

*St Pius X College Chatswood*

# *Microfiction*

*2025*

*A selection of entries and illustrations*





In the 2025 fourth edition of St. Pius X College’s Microfiction Competition students were asked to compose original stories of no more than 100 words. This was a challenging exercise in precision and creativity, leading students to craft, edit, and proofread meticulously.

In addition to a challenging word limit, these stories had to include specific actions and words.

These prompts were:

First Round

Required Word – “Vision”

Required Action – “Descending”

Grand Final

Required Word – “Horizon”

Required Action – “Lingering”

What follows in this anthology is a collection of outstanding entries from the Senior School, Primary School, and teaching staff, complemented by artworks commissioned by the Visual Arts Department and completed by their talented students.

## Authors

Year 6	Dario Leotta
Year 7	Ashworth Hilton
Year 8	James Sykes Lucas Korth Rory Rapa
Year 9	Cruz Arapoc Marcus Cicero
Year 10	Zachary Rapa Peter Haddad
Year 11	John Medalla Joshua Booth Rohan Chang Christopher Schuller Thomas Wong Sean O'Donnell
Year 12	Anthony Parissis Adam Fitzryk Patrick Elliot Aidan McNeilly
Teachers	Frances Doyle Rebecca Matthews Ryan Balboa Patrick Rodgers Jay Lane Penny Lindley Lesley Gissane

## Editors

Mr Dan Quilty English Department  
Ms Frances Doyle Visual Arts Leader of Learning

## Artwork

Year 5	Charlie Dove Josh Wroblewski
Year 6	Luca Posa Harvey McKinley
Year 8	Lucas Korth Henry Burke Lachlan Huynh Rocco Grande III
Year 9	Jake Kiem Oliver Mitchell Theo Chow Austin Judd Aaron Klarich Alfred Hu
Year 10	Nikki Hurrell Alexander Dowling Jake Swan
Year 11	John Medalla Archie Turner Ejan Salcedo Connor Staude Hugo Hart
Teachers	Ben Serone Donna Janes Frances Doyle

Front Cover Artwork: Hugo Hart

Back Cover Artwork: Archie Turner

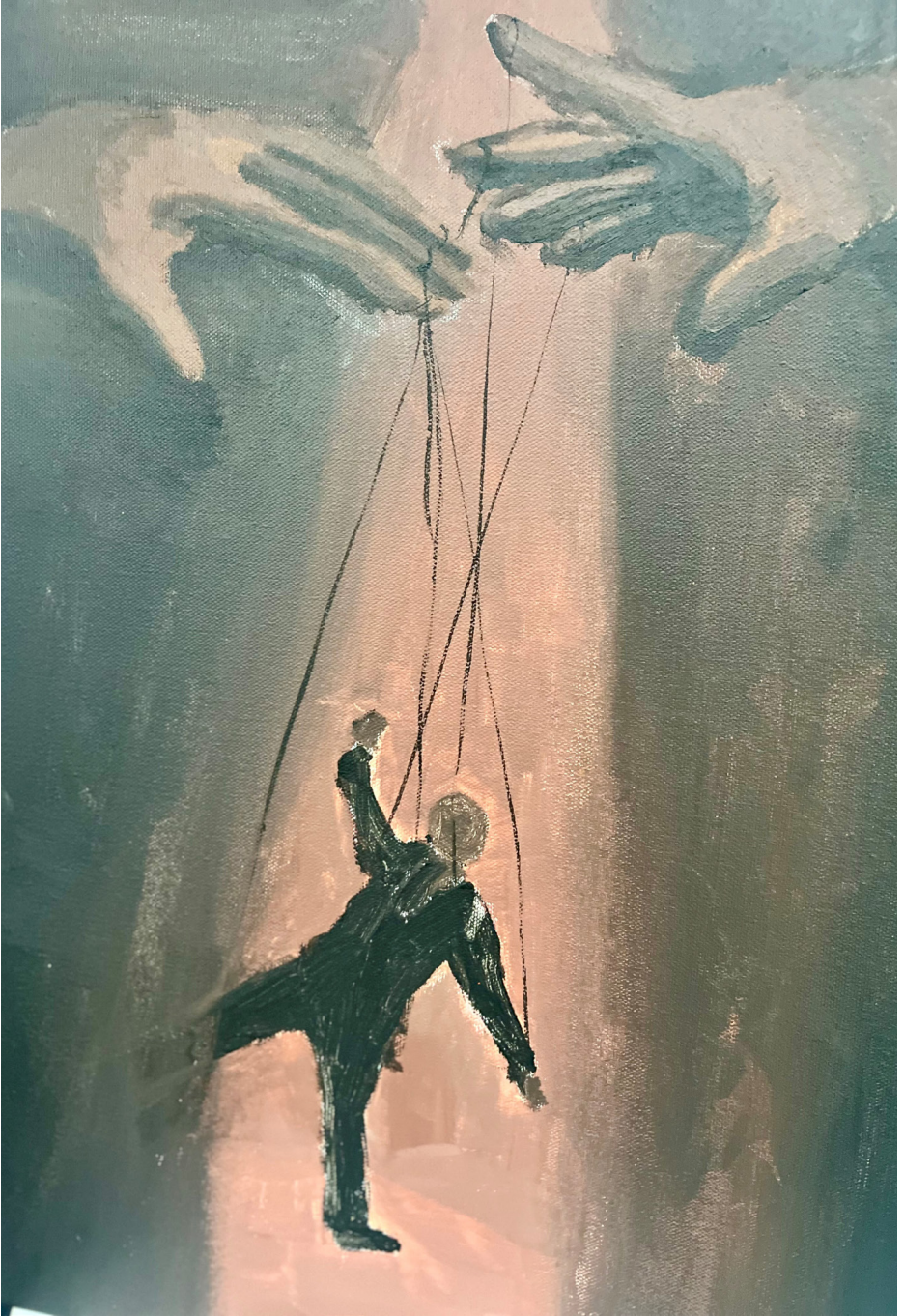
## Judges

Mr Dan Quilty English Department  
Year 12 Learning Prefects: Jimmy Furini  
Adam Fitzryk  
Luke Mortimer

## Grand Final Entries



Artwork by Charlie Dove Yr 5



## First Place Overall

### And For My Next Act

Anthony Parissis, Year 12

**P**laster and fairy-floss fibre. Static hum-buzz echoes from blaring fluorescent lighting, lingering like a persistent salesman for a deceptively simple sideshow game. Triumph appears ephemeral. Already-naked eyes unclothe me. I am made to appear a sinner, immortalised in graphite by Medusa's stare. I hopscotch and prance, subservient to the ringleader's command; I limbo between hoops, that serve now as my deities. With every visit, though there are few, it appears that freedom slips further beyond the horizon. Perhaps one day my captivity will falter at the hands of a liberator, just as I do against the omnipresence of my admirers.

## Second Place Overall

### The Apparition

John Medalla, Year 11

The moon nestled on the horizon. Fog settles upon the earthy scented fields. The scent of life still lingering on her gravestone, as if she's still walking amongst us. A delusion. No. An apparition appears before me. The fog ought to make a fool of me. O Angel of Death, take me into thine shivering embrace. The apparition takes shape of my beloved. Wife. Daughter. Mother. Such cruelties. Toying with my sight. Take me away. Haggard breathing draws closer, like coming to take the firstborn sons of Egypt, this body, free of lamb's blood on its doors. Take me away.



Artwork by John Medalla Yr 11

## Third Place Overall

### Before Tomorrow

Joshua Booth, Year 11

A giant slowly falls behind the waves. A celestial god of swirling energy begins its descent into a new form. Nearing the event horizon, the sun places a hand on the arm of the unknown- But the sun refuses to extinguish now, in this moment, in this minute. The waves still need a light to guide their paths, the trees a glow to ensure their growth. Fingers of light grasp onto distant trees, and the slow rumble of a solar groan echoes over the earth. But the waves, so gentle yet so firm, push the light over the edge.



Artwork by Theo Chow Yr 9

# Primary School Winner

## We Must Flee

Dario Leotta, Year 6

**O**ur boat bobs up and down, the rudder and motor squeaking in protest against an unseen current that swirls beneath us. We have one clear goal, to escape the people who want what little precious things we have left. Dark, ominous clouds gather over the horizon, silently waiting to consume everything in their path. I clutch my sister's hand, and I think about all the things we will get once we arrive at this new land. Safety, security, food and water, but will we even make it there alive?



Artwork by Josh Wroblewski Yr 5

# Principal's Award

## The Remedy For the Soul

James Sykes, Year 8

**B**eneath the vault of emerald canopy, supported by cathedral limbs of red gum, light fractures into trembled tesserae. Each branch, a cantilever of memory. Each leaf, a parchment brushed by wind. The lingering scent of both decay and birth perfumes the sacred air, and across boulders glazed in lichen skin, a stream carves its silvery path into the horizon. Its hum is neither cheerful nor forlorn, but the eternal prayer of this breathing shrine. Underneath these forgotten constellations, where time is measured only by the treecreepers rhythmic peck, the heart remembers what the mind has lost. Thus, is nature's purity.



Artwork by Ben Serone

# English Faculty Prize

## The Jump

Zachary Rapa, Year 10

The boy lingered on the edge of the rocky precipice. The dark misty skyline lapped at his toes, veiling the ominous void below. His knees wavered in their sockets as fear numbed his legs, causing his body to oscillate as if it were drifting ever forward, subliminally called by a vague, unsatiated force. Paralysed as he balanced on the combating horizons of tangible fear and unconscious curiosity, he could take this torture no longer. He jumped. Blue light and warm water exploded around him. He smiled in relief looking up at summer rock-jump as he bobbed amongst the waves.



Artwork by Jake Swan Yr 10

# Academic Prefect Prize

## The Blank Paint of a Stranger

Rohan Chang, Year 11

I met a stranger. Seemingly a blank canvas, or at least the cliché goes something alike. To him, his canvas is overcrowded with colours of red, green, yellow, trauma, frustration, and anger. Perceivably invisible shades of the absence of a future on the horizon, and a dash of hands let go too soon. But in the corner, a faded drawing of himself, when he was younger, with dreams so big everyone called him crazy. Maybe they were jealous. But every time someone told him, the image faded quicker. And yet I couldn't see anything, not even a flick of paint.



Artwork by Archie Turner Yr 11

# An Impossible Voyage

Adam Fitzryk, Year 12

**B**iting sea spray caved across the Sailor's face. A flurry of rehearsed blinks repeatedly claimed his vision, yet his pupils remained locked on the lingering Horizon. A halo of brooding oranges and bloody crimson painted his target: the fleeting Sun. Thumps of wind-born waves simultaneously sent screeches through the steel in his limbs, and warm shivers from his core. In his pursuit, the Horizon never stepped closer. Yet once the sky angel receded, the Sailor took down his sail and gazed skyward to its Heavenly Brothers. There he wondered if he could see his own Brother gazing down at him.



Artwork by Luca Posa Yr 6

# The Lingerin Man

Thomas Wong, Year 11

As the autumn wind blew between the gloomy clouds of grey, the withering trees donated their last brown leaves to the freezing soil. The birds said adieu, embarking on their flight away from the once azure sky. The dimming Sun slowly faded away, beyond the horizon towards the West. Likewise did most of the old man's comrades migrate away from the grip of the red land of Soviets. Yet the old man still stayed outside and lingered around. A refusal to acknowledge the coming of the night. A refusal to accept the end of the glorious days of the Soviets.



Artwork by Harvey McKinley Yr 6

# An Imperfect World

Rory Rapa, Year 8

**H**atred. The unwanted aspect of human nature. Some say it can be controlled, but the blood that trickled out of his chest proved otherwise. It terrifies without being seen, can disgust, intrigue, cause death. Its forces ripple through the unconscious thought of all people. It lingers in the very hand that closed over his throat. Is there a world where such a thing ceases to exist? Beyond the horizons of negative human thought. A perfect world perhaps. The pinnacle of human evolution. He enjoyed a solitary moment of content, before his eyes glazed over and hatred conquered once more.



Artwork by Alexander Dowley Yr 10

# Afraid

Lucas Korth, Year 8

Why be afraid? Why are we afraid of being afraid? We can't cross the horizon, yet we are afraid of not knowing. We wait, lingering on the threshold afraid to give up. We are afraid of making friends, afraid of the unknown. But some people are not afraid, and so they come to our aid. They are the ones who cross the threshold, the ones who chase the horizon. We wonder why being big is smaller than being afraid. We are afraid even of those who care for us most. So I ask one question. Why be afraid?

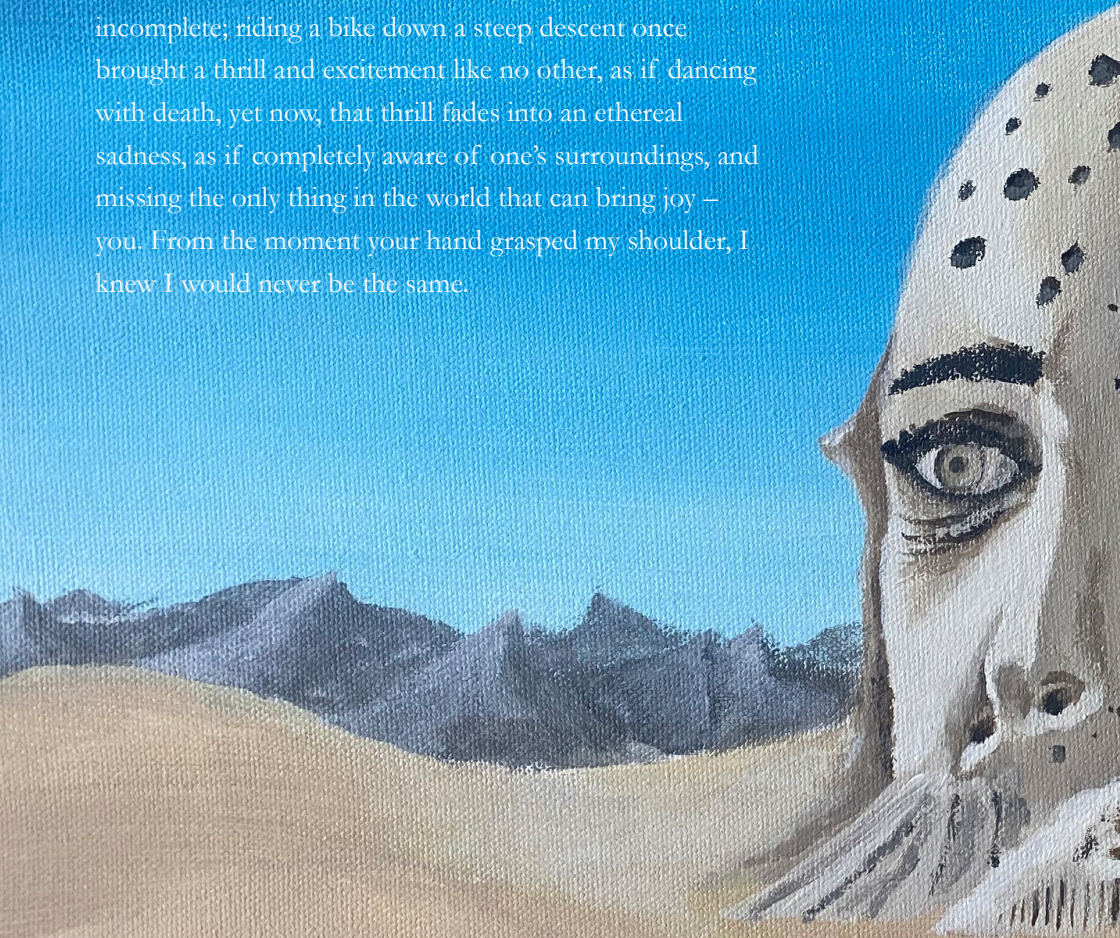


Artwork by Lucas Korth Yr 8

# Vestige

Aidan McNeilly, Year 12

Like Gideon's visions, doubting if the memories were ever real at all. What once brought joy, now feels incomplete; riding a bike down a steep descent once brought a thrill and excitement like no other, as if dancing with death, yet now, that thrill fades into an ethereal sadness, as if completely aware of one's surroundings, and missing the only thing in the world that can bring joy – you. From the moment your hand grasped my shoulder, I knew I would never be the same.





# T-Minus

Peter Haddad, Year 10

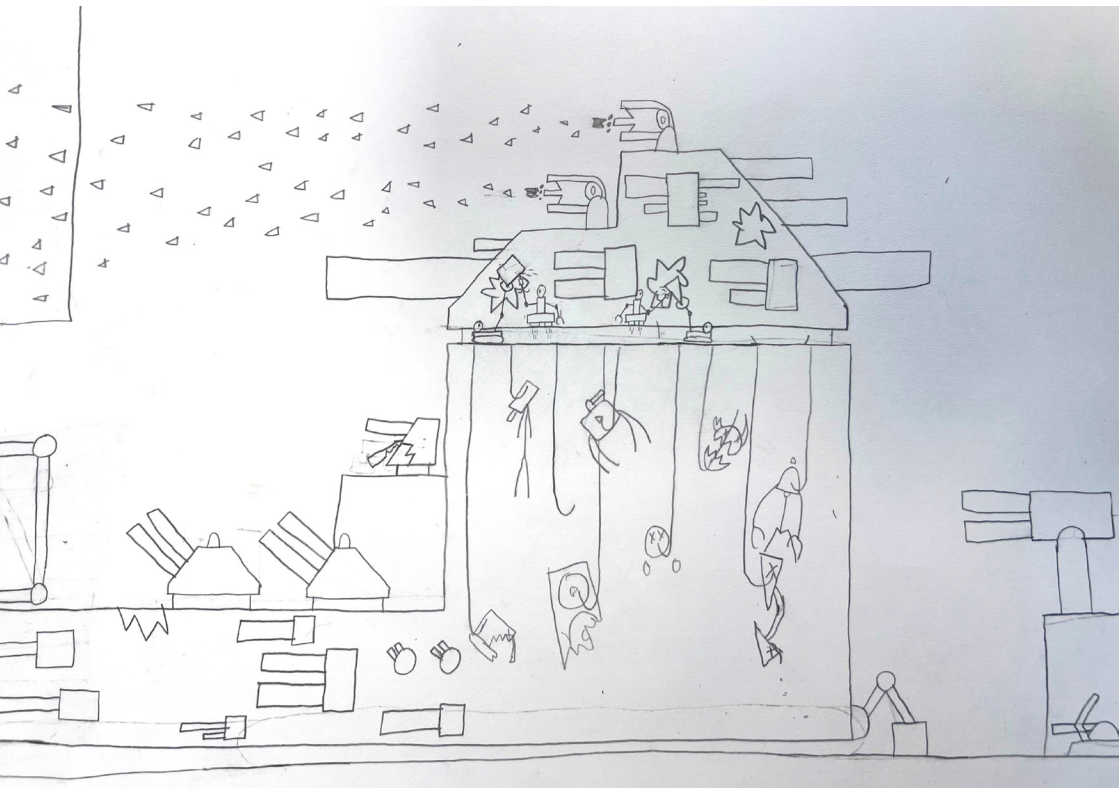
- 10... The astronaut closed his eyes and imagined his family.
- 9... His daughter, smiling. His son, laughing. His wife, crying.
- 8... He reopened his eyes to a closing window.
- 7... Two halves, like a devouring mouth, meeting in the centre.
- 6... He watched as it blocked out the horizon.
- 5... He turned his head away.
- 4... Inhale. The lingering smell of disinfectant.
- 3... Exhale. His breath felt warm against his face.
- 2... He shut his eyes again.
- 1... A low rumble. He smiled. Blast off. And he felt a force as the Challenger shuttle lifted him out of this world.



# The Writer's Plague

Ashworth Hilton, Year 7

I would write you fiction, but there's one issue you see. A pestilence has taken hold and continues to irritate me. Identical to bugs that you can't shoo away. It's a glitch in your brain that's guaranteed to stay. You've likely been in my current predicament, being unable to write for hours. Not even your narrative is free of its power. Show some empathy because the success rate of tales procured by the infected is the donut number. Don't fret this parasite is not contagious. Perhaps your horizons broadened by this medical paper of the deadliest plague known to writers.



Artwork by Lachlan Huynh Yr 8

# First Round Winner

## What Have I Done?

Patrick Elliott, Year 12

I jolt awake after descending into this cold, barren room littered with dust. I stand on wobbly legs, shaking from the lack of use. My eyes strain, adjusting their vision to the darkness. I trace the edges of the walls. My fingers sting against the coarse, freezing wall. As my gaze focalises on the nebulous glow of light under the door, my feet come to a stop upon something soft. I kneel as my legs are cut with shattered glass bottles. My hands brush into her hair, and I hold her still hands. I cup my face, sobbing beside her.



Artwork by Archie Turner Yr 11

# Two Foxes

Christopher Schuller, Year 11

It started with a vision, shy and timid eyes peeking through to her, almost like a fox but woke up to nothing. Taps followed next, like a branch swaying in the wind but she wasn't dreaming, they were real. Each night, the noise grew from soft taps to pounding fists. Whatever it was, it wanted to come in. It then started screaming, acting in pain, but she knew they were lies. Her descent into fear deepened. She hid beneath her sheets like the shy and timid fox. She wanted to wake up but couldn't, she was already awake.



Artwork by Ejan Salcedo Yr 11

# A Swirling Reality

Cruz Arapoc, Year 9

The wind whirled around its container, driving the observers attention. Time ticked as the crowd crafted a conundrum of what was soon to come. The man was plugged in and reality overgrew imagination, engulfing his conscious. Birds chirped and snow flakes plummeted on his skin. He dug his hands into the wet soil and wrenched his weary legs towards his core, exposing his retina to the magnitude of colours in the atmosphere. The force attracted his torso down the opaque white cliff and his pale skin made his subconscious realise... this is a part of their vision.



Artwork by Henry Burke Yr 8

# Descent Into The Unknown

Marcus Cicero, Year 9

Sense. That's what keeps us feeling alive. The sensations of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing. But I can't feel anything right now. All I can do is fall. A slow, painful descent into the unknown. Ironic, isn't it? Not being able to feel anything can be just as painful as physical pain. Well, I think I'll be here for a while. Stranded in an abyss of nothing with only my own thoughts. Wait! Thoughts! I can create visions of anything with nothing but my own mind! No matter where I am, I can be anywhere. Anywhere but here.

Artwork by Jake Kiem Yr 9



# Smithy's Letter

Sean O'Donnell, Year 11

Dearest Mother,

In the suffocating stillness of the trenches, my thoughts descend to you as if carried by the very ink of this letter. The war rages around me, yet your image remains a beacon, a vision of solace amidst the chaos. Each day, descending deeper into this abyss, where the weight of duty bears heavily upon my soul. Yet, in the quiet moments, I find respite in the memories of our shared dreams, those fleeting glimpses of a life beyond the battlefield. Hold them close, for they are the light that guides me through this descent.

Forever yours,  
Smithy



Artwork by Austin Judd Yr 9

# Teacher Entries

## Teacher Winner

### Flood

Frances Doyle, Visual Arts

**T**he fence posts lay in a line at odd angles along new sand banks, the usual wire horizon flattened by tons of angry water rushing down from the Barrington Tops. Bundles of grass, leaves and vines were wrapped tightly around the metal strands, woven by the water's force. The river was low now, lingering in deep puddles, but only days before it had swamped paddocks and roads, covered bridges while carrying trees, logs and the odd terrified cow. Nothing to do but get on with it, pick up star pickets, strip the wires and start over.



Artwork by Frances Doyle

# Giants

Rebecca Matthews, Languages and English

Nature's vision drew us here — to witness them nestled like well-loved chess pieces, smoothed by generations of play and packed higgledy-piggledy into their box, awaiting the next tournament. We made our descent hastily over amber lichen, speckled with youthful sapling-green that belied the centuries since the boulders had been carved into place by time itself, endlessly refined. Mortals among giants, we wandered the stone annals of history, seeking what had been and what still lay ahead. Time stood still in the in-between, and we were a faint flickering imprint on the vast granitic terrain, its grains of time stretching endlessly to the horizon.



# Sandcastle: A Liturgy in Dust

Ryan Balboa, Religion

The sun, the salt, the weight of whatever he carried—it made him blink too long. They always arrive like that. Looking for meaning. Mistaking stillness for a sign. Adults. I kept digging. Resistance. Release. Structure. Repeat. He descended, hesitant. Like someone hoping not to break the moment. Silence. It was complete, knowing in its fragile existence, its defiant parapets shivering amongst changing winds. He stared at it as if it might redeem him. It won't. We are dust, and to dust we will return. Perhaps he'll understand someday. The beauty of vision? Impermanence.



Artwork by Henry Burke Year 8

# The Descent Into Darkness

Patrick Rodgers, History

“Our vision is one in which God’s will is done.” “If we let them rule us, this will represent a descent into darkness.” The rhetoric from both sides was full of cliches like these. We had certainly heard it all before but this time it seemed different. This time we had no freedom to choose. This time it seemed that everything was spiralling out of control. Who were these new commanders dressed in black suits with their guardians all eyes and ears in case anyone dare oppose? What was their solution to the new crisis? And what was Gilead anyway?



Artwork by Oliver Mitchell Yr 9

# New Chapter

Jay Lane, English and History

A new chapter folds into view. This 'new home' of mine is paradise, oh yes, but dull thoughts make my elation regress. It sneaks and snakes into cracks in my consciousness. An ache that longingly prods and pokes into my daily efforts to grasp the spokes of this whirring dream of so many. A vision of life that seems to have the cherry. This glazed perfect bite. It glistens despite the emptiness that lingers out of sight. A descent into a dysmorphic plight that might perpetuate an eternal descent into night. Ah, sod that - time for a rewrite.



Artwork by Rocco Grande III Yr 8

# For Oliver

Penny Lindley, Drama

As the young woman descended the steps, she indicated to the two people to follow. The night was dark, and it was unsafe for her to be seen talking with the likes of them. Her people would grow suspicious if they saw. Even now she may have been followed. Down here no one would see or hear them. On the bottom step close to the river, she began to speak what she knew. A vision of the boy safely in their world gripped her and she told more than she intended. Unknowingly, she would pay with everything she had.



Artwork by Aaron Klarich Yr 9

# Solvitur Ambulando

Lesley Gissane, English

**D**own the slight hill that was not steep but had just enough slant for the soles of the feet to tense. Past the lake that generated so much screeching from the cockatoos that ears had to be physically covered, competing with the noise on the inside. Over the bridge which did not cross water so much as a muddy, marshy swamp that had little to recommend it. A long stretch of path with no-one in sight; wandering in and out of the dappled sunlight brings an involuntary smile. Just a few more steps to clear vision.



Artwork by Donna Janes



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CHATSWOOD