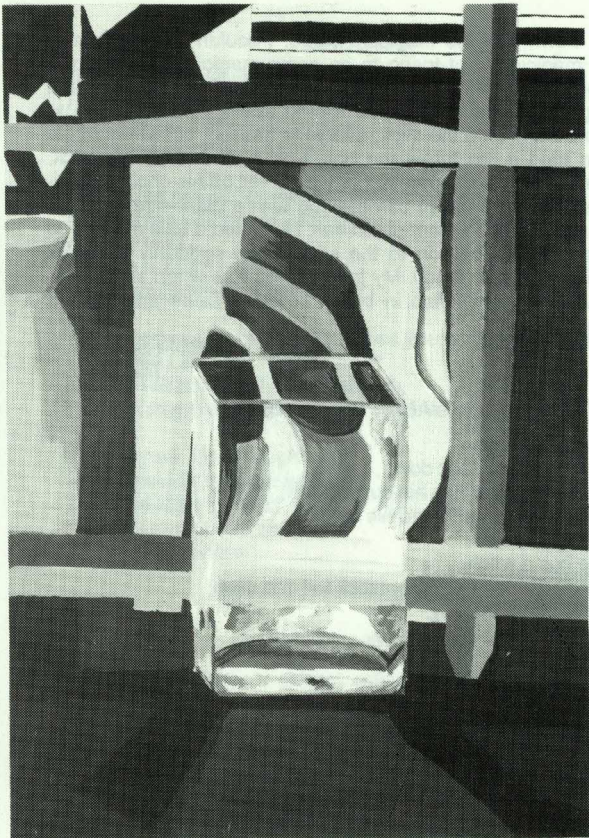


Pencil and Acrylic AMANDA DUNBAR LVI



young ones. One day he got the cane for playing a game where you drop a paper trail for everyone to follow and he went outside the school, and didn't get back until half an hour after break.

*Sonia Fletcher
Upper Preparatory*

MY GRANDAD

My grandad's name was Stanley. He was born in Brighton, Sussex in 1916. He went to school in Hove. He had two sisters and two brothers. He left school at 14 and went to work on a farm as a farm hand, where he also learned to ride and care for horses. At 16 he left the farm and went into the army. He was in the Royal Horse Artillery. He got his leg injured by a gun and had to leave the army. After this happening he had lots of operations and this made him have a stiff leg. He was classed as a disabled person. This made it hard for him to find work. So he did charity work. One of his jobs was serving tea and sweets at the hospital and helping other disabled people.

*Lucy Middleton
Upper Preparatory*

WILF THE WORM

There once was a worm,
A worm named Wilf,
Who lived at the bottom of my garden.
He was very very sweet,
But he had no little feet,
So he would slide,
And sometimes glide,
Through the ground.

There once was a snail,
A snail named Sam,
Who lived at the bottom of my garden.
He was Wilf's best friend,
And they would quite often spend,
Many hours of the day together.

*Sian Harvey
Transition*

HOLIDAY ON ICE

In the Christmas holidays my mother and I went to see "Holiday On Ice". It was brilliant fun. There was a disco dancer who made so many mistakes by slipping over. When

the clown and the magician came, I couldn't wait, because the magician kept trying to do some magic while the clown ruined it, by giving the magician the wrong things. When the magician put a stick in his mouth and asked someone to throw a ball onto the stick, everyone missed, but when an old man tried it, he threw the ball, and it landed on the stick. Then when the old man sat down, he fell off his chair by accident. Then the clown came along with a giant-sized stick in his mouth, and a giant-sized ball. He asked a little old lady to throw the big ball on to the stick. Then suddenly the stick broke; it was so funny. My favourite bit was when some people, dressed like fish in bright colours, came and started dancing.

*Rima Shuman
Transition*

AN EPITAPH POEM

Here lies a clown,
His face not up, but down,
There was poison in his custard tart,
And the poison affected his heart.

Here lies a witch,
She died when her broomstick fell in a ditch,
She fell from the sky,
Into a pot of boiling dye.

Here lies a king,
His flowers in a vase of Ming,
He died when his wife began to sing.

*Leonie Aspinall
Transition*

I WONDER

It's a cold winter's night.
The rain is pouring down.
There's an old man in a torn up coat
And a scruffy pair of trousers.
Beard,
Head bent forward,
He strolls along, very dirty.
The sea is rough and raging all around.
The sky is black, with a full moon.
It makes me sad.
Where will he go?
Where will he get some food?
I wonder.
Poor old man.

*Louisa Canavan
Upper Preparatory*

THE ANGRY SEA

The sea is rushing and crushing around. Little black spots appear in the sky. There's someone with a tall black hat, someone with a green face, someone with a broomstick. They are all witches!! The sea starts to roar with anger. You can hear the witches chattering their spells and curses. There is one wizard, the most powerful person, and he makes lightning crash down on the sea. This makes the sea even more angry and he smashes the cliffs. A house falls down and there are no survivors. The sea feels ashamed and starts to calm down.

*Emma Drew
Transition*

GRANDPA AND THE WAR

My grandpa fought in the war against the Japanese in Burma and in India. He won some medals for bravery. Some of his friends were killed by the Japanese.

He lived in the jungle with his men for many months, and they had to eat their mules and horses, snakes and frogs and anything that they could catch, when they ran out of food. He was a Major in the army and he led his men on many missions in the jungle. Many were killed, many got diseases, and only a few came back to England.

After the war in 1945, when the war ended, Grandpa said, "Never be afraid of the dark because it saved my life in the war."

*Sarah Penfold
Upper Preparatory*

THE HARVEST MOUSE

One day there was a baby mouse born, and that was me. I had brothers and one sister. When I was four, the fields were cut down so we ran as fast as we could. My father dug a hole to hide, but I didn't like it. We moved to a church. We loved the music so we stayed at the church. My brothers and sister ate the hymn books. When it's a sad song, we start to cry. The priest saw me and said "Hello". I ran back to my mother and I said that the priest saw me and said "Hello" to me.

The family saw the priest and the priest saw us so we said "Hello" to him. He picked us up. He touched my hand and I was shy.

*Emelia Papadamou
Upper Preparatory*

GRANDADS

I should have had two grandads. Unfortunately I wasn't lucky enough to see either of them. They both died many years ago, before I was even born.

They were both born in Cyprus and lived there all their lives. They were both working for the Government as civil servants. They lived in small villages where people are very friendly to each other. They never met each other, but, according to my parents, they were very much alike.

How I wish they were both alive today to tell me stories.

*Elizabeth Pastouna
Upper Preparatory*

THE STORY OF THE SEED

I am a lettuce seed in a packet with some of my friends. We were bought for 55p by a gardener. He took us to his garden and scattered us in his back garden. He then threw some soil over us and watered us with a watering can. We were left there for some time. Every day the man watered us. Some of my friends were eaten by the birds. Then I started to grow some roots and I grew some leaves as well. In the daytime the sun shone on my leaves which helped me to grow bigger. The rest of my friends were very close to me, so the gardener dug us up and moved us further apart. This is because we would grow and need more room. At night slugs and snails come and ate my leaves and left a big hole. Later on, some of my friends were picked by the gardener. Soon it would be my turn. The next day I was pulled out of the soil and the gardener shook my roots to get rid of the dirt on my

*Christina Gill
Upper Preparatory*

MY GRANDPA AND IVOR NOVELLO

Natasha Tawell
Upper Preparatory

APPLES

Nathalie Hojka
Upper Preparatory

THE PEACEFUL SEA

When the sea is peaceful you can just hear it lapping on the shore. It is at this time that the mermaids are singing to the sea creatures and the sea is sleeping peacefully and snoring here and there. The sea creatures and mermaids try to calm the sea and send it to sleep, because they like people and do not want them to be carried away to far off lands. On a lovely sunny day the sea seems so lovely and calm with the lovely blue sky above you and the glistening water right ahead of you.

It always seems as if there is magic in the water and something is hypnotising you to come into the water and play with the mermaids or sea creatures. When you see the water like this it seems like heaven, and that God is beckoning for you to come and live with him.

I expect most people like the sea when it is calm, better than horrible, threatening water.

Emma Briant
Transition

STARLIGHT

Starlight is a sky at night,
Which gleams and glitters beautifully bright.

When I look and see the stars,
I want to catch a rocket ship to Mars
And when I get there, I wonder what I'll see.
Looking back to the earth, Far, far away from me.

Sarah Swinford
Transition

GHOSTS

This wood is gloomy, dark and dull,
Things behind each and every tree,
Will there be a ghost or an alien,
Who knows and who cares?

Will it jump out at you and go "Ahhhhhhh!"
And frighten you out of your skin,
Will you faint,
Will you scream,
Or will you just stand and stare?

Then suddenly a cold hand touches you on the shoulder.
You want to scream, but you can't
Nothing will come out of your mouth,
You turn round with your face as white as snow,

It's only your friend laughing.
So you decide to laugh with her.
Then she sees a ghost,
"That's a real ghost" she says.
"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh".

Rhakee Chudasama *Transition*

GHOSTS OF THE PAST

Once there was a school called St. Mary's Hall, where over three hundred children went. The Junior School was on one side and the Senior block was on the other. High up in a window of the Junior block was a busy class, hard at work doing Maths. It was the middle of the day at precisely twelve o'clock. There were three particular children in the class whose names were Heather, Emma and Emily. These three children loved exploring and finding things out. Suddenly the bell went and a pack of girls rushed off to the Senior block to get their lunch. At lunch Heather said, "I am so bored. I wish that there was something exciting to find out, but nothing has happened in the last few weeks."

When they had all finished their dinner they started to walk down the corridor. Suddenly Emma noticed a door. "I have never seen that door ever before. Let's go in and see what's inside." They were just about to open the door when a teacher came out from lunch. Emily quickly let go of the door handle. "I wouldn't go in there if I were you. It was an old office that a headmistress used to use. She insisted, before she died, that no-one must ever go into the office. So, run along now and go and play. It will be the end of break soon." As soon as she had gone, Emily, Heather and Emma crept inside, then shut the door quietly; they looked around. The room was full of cobwebs. There was just a table and a chair in the room. "There isn't much in the room. Let's go." They started to go towards the door. "You know, it's funny, but I can't hear the senior girls. They are normally so noisy when they go down to lunch."

They opened the door and to their surprise they saw ghosts floating round the school, wearing old fashioned clothes. "They are ghosts from the past," said Heather. She was right! "It's scary. I wonder how we can get back," coughed Emily. "I know," said Emma, "What about going back through the door that we used to come in?" They tried and, yes, they were back in the present.

They realised that no time had gone by while they had been in the past. That night they saw a lady locking the door



Two unglazed stoneware heads by ELIZABETH SMITH VU and NICOLA SLATER VF

up so that no-one would be able to get in. "Well, thank goodness we have had an adventure, but I will definitely never go back through that door again," said Heather.

*Heather Goddard
Transition*

A POEM ABOUT MUMS

Mums are happy, Mums are kind,
Mums have very thoughtful minds,
Always working hard for me,
From making my bed to cooking my tea.

Mums in general are so kind,
They usually find things you can't find,
Every day the same routine,
Washing, ironing and hoovering.

Mums go shopping twice a week,
And if you're lucky, they'll buy you a treat,
Sainsbury's, Woolworth's and Habitat,
Buying food and Whiskers for the cat.

Off to Tesco's in the car,
Speeding off, it's very far,
Beans, spaghetti, onions too,
Chicken, eggs and lamb for a stew.

Please remember one and all,
Never drive them up the wall,
Always be helpful and try your best,
And remember on Sunday to give them a rest.

*Ayesha Gilani
Transition*

THE CAVEMAN

A dirty, damp cave,
With a man of shaggy black hair,
And shiny black eyes.
Wearing rabbit skins as clothes
With strong hairy hands
By a warm, warm fire
And a grunt for a Hello.

*Susan Knight
Lower Preparatory*

OLD MAN

Black hair, blue eyes,
Old shaggy hat,
Unshaved beard,
Torn shirt,
Torn jacket with two buttons,
Holes in his trousers.
A pair of odd socks, holes in his shoes,
Very unhappy, he looked very pale,
And he had two Tesco carrier bags.
I wonder what his life was before?
When he was a little boy.
Before he became a tramp.

*Georgina Deighton
Upper Preparatory*

HARVEST

By harvest time,
The tractors are out,
Farmers at work
And going fast.
But I sit on the bank,
Thinking about them.
The wheat is swaying to and fro,
Ready to be cut down.
I hope poor people,
Get some too,
And have a happy time.

*Sarah Penfold
Upper Preparatory*

THE SEED

I planted a seed,
I waited.
I went back, and before my eyes
I saw a different coloured grain.
I went and told my friend.
She started to sing.

*Lucy Middleton
Upper Preparatory*

HOW RUDOLPH GOT HIS RED NOSE

There was a herd of reindeer. The herd was a very nice one except for one little greedy reindeer and his name was Rudolph. Every night when Rudolph's parents thought he was in bed, he was really in the fridge. He was so greedy, he ate all the sausages, hamburgers, bacon and all of his mother's home made pie. Because he was in the fridge so long and so often, his nose turned pink, then blue, then purple and finally red with the cold. Suddenly he began to sneeze and made such a noise that it woke his mother up. Rudolph's nose was so red. By this time his mother was in the kitchen. "Rudolph!" she called in rage, "so this is how you got your red nose. You have always got your nose in the fridge. From now on I shall call you Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer."

Louise Beard Lower Preparatory

WHAT COULD IT BE?

Shines, sparkles, spits,
Dazzling, fizzling, blazing, scorching,
Glowes fierce and flashy,
What could it be, a ball of fire?
It rises in the east and sets in the west.
Could it be the sun?

*Fiona McCarthy
Lower Preparatory*

THE USEFUL TREE

There was a tree in a forest that thought he was going to grow up, be cut down, and be made into newspaper.

There were lots of other trees and one of them said, "I'm going to be a Bible when I'm cut down!" He was the most bossy tree there. He thought he knew everything.

But there was one tree in the forest which was very quiet; he knew that he would grow up to be something useless.

As time went by the woodmen came and started to cut

down trees. One of the men said, "We are looking for a nice piece of wood for the church Bible." The proud tree thought to himself, this is my chance. But when they got there one of the men said, "This is a useless piece of wood." The proud tree was most shocked to be called a useless piece of wood. Then when they came to the tree that thought he was useless, the men said, "This is a lovely piece of wood."

Later on the tree that was proud was made into a newspaper and the tree that thought he was useless was made into the nicest Bible for the church.

Sarah Dyer Upper Preparatory

CAVEMAN

Creepy dark,
Damp and dirty.
Caveman had shaggy, black hair,
Sparkling black eyes,
Hairy humpy,
Short and stooping,
Dark and dull.

SUN

Fierce, flashy flames.
Blazing, scorching, parched.
Sparks and glows.
Golden, gleaming.
Blinding, scarlet, flames.

*Vanessa Cuddeford
Lower Preparatory*

MY RAINBOW ADVENTURE

I was a little grey rabbit. One day it was raining and then a beautiful sun came out so there was a rainbow. The end of the rainbow landed in my front garden. I did not know this, but when I looked out of my window and I saw it, it was so beautiful you could see all the colours, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet and it was very clear.

I started to dig. Then a fairy appeared and said, "Why are you digging, why don't you climb up to the top and have games? There are lots of other rabbits there," and she helped me onto the top of the rainbow. There were lots of other rabbits there but no other grey ones. There were only white ones. I was not lonely as it was very nice there and I made lots of friends. My best friend was called "Bobby" and there was another one called "Snowdrop". I enjoyed playing on the top of the rainbow. We all slid down together and had great fun.

When I got home it was ten o'clock and I was very sleepy. I quickly went to sleep and had the same dream.

*Tiffany Henry
Upper Preparatory*

GRANDAD'S MEDAL

My grandad was in the war. He fought against the Germans when he was in the navy. I am not sure what ship he was on, but he used to guard all the merchant ships in their convoys across the Atlantic. One day his ship was attacked by a German submarine which fired a torpedo at his ship and sank it. Grandad was wounded in the explosion and

now has a big scar on his tummy. He jumped into the sea and even though he was wounded he still managed to save the life of a shipmate who was really hurt. He managed to hold him up in the water until they were rescued. For this he received a medal, after he came out of hospital where he had been for a long time recovering.

*Georgina Deighton
Upper Preparatory*

THE TEDDY BEAR MONEY BOX

I am a little teddy bear,
I have a lazy life,
Just sitting on the bottom shelf
Doing what I like.
I hate this slot that's in my back
It lets the draught come in
And all that metal in my back
Makes a dreadful din.

I have a little piggy friend
Who sits right next to me.
She wants to be a film star,
Like the people on T.V.
We are really very happy,
Watching everyone have fun.
We like our places on the shelf,
Sitting in the sun.

*Charlotte Ede
Transition*

JAILBIRDS

As you know, magpies steal things. And if you steal, you go to jail. I'm going to tell you the story about how the magpie became black and white.

One morning, as usual, the magpie family were planning to rob Mr. Peacock, when suddenly Mr. Bluetit flew into their house (which was an old bucket).

"O.K. you sneaky lot, up with your wings. You have always got away from us police-birds, but this time we have got you for sure!" The police-birds then carried the magpie family to jail, and they had to put on black and white clothes. There they stayed for a year and a day, and then, one day, they escaped. But they still have their black and white jail clothes, and now they are as sneaky as ever.

*Louisa Canavan
Upper Preparatory*

MY MOTHER

I would like to introduce you to the person who I feel works the hardest, and that is my mother. Work is not, in my opinion, merely physical, although her day often includes many hard jobs; it is the ability to work hard in caring, loving and helping - all of which she does for my family.

Her day starts early - about 5.30 a.m. when she sees my father off to London, then, after exercising, she begins "sorting the house" and she comes into my bedroom at about 6.30 a.m.. She never calls for me to get up; she makes time to pop in for a chat and my day begins with a smile and a gentle word.

Her secret is routine or so she claims: every task has its time and order and the house runs like clockwork. For instance, she makes sure the bathroom is ready for me, and



Drawing by DAISY BALOGH IV O

there are always clean towels, ample supplies of soap, tooth-paste and deodorant. The house is quiet; only her gentle chivvying is heard if I slow down with my getting ready for school. By now, the house is beginning to take on its usual neatness and sparkle.

I leave for school and her day starts. It is full of what she calls her JOB - shopping, cleaning, washing and ironing - all of which are done with accepting only the very best. She will travel from shop to shop to make sure that the food she buys is the freshest. She will make mental notes of items we need - pen refills and other school materials appear just as I think I have run out. Books I have mentioned on a passing thought, are sitting on my bedside table and favourite clothes arrive fresh for the weekend.

We moved last year, creating a very stressful period for my mother, as the house needed a lot of building work, which created an atmosphere of dirt and disruption, which is completely out of character. Throughout this time, I cannot remember a day when I ran out of clothes or came home to find a meal was not in the preparation stage.

The house is now nearly finished and she has scoured fabric designers and wallpaper shops, ensuring that the rooms blend with each other perfectly.

My mother is also involved with my father's business and does, as she calls them, "The Books".

I often find her surrounded by ledgers doing sums which leave me baffled. She will laugh and claim it is fun!

The garden is her next task; weekends are spent digging and weeding, planting and trimming edges.

Each day, when I arrive home, she will spend as much time as I need, gently unwinding me. Problems spill out and

are talked through. It is so good to have her there, not rushed or cross, always ready to help.

She then prepares my meal, and another later for my father; he will receive the same attention when he arrives home. Her day will finish at her bedtime with the final washing-up and checking the house.

Every day, an unexpected task will be fitted in. She knew I needed cakes for the house cake sale and promptly made five-and-a-half dozen small cakes, which she stayed up until 11.30 p.m. decorating! She says it was fun and I think that it is her secret. My mother works hard every day, but it is done in a quiet, happy way, seeing only a positive side to life. She never seems to be ill and is always there.

My only criticism is that she is almost impossible to help, claiming that life carries on a lot easier if she is left alone - frustrating, but loving - that is my MUM!

Catherine Harris VF

A PRAYER FOR ST MARY'S HALL WRITTEN BY FIRST FORMERS

Thank you O Lord our God
For our school here in Brighton
And for all the things that make it enjoyable to be in.

Thank you for the buildings in which we work and shelter,
For the food that the cooks prepare specially for us,
For the cleaners who work so hard to make it a clean and healthy school,
For the caretakers and the gardeners,
For Henry Venn Elliott who founded the school,
For the staff and pupils who make the school complete,
And for the love and protection you give us through the day.

Pour trust into our hearts so that this school can be happy.
Help us to love one another
As you have loved us.
Help us to make new friends but not to forget old ones,
However different we may be.
Help us to forgive and forget,
To be kind and considerate,
And to help one another in our work and play.
Where there is discomfort, let us bring comfort,
And where there is need, teach us to go.

We thank you for bringing us safely here today
And for all the days that lie ahead.
Please love and protect our school and families,
Now and always,
And guide us
Today and evermore.

Amen

*Sarah Bridgewood, Amy Ellison, Joanna King,
Deniz Kirkaldy, Sara Lunson, Nicole O'Connell,
Anna Stemp and Alice Tatham
1Y and 1Z*

HONG KONG

Hong Kong is a prosperous place. Early in the morning, the street is full of cars, lorries, buses - all contribute to the noise and dust everywhere.

In the central business district, businessmen are rushing to meetings and the brightly decorated shop windows attract many shoppers. During lunch hours, many people will just have fast food for their lunch. There is always traffic congestion, particularly the buses, tunnels or flyovers. The MTR (underground) is full of people. Travelling on the MTR in Hong Kong is not always a pleasant experience.

Hong Kong is known as the "Pearl of the Orient", because of its night views. The lights of the traffic-filled streets with their glittering neon signs, the harbour sparkling with the lights of shipping, from ocean liners to sampans, all enhancing the scene.

However, there are only eight years left for British rule in Hong Kong. China will take Hong Kong back in 1997, but I still hope that even then Hong Kong will be as prosperous as in past years.

Brenda Ng IV O

LONELINESS

She shrank back into her comfy green chair,
And picked up her cup of Earl Grey Tea,
Her thin brittle fingers still wore the treasured
Gold wedding ring.

She looked up at the grandfather clock,
Leaning against the wall by the sideboard
Her small, pale, wrinkled face,
Lined with all the pictures of the past.
Her glazed eyes about to burst any minute,
From the loneliness she suffered.

She sat gazing out of the window,
Watching the birds flying free with no worries or sadness.
She too wished she could be free of all her sorrow,
And longed to leave this cold, lonely world,
to be reunited with her dear, dear husband.

Sarah Ross IV P

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

Once upon a time there lived two little girls called Emily and Rosemary. These girls were very fond of playing with dolls, and for Christmas one year they longed for a dolls' house of their very own. Christmas came, and with it a beautiful dolls' house made of oak, with oak beams and miniature joists - made just like a real seventeenth century house. The girls were delighted, and immediately set about furnishing it with very old furniture. How they played with it! Every day they would come home from school, throwing their satchels aside, and gallop upstairs to carry on playing dinner parties or birthdays or royal visits.

It was not until the next year that the girls first saw the ghosts. At first, it was just a single shimmering light that walked towards the dolls' house and then vanished. Gradually, the girls, watching eagerly from their beds, saw the light divide in two. Then it formed two shapes, human shapes, of two children. By May the ghosts were fully apparent. They were two girls, not unlike Emily and Rosemary, and wore very old-fashioned clothes. They came every night and always opened the dolls' house. The two children would listen with growing excitement as the ghosts gave soft cries of delight as they gazed at the furniture. The children would often try to speak to them, but one word would seem to break the spell and the ghosts would vanish.

One day, the girls decided to write messages on paper, and leave them sticking out of the top of the dolls' house chimney. This worked perfectly, and soon the children discovered that the ghosts were children whose father had built them a dolls' house for their ninth birthday. When they grew up the house was sold, and the women had searched all over the country for it. But not until they died did they find it in an auction room at Sotherby's. Being ghosts, they could not influence anyone to buy it, but hoped against hope that the Bracken family would buy it - and Mr. Bracken did. They dared each other to visit it, and when they encountered no-one except a couple of awestruck girls, they came regularly. Emily and Rosemary longed to converse with the two ghosts, but they had to be content with just watching them play. Sometimes, the children would leave little presents for the ghosts, and play with them. The ghosts stayed for over three years at the Brackens' house. One night, the children waited for them to come, but no light, no figures, not even a sigh was heard. The girls never saw the ghosts again, but they knew why. The little ghost girls had grown up.

Susannah Hildyard II G

THE SNOWMAN'S THOUGHTS

The snowman stands on a quiet morn,
Waiting for the winter dawn.
A passing ship upon the shore,
Makes the sea swish and roar.
The children playing with snowballs,
The crashing from the waterfalls.
The cars passing to and fro,
The birds flying very low.
As the children come out to play,
The snowman slowly fades away.

Alexandra Exley 2H

THE FIRE'S JOURNEY

The fire begins its journey like an animal on the rampage,
Bent on destruction
Bent on revenge.
The elegant, arching curves grow larger,
Preparing to pounce,
Preparing to kill.
It sounds like a volcano has erupted-
Huge explosions and sparks can be seen for miles.
The curling talons of flame go wild with freedom,
Freedom that seems to be eternal.
The licks of flames stealthily swarm up a tree -
and engulf it.
Small, dainty, dancing figurines flicker through the debris,
Its heart melts down to a molten mass -
Of golds, ambers and crimsons.
The debris smoulders with evil, bewitching smoke.
As the fire dies it sinks into the depths of hell -
Like a sunset, silently setting on the horizon.

Antonia Baverstock III V

THE PONY WITH THE DEVIL IN HIM

His name is "AZARA" and we came to meet when I first went up to "Chestnuts", the place where he is stabled. We got to know each other very well when I went on a riding week last summer. I rode him nearly all the time because

there was a musical ride (when the ponies do things to music like trotting and crossing each other) at the end of the week.

He is six years old, so he is frisky and jumpy. He comes from the mountains, his breed being a "HAFLINGER". In height, he is 14 hands. His colour is palomino, which is a sandy brown with a nearly white mane and tail.

In character, he is very naughty, but sometimes he is extremely good. Once he had a habit of galloping from one end of the school to the other, trying to throw you. It is very frightening and he would nearly always succeed. He would try and make it seem as though he had been "spooked", which means scared.

He is always alert and ready for anything, ears always pricked. He tries to find the easy way round things. He thinks trotting all the way around the school is silly so he pulls hard and goes to the rear of the ride.

If you tickle his muzzle, he grins and shows his teeth as though he is laughing. He is very naughty, but still lovable and silly.

Penny Powell IZ

THE TIDE OF LIFE

As I placed the cup before her
I had to turn away.
Although she looked weak and frail
I knew she was as tough as the diamond that shone in her eyes.
A shine that would soon ebb away
Like the tide of life.
Her hands elegant and well manicured,
Yet losing touch with reality.

Innocence and warmth tumbled from her
Like an unsuspecting flow
From a stream that never seems to dry up.

Memories remaining restless in her mind
Hanging on
Terrified to let go,
As if she had more than memories to lose;
The memories of life.
She loses them, she has lost the battle,
The stream will dry up,
The tide will go out.

Annabel Ryder IV O

THE ROOM

The television hissed and crackled, emitting tongues of flickering light, which flamed out into the dimly lit room in sudden flashes of brightness. Apart from this unceasing motion of pulsating light, the room was still and cold, bitterly cold.

The room was strangely devoid of colour and in the flickering greyness it could be seen that the fire in the grate had burnt itself out, until, now, not even a glowing ember remained, only a pile of powdery dust.

The light of dawn began to filter through the heavy, chintzy curtains and dispersed in the shadowy murkiness, disturbing the dust in the air, which swirled and flowed in small eddies. Gradually, objects in the room took form and became visible: a grandfather clock loomed up out of the dim obscurity; seconds ticked away and the relics of spiders frozen into inactivity, became discernible, their intricate webs gently quivering

in a draught. Darkness fell away to disclose vases and framed photographs on top of a rotten, worm-eaten sideboard. The photographs depicted scenes of joy: a black and white wedding photograph of a handsome couple, the groom in soldier's garb, and a more recent photograph of another couple with their children. All smiled radiantly in the frames, where dust had now settled.

The screen on the television was now blank, and suddenly, a bodiless voice filled the room, punctuating the silence. Its origin was the television, and, as it wished the nation a very good morning, a low growl came from a region of duskiness near the fireplace. It gurgled slowly in the throat of a dog who had been asleep, but, at the sound of the strange voice, had woken with a start. In the dimness, its wide eyes blinked under their brows like two glowing coals. Its tail could be heard swishing vigorously.

Just at this moment, the morning sun peeped over the rooftops and a shaft of sunlight cut through the dim murkiness like a sharpened blade and illuminated the area around the fireplace.

The dog, a black mongrel, was lying with its head on its paws next to its master's armchair. His master was slumped in the chair, and his head was bent over one shoulder, so that folds of flesh were gathered under his chin, which caused his mouth to hang open, the tongue protruding slightly. The half-open sightless eyes twinkled in the sunlight and one arm dangled lifelessly over the side of the chair.

Two nights ago, when the old man's arm had dropped like a lead over the chair, the dog, thinking that his master was stroking him, had impulsively licked the warm hand with his rough tongue, and then, sighing, had happily fallen asleep in the knowledge that his master was nearby.

The dog and his master had grown old together in this room, but now, something was wrong. The dog seemed to sense that a change had taken place. The arm still hung over the side of the chair, but now the hand was blue and cold. It had stiffened and had taken on a ghastly, ligneous appearance, with the veins and knuckles protruding through the taught, old skin.

A new smell pervaded the atmosphere, a pungent odour which caused the hackles to rise along the dog's back. It wandered aimlessly about the room and now avoided the chair as a change had occurred...

From outside, the familiar sounds of the milkman, postman and newspaper boy, unwittingly carrying out their deliveries penetrated into the room. Noisy children ran past the house on their way to school and still the man in the chair made no motion.

On the screen of the television faces smiled blandly as they reached into the nation's homes, but in this room they went unheeded. The sounds and voices were strangely hollow as they echoed round the walls; they seemed false and unreal...

The old man was discovered a day later, when strangers forced their way in, shattering glass, and shattering the stillness. The man was removed from the house unceremoniously. It was of no consequence that he had been stripped of all dignity. No-one could help him now. No-one cared.

The dog, who had tried to protect his master, was led out of the house and away from his home, fear etched in his eyes.

As the front door was shut, the noise echoed through every room. The house became still. It was now empty and a deeper silence ensued, as the dust settled again. The only

reminders of life were the people in the photographs on the sideboard, who continued to smile out of their frames.

However, soon the dust would settle there also, covering the glass and obscuring their faces from view.

Katrina Lewis U VI

THE LOVE OF HER LIFE

She sat there looking at her hands
Looking at the fat and puffy fingers,
Believing the whole world was caving in on her,
She had just lost her dog.... her life.... her love
The only thing she had loved in the world
Seemed to have slipped away like water going down the plug-hole.

She had no-one else who cared;
To everyone else, she was just another old lady.
Since she had moved to that house,
She seemed to have lost everyone,
Her husband, sister, and now her dog.

The handkerchief she was holding was sodden with tears,
Her eyes were blurred
She could hardly see.
She looked at the coalfire,
The flames flickered like an on/off switch,
Looking into the fire she thought about Jasper the dog,
How he used to laze in front of the fire, as if he had nothing to do.

She played with her imagination,
Thinking her life was not worth living,
What was there to do?
Only sit and think think,
Getting older.
What was there to live for?
She had no-one who cared,
No-one to care for,
No-one to be with,
No-one to love or cherish.

As I looked at the clock on the mantelpiece,
I thought, I might as well start to make the tea,
There was nothing else to do.

Emma Bird IY O

KEEPING A SECRET!

I like keeping secrets!
I like knowing something that no-one else knows
Knowing something that no-one else does
Bursting to tell someone, but you know you can't!
I love that feeling, a feeling of superiority.
It's especially good fun when the secret is something really funny or important.
It's awful when there is a boiling rage inside you that's just about to get too hot and boil over
Spilling the big secret.
I don't like nasty secrets about other people
that are spiteful and jeering.
But when things are normal and everything fits into place
I REALLY LIKE KEEPING SECRETS!

Helen Roberts IV

LIMERICKS

There once was a girls' school in Brighton,
That sought every child to enlighten,
About Birds and the Bees
To pass subjects with ease,
And to sleep without having the light on.

There was a young girl of St. Mary's,
Who went off to work in the dairies.
Whilst milking a goat,
It opened its throat,
And out flew a flock of canaries.

Deniz Kirkaldy I Y

MALAY SUPERSTITIONS

"Will you stop singing in the kitchen. Do you want to marry an old man?" I stopped singing instantly and groaned. Sometimes I think my mother is over-superstitious. How can singing in the kitchen have anything to do with marrying an old man? I remembered an old friend of mine who could not utter a word, let alone sing, and who had just married a man forty years her senior!

However, believe it or not, Malay superstitions, of which the above is an example, despite their sounding strange, bizarre or even ridiculous to some people, have sensible meanings behind them. In fact, these hidden meanings are the real purpose of the existence of superstitions. Nobody knows where superstitions come from, but they have been passed down from generation to generation as a way of indirectly preventing someone, especially the younger generation, from doing something which could lead to undesirable results. Take, for instance, the superstition which I mentioned above. A girl is discouraged from singing in the kitchen, not so that she will not marry an old man, but actually to prevent her from getting distracted from her kitchen work which in turn could lead to a burnt supper! Moreover, singing whilst cooking could be unhygienic. Saliva might enter the food being cooked.

Another example which I find quite interesting is the one which says: "Don't play during sunset or you'll get possessed by ghosts or spirits". This superstition is particularly directed at children. Sunset is one of the times set aside for prayer and everybody is expected to be at home at that time. Now, as you know, children tend to get carried away when they play and forget to go back home on time. Thus this superstition was made up to prevent this from happening as children are normally afraid of ghosts and spirits.

According to another Malay superstition, when someone whistles at night, he will attract the attentions of supernatural beings. The story behind this, as some of you might probably have guessed, is actually to prevent people from making any noise at night to disturb those who are sleeping. Perhaps today the noise of someone's whistling is insignificant compared to the sound of blaring televisions and whizzing cars, but, in the old days, when everybody practised "early to bed, early to rise", the nights were so quiet and peaceful that a whistle was indeed a form of "noise pollution"!

Other examples are: "Don't pass a tray over someone's head or that person will never get married"; "Don't change places during mealtime or you'll become a bigamist"; "Don't sleep near the window or you'll get bad dreams", and many others which I cannot mention. All of them have their hidden

purposes. Try to figure out the hidden purposes behind the examples just given.

People might not believe in superstitions nowadays, but they did play a huge part in Malay society long ago. It could now be considered a legacy which is on the verge of extinction. Personally, I think this is a great pity.

Siti Haziah Abidin L VI

DISAPPOINTMENT

The roundabout in the playground slides slowly to a halt.

I sit there for a while pondering about Ben. If I screw my eyes up tightly, I can see him just as he was the last time he came. In my mind, we are sitting on the edge of the rocks, dangling our tanned legs in the warm salt-water. The sun is shining down, casting golden sparks onto the tips of undulating waves. A gentle sea breeze combs through my hair and the lapping of the sea is willing me to sleep. I want this moment to last forever; if only I could trap this elusive feeling of peace and contentment in the amber of my mind.

I gaze wistfully at the nearby seashore, shrouded in patches of dark green. I can imagine the tranquil underwater scene: tiny salt-water fishes darting through the feathery, green ferns and dark-green-coloured crabs scuttling across the sandy sea floor. I can taste the salt in the water and feel the stinging in my eyes when it seeps in through almost closed eyelids. I remember a day almost four years back when Ben and I first went scuba-diving. I long for the muffling quietness of the sea; I long for Ben.

I am drawn by an almost magnetic force to the rocky shore where Ben and I had sat almost every day, talking about everything and nothing. As I peer through the shimmering air of the Persian Gulf, something on the rocks near me catches my eye. I blink in amazement; in the thin layer of sand in front of me lies a perfect half of an oyster shell, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. I pick it up and cradle it in my hands protectively. I will give this to Ben when he arrives today.

I can visualize the look of boyish pleasure on Ben's face when I present this shell to him. The two hour flight from Dubai will have left no dent on his energy. When I see him at the airport, he will lift me up and hug me tightly as he always does. I have such a strong feeling of anticipation inside me. Yet there is something from within me that is trying to escape. I cannot relinquish it. A sudden chill travels up my body and I decide to run back to my house in order to vanquish it.

Although the run from the shore takes only five minutes, I am panting when I collapse on my bed. I am panting from the heat; I am panting from the fear. I do not understand the fear. A pressure is building up inside my mind and I grip my head to prevent it from exploding. I do not want to know

Hours later, I look out of my window to view a blood-red horizon. Where had the golden morning disappeared to? I run downstairs; eager to see Ben's face. He must have arrived from the airport.

"Mother," I call, eagerly rushing towards the lounge. "Are you there, Ben?"

When I enter the lounge, my mother is sitting up, eyeing me with a questioning look. "Where's Ben?" I ask, an ominous feeling welling up in the pit of my stomach.

"Tavia," my mother begins as she starts to get up.

An almost manic feeling seizes me and I grip my mother's shoulders. "Where is Ben?" I need to know. There is something evil in this room. Something that is taking Ben from me even as I speak.

I storm around the lounge pushing over innumerable objects.

There is an aching pain in my brain. I start to feel dizzy. Silhouettes of objects start to blur and blend before my eyes. There is an intense pressure behind my eyes. Something is slipping through the meshed wire net of my mind.

And I know.....

The pressure behind my eyes is relieved in the form of tears and I cry and cry. I cry for myself; I cry for Ben. The pain that has been leashed tight in some forgotten corner of my mind has escaped at last.

Someone is hugging me tightly and I realise that it is my mother. I hug her tightly, knowing that she must be suffering from the same pain as I.

It is ironic that someone whom I have treasured and loved for years suddenly disappears in one moment.

For Ben, my beloved twin brother is dead.

Kaythi Yin IV O

THE HAUNTED CHURCH

Cold and clammy, dingy and damp
The walls of the church by the light of my lamp,
Looked green and brown - stained with time.
My lamp's flame flickered orange and lime,
Until I heard the door before my eyes
Swing open and the chill night air
Blow out the lamp.

I stood and stared.

The moonlight fell on tombs and walls,
A white shape passed the choir stalls
And footsteps climbed the grey stone stairs.

Then organ music filled the air:
Was there a ghost in the church that night?
Or was it a dream that has filled me with fright?

Amy Bayless II G

BED AND BREAKFAST INCLUDED

She gave her reflection one last look in the mirror; she was not quite sure why, but she always dressed with care. A tall figure stared back at her from the mirror. She was about twenty-five with auburn hair which fell in soft curls on her shoulders. Her usually pale complexion had been touched by the sun, despite the large hat she would wear outdoors. Her rich, brown eyes had lost their youthful lustre in the past years, as her life had grown slowly more tedious and monotonous.

She made her way down the stairs, the carpets of which were badly worn. The Regent Guest House, Brighton, had sounded impressive, yet its appearance fell sadly short of her expectations.

She took her place at the usual table. Mrs. Crownley, who insisted on being known as the proprietress, not landlady, which she thought vulgar, gazed at her with an annoyed expression on her face. Breakfast ceased to be served in ten minutes and all the other guests had nearly finished. Helen leant back in her chair, waiting to give her order. The room was filled with a continuous hum of voices, as guests decided what to do that day.

The table in front of Helen's was occupied by a couple with two argumentative young children. The father rarely spoke at breakfast. He seemed to be unnaturally absorbed with a copy of "The Times". This left a rather flustered wife to cope with the girl and boy's demands. On refusing several of

their requests, the colour heightened in her face, which was already red and sore from an unwisely long period spent in the sun. Helen wondered how this poor, harassed mother with silent husband and troublesome children could actually be enjoying her holiday. But she undoubtedly was as there was a certain light in her eyes which betrayed her deep feeling of content.

Helen poured a cup of tea from the pot which had just been set before her. The crockery had obviously been chosen for its ability to survive life in a guest house rather than for its appearance.

Helen then turned her gaze to the table beside her. At it sat a middle aged couple who seemed oddly matched. The woman was petite with abundant, fading, blonde hair, gathered up in a youthful pony-tail. It was apparent that she had taken great pains to conceal with foundation any telling lines on her face, but her age was still very obvious. In contrast, her husband stood at least six feet tall and greatly exceeded the weight limit for a man several inches taller than himself. A bush of dark, unruly hair surmounted his colossal figure. Somehow he had managed to get through an enormous breakfast which would, Helen thought, have lasted her for many meals.

At the window table, which for some unknown reason Mrs. Crownley insisted on calling the "Newly-Wed Table", were seated a young couple who had actually been married for just over a year. Apparently married life suited neither, or maybe they were both naturally untalkative people. Either way they both stared forlornly out of the window, thinking perhaps what life would have been like if they had not chosen each other as partners. At least they had married, thought Helen to herself, and sighed.

Helen finished her meal in silence. Each morsel of food seemed to stick unpleasantly in her throat. Soon she sat alone in the room. The other guests had already left to begin another day of their holiday. The silence of the room was broken only by the chiming of the clock, reminding Helen of all the time today and in the future she would spend alone.

Nowal Alshaikhley L VI

A FIRE IS BORN

The fire was born!

With anger is his heart he spat out the sparks,
And the flames flapped higher.

Colours of the rainbow shot in the air,
Smells so evil like flowers dying in his hands.
And crawling out from the depths of hell the fire appeared.

Growing intensely, his mind grew wilder,
His body moving to the objects around,
And like a blazing sun, he brought evil heat.

No-one could match this body of flames,
He fought like a bull and ate like a pig,
And gave out the heat of a furnace.

But, to his dismay, his enemy reached him,
And with a thrust of such vigour he crept over the fire,
Like a candle melting to its wick, the fire died to an ash,
His short legs sunk back into hell.

Natasha Watts III V

AUTUMN

The summer mellows, the autumn winds have begun,
Birds fly to distant lands to seek the sun,
The mist low lying silhouettes the trees,
Rushing up the valleys comes the noisy autumn breeze,
The brown crumpled leaves dance on the garden paths,
Cosy and warm the cats lies sleeping on the hearth,
Nature starts its long deep sleep,
Guarding well the glories of next summer in its keep.

Rachel Pratt II H

MY WEDDING DAY

Today is the IVth day of the week in my XIIth year, the most important day in my life - my wedding day.

I woke up at dawn and lay in my bed, feeling nervous and excited. At the IIIrd horae, mater and the slaves came into my room. First, they prepared the hot water and I was cleaned. Then they rubbed my body with oil and perfume. When they were putting my tunica recta on me, I said to mater, "I am nervous. What will my husband be like?"

Mater answered, "Do not ask, daughter. I have never seen him before myself, but our good friend Marcus, who found your husband for you, said that he is not ugly. He comes from a rich family; his father is a patrician and has a respectable position in the Senate. After all, that is the important thing."

I was silent as mater plaited my hair. Thoughts of all kinds ran through my head - what will my husband be like? Is he handsome? Would he be kind to me?

"Right, daughter, have a look at yourself," mater's voice broke into my thoughts. I made my way to the stream outside my house and gazed into the water. I saw myself in a long, white gown, with a belt tied round my waist. My hair was done into six plaits, tied together with orange ribbon. I was sure I looked pretty but my mind was too far away to enjoy that. As I walked slowly back to the house, I met mater and she said, "Oh, there you are! I want you to go to your room and bring out the toys you played with when you were a little girl. They will be offered to the gods because they guarded your childhood. This is what all brides must do."

I went into my room and looked under my bed. There was a box full of my toys which I still played with sometimes. I looked in it. There was a tiny wooden dolls' house with bits of furniture in it, some dolls' clothes and a large cloth doll which I used to cuddle in bed when I went to sleep. I was sad to realize that from this day onwards, I would become a woman who had to take up responsibilities instead of being a little girl who played with toys at home.

I carried the box out to mater and she said, "Fine. Come and have prandium. Your pater is waiting for you."

After prandium, mater came with me into my room. She held out an orange veil and covered my head with it. She said, "There now, my precious daughter all ready for her Dextrarum Iunctio."

I whispered shakily, "Mater, I am frightened." Mater answered, "Frightened? Do not be frightened. Are you wondering about your husband?" I nodded silently. She said, "I know your feeling, daughter. I had gone through the same thing when I was about to marry your pater. I was XII years old then and my parents did not tell me anything about him. I thought of running away on my wedding day because I could not bear the dreadful feeling and suspense. But I got married



First attempts at portraiture for some members of the Photographic Society

Photograph J.B.L.

all the same and have been married to the best paterfamilias in the world."

I said in surprise, "Oh, I never knew that!" Mater replied, "Of course you did not. Nobody could fully understand that feeling unless it is their wedding day and that they have no clue about their husband at all."

I asked, "May I know what dowry pater has paid?" She answered, "The provision of your dowry is included in the marriage contract which your pater had signed. Your dowry is seventy acres of land, two hundred sheep, one hundred cattle and a villa. It is getting past the time. We must go to the Dextrarum lunctio."

I hardly remembered my journey there. My hands were sweating but I did not wipe it on my tunica recta for fear of ruining it. It was made especially for me by my grandmother.

Finally, I arrived at the courtyard where my Dextrarum lunctio was to be held. I took a deep breath as I walked in with pater and mater. I walked slowly towards the priest and I saw a man with his back turned towards me. I was certain that he was my new paterfamilias and I was so frightened that I could not even breathe properly. However, I steadied myself as the priest asked for good omens before he proceeded. I heard his voice saying that I was to sign the wedding register. As in a dream I picked up the stylus. As I was about to sign, I realized that either a beautiful dream or a nightmare was in front of me. If the man with his back turned towards me was good, kind and loved me, then all would be well and I would be happy. But if he should be cruel and cold, then the rest of my life would be a nightmare. However, sense told me that I could not back out from it, so I signed the register very quickly indeed in front of witnesses. After I did that, a rather calm feeling spread through me; my fate had been decided, however good or bad it might be. After that, my new husband came and stood in front of me. I dared not look at him as he lifted my veil and I lowered my eyes. When I finally had the courage to lift them, I saw a tall boy, about sixteen or seventeen years of age looking down at me. He was quite handsome and had a young, boyish face, but he was so tall, and his shoulders so broad that I supposed many people took him for a man, just as I did at first. I could see that he was shy, for he was blushing, a thing that I had never expected to see in a man, especially not my husband. For a moment, I realized that he was even more nervous than I, so I decided to make the first move. I smiled pleasantly at him and he managed a shy smile in return. We joined hands and I swore, "Wherever you go, husband, there go I."

After the Dextrarum lunctio, everybody, including the guests, went back to our house for cena nuptialis. They drank toasts to me and my husband and we were all jolly and merry. I was no longer weighed down by the suspense about my husband, but felt as light as a feather. Our atrium was beautifully decorated with flowers and the ancestral busts were brought out. I chattered to every guest and saw that they had enough to eat and drink.

After cena nuptialis, I went in an evening procession to my husband's house with page boys carrying lighted torches and guests singing and shouting behind us. I carried a spindle and distaff to symbolise my new duties as a wife. As I neared my new husband's house, I saw him at the door. When he saw me, his face lit up with a smile. I was so happy at seeing him again that I practically ran ahead of the others and jumped into his arms, leaving everybody else staring after us in speechless surprise. My husband looked deep

into my eyes and whispered, "Cornelia?" I whispered back, "Yes, Sextus," and smiled sweetly at him.

The crowd behind us cheered and the boys distributed the remains of the torches among the guests as good luck charms. My new family threw rice over us.

My new husband carried me over the threshold to signify that I was the new mistress of his house. He kissed me.

I am now the happiest in the world. I pray with thanks to the gods that they have brought my husband and me together and that he loves me. I am the luckiest girl in the world.

Deborah Chan III i

FIRE

Fierce flames. Red, orange, yellow, amber.
Fighting flames, fighting to flee.
Sitting on crimson cigarette ashes.
A river of lava and a sparkle of sparks
Trailed evil heat along the ground.
Glowing cinders gave birth to new born
Flames. Dancing flames shot out strong
Beams of heat. Shooting a rainbow of
Autumn colours up into the air.
Like a blazing sun, shining its
Determined heat. The heat and
The flames fought against the wind.
The flapping flames eventually gave in -
Slowly, defeated and tired, they sank
Into the ashes, and died.

Naomi Slater III V

THE WAITING ROOM

The rain dribbled down the dirty window pane of the crumbling Victorian building. Blankets of rain fell across the dimly-lit, eerie station. A guard stood watching out for any "would-be" criminals near the platform. Ahead of him he saw what looked like a scuffle between two men, each twice the size of him. He swore as he marched towards them.

A young girl walked briskly through the streets towards the station. She wanted so much to turn back, run home, forget everything, pretend none of this had ever happened. She felt a slight wave of relief when she saw a lit street lamp. But then she shuddered as another crack of thunder thumped through the grey sky.

A train sped through the countryside, a nervous man sitting there, sipping coffee, remembering. A tear gently swam down his face. He wiped it away and inhaled from his cigarette again. He watched the smoke drift from his mouth, reminding him of countless family bonfires.

She finally arrived at the station. It seemed deserted. The clock on the platform read 7.30; she had ten minutes to wait. She walked into the waiting room and sat, noticing things about the room she had never noticed before, the ugly wallpaper, torn and dejected, plaster crumbling away like chalk.

The train pulled into a station. The man glanced at his watch: 7.35, five minutes to go. He clenched his first, fighting back tears.

She began to shake; nervousness caused her to twitch and fold and re-fold her umbrella - the umbrella he had given her, just before Mum had banished him from the house.

"She did not understand him, never would, never even tried to," the girl murmured as she pushed a stray black hair away from her eyes. Her large brown eyes clouded; tears

cascaded down her pale face. She ignored them, hating to show her feelings. She had kept her feelings to herself always, except for now; she had to see him again. Now the tears were flowing freely down her face, washing away the pain and discomfort. The dank room kept her prisoner. She wanted to run, hide, anything, just to get away, anywhere, not there, not then.

A guard walked past the window and changed the signal to red. That would be for his train. She wondered if that guard knew what that train meant to her. He stomped into the waiting room, and lit up a cigarette, took a sign from the desk and walked out, without even acknowledging her existence.

He stood up, brushed down his jacket, took one last puff on his cigarette, and flattened it under foot. Running his fingers through his thinning hair, he stepped out of the train; he was the only one to get out of the train there. All sorts of questions went through his mind. "Will I recognize her?", "What if she hates me?", "What do I say?". He considered getting back on the train and forgetting it all. "But what about her? She must want to see me, or else she would not have asked to." He saw what must be the waiting room, an old, crumbling building. He opened the door and walked in; a young girl sat in a corner, alone.

She looked up. Suddenly the room came alive; the drab wallpaper was beautiful; the rain and darkness were perfect.

"Amy?"

"Dad!"

Emma Henderson-Kemp IV P

HANDS

My hands love picking strawberries, big, red, juicy ones, squeezing them, feeling their soft red skins. They do not like getting scratched and pricked by thorns and thistles, though. They like sticky glue, and soft dogs, and rabbits' fur. They love being washed and the feel of soap and water and smelling nice and fresh, and brushing my hair when it's clean and has just been washed. I like my hands, and cuddling my teddy with my hands and going to sleep rubbing his nose. There are all sorts of hands, clock hands and helping hands. I don't know what I would do without my hands.

Emma Gest I Y

A MORNING

Waking up with the sun streaming in through the open bedroom window, bringing warmth and brightness to everything, is not something I am used to. Neither am I used to hearing the continuous chirp of crickets and the monotonous, yet necessary, purring of the electric fan high up on the ceiling, circulating the warm, sticky air. Covered only by a thin sheet, I felt hot and sweaty, due to the heat. At ninety-four degrees Fahrenheit, Singapore was a far cry from England. As I looked out of the window, instead of seeing people walking stiffly hunched in thick coats, I saw children in T-shirts, laughing and running and windows wide open in a vain attempt to cool a humid room.

It was only half past eight yet the village of Ang Mo Kio was alive with businessmen, schoolchildren and shoppers. The hawker stalls, where Chinese snacks were cooked and sold cheaply, were already open and some of the little, round tables were occupied by breakfasters.

I had not really planned what I was going to do that day, but when I glimpsed the inviting coolness of the swimming

pool, I could not resist a quick dip. We had been invited to stay at the flat of a friend in Singapore and it was an offer too good to resist. She was delighted when she heard my family and I were coming over for the Easter holiday and planned trips that would take us all around the island and also some of the neighbouring ones too. It was only due to her kindness that we were able to afford it and so we were going to make the best of this trip of a lifetime.

My parents and younger sister were having breakfast when I left for the swimming pool. As I walked out into the air, the humidity hit me like a hot, wet flannel. Even in the early morning, the sun was scorching and, as I looked around, I saw several Chinese women with umbrellas to at least provide some shade. The path was crowned with tall fan-shaped palms, through which the bright sun rays formed intricate shadows on the ground. The swimming pool glistened invitingly and there was no-one else around. The refreshing water cooled me down immensely before I went back to the flat.

At half-past ten, we took a taxi to Orchard Road, where the main shopping centre was. The taxi took us through the centre of Singapore and we saw the famous sites as well as the imaginative architecture. Cleanliness featured largely in the country, as everywhere, haggard-looking Chinese men were sweeping and tidying, although I think the small population of only two and a half million resolved some of the problems London has difficulty coping with.

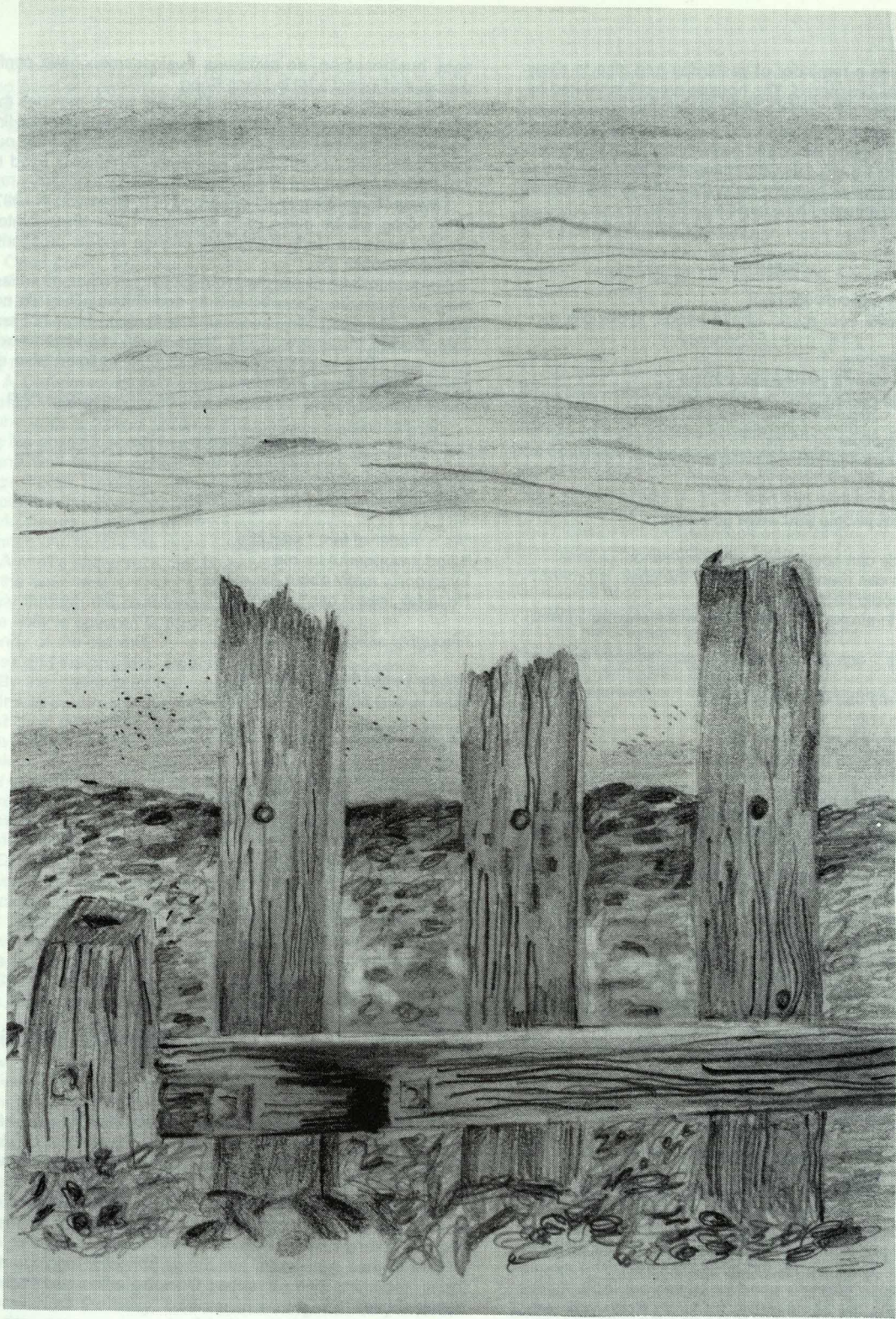
Singapore has some of the largest shopping complexes in the world. Floor upon floor of shops and stalls inhabit tall buildings. We went to perhaps the most famous one in Singapore which was called "Lucky Plaza". In the centre, and stretching high upwards, was an escalator with lights and mirrors illuminating it. A large variety of shops lined the inside walls and cafés were also dotted around. Even though touting was prohibited, people still came up to us, offering Cartier watches for ten pounds, which even we knew were copies! Music blared out from every side of the Plaza, each record shop trying to create a bigger noise than the rest.

It really was fabulous! Although Singapore receives three million foreign visitors a year, we did not see any other race except Chinese. Due to that, we got five-star treatment from everyone and we could tell they thought we were literally made of money!

It was a lot of fun going shopping. The prices were not fixed so we left it up to my father to negotiate a price which suited him, but almost put the owner out of business! We spent about an hour in "Lucky Plaza" and eventually left carrying linens, a handbag and a piece of ivory.

Again braving the heat, we ventured out and joined a queue for a taxi. Nearby was a Chinese food stall, and, as we passed it, the scent of Oriental delicacies, such as satay, came towards us. Before we had lunch, we decided to pay a visit to Chinatown. Singapore is actually a very developed country but it is only when you visit Chinatown that you really begin to see how it has changed during the years.

Great, long streets are cluttered with miserable shack houses: roofs caving in or breaking altogether and tiny windows open and off their hinges. Tatty plastic awnings cover the miserable stalls below, where cheap clothes made by the women are sold. Stray cats and dogs wander aimlessly, hopeful that they might come across a piece of mouldy bread. There is no hint of any modernisation and no cars to be seen. The Prime Minister of Singapore left this part of the



Breakwater by SAMANTHA GARBUTT IV P

country alone, as a reminder of yesterday and also to show how the rest has prospered. The houses are still inhabited by the poor who seem to live quite happily despite the surroundings.

We bought some straw mats for the breakfast table from one of the stalls before leaving to go for some lunch. The sun was still blazing as we left Chinatown and returned to the modern world. For a country only the size of the Isle of Wight, it is quite amazing how large it seems!

Claire Watkins VK

HANDS

You name it, your hands will do it:
Catch a ball, write your name, shake hands, applaud a concert.

Hands bring pleasure
Play the piano, draw a picture, do a mime
Hands can write poems.

Hands show emotion:
A hit here or a quick punch while the teacher isn't looking!
A clench of fists, or a ruffle of your hair.
Hands can feel and they can heal.
Hands can greet people and wave goodbye.

Mummy's hands can sew my name on my school clothes.
Daddy's hands can mend my bike when the chain is broken.
Jesus' hands could heal sick people.
My hands like to stroke my sister's hair when she can't sleep.

With my hands I can stroke, touch, grasp, scratch and bite my nails.

I like to stroke my cat, Crumpet,
As her fur is so soft.
I can feel cotton, silk and velvet
And the rough tongue of a cat.
I love to knead dough with my hands.
I enjoy getting my hands dirty
By painting, playing, cooking, gardening
And then to soak and wash my hands
In a bowl of hot water and soft bubbles.
I can hold my friend's hand tightly when I am afraid.
I can paint a calm picture of the countryside
Or a rough and dangerous sea.
I can write a letter to my friend
Or use the 'phone to tell Mum I'm coming home.

If I didn't have my hands I couldn't
Hit my sister
And then before I go to sleep
Put my hands together when I pray to God.

*First Formers: Sarah Bridgewood, Barbara Cole,
Amy Ellison, Caroline Green, Zoe Kent,
Joanna King, Helen Roberts, Miranda Wells.*

HONG KONG

Hong Kong does not have any mineral resources and food, but today it is prosperous, due to the hard-working Hong Kong people. People work in the textile and garment, electronic and toy industries, which produce semi-finished or finished goods. They are sold to other countries. The money earned from these goods is used for buying our food. As our Government has the same policy for Hong Kong and over-

seas businessmen, so overseas businessmen have confidence, and invest a lot in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong has a deep natural harbour which provides the best facilities for ocean liners, oil tankers and passenger liners, etc. In this way, we get our imported goods and sell our exported goods. Kwai Chung Container Terminal is used to store this large amount of goods.

I live in Hong Kong and I am proud of it. However, in 1997, Hong Kong will be given back to China. I feel disappointed about it because Hong Kong may change and its prosperity may disappear.

Large numbers of people are migrating to other countries, such as Australia, Canada, U.S.A. and Britain. They do not trust the Chinese policy because it is likely to blow hot and cold. During these few years, large firms' investments will grow less. This is because overseas businessmen also do not have confidence in China.

Irene Tam IV P

ARE GHOSTS WHITE?

"What's it like, being a ghost?"
I said to my blurred, shapeless host.

"As a matter of fact," said she,
"I find it wonderful for me.
Everyone's really about the same,
No unfair laws. I can't complain."

I thought I saw her give a grin.

"It's far better than life was here,
Such a long time, I lived in fear."

I wondered over what she said.
Why had she lived her life in dread?
And when she stood to drift away,
I said, "Please hold on. Won't you say
Where you lived and just what was bad?
Surely you can't mean you're glad?"
I waited then for her reply
'Til she confided with a sigh.

"Now that I'm a ghost no-one cares
Whether my skin is black or fair.
Black South Africans have no rights.
I suffered for not being white.
And then I discovered after I died,
Ghosts cannot practice Apartheid."

Katrina Maddock II G

MY FRIEND

My friend has blonde shoulder-length hair, greeny-blue eyes and quite a few faint freckles. She has quite fair skin, but when she goes abroad she turns so brown that I turn green with envy.

Her hobbies are horse-riding, roller-booting and reading, but she isn't that much of a bookworm. She loves animals, just as I do and has two cats.

The clothes she wears are baggy jumpers, leggings and jeans, tee-shirts and for shoes Doctor-Martins and canvas beach shoes.

In personality, she can have awful tempers, but is kind and good at comforting you if you are sick or something like that.

She has a mellow voice and is a good friend whom I have known for years.

Can you guess what her name is.....?

Penny Powell IZ

AUTUMN'S GLORY

Once green, exuberant leaves now hang lifeless, coated in thick, heavy dew. Some of the leaves have vivid orange and red colourings which contrast sharply against the rotten brown remains of the others, now covering the lengthening grass. Water lies an inch deep over the earth's surface, forming puddles on paths, and the streams too run deep and fast.

A Christmas-decked pheasant struts king-like down the grassy verge, his dreary mate following in his shadow. High in the trees a crow is perched thoughtfully, occasionally shifting his position according to the changing winds. On the old stone wall below, lichen and moss compete to cover the cranny of the old wall, its growth stunted by the small enclosures and the previous drought of the long, hot summer.

A snail's shiny track can be seen glistening along the top of the wall, and a spider's web covered in dew, shimmers shyly through the dark tangle of the hedge's thick branches. The holly is covered in thick green leaves and nestles in the cranny of the old wall, its growth stunted by the small enclosures and the previous drought of the long, hot summer.

By the sweet-smelling stream, a host of toadstools force their way up through the clinging grass, tempting fools to harvest their poisonous abundance. Under the horsechestnut tree, hidden in the tree's once beautiful, summer coat, conkers can be found. The shiny dark nuts are softly embedded in the silky, white inside of the hard, prickly shell. Village boys search, kicking through the rotting leaves, to find the best conker to last throughout the traditional, ensuing conker-fights.

Orchard trees are released from their burden of ripe produce, all of which is stored in the depths of the cool cellar. Stacks on stacks of wooden boxes filled with apples and nuts rise from floor to ceiling. Beside them, barrels of cider and wine stand fermenting, the rich, smooth taste of which is to be enjoyed by all during the following year.

Small birds are seen busily bathing in the shallow puddles, their splashing and fun a cause of delight for all spectators. All along the window ledge birds of different sizes can be seen dining on bacon rinds and breakfast crumbs. Their eyes, bright and quick, watch to ensure they don't miss the tastiest tit-bit. Sparrows and blue tits sway on the small branches of the nearby hedge. Their doleful songs moan of the cold as they fluff up their feathers and sink their heads between their shoulders in their anxiety to keep warm. Other birds circle the chimney tops where the warmth from the fires lit below circulates before dispersing into the chilling air.

The last of the blackberries, bitter from the first frosts, hang woebegone on spindly branches. The red rose-hips glow above, coloured bright against the brown of the supporting twigs. Below them acorns, missed by the swallows, lie scattered on the grass. The once humming air now rests quiet with all the busy, summer insects gone. Only one or two drowsy wasps remain, feeding on the decaying apples

beneath the orchard trees. Even the bat, seen throughout the summer evenings, soaring and dipping, her high squeaks proclaiming her excitement and pleasure, has left with the warm breezes.

A small, thick-furred cat picks out the driest path it can find as it travels warily down the unkempt garden. Behind it a row of footprints follow, showing dark, green grass beneath the dew. At each step a paw is shaken to dislodge the cold drops of water lying on the sleek coat. Upon reaching the wooden fence overlooking the field, the cat leaps onto a post, and settles, crouching, to survey for itself the goings-on of the autumn morning.

Sarah Cole VK

TYRANNOSAURUS REX

At the top of the hill stood a large monster.

What is it?, I thought to myself, it's awful.

He looked at me with his eyes like toadstools.

He roared and exposed his teeth like daggers.

His body was green and scaly like old copper coins.

He looked around once more, lashing his

Tail like a coachman's whip.

I stood anchored to the spot, standing in amazement.

The monster immediately took notice of me,

Lunging at me with incredible force.

I knew I had to take action or die a

Gruesome death.

I jumped out of the way.

Missing me the monster fell to the ground,

Hitting some rocks.

Its skull smashed like an egg,

Its blood spewing out like lava from a volcano:

He was dead.

Anna Stemp 1Z

BEAUTY IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

Are there any families out there planning to take a trip to Ethiopia next summer? Where there is sparse vegetation, dried-out lakes and where civilisation has made little impact on the present local tribes? Famine is reaching, or has reached, epidemic levels in this place and dilapidated houses with their skinny residents can only be an eyesore for holiday-makers.

Beauty to some is the countryside or the Scottish Highlands, romantic France or the exotic Hawaiian beaches, landscapes that leave the viewers breathless, or which are so mysteriously beautiful that it takes time to ponder over.

None of the above describes Ethiopia, which is situated at the end of heat waves and where little rain visits. This can only be dignified by the epithet "melancholy". The plight of the Ethiopians has touched the hearts of many and some organisations have exhorted the world to help. American singers raise funds through the "U.S.A. For Africa" album. Whereas Bob Geldof has travelled to this land of famine and drought to see what he can do to help. Beauty is not the scenery or the people's way of living, but in the hearts of volunteers and the hungry.

The fortunate people who try to help the more unfortunate understand their plight and, at the same time, are thrilled with joy in volunteering themselves. Beauty is the friendship built up among the deprived and volunteers as they wrestle against what natural disaster has fallen on them. Giving is always like a gift from God and God's gifts are always beautiful.

See Peng Tan U VI