



North Tyneside Writing Competition Winners 2016 (All spelling and punctuation is the winners own)

Staff

First Prize

Marathon

By Harry Lindsay - Benton Dene Primary School

Alltherunnerssquashedtogetheratfirsttracing
againstexhaustionheatanddraggingthirstjostlingand
hasslingforpositions superblyfitinthepeakofcondition
gradually stretching out as the miles go by
sweating licking lips as the mouth goes dry
thirteen miles behind and still thirteen
more to run lungs on fire muscles burning
mind struggles over matter kicks in as as eyes slant
and stare into the burning sun

then a group of runners bravely
break away move ahead as
chanting crowds clap and
cheer them on
their weary way

Two runners
Forge ahead
Almost finished
Almost dead

Until
One

Lonely

Runner

Crosses

The

Line

Ex-haust-ed

Second Prize

The Throat of Denali

By David Gibson - John Spence High School

8th May 1981

Climbers Jim Wickwire (41) and Chris Kerrebrock (25) were trekking across the Peters Glacier towards the Wickersham Wall: part of the North Face of Mount Denali which is the highest mountain in North America. They were roped together and manoeuvring a sled carrying their equipment when Chris Kerrebrock stepped on a fragile lip of snow that covered a deep crevasse...

I was imprisoned by slick, blue ice and balanced precariously on a mass of blankets, canvas and metal. There was a crimson smear across the jagged frozen rock that I quickly realised had erupted from my nose; the blood was already congealing and clotting in my beard, mixing with the icicles and matting my mouth grimily together.

I gingerly touched my shoulder; it grated alarmingly when I tried to move it. Broken. Hell!

I tried to organise my thoughts: a deep crevasse, serious (but not necessarily life threatening injuries), the mangled remains of the sled, food stores and equipment. There was no sign of my axe or...

I was forgetting something.

And then I heard the moaning, soft but insistent: muffled and hidden. My heart stopped and I couldn't swallow. I'd forgotten about Chris.

And he was beneath me: beneath the sled, beneath the food, beneath the tents and the blankets and the spare coats and the bloody oxygen bottles – Oh God! I could see his feet and they were facing the wrong way. Upwards.

Chris was wedged, head first, deep into the very jaws of the crevasse.

I tried to move him; please believe me I tried but it was impossible. I only had one arm and every attempt at securing him or even inching him a little way out of his macabre vice brought agonising stabs of liquid pain and insistent black outs. My tears were frozen on my cheeks.

I remember talking to him, trying to tell him it was fine and I'd get him out eventually, and he could only whisper, he urged me to leave him: to get out and save myself.

I tried everything I could to move him, to get some kind of purchase on his calves or thighs but I was pathetic: a one armed, mewling mess. Chris slipped fraction by

inexorable fraction further into the hungry rent: a slice of nightmare in an ivory dreamscape.

For a few minutes, we did nothing but cry together. I tried to hold as much of him as I could reach and we wept: we wept for what we knew was the future he would never have. I could feel the breath bubbling through his body, draining into the lustful snow: heat and life snatched greedily away and swallowed up. Why do we challenge these mountains? How dare we think we, mere humans, so tiny and insignificant, have any right to lay claim to these peaks, their glaciers and their cliffs. They laugh at us, choking avalanches down upon us and ushering us, helplessly, into their endless, clutching embrace.

There might be ropes at the top. I was trying to convince myself I could clamber out and still have the strength to come back down and somehow rescue my friend. Perhaps I could create some kind of pulley system?

The walls of the crevasse were sheer and I had to claw with my good hand at the slope, desperately trying to create steps that I could haul my battered body up. Whilst below me, terribly, I heard Chris singing old assembly songs from his school.

Chopping into the snow; it felt like I was hacking into Chris' flesh. Every foot of arduous ascent took me further from my friend. The effort warmed my body but it couldn't thaw out my guilty soul.

Like a worm, I crawled from the crack in the earth. There were ropes but my hands, already surely frostbitten and black, could barely muster the strength to manipulate them. Making guttural noises, I managed to secure two ends to two rocks and maybe I dared to believe we had a chance.

From the crevasse, there was silence.

But I was driven and hopeful; the ropes helped me support another descent although every voice of many in my head, family, friends and strangers, urged me not to return. I made it back down to Chris: his frozen form spread-eagled obscenely in a reverse crucifix position, diving headlong into the throat of Denali.

Still no sound. But as I frantically tied the ropes around his ankles I felt him shudder and then mutter incoherently. I didn't know what he was saying so all I could do was murmur and try to hide the despair in my voice.

Then, another pain filled clamber through the snow; my shoulder screaming at me to let it rest.

At the top I surveyed my work. The pulley was there and it was secure. Now all I had to do was find the strength to somehow work it.

And this, to my eternal shame, was beyond me. With one arm I had no ballast and on that unforgiving slope, on that hard packed snow, I had no purchase. I strained and slipped and threw myself again and again into the task but there was no movement and no give. For hours I pushed and pulled and cried and begged.

For nothing.

I sat, as the Alaskan sun set over Denali, and listened to the unbearable sound of my friend's final suffering breaths.

And then I left.

Jim Wickwire wandered dazedly around the Peters Glacier for six days until, entirely by chance, he was spotted by a reconnaissance pilot who sounded the alarm and picked him up.

Jim Wickwire continued to challenge himself against the world's highest peaks.

Chris Kerrebrock remained on the mountain until May 25th when his body was recovered by a specialist team.

Key Stage 4/5 Prose

First Prize

Search for Sanctuary

By Emilie Clowry – Whitley Bay High School

The boat rocks as the final passengers are loaded, their assortment of belongings trailing behind them like seaweed off a breakwater while the setting sun gilds the sea molten gold. I sit hunched near the prow, my knees drawn painfully up to my chest, the ridged wood pressing firmly against my bare shins. Gulls wheel overhead, their harsh cacophony all that there is to mark our passing. The vessel sways sickeningly as it is pushed off, slipping silently onto the dark water; I grip the rim for support as I feel my stomach lurch and breathe quickly, trying to quell the nausea threatening to overpower me.

Coldness envelops my grimy toes, my threadbare sandals lost long ago, and I realise with a start that water is slowly seeping in. I could only pray that the craft would last as long as we all needed it to. The waves grow stormier and the current stronger as we leave the lee of the little harbour; I can almost feel the boat being tossed onto the jagged rocks, looming, dark silhouettes, to our left. I swallow nervously as my journey from strife begins.

I know how dangerous this voyage is... everyone does... yet still hundreds risk their lives every day – staying would be a death sentence for those like me. My thoughts drift to unbidden memories of my village, ravaged by famine and disease; in my mind's eye, I see my little sisters with hollow cheeks and flea-bitten skin, my mother lying ill and dying in the corner of our crumbling hut, my father cowed and beaten after days without end toiling beneath the beating sun. I hadn't been able to bear the sight of the desolate desert horizon; my family needs this voyage to succeed or there will be a future for no-one.

My throat clenches as I recall my sisters' tearful farewells and clutch a bundle of rags to my emaciated chest. I need to stay strong and, raising my head, I set my eyes steadfastly on the east where the moon is rising languidly, lighting our silvery path to freedom. I have heard so many tales of Italy and Europe – the work, the food, the medicine. I hope it will prove as welcoming as I have been led to believe.

I have little money after my arduous trek through hostile territory – through so many grime-encrusted hands have I been passed on my journey that they have all now blended into a single faceless, but gold-greedy, guide. I wonder again at the madness of this mission: to throw myself, a desperate refugee, on the mercy of Europe. But, truly, I have no choice – I can see no other way.

The boat creaks ominously as the water begins to lap around my ankles while an infant sets up a wail, shattering the tense silence with its shrieks. It is quickly hushed for fear that the cries will alert the authorities, sealing our fate and dispatching us to our doom.

I glance out across the water, trying to distract my thoughts from the tumult besieging them. The ocean is shadowy and unfathomable, smothering the stars which dance across its simmering surface; the sea slaps menacingly against the wood, just inches from my leg, and I feel the salty spray pepper my face with icy darts. The waves look different up ahead, calmer, more silent – even my desert instincts can sense that something is amiss. I turn to search for the captain, assuming one of the traffickers boarded after me, however my eyes rest on but a boy, no more than twelve summers old; he holds the rudder awkwardly, inexpertly, his brow furrowed, biting his lip in fear and concentration. Dread engulfs me as seawater eddies around my shins: the boy, obviously a migrant too, is staring in the wrong direction, oblivious to the danger lurking ahead.

I open my mouth to shout a warning but the call dies in my throat as I see his eyes widen, the rudder spiralling out of his grasp.

A sudden great splintering of wood fills the air as the rocks beneath the water snatch at our little boat. My heart stops as time slows and sounds deaden. I gaze around as people open their mouths in silent screams, clutching and clambering in

an attempt to escape the sea's death-cold embrace. I thrash wildly as the water crashes over my head and break through the surface, gasping desperately, before slipping impotently under once more.

My legs kick. My lungs scream. My head spins. The darkness surrounds me and I can no longer tell whether I am above or below the water. Suddenly, as I am about to give up my soul to Allah, a piece of driftwood shoots out of nowhere, swirling in the current, and hits my shoulder, wounding it deeply though I feel no pain. My numb fingers grip the plank as it drags me towards the sky.

The brisk wind slaps my face sharply, dispelling some dizziness, and the numbing cold harrows my heart as I feel the ocean pulling relentlessly on my legs; I kick weakly, my spirit drained. It would be so much easier to give up, to let go...

The baby's cry slices through the turmoil, offering a stark reminder of the sisters I have left behind. They deserve more than my simple surrender for their future depends on my success... I feel my strength return and my resolve harden.

The moon is high in the sky, past its zenith, when I hear it, a faint, approaching rumble. Thunder? I am not sure I could survive a storm and mutter a fervent prayer that such a tempest will be stilled. Ever closer the growling prowls and I can feel the water tremble all around, mirroring my terror at this new menace. But wait... a white light lances the waves, piercing the darkness like a blade, as a horn blares. Am I to be rescued? It's bright, too bright, and I am forced to raise a hand to shade my eyes.

The driftwood slips from between my numb fingers and I sink, with an anguished whimper, beneath the wind tossed waves. I drift lower and lower, further and further from the salvation that so nearly came to fruition. I close my eyes one final time.

I come to, vomiting violently, retching up the brine that had stifled my lungs and robbed me of my spirit, coughing and heaving until my throat begins to bleed.

"Steady there." I hear the comforting sounds of my own language, spoken in an accent I do not recognise, as I am passed a cup of fresh, clean water. I open my eyes and blink rapidly as the salt begins to sting; I look around in surprise: I am on a boat, much larger than before with no water leaking in, sturdier, cleaner, safer. My bundle is gone, swallowed by the waves, and I am wrapped in a thick blanket, shivers wracking my thin body after my recent ordeal. The deck feels hard and warm beneath my palms – solid, real. The baby begins to babble and I glance around to see the child who gave me hope when all seemed lost. now the future glows brighter than ever... this part of my journey, at least, will finally reach its promising conclusion.

Second Prize

Journeys

By Mia Taylor – John Spence High School

Winter was coming, the arctic snowstorm was arriving: cold, harsh and despairing. The home of the Emperor Penguin was in a flurry amongst the snow-filled land; it was time for the mother penguins to embark on their journey across the arctic, into the unknown.

Saying goodbye to their new family would be difficult, leaving the father penguin to protect the egg that could soon hatch at any moment.

But there was only one priority now: catching the fish. Their child's life depended on it. If the mother doesn't return back with the food, or doesn't return at all, once the egg hatches the baby won't have the strength to survive.

And so, the journey began. Miles and miles across the thousand meters of ice and snow; the safety and the well-being of the child always in mind.

The wind sang a distressing tune, it kept the thousands of mother penguins motivated to survive this pilgrimage to the sea and back.

If they managed to make it back...

The temperature dropped dramatically below -40°C; the storm was emerging. It hit the huddle of penguins unexpectedly, knocking the mother penguin off course and away from the pack.

Without the warmth from the other penguins, she had no chance of surviving. Panic-stricken and full of fear, she glided back towards the herd. She fought hard against the sudden blast of ice and snow against her face.

What if she could never get back to the group?

She would never return home.

And worse than that, she'd never see her family again.

So with all her might, she broke through the storm. To her relief she found the group; she was safe again.

On that dark and stormy night, it was the mother penguin who prayed the hardest. It was her voice that sang out amongst thousands upon thousands of other desperate mothers, dreaming of the moment when they could see the sun again.

And they saw it.

Dawn broke out across the arctic; every trace of a deathly storm had completely vanished.

A felling of utter relief travelled throughout the crowds of penguins. In front of them stood the sea.

And with the sea came...

Fish.

Hours of drastically tiring work led to this one moment; a turning point in the lives of the Emperor Penguin.

A new generation were about to be born.

Third Prize

Journeys

By Meaghan Vipond – John Spence High School

“c’mon, is that what you call walking? Move, move, move!” the guard yelled. The high pitch voice drilled into my ears.

I must have been amongst about 500 other men, being led along a narrow pathway.

Where were we going?

A man with a mud splattered face strode out of the herd of wild animals independently. Questioning a nearby soldier, “where on earth are you taking us, don’t you think we’ve been through enough?” Astonished, the soldier sternly told him “How dare you! You have the audacity to come out here and question my methods”.

Of course, this 6ft tall soldier, standing proudly I must add, was German. Before all of this my wife Elizabeth, I, my daughter Darcy and my son Arthur would visit a small German town called Gengenbach. I carried a pocket dictionary, by the end of the 12 years I was becoming fluent, well at least I thought I was.

I hadn’t seen my family in about 6 months. I don’t know precisely. I was in the German town of Auschwitz, that’s all I knew. It’s the fear of the unknown that kills you slowly every day.

BANG! BANG! BANG! 3 times in the left leg.

I trembled. The shots literally shook my body. Panic rose. Fury rose.

Crying out in the excruciating amount of pain he was in, the man lay there; in the pouring rain whilst the heavens opened up on us. He lay in a deep muddy puddle.

Clawing the mud, he tried to drag himself along. But it was useless; the gloopy mud was just squelching in and between his worn fingers.

Smirking, the guard kicked the man back in line, even though he was hopelessly lying on the ground.

500 men treading on the bullet holes, his head, his body... Desperate to make it to what they thought was a fresh cleansing shower.

Everyone was staggering into each other, weak to the knees. We couldn't even walk.

I hadn't eaten in 2 days. I hadn't eaten properly in 6 months.

We had no hope. Maybe I was the only one who realised this.

A chamber was ahead. A steel door was now an obstacle what lay before us. We all piled in.

"Clothes off!" What? What! All of us in 1 shower together? Well I wasn't complaining, my first shower in months!

We walked into a light room. As we were all in it, the lights suddenly went out. a glimpse of light peered through a hole above.

A dust like powder fell on us. 10 minutes we stood there for.

My fellow 'friends' around me fell. They fell on top of me. I couldn't breathe. People scratching the walls... everyone was screaming. They are the screams that haunt me and visit me in my nightmares.

I lay breathless on the stone cold ground.

By the time we had been in there for about 10 minutes, there was silence. Literally dead silence.

I was encaved. Encaved by the corpses, who lost their lives so tragically.

The hole where the light came through was now closed. I lay gasping for air on the floor. My eyes slowly fell shut. It was finally over.

Only until I realised how fortunate I was.

I heard those around me. Guards and doctors “Is this possible?”

“How could this happen?” Why wasn’t I dead?

It was a few short hours apparently before I woke up.

I hadn’t perished. Everyone was amazed. Literally overwhelmed. They couldn’t take their eyes off me. In silence, they gazed at me.

I awakened in a medical centre. I couldn’t understand the doctor anymore. My ears had a constant ringing sound stuck in them. They are drilled in them still to this day. It was dark and the lights were dim. The room was spinning. The lights were flickering.

Would they just kill me another way?

I escaped the death camp and its ghastly tricks because of my country. I believe my country was my saviour; they liberated the camp and set me free.

My family, my remarkable family. They weren’t as lucky. They never returned so I made the worst assumption. As the months went on I lost hope. On a Saturday, I collected the paper from the local shop. A young boy stood hand in hand with his mother. Our eyes met. Elizabeth and Arthur stood in utter shock. Our fate had taken a turn for the best.

Elizabeth moved away after I got taken to the death camp.

But to my poor angel Darcy, I will never forget your kindness or braveness.

She was taken off Liz, at the train station. She was instantly killed. They believed little girls were worthless. Those monsters took my daughters precious life. I won’t be able to walk her up the aisle, or dance with her at her wedding because you have took it. Yes, to you it was only one life, but to me it was my whole world.

So finally to the men who lost their lives in the death camps. I live on and tell our story for you. I am the 1 out of 1 million who can say this.

I am a survivor.

Upper Key Stage 3 Prose

First Prize

The Journey that Changed the World

By Izzie Clowry – Whitley bay High School

The bus jolts forward, it's exhaust spluttering as it turns down another identical street in this grey, unforgiving, concrete world; I press my forehead against the cool glass of the window, condensation greasing its already murky surface. Craning my neck, I try in vain to glimpse the sky between the tall, shadowy offices and dingy apartment blocks hemming me in – I feel stifled here yet I am more free than I have ever been... I am at liberty to study, to socialise without fear of disapproval... so different from the vengeful oppression left behind.

The road ahead is lined with cars, their bright colours muted by the overcast sky, their drivers travelling back and forth, day in, day out, their preoccupations governed by rising fuel prices and reality T.V. searing injustices seem hardly to intrude on their thoughts... I wish I could say the same for my own.

I lean back, my eyelids drooping, trying to ignore the low murmurs and snatched stares as my fellow passengers offer up glances of doubtful recognition. Yes, they will know my face... how could they fail to? I have been plastered all over news stands and screens since long before I arrived... my life has changed so much, and so suddenly, since the day they came for me...

I raced ahead to join Kainat and Shazia as they boarded the bus at the end of our long, tiring day – sticky with perspiration under the heavy fabric of my burqa, I was determined to find a seat as it was such a long way from school to my home. The imposing, mountainous landscape beckoned as we set off on our twice-daily journey, my mind turning to the exam I had just completed; it had gone as well as could have been expected and now there would be only a few more late nights of revision before the weekend. A smile played on my lips as I thought of my father who would be waiting ardently for my return – I would be quizzed again about the answers I had written and then we would settle down for our evening meal. Little ever changed in our small village in a corner of Pakistan but, at times, I yearned for something fresh, something new, a different journey from the one I was destined to make each and every day...

The wind buffeted the little bus to and fro while it trundled along the dusty lanes and my mind took a sinister turn as it drifted to the recent threats I had been receiving – they would arrive, slipped under our front door or posted on social media sited but did the perpetrators truly believe I would be suppressed by their menace? Even if they were to come to threaten me in person, I would stand up to them, tell them that education is a basic right... or at least, I would hope to have the courage to confront them in this way...

Suddenly, I was jolted from my reverie as the engine ground to a halt and I became aware of a commotion towards the front of the bus. And then I heard the voice that haunts me to this day...

"Where is she?" The rasping syllables sliced through the suffocating air like a scythe. "Which one of you is Malala?"

Slowly, as if in a dream, the crowd of passengers parted for they knew I was finally to be silenced; I stood, my legs trembling but my back ramrod straight. Was I about to come face to face with one of my tormentors? Stumbling forward, my heart thudding a frantic tattoo, I stared the brute firmly in the eye, trying to pay no heed to the loaded gun held casually in his hand and the sadistic sneer distorting his features.

"I am the girl you are seeking," I proclaimed, pride veiling my terror. The air was thick with fear.

I glimpsed a sense of satisfaction behind the masked man's glowering eyes as a deafening crack sent me reeling. Then... darkness...

I learned later that I had been shot in the head at point blank range because I had stood up for education for girls. I have been told that I never regained consciousness in my beautiful home country but that I was flown to the west, to the U.K., thousands of miles away from all that was familiar. They say I am a heroine, an inspiration, known and respected around the globe...

That's what *they* say. As for me, I say that I did as everyone who is committed to the fight for equality would have done for I am not one voice but simply the mouthpiece for millions of oppressed girls everywhere.

The Taliban tried to impose their will on me that day but, as I gather up my belongings and head for my new home, I swing my bag over my shoulder and feel thanks that my resolve has grown ever stronger... my voyage continues not despite, but because of, the events on the bus that fateful afternoon...

Who knows where my journey, and that of all the young girls who are certain to follow me, will now end?

Second Prize

Kini

By Harry Scott – John Spence High School

My name is CMDR Jack Opor of the Pilot Institute. I am an explorer on an unknown inhabited planet.

My ship pulled out of warp and I glanced at my systems panel. The solar system read Kini – 700 light-years from Sol. I looked around for a nearby planet and when I set my eyes on one, a smile lit my face. I turned towards it and throttled up to 7Mm/s. I noticed my mistake when my info panel displayed a proximity warning and the ship began burning up in the atmosphere. I pulled my throttle down and helplessly hurtled towards the planet's surface. I braced for impact mere seconds before everything went black.

I woke with my face against the cracked canopy of my ship, the thrusters completely burned out. Fear struck me like a bullet and I crawled backwards reaching for the nearest relatively hard object. My hand came to land on a blaster and I picked it up, taking aim at the most cracked area. The sound of blaster fire was music to my ears when accompanying shattered glass. I slid out of the cockpit and looked around.

“Computer, landscape scan,” I commanded, almost instantly receiving feedback on the surrounding area. High metal content. Once, or if, I got back into space I was selling this data.

“Computer, map,” I chimed inquisitively before pulling up the local area and searching for any signs of civilisation. My eyes briefly scanned the map and settled on a nearby city.

“They could have replacement parts, I suppose,” I mumbled to myself before setting my destination and setting out.

I took a few steps across the rocky landscape, getting used to the gravity levels of this world. I was frankly amazed that my computer was still functioning after a crash like that. I suppose it was due to my... potentially illegal modifications to the outer casing. I won't go into detail about it but I can certainly tell you it was difficult to do.

7 EARTH HOURS LATER

I finally made it. They called the city ‘Grok Antol.’ It was a market city where the economy is about buying things second hand for cheap and then reselling them at double their actual value – exactly what I needed. I could afford everything they were selling, I had no doubts about that but what I wasn't so sure about was how high quality these parts actually were.

I had an advanced discovery scanner and a detailed surface scanner that were completely wrecked, my thrusters were malfunctioning, my canopy was non-existent and my FSD was missing entirely.

All of these parts seemed worn and prone to breaking. I picked out a new FSD that looked as if it had never been used and was a brand I recognised – Falcón DeLacy Shipyards. I handed over a fistful of credits and took the drive, activating the anti-gravity suspension and bringing it with me to purchase my thrusters. I dragged my eyes over the selection and cringed at how bad some of them looked. I decided on the newest looking set of thrusters and handed over the credits. In a vain attempt to find new scanners, I scoured the city. Not a sign of any thrusters. I ended up in a back alley when a group of marauder-esque group of men crept up behind me, charging their blasters.

“Drop the thrusters,” the leader (or at least I assumed he was the leader) demanded, “now.”

“Over my dead body,” I growled through gritted teeth.

“So be it!”

As the fired I dropped to the ground and they all hit each other. Looking back on it, it was technically an indirect murder. I continued on my way to find the last part I genuinely required, the canopy for my cockpit.

5 HOURS LATER

I was back at my ship by now, installing the new parts and taking an occasional break. I had only installed the FSD because there was nothing else in the housing. I was working on the canopy when raiders came to steal everything. I slowly reached for the blaster in my ship and shot the leader in the foot, scaring the others off and getting back to work. A smile spread across my face as I finished my work on the canopy and slotted the thrusters into place. I was back.

Third prize

By Megan Campbell-Hills – Whitley Bay Student Support Centre

When the storm had well and truly descended, when it engulfed me, when it filled my body like a cancer the most important journey of my life was set in motion. I always knew I was not quite the same as everyone else. I knew I had dark days. Fears. Eccentricities. I did not, however, know I would someday be fighting for my life.

Over the course of a year I was not present, not to myself nor anyone else. Hence why my memories of that time are dull. Thick. Grey. I believe the storm arrived when my Great Grandpa died, this was succeeded a month later by my Grandad dying –

on the same day my Grandma slipped into a coma. A short 6 months later my Great Grandma joined her husband. I think it's fair for me to describe this as the worst time of my life.

Thinking of this time my memories collide, veering into each other. I was like a ship stuck out in the tempestuous waters. Getting lost amongst the chaos. I was overwhelmed. unable to breathe. I retreated. I shrank into myself. I disappeared.

I cried and cried and cried my throat burned my eyes stung my body ached my nails were bitten I scratched myself I rocked back and forth. I tried to preserve the remains of myself by disengaging from the outside world.

My mother would check on me every now and again. I tried to talk back to her. Over time my answers got shorter. One word answers. Things got harder, I was sinking. She was lucky if she got a grunt or some kind of acknowledgement. Eventually I stopped answering.

"Can I come in?" "No"

"Are you okay?" "M-hm"

"Do you want anything?"...

"Meg?"...

My mother told me she slept outside of my room on the bad days – I think this was her way of telling me she never left my side.

The longer I spent in bed my body sunk further into itself. I was rotting from the inside out. Imagine that. Rotting. I felt too much yet felt nothing at all. It's a terrifying thing to fight your own mind. As hours, days, weeks passed I was losing strength. losing hope. I was a fraction of the girl I have emerged to be.

You will never truly know what it's like to look in the mirror and not recognise who looks back or slicing yourself open because it's impossible to worry about anything else when there is blood escaping you or wanting to scream when you're unable to bring a whisper past your lips or lying in bed for a week straight because your body is so heavy it physically pains you or not understanding your own feelings or having to decline social invites and watch the last remaining people in your life lose faith you'll ever get better or being overwhelmed by the presence of another simply existing in the same room or being paralysed by fear of the world that exists on the other side of the door. I hope you never truly know.

My mother pulled me from the wreck and took me somewhere I had never seen before. I met a man named Oliver Aramo. I'd like to think he saved my life. I can't really remember what his methods were – I have lost that part of my life. I feel my unconscious mind has blocked this from me in order to protect me from getting marooned at sea for a second time. Even now, many months on, there is still an insistent voice telling me it's not safe to leave harbour. He taught me that ships are safe in port, but that's not what ships are made for.

Life only begins when you've sailed to the edge of your comfort zone.

Key Stage 3 Poetry

First Prize

A Syrian Journey

By Robson Shipley – Marden Bridge Middle School

Paralysed by fear,
Trepidation devours away at their emotions,
Their bodies oblivious to the horror surrounding them,
Bleak echoes leak from their souls,
Lifeless.

A life of fear stalks them as they seek liberty,
The stench of death hangs in their hearts,
A whirlwind of poison leaks into their veins,
Agonising.

Freedom has left them,
Oblivious,
They want their lives back,
Prisoners held by consternation,
On a journey from heaven to hell,
Frail.

Diseased spirits engulf their thoughts,
Their traumatised essence trapped behind rage,
Hell circles their bleeding epitome,
Suffering haunts them,
Unconscious.

Lower Key Stage 3 Prose

First Prize

Journey of a Survivor

By Esther Van Den Bos – Marden bridge Middle School

Mist curls around my feet, intertwining with my haggard limbs. The placid water mirrors the cloudless sky, like our hopeless souls. Running my hand along the weather-beaten paint of the boat, a small carving of a raven lies watching those on board. Rays of the dying sun glint off the rusted rails, a small drop of beauty in this ocean of horror.

Darts of pain shoot up my leg, reminding me of the fear of the shadow that lingers behind me, ready to pounce... My calloused feet drag across the barren wasteland that was once my home. Fear unites the living, pulling us together into its arms and wrapping its scaly tail around us. Tears run silently down my face, leaving trails in the soot. Desolation fills my soul, clouding with sombre betrayal. Shaking my head, I wrench myself back into reality. I cannot let myself reflect on my painful past. My eyelids droop, and I sink back into the unyielding deck.

Rousing from my drowsy slumber, I peer into the early morning sky. Rays of hope slink across the horizon, casting light onto this vessel of sadness. Faith rises inside of me, lifting my chin. A smile tugs at my lips, the action seems foreign to me, as if I had forgotten how. Opening my eyes to opportunity, a new day arises.

Second Prize

Journey Into Space

By Amu Carr – Southlands School

Massive. grey, choking clouds and then hideous, dark sky. Whooshing in the air, melting hot fire and people.

Suddenly I could see massive basting crackling meteors zooming through the air. Everyone that saw the Television were cheering when they saw the two meteorites blasting quickly into space.

Through space we got really excited and even our parents were shocked after they caught the news of the meteorites zooming on their journey.

Staring out of the porthole I can see dull, haunted, eerie naked tree trunks. some planets are camouflaged and bare and bleak. Spying out the porthole I can see the moon light shining brightly on the dull moonrock. Staring out of the spy hole beautifully, quietly the crackling boiling moon. Gently the sun stands by. Relaxing, just staring out of the porthole a dull quiet planet gently floats by, a rocky, haunted planet called Mars. Somehow, being away from Earth feels disheartening because space is dull and eerie.

Third Prize

By Alyssa Rannie – Monkseaton Middle School

Drizzling rain trickled down the window, pooling at the back of the white plastic windowsill. I was scared. They had taken her. they took my mother into the room. I stood still, tensing at every slight sound as I watched the white door at the other side of the metal gate that held me captive. The harsh smell of chemicals tickled my nose, and I sensed an emptiness inside me, as if part of me was missing.

Suddenly, the tarnished silver door handle turned, revealing a woman. I cowered in the dark corner of my pen, terrified, as she approached me, hand outstretched. She edged slowly towards me, and for some reason, I knew I was safe with her. I let her come closer, and she whispered:

“I’m sorry. Poor thing. It was the best for her, I promise...”

I wondered what she meant by that, but what could I do? She couldn’t understand me. She gently stroked my silky fur, and for a moment I didn’t care. I just wanted to stay there forever, with her. Just then the door opened again, and I jumped back, startled, and growled.

“Shush, it’s alright.” The woman assured me, in a gentle voice.

A man entered then, a tall man in white clothes, green gloves and a strange mask covering half of his face. I was never sure why, but that mask unsettled me.

“I always hate doing that.” The man said in a deep, gruff voice, half muffled by his mask.

“Me too, but really, it’s all for the best.” The woman mumbled almost near tears.

The strange man just grunted. The lady reached out again and softly ruffled my fur. I knew then that my mother was gone forever. I whined and jumped up at the gate, willing her to come padding out of the white door, nothing the matter. It didn’t happen.

“Carrie, I know it’s sad, but we have a business to run here. This little mites going to have to be put up for adoption straight away. We’ll find him a good home, I promise.” Said the man, patting my Carrie on the shoulder sorrowfully.

She just nodded, subdued and staring at me, still fondling my ears.

The she stood up, and, with one last look at me, walked out slowly with the tall, strange man. I stood there in the corner of my pen for a bit longer, barking, but no-one came. I lay down, my head on my front paws, staring at the spot I’d last seen my poor mother, barking, trying to get to me, and drifted off to sleep.

The next few days were like a dream, I missed my mother, of course, but Carrie and Gerald, as I learned the man was called, looked after me and loved me like I really belonged to them. I thought I did. I had no idea everything was about to change.

One day, I woke up to the sound of a bell ringing as the front door to the vets opened and a big man strutted in. He had a tattoo of a spider web on his neck and looked terrifying enough to send a lion running with just one glance. I was confused. I was sure it was past breakfast time, so where were Carrie and Gerald with my food?

Where was my lead ready for my morning walk? I whined a little, calling out to them. As if they could read my mind, I heard footsteps running down the stairs and Gerald entered, looking flustered.

“Oh, sorry about that! My wife is out and I had to do the ironing.” He said apologetically to the scary man. “What is it you’re after, a dog?”

The man nodded. “A big, strong beast to help me hunt. In fact, I had my eye on that Labrador over there. How much?” He nodded again in my direction.

“Oh, erm, well, actually, that dog is...” Gerald spluttered.

Just then, the doorbell rang again and Carrie entered, smiling at me fondly, then noticing the man and frowning.

“Carrie, this customer wants to buy the Labrador.” Gerald explained.

Carrie smiled sadly, almost regretfully, at the man. “Of course. That will be £55...”

I was extremely confused. In the next few hours, Carrie put my harness on and I sat being cuddled by her and Gerald. I played up to them as much as I could, not wanting to say goodbye. But it didn’t work. Eventually, they passed me to the man.

He bundled me in a van, and that was the last I saw of my second mother. I could not believe how they had betrayed me. I thought they loved me, yet they sold me in the blink of an eye to the first stranger they came across! I was in the middle of these thoughts when the van ran over a speed bump and the doors flapped open in the back. The scary man was up front, so this was my chance of freedom. I jumped.

I watched as the van disappeared into the distance, the man not even acknowledging my absence. It was raining hard by this point, and I had to find shelter. Plodding along sadly in the wet gutter, I could not help dwelling on those I had lost. My real mother, whom I had shared so little time with. Carrie and Gerald, whom I had loved and assumed they loved me back. But now I was on my own. The past was the past, and my first priority was survival. For the next few days I wandered hopelessly, sheltering in any empty cardboard box that was blown near by the strong wind. I grew cold, and soon caught an illness. I was more desperate than ever for love – something I had been starved of from the beginning. Time passed, and I needed attention. I needed to be nursed. I had almost given up on life when my wish was granted.

I was sheltering behind a cluster of rusty dustbins when the front door to a house opened, and a small girl with blonde plaits came skipping out. She came across me, in a horrible state, cowering away, knowing I could not trust humans. But she picked me up and held me, cuddling me close, whispering:

“It’s OK, puppy. I’ll look after you. I think I’ll call you... Buddy. Yes, Buddy. I like that.”

She carried me inside, and from then on I had a new life, and a new name, Buddy.

The little girl and her mother nursed me back to health, and loved me truly. I grew to trust humans again, and became known in the small estate as a friendly, carefree dog. playing with the innocent children. now I am happy, and plan to never leave my new found family. This is my journey.

Upper Key Stage 2 Prose

First Prize

Journey

By Maya Ruiz – Valley Gardens Middle School

I stood. My wife squeezed my hand tight. The clock ticked and built the tension in the room. My heart was broken. I could tell my wife's was too. But I didn't have a choice. My eyes went for a walk around the room. They studied every nook and cranny of the kitchen. I would miss it. Even looking at my wife, Marie's dreamy blue eyes made me feel lost and broken in two. Silently, steam lifted from the tea pot. Memories rushed to my head. A burning tear, drizzled down my rosy cheek. I felt hot and sticky. Alone. In my own world. Alone.

I passed my daughter her hat and looked in my wife's eyes. I couldn't face the pressure of looking directly at her. It was as cold as the Arctic outside as the mist appeared. The breeze blew my daughter's hair around. I cracked. I couldn't hold the tears that swelled my eyes red. I didn't want my wife to see my tears so I rushed out of the house. My daughter, whose name is Lola, squeezed my hand tight and looked up with fear. She was confused: eyes questioning, heart pounding and fingers shaking. As slow as snails we walked down the road, making the most of the limited time we had together.

After a while of walking in silence, my wife and I started chatting about things Lola couldn't understand. "Marie, dear." I said softly. "I'll be fine. Look after yourself. And Lola. Marie?" I whispered worryingly. A few minutes later "Me and my husband are in a conversation. Lola." Lola didn't reply. Instead, she looked up at the sky where weird shadows were lurking. She looked scared. What were they? It was as dark as night. I had to go. I said my last goodbyes and waved. The train whistled and a man came out shouting that the train was leaving. I strolled down the rough path. Before I knew it my family were out of sight. They disappeared in the fog. I disappeared on the train. The mist cleared. They were gone.

Time flew by and I was in the cabin on the ship. I was more lonely than I'd ever been. Like a dog without a bone. I pinched myself, hoping I would wake up from a nightmare and find myself at home with my family. But it was no dream. It was real. As real as life. Although I was alone, I was with my family. I'd always be with them. I stared at the photograph, which was old and torn but it brought back so many memories.

Above my head I felt people's feet stamp on the deck. I heard children's coughs, babies' cries and the comforting adults' voices. I stepped slowly towards the window, hoping I'd see the sun and a blue sky. What was I thinking? It was dark gloomy. I felt tiny and small: like a mouse in a field, like a single droplet of rain in a thunderstorm and as if I wasn't there. As if I'd disappeared. Into thin air.

Suddenly, I felt the boat jerking to a stop as the waves crashed against the rocks. Then, a bird flew over my head. And another one and another one. Until a whole flock, of what looked like doves, were flapping their wings a few meters above me. I then remembered about the little paper crane I gave to my daughter. I took out a blank piece of paper and folded it to an almost identical paper bird. A herd of

memories rushed into my head and took over all of my current thoughts. My mind went blank. I bit my tongue so hard because I missed my family. I dreamed I was back home with my family. I then woke up to reality and stepped down the steps. I felt lost in my own world. My journey had only just begun.

Second Prize

The Journey of the Old Oak Tree

By Luis Anna Rawsthorne – Monkseaton Middle School

The golden droplets of sun shone through the lush, leafy branches, making the forest look magnificent in the morning light. The heart of the forest – the most beautiful place, was buzzing with life. Animals everywhere were chatting happily with the Old Oak Tree. The Old Oak Tree was twelve hundred years old! He had big, green, bushy eyebrows and large emerald eyes. He was a very kind and generous tree.

Every autumn, animals would migrate because in winter the forest was too cold for them to live in. And every autumn, the Old Oak Tree would wonder what it might be like to go on such a journey. As the years passed by, it was the same old story: the animals would go off in autumn and come back in spring, and in that period of time the Old Oak Tree would be alone in a skeleton of a forest.

It was on a warm summer's day, when the idea finally struck the Old Oak Tree that he would go on a journey himself! The animals all thought this was a wonderful plan and congratulated him. They bombarded the oak tree with tips and friendly advice on how to embark on his expedition. They spent many excited days together, but when the Old Oak Tree tried to move, he realised he was rooted to the ground! To him at that moment it seemed all the colour had drained out of the world and everything was grey and cheerless.

Autumn came and the animals were busy preparing for their long and tiring migration. The Old Oak Tree tried to be happy for them, but on the inside he just wanted to retreat into his bark like a snail into its shell.

Winter was cold and miserable. Without any animals the Old Oak Tree felt lonely and spent his days standing motionless like a statue. Time passed, and finally the first flower bloomed. Spring had sprung, and with it the animals had returned! However, unlike other years, this time they had each brought a souvenir home for the oak tree and they filled him with tales of their exciting adventures. A wide smile crept across his face and a large tear of joy welled up in the oak tree's eye. The sun broke out from behind the stormy clouds and everything suddenly became much brighter.

And so it was that every time the animals came back from their migration they would fetch something back for the Old Oak Tree and tell of their travels. The Old Oak Tree realised that everything made its own journey. It didn't have to be physical; it could be an emotional journey or a journey of one's imagination. But as sure as the acorns on his boughs, every single journey was possible.

Third Prize

In the Cave

By Ishika Jha – Wallsend Jubilee Primary School

Catherine Stevens scurried across the deck of the Jackson, Chef Gat's snores filling her ears. After checking through her survival checklist for the fifteenth time, the innocent little maid had ventured into her great Escape from this horrid crew – and life. Brushing her sandy hair out of her determined eyes, the scrawny girl heaved her small bag onto the lifted rowing boat. She was so light the boat would barely make a sound when it touched the murky water.

'And where do you think you're going?' came a cool voice from behind.

With a startled gasp, Cath spun around to see twenty-year-old Captain John emerge from the shadows. His wide grin wasn't reassuring. Silently, he beckoned her into his candle lit office.

After soundlessly following the young sailor, Catherine began to wonder whether this had been a good idea after all. How about I, a scrawny little girl, attempt a great escape off the Jackson, never to be seen again?' I'm sorry, sir. I didn't know what came over me... am I in trouble?'

Unexpectedly, the green-eyed Captain burst into laughter. Cath flushed.

Catherine rubbed her sweaty palms against her rags. She was definitely a goner.

'No, no. You're not. Don't flatter yourself – you aren't the first soul to attempt to escape off this wretch of a ship.' Cath's eyes widened. Was the Captain insulting his own crew? 'No, my girl I have brought you here for another reason entirely.' And then, as the ship swayed and creaked in the night, to her astonishment, he pulled out a gold-papered map.

'As I'm sure you remember, six years ago, on this very day, I found you, abandoned on the street, orphaned and alone. I'm not quite sure I did you a favour – or that you know it wasn't out of kindness. You see, my father had handed down this map to me (Catherine suddenly wished she knew how to read) on his deathbed. Admittedly, for the next few years, I became obsessed; miraculously, I uncovered that this map lead to a cave on the Isle of Draco, off the coast of Italy. You may have noticed that is where we are headed now.

'But that left me with one problem: to get into this cave filled with gold, I needed someone scrawny enough to fit through the entrance. You see, here it says it is exactly a third of the width of an average door across. Just in my luck, I came across you and everything fitted together. I spent the next six years gathering crew and saving money...

'So? What do you say?' The eagerness in the Captain's voice rung clear.

'What are you not telling me?' asked Catherine suspiciously.

The Captain's smile fell. 'There are a few... er... rumours that there is a "dragon" sleeping there. Nonsense, I say... but what do you? Do you come, or do you waste twelve years of effort?'

As perplexion spread across her face, Cath considered her options. Say no, go free. Say yes... gold. A chance to live. Adventure. 'Alright,' she burst abruptly. 'when do we leave?'

The Captain grinned. 'Tomorrow. Or, as of now, today!'

With a small smile, Cath turned to the window opening to the sunrise, wondering if this *slight* change of plans could work out for everyone.

Ship docked, crew ready and awake, Captain Johnathan Jackson ventured off onto the Isle of Draco, the green scenery hissing at him like a snake, breeze whispering in his ears.

Suddenly, he frowned.

Perhaps it had been a bad idea to lie to the small girl.

Perhaps he should have told her about Arachnid, slayer of thousands, breather of flames, wielder of –

Shrugging the guilt away, Johnathan walked into his beckoning destiny.

Upper Key Stage 2 Poetry

First Prize

The Couche's Caves

By Rubi Ravestijn – Spring Gardens Primary School

Eugh! Monday morning do I have to get up so early?
They won't mind if I'm late surely.
Just five minutes or an hour or two,
But I would get into trouble, real bad trouble I knew.
I dragged myself out of bed,
Then I felt an ache in my head,
I dropped myself onto couch,
And rested my head on a sofa pouch.
I slowly drifted to a sleep,
When suddenly I started sinking deep.
I tried to pull myself steady,
But the next thing I know I'm in the couches belly!
I awoke with a surprise,
For standing in front of my gazing eyes,
Were homework tasks of every sort,
History, science and my book report.
There were toys that had been lost and never found,
My rubber duck, my cuddly hound.
My game console, my mini guitar.
I strode deeper into the couches caves,
And the deeper I went, the more I became,
Aware of all the sins I'd done,
I made life hard for everyone.

The guilt crept into the centre of my heart,
And tore my love and happiness apart.
I swallowed hard and looked away,
And vowed to myself that from this day,
I would turn over a new leaf and be better,
Not a lazy loser but a goal getter.
I sped through the cave it was tiring and long,
I turned left and right and the path went on.
I finally found myself in a light,
And found a rope and lassoed it tight,
To the top from where the had shown,
And clambered up the worn rope.
When I finally reached the top,
And grew back to my normal size and stopped.
I quickly put my school clothes on,
And had some breakfast with my mum.
I am going to be a good boy from this day,
And remember the lessons the couch gave,
To me and you and everyone,
The power of the couch is a secret one.

Second Prize

Keep on Going (Lyrics based on Sing by Gary Barlow)

By Claire Centeno – St Mary’s RC Primary School Forest Hall

Every drop of hope falls in my cup,
Walking on the long dusty road.

Bring hope, bring peace, in this life,
you can be who you want to be.
Stand with might. Stand with pride.
Don't you see right now everyone is,
listening to what we say.

(Chorus)

I have stumbled, I have fallen,
I get back up and keep on going,
Life is like riding a bike,
I've sailed seas, I've climbed mountains,
life is just a big journey,
Open up your eyes and see light.

Their walking on their feet everyday,
And seeing every sad face along the way.

Bring hope, Bring peace, in this life,
You can be who you want to be,
Stand with might, stand with pride don't you
See right everyone is listening to what we say.

(Chorus)

I'm catching every drop of love,
To hear a thousand voices shouting life
and light and hope.

Bring hope x4

Come on and...

(Chorus)

Third Prize

The Journey to Find Happiness

By Aaryn McDonald-Brown – St Columba's RC Primary School

I've sailed all around the world,
To discover real joy.
Yet everywhere I've went
I've never been more content
Than when I'm sitting with my friends by my side.

The hope my journey promised,
Disappeared much too fast.
I've seen misfortune and greed
Plus all those in desperate need
Of a friend to guide them down the path.

But know I've witnessed love,
Abundance of its faith,
It lives in every community
Binding them in unity
And helping them to guide one another.

Now I know where true happiness is,
It lives in all of us!
Its home is in our heart,
It's been there from the start,
And from there, it will never part!

Lower Key Stage 2 Prose

First Prize

The Journey from Dunkirk

By William Pellow – Marine Park First School

The thick, black smoke cleared as our armada stealthily sailed into the war torn harbour of Dunkirk. Soldier painted the beach like long, black serpents, all waiting on the moles to be rescued. Treacherous fires raged all over the golden sand and ebony black ash blew into my lungs. I coughed and spluttered as my panick stricken eyes watched the scene of an army on the run.

The 'Lucy' started to make trip after trip carrying soldiers onto the big navy boats. I had to ignore the fact that gun shots were firing everywhere and the fact we were going down rapidly on fuel. I had to stand taller to help my father to save these soldiers. Eventually we took one injured soldier and a young soldier and rottweiler and set off for Dover.

Gently rocking, 'The Lucy' sailed peacefully out of the disspared harboured. I stared at the injured soldier he had a sling and an eye patch also sitting next to him the rotweiler growled menacingly at me. Everything seemed to be ok until a silver bullet struck our boat with an ear-splitting crash. Panick washed our boat clean.

Dad tossed me a rope ladder as our boat started to flood with the cold English channel. I clambered down the side of boat carefully but quickly. To my horror the bullet had hit the main engine! I reached out for some tools and with my quick engineering skills I had fixed it. Then, the boat took a sudden jolt and I was plunged into the salty water. My head came back up as I grabbed a hand and fell unconscious on a smooth surface.

When I woke up I saw a bright, blue sky and some white cliffs towering above me. I sat up to see the soldiers and my dad staring down at me. We were at Dover... We made it to Dover! I sat up and gave my dad a big hug. "Your ok now girl," whispered my dad. We pushed round the soldiers and past the medics. But there was no sign of John. So we jumped on the battered 'Lucy' and drifted to Deal.

We wandered back home while the boat was being fixed. We had found out are neighbour Mr Smith had not returned home so we mourned a bit but we were still not sad. The door unlocked into house but when we got inside we were curious to hear the radio on. No, could it be I raced into the living and there sitting on a chair was JOHN! I rushed up to him and gave him a giant hug as he told us he wasn't needed in the army any more. So there we were on that tragic day sitting together listening to Churchill on the radio.

Second Prize

Dear Mr Jones

By Aishah Kizito – Stephenson Memorial Primary School

Dear Mr Jones,

Would you like to have the best experience of your life? How would you feel if you thought your play was the most fantastic play, but people thought it was the worst? Well then, come to watch The Tempest with funny characters, unlike Macbeth which has blood and chaos in it.

When the play begins, you'll be on the edge of your seat, watching magical fairies cackle and chuckle, unlike Macbeth that begins with three mind-numbing witches pretending to be scary. (What do you think?)

Not only is there a man casting a storm, but The Tempest is packed with magical scenes of fairies, romance and comedy, whereas Macbeth has fighting in it and people falling to their death. (Not to mention a man trying to be a show-off!)

It is important that you watch our performance because all the 30 children have worked very hard to make The Tempest a successful play, we know it's your favourite! The extraordinary acting, along with amazing, loud, clear noises, will have the audience clapping with delight instead of falling asleep watching Miserable Macbeth. Remember, we are such stuff as dreams are made on!

Aishah Kizito

Third Prize

The Same Journey

By Santiago James – Star of the Sea RC Primary School

My names Jimmy and I am a trapper (and I am going to tell you The Journey of a Trapper) it's my first day I am scared I don't want to go down but I had to. My whole family is counting on me and my brother John. If we don't go down into the darkness we'll die because if there is no money it means no food and no food means no life.

The cage door shut... down we go deeper and deeper and deeper into the underground world. Thud! We had landed I was not brave I sat down on my little stone chair I couldn't even sit up straight and tall. I had to sit down and bend over not even an eleven years old boy could sit-up. It was so dark if I put my hand in front of my eyes I couldn't even see it it was like I'd lost track of time but not my fear. Wait I can hear a mine cart coming I opened the door and...

My dad died in the explosion round about one year ago. So now it's all come down to me and my brother. If we don't then we are kicked out of the house you may think I am alone hear... but I'm not. There are ghost's down here 16 of them and one of them is my dad.

Lower Key Stage 2 Poetry

First Prize

The Journey to the Deepest Darkness

By Amelia Cerisola – Star of the Sea RC Primary School

In the deepest darkness...

all I can see is

tiny flickers of light,

and the outline of big heavy carts,

and the pitch black darkness.

In the deepest darkness...

all I can hear is

the coal carts chugging along the tracks,

and everything else is silent.

In the deepest darkness...

all I can touch is

the stoney surface of the coal,

and I can feel the string of the trap door.

In the deepest darkness...

all I can taste is

the dust in the air,

that makes my throat tingle.

In the deepest darkness...

all I can smell is

the smelly miners breath,

and the fear of death.

I hate my journey every day down to the deepest darkness...

Second Prize

Journey of Faith

By Nyasha Kaur Celise Chinna Chonyear – Star of the Sea RC Primary School

From the morning of dawn are Journey begins. From packing your stuff and walking down stairs to the front door to leave. Are Journey has already began.

A Journey is like a tree.

You walk in different paths but each path leads you to the right place. This is like the branches of a tree. Some paths might come to dead ends this is the same as branches not every branch leads to another branch.

Finally you get to the place you want to be. This is the root of the tree. this is the place you have dreamed of this is where your where born. This is also like the root of a tree it is where the tree begins.

Nobody know what's going to come your way. Nobody know what root you are going to take.

Nobody knows what you will do all the way.

Are you going to sing all the way.

Are you going to dance all the way.

Are you going walk all the way.

Are you going to be quite all the way.

Are you going to jump all the way.

Third Prize

The First Dragon Flight

By Shane Sugden – St Columba's RC Primary School

The wind as cold as ice,
Gilding through the light,
Fast but calm,
Doing no harm,
Going to far,
It is bizarre!

The sight of the flight
Using all your might.
Under the suns light,
Waves beamed at my dragon.

Higher, higher and higher,
Almost drowning,
In the sapphire sky.

Key Stage 1 Prose

First Prize

My Learning Journey So Far

By Ellie Henderson – St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

I can still remember that hot, sunny night. My Mum and Dad tucked me in and read me a story about nursery. My tummy felt funny and my heart felt warm. I fell asleep cuddled into my mum. The following day was a big special day. I was starting ST Cuthbert's nursery. When I got there I found a friend very quickly. Mrs Cottess made me feel happy. I loved reception and year 1 and now in year 2 my learning journey has got even better. I love to write storeys and we do maths outside with water and bubbles. We just went on a trip to the planetarium. Fineley when I'm I would like to be a profeshenel ballet dancer so I continue my learning journey to learn how to dance.

Second Prize

A Journey to Chocolate Land

By Freya Dobson – Hadrian Park Primary School

Once upon a time there lived a little girl and a little boy they were called Freya and Dylan. One day Dylan planted a chocolate tree. Freya meshered it. It grew bigger but not so big. The next day it was enornes. The next day it was jiganteck, so they puled and pulled but it wade not moof. When they got houme they went straight to bed ecseapt for Freya. She stayed up with her mother playing gease who because she was not tired. The next day all of her family pulled it. But sudently it xploded. It made all of the clothes in the shops soggy. It fludded shops. It eaven fludded the butchers. It took days and days to get rid of the flood. But what they didnt know back then was that sumtimes being in a flood was not the safest place to be. Dylan said please be carm we have to try harder. We can not do it said Freya. But then Freya got a pease of wood and blocked it. It stoped Flooding. the king and queen came and gave freya a reward for stoping the flood. Her family were very happy and she trafeled back home and went on TV and was famous. She went the nues and she went on the radeo and she went on everything. She was the priminister. The day after she became a princess.

Third Prize

A Journey to Candy Floss Land

By Jessica Robinson – Hadrian Park Primary school

Once upon a time there was a red and blue lolly pop tree. Some girls called Fallon and Jessica wanted a lolly pop from the lolly pop tree. When they were there they ate one and it sparkled. It took them to candy floss land with Sky, Zoomer, Marsle and Chase. They found Sky, Zoomer, Marsle and Chase and they took them to a special park and they had hot chocolate. They had a sleep over at there home and they had packed things in case they had a sleepover. They had lots of fun there. When they woke up it was time for home. But paw patrol wanted to come. So paw patrol stamped and they jumped. At last they were home and paw patrol. So all of

them had a big party. But they didn't know that that it was Marsle's birthday and Marsle told them that it was his birthday. They had not noticed that it was Zoomer's birthday. So he told Marsle.

Key Stage 1 Poetry

First Prize

The Firebird

By Jessica Rogers – Marine Park First School

Eyes shimmering like amethysts in the moonlight,

Flames shooting of his delicate wings,

Feathers glowing in the darkness,

Moving gracefully like a peaceful dancer,

Looping above above a beautiful forest he flutters down
onto a lovely red rose,

While honey is being made off stripey bees and colourful flowers,

Looping with butterflies over the long green grass,

Gliding back home to a flower meadow with a giant trickling waterfall,

How many centuries have you watched?

Second Prize

My Dinosaur Journey

By Juhi Kaur – St Columba's RC Primary School

I'm a new baby Dinosaur,
looking for a friend,
when I find one'
we'll be friends till we end.

I'm a new baby Dinosaur,
I found my friend,
I was walking down the river,
She was there round the river bend.

I'm a hungry child Dinosaur,
looking for some food,
searching all around,
for something that tastes good.

I'm a hungry child dinosaur,
I found some food,
I ate it very quickly,
now I am in a good mood.

Third Prize

Firebird

By Ethan Haynes – Marine Park First School

Delect crimson feathers glisnin at the sun. Eye's so bright you could almost see diamonds.

Swooping like a bullet.

Soaring through the night sky.

Gliding over the trees so high.

Sitting in a golden nest full of silver twigs.

Travelling to a far away land with a encanted castle full of gold.

How did you get your name firebird?

EYFS Poetry Individual First Prize

Journey

By Jack Ferris – Ivy Road Primary School

I am going to the arctic.

Come with mee,

When I get there

I will see

Polar ber

in the snow

So come on the journey

Let's go go go!

EYFS Prose Individual First Prize

Journey

By Alivia Peters – Ivy Road Primary School

I wud like to go to the moon. I wil see a green Aleein with big anteenas. I wil trvil in a rocit up past the sartsin the sci.

Group Prizes

EYFS Poetry

Reception Class – St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Nursery Class – St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

EYFS Prose

Hadrian Park shared writing group – Katie Charlton, Molly McGough, Caitlyn Harris, Adam Webster, Lola McCormick and Emmie Harris

Ivy Road shared writing group – Ella Lackenby, Pheobe Robson, Maia James Green, Jessica Chaplin and Robin Tierney