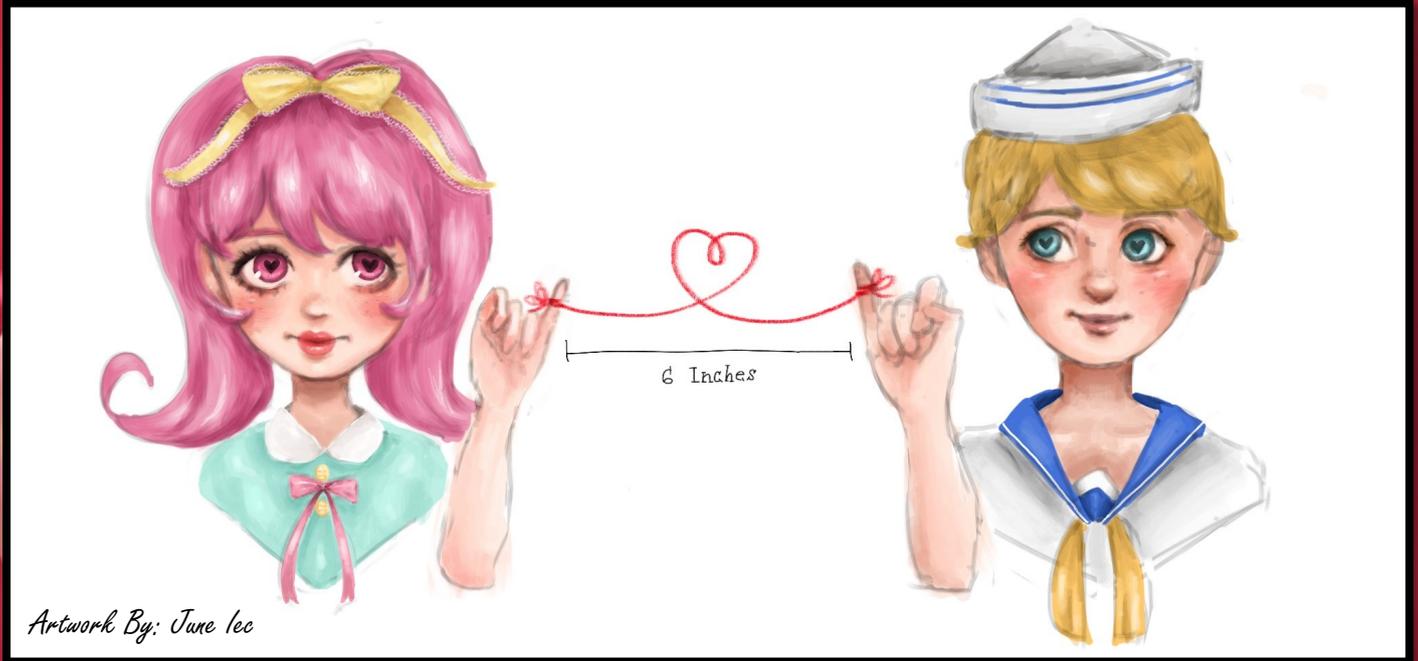


# TWO ZERO ONE

Issue 2 : February 2016



Artwork By: June lee

Madalina Macadrai

Alia Derriey

Anastasia Broder

James Edge

Artwork By: Anya Butler

## The Dynamic Nature of Love

**M**y generation is blamed for failing to understand the complexity of love. My generation is presented as one that frowns upon hand-written letters and similar gestures of romance, deeming them as too cheesy. My generation is seen as shallow. My generation swipes right.

It is hard to argue that the attitude towards romance and relationships has been altered greatly from the time our grandparents, and even parents, were young couples. With the rise of dating apps, social media, as well as our idolization of the too-cool-to-care persona and changing tempo of life, cynicism seems to have crept into our perception. In this age of information, naivety is a social stigma; so to avoid the shameful label we ostentatiously announce our conviction that true love is a myth. We cringe at the reoccurring theme of devotion in literature, bashing Romeo and Juliet for succumbing to childish and unreasonable surges of passion. We claim that it's pointless to search for a soul mate, although some still hold hope of one day experiencing the kind of sensation that made people write confessional poetry to express the intensity of the feeling.

I don't think we should be bashed for distancing ourselves from ideals of our predecessors. We are different, and our environment is nothing like the one they were exposed to. Of course, occasional nostalgia for the 'good old days' is expected, and even beneficial, as it connects the whole human kind into a single entity

held together by universal ideas. Still, we do not necessarily uphold identical values prevalent in the past; perhaps we fear commitment and underplay the importance of sentiment, but overall our love is just as beautiful as love 20, 60, or 200 years ago in its context. It has its good sides; it's playful, unpredictable, mysterious, personal, and independent. Each generation is blamed for having the "wrong" attitude towards love that is actually never really wrong at all. Love is not a static concept; on the contrary, its dynamics have annihilated an impressive number of strict social boundaries over the centuries. Love conquered class divide, as the family name lost its significance, no longer constituting much more than a combination of letters. Love conquered racial prejudice, when skin pigment ceased to be a factor in developing feelings for a person. Love conquered gender bias, when the crowds gathered before Supreme Court of America proudly waved rainbow flags as a sign of sheer jubilation. It's in our human nature to reject novelty and change, as it makes us feel unsafe and insecure. That's why the condition of love of the younger generation has always been criticized by the older generation; as love constitutes an entity so universal, its changing nature is a frightening prospect and it's our instinct to preserve it. But maybe, we need to realize that what we are witnessing is not this generation's spiral into abyss of superficiality, but rather a gradual evolution of the concept of love.

By Anastasia Broder

---

### Anonymous Submission

#### The moment of falling in love | Creative piece

A moment so minuscule that its consideration seems irrelevant. A fraction of a second where everything seems possible. A feeling of warmth and delight overwhelming your body. A flash where every tissue, every cell transubstantiates into molten gold. But even this gold, does not compare to the unearthly shade of the eyes; your eyes. Your eyes, your hair, your mouth

with a laughter so bright, so clear, like the world is made of ice and sugar. Wanting to press your heart against mine until the separation becomes impossible and existence irrelevant. Simply letting go of imperfections, because in this exact moment, the world is perfect.

### Essay prompt for Edition 3:

#### Does Pressure Drive Or Destroy?

**Deadline: 15<sup>th</sup> April**



# A Message From God

*By Nandini Bulchandani*

I stand back in awe  
As I witness the birth,  
Of a glowing orb of blue and green  
The planet which shall be named "Earth"

I stand back in awe  
As I listen to the sounds,  
Of life beyond imagination  
Of beauty that knows no bounds.

I stand back in awe  
As I look upon kindness bloom like a flower,  
An eternal prayer of love  
Growing stronger by the hour.

But something is changing  
The glowing orb is catching fire,  
Its embers glinting ruefully  
It is swallowed by the human pyre.

Malignant shadows masking  
The desperation for power,  
Suffocate the life of imagination until  
Before this desire, all it does is cower.

I stand back helpless  
As kindness wilts and dies,  
The prayer becomes a blade  
And murders before my eyes.



## Movie vs. Book

# FAR MADDI

This movie adaptation of the famous Thomas Hardy novel is incredibly pleasant on the eyes with its stunning British landscape. It opens with a scene featuring our lovely female lead, Miss Bathsheba Everdene, riding a horse across vast green fields. Soon we meet the gentle and reserved sheep farmer, Gabriel Oak, who falls in love with the wilful young lady, as the two other gentlemen in the movie also do. Having rejected two respectable suitors, Miss Everdene, the strong and independent mistress of a well-off farm (you go, girl!), fell for the “bad boy” in the movie – the charming yet dangerous soldier Troy (not the one in HSM, mind you). As I watched her making the same mistake that most of us girls do, I began to contemplate why we all prefer bad boys to nice guys. It is similar to how flies chase after bright, blinding fires only to die instantly once they reach them. A suicidal mistake I would say, as our heroine soon learns the consequences of playing with fire.

I have never read the book, so I can't compare it to the movie, but the plot flows well and it is easy to sympathise with the affectionate Gabriel Oak, watching him guarding his love all along. The soundtrack complements the movie with its beautifully touching melodies, the highlight being the duet “Let no man steal your thyme”; this also serves to emphasise Miss Everdene's attractive determination as a woman refusing the social constraints and perceptions of female roles in Victorian times. The historic setting, presented by round hats, fancy ruffled dresses, farmer's costumes, traditional dances and Victorian houses allows for a quick 2-hour time travel to bygone times.

This classic romance film is perfect for weekends when you realise all chick-flicks on Netflix share the same story and that you are sick of American high school dramas. Highly recommended.

By Ira Li

This book is about how the lives of four people – Gabriel Oak, Bathsheba Everdene, William Boldwood and Frank Troy – with different backgrounds and aspirations intertwine, charting their relationships through different circumstances.

I have never felt so relieved to have finished a book – *Far from the Madding Crowd* is ‘thick’ and heavy, despite its short length. Although it isn't too slow-paced, or wordy, I struggled to maintain an interest in it. The cause of its insipidity is its topic: despite the beautiful romantic story suggested by the blurb, this book is about everyday life, and love, in rural Victorian England. Bathsheba Everdene, the centre of so much attention, has ordinary thoughts and feelings, most of which are self-absorbed. Gabriel Oak, a sheep farmer – and my favourite of Bathsheba's ‘suitors’ (or hopeful admirers) – is humble and understated in the way he lives his life. The only characters that seem somewhat fantastical come to their tragic ends through the course of the story. Perhaps this suggests the underrated value in living an ordinary, honourable life – sometimes, the most safe and boring option is the one that will make you happiest.

I felt compelled to read this book, knowing it to be a largely beloved classic; there is something distinctly rewarding in reading a ‘respected’ book, despite this being a poor reason for reading one. Nevertheless, I started it, determined not only to read it, but enjoy it. Frankly, I was disappointed: I tried to like it, but as I wasn't gripped, I found it hard to pick up. I forced myself to read a couple of pages every day, ploughing through them slowly and reluctantly. It wasn't until the end that I finally began to like it, when the plot gained momentum and exciting events occurred in succession. If it wasn't for this, I wouldn't recommend the book at all: more than once, I came close to putting it down.

*Far from the Madding Crowd* is Marmite: some rave about it, whilst others think it tedious. I'm not sure which I fit under – I found a lot of it hard-going, but by the end wished I had savoured it. Overall, it's a great, well-written book, but must be read with patience: eventually, it is rewarding. It's good for people who like old classics for their language and history, but don't want too long a book (and don't mind a drawn-out, sometimes monotonous plot).

By Alia Derriey

# R FROM THE DING CROWD

Based On The Classic Love Story By  
Thomas Hardy

Directed By  
Thomas Vinterberg



**The Bottom Line: Movie**

It's a 'classic romance' with a flowing plot and characters that are 'easy to sympathise with'.



**The Bottom Line: Book**

At times 'tedious', but nonetheless 'well-written'.

# Top Five Couples

By Nadya Durova

In keeping up with the romantic theme of this issue, I thought I'd share with you my top five favourite 'ships' (relationships) in books, films and TV shows. And if you're not already a fangirl, you'll soon be talking like one with the vocabulary you'll pick up here!



## 1. Klaine - Glee

Everyone loves to watch a love story unfold, and viewers of Glee have a special place in their hearts for this couple. Kurt and Blaine's ship went through many storms, such as cheating, becoming ex-fiancés, and Blaine dating Kurt's ex-bully. But the love between these two was and always will be there. One of the original couples, Glee wouldn't be complete if these two didn't end up together.

## 2. Percabeth – Percy Jackson

The most *shipped* couple in the series, Percy and Annabeth were destined to become a couple. Both went through many struggles, even disliking each other at the beginning. But classic love and their relationship just made them even cuter. Every book contains so many Percabeth moments - it's hard not to *ship* them from beginning.



## 3. Finchel - Glee

Another pairing from Glee, which I couldn't resist putting on the list. Although they may have broken up, to many they are supposed to be '*endgame*' (together in the end). Finn and Rachel went through an excessive amount of drama during their relationship, but were never considered finished. Sometimes slightly cheesy, these two were always cute and perfect.

## 4. Stydia – Teen Wolf

This ship may not be '*cannon*' (happening/real), but the chemistry between Lydia and Stiles made it one of the best pairings on Teen Wolf. Stydia just always seems to happen, making it certain that they will be *endgame*. Both bring out the best in each other and show an unlimited amount of love and compassion for one other. The history between them makes them even more perfect—if that's even possible.



## 5. Everlark – Hunger Games

It may not be the cutest *ship*, but it's one of the strongest. Throughout the books, both begin to slowly fall in love despite faking everything in the beginning. They survived Hunger Games together, Peeta getting hijacked and the rebellion. Nevertheless, they reached a happy ending. They're one of those couples that makes you cry with joy for their relationship.

# Blue Neighbourhood



## Album Review: *Blue Neighbourhood* – By Troye Sivan

By Nanci Burbidge

December 2015 saw the release of debut album “*Blue Neighbourhood*” by Australian singer-song writer, Troye Sivan. The ten-track record follows Sivan’s EP *Wild* released earlier in September of last year.

Troye Sivan, 20, who was shortlisted as one of *time.com*’s *Most Influential Teens* in 2014, first made a name for himself on YouTube, where he now has over three million subscribers. It was here where he was spotted by a Hollywood producer and went on to have a role in 2009’s *X-men Origins: Wolverine*.

As an openly gay artist, Sivan has used his popularity and large following to help the LGBT community. In an interview with the *Gay Times* during October of 2015, Troye expanded on his involvement within the gay community,

‘I have a platform and I should be using it to spread good.’

The record, a series of electronic-pop style tracks, manages to tie together a sense of melancholy and mellow, laid-back beats whilst exploring the ideas of small-town boredom and the want for physical contact with a loved one. The mix of up-beat tracks such as *YOUTH* and *LOST BOY*, with the more down-tempo beats, including *HEAVEN*, makes for fantastic easy listening. Imagine yourself relaxing on a Caribbean beach, immersed in a hammock, surrounded by the tranquil flow of waves. This is where Sivan’s album takes you.

“*Blue Neighbourhood*” is already set to be one of the biggest selling albums from an Australian artist. So, watch this space.

# Desert Island Inquisition

Inspired greatly upon the famous BBC4 programme 'Desert Island Discs', the school magazine has decided to take its own slant. Here, every month, we will be asking a member of the school body some quick fire questions about themselves and most importantly, what they would take with them to a desert island.

Mr. Clague, Headmaster

**What is your favourite book?** Riddley Walker by Russell Hoban. It is a unique view of a dystopian future in which the English language unravels and echoes of the past are misinterpreted. One of the few books I will happily re-read.

**What is your favourite film?** The Castle. As much as it hate to admit it, something brilliant from Australia. A comedy about a working class family fighting for the right to stay in their beloved home. True laconic Aussie humour at its best.

**What do you like most about Britain and miss most about New Zealand?** What I like most about Britain is the new adventure it is offering me; new people, different perspectives, the exploration of remarkable places. I relish the profound sense of culture and history, yet the future is enticing and there's no sense of being stuck in the past.

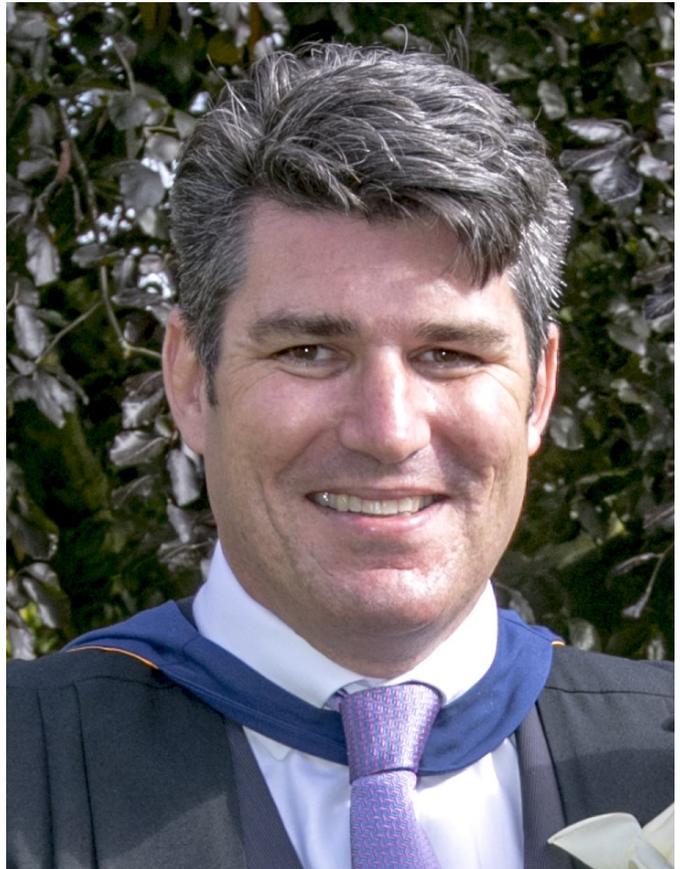
**What do you miss most about New Zealand?** Having been an Outdoor Education Instructor for most of my life, I miss the mountains and forests, rivers and the sea. There's plenty of wilderness in Britain of course and to be honest it's probably more the busyness of the job that keeps me away. But I do miss walking through a rugged landscape confidently knowing the names of every bird and tree. Something to work on over here.

**What is the best piece of advice you could give anyone?** The best piece of advice I could give, comes in the form of a favourite quote: *'The true purpose of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.'* For me, this is both literal and metaphorical. Given my love of the outdoors, I have always grown native trees from seed – they make perfect gifts and give back to the environment. But more philosophically, I believe that the work we do in our life should benefit future generations, people we may never meet in ways we may never know. And to do so without expectation of acknowledgement or reward

**What person inspires you the most?** One of my greatest inspirations is the famous polar explorer Ernest Shackleton; often considered a great rival of Captain Scott's. I look to him for lessons in leadership and great humanity. A man who knew he was fallible and was greatly capable of recognising his personal failures without despair or disguise. He also had a gift for bringing out the best in others and for having the common touch, always able to engage with anybody no matter their rank or standing. Ironically his greatest Antarctic expedition was a complete failure, yet he was arguably the most successful British Polar leader.

**Most importantly: If you were stranded on a deserted island what 3 things would you take with you?**

- My wife (so I don't die from lack of love)
- A full set of the Oxford English Dictionary (so I don't die from lack of words)
- Then lastly, without doubt, a life time supply of Cadbury Creme Eggs (for obvious reasons)



Written by: Olivia Bond

## The 'Done' Thing

**D**o you follow the crowd? Do you do things because most of the people around you have done the same? In this modern day and age, there are many people who strongly believe that there is an 'absolute' or 'certain' way to live one's life. This could be phrased as the 'done' thing. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, where racism, sexism and ageism is apparently sorted, you'd think that people would have the freedom to do what *they* think is right, without being told or encouraged to do one specific thing by the majority of others. However, no, this is not to be. I feel that this control of the 'done' thing is so plainly obvious, and yet nobody seems to understand its restrictive conformity.

Let me use an example to try and explain the 'done' thing better for you, the reader. As listening to the radio is one of my many hobbies, I'll make up an example, using persons A and B. Let's say that person A really enjoys listening to Radio X (a relatively new rock and guitar music based station), whereas person B rather prefers listening to BBC Radio 2 (a much older radio station that has been around for as long as anyone can remember). Person A says to person B, "my life seems to involve having a laugh with Chris Moyles on Radio X in the morning, then easing into the movement of my work. I then come home, sleep and the cycle continues." Person A is trying to get across to person B the repetitive nature of everyday life, by using his own daily routine as a bit of analogy. He was probably therefore expecting person B to reply with something to do with this said topic. However, person B very abruptly and simply asks, "Why don't you listen to Chris Evans?" (Completely expecting that person A knows who Chris Evans is and what radio station he is on, being BBC Radio 2). Having disliked Chris Evans, and finding more humour in Chris Moyles, person A responds by saying, "I don't really like him. I like his television work, but I don't find much entertainment in his radio show". Due to the closed minded nature of person B, they simply look at person A strangely, as if they come from a different planet, and walk away. The 'done' thing within this analogy was that most people listen to Chris Evans on BBC Radio 2, and just because person A was different and liked Chris Moyles on Radio X more, he was somehow neglected from society and a conversation. This was due to person B's ignorance and closed-minded nature. But, why couldn't person A continue in the conversation? Why should anyone be restricted to what most people do? Surely no-one should be restricted to the 'done' thing in order to be accepted?

Using another example, this time music tastes, we can use stereotyping to demonstrate how the power of the 'done' thing. Using person A and B again, let's imagine that person A likes 70s rock and pop music, and person B enjoys keeping up-to-date with all the rap music that is continuously coming out. Person A finds himself listening to a 70s rock song, and person B comes up to him, noticing it. Person B decides to ask, "Why are you listening to *that*? That song is so old". Person A replies, "I just like this music, and I don't really care much for any music that comes out these days". Person B then says, "But new music is way better. All of my friends enjoy it. It's what you're meant to like". In actual fact, you aren't and shouldn't be 'meant' to like anything, and people should be entitled to like any sort of music, and should also be entitled to express their enjoyment in listening to it. Why can't people be able to express their own opinions on anything, without being criticised for not doing what the majority of people around them seem to be doing?

Being different to the majority is what I would call being out of sync from the 'done' thing. What if most of the people in a specific age group go around wearing cardigans, polo shirts and skinny jeans, but one seems out-of-sync as they're wearing a long coat, waistcoat and black boots? That person shouldn't be denied access into conversations, nor should they be pushed to wear the clothes of everyone else in that age group. They should do their own thing, while everyone else does theirs.

My point is that everyone should be entitled to looking how they like, liking what they like, and doing what they like without being criticised for never doing the 'done' thing of the majority. I would have thought that it this day and age, everyone should have freedom, without restrictions or peer pressure. No limiting factors, no barriers, and the ability to let people do their 'own' thing, instead of the 'done' thing.

*By Ben Payne*

# Welcome to the Service—

## Part 1

*By Jagveer Uppal*

Artwork By

*Anya Butler and June Lec*

Fog. Fog dipping behind every corner, every alley. Fog weaving between each bar and plank of scaffolding, cluttering every structure throughout the neighbourhood. Fog nipping the dripping noses of every shivering builder on every construction site for miles around. Fog looming over the haphazard scene of ruins beneath; an inquisitive ghost lurking, watching every ongoing encased within. One structure, inconsistent with its surroundings, was whole with no need of extra support. The colossus of infrastructure stood tall, proud amongst mist. Its apex took residence well above the world. The base, though in the fog, was somehow immune to its foreboding presence due to the protective aura emitted by the building. In one fog infested corner stood a man sporting a trilby. An old pair of eyes skilfully focused through the vapour, surveying the building. A second pair of eyes studied the man.

“Ready Johnny boy?” inquired a voice with a heavy Welsh accent (its owner without a trilby).

“Yeah. Let’s kill a millionaire.”

\*

“Bob, he’s wasting our supplies.” Moody spoke with a slow voluptuous tone.

“Well, you didn’t think it was wastin’ before, did you?” Bob didn’t.

“Before it paid out. Now though, he’s lucked out. He’s took too many chances and one of those chances went south. He had seven of our finest stock and only he walked out.”

“Stock?” said John from across the table, “What are you talkin’ stock?”

“Our boys!” a mixture of the opposing voices reverberated round the church

room.

“John,” now only Moody spoke, her scarlet lips cradling every syllable with a gentle finesse, “we runnin’ a complex system here. Let me tell you it takes a lot’a muscle power to keep it going so we need a good supply of bodies to keep things smooth round here. We get this from a friend of Bob’s.”

“Doc E.” Bob added.

“Yes, Doctor Harvey Ener does this for us.”

“How?”

“Look,” once more Bob felt the urge to add. He was a stout, crusty gentleman who seemed always to speak with an element of sarcasm in his words “I came here to do a job, you want his arse with a bullet in it? I’ll give it to yiz, I just need your say so.”

“Well, I say so and take John with you. Break him into the service a little.” The woman’s voice had a sudden flicker of amusement embezzled into it.

“Wait,” now it was John’s turn to add, “so you wanna get this guy who cost you a lotta boys? Is that it?”

“He’s what I use to set an example. This one might have a hefty pocket-book, but I’ve got a hundred and one just like him and we need to make sure they understand their place. I enjoy teaching by example.” The corner of the woman’s mouth escalated. “Go make a game outta it.” The order seemed to catch Bob’s attention, like a dog catching the scent of a scrap of meat.

\*

“Well hello, love. We’ve an appointment with Mr Rattigan.” The two had

entered and Bob took to a receptionist with a flirtatious flit in his tone.

“Name?” she replied, uninterested.

“Just tell ‘im we’re Moody’s boys.” A puzzled look overtook her appealing face followed by a gaze of dismissal. She rose from her seat and entered the office opposite. The boys had been in the lift for what felt like an eternity; two views that were in no way akin had been crammed into a box overflowing with an awkward silence. Bob was on a mission, one he would undoubtedly take pride in completing. John’s goal at the time had been only to distract himself from reality with thoughts of his wife, though intended to be a positive experience the idea of her dysphoria should she find out about his work was ever lodged in his mind. Now the both of them were sat on a comfortable sofa across from an immaculately organised receptionist desk. The waiting room was white. White walls, white sofa, white carpet with the only refuge from bombardment being the lightly coloured wood of the desk. Moments later the receptionist came back into view when she opened the door to welcome the two inside, while avoiding eye contact with the dismissed Bob.

“Come on in!” the high pitched words emanating from inside the office were spoken with a quick, obnoxious demeanour. Despite the un-holiness of the nose the both of them approached its source. The office had shelving on each side, each was rammed with an array of starkly coloured books.



A bear skin rug was strewn across the floor, mouth agape, while the sealing had a series of intricate card patterns coating it. Truly it was a gentleman's library. At the back of the room, however, there were no books, shelving or carvings, just a glass wall behind a clear mahogany desk. Sat stalking the two as they entered was a young, scrawny, pale man dressed in a modern and apparently expensive suit. He might have been conceived as handsome if not for his grotesquely pointed nose and front teeth that appeared to be attempting escape from rest of his moth. "So you Moody's boys then. You know I should go and pay her another visit. It's been a while since I stopped by the church. I kinda owe them an apology, after that incident with the acidic holy water." He turned his head and sniggered to himself, "That was one hell of a baptism." His attempt at a joke was not well received by Bob who'd now taken the seat across from the man, leaving John to stand behind him, arms folded.

"Moody wanted us to play a game." John had taken to letting Bob do the talking.

"A game?" Rattigan replied. A moment passed and from his pocket the beaming Bob withdrew a revolver and silencer. After clearly showing the armament to Rattigan he opened it out letting all but one bullet from their place.

"Roulette? I was hoping for something more original." He grinned with a mixture of mockery and bliss.

"I have a soft spot for the classics."

"Why are you here?" asked Rattigan, not really caring.

"I told you. You like to play games, take risks and Moody just wants to see how good at it you really are." He grabbed the gun from Bob's hand over the desk, pointed it under his chin and 'clicked'.

"I'm the best." His grin was so large it almost appeared to touch the base of his ears. He passed on the gun. "Your turn," he said expectantly.

"All right." Bob pointed at himself, huffed and 'clicked'. Rattigan's eyes narrowed and sharpened. He pointed, this time at his eye, with no hesitation and 'clicked'. Bob said nothing; he'd begun to treat the game as more of a choir. He started to repeatedly roll his eyes as if to say 'let's get to the fun part'. It was, again, loaded, aimed and then came the familiar 'click'. The mantle was passed on to the now visibly worried Rattigan. He'd reluctantly pointed at his chest and... paused. "Go on, Mr Rattigan." Bob teased, "I'm waiting." His breathing quickened, he turned his head and... 'clicked'. A wave of relief covered Rattigan. Bob was unchanged. The gun was taken, aimed and Rattigan quivered. The both of them left their chairs and the millionaire backed towards the window.

"I don't take chances."

"Shame." Rattigan threw a punch hitting Bob's face, then a second knocking the revolver backwards. Seconds later the two rolled round in a frenzy on the floor each lunging for the other. The brutal, yet brief cock fight was drawn to a swift halt with a single word from the now armed John.

"Next time Mister, watch which way you whack a gun."

"Good boy, Johnny."

"Get up!" he now referred to Rattigan. He gestured for Rattigan to face the glass; with no unwillingness whatsoever he did.

"Ok Johnny I've had enough. Go on... John?"

"Don't..." pleaded the hostage.

"Shut up!" snapped the hit man. "Go on." Bob was an impatient creature "I don't take chances. Remember?" he said removing a second, smaller revolver from his jacket. Before John had fully come to grips with his situation he realised he too was being held at gun point.

"I'm sorry." He whispered. A second later he discreetly moved the barrel to the side of Rattigan's head, unnoticed by Bob, and 'boom' a brilliant smashing of glass followed and the millionaire was lost to the writhing void of mystery bellow, falling, screaming as he did so.

"Well Johnny boy, welcome to the service of Mistress Moody."

# Random Thoughts on Poetry, Humans, Computers and the Impossible

AnaMaria Cuza

If you were asked which is the most defining art of the human emotion experience, what would your answer be? Is there anyone thinking that it is poetry? From Maecenas, patron of ancient Roman poetry, to Maya Angelou, from anonymous verses found in a diary to the few rhymes on a Valentine's card - there is something in poetry which conserves the most defining human emotions: love, nostalgia, hope, despair...

Would you ever consider, then, that a computer could be capable of truly writing "human" poetry? When faced with these sort of questions, we tend to cringe, trying to protect our mental boundaries of what is human and what is machine thinking, of what is natural and what is artificial. But should we really ignore asking the questions: what is poetry? What is creativity? What is, after all, human?

The first time I started seriously thinking about these questions, was when I came upon the work of Oscar Schwartz. With his team, he created the [botpoet.com](http://botpoet.com) site, a virtual *Turing Test* - the traditionally and universally agreed on way of testing artificial intelligence-where he challenges its users to vote which poems are human written and which ones are computer created. The shocking thing he discovered? While there are poems, where the "computer touch" is obvious, there are some other poems where more than half of the voters couldn't guess that behind those verses there was a computer, rather than a human.

Even though these results seem incredible, fascinating, maybe even frightening, there is still a long road towards achieving computational

creativity. When looking at the algorithms behind this poetry generating program, created by Ray Kurzweil, you can see that the computer is given a source text (like one of Emily Dickinson's poems), analyses it to find out how the language is formed and regenerates the language in a new way, basically creating a new poem, but without understanding the meaning of the words.

In his TED Talk, Oscar Schwartz shows the audience, at a point, a poem with unnaturally sounding verses - obviously everyone believed that they were written by a computer. But it turns out that the writer was Gertrude Stein. So does that mean that Gertrude Stein is less human than other poets, because of her use of language? After all, human is an ever shifting idea, a relatively unstable one and its meaning is based on our opinions, which change over time. Then, how can we define a clear boundary between humanity and... the rest?

Going back to the start of the article: can a computer write poetry? Not yet, but it might and that is why we have to teach ourselves to think more openly. We have to learn to set less boundaries, to ask more questions, to stop unconsciously seeking for our comfort zone. Who knows? Maybe in just a few years, the word "impossible" will be removed from dictionaries...



# AN OLD BROMSGROVIAN INTERVIEW:

## TOM FULLWOOD

HOUSE: Walters 2005-2010

HIS OCCUPATION NOW: Senior Conference Producer

INTERVIEWER: OLIVIA BOND

### • What is your fondest memory of Bromsgrove?

All of the activities. The chance to perform on a professional stage, with a brilliant cast and incredible friends, the chance to do choir, fencing, orchestra, string group. That sense that you can be strong and do whatever you want, sport or arts, and it will still be recognised, supported and encouraged by friends, teachers and family.



### • What aspect of Bromsgrove life helped to get you where you are now?

The responsibility and the understanding that hard work and being a good person can help you achieve anything. The wide variety of activities and the chance to be involved in so many different things.

### • What three elements do you think a person needs in order to be successful?

*Hard working* - you need to be able to push and work your way up from the bottom until you succeed and get to where you want to be.

*Various Interests* - always try and find something new and different. Get involved with as many things as possible and take any opportunity you can. You have to get involved in as many different things and take opportunities that are presented to you, but be prepared to choose when you need to. You never know what will happen.

*Kindness*- Always being polite and kind to other people is key to success. If you are kind and friendly to others, they will be good back to you and help you when you need it.

### • Who is your inspiration in life and why?

My dad. He is so successful and works so hard to get the incredible things he has, and he has given me so many opportunities I may never have had, and I want to be able to do the same when I have a family.

### • What is the best advice you could give anyone?

Trust in yourself. You can do anything and can be successful. There will be hard work but it is worth it and it helps you grow to become successful.

### • What makes you enjoy your job?

The people. It is all about the people you work with. You may have bad days, but if you have good people to work with they will support you through it and help you as much as they can. They will make the days go by and make sure you enjoy the whole time.

# VACATION SPOTS YOU HAVE TO VISIT

By: Madalina Macadrai

The world is filled with beautiful places, but looking past the usual very popular touristic destinations, a fresh variety of holiday spots could become your new favourite places.

## **For the lover of exotic places (with a twist)**

*Curaçao -Southern Caribbean Sea*

This island is owned by the Dutch and has been voted one of the best islands in the Caribbean. It's not a common island- the town is built in the Dutch style, however it is surrounded by tropical areas. Basically, you get the best of both worlds- an exotic Holland.

The island does have the typical characteristics of a holiday island: you can visit the beautiful beaches, lay in the sun and also go to amazing parties. The



weather is stable and the nature is splendid with a lot of vegetation but also a rich marine life. The place to be!

## **For the lover of oriental, cultural sites**

*Şanlıurfa - Turkey*

The city is commonly known as Urfa and dates back 3,500 years. It is a town with stunning architecture but also the Turkish legend that Abraham was born in a cave there, make this historical city both mystical for the 'explorer', but also relaxing for a different holiday experience. The main attractions you will find in Urfa, are the Fish Pond, an old covered bazaar, the Throne of Nimrod fortress and an archaeological museum. There is also one of the oldest temples in the world located nearby. Don't forget the food. In Turkey in general, the oriental food is amazing for the people who are into new



experiences. If you love exploring new sites and like discovering cultural aspects, this is the place for you!

## **For the lover of beautiful sea and beaches, but also culture**

*Kotor - Montenegro*

This town is one of the most beautiful European seaside places I have visited! Not only because it is surrounded by crystal clear water and stunning beaches, but also because of its rich tradition and culture. When you first arrive in Kotor you are surrounded by ancient atmosphere, with old fashioned streets and architecture. In Kotor, time seems to have stopped hundreds of years ago. Exploring the beautiful old streets and also climbing the stairs to get on top of the hill for a breath-taking view of the surroundings are only some of the things you can do in Kotor. It is a very relaxed, but in the



same time vibrant city that can offer you both exploration and a well-deserved break from your daily routine!

## **For the lover of cold water experiences outdoor spas and adventure in the nature**

*Iceland*

Iceland is home for a variety of beautiful natural landscapes and phenomena. The gazers are truly spectacular and if you have the opportunity to take an SUV to explore mountains, hills and waterfalls, do take it. The skimobile ride on an iceberg is one experience I will never forget. Although slightly dangerous if you don't follow the instructions, this experience offers you 2 hours of just riding in peace with everything around you perfectly white and clean. The Blue Lagoon is probably the most famous in Iceland, but it really is a must if you manage to go to Iceland. The waters have exceptionally healing properties and the large cohort of products you can purchase also represent a great opportunity. Spending one or two days at the Blue Lagoon can be both a relaxing and a fun experience for you and



your family or friends.

# TOP 3 UNIQUE TRADITIONS

*Liberty Guillamon*

One of the reasons I was so excited to come to Bromsgrove was because of the many different nationalities that this school has and its abundant diversity, and I definitely was not disappointed. In just over a term here, I have learnt so many interesting things about different cultures, many of which seemed like odd concepts to me at first but played such a massive role in peoples' lives. The top three most unique ones I have ever heard about are:

## **La Tomatina...**

My roommate is Spanish, so it was through her that I learnt more about this interesting festival. It is held in Valencia on the last Wednesday in August, and it is essentially just one massive food fight with only tomatoes. The festival is purely for entertainment purposes. The festival is thought to have originated with a vegetable fight but over the years, the rules have changed, and the festival has become more popular. One of the reasons for this is because it is so much fun, and I think that is what many festivals/ traditions are for- they are to unite complete strangers and make people feel happy because of sharing a totally unique experience.

## **Mud Carnival...**

This festival is based in southwest China, and it's a four-day celebration of love, health and happiness. Clearly, the best way to show this is to cover each other in mud! When I first found out about this festival from a friend, I was very surprised to find how popular it is. Since then I learnt that they see black as the symbol of diligence, and good health. The mud is seen by them to possess special qualities that help the person it is spread on and so now I understand its popularity, people want to feel as though they belong to a community even if for just a short time. I think that this is actually a really lovely idea, and although I would personally never want to be smeared in mud; it was amazing to hear about.

For my final tradition, I decided to ask people what weird festivals they heard Britain had. Among the countless suggestions of 'afternoon tea'- there were some good suggestions, and I picked this one:

## **Cheese rolling...**

I had actually never heard of this festival before, but after someone's suggestion a quick Google search soon told me about this peculiar event. In Gloucestershire, there is a day when, for sport, people roll a 9lb wheel of cheese down a hill. The cheese can reach speeds up to 70 mph, and the winner is the first to reach the bottom, this festival can actually be quite dangerous and was almost banned, although this seems to have only increased its popularity.

I think this is probably the most intriguing of them all, and I can only wonder how people prepare for this event. What all of these have in common however, is the feeling of friendship and happiness in sharing this unique experience with other people. It doesn't matter where you are from; every country has a totally special tradition or part of their culture that belongs just to them, and the exclusiveness of this helps to create a feeling of partnership and belonging that is indescribable. The history and meanings behind each event creates a connection with previous generations and holds immense sentimental value!



Picture Courtesy of Getty Images

## Is love all you need?

I have a confession to make: this essay was never intended to be written. I still remember clearly how, at the moment of hearing the title of the essay, all of my neurons fired at once, producing the thought "I can't write this!" I am too logical, too absorbed by the complexity of our world, too easily distracted by the "how" and "whys", to let myself fall in love, fall into the vicious circle of relationships, fall into the normal trap of teenage emotions. I could spend hours defending the genetically inherited selfishness of humans or debating if our Universe was just a matter of pure coincidence, but day dreaming about finding true love always seemed too... clichéd for a 17 year old girl.

Still, I found thinking about what I would have written engaging: would I have analysed the biological explanations of what is love? Would I have dissected the mathematical truths about finding true love? Or maybe I would have proudly presented my own conviction that knowledge is above all?

One day I got distracted by the pile of books spread next to my bed, trying to recount all of the ideas hidden between those pages. Randomly opening them, I suddenly got caught in a thought experiment: if we were to remove love from who we are, from the world we live in, would all the knowledge accumulated by humanity have any value? Would these small treasures suddenly turn into the dust of ignorance?

Give it a moment of thought: these days, cosmologists are "playing" with the idea of multiple universes, in trying to get to the conclusion that our universe is just an alternative to the uncountable number of different worlds. There is nothing special about us, except for some well-placed random numbers. In the same manner, the evolutionary theory reduces humans to simple products of nature, removing any sort of spiritual reason for our existence. Now, our obsession with finding a scientific explanation to everything, leads us to efface profoundness even from some of the most deeply rooted human emotions. But if the final answer of science is that humanity as a whole has no significance - then shouldn't we give up on it all?

No. Our lives are made of more than knowledge, more than facts, more than a constant pursuit towards universal truth. Our lives are made of stories, experiences, people and a huge amount of emotional connection with others. Love, in whatever context, is what makes us go forward; maybe humanity is not important for the universe, but you are - in the eyes of your loved ones, in the eyes of the people you help every day, in the eyes of the person you share a smile with. Love is the barrier between the cold truths of reality and each one of us. Maybe we are not more than Richard Dawkins' "gene machines", but that doesn't really make a difference, when you are surrounded by love, does it? When you feel the selfless loving support of your parents, when you find a loyal friend, when you unexpectedly realise you are in love - those are the moments that empower us, that make us feel unstoppable and mark us out as unique.

Ironically, my "never to be written" essay is laid down word by word on this page and my logical analysis led me to one conclusion: love is not all that we need, but without it everything else seems to lose value. Feeling loved is what detaches us from the rest and makes us feel special, while offering love is what connects us with the rest, with those around us, with those who need our support.

So maybe, we need to take the risk of being vulnerable, of not acting logically, of not analysing everything and fall. Fall for the idea that you are special, fall into the notion of caring for others, fall... in love.

### **Essay prompt for Edition 3:**

### **Does Pressure Drive Or Destroy?**

**Deadline: 15<sup>th</sup> April**