

# ***Writers Unlimited***

***Volume #1***



Poppy



Niamh



Megan



Ema



Amelia



Al



Evelyn



# **A FORWARD**

**Writers Unlimited** would simply not exist without the student writers who are its heart and soul.

*The idea for it began one blustery Friday afternoon in the autumn of 2021. The upstairs Moles' corridor was disgorging students eager to head home for the weekend, when a year eight student asked me to read a creative piece she had written at the back of her exercise book. I read and saw instantly, not only a talent, but more importantly an attitude towards her writing. I was impressed too by her confidence in approaching me. The next week, I found her a different exercise book — one just for writing — and the seed of an idea had been planted. As she skipped down the corridor, a lightness in her step, I resolved that it might be the right time to start a club for students like her, students with a passion for writing and the commitment and confidence to keep coming.*

*I am a writer of sorts myself and for a number of years I have been a part of a successful writers group based in central London, the model for which seemed ideal. Writing – reading – feedback. However, I was reluctant to run it on my own so I approached Ms Gill, who I knew to be a published poet, and who I felt might bring her own slant to our new writers club. Now we just needed a name –*

**Writers Unlimited** began in January of 2022 with a small core of students ranging from year 8 through to year 12 and it has grown steadily since then. We have regular participation of between 12 and 18 students each Friday lunchtime who come to write, discuss and receive feedback. We always welcome new writers, all we ask is that they come to write, come with an open mind and the desire to express themselves on paper, in words.

*The extracts we are publishing here are just some of the brilliant pieces the students have been working on over the last few months. It is volume #1. We are already working on volume #2!*

Mr Holloway

# **WRITING PROMPTS**

*We take prompts from anywhere, but a favourite in the club have been first lines from famous novels. Here are a couple we used which inspired the writers to take different approaches.*

***There was no possibility of taking a walk that day***

*(Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte)*

***It was a pleasure to burn***

*(Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury)*

## ***There was no possibility of taking a walk that day***

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. Rain slashes the windows making it seem as if they were crying. Many believe that when it rains somewhere in the world another is sad or lost. If that is the case then it must be true, due to the fact that today I was not in the best of moods. Listening to the rain for a while longer my boredom got the best of me and I decided it was time to start my winter project but where to begin? We have to write an essay on someone we admire and as it has been so far I have had no luck. It was not that I didn't admire anyone, it was just hard to begin. A knock came from the door, disrupting my thoughts. Rushing down the stairs I opened the door to a man with a pointed hat and army vest. Before I could even contemplate who he was he knocked me out. Now to many this would come as a shock not me however. Due to the fact I'm not exactly a likeable person many felt the need to remind me of it and so being knocked out seemed like a good way to remind me of that fact.

***NM***

## ***There was no possibility of taking a walk that day***

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. Too much had happened. Most days when Maxwell was upset they would walk, not with a destination, they'd simply wander around the streets for hours losing track of time. They liked it, it let them feel purposeful, while giving them time to think. But not today. Today was so much worse than most days. They decided to run a bath. They left the hot water tap on so it was nearly overflowing and the water was so hot it hurt. They laid in the bathtub and submerged themselves, falling beneath the burning water and sinking into the porcelain depths, wondering what it would feel like to be dead, drowned. They sat there under the water for hours, aimlessly. Not doing anything, not even thinking. The water was freezing cold now but Max didn't care. It didn't matter anymore. Nothing did.

***ES***

## ***There was no possibility of taking a walk that day***

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day...

It was a shame, really. My daily walks were always something to look forward to. Yesterday I came across an elderly man tap dancing in the streets with the biggest grin on his face, paying no attention to the rest of the world.

On Thursday last week, I saw a cat being chased by a mouse, and on the Tuesday before, I heard an argument between the mother bird and her child. The baby bird didn't want to learn how to fly, but the mother was persistent with her persuasion.

I was eager to see what I could discover today, but now that hope was crushed. Relatives were coming, and I needed to hide my books.

You see, reader, books were not something my family saw positively. They didn't see the wonder and the life that flowed between the pages. They didn't see the vast array of different worlds, pressed together on a bookshelf. They were much more into 'important things' like conversations and watching the news on television.

To them, I was a mystery, a weird little book worm that would give up all forms of communication for a few pages with words on them. They were glad to let me leave the comfort of my bedroom for a few hours outside. What they didn't know was that my daily walks took me to a tree, where I read some more.

The tap dancing grandad did really happen, but only in my imagination. He wasn't physically tap dancing, but it would have been funny if he did. I had also attempted to make the mouse look as heroic as possible, but the truth was that the cat did the chasing.

The bird argument, I am certain, did happen, but they didn't speak any English, so I couldn't ask them to confirm my suspicions.

You see, dear reader, my daily walks were something to treasure, they allowed my imagination to stretch to new lengths, my sorrows to become overshadowed by beaming joy, and my mind to wander with every step I took. Rain or shine, I was free...

But not today. Today I am to sit on the sofa, smile falsely and laugh politely with people that can't see the magic my books had to offer...

## ***There was no possibility of taking a walk that day***

There is no real possibility of taking a walk today.

She sits there, staring into the wardrobe, folding and unfolding clothes until they are wrinkled and sit in a heap around her, never quite right. Because no matter how many times she folds them like origami, making swans and kites and elephants, it will never get rid of the fact that they are never there to see them.

Because the clothes aren't folded.

Because the clothes aren't folded and her sunshine is dead.

Because the clothes aren't folded and her sunshine is dead and her child is missing, and slowly everything unravels, an unwoven tapestry of I should have been there-s and I could have helped them-s.

She sighs, breath stuttering in her chest, eyes locking onto the dinosaur plushie in the corner, the ties hanging on the door, the daffodils on the windowsill, the action figures still littered across the floor. Little, tiny things, things that she would shout and yell and scream for, all pooling together in a heap of bobbins and pins and needles that prick her everytime she gets close.

She cannot move from this spot. Perhaps this is her punishment, forced to sit in the exact place where her child would block his ears to stop the arguing from downstairs from ever reaching him, burrowed inside the closet and wishing the world would go away for just a second, just a minute, just an hour, just a day. Careening back into a state of disarray, therapy sessions going unvisited, beds going unmade, wasting away in this little dark wardrobe as books are thrown and love turns into something ugly, something cruel downstairs in that dingy front room.

There is no real possibility of going on a walk today, and yet there is a possibility that she will stop breathing, stop moving, stop thinking, because what use is life if you are not living for someone? If you do not spend every waking moment thanking the stars that you are able to see their faces, hear their voice, love them the same way they love you, are you living? Or is it just another endless purgatory, trapped inside a hollow version of reality, not hate but just the absence of love.

The monitor on the desk stays off, the keyboard gathering dust. She cannot bear to turn it on and see the news lines trending- children gone missing, blood and guts and gore and grief and all the things she has seen far too much of in these last few days.

Curtains block out the sun, and after a few days she has the courage to open them, though her head goes fuzzy with each movement and her bones stick out uncomfortably against her skin. She wonders if perhaps she should throw herself through the hallways until one of them breaks through her skin, renders her legs obsolete, punctures a lung, spears through a heart. From the shadiest spot in the room, the daffodils are limp and wilted.

Narcissus flies flit between petals, the leaves crumbling to dust.

Without their sunshine, they are nothing.

Perhaps she's not talking about the daffodils anymore.

***AE***



# ***It was a pleasure to burn***

## ***(Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury)***

It is no longer a pleasure to burn, he thinks.

The forest is quiet at this hour, humid and dry at the same time, bright and colourful, red sky covered by the crowd of crows that sit. Watching.

He takes the first step, leaves crunching under broken boots, and immediately the telltale dull thudding starts. Sometimes followed by a strangled caw, a cry for help.

The further the ventures, the louder the leaves under his feet are, the more they crackle like flames, but they cannot hide the muffled sound of birds hitting the ground, each one still warm, feathers sleek and eyes still full of flames.

But dead. So, so dead it's hard to believe they were ever alive in the first place, that the flocks in the treetops were never anything more than lambs to the slaughter, macabre messages saying to leave, to run away until it is too late, to keep the devil waiting another day.

The crunching of leaves under his feet turns to bone.

He walks on, possessed by some urge to keep going, keep looking until you are one with the bones and the feathers, until you cannot hear anything but the crackle of flames and the thud of birds warning you a little too late that the forest always takes back what belongs to it. That every tree is charred and every flower looks the same. An endless torment, where the thudding and the crackling and the caws get louder and louder and louder until your thoughts are no longer your own.

You do not recognise this part of the forest. [This is a lie.]

He repeats it like a mantra, over and over and over, trying to forget the sight of bone-littered roots and elm trees and the fire that is lurking somewhere along the horizon.

Verse something-or-other, he doesn't remember. [This is another lie] 'All sinners will burn.'

Is this his punishment? For being a child, for being a fool, for being a coward and too-scared and too-quiet and always wrong. This is what he gets. [A truth, perhaps, but not a good one. Just a sad fact, that innocence is punishable by death and that he is the forest fire just as the forest is, that he will burn and he will die just like the trees and the bushes and the daisies.]

He has never been religious- he learns the verses about hellfire from his mother and the tales of torment from his father- but he finds himself hoping, praying to whoever will listen, that he will find a part of the forest that looks different, that he'll be able to navigate without going in circles for eternity. That he will stumble out and yell at his 'friends' about how stupid of a dare it was, about how the forest is not a playground.

He does not recognise this part of the forest. I do not recognise this part of the forest. You do not recognise this part of the forest. (The final lie, the final chorus. Crescendo, fade out.)

A mourning bird falls right in front of him, eyes bugged out, feathers shedding as it starts decaying too fast to be natural.

Disgusted, he just looks on, and keeps walking, lip curled in distaste. No use crying over spilt milk, or dead doves.

The further he goes, the quieter the forest becomes.

Nothing remains here, only the bare shells of blackened trees and soot and ash and smoke. The birds are gone, either flown away or fallen. Nobody is here now.

There is no fire. He does not recognise this part of the forest. (A truth.)

The fire crackles but there is never any flame.

It is not a pleasure to burn.

**AE**

## ***It was a pleasure to burn***

It was a pleasure to burn, finally the end of this long treacherous road I had consumed myself for years in. But what have I achieved? Nothing, I didn't have a heroic act to my name, all my years of research wasted due to the cold hearts of my killers. They had no understanding of modern science and had the audacity to accuse me of witchcraft and burn me at the stake. How heartless the human race has become. I was shaking uncontrollably as I smouldered in the flames, I could smell my own burning skin as the fire licked the soles of my feet. How I wished the pain would lift and I would die quickly though these barbarians had other ideas. A sharp ringing filled my ears as a rock was flung between my eyes. Now the fire was creeping higher and it scorched my entire lower half. The pain was unbearable no wonder I heard such ear piercing screeches from this very hall, this was hell.

**NM**

## ***It was a pleasure to burn***

It was a pleasure to burn

Burn those moments, burn the secrets and lies and half-truths that I have been told my whole life. To watch the memories turn to ash as the flames engulfed everything I threw at them, all those pages...all those words.

The diary I spilled my heart to blackened and withered as soon as it touched the fire, like it was showing its true, poisonous nature. The ink that filled the paper infected the flames, turning them a mottled green, and sickly blue.

The cover burned, revealing the title page I made when I was seven, that too became lost to the purifying flames.

Tendrils of smoke began to lace the air, burning leather and paper scented the sky, turning it acrid. The birdsong that was usually cheerful, turned agitated before disappearing. The once bright sky seemed to turn cloudy and sombre as it read the words I burned. I watched on, staring intently at the diary that had ruined my life, willing it to burn faster. To scorch the sadness and cauterise the wounds those words created.

My mind was finally free.

**LW**

# **PERSONAL PROJECTS**

*For six weeks the writers worked on a range of individual projects including one which was a collaboration between several writers. What follows are extracts from their work. We limited those extracts to less than a thousand words.*

*The writers are continuing to work on their stories and perhaps in volume #2, we will be able to share more of them.*

*You will notice that many of the extracts are anonymous and some are attributed to the writer.*

## ***Apollo's Incident (Apollo-gy) - Anonymous***

Apollo never liked pizza. He didn't like cake and he hated birthdays. The balloons would pop and the children would cry and everything was either too loud or too quiet. The music never fitted the atmosphere, the workers seemed just as put off as the customers, the soft play area was always covered in a sticky residue and someone had definitely peed in the ballpit.

In short, Apollo hated this place. The place every year his little brother begged to hold his party at. Every. Single. Year. It didn't matter how much Apollo pleaded with his father, he always had to go too. Billie's Pizzeria.

Apollo sighed into his drink as he watched the kids run around screaming. All he ever did was watch. This place might have been targeted towards children, but Apollo felt no shame in admitting he despised the building and everything it stood for. Children would scream and cry and squeal and God forbid the mascot came out from behind the curtain, that's when he would retreat to the bathrooms, or lock himself in one of the staff break rooms. The noise was too much then and the workers had gotten used to Apollo retreating into the break rooms with his gameboy.

In fact, Apollo had been going to this stupid pizzeria for so long that he knew the ins and outs of the place like the back of his hand. He could probably bet his whole house that he knew it better than any technician that worked there. Apollo had spent many evenings after school just exploring the place, the building's vent system was his favourite to climb through when his father worked through the financial legislations of the building in his office.

That was probably one of the reasons, aside from his little brother, that they came so often. They got half price pizza because his dear father, bless his goddamn soul, works a minimum wage job that barely pays the rent let alone the bills. Apollo thought it was sad his father worked at minimum wage, he was a highly intelligent man and could definitely have done more if the opportunities were simply given to him. The universe just likes to punish the Riordan family.

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The pizzeria was lively and brightly coloured, neon lights circling and lighting up in a dizzying pattern. In all credit to the building designers, it hit the nail on the head that was for sure, knowing exactly what their target audience wanted. Childish excitement spewed from the brightly coloured walls, laughter seeping from the posters advertising "EXCITEMENT HERE AT BILLIE'S PIZZA!! CHILDREN UNDER 8 EAT FREE!!"

## ***Extract from Cathy and the Volcano - Fabiola Dias***

Cathy saw that her parents were burning, and started to scream:

"Mommy! Daddy!"

She also tried calling the hospital for an ambulance, but it was late at night. So she had to call the hospital again and again, till they picked up. She was frightened, nervous and was stressed too, so she tried to help her parents. After twenty minutes an ambulance was there and they took them to the hospital. The explosion had affected the people who were nearest to the experimental area a lot, especially her parents. It affected her parents because they were performing the experiment and were close to the volcano. It did harm Cathy a little bit too, but luckily she was saved.

On the next day it turned out that her parents died because they were very close to the eruption, so their skin got burned. Hearing this Cathy went into a depression as she did not have anyone in the world besides her parents. However, the doctors told her that her parents kept a letter for her.

"Dear Cathy, thank you for being the best child ever, we made a lot of memories together between us, but dear, never forget that we are with you always (forever and ever)." Reading this, tears rolled out of her eyes. "Oh, dear don't cry. We never thought that a day like this would ever come in our life but now is the time to say goodbye to you. You're loving parents."

Cathy cried out very loud and went into a deeper depression but somehow the doctors there tried to treat her, and though her treatment was successful, she was never able to forget them.

[to be continued]

# *I'm Dead - by Megan Winder*

## Summary

This is a short group of pages an unknown person has written during their time after death, as they try to understand why, how, and when they got to the abyss, which they now have to call their home.

**14/11/2018 - 13:20 pm\*?**

I have been dead for several years, it's not nice, but it's not bad either. People always think when you die you either go to heaven, or hell, or purgatory or become a ghost; but that's not what happened to me, nor them, instead just an unusual eternity of nothingness and everything at the same time.

Of course when I arrived I was incredibly confused, as any dead person would be, seeing the white abyss which is hard to describe, an experience that nobody should ever really let happen from what I can remember.

Oh yeah, did I mention that your memory in its entirety is short and snappy? It only lasts a couple of days, I'm not sure why. I'm not sure about a lot of things to be honest.

The only progress that happens is that every now and then you can hear a faint sound of what's going on in the pre-life, such as roads and cafes; yet never can you hear a full sentence, it's like speaking had never existed in the first place.

Well, who am I to say it does or doesn't; I'm writing for my own memory here.

Many people before me have left pages on the 'floor', probably for the same reason I have, yet that means that I've shared a so-called 'room' with many people.

And yet I'm still too lazy to find out how that works and why. I just don't have that much time on my hands which does sound silly, as I LITERALLY have all the time in the universe, or void.

Now I don't understand many things in this realm due to not having a form or anything. So things like this I just leave for the next person to write about. It saves me the trouble and for them the eternal depression of doing nothing in nothingness.

To be honest I don't even know if I really am dead, I just automatically assumed it due to previous people writing about their past lives and such. Now, I kind of believe it was a 'before eternity' thing. Makes me feel a bit stupid when I think about it.

**20/11/2018 - 05:17am\*?**

A newspaper arrived in the eternity today, it said a fire has appeared out of the blue in the middle of the ocean? How in the nothingness did that happen? Now, I may not know much at all, BUT THAT SHOULD NOT BE HAPPENING... RIGHT?

Then the paper made me think some more, which hurt a lot. Yes, we can feel things in eternity without a body; it's very odd indeed.

Back to the thinking part though!

What are colours?

Why can I see but have no eyes?

What does eternity truly look like?

**What am I ?**

I had never really thought of these questions before, as I felt I had no need to understand them.

Do I really need the answers?

I was fine without them before...

Why is it different now?

Is this what the un-dead call a "mid-life crisis"?

Should I call it an "after-life crisis"?

I'm so funny :)



## ***Schrodinger's Fire - anonymous***

An excerpt from 'Schrodinger's Fire' surrounding a family, and a town, and a forest, as most stories do. The members of this family and this town are just like you and I - they will sit in their beds and sing themselves to sleep, and then sing more into the late night, turning into the quiet yowl of one hundred lonely souls. They go bowling and swimming, and climbing and schooling, and running and hiding, and they will go into the forest and escape hours later with tobacco stuck to their teeth (though they don't smoke) and fruit flies in their hair (though their hair is not fruit).

Jeremy, on the other hand, is having a horrible day.

He wakes up and the burns itch at his skin. They are never always real.

He feels bad. He lets Cyrus in, and Cyrus makes a joke that falls flat. The silence is deafening. Cyrus starts feeling bad too.

They sit together on his bed, feeling bad.

"You look awful." Cyrus says to break the silence. The mouse that sits on his head nods in agreement. Jeremy wonders how much mousetraps cost and if he will be able to get cheese from the deli aisle without the deli worker deciding to eat him. The deli worker is such a kind gentleman unless you go near the cheese. And then he turns into a swirling mass of colour and light and eyes, eyes, eyes, and screams and flies and teeth and gums and it devours. But he is very polite if you do not go near the cheese, so the manager of the local Waitrose has decided not to fire him.

Cyrus does not seem to realise there is a mouse on his head. Jeremy does not tell him.

'Why are you not fun anymore?' Cyrus thinks.

'Get out of my room,' Jeremy thinks.

The mouse thinks nothing, because whilst mice are in fact sentient, their consciousness is more complex than any human and cannot be put into words without the speaker becoming more and more uncomfortable the more they delve into the mouse's thoughts.

"Stop thinking," They might say, smashing their hands against the keyboard until their fingers break, "Get away from me. Why are you telling me this? Please, please, please, please, please -" They would descend into unintelligible mutterings and sobs, and maybe the mouse would take pity on them and stop being sentient for long enough that they can pull themselves together.

So we will not discuss what the mouse is thinking. However, if the mouse were to think (which is a ridiculous notion, because mice are not sentient and do not have conscious thought) it would be thinking 'This human's head is not very nice to sit on.'

Cyrus still does not realise the mouse is on his head. He thinks he is spending some awkward quality time with his little brother. Jeremy thinks about the mouse, and how Cyrus is deathly afraid of mice. The mouse still thinks both everything and nothing at once.

## ***Elders, Elves and Monsters***

*Three short extracts from a co-written novel.*

### ***Ryfon - Amelia Mannington***

The rest of the day the train continued its steady route through the grassland. As the sun began to set Ryfon looked up at the sky, daydreaming, he had in fact stayed there the entire day not keen on meeting the other passengers. He would have to at some point though, as the journey was a week and sooner or later he would bump into someone. As night drew closer the elf crept back to his compartment, where Kogu had not moved from where he had left her napping on top of a stack of books on the desk. He fell into his bed, the gentle rocking of the carriage making him drowsy, and soon fell into a dreamless sleep.

He was awoken the next morning by a muted bang, and a bitten of swear. Who was in his compartment? He crawled out of his bed and onto the floor, hiding behind the desk. Suddenly, he felt a slight stinging sensation on his head; a small pair of scaly legs clawed at his eyelids, as Kogu climbed down his face looking him in the eyes upside down. Her breath was hot against his cheek as she slid down his face and onto his shoulder, clearly unfazed by their current predicament.

Cautiously he peered over the table to see...

## ***Aren - Niamh Mannington***

During her packing she heard a crash from outside her window. Aren stormed over to see which creep was watching her from the window, but to her surprise she found a small ginger haired man climbing up a drainpipe along the building. She glanced down at the figure who now stood on her windowsill.

"Rotis Evergreen, please to make your acquaintance." He gave her a smile which would be charming, but in this situation it just made him look even stranger than he already did.

"Pleasure Mr Evergreen."

Now most who saw a small man on their windowsill would call for help or beat the man with a stick. Not Aren. She found herself intrigued by him, so she let him inside.

"The name is Aren, if I may ask, why were you trying to get into the centre?"

"There seems to be a large group of police officers following me, it's fine, they aren't smart enough to see where I went."

Aren contemplated herself for a second, wondering was this man, Rotis Evergreen, telling the truth. He seemed legitimate and that was good enough for her.

A siren could be heard outside the window and a man called, "We know you're in there!"

"Shoot." Rotis shouted. Delighted at the first curse word she had heard all day, she looked at Rotis, a grin creeping across her face. Walking away for a second Aren returned with a body bag.

"Get in!"

He looked in disgust at the bag for a moment but shrugged his shoulders and clambered into the bag.

"Hold your breath, that bag hasn't been washed in a while"

"Could have given me some warning..."

At this Aren ignored the suspicious silence and walked, slightly staggering along the hallway. Sirens wailed outside as she stumbled out of the door into the cobbled paths outside.

"You weigh a ton, what do you eat?" Aren mumbled almost breathless, carrying the bagged Rotis.

Heart beating fast now Aren could hear the sirens drumming in her ears. Attempting to help this stranger, known as Rotis, she would have to make a quick escape. Why was this guy even on the run she contemplated, would helping him land her in prison? Only time will tell, she grimaced, not wanting to go to jail just yet.

## ***Okura - Evelyn Mannington***

The figure lifted their chin, eyes darting back and forth. They stepped forward, their toes spreading across the smooth stone path now stained with blood. Their tongue sticks out as they walk. The sound of beating wings fills the air, the figure flies up and their hood falls down. Long crimson hair falls down, black charcoal horns glimmer in the sunlight. The most eye-catching thing about this girl was a pair of black and blood red wings. She swung around and looked down, her hair swinging over her eyes, fire fell from her fingers burning the plains under her.

"Brother, I'm coming for you." She laughed. She dived down and disappeared.

When she opened her eyes again she was in a small village. Everyone was looking at her, like she was a demon.

"Hello people of the Cold Temple, nice to meet you." She smiled, her fangs glinted in the torchlight, the people stood still, frozen to the spot as she scanned the sight in front of her. She lunged at a small boy who was holding a small toy dragon. She grabbed him by the throat and asked. "What do you think I am, kid?"

The boy struggled but managed to blurt out. "A MONSTER!"

She grabbed the boy's throat tighter, gurgled gasps slipped from his lips. A stream of blood appeared at the feet of the townsfolk as the boy's body fell to the floor limp.

"I'm taking this town for my own. I'm your new leader. Anyone who tries to resist will end up like this child." The half dragon, half elf smiled, a murderous glint in her eye.

A man walked up to her and yelled: "I refuse to follow someone who murders with no reason!"

The girl walked forward, flames licking her fingertips. Fire spat up at the man scorching his skin, burning through his flesh and leaving charred bones where he once stood. With this the townspeople backed away slowly. All eyes seemed to be on the smouldering bones, the white walls of the small houses stained in red, the whole town blanketed in a looming sense of dread and fear. The girl walked away from the scene grinning demonically at the sound of people screaming, as fire engulfed the small town of the cold temple. The hunt for her brother had begun and nothing could stop her from reaching her goal.

The smoke clouded her vision as she turned away from the burning town. Memories of being with her mother came back to her, the warm embrace of the figure she once saw as a parent rather than to love. Her brother, Ryfon, looked upon for his intelligence, leaving her behind; all the others saw her as corrupt. Her brother caused her a lot of pain leaving her to die, leaving to study in the sciency academy thingy. She didn't honestly care to learn the name of the academy.

The light of dawn stretched across the sky engulfing the darkness of night in its wake. She looked up at the sky and sighed knowing that she would have to move soon.

She had been in the village for almost a week now, the tension in the air had lingered ever since she had killed the apparent chief's son.

The Village of the Cold Temple had become dull and cold since she had arrived, the people's fear hung in the air like the faces of dead loved ones.

A yell could be heard coming from the hills. As she turned, her eyes glittered with malicious glee. A well dressed man seemed to be running down a hill, his suit tattered and covered in blood. It might've been his own but it was hard to tell. Okura instantly knew who his man was.

"Shit!" she yowled like a distressed dog, as she ran from the man, her feet leaving bloody footprints on the cold stone of the village walkways. Her heart beat faster as she tried to run from the man who was getting closer. Within minutes the man was next to her.

"R-ryfon?" She stumbled, but as soon as her brother had appeared, he vanished leaving her thoughts jumbled and her heart aching.

She stumbled blindly. Hours passed as she wandered through the forest, twigs breaking under her bare feet, scratching at her skin leaving a trail of her black sticky blood. She scrambled through small civilisations, tribes and woods. She chuckled as people turned and stared and other creatures of the night turned her way. She felt better knowing she had a reputation like her brother.

Months passed and she grew weary and tired. She stumbled into an old rundown village. A smirk spread across her face as she saw a small cat hopping around. Much to her delight, it waddled up to her sticking out a tongue, and looking up at her with big goofy eyes. She bent down and picked up the small cat, giggling with childlike glee.

"I'm going to call you John"

## ***Death Tales - Amelia Mannington***

Thursday the 24th of November 2019.

The day I died.

It wasn't as unpleasant as some I've heard; hit by train, neck twisted, wood chipper (feet first), ice pick to the eye, mauled by bear, diving into shallow water, fell into volcano, sacrificed, plane crash buried alive, trapped under ice, strapped down so you can't move then have a one foot nail start from a foot above your head and go down a millimetre every hour until it goes through your forehead, skinned alive and then lemon juice poured on your flesh, and then burned, etc.

I died via murder and must live unable to find the murderer, trapped in this limbo. For me it looks like a train station, waiting for a train that will never come. For others it looks different. It's meant to torture and drive them crazy. I was killed in a train station, stabbed to death so this brings bad memories. But you get used to it. Sometimes. At least I did.

I watch as they cross over the platform. Sometimes they are those I knew, some I have never seen, but they all have a story to tell.

January 17th 2020.

A small boy entered the station. He told me his story, like they all do, it was a sad death I will admit. I wonder how his family feel? Their little boy burned to a crisp. He had been in the wrong place at the wrong time I guess. How unfortunate.

# ***The History of the World - by Poppy Paine***

History of the world, I guess [up until the first living organism]?

A tiny ball of matter, no bigger than a marble, becomes so hot and dense that it explodes. This tiny ball has so much matter inside it, condensed down, enough to make a whole universe.

At first, the universe is made up of quarks and stuff, no planets or stars. The quarks join up in groups, creating protons, neutrons, and smaller electrons. These then join up to make hydrogen and helium, the first elements. The universe is now a bunch of gas in space, and gravity pulls it together, until it makes a star.

Many of these stars are made, including many different sizes. When bigger stars die, they cause a supernova; when this happens, new elements are created, making more complex stars, making bigger supernovas, making more stars etc. In addition to new stars being made, excess debris from stars can cool down into rock and dust, which start to orbit around other stars. Again, due to gravity, this debris clumps together into balls of rock or gas. And one of these stars has one of these balls of rock orbiting it. And this ball of rock is earth.

As a series of asteroids hit the newly formed earth, its landscape was dented and holes were made (later to be volcanoes) but, by complete coincidence, these asteroids contained H<sub>2</sub>O, better known as water. Due to the heat of the planet, this water evaporates into the sky and begins to orbit the earth, making clouds. After years and years of this, the earth begins to cool down and the clouds condense, and it begins to rain.

It would have rained for hundreds, maybe thousands of years, until the earth is almost entirely flooded. A few bumps and crevices in the landscape, as well as erupting volcanoes left over from the meteor shower, create land (but at this point, it's one big continent called Pangea). The ocean that was created is soon home to the first living thing on the planet.

A tiny microbe, invisible to the naked eye, containing DNA to make more of itself, feeding off chemicals from when it was raining meteors earlier, is the first thing to live on our planet.

## ***Mind The Gap - Ena Smith***

A short monologue about the London underground.

Everyone forgets about the ghosts of the London underground. This bustling hell is so loud, so overwhelmingly and painfully happening and there and alive that no-one thinks of the death. The people, however unfriendly, don't seem anything less than living. But they're all too busy to see the bodies. The lonely souls reaching out for help, hoping to catch a thoughtless stranger's eye through those graffiti-covered windows. The trains go too fast to hear the screams, the splashes of that maroon liquid that means death hidden behind gaudy advertisements for products that you'd never need or even afford. No-one thinks about anything but their own destination on the London underground.

Everything goes so fast. The trains, the people. Everyone so busy rushing to get somewhere that they forget why they even set off in the first place. And the trains, they pass you so quickly as if they want to avoid you, screaming so it echoes through your bones all the while. And when they finally slow down and let you think once more, all you can see are flashes of those glaring advertisements burned into your retinas. BUY THIS. BUY THIS. Wailing at you through their "beautiful" designs and fancy lettering.

I don't think I have ever met even one person in my short life who likes the London underground. Why would they? The only people worth talking to here are the ghosts.



# ***Acadia - Sharanya Ambastha***

## **The Elixir**

Summary - This extract is the start of a story which is basically about a school of witches where young witches can attend to compete in the competition to win immortality. Ophelia, a witch who lived between humans, finally decides she needs to attend Acadia.

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Every human needs education and similar teaching sources to find out the most about themselves. Without education, it is hard to understand what actually exists and it is even harder to figure out what doesn't. It's the same with every creature no matter if they are good at studying or not. It's the same for the spell casting witches of the Northern Hemisphere and Acadia is the only school.

The Acadia was built in the 1250s by King Alexander for his secret lover Beatrice. Beatrice was one of the most important figures in vamparian history who started the small institute in the Highlands of Scotland with the help of Henry as she wanted to gather an army for the battle of Bountmain that took place in 1262. She was up against one of the most powerful witches in the southern hemisphere but her excellent idea of training witches for a battle made her victorious. More and more witches were intrigued and they came from all places in the northern hemisphere to meet Beatrice, the leader of the northern clan of witches. Since then Acadia became a teaching institute for powerful and elite witches

The current Headmistress of Acadia, Yvonne Chancier was one of the most respected figures as she was the only person alive related to Beatrice. She was made the headmistress in 2010 and the school has progressed in its special ways. When children from wealthy witches turn fourteen they are invited to attend Acadia. It's their choice to attend the school, not a necessity. But seriously, why wouldn't someone want to attend such a cool and amazing school? Every witch of the northern hemisphere wishes to be one of those two hundred students who get an invitation letter to Acadia.

Not everyone is accepted in this school. The basic requirement for any witch to attend this school is to be rich. Whoever comes to this school is affluent, drowning in luxuries only people can dream of. Being wealthy is considered an eligibility criteria for the school and then other criterias of family backgrounds, primary studies, awards etc are the ideal secondary requirements

The Acadia is divided into four houses. Each house was based on the french suits: Diamonds, Hearts, Clubs and Spades. Each house had thirteen members, Ace being the leader, the most powerful, while the 'two' or the 'second' being the weakest of all rank cards.

Students were shortlisted to be considered as a candidate for a card rank and their performance. The Altas, the judges of the school decided which house or rank they belong to based on how students do in school. Students who did not qualify for these fifty-two positions were then unranked and the weakest witches in school. But now the question is, why would a witch even attend this school and furthermore, bleed their heart out to be ranked a card number? The answer was blatant- for the elixir of immortality.

Witches aren't immortal, they don't have the ability to survive for millions of years like the Vampires but they wish they could. They wish they could just cast a marvellous charm that makes them eternally immortal but that was impossible. No witch's blood had the potency to live longer than they were supposed to and elixir was the only way their wishes may come true. The cerulean blue liquid was the only way.

Ophelia never thought she would be in a library to read more about the elixir of immortality. It was real, she knew how wondrous the elixir was, her great grandmother Gretel was an example of it. Even though the two hundred year old woman should have been buried six feet under the ground, she was as young as Ophelia herself, the auburn hair signifying how both of them had little differences.

Gretel wasn't an amiable person to say the least. She was harsh and traditional, always thinking she was the greatest and was supposed to be treated like an idol just because she won the tenth trial to win the elixir. She had kept the cerulean liquid hidden, not even sharing it with her own husband or children. And Ophelia hated that. She hated how uncaring the elder was, not trying to prevent the death of her own family.

Ophelia realised how important life was, how there were only many people you could trust and she needed to win the thirteenth trial to make sure no one leaves her again.

## ***The Past Behind Me - anonymous***

The past comes back to life after a collection of mysterious items uncover a story that was meant to be forgotten...

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### **Follow the string**

String the colour of blood, winding and weaving through the maze of hallways. Hanging from the ceiling, taped to walls, some miraculously floating in the middle of the corridor, as if gravity was forbidden to touch it.

### **Follow the string**

That's all the note had said when it arrived on my doorstep on a dreary Tuesday afternoon. In red ink, on white card, were those words and a date. Today's date, in fact.

I was extremely tempted to ignore it, to play it off as a practical joke that the neighbours thought was a good idea. I had only arrived at my new house a month ago, and I thought that this could be their weird way of welcoming me. So I laughed and threw it away.

Then on Wednesday afternoon, another note was found on my doorstep, this time on a playing card. Even more ridiculous! The Queen of spades looked on, she seemed perturbed by the messy scrawl of red ink that stained the card face. It stated that I should follow the string to an address.

It was one I hadn't heard of before, I had to google it to see if it was a real place. By then, my curiosity had gotten the best of me, and I started to ignore the lingering voice of my mother as she scolds me for my intrigue.

Curiosity killed the cat, after all.

The address belonged to an abandoned office block, around 10 minutes away. There was no way I would ever go there. It looked hauntingly depleted. From what I could uncover, the building belonged to an old paper company, but I couldn't find any information from 2003 onwards.

This practical joke was not at all clever, but I hadn't seen any neighbours around that I could confront. It was like they had avoided me. Fools.

On Thursday however, my need for a mystery to replace the boredom had overpowered my logical mind. There, sitting idly on my doorstep, was a lone tin.

It's funny that something so ordinary could look so out of place. There was nothing special about it, nothing to say where it came from. It was just a tin. Green and cylindrical and...odd.

My mind instantly buzzed with intrigue, hundreds of thoughts like bees flew through my head, but never settled long enough. The tin seemed light enough when I picked it up for a closer look. My mother's panicked voice threw a fit about my disregard for my own safety as I twisted the tin lid off...

Nothing.

No note, no object that could explain its presence. The interior was made of polished gold metal, so clean that my reflection stared back at me with the same baffled expression. The tin looked just as ordinary as the outside, making it even more confusing. The endless queue of questions morphed into a stampede, and my mother's nagging voice was at the forefront, hissing snide comments about my obsessive need for answers.

I hushed my thoughts into silence and examined the tin again, twisting and angling the tin to catch the glaring sunlight. Still nothing...

Until, there, scratched into the metal as if by hand, were the words:

**We know what you did...**

**To be continued**

## *What the writers say about **Writers Unlimited***

What I like about this club is that we have an opportunity to express ourselves as writers. The teachers are very supportive, they give feedback and always encourage creative thinking. I like that sometimes we are given a particular topic, but I also like it when we have our own choice of what to write.

**Writers Unlimited helps me expand my vocabulary and shows me how to create my own story and use my imagination to customise and improve it.**

I like to write because it allows my mind to think or imagine things happening also it gives me time to express my ideas in my own way :D

**I get to talk to people about writing and also I get to write. Also the spacebar on the keyboard goes click clack and it makes me happy.**

It is a calm club that helps us make our creative writing better.

**I can write without people I don't know looking over my shoulder**

It is a fun experience that helps you progress with your writing skills.

**I enjoy the fact that I have some time to write every week in an environment which makes me motivated to write. :)**

It's fun to write stuff here, also it's actually time where I can write without getting bored?

**It's very fun and you get to write about things with your friends without being judged by your English teacher for one :)**

'tis unlimited

### ***The Writers***

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