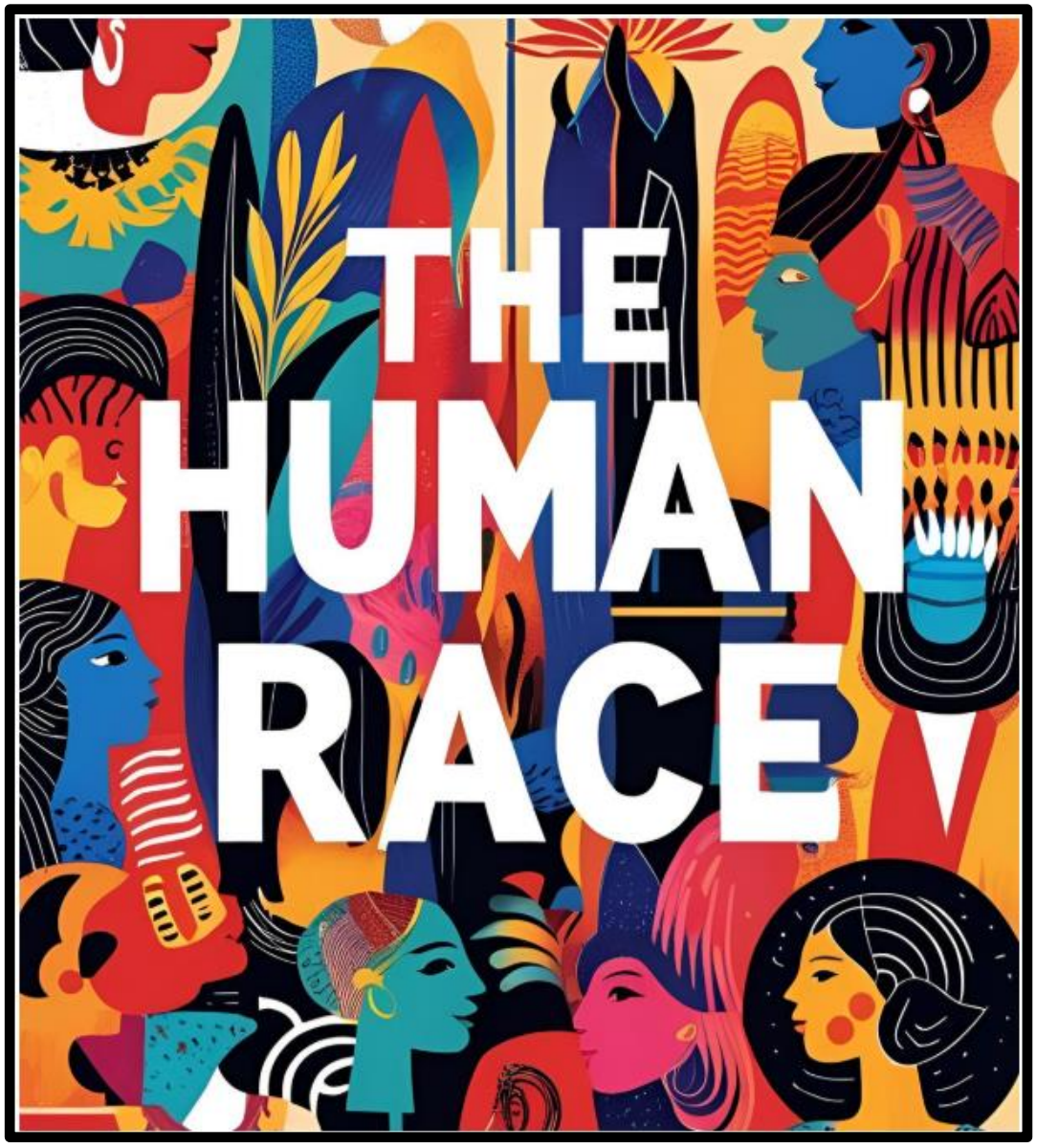
THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

presents



THE SPOKEN WORD COMPETITION

Information at a Glance

Who	● Every pupil from Year 3-8
When	● Heats will take place during English lessons in the week beginning **Monday 6th October.** ● Finals will take place on **Thursday 16th October**.
What	● Each pupil will select a reading from the Human Race anthology to perform aloud. ● Some must be learned by heart, some may be practised and read. These pieces are clearly marked. ● With special prior agreement with Mrs. Rivington, Mrs. Gillott, Mrs. Rice or Mrs. Pooley, Mrs. Hayes, Mr. Pascalides or Miss Wilson, there is an option to write your own **or** submit an alternative poem or extract (so long as it is in keeping with the *Human Race* theme).
Where	● The heats will occur in front of your peers during your English lessons in your classrooms. ● The finalists will compete in the Britten Hall with an audience of pupils and staff. ● Mrs. Rivington will adjudicate.
Why	Whilst it takes confidence and skill to perform aloud, it can feel like quite a big step to take. But the secret is that the more times you do it, the easier it gets. It is also much better to get used to public speaking in a friendly and welcoming environment amongst your friends. Once you have performed, you feel a tremendous thrill of confidence and will be ready for the next opportunity to speak aloud. The competition is also an opportunity to spend time enjoying the power of words: to find, share and entertain each other with expressions of what makes us all human.

Hints and Tips for your Performance

Have a go at reciting three or four different pieces before you finally decide which one to perform for the competition.

Once you have chosen what to recite, make sure you really understand it – what message is the writer trying to put across? What sort of atmosphere is created?

Practice performing in different ways so that you can get the message across to your audience.

Always announce the title, the author and one or two words about why you chose it. E.G. “I have chosen to read Nettles by Vernon Scannell because I liked the image of the father slashing at the nasty nettles.’

After announcing your title, PAUSE! When there is absolute quiet, take a good deep breath and begin to read or recite. **It is preferred that you learn your poem off by heart. Please speak to Mrs Rivington if this is causing undue stress.**

Be sure to:

- Speak **slowly** and expressively – show the thoughts on your face
- You may use your body language and hand gestures to add emphasis
- Be very aware of where the writer wants you to pause, this is often for a reason
- Vary the tone and pitch of your voice or it will sound dull and flat
- Don’t run out of breath, plan where to breathe
- Try to look at where sentences end – not just the line end – so you get the meaning across
- Make sure you say difficult words correctly – ask for help if you need to
- Project your voice – this is essential, but do not shout!
- You can make notes or marks on your poem to help you remember where to ‘shape your voice’ or pause for dramatic effect
- Indicate the end by pausing and then smiling at the audience
- Enjoy the applause and leave the stage
- **CRUCIAL**: Relax and enjoy the way your voice can bring your performance to life and make a real impact on your audience

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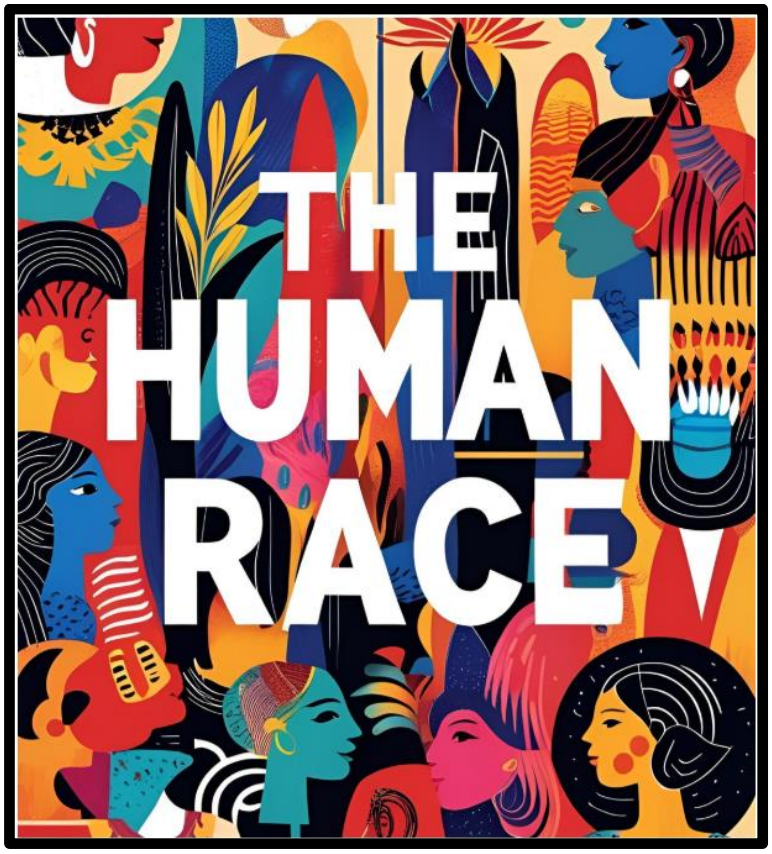


SECTION 1

POEMS

- You **must try to learn these** off-by-heart, you can read from a clean, smart copy; BUT, you must ensure that you have practiced thoroughly.
- If would like to read a different poem that is not in this anthology, please check with your English teacher first - there is every chance that we will be happy to include it.

Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

By Percy Bysshe Shelley

Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,
    Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
    For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
    I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
    My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
    Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
    Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
    How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
    I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley

Hide and Seek

Call out. Call loud: ‘I’m ready! Come and find me!’
The sacks in the toolshed smell like the seaside.
They’ll never find you in this salty dark,
But be careful that your feet aren’t sticking out.
Wiser not to risk another shout.
The floor is cold. They’ll probably be searching
The bushes near the swing. Whatever happens
You mustn’t sneeze when they come prowling in.
And here they are, whispering at the door;
You’ve never heard them sound so hushed before.
Don’t breathe. Don’t move. Stay dumb. Hide in your blindness.
They’re moving closer, someone stumbles, mutters;
Their words and laughter scuffle, and they’re gone.
But don’t come out just yet; they’ll try the lane
And then the greenhouse and back here again.
They must be thinking that you’re very clever,
Getting more puzzled as they search all over.
It seems a long time since they went away.
Your legs are stiff, the cold bites through your coat;
The dark damp smell of sand moves in your throat.
It’s time to let them know that you’re the winner.
Push off the sacks. Uncurl and stretch. That’s better!
Out of the shed and call to them: ‘I’ve won!
Here I am! Come and own up I’ve caught you!’
The darkening garden watches. Nothing stirs.
The bushes hold their breath; the sun is gone.
Yes, here you are. But where are they who sought you?

Vernon Scannell

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

William Shakespeare

Bed in Summer

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

Robert Louis Stevenson

When You are Old

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

William Butler Yeats

Sonnet 29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

William Shakespeare

Brothers

Saddled with you for the afternoon, me and Paul
Ambled across the threadbare field to the bus stop
Talking over Sheffield Wednesday's chances in the Cup
While you skipped beside us in your ridiculous tank-top
Spouting six-year-old views on Rotherham United

Suddenly you froze, said you hadn't any bus fare
I sighed, said you should go and ask Mum
And while you windmilled home I looked at Paul
His smile, like mine, said I was nine and he was ten
And we must stroll the town, doing what grown-ups do

As a bus crested the hill we chased Olympic Gold
Looking back I saw you spring towards the gate
Your hand holding out what must have been a coin
I ran on, unable to close the distance I'd set in motion

Andrew Forster

Praise Song for my Mother

You were
sunrise to me
rise and warm and streaming

You wereYou were
water to me
deep and bold and fathoming
You were
moon's eye to me
pull and grained and mantling

the fishes red gill to me
the flame trees spread to me
the crab's leg/the fried plantain smell
replenishing replenishing

Go to your wide futures, you said

Grace Nichols

Friend

Do you remember
that wild stretch of land
with the lone tree guarding the point
from the sharp-tongued sea?

The fort we built out of branches
wrenched from the tree, is dead wood now.
The air that was thick with the whirr of
toetoe spears succumbs at last to the grey gull's wheel.

Oyster-studded roots
of the mangrove yield no finer feast
of silver-bellied eels, and sea-snails
cooked in a rusty can.

Allow me to mend the broken ends
of shared days:
but I wanted to say
that the tree we climbed
that gave food and drink
to youthful dreams, is no more.
Pursued to the lips her fine-edged
leaves made whistle – now stamp
no silken tracery on the cracked
clay floor.

Friend,
in this drear
dreamless time I clasp
your hand if only for reassurance
that all our jewelled fantasies were
real and wore splendid rags.

Perhaps the tree
will strike root again:
give soothing shade to a hurt and
troubled world.

Hone Tuwhare

La Belle Dame Sans Merci

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
  Alone and palely loitering;
The sedge is withered from the lake,
  And no birds sing.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
  So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
  And the harvest's done.

I see a lilly on thy brow,
  With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
  Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads
  Full beautiful, a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
  And her eyes were wild.

I set her on my pacing steed,
  And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
  A faery's song.

I made a garland for her head,
  And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
  And made sweet moan.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
  And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
  I love thee true.

She took me to her elfin grot,
  And there she gazed and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
  So kissed to sleep.

And there we slumbered on the moss,
  And there I dreamed, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dreamed
  On the cold hill side.

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
  Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cried—"La belle Dame sans merci
  Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam
  With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
  On the cold hill side.

And this is why I sojourn here
  Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
  And no birds sing.

John Keats

What has Happened to Lulu?

What has happened to Lulu, mother?
What has happened to Lu?
There's nothing in her bed but an old rag-doll
And by its side a shoe.

Why is her window wide, mother,
The curtain flapping free,
And only a circle on the dusty shelf
Where her money-box used to be?

Why do you turn your head, mother,
And why do tear drops fall?
And why do you crumple that note on the fire
And say it is nothing at all?

I woke to voices late last night,
I heard an engine roar.
Why do you tell me the things I heard
Were a dream and nothing more?

I heard somebody cry, mother,
In anger or in pain,
But now I ask you why, mother,
You say it was a gust of rain.

Why do you wander about as though
You don't know what to do?
What has happened to Lulu, mother?
What has happened to Lu?

Charles Causley

Nettles

My son aged three fell in the nettle bed.
‘Bed’ seemed a curious name for those green spears,
That regiment of spite behind the shed:
It was no place for rest. With sobs and tears

The boy came seeking comfort and I saw
White blisters beaded on his tender skin.
We soothed him till his pain was not so raw.
At last he offered us a watery grin,
And then I took my billhook, honed the blade

And went outside and slashed in fury with it
Till not a nettle in that fierce parade
Stood upright any more. And then I lit
A funeral pyre to burn the fallen dead,
But in two weeks the busy sun and rain
Had called up tall recruits behind the shed:
My son would often feel sharp wounds again.

Vernon Scannell

On Turning Ten

The whole idea of it makes me feel
like I'm coming down with something,
something worse than any stomach ache
or the headaches I get from reading in bad light –
a kind of measles of the spirit,
a mumps of the psyche,
a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,
but that is because you have forgotten
the perfect simplicity of being one
and the beautiful complexity introduced by two.
But I can lie on my bed and remember every digit.
At four I was an Arabian wizard.
I could make myself invisible
by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.
At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window
watching the late afternoon light.
Back then it never fell so solemnly
against the side of my tree house,
and my bicycle never leaned against the garage
as it does today,

all the dark blue speed drained out of it.
This is the beginning of sadness, I say to myself,
as I walk through the universe in my sneakers.
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary friends,
time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday I used to believe
There was nothing under my skin but light.
If you cut me I could shine.
But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,
I skin my knees. I bleed.

Billy Collins

When Daddy Fell Into the Pond

Everyone grumbled. The sky was grey.
We had nothing to do and nothing to say.
We were nearing the end of a dismal day,
And there seemed to be nothing beyond,
THEN
Daddy fell into the pond!

And everyone's face grew
merry and bright,
And Timothy danced for sheer delight.
"Give me the camera, quick, oh quick!
He's crawling out of the duckweed!"
Click!

Then the gardener suddenly
slapped his knee,
And doubled up, shaking silently,
And the ducks all quacked
as if they were daft,
And it sounded as if the old drake laughed.
Oh, there wasn't a thing that didn't respond
WHEN
Daddy fell into the pond!

Alfred Noyes

If My Whole Life Flashed Before Me…

I wouldn't want to remember:

The time I threw an apple through my neighbour's window,

the day my Dad took his trousers off in public

because a wasp had got inside them,

the moment I took hold of someone's hand

in the supermarket

and it wasn't Mum's,

the journey when we found ourselves driving along

an airport runway,

the meal when I spilt red wine over Dad's important

business client,

and - worst of all,

the kiss from Great Aunt Mabel when she forgot

to put her teeth in.

Brian Moses

King's College Chapel

When to the music of Byrd or Tallis,
The ruffed boys singing in the blackened stalls,
The candles lighting the small bones on their faces,
The Tudors stiff in marble on the walls.

There comes to evensong Elizabeth or Henry,
Rich with brocade, pearl, golden lilies, at the alter,
The scarlet lions leaping on their bosoms,
Pale royal hands fingering the crackling Psalter,

Henry is thinking of his lute and of backgammon,
Elizabeth follows the waving song, the mystery.
Proud in her red wig and green jewelled favours;
They sit in their white lawn sleeves, as cool as history.

Charles Causley

I Saw A Jolly Hunter

I saw a jolly hunter
With a jolly gun
Walking in the country
In the jolly sun.

In the jolly meadow
Sat a jolly hare.
Saw the jolly hunter.
Took jolly care.

Hunter jolly eager-
Sight of jolly prey.
Forgot gun pointing
Wrong jolly way.

Jolly hunter jolly head
Over heels gone.
Jolly old safety catch
Not jolly on.

Bang went the jolly gun.
Hunter jolly dead.
Jolly hare got clean away.
Jolly good, I said.

Charles Causley

The Bowler

Many have stood boldly at the crease,
With determination and resolve,
To win through on the day with acclaim,
But few can survive the grit
Of the fast spin bowler baying for blood,
His awesome onslaught frightening and merciless,
The first ball a full toss safely batted,
The wicket saved,
The first run attempted and won,
A first step towards victory,
A taste to relish,
A euphoric mood, a sensation of pride.

Another run and yet another,
Dreams being fulfilled,
Breathless with effort and joy,
Blood running like a torrent,
Nostrils flare with resolve and intent,
An elusive century looms
Like the summit of a mountain,
Its shadow envelopes and suffocates the mind.

Expectations rise like a flood tide,
The heart beats uncontrollably,
Braced sinews tighten, the body stiffens,
A small projectile spins inextricably
Intent on destruction.

It pitches short and bounces high,
It strikes the target!
A profusion of stumps and bails scatter,
Hopes and dreams lie forlorn,
Invisible among the debris,
Pride is swallowed, today, alas, is not yours,
It belongs to the fast spin bowler!

Richard Kinsella

Cynddylan on a Tractor

Ah, you should see Cynddylan on a tractor.
Gone the old look that yoked him to the soil,
He's a new man now, part of the machine,
His nerves of metal and his blood oil.
The clutch curses, but the gears obey
His least bidding, and lo, he's away
Out of the farmyard, scattering hens.
Riding to work now as a great man should,
He is the knight at arms breaking the fields'
Mirror of silence, emptying the wood
Of foxes and squirrels and bright jays.
The sun comes over the tall trees
Kindling all the hedges, but not for him
Who runs his engine on a different fuel.
And all the birds are singing, bills wide in vain,
As Cynddylan passes proudly up the lane.

By R S Thomas

Thumbprint

In the heel of my thumb
are whorls, whirls, wheels
in a unique design:
mine alone.
What a treasure to own!
My own flesh, my own feelings.
No other, however grand or base,
can ever contain the same.
My signature,
thumbing the pages of my time.
My universe key,
my singularity.
Impress, implant,
I am myself,
of all my atom parts I am the sum.
And out of my blood and my brain
I make my own interior weather,
my own sun and rain.
Imprint my mark upon the world,
whatever I shall become.

By Eve Merriam

Impressions of a New Boy

This school is huge – I hate it!
Please take me home.
Steep stairs cut in stone,
Peeling ceiling far too high,
The Head said ‘Wait’ so I wait alone,
Alone though Mum stands here, close by.
The voice is loud – I hate it!
Please take me home.
‘Come. Sit. What is your name?’
Trembling lips. The words won’t come.
The head says ‘Speak’, but my cheeks flame,
I hear him give a quiet sigh.
The room is full – I hate it
Please take me home.
A sea of faces stare at me.
My desk is much too small.
Its wooden ridge rubs my knee,
But the Head said ‘Sit’ so though I’m tall
I know that I must try.
The yard is full – I hate it.
Please take me home.
Bodies jostle me away,
Pressing me against the wall.
Then one boy says, ‘Want to play?’
The boy says, ‘Catch’ and throws a ball
And playtime seems to fly.
This school is great - I love it.

Marian Collihole

Isn't My Name Magical?

Nobody can see my name on me.
My name is inside
and all over me, unseen
like other people also keep it.
Isn’t my name magical?

My name is mine only.
It tells me I am individual,
the one special person it shakes
when I’m wanted.

Even if someone else answers
for me, my message hangs in the air
haunting others, till it stops
with me, the right name.
Isn't your name and my name magic?

If I’m with hundreds of people
and my name gets called,
my sound switches me on to answer
like it was my human electricity.

My name echoes across the playground,
it comes, it demands my attention,
I have to find out who calls,
who wants me for what.
My name gets blurted out in class,
it is terror, at a bad time,
because somebody is cross.

My name gets called in a whisper,
I am happy, because
my name may have touched me
with a loving voice.
Isn’t your name and my name magic?

James Berry

Faster and Faster and Faster She Went

Faster and faster and faster she went,
and all she rolled over got broken and bent.
Who on earth was she and why was she sent?

Though many were questioned, nobody knew,
but the faster she went, the bigger she grew,
and the bigger she grew, the faster she went–

some gathered to wonder at what it all meant
and others to ask what she might represent,
but still none could guess what might be the intent

of her surging and burgeoning whirling descent,
none could make sense of it, none could prevent
the flattening violence the world underwent,

till someone threw up a great wall of cement,
right in the path of the way she was headed,
and that's where she stopped at last, slightly imbedded.

Then a laugh was heard, "Excellent! Just what I needed!
I wanted to stop–now I've finally succeeded!
And look, I've gone back to my regular size!"

And when she rose up, she looked so angelic it
seemed that to chastise her would be indelicate.
Right then they decided they might as well hide it–

and so they concealed from the innocent, guiltless
(though none would say harmless), and guileless girl,
their flattened, destabilized, half-destroyed world.

Vernon Scannell

Sunday Dip

The morning road is thronged with merry boys
Who seek the water for their Sunday joys;
They run to seek the shallow pit, and wade
And dance about the water in the shade.
The boldest ventures first and dashes in,
And others go and follow to the chin,
And duck about, and try to lose their fears,
And laugh to hear the thunder in their ears.
They bundle up the rushes for a boat
And try across the deepest place to float:
Beneath the willow trees they ride and stoop—
The awkward load will scarcely bear them up.
Without their aid the others float away,
And play about the water half the day

By John Clare

ONE

Only one of me
And nobody can get a second one
from a photocopy machine.

Nobody has the fingerprints I have.
Nobody can cry my tears, or laugh my laugh
or have my expectancy when I wait.

But anybody can mimic my dance with my dog.
Anybody can howl how I sing out of tune.
And mirrors can show me multiplied
many times, say, dressed up in red
or dressed up in grey.

Nobody can get into my clothes for me
or feel my fall for me, or do my running.
Nobody hears my music for me, either.
I am just this one.

Nobody else makes the words
I shape with sound, when I talk.
But anybody can act how I stutter in a rage.

Anybody can copy echoes I make.
And mirrors can show me multiplied
many times, say, dressed up in green
or dressed up in blue.

James Berry

INSTEAD

Instead of an X-box
please show me a pathway that stretches to the stars.

Instead of a mobile phone
please teach me the language I need to help me speak with angels.

Instead of a computer
please reveal to me the mathematics of meteors and motion.

Instead of the latest computer game
please come with me on a search for dragons in the wood behind our house.

Instead of an e-reader
please read to me from a book of ancient knowledge.

Instead of a digital camera
please help me remember faces and places, mystery and moonbeams.

Instead of a 3D TV
please take me to an empty world that I can people with my imagination.

Instead of electronic wizardry
please show me how to navigate the wisdom inside of me.

Brian Moses

WHAT TO WEAR?

I won’t wear a wizard outfit, wand and black moustache
I won’t wear a blonde wig as I’d look completely daft
I won’t wear a monster suit with googly eyes
I won’t wear a cape (unless it helps me to fly)
I won’t wear the whiskers, tail and claws of a cat
I won’t wear a ten-gallon cowboy hat
I won’t wear a leotard or a long white nightie
I won’t wear a pirate’s beard that’s prickly and spiky
I won’t wear armour as it’s sure to rust and creak
I won’t wear a clown nose and big floppy feet
I won’t wear the costume of a giant bumble bee
‘Cause at your fancy dress party I’ll be going as...
Me!

Neal Zetter

It Was Long Ago

I'll tell you, shall I, something I remember?
Something that still means a great deal to me.
It was long ago.

A dusty road in summer I remember,
A mountain, and an old house, and a tree
That stood, you know,

Behind the house. An old woman I remember
In a red shawl with a grey cat on her knee
Humming under a tree.

She seemed the oldest thing I can remember,
But then perhaps I was not more than three.
It was long ago.

I dragged on the dusty road, and I remember
How the old woman looked over the fence at me
And seemed to know

How it felt to be three, and called out, I remember
'Do you like bilberries and cream for tea?'
I went under the tree

And while she hummed, and the cat purred, I remember
How she filled a saucer with berries and cream for me
So long ago,

Such berries and such cream as I remember
I never had seen before, and never see
Today, you know.

And that is almost all I can remember
The house, the mountain, the grey cat on her knee,
Her red shawl, and the tree,

And the taste of the berries, the feel of the sun I remember,
And the smell of everything that used to be
So long ago,

Till the heat on the road outside again I remember,
And how the long dusty road seemed to have for me
No end, you know.

That is the farthest thing I can remember.
It won't mean much to you. It does to me.
Then I grew up, you see.

Eleanor Farjeon

Us Two

Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
Whatever I do, he wants to do,
"Where are you going today?" says Pooh:
"Well, that's very odd 'cos I was too.
Let's go together," says Pooh, says he.
"Let's go together," says Pooh.

"What's twice eleven?" I said to Pooh.
("Twice what?" said Pooh to Me.)
"I think it ought to be twenty-two."
"Just what I think myself," said Pooh.
"It wasn't an easy sum to do,
But that's what it is," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what it is," said Pooh.

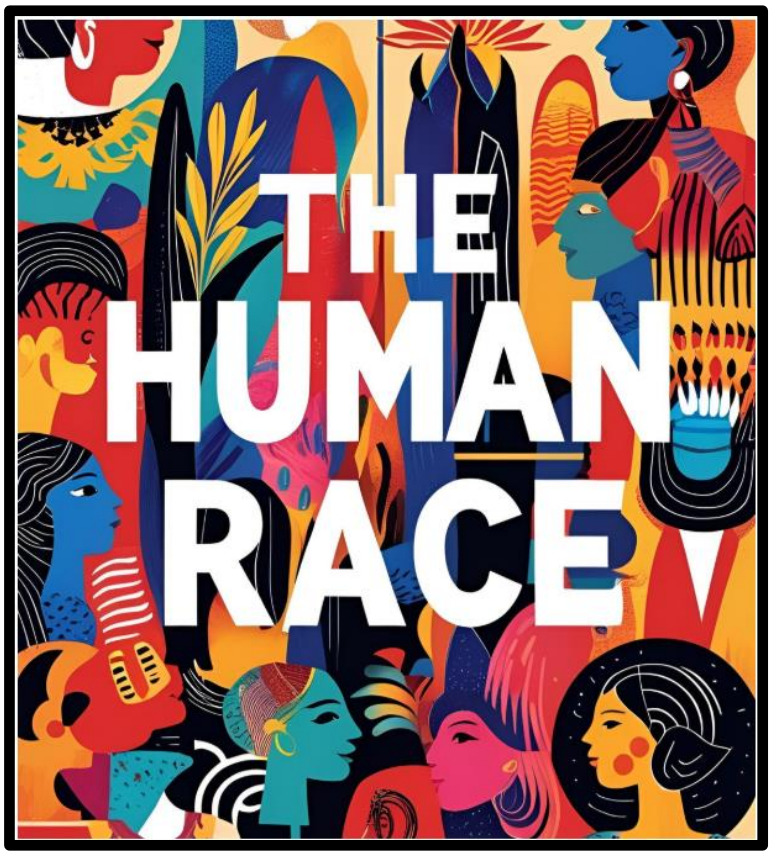
"Let's look for dragons," I said to Pooh.
"Yes, let's," said Pooh to Me.
We crossed the river and found a few-
"Yes, those are dragons all right," said Pooh.
"As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.
That's what they are," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what they are," said Pooh.

"Let's frighten the dragons," I said to Pooh.
"That's right," said Pooh to Me.
"I'm not afraid," I said to Pooh,
And I held his paw and I shouted "Shoo!
Silly old dragons!"- and off they flew.

"I wasn't afraid," said Pooh, said he,
"I'm never afraid with you."

So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
"What would I do?" I said to Pooh,
"If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said: "True,
It isn't much fun for One, but Two,
Can stick together, says Pooh, says he.
"That's how it is," says Pooh.

A A Milne



SECTION 2

FICTION

EXTRACTS

- You do not have to learn these off-by-heart, you can read from a clean, smart copy; BUT, you must ensure that you have practiced thoroughly.
- If would like to read a short piece from a book you have been enjoying that is not in this anthology, please check with your English teacher first - there is every chance that we will be happy to include it.

The Secret Garden

Mary Lennox, a lonely girl, discovers a walled garden on her uncle's estate, hidden for ten years.

It was the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place any one could imagine. The high walls were covered with climbing roses, and the ground was full of grass and flowers, though it had been left untended for years. Mary stood in the middle of it all, her eyes wide with wonder.

“It’s been shut up and forgotten,” she whispered. The robin had shown her the way, hopping ahead and chirping brightly, as though he knew the secret of the door. With trembling hands she had turned the rusty key, and now the garden was hers.

Mary walked slowly, touching the branches and breathing in the cool, fresh air. For the first time in her life she felt something stir inside her—a happiness she had never known in the grand houses of India or the gloomy rooms of Misselthwaite Manor.

“It’s a secret garden,” she said softly. “And I’m the one who found it.”

Frances Hodgson Burnett

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Graceful trees and bushes were growing along the riverbanks- weeping willows and alders and tall clumps of rhododendrons with their pink and red and mauve blossoms. In the meadows there were thousands of buttercups. ‘There!’ cried Mr Wonka, dancing up and down and pointing his gold-topped cane at the great brown river. ‘It’s all chocolate! Every drop of that river is hot melted chocolate of the finest quality. The very finest quality. There’s enough chocolate in there to fill every bathtub in the entire country! And all the swimming pools as well! Isn’t it terrific? And just look at my pipes! They suck up the chocolate and carry it away to all the other rooms in the factory where it is needed! Thousands of gallons an hour, my dear children! Thousands and thousands of gallons!’ The children and their parents were too flabbergasted to speak. They were staggered. They were dumbfounded. They were bewildered and dazzled. They were completely bowled over by the hugeness of the whole thing. They simply stood and stared.

‘The waterfall is most important!’ Mr Wonka went on. ‘It mixes the chocolate! It churns it up! It pounds it and beats it! It makes it light and frothy! No other factory in the world mixes its chocolate by waterfall! But it’s the only way to do it properly! The only way! And do you like my trees?’ he cried, pointing with his stick. ‘And my lovely bushes? Don’t you think they look pretty? I told you I hated ugliness! And of course they are all eatable! All made of something different and delicious! And do you like my meadows? Do you like my grass and my buttercups? The grass you are standing on, my dear little ones, is made of a new kind of soft, minty sugar that I’ve just invented! I call it swudge! Try a blade! Please do! It’s delectable!’

Roald Dahl

The Hobbit

The stars were coming out behind him in a pale sky barred with black when the hobbit crept through the enchanted door and stole into the Mountain. It was far easier going than he expected. This was no goblin entrance, or rough wood-elves' cave. It was a passage made by dwarves: straight as a ruler, smooth-floored and smooth-sided, going with a gentle nevervarying slope direct – to some distant end in the blackness below.

The hobbit slipped on his ring and crept noiselessly down, down, down into the dark. He was trembling with fear, but his little face was set and grim. Already he was a very different hobbit from the one that had left the safe comforts of Bag-End long ago. He loosened his dagger in its sheath, tightened its belt, and went on.

He was altogether alone. Soon he thought it was beginning to feel warm. "Is that a kind of glow I seem to see coming right ahead down there?" he thought.

It was. As he went forward it grew and grew, till there was no doubt about it. It was a red light steadily getting redder and redder. Also it was now undoubtedly hot in the tunnel. Wisps of vapour floated up and past him and he began to sweat. A sound, too, began to throb in his ears, a sort of bubbling like the noise of a large pot galloping on the fire, mixed with a rumble as of a gigantic tom-cat purring. This grew to the vast unmistakable gurgling noise of some vast animal snoring in its sleep down there in the red glow in front of him.

J.R.R. Tolkien

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Looking into the inside, she saw several coats hanging up - mostly long fur coats. There was nothing Lucy liked so much as the smell and feel of fur. She immediately stepped into the wardrobe and got in among the coats and rubbed her face against them, leaving the door open, of course, because she knew that it is very foolish to shut oneself into any wardrobe. Soon she went further in and found that there was a second row of coats hanging up behind the first one. It was almost quite dark in there and she kept her arms stretched out in front of her so as not to bump her face into the back of the wardrobe. She took a step further in - then two or three steps always expecting to feel woodwork against the tips of her fingers. But she could not feel it.

"This must be a simply enormous wardrobe!" thought Lucy, going still further in and pushing the soft folds of the coats aside to make room for her. Then she noticed that there was something crunching under her feet. "I wonder is that more mothballs?" she thought, stooping down to feel it with her hand. But instead of feeling the hard, smooth wood of the floor of the wardrobe, she felt something soft and powdery and extremely cold. "This is very queer," she said, and went on a step or two further.

Next moment she found that what was rubbing against her face and hands was no longer soft fur but something hard and rough and even prickly. "Why, it is just like branches of trees!" exclaimed Lucy.

C S Lewis

Skellig

I finished the Coke, waited a minute, then I went down to the garage again. I didn't have time to dare myself or to stand there listening to the scratching. I switched the torch on, took a deep breath, and tiptoed straight inside.

Something little and black scuttled across the floor. The door creaked and cracked for a moment before it was still. Dust poured through the torch beam. Something scratched and scratched in a corner. I tiptoed further in and felt spider webs breaking over my brow. Everything was packed in tight – ancient furniture, kitchen units, rolled up carpets, pipes and crates and planks. I kept ducking down under the hosepipes and rope and kitbags that hung from the roof. More cobwebs snapped on my clothes and skin. The floor was broken and crumbly. I opened a cupboard an inch, shone the torch in saw a million woodlice scattering away. I peered down into a great stone jar and saw a bunch of bones of some little animal that had died there. Dead bluebottles were everywhere. There were ancient newspapers and magazines. I shone a torch on to one and saw that it came from nearly fifty years ago. I moved so carefully. I was scared every moment that the whole thing was going to collapse. There was dust clogging my throat and nose. I knew they'd be yelling for me soon and I knew I'd better get out. I leaned across a heap of tea chests and shone the torch into the space behind and that's when I saw him.

I thought he was dead. He was sitting with his legs stretched out, and his head tipped back against the wall. He was covered in dust and webs like everything else and his face was thin and pale. Dead bluebottles were scattered on his hair and shoulders. I shone the torch on his white face and his black suit. 'What do you want?' he said. He opened his eyes and looked up at me. His voice squeaked like he hadn't used it in years. 'What do you want? My heart thudded and thundered. 'I said, what do you want?'

Then I heard a yelling from inside the house. 'Michael! Michael! Michael!' I shuffled out again. I backed out through the door.

David Almond

The Little White Horse

They had come to the edge of a clearing in the wood, a desolate place like a quarry strewn with boulders, with stagnant pools of water between the rocks. On three sides the rock rose up sheer like a wall and crowning the wall the way they were facing was a castle built foursquare like a tower, so old that it looked like part of the rock upon which it was built. Upon each side of it, except just this side where its great gate looked down upon the clearing, the pine trees closed about it with the darkness of night. It was a terrifying castle. The only way to reach it, as far as Maria could see, was to climb up the flight of steps that had been cut in the cliff beneath; and to do that they would have to leave the shelter of the pine trees and cross the clearing under the eyes of whoever might be looking out of that window above the gate.

“There’s another way,” whispered Robin. “Wrolf showed it to me when we were here before. Look, he’s leading us that way now.”

They went back among the pine trees, turned to their left in a wide half-circle and began to climb steeply upwards, climbing over the rocks that had pushed themselves out of the ground between the pine trees, and pushing their way through thickets of bramble bushes. … Then they swerved round to the right again, and they had come right round to the back of the castle. Its frowning walls rose sheer up above them. But there was no door here. No window even. Nothing but the great high wall, as high as the tallest pine tree, with battlements along the top.
“We climb up the tallest tree, and then onto the battlements,” explained Robin airily. “I tried it the other day to see if it could be done, and it’s quite easy.”’

Elizabeth Goudge

Zhou Chou and the Three Beasts
A legend from China retold

Everyone in the village feared and hated the bully, Zhou Chou. One day, the priest asked him, “Why do you squander your time worrying us little people? A man with your talents should be battling ferocious beasts, not frightening small children.”
Zhou Chou glowered.
“What beasts?” he asked.
“Three beasts live nearby. They are the scourge of our town,” exclaimed the priest. “Why don’t you scare them away? Or are you worried that they are too powerful for you?”
“Nothing is too powerful for me!” declared Zhou Chou.
“The first beast terrorises the people and steals their children. It is a wild tiger,” said the priest. “Can you help us with it?”
“Consider it done!,” smirked Zhou Chou, displaying the bulging muscles in his arms.
Taking his weapons, he hurried to the tiger’s lair. The tiger was sharpening its claws on a rocky outcrop. Zhou Chou fired a swarm of fierce, fast arrows at it.
“That was well done,” said the priest when Zhou Chou returned to the town wearing the tiger skin as a cape. “Now can you defeat the second beast – a water dragon that terrifies the fishermen and keeps them from their shoals?”
Zhou Chou found a boat and rowed out onto the lake. For three days, he teased and pestered the dragon until it became frustrated and drew closer, intending to incinerate him. As it drew in a breath, Zhou Chou struck it with his axe.
“Congratulations,” said the priest when Zhou Chou appeared wearing a tunic of dragon hide. “Your biggest challenge, however, is yet to come. You must tame the fiercest of all the beasts.”
“It doesn’t stand a chance against me!” boasted Zhou Chou. “Where is it?”
“I am looking at him now,” said the priest.
Zhou Chou staggered back. For the first time in his life he felt inadequate. Ashamed, he slunk away from the town and enlisted in the army. In time, and under the guidance of their greatest warriors, he became a skilled general, admired and beloved by his people.

Kate Ruttle

The Firework Maker's Daughter

A thousand miles ago, in a country east of the jungle and south of the mountains, there lived a Firework-Maker called Lalchand and his daughter, Lila.

Lalchand's wife had died when Lila was young. The child was a cross little thing, always crying and refusing her food, but Lalchand built a cradle for her in the corner of the workshop, where she could see the sparks play and listen to the fizz and crackle of the gunpowder. Once she was out of her cradle, she toddled around the workshop laughing as the fire flared and the sparks danced. Many a time she burnt her little fingers, but Lalchand splashed water on them and kissed her better, and soon she was playing again.

When she was old enough to learn, her father began to teach her the art of making fireworks. She began with little Crackle-Dragons, six on a string. Then she learned how to make Leaping Monkeys, Golden Sneezes, and Java Lights. Soon she was making all the simple fireworks, and thinking about more complicated ones. One day she said, 'Father, if I put some flowers of salt in a Java Light instead of cloud-powder, what would happen?'

'Try it and see,' he said.

So she did. Instead of burning with a steady green glimmer, it sprayed out wicked little sparks, each of which turned a somersault before going out.
'Not bad, Lila,' said Lalchand. 'What are you going to call it?'
'Mmm... Tumbling Demons,' she said.

Philip Pullman

Winnie-the-Pooh

Pooh Bear, a bear who loves honey, is introduced to the reader.

Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it. And then he feels that perhaps there isn't.

"Ow!" said Pooh, as he bumped his head against the next stair. "Bother!"

Christopher Robin sat down on the stairs and laughed. "Silly old Bear!"

So one day, when he was out walking, Christopher Robin came to where Pooh was sitting. Pooh was humming to himself in a thoughtful sort of way, and when he saw Christopher Robin he stopped humming and said, "Hallo!"

"Hallo, Pooh Bear," said Christopher Robin. "What were you thinking about just now?"

"I was thinking," said Pooh, "that if I tried very hard, I might be able to make up a little hum all about honey. Because it's nearly time for a little something." And with that, he began to sing in his deep, thoughtful voice about honey and bees and how a Bear might find them.

A A Milne

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

'What's he doing?' Harry whispered. 'Why isn't he down in the dungeons with the rest of the teachers?'
'Search me.'
Quietly as possible, they crept along the next corridor after Snape's fading footsteps.
'He's heading for the third floor,' Harry said, but Ron held up his hand.
'Can you smell something?'

Harry sniffed and a foul stench reached his nostrils, a mixture of old socks and the kind of public toilet no one seems to clean.

And then they heard it – a low grunting and the shuffling of gigantic feet. Ron pointed: at the end of the passage to the left, something huge was moving towards them. They shrank into the shadows and watched as it emerged into a patch of moonlight.

It was a horrible sight. Twelve feet tall, its skin was a dull, granite grey, its great lumpy body like a boulder with its small bald head perched on top like a coconut. It had short legs thick as tree trunks with flat, horny feet. The smell coming from it was incredible. It was holding a huge wooden club, which dragged along the floor because its arms were so long.
The troll stopped next to a doorway and peered inside. It waggled its long ears, making up its tiny mind, then slouched slowly into the room.

'The key's in the lock,' Harry muttered. 'We could lock it in.'

J K Rowling

Varjak Paw

The Elder Paw was telling a story.

It was a Jalal tale, one of the best. Varjak loved to hear his grandfather's tales of their famous ancestor: how Jalal fought the fiercest warrior cats, how he was the mightiest hunter, how he came out of Mesopotamia and travelled to the ends of the earth, further than any cat had been before. But today, the Elder Paw's tale just made Varjak restless. So what if Jalal had such exciting adventures? Varjak never would. Jalal had ended his days in the Contessa's house. His family of Mesopotamian Blues had stayed here ever since.

The old place must have been full of light and life in Jalal's time, generations ago - but now it was full of dust and musty smells. The windows were always closed, the doors locked. There was a garden, but it was surrounded by a high stone wall. Jalal was the last to cross it. In all the years since then, no one had ever left the Contessa's house.

Now, no one except Varjak was even listening to the tale of Jalal's adventures. Father, Mother and Aunt Juni were dozing in the late afternoon light that trickled through the thick green windows. His big brother Julius was flexing his muscles; his cousin Jasmine was fiddling with her collar. His litter brothers Jay, Jethro and Jerome were playing one of those kittenish games that Varjak could never see the point of, and wasn't allowed to join in anyway.

S F Said

Kensuke's Kingdom

Considering everything, my mother took it pretty well. She didn't shout at him. She just went very quiet, and she stayed quiet all through his explanation down in the galley over a cup of tea.

'It wasn't a spur of the moment thing, you know. I've been thinking about it a long time, all those years working in the factory. All right, maybe I was just dreaming about it in those days. Funny when you think about it: if I hadn't lost my job, I'd never have dared do it, not in a million years.' He knew he wasn't making much sense. 'All right, then. Here's what I thought. What is it that we all love doing most? Sailing, right? Wouldn't it be wonderful, I thought, if we could just take off and sail around the world? There's people who've done it. Blue water sailing, they call it. I've read about it in the magazines.

'Like I said, it was just a dream to start with. And then, no job and no chance of a job. What did the man say? Get on your bike. So why not a boat? We've got our redundancy money, what little there was of it. There's a bit saved up, and the car money. Not a fortune, but enough. What to do with it? I could put it all in the bank, like the others did. But what for? Just to watch it dribble away till there was nothing left? Or, I thought, or I could do something really special with it, a once-in-a-lifetime thing: we could sail around the world. Africa. South America. Australia. The Pacific. We could see places we've only ever dreamed of.'

Michael Morpurgo

Percy Jackson and the Greek Gods

I hope I'm getting extra credit for this. A publisher in New York asked me to write down what I know about the Greek gods, and I was like, 'Can we do this anonymously? Because I don't need the Olympians mad at me again.'

But if it helps you to know your Greek gods, and survive an encounter with them if they ever show up in your face, then I guess writing all this down will be my good deed for the week.

If you don't know me, my name is Percy Jackson. I'm a modern-day demigod – a halfgod, half-mortal son of Poseidon – but I'm not going to say much about myself. My story has already been written down in some books that are total fiction (wink, wink), and I am just a character from the story (cough – yeah, right – cough). Just go easy on me while I'm telling you about the gods, all right? There's like forty bajillion different versions of the myths, so don't be all Well, I heard it a different way, so you're WRONG!

I'm going to tell you the versions that make the most sense to me. I promise I didn't make any of this up. I got all these stories straight from the Ancient Greek and Roman dudes who wrote them down in the first place. Believe me, I couldn't make up stuff this weird. So here we go. First I'll tell you how the world got made. Then I'll run down a list of gods and give you my two cents about each of them. I just hope I don't make them so mad they incinerate me before I –

AGGHHHHHHHH!

Just kidding. Still here.

Anyway, I'll start with the Greek story of creation, which by the way is seriously messed up. Wear your safety glasses and your raincoat. There will be blood.

Rick Riordan

Wuthering Heights

This extract invites us into the hostile farmhouse of Wuthering Heights, where the narrator describes a storm and seeing a ghost.

We had nearly reached the door, when suddenly the dogs set up a howl, and the latch lifted from within. A rush of wind blew out the candle, and in the dark chamber I fancied I saw a child's face, white and miserable, pressed against the window-pane.

Terror made me cry out, and I tried to pull away from the glass. My hand touched only the cold, wet surface, and a branch of a fir tree tapping on the window was all the ghost I had seen. Yet my nerves trembled for hours afterwards.

The storm raged outside, and the desolate moor seemed to echo with cries. I could not shake the feeling that I was surrounded by spirits. The wind moaned down the chimney, the shutters rattled, and the house itself seemed to shudder under the storm's force.

Alone in that strange chamber, I pressed the bedclothes around me and tried to sleep. But the image of the pale child's face at the window would not leave my mind. It seemed to hover there in the dark, pleading to be let in. Each gust of wind sounded like its wailing voice, and I began to wonder if Wuthering Heights was indeed haunted by the restless dead.

Emily Bronte

Life of Pi

Once there was lightning. The sky was so black, day looked like night. The downpour was heavy. I heard thunder far away. I thought it would stay at that. But a wind came up, throwing the rain this way and that. Right after, a white splinter came crashing down from the sky, puncturing the water. It was some distance from the lifeboat, but the effect was perfectly visible. The water was shot through with what looked like white roots; briefly, a great heavenly tree stood in the ocean. I had never imagined such a thing possible, lightning striking the sea. The clap of thunder was huge. The flash of light was incredibly colourful.

I turned to Richard Parker and said, "Look, Richard Parker, a bolt of lightning." I saw how he felt about it. He was flat on the floor of the boat, limbs spread and visibly shaking. The effect on me was completely the opposite. It was something to pull me out of my limited mortal ways and thrust me into a state of exalted wonder.

Suddenly a bolt struck much closer. Maybe it was meant for us: we had just fallen off the crest of a swell and were sinking down its back when its top was hit. There was an explosion of hot air and hot water. For two, maybe three seconds, a gigantic, very bright white piece of glass from a broken cosmic window danced in the sky, small and unimportant yet overwhelmingly powerful. Ten thousand trumpets and twenty thousand drums could not have made as much noise as that bolt of lightning; it was positively deafening. The sea turned white and all colour disappeared. Everything was either pure white light or absolute black shadow. The light did not seem to illuminate so much as to penetrate. As quickly as it had appeared, the bolt disappeared—the spray of hot water had not finished landing upon us and already it was gone. The punished swell returned to black and rolled on.

Yan Martel

The Hound of the Baskervilles

This extract introduces the brilliant detective Sherlock Holmes and his loyal companion Dr. Watson, as they experience the dreadful case of a mysterious hound and a family curse.

A low moan rose on the night air, deep and dreadful. We froze where we stood, listening. Then, on the moor itself, the sound was repeated: long, drawn out, and terrifying. It was the howl of a gigantic hound.

“It is the cry of a hound!” said Holmes.

I shivered as the echoes rolled over the dark hills. The wind seemed to carry the sound closer, as though some monstrous beast prowled just beyond our sight. The moon broke through the clouds for a moment, and the mists of the moor swirled like ghostly shapes.

“What do they call that sound?” I whispered.

“The Hound of the Baskervilles,” Holmes replied grimly. “And if ever mortal man stood in peril of his soul, it is Sir Henry this night.”

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Great Expectations

The mist was heavier yet when I got out upon the marshes, so that instead of my running at everything, everything seemed to run at me. This was very disagreeable to a guilty mind. The gates and dykes and banks came bursting at me through the mist, as if they cried as plainly as could be, “A boy with Somebody-else’s pork pie! Stop him!” The cattle came upon me with like suddenness, staring out of their eyes, and steaming out of their nostrils, “Halloa, young thief!” One black ox, with a white cravat on – who even had to my awakened conscience something of a clerical air – fixed me so obstinately with his eyes, and moved his blunt head round in such an accusatory manner as I moved round, that I blubbered out to him, “I couldn’t help it, sir! It wasn’t for myself that I took it!” Upon which he put down his head, blew a cloud of smoke out of his nose, and vanished with a kick-up of his hindlegs and a flourish of his tail.

All this time I was getting on towards the river; but however fast I went, I couldn’t warm my feet, to which the damp cold seemed riveted, as the iron was riveted to the leg of the man I was running to meet. I knew my way to the Battery, pretty straight, for I had been down there on a Sunday with Joe, and Joe, sitting on an old gun, had told me that when I was ’prentice to him, regularly bound, we would have such Larks there! However, in the confusion of the mist, I found myself at last too far to the right, and consequently had to try back along the river-side, on the bank of loose stones above the mud and the stakes that staked the tide out.

Charles Dickens

War Horse

This extract is told from the perspective of Joey, a young horse, as he iapproaches a battle in World War I.

The troopers talked of the battle ahead and all the frustrations and irritations of imposed idleness vanished as they sang in the saddle. And my Trooper Warren was singing along with them as lustily as any of them. In the cold grey of the night the squadron joined the regiment in the remnants of a little ruined village peopled only by cats, and waited there for an hour until the pale light of dawn crept over the horizon. Still the guns bellowed out their fury and the ground shook beneath us. We passed the field hospitals and the light guns before trotting over the support trenches to catch our first sight of the battle-field. Desolation and destruction were everywhere. Not a building was left intact. Not a blade of grass grew in the torn and ravaged soil. The singing around me stopped and we moved on in ominous silence and out over the trenches that were crammed with men, their bayonets fixed to their rifles. They gave us a sporadic cheer as we clattered over the boards and out into the wilderness of no man's land, into a wilderness of wire and shell holes and the terrible litter of war. Suddenly the guns stopped firing overhead. We were through the wire. The squadron fanned out in a wide, uneven echelon and the bugle sounded. I felt the spurs biting into my sides and moved up alongside Topthorn as we broke into a trot. 'Do me proud, Joey,' said Trooper Warren, drawing his sword. 'Do me proud.'

FOR JUST A few short moments we moved forward at the trot as we had done in training. In the eerie silence of no man's land all that could be heard was the jingle of the harness and the snorting of the horses. We picked our way around the craters keeping our line as best we could. Up ahead of us at the top of a gentle sloping hill were the battered remnants of a wood and just below a hideous, rusting roll of barbed wire that stretched out along the horizon as far as the eye could see.

Michael Morpurgo

To Kill a Mockingbird

Jem was twelve. He was difficult to live with, inconsistent, moody. His appetite was appalling, and he told me so many times to stop pestering him I consulted Atticus: “Reckon he’s got a tapeworm?” Atticus said no, Jem was growing. I must be patient with him and disturb him as little as possible.

This change in Jem had come about in a matter of weeks. Mrs. Dubose was not cold in her grave—Jem had seemed grateful enough for my company when he went to read to her. Overnight, it seemed, Jem had acquired an alien set of values and was trying to impose them on me: several times he went so far as to tell me what to do. After one altercation when Jem hollered, “It’s time you started bein‘ a girl and acting right!” I burst into tears and fled to Calpurnia.

“Don’t you fret too much over Mister Jem—” she began.

“Mister Jem?”

“Yeah, he’s just about Mister Jem now.”

“He ain’t that old,” I said. “All he needs is somebody to beat him up, and I ain’t big enough.”

“Baby,” said Calpurnia, “I just can’t help it if Mister Jem’s growin’ up. He’s gonna want to be off to himself a lot now, doin’ whatever boys do, so you just come right on in the kitchen when you feel lonesome. We’ll find lots of things to do in here.”

The beginning of that summer boded well: Jem could do as he pleased; Calpurnia would do until Dill came. She seemed glad to see me when I appeared in the kitchen, and by watching her I began to think there was some skill involved in being a girl.

Harper Lee

Jane Eyre

This extract describes the young Jane Eyre who has been unfairly punished for bad behaviour and locked in a room.

I resisted all the way: a new thing for me, and a circumstance which greatly strengthened the bad opinion Bessie and Miss Abbot were disposed to entertain of me. The fact is, I was a trifle beside myself; or rather, out of myself, as the French would say. A moment's mutiny had already rendered me liable to strange penalties, and like any other rebel slave, I felt resolved, in my desperation, to go all lengths.

"Take her away to the red-room," was Miss Abbot's order.

The red-room was a chamber very seldom slept in, and reputed to be haunted. I resisted all the way, but in vain. I was dragged to the threshold, pushed in, the key turned, and I was left alone.

The room was large and silent, with curtains of deep red. The bed was massive, and the furniture dark. A strange chill seemed to creep into my bones. I thought of the tales whispered in the house, of a ghost that walked there. My heart beat fast, and though I tried to be brave, every creak in the old wood made me tremble.

As the minutes passed, I felt more and more oppressed. The shadows seemed to shift across the walls. I stared at the great mirror, certain I would see some dreadful shape at my shoulder. Suddenly, a beam of light struck the glass, and in the reflection I thought I saw something stir. My courage broke; I screamed, and no one came.

Charlotte Bronte

Dracula

This extract focuses on Jonathan Harker as he becomes familiar with the mysterious castle in the Carpathian Mountains, and the strange nature of his host, Count Dracula.

As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal. The Count, evidently noticing it, drew back; and with a grim sort of smile which showed more than he had yet done his sharp white teeth, sat himself down again on his own side of the fireplace.

We were both silent for a while; and as I looked towards the window I saw the first dim streak of the coming dawn. There seemed a strange stillness over everything; but as I listened I thought I heard, from far away in the depths of the valley, the howling of many wolves. The Count's eyes gleamed, and he said:

"Listen to them—the children of the night. What music they make!"

As he spoke, he waved his long arms, as though it all were his own. There was something so strange about the place and the sound, that a chill came over me. I could not help thinking of the old legends of the country, and of the dreadful stories of ghosts and demons that the people had told me on the way. Now, here in this lonely castle, with a man who seemed more like a living shadow than a mortal, those tales did not seem so impossible.

Bram Stoker

Lord of the Flies

The boys think a beast is coming to attack them and this is their response.

Jack leapt on to the sand.

"Do our dance! Come on! Dance!"

He ran stumbling through the thick sand to the open space of rock beyond the fire. Between the flashes of lightning the air was dark and terrible; and the boys followed him, clamorously. Roger became the pig, grunting and charging at Jack, who side-stepped. The hunters took their spears, the cooks took spits, and the rest clubs of firewood. A circling movement developed and a chant. While Roger mimed the terror of the pig, the littluns ran and jumped on the outside of the circle. Piggy and Ralph, under the threat of the sky, found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society. They were glad to touch the brown backs of the fence that hemmed in the terror and made it governable.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!"

The movement became regular while the chant lost its first superficial excitement and began to beat like a steady pulse. Roger ceased to be a pig and became a hunter, so that the center of the ring yawned emptily. Some of the littluns started a ring on their own; and the complementary circles went round and round as though repetition would achieve safety of itself. There was the throb and stamp of a single organism.

The dark sky was shattered by a blue-white scar. An instant later the noise was on them like the blow of a gigantic whip. The chant rose a tone in agony.

William Golding

Carrie's War

In this extract, Carrie and her younger brother Nick arrive in Wales as evacuees during the war, and they are taken in by a strict but kind shopkeeper and her sister.

The shop was dim and smelled mustily pleasant. Candles and tarred kindling, and spices, Carrie thought, wrinkling her nose. A door at the back led into a small room with a huge desk almost filling it. “My brother’s office,” Miss Evans said in a hushed voice and hurried them through into a narrow, dark hall with closed doors and a stair rising up. It was darker here than the shop and there was a strong smell of polish. Polished linoleum, a shining glass sea, with rugs scattered like islands. Not a speck of dust anywhere. Miss Evans looked down at their feet. “Better change into your slippers before we go up to your bedroom.”

“We haven’t got any,” Carrie said. She meant to explain that there hadn’t been any room in their cases but before she could speak Miss Evans turned bright red and said quickly, “Oh, I’m so sorry, how silly of me, why should you? Never mind, as long as you’re careful and tread on the drugget.”

A strip of white cloth covered the middle of the stair carpet. They trod on this as they climbed; looking back from the top, Carrie saw the marks of their rubber-soled shoes and felt guilty, though it wasn’t her fault. Nick whispered, “She thinks we’re poor children, too poor to have slippers,” and giggled.

Carrie supposed he was right. Nick was good at guessing what people were thinking. But she didn’t feel like giggling; everywhere was so tidy and clean that it made her despair. She thought she would never dare touch anything in this house in case she left marks. She wouldn’t dare breathe – even her breath might be dirty

Nina Bawden

Oliver Twist

Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months: at last they got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cook-shop), hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel per diem, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild, hungry eye; and they implicitly believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered each other, and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbors nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity: 'Please, sir, I want some more.'

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear. 'What!' said the master at length, in a faint voice.

'Please, sir,' replied Oliver, 'I want some more.'

Charles Dickens

Black Beauty

There was before us a long piece of level road by the riverside; John said to me, “Now, Beauty, do your best,” and so I did; I wanted no whip nor spur, and for two miles I galloped as fast as I could lay my feet to the ground; I don’t believe that my old grandfather, who won the race at Newmarket, could have gone faster. When we came to the bridge John pulled me up a little and patted my neck. “Well done, Beauty! good old fellow,” he said. He would have let me go slower, but my spirit was up, and I was off again as fast as before. The air was frosty, the moon was bright; it was very pleasant. We came through a village, then through a dark wood, then uphill, then downhill, till after eight miles’ run we came to the town, through the streets and into the marketplace. It was all quite still except the clatter of my feet on the stones—everybody was asleep. The church clock struck three as we drew up at Dr. White’s door. John rang the bell twice, and then knocked at the door like thunder. A window was thrown up, and Dr. White, in his nightcap, put his head out and said, “What do you want?”

“Mrs. Gordon is very ill, sir; master wants you to go at once; he thinks she will die if you cannot get there. Here is a note.”

“Wait,” he said, “I will come.”

He shut the window, and was soon at the door.

“The worst of it is,” he said, “that my horse has been out all day and is quite done up; my son has just been sent for, and he has taken the other. What is to be done? Can I have your horse?”

“He has come at a gallop nearly all the way, sir, and I was to give him a rest here; but I think my master would not be against it, if you think fit, sir.”

“All right,” he said; “I will soon be ready.”

John stood by me and stroked my neck; I was very hot. The doctor came out with his riding-whip.

“You need not take that, sir,” said John; “Black Beauty will go till he drops. Take care of him, sir, if you can; I should not like any harm to come to him.”

Anna Sewell

The Tale of Peter Rabbit

In this passage, Peter Rabbit's curiosity leads him into Mr. McGregor's garden, where he faces the consequences of his disobedience.

> "Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were—Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, and Peter. They lived with their Mother in a sand-bank, underneath the root of a very big fir-tree. 'Now, my dears,' said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, 'you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden: your father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor.' 'Now run along, and don't get into mischief. I am going out.' Then old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella, and went through the wood to the baker's."

Beatrix Potter

Jennings Goes to School

This extract introduces Jennings, a good-natured but accident-prone schoolboy at Linbury Court Preparatory School.

Jennings had a strong sense of public duty. He would return good for evil, and set a shining example of the way in which citizens ought to behave. He strode back up the garden path and knocked again at the front door. Police Constable Herbert Honeyball was not pleased to see him. “Now, look here, I thought I told you to run away,” he said sternly. He was halfway through his tea, and he had no intention of letting his poached eggs become spoilt at the whim of some youthful hoaxer. “Ah, yes; but it’s different this time,” Jennings assured him. “I’ve come to report something I’ve found—not something I’ve lost.” He held up the pump for the policeman’s inspection. “Look, I found this—well, I bet you can’t guess where.” PC Honeyball said that it was unreasonable to expect a police officer whose poached egg was rapidly congealing to indulge in guessing games, especially when he had just gone off duty. “Oh! Well, I’ll tell you then. I was just going through your garden gate, and there slap bang on the path outside...” “I’ll book it down,” said Mr. Honeyball shortly. “What did you say your name was?” “Well, my name’s Jennings, but according to that code I was telling you about, it’s... well, it’s rather difficult to pronounce. Try saying...” The policeman’s patience was wearing thin by the time he had recorded the finding of a bicycle pump on the Dunhambury road by J C T Jennings of Linbury Court, at 4.52 p.m. approx, on the afternoon of February 16th... And by that time his poached egg was not worth eating.

Jennings had ridden barely five yards on his homeward journey when the bumping of his back wheel told him that his tyre was nearly flat... Of course! Pettigrew had said something about a slow puncture. He dismounted and reached for the pump... It was some seconds before the explanation dawned on him, and even then there were still some things that he did not understand. Who was the crazy clodpoll, he asked himself angrily, who had calmly removed the pump from its proper place and left it by the gate? No one but a stark, raving addle-pated half-wit would indulge in such senseless stupidity. A joke was all very well, but this was carrying things too far!

Anthony Buckeridge

The Ozard Incident

Jennings was still pondering the mystery of the "ozard" when Atkinson, a seasoned pupil, enlightened him. "School jam's rotten muck," Atkinson explained, "tastes like hair cream. Of course, all school food's muck, but usually it's pretty decent, so that makes it wizard muck, if you follow me." Jennings, eager to understand, nodded sagely. "Okay then," Atkinson continued, "You've heard of the Wizard of Oz, of course. Well, obviously, the opposite of wizard is ozard, isn't it?" Jennings conceded the point. "That shepherd's pie we just had was supersonic muck, so it's wizard, but this school jam's ghastly, so it's ozard. Everything ghastly is ozard; being a new chap's pretty ozard for a bit, but you'll get used to it when you've been here as long as I have." Jennings, now enlightened, felt a sense of camaraderie with Atkinson, despite the peculiar terminology.

The next day, Jennings was determined to make the best of things. Armed with his newfound knowledge, he approached the dining hall with a sense of purpose. As he sat down to his meal, he surveyed the offerings with a critical eye. The mashed potatoes looked suspiciously like wallpaper paste, and the peas resembled marbles more than vegetables. But Jennings was undeterred. He dug in with gusto, determined to prove that even ozard could be palatable with the right attitude.

As he chewed thoughtfully, he overheard a conversation between two older boys. "I say, did you hear about the new chap?" one asked. "Yes, Jennings, isn't it? I hear he's quite the character." The other boy nodded. "Indeed. I understand he's already made quite an impression with his... unique approach to school life." Jennings puffed up with pride. Perhaps he wasn't so out of place after all.

Anthony Buckeridge

The Fire Drill Fiasco

The bell rang with a shrillness that sent a shiver down Jennings's spine. He had been in the middle of a particularly engaging game of marbles with Darbishire, and the sudden interruption was most unwelcome. Nevertheless, he dutifully filed out with the rest of the boys, lining up in the designated area on the lawn.

Old Wilkie, the headmaster, was pacing up and down, his stern face betraying no hint of emotion. "Right, boys," he barked, "this is a fire drill. I expect perfect order and silence. Anyone caught out of line will be severely punished." Jennings swallowed nervously. He had no intention of being punished, but his recent track record with Old Wilkie was less than stellar.

As the minutes ticked by, Jennings's mind began to wander. He noticed a small bird perched on a nearby tree branch, its feathers ruffled by the breeze. The sight was so captivating that he momentarily forgot where he was. In a sudden burst of inspiration, he decided to mimic the bird's movements, flapping his arms and hopping from foot to foot.

The other boys watched in stunned silence as Jennings continued his impromptu performance. Darbishire's face turned crimson with embarrassment, and even Old Wilkie seemed momentarily taken aback. "Jennings!" he roared. "What do you think you're doing?"

Caught in the act, Jennings froze. "I... I was just... practicing for the school play, sir," he stammered, hoping his quick thinking would save him.

Old Wilkie narrowed his eyes. "The school play, eh? Well, you can practice your acting skills in detention this evening."

As the boys were dismissed, Jennings trudged back to the dormitory, his shoulders slumped in defeat. He had intended to bring a touch of levity to the proceedings, but instead, he had landed himself in more trouble. Darbishire walked beside him, shaking his head. "Honestly, Jennings," he muttered, "you really must learn to control yourself."

Anthony Buckeridge

Matilda

This extract comes from the beginning of the novel, where we are introduced to Matilda Wormwood. We learn of her incredible intellect and love of reading despite the ignorant and selfish nature of her parents, who are completely uninterested in their brilliant daughter.

All alone in the world, a child is a terrible thing. But when a child has the good fortune to be born to loving, caring parents, then that child's life is a glorious thing, a glorious thing indeed. The boy who has a mother who hugs him and a father who kisses him is a happy boy.

Mr and Mrs Wormwood, on the other hand, had not a single one of these virtues. Their daughter, Matilda, was the most amazing little girl in the world. She was only five years old, but she had already read all the books in the local library. She was so clever that she could do all the sums in her head, and she was so good at school that she was always at the top of the class. Her parents, however, were not proud of her at all. They were selfish and rude and they didn't care about Matilda one bit. They never noticed that she was a genius. But Matilda didn't care. She was happy in her own little world, with her books and her imagination. She loved to read, and she loved to learn. She was a little bit of a troublemaker, but only because she was so clever and she didn't like to be told what to do. One day, her parents came home from work, and they found her reading a book. 'What are you doing?' said Mr Wormwood. 'I'm reading,' said Matilda. 'I've already finished all the books in the library.' Mr Wormwood just laughed. 'You're not supposed to be reading,' he said. 'You're supposed to be watching television.' But Matilda just smiled. She knew she was clever, and she knew she was going to have a wonderful life, no matter what her parents said.

Roald Dahl

A Midsummer Night's Dream

This extract is a speech by Oberon, the King of the Fairies. He describes a magical place in the forest where his queen, Titania, sleeps. He is speaking to his mischievous servant, Puck, and commands him to fetch a special flower to use for a trick.

OBERON
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine;
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight.
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth. Anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond than she upon her first sight love.
And look you meet me ere the first cock crow.

William Shakespeare

Caliban's Speech from *The Tempest*

In this famous scene from Shakespeare's play, Caliban, the native inhabitant of the magical island, is speaking to two of the shipwrecked men, Stephano and Trinculo. The men are frightened by the strange sounds of the island, which they believe are a sign of danger. Caliban, who knows the island better than anyone, tries to calm their fears by describing the island's magical music. This moment shows a poetic and sensitive side to his character, which is often hidden.

CALIBAN
Be not afeard: the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again: and then in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again.

William Shakespeare

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

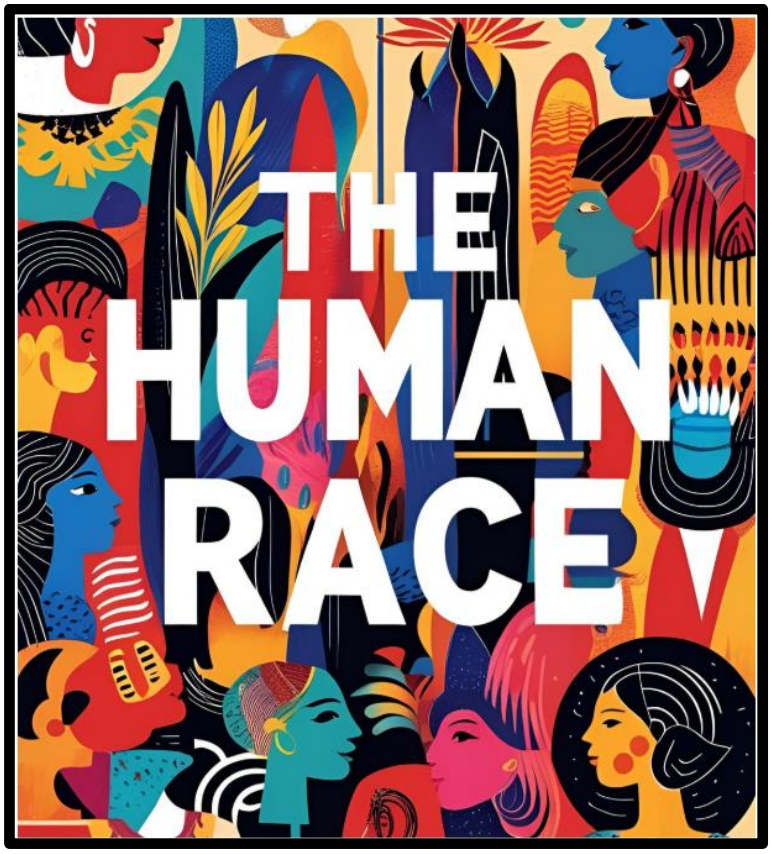
Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it. "And what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversation?"

Just then, a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her. There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!" But when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat pocket, looked at it, and hurried on, Alice's curiosity was piqued. She jumped to her feet and ran across the field after it.

Alice followed the Rabbit down a deep hole. She fell slowly, thinking of all sorts of things: the softness of the earth, the wonder of such a strange adventure, and what she might find at the bottom. The fall seemed to go on forever, yet it was not frightening; it was thrilling, and Alice's imagination ran wild. She wondered what magical creatures and peculiar adventures awaited her.

Finally, she landed with a bump and found herself in a long hallway lined with doors of all sizes. She tried each, but they were locked. Then she discovered a tiny key on a glass table, which opened a tiny door just large enough for her to peer through. On the other side, she glimpsed a beautiful garden full of flowers and fountains. Excited, Alice realised she was about to begin a most extraordinary adventure.

Lewis Carroll



SECTION 3 NON-FICTION EXTRACTS

- You do **not** have to learn these off-by-heart, you can read from a clean smart copy; BUT, you must ensure that you have practiced thoroughly.
- If would like to read a short piece from a non-fiction book you have been enjoying that is not in this anthology, please check with your English teacher first - there is every chance that we will be happy to include it.

The Mozart Question

The question I am most often asked is always easy enough to answer. Question: how did you get started as a writer? Answer: funnily enough, by asking someone almost exactly that very same question, which I was only able to ask in the first place by a dose of extraordinarily good fortune.

I had better explain. My good fortune was, of course, someone else's rotten luck – it is often that way, I find. The phone call sounded distraught. It came on a Sunday evening. I had only been working on the paper for three weeks. I was a cub reporter, this my first paid job. "Lesley?" It was my boss, chief arts correspondent Meryl Monkton, a lady not to be messed with. She did not waste time with niceties; she never did. "Listen, Lesley, I have a problem. I was due to go to Venice tomorrow to interview Paulo Levi."

"Paulo Levi?" I said. "The violinist?"

"Is there any other Paulo Levi?" She did not trouble to hide her irritation. "Now look, Lesley. I've had an accident, a skiing accident, and I'm stuck in hospital in Switzerland. You'll have to go to Venice instead of me."

"Oh, that's terrible," I said, smothering as best I could the excitement surging inside me. Three weeks into the job and I'd be interviewing the great Paulo Levi, and in Venice! Talk about her accident, I told myself. Sound concerned. Sound very concerned. "How did it happen?" I asked. "The skiing accident, I mean."

"Skiing," she snapped. "If there's one thing I can't abide, Lesley, it's people feeling sorry for me."

"Sorry," I said.

"I would postpone it if I could, Lesley," she went on, "but I just don't dare. It's taken more than a year to persuade him to do it. It'll be his first interview in years. And even then I had to agree not to ask him the Mozart question. So don't ask him the Mozart question, is that clear? If you do he'll like as not cancel the whole interview – he's done it before. We're really lucky to get him, Lesley. I only wish I could be there to do it myself. But you'll have to do."

"The Mozart question?" I asked, rather tentatively.

The silence at the end of the phone was long.

Michael Morpurgo

The Thunderbolt Kid

Far out in the lake there was moored a large wooden platform on which stood an improbably high diving board—a kind of wooden Eiffle Tower. It was, I'm sure, the tallest wooden structure in Iowa, if not the Midwest. .... No human being had ever been known to jump from it.

So it was quite a surprise when, as the egg timer dinged our liberation, Mr. Milton jumped up and began doing neck rolls and arm stretches and announced that he intended to have a dive off the high board. ....

Word of the insane intention of the man who looked like Goofy was already spreading along the beach when Mr. Milton jogged into the water and swam with even strokes out to the platform. He was just a tiny, stick figure when he got there but even from such a distance the high board seemed to loom hundreds of feet above him—indeed, seemed almost to scrape the clouds. It took him at least twenty minutes to make his way up the zigzag of ladders to the top. Once at the summit, he strode up and down the board, which was enormously long—it had to be to extend beyond the edge of the platform far below—bounced on it experimentally two or three times, then took some deep breaths and finally assumed a position at the fixed end of the board with his arms at his sides. It was clear from his posture and poised manner that he was going to go for it.

By now all the people on the beach and in the water—several hundred altogether—had stopped whatever they were doing and were silently watching. Mr. Milton stood for quite a long time, then with a nice touch of theatricality he raised his arms, ran like hell down the long board—imagine an Olympic gymnast sprinting at full tilt toward a distant springboard and you've got something of the sprit of it—took one enormous bounce and launched himself high and outward in a perfect swan dive. It was a beautiful thing to behold, I must say. He fell with a flawless grace for what seemed whole minutes. Such was the beauty of the moment, and the breathless silence of the watching multitudes, that the only sound to be heard across the lake was the faint whistle of his body tearing through the air toward the water far, far below. It may only be my imagination, but he seemed after a time to start to glow red, like an incoming meteor. He was *really* moving.

I don't know what happened—whether he lost his nerve or realized that he was approaching the water at a murderous velocity or what—but about three-quarters of the way down he seemed to have second thoughts about the whole business and began suddenly to flail, like someone entangled in bedding in a bad dream, or whose chute hasn't opened. When he was perhaps thirty feet above the water, he gave up on flailing and tried a new tack. He spread his arms and legs wide, in the shape of an X, evidently hoping that exposing a maximum amount of surface area would somehow slow his fall.

It didn't.

He hit the water—*impacted* really is the word for it—at over six hundred miles an hour, with a report so loud that it made birds fly out of trees up to three miles away. At such a speed water effectively becomes a solid. I don't believe Mr. Milton penetrated it at all, but just bounced off it about fifteen feet, limbs suddenly very loose, and then lay on top of it, still, like an autumn leaf, spinning gently. He was towed to shore by two passing fishermen in a rowboat, and carried to a grassy area by half a dozen onlookers who carefully set him down on an old blanket. There he spent the rest of the afternoon on his back, arms and legs bent slightly and elevated. Every bit of frontal surface area, from his thinning hairline to his toenails, had a raw, abraded look, as if he had suffered some unimaginable misfortune involving an industrial sander. Occasionally he accepted small sips of water, but otherwise was too traumatized to speak.

.... It was the best day of my life.

Bill Bryson

Home: The story of everyone who ever lived in our house

And the layers of paper curled and rolled off and dropped onto the floor – and, quite perfectly preserved, half a dozen different patterns were revealed: imitation wood grain (the sixties?), brown zigzags (the fifties?) – then a bold Art Deco style in cobalt and scarlet (the twenties?). Under that, large Morris-style chocolate ferns and flowers, and beneath that a solid layer of thick custard-coloured paint. Each layer – imperfectly glued, faded, merged — revealed another.

‘What smells so horrible? ‘ said Jake, wrinkling his nose.

‘The glue, I think,’ Jonathan said. ‘Probably made from bones.’

‘Wicked!’ said Raphael and then, frowning, ‘But would vegetarians have used it?’

‘Weren‘t really any vegetarians then.’

‘Just think,’ I said, as another William Morris-style lily showed us its black, almost funereally rimmed edges, ‘how long since anyone saw these patterns. I wonder when each one was covered up.’

‘Which one was the Haywards’ wallpaper?’ asked Chloë.

‘I imagine that‘s something we‘ll never know. ‘

But even a little information is seductive. Once you know names, you start to see things. It‘s impossible not to – impossible to resist. I know almost nothing real of Henry Hayward but my imagination has already begun to whisper. And I admit it. I’ve begun to listen.

He’s tall, whiskery, gingery-haired (Hayward is definitely a gingery name). And maybe a bit of a punter, inclined to slope off to the races at Epsom or Goodwood, though he never loses too much – he has it in check. His wife Charlotte is much shorter, plumper and more self-effacing – a terrible worrier, especially about what other people say. Sometimes she thinks she only sees herself through other people’s eyes. Take away that critical, slightly warped perspective and she’s really not quite sure who she is – not that she’d ever think of expressing such a flighty idea to anyone.

Julie Myerson

I am Malala

I COME FROM a country which was created at midnight. When I almost died it was just after midday.

One year ago I left my home for school and never returned. I was shot by a Taliban bullet and was flown out of Pakistan unconscious. Some people say I will never return home but I believe firmly in my heart that I will. To be torn from the country that you love is not something to wish on anyone.

Now, every morning when I open my eyes, I long to see my old room full of my things, my clothes all over the floor and my school prizes on the shelves. Instead I am in a country which is five hours behind my beloved homeland Pakistan and my home in the Swat Valley. But my country is centuries behind this one. Here there is any convenience you can imagine. Water running from every tap, hot or cold as you wish; lights at the flick of a switch, day and night, no need for oil lamps; ovens to cook on that don't need anyone to go and fetch gas cylinders from the bazaar. Here everything is so modern one can even find food ready cooked in packets.

When I stand in front of my window and look out, I see tall buildings, long roads full of vehicles moving in orderly lines, neat green hedges and lawns, and tidy pavements to walk on. I close my eyes and for a moment I am back in my valley – the high snow-topped mountains, green waving fields and fresh blue rivers – and my heart smiles when it looks at the people of Swat. My mind transports me back to my school and there I am reunited with my friends and teachers. I meet my best friend Moniba and we sit together, talking and joking as if I had never left.

Then I remember I am in Birmingham, England.

Malala Yousafzai

The Diary of Anne Frank

I get along quite well with all my teachers, nine in all, seven masters and two mistresses. Mr. Keptor, the old math master, was very annoyed with me for a long time because I chatter so much. So I had to write a composition with “A Chatterbox” as the subject. A chatterbox! Whatever could one write? However, deciding I would puzzle that out later, I wrote it in my notebook, and tried to keep quiet.

That evening, when I’d finished my other homework, my eyes fell on the title in my notebook. I pondered, while chewing the end of my fountain pen, that anyone can scribble some nonsense in large letters with the words well spaced but the difficulty was to prove beyond doubt the necessity of talking. I thought and thought and then, suddenly having an idea, filled my three allotted sides and felt completely satisfied. My arguments were that talking is a feminine characteristic and that I would do my best to keep it under control, but I should never be cured, for my mother talked as much as I, probably more, and what can one do about inherited qualities?

Mr. Keptor had to laugh at my arguments, but when I continued to hold forth in the next lesson, another composition followed. This time it was ‘Incurable Chatterbox,” I handed this in and Keptor made no complaints for two whole lessons. But in the third lesson it was too much for him again. “Anne, as punishment for talking, will do a composition entitled ‘Quack, quack, quack, says Mrs. Natterbeak.’ ” Shouts of laughter from the class. I had to laugh too, although I felt that my inventiveness on this subject was exhausted. I had to think of something else, something entirely original.

I was in luck, as my friend Sanne writes good poetry and offered to help by doing the whole composition in verse. I jumped for joy. Keptor wanted to make a fool of me with this absurd theme, I would get my own back and make him the laughing-stock of the whole class.

Anne Frank

Cider with Rosie

The morning came without any warning when my sisters surrounded me, wrapped me in scarves, tied up my bootlaces, thrust a cap on my head and stuffed a baked potato in my pocket.

"What's this?" I said.

"You're starting school today."

"I ain't. I'm stopping 'ome."

"Now come on Loll, you're a big boy now."

"I ain't."

"You are."

"Boo hoo."

They picked me up bodily, kicking and bawling, and carried me up to the road.

"Boys who don't go to school get put into boxes and turn into rabbits and get chopped up on Sundays."

I felt this was overdoing it rather, but I said no more after that. I arrived at the school just three feet tall and fatly wrapped in my scarves. The playground roared like a rodeo and the potato burnt through my thigh. Old boots, ragged stockings, torn trousers and skirts went skating and skidding around me. The rabble closed in; I was encircled; grit flew in my face like shrapnel. Tall girls with frazzled hair, a huge boy with sharp elbows began to prod me with hideous interest. They plucked at my scarves, spun me round like a top, screwed my nose and stole my potato.

I was rescued at last by a gracious lady-the sixteen year old junior teacher-who boxed a few ears and dried my face and led me off to The Infants. I spent the first day picking holes in paper, then went home in a smouldering temper.

"What's the matter, Loll? Didn't he like it at school then?"

"They never gave me a present!"

"Present? What present?"

"They said they'd give me a present."

"Well, now, I'm sure they didn't."

"They did! They said: "You're Laurie Lee ain't you? Well, just you sit there for the present." I sat there all day but I never got it. I ain't going back there again!"

But after a week, I felt like a veteran and grew as ruthless as anyone else. Somebody had stolen my baked potato so I swiped somebody else's apple. The Infant Room was packed with toys such as I've never seen before-coloured shapes and rolls of clay, stuffed birds and men to paint. Also a frame of counting beads which our young teacher played like a harp...

Laurie Lee

Boy

A tuck-box is a small pinewood trunk which is very strongly made, and no boy has ever gone as a boarder to any English Prep School without one. It is his own secret store-house, as secret as a lady's handbag, and there is an unwritten law that no boy, no teacher, not even the Headmaster himself has the right to pry into the contents of your tuck-box. The owner has the key in his pocket and that is where it stays. At St Peter's, the tuck-boxes were ranged shoulder to shoulder all around the four walls of the changing-room and your own tuck-box stood directly below the peg on which you hung your games clothes. A tuck-box, as the name implies, is a box in which to store your tuck. At Prep School in those days, a parcel of tuck was sent once a week by anxious mothers to their ravenous little sons, and an average tuck-box would probably contain, at almost any time, half a home-made currant cake, a packet of squashed fly biscuits, a couple of oranges, an apple, a banana, a pot of strawberry jam or Marmite, a bar of chocolate, a bag of Liquorice Allsorts and a tin of Bassett's lemonade powder. An English school in those days was purely a money-making business owned and operated by the Headmaster. It suited him, therefore, to give the boys as little food as possible himself and to encourage the parents in various cunning ways to feed their offspring by parcel-post from home.

'By all means, my dear Mrs Dahl, do send your boy some little treats now and again,' he would say. 'Perhaps a few oranges and apples once a week' – fruit was very expensive – 'and a nice currant cake, a large currant cake perhaps because small boys have large appetites do they not, ha-ha-ha …Yes, yes, as often as you like. More than once a week if you wish … Of course he'll be getting plenty of good food here, the best there is, but it never tastes quite the same as home cooking, does it? I'm sure you wouldn't want him to be the only one who doesn't get a lovely parcel from home each week.'

Roald Dahl

Boy

The sweet-shop in Llandaff in the year 1923 was the very centre of our lives. To us, it was what a bar is to a drunk, or a church to a Bishop. Without it, there would have been little to live for. But it had one terrible drawback, this sweet-shop. The woman who owned it was a horror. We hated her and we had good reason for doing so.

Her name was Mrs Pratchett. She was a small skinny old hag with a moustache on her upper lip and a mouth as sour as a green gooseberry. She never smiled. She never welcomed us when we went in, and the only times she spoke were when she said things like,'I'm watchin' you so keep your thievin' fingers off them chocolates!' Or 'I don't want you in 'ere just to look around! Either you forks out or you gets out!'

But by far the most loathsome thing about Mrs Pratchett was the filth that clung around her. Her apron was grey and greasy. Her blouse had bits of breakfast all over it, toast-crumbs and tea stains and splotches of dried egg-yolk. It was her hands, however, that disturbed us the most. They were disgusting. They were black with dirt and grime. They looked as though they had been putting lumps of coal on the fire all day long. And do not forget please that it was these very hands and fingers that she plunged into the sweet-jars when we asked for a pennyworth of Treacle Toffee or Wine Gums or Nut Clusters or whatever. There were precious few health laws in those days, and nobody, least of all Mrs Pratchett, ever thought of using a small shovel for getting out the sweets as they do today. The mere sight of her grimy right hand with its black fingernails digging an ounce of Chocolate Fudge out of the jars would have caused a starving tramp to go running from the shop. But not us. Sweets were our life-blood. We would have put up with far worse than that to get them. So we simply stood and watched in sullen silence while this disgusting old woman stirred around inside the jars with her foul fingers.

Roald Dahl

Autobiography

I am crying. I am a Sheffield schoolgirl writing in her diary about the bullies awaiting me tomorrow. They stand menacingly by the gates and lurk unseen in my head, mocking my size and status. They make a small girl shrink, and I feel insecure and frightened. I pour the feelings out into words on the page, as if exposing them in some way will help, but nobody sees my diary. It is kept in my room as a hidden tale of hurt.

Fast forward two decades and I am crying again. I am standing in a cavernous arena in London. Suddenly, the pain and suffering and frustration give way to a flood of overwhelming emotion. In the middle of this enormous arena I feel smaller than ever, but I puff out my chest, look to the flag and stand tall. It has been a long and winding road from the streets of Sheffield to the tunnel that feeds into the Olympic Stadium like an artery.

I am Jessica Ennis. I have been called many things, from tadpole to poster girl, but I have had to fight to make that progression. I smile and am polite and so people think it comes easily, but it doesn't. I am not one of those athletes who slap their thighs and snarl before a competition, but there is a competitive animal inside, waiting to get out and fight for survival and recognition.

Jessica Ennis

Toast

Mum never was much of a cook. Meals arrived on the table as much by happy accident as by domestic science. She was a chops-and-peas sort of a cook, occasionally going so far as to make a rice pudding, exasperated by the highs and lows of a temperamental cream-and-black Aga and a finicky little son. She found it all a bit of an ordeal, and wished she could have left the cooking, like the washing, ironing, and dusting, to Mrs. P., her “woman what does.”

Once a year there were Christmas puddings and cakes to be made. They were made with neither love nor joy. They simply had to be done. “I suppose I had better DO THE CAKE,” she would sigh. The food mixer—she was not the sort of woman to use her hands—was an ancient, heavy Kenwood that lived in a deep, secret hole in the kitchen work surface. My father had, in a rare moment of do-it-yourselfery, fitted a heavy industrial spring under the mixer so that when you lifted the lid to the cupboard the mixer slowly rose like a corpse from a coffin. All of which was slightly too much for my mother, my father’s quaint Heath Robinson craftsmanship taking her by surprise every year, the huge mixer bouncing up like a jack-in-the-box and making her clap her hands to her chest. “Oh heck!” she would gasp. It was the nearest my mother ever got to swearing.

She never quite got the hang of the mixer. I can picture her now, desperately trying to harness her wayward Kenwood, bits of cake mixture flying out of the bowl like something from an I Love Lucy sketch. The cake recipe was written in green biro on a piece of blue Basildon Bond and was kept, crisply folded into four, in the spineless Aga Cookbook that lived for the rest of the year in the bowl of the mixer. The awkward, though ingenious, mixer cupboard was impossible to clean properly, and in among the layers of flour and icing sugar lived tiny black flour weevils. I was the only one who could see them darting around. None of which, I suppose, mattered if you were making Christmas pudding, with its gritty currants and hours of boiling. But this was cake.

Nigel Slater

Faster Than Lightning: My Story

There's an old photo at home that makes me laugh whenever I see it. It's of me as a kid. I'm maybe seven years old, and I'm standing in the street alongside my mom, Jennifer. Even then I was nearly shoulder high against her. I'm looking 'silk' in skinny black jeans and a red T-shirt. I'm clutching Mom's hand tight, leaning in close, and the look on my face says, 'To get to me you've gotta get through her first.' It's a happy time, a happy place.

I was a mommy's boy back then, still am, and the only time I ever cry today is when something makes my mom sad. I hate to see her upset. Me and Pops were close, I love him dearly, but Mom and me had a special bond, probably because I was her only child and she spoilt me rotten.

Home was Coxeath, a small village near Waldensia Primary and Sherwood Content and, man, it was beautiful, a village among the lush trees and wild bush. Not a huge amount of people lived in the area; there was a house or two every few hundred metres and our old home was a simple, single- storey building rented by Dad. The pace of life was slow, real slow. Cars rarely passed through and the road was always empty. The closest thing to a traffic jam in Coxeath took place when a friend waved out in the street.

To give an idea of how remote it was, back in the day they named the whole area Cockpit Country because it was once a defensive stronghold in Jamaica used by Maroons, the runaway West Indian slaves that had settled there during the 1700s. The Maroons used the area as a base and would attack the English forts during colonial times. If their lives hadn't been so violent, Coxeath and Sherwood Content would have been a pretty blissful place. The weather was always beautiful, the sun was hot, and even if the sky turned slightly grey, it was a tranquil spot. I remember we called the rain 'liquid sunshine'.

Despite the climate, tourists rarely swung by, and anyone reading a guidebook would see the same thing in their travel directions: 'Yo, you can only get there by car and the drive is pretty scary. The road winds through some heavy vegetation over a track full of potholes. On one side there's a fast- flowing river; trees and jungle hangs down from the other and a crazy-assed chicken might run out on you at any time, so watch your step. About 30 minutes along the way is Coxeath, a small village set in the valley…' It's worth the effort, though. That place is my paradise.

Usain Bolt

My Story by Steven Gerrard

I sat in the back of the car and felt the tears rolling down my face. I hadn't cried for years but, on the way home, I couldn't stop. The tears kept coming on a sunlit evening in Liverpool. It was very quiet as we moved further and further away from Anfield. I can't remember now how long that journey lasted. I can't even tell you if the streets were thick with traffic or as empty as I was on the inside. It was killing me.

An hour earlier, after the Chelsea game, I'd wanted to disappear down a dark hole. Our second-last home match of the season was meant to have been the title-clincher. We had beaten our closest rivals, Manchester City, in the previous game at Anfield. We had just reeled off our eleventh straight win. One more victory and we would be almost certain to win the league for the first time since May 1990.

Twenty-four years earlier, in the month I turned ten, that team of me and my dad's dreams had been managed by Kenny Dalglish and captained by Alan Hansen. It was also the team of McMahon and Molby, of Beardsley and Rush, of Whelan and Barnes.

I was dreaming of today even then, as a boy who had joined the Liverpool Academy at the age of eight and wished and prayed that, one day, he might also win the league in front of the Kop. My first-team debut came in 1998, when I was eighteen and I had no idea how it might feel to be a thirty- three-year-old man crying in the back of a car.

I felt numb, like I had lost someone in my family.

It was as if my whole quarter of a century at this football club poured out of me. I did not even try to stem the silent tears as the events of the afternoon played over and over again in my head. In the last minute of the first half against a cagey Chelsea, set up to stop our rush to glory by José Mourinho, it happened. A simple pass rolled towards me near the halfway line. It was a nothing moment, a lull in our surge to the title. I moved to meet the ball. It slid under my foot.

The twist came then. I slipped. I fell to the ground.

The ball was swept away and the devastating Chelsea attack began. I clambered to my feet and ran with all my heart. I chased Demba Ba as though my life depended on it. I knew the outcome if I couldn't catch him. But it was hopeless. I couldn't stop him.

Ba scored. It was over. My slip had been costly.

Steven Gerrard