

 **YOUNG
MUSLIM
WRITERS
AWARDS**



Muslim Hands



ANTHOLOGY 2020

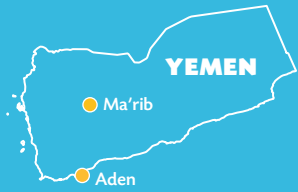


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We are delighted to present to you this year's anthology of the shortlisted entries for the Young Muslim Writers Awards! This year's entries were diverse and engaging, discussing everything from the challenges of lockdown and space adventures, to detective stories and the marvels of spiders. We hope you enjoy reading these extracts as much as we did, and that they inspire your writing and imagination.


This year marks a milestone for us, as we celebrate our 10th Young Muslim Writers Awards competition. To celebrate our anniversary, we held a series of events in the lead-up to the ceremony as part of the Young Muslim Writers Awards Festival. During one of the sessions, we caught up with past winners to learn more about their writing journey. We were heartened to hear about how they had gained confidence from having their voices praised and amplified through the competition – developing confidence is one of the primary goals we set out to achieve. We hope we can continue to inspire young wordsmiths to explore creative writing and to provide a platform from which they can showcase their work.

While 2020 marks a wonderful milestone for us, it was evident that the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns were never too far from the minds of this year's entrants. Many submissions focused on the challenges of home-schooling and the loneliness of spending time away from friends, but also more optimistically, the opportunities that this offered. For us, this year gave us the chance to take our creative writing workshops online, giving us the ability to reach more writers across the country, many of whom have taken part in the competition.

As our tenth competition draws to a close, we are ever grateful for the support and encouragement we have received over the years. We would like to thank Islam Channel who have broadcasted our ceremonies to an international audience since our first event, and the Institute of English Studies at the School of Advanced Study (University of London), for their continued support in celebrating the achievements of young writers. We thank the teachers and parents across the country for encouraging children to put pen to paper, and to this year's judges who embraced the difficult task of selecting the winners.

We congratulate and thank all the writers who took part in the competition! May this be the first step in your remarkable writing journeys, and may this achievement pave the way for your future successes, in sha' Allah.

Wassalam,



Syed Lakhte Hassanain
Chairman, Muslim Hands

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SHORTLIST: POETRY

Key Stage 1 Poetry – Ages 5 to 7

Dear Rainbow	Xavier Mahmood
Every Day	Asma Irshad Hussain
Magic Spells	Humayrah Timol
Muhammad Hero of Mankind	Shayma Yasmin
The Environment in Lockdown	Maryam Khan

Key Stage 2 Poetry – Ages 7 to 11

Changes	Zain Durrani
'Great' Britain	Mariam Khan
Hope	Zidan Akhtar
I Can See	Norah Tafraouti
Safe At Home	Eiliyah Ali

Key Stage 3 Poetry – Ages 11 to 14

Am I Not Human	Daleela Raadiya Haque
H.O.P.E (Hold On Pain Ends)	Ehan Sajjad
Little Little Spider	Aisha Green
Sunrise	Ayaan Shah
The Void of Blue	Aaishah Ravat

Key Stage 4 Poetry – Ages 14 to 16

Life	Safina Aziz
Life is Life	Saif Rahman
The Peer You Fear	Amna Ali
The Waves of War	Weiyen Tan
Why is Happiness so Postponed	Tooba Subuhi Khan

SHORTLIST: SHORT STORY

Key Stage 1 Short Story – Ages 5 to 7

Race in Space	Muhammad Hassan Sheikh
The Adventures of Sophie and Grace in the Enchanted Forest	Humayrah Timol
The Happiness of Sharing	Arhab Bilal Farooqui
The Mystery of the Mystical Creature	Abdussalaam Bizzari
The Tale of Spidzulla	Denny Mehmet Kaya

Key Stage 2 Short Story – Ages 7 to 11

Dognapped!	Yusayrah Ehtesham Ur Rahman
Jack and his Beguiling Lockdown	Zaeem V Karnachi
Roboy	Umar Ibrahim
The Sinister	Sophie Hanif
The Misadventure of Umar Rahman	Mowahid Zubairi

Key Stage 3 Short Story – Ages 11 to 14

A Different Kind of Lockdown	Hadi El-Hammoud
“Heroes”	Alizah Abbasi
Hobson’s Choice	Numa Tasneem Karnachi
The Golden Father	Zakaria Aden
The Younger Versions Of Your Parents	Mahreema Jannat

Key Stage 4 Short Story – Ages 14 to 16

Aster ad Astra	Ameerah Kola-Olukotun
Detective Deen	Muhammed Asif
Giving to Ghana	Aaminah Bizzari
Nescient	Fatima Awan
Sight-Seeing	Rayya Nawal

SHORTLIST: JOURNALISM

Key Stage 3 Journalism – Ages 11 to 14

Homework - The Door to Success	Riyad Salah
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Key Stage 4 Journalism – Ages 14 to 16

Private vs Public Schools: Why the Divide?	Ameerah Kola-Olukotun
Somalia’s Future	Yumna Hussien

SHORTLIST: SCREENPLAY

Key Stage 3 Screenplay – Ages 11 to 14

GBC News	Numa Tasneem Karnachi
The Golden Rule	Sajeel Shah and Saad Ahmad

Key Stage 4 Screenplay – Ages 14 to 16

The Johnsons	Amina Mohamed
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KEY STAGE 1

POETRY

EXTRACTS FROM 'DEAR RAINBOW'

Dear Rainbow,

You have so many beautiful colours, I love them all. You wouldn't be complete if one of them was missing. I love you rainbow; you make the sky beautiful.

Rainbow I have been feeling sad, the tv shows that people aren't being treated fairly because of the colour of their skin. It's not fair, they were born with that skin. I have friends who are like you rainbow, so many beautiful colours and mummy says the world wouldn't be complete if one of them was missing. And just like you rainbow; you make the sky beautiful; my friends and all the beautiful colours of skin make the world beautiful.

...

I hope one day, everyone can see how beautiful the world is, I hope one day, everyone can be treated fairly. I hope one day, everyone will be kind to each other, I hope one day everyone loves different colours of skin like everybody loves the different colours in you rainbow.

...

From
Xaavier Mahmood

© Xaavier Mahmood
Key Stage 1 Poetry

EVERY DAY

Every day, every day
Nobody is having their way
Schools are closed, so we are all at home
My grandparents are home, on their own
We Facetime but it isn't the same
I wonder when we'll visit again

Every day, every day
Children cannot go out to play
I miss playing with cousins and friends,
I long to see them when lock-down ends
I wish I could meet them all at school
But we cannot because of the Lockdown Rule

Every day, every day,
We must be brave and not lose hope
We are grateful to have the ones we love
And for all the blessings we have from above
One day Allah will take Covid away
And life will be like it was, every day

© Asma Irshad Hussain
Key Stage 1 Poetry



EXTRACTS FROM 'MAGIC SPELLS'

There once was a witch that loved doing spells,
Especially the stinky spells that smell,
She was so good that you couldn't even tell,
That her strong spells would ring the bells.

...

She cut out frog tongues just for fun,
Abra kadabra Zigady zag,
Make this potion have an explosion, (Lightning)
She would cackle pointing to her bag.

Her face was warty and rather green,
She looked like a big ugly bean!
She thought she looked lovely and clean,
But really she was all dirty and mean.

She had a scary-looking black cat,
Whom she had named Wilbur,
Wilber loved to chase a rat,
That was grey speckled with silver.

He was very horrid,
As horrid as can be,
But not very torrid,
Oh no but not as horrid as me

© Humayrah Timol
Key Stage 1 Poetry



EXTRACT FROM 'MUHAMMAD (PBUH) HERO OF MANKIND'

His name is Muhammad (PBUH) so beautiful to see,
He's one of mankind who will always change your mind,
He's in charge of religion in a wonderful way,
It's always nice to meet him,
Hip Hip Hooray!

Abdullah his father died before he was born,
Which means he was an orphan when he was born.
Amina his mother passed away when he was six,
So, Abdul-Muttalib took care of him as a fix!

Khadija was a caring, compassionate and a wonderful wife,
Who cared for him for twenty-five years of his life!
She gave birth to six children, four daughters and two sons,
Together they are a team and all make one

© Shayma Yasmin
Key Stage 1 Poetry

THE ENVIRONMENT IN LOCKDOWN

Environment has improved in Lockdown, great news for all!
No pollution from planes and cars, just fresh clean air.
Very kind people, taking rubbish home, showing they care.
I'm so glad the flowers are blooming and the trees are looming.
Roads are quiet, gardens are growing and birds are singing.
On my walk to the park, I hear busy bees buzzing
New green leaves shooting out from bushes
More and more colours are appearing, red, white and blue
Every where vegetable and flower pots I see, a sign, a clue...
Nature is happy, she's showing us to love life
The sun is shining, animals are playing and the environment is healing 😊

© Maryam Khan
Key Stage 1 Poetry

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KEY STAGE 1

SHORT STORIES

EXTRACTS FROM 'RACE IN SPACE'

All of a sudden there was a big BANG. It woke up Max. James was fixing the steering wheel of the Rocket Ship. Max woke up Adam and all three decided to finish building the rocket ship and fly to space that same night. The rocket ship had a pointy top and boosters at the bottom. It was as big as their school. Adam painted it blue and red with stickers all around it and all over the door. All three of the boys pressed the big red button together. The countdown began 5..4..3..2..1..BLAST OFF.

As the rocket ship flew higher they saw the city get smaller. As they get more higher they see the country and as they get even more higher they see the planet Earth. Earth is green and blue! In space they see stars- thousands of shiny glittering stars. The boys feel amazed by looking at this beautiful sight.

...

All of a sudden the children felt a huge bang. IT WAS THE ALIENS. They used their robotic magnetic hand which came out from the alien's space ship roof. The magnetic hand crushed the rocket ship tighter and tighter. The children felt scared and thought they will be trapped in space forever.

© Muhammad Hassan Sheikh
Key Stage 1 Short Story



EXTRACT FROM 'THE ADVENTURES OF SOPHIE AND GRACE IN THE ENCHANTED FOREST'

"Huh," said Sophie "W-where are we?" She asked herself, she said it in her mind so no one could hear it except for her. Grace got so fed up because they kept going around a massive forest. Sophie was quite scared, Sophie then wandered off without Grace deeper into the forest! Sophie's friend chased after her. Sophie then saw something, it looked familiar. "What is that?" and Sophie pointed at the familiar thing she had seen. It was that red lizard thing they had seen, Grace explained. The lizard went towards a small gap in the middle of the forest. One by one they went through the gap following the lizard. The lizard thingy started mouthing things to them. No humans ever went through this gap so Sophie and her friend were the first to go through that gap after 2 years!

A frog appeared, and the frog starting mouthing things. After he had finished mouthing he slowly and quietly started saying small words that led to a few words that suddenly led to a sentence. Sophie and Grace were flabbergasted that the frog could talk! He said "This is where all the animals stay. This forest is enchanted and needs help. There is an evil witch who has become queen destroying everything! We need help, the animals are too small!" The two girls listened with sadness and amazement at the same time. "Can you humans help us? You need to get the queen's jewel on her necklace." The girls looked at each other and slowly nodded. The girls gulped as they knew that was going to be a really difficult task. The frog then continued, "The queen's palace is on a faraway island. If you need anything we will be here for you....." The two girls stood deadly still. The lizard came back and the girls made slow moves. "Well?" The lizard asked.

© Humayrah Timol
Key Stage 1 Short Story

EXTRACT FROM 'THE HAPPINESS OF SHARING'

"Alhamdulillah, I am so happy and excited today because it is EID DAY tomorrow!"said Ali.

As Ali was doing Eid preparations and was decorating his room with golden lights, Ali's mother called him, "Ali!!! Come on let's go for Eid shopping". HURRAY!!!! Ali asked his mother "Can you please buy two dresses for me this Eid?" Mother said "Yes my dear! You can have two dresses, In sha Allah".

They went to shopping and bought many gifts for Eid along with Ali's Eid clothes. When they were returning home, Ali saw his friend Ibrahim sitting on a bench, he looked very sad. Ali went to Ibrahim and said "Assalam O Alaikum Ibrahim, why are you looking so sad?" Ibrahim replied "It's Eid tomorrow but I don't have any clothes to wear, even we don't have anything to eat in iftar today". Ali also become sad after hearing this, then he got an idea.

© Arhab Bilal Farooqi
Key Stage 1 Short Story



EXTRACT FROM 'THE MYSTERY OF THE MYSTICAL CREATURE'

"Well I'll go on my own then!" he said frustratedly, turning and running back to the house. "Wait!!" shouted Nadia after him. "Wait for me too!!" Zahra called out to. A short while later they got to their house and found the front door wide open. "What happened here?" questioned Nadia. "Eeeeeek" creaked the floorboard as if in reply...

"I dunno... maybe the beast got our parents. Mum...Dad?" Zahra called out nervously.

"What if they did?" Suddenly Murad appeared and then disappeared again. "Um, Nadia, where's he gone?" Zahra asked nervously. "Who?!!!" said Nadia furiously. "Murad, the man who kidnapped us!" replied Zahra frustrated at her sister... "Ohhhhh you mean him! Yes, where is Murad?" said Nadia.

Just as she said that Nadia turned around to see a towering beast staring down at them with an evil smile...She could not be sure, but the beast looked a bit like...no... could it be?!

© Abdussalaam Bizzari
Key Stage 1 Short Story



EXTRACTS FROM 'THE TALE OF SPIDZULLA'

Spidzulla is an animal from the Scorpion Species; half scorpion, half squid. He has the head of a scorpion with pincer arms and the bottom half squid tentacles.

Spidzulla is in his secret lab with his pet helpers the Spidz. Spidzulla is an evil villain and he hears that the circus is coming to town. He feels sneaky. Spidzulla wants to be rich and so he designs a plan to steal the money from the circus.

...

Back at his secret lab Spidzulla explains the plans to his Spidz. The Spidz are cute and great at distracting people so Spidzulla decided that the Spidz should go to steal the money from the circus and off they went.

The plan was a success; the Spidz had stolen the money. They started to have a celebration but Spidzulla felt bad, he missed the friends he had made at the circus, and he took back the money.

...

But the Spidz loved being bad and wanted to take over the world. They became despicable.

© Denny Mehmet Kaya
Key Stage 1 Short Story

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KEY STAGE 2

POETRY

CHANGES

It's time to say goodbye,
My year has come to an end.
I've made so many cherished memories,
With all my school friends.

I've watched my class
Change from day to day.
All the things I've learnt,
Will change me in a big way.

It's been a stressful year,
With Covid-19 around.
I left my spectacular school,
Without a real goodbye.

I wasn't expecting,
An ending quite like this,
No trips, no performances,
Not even a prom.

A new beginning awaits,
Nerves and excitement all mixed in one.
Finally the time has come,
To look forward to life's new challenges.

© Zain Durrani
Key Stage 2 Poetry

EXTRACT FROM ‘‘GREAT’’ BRITAIN’

A young lady, knotted hair,
Back against the wall, eyes full of despair,
The shelter she took under the bridge,
Her coat in tears and rips.

The howling wind, her rain splattered face,
Her arms bare, with nothing to spare,
But a thin blanket dark with dirt,
Her head ached, her heart hurt.

It makes me think, who was to blame?
How did it come to this?
How could we find bliss?
With sadness, broken hearts

Just like this.

© Mariam Khan
Key Stage 2 Poetry



HOPE

I get out of bed and through my window I stare
Not a vehicle in sight, I am confined to my lair
We all want to escape this infection and pain
But the numbers are rising
We must stay shackled in chains.

No children around, adults queuing instead
Their bags soon to be laden with pasta and bread
Nothing else to do but return home and fret
Politicians and leaders - are they full of regret?

Sitting in my chair, my eyes closed, I dream
Occasionally interrupted by the sound of an ambulance scream
People are smiling, some freedom at last
A little less queuing, no need for a mask.

Cooped up for so long, let us return to the beach
Kids eager to attend school and teachers ready to teach

We pray that this calamity will be gone and disease no more
Thanks to Captain Tom the NHS is beginning to settle the score
As our claps ring out for one last time in the evening sky
We must learn to live alongside this deadly spy

© Zidan Akhtar
Key Stage 2 Poetry

EXTRACT FROM 'I CAN SEE'

I can see the trees crying red tears
I can see the acorns all over the floor
I can see a pack of wild, shy pack of deer
I can see the golden leaves glimmering in the sunlight all across the moor

I can see the multi-colored flowers blooming happily in the sun
I can see the cherry blossoms forming a beautiful stream
I can see the children in the park having lots of fun
I can see the plays using a spring theme

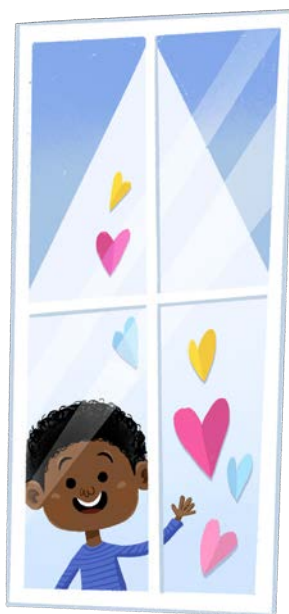
I can see the frozen ponds showing my reflection like a mirror
I can see the bare trees, shivering in the cold weather
I can see children ice skating all around the river
I can see the traveling birds leaving nothing but their feathers

© Norah Tafraouti
Key Stage 2 Poetry



SAFE AT HOME

"I can't go to school, you say?"
Said everyone around the world today.
"Or out for ice cream or to the park.
I can't go dancing when it gets dark.
No sleepovers or dinners out,
It's hard to walk with my dog Scout.
My folks stay home to do their jobs,
Turns out, at home we all are slobs!
My sweatpants became a second skin,
You'd be shocked at the shape our house is in!
I've started a project in every room.
Not one clean corner in which to Zoom.
I'm building LEGO, painting art
Does this TP tower make me look smart?
Mum says, it's okay to get the grumps,
Staying home will cause some bumps,
But while we're here to slow the curve,
Others work with extra verve.
The teachers reach us by videos,
Helping us learn what we should know.
Doctors and nurses heal the sick,
Hopeful this virus they soon will kick.
Drivers drop parcels at our door,
Workers stock and clean the grocery store.
I hope this doesn't last past fall.
I need a way to thank them all!
Instead of hugs, I'll share window hearts.
While I can't see grandma, I'll send her art.
To the food pantry, send some extra snacks.
For friends and neighbours, sew some masks.
My heart won't shrink. I won't get dumber.
I know this mess is such a bummer.
I'll hang in there. It could be worse- what? What's that? What's that you say?
A vaccine.... stopping that Covid-Fool!
G'bye, I'm going back to school.



© Eiliyah Ali

Key Stage 2 Poetry

KEY STAGE 2

SHORT STORIES

EXTRACT FROM 'DOGNAPPED!'

So he turned the handle of the door...but it was locked!

"Oh no!" said Umar, "The lock must have clicked shut from the outside and we were so distracted that we didn't notice!"

"What are we going to do?" said Ayesha worried.

"Maybe we can look for a loose board or something." Umar said. "If we find one, we should be able to get out from under the cabin because it's on high legs."

"Great idea," she agreed.

So they searched and searched. They looked under all the cages that could be moved and found nothing. Not a single weak or unsteady floorboard could be seen. Tired and exhausted, Umar leant against the wall.

Without warning, the part he was leaning on started to slide into itself!

"Wow!" said Ayesha stunned.

"Amazing!" said Umar as he stared down the black mouth of the tunnel that had just revealed itself.

Suddenly they heard voices!

"Quick hide!" said Umar as he slid the wall back carefully. He and Ayesha raced towards a pile of cages and crouched behind them. Then they waited.

The wall slid open. In came a burly man with shaggy eyebrows and with a fixed expression on his face. In one hand he held a torch and in the other... a bag of dog biscuits! The mystery was starting to make *some* sense. Another, strangely familiar man came in but it was too dark to see his face properly. He unlocked the door and then they left, leaving it slightly ajar.

© Yusayrah Ehtesham Ur Rahman
Key Stage 2 Short Story

EXTRACT FROM 'JACK AND HIS BEGUILING LOCKDOWN'

Jack was always so eager to just get out there into his wild garden – whether lockdown or not (although it was his only option in lockdown). It was a place of euphoria. He felt that whenever he went there all his dreams came true, even if they were just imaginations – like he was in a movie. He was a free bird and the garden always had the most wonderful scent of beautiful and blooming flowers. The garden also had a tiny pond which is like a feather in a cap, that is where he ruminates while admiring the tiny tadpoles. For Jack it was a mesmerizing place to be – whether it is day or night; this does prove that 'nature always wears the colours of the spirit'. Jack also loved this place because it was somewhere he could forget about the urban jungle and enjoy the great outdoors. He also urged to dig up that oddly suspicious patch of land - around the weeping willow; that is where he believed the treasure had buried. "How could this patch of land not have grown at least a single plant for such a long time?" he pondered to himself (The garden was neglected as nobody had time to clean it).

The lockdown left the poor boy spiritless. It was an arduous time, depressing and stressful for many, especially for Jack. Both of his parents were front line workers in the NHS and – even if he pleaded to them to at least take a day off – they worked all week, sometimes even busy in night shifts. His beloved grandpa had also tragically passed away quite recently out of heart stroke, this shattered his already lonely and depleted heart. Although it had been about 3 months, it was the lockdown that made him miss grandpa the most, but even before the lockdown, he was drowned in sorrow on hearing his grandpa's death. He always recollected and cherished the memories of his grandpa, but then he remembered an interesting sentence his grandpa mysteriously told him, why would he say that? Had he hidden something here in the garden or does he know something is been hidden here? There was a mystery and Jack was going to unearth it – quite literally.

© Zaeem V Karnachi
Key Stage 2 Short Story

EXTRACTS FROM 'ROBOY'

All of a sudden, Roboy tripped over an enormous tree root that looked like a giant wooden tentacle and was sent sprawling headfirst into a ditch. Roboy spluttered mud out of his mouth. When the boys caught up, they towered over him like giants blocking out the sun. There was a hissing avalanche of stones and crashing cascades of mud, leaves and twigs as the boys tried to bury him. Before Roboy knew it, he was buried in the ditch, only part of his head remaining uncovered by the rubble. The boys were laughing heartily as they watched Roboy struggle.

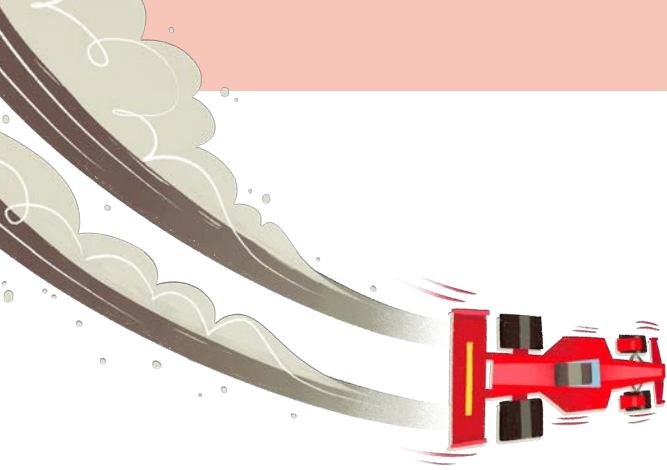
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Due to all the commotion and noise, it attracted the attention of an old man and his dog. The dog, Patch, a border collie, suddenly raced ahead and leapt into the ditch, next to where Roboy lay still. He started barking and then whining. The old man hobbled over as fast as his legs would carry him and stopped at such a sorry sight. His face was shadowed and despair washed over him as he stared unblinkingly at the ground. A horrible sense of injustice bled through him as he scrambled down to the ditch to kneel beside Roboy. With the help of his fiercely loyal companion, Patch, he worked relentlessly to remove the mounds of suffocation. Handful after handful. Stone after stone. The old man carefully unearthed the body of this small metal boy. With words of comfort and reassurance he pulled Roboy out of the ditch. As beads of sweat sparkled on his brow the old man scooped up Roboy's unresponsive body, small enough to carry, yet very heavy, in both arms and carried him back to his woodland cottage.

The smoke from the stove blew out of the tall terracotta chimney in the rickety, old fish scale roof. As he hurried through the kitchen garden, the hens clucked at the site of Roboy and gathered round as if to resume a mothers meeting. The old man placed Roboy on the large, solid, oak kitchen table and using the tools from his garden shed to try and fix him. He could only hope and wait, to see if Roboy would come back to life.

© Umar Ibrahim
Key Stage 2 Short Story





EXTRACT FROM 'THE MISADVENTURE OF UMAR RAHMAN'

He looked back to the track. The grey of the tarmac was reflecting the sun's heat and the grass seemed almost dead and patchy despite the track being Nurburgring, one of the best F1 tracks in the world nestled in green hills in the heart of Germany. They were burning rubber as the rear wheel drive cars turned the corner. The downforce was tremendous and the carbon fibre frames were holding up despite the engine making over 800 horsepower and reaching speeds of up to 214 km an hour. The cars were just a blur as they whizzed past with their engines reaching upto 1000 degrees Celsius, hot enough to burn your sausages to a crisp!

Everything was going well when a car got a puncture. 'It must have been debris from yesterday's crash,' thought Umar as the safety car came onto the track and escorted the broken car into the pits. Taking in the yells of the commentator as one car met another at a bend, the smell of the petrol in the air, and the sound of his heart in his chest beating so fast from the adrenaline. There were blaring ads with their flashing sponsorships advertising big company names all across the track but Umar hardly noticed them as he was so focused on the cars. He heard the scream of a V10 turning a corner, a great masterpiece of engineering at its best.

That was when it happened. A car had turned the corner but then it stalled and was not starting again. A hush descended over the crowd. These cars were meant to handle anything. It couldn't be overheating, could it? No other cars were struggling. Something was definitely wrong. The safety car came onto the track and the broken car had to be towed into the pit stop. When the driver got out, a look of confusion could be seen on his face.

© Mowahid Zubairi
Key Stage 2 Short Story

EXTRACT FROM 'THE SINISTER'

25th January Wednesday

My mother told me to go there. The voice in my head led me there. I turned round and saw a MISSING poster, nailed to the entrance of the dark tunnel. It was the same boy with his weak posture and his pale eyes.

I walked back home and heard the deadly voices of my school prosecutors. The rabble taunted they would put me in the same place as my mother. I believed them.

"Hey Janice, you're still tubby under the shirt I see." I stooped to look at the ground to not make any eye contact. I concentrated hard to block them out my head.

When I looked up, I saw the weak postured boy and his pale eyes. He stared at me and I'm not sure how long I was struck, mesmerised, looking into his eyes. Everything had gone silent. Defensively, I looked behind me and I saw my mother. She looked calm but had a disturbed smile on her face. She swiftly elevated her arm and said a few odd words.

"It will rain on the black parade."

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Key Stage 2 Short Story

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MEET THE JUDGES



ABUBAKR AL-SHAMAH is a British-Yemeni television and multimedia journalist, with a focus on explaining not just what is in the news, but why it's happening. He has reported from across the world, with a special focus on the Middle East. Abubakr has worked for TRT World, The New Arab, and the BBC, and has written for *the Guardian* and *Vice*, as well as providing commentary for Al-Jazeera English.



AHMED JAFFER ALI VERSI is the publisher and editor of *The Muslim News*. Ahmed has interviewed world leaders including the late President of Bosnia Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic, the late Aslan Maskhadov of Chechnya, Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, the Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, the Rt. Hon. David Cameron, the Rt. Hon. Theresa May, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson, and HRH The Prince of Wales. During the first Gulf War, Ahmed was part of a British Muslim delegation to Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia mediating for the release of British hostages. In March 2000, Ahmed launched The Muslim News Awards for Excellence celebrating Muslim achievements. He established the Muslim Women's Sport Foundation and was until recently Deputy President of the International Islamic Women's Games. A regular speaker at international conferences covering Islamic issues at the local and global level, Ahmed focuses on media representation. Ahmed was awarded Honorary Doctorate of Arts in recognition of achievements as Editor of *The Muslim News* from the University of Bedfordshire in 2007.



A. M. DASSU is a writer of fiction and non-fiction and is the author of the widely acclaimed novel *Boy, Everywhere*. She is Deputy Editor of SCBWI-BI's magazine, *Words & Pictures*, and a Director of Inclusive Minds, an organization which champions inclusion, diversity, equality, and accessibility in children's literature. Previously, she has worked in project management, marketing, and editorial. Her work has been published by *The Huffington Post*, *Times Educational Supplement*, *SCOOP Magazine*, *Lee and Low Books*, and *DK Books*. In 2017 she won the international We Need Diverse Books mentorship award.



ANNUM SALMAN is the debut author of her poetry book *Sense Me* which revolves around the theme of identity, encompassing topics such as gender inequality, mental health, race, culture, and love. Born and bred in Pakistan, Annum completed her MA in creative writing from the University of Surrey. She is a renowned spoken word poet in Pakistan as well as in the UK having had featured shows at That's What She Said, Dorking is Talking, Woking Literary Lightbox Festival, Nottingham Poetry Festival, SpeakEasy Soho, and The Surrey New Writers Festival.



BURHANA ISLAM was born in Bangladesh and raised in Newcastle. She studied English Literature at Newcastle University before deciding to become a secondary school teacher. After five years of teaching in Newcastle and winning a mentorship with Penguin Random House, Burhana relocated to Manchester and used her Society of Author's grant to support her writing. After a short hiatus, Burhana returned to teaching where she is continuously reminded of the importance of diversity and representation in children's literature, particularly for communities like her own. As a storyteller, Burhana is passionate about exploring themes of heritage, belonging, identity and faith in her children's and middle grade works. Her collection of biographies, *Amazing Muslims Who Changed The World*, was published in 2020 and celebrates the successes of Muslims all over the ages and across the globe.



DREADLOCKALIEN is the stage and writing name of Richard Grant. A former Birmingham Poet Laureate 2005, Richard has toured the world performing poetry and working with communities, pupils and writers as he travelled. Now he is a co-director of Memorhyme Education and a founder of Cambridge Tower Educational Press.



FAIMA BAKAR is a lifestyle journalist at *Metro.co.uk* covering beauty, fashion, and health. She has a passion for feature-writing on issues of race, culture, religion, and gender. Faima has written nearly 3,000 articles and hopes to raise the status of underserved communities whose stories often go untold.



HAFSAH ANEELA BASHIR is a Manchester-based poet, playwright & performer. Founder and co-director of Outside The Frame Arts, she is passionate about championing voices outside the mainstream. Winner of the Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowship 2019, she is an Associate Artist with The Poetry Exchange, Associate Artist with Oldham Coliseum Theatre and Supported Artist at The Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester. Creating socially engaged work with community at its heart, her play *Cuts Of The Cloth* was commissioned for PUSH Festival 2019. Her debut poetry collection *The Celox And The Clot* is published by Burning Eye Books. She has worked creatively with Manchester International Festival, Ballet Black, HOME Theatre, Manchester Literature Festival, ANU Productions, and the Imperial War Museum. She is currently writing the libretto for *The Bridge Between Breaths*, a formidAbility & Tete a Tete festival commission exploring Britain's involvement in the Transatlantic slave trade and is founder and Creative Director of the recently launched Poetry Health Service.

Photo Credit: Benji Reid.



HIBAQ OSMAN is a Somali writer born and based in London. Her work centres largely around women, identity, and the healing process. *A Silence You Can Carry*, her debut poetry pamphlet, was published with Out-Spoken Press in 2015. Hibaq works towards a future where funding and access to the arts for people of colour is considered the norm and not an exception. Her debut full collection '*where the memory was*' was published under Jacaranda Books in 2020.



JAMES COOK is a writer and journalist based in London. His first book, *Memory Songs* was published by Unbound in 2018; his second, *In Her Room: How Music Helped Me Connect With My Autistic Daughter*, by Bonnier Books UK in 2020. His short fiction has appeared in the anthology *Vagabond Holes*, and his journalism and essays have appeared in *The Guardian* and *The Times Literary Supplement*, among others. In 2017, with his twin brother, novelist Jude Cook, he was a guest on the award-winning literary podcast *Backlisted*.



JAZZMINE BREARY is Sales, Marketing & Publicity Manager at award winning independent publishing house Jacaranda Books where she has worked since its launch, working closely with founder Valerie Brandes across multiple areas of the business. In 2020 Jazzmine was named a Bookseller Rising Star, recognising her contribution to publishing and her promising future in the industry. She is curator of the #TwentyIn2020 Black Writers, British Voices Festival, created in collaboration with Fane Productions and TGRG Agency, celebrating Black British writing talent and the writers of Jacaranda's #TwentyIn2020 publishing programme. In 2015, Jazzmine contributed to the *Writing the Future* report; her article, 'Let's Not Forget' explored the legacy of diverse and particularly Black publishing in the UK. She is a regular speaker on issues of diversity and inclusivity in publishing. Her speaking engagements include M-Fest, the LBF Inclusivity in Publishing Conference, the Bradford Literature Festival and more. She has been featured in *The Voice* newspaper, *Actual Size* magazine, on BBC Radio London's Dotun Adebayo Show, The Beat London and more recently BBC Radio Gloucestershire. She has been a mentor on the MA in Publishing at Kingston University and served on the committee of Women in Publishing UK from 2012-2014.



KELLY MCCAUGHRAIN is a Young Adult writer from Belfast. Her first novel, *Flying Tips for Flightless Birds*, is published by Walker Books and won the Children's Books Ireland Book of the Year Award, Children's Choice Award and Eilís Dillon First Novel Award, as well as the Northern Ireland Book Award, and was nominated for the Carnegie Medal. As the current Children's Writing Fellow for Northern Ireland, she is spending two years promoting children's reading and writing through events and projects with the support of Queens University Belfast and the Arts Council Northern Ireland. She volunteers with Fighting Words Northern Ireland, where she particularly enjoys working with teen writers, and she runs a blog to support creative writing groups in secondary schools.



KHALEEL MUHAMMAD is an internationally renowned nasheed artist who has performed globally and released three albums. Khaleel is the author of the children's book *Muslim All-Stars*. He has appeared in several television shows, adverts, and the Disney film *Cinderella*. On TV he has presented 'Khaleel's Make & Do' show, and 'The Muslim Kid Show'. He is the radio presenter of the double award-winning 'Kids Round Show' on Inspire 105.1FM. Khaleel designed and illustrated the children's books *Allah's Amazing Messenger* (pbuh) by S.J. Sear, *Adams Adventures* by Mariah Derissy, and his own *Muslim Family Colouring Book*, now in its second revised edition. Khaleel has most recently self-published his second book *Muslim All-Stars Monster Mayhem*.



KWAME ALEXANDER is a poet, educator, and the New York Times Bestselling author of thirty-five books, including Caldecott-medal and Newbery Honor-winning picture book, *The Undeclared*, illustrated by Kadir Nelson, the Newbery medal-winning novel, *The Crossover*, the National Book Award nominee, *Booked*, and the novel *Becoming Muhammad Ali*, which he co-authored with James Patterson. Kwame is a regular contributor to NPR's Morning Edition, and the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including The Coretta Scott King Author Honor, two Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Prize, three NAACP Image Award Nominations, the 2017 Inaugural Pat Conroy Legacy Award. Kwame's belief in the power of poetry and literature to inspire, engage, and empower young people is the guiding force behind the #KidLit4BlackLives Rallies that he spearheaded in 2020. Kwame is the Founding Editor of VERSIFY, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers whose mission to *Change the World One Word at a Time*. He's led cultural exchange delegations to Brazil, Italy, Singapore, and Ghana, where he built the Barbara E. Alexander Memorial Library and Health Clinic, as a part of LEAP for Ghana, an international literacy program he co-founded. He is the writer-in-residence at the American School in London.



MALIKA is a spoken-word artist and Peterborough's Poet Laureate 2019-2021. Writing poetry from a very young age, she found a love for spoken word which she uses to inspire and deliver messages around mental health, morality, reflectivity, and self-empowerment. Malika is active in many projects around community cohesion, and inspiring and empowering people in being confident in who they are and knowing their value in society. She has performed and appeared on TV and radio shows, and at events in London, Luton, and Peterborough, including BBC Look East, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, Inspire FM, and Salaam Radio.



MARCUS WICKER is the recipient of a Ruth Lilly Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation, a Pushcart Prize, *The Missouri Review's* Miller Audio Prize, as well as fellowships from Cave Canem, and the Fine Arts Work Center. His first collection *Maybe the Saddest Thing*, a National Poetry Series winner, was a finalist for an NAACP Image Award. Wicker's poems have appeared in *The Nation*, *Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *Oxford American*, and *Boston Review*. His second book, *Silencer*—also an Image Award finalist—was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2017 and won the Society of Midland Authors Award, as well as the Arnold Adoff Poetry Award for New Voices. Marcus teaches in the MFA program at the University of Memphis, and he is the poetry editor of *Southern Indiana Review*.

Photo Credit: Kristyn Greenfield / KG Creative Photography LLC.



MARTIN DAWS is a spoken-word poet, writer and creative educator. Martin first started off at open mics and poetry slams, graduating to Feature Slots and Touring Shows, evolving into a socially engaged writer and performer with a wide range of styles. He was awarded the role of Young People's Laureate for Wales 2013-16. On page, Martin enjoys representing the character of words through creative layouts, expressing the energy of how he performs his pieces. He has published two collections of his poems: *Skintight the Sidewalk* (2008) and *Geiriau Gogs* (2016).



MOLLY ROSENBERG is Director of the Royal Society of Literature, Britain's national charity for the advancement of literature. Molly has worked at the RSL for 10 years and is thrilled to be working towards the RSL's 2020 bicentenary with RSL staff and trustees on a number of new projects, showing how much Literature Matters. Molly has previously worked at the Royal Opera House and Southbank Centre, and as an independent researcher. Molly holds an MPhil in Irish Writing and Literature from Trinity College Dublin and is currently completing her PhD at King's College London, where her doctoral thesis examines the relationship between contemporary Irish poetry, nation, and the poetics of the trace.



NIZRANA FAROOK was born and raised in Colombo, Sri Lanka, which inspires the stories she writes. She has a master's degree in creative writing for children. Her debut novel, *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant*, was a Waterstones Book of the Month, longlisted for the Blue Peter award, and nominated for the Carnegie Medal. Her second book, *The Boy Who Met a Whale*, will be out in January 2021.



NA'IMA B ROBERT was inspired by visits to the local library and started writing children's books when her eldest son was a baby. Her ambition was to write beautiful, creative books about Muslim life that would foster pride and pleasure in young Muslim readers. She has since published over twenty books for children and young adults, including *The Swirling Hijab*, *Ramadan Moon*, and *Going to Mecca*, and the acclaimed YA novel, *Far from Home*, winner of a Muslim Writers Award and the Children's Africana Book Award, as well as the 'halal romance' classic, *She Wore Red Trainers*. Among her forthcoming children's books are a collaboration with Mufti Menk and a book on Islamophobia with Hachette.



NOOR YUSUF is a poet and author. Her works have garnered her awards at both local and national level, including being a three-times winner of the Young Muslim Writers Award. At the age of 15, she authored a thousand-line narrative epic, *The Soliloquy of the Full Moon*, an original work on the nativity of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). She has recently published *Beyond the Forest*, an adventure story influenced by children's classics such as *The Faraway Tree*, as well as accounts of Muslim Sufis and mystics. She has also authored a fully-fledged historical fantasy trilogy. She is currently completing a degree in linguistics and pursuing traditional studies of Islamic law, theology and spirituality. Besides writing, she is an artist and choral conductor.



OSHANTI AHMED is a Bengali poet from South London. She is a co-founder of the youth group Globe Poets, as well as being an alumnus of the Roundhouse Poetry Collective 2018-19 and the Writing Room 2018-19. She was longlisted for the Outspoken Page prize and was a Roundhouse Slam finalist in 2020. Her work has been featured on the FADER and BBC Radio 4 and she has performed both nationally and internationally at Brave New Voices, Brainchild Festival, Latitude and The Haye Festival.



PATIENCE AGBABI FRSL is a poet, performer, workshop facilitator and Fellow in Creative Writing at Oxford Brookes University. She has performed all over the world and taught Creative Writing in a broad range of settings for over twenty years, from primary to PhD. In 2000 she set a world record when she recited her poem 'Word' in synch with 3,001 primary school pupils. She participated in Metamorphosis: Titian 2012 which led to a project with Year 8 pupils in conjunction with the National Gallery. Her poem 'Eat Me' is studied on the Edexcel A-level curriculum. Canterbury Laureate from 2009 to 2010, Patience received a Grant for the Arts to write a contemporary version of *The Canterbury Tales*. This fourth poetry collection, *Telling Tales*, was shortlisted for the 2014 Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry and Wales Book of the Year 2015. She was writer-in-residence at Brontë Parsonage in 2018 to mark Emily Brontë's bicentenary. Her debut, middle-grade novel, *The Infinite*, was published in 2020 with Canongate.

Photo Credit: Lyndon Douglas.



RAISAH AHMED is a Scottish Asian Muslim Writer/Director, based in Glasgow, currently working across television and film. She has been shortlisted for the Sundance Screenwriters Lab twice – in 2015 with *Meet Me By The Water* and in 2018 with *Safar* which is currently in development with Producer Zorana Piggott. She is in development with Zorana Piggott on a WW1 feature, *Half-Moon Camp*, for Film 4. Her writing credits include CBeebies shows *Feeling Better*, *Molly & Mack* and *Control*; a BBC The Social phone drama, and *Aden's Journey* a short drama about a refugee unaccompanied minor for the Celcis course 'Caring for Children on the Move'. Alumni of the EIFF Talent Lab 2014, Raisah had her first commissioned short as writer/director *Meet Me By The Water* premiere at EIFF 2016 – it went on to be programmed by BBC Scotland's 'Next Big Thing' programme. She directed one of BBC 3's *The Break III*, 2018, was a shadowing director on CBeebies *Molly & Mack S2* and most recently directed on CBBC's '*Sparks*'.



REHAN KHAN is the author of *A King's Armour*, and *A Tudor Turk* (nominated for the Carnegie Medal in 2020), described as *Mission Impossible* in the sixteenth-century. When not writing, Rehan works in the telecoms sector. He has a monthly column in *Gulf Business*. Previously, he was a visiting professor at an international business school (2014–17) and a business columnist at *The National* (2009–10). Rehan holds a master's degree in applied social and market research, as well as an MBA in strategy.



ROBIN STEVENS was born in California and grew up in an Oxford college. She studied crime fiction at university before working in children's publishing. Now a full-time writer, her first book *Murder Most Unladylike* was published in 2014, received critical acclaim, and won the Waterstones Children's Book Prize in the Young Fiction category. In 2020 Robin was an official World Book Day author, the same year that *Death Sets Sail*, the final book in the *Murder Most Unladylike Mysteries*, was published. In 2022 Robin will publish a new series, *The Ministry of Unladylike Activity*. **Photo Credit: Chris Close.**



SAADIA FARUQI is a Pakistani-American author, essayist and interfaith activist. She has authored the children's early reader series *Yasmin*, and other books for children including middle grade novels *A Place At The Table*, co-written with Laura Shovan, and *A Thousand Questions* both published in 2020. She has also written *Brick Walls: Tales of Hope & Courage from Pakistan*, a short story collection for adults and teens. Saadia is editor-in-chief of *Blue Minaret*, a magazine for Muslim art, poetry and prose, and was featured in *Oprah Magazine* in 2017 as a woman making a difference in her community.



SARMAD MASUD is a writer and director. He is currently in pre-production on *You Don't know Me* for Snowed-in Productions and the BBC, a new four-part series written by Tom Edge, based on the book by Imran Mahmood. He previously directed the *Bulletproof Special* for Vertigo and Sky set in Cape Town, having also directed the Season 2 finale. He also recently directed on *Ackley Bridge* for The Forge and Channel 4. Sarmad's first feature, *My Pure Land*, is set and filmed in Pakistan. It premiered at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and was the UK submission to the Oscars in the Foreign Language category. He was also nominated as a Screen International Star of Tomorrow. Previously his short film *Two Dosas*, funded by Film London, was voted best film in their London Calling Plus category by David Yates, winning at London Short Film Festival, Aspen Shortsfest, River to River in Florence, and Shufflefest voted by Danny Boyle. He also wrote and directed *Adha Cup* which was the first Urdu language drama commissioned by Channel Four, going on to develop it as a six-part TV series with the BBC.



SUFIYA AHMED is an award-winning children's and YA author. Her latest book is based on the real-life story of World War II heroine Noor-Un-Nissa Inayat Khan. Sufiya is a public speaker on girls' rights and regularly visits secondary schools to deliver author sessions. She also discusses her previous career in the Houses of Parliament to educate and inspire pupils about the democratic process, and explores how her political activism influences her writing. Sufiya is the founder and Director of the BIBI Foundation, a non-profit organisation which arranges visits to the Houses of Parliament for children from underprivileged backgrounds. Her new picture book *Under the Great Plum Tree* has been nominated for the Greenaway Medal and the UKLA awards. Her YA book *Secrets of the Henna Girl* has won numerous awards. Sufiya is also a contributor to *It's Not About the Burqa*, Ladybird's *Tales of Superheroes*, and the *Match Made in Heaven* anthology.



TIM ROBERTSON is Chief Executive of The Anne Frank Trust UK, an education charity that empowers young people to help bring an end to all forms of prejudice. He is passionate about Anne Frank's Diary as a role model of how a young person's story can reach across differences to build empathy and understanding. Tim's previous roles have included Director of the Royal Society of Literature, Chief Executive of the Koestler Trust for arts by prisoners, Chair of Regent High School, and a children's social worker in the London Borough of Camden. He studied English and American Literature at university in London and New York.

KEY STAGE 3

POETRY

AM I NOT A HUMAN?

Chained.
I felt drained, as I was pulled.
Blood. Pouring.
Blisters. Roaring.
I cried, as my body was whipped.
My child was dragged away from my sight.
I stayed silent.
People were screaming
Begging for signs that they were dreaming.
That this horrible show is just a nightmare.
I said a prayer.
Tears ran.
Drip, Drip
No.
I must stay strong.
I must show them that we belong.
We will end this.
Why, we must.
Am I not a human?
We all bleed the same blood.
Do we not?
You leave us to rot.
While you splash your dimes
You rob us blind
Ruining our lives.
But this will finish
Terminate.
Stop.
Even if we must,
We will
Drop.



© Daleela Raadiya Haque
Key Stage 3 Poetry

EXTRACTS FROM 'H.O.P.E (HOLD ON PAIN ENDS)'

Let me tell you a tale,
About a disease-stricken land,
One of great horror,
And fast is time's sand.

It was a time of fear,
Where everyone would hide,
And stuck in four walls,
Losing their minds.

It was a time when dear friendships,
Were heartbroken and lost,
And all the years of ignorance,
Would truly have their cost.

It was a time when new heroes,
Must be separated from the old,
And the well-loved elderly's,
Souls would be sold.

The invisible grime,
That was once in our air,
Has been replaced by something worse,
But we were unaware.

...

Some would laugh away the days,
And celebrate when it's over,
While others would stay aware of graves,
Silent and sober.

...

Although this situation,
May be an aberration,
Remember that this is happening,
Throughout our generation.

We started to use our screens,
For better reasons,
And called up on our family,
With the passing seasons.

The virus may be here,
But we have each other,
Whatever way we stand together,
We'll make the world better.

But why must it take a virus,
To let the world know?
Well, sometimes it takes a little hurt,
To let the truth show.

© Ehan Sajjad
Key Stage 3 Poetry

LITTLE LITTLE SPIDER

O'Little little spider
Smaller than a pea,
You are nothing in this world
What use can you be?

For a pebble is a bolder
For a puddle is your sea
For twig is a tree
Its top you cannot see
For a mound of earth is a hill
Your eight legs cannot climb.

O'Little little spider
Smaller than a pea,
You are nothing in this world
What use can you be?

For a single snowflake
Will freeze your blood
For a drop of rain
Will soak your web
For the slightest breeze
Will blow you away.

O'Little little spider
Smaller than a pea,
You are nothing in this world
What use can you be?

You are special
For you catch mosquitoes
That bother us at night
For you eat moths
That ruin our clothes
For you catch flies
That poison on our food.

O'Little little spider
Smaller than a pea,

You are nothing in this world
What use can you be?

Little little spider
You are special
For you inspired
Robert Bruce
to defeat his enemy
When he saw you fail and
on your seventh try
Succeed in spinning your web

O'Little little spider
Smaller than a pea,
You are nothing in this world
What use can you be?

You are special
For you spun a web
Covering the entrance of the cave
Convincing the Quraysh
no one was there
The prophet and Abu Bakr
you did save

O'Little little spider
Smaller than a pea,
You are something in this world
You are useful, don't you see?

© Aisha Green
Key Stage 3 Poetry



EXTRACTS FROM 'SUNRISE'

I move the tips of my shoes over the edge,
Knuckles white, I grip the steel cables of the bridge,
My heart beats in an unmistakable rhythm, and my thoughts move to the
ba-dum ba-dum ba-dum in my chest,
Water streaks down my face, some warm, some cold, and I tremble,
The rain falls in sheets, each hitting me harder than the last,
"Don't look down, don't look down,"
But I have to, because all the muscles in my neck strain,
And bring my head to the dark waters below,
Miles below,
Roaring and raging, screaming and shouting and,
Calling to me,
I inch closer, and closer,
Closer

...

I hear a voice that says,
"Your past does not define your future,"
And my eyes snap open,
I sit and lean against the railing,
And as the golden light of dawn floods across the sky,
I take it upon myself to make my life,
One worth living

Years later, I care for my family
I fight to protect them from the hardships that I battled,
The darkness that I felt my way through,
Only to lay my sight upon the beautiful sunrise that is today

© Ayaan Shah
Key Stage 3 Poetry

EXTRACT FROM 'THE VOID OF BLUE'

The coarse sand crunched beneath my feet as I strolled along the bare beach.
My eyes trailed their gaze to the murky, gloomy sea.
Watching as a sheet of heavy fog sat atop it, moving faintly with the chilling breeze.
Although the thick mist that covered the night
Was so blinding that it would make vampires miss the light of day,
The glow of the moon was still evident on the surface of the mystical marine.

My frozen hands reached up to clutch tightly at the hood of my flimsy coat,
The thin material fighting against the harsh draught.
I realised that in the process of doing this,
The worn shoes that I once clasped in my hands had fallen to the ground.

My eyes strayed from the daunting depths of water to the discoloured grains of sand,
I bent down to pick the shoes up, tripped and fell to the ground,
Landing on my bruised back.

© Aaishah Ravat
Key Stage 3 Poetry



KEY STAGE 3

SHORT STORIES

EXTRACT FROM 'A DIFFERENT KIND OF LOCKDOWN'

These four walls feel like a prison cell. I've never actually been in a prison cell, but my dad has. He was there for a long time. He told me that after a few months he started to go crazy, seeing visions of strange people in the cell with him and hearing voices in his head. I don't know how many days I've been here but I feel like I'm going crazy already.

A ray of light creeps through the cracked window in the corner of the room, making my grey surroundings a little bit glowy. I bounce my legs up and down, making the sunlight dance on my skin. It feels warm and friendly, and it makes me smile. I do this for two minutes or two hours, I'm honestly not sure because time doesn't feel real anymore. Days and nights are all mixed up like one of those horrible paintings I saw in an art gallery once on a school trip. The colours all swirled and crashed together like someone had knocked over a paint pot; I thought it was really ugly but my teacher said it was 'priceless'. Anyway that's what time feels like right now. One big messy painting that has no direction.

I'm so bored out of my brains that I start to chew on my fingers and tear at my nails. I haven't bitten my nails in years, but I have nothing else to do so my fingertips are all raw and pink for the first time in forever. Mum used to tell me that if I bit my nails, insects would grow in my stomach and make a nest from all the nails I had swallowed, and then they'd crawl out of my body through my nose and ears and belly button. I didn't believe her, but one time my belly started tickling from the inside and I swear I could feel something crawling around in there. I never bit my nails again.

© Hadi El-Hammoud
Key Stage 3 Short Story

EXTRACT FROM 'HEROES'

Pouring. Trickling. Dripping.

Slowly but surely, the downpour began to subside. It became a drizzle that gently pattered the ground. Emily placed her hand under the drizzle and stepped out from under her spot underneath the shop's rooftop. People looked up, tilting their hoods back a little, emerging from where they disappeared under their umbrellas like a turtle emerging from its shell.

Emily was known as a strange girl. She would spend all of her time reading books, wandering around the streets of her town, sketching abnormal characters and creatures in her textbooks during class, and writing poems and stories about pretty much anything that crossed her mind. She was often interested and fascinated by the way the world worked and bided her time by reading myths, legends and using her creativity to her advantage.

Other children avoided her for being so different, sadly they weren't used to coming across such a diamond in the rough.

© Alizah Abbasi

Key Stage 3 Short Story



EXTRACT FROM 'HOBSON'S CHOICE'

It was midnight, the dock was quiet and calm, the gentle thud of wooden boats bumping against each other breaking the eerie silence. The moonlight ran across the concrete quay, following the distinct footsteps smacking against the wet, stone ground. A large group of fearful people, children huddled around their parents, were in the wake of five men, who aggressively beckoned for them to keep quiet. They stopped by two men who were filling a small, orange dinghy with air, panting loudly like dogs.

"Hurry, over here. Now pay up people, get on board, don't have all night", the man in front brusquely hissed, ushering the crowd on board, the tight means of transport. As the mass of apprehensive people stampeded on board, handing over hordes of cash to a tall, towering man up front, a small, hazel eyed girl of twelve clung onto her mother's arm, their pale, anxious faces basked in the moonlight. In her mother's other arm hung Mariam's baby brother, Ahmed, who was bawling at the top of his lungs.

As their turn came to climb on board, the man demanding money glowered at them darkly. "Can't you make it quiet!" he growled. Frantically, Mariam's mother, Mrs. Almasi, shushed the sobbing baby, muffling his cries with his woollen blanket. Hands trembling, she handed over an envelope bearing Syrian £6000, saved by Mariam's deceased father. The man angrily snatched it away, then shoved them on the rocking dinghy.

The smell of perspiration and saltwater bombarded Mariam's senses as she felt clammy bodies pressed against her. Resisting the urge to gag, she wrestled against the shivering limbs and arms and wrenched at her mother's side. Mrs. Almasi jumped, then, recognising Mariam, tightened her grip on her arm.

"Stay close," she whispered, "It's going to be a long journey." Mariam snuggled into the crook of her mother's arm, the bitter chill of the night air numbing her face. The bay drew farther away as the paddles, propelled by four passengers, splashed loudly into the night.

EXTRACT FROM 'THE GOLDEN FATHER'

One day my father came out of his bedroom, which he uses as his company headquarters, screaming triumphantly saying

"I've done it, I've done it".

He explained that he had figured out how to transmute anything into gold. I screamed so loud that I was worried the glass windows might break. Then when me and my father calmed down, he went back to his 'lab' to start making the machine. Then the next day, when I came back from school to check in on him, I saw something terrible. My mother on the floor as if crawling backwards from something. Then a flash of golden light illuminated the room and then my mother was frozen. Her dark skin turned a bright gold. I screamed. My father came out of his 'lab' his arm has solid gold but somehow, he was moving it as if there was a layer of gold over it. I screamed at him to stop to undo what he had done to my mom and he complied. He raised his arm and a flash of gold light that was somehow dark and gold at the same time illuminated the room and then I froze.

My mom was lying on the floor unmoving and the face that had made my life so bearable when I thought I could go on no longer was broken and just looking at her made me die inside. I went over to her to check her pulse. I refused to believe that she was dead but in those moments the reality hit me and hit me hard it did. I was overwhelmed with sorrow. I looked around for a second and saw my sister also a statue of gold. In that brief moment I knew I was next, so I ran. I heard a howl of outrage and saw a ray of gold hit the wall and turn it into gold then I sprinted into an alley with laundry hanging and heard an array of clothes made of gold hit the ground. I ran for another 10 minutes until I was absolutely sure I got away.

© Zakaria Aden
Key Stage 3 Short Story



EXTRACT FROM 'THE YOUNGER VERSIONS OF YOUR PARENTS'

The school bell rang once again, signalling it was time to go home. But Howard decided to go somewhere else, somewhere he could call home.

'Who's there?' spoke the eerie, deep voice from the other side of the door. Howard was at the doorstep of his dad's apartment.

'It's me, Howard,' he spoke, pleased to be with his dad. The door flung open and Howard's dad revealed himself.

'Come in, son,' he grumbled. Howard was hoping he would not sound like that the whole time. He walked in and close the door, taking a seat in the room.

Turner Rocco was a dangerous and scary man. Everyone knows if you see him in the street, it is better if you cross to the other pavement. He was always a rebel since he was born. His ex-wife, Elizabeth, left him to raise her son as a good and kind man, away from the horrible and nasty things the father does. Howard sat on a small, dirty sofa that was covered in boxes and parcels. Howard became curious, but knew better than to not ask his dad what it was.

'What do you want?' he asked, sitting on the ironing board left in the middle of the room. The entire house was a clutter, kitchen, living and bedroom all stuffed into one. He could see everywhere random objects, and the complete place was a mess.

'I came to ask you... how you were at school. Did gram- didn't your parents say anything about your behaviour or grades?' he asked, looking for support, for himself. Turner was sitting on the ironing board, which didn't appear like a wise decision to Howard. Mr Rocco was an enormous man. Sitting on something like that will break it. Luckily, he got off and dragged a stool opposite Howard. He chuckled at the question.

© Mahreema Jannat
Key Stage 3 Short Story



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KEY STAGE 3

SCREENPLAY

EXTRACT FROM 'GBC NEWS'

Salmonella's new home

All of SALMONELLA'S friends, LISTERIA, STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (S. AUREUS), E. COLI and BACILLIUS CEREUS are all at Salmonella's new house. They are all seated on the floor discussing Salmonella's recent interview on the news.

LISTERIA gives SALMONELLA a dark look.

LISTERIA (*Angrily*): How come you got to go on the news? I too cause food poisoning!

SALMONELLA (*Laughing*): Well, I guess I do it best then!

S. AUREUS stands up from seat and stands at full height, apparently offended.

S. AUREUS (*Exasperatedly*): Well, I should have been interviewed too! I am found on the nose and skin of 25% of healthy people and animals. I am most commonly transferred to foods like milk and cheese through contact with workers who have me.

S. AUREUS sits down once more looking very smug. LISTERIA and BACILLIUS CEREUS both look grumpy and dull. LISTERIA stands up after a short pause.

LISTERIA: Well, I, as all of you should know, am also a germ who causes food poisoning. (*pauses to see the other germs outraged faces*). I am most commonly found in chilled ready to eat foods, cooked meat, fish and soft cheese.

E. COLI stands up too, but not to argue.

E. COLI (*Calmly*): Me and my brother Bacillus couldn't care less. I mean, we are obviously the best and we don't need to go in the news to know that!

SALMONELLA makes an angry sound and stands up as soon as Listeria sits down, eager to hear what would come next.

BACILLUS CEREUS: Yes, I prefer to contaminate rice and leftovers that have sat out too long at room temperature, and my brother here likes to contaminate under-cooked beef or vegetables which are washed in contaminated water. Could I just add; germs need moisture to thrive as well!

© Numa Tasneem Karnachi
Key Stage 3 Screenplay

EXTRACT FROM 'THE GOLDEN RULE'

Scene 1: After-school

The scene begins outside a Manchester Secondary School with four friends, Hanif, Sabeeh, Abdullah and Abid. They are walking home from school.

Narrator(off-scene): Here our story begins: two Syrian refugees and two twins smiling with heavy grins. They walk along a street, unaware that they are about to get beat. There was nobody to warn them of the upcoming mayhem...

The boys are walking and suddenly a group of 4 boys, dressed in black tracksuits and balaclavas wrapped around their face, approach the boys aggressively on their bikes. Hanif, Sabeeh, Abid and Abdullah step back, frightened and not wanting to fight. The boys then drop their bikes on the ground.

Boy 1 (in a strong cockney accent): Oi, what you terrorists doing here?!
Who gave you permission to come to our ends?!

Boy 2: This is our country, we don't want your filth here!

Hanif (confused, speaking shakily): What do you mean? We live here.

Boy 3: Who asked you to speak?!

Boy 3 pushes Hanif over to the ground. Abdullah and Abid are in shock and try to run, however Boy 3 trips them over and laughs. Abdullah and Abid start to tear up.

© Sajeel Shah and Saad Ahmad
Key Stage 3 Screenplay

KEY STAGE 3

JOURNALISM

EXTRACT FROM 'HOMEWORK – THE DOOR TO SUCCESS'

Homework is a form of education that enriches students to aim high that shapes Britain's young minds into wisdom and knowledge. Schoolchildren will be in a state of confusion if banned; homework is truly invaluable to society.

Evidently, homework is a core part of the National Curriculum and if banned the physical, mental, and social development of children's' minds will be altered. My friend who lives In the Netherland's is doing his International GCSE at Group 7, the equivalent to a Year 8 in our country. A Guardian survey has conclusively proven that 92% of individuals in state schools in London pass their GCSE's with a Grade 7 or 8 due to the extra boost of homework and other educational factors. Homework is therefore an essential part of the curriculum.

© Riyadh Salah
Key Stage 3 Journalism

KEY STAGE 4

POETRY

LIFE

Despair. Anxiety and Uncertainty,
Spiral into the depth of my fear and worry,
Pressure exerted a dark force in my mind,
Making me question,
Am I going to do it?

Darkness turned into a flickering light,
And intertwined with my dreams,
Sleepless nights, failed goals, and eternal hope.
Yet little did I know,
That's all I needed.

The seeds of ambition I planted will flourish,
The roots of hope will grow longer,
Stemming into a new found confidence of belief in myself,
Reaching what seemed so far,
Hope. Ambition and courage.

© Safina Aziz
Key Stage 4 Poetry



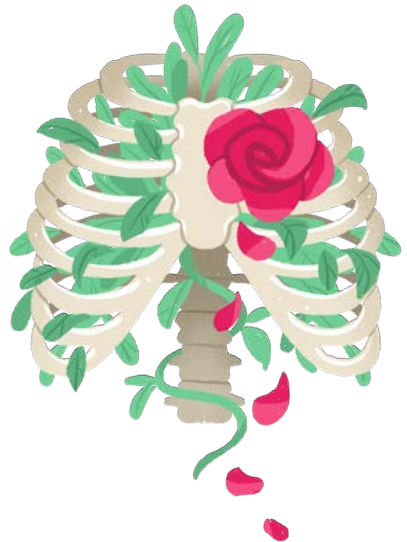
EXTRACTS FROM 'LIFE IS LIFE'

At **ninety** now, breaths laboured and lungs wheezing,
My heart thudding weakly through
A skeletal chest, my hands interlaced
with my loving wife's, as my eyes droop heavily down
into the everlasting slumber, but God kindly
beckons me, and my soul
slips further away, and the angels
tug: urgent but with warmth – as I finally let go.
But it's ok. I can leave.
Life was good.

...

And at **fifty**, staring at the tendrils
of green vines snaking up
my daughter's grave, as sobs rack my body,
and grief envelops, freezing
my heart solid – but then it thaws
ever so slightly, just a tiny chink,
As I see shoots grow to saplings before
withering in the cold. Some climb from shoots to trunks,
That cast shadows and grow large,
They form a canopy and grow old.
But at some point – they all die.
Life is short.

© Saif Rahman
Key Stage 4 Poetry



EXTRACTS FROM 'THE PEER YOU FEAR'

My skin intimidates you,
The hijab wrapped around my head,
The foreign words I speak.

How strange is it that I don't show skin,
But choose to cover my body instead.
How oppressed I must be,
Simply because of the way I dress.

In class I sat beside a kid like you.
My face beamed with glee,
As I finally got to sit on a bench,
In year 6 assembly.
Do you not see?
We're not so different- you and me?

...

You look at me through their eyes,
And broken mentality.
Passed on views,
From an old age and fake reality.
And so,
You will never ever see,
Yourself and I,

Equally.

© Amna Ali
Key Stage 4 Poetry

THE WAVES OF WAR

A wave of fear consumes every face
It contorts their features and bites at their skin
Like the stinging frost that smothers the place
And the wire that surrounds each soldier within

The guns invade the deafening silence
Clouds of powder and terror and misery
Soldiers desperately seeking guidance
From leaders with hands equally dirty

And then the infinite, limitless waiting
The longing to move and end being idle
For although they know it is Death who is baiting
They'd have some control, like a horse with a bridle

At last the shells begin to squeal
Like a kettle with scalding water boiled
And the river of blood and death becomes real
As water giving life is fed to the soil

Then as the mist begins to clear
And the boom of cannons starts to cease
A cry of victory wipes all the fear
But the trauma and guilt erase any peace

A wave of dread consumes every face
It contorts their features and bites at their skin
With regret that paints red every space
And gnaws at each soldier's shame from within

© Weiyen Tan
Key Stage 4 Poetry



EXTRACT FROM 'WHY IS HAPPINESS SO POSTPONED'

Reminiscing in transparent darkness,
Where we were and now where I am.
The sound of screaming, not of pain
but happiness
now long forgotten.
Like memories suffocated by toxic fumes.

The horizon of our outbursts deserted, hidden. Lost.

My Mind is playing games with me,
A full on round of monopoly.
Running away anticlockwise.
Time be telling me to stop,
Time be laughing at me.

Gunshots shooting my eardrums.
The same land where I used to sleep,
Now seems so foreign to me,

that I can't even recognise uncertainty.

© Tooba Subuhi Khan
Key Stage 4 Poetry



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KEY STAGE 4

SHORT STORIES

EXTRACT FROM 'ASTER AD ASTRA'

The suitcases trailed behind them obediently, the sound of their wheels scraping against the concrete jarring to Silas' ears. It mingled with the hushed conversations and indignant complaints of the crowd, creating a cacophony that rose and fell without warning. The rain came down in torrents, hard enough to melt any positive emotions. An army of umbrellas lined the platform in a rainbow of greys, though Silas was unfortunate enough to be without one. Liquid dripped from his blazer and onto his already soaked socks, but he couldn't tell if it was from rain, sweat or tears. In front of him, Hadrian marched ahead, his face a wall of stone. The curls that he usually lavished so much attention on were tangled into an unruly mess that hung over his eyes. His free hand was clenched so tightly that his knuckles were the colour of polished alabaster.

Two blinding lights cut through the haze as a screeching noise filled the air. The train hurtled into the station, shrieking as it ground to a halt. But the two didn't stop, not even when a beep announced that they could board. Finally, when walking further would have sent them tumbling into bracken, Hadrian came to a stop, glancing back at his brother before hauling his suitcase onto the train. Silas watched him go, hesitating as the doors whined and the lights flashed incessantly. But when Hadrian hoisted his suitcase into the overhead carrier and fixed him with a perplexed stare, he hurried onto the train, dragging his drenched suitcase with him.

He was greeted with a blast of warm air that made him shiver at the change in temperature. Whispering apologies for staining the floor, he squelched his way towards his brother, who shook his head and pointed to a seat three rows away. Silas gazed at him imploringly, and after a dramatic eye-roll, Hadrian relented. He lifted his rucksack from the seat opposite him but turned away when Silas finished stowing his suitcase and sat down.

"Don't talk to me," he muttered, slipping headphones into his ears.

© Ameerah Kola-Olukotun
Key Stage 4 Short Story

EXTRACT FROM 'DETECTIVE DEEN'

'My brother', called out a voice behind Deen as he limped out of the mosque gate after performing the morning prayer. Deen turned around to see none other than his old trainee and friend Ishaq.

'Ishaq!', Deen exclaimed, as the two men embraced each other, 'how long has it been?'

'Too long', Ishaq replied, and with that both men chuckled, their faces beaming with happiness.

'What brings you to Blackburn? Official business I suppose?', Deen questioned, though he already knew the answer that was sure to be coming his way.

'Right you are', his companion replied, 'but first, let's go find somewhere to eat. I'm starving after that journey from London and as you always used to tell me, when the stomach starts to rumble your thoughts start to crumble.'

They let out a loud and hearty laugh and with Deen confirming what Ishaq had said to be true, they set off to find a place to eat.

Deen had been a detective for the London constabulary for many years before he finally retired at the age of sixty back to the town he first lived in after migrating to England from Bangladesh. At this point, he was fast approaching his eighties and so wasn't in the best of health. He had a crutch to support his diminutive and fragile body as he walked – and that is if you could call it a walk- limping would be a more accurate term for how Deen got himself from place to place. He was a very short individual, and skinny, with dark skin and snow-white hair which was found on his head, and as a stubble for his beard and moustache. He had a wrinkled face as with most old people, but also had a single, very observable V-shaped wrinkle above his right eyebrow, which was there due to the fact that whenever Deen was puzzled, his right eyebrow would shoot up into an upside-down V- shape, and as a detective, Deen was often puzzled.



© Muhammed Asif
Key Stage 4 Short Story

EXTRACT FROM 'GIVING TO GHANA'

"Hey - wake up already! Your bus leaves in 15 minutes and you still haven't had breakfast!"

Aaminah rubbed her eyes groggily and stumbled out of bed. She'd clearly overslept and didn't bother to remind her mum that her friend's mum was dropping her off to school today.

As she hurriedly wolfed down her cereal, she could hear the news on the TV. She didn't bother listening too closely though; these days the news was all boring – politics, weather, more politics...

As she swallowed her last spoon, the latest story caught her attention. "More Ghanaian children left without access to food and water than ever before", the presenter announced. Aaminah winced as an image of a half-starved baby appeared, its ribs poking through its skin. She only had a brief moment to empathise with the poor child before her mum rushed her out of the dining room and towards the front door. "Have a great day, and yes I packed your lunch for you!" And just like that, the news story was forgotten as Aaminah made her way to school just in time for registration.

"Aami! Sit next to me – I've saved you a seat!" It was Friday and Year 10 were gathering for their weekly assembly. Aaminah managed to sit down just as her head teacher entered and began speaking. "Now you probably know that as a school, we pride ourselves on-" At this point, Aaminah zoned out and began to imagine herself back at home watching Netflix on the sofa. "-please give a warm welcome to our guest speaker for today, Kwame Okodene!" She sat up, feeling a bit more awake. Guest speakers always had something interesting to share.

© Aaminah Bizzari

Key Stage 4 Short Story

EXTRACT FROM 'nescient'

One of the individuals stopped in the multitude of spiritless civilians.

A strange light seemed to come from him; an enveloping yet scattering medium that surrounded him. Or maybe not a light, maybe it was an idea, a feeling that emanated as he stared at his surroundings. Adjusting his petrol blue coat, he peered into a shop window, inspecting the glints of meagre light on its glossy surface. Slowly, with all the speed of a growing plant, a smile spread on his face when he saw the display beyond. Books.

Not many books, you understand. After all, it was a small shop tucked in the corner, jammed between the post office on one side and the town hall on the other. But there were enough books for the man to walk through the door.

Worn shelves stretched into the tiny interior, climbing over each wall insistently, each hosting a horde of tomes, folios, manuscripts and the occasional scroll. As the man ran his hands over each of the books, he could feel their words jostling through his skin, each of these writer's lives converging from their works into him.

From the distant back of the room stumbled out the shopkeeper, a small stooped man clad in rough green trousers and a yellowed shirt. "Ah yes, I thought I heard a customer."

The man lowered his head at the shopkeeper on greeting, and then, glancing around, spread his arms as far as he could in the filled room. "This, this is beautiful. Wondrous. I never thought I'd see such a collection in this town."

The shopkeeper chuckled wryly. "If only the people could see that." The room seemed to darken at his words, as if the ignorance of the city was seeping in.

© Fatima Awan
Key Stage 4 Short Story



EXTRACT FROM 'SIGHT-SEEING'

Gini had lost her sight aged seventy-three and retrieved it, every night, in her memories. The morning was fickle; a sudden downpour cancelled her walk and now the sunshine teased through her window. But the tender woman knew better than to contend with the weather. When she was a child, everybody boarded rickshaws for short and long distances, in monsoon rain or blazing heatwave. One time, her family paid an unusually large sum for a rickshaw. (In hindsight, it would have been cheaper to run down the road.) The driver had a foreign countenance: brawny and darker than city folk. Upon asking why it was so expensive, he explained that a population had been displaced that month, from the flooded village in the south, and had desperately taken up new careers. It was not a good livelihood he said- they were used to cultivating the land, not racing through it.

"Your medicine, ma'am," struck her caregiver's soft voice. Gini did as her doctor told, never questioning the strong doses and the peculiar feeling. Her nurse was sweet, as they were trained to be. She smiled and exited the room swiftly.

Gini had seen the headlines for months: Bangladesh would be submerged due to climate change. When a disastrous truth manifests, the people are occupied with every detail of the matter to begin with. And when the Indian Ocean embraced the country in 2050, welcoming its onehundred and sixty-three million citizens with open arms, the people reacted as if this horror were unprecedented, and a miracle of some sort had been expected. The village said that Gini was mad. In truth, she just remembered too much. They wondered why she never became a policy maker, since no crime escaped her memory.

Even before Gini was delivered to the world, she retained all that took place around her: in utero she consumed the peak of the war, the smell of traditional foods and untended wounds. She wondered how her mother's belly didn't pierce on the metal fence surrounding their home; they crashed into it so many times while fleeing.

© Rayya Nawal

Key Stage 4 Short Story

KEY STAGE 4

JOURNALISM

EXTRACT FROM 'PRIVATE VS PUBLIC SCHOOLS – WHY THE DIVIDE?'

A green and gold tie peeks out from a freshly laundered blazer; slender fingers fiddle with the hem of a pleated skirt. But the most remarkable thing is her smile, the epitome of radiant bliss. Pearly teeth coruscate like diamonds in the morning sunlight, outshone by the way her eyes gleam with elation. The name of a prestigious private school is emblazoned on the gates behind her, and her palpable excitement reveals exactly what day this is.

The joy of the first day of 'big school', her happiest moment, immortalised.

Mere yards from where this picture hangs proudly, a boy scuffs his shoes on the pavement. Trudging to the local comprehensive with a frayed jumper and loafers that squeak in protest with every step, his features are contorted in a careworn grimace. A sketchbook lays forgotten in the back of his rucksack, its curriculum abandoned by a struggling school. There is no smile, for what awaits him are tattered textbooks shared with six others, instruments and art supplies squashed into a box, inaccessible to students, and classrooms stripped so bare they resemble prison cells.

© Ameerah Kola-Olukotun
Key Stage 4 Journalism

EXTRACT FROM 'SOMALIA'S FUTURE'

Only a few months ago, we celebrated 60 years of independence for Somalia. After a long-lasting civil war, Somalia has become a synonymous term in the Western world for 'piracy' and has been classified as a 'failed statehood'. Still battling its history, whilst attempting to return to some form of normality with a central government, this is merely just the beginning of a long road to stability and success for Somalia. Rather than half-hearted political, economic and social reform, it is crucial we are clear on the vision we want for the country and collaborate effectively to push for a massive transformation.

In Somali society, women are considered the economic backbone of many families and with the concept of resilience embedded within the culture, despite the instability in the country, they offer security and stability.

© Yumna Hussen

Key Stage 4 Journalism

KEY STAGE 4 SCREENPLAY

EXTRACT FROM 'THE JOHNSONS'

ASHWAQ

"Hamza give me my bag now!"

HAMZA

"what's that I can't hear you?" (he ignores her and giggles)

ASHWAQ

(Ashwaq walks over to him and grabs his ear) "Can you hear better now?" (she shouts in his ear) "WHERE IS MY BAG?"

HAMZA

(Hamza cries) "MAMA! MAMA ASHWAQS HURTING ME FOR NO REASON!"

(Mama Sumaya walks in rather annoyed with her scarf wrapped around her head, a robe and a pin cushion around her wrist).

MAMA SUMAYA

(she yells) "YALLAH YA HAMZA GO GET YOUR SISTERS BAG AND ASHWAQ LET GO OF HIS EAR!"

(As Ashwaq lets go of his ear the sound of the door opens and with her junior doctor uniform Badriya has her son Essam in her arms)

BADRIYA

"HI MA. (She places Essam in her mother's arms) BYE MA." (And then rushes out the house taking out her car keys)

(The family members all turn to Essam with concerned faces)

MAMA SUMAYA

“Wallah you guys think of me more as a maid than a mother” (she picks up her grandson and walks out of the kitchen.

(Ashwaq quickly rushes out and grabs her bag from her brother, trying to catch up with Badriya. Luckily, she sees her just in time.)

ASHWAQ

(short of breath) “Gosh how are you so fast? (she pants) Anyways be a good sister and give me a ride to school.”

BADRIYA

(she looks at Ashwaq and sighs) “Fine but don’t expect me to do this in future. I’m in a rush so hurry up and get in.”

(In the distance 3 people come running towards the car. Hamza and two of Ashwaq’s friends)

CARA

(She yells) “WAIT A(PANTS) MINUTE!”

AYLA

(Short breathed) “WE WANT A FREE (PANTS) RIDE TOO!”

HAMZA

“WHAT (PANTS)THEY SAID!”

BADRIYA

(she takes a deep breath and sighs)

HAMZA

“You alright sis- ”

BADRIYA

(she cuts him off with an irritable voice) “JUST GET IN THE CAR!”

© Amina Mohamed
Key Stage 4 Screenplay

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MESSAGES FROM JUDGES



The Young Muslim Writers Awards is an important initiative as it celebrates the achievements of young Muslim writers. We need good news especially in the current climate of the pandemic. The event puts the talent of young Muslims on a platform and helps to counter negative stories. Writers have a huge impact in society, both positively and negatively. They inspire people by stimulating their readers' imagination. Congratulations to all the nominees. I was inspired by the works of the nominees under the journalism category. The journalistic writing of the nominees was very impressive. Many of the entries were of high standard and choosing a winner was a difficult decision. I hope they pursue journalism as I believe they have skills to be future journalists. Journalists play a vital role in our society as they seek the truth and hold governments to account.

Ahmed J Versi



I really enjoyed reading your entries and was so impressed by the quality of writing. Your use of dialogue and description of characters was excellent for such young writers. You all have huge potential and I hope you'll continue to write with such great imagination and flair. I wonder what you'll come up with next year! A huge well done to all of you and congratulations for making the shortlist. A great achievement!

A. M. Dassu



The lockdown and the Covid-19 phase has been extremely harsh on everyone, but more so on kids, who are so used to being out of home and it has impacted childhood in ways we can't perceive. While being surrounded with misery and gloom, it is so imperative that children find an outlet where they can express their creativity - to create worlds of the outside while staying in and staying safe, these talented young writers have proven that there are no restrictions in the mind. It has always been a pleasure reading such young and inspiring worlds and just imagining that this may be the first words I've read of a future famous poet. I should get an autograph right now!

Annum Salman



Congratulations to all the shortlisted winners! It's a very big achievement to complete and share a first draft of your story and you should all be very proud of yourselves. It took me an incredibly long time to build the confidence to even put my ideas to paper and to see such talent reassures me that we have some brilliant story makers in the making. I can't wait to hear what these writers have planned and I'm almost certain that I'll have their very own books in my hands one day.

Burhana Islam



I am in awe of the young Muslim poets who shared their work with us and bravely sent in poetry on such important topics. 2020 has forced many of us to think of community during hardship, and also look within ourselves to discover what we need and how best we can move forward. While reading these poems I felt the strength of the young writers and was amazed at their ability to express themselves so beautifully. They should all be very proud of themselves!

Hibaq Osman



Dear writers, thank you for allowing me to read your wonderful stories. It was hard to pick a winner as the five entries were of an extremely high standard. All had something different to offer: some had plot twists, others featured engaging characters; some were fables, others ended with a good old cliff-hanger. But what all the stories had in common was an abundance of energy, confidence, personality and imagination. So, I'd like to congratulate each of you on your hard work this year. Good luck in your future writing endeavours!

James Cook



I am genuinely blown away at the quality of these shortlisted stories. It was an absolute pleasure and privilege to read them and an impossibly difficult task to judge them. They are beyond judgement; each one is fully worthy of publication. These young people are outstanding writers already and I would happily read more from any of them.

Kelly McCaughrain



A gigantic well done to each and every one of you poets! I thoroughly enjoyed reading each poem. I felt so many different emotions through them all, but every one of them made me smile. Seeing all of your talent makes me excited for the world of poetry, and I hope I get to read more of all of your work some-day. Always remember the power of your words and the importance of your voice.

Malika



Congratulations, young writers! And while you're in the mood for celebration, please give your peers and teachers some praise, too. Said to be a solitary pursuit, poetry is also a reaching out—a room expressly invented for connection. Each time you craft a poem you're building a cadre that values diverse ideas and modes of expression. Revel in this and be glad!

Marcus Wicker



Thank you so much for writing and sharing your work. To be shortlisted in such a prestigious award is a great achievement. Well done and congratulations on your excellent work.

Martin Daws



This is my first time judging the Young Muslim Writers Awards and I was amazed at the standard of the shortlist. I had a lovely evening of reading the entries, cuddled up with a hot drink while the wind raged outside. I was immersed in worlds of clever sleuths and cunning villains, of digging for buried treasure and a metal boy that yearned for belonging. I was thrown into the fast and furious world of a dashing super-spy and the dark goings-on in a small town where nothing was as it seemed. You are an astonishing bunch of writers, and may your stories soar someday.

Nizrana Farook



It has been my pleasure to read the pieces of the young authors and poets, which are all well-written, engaging, moving and beautiful. My heartiest congratulations to those whose writings were selected to win, those who were shortlisted and those who took the brave initiative of submitting. You have all gained from this experience, perhaps in ways that you haven't yet seen. Keep going, keep writing, keep expressing. Let it be a means of celebrating your creativity and bringing joy to others. Most importantly, let it be a beautiful act of faith and love for Allah who has inspired your pens. I once started in the very same place as you are now and have since been taken on an amazing journey. I hope you all journey on, through your stories and song, to wonders.

Noor Yusuf



In these troubling times, each of these young voices remind us of the possibility of the power we carry both as individuals and as a community, which is not only encouraging but necessary. Even though this is a competition it is not about the points gained but the points that are made in the work! Each poet shortlisted should be proud and firm in the belief that their voice encourages hope. I hope these young Muslim poets keep writing as the world urgently needs to hear their words!

Oshanti Ahmed



We're living in challenging times and all your poems reflected that. The impact of Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter were evident in two of your pieces whilst all the poems took us on an emotional journey, showing humanity's ability to overcome adversity. That's why I found the reading process so uplifting. And I was inspired that you young writers are taking up your pens and sharing your work, engaging with big issues, encouraging empathy with others, to make the world a better place. Congratulations to all who made the shortlist. Keep writing and keep reading. Good luck!

Patience Agbabi



Congratulations and thanks to all the entries this year, the shortlisted ones were very hard to judge and were all very closely marked and valued.

Richard Grant



Judging for the Young Muslim Writers Awards is one of the highlights of my year – always so inspiring. In this coronavirus year, the Key Stage 3 poets write about some serious, dark experiences. Their courage and honesty are strikingly mature. But in the middle of difficulties they also find hope and even humour. One of the poems ends: "Well sometimes it takes a little hurt/To let the truth show." As ever, these are young voices from whom we adults have much to learn.

Tim Robertson

MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATIONS



The team at Islam Channel and I send our congratulations to all those who took part in this competition and to the final winners. The Young Muslim Writers Awards serves as an opportunity for our youth to be creative and showcase their talents to the world. It also serves as an important platform for nurturing skills and helping the youth to build on their achievements and influence them positively in becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

Mohamed Ali Harrath
Chief Executive Officer, Islam Channel



The Child's Play team would like to congratulate everyone who entered their work for this year's Young Muslim Writers Awards. We hope that the sense of pride you feel from participating will inspire you to keep practising your skill, and that you will continue to share your unique ideas with the world through your writing. We look forward to seeing your names on bookshelves one day!

Child's Play



The Faber Children's team would like to extend a huge congratulations to all the incredibly talented young writers taking part in the Young Muslim Writers Awards 2020. We are so delighted to be supporting the award once again this year and hope you enjoy our selection of books. Many congratulations to you all. Keep reading, writing and sharing your fantastic stories.

Faber



Congratulations to the shortlisted authors of the 2020 Young Muslim Writers Award. A terrific achievement of the craft and imagination in writing. Flame Tree publishes a wide range of novels, short stories, notebooks and calendars. In recent years we have worked with different communities, encouraging new voices and emerging talents to express their love of language, knowledge and ideas. We work together to develop a deeper understanding of the world around us, reflecting and respecting its many cultural traditions.

Flame Tree



Hachette UK is delighted to be supporting the Young Muslim Writers Awards once again in 2020. Our mission is to make it easy for everyone, everywhere to unlock new worlds of ideas, learning, entertainment and opportunity. Initiatives like the Young Muslim Writers Awards make an invaluable contribution to these new worlds, and we're proud to be involved with the awards.

Hachette UK



As salaamu alaykum, To the amazing young writers in this anthology, congratulations! Through your stories, your talent and your creativity you have written yourself into history and you have represented yourselves and your community beautifully. You should be immensely proud. It is a joy to celebrate your work. Keep writing, keep showing the skill, passion and drive you have displayed in your stories. We wish you success and happiness, and we look forward to seeing more of your work published in the future. Perhaps one day you may even be published by Jacaranda Books.

Jacaranda Books



Kube Publishing would like to congratulate all the young writers involved in the Young Muslim Writers Awards 2020. We are proud and privileged to celebrate the incredible work of so many young and diverse voices.

Kube Publishing



The Little Tiger Group creates engaging and inspiring books for children and young people. Together, our mission is to create a diverse range of high-quality books, with something that will appeal to every reading taste, helping children develop a passion for books and a life-long love of reading. We're delighted to support Young Muslim Writers Awards this year and champion incredible young storytellers of the future.

Little Tiger Group



Pan Macmillan would like to congratulate all those who took part in the Young Muslim Writers Awards this year. We are delighted to be involved in the project and hope it inspires more creators in the future.

Pan Macmillan



Old Barn Books sends heartfelt congratulations to all those who have participated in the Young Muslim Writers Awards this year. Whether or not you were a winner this time, it's always great to be able to express yourself creatively through words (and pictures) and it's a skill that improves with practice. So keep telling your stories and we look forward to your future success!

Old Barn Books



Piccadilly Press is so pleased to be a part of an award that encourages reading and writing within the Muslim community. We know that reading and writing are crucial tools that children need, not only to progress and learn in the modern world, but also to create their own stories and have a voice in society. We are delighted to support the Young Muslim Writers Awards, and we hope you enjoy a copy of *Cookie and the Most Annoying Boy in the World* by Konnie Huq.

Piccadilly Press



Raintree would like to congratulate all the writers that have participated in this year's Young Muslim Writers Awards. Here at Raintree, we believe that reading is for everyone. We really value the chance to celebrate and champion diversity across the industry and are honoured to be able to encourage the next generation of young readers and writers to explore their creativity. We hope you keep writing more fascinating stories and poems and we can't wait to read them!

Raintree



The whole team at The Salariya Book Company would like to congratulate all of the writers shortlisted for the Young Muslim Writers Awards for their amazing work this year. We are very proud to be involved with a project promoting the importance of inclusiveness and diversity in publishing, and we hope that the awards inspire other young writers to explore their creativity and find their voices.

The Salariya Book Company



Tiny Owl would like to congratulate all the incredible young writers in the Young Muslim Writers Awards. Thank you for sharing your work with us. Every child has a right to see themselves in the books they read. We champion stories that reflect the diversity of our world. Now, more than ever, access to diverse and inclusive books is essential in building bridges to wonderful new worlds, and exciting new experiences. It would be brilliant to have the opportunity to publish some of your inspiring work in the future. Keep writing and exploring that creativity!

Tiny Owl



What on Earth Publishing is proud and delighted to support the Young Muslim Writers Awards 2020. It is wonderful to be a part of this project which celebrates and provides a platform for talented young writers. Congratulations to everyone involved, we hope that our prize inspires your creativity and we look forward to seeing your work in print in the near future.

What on Earth Publishing

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2021

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