they were necessary and proportionate. These examples demonstrate the precarious balance between public order and protest rights.

Domestically, protests in the UK are governed by the Public Order Act 1986. Under this Act, protest organisers have to provide advanced notice to the police (Section 11), but failure to do so does not automatically render a protest illegal. It also gives powers to the police to ban or impose conditions on demonstrations in certain situations if there is a risk of serious public disorder. The European Court of Human Rights observed that operational decisions by the police are multifaceted and need to be led by intelligence that is not available to the public. This dual responsibility, of enabling protest whilst providing protection, is central to protest regulation.

The problem with balancing the right to protest with public order is further demonstrated in Rotherham, as the English Defence League (EDL) and Britain First (two far-right groups) have habitually held demonstrations. These tend to be answered with counter-protests from the likes of Unite Against Fascism (UAF), which escalate into violence and have generated substantial economic costs. Between 2012 and 2016, sixteen protests in Rotherham cost the police an estimated £4 million, diverting resources and interfering with local business. The Independent Policing Protests Advisory Panel, set up in 2016, advises on protest management but faces criticism for potential bias due to excluding far-right voices. This emphasises more general concerns that the police face in balancing competing interests: allowing protests under ECHR Articles 10 and 11 but continuing to ensure public safety and community rights under Article 8. Indeed, the volatile nature of far-right protests and their subsequent counter-demonstrations usually demands the police to make difficult tactical choices, as in *R (McClure and Moos) v Metropolitan Police* [2012], where the court justified containment ("kettling") to prevent disorder at the expense of peaceful protestors.

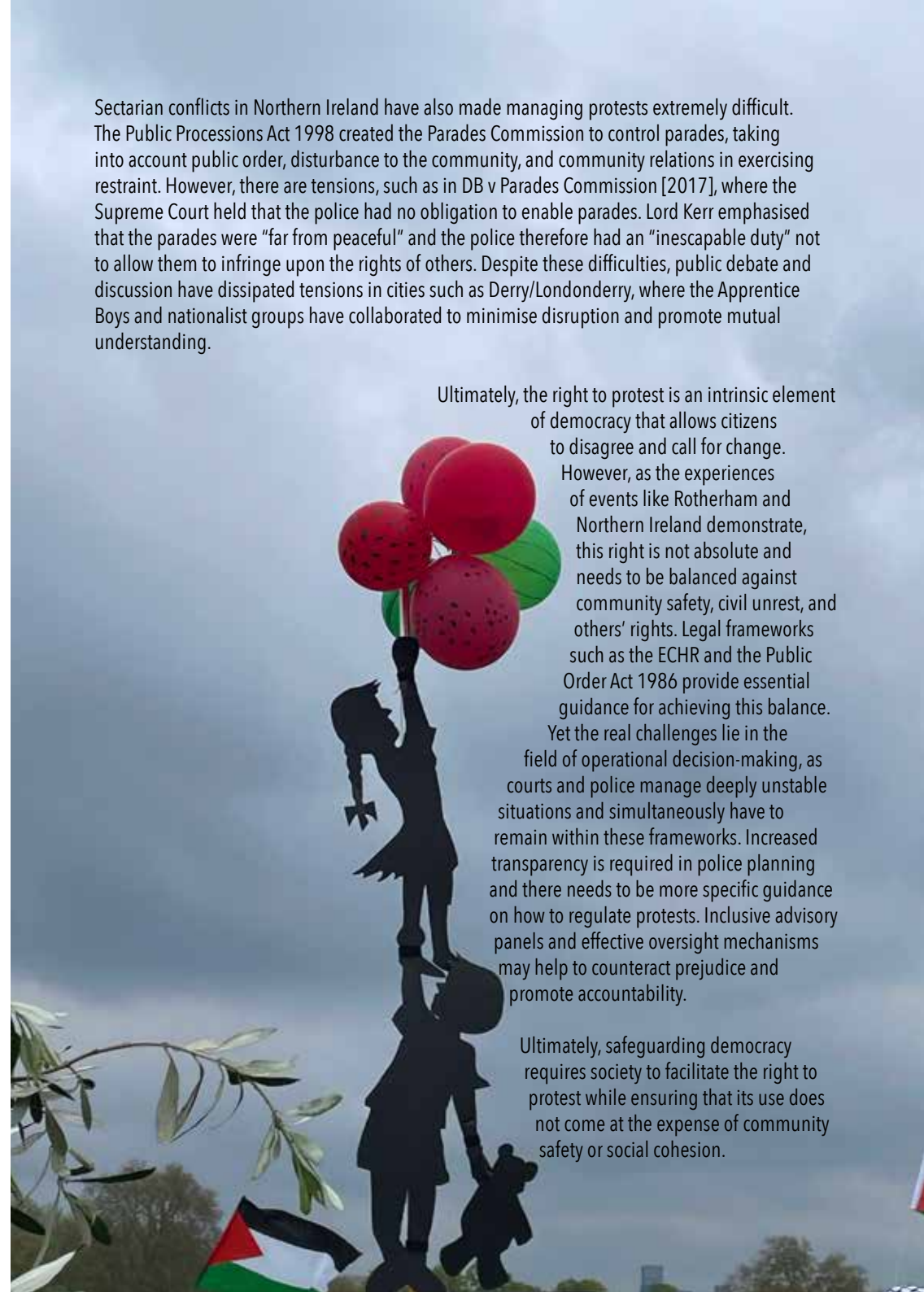
Sectarian conflicts in Northern Ireland have also made managing protests extremely difficult. The Public Processions Act 1998 created the Parades Commission to control parades, taking into account public order, disturbance to the community, and community relations in exercising restraint. However, there are tensions, such as in *DB v Parades Commission* [2017], where the Supreme Court held that the police had no obligation to enable parades. Lord Kerr emphasised that the parades were "far from peaceful" and the police therefore had an "inescapable duty" not to allow them to infringe upon the rights of others. Despite these difficulties, public debate and discussion have dissipated tensions in cities such as Derry/Londonderry, where the Apprentice Boys and nationalist groups have collaborated to minimise disruption and promote mutual understanding.

Ultimately, the right to protest is an intrinsic element of democracy that allows citizens to disagree and call for change.

However, as the experiences of events like Rotherham and Northern Ireland demonstrate, this right is not absolute and needs to be balanced against community safety, civil unrest, and others' rights. Legal frameworks such as the ECHR and the Public Order Act 1986 provide essential guidance for achieving this balance.

Yet the real challenges lie in the field of operational decision-making, as courts and police manage deeply unstable situations and simultaneously have to remain within these frameworks. Increased transparency is required in police planning and there needs to be more specific guidance on how to regulate protests. Inclusive advisory panels and effective oversight mechanisms may help to counteract prejudice and promote accountability.

Ultimately, safeguarding democracy requires society to facilitate the right to protest while ensuring that its use does not come at the expense of community safety or social cohesion.





## Rat Poison, Tooth Decay and a Communist Plot: The Great Flouride Debate

Kawthar Abdulkadir

Those of us who pay attention to the front pages of the tabloids will notice a particular type of panic that regularly rears its head. Whether it's the age-old fear of vaccines causing autism or newer fears of parabens causing cancer, the newspapers love to rave about the newest 'deadly' product or chemical that is ubiquitous in day to day life. But are these chemical boogymen really out to get us, or are we placing all of our bets on flimsily constructed studies that seek to serve corporations over communities? Let's get into it.

Cavities and tooth decay are one of the world's most common health problems worldwide and are especially common in children and teens. Almost 1 in 3 adults in the UK are currently struggling with tooth decay. Aside from the excruciating pain that arises as a result, tooth decay can lead to infections. Fortunately, these issues are in fact preventable through flossing, eating less sweets and... fluoride.

The NHS recommends brushing your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste as it is proven to strengthen enamel making it resistant to tooth decay – and can even reverse it at an early stage. It's seen as one of the main reasons for the decline in tooth decay in industrialised countries which is why many Western European countries don't fluoridate water. Water fluoridation, however, is supported by international health agencies such as the FDI World Dental Federation and WHO. It's considered safe and effective, and a 2007 Australian review declared that it was the most socially equitable way to prevent tooth decay, especially where access to and education about dental care is in short supply.

Despite this, water fluoridation has been controversial since its inception, with the newspapers stoking fears that it was a version of 'rat poison' being added to drinking water. And so, in the Newburgh area of New York, people began to complain to local health authorities about cracked dentures, stained saucepans and digestive issues before the water had actually been fluoridated. Language such as "fluoride poisoning" and "toxic" were also used to describe teeth mottling from fluorosis in studies - although the studies were done in areas with fluoride levels much higher than the amount added to water today.

Now, although fluoride can absolutely be poisonous, arguments against fluoridation fail to acknowledge that the dose makes the poison. Anything can be dangerous at a high enough dose and writing things off as hazardous without proper context is highly irresponsible. Whilst pure sodium fluoride would in fact kill a rat, it would have to consume around 100 litres of 1ppm of fluoridated tap water without urinating before dying. So, even if we ignore the significant anatomical and physiological differences between rats and humans, there isn't enough evidence to suggest that fluoride is 'toxic'. Even water can kill us at a high enough dose. Tea has higher

fluoride levels than fluoridated tap water yet there isn't mass panic about tea consumption. Which turns us to more suspect, and indeed political, reasons why such a helpful chemical has been so demonised.

A step back in time will reveal a conspiracy theory that fluoridation was a part of a Communist plot aiming towards world domination. This theory was a part of the Second Red Scare that took place in the US from the 40s - 60s. Far right activists asserted the idea that fluoridation was a ploy as nationalising healthcare and government intervention was a step towards socialism. Many other right wingers claimed it was the Communists' way of dumbing down Americans. Charles Bett, an anti-fluoride activist claimed that it was better than the A-bomb as people willingly placed it in their water supply. This specific sentiment was frequently peddled which heavily impacted water fluoridation programs. However, the arguments fuelled by the fear of communism died during the 60s. Movies like 'Dr. Strangelove' and 'In Like Flint' explicitly satirised the Red Scare fuelled fear of fluoride. But this sadly hasn't prevented this particular panic from remerging...

Indeed the fluoride debate has been reignited and championed by the US Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert F Kennedy (RFK). He recently vowed to remove fluoride from drinking water in the US leading up to the election stating that the chemical "is an industrial waste associated with arthritis, bone cancer, IQ loss, neurodevelopmental disorders and thyroid disease". There is no clear association between fluoridation and bone cancer and osteosarcoma or more outlandish theories that fluoride calcifies your pineal gland which 'closes your third eye' like more recent fluoride fear mongering may suggest. Despite this, RFK has gone on to praise Utah for "making America healthy again" by removing fluoride from their water supply.

But waiting in the wings was Lorna Koci, the chair of the Utah Oral Health Coalition. Koci called out Utah's decision predicting that it would lead to more cavities, and also declaring the following:

**"This seems to be less about fluoride and more about power."**

So it seems that the right wing is still promoting contrarian ideas that oppose science. Ideas that could have catastrophic consequences on public health overall by changing public attitudes towards science. There simply isn't sufficient evidence to suggest water fluoridation leads to adverse health effects. Fear is an extremely powerful motivator and the likes of politicians like RFK are yet again abusing it for public gain.



Viva La Evolution - Y12 Art Students

## Will China Surpass the USA's Political Dominance?

Ayesha Khan

China has increasingly showcased its immense capabilities when it comes to development, especially from the late 1970s onwards, when it lifted more than 800 million people from extreme poverty. This has been the most significant global reduction of inequality in modern history. As a result, China has sought to improve its international influence through the policies of the Chinese Communist Party. In essence, China has expanded economically and politically through the Belt and Road Initiative, expansion of BRICS (a grouping of the world's leading emerging market economies) and becoming the world's largest trading powerhouse. Their dominance has threatened the USA's position as the world's sole hegemonic power. However, the question remains if China will be able to surpass them to become the world's leading power?

A key part of China's economic and political expansion has been through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) adopted by the CCP in 2013. It seeks to connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks through significant infrastructure investment to improve regional integration, increase trade and stimulate economic growth. The initiative defines five significant priorities: policy coordination, infrastructure connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and connecting people. For example, one of the most important projects of the BRI is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which aims to facilitate trade between China and Pakistan, with investments exceeding \$60 billion. For instance, the developments to the Gwadar Port have positioned it as a strategic hub for regional trade. It allows China more straightforward access to the Indian Ocean, improving its trade routes to the Middle East and Africa and reducing reliance on the Malacca Strait, as it is increasingly exposed to vulnerabilities from geopolitical tensions. Additionally, China has claimed the initiative has created more than 400,000 jobs within the countries and helped to lift more than 40 million people out of poverty. However, serious concerns are that it burdens developing countries' finances, as it could push them to economic collapse.





## The Window From Block 12

Inspired by 1984 by George Orwell

Alexia Safta



Maria had never left block 12. No one had. Each day, the radio reminded them: "out there is chaos, inside is safer." She believed it, everyone did. Her grandpa had been the only one who seemed to know more. He owned books, banned ones, hidden behind a heavy wooden shelf in his study room.

**"Don't touch them," he warned. "These truths are not meant to be found."**

But after he passed, the silence became unbearable, so one afternoon, Maria entered the room. She examined each book, their covers marked with strange symbols. One by one she moved them aside until the second to last book clicked. The shelf made a weird loud sound and slowly swung open. Behind there was a forgotten window, layers of black tape crisscrossed the glass like a warning. Maria's heart pounded uncontrollably as she slowly peeled the tape away.

At first light struck her eyes and then she saw outside: the world was chaos. Buildings stretched across the horizon, their windows shattered into thousands of small pieces, smoke twirling through the foggy sad air. Drones hissed across the sky. From the distance, Maria watched as two towering, mechanical figures advanced. Their glowing red eyes scanned each building while the hum of their movement sent tremors through the destroyed streets. As they came closer Maria's eyes widened in realization they were not searching for just anything; they were hunting.

Then she saw two children, hand in hand, walking on the cracked asphalt road. They were giggling, unaware. Their laughter was sharp against the silence. Maria's eyes widened in shock

**They didn't know .**

Everyone was hiding, silent, invisible. That was the only way they could survive. The mechanical figures turned around quickly, staring with a gaze of hunger. The drones zoomed across the dark colored sky and formed a perfect red circle around the two little, clueless children. The children stopped, still laughing at first. Then silence. Their laughter stopped, and the children froze.

Maria staggered back, breath caught in her throat. The radio hadn't lied. But why had her grandpa hid this ? Why put tape?

Her grandpa had known. The books, the shelf, the window - it was all a message. Maria didn't know what came next, but for the first time she saw Block 12 for what it truly was.

**A shelter... no. A prison.**



## Crime Writing

Omolayomi Jacobs, Arthur Khan, Ying Bo Zeng, Abdus-Samad Ally

Note to the reader: enjoy these short story openings. Follow the QR code to read each story in full... if you dare!

### Omolayomi Jacobs

The lake remembers. But more than that we remember.

We, the silver darts that weave through the dark. We, the silent watchers beneath the surface. Our world is one of shifting shadows, of whispers in the current, of the slow decay of things that do not belong here.

And tonight, the water is disturbed.

I taste it before I see it—the sharp tang of iron, rich and warm, curling through the reeds. It spreads like ink, thick and full of life, intoxicating. The others taste it, too. They come from the depths, drawn by the promise of flesh, of something new, something soft.

She came stumbling to the shore hours ago, her breath ragged, her hands slick with something dark. The reeds whispered as she passed, bending beneath her weight. She kept glancing over her shoulder, eyes wide, hollow. A rabbit knowing the wolf is close.

### Arthur Khan: The Scarlet Alibi

The rain hammered against the dilapidated iron roof of the abandoned complex, a relentless rhythm matching the frantic beat of Dwight's heart. Dwight, spiraling in a thorny maze of thoughts, stared at the body. It was a young woman, classy even in death, lying sprawled amidst a scattering of discarded blueprints and half-empty paint cans.

Drops of dried-out blood lay still across her temple, a rather vibrant splash of colour against the grey grime of the floor. His gut churned; this wasn't just another case, it felt... personal. The familiar metallic tang of blood filled his nostrils, a scent that always seemed to bring his own senses into sharper focus.

Sergeant Singh arrived, her crisp uniform a stark contrast to his disheveled appearance. "Inspector Dwight," she said, her tone professional but twined with a hint of weary tolerance. "Forensics are on their way. Initial assessment suggests blunt force trauma to the head. No obvious signs of forced entry, but the place is a mess." Singh, ever practical, began meticulously photographing the scene, her movements precise and efficient, collecting any evidence she could. He watched her, still trying to process the dilemma he was facing. Just then, he caught a fleeting glimpse of something out of the corner of his eye. A rose...

### Abdus-Samad Ally: Till DEATH do US part

04/09/24 – Sixth Form Induction Day

7:30 a.m.

I starved for this day. My hands twitched with hunger. My body was buzzing with noradrenaline:

I have waited long enough. Too long

New flesh. Soft. Warm. Pulsating with life. And I am going to take it all away.

The first time I killed it was messy. Rushed. An error. The bird flapped too hard, screamed too loud. I snapped its neck too soon. It didn't last long enough.

I was a rookie then, I have learned. Oh, I have learned.

The next one, I took my time. Peeled its feathers away, one by one. Let the pain settle in. Before the silence.

Birds are nothing. Their reflexive eyes don't beg. Their bodies don't shiver and quiver when it is over. Humans do.

Today. I could finally feel it for myself.

### Ying Bo Zeng

The first thing Detective Wang noticed when he stepped into the abandoned farmhouse was the smell. It clung to the air, thick and rotten, a combination of damp earth and something far worse. He'd been to crime scenes before, scenes that would turn the stomachs of lesser men, but there was something about this one that unsettled him in a way he couldn't quite put his finger on.

His flashlight beam exposed a living room unperturbed by time—dust-covered furniture,

peeling floral wallpaper, a rocking chair swaying gently in a breeze that didn't exist. He forced himself forward, the wooden floor groaning beneath his weight. The call had come in less than an hour ago—a local teen had been dared by his friends to spend the night inside, and hours had passed without a trace of him.

Something moved in the corner of his vision.

Wang spun, gun drawn.

Nothing.

Just shadows stretching unnaturally along the walls. He exhaled sharply. Get a grip, he told himself. But that feeling—that creeping, skittering sensation under his skin—only grew stronger.



SCAN QR CODE  
TO READ MORE



### Beneath the Badge - a short play based on the above piece by Ying Bo Zeng

Year 9 drama students from Duke's Aldridge Academy



SCAN QR CODE  
TO WATCH



## How Corruption is Presented in Dystopian Literature: a Stark Reminder

Saarah Patel

Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* (1963), and Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) are two of the most powerful, satirical novels of the 20th Century. Written against the backdrop of war, political tensions, as well as technological and scientific innovation, both authors expose how control is exerted by creating environments of chaos, violence and deceit. Vonnegut creates a fictional country of San Lorenzo, a corrupt dictatorship, in which everyone follows Bokononism, a religion based on foma, harmless untruths, which encourage the citizens to embrace illusions to make life more bearable. Heller, on the other hand, heavily draws upon his real experience in the US Air Force during World War 2 to expose the hypocritical, dysfunctional state of American bureaucracy. The protagonist Yossarian is caught in the paradox of "Catch- 22", where soldiers are trapped by two contradictory conditions of being too 'crazy' to keep flying, but too 'sane' to stop. Heller uses this paradox to emphasise the duplicity of those in positions of power, who continue to exploit those underneath them in the name of patriotism and duty.

In both novels, military personnel are depicted as self-serving and corrupt, often more concerned with their own advancement than the welfare of those under their command. In *Cat's Cradle*, the protagonist John is introduced to Papa Monzano, San Lorenzo's dictator who holds control over the island. His corruption is demonstrated through him enforcing the ban on Bokononism, even though he secretly practises it himself, something readers only find out once he is on his deathbed. He brutally decrees that "anybody caught will die on the hook!" This public form of violence is used to maintain control over his people through fear and illusion whilst forcing them into compliance. In creating a hypocritical leader such as Monazno, Vonnegut draws attention to just how corrupt the systems of governance really are, with leaders who preach one way, and behave another.

Meanwhile, in *Catch- 22*, Colonel Cathcart embodies a corrupt military officer who prioritises his own career over the lives of his soldiers. He raises the number of missions men are required to fly from 40, to 55, to eventually 80, reminding them 'you've always got to do what your commanding officer tells you to'. Obsessed with military promotion, his hypocrisy is starkly illustrated when he tells Milo that 'I myself have only flown 4 missions'. In this moment, his altruistic facade of putting his men through more missions for the benefit of their 'country' is dismantled. That soldiers are expendable assets is further captured in the horrifying image of the 'soldier in white' who was 'constructed entirely of gauze, plaster, and a thermometer'. To the rest of the soldiers in the medical ward, this sight is harrowing, as they are unable to distinguish who or what lies beneath the 'gauze', a symbol of the total degradation of men who were sent to fight for their country.

As a reader in 2025, it is particularly distressing how ideologically selective leaders still seek to exploit and undermine the people they govern for personal and political reward. There will always be men like Colonel Cathcart and Papa Monzano to enable and maintain the cycle of corruption as it stands to serve them as well as the institutions they uphold. However, novels such as these serve as a reminder to the people of how individual quests for power can lead to destruction for all.



## Complaint

Paris Udigwe

Listen, I bet you want to complain.  
Bet you want to scream, shout, yell.  
Break out of these confines,  
You want to break free from this all consuming hell.  
Each minute a reminder of your struggles,  
Of the disappointment from this life's promised bliss  
You have a complaint because life is tough.  
Because how could life get worse than this?  
A little girl begs to sit her examinations,  
as you watch your paper burn up in flames because  
To Hell with school. Isn't that what they say?  
To hell with the education that thousands can only dream of.  
To hell with the opportunities laid out to you on a silver platter.  
Because why should I do your homework, sir?  
You set too much.  
Your manager is killing you.  
But at least you can be sure that it's not in the flames.  
It's not in the genocide painted up to look tame.  
While you scream "cease taxes", a child screams cease *fire*.  
Go on.  
Yell at them to give you this week's payment,  
While a child yells at the world for ignoring her basic human rights.  
Don't worry, I believe you. Your life must be so difficult.  
Your best friend lives too far away,  
But your best friend doesn't live in the grave carved  
by the very people that promised to protect her.  
You're so caught up in your self-inflicted depression, that all love turns poison.  
That each smile turns sinister,  
Every decision is a trick question leading you from misery to misery.  
Yes, I heard you. You said you have a complaint?  
What are the chances that you still have to wake up to this every *single day*?  
I'll tell you.  
The chances that you are alive is 1 in 10 to the 2,685,000.  
That is a 1 followed by 26,850,000 zeros.  
The chances that you are here right now is pretty much zero.  
And sure, it's not perfect math.  
But to me it adds up.  
And no, I don't mean to diminish your problems.

Erasing – Hajar Khalisder

I intend to make you see that,  
We know, you pulled the short straw,  
only to find out that your cup was half empty.  
But remember that every year two million people die of dehydration  
so it actually doesn't matter if the glass is half full or half empty,  
there's water in the cup,  
So drink it.  
Cause me too, I have a complaint.  
No, really. I have five.  
But when life hits me with work, problems, lies.  
I find comfort in the simple fact  
I know that I'm alive.



## Oranges and Apples

Leo Muhibzada

If I retrace my steps back far enough, I wake up to my kitchen at night.  
I am opening a carrier bag of shopping  
and half of the produce has gone off.

I am grabbing fruit in the palms of my hands,  
examining its sides, trying to separate  
the mouldy from the ripe,  
as juices are rolling down my wrists.

My thumb pierces into centre of an orange  
and the sections come apart as I look down,  
it bleeds its stickiness onto laminate flooring.

And so I must crawl under the table,  
kitchen roll in one hand, disinfectant in the other,  
and clean up the mess I have made.  
My sticky fingers grip the spray bottle neck.

And when I am done, I wash my hands in the kitchen sink;  
soap suds and orange zest,  
I would breathe in daily.

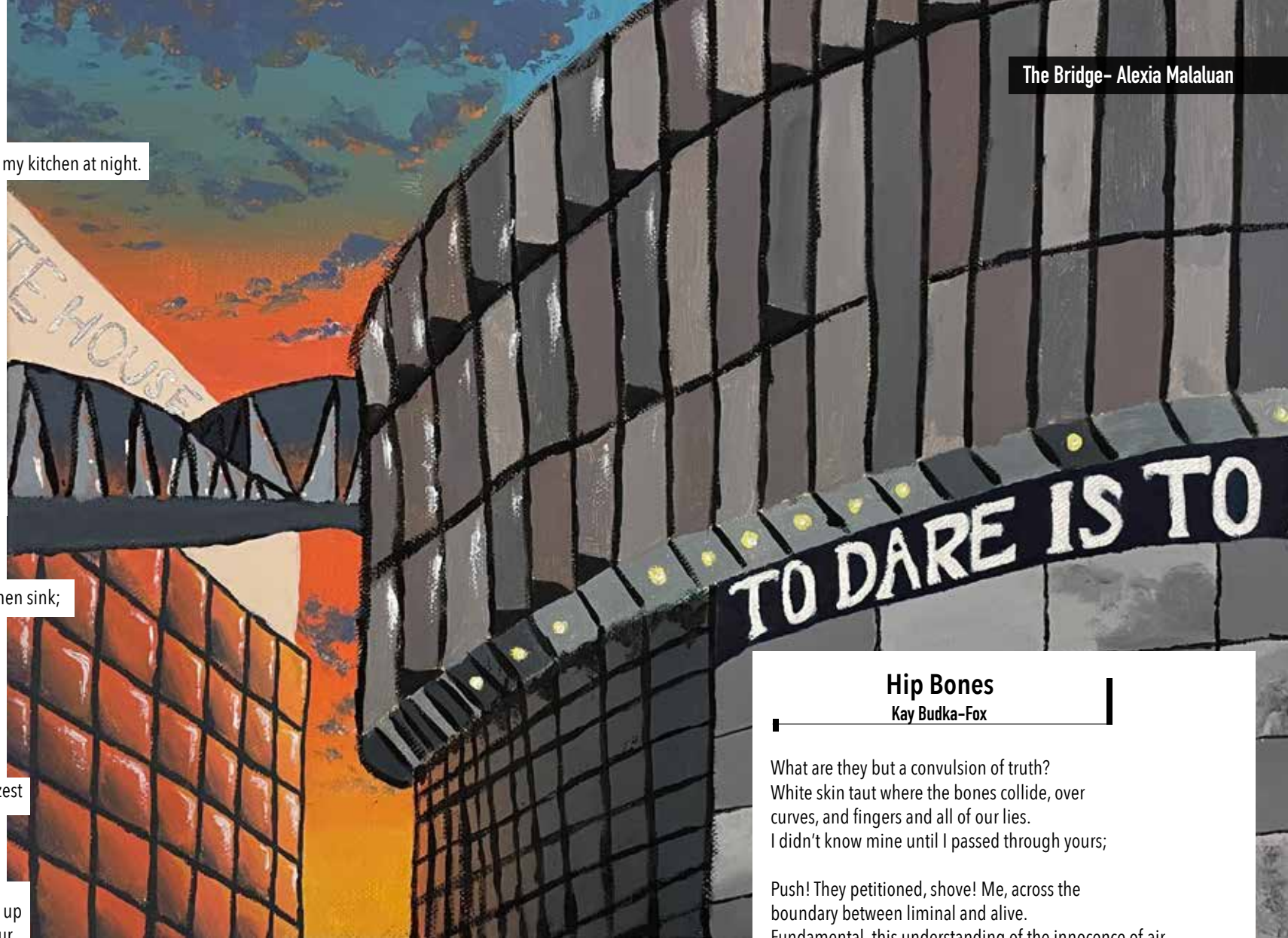
Now yesterday, I enter the kitchen again,  
on the table is an unfamiliar plate.  
I see apples—skinned, sliced and cored.

And although my muscles are tense with orange zest  
The air itself is fresh.  
I look down at the floor to realise  
Laminate floorings are no longer there.

And when I laugh I remember how I peeled them up  
when I realised I did not have to live with the odour  
of oranges, rotten beneath the surface.

See these days my heart still skips a beat  
and I am compelled to count each time  
I inhale, I feel allowed to laugh  
When I see crisp, new apples on the table.

The Bridge— Alexia Malaluan



## Hip Bones

Kay Budka-Fox

What are they but a convulsion of truth?  
White skin taut where the bones collide, over  
curves, and fingers and all of our lies.  
I didn't know mine until I passed through yours;

Push! They petitioned, shove! Me, across the  
boundary between liminal and alive.  
Fundamental, this understanding of the innocence of air  
and yours, although not quite your first, of the greed that conceived

this prostitute of feeling - clawing, tearing,  
through the heart that assembled mine.  
But now they have become something heavy.  
Me, too weak to be held.

And I am your son.

You may write me down,  
in your twisted, bitter lies.  
In the very dirt,  
I'll rise.

Does my arrogance upset you?  
like I own everything,  
including your natural hue?

With the certainty of ties,  
Just like Hopes springing,  
still I'll rise.

Did you want to see their lowered eyes?  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Don't you take it awful hard like

You may shoot me down  
or cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me,  
but still...

Does it come as a surprise,  
out of the huts of history's shame.  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain,  
welling and swelling.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear,  
bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave.

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I'll rise.

Maysa's interjection:  
Confidence may bring you down,  
it may boost you up,  
But can you stay boastful?  
Say all these things and brag,  
just for your ego that starts to sag!  
Do you always show off?  
for every achievement and award?

If you want a medal,  
stay silent.

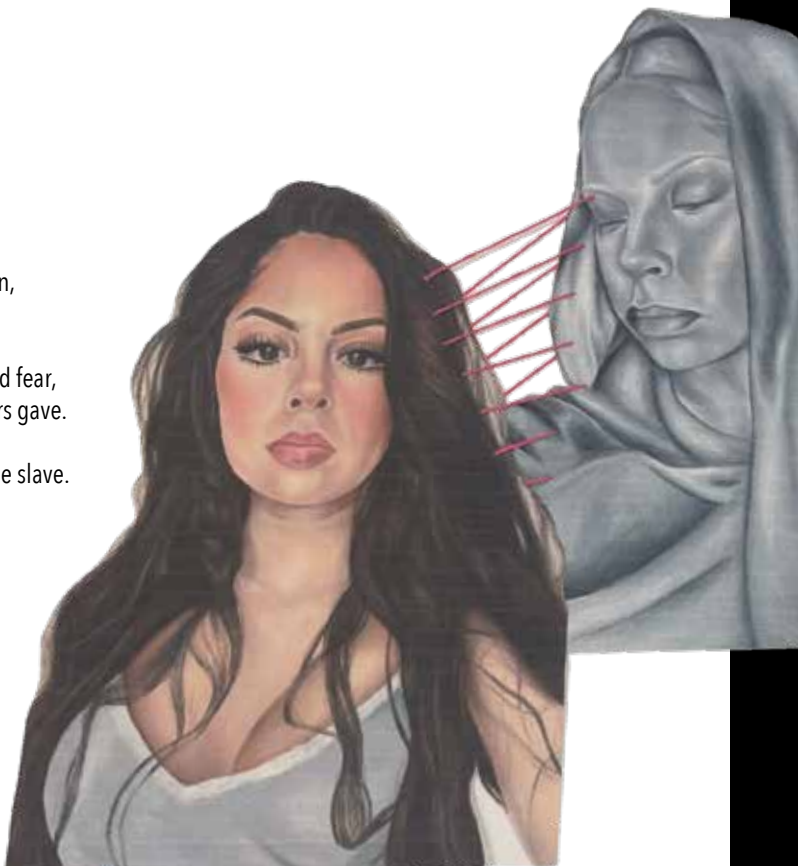
## And Still I Rise - a response to Maya Angelou

Maysa Ahmed

Mulberry Academy Woodside



Queen - Eylul Gungor



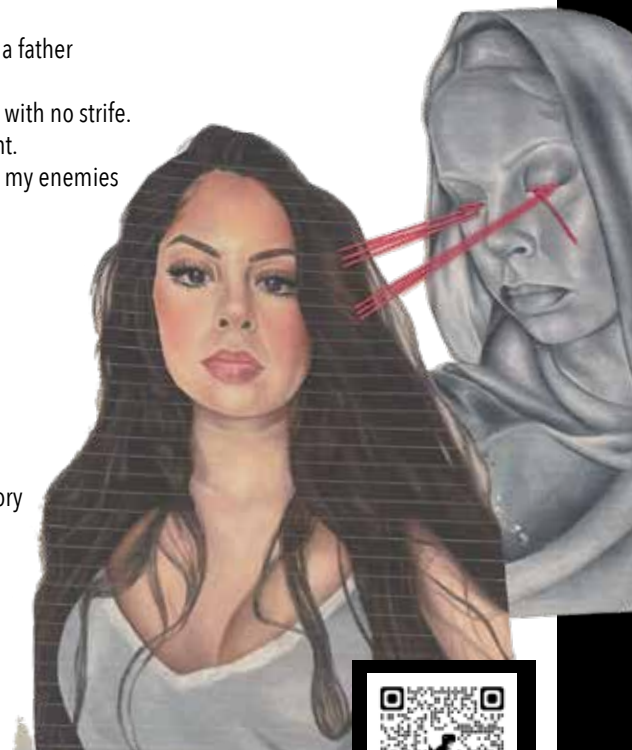
## Reverence

Berenice Dienda and Tyra Omisanya

He is a giver of life, but humbled,  
came to us through Mary,  
Mother of the world, forever adored.  
And I ask that she intercede,  
ask her son to guide, protect,  
the woman in whom I would name.  
Faithfully and wonderfully,  
my yaba, Queen Mother, warrior woman  
who works tirelessly and reminds me  
of the food she puts on the table.  
A tough life,  
improbable,  
made possible,  
through Him.

More than just a mother, more than just a father  
The names go Yahweh. Jehovah. Rafa.  
He's the first in my life and I can say that with no strife.  
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall Not Want.  
He sets a table for me in the presence of my enemies  
So why be like the Pharisees?  
Because the sacrifice, on the cross  
means more  
to me.  
Yes me,  
the name,  
Berenice,  
in the Bible, daughter of Herod  
Meaning bringer of, victory.  
But let's not forget the origin of this victory  
My Lord, My Christ,  
giver of,  
My life.

Queen - Eylul Gungor



SCAN QR CODE  
TO LISTEN



## Sand Angels

Ayyun Muhammad

Twenty years have passed, yet here I stand  
much taller but bare feet sinking in the sand.  
Twenty years ago, I used to lie in snow  
carving snow angels under the moon's glow  
Frolicking on that cold winter day,  
my father at the window  
of my childhood home watching me play.

But then they took it all from me.

They tore it down, my childhood home  
ripped it apart, stone for stone.  
replaced it with a beach that stretched far and wide  
what used to be my home is now home to the tide.  
But as I stand 20 years later here today  
I'm able to watch my son play  
Frolicking in the sand  
carving sand angels.

December – Daniyal Mohammad

## Gaza's Children

Princessamira Abdullahi



Mulberry Academy Woodside

A girl around the age of 6 held her doll tightly by the hand and dragged it to her street that was once a place that she could call home. Derelict areas, rubble and debris filled the atmosphere before her. This little girl had no recollection of her memories but the first thing that popped into her mind was home. Home. A six year old doesn't know home, but she does. The smell of her mum's famous maqluba or the bitter taste of metallic that fills her mouth as her father drags her into his arms only to be forced to let go permanently, never to be held again.

Heart in the Clouds – Tetyana Chetin

As she continued to walk, dragging her legs behind her, every step a trail followed her like a shadow. Bound. A feeling of unease filled the air as screams pieced the silence. Alone.

Parents raise their children and give them "basic necessities" but what happens if that was stripped from you?

One random night. The little girl continued to walk until she was met with a pile of rubble. Two legs were all the girl could see. Using all her might she picked up the piece of rubble to reveal a face. No. Tears filled her eyes, her heart began to race faster and faster. Sweat filled her palm as she gripped onto the piece of rubble tighter and tighter. Beside the person on the ground there was the same doll covered in ashes. The little girl was filled with confusion and pain. The trail behind her was blood and pain.

As tears trickled down her face, smudging the soot on the little girl's face, the girl, standing above her dead self, looked up and a ray of sunshine shone on her face bringing out the hazel shimmer in her eyes. No matter how dark it could get, light always shines through.



## Gentrification

Artiom Zagovorychev

Gentrification in the East of London

an homage to a once-upon-a-time part of my childhood that exists no longer

Growing up in Walthamstow as a youngster, I never looked at the staple landmarks that Walthamstow had to offer with anything other than indifference. The market, the shopping mall, and the high road. They all used to evoke a sense of bustling community that, as a child, I could not have envisioned any differently. However, my eyes have been pried open to the gradual and monumental changes that have overgrown the area. Pried open to a word that is now in widespread use, often under no good attribution - gentrification.

Islington, an area undeniably caged under the all-so-similar myriads of appallingly overpriced coffee-shops, upheld by the trust-funds of the owners, has begun to look worryingly like Walthamstow. The gradual rise of these parasitic businesses has begun to equate to the ones found in Islington. You see rows upon rows of these shops all identical in uniformity, plastering "independent" upon the windows of their extortionate artisanal goods shops. Looking from within your spaceship of the 56 bus, you begin to think, Planet Walthamstow is beginning to look like this! I used to believe that these places could survive in the gentrified strongholds that Islington falls under, but Walthamstow? The once two vastly different planets have begun to merge into one gentrifi-entity.

Now, I don't want to come off as a soulless husk of a human being by complaining about the expansion of independent businesses. I am sure the books, coffee, and ceramic stuff the shops sell can be somewhat interesting. However, it is the nature under which they survive that bothers not only myself, but the wider majority of Waltham Forest residents. These shops, as innocent and appealing as they look, serve a parasitic purpose, of drawing the blood out of the heart and soul of marginalised communities and setting in motion a process of replacement. Their artisanal gunk isn't needed for the average resident of Walthamstow! And yet this parasitic effect started during the pandemic, where genuine independent businesses had struggled to keep doors open under depleted consumer demand. To cut a long story short, as rows of shops went out of business, out came the average worker, and in came the gentrifier. Walthamstow had become Walthamstow Village.

St James' Street, a once small high-road in Walthamstow, had become home to the ridiculous housing project known as "The Chain", which plans to redevelop and repurpose the tiny area into a housing metropolis. These visually pleasing houses... were not for the average resident, but rather a welcoming invitation for an even greater influx in gentrifier traffic. The prices for purchasing a house in "The Chain" stand at an eye-watering £487,500, with the average median weekly income of the area being at just £765. The purpose of these high-rise exclaves are to serve the interests of London's modern-day bourgeoisie, painting Walthamstow as this picturesque and quiet village, where Gail's stands within its vicinity, reminding the average resident of the future of what's to come.

Gentrification spreads like bacteria in a petri dish, just a sporadic seizure of opportunity. Hackney stands as a testament of this example, as Dalston, even nowadays, is not considered the greatest areas in the grand scheme of the east, but the independent baristas and vintage shopkeepers have still managed to nestle into and usurp selected areas within Dalston, namely Dalston Junction. Small plate restaurants and wine-tasting bars are now the "big thing" in Dalston, which only stands as an omen for what's to come to Walthamstow. Or rather, Walthamstow Village.

No concrete solution can be created from this conundrum, and even I can't think of anything to say other than to relay the impacts of what has happened. Maybe, we should shovel all these baristas onto an island, where they can work from home in their nice little studio apartments, where they can enjoy selling their overpriced wares to other people within their hivemind. What a picturesque Liberal Democrat safe-seat that would be.



"The Chain" housing project



"Walthamstow Village", the gentrified exclave that kickstarted this process.



## When I See Someone of My Colour

Rumaita Ibnat

When I see someone of my colour  
 With scars on their wrist  
 Marks of mehndi  
 But dark red, darker than usual  
 I wonder, they must be celebrating culture  
 When I see someone of my colour  
 Be an artist, a dancer, a musician,  
 All careers my parents believed weren't real  
 I think they must feel deeply and strongly  
 I applaud their creativity, passion and dream  
 When I see someone of my colour  
 Brown; a darker shade that doesn't meet the criteria  
 Because the world exists in black and white  
 Face whitening creams  
 Actresses with face paints  
 Generational pressure on women to be light skinned  
 "It's okay if he's darker, he's a boy. You're not"  
 Condescending comments disguised as compliments  
 Are what prey on my people's inner beauty  
 "Did you gain some weight? the dress fits you almost too perfectly now."  
 "Your eye bags looked more defined, must be all the studying in late nights "  
 It's in the culture, they say  
 On every occasion, Eid, weddings, birthdays  
 "You're almost of marriageable age  
 Should I look for a suitor?"  
 Auntie. I'm only 10  
 Get married young, you'll be happier, they say  
 But don't marry outside your race  
 Cause that's a disgrace  
 Whose side are you on?  
 Mine or the culture?  
 The culture I was taught to love and respect  
 The culture that paints terracotta designs  
 Moulds exquisite floral and geometric carvings into palace walls and temples  
 The culture that gave birth to Tagore

And the family of patriotic poets that follow him  
 The culture that fought for independence  
 And honeyed my mother tongue  
 "words from your lips are like nectar to my ears"  
 Are we thinking of the same culture?  
 Because when I think culture  
 I see freedom fighters  
 Adorned in crimson  
 Crimson that holds a place in my flag  
 I see emerald fields of fertile lands  
 Another colour marked my flag  
 When I see someone of my colour  
 I think they must be proud of their culture.



## Notes on Ukraine

Vlad Grativ

A brief essay highlighting important historical events that I consider to be underrepresented in the media. Without this fundamental context, one simply cannot have any judgment on the conflict and the nuanced relationship between Ukraine and Russia.

Ukraine is a sovereign and independent, democratic, social, law-based state. It is not "the Ukraine", nor is it the same as, or similar to, Russia. The Ukrainian language is not the same as Russian, and neither is it a dialect or a peasant language. Ukraine has been a recognised member of the UN since the UN's foundation in 1945 as a Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, up until the desired dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Then it gained its full independence as Ukraine and again - was recognised by all members of the UN.

This brief chronology outlines what Ukraine has been resisting for decades, now more than ever:

### LIST OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSIONS

- 2022 – Full-scale Invasion of Ukraine
  - Russia launches a full-scale invasion to physically overthrow the Ukrainian government to prevent the country's integration with the EU and NATO, which are seen as existential threats to Russia. A total of over 1 million casualties (killed and wounded) has been reached from both sides.
- 2014 – Crimea
  - Annexation of Crimea by "green men" - i.e. soldiers without any national insignia which is illegal under the Geneva Conventions - despite its official transfer to Ukraine in 1954, followed by military aggression and occupation of Donbas (Eastern Ukraine) as a response to Euromaidan. Euromaidan is the name for the Revolution of Dignity which was a series of protests from Nov 2013 to Jan 2014. They were sparked by then-Russian pawn president of Ukraine V. Yanukovich's decision to suspend an agreement that would bring Ukraine closer to becoming a member of the EU. Hundreds of lives were lost due to brutal clashes with the police. Eventually, the president fled and new elections were held. The Kremlin, however, did not let my freedom-loving people let it slide so easily.



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## Assurance

Ayan Abdul

Park View School



You know, I was thinking about the book you mentioned,  
the one about the stars and their silent conversations  
It's captivating,  
isn't it?

How something so  
far apart  
can seem so  
so close  
like pages in a closed book s e p a r a t e d by words  
yet pressed together.  
It kind of reminds me of you, how your presence  
even  
in  
silence  
speaks VOLUMES to Me.  
You are my Assurance that I'm  
not alone in this vast universe.



## Frail Hymnos

Eva Trayler

Acceptance and craving amalgamated,  
and shifted its blind eye skyward.  
I watched as my longings disjointed and decomposed  
by the malnourished and sinuous snake of reality.  
Realities that collapse in on themselves like a dying star;  
seeping, dripping, sweating into the empty space.  
All too tired to withstand its pressure,  
pressing down on our wounds,  
our bruises aching.  
I bleed for You.

Growth – Mia Rolfe

68

## How Can Technology Support Young People's Mental Health?

Kay Budka-Fox

### Introduction

Cyberpsychology, an increasingly prevalent field of psychological study, works to examine how we interact with others using technology, the ways in which it impacts our behaviour, the adaptations necessary for technology to suit our needs, and how the psychological states of humankind are affected by varying technologies (Connolly et al., 2016). The advancement in technology is one that has drastically changed the way in which the mental health and wellbeing of young people is recognised, diagnosed, spoken about and treated. Technology as a set of tools, equipment and methods used to solve problems and achieve specific goals is increasingly utilised in the psychological field, and one that is multifaceted (Harvey et al., 2022). This essay, through discussion of both the advantages and disadvantages, aims to elucidate the ways in which technology can support young people's mental health and wellbeing.

### The Role of Technology in the Support of Young People

The melding of technology and the treatment of mental health has provided a platform of accessibility and inclusivity for young people, who may not have otherwise experienced this. AI is a powerful tool, and one that is becoming utilised in psychotherapeutic settings. Specifically, AI has offered support in diagnostic and therapeutic areas of medicine that were previously offered solely by trained healthcare professionals (Holohan and Fiske, 2021). AI as a therapeutic tool now has the potential to act as a counsellor, and it may be expected to accomplish this capability successfully in the coming years. One way in which this may occur is through the assistance of providing data-driven insight to both counsellors and their patients, as well as offering additional resources for the betterment of counselling services in general (Mohammed Bala Hashidu, 2024). Furthermore, it has been found that through cyberspace, users tend to become more open, feel less restrained, and feel more safe in expressing themselves in comparison to face-to-face environments (Suler, 2004). This appears to be contributing to the nurturing of the positive coalition between technology and the support of young people (Bolton, 2017), with 59% of people feeling more able to talk about their mental health in this way (Suler, 2004). Technology has offered a wealth of users a level of control and empowerment over their mental wellbeing, and it can be hopefully assumed that this will only continue to develop.

69



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The mornings gave the social cue for it to take precision in inserting the stoic piece of cotton into the knife, impersonating a needle  
an expensive make for it had to be able to work a 9-5 job, withstand the hours  
It started to sew through my questioned trembling canvas of skin, sewing quiet seams through  
premade holes each indents on my presence into my lips along with poisonous glue  
I was drowning in terror, each nightmare in the corridor coinciding with every stitch made  
For every prisoner wanting to be let out it tugged tighter on the thread, for every class I was in pulling  
till breaking point and leaving me with wounds caused by internal bleeding  
The ice froze, it fetched a heavy rope and wrapped it round my neck strangled it round my throat,  
They say things scream when they are dying, but I was drowning on land,  
So I fell into the usual routine, endless conversations with the clouds dogs dead, it hurt me more with  
every cold shoulder, from those who saw my tongue coated in led, for  
I was out out of the peripheral vision, those only listening with ears  
It was loyal to me all day, never leaving me,  
In the home, it was an unwelcome guest, the callous needle and  
thread were given no extra shifts, the ice melted unscrewing the  
tap, letting the prisoners from the day run free  
Though there was a little refuge, the sun came  
out - only for a bit, but the monstrous creatures  
of clouds began to rain

Because the clock struck 9, and it came for me again.



Let it Happen – Alex Ciuciula

## The Impact of Working From Home on a New Generation of Workers

Abdirahman Ibrahim

### Introduction

Working from home provided a temporary remedy to the issue of labour shortages induced by the Covid-19 lockdowns. Whilst this statement is valid, the work type has its glaring upsides and downsides which may have been ignored when being implemented during the crisis and continued thereafter as a 'new normal'. In this essay I will discuss how working from home can cause loneliness and a reduction in tacit knowledge through the loss of spontaneous interactions. This loss of spontaneous interactions would specifically affect those younger workers as they are less able to make conversation with more senior colleagues to gain insight which would in turn increase productivity. On the other hand, firms may benefit from at-home work as it could reduce a firm's operational cost and may actually increase productivity through the potential usage of alternative face to face media, such as virtual meetings. Furthermore, a reduction in absenteeism could also occur triggered by the removal of the early work commute. Overall then, this essay will conclude by arguing that a mutual balance can be created between firms' needs and employee wants through the usage of hybrid work.

### Loneliness and its Links With Remote Work

A key issue that arises with employees working from home is increased loneliness by reducing the amount of informal interactions with co-workers. These informal interactions can foster positive workplace relationships and ease the transfer of soft skills. Furthermore, greater connections in the workplace can increase productivity, reduce work stress and increase work engagement which is a state in which employees are more dedicated and absorbed into their work (C. Birmingham et al, 2024). Moreover, supportive workplace relationships would help to alleviate work stress by providing people with a "listening ear" (C. Birmingham et al, 2024). Younger workers, with lower stress tolerance and resilience (Perna Varma et al, 2020), may struggle more due to their inexperience. This could mean that they could have more issues completing their work, making it important to have someone more senior to seek guidance from, which may not occur with remote work. The CORoNaWork project in Japan showed that participants who worked remotely 4 or more days per week marginally reported feeling lonely more than those who did not work remotely (Miyake et al, 2022). Although there is a shown relationship between working from home and loneliness, the project also revealed older workers (50-65) reported a higher proportion of loneliness (39.3%) compared to younger workers with 29.8%. However, even if these younger workers felt less lonely, research suggests there is still a fall in productivity due to the limitation in rich, face to face interactions which are crucial for imparting soft skills and tacit knowledge on younger workers.



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## Nature Writing

Yasser Sahebzada, Tomisin Agbogbo,  
Tobenna Osuala, Azeez El-Dan



Duke's Aldridge Academy, Park View School, Mulberry Academy Woodside

It was there that I felt most comfort. Where I would I stand peacefully, while honey-dappled beams of light beat down upon the winter-bare and broken branches and rested upon your brow, a wreath of sunlight woven into the seams of your hair. You had liked it there also; the rough touch of bark, the melodic hums of life, reverberating through the hallways of the forest. You took me there for the first time when my youth was beginning to bear its fruits, and when my knowledge of the world was still limited. And like the seasons, our bond warmed into a spring's heat, blooming with the beauty of a floral field.

But then you had gone. The flowers withered without your sunlit smile, your warm laugh.

The trees had fallen, disrupting this natural kingdom, this sanctuary of splendor.

I had been torn, ripped apart, forced to gather the pieces to put myself back together. It had tormented me, and on those sleepless nights when I thought of you, I would wonder when I would dream again.

Some time now has passed. I have once again begun to dream. I have begun to dream of the roots of your love, now dug-up and discarded, rotten with the plague of your absence. I dream of your smile, a blinding light filling my head. I dream of your voice, a sweet taste of honey filling my mouth.

I dream of you.

Oceans filling my eyes.

**By Yasser Sahebzada, Park View School**

Alive. The ocean felt alive. It looked after our ship. Mama had told me legends of the ocean spirits and warned me not to ridicule them on our journey. The fresh and fragrant Caribbean Sea air was hearty to my core. And even as we journeyed into the cold and choppy waters of the Irish Sea, stormy clouds in the sky were calmed, as we were blessed with humid relaxing weather. It was our fresh start.

But as they approached the harbour, it was as if God Himself had flipped a switch in their lives. Out of nowhere, tears rolled down the infant's cheek, as his mother's arm pulled tightly around him. What spirits would protect them now, in this hostile new land?

**By Azeez El-Dan, Mulberry Woodside Academy**

As the sun arose, bright and radiant, its rays peered between the ancient trees. The dull grey forest began to glow. Birds chattering, emerald green leaves rippling in a gentle breeze - almost the perfect setting for a proposal.

He strode with confidence, the crunching of the leaves cheering him. Birds continued to sing, louder this time. A river next to the forest flowed indifferently.

Suddenly the sounds and movements of the forest stopped all together. The pathway was sunlit clear. And as she approached him, he could almost taste the honeysuckle pollen that flowed with her, sweet and sharp. He placed his trembling hand in hers, noticing her dark luminous skin, smooth as the leaves in the trees around them.

The stroll together begins...

**By Tomisin Agbogbo, Mulberry Woodside Academy**

The earth was soft, moist from the morning's usual condensation which enriched the colourful foliage below and blossoms above with a dripping shine, reminiscent of the glow of expensive jewels. I stood in the midst of this ordered chaos, gazing at the woodland birds that flew like darts from tree to tree, their singsong following behind like ink flows from the nib of a pen. Chirping, chattering, buzzing, a natural symphony rose over the forest, touching the air with a blare of bliss that looped over and over. I stood in the midst of all this; the flower which passively feasts on the atmosphere's abundance.

But tranquility never lasts forever.

As I stood in nature's exciting embrace, I realised there was someone else standing in the clearing - although it should be noted that 'someone else' is a phrase that will never suffice to describe her.

Her hair was jet black, like the night, each strand glowing a soft indigo as the approaching sunlight landed its rays gracefully on her soft countenance. Her face was spotless, refined, while her eyes shone like an amethyst. She wore a dress embedded with diamonds as if she wore the sky on her shoulders, stitched with silver at the waist, and the clouds followed her footsteps. Lost in a newfound reverie, I barely noticed her reaction when she caught my adoring gaze.

Eyes wide, she looked at me... then smiled.

**By Tobenna Osuala, Duke's Aldridge Academy**

## Gains and Losses

Niki Nahavandi

The day I took my leave of loving  
I found I loved all things again

when tired at last of seeking and striving  
I heard again freedom's refrain

the radiant flowers abroad do bloom  
their scent, a novel, lovely strain

then suddenly I saw  
twas the unseen breeze that helped  
push me from home shores

## Has Globalisation Failed

Daria Chiric

Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat* argues that globalisation has leveled the playing field, fostering connectivity and economic growth, while his *Golden Arches Theory* suggests that economic interdependence reduces conflict, as countries integrated into global trade avoid war. Yet rising inequalities and conflicts, such as the Ukraine war, challenge these ideas, raising the question of whether globalisation has truly succeeded or failed.

From Genghis Khan's Silk Road to the spice routes and the Suez Canal, humanity has long sought to accelerate the movement of goods and capital, making globalisation the backdrop of the modern world. Our economic, political, and social realities in the twenty-first century are inseparable from the forces of free markets and information technology. However, this relatively recent innovation – set to become the defining political issue of the next century – has already corroded society, exposing the fractures in its promise of a united, prosperous world. Yet rather than an outright failure, globalisation is undergoing a transformation – its benefits endure, but its flaws demand urgent reform.

Globalisation is a multifaceted process perceived differently, depending on whether we belong to a poor country or a rich country. It truly took off with the Reagan-Thatcher Revolution of the 1980s that championed free markets, deregulation, and privatisation. This era significantly removed barriers to trade and investment, rising the polarisation between corporations expanding internationally (their profits increasing to \$2.54trn) and intensified wealth inequality, exploitation of workers, and environmental destruction. Even though, it's estimated a billion people got out of poverty since the 1990s, it is unwise to discredit the poisonous nature of the accelerated capital movement. Free market bulls believed goods would be supplied at the cheapest point of the supply chain, barriers to trade would fall, and consumers would pay less and less. Now, they would undoubtedly reconsider their stance in light of globalisation's apparent dismantling.

The first cracks in the edifice of it appeared during the 2007-2008 financial crisis, as everything ground to a halt.



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## Populism: Funded by billionaires, voted by the working class

Ergi Osmani

In recent years many Western countries have shifted right. In Germany the extreme-right AfD became the 2nd largest party in the Bundestag - doubling its vote share from 2021. In the US, Trump won a 2nd term despite being charged with felonies, running an even more divisive and aggressive campaign than his first one. In the 2024 European elections the (far) right made significant gains across the whole of Europe. The question is: why?

### Rise of populism in Germany

In the February federal election, the governing Social Democratic Party suffered its biggest post-war defeat. Attention focused on the AfD's rise, which doubled its share of the vote. The AfD, translating as 'Alternative for Germany', is a hard-right anti-immigration party. One of its headline policies is "remigration" - a program to deport a large proportion of foreigners in Germany - with some hard-line members even proposing to deport naturalised German citizens - echoing policies of Nazis who emphasised "German blood". In 2024, party members met neo-Nazi activists at a secret conference to discuss the mass forced deportation of "non-assimilated" German citizens in the event the party gained power.

However, polls revealed immigration was voters' 3rd most important issue, after inequality and - most important of all - the economy. Germany is now entering its 3rd consecutive year of recession, with its biggest export - cars - undercut by Chinese EVs, and rising energy costs following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Geographical analysis reveals AfD's big achievement was mobilising poorer voters in what was once East Germany. After 30 years of unification, voters here feel left behind: West Germany has more private companies, better

services and higher GDP per capita. Much of the AfD vote came from those who did not vote in the election in 2021, a group comprising mainly people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

### From Democrat to MAGA ...

In America there has been a dramatic shift among technology companies from opposing to supporting Donald Trump. This has left them allied with Trump's more working-class base, but for very different reasons.

Silicon Valley used to be one of the most liberal areas of the USA with Biden winning 85% of the vote in San Francisco. Most companies based in the Bay Area promoted DEI and with social media companies aiming to combat misinformation via fact-checking. However, recently they have made a sharp U-turn. After Elon Musk bought Twitter, changes including weaker moderation rules fanned misinformation in the name of "free speech"; Meta has also cut moderation teams. Whilst Musk has been the most vocal tech billionaires expressing support of the far-right, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos and others have been cosying up to Trump in sharp contrast with their opposition to him 2016 and especially after January 6th where Trump was banned from Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (he's been unbanned from all since). Musk, Zuckerberg and Bezos all donated funds before and after Trump won his campaign and attended his inauguration.

So why are the world's wealthiest technology billionaires aligning with Trump's core voter base of disillusioned working-class? The answer, of course, is self-interest. Their sudden rightward shift comes as the Democratic Party has become more willing to regulate tech companies. This also

explains Musk's newfound interest in Europe, expressed by his vocal support of parties such as AfD and Reform UK, Britain's fast-growing far right party. These parties often want deregulation and are anti-EU, one of the few institutions which has the power to go after international tech firms.

### The growth of Reform in the UK

In the UK, the populist right appeals to populations most impacted by wealth inequality: ex-industrial regions like the North of England, frustrated by centrist governments who often prioritise returns on investment by investing in only the wealthiest areas like London. Lincolnshire, where Reform won its first mayor in the last local elections, is the 3rd poorest region in the UK and has been seduced by a populist right scapegoating immigration as the root of all problems, despite having some of the lowest foreign-born population (89.6% of Lincolnshire is White British).

Simultaneously, Reform campaigns for lower taxation, less regulation and more privatisation - policies that have rarely helped the working-classes. Bankrolled by billionaires and oil companies, parties such as Reform are the easiest to influence due to how little accountability they face compared to major parties. For example, Reform has received £230,000 by First Corporate Consultant - a group owned by a chair of a climate change denial group.

### The upshot

The rise of populist movements across Western democracies reveals a striking paradox: parties funded by billionaires are winning votes from the working class who feel abandoned by the economic system these same elites helped create. From Germany's AfD to Trump's tech supporters to Reform UK, the pattern is consistent. Populist parties offer simple solutions to complex problems while being bankrolled by those who benefit most from the status quo.



Journalist burning alive.  
is this normal? more people  
recorded him than helping.



These  
aren't  
birds. They  
are bodies  
flying in the  
air after an  
explosion

carrying  
body  
parts  
in  
plastic  
bags.

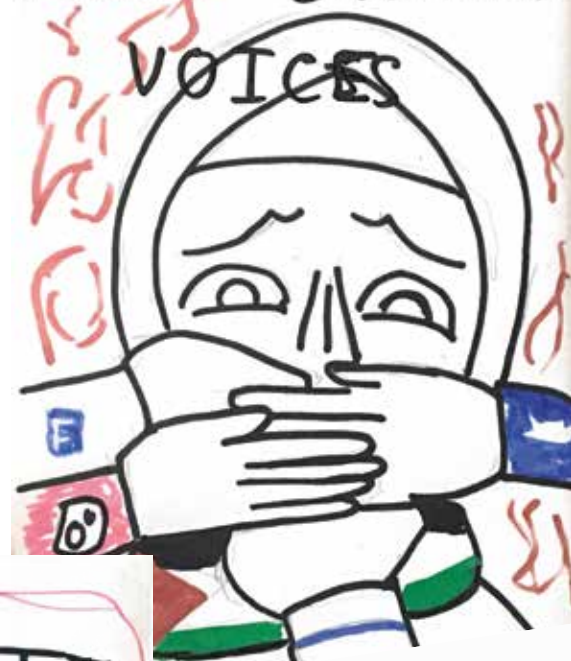


How does it feel to  
collect / carry your family in  
a bag.

# Media Silences

Journalist burning alive.  
is this normal? more people  
recorded him than helping.

Choose your sources carefully  
Media silences



BOYCOTT

BOYCOTT

BOYCOTT

BOYCOTT

[www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net)

in  
plastic  
bags



# Homage to Seventh Circle of Earth

Inspired by the work of Ocean Vuong

Eilidh Dobbie

*Cam is at least the 32nd trans or gender-expansive person killed in the United States in 2024, and the second killed in Alabama that same year. Both victims were Black transgender teenage girls, and both were killed with a gun.*

Human Rights Campaign

1

5

6

2

7

3

1 A gun/ A blaze/ The bullet/ enveloped by her skin/ and her skin too/ We call them sisters/ in the confines of B-Bob's Downtown/ or any other haven/ But the bullet

2 The bullet/ a rite of all/ bulges in pockets/ sheds/ safes/ houses/ cupboards/ gun vaults/ under beds/ ranges/ The range of them is huge/ Colt/ Smith and Wesson/ Savage Arms/ O.F. Mossberg and Sons.

3 Daughter's imagined laughter/ all that is left/ "Lit up a room/ when she walked in."/ Her mother's words echo/ into a terminal abyss/ The reporting exacerbates/ the problem/ She is

4 Cam/ Call her Cam/ Do not call her another name/ Her name was Cam/ and she wanted to buy a car/ And her wants are no different to your own/ just the same needs in different fonts/ yours in Garamond/ hers in Arial/ You both still need a page/ And she had

5 "A beautiful smile/ very contagious smile,"/ said her aunt/ and that imagined laughter/ splits the heart in two/ the air now polluted with the/ ring of a bullet/ rendering her life

6 Unprotected/ Remembered by/ #restinpower/ and #restinpride/ and #translivesmatter/ Not remembered in law/ but by the aggregations on social media/ like shattered dominoes/ creating an instant uproar/ an upheaval/ But it does nothing/ She is still

7. Dead

## Lady of Shalott

Rumaita Ibnat

"Anything from the shop?" he slurs  
Snakelike as he oozes from the tangled nest  
Of their lovemaking. "A twix," she breathes, a literal two fingers  
Her soft hands wrapped round her own throat.

A puppet with silk strings  
Defeated, she fades back into sheets of wrinkled ivory And dreams of chivalry. Exchanging Knights of  
honour For nights of squalor. Exchanging valiant quests  
For pointless regrets. "No more," she pledges.  
"I shall not. I shall not fester in his sordid web  
The gossamer lies of a man who sighs

For another's arms.  
Across the bleak landscape of the bedroom,  
A tarnished mirror slyly beckons.  
It calls her forgotten name and  
Like a broken marionette she approaches, weeping. Like  
a glowing torch echoing back, a sliver of light pierces  
through the black cracks in her face

A lady that looks back  
Maiden in the mirror entombed in her flawless skin Maiden in the mirror eyes confined in amber  
Maiden in the mirror skilfully sculpted still figure Yet kept in a crystal cage, a pellucid private coffin  
Stepping back her bruised ankle anchors her  
firmly

To the chains forged by her deluded desire  
Bruiséd and deludéd  
Damson brands corrupt her naked, unguarded flesh Her  
eyes remain sunken in desolate pits of despair Her  
emaciated frame shattered, torn and discarded And yet the maiden in the mirror knows her name She  
calls to her,

yearning, begging, demanding an audience And yet after countless seasons of ignorance followed by  
droplets of dried up blood

She allows herself to be drawn by

The maiden in the mirror  
To be re-imagined, re-written and re-captured  
Her endless echoes of emptiness finally  
Set free from the beast of burden and blame  
But "Is it really the end?" asks she  
Revealing a piece of the lacerated skin  
between the forearm and the wrist

Vowed to never return  
And shattered with a shrill laugh  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott

Inspired by Lord Alfred Tennyson





# From Femurs to Freud: How Understanding of Biology has Led to Paradigm Shifts in Psychiatric Medicine

Marwarh Al-Murbarak

## Introduction

The field of psychiatric medicine has experienced many paradigm shifts over the past century. Previously dominated by psychoanalytic and behavioural theories, psychiatry has now embraced a more empirical approach, rooted in biological sciences. Understanding the biological underpinnings of mental disorders has not only led to better diagnosis and treatment strategies, but also revolutionized the way psychiatric conditions are perceived: less fear, more tolerance.

## Unruly Guests: How Neurotransmitters Stir the Psychiatric Pot

Neurotransmitters are the brain's chemical equivalent of couriers, facilitating communication between neurons through synaptic transmission – express delivery. They play a critical role in regulating mood, cognition, and behaviour, making them central to understanding psychiatric disorders. When an electrical impulse, or more scientifically known as action potential, reaches the presynaptic neuron's synaptic knob, it triggers the release of neurotransmitters into the synaptic gap via exocytosis. These neurotransmitters then bind to receptors on the postsynaptic neuron, shifting its permeability to certain ions and either initiating or inhibiting a new action potential (Study Rocket, N/A). Disruptions in these vital processes and neurotransmitter function can lead to various psychiatric conditions, such as schizophrenia, depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

Neurotransmitters can fall into two categories: excitatory and inhibitory. Excitatory neurotransmitters – like norepinephrine and glutamate – stimulate neuronal activity, while inhibitory ones – like serotonin and dopamine – suppress it (KenHub, N/A). The complexity of their roles is yet to wane; dopamine, for example, is the fuel to the brain's reward engine but, at the toss of a coin, if hyperactive, can drive the hallucinations and delusions found commonly in schizophrenia (Transl Psychiatry, 2018). This only serves to highlight the complex but vital role that neurotransmitters play in mental health.

## Imposter Among Us: Are Genetics to blame?

Psychiatric disorders don't just pop out of thin air – genetics have emerged as a crucial factor in shaping an individual's susceptibility to specific psychiatric disorders. Schizophrenia, for example, demonstrates a significant genetic influence, with concordance rates among monozygotic (identical) twins ranging from 41% to 65%, compared to 0% to 28% in dizygotic (unidentical) twins, indicating an 80-85% heritability estimate (Cardno & Gottesman, 2000). Similarly, OCD is considered a familial condition, with dysfunction in the cortico-striato-thalamo-cortical (CSTC) network – yes, long and boring – responsible for regulating thoughts and behaviours, potentially driven by genetic mutations affecting serotonergic, dopaminergic, and glutamatergic systems (Sinopoli et al., 2020).

But that's not the end of it... epigenetics, the study of how environmental factors influence gene expression, further supports the role of genetics in psychiatric disorders. Psychological trauma, perinatal complications and environmental stressors can modify gene expression, triggering the onset of psychiatric conditions. Additionally, mutations in the C4 gene have been linked to excessive synaptic pruning in the prefrontal cortex during adolescence (Sekar et al., 2016), explaining why cannabis use in adolescence significantly elevates schizophrenia risk among individuals with certain genetic profiles (Godan & Shehata, 2022).

Before the integration of genetics into psychiatry, the field largely relied on psychoanalytic theories and attributed mental disorders to upbringing or trauma. But it is through these modern insights that psychiatry has been transformed, moving toward a molecular-level understanding of mental disorders.

## Bio-Tech Boom: New tools in the Toolbox

Modern advancements in biological techniques have also revolutionized psychiatric medicine. Indeed, psychiatric treatments have come a long way from the dark days of lobotomies. Once hailed as a miracle cure, this crude and invasive surgical procedure, developed by Antonio E. Moniz in 1935, left many patients with severe cognitive impairments and flattened personalities (Herva, 2013). In contrast, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), despite its early misuse, continues to be refined and remains an effective treatment for severe depression – of course only when used meticulously (Park et al., 2021).

Pharmacological advancements have also played a pivotal role in transforming psychiatric medicine – what the French would call *la crème de la crème*. The development of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), such as fluoxetine, has significantly improved the treatment of OCD and depression by directly targeting the source of the problem, neurotransmitter imbalances (Gram, 1994). These breakthroughs have shifted psychiatry towards a precision-based approach, where issues can be nipped in the bud.

## Conclusion

This cocktail of biology and psychiatry has marshalled a new era of mental health treatment. And yet, challenges remain. The human brain is a jigsaw puzzle, with countless variables influencing mental health. But puzzling is not a solitary game. And so future researchers must work together to delve deeper into the complexities of psychiatry. The biological revolution in psychiatry is far from over. In fact, it is just getting started.

## Decryption

Nikhil Handley

try something. yes.  
yes. but it might help. just. sit. think.  
something's missing. Breathe.  
In- trace the sensation. your toes.  
fingers. hairs. skin. Out-  
your body is made of experiences.  
feelings. habits. they are still there.  
In- move the sensation. to your head.  
try. just try. it's neurons. electricity.  
like a computer. remember computers? Out-  
nearly there. think computer. again.  
In- data. lost in memory.  
search. like binary. what is it?  
static. energy. flames. fire.  
turns to tears. Out-  
tears.  
quiet.  
pen clicks.  
you don't need to ask for a tissue. they're for you.  
well done.

## Biofuel - a step in the right direction

Felix Newton

The future is what we all think about, whether it's the future of tech, the future of the planet... or simply what's for dinner. But among all these thoughts, there is something that not many talk about and is becoming increasingly important by the minute: biofuels. As the world works to curb carbon emissions and wean itself from fossil fuels, biofuels are emerging as a critical element in mapping a more sustainable trajectory for aviation, along with transport in general.

Although most people associate biofuels with cars and trucks, their application in aviation is rapidly gaining momentum. As the world is moving towards greener technologies and innovations, industries that release high amounts of carbon dioxide are coming under increasing pressure. Aviation, being one of the biggest polluters, is under significant pressure to change. Biofuels are emerging as one of the most promising solutions to facilitate this transition towards sustainability. These fuels, made from fats, oils, algae, and even recycled plastics, offer a cleaner way of powering aircraft without having to substantially modify existing engines.

However, biofuels are no silver bullet, far from it. There are a host of problems that enter the picture when their use is brought into consideration, ranging from how they are produced, to what materials ought to be used, to even who is going to produce them. In a world where politics and economics are continually shifting, these issues could be made even more complicated, potentially stifling or even stopping the biofuel boom and use.

### What Should Be Used to Produce Biofuels?

The first step of the biofuel revolution is, of course, deciding the energy source itself. That is where Generation 1 biofuels, or biofuels made from food crops, enter the picture. It seems simple enough: crops like corn, soybeans, and sugarcane can be transformed into ethanol and biodiesel. But, as it turns out, using crops as fuel is not problem-free. It leads to competition with food production, an issue that sparked debates from the start. The moment we start taking land away from food production to grow crops for fuel, we might have solved one environmental problem and opened another (hello, food shortages). The land-use trade-off complication has made biofuels' first generation such a contentious issue. And yet, biofuels are here to stay, just in a more evolved, non-food-gobbling incarnation.

### Next-Generation Biofuels: Algae and Beyond

Then Generation 2 biofuels come along and toss the whole "food crop" idea out of the window.



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# England Football and Taylor Swift: Place-Making at Wembley Stadium

Extracted from an EPQ by Lily Hamil

The concept of place versus space is foundational within the field of humanistic geography, with the notion of 'changing spaces, making places' being perfectly captured by Chinese-American geographer Yi Fu Tuan: "place is security, space is freedom." A critical factor determining the successful transition of an area from a space to place is the process of place-making. Place-making is a creative, collaborative process that involves the design, development and renewal/regeneration of a rural or urban built environment. The outcome of the place making process should ultimately be sustainable and well-designed places that encourage people to intentionally behave like they belong together.

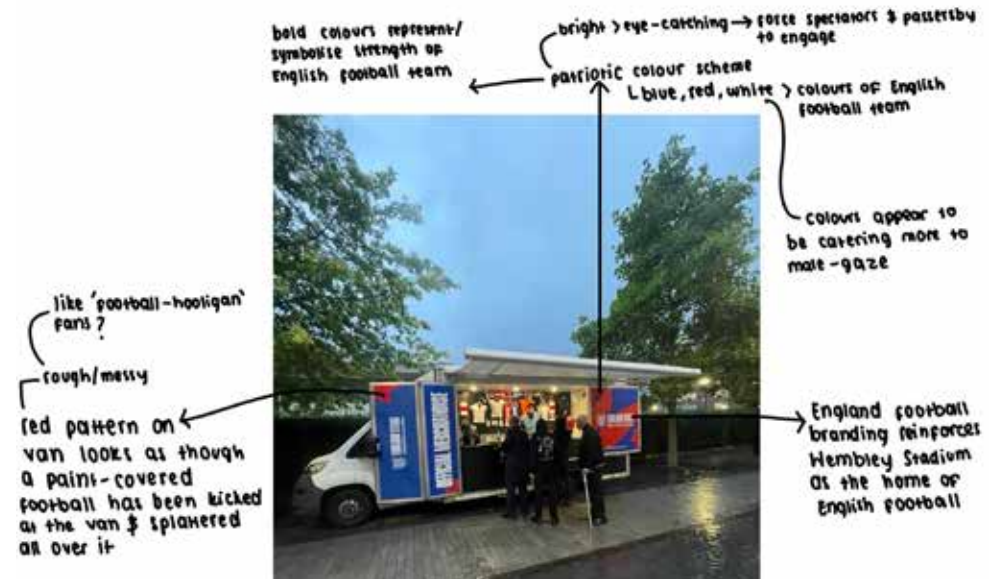
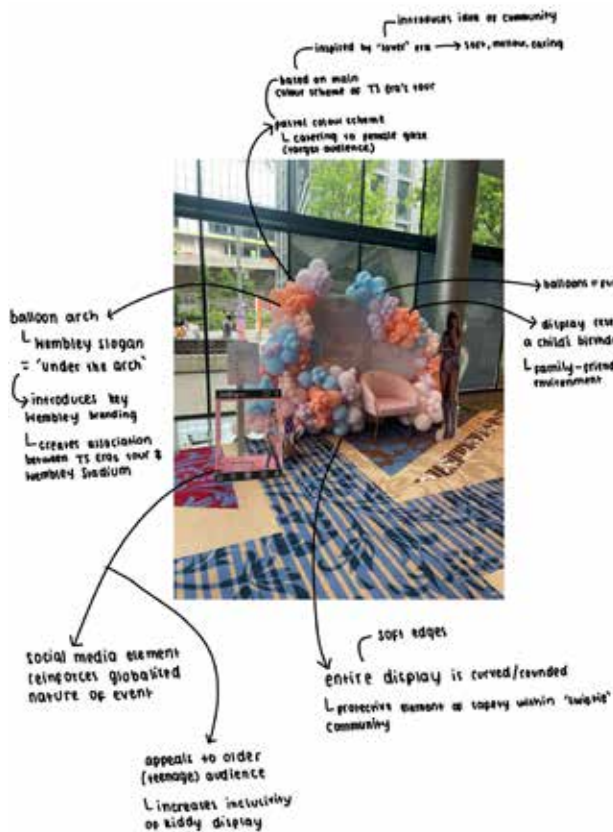
"Every built environment tells and creates stories - they make an impact." This is a powerful statement delivered by architect Damaris Hollingsworth during her TED talk 'Places and spaces and the behaviour that they create' where she discusses the concept of places, spaces and a built environment from

an architect's point of view.

Hollingsworth repeatedly highlights this idea of designing a building with the intention of successfully creating a community, thus turning a 'space' into a 'place'.

The focus of my study is the famous Wembley Stadium. To illustrate the power and process of place-making at Wembley Stadium, I draw on the contrasting examples of an England Football match and a Taylor Swift concert. I will compare how an experience of place was altered between two events that ostensibly happened in the exact same space.

The display set up within the Hilton Hotel for the Swift concert is pastel in colour, rounded in shape, and features a comfortable chair, subsequently increasing a sense of home and safety amongst consumers within the hotel. Whereas on the football event day, consumers are



encouraged to move around, look up in awe and communicate in order to properly engage with this display, marking as it does the central importance of football to this entire space.

Colour schemes utilised for the physical marketing strategies on the exterior of the stadium, and continued into the stadium itself, played a key role in place-making here. Before the football match, the billboard on the exterior of the stadium featured bright, clashing colours to encourage a sense of excitement and anticipation amongst consumers/fans, subsequently raising energy levels. In comparison, the Taylor Swift tour colours were much more muted and some may argue feminised (pastel purples and pinks) to encourage a more family-friendly environment tailored more towards the feminine gaze.

The two different stands present outside the stadium also manipulated the sensory place characteristics between these two events. The Swift concert featured a popcorn & candy floss stall: the introduction of sugary smells and pink pastel colours soften the environment, while 'fluttery' flags act as butterfly/fairy-like features to reinforce the magical & 'enchanted' nature of the space. Whereas during the England football match the sensory sense of place is manipulated via the repeated emphasis of Wembley stadium being 'the home of English football' that is communicated through the use of bright and bold patriotic colours, as well as the sharper geometric shapes demonstrating the strength and drive of the England football team on their path to glory.

Ultimately, these brick and mortar placemaking strategies serve to transform spaces into destinations that nurture emotional connections and community identity, alongside increasing consumer loyalty to a specific physical environment.

## A Fresh Start (inspired by the work of Malorie Blackman)

Myra Matovu

Park View School



Self Portrait – Esmerelda Gonzalez Guevera

### Preface: Lana, Age 11

Mom always said to let your hair down. Meaning...loosen up a little, I guess. But I was always a contrast to her beautiful dark brown curls. Her bright persona, so different from the crowd. *Free* is the best word I could use to describe her.

And as for me, just an average girl with huge glasses and freckles splattered all over her face.

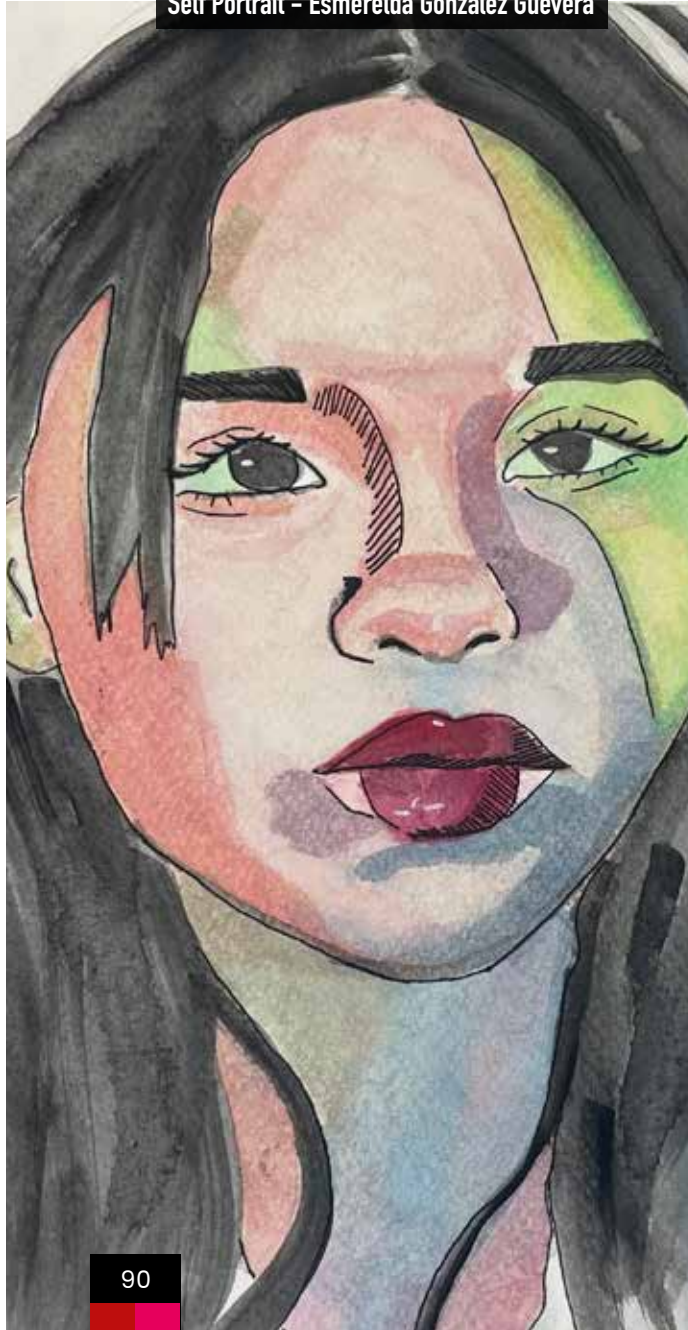
And hair that won't budge whenever I try to straighten it.

Back to my Mom. The type of person who never read the room. The type of person who stood out. The type of person I'd want as my Mom.

So when I lost her, it was like a piece of me died too.

She was everything I had. Think of whatever crazy thing you can't live without. Think of Romeo losing his Juliet (not some kind of romantic story but with a love just as strong).

I'd lost myself too, until they showed up. Until, they flipped my world. Until they flipped me...



## Girl, Woman, Other and the Future of Feminism

Safiyah Kazi

Living within the constraints of a patriarchal society unites women, highlighting our sheer interconnectedness and unity. Our stories have been commercialised, misread and dismissed which is such a poignant issue that attempts to be resolved throughout *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernadine Evaristo. The novel explores the lives of twelve women grappling with going about their lives through a rapidly changing British society and its changing attitudes towards women from all walks of life.

The unique writing style with dialogue and minimal punctuation is what truly captured me when reading. This compelling storytelling method has allowed me to resonate with the characters and the struggles they have faced. Each character has her own flaw and strength, establishing a more human connection between each other. The rich plethora of experiences span across topics such as the complexities of gender, race, class, all important factors in defining the feminism of today. The women are all subject to situations that end up clashing with their multiple identities, allowing them to navigate their persona within contemporary British society - a situation many of us can resonate with.

Feminism is an apparent theme and driving force behind the book: from Amma's radical political standpoints, to Carol's drive through the mainstream male-dominated financial sector, to Waris's refusal to be a victim within a Britain marked by Islamophobia and misogynoir, all of which highlights the fluidity of the movement. The feminist undertones weave into every crevice of the novel, providing a truly inspiring tapestry of stories showing us how the power of women is multi-faceted and enduring in the face of multiple barriers. This book has left a long lasting effect on me, moulding how I see the world, especially as a woman, and has allowed me to hope: to create a better, more cohesive world for us all.



## Ode to Ramadan

Ikraan Ahmed



Mulberry Woodside Academy

When crescent moon ascends the darkened sky,  
A sacred month of mercy now begins.  
With tasting lips and hands both pure and high,  
We cleanse our souls and cast away all sins.

The dawn's embrace compels the night to fade,  
Yet hunger cannot shake our faithful will.  
For faith and love within our spirits stay,  
And patience keeps our weary hearts so still.

Then comes the day when fasting days are through,  
As Edi bestows its joy on young and old.  
With gifts and fests, with those we hold go true,  
We share our love more precious than gold.

O Ramadan, your blessings shine so bright,  
And Eid, your joy fills all my heart with light,  
The glowing moon now smiles from up above  
A sign of peace, of mercy, and of love.

LAETY12s at the Ramadan  
Festival of Lights, March 2025

## For Jesus: an extract

Jibril Rose



My name is Jibril,  
And it's Arabic, so people often mistake me for a Muslim,  
But the truth is that I used to be...

Like you, I was born into a world full of sin.  
I used to ask God silly things. God, if I was made in your image, why do they hate me for the colour of our skin?  
We all know that  $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$ , so how can there possibly be three persons in one being?  
I guess I ignored the fact that  $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ , or  $1 \div 1 \div 1 = 1$ .  
Or the fact that our Lord is all-powerful, and He can do anything that power can possibly do.  
And since we're talking about power,  
Did you know that 1 to the power of 1 to the power of 1 = 1?

I'm Jacob because I wrestled with God.  
I'm Joseph, I forgave when I was betrayed by my blood.  
I'm Moses, but the slaves that I'm freeing aren't restricted by anything physical.  
I pray for help because the way I want to free you is spiritual.  
I am an ungrateful miracle,  
A survivor of abuse, knife crime, and gun crime.  
How many times has God shown me death through my two eyes?  
I watched that bullet pierce his belly when I know it should've pierced mine.  
And that's why I'm ungrateful,  
Because the wages of sin is death, right?  
And yet still, God gave me more time.



SCAN QR CODE  
TO READ MORE

## Faith, Love and Football

Extracted from a spoken word piece by:

Yohance Anderson, Joshua Assouman, Ayomikun Daniel,  
Deiniol Matovu, Tyrel Nyirabega and Joseph Urmaza.

I thought I was on my own, caught offside,  
but those around me kept me onside.  
The linesman eager to raise that flag,  
the ref checked VAR - see I would have gone far.  
Slipped midfield,  
looking like I'd yield.  
So my bro had his legs took, got his name in the ref's book.  
90+4, I hung it in the air, same bro byci'ed it in Brazilian flair.  
We pointed to the sky, imitating the greatest of all time.  
Giving thanks to Jehovah, the greatest of all time.

In the grand symphony of life, love and rhyme intertwine.  
It used to be market-road pitches on Sunday,  
VARs correcting the pitch, not to waste studio time.  
I used to play football, you know, find the angle, score a goal or two.  
Now I'm striding class with my brothers - head up straight, with a different journey to pursue.  
Numbers, sport, and melody - circling the dance of rhyme.  
And I know that with Yahweh at the wheel, I know all will be done in God's time.

The little version of me - my source of love and inspiration.  
The love I have from sharing the same DNA;  
the love I have when serving dinner set with three extra plates.  
Four loving sons, pushed from one womb.  
All blessed by the one that can never be number two.





## Far Harbour

Matt Niedzielski

I can't believe  
That I'm leaving  
The shore.  
My heart is screaming, clawing  
At the walls of my lying,  
Please tell me someone's seeing  
That my eyes are crying.

I can't tell  
If my words  
Have meaning.  
The wind is unforgiving,  
Competing with my howling  
Please tell me someone's listening  
Or is my voice abandoned?

I can't make out  
Your silhouette  
In the foreground  
Of the blurry docklight,  
Diffusing in the dark night.  
The rain is beating harder.  
Please tell me someone's waiting  
At the far harbour

## Lost at Sea – Noura Ali



## Blue – Anonymous

### The Waves Still Crash

Helin Erdogan



Gladesmore Community School

The waves still crash,  
the girl still stands by the ocean  
for a sign, for a connection and for a touch  
of empathy.

As a child she pleased to touch  
the pebbles bonded by the sea  
as she grew she wishes it was pebbles not bones  
salty water, not remains of the unfree.  
The salt has dried, the pebbles have been washed  
But no one understands this tragedy,  
it is not a retaliation,  
it is a genocide.

The international water echoing the homes of the wealthy,  
but still nothing has reached me.  
5, 10, 15, 20, the waves still speak to  
me in a voice I'm familiar with.



## Letters in a Borrowed Tongue

Zohana Abu Lauz



### *To My Father*

I've lost the tongue in which you once believed,  
And mine, the mother speech that we both grieved.  
Now I speak in syllables strange and bare,  
A borrowed voice, adrift in foreign air.

Where has the tide of life so coldly cast  
The roots we planted in a distant past?  
Your hands now tremble autumn in your veins,  
Each shake a silent echo of your pains.

Yet still I see what time could not erase  
Your strength, your light, your ever-giving grace.  
You fed my fire while yours began to wane,  
You bore the storm so I might dodge the rain.

### *To My Mother*

Your eyes are wrinkled stars now dimmed by years,  
Yet still they shine through sorrow's glassy tears.  
Or do they gleam with something sadder still?  
A silent ache this life refused to fill.  
What did the world return for all you gave?  
What mercy came to soften all you brave?  
Your heart a harp that plays through every scar,  
Still hums with love though bowed beneath the stars.

### *To Time*

O ruthless Time, I beg you cease your theft,  
Return the days, the laughter that is left.  
Unwind their clocks, un wrinkle what you've done,  
Let them be bathed once more in morning sun.

Give them not years, but joy that does not fade,  
A kinder path, where dreams are softly laid.  
Let them remain, not shadows in my breath,  
But songs that outlast silence and songs that outlast death.

## Phoenix

Ayesha Khan

Beneath a fractured sky, the earth recalls,  
The broken whispers of forgotten walls.

In Syria's veins, the blood runs dry,  
A land adrift beneath a starlit lie.  
The banners wave, but none declare  
The truth that curls in poisoned air.

Where politics, a shapeless fog,  
Casts shadows long where light once jogged.

Hands that grasp, yet never hold,  
A nation's breath, both sharp and cold.  
The hollow voices on the breeze  
Speak not of peace, but of decrees.

And in the ash, the unborn seeds  
Take root in shattered histories.

The promises of tongues untrue  
Betray the past, erase the blue.  
But now, amid the ruins stark,  
A flicker stirs, a spark, a mark.

For Syria rises from the night,  
A phoenix born in fire and fight.

No longer bound by chains of old,  
A future, fractured yet bold,  
Emerges from the dust and cries,  
A dawn of freedom in her eyes.



## Community – Jinn Yin Wang





### **The Tottenham Phoenix Editorial Team 2024-25**

*Editors left to right: Saira Khan, Yusra Ali, Chibueze Ugoji, Eva Smith, Safiyyah Kazi, Paris Udigwe, Saraah Patel, Daria Chiric, Eva Trayler, Eilidh Dobbie, Kay Budka-Fox, Nikhil Handley, Abdus-Samad Ally*

Note from Ms Raima Bari, Mr Frederick Sehgal and Dr Camilla Stanger (The Tottenham Phoenix staff team): We have witnessed for 8 months a group of students - from varying facets of LAET's community - come together in joy, laughter, a readiness to push themselves outside of their comfort zones, and a deep respect and appreciation for this creative endeavour, to curate a body of work that honours and celebrates their community. It has been a privilege to watch all thirteen student editors bring, with loving hands, volume three of The Tottenham Phoenix to life. Thank you all and congratulations.

Deep gratitude is also owed to the LAET community for the creation of this edition of The Phoenix. It was truly a communal effort to bring together the voices you find here, of young people ranging in age from 12 to 23, and across academic and creative disciplines. This bringing together was made possible by the investment, care and pride of LAET staff who nurtured and shared the work of their cohorts; by the support and trust of staff in our feeder secondary schools; and, this year, also by the creative and guiding contributions of LAET alumni. Thank you.

We extend a special thank you to Angie Smith from CreativityUnleashed, our publisher, for believing so deeply in our young people, for bringing energy and expertise when we needed it most, and for guiding us in taking it from idea to reality. From the CreativityUnleashed team we also thank Monika Reich for supporting the creation of our new website, where you will find our QR-coded pieces. On this note, we offer a huge shout-out and thank you to Chibueze Ugoji, who led on this important development of The Phoenix. Additional special thanks to Daria Chiric, who wrote our opening note to the reader so beautifully, and to Jibril Rose, Dr Melanie Socrates, Emma Rivlin, Maria Christopher, Josie Carter, Nathan Hatch and the LAET Facilities Team for their support in the creative process. Last but not least, a huge thank you to our designer Mark Mathews and Bluekite Creative - the way you include us in the creative process is deeply appreciated - and to Rokos Capital Management, without whose contributions the magazine could not exist



# TOTTENHAM PHOENIX

**CHRYSLIS  
EAST**  
DARE TO DREAM

