

Writing Competition Winning Entries

WINNER - Y7

I've been here way before you. Longer than you could ever imagine. And I've watched. And I've seen. And I'll be here way after you've gone. I watch the Earth as the oceans change and twist, with no meaningful opinion but I witness the results and consequences on the land and the disappearing life from it. I see what your actions will cause or already have caused. There are no other people or things you can blame so you turn on each other instead of working together. I don't really care what happens to you because I know I have warned you. I gave you hint after obvious hint. I mean, hey you might have listened. But maybe not, and I'll know in the end but you won't. But don't worry, I've learnt not to feel regret, or guilt. I've seen it all burn and recover. Like I said, I've been here before you and I'll be here after you. I don't care about you so I might as well warn you. I get to sit by, outside the bubble, the only audience watching the show called life. I only want to say if you don't listen, you will regret it. This is a sensitive pebble so appreciate it.

There are years that ask questions. Well, what does that mean to you? What should it mean for you? I can answer that, but I'm not sure you'll act on my answer. So I'll keep it to myself until I know you're serious. There are years that answer. Well, what does that mean to you? It all depends on you. You are in control of the Earth. And everything that lives with you.

Always has been. See you later, in the years that answer. I am Time, and you would be wise to remember.

By Jazzy A-H

What the judges said: 'This is an original piece of writing, with a really interesting voice throughout.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED Y7

Beware; for I am fearless, and therefore powerful. You can't hear me, you can't see me, you can't hurt me, I can do anything to you. And what I want to do to you is scare you to a place, my place: hell. You're weak, you're pathetic, you're nothing. I will make you think about death and your actions.

If you think you're angry with me, that's what I want you to be. You can't see because you are blindfolded.

I feel chains on my belly, it is tight, it hurts. The person took the blindfold off. And I saw a man standing, a very very aggressive man.

He was wearing a mask. It was a wooden mask. His boots were very very muddy. He was holding an axe; he was still. It was in a cold forest, dark, foggy, and the sky. He said to me: "you will know more, live".

His voice sounded like he had not been treated well. He said "I am going to count to ten". He took the tight chains off him and counted "ten, nine, eight, seven, six, you should get ready now, six, five, four, three, two, one"... I already ran away. He started to look for me. He got a revolver out of his pocket and started to laugh. And he says "I know your name, Ainar".

Ainar heard that and was frightened. He thought he did not know about him but he did. Ainar thought that was not fair, knowing his name. How come Ainar doesn't get to not know who the man is. Ainar found a gate. It was locked but suddenly behind him was the man and the man did not get his axe out, did not get his revolver out, he wacked him with his hands. He put a rope on his legs and tightened it up and started to drag him into the cold wet grass. His nose was cold. Ainar heard him talking to himself, his face was red with anger. His eyes started to close.

Who is the man?

What the judges said: 'A tense, mysterious and atmospheric piece of writing: well done.'

WINNER - Y8

"There are years that ask questions and years that answer." That was one of the few but most used phrases that my mother ever used to answer any particularly 'tricky' question of mine. Examples included, who was my father, why did we leave and my personal favourite: when are we going home? When I was younger I realized how easily those around me grew weary of the constant stream of questions that came out of my curious mouth. I also realized I had to be quiet and cunning to stay alive. Apparently, in my youth I realized a lot of things. When I left home, abruptly gathering my few belongings and strutting out the door, I was searching for answers. And I did not find them.

Experience makes you stronger. That is certainly true for the smoggy, bustling and uncultivated side of London, where paupers sneer at you from alleyways and beggars tug at your clothes and belongings, hoping to grasp any object of value. Not that I've ever seen one succeed. I used to hover around the docks and on occasion I would run for the gangs there. However, I was much more adept in the art of thieving and I made my living off bits and pieces from here and there. I like to think that I was particularly well-known for my vast collection and assortment of various findings, though I doubt my circle of clients stretched nearly as far as I'd like to believe.

It was in this business that I met a notably intimidating client who came to me saying that he needed someone unrecognisable and quick. I, in my greedy state, obviously replied yes and proceeded to meet him the next night in the side of London which I was not familiar with. The wealthy side.

We waited outside a fancy looking building, the sort which I would never be allowed to set foot in, as he revealed his objective. The reason I never so much as approach the rich side of London is due to the large amounts of police who patrol the areas. It was due to this knowledge that I remained wary as the man described his plan to bomb those who ate in the posh building in the name of some almighty and righteous cause. I just knew that the money he had offered me would be enough to answer all my questions and still remove any financial doubts about my future. Hastily, we set the explosives and then we ran.

I never did learn who my father was, instead I was arrested on site as the world behind us went up in flames.

By Laila S

What the judges said: 'Excellent control of sentences and words and an excellent apocalyptic ending.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Y8

"Beware...for I am fearless, and I am powerful." That thought remained Omlettepaw's head as she lay next to Dizzypaw, who was snoring softly. Those words had haunted her mind since Ravenrobin had killed Scrambledpaw, her sister. When he had been exiled, he paused in front of the camp entrance, and snarled those words, as Mousepaw padded after him, and he stared deeply into the she cat's soul.

Quarryfall would leap upon the fieldstone, her dampened and ragged grey pelt glimmering in the sun. Her amber eyes flashed with fury. "Cats of Daisyclan, gather around for a clan meeting you mouse-brained fools!" She hissed, her tail lashing. Cats would peer out of their dens, dreary from waking up. Den by den, each warrior, medicine cat and apprentice would be sitting at the fieldstone.

The golden-pelted she cat would lean over to her friend, Shrewpaw. "What's going on? Isn't this the Caveclan warrior who got exiled a few moons ago?" She whispered. The tall and sleek-furred silver tabby would appear worried, her one non-scarred ear pinned back at her head. "I don't know Omlettepaw..." She mewed. "I'm scared..." There was muttering around, and the remainders of Omlettepaw's family gathered around, except for her mother, who was busy in the nursery. Eggleaf and Benedictpaw sat next to the pair. The two medicine cats seemed bothered. "The omen..." Benedictpaw murmured, sitting next to his sister. Shrewpaw curled her long tail around the shorter, fluffier cat, and kept her close. Omlettepaw felt her muzzle grow hot as their bodies pressed together.

"cats of daisyclan, your leader is dead." Quarryfall yowled. Gasps of horror erupted from the clan below. "And from now on... your leader will be..."

"Me." A horribly familiar black tom emerged, red chest gleaming.

Ravenrobin was back.

By Lizzy J

What the judges said: 'Superb descriptions of cats - great showing not telling.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Y8

The dark grey sky encases the motionless street, silent and suffocating. With this thought, I hold my breath and shut my eyes, letting the glare of the streetlight above me creep beneath my eyelashes. 10, 20, 30 seconds I sit there, convincing myself that even the slightest release of breath would cause the great grey ceiling to fall on top of me. My lungs burn. When I can no longer bear it, I gulp fresh air down my throat. I wait. The sky remains intact. Sighing, I relax and slowly slide down the wall until I'm sitting in the pool of fluorescent yellow light and I feel strangely safe.

You never liked the dark, preferring the warm gentle glow of a night light. I know for a fact you're still with me; I see you reflected in myself. I've wrapped you around me like a cloak - your familiarity too comforting to let go.

But I want to let go.

I want to live life without the fear of the rare occasions when you slip out of my thoughts. I want to be free of your soothing restraints, your loving confinements.

Maybe memories of you are like the sky, always threatening to crash over me and drown me in you, but never quite strong enough. If that is the case then let me be your rain. Let me scatter the earth and remind the world of your strength. Let me plant the seeds in the cracks that you can no longer reach. Let me spread my wings and go where I please, for I will keep my promise. I will keep my promise and I will come back to you, and one day, we shall meet in the place where there is no darkness.

By Annie M M

What the judges said: 'Superb descriptions of light.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Y8

In the empty darkness of space, memories are my only comfort. But time alone can do a lot to a person's memory. I can't remember her face. Her eyes have been replaced by stars, her freckles turned to galaxies. Her voice was swallowed long ago by the silence of space. I miss her, I miss home - this shuttle is nothing more than a vessel to me.

The space program was supposed to be over years ago. 18 years and 49 days exactly. Sometimes I wonder if it was all a dream, life on earth, people. Maybe I'm the only one, destined to float in space forever, looking for a planet that doesn't exist. The only sound I've heard in years is the dull buzzing of machinery, I wonder if I could still talk if I tried.

The customs of humans seem so strange to me now. How they collect, always looking for more, never satisfied. They search for new land, claim it, just to turn it to dust. It hurts to admit, but I was the same.

I'm far off course now. Going back is pointless. I would die of starvation before I got anywhere close. My food rations are dwindling; I'm surprised they had enough dry crackers and baby food to last me this long.

I would hate to starve.

If worst comes to worst, the vacuum of space would be a quicker way to go. But I can't bring myself to do it. I will keep pushing on, even after the food runs out. If I die, so does my wife, her memory lost to the void. I must find another planet.

By Iris D

What the judges said: 'Wonderful space imagery.'

HIGHLY COMMENDED - Y8

We live in the gaps between stories,
The ones you forgot.

The British Empire,
Let your mind wander for a moment,
And cast back to what you might have learnt in school,
What do you remember?

Is it the Sikh troops who defended an Afghan fort to the last man against waves of foes?
The commander among them who sacrificed himself so his men could close the gates?
All for the army to pull out soon after,
Sure they got a film,
And one was martyred,
But do you remember?

Or is it instead the carving up of Africa,
The slow dissolution,
It's legacy,
All important,
All should be known,
But do you remember the others?

We are dwindling now, certainly,
But we are not gone,
Every year more enter the textbooks,
The curriculum,
History,
But we are not gone.

Never forget,
The Sand Creek Massacre,
The boy soldiers of WW1,
Some will know,
Others will not,

They must.

We live in the gaps between stories,
We are the ones not always in the textbooks,
The ones you forgot.

By Arun W

What the judges said: 'We live in the gaps between stories' - superb metaphor and a powerful voice.'

Y9 WINNER

'We Shall Meet'

Isobel B

We shall meet in the place where there is no darkness,
When all of this is done.
We shall meet at the edge of the world,
And dance on the sun.

We shall meet later,
When the time is right.
We shall meet in another life,
And sit in a gentle candlelight.

We shall meet in a quiet place,
And let time tell.
We shall meet at sunrise,
And watch the sky paint in pastel.

We shall meet on the horizon,
And fade into space.
We shall meet in the stars,
And climb the constellations staircase.

We shall meet in the clouds,
And watch birds pass us by.
We shall meet in the gentle breeze,
And watch the wings of a butterfly.

We shall meet in a daydream,
And walk.

We shall meet in silence,
And talk.

We shall meet at dawn,
And swim in the sea.
We shall meet in the evening,
And listen to the buzz of a bumblebee.

We shall meet in the dew of the morning,
And the delicate raindrops on plants.
We shall meet when the sun skips over the water,
And take our chance.

We shall meet in the tallest mountain,
And the falling leaves of trees.
We shall meet in the deepest ocean,
The day is ours to seize.

By Isobel B

What the judges said: 'A precisely worded poem, with effective use of repetition.'

Y10 WINNER

I watch you,
Strands of hair sticking to your pale cheeks,
The dimples indenting when your laugh rings out,
I could get drunk on your laugh,
Echoing across time,
Grounding and unsubstantial all at once,
You with your perfect lips,
The cupid's bow rests atop them,
like the sky rests above the earth,
The safety of knowing it is always there,
Incessantly a part of you just as clouds are the sky.
The bridge of your nose,

Overhanging yet still apprehensive not wanting to impose,

Just like you,

Always too loud

too bright, too you for anyone to ascertain

yet cryptic and shy,

Words pressed up against your lips,

Your lips!

The curves of your lips rewrite history.

By Storm H-W

What the judges said: 'A delicately composed poem with some fine word choices.'

Y11

Conflicted Love by Matilda B

Aquib's Perspective

My mind is astir and effervescing, a scalding saucepan of water overflowing and scolding me: I block my ears with my fingers and slam my eyes shut. But the voices are still audible and the graphic images don't descend into darkness. ..

We are standing, shaded by the Atlantic Pistachio. Inbar's head is leaning on my shoulder. Flooding back to me, the way her amber eyes were iridescent like the sunset.

"My Naar." Inbar purrs.

The heat still makes me tingle. More than a metaphor.

Same day, I watched the Isralites storm the mosque with blue and white flags, chanting slurs. Why had our relationship not been divulged? Religion over love.

Inbar's Perspective

Aqib and I are sitting on the moist grass, I am tracing patterns on his bronze back whilst he stretches my hair grip I took out a while ago. Unconsciously, I observe the smell of his aftershave. Arboreous and Autumnal. The apricity beams on my arms. Our lips touch. Aqib tastes of majewelled dates. Even just revisiting this memory, I feel mellow with ecstasy.

"Okay, neshama, we have to part."

I nuzzle his chest before reluctantly wading off. Regretting wearing sandals as my feet are swelling, I climb halfway up the hill when I hear the most unorthodox noise. Whirring followed by an explosion. I look up and see what look like warped wands. I slowly burn; They are rockets and I know their aim. Picking up pace, I manage to reach home. My father's eyes are open, but his leg has a hole.

Returning to the moment, a scorpion strangles me. Unhinged how I feel affection towards Aqib, but aggravation towards his clan. So juxtaposing, so misinterpreted, yet Palestinians and Israelites both worship the Wailing Wall. Similarities outweigh differences. Daydreams evolve into nightmares.

By Matilda B

What the judges said: 'An interesting dual narrative, with powerful details.'