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Furthsetter

Creative writing from the pupils of Boroughmuir High School

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Welcome to this term's edition of Furthsetter, the mini creative writing magazine from Boroughmuir High School!

Each term, the English department will be publishing some of our favourite pieces of recent creative writing. Enjoy!

On Cloud One

Emlyn Cox

(in the style of Andrew Kaufman)

Rick woke up and put the kettle on. Like he did every morning. It seemed windy, but then again, it always did. It didn't appear to make the little house colder, so Rick was okay with it. It was a very nice little house, if you could see it, which no one could. But if you did, then you might notice the perfectly tended garden, with fruit and vegetables surrounding Rick's home. The garden had a bigger footprint than the house. Similarly, you might notice the beautiful circular windows, which appeared to have no idea what dusty was. You might notice the fact that the cream coloured walls on the outside were the natural shade of the stone, sanded down so it appeared like it had been painted with uncanny precision. Everything was adorable and lovable and perfect, but Rick didn't have much to do, so keeping everything perfect was one of his main pastimes.

With his newly made cup of coffee, he walked through the door and sat down on a folding wooden chair just next to the potatoes. Before he had tasted the bitter, comforting taste of his coffee, George ran out. George the dog. The floppy ears of a spaniel gave way to two dots of black that could be identified as eyes. No one ever saw George either though, except Rick. Taking out his phone and opening up the map app, he saw they were just west of Dover. Looking at the speed the blue dot moved, he guessed aloud "15 miles an hour". He said this to be able to prove he had gotten it right, despite the fact no one was there, except a dog. Closing one app and opening the digital speedometer he had, he saw they were going at 13 miles an hour. "Close" he told himself, feeling the wonderful sensation of caffeine. Going to the edge of the garden and opening the gate, he looked down.

Sure enough, stretching blankets of green grass with yellow trims of gorse bush and black outlines of roads showed the archetypal image of this area. Looking

forward a bit, he saw a sheer drop, and rising clouds of burnt fuel. The wind was coming towards him, and he already knew that it didn't smell nice. This was definitely Dover. He brought his gaze back to the vertical line it had been at before he saw his cloud. The cloud his little house sat on, the cloud his little world sat on, and the cloud that George ran and sat on. His joyous cloud, that brought him no joy.

About a year ago, Rick had been working as the chief accountant for a French bank. He didn't particularly enjoy his job, but it paid well, and he could have his fun at home. The problem started when he got his promotion. He could remember getting called to the head of the bank's office, sitting down and hearing he would be appointed deputy head. This wasn't like most promotions - he really didn't see it coming. He hadn't applied. He hadn't even known they were hiring a new deputy. He felt amazing, and life only got better for him - he had already been planning to ask his girlfriend to marry him, and when she said yes later, his joy was unexplainable.

When he got home, he couldn't stop smiling, and the following morning, his smile was still there. It was the kind of smile that hurts a bit at the side of your mouth, but not in a bad way. When he got to work he couldn't stop smiling. When he had his lunch, he couldn't stop smiling. And when he walked home, for the first time in his life since he was 8, he found himself skipping. The next day, his skipping and smiling was still there, soon to be joined by his humming. Every day, he couldn't help feeling more and more joyous, but one morning, he woke up, and found his smile gone. He looked everywhere for his smile, but soon realised that he was back to normal facial expressions, and decided it was for the greater good to leave his smile be. Walking out to go to work he discovered a new problem. His house was floating on a cloud. At this point, it was only about a 100ft up, and just a quarter of a mile from his street. For the first time in days, he felt scared. He went back to his house and started crying. And every time one of his tears touched the ground, his house jolted down. Being of a practical nature he soon started drawing up plans to return to the ground. In the end he just

started to try and make himself cry. It worked, up to a point, but every time the house moved the jolt was bigger than the last. It soon became that every time a tear hit the floor he was moving straight down at a speed of 15ft a second.

Rick remembered his reaction. It was the only time he can remember he really lost his temper. He began punching random objects in the house and became obsessed with finding a way of returning without killing himself. George waddled over to him. George had been a reassuring sight then. The fact he wasn't truly alone had been wonderful.

The strangest thing was his house was still connected to the water supply, to the mains somehow, and his monthly copy of *Fishing in France* still got to him (he never worked out how. Once he waited outside all day and night on the due day, but it just appeared in front of him. He didn't like this. He liked explainable things.)

But his problem remained. If he cried he fell, and if he laughed he rose. Some days Rick just looked down at the earth, and then up at the sky, wondering which was a more dangerous one to go towards. After sinking and rising unpredictably, he ended up having to face the horrible truth. He had to exist in a state of total bland emotion. He couldn't be joyous and he couldn't be sad. He couldn't be guilty or jealous or excited or scared.

Rick inhaled the clean-ish air. He didn't mind the stink of factories. He has lived devoid of emotion for a year, because that's the only way he can live. But he has George. And he believes that if this has happened to him, then soon enough, people will be coming to join him, and talk to him, and see his lovely house. He's wanted someone to try one of his carrots for a long time. But he had drunk his coffee, so went inside to get some more.

Heron Haiku

(inspired by 'The Lost Words')

by Oilibhear Hilley

On ochre sunset,
Beating wings lift off the pond,
Razor bill, fish gone.

by JJ Liggins

Heron flying high
Weapon when he goes to dive
Perfect silent spear

by Abi Parsons

Great wings rise and fall
Light as the day, dark as night
Soaring to the sky

One Peaceful Evening

Ruth Shephard

Annabel's gaze fell from the sky. Amber light flooded the beach, leaving speckles of gold on the ridges of the sand as the sun nestled down to make way for night. She wandered along by the sea, allowing the water to splash her, cooling her feet from the warm sand. Waves sang softly to the beach as they embraced the bay. The slightly sweet, sticky smell of sun cream lingered on the sea air, left behind by the holiday makers who had headed home for the day. All was quiet. Not a soul could disturb the perfect scene, and Annabel could bask in the evening glow for hours.

Sighing slightly, she glanced around. Her parents had promised she could come back to the beach, but only for the few minutes it took them to pack up the car. Annabel wondered how long it had been. Tugging her sandy braid round her neck, she studied her flaming red hair – it definitely needed a wash. Lazily, she turned to check the path from the car park. Surely it had been long enough now? Everyone else had long gone. Licking her lips, she groaned, wishing she'd kept a bottle of water with her. Her mouth was as dry as her dad's comedy. She shivered, suddenly aware of the sharp evening chill and the icy bite of water at her ankles. Tentatively, she scanned the sky. Menacing dark clouds lurked on the horizon; it would be dark soon.

A pathway lay at the far left of the beach, guarded on either side by hulking lumps of rock. Swallowing hard,

Annabel ran from the shoreline, curling her toes in the gritty sand underfoot. Shaking, she climbed up the rock, cutting her hands red raw with her efforts. She curled her legs up under her flimsy summer dress, eyes darting about in search of danger.

The hairs on the back of her neck stood on end.

Fear crept up and slammed into her, knocking the air out of her lungs. Annabel froze. Petrified. Towering shards of stone hid the beach in shadows, taunting her with what skulked among them. Not a sound could be heard apart from the thud of her heartbeat, punching a hole in her frock. Every hair on her body stood on end, and not just from the cold. Darkness shrouded her, pulling her into its depths. All the while the moon looked on with malice, sneering at her struggle. There was no one left to help her. Cold sweat dripped down her neck as her teeth chattered uncontrollably, objecting to the taste of blood in her mouth. The air thickened. It closed in on her, so thick you could slash it with a knife; far too stiff to breathe. The hissing wind seemed to part around someone, cowering as they moved closer. The sound of footsteps merged with her heartbeat, making her unsure if they were there. Paranoia coursed through her veins, ripping at her sense of consciousness. Slowly, carefully, Annabel turned around...

Refuge

Callum Cooper Lee

You lift the flip flops from where you had kicked them off and trudge towards the sea. Sand sifts between your toes as you gaze at the incredible purples, crimsons and oranges that bleed across the sky. You love sunset. To the west an abrupt cliffside is perfectly silhouetted against the simmering sun. You inhale freely and taste the salty evening air. As you listen to the sea inquisitively slosh on the shore and the lull of the music that retreats with your footsteps, you meander over the seasoned beach into the light. You recall sitting and staring out into the infinity of the horizon, wondering about what it would be like to never observe it again. However, you know that you will see things more beautiful than anyone could begin to understand comprehending.

Making sure to eternalize every moment, you continue to escort yourself in the direction of the low, white building hugging the cliffside. You can feel the night clawing at the remaining stubborn sunlight, dragging the beauty of the day away with the wonder of darkness. As you approach the facility a tear blunders down your cheek and you look back at this wonderful planet for the final time. You feel a hand gently grasp you beneath your elbow and it prompts you inside. The building is large from within, dug into the cliffs to prevent discovery. Piping and cable-age snake up the walls and droop slightly above you, whirring and beeping and pulsing and warping. You are led to a pure white chamber containing a large gaping pod and Dr Krahn.

"I'm glad to see you. Are you ready to travel?" Krahn's monotone punctures the silence.

"Yes, ready the Capsule please," you reply, cracking your back and breathing deeply.

"Good, prepare for passing."

You submissively step onto the soft cushioning lining the Capsule and lie down. Your eyes come to rest upon the pure blank colour of the ceiling and you breathe the freshly ventilated air. Who knows what will be waiting for you upon arrival? The world you know and love could become a raging molten mess. Who even knows if you'll make it there at all? Pushing doubts and wishes away, you focus on the closing Capsule door. The sequence had begun. You are

encased and you gently feel the absence of gravity kick in. It is such a funny feeling and you smile as you realise the need to keep yourself orientated correctly. You can hear motors and electronics waking up for the first time and hope for them.

By this time Krahn and all of the staff are positioned behind a panel so transparent you could hardly tell it was there. Their focused faces stare into the room as the Capsule began to spiral, accelerating rapidly. You inhale and hold your breath like the many practices before. You can't fail now. You can't. Light fills up the chamber around you and you screw up your eyes to avoid being blinded. The pounding and whirring builds and builds and you can feel the world spinning around you... nothing.

A ginormous crash proceeds as the Capsule impacts the floor of the chamber. You feel the ground pulverise your ribs as gravity violently wrenches you down. Flames lick at your toes as you try to raise your head. The whole thing had failed. Your sole purpose had been obliterated. You haul yourself painfully away from the smoke and leave the wreck of the Capsule. You glance at the observation chamber and gawp as you realise: no-one is there. The scientists had strict instructions to never place themselves in danger and yet none of them had stayed within the most secure room in the facility? You gasp as you painfully and arduously make your way to the vault like door of the room. You don't know what could've gone wrong: it had been in planning for the last year. You wander down the empty halls of the facility and navigate to the exit. You grasp the handle of the entrance door and fling it open.

In front of you there is the same beach that you had been on not fifteen minutes ago. But was it? You could not tell if it was day or night because of the stale grey sky. The beach reflected the colourless clouds with dark grains of sand stretching out for miles in front of you. You limp across the barren landscape and your eyes come to rest upon a vast plain of smokestacks and shelters surrounded by wall of giant proportions. Had you done it? Was this the refuge? You reach a colossal iron gate that interrupted the perimeter. A rusted bell is suspended on a bent coil of metal. You take the tattered rope hanging from it and ring.

The gate opens.

