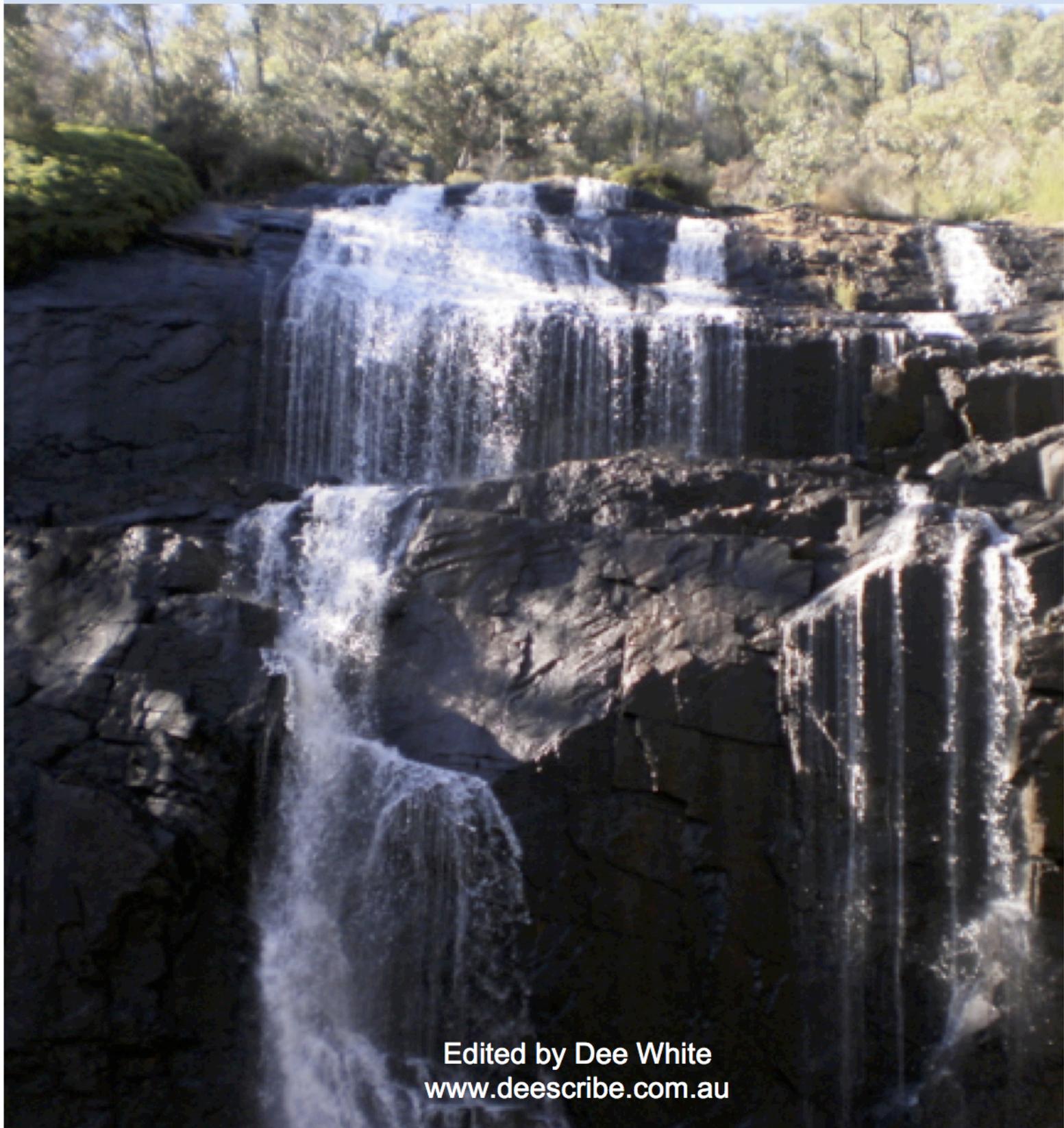


Fall

An anthology of stories by young writers



Edited by Dee White
www.deescribe.com.au

Fall

This anthology is a compilation of works by talented young writers aged 7 to 16.

All are based on the theme of the 2015 [Writing Classes For Kids](http://writingclassesforkids.com) Fall writing competition. (<http://writingclassesforkids.com>)

When selecting the winners to have their stories published, I tried to include a variety of different kinds of stories from boys and girls across different age groups.

Stories were also selected on originality of ideas.

They are fabulous examples of how we use our imaginations and life experiences to interpret a particular theme, how our writing is different because we are all different.

Congratulations to all the writers who were selected for this publication.

I hope readers enjoy your pieces as much as I did.

Happy writing:)

Dee

[Dee White Author](#)

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The Timber Lane Gang Go Camping



by Katrina Bau

The Timber Lane Gang Go Camping

by Katrina Bau - aged 7

Once there were twelve kids, and their names were Katrina, Jane, Soul, Sienna, Zoey, Edward, Tenzin, Luka, Teddy, Tyne, Harry, and Chloe.

Katrina's uncle had told them all to go camping. So off they went.

But they didn't know that a snake had crept into their camping bag earlier on.

Just then the fierce snake shot out. Harry found a stick and fought the snake and killed it.

Sienna was shocked!

"I was worried you would get hurt," said Chloe.

"Come on Sienna are you going to help set up the tent?" said Katrina.

"Sure I will, said Sienna".

Sunset finally came and Chloe wanted to play a game!

Harry said, "Hey! I know what we can play. We can play soccer!"

The girls said, "You can play soccer. We will play Uno if you don't mind."

"Ok," said the boys. "You have your little girlish game."

So the boys played soccer and the girls played Uno.

Just then Edward tripped on some slippery autumn leaves and fell.

Katrina and all of the other girls rushed out to Edward and helped him up. Edward had hurt his knee badly, and had to go to hospital.

"I'm worried about Edward," said Jane.

"Me too," said Katrina.

"What about we go and see him?" said Zoey.

"Great idea," said Teddy.

Katrina said, "Come on guys, let's go to the hospital", and off they went.

Just then Tyne said, "How will we know which way to go?"

Then Katrina said, "I've got the map to Castlemaine Hospital and we are probably 5k's from there so let's get a move on."

The tremendous twelve finally got to the Castlemaine hospital. When they got there they all said hello to Edward. His leg was looking a lot better.

Everyone was very happy to see Edward come out of hospital.

But he hadn't told them that he had to have crutches. So when they saw him with crutches they were all very shocked!

"Edward, why didn't you tell us that you had to have crutches?" said Sienna.

"I didn't tell you because there weren't any phones at the hospital.

Katrina said, "Come on guys we have to get back to the tent before sunset."

"I want to go home, Katrina," said Zoey.

"Okay," said Katrina.

"How will we know how to get back home?" asked Tyne.

"The map got us here, silly," said Katrina. "Now where does the map tell us to go first? First we have to go around the rock, then through the two trees, we go to the church then right, around the train station and we're home."

Everyone shouted, "Hooray."

Katrina's uncle was there to greet them.

A Lesson in the Bus

by DeriAnne Mak - aged 7

It was a windy gloomy evening. Jack and Amy were sitting on a hard brown wooden bench at the bus station. It was their first time taking the bus home without their parents.

Jack and Amy squealed in delight as they swung gleefully on the rusty metal handrails. They both felt like Tarzan as they continued swaying, much to the disgust of the other annoyed passengers.

Suddenly, Amy lost her grip and she landed on the floor with a loud thud. Jack was shocked and could not prevent his friend from falling. Amy burst into tears. Amy's tears rolled like raindrops.

Jack stopped frolicking and rushed to comfort his injured buddy. In between the watery sobs, Amy revealed that she had hurt her back during the fall.

Amy's noisy cries attracted the attention of an off-duty bus officer. The tall fierce officer rushed hurriedly up to the pair to see what had happened. When he learnt about the horrifying incident, he chided loudly and terrifyingly at the pair for their hazardous behavior.

Jack and Amy were embarrassed and were ashamed of themselves. They promised not to do it again.

When they reached home their parents were very cross. Jack and Amy got punished and Amy had to go to the hospital.

Jack felt bad for Amy and they told their parents that they would not do that again.

An Unexpected Trip

by Josephine Sim - aged 7

I was dressed in my rare clothes at home as usual, warming up beside the fireplace and preparing to carry some delicious caramel cake to my grandparents who lived in a cottage beside the forest.

My family had reminded me not to take the longer path strolling into the forest because there were dangerous animals hiding amongst the trees and bushes. It wasn't until I was halfway through the forest full of swinging vines that I remembered I shouldn't walk in the longer path in the forest but I decided to carry on my way because I was already very near to grandparents' cottage.

I had been attracted to admire the pretty flowers and the sparkling morning dew on the beautiful petals glittering under the sun. I skipped happily along in the warmth of the sun, stopping and bending down every now and then to pick a wonderful sweet smelling flower for my grandparents.

Without a warning, a Mulga snake appeared in front of me like magic. I stood there surprised staring until the Mulga snake tried to attack me. I ran back hysterically, afraid the snake would follow me. I accidentally took the wrong path and fell into a hole. It was pitch dark and I was falling deeper and deeper. It felt like the hole was never going to come to an end. Abruptly, I rolled out from a tunnel on the other side of the world in an African Safari.

A rhinoceros spotted me and charged towards me, its face staring at the ground. Unfortunately, I didn't notice it running towards me until the very last minute when I whirled around. The heavy animal leapt into the air and nearly buffeted into me with its sharp horns, but I ducked and the furious rhinoceros landed on the ground with a loud thud and its horns stuck into the hard ground.

I heard a growl in the wild, thatching grass a distance away and spotted a leopard. I dashed away to a tall tree, clambered up and pulled myself onto a fragile branch about twenty feet away from the parched ground.

Just then, a cheetah caught sight of me. It jumped down from the upper branch of the same tree I was sitting on. The carnivore hungrily sneaked up behind me, ready to rip me apart. Then, as I heard a sound, the tree

branch suddenly cracked and I dropped, whizzing down like a falling star while I wished I wasn't going to die.

All of a sudden, I heard my dad's loud voice yelling, "Wake up! Hurry! You're going to be late for school ... why are you lying on the floor?"

Startled, as I woke up, I realized that I had only fallen down from my comfortable bed to the carpet floor. What a frightening nightmare!

Fallen into a Deep Hole

by Reshan Gill - aged 8

Last week, my family and I moved into our new house in Forest Town. We moved to Forest Town because my dad had a new job there.

While my parents were unpacking the car, my sister, Ella and I decided to explore the nearby forest.

We walked for some time and then Ella started to get bored so I suggested that we have a race. Ella was faster than me and I soon lost sight of her. Suddenly, I tripped and fell into a really, really deep hole. I tried to use the rocks that were sticking out to help me up but it didn't work. I tried shouting, HELP, HELP!!!!!!! really loudly, but there was no one around to help.

After waiting for about two to three hours, it started to get dark. I was getting worried and I knew my parents would be too. Suddenly, I heard a loud growling noise. I also heard loud thumping footsteps. Feeling scared, I covered my eyes and crept deeper into the hole. I was so frightened that I started to sob.

I looked up to see what it was and saw a huge, brown bear. It looked very fierce with its sharp teeth. It reached out to grab me.

It looked like it was hungry and wanted to eat me. After a while, it stopped growling and then I realised that the bear wanted to help me. It held out its paw and I took hold of it and it pulled me up. I gave it a big hug.

As the bear was looking hungry and tired, I found it some wild fruits to eat and gave it some time to rest. I then told it to take me home knowing that it wouldn't know the way but surprisingly, it did. It took me to my doorstep and it went away.

When my mum, dad and Ella saw me, they ran up to me and said "Where have you been Reshan? We were worried sick about you" I said that I had fallen into a deep hole. Then, a bear found me and helped me out of the hole.

Although they didn't believe me, I am looking forward to seeing my newfound friend again.



Whoops!



by Audrey Kennedy - aged 8

Whoops!

by Audrey Kennedy - aged 8

“All set Lilly” Joey said.

“Okay!” I answered. For the last three weeks we had been slaving away at this crazy idea. We wondered if humans could fly by strapping giant water bottles to their bodies. I’d sewn and threaded and Joey had planned and carved. If it worked, we’d be famous, but if it failed I’d find myself in hospital. Yes! Let’s hope not.

I started dressing in the pillow safety suit we had constructed. It was a little stuffy and it made me look like a big fat snowman. As I strapped the carved bottle on my back Joey reminded me for the 10,000th time to keep calm.

I reassured him for the 10,000th time, “I will.”

“OK,” he answered, “Let’s test this thing!”

I ran to the rusty old tap at the far side of the yard.

“I’m filled. Is the trampoline in place?”

“Tick.” Joey assured me. Then I closed my eyes and the corks flew out.

The water gushed out like a jammed-on tap. It pushed me higher and higher. Now I was eight metres in the air! Suddenly, I stopped shooting up and started falling. I raced down faster and faster. I just might make it to the trampoline. Nope, I wouldn’t. Panic!

“AHHH” I screamed at the top of my lungs. I’m doomed. I was heading straight for the old frail oak tree! I hit the plant with the force of a boulder on an autumn leaf. I grabbed the first branch I could and clung on with all my might. Already, with the first touch of my weight, the branch bent over precariously.

It began to crack, and finally, with an earsplitting SNAP, the branch gave way and I was sure that this time I would fall to my doom. As I whizzed past the small bridge over the garden pond, one of the plastic garden gnomes hit me on the head with its silly looking fishing rod. Unfortunately, I did not hit the pond as I had hoped and pleaded. The world started to spin, and I felt dizzy. Round and round it went, getting faster and faster. Now it was so fast that I couldn’t even see. Goodbye world! I thought...

The world was coming back into focus. There was a white wall in front of me, and curtains around me. I looked down and there were white sheets covering me.

“Where am I?” I stammered as I opened my eyes.

“You’re in hospital with a broken hip,” a voice called. It was Joey. “You landed splat on the paving!”

“Hi, I’m Dr. Oliver Mince,” a slim woman said. “You’ll be in a wheelchair for a few days, and be careful on that hip.”

I did go to the hospital! Oh, well. Better luck next time!

A Gruesome Fall

by Joyce Sim - aged 9

Abby, Destiny, Tessa and I had arranged to meet up at 3 pm at Abby's tree house. The purpose of the meeting was to come up with ideas for the school fundraising, which would be on next month. When I arrived Abby, Destiny and Tessa were waiting for me under the recently completed tree house built by Abby's Mum and Dad.

My cat, Mittens and dog, Barker escorted me like I was the Queen and they were the guards. It was mainly because I was acrophobic so I let my friends climb up the extension ladder first, and then I followed behind climbing as slowly as I could, being careful not to look down.

Barker, my faithful companion was under the tree house barking furiously as if to raise my spirit of courage. My friends up the tree house were trying to make me feel brave by cheering "You can do it!" but it only made me feel sicker. I glanced over and saw that Mittens had crawled up the tree to get to the tree house as well. I was nearly halfway from the tree house when I found that the ladder was wobbling. I kept on trying to say to myself that it was nothing to worry about but I couldn't get it off my mind. All of a sudden, I toppled over and I felt I was gliding down like a flying squirrel. For a split moment I thought I could fly but ...

THUD! I landed on something soft and white ... Wait a minute I thought I would die from the fall. I don't feel pain at all. I checked myself for blood or broken bones but there was none. Where is this? I can't see the sun but there is bright light all around me. Did I die? Is this heaven? Where are my friends? Are Barker and Mittens here?

Something soft and white swiftly brushed against my feet. What was that? Was it a cloud? Yet, I was convinced that it was nothing but a cloud and that I must be in heaven. I'd always wanted to explore heaven so I took a few hesitating steps on the cloud. So far so good. Cool!

All of a sudden, the cloud collapsed. I was falling from the cloud like a skydiver except that I didn't have a parachute. Oh no, I would surely die a horrible death!

"Joyce! Would you collect all the math workbooks ... " Mr Key called, his voice intruding my catnap

Matthew's Intriguing Fall



by Andrew Del Borello

Matthew's Intriguing Fall

by Andrew De Borrello - aged 10

Matthew was born with a permanent grin on his face. He had very dark, curly, black hair and hundreds of tiny freckles.

Matthew had so many freckles that it looked as though he had once spilled tiny drops of melted chocolate all over his face but the chocolate never came off.

Matthew was on a holiday with his family. A tour guide was talking to them about the beach cliffs. "These beach cliffs have been here for millennia. There is a legend that says people who fall off these cliffs can never be found again. There is supposed to be a porthole and another galaxy beyond that porthole," laughed the tour guide.

"Falling off cliffs? Unknown galaxy? Never coming back to listen to this boring man sounds like a dream come true," Matthew muttered to himself while raising his eyebrow.

Matthew ran up to the cliff's brink. The ocean clashed against the cliff. Without warning, the wind whipped Matthew and grabbed him. He was now falling headfirst into the ocean.

Matthew was flipping around like a falling astronaut in space. "Blearggghhhhhh," groaned Matthew as he slowly closed his eyes and plummeted into a purple, fluorescent, luminous porthole. Matthew opened his eyes and realised that he was passing through an insanely colourful tunnel that seemed endless.

Matthew felt his stomach lurch, "Ooooh, I shouldn't have snuck all that ice cream before we left." The tunnel came to a sudden end. "Wow, where am I?" Matthew was floating in a vast, dimly lit, purple galaxy.

The galaxy had no ground, only flat, grey chunks of rock floating around. Matthew heard chattering sounds. "Wow.....is that a flock of raviolis?" The massive flock of ravioli creatures flew gracefully like moths. Matthew followed them.

Bbbbbebzzzbb! Bbbbbebzzzbb!

"What are those little brown orbs?" Matthew ducked as the orbs whizzed over his head. "Those aren't orbs!! They're meatballs!" Matthew

followed the raviolis. They went across spaghetti bridges, through Parmesan cheese dust storms, and under coffee rain.

They stopped in front of a focaccia house. Matthew entered through a giant air hole. He found two, small, marble pillars.

One had a blue crystal on top, while the other, a red crystal. A small, wrinkled note lay under each crystal. Matthew read the note under the blue crystal. "Hold me. Wish for home but you'll never be back". Matthew read the other note, "Hold me. Wish for home and you'll be there. Wish for here and you'll be here." "Hmmm..... tough choice. I think I'll go with the..... red crystal."

Matthew held the crystal, closed his eyes and said, "I wish for home but one day to come back." Matthew felt bursts of air all around him. He moved head first up the purple tunnel. He opened his eyes and realised that he was back at the cliff's brink. "Matthew get back here," yelled his mum.

Matthew held the crystal in his hand and grinned.

Fall

by Anna Hall - aged 10

It was the middle of fall and a small rickety house stood in the middle of a dimly lit street. In that house was a family of four. There was Anthony the Dad, Fiona the Mum and the troublesome twins, Edmund and Oliver.

One night, Edmund and Oliver were playing pirates in their room. They had bunk beds and were playing on the top bunk. They were dressed in matching pirate outfits, with matching toy cutlasses.

“Yah, yah, yah! Take that, pirate Ed!” growled Oliver.

“Take this... And this... and THIS!” cried Edmund.

Oliver lost his balance and fell to the ground. He was still. “Mummy, come quick! Olly’s hurt!” shouted Edmund.

The twins’ mum and dad rushed upstairs to the twins’ room. “What happened?” exclaimed Fiona.

“We were playing pirates when Olly walked the plank and fell into the shark-infested water below.” said Edmund telling a whopping big lie.

Anthony called an ambulance. “Hello, my son’s had a fall and he’s out cold. My address? Oh yes, 34 Chapman lane. You’ll be here soon? Okay, thanks, bye! Fiona, the ambulance will be here soon.” calmly said Anthony.

When the ambulance came (the ambulance man was called John) Edmund told John the version of Oliver’s fall that he told his parents. “Well, what an unusual way to fall!” laughed John.

The next morning, Edmund asked his dad if he could go and visit his brother.

His dad said, “yes”.

Edmund was very impatient when they were driving to the hospital. “When are we there, when are we there, when are we there! I want to see Olly!” screamed Edmund.

When they got to the hospital, Edmund rushed down the corridors, shouting, “Olly, Olly! I’m here, I’m here!” As he ran, he knocked over multiple nurses and patients, causing a big commotion.

When Edmund and Anthony found Olly and Fiona, Ed and Olly had a big twin hug.

“Let’s do that again!” shouted Olly.

“I think not,” said Fiona sternly.

Edmund and Oliver fell about laughing.

The next week, everything was back to normal. Oliver was much better and probably better than he was before!

On the Friday night, when the twins were in bed, Oliver suddenly had an idea. “Hey Ed? I’ve just had an idea.”

“What?” demanded Edmund.

“Tomorrow, do you want to play football on the top bunk?”

Race

by Kevin Yu - aged 10

I couldn't believe it. The government had finally allowed me, James Star to drive a racing car. But it came with a catch. I had to track down the famous criminal, Blake Smore. He also had a Formula 1, Knight's Shadow Prototype 5000.

Soon, I was revving up my engine, ready to track down the stolen Knight's Shadow and Blake Smore. The government had supplied me with a high-tech GPS and food. Soon I was on the trail of the crook. In about 5 minutes, I had located the devil and had seen a bit of his spoiler. I kept on following him and soon, I was side by side with his car. We raced through all sorts of terrains. When we reached the snow, our engines spluttered to a stop. I was about to leap on him and pin him to the floor when, when he hopped out of his car and ran away like a rabbit. I sprinted towards Blake, taking a flying leap and falling in the thick snow.

Suddenly there was a thud as I watched as Blake disappeared before my eyes. I jogged over to investigate. I started walking slowly around the place where Blake had last been.

Almost immediately, I fell through some kind of trapdoor. I landed with a heavy thud. I got up and dusted myself off with a piece of fabric that I had found on the floor. Why would that be there? Then I remembered what my task was, to capture Blake.

I sprinted through the maze-like corridors, searching frantically for Blake. Where was he? Then I saw him lying on the floor, moaning. I wondered if I should help him up or shove him down. Sometimes I hate myself for being so kind. I helped him up. The second I touched him; he grabbed my arms and flipped me over him and tossed me across the room like sack of potatoes. He then skipped over me and ran out of the room, laughing.

I was furious at myself. How could I be so gullible? I rocketed up at the ceiling, mad. Suddenly it gave away to reveal another trapdoor. I climbed through it, only to find myself falling down again.

"Need some help?" asked a voice.

"Sure!" I replied. For all I knew it could've been Blake, but my instincts told me to trust whomever it was. A pair of hands grabbed me around the

elbows and lifted me out of the cave. Waiting for me was Ned, my friend. He had behind him the whole countries' police force and 57 Operations agents. They had helicopters with them. They escorted me home with sirens wailing.

When I was safe at home, news arrived, stating that the criminal, Blake Smore had been found and caught. I was so relieved! As a reward, I got a medal and had tea with the prime minister.

The best news was that I got to keep the car!

Fall

by Molly Bell - aged 11

I didn't mean to, it wasn't my fault.

The pit appeared out of nowhere.

The 21st Eskimere ball was being held at the town hall and it was dragging on for hours.

My blue sparkly dress was dragging behind me and all I wanted to do was change into my leather jacket with my pair of jeans, but mother had pulled me into my dress and tightened it as tight as she could, and I couldn't breathe.

The adults were talking about the tennis cup or badminton or the latest Myers catalogue. I would have told my mother about my trip outside but I doubt she would have cared.

I was finding it hard to breathe so I went to get some air and walked around the garden. Suddenly my head started to spin and before I could stop myself I was falling down and down through a dark, dank pit.

I didn't scream, I didn't cry. No one would have heard me, and no one would have cared. The world around me was disappearing and all I could see was a faint blue light. I closed my eyes and let my imagination wander.

I awoke on a cold marble floor. I was no longer dizzy. I could see clearly that I was in a deep dark forest with trees as tall as mountains and they were sprouting diamonds and rubies and crystals as clear as glass.

Many of the jewels had been discarded on the marble path. Eagerly I picked up a diamond as big as a silver coin and slipped it into my pocket. I walked as fast as I could down the path when suddenly a wolf jumped out in front of me. I screamed at the top of my lungs and stumbled and fell backwards.

He pointed to my pocket and growled. I slowly took the diamond out of my pocket and laid it on the ground. To make it dramatic I lifted my hands above my head and closed my eyes. The wolf growled, I opened my eyes and saw the wolf had disappeared. I hurried on my way without the diamond.

I wish I could change into something more comfortable I thought. Suddenly a red t-shirt and a pair of black jeans appeared hanging from a

branch of a nearby tree. I slipped my dress off, and felt it slip through my fingers and onto the ground. I quickly changed and left my dress in the dirt.

I walked along the path until I saw a sparkling silver castle, the turrets tipped with diamonds. I was just about to knock on the door...

Suddenly my head started to spin and before I could stop myself I was falling down and down through a dark, dank pit. I woke to find myself lying on a cold stone floor of the Eskimere ballroom.

It must have been a dream but why was I wearing a red t-shirt with black jeans?

It's Fall

by Lara Borges - aged 11

When I wake on Wednesday, September 23, I immediately feel the change. Chilly air floats in through the open bedroom window, causing the purple curtains to sway back and forth, back and forth. A thin sheet of silvery mist hangs in the morning air, like magic.

I energetically jump out of bed. Usually I'm a grump in the morning, but today is different. I quickly change out of my pajamas and into some warmer, more efficient clothes and skip to the kitchen.

The cinnamon smell of freshly baked pumpkin bread overwhelms me as I enter. I sit at the dining table. My mother smiles at me and hands me a plate piled high with her famous pumpkin bread. She gives me a glass of orange juice, no pulp.

My dad leaves for work early every day, so it's just me and my mom in the house. We chat a bit as we eat, but Mom is more like me, quiet and thoughtful rather than loud and impatient, so our breakfast is mostly spent silent. But it's not an awkward silence.

I hear the bus screech to a stop outside my house. Leaving the dishes in the sink, I kiss my mom goodbye, grab my bag, and head outside.

Inside the bus is loud. Like capital L-O-U-D loud! Groups of girls sit together, chattering away about things such as what color they're going to paint their nails and who likes whom. Boys shout and throw footballs to each other and do whatever boys do. I head to the very, very back of the bus and manage to sit before the bus starts moving again.

As the bus makes its way through the city traffic I gaze out the window. The magic I mentioned earlier is even more profound here. It's in the red, orange, and yellow leaves that cover the streets and sidewalks, buildings and houses. It's in the colorful trees that produce those pesky but gorgeous leaves. It's in the fields full of plump orange fruits we know as pumpkins. It's in the sad people who have to say goodbye to tees and shorts and pools and say hello to jeans and jackets and days spent indoors next to fires. It's everywhere. It's Fall.

The Skywalker

by Alexandra de Graaff - aged 11

The newspaper was not something I ever considered looking at, it was never an interest of mine. I never wanted to know what was happening in the outside world. Most of the time it would be some depressing little article I wish I'd never laid my eyes on. Or it would be about someone's business I didn't have a right to know.

But on this particular day, something in the newspaper caught my eye. The headline read, Mysterious man seen walking across sky rise building, given the name the SKYWALKER

"Dad?" I said turning to face my hippie father. "Have you heard about the Skywalker?"

Dad peered over my shoulder looking at the newspaper that I was holding in my hand. "Oh yeah so cool he is, I mean he's been sighted walking up vertical walls! And jumping roof to roof! He isn't stealing anything but geez. He probably wants something tall to walk up." Dad stared at the photo of a silhouetted man on the Rontavoue Estoria, a very famous restaurant in the middle of town.

What would this Skywalker person want though? Dad was right, this couldn't be a hobby, could it?

I wanted to see this man in action so I told Dad that I was going to Saskia's house (Saskia is a really good friend of mine). He asked when I would be back so I told him tomorrow afternoon.

He nodded and I went off with no more than my wallet and a sleeping bag.

It was five o'clock at night in the city and I was really tired. I found a park bench and slipped into my sleeping bag holding my wallet.

I woke to hear a lady shouting, "He's there! On the roof! Call the newspapers!"

I ran to where the lady was standing and just like in the pictures, he was there running on the roofs of buildings. I wanted to catch this guy. I started to run along side him except I was on the ground and he was 100 feet above me. Then without warning he disappeared into a hotel.

I waited at the exit. He was there. He smiled a yellow tooth smile and said "You're coming with me girlie"

I screamed and ran, but he caught me with his grubby hands. He shoved me into his car and slammed his feet on the accelerator screeching off.

The car smelt of smoke and I put down the windows as we passed the police station not only for fresh air, but also to scream, to make someone hear me.

"Shut up ya little girl" he shouted putting up the windows.

We stopped at the wharf and the man put a cloth round my mouth. But relief then flooded through me. Someone had heard me scream. The police and Dad were there. The police cuffed the Skywalker.

I never got to know what the Skywalker wanted or who he was. But I knew that was my encounter with the Skywalker.

Fall

by Maxyn Dorz - aged 11

My worst fear, my worst enemy, my worst nightmare.

Come alive!

In the reflection on the skyscraper windows it looks as if I'm flying,
peacefully flying, drifting towards the far ground.

It doesn't feel that way.

Loose hair whips my face and the cool air bites at my skin, nibbling my
hope and demolishing my dreams.

Thoughts fly through my head as fast as I fall, and in less than a
minute, every memory, every thought, from the deepest vault in my mind has
resurfaced and left butterflies of longing in my stomach.

I see my house, my school, normal life going on as usual below me, all
the while my life, from the start, plays out in my mind.

My mother.

My father.

My sister.

All left behind.

My teachers.

My friends.

My neighbours.

All forgotten.

My life is only a digit in the count of losses and gains.

The memory in few minds,

The whispers of a rumour,

The tears at a funeral,

The death of a little girl.

I remember things from years back like they were only minutes ago.

I know it's stupid.

What happened a few minutes ago sealed the deal.

The acceptance of a dare, a death wish.

I see the fast-approaching ground coming up below me, many colours,
many shapes, many lives.

It feels as if I've been falling for years.

Am I a ghost, stuck replaying my last moments for all of eternity?

Am I 'dead before I've hit the ground?'

But as I hurtle towards the staring faces of mothers, joggers and businessmen, all going about their normal life,

I know this isn't a dream.

One of those people could have been me.

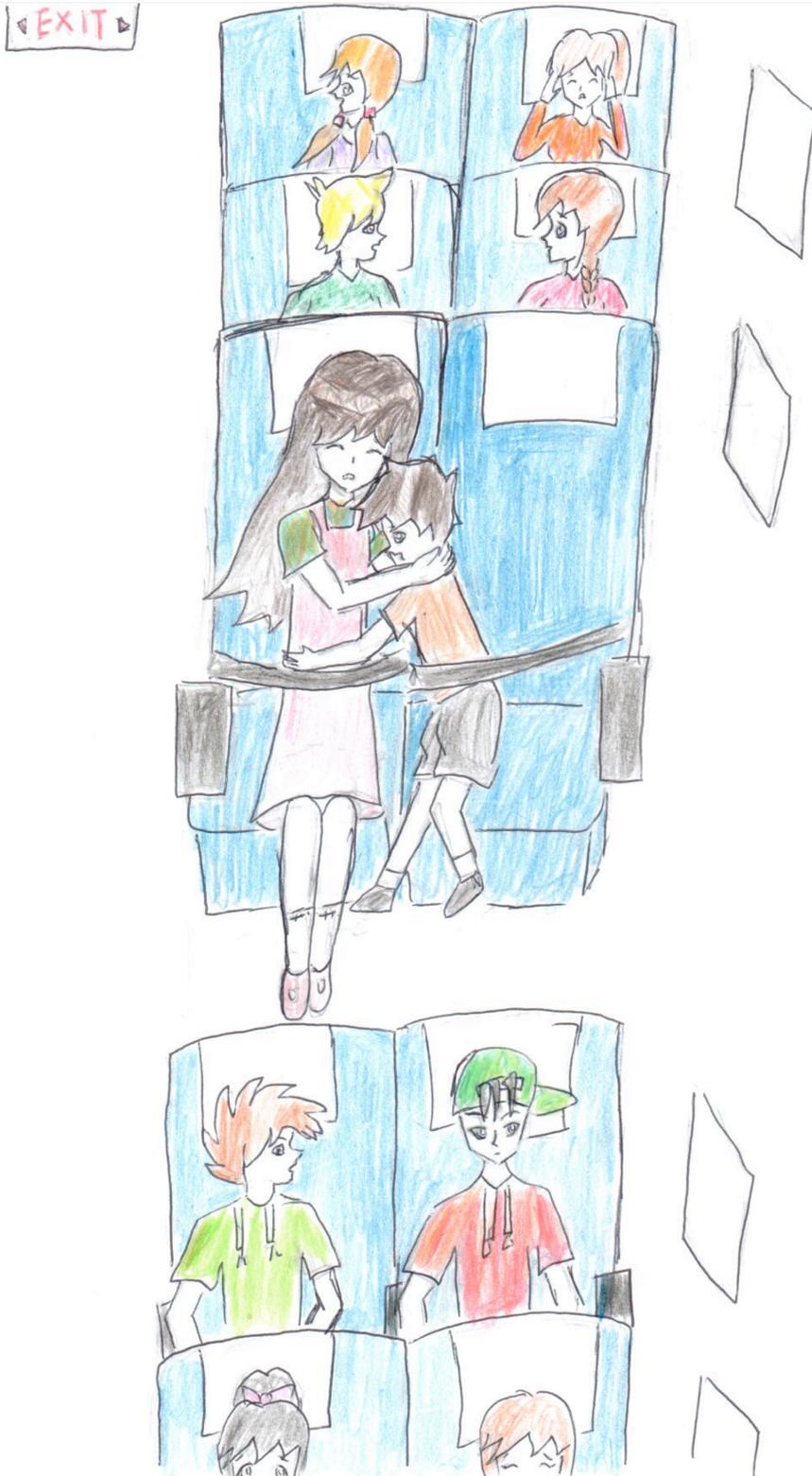
I can't do anything about it now.

So I do the only thing I can do.

Shut my eyes, clear my mind...

and take my last breath.

Fall



by Adelina Huang

Fall

by Adelina Huang - aged 11

Mum hugged me tightly and pecked me on the cheek. "Goodbye sweetie! See you in Australia!"

Dad ruffled my blonde hair affectionately and smiled.

I dragged my suitcase towards Gramps and shouted to my younger brother Otis, "Come on Otis! The plane to Australia will be here soon!"

Otis came running.

We were in the waiting room at the airport. Otis was chatting to Gramps noisily while Mo, my older brother sat back in his seat sullenly. I remained silent despite Otis's hysterical shrieks. I didn't want to leave. Amsterdam was such a nice place. It felt like home. But we had to go back for school. So we had decided that Gramps would come back with us while Mum and Dad stayed in Amsterdam for a bit longer.

"Argh! When is the plane coming?" Mo groaned.

"Don't worry son another minute and it'll be here," Gramps assured.

"All passengers boarding MH17. Please get ready to board your plane." The speaker boomed.

We jumped up and grabbed our suitcases. I waved like mad to my parents. But they soon disappeared as the crowd swept us onto the plane.

I sat with Otis and fastened his seatbelt. "Whoa sis. This is gonna be fun!" Otis shouted with laughter. He wriggled with excitement.

"Dear passengers. Please make sure your seatbelts are fastened. We'll be taking off." The plane started on the runway and we were off.

Otis was chattering away happily. We were two hours in. The plane was dark. All the shutters were pulled down except for Otis's, he likes looking at the clouds.

Somebody screamed. My eyes flew open. I must've fallen asleep. I turned to Otis. He was still sleeping. Suddenly without warning something crashed onto the plane making it tilt dangerously. Otis was jerked up and he opened eyes slowly. The crashing sound came again. We were sent flying around like crazy.

"Dear passengers, there are missiles heading towards us. Please put on your oxygen masks and make sure your seat belts are fastened. Thank you!"

"Hey Evie? Are we gonna be alright" Otis asked.

I nodded even though I wasn't sure myself. Oxygen masks popped out. I grabbed one and put it on for Otis before putting on one myself.

Another missile hit the plane.

We were sent tumbling around. I hugged Otis and squeezed him tight. I could feel his tears flowing onto my clothes. I rested my cheek against his brown hair.

CRASH! Another missile hit us. My head was throbbing. Breath tore at my lungs, and my stomach lurched. I felt sick. We were falling so fast.

There was a sickening thud as we crashed onto the ground. Searing pain burnt through my body like fire. Blackness swirled around me. My heart was pounding like crazy. I grabbed around for Otis but I couldn't feel him. Tears were running down my cheeks. I wished this was a nightmare but it wasn't. "Gramps..." I croaked. A wave of darkness washed over me.

Intertwined

by Mackenzie Stone - aged 11

I was sleeping when I had a vision. I was standing out in a field watching a boy and my dad play catch. They didn't seem to notice me so I slowly stepped closer. My dad threw a ball and the boy caught it. My dad clapped, proudly. "Good job Emerson!"

What confused me even more is that my dad and I also shared this same moment.

I then had another vision of Emerson; he was a bit older, maybe fourteen? He was arguing with my mother, about spending time with a friend. My mom said no, she didn't think that friend was a good influence. It resulted in him getting grounded.

The same thing had happened with me and my mom in the past. The boy I saw was kind of like me. That was weird, because last time I checked, my mom and dad only had one child.

~

A week later, while sitting in my room, it appeared to catch fire. As the room disappeared, I felt as if I was falling. I landed on what felt like a cloud, it was soft and plush and it broke my fall.

I was in my room when I landed, or so I thought. Emerson was sitting on my bed, but he didn't appear to notice me. As I was looking around the room I noticed a picture of Emerson and my parents. I have the same exact picture in my room. I realized that this wasn't actually my room. It was Emerson's room however, it was exactly the same as mine.

A few minutes later, I realized I wasn't in Emerson's room anymore, but mine. I wondered how I had ended up there. Did that mean he was real? I asked myself. Usually these visions happened when I was asleep. Though this time; I was positive that I was actually standing in his room.

All these questions swirled around in my head, but I locked them up and placed them in the farthest corner of my mind. I felt as if I needed to tell someone about this, but I thought it would be better if I didn't. They might think I was crazy or something.

~

Later that same day, I received a letter from my great Aunt, Jocelyn.

Dear Emerie, if you are reading this you have most likely been informed that I have sadly passed away. Inside this envelope is the skeleton key necklace that you have always dreamed of, the one that you saw me wearing when you were only a little girl. I would like to pass this family heirloom over to you as my favorite niece.

The Secret of Fall

by Jasmine Sulsh - aged 11

'Fall,' I thought 'My favourite time of year. When the trees begin to shed their leaves and turn beautiful browns and dark oranges, the bare branches swaying in the wind.'

I grinned as I pulled on my furry leather boots and my thick grey coat and opened the door with a click. The cool autumn air swirled in through the open frame. I locked the door whilst waving my hand to greet an old friend. I crunched down the steps from my house and, took in the scenery then I started the long but solitary walk to the nearest coffee shop, about two miles away.

I usually drove to Wicker Inn, the coffee shop and B&B, but today I decided to walk to take in the early autumn scenery.

My feet padded softly along the dirt paths. I looked up and paused for a minute and rubbed my hands together to fight the chilliness that had seeped through my woollen gloves.

Leaves were spiralling downwards in the breeze, some a dark orange, some a deep gold and others a sickly yellow. "Whoa" I breathed, my hands falling to my sides.

This was my first year living in the countryside, and I was amazed by the sights of nature that I had never witnessed before. I had moved here from a polluted city that had no fresh air, no trees and not a single blade of green grass — or even a speck of dirt. It was all polluted, dark smoke bellowing out of tall chimneys, citizens covered in coal dust, no pets and smog clouding the air, cloaking everyone's mouths and noses, making it hard to breathe.

Ding!

I looked up, surprised. My feet had a mind of their own, and had led me to an antique shop. I went to turn back but the owner had seen me open the door and beckoned me in.

"Oh, hello there! I didn't see you, how are you?" She called.

She was a wizened old woman with short grey hair and a petite frame standing behind the counter through a maze of antique furniture.

But she still looked like she could pack a punch so I replied politely. "Fine thanks." An old square box sitting on the counter caught my attention.

Making my way over, I picked it up just as the lady screamed, “Don’t touch that!”

I dropped it in surprise and it shattered, releasing a bright beam of light. The whole room shook, and the ornaments rattled on their shelves.

The woman glared at me with eyes that blazed with hate, as I fell to my knees, I felt sluggish as if my limbs weren’t my own. I crumpled to the floor and my gaze locked onto the old woman’s, silently begging for help.

“You don’t know what you’ve done!” She hissed, her voice crackly, limbs bent at awkward angles.

And the thing was, I wasn’t sure that I that was human anymore.

The Withered Oak Tree

by Ashley Ting - aged 11

The sun was wavering. it cast an orange hue. My eyes glazed over. Autumn was a beautiful month. The orange leaves looked like pieces of the sun. Dappled and shining they flickered in and out.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw a withered oak tree that was completely bare. That was quite unusual as it was still in the middle of autumn. Its twisted branches snaked everywhere. Burly knots littered the arms and there was an eerie silence and menace surrounding the tree. It was too quiet.

I inched forward, and felt the urge to touch it. So I did.

I shuddered with fear as I felt a clammy coldness deep inside my soul. Suddenly a weakness spread over me, tossing me like a rag doll on the rough waves of the ocean. My knees were unstable and soft like cheese. My hands felt brittle and icy.

The tree grimaced and grinned at me in a horrible way. I gasped as my legs twisted painfully together, then encased themselves in wood.

I was too shocked to scream. My voice felt heavy and sticky in my throat as I managed a gurgle. My hips straightened, my arms spread wide and my hair fanned out to make twigs and branches. Almost all the feeling and freedom in my body had disappeared. I closed my eyes and strangely, embraced the creeping feeling of wood on my face. I didn't mind being a tree.

My spirit was alive. I felt it pulsing and moving to the beat of my heart. My heart! I woke in an instance, finding myself in layers of shadows and gloom. Wasn't I a tree? An orb of light glowed in my hands. It brightened and I saw myself in an underground tunnel. It seemed that I was no longer human. I wore a brown dress made of dying leaves and moss. My hands were small and delicate. I wore similar brown shoes on my dainty feet. My hair fell to the small of my back in curls. What was I? Where was I?

I seemed to control the orb of light, so I directed it to the end of the tunnel. I reached a wooden door with an ivy handle.

The door was made of the same wood as the tree I had touched. It had a battered old sign hammered onto it that read, "Beware all humans. This is the realm of the Shadow Kingdom. All elves, trolls, and creatures alike, try your luck. Enter if you dare."

I took a deep breath and sighed. I didn't even know what I was! I assumed that I wasn't human. Taking yet another deep breath I shut my eyes tightly and opened the door.

Random Kylie



by Audrey Del Borello

Random Kylie

by Audrey Del Borrello - aged 12

This is the story of a lady who was born, shall we say, random. Just about everything she did was absurd and illogical.

For this reason, Kylie McPhee was known forever as Random Kylie.

Our story begins with Random Kylie skipping along a marble-smooth pavement. A pavement without cracks or lines.

And yet, she was cheerfully chanting, "Fall between the cracks, break your mother's back! Fall between the cracks, break your mother's back!"

Random Kylie was skipping leisurely to her local shops, as she wanted to buy some blue polka dot pumpkins. When she got there, Random Kylie sought to enter the shops from the emergency exit.

"How ridiculous," she muttered, "fancy having an exit door that you can't enter!"

Random Kylie shrugged and sighed sadly and entered through the main entrance. She swivelled her head around, looking at all the different places she could visit. The nail salon appealed to her.

"How may I help you?" the lady at the counter asked Random Kylie.

"I'd like to see your watering cans," Random Kylie walked past the confused lady.

Random Kylie stood and admired the array of nail polishes. She picked them up carefully but then started to throw them on the white wall. The bright colours ran down and trickled onto the floor. Random Kylie smashed five bottles before the angry nail artists chased her out of the shop.

"Well that was fun!" Random Kylie whooped happily.

The next shop she decided to visit was the grocery store.

"What lovely emus!" Random Kylie exclaimed when she saw some crates of oranges. She took a permanent marker out of the empty soup can she kept as a handbag and started to draw little pictures on the oranges.

“Excuse me,” said a shop assistant when he saw Random Kylie vandalising the third orange. “You’re going to have to pay for those, madam!!!”

Random Kylie turned around, “Why, thank you! I hope you have a good birthday, too,” she said to the befuddled man as she crawled out of the store.

When at the butchers’, she jumped up and down, shrieking, “There’s my blue polka dot pumpkins!!”

“Errrrr, do you need some help?” asked the wary butcher.

“I’d like a kilo of blue polka dot pumpkins,” Random Kylie replied, pointing to the sausages.

“Ahhh...haaa...umm, sure,” the butcher said as he swiftly filled a bag full of sausages.

Random Kylie handed the dumbstruck butcher seven Ancient Greek coins.

She kangaroo hopped to the jewellery shop. She admired the rings in the sparkly, crystal-clear display window.

“Just disgusting! What filthy windows,” grimaced Random Kylie. She took out an air-horn and proceeded to spray the window.

BLAMPPPPPPPP!!!!!!

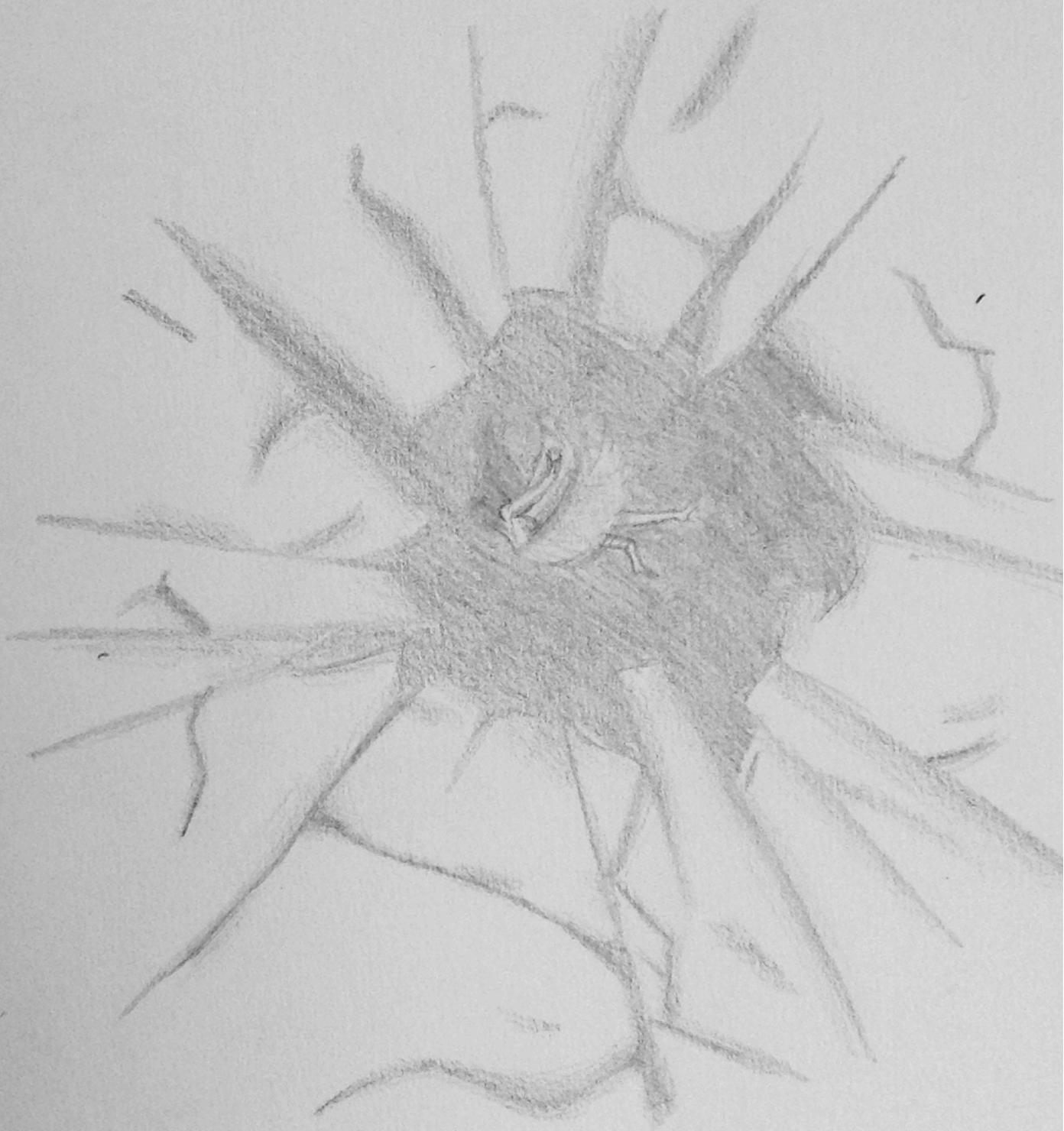
Two security guards ran towards her. The burly men picked her up and ejected her out the emergency exit.

“Don’t you ever come back!!” one of the guards screeched.

“What lovely boys! And to think that they let me use the emergency exit,” exclaimed Random Kylie as she frog leapt home.

Shadow in Darkness

By Piper Lane



“Look inside you. The devil is watching you.
You are the Fallen Angels.”

Shadow in Darkness

by Piper Lane - aged 12

It was autumn and I was sitting on the bench in the graveyard. Here, I could feel all the dead souls lingering around their stone cold gravestones. I stared longingly into the darkness. I could feel a pair of eyes glaring daggers into my back, but I didn't care. I ignored the thought and continued looking into the shadows. I don't know why but there was something in the shadows that caught my attention and I couldn't look away, no matter how hard I tried.

Suddenly, the sound of shattering glass clouded my thoughts. I snapped out of my trance and turned to see him. I stood. Darkness shrouded my thoughts; the only clear image was that of the boy behind me. Glass was showering over him and piercing his skin and cutting through his clothes in many places, but he still didn't move. I watched as his lips moved to form a slight smile. He began to speak.

"You are the Fallen Angel," he said calmly. "Don't forget that."

And with that, he disappeared.

I turned back to the leaves and sat back down. It seemed like an age as I reflected on what he told me. What was the noise of glass shattering about? Why were they cutting him? And, most importantly, who was that boy?

I stared back into the distance. Slowly, the falling leaves were shrouded with frost.

This is how I will end. This is how I will live.

Time passed extremely quickly, and soon I found my body becoming cold and frost-covered.

I got up, but not willingly. I felt an unknown force making me move. Before I knew it, I was walking towards the entrance gates to the graveyard.

A slight whisper echoed in the back of my mind. "Look inside you. The devil is watching you. You are the Fallen Angel. "

Days later, I returned to the bench and saw the boy again. He was sitting in the middle of it, eyes lit up as I meandered up to him.

"Lovely day it is, today," he smiled.

“Alright,” I told him. “Quit the act. I know you were watching me that day. Why, though?”

“What are you talking about?” he asked, narrowing his eyes and chuckling at me. “I have no idea what you are saying. I’m pretty sure I’ve never seen you before.”

I hid my blushing face, embarrassed, “I am so sorry, I thought you were someone else.”

“That’s no problem; everyone makes mistakes.” He tapped the space on the bench next to him, gesturing for me to sit with him.

I moved to sit with him, and then I looked over at him.

Suddenly, I jumped, seeing the boy. His eyes were no longer in his sockets; instead were replaced with black holes that oozed an oil-like substance down his cheeks. Scratches were sliced across his face and he leaped at me, forcing me to the ground...

The Beauty of Autumn

by Uzzielle K.T. Santos - aged 12

The morning breeze wafts gently on my face. My hair dances and sways as I walk down the trail. The apples in the orchard are growing. The Fuji's and Granny Smiths glimmer in the sun. I reach out for an apple and brittle stems snap out the golden leaves.

The corn stalks in the neighbour's fields shoot up, and the husks are as golden as the eastern sun. The pumpkins look just wonderful beside the leaves. One is almost as big as the pumpkin in Cinderella! The geese honk loudly above me. They are heading south for winter. The pinecones are falling around me just as fast as the apples. This is all so beautiful; but what I like most are the colours of the leaves.

Autumn is my favourite season of all. It's just the right time to shuffle through the fallen leaves and send them flying into the air. It's just the right time to kick up a pile of brightly coloured leaves and leap into it. Swishy, swish... Shuffle shuffle... I drag my bare feet through the leaves, flashing a smile to the passers-by.

Golden crisp leaves fall to the ground. One child takes a running leap and lands in a big pile of leaves and some of them fly into my face. I laugh.

Autumn is a beautiful season. Full of fun, full of colours. I love nature; especially when it makes this season. Especially when it paints the leaves my favourite hues: orange and yellow. Especially when it shakes the leaves gently off the trees so that we can jump into them.

"Come and play!" the children call to me.

And so I run and leap into a pile of leaves; my arms out-spread, my hair blowing behind me as I land in the soft bed.

The children laugh to see me lying there covered with leaves. I laugh too.

Today at school my teacher gives us an assignment to make a collection of Nature. She says to hand in something we love. And so I go home and gather a wooden box with a glass lid and foam on the inside.

I know where there is a very pretty tree. It's a very big tree and it's my spot. When spring and summer come, this tree produces the biggest juiciest fruit you will ever see. In winter, nature showers snow upon the branches and

it gives a nice shelter from the storms and rain. In autumn, it gives beautiful leaves. Nature paints them the loveliest colours and gives them just the right textures. The right shade and they are as fresh as if autumn had just arrived.

That is where I will get my collection. I hope my teacher will like the leaves. On the very top of the box I put a label reading: The Beauty of Autumn.

I walk home from school that day with an A+ proudly stamped onto my autumn collection.

Don't Look Down

by Lalita Weir-Smith - aged 12

Don't look down! Don't look down! Don't look down! Don't look down!
The worst possible thing you could do in my situation is look down, they tell you not to but curiosity always gets its way.

All of us lucky survivors call the sadistic people who do this to us, The Shadow Walkers. You don't know they're there until you're caught. First they stalk you and make sure you have the right gene, G2hE. Once there is proof, BAM!! You wake up in a really bright, white room, with four walls and a bed, and no memory of what happened.

I have been here for two and a half years now. We keep track of time with the dry beans they give us. We are all part of one big family, and we have each other's backs in the arena.

DING. DING. DING. That's the bell that tell us we're about to go back into the arena.

"Hey kiddo, you ready for this?" I turn full circle to meet my best friend Anton's eyes. He has big blue eyes, scruffy brown hair and a way of making you feel better when you're down. He calls me kiddo only because he thinks he's older than me!

"Yeah, I guess," I mumble. I just want to see Mother again.

"Well come on, let's go!" Anton exclaims, his thick Spanish accent making it hard to understand.

We walk up to the gates, and stick our arms through the window. The Shadow Walkers don't want us memorizing all of the hallways, so they sedate us. It's kind of freaky, because you don't know what they do to you while you sleep.

About twenty minutes later.

"Ugh, my head" I groan, a headache is always there to greet you when you wake.

"Anton?" I call out into the giant arena that surrounds me.

"Shush my head hurts" someone groans, reassuring me that he's not dead... yet.

"Come on big guy, lets get moving." I heave as I attempt to pull Anton to his feet. Once he's up we start making our way to the centre of the arena.

I know it sounds easy, but the one thing we can't do is look down. The only way to the centre of the death arena is to walk along the wood beams, without falling or looking down upon the depths of the hell dome.

We are doing really well until Anton slips. Without any thought I turn around and grab his arm, and hoist him back onto the beam.

"Where would I be with out you Em?" Anton jokes.

"At the bottom of the pit!" I exclaim, giving him a sad look.

His lips turn purple, and his face goes white.

"Anton! You didn't look down did you?" I yell.

"I'm sorry Em, it was an accident..." His eyes close slowly, and he begins to slip away from me.

I can't bear it, so I looked down.

And we began to fall.

Fear of Falling

by Izzah Khan - aged 13

"Don't fall, don't fall, please don't fall" Ali kept muttering under his breath as he ran as fast as his twig-like legs could carry him. He managed to sneak a glance over his shoulder and saw his opponent catching up which gave him a boost as he started to sprint faster. He had to win this race. It was his last chance of a decent education. His younger sister's chance of a better lifestyle and his father's chance of a full stomach. He couldn't fail his family now... He couldn't fall now.

His mother used to be the one to bring in the money. She would go to the city from the village where they lived and work as a maid at other's houses. Ever since she passed away the family had to rely on the small amount of crops their father grew for survival.

If Ali won, he would be able to go to a decent college and further his education. If he didn't fall, Iman, his sister could have a better lifestyle growing up. If he didn't fall, his father would be able to retire and live the remainder of his life peacefully.

Thinking of the rewards that came with winning the cash prize, he sprinted around the bend and saw that there was only one more person between him and his goal. Ignoring the beads of sweat dripping down his forehead, the distracting screams and yells of the crowd, the hot summer sun baking his skin and the pebbles that were coming in through the hole of his ratty second hand trainers, he overtook his last opponent and was now in the lead. A feeling of euphoria overwhelmed him and made all the cuts and bruises and broken bones he got practicing for this moment worth it.

The euphoria was short-lived.

Just as the finish line was visible to him, he fell.

It all happened in slow motion. He could see his dreams flashing before his eyes and he could hear the thumping of the shoes of his opponents passing him by as well as the loud exclams coming from the crowd, which sounded as if they were coming from somewhere far away. He felt his face collide with the rocky ground beneath but felt numb to the pain and was sure there was a deep gash on his right cheek. Lying on the ground, he presumed

the warm liquid running down his forehead was blood. He randomly thought that the two deep cuts were not as bad as the injuries he had endured before.

Just then he felt an arm lift his right one and another lift his left one. He felt himself getting dragged forward. He looked up to see that two of his "opponents" had stopped for him and were helping him finish the race.

The crowd started cheering when he crossed the finish line. The reality of the situation had just sunk in when he felt the principal whisper into his ear "your scholarship has come through".

Graveyard of the Leaves
by Maryann Xue - aged 14

I see that autumn has arrived in the trees that are laden with multicolored leaves. The reds, the browns, and the oranges that paint the picturesque image of a sunset. The leaves fall slowly, with resonance, drifting gently through the air in the direction of the wind.

I see the street-sweeper of our block standing in the divide between our house and the next. From my bedroom window, I can faintly discern the perspiration that lines his forehead and the worry in his furrowed eyebrows, white with age. In his hands is an old broom, but it has not done its job for the day, for the street-sweeper is still surrounded by piles of fallen leaves around his feet.

It is still early morning. I am the only one awake in the house. Without a second thought, I leap out of the front door.

Looking through a windowpane cannot grant the same feeling as being there in person.

I close my eyes and revel in the beauty of autumn as a cool breeze ripples through my hair. When I open my eyes, the street-sweeper stands before me.

"Here lies the fallen," he says, his voice full of ambiguity.

I flinch at the sudden acknowledgement and then cock my head sideways in confusion.

"Here lies the fallen," he repeats.

"What do you mean?" I ask politely. It is my first time speaking to him.

"Come."

The street-sweeper walks forward a few feet and then gazes upon the thick oak tree before him, motionless. I hurry and join him. Slowly, leaves begin to detach from its branches and fall to the earth. The remainder dangle precariously, blown awry by the wind. After observing the scene for a long time, I realize that I am experiencing the passage of time.

"That's my mother," the street-sweeper announces suddenly. There's something different about his voice that I can't detect. It seems to have gotten heavier.

I snap out of my daze and quickly glance around for the source of his declaration. To my surprise, I see him pointing at the ground.

He bends down, drops his broom with a clatter, and grazes the corner of a fallen orange leaf with his index finger. "She passed away this year." There is a tremble in his voice.

I blink, startled. "I-I'm sorry," I say sympathetically. There is nothing else I can say. I do not understand.

The street-sweeper shakes his head and moves his finger over to the next leaf, one of a warm, brown color.

"This one is my uncle. He died when I was seven years old."

I stay quiet as I listen to him speak. There is something captivating about his voice that mesmerizes me. His fingers travel quickly around several other leaves in the heap, and with each he tells me of a family member's death. Finally, he stops and looks up at me.

"Here lies the fallen," he says again.

This time I understand.

Leaves Falling

by Elsie YeaLim Jang- aged 14

Grandma and I stand by the window, watching the view outside. A single, orange-red leaf from the maple tree gets caught by the wind and drifts down rather unsteadily.

I find myself biting my lip. I don't know about Grandma, but autumn always makes me feel nervous.

Grandma points at more leaves floating down. "One day, we're all going to fall, too. Just like those leaves. We don't know when exactly we'll catch the wind, or where exactly we'll land. Life is such an obscure thing." Grandma seems as if she's a thousand miles away.

I don't know what to do or say. I just blink owlshly.

After a while, I can't stand the silence anymore. "Come on, Grandma, don't be morbid. Let's go on a walk down the lane and back again."

"But the seasons—they pass all too quickly, don't you think?" She sighs, and continues to look outside of the window without another word.

The only thing I can do is to stand beside her.

Little did I know then, that the following days would be the last ones of Grandma's life.

Perhaps she was right—the seasons do pass all too quickly. Grandma was another leaf on the tree of life. She fell when none of us were really expecting it, but then again, all leaves eventually go through this phase.

I will never forget the mysterious conversation I've had with her on that windy autumn day, with leaves quietly falling before us.

Till The Day We Fall

by Sanya Chawla - aged 16

My knees are shaking, my hands are sweaty, and my mouth is dry. I should never have decided to do this. But I guess it's too late to back out now.

I recently discovered that when a person who's known for having anxiety issues decides to jump out of a helicopter flying miles above the ground, people generally don't respond enthusiastically. Or encouragingly. In fact, sometimes they don't even take you all that seriously, and you end up irritated, shouting at them to stop laughing while tears well up in your eyes out of frustration.

Not a pleasant experience, if you're wondering.

At the time their incredulous, disbelieving expressions only proved to strengthen my resolve, yet as I look down now at the dizzying view below me in trepidation, it seems that they might have been onto something.

I feel a bit lightheaded, and I've no clue if that's because of the height I'm at right now or because of the fact that I'm absolutely petrified at the thought of actually going through with this. Truth be told, all of this seemed so much easier on paper. Jump, parachute, and land.

...Simple, right?

It's my turn now, and my knuckles are white as I grasp the sidebars. I won't be able to jump, at least not by myself. Gulping, I yell for the instructor to give me a push, although I'm not really sure whether he's heard me over the deafening whirring of the helicopter blades. The answer to that becomes clear when barely a few seconds later I'm shoved out of the open door and I'm in the air, hurtling towards what might be certain death. It is now that I truly panic, frozen by the thought that my parachute might malfunction, and desperately hoping that I didn't take the wrong backpack, although I know how improbable that is.

I must have been screaming for a while by now, I realize, as evidenced by the fact that my throat feels raw and scratchy. Inhaling deeply, I close my eyes and try to relax, simply listening to the wind whistling past my ears and trying to calm myself down.

And then I'm suddenly jerked back and I shriek again out of sheer terror.

The jerk though, I realize, came from the parachute opening, and I heave a sigh of relief. So I'm not dead. Maybe. Hopefully.

The world seems to slow down now, and a sense of calm that I've never known before washes over me.

My heart is thumping loudly in my chest, adrenaline coursing through my veins, and I start to laugh. Slowly at first, but pretty soon I'm practically breathless from exhilaration and disbelief at the fact that I'm safe and nothing went wrong.

And as I slowly drift down the thought crosses my mind that falling made me realize what it feels like to fly. And all it took was little bit of determination and a leap.

Never Trust a Travel Brochure

by Gillian Goh - aged 16

On the surface, the lake seemed more or less perfect. It had all the features that were generally associated with nice lakes - clear, clean water, swaying reeds, sloping banks blanketed with grass and a scattering of wildflowers here and there, the works. Trees overhung it. Pleasant woodland skirted it to the east, and to the west the greenery was replaced by endless gently rippling fields of ripening wheat. Sometimes the sun, sinking slowly behind the fields, caught the still, clear surface of the lake and set it shimmering, filling it with liquid gold.

It was a lovely lake for sitting by, a beautiful spot for a picnic. It looked like it belonged in a certain kind of very expensive travel brochure, the kind that invites you to visit a world exclusively populated by people who are nicer and more attractive than you and everyone you've ever met, and look like they're having a much better time. If this lake had been in one of those brochures, there would have been a smiling couple enjoying cocktails on a red gingham blanket under the trees, while a laughing family played with a brightly coloured blow-up ball in the shallows.

Which is a very good reason why you should never believe anything you see in travel brochures.

Sometimes, a bird would fly overhead, notice the perfect, glassy waters, and swoop down for a graceful, photogenic landing on the surface. It would paddle for a second, fluff its feathers and then vanish without a trace.

It was a spring morning, just before dawn, fresh and mild. The last stars were still just about visible, reflected in the lake's tranquil surface. Crickets chanted their dry-throated songs in the long grass, although none of them hopped too close to the lake.

They'd learnt.

The next second, the peaceful morning was shattered. A screaming sonic boom smacked through the trees, parting the grass and sending the crickets diving for cover. A bright point of light hurtled through the canopy, trailing blazing vapour and broken branches, and hit the lake in a hissing gout of steam that was immediately obliterated by a giant geyser of displaced

water. The resulting tidal wave drenched the banks and tore most of the wildflowers out by their roots, sucking them into the lake with the backwash.

Time passed. The water boiled, bubbled, slowly settled down. Eventually, the crickets started up again, competing with the crackle of burning branches as the numerous small fires in the surrounding trees smouldered and died.

Clumps of reeds, mud, and other detritus had been churned up by the impact. But curiously, once the ripples had finally settled, the water of the lake was exactly as clean and clear as before.

Never trust a travel brochure.

My Nightmare

by Julie McNamee - aged 16

"Tip! You're it!" Charlie cries before ducking behind Dad, using him as a human shield. My eyes search for a way to get him back. They land on Dad's slightly parted legs. I've always been short for my age so I'll be able to crawl through them. Charlie won't be expecting it but neither will Dad. He's going to get so mad at us when we get home but if I can just beat Charlie in one game of tips it will be worth it. In one, swift move I dive in between Dad's legs. My hand tugs at Charlie's ankle.

"You're it!" I call before Dad jerks back.

"Gemma! What are you doing? Get off the floor!" He scolds. As I scramble back onto my feet, Charlie tips me back.

"Now you're it!" Charlie shouts before spinning on his heel and bolting down the long rows of shops.

"Don't go too far!" Dad warns as an item in the shop window distracts him. I chase after Charlie but my legs won't move as fast as I want them to.

This is a dream. One that I have had before, I realise. I just can't figure out what happens next. I decide that I need to continue playing the harmless games of tips. I decide to jump instead of running, and after a leap it works. I jump further and just as I catch up to him, Charlie's hand clasps the staircase railing.

"Pause!" He cries.

"You can't do that." I argue.

"Yeah I can." He snickers. He is even annoying in my dreams.

I don't argue any longer, as I too need to catch my breath. I lean over the staircase railing and look down the four floors at the people below. Everything becomes distorted and the drop to the ground becomes bigger than what it really is. That's when I remember. I remember what happens next.

"Off pause!" Charlie interrupts my thoughts. When I look at him, he has hauled himself onto the staircase railing.

"No! You need to get down Charlie!" I cry, panicked. His body sways slightly and he reaches out to grab something but there is nothing to hold. I reach out and my hand grips his shirt in a balled fist but he is too heavy.

“No, don't go Charlie.” I'm crying now. I don't want to have to relive this.

“Not again.” I whisper to him. As he opens his mouth to tell me something all that comes out is a blood-curdling scream.

His scream turns into mine as I wake up, sweat pouring off my body. My cheeks are splattered with tears and I heave as I tell myself that it was just a dream. A nightmare.

When I hear the muffled crying of my mum between our thin bedroom walls I know that I didn't wake up from a bad dream. I woke up into my continued nightmare.