

Community Anthology

A collection of art, flash fiction
and poetry submitted to the
2020 City of Kalamunda Creative Writing
and Digital Art competition

Anthology
2021



Artwork by
Leah Kuckelkorn

“ We acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people as the custodians of the land on which we walk and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.”





About the program

In 2020 the City of Kalamunda's programming went virtual after the expansion and disruption of COVID-19. This change in pace, engagement and impact on community connection inspired the year's Young Creatives Kalamunda programming to be an intergenerational anthology, a compilation of our community's stories surrounding the theme: The Change. From this concept, we received a multitude of stories, artworks and poems showcasing unique, personal outlooks and commentaries on the evolving world around us, of ageing, changes in circumstance and even a little magic.

We hope that these works, which have all been showcased in this anthology invoke a sense of connection to the community, offer a new perspective on your perception of normal, and incite a reflection of your own vision of the year beyond 2020, the year of change.

This program was proudly brought to you by the City of Kalamunda Community Services Team.

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One | Annabelle Gallon | Under 18

"'One' is my perspective on love and the changes that it brings once it enters your life. 2 figures are connected through sharing a kiss which sparks a glowing light. In this work i aimed to communicate unity and light, as these are two vital aspects to love. Whether this love is shared with your partner, family, friends or community it always brings a sense oneness."

- Annabelle Gallon

Loop

by Alexandra Geneve | Flash Fiction | 18 - 55

There is a loop near my new home around which I walk most days. It's usually in the evenings as dusk falls and I can feel the end of the day settle on my shoulders like ash from a far off fire and drift away from me again as my moving body creates a draught. The day's fire becomes powder that I crush lightly between my fingertips and blow to make it vanish.

The first hill is a tough one as my body and mind are ill-prepared for the uphill push. But once I reach the top where it curves away around the bend, and I can breathe normally once again, I close my eyes and find a physical joy in my body as I begin the walk downhill, where the joeys and their mothers rest in the paddocks, and the gully of trees grows thicker and more lush where I pass. I quicken my pace and always smile as I make my way down this ribbon of road toward the next big hill.

The new year began for me the morning my brother told me I was home. I had gone out dressed up for the first time since I left my marriage and my home. I had promised him I would be careful and not drink; instead I drank too much with the open bar, I laughed and danced, and then cried into my drinks and on people's shoulders and in people's arms. The kabab and chips at 1am didn't help and neither did the sleepless and sweaty night in my friend's spare bed.

When I finally arrived back at my brother's the next morning, I stepped out of the car with no shoes, hair everywhere, makeup all over the place, and feeling sick to my stomach. I saw him walk up from the shed and I stood there, feet hurting on the red gravel with my red stilettos in my hands and felt myself begin to cry yet again.

When he asked if I was okay I told him no. I said I had drunk too much and had not been able to decide, as the Uber dropped me at my car in the city the next morning, where I was meant to go. I had almost driven 'home'; my old home. The home I built lovingly with my husband and children. The home I had had to leave or it would have destroyed me. I told him I had almost gone back there to crawl into my old bed in the bedroom I loved and missed, and I had almost gone to be comforted by my husband. But I hadn't done that. Thankfully, I hadn't done that. Instead, I had driven back to this place where my family had taken me in and loved me and had begun the slow process of healing me. But I had for a time been confused as I sat in my car in that high-rise parking lot, unable to move or to choose the road home. I told him that I didn't know where my home was any more.

My brother stood and looked at me as my lip trembled and tears ran down my face like a child and he said simply, 'This is your home now. This is where you come to.'

And I realised then that I was. Home, that is. And I cried more but with both relief and a bereftness born deep in my lungs before going inside to shower and sleep. I was home.

It's easier now to lift my chin and face that next uphill climb in the distance. I reach the base and watch the sun set as I begin the ascent. I have learned to keep my eyes on the road in front of me, the blue-metal surface, and my invisible shadow. I keep my eyes on the road just ahead of me, not too far, like a blinkered horse. And soon enough I am feeling that familiar and good burning in my lungs and the acid in my legs and I feel strong and ready for the next hill when I get to it. And I know it's coming. I have walked this loop so many times.



"'Loop' is a piece of short fiction about the physical, emotional, and spiritual changes one goes through after the end of a long relationship. Set in the Perth Hills, it is a meditation on resilience, family, and belonging.."

- Alexandra Geneve



Tiny Power - "A poem about the changes Covid-19 brought to our community"

by Tania Park | Poetry | 55+

A hush of silence in the streets
No swish of tyres or scrape of feet.
No roar of children's shouted calls
Sneak from behind the
playground walls.

It's like the people have the plague
The cause: a bug of which we're vague.
A single germ does kiss your hand.
Like air in lungs it too expands.

Covid is like the honeybees.
They soar above the flowers on trees
Then strike a flash as lightning does
No stops to sing a single buzz.

The chaos caused is not a friend
Resulting illness does not bend.
To some the symptoms pass them
by Yet lives in many 'til they die.

A bug so small yet fills the world
It threatens death when once
unfurled.
It takes a hold but fast it spreads
If you be caught you may be dead.

Is washing hands a help or cure?
Keeping distance your health ensure?
What vaccine known will be the best?
Who knows the answer to this quest?

Not much in life has changed for me
Our local town is virus free.
I've learnt to nod and keep a space
To wash my hands, not touch my face.

Our borders for a while have shut
Some jobs for workers have been cut.
But in this world with faith and hope
Each one of us has learned to cope.

To fly

by Sharlene Nel | Poetry | 55+

The little caterpillar had way too much too eat
while his mother laid an egg on another leaf.
'Why do I have no sulphur wings, why can I not fly,
why am I so ugly, so unlike a true butterfly?'
His mom giggled when she saw his 12 anxious eyes.
'O darling, very soon you will learn to fly,
but first you have to spin yourself into a cocoon to die.
You will grow a new body and wings in about 10 days
to become the most beautiful butterfly ever raised.'

" We all dream about a better future, or a better work situation,
or about losing weight, or building a house. We dream about
making changes that will improve the quality of our lives.
With this simple poem, I am instilling the message that in
order to make those changes that will take you to a better
place, we always have to be willing to make sacrifices, leave
behind what we currently have and that the change always
takes time and effort."

- Sharlene Nel



A Boring Life or Not

by Ann Grylls | Flash Fiction | 55+

Life can be boring but it is up to the individual how they handle the situation. My life on a wheat-belt farm was always very busy and there was no time to become bored. From daylight to dusk my husband, Jack, and I had jobs which needed to be done yesterday. I always woke with the birds to cook a satisfying breakfast for Jack and myself of porridge, hot crispy bacon and eggs before Jack started his busy day on the farm. My day was filled with the humdrum chores of everyday households, cooking cakes and pumpkin scones for hungry farm workers, helping with sheep work when required and being the farm bookkeeper.

When Jack passed away in 2017, after a complicated operation for a serious illness, I retired to Kalamunda and my busy life changed. I missed Jack's company, especially in the evenings and soon realised I had to take steps to prevent boredom. I still wake at five o'clock, or earlier, and I cannot seem to break the habit. I turn on my bedside radio and listen to the five o'clock news, then the headlines at five thirty, and the news at six o'clock, and seven. By this time I am so bored I climb out of bed and go to the kitchen to make a welcome cup of tea.

I joined several local clubs during the first few weeks after I arrived in Kalamunda, which now help to fill my long days, but as I don't have anyone with whom to discuss my activities, my life living alone can be boring sometimes. I can't even have an argument about which television programme to watch. My husband preferred documentaries which I found boring while I enjoy English dramas and exciting crime stories.

This year when the Covid-19 virus spread like wildfire across Australia, all club activities and libraries were closed. This made it very difficult to remain positive and not to succumb to boredom while confined to my home. Exchanging books with neighbours, holding church services on Zoom, and continuing our writing group on line helped fill the empty days

Since I arrived in Kalamunda three years ago I have gathered a new group of friends. When we meet, we chatter away like magpies, discussing the inclement weather, our various ailments and gossip about the latest neighbourhood news. This may sound boring to many people but I am more than thankful I have these friendly exchanges to brighten up what might be a boring day in retirement.



"How my life changed when I moved to Kalamunda"
- Ann Grylls



"It is a poem about the changes we have experienced in school this year and the change we will experience when moving to high school at the end of this year and how life is currently before the big change to high school in 2021."

-Tahlia Jones

The Year 2020

by Tahlia Jones | Poetry | Under 18

Although we fell, We cannot dwell
On things that happened in the past,
as grade six went really fast
As we break away to different places,
and meet lots of new faces
We all belonged here at some point in our lives
As we learnt to strive, to achieving our goals
Yes we will never be the same, As we will all change
We all know this year was very tough,
as we knew it wasn't enough
To knock us down, or make us frown
This year was special enough,
to make us quite tough
For what we might face in a strange place,
Like high school

Some things went wrong, To list a few
Corona virus, home learning and online assemblies too
We all got through it, With smiles on our faces
We had some good things too, just to say a few
Sports carnival, fundraising and camp as well
Friendship struggles and good times,
and when that bell chimes
On the 17th of December, we will always remember
Our friendships and passions, kindness and fashions
As we say goodbye to teachers' friends
and principles too
As we take our own paths and live our own lives
We will always remember from the 3rd of February
to the 17th of December

**Grade six was the best year of
Our Primary school lives**

Brooke Atlantes and the Mermaid Mishap

by Melinda Barton | Flash Fiction | Under 18

Brooke Atlantes had a very weird summer holidays. Magical holidays in fact. She changed.

Let me take you back to the beginning, the first Monday of the holidays, when Brooke was at the beach going for a little swim. The water was nice and cool, and the summer sun was blazing hot. It was the perfect weather to go for a swim!

Brooke dived into the water, swimming in a dolphin kick until she ran out of breath and resurfaced only to dive in again. She repeated this a few times, enjoying beautifully blue cloudless sky. Once, a flock of seagulls flew past and put on a mini show, which included the unfortunate pooping on of a girl sunbathing on the beach.

Brooke dived into the water again, and as she swam, her hand brushed up against something. She resurfaced, wondering what it was. It wasn't a fish, because they don't come close enough to touch.

Brooke put her head underwater so she could see what it was. She looked around and couldn't see anything until there was a flash of colour against the creamy-yellow sand. Brooke reached out to grab whatever it was and it almost slipped out of her hand. She resurfaced and had a look at what she was holding.

It was a piece of paper. A blue piece of paper. Though it was underwater for who knows how long, it didn't look ripped, it wasn't starting to disintegrate. Heck, it wasn't even wet. It was like magic.

Brooke turned the paper over in her hand. It looked like any old piece of paper. Well, until she looked closer. She realised there was actually some writing on it, swirly-hard-to-read writing, but writing nonetheless.

She tried to read it, but the handwriting was very weird and curly. She looked closer again and it was like the words rearranged themselves. Now Brooke could see what it said. She read it aloud.

'A tail I want,
So grant me this,
With legs no more,
I am part fish.'

It sounded like a poem. Or an enchantment. Too late, Brooke realised what was happening. She felt a tingling in her toes and feet and suddenly her whole body was pulled underwater. She looked around her and saw sparkles rising from her arms. Sparkles. They were purplish in colour and rose like bubbles in a bottle of champagne.

The tingling sensation and sparkles spread from Brooke's toes and feet through her torso to the very tips of her long,

wavy auburn hair. Brooke felt her lungs running out of air and tried to resurface, but she couldn't. Her legs were kicking and she should've been floating up, but she just wasn't.

Starting to panic, Brooke clasped at her throat, and realised something wasn't right. The area on her neck under her jaw was different. By different I mean something was there that wasn't meant to be. Brooke had gills.

Reasoning that if she had gills she would be able to breathe underwater, Brooke took a breath. It worked. She then proceeded to examine the rest of her tingling body. Big mistake. Looking down, something surprised her even more than gills or magical purple sparkles.

Brooke had scales covering her legs.

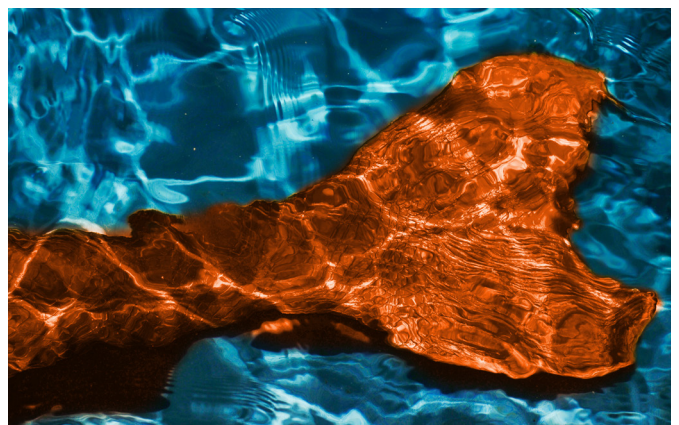
More than that, she had a tail. A real, scaly fish tail. I'm a MERMAID? Brooke thought to herself.

Her tail was made of beautiful shades of an Australian sunset. Reds, oranges, pinks, purples and brilliant blues were shining up at Brooke. Her fluke and fins were a pretty silver colour that shone in the underwater light.

Her auburn hair was dotted with pearls and shells that had magically appeared.

On her right shoulder was a tattoo of a sun and a moon on the other shoulder. They seemed to signify the colours on her tail.

'Oh boy,' Brooke said to herself some how (she was still underwater). 'My mum's gonna kill me.'

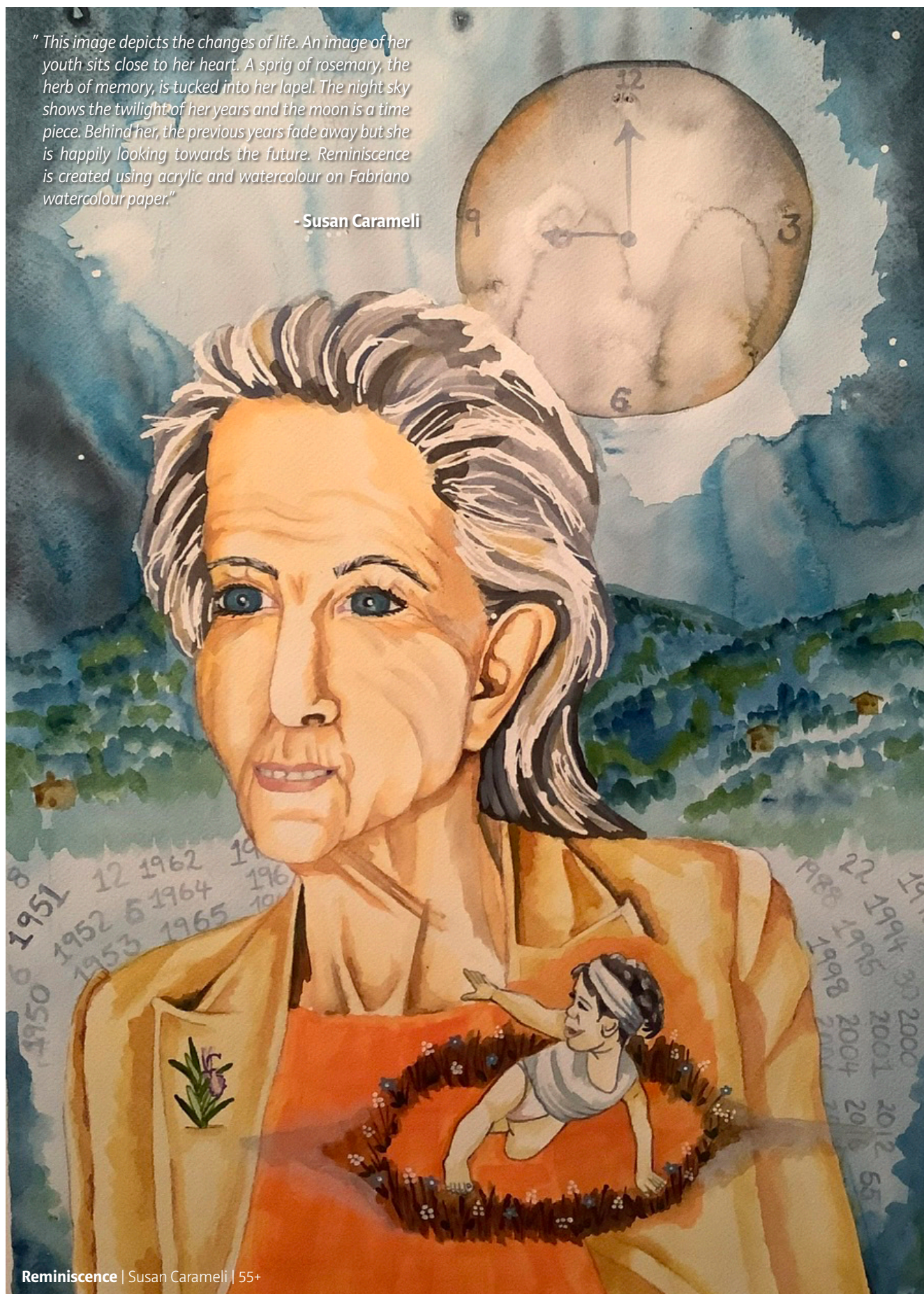


"Brooke Atlantes wanted to have a normal day at the beach. But no, the universe had different plans for her. She found a note floating in the ocean and read it, not knowing that it's a magical incantation. Brooke's legs were soon after replaced with a glittering mermaid tail and her life is changed forever."

Melinda Barton

"This image depicts the changes of life. An image of her youth sits close to her heart. A sprig of rosemary, the herb of memory, is tucked into her lapel. The night sky shows the twilight of her years and the moon is a time piece. Behind her, the previous years fade away but she is happily looking towards the future. Reminiscence is created using acrylic and watercolour on Fabriano watercolour paper."

- Susan Carameli



Reminiscence | Susan Carameli | 55+

Mylar

by Cynthia Pickering | Flash Fiction | 18 -55

Every year, on the first Saturday in December women's new dresses and men's lightly pressed shorts stuck to the plastic chairs of the Mylar Town Hall. The wall fans thrummed into the humid air, hoping to keep the audience awake and alive during the local ballet school's annual concert. And, it being Mylar's only cultural event it swelled quite a crowd.

Ursula had been dancing for seven years. Her dad equaled the concert's importance to her brother's Footy Medals Windup. She reminded him that no-one swore or wore thongs in the theatre and that footy players didn't wear tights. Ursula looked forward to concert night all year because she got to wear more makeup than her Mum, Elsa, and her Dad would hug her tight and whisper with proud watery eyes, 'You were the best dancer by far!'

But this year Ursula felt different. It all started with her tutu. It was so extravagant that a four hundred kilometer round trip to the City Costume and Ballet Centre was required. Ursula and Elsa ate cheese toasties as they drove out of town, only later stopping for fuel and a cup of tea. Once in the city Ursula saw people pacing to work in jackets and heels, blow dried hair and silk ties. As they neared the costume shop Ursula saw the theatre; faced with stone carvings and upcoming show posters framed inside glass boxes.

The shop was a restored Edwardian building. An elegant costumer greeted them; 'I adore the Nutcracker and the Waltz of the Flowers is my absolute favourite.' Cutting an exact length of lilac satin she purred, 'Now, I understand your staging is limited so this fabric is perfect. It shimmers under heavy lights and holds the Mylar close. It can be washed after every second show in Lux flakes, and remember, always, always flat dry.'

'Did you say Mylar?' Elsa asked. Ursula grinned.

'Yes, our sequins. We only stock the best.'

'This is an amazing place.' Ursula said wide eyed.

'Yes, we're very busy this time of year, what with dance schools and the opera company's new program. But, those rounded divas; honestly, give me a dancer any day' she winked 'the less the meat, the easier it is to seal!'

Ursula wandered amongst the ribbons, lace and tulles. She plied herself away from the silk chiffon, and hid her disappointment when Elsa chose the rayon option. The costumer then presented them with two packets of sequins. 'And here are your Mylar, in amethyst and pearl.'

'Do you have a cheaper option?' Elsa asked. Ursula's cheeks warmed. Her mother had spent one week's wage on this concert already.

'No we don't keep the new vinyl. They curl and fade, plus if you glue them on they fall off in the wash. The woman held out a single sequin. 'See, it's a tear drop shape. It sparkles brilliantly and its wider hole makes for easier threading'. She

smiled at Elsa, 'they really will make your daughter's tutu sing'.

For the next two weeks her mother sewed late into the evenings and Ursula practiced her waltz. She meditated in front of her ballet poster that captured a ballerina leaping across the steps of the Sydney Opera House. She would be that dancer one day and she would be dressed by refined experts like the costumer who also shared her passion for ballet.

Ursula suddenly felt very grown up in her small town. She no longer cared to fit in with the other girls. Their shallow futures would include the latest jeans; pop star obsession and kissing their neighbour's cousin. That would never be her. So she rehearsed seriously, determined to be the best lilac flower on stage.

Come concert night, Ursula's heart beat fast as she pirouetted across the floor, hearing only Tchaikovsky and the brush of pointe shoes. Following a flawless performance she took her first curtsey in front of a red curtain. Her brother ran a wilting spray of carnations up to her, and it was in that very moment; aged eleven, as a tape player curdled side stage, that Ursula knew her future lay with the cheers of an adoring audience. This feeling would be her new home, and her destiny would be sequined in Mylar.



"A small town ballet student realises her life dream and destiny after a trip to the costume fabric shop. Mylar is both the fictional town name and a real brand of sequin. A coming of age story through the experience of art."

Cynthia Pickering

Nelson's Column

by Gary Barber | Flash Fiction | 55+

The rising wind and blackening sky threatened as he paced the deck, checking everything was battened down.

The barometer was falling.

Squalls carried smells of rain and eucalyptus. His deck, and the rocks 50 metres away, glistened with spray.

Seagulls and the wind, singing through the wires, added to nature's tortured musical riff.

Monsarrat describing storms at sea in "The Master Mariner" came to mind as gusts tugged at his wet weather gear. After checking the crow's nest he scanned the horizon, then went below. Weather predictions were so dire he had brought in enough provisions to last him a week, including enough bottled water to keep a small dinghy afloat. Precautions taken, and skills acquired via the S.E.S. and Sea Rescue, he was confident of enduring whatever nature threatened.

Memories of the barque, S.T.S. Lord Nelson, came to mind. Nellie, her common moniker, had been on a world circumnavigation in 2013. After getting a berth on the Fremantle/Adelaide leg, he had been further offered a position as Watch Leader on her New Zealand sailings.

Barometer and compass readings: wind direction/strength recordings were standard practice on Nellie's watches, so as the storm strengthened he drew confidence from his experiences, and reassured himself the skills he had acquired would be useful when the tempest peaked.

He checked his Victorinox Swiss Army watch...18.13, and the sky was pitch black, heavy with thunder and howling wind. Rain falling heavily, horizontally. Boards were slippery, lashed sails were straining at their ties. The empty crow's nest invisible.

Shadows swallowed the last vestiges of light. Sanctuary awaited in the galley; sustenance, in lighted surroundings, was tempting. Coffee, and 2 minute noodles, settled him. The Jameson's Irish Whiskey, just at arm's length, promised solace.

The noodles, and two fingers of Irish worked.

Through the glass he checked the lights of houses along the shore-line. Power was still available to those electing to sit out the storm.



Knowing any opportunity to catch shut-eye was mandatory, he stretched out on the bunk. A light sleeper, he would wake and be ready to tackle anything that Mother Nature was prepared to inflict. Recalling rounding Cape Leeuwin, with Nellie heaving and bucking as she fought watery fists and screaming gale, sounds of crackling lightning and rumbling thunder had never left him.

He fell into a fitful sleep, woken by sounds of creaks and groans and hammering rain. One glance at the shore-line revealed trees and branches down. Sheets of corrugated iron scattered like a deck of cards. Boats had been thrown up on what was sandy beach, but now naked, rounded rocks and boulders were features of Peaceful Promontory.

Checked his watch...03.13. Daylight was hours away and the weather was not abating. Complete darkness restricted him assessing conditions outside. Senses were on full alert as his foul weather instincts determined he stay within his snug-hole.

Resisting the temptation of another two fingers, he boiled his kettle to prepare another meal of noodles. Mug in hand he retired to his sleeping bag and resigned himself to a long wait, falling into a disturbed slumber 20 minutes later.

Sounds of his crashing noodle mug ceased his fitful zeds. Adding to this clamour was the cawing of crows returning to their nest in the coastal iron-bark, not 20 metres away. His watch indicating it was past dawn, and a glance through the window revealed the outdoor deck reflecting sunlight. Shade sails he had lashed to the railings hung like wet rags. Shade sails, installed to protect less sun tolerant plantings, had needed to be tied securely given the forecast of strong winds. The wires that acted as a barrier to the 3 metre drop to the ground were intact and dripping with droplets along the length of the decking.

Leaving his quarters he turned to the post which supplied the mast-like, vertical structural supporting his pole home. It was his anchor, acquired from Nelson's Timber and Salvage Yard when he was looking for a solid piece of timber to form the basis of his proposed home. Previously it had been a jarrah pylon on the old Fremantle Bridge, and originally from the Kalamunda forest. The Nelson Timber and Salvage connection a co-incidental reminder of his sailing days on Horatio's namesake. The girts, from the same bridge provided the horizontal support.

His treasured abode had survived the tempest, thanks to the form and mark of that piece of history, a salvaged bridge piling, being his sanctuary's strengthening core, and anchor.... his own Nelson's column.

"A change of weather; a change of lifestyle; a change of function; a change of roles; a change of scenery...all combining to describe an episode in the life of a man, testing his endurance, physical and mental strengths plus the belief in himself. All this and a twist in the end!"

- Gary Barber

Seasons | Trithany Delides | Under 18



"A tree changing with the seasons"
- Trithany Delides

Selkie of the Mountain

by Bianca Breen | Flash Fiction | 18 - 55

When she broke the surface of the water, whiskered nose expelling droplets in a snort, it was to a young man sitting on a rock.

He didn't see her with his back bent, head to the ground, fingers skittering across the pebbles on the shore. Looking for something.

She glided closer, the water parting around her like silk. The man's long-fingered hands shifted delicately through the stones on the shore. He brought one up to his face then, seemingly satisfied, slipped it into his pocket and began the process again. The stone had been freckled with black spots. He had attention to detail. She liked that.

He grabbed a few more stones, then raised his head, as if sensing her presence. When his eyes locked onto hers, he rose slowly to his feet. Grey swollen clouds closed over the last of the blue sky and released a rumble of thunder. The boy glanced up, attention drawn, fingertips startled into dropping the stones.

As he disappeared around the side of the hill and slipped from her sight, she returned to the ocean, diving to the bottom to break free of the agitated waves above. She passed the same rocks, the same schools of fish, the same sandy bottom, as familiar as the back of her flipper. She paused, treading water, eyes flicking upwards to the darkening rippling ceiling. What was he doing now? Had he sought shelter from the storm? Did he live nearby?

As the last of the light blinked out from the surface, she made for the entrance to the sea cave that had been their family's home for generations. It was a cacophony of echoing grunts and calls as her family relayed to each other the news and catches of the day. She knew what they would say if she told them about the man. She had heard the stories, had grown from a pup into adulthood fed on the warnings of her elders. Humans were dangerous. You did not belong on the land with them. Your skin would never be safe, and you risked never returning to the ocean.

But some risks were worth taking.

When the herd was asleep, she heaved her ungraceful-on-land body to the mouth of the cave to gaze up into the clear night. And she tried. She tried to focus on the moon and stars and planets above her. Tried to feel as one with the ebb and flow of the waves against the cave walls. But her eyes crept downward, to the dark outline of shore, the mountain behind it, its perimeter blurred with the soft silhouette of trees.

She had made her decision.

She rose before the sun did, slipped from the cave to the water, to the shore. The young man was already there. A rope was in his hands, hauling in a crayfish net. She made no noise as she

broke the surface, but she audibly expelled droplets from her nose to attract his attention.

His eyes widened in awe as he saw her. 'Y-you're her, aren't you?' he called. 'The one who's been watching me for weeks.'

She swam until the pebbled floor touched her belly, then reached her flippers up and pulled her seal skin away, revealing a smooth human body beneath.

He breathed out. 'A selkie. Wow. You're beautiful.'

She felt the human skin across her cheeks warm as she walked out of the water. 'Thank you.'

He shrugged out of his fur-lined coat. 'Here -'

She couldn't take it with her hands full. He seemed to realise this as well, eyes falling to the seal skin bundled in her arms. She proffered the seal skin, and hope lit his face. 'Would you mind holding this for me?'

His next words tumbled over one another in their rush to leave his mouth. 'Yes, of course. My God. Thank you. I promise I'll make you happy. Oh, my mother will be thrilled -'

'Okay,' she said, buttoning the coat with her new, dexterous fingers. She straightened her shoulders and smiled. 'Thanks. Bye!'

And she set off toward the mountains, ready to start her new life of adventure, leaving her old skin behind.

"A selkie dreams of becoming human and exploring the land and mountains she has always lived in the waters beside. Change is significant with selkies, since they have the ability to shed their seal skins and become human when on land. I've incorporated further change in the story by having the selkie leave her seal life behind in search of a new life."

- Bianca Breen



"My artwork is about resilience, adaptability and a positive outlook in life. The quote on the piece comes from Wayne Dyer, ""Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change"". My chameleon shows this in a figurative way, it will change colour according to its environment. It represents adaptability to a rapidly changing world. The quote however has a deeper meaning. Problems can turn into opportunities if you change your attitude. Medium: Acrylic on canvas. Dots created with dad's drill bits dipped in paint."

- Leah Kuckelkorn



The Way You Look at Things | Leah Kuckelkorn | Under 18

Super Powers

by Krystal Adriano | Flash Fiction | 18 - 55

I was born at the exact same time as three other kids; Dylan, Sasha and Austin. We dreamed of being superheroes. Dylan always messed up the time and could never go in the right direction. He often confused me and struggled to read and write. So, we decided his superpowers could be to always know when and where to go. He was also fluent in every language when we played the game. Sasha never slept through the night. She would talk as I tried to sleep and wake me up in the middle of the night. Her mind was always active, and her superpower was to see and hear things that I never understood. Austin's superpower was his attention to detail, ability to create plans and always know what was happening around him. I had the power to always feel what other people felt. It wasn't always a great power, but it made the game fun!

Austin was a bit different from most kids, but it never mattered to me. As we grew up, Austin and I faced many challenges, but it was nothing we couldn't handle. We avoided loud noises, crowded places and I always made sure people made his food right. He always needed company but liked to do things alone. I understood that and we spent all our time together, even if it was in complete silence.

One day Austin met Haidee. She wasn't a superhero; she was a villain, but she joined our game. Haidee always made fun of Austin's quirks, she called out all our mistakes and flaws. She always lied: 'Nobody loves you', 'You are a burden to everyone', 'You have no purpose', 'You will never amount to anything'. I began to believe her. I tried to stand up to her, but she was so strong. Her negative energy drained on my "so-called superpower".

After months of falling deeper into Haidee's lies, I met Reagan. His power was his battle skills. I quickly realised he was also a villain when he became abusive. He would physically hurt me. I would lie awake at night crying in pain or more correctly - the numbness that he made me feel.

Haidee and Reagan quickly became close friends. I would often find myself cornered by their nasty taunts. This is when I started to push Austin away. I wanted to protect him from what I was going through.

Haidee then introduced her friend Darcy to the group. Darcy's power was her ability to drain the energy and happiness from anyone she touched. She never had the motivation or energy to actually do anything. I never understood how Haidee and Darcy had become friends. Yes, they were both villains but, Haidee was full of energy and Darcy was not.

I tried to stay away from Darcy as her emotional presence was very draining. But then, I tried to stay away from all the villains in our story. It just wasn't that simple. Nobody seemed to understand that. I couldn't just walk away.

One day, I needed to escape. I ran until I couldn't run anymore. I stopped abruptly and looked down at the waves crashing

below, realising I ended up on a cliff at the ocean. I glanced over at Austin, we used to come here all the time. It used to be peaceful, it used to be our happy place. He looked up, he had tears streaming down his cheeks. I didn't. I couldn't cry anymore. I felt nothing.

I reached for Austin's hand and heard him mumble, 'My superpower is autism.'

I smiled and said, 'Mine is empathy.'

Dylan bowed his head, 'Mine is dyslexia.'

'Mine is a sleep disorder', whispered Sasha.

We stood in silence when suddenly Haidee blurted: 'Mine is anxiety.'

Reagan followed, 'And mine restless leg syndrome.'

Darcy mumbled, 'Mine is depression.'

We stood there. I was deep in thought, unsure what to do, when I realised Austin was chanting, 'Our superpowers give us strength...'

I squeezed his hand and yelled, 'We are strong!'

'No, you're not!' Haidee snickered.

And that's when I jumped.



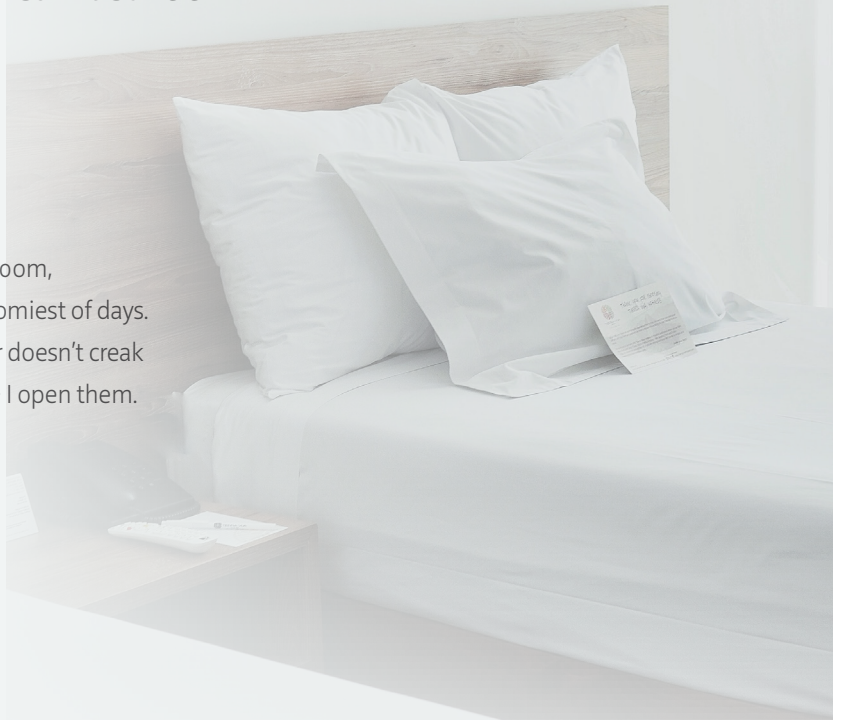
" Superheroes is a fun game until people with the wrong powers begin to play. This story centres around a girl who struggles with multiple disabilities and mental illnesses. She is unaware of the impact of these disabilities/illnesses until she creates characters based around them, each with their own power. It is then she can see how character or disability\ illness has changed her life. Is she able to stand up to these villains or is it too late?"

- Krystal Adriano

A cleared mind makes a clean bedroom

by Sophie McGeough | Poetry | 18 - 55

As my mind releases its mess
My room starts to organise itself
Folded clothes and clean sheets,
I create a home in that I have to stay.
Taking out a fresh lick of paint I coat my room,
The brightest of the colours over the gloomiest of days.
My lightbulb doesn't flicker, and my door doesn't creak
A ray of sun gleams through my curtains; I open them.
I never noticed the garden outside,
The trees, grass and blue skies,
I watch them from my window.
For my brain controls my environment,
And as for today my room is clean.



"It displays the changes within the environment of a person's bedroom, in regards to the state of their mental health. Within the poem it is during the shift of a person's mental state improving, and therefore their bedroom begins to be cleaned and the outlook of their environment improves."

- Sophie McGeough



I open my eyes
Everything around me is weird and new
But I can't go back

Haiku poem by Kayella Serrano | Poetry | Under 18

The Sudden Changes in Life

by Isabelle Tysoe | Flash Fiction | Under 18

Lisa, full of excitement, rushed to tell her dad the good news. 'I think Mandy is in foal!', she shouted. Her father put down his broom with a sigh. 'I'll come see her', he said. Once back in Mandy's stall, her father felt Mandy's tummy. 'I actually think you're right!', he said, a twinkle in his eye. Lisa felt her stomach lurch. 'So she really is in foal?', she shouted. Her father nodded. 'Yes, you're right. I didn't think you would be. We'll just have to get the vet to come.' Then seeing the angry look in Lisa's eye, he quickly added, 'Just to confirm that we're right.' Suddenly Lisa realised something. 'But Father, we can't get the vet to come because it's the middle of Covid time!' 'Oh dear', her father said his face darkening as he realised the worst. 'We'll just have to get the foal born ourselves then!'

A few weeks later, Lisa noticed the bulge in Mandy's tummy start to move. 'Lucky I'm still homeschooling or I wouldn't be here, I would be at boarding school. Isn't that lucky?', Lisa said, feeding her an apple. 'I really think the foal is going to be born soon, isn't it, girl?'. That night Lisa was awoken by whinnying coming from the direction of the stables. Suddenly Lisa sat up straight in her bed. Was the foal really going to be born... tonight? Lisa leapt out of bed and quickly changed into her jodhpurs. Then she rushed to alert her father. A few minutes later, they were standing in Mandy's stall. The foal was certainly going to be born tonight! Mandy was whinnying, the whites of her eyes showing.

Hours passed, and suddenly a head showed up under Mandy's tail. Mandy gave a final whinny and DIED! Lisa started sobbing. This was all too much for her. Her father shook his head sadly, but had to continue his work. It was 4:00 in the morning when finally the foal emerged. Immediately Lisa fell in love with it. The foal had a white patch on her forehead that looked like a snowflake. 'Let's call her Snowflake', Lisa said firmly. Her father nodded. 'It does sound like a good name', he said.

Later that day, her mother went to go shopping, but never came back. She was hit by a car as the driver was fiddling on his phone. This caused even more sorrow for Lisa. Why did the most special person in her life had to go after the other? The change was enormous. No running into the kitchen with oranges for breakfast the next day, or running away into Mandy's stall to the familiar smell of her horse. Her father did everything he could cheer her up, but he failed. Everything was just so different. Why, oh why did this have to happen to me?, Lisa thought everyday. It was just so unfair. Why couldn't everything just stay the same, as it always had? Now the only light in her life was Snowflake. She was always there for her.

But disaster struck. Snowflake fell sick. No vet could come to treat her, as it was still Covid time and all people in Perth

weren't allowed to go back to school, or work yet. So Lisa had to treat her alone. Lisa spent day after night in Snowflake's stall, cheering her up. She was determined to always be by Snowflake's side, especially now, being there for Snowflake, just as Snowflake had been there for her when she was still in a shock after her mother died. Treating her so well, Snowflake slowly got better.

Lisa finally realised the reality of why she and Snowflake had even be sent to earth. To remind humans what they had stopped doing long ago. They had stopped interacting and showing friendship to animals. If that driver hadn't been on his phone, mother would still be alive. So she wrote to the prime minister to change the laws about touching mobile phones while they were driving. Then she wrote to the Kalamunda Council so they would make a refuge for lost and unwanted animals, where even children could see and feed the animals.

It worked! Two years later, there was a new rule that you couldn't touch your phone in the car, or you were fined \$1000 and lost half your points! Now Lisa is a helper at the refuge. But Snowflake is still her favourite animal.



"There are many changes in Lisa's life but she changes things for the best."

- Isabelle Tysoe

" This is a book for young children 5 years and under. Theme is education; to extend children's curiosity and learn about the small insects that live in their own backyard and to also encourage nature exploration. Children need encouragement in learning about the environment and its species big or small."

- Amal Abdilahi



My Backyard Adventure

by Amal Abdilahi | Poetry | 18 - 55

This is my Backyard. It has many Insects.
There are bees buzzing around.
There are wasps zooming around in the air.
There are millipedes and centipedes hiding under tiny rocks and grass from hungry magpies.
There are spiders coming out at night because during the day hungry birds prey on them.
There are a friendly Snails hanging together in the morning for sunshine.
And there are always the busy ants going about their day.
What insects can you find in your backyard?

The Change

by Caitlin Hanbury | Flash Fiction | Under 18

As I woke up on a Monday morning. I knew that today was going to be boring at school. It usually is just work, work, work. As I got out of bed to go and brush my teeth, I looked into the shiny, squared mirror and I stood there in shock. My face was as wrinkled as a raisin that had just been dried. I looked at my hands, wrinkled and horrible looking.

My phone was ringing. I never received phone calls this early, I thought. As I walked to my bedroom to answer the phone, I noticed that my feet were shaking as I walked. I wondered how old I would have been if they just wouldn't walk. I finally reached my room. As I picked the phone up, I noticed that it wasn't the brand new iPhone I got for Christmas. It was one of those phones that you open the flap and talk. I was old!

It was my friend Matilda (or Tilly for short). I answered it. "Hi Jazzy, this is dreadful!" Matilda said in a hoarse voice. "Hi Tilly, this is the worst most dreadful day of my life. I can't even get 3 meters without bruising my butt," I said, tired and annoyed. I ended the call by saying, "See you at Bingo!" I tried saying it while laughing but I had a sore throat so it didn't come out the way I wanted it to. "Yeah, sure." Replied Matilda, trying to laugh. But it sounded like a dying pig.

After school I went to Bingo Mania for good old ladies. It was boring. I lost every single time. The lady sitting next to me found it as easy as running when you are young. But I'm old now and it sucks.

I got home at 5:30 and mum was cooking in the kitchen. I hadn't seen her all day as she leaves the house at 5:45 to go to

work. I knew that mum wouldn't be very happy that I was out without telling her. She actually didn't mind. She just smiled when she saw me and let me walk to my room without me having to tell her about my day and everything that mums HAVE to know. I called Tilly, she answered the phone for once in a while. "Hey Jazz, I need to tell you something very exciting!" She said "Yeah, what is it?" I replied in an excited voice. "You know how this old people thing is going on right?" Tilly asked. I nodded in agreement. "Well if we are going to be old ladies, then let us be fun and cool old ladies, but only if you want to. We can solve what is going on!" Tilly said all excited and happy. "I'm in, and that is a great idea!" I replied also excited at her brilliant idea.

"First of all, I think I have an idea of who is on this case. Remember the Cheeky Clowns from Mr Hashbrown's circus? Well the three clowns' names are, Jimmy the judge, Carry the cat and Mike with the bike. Their real names are, Josh (Jimmy the judge), Chris (Carry the cat) and Mud (Mike with the bike). They always had new inventions, like the old to young. Jimmy brought an old lady out of the crowd and made her young again. There was also a branch off a tree changed into your favourite food. Carry pulled out Tiana from our class to go outside and get a fresh branch off the nearest tree and bring it back. Tiana obviously went out and in thirty seconds she was back with a huge branch. Carry grabbed the branch from her and put it in the machine and pressed the huge red button and then ten seconds later out came popcorn!" Explained Tilly.

"I think I know where the mines are." I whispered.



Change

by Ariana O'Neill | Poetry | Under 18

Change is inevitable
you don't know when it's coming
you don't know when
the caterpillar will turn into a butterfly
you don't know when
the sun will set
but you do know it is the undeniable truth
Change

" My piece represents how change happens whether you want it to or you don't and although it's not always good change sometimes it's bad it's always going to happen."

- Ariana O'Neill



FAMILY TREE

by Kane Jones | Poetry | 18 - 55

What's
'The change'?
It's 'Our Present',
Rearranged.
Wind blows new seasons
bringing warm spring rain.
New life frolics, adorning a new day,
while seedlings rise to the skies, making
colourful umbrellas, camouflage for butterflies.
Change is banks closing for an online domain,
once your weekly routine, now hang up your cane.
We're bound together like a nest, offer older generations
our seat to rest. Change has masked the air we breathe.

We
replace
cut trees,
planting
new seeds.
Change is
the horizon
our rising sea.
Change
is growth
of our
community,
Intertwining
branches in
our cultural
Family tree.

*" My poem is about an ever-changing environment
bringing our community closer."*

- Kane Jones

You Want Me to do What?

by Theodorus Pabst | Flash Fiction | 55+

The couple were standing in the middle of the kitchen, toe-to-toe, both with looks on their faces which would bowl over a bull at ten paces. 'You want me to change my mind, why does it always have to be me, why not you for a change?' The question hung there, in the air like a bad smell and without an answer coming from the recipient.

It would not be the first time in their short marriage that they had finished up in this position. For either of them to come to a decision would be to admit a defeat, so a confrontation had to take place before any conclusion to the problem could come forth.

Some months earlier, they had met during a debating competition on 'The rights of the Individual' ran by the local school in their town. It was held in the church hall due to the lack of space at the school. The principal would be the adjudicator and his verdict would be final. They both were the spokesperson for their groups but soon realised, due to eavesdropping of their opponent's conversations, they had completely opposite approaches to the topic.

The locals were intrigued as to why this was happening in their small town, for surely everyone here new their rightful place in the human ladder. The big land owners made sure of that. With their curiosity aroused, the hall was packed to the rafters. No one wanted to miss out on this debate. The principle laid out the rules to the contestants and drew a name out of the hat to see who would start. She was first. I have not the time or space to convey how the debate went, but I can assure you that those present hung on every word that was spoken that afternoon. The time came to announce the winner. The principle with clipboard in hand stood up and approached the mike. You could have heard a pin drop for all wanted to hear the verdict.

'Both were of such a high standard that I could not separate them so my decision can only be that it is a draw.'

It took a couple of seconds to sink in before they realised the consequence of that decision. Uproar followed for they all had their own opinion of who had won regardless, and they were fifty-fifty in their verdict. Now small towns may not be as sophisticated as their bigger cousins, but they knew when they were being screwed by those in charge. It was fortunate that the hall had a back door which the principal new about and took advantage of for his escape. If he had not, who knows what might have happened to him for the crowd inside were ready to lynch anyone.

The two debating factions took their appropriate champion and left to celebrate in the pub, both accepting in their own way, that maybe it was a draw after all and they would be ready to fight another day.

If you speak to any of the locals regarding our two competitors, the whirlwind courtship that followed between them was beyond belief, for you could not find two people with more conflicting views than those two had and yet be able to bond together. No one believed their marriage would last, but it did, for the time being. They purchased a small house and settled in like any other couple would have done before them.

But once a debater, always a debater. They just could not leave it alone. So, can you imagine at breakfast time, cornflakes or wheeties, tea or coffee. Now to most of us, that would take a couple of seconds and then we would enjoy our favourite breakfast. No not them. At times the debate would take all morning and then it was lunchtime. They would continue debating about what to have for lunch.

And if they had a free evening, they wondered should they go out or stay indoors. He knew he would not win this debate, and what did they finished up with, was neither. It was some time before they both realised that it was the debate which they enjoyed. And from this a happy marriage was born.

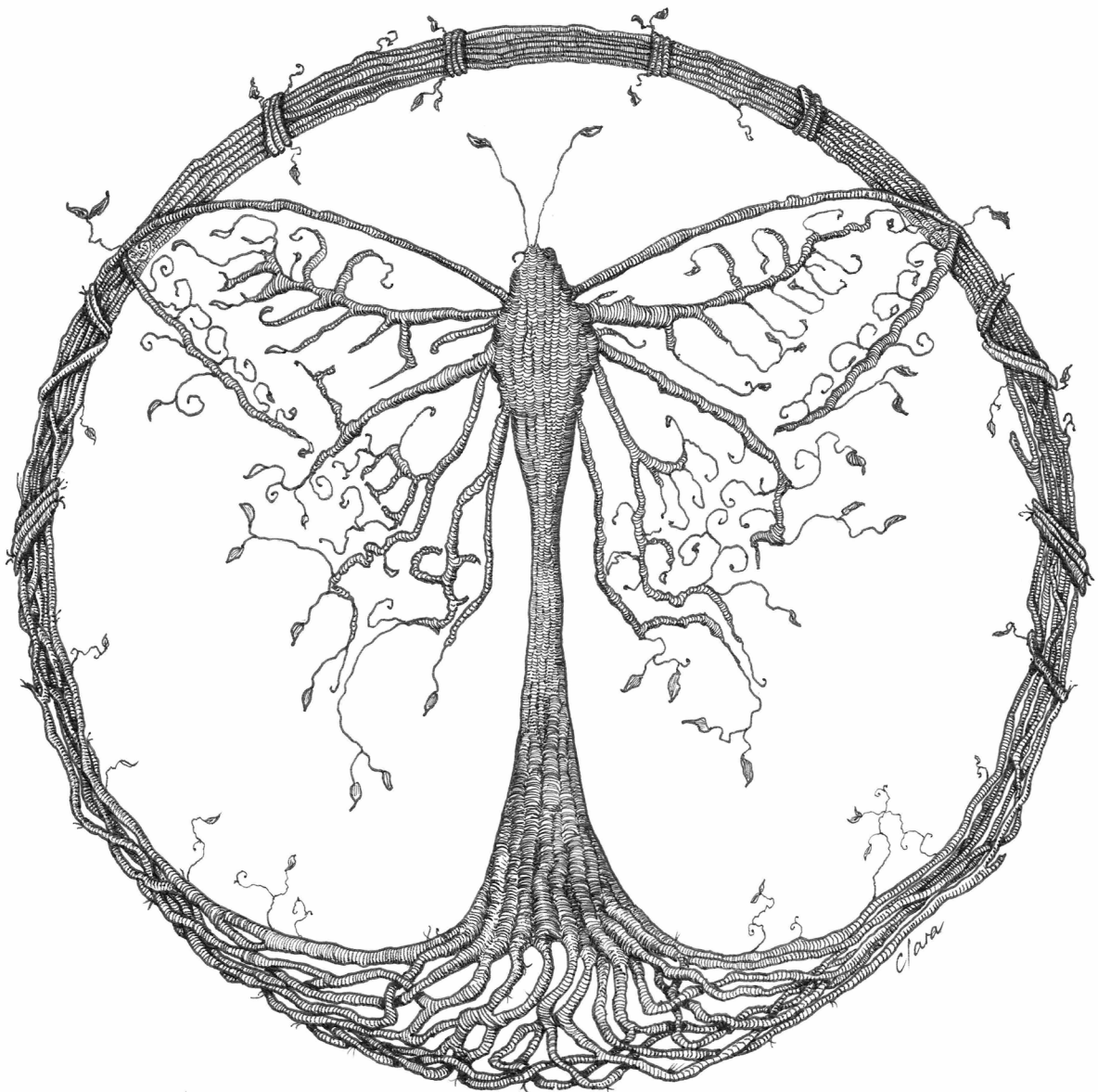


"A young couple realizing debating is not what it is all about."

- Theodorus Pabst

" My entry has been hand drawn using ink pens, scanned & then had the brightness/ contrast adjusted digitally. Working with the given prompts (tree of life/life cycle of beings & metamorphosis) I have produced a tree of life whose branches and trunk form the shape of a butterfly. A butterfly is a creature that undergoes a significant metamorphosis during its life cycle. Here the tree itself has undergone a metamorphosis; changing into the shape of the butterfly. Some of the branches are quite delicate as life can be. The roots of the tree interweave themselves and become the encircling frame of the tree - indicating the cycle of life."

- Clara Cook



Butterfly Tree of Life | Clara Cook | 18-55

When in Dôme...

by Garry Davies | Flash Fiction | 55+

I slid the ten dollars across the counter to her. She glanced down at the payment, and then back at me. She remained wordless throughout.

What's this? Raised eyebrows projected her question. It was a clever look. Along with the question, it also came with disdain. And superiority. She continued her argument with a glance at the hand sanitiser and then at the card reader on the counter in front of me. Then she looked back at me. It was a hard look.

I needed time. I considered the card reader.

Swipe or Tap, it lobbed the challenge back over the counter at me. I looked from the reader back to her.

It's money, I thought directly at her face. Money! But my shoulders sagged, just a little, and my head went down, just a little more. I felt worthless. The hand sanitiser and the card reader were both against me. They supported her argument. I sagged some more. There was no support for me.

The door banged behind me, and salvation entered in this moment of darkness. Customers approached the counter. They stood a healthy distance away from me and looked expectantly at her. They were unconcerned, waiting their turn without fully knowing the minefield they were about to enter. I looked at them and then back to her. She glanced at them and then at the money on the counter.

Hurry up or there will be a queue, she hurled at me with her slightly wider-eyed glare and fixed expression.

You can't have four people here, I thought back at her. I recognised the support I had gained—the weight of numbers had turned the tide. That and the distancing required by the current regulations. I opened my shoulders and stood a little more erect. I glanced at the money and raised my head.

Take it, take it now! I paused for dramatic effect. Or cause an isolation incident, I accused. She wasn't the only one who could pack a sentence into a single look.

And then, resigned, without looking at me, she picked up the money as though it was toxic. She placed it on the ledge in front of the cash drawer and punched buttons on the display in front of her. The cash drawer sprung open.

I turned to the small crowd behind me.

Thanks, they all glanced back at me. *Thanks for saving us from that social difficulty*. It seems more people than I thought possible can do sentences in single looks. I made a mental note to be more observant of the people around me. Especially in coffee shops.

I watched as she slid a handful of coins across the counter to me. She had the defiance of someone who has a computer to work out the correct amount to return.

Question that! she commanded with her stern eyes and set brow.

Swipe, I thought. *Definitely, Swipe!*

Then, in the midst of this aggression, I looked at her face. The image she projected was pretty...

Pretty what? I wondered. As a man of words, I realised that I was almost undone.

Pretty stubborn? I thought.

Pretty young?

Pretty militant?

No, just pretty, some traitor's voice was saying inside my head. I glanced at the name tag on her blouse.

Penny, it purred back at me.

Penny! Of course she is. I pushed the coins over to her side of the counter and glanced at the tip-jar behind her. She wanted to smile, maybe. But her lips remained tight together.

Very pretty, again the traitor's voice whispered.

I headed to the door. I heard the sanitiser pump deliver two squirts, probably into her open hand. The card reader said nothing, abandoned and silent.

Penny for your thoughts, I said, almost certain it was not out aloud.

"Flash fiction piece about the perils of buying a cup of coffee in a post-Covid world.

Includes reference to change as cash over the counter. The title suggests the need for a change of culture from one country to another. The piece refers to changes in behaviour brought about by current Covid restrictions. The customer exhibits a slight change in attitude to the waitress, while the waitress exhibits no change at all in attitude to the customer."

- Garry Davies



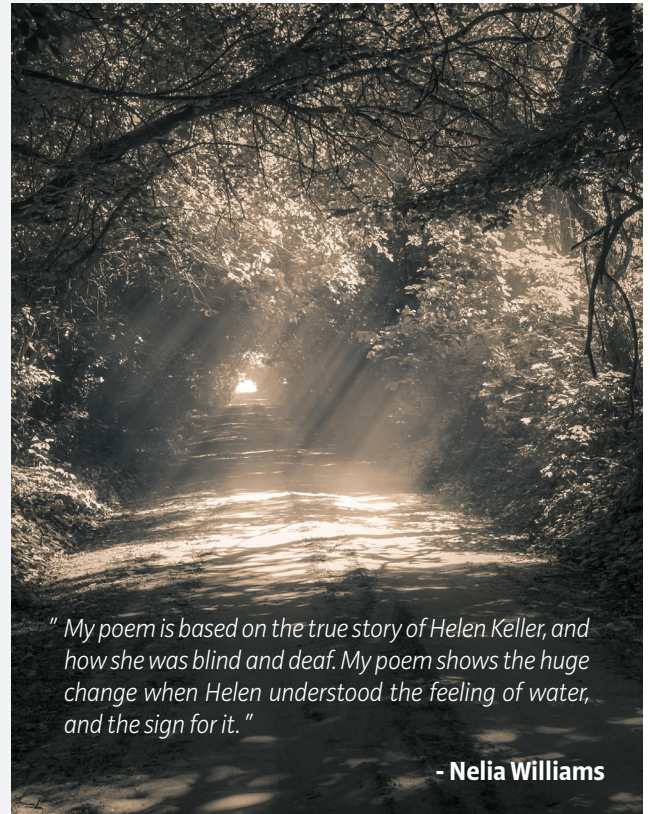
The Enlightening

by Nelia Williams | Poetry | Under 18

No light, no sound, nothing was there,
The happiness others had; I couldn't share
Not knowing what's in front, nor what was behind,
I thought everyone was like me, I didn't know I was blind.

No sight, no hearing, my world was black,
Until one day my understanding opened a crack.
Water gushing onto my hand,
Then sign language I felt, helped me to understand.

I felt enlightened, as I learnt all these new words,
Dog, grass, doll and even birds.
My world unravelled, making more sense each day,
Providing hope that others would learn the same way.

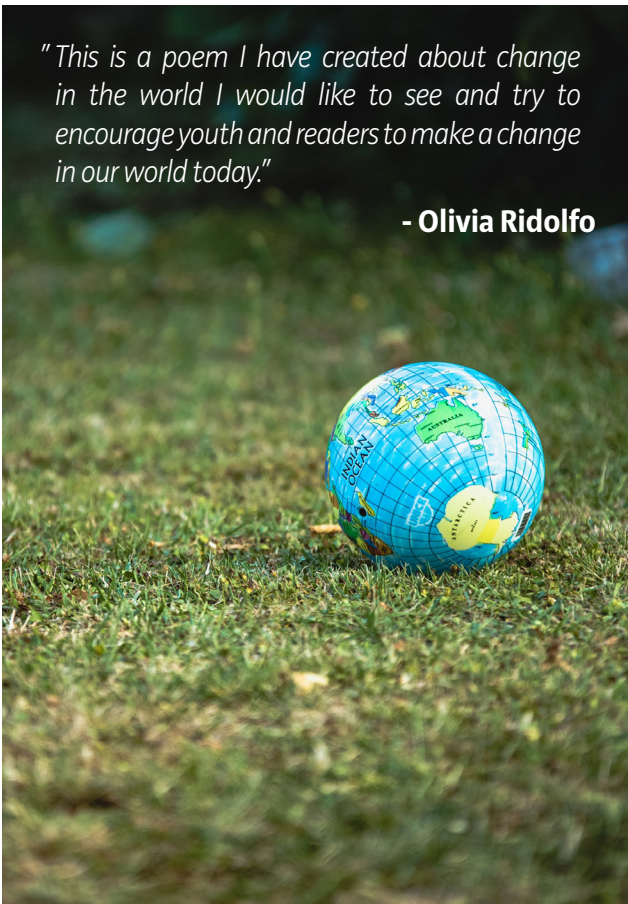


" My poem is based on the true story of Helen Keller, and how she was blind and deaf. My poem shows the huge change when Helen understood the feeling of water, and the sign for it. "

- Nelia Williams

"This is a poem I have created about change in the world I would like to see and try to encourage youth and readers to make a change in our world today."

- Olivia Ridolfo



The world

by Olivia Ridolfo | Poetry | Under 18

The world wasn't always this way,
It was beautiful, bright, no such thing as a bad day!
Then human kind came
And took it all away!
The plants, the animals all gone!
That was the moment human inventions where born!
You CAN change this, make your voice heard,
Why not even start with helping a bird?
Why not ask Ruth?
Who organises the youth
There is also Kay
She helps the environment have its say!
Don't forget Mayor Margaret Thomas
Who makes decisions that are enormous
You can change the world with the help of these friends
You must protect it so it never ends.

The Scent Of Almonds

by Holly Sydelle | Flash Fiction | 18 - 55

The number eleven flashed in red.

With blurred eyes, I reached over to my nightstand to grab my glasses, and focussed more clearly on the digital clock. *11am?* It wasn't like me to sleep in. With wobbly arms, I sat myself up. *I must remember to take it easy on the exercise.* I massaged my thumb against my aching wrist, body sore as though I had just run a marathon.

With a soft knock at the door, an elderly woman entered the room, smiling broadly.

'Who are you?' I demanded.

She frowned, disappointed. 'It's Delia, darling. Your old friend. Don't you remember?' She sat down in the chair beside my bed, making herself comfortable. I focussed on the woman's face, a deep crease between my brows. She looked thirty years older than she should.

'What's wrong with your face?' I asked bluntly.

'I don't know, sweetie, I think we both look damned good for seventy five.'

'Seventy five?' I shook my head in disagreement.

Delia's jowls wobbled as she leant down towards her bag. 'It's the dementia, darling, don't worry.' She patted my knee kindly.

Delia revealed a small tin of homemade cookies and handed one to me. 'Do try one! Freddie gave me this recipe and it's bloody good!'

I paused with the cookie halfway to my mouth. 'My Freddie? What is my husband doing cooking with you?'

Delia rolled her eyes. 'Don't start this again, sweetie. Freddie and I are good friends. We always have been. Now eat.'

I pursed my lips. I knew Delia's seductive ways. 'Well, the next time you see Fred, tell him I'm expecting a visit.'

Delia waved it off. 'Sure, sure.'

I took a bite of the cookie, delighting in the sweet taste. 'It's quite nutty, is it almond meal?' I brushed the crumbs from my chin, taking another bite.

'No, love, just plain flour' said Delia absently, tucking the tin back hidden from view.

As Delia sat up, her phone buzzed. She glanced at the time on the screen, then shot up from her chair. 'Sorry, darling, the traffic is already terrible - I have to leave now to get to the theatre in time with Fred.'

I looked up at her, lethargic. My throat felt tight, and I couldn't find the words to say goodbye.

'You always were a good friend.' Delia patted my hand before leaving the room.

Through blurred eyes I swore I saw her hand link with Fred's through the doorway. His lips brushed softly against her cheek. *Was I the only thing standing in the way of her getting what she wanted?*

My body felt heavy, the bitter scent of almonds up my nose. Muted alarm bells warned me that this meant something bad, but I couldn't remember what.

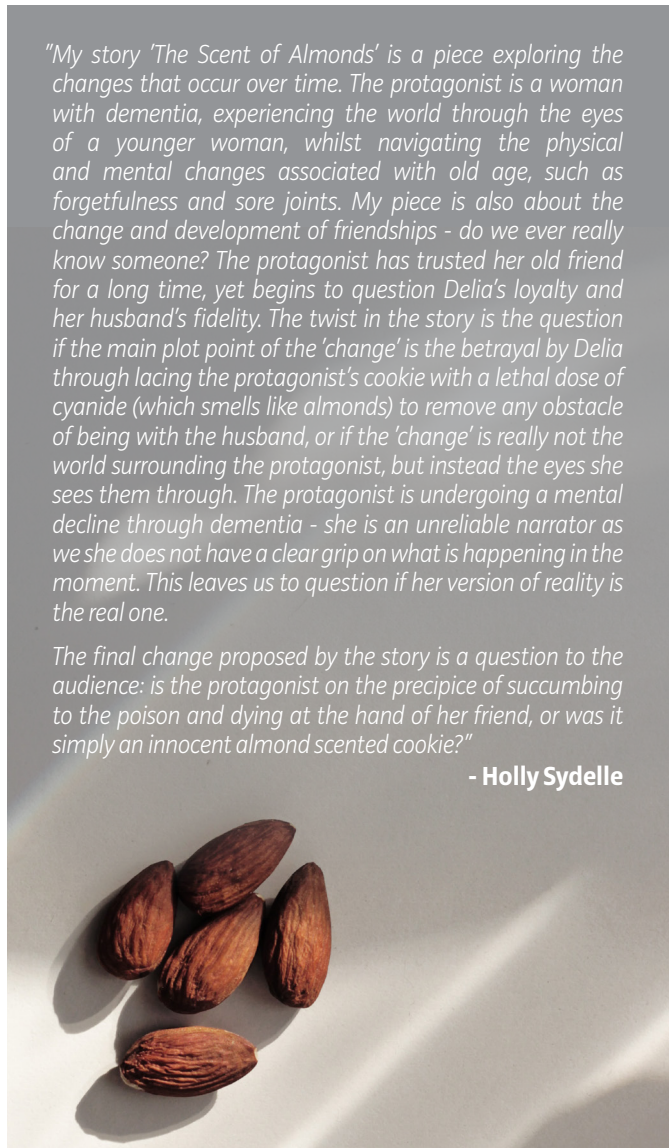
My mind drifted as though on a cloud. I thought of spring afternoons and baking. My favourite cookies to make were always almond crescents.

Almonds... why were they important? Maybe Delia would tell me. I was expecting a visit from her sometime today.

"My story 'The Scent of Almonds' is a piece exploring the changes that occur over time. The protagonist is a woman with dementia, experiencing the world through the eyes of a younger woman, whilst navigating the physical and mental changes associated with old age, such as forgetfulness and sore joints. My piece is also about the change and development of friendships - do we ever really know someone? The protagonist has trusted her old friend for a long time, yet begins to question Delia's loyalty and her husband's fidelity. The twist in the story is the question if the main plot point of the 'change' is the betrayal by Delia through lacing the protagonist's cookie with a lethal dose of cyanide (which smells like almonds) to remove any obstacle of being with the husband, or if the 'change' is really not the world surrounding the protagonist, but instead the eyes she sees them through. The protagonist is undergoing a mental decline through dementia - she is an unreliable narrator as we she does not have a clear grip on what is happening in the moment. This leaves us to question if her version of reality is the real one.

The final change proposed by the story is a question to the audience: is the protagonist on the precipice of succumbing to the poison and dying at the hand of her friend, or was it simply an innocent almond scented cookie?"

- Holly Sydelle



"I have included the theme 'the change' by drawing three trees, one small, one medium and one large. It has used the theme 'the change' because the trees are in different heights and their sizes are processing and changing every day."

- Charlotte Herbert



The Change of Trees | Charlotte Herbert | Under 18

The House Of Cricket and The Lake District and Scotland

by Kaye Slater | Flash Fiction | 18 - 55

"We all want something more"

I have lived in plenty of Houses of Cricket in my time, believe me... this was just another in a long line....but you do get people to house share with, and you know, you don't get bothered, it's like being at a gay pool in Sydney, you are left alone to your own devices..

Well I going to diverge and give you the story of our trip to the Lake District in England, which I think pretty much summarises everything up in one hit...

Ok, well we did infact go on a small trip around some of England and Scotland while staying at the Croydon House.

Credit for the organisation of this trip has to go, once again, to my brother Scott. Who also drove us around interesting spots in London, like the Old Bailey, and Hamstead Hill, and we had a quick peak at Holland Park. We felt outside of London life, and I think that short journey is what wet my appetite to go back and see if I could experience more of it.

We drove to the Lake District, then on up to Scotland. We drove through Perth (I think), Edinburgh, then on up to Inverness and Loch

Ness. Said brother snuck down to the banks of the Loch with a bottle of whiskey. The rest of us knew nothing of this private indulgence. He wanted to celebrate the mere fact that he was there...on the very shores...of that famous iconic lake. In the morning, Scott was unable to continue on the trip because he felt so ill...so he looked up his Travel Guide and insisted on being driven to the small town of Drumnadrochit, where he had discovered there was a very reasonable motel. He booked in there to rest for the day. (I think we all would have liked to have stayed in that hotel room).

Without Scott, we drove on to a castle (another castle which had been turned into a youth hostel), stayed one night, and even reached John O'Groats, a small non descript point jutting out I the sea, which is the northern most tip of Scotland.

We then doubled back to pick up the brother. The three boys we were with were becoming increasingly unbearable and irritating in the car – they would stop on a whim at any patch of grass and go and kick a footy, which we found very irritating. Then they would pile back into the four door Cortina sedan, all hot and sweaty and rather obnoxious.

After another one of these unprecedented stops, Vicki and I had a short conversation and the next thing we announced would they mind dropping us off at a small bus stop we had seen, outside the shop near Loch Ness. We either spied the bus stop and had the very quick conversation while we were stationery at the shop, or we'd seen it before and knew we would be driving by that spot again, as we were still heading north I think..and we asked to get out there!!

We found out we could catch a bus back to Inverness from there in the small shop. Goodbyes were said, really, people can be very poor travellers indeed, out of their comfort zones is what causes irritating and often unbearable behaviour.

Anyway, we gave a sigh of relief as we got out of the car, and waved goodbye to the occupants of the car..

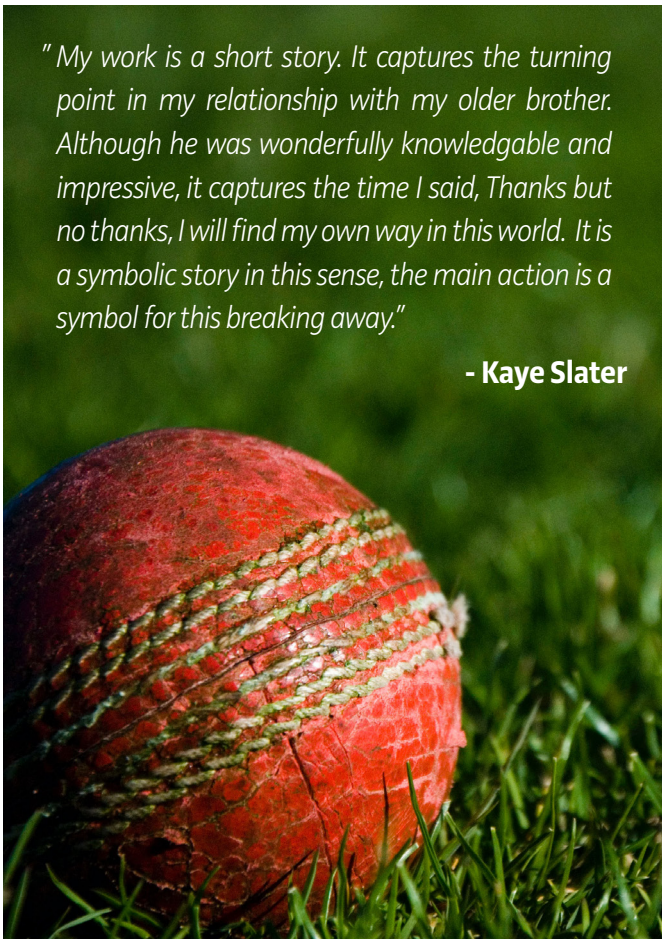
We had no regrets as we bid them adieu and calmly found out what time the next bus would be coming to take us back to Inverness.

We felt a frisson of excitement as we reached Inverness without a hitch, and booked our tickets for the next train to London. We didn't have long to wait, but we did notice THERE WAS NO DINING CAR OR FOOD VENDING FACILITIES on the train. This was an overnight train, and all we had on us were some nuts and sultanas. This would have to do. It felt like an adventure at that moment, but later in our seats, we felt that the nuts and dried fruit were not really hitting the spot...

Probably something we should include in our lives, a fast on an overnight train occasionally. We were famished when we pulled into Paddington Station. We got out in the cold morning air and thankfully spied a Lion's Tea-House, just over a busy road from the Station. There we headed for a hearty breakfast, and to plan starting our Euro-rail adventure...we really had had enough of those boys...

"My work is a short story. It captures the turning point in my relationship with my older brother. Although he was wonderfully knowledgable and impressive, it captures the time I said, Thanks but no thanks, I will find my own way in this world. It is a symbolic story in this sense, the main action is a symbol for this breaking away."

- Kaye Slater



The Change

By Joy Chew | Flash Fiction | Under 18

Hyperventilating, I reached the shadowy forest. I slowly ducked behind a small, stubby bush. Fear shot through me making the hairs on the back of my neck bolt upright. I saw an eerie shadow dart between the trees, I looked around, scanning the forest. "Sprint to the house and don't look back" I told myself quietly.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see their grey shadows. I ran to the door, stopped and look behind me. "Nothing there" I reassured myself. I slipped into the house and made my way to my room. As I walked down the darkened hallway, I heard footsteps coming from the shadows behind me. What was that, should I be afraid?

I stood, frozen to the spot. I was so scared, I couldn't scream, I knew there was a Gork in my house. It made my face burn. I felt the adrenaline pumping through my veins, pounding in my ears.

We had learnt about Gorks in class. Demons and humans combined. If they killed you, you would be reborn, as a Gork, like a zombie. They call it Gorkian virus. It was a super weird name, me and my friends laughed about it until one by one their families left.

There were only a few families left in Sunnyside. We thought Gorks would just die out and we would live. We were wrong. It had been more than six months now. Some families returned only to be ripped apart, both literally and figuratively. It was like a dream, but that dream was a nightmare and I was living it, the whole world had gone crazy!

The next thing I knew, I was in my bed with my parents looking over me, concerned. "You were drained by a Gork," they told me.

"What?" I asked confused. "You're wrong!"

"You need rest," my mother informed me. She was right, but something seemed off..... My mother usually called me sweetie or honey. What if they were possessed?

I knew what I had to do. I tiptoed into the spare room and grabbed a hard, cold golf club. Maybe dad was right, golf would come in handy. And of course, salt. I crept into the living room, observing my parents like a scientist watching a frog dissection. I took a deep breath, my heart ringing in my ears, the taste of vomit filling my mouth. I ran into the living room.

"I know you are possessed," I shouted. A distorted laugh came from the Gorks as they ripped my parents' skin away to reveal two blood thirsty monsters. "Mum.... Dad?" I whimpered. I grabbed the salt and hurled it towards them. Instantly they burned and dropped, just a pile of ash.

I heard a rattle from the cupboard. "Sweetie, it's us. Open the cupboard," my mother called.

"I thought you were dead," I shouted hysterically as Mum and Dad climbed out, greeting me with warm hugs. "What happened?" I asked, confused.

"Gorks aren't all bad," my mother paused. "They ...they try to be like us and then they get killed because they look different."

"Then why do they kill people?" I interrupted rudely.

"You see, Gorks have strong ties to family and loved ones. When one of those loved ones is killed, they get sad and very angry." Mother stopped for a second. "It would be like if someone killed me, you would want revenge. Gorks want revenge too. They lose control and kill. They don't always mean too."

"So why don't we try and make peace with the Gorks?"

"Both sides have done too much damage," she paused. "I wish we could....."

"Why don't we try and make peace," I interrupted. "Why don't we just try?" I stormed off to my room and started planning.

That night I worked on loads of platforms to create a website, ones to start conversations about peace. I realised this could change the world, so I called the website, 'The Change.' I pressed down on the mouse to confirm the website, so everybody could see it. Slowly....one view...ten views....thirty nine views.....one hundred and twelve views.....I fell asleep watching the views going up and up.

I woke to a bunch of Gorks and humans looking into my room quietly observing me. I looked at the screen count, 12 million views. I smiled at the crowd, they smiled back. "Thank you!" They all said happily. Proving one small change could make a big change.

"My short story is about how one small change can do great things."

- Joy Chew



Winners

Art

		NAME
55+	Reminiscence	Susan Carameli
18-55	Butterfly Tree of Life	Clara Cook
U18	One	Annabelle Gallon

Poetry

55+	Tiny Power	Tania Park
18-55	Family Tree	Kane Jones
U18	The Enlightening	Neila Williams

Flash Fiction

55+	Nelsons Column	Gary William Barber
18-55	The Scent of Almonds	Holly Sydelle
U18	Brooke Atlantes and the Mermaid Mishap	Melinda Barton

Runners up

Art

55+	Nil Submissions	
18-55	Nil Submissions	
U18	The way you look at things (Chameleon)	Leah Kuckelkorn

Poetry

55+	To Fly	Sharlene Nel
18-55	A Cleared Mind Makes a Clean Bedroom	Sophie McGeough
U18	The World	Olivia Ridolfo

Flash Fiction

55+	When in Dome...	Garry Davies
18-55	Loop	Alexandra Geneve
U18	The Change	Joy Chew

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