

Previous Winners of The Lowry Creative Writing Challenge

Category: Poetry

Winner: Layla Wood

The Journey

Homeless,
Danger,
Pitied,
Destruction.

Darkness is split by a singular prism of light.
Spots of mould dot on the ceiling,
Blood leaking through the sheets,
Shadows blocking all light.

Left all alone.
No longer at home.
Darkness blanketing the world.

I miss my brother, I miss home.

Hiding away underneath covers.
You must take this to mind.
You only leave home when home is the epilogue of an apocalypse,
I've been sentenced to death.

Gunfire explodes inside my head.
Souls crammed into an endless carriage,
Nobody leaves home unless home is a one-way Hell.

Pain,
Agony,
Hopeless
Homeless

Home was beautiful,
Until they came.

Where am I going?

I don't know.

Home is gone,
I need food,
I need water,
I need family.

Death knocked on my door,
The moment I set foot to the border.
Death knocked on my door,

The moment I arrived.

The moment I got off the train.

And onto the path,

The path to hell....

Runner-up: Peter McColgan (insert film)

The Lonely Man

I want to paint emptiness, like a room that has been untouched for too long.

Hope; the way that a sack is half empty or half full.

A house alone in the street, with nothing but a lamppost and people to meet.

I want to paint the rain silently falling on a small car parked outside my neighbour's house. I could watch it all day.

I want to paint a day where the clock stops ticking, the day keeps on going and the stars keep shining.

A street as empty as an old motel that's had its big unwelcoming doors closed for centuries.

A man as lonely as his faith, but he doesn't have a worry because all he wants to do is paint.

Category: Short Story

Winner: Gabriela Kulacz

In The Box

I live in a box, at least I think I do. Strange way to introduce myself, but it's true. This is all I ever knew. It can get pretty lonely in here, only me and my thoughts. This place is boring on its own, darkness wherever you look, I wouldn't be surprised if I went paranoid! Sometimes I sit and wonder, where am I from? Do I have a family? Was I even a somebody? But I have visions, visions of a mighty God, trapping poor souls in an unknown place. I believe I was one of them, but I guess I'll never know! Some things were not meant to be known. Unless, the universe wants me to escape! And save the others from a cruel fate. I mean why else would the sky open? Believe me, it does! I'm not insane, or am I? Not going to lie, this loneliness may have muffled with my brain a bit.

I like to pretend that I'm sat next to my friend, but like my favourite friend, and we talk about what we've done today. Of course I lie a bit, nothing interesting ever happens here, but in her world! She goes on walks in between tall trees, swims in water gently heated up by the sun and draws pretty pictures of everything she sees. No! Snap out of it! It's not real! But the sky is! It moves, and I have proof! I always climb out of the box when this happens, and appear in a totally different dimension. I'd want to describe it, but I don't know what to say. It changes every time, but the faces stay the same. Huge, monstrous circles of skin, with piercing eyes and wide mouths. I think they're the Gods, maybe the same ones that put me inside the enclosure. Then some mysterious sound begins to play. It sounds so graceful, sweet and soft, it really makes me want to fall asleep. But I can't, I have these Gods to please! So, I dance. I practice inside my little world, leaps and pirouettes. You could say I've improved entirely, I can do a lot of complex ballerina moves. It seems that the Gods like ballet, because when I'm done, they clap and smile, but don't let me go, instead I get pulled in again by an invisible force of power.

Would you look at that! The sky is opening! Maybe this time they'll approve of me.

As the music played, the ballerina began her dance.

Runner-up: Maryam Akram

Return to Kandahar

The twins never thought they would return to Kandahar after their traumatizing experience. They used to live in Kandahar, but their parents died in war whilst trying to protect them. Because they were orphans their aunty became responsible for them, she decided it would be safer if they move to Herat. She looked after them until ... One day she fell ill.

“Surayah, Surayah come quick. Aunty is ill” Khalid shouted desperately.

“What’s the” Surayah paused as she looked at Aunty’s pale face, giving a loud gasp. “How has she become ill? She was fine last night” added Surayah looking like she was about to cry.

“I have no idea; we need to get her some medicine suggested Khalid feeling panicked.

“But how? It costs an arm and a leg to get medicine where we live” Suraya said with frustration.

Aunty tried to butt in, but she was too ill to shout, and the twins were too focused to think of a way to treat their aunty. Then aunty let out a big sneeze. She finally caught their attention.

“I left my medicine in Kandahar in the basement of our old house” aunty whispered.

Since aunty was a doctor, she kept medicine in case of an emergency. But when they fled to Kandahar to go to Herat a lot of things were left behind including those medicines.

Surayah gulped and said dramatically

“The only way to get medicine is, well....to venture back to Kandahar”

“So, what you’re saying is we have to go back?” replied Khalid his left eyebrow lifting.

“Exactly” stated Surayah. “We’ll leave at 3:00pm. Let’s do some packing, it will take us 5 days” said Surayah bravely.

When 3:00pm hit, they set off along the narrow, winding path. Even though their feet became scabbed, they continued in the hope that there was a good chance the medicine could still be there because it was in the basement. Luckily, they just about had a picture in their head, of the way to Kandahar since they journeyed from Kandahar to Herat. A few days later, they recognised where they were. Their father used to take them there to camp and do different activities. Both, started to have flashbacks of the memories they shared.

Then they bumped into an old man.

“Umm, excuse me, where is Kandahar?” Quickly asked Khalid.

“It is only about 4 hours away. I am about to head there; you can come with me if you want” Replied the man.

The twins nodded, the man and the twins set off in his truck. The twins gave the man 10 Afghani money and recognised the area because they used to live there. The streets were lifeless, when they found their house, they could see it all been blown up. They saw the stairs to the basement and zapped down them. Finally, they found the medicine and ran back up. Suddenly a soldier stopped them. Would they be able to get back to their aunty in time...?

Category: Script/Playtext

Winner: Salome Samuel

The Magic Door / Freya’s Amazing Adventures

- “You have to believe me! Yesterday I saw a ghost in my room!”

- “Stop with your stories”

- “But mum its t... “

- “Don’t answer me when I talk to you young lady go to your room!”

When I reached my room, the door was purple instead of pink, on it said: READY FOR AN ADVENTURE?

I opened it and fell into a portal then landed in an enchanted forest of singing trees. I looked around and the purple door had vanished. In the distance two dots were moving closer and closer and closer. Until...two elves appeared, one was red and the other blue:

- "hello", said the elves I could not hear them so I let out my hand and they jumped on. I reached my hand to my ear.

- - "Hello", I could hear them much more clearly now.

- - "My name is Lity said the red elf, mine's Billy said the blue elf".

- - "Hi my name's Freya"

- - "How did you get here? This is a dangerous place for a little girl".

- - "No time to explain, do you guys know how I can get out of here?"

- - "Yes" said the elves.

LALALALALALALAL !

- - "What was that?"

- - "The singing trees of course! Do not listen to them or you will be frozen forever!"

- "Quick follow me", said Billy but Lity was already frozen. Freya quickly put Lity on her shoulder and they started running. A few hours later they stopped at an orange river. Billy said "nobody should know where we are"

Then he whispered "Dip her inside the river".

And that is exactly what Freya did. Few minutes later Lity came back to life:

- "Thanks" said Lity, "so Freya you want to get out of here?"

It's a very perilous journey but it will be a pleasure to come with you. First stop The Land of Despair, when someone goes there they never come back.

- "It's full of unexpected creatures!" said Billy anxiously.

- "its cold dark and damp", added Lity.

After few days of walk, they came to a dark forest with red trees and unusually square bushes, they entered the mysterious forest and heard something crack.

- "What was that?" they all said at the same time. They turned around and saw dark red eyes staring out one of the square blackberry bushes and an enormous creature popped out, SNAPPED, Freya was able to take a quick picture of the terrifying beast. They had to react fast. Suddenly Lity magically bring a wand out of the air and it sparkle magic powder on the ferocious beast. After that it turned the size of a tiger and run away...

- "What was that?" asked Freya.

- "I am not sure" said Billy the blue elf.

- "Let's see the photo you took", hurried Lity.

- "My batteries are dead" said Freya in despair.

- "Don't be sad this is the Land Of Despair remember? If you lose hope you'll be nothing but dust at sunset!" said the elves.

- "WOOOHHH look out it's the creature with the tiger body and cat ears!"

- "It's a Catiger, it's a very nice creature".

- "THEN WHY DID IT TRY TO KILL US? ... Sorry I got a little bit out of control there ", said Freya, still shivering.

- "I'll be able to pet it and instead of walking we can ride it!" said Lity the red elf.

- "It can help us find food!" said Freya.

- "Hold your horses! We better look for water first, we've not drank for a few days! Do you realise?" said Billy.

- "I guess you right" said Freya in a board way.

- "I know where to find water", said a mysterious voice...

- "Did the Catiger just talk?!?"

- "I think so", said Lity.

Runner-up: Ruby Lee

Alien in Manchester

Scene 1: Ship take off

(20-30 Aliens are standing in front of a huge ship. A timer with 5 minutes left was beside the ship and 2 aliens were standing next to each other, looking at the aliens.)

Borris: Hello everybody! As your prime minister, Borris Blobson, I am honoured to release this ship into outer space! It is all automatic and will fly around the universe for 5 weeks. It will stop if it sees a planet and our person on board will go and investigate to see if we could grow life there. Now, let me introduce you to the person on board, 11 year old Zeke Lobby!

(A round of applause from the group of Aliens)

Zeke: Thanks for the opportunity Borris,

Borris: *(under his breath)* Borris Blobson to you..

Zeke: I'm super excited to go into space, it's gonna be super cool seeing all these creatures that no one has ever seen. It's cool that we only have *(looks at the timer next to him)* 3:25 seconds until take off! Now 3:24 ... 3:23 ... 3:2-

Borris: ALRIGHT ZEKE! Whose idea was it to send a kid to space? Anyway if you want to hop on the ship and the crew can check if everything is working.

(Zeke hops on ship, then the ship blasts off immediately, without the timer going to 0)

Borris: *(shocked)* ummm.... I'm sure it's nothing to worry about! The only way for the ship to set off is if Zeke hit the big red ... button... ZEEEEEEKE!!!!

Scene 2: Earth landing

(Zeke is in the ship on an upside-down, floating chair tapping randomly on what looks like a watch)

Zeke: *(confused)* is it on? Maybe this button... there! Hi guys! If there is anyone watching this, I'm Zeke and I'm on a ship. I was supposed to be sitting still on the ship, ready to blast off when I was last on my planet.... But it was BORING! So I got up and started to look at the keypad. There was a big red button there, so I just kind of pressed it! Then there was a rumble sound and now I'm floating! I don't know where I am, well I'm in space, but this looks like a planet! So I will see you all in a bit! *(taps watch)*

(The ship rumbles and crashes onto a planet called Earth. Zeke climbs out of the ship and his jaw drops in front of him is a massive red sign with Marcus Rashford and in big words 'Welcome to Manchester')

Zeke: *(walks up to someone random)* hi! I'm Zeke and I'm from a different planet. Can you help me?

Woman: I don't want to see your new star wars film!

Zeke: But... *(woman walks off)* oh fine. I'll investigate man-chest-er by myself! Now where first? 'The Etihad stadium' sounds like some sort of opera thingy. 'The Lowry' sounds cool! One of these spinny, moving things could help!

(Zeke hops on the roof on a car roof causing the car to shake. The people driving don't notice as they are looking forward to watching their show at 'The Lowry'. Zeke and the family then arrive at The 'Lowry')

Zeke: Well this looks cool! Let's get in!

(Zeke sees people showing security tickets and wonders how he will get in)

Security: are you one of the actors for the 'up in space' play? Mate, I told you to get here early! Get in there! Stage 4 as usual. You got 5 minutes. Good job with the blue body paint by the way. Break a leg!

Zeke: *(awkwardly)* Yeah Yeah.. of course! See you... mate! *(sprints into stage 4)*

(when Zeke reaches backstage, he sees that the show has already started. He chooses not to go on because he is really enjoying the show 'up in space' Then someone dressed in black with a headset and a black outfit walks up to him.)

Woman with black outfit: Carl you're on, good luck!

(Zeke then walks onto stage casually but then freezes and realizes that he doesn't know what to say)

An actor on stage: (pointing at Zeke but looking at actor) Then who is your friend, Garbop?
(Everyone looks at Zeke)
Zeke: (confidently) Im Zeke Lobby and i was sent here on a ship to investigate manchee..
Manchestst... you know where we are now. It's alright but if i could improve one thing
Woman with black outfit:(whisper) CARL! That's not your line! Did you learn the script at all?
Zeke: What? Oh yeah, I didn't learn it. Sorry everyone, I don't know what to say. Joanne? Will you
say my lines please? Yes you! Get here now! (drags woman in black shirt to stage)
Priya: UMM.. hi everyone! I'm not Joanne, I'm actually called Priya...
Zeke: I was so close!
Priya: (clears throat) I am Leon the fierce! Garbops greatest friend..
(Zeke walks off stage and taps his watch)
Zeke: Hi guys! So i have decided to stay here on Manchester (cheers because he said it)
Because it's way more interesting than mars. I wonder what other adventures I could have here...
THE END

Category: Founders Prize

Winner: Hawa Chowdhury

The Adventures of the Oak Tree

Lily lived in a small village at the edge of a dense forest. She loved going into the forest to explore. She had a favourite spot within the forest, a clearing surrounded by tall trees. In the centre of the clearing stood a giant oak tree, with branches that stretched to the sky.

One day, as Lily was playing in the clearing, she noticed a small door at the base of the oak tree. She had never seen it before, but it looked like it had been there for a long time. Curious, she approached the door and noticed that it was unlocked. Without hesitation, she opened the door and peeked inside.

To her surprise, she saw a spiral staircase leading up into the trunk of the tree. Lily hesitated for a moment, wondering if she should go up the stairs, but her curiosity got the best of her, and she began to climb.

As she climbed higher, the air grew cooler, and the light grew dimmer. Lily pressed on, her heart racing with excitement. Finally, she reached the top of the staircase and stepped out into a small room.

The room was cosy and warm, with a bed, a table, and a chair. There was a small window that looked out over the forest, and on the table, there was a book. Lily walked over to the table and picked up the book. It was a leather-bound journal with the words "The Adventures of the Oak Tree" on the cover.

Lily opened the book and as she read, she discovered that the oak tree was not just an ordinary tree. It was a magical tree that could grant wishes!

Lily was amazed. She had never heard of such a thing before and wondered what she should wish for. Should she wish for candy or toys? No, that seemed silly. Lily thought for a long time before she made her wish.

"I wish for everyone in my village to be happy," she said loudly.

Suddenly, the room began to glow, and a warm light filled the air. Lily felt a rush of energy pass through her body and knew that her wish had been granted.

Runner-up: Charlie Grieve

The River's Adventure

The river's a monster,
Consuming all the trees,

Bashing into rocks but still he proceeds,
Spitting out water like a miserable baby,
He dances and prances and travels all wavy,
Stretching out his interminable arms,
Travelling quickly so nothing he calms,
Other miniature tributaries join the flow,
At least he's happy to go slow,
Swiftly riding under bridges, he sees the waterfall in sight,
Reaching the brink, the river begins to take flight,
Somersaulting, diving and soaring,
He reaches the bottom with a crash,
Unleashing an enormous and powerful splash,
The river finishes in a gentle motion,
Before it meets the almighty ocean.