

DETWEILER COMPETITION



Art, Creative Writing,
Drama & Music

STILLNESS &
MOTION

2026




BEDFORD
SCHOOL

FOREWORD

We are delighted to share with you the incredible work created by the boys for this year's Detweiler Competition.

The Detweiler Competition was introduced to Bedford School by Rob Campbell (Director of Art 1994-2013) in 1997 and named after the Canadian composer, author and patron of the arts Dr Alan Detweiler, who so generously provided the prizes until his death in 2012. Initially set up as an Art competition, it now involves the English, Drama and Music departments and so encourages the arts across the whole school and, as such, is a major event in the school arts calendar.

This year's competition, with the theme of 'Stillness and Motion', was very well received by a large and captivated audience. It is one of the creative highlights of the academic year and we would like to congratulate all boys who entered the competition. We hope you enjoy this year's winners and highly commended prizes!



ART

Judge: Victoria Partridge,
The Higgins Bedford





Winner Sculpture

Ben Rioch
(Upper Sixth Form)



Highly Commended Sculpture

Harry L'Estrange
(Upper Sixth Form)

Commended Sculpture

Teddy Carson
(Fourth Form)



Winner Painting

Semilore Apesin
(Fifth Form)



Highly Commended Painting

Henry Gillham
(Upper Sixth Form)

Commended Painting

George Wooding-Jones
(Lower Sixth Form)





Winner Printmaking

Giuliano Mulé
(Upper Sixth Form)



Highly Commended Printmaking

Daniel Hudson
(Upper Sixth Form)



Commended Printmaking

Jo Gardner
(Lower Sixth Form)



MUSIC

Music Winner

Seb Whitmarsh (Lower Sixth Form)

Stillness and Motion

Music Runner Up

Elias Demetrius-Louisy
(Fifth Form)

A New Discovery



Music Third Place

Ivan Yu
(Upper Sixth Form)

Dilation



CREATIVE WRITING

Creative Writing Winner

Freddie Bowis
(Lower Sixth Form)

The Melting Ice

Victoria took a long, deep breath to compose herself before stepping through the automatic doors of St Catherine's Hospice. Her hands grappled around a large, cardboard box; a box full of dusty memories from her mother's old attic. She masked her misery with a pretend smile and checked in with the receptionist, who bequeathed her to another Hospice worker and was taken straight to room 19. "I'm just going to make sure she's awake and well enough for visitors, Mrs Murphy", the young worker had said, "It will take just a tick."

"Of course," Victoria replied with an understanding smile. The worker then opened the door and placed herself in the doorway whilst Victoria remained hidden from view. "Everything alright, Annie?" she asked. Victoria heard a faint groan, as though the last of her words were being slowly squeezed out of her. "I have a visitor here for you, Annie", she said as she ushered Victoria into room 19.

There she was. Her mother, Annie, lay motionless



in her bed. Tubes ran around both arms and across her face like plastic veins. To her left was a heartbeat monitor, which spiked up and down slightly quicker than the last time Victoria visited. Her tissue paper skin, that matched the dull white of the rest of the room, looked as though it was barely clinging onto her face. Her half-closed eyes hid the beautiful blue-green colour of her pupils, so that the only colour that could be seen on her was a red wristband that wrapped loosely around her bony wrist. Her right palm lay still and face up on top of the bed sheets, as if this part of her had already died. Victoria knew that it was a matter of days before her beloved Annie was taken by the angels. Cancer is the cruellest of all cold-blooded killers.

A hint of a smile seemed to surface from her face as she recognised her daughter, like the morning sunshine that gently rises from the east. She made the same groaning noise as before, as if to say hello, but this time it was followed by a violent coughing fit. The nurse encouraged her to drink her water, then left the two to attend to other patients. "Hi Mum," Victoria said, trying to sound pleased to see her, all the while tears ran down her face.

She was pleased to see her, but not in this state. "I bought you some things from your attic", she said, gesturing to the contents in her hands. "I thought you might want to have a look through them together". Annie's smile grew millimetres wider, and she gradually moved her stiff neck downwards and then up again.

Victoria sat in the armchair next to her mother and held her mother's hand that lay on the bed whilst balancing the box on her lap. Annie's frozen hand shook vigorously in an attempt to clench Victoria's, as though she were a tired, harness-less rock climber desperately clutching at an outstretched rock. "It's mostly your childhood books and an old photo album," Victoria said while letting go of Annie's hand to place a pile of books next to her. Annie carefully sat up in her bed and continued smiling softly as she picked up the photo album. As she flicked through the pages with grace, her head turned rigidly toward Victoria and, in a quiet whisper, she said, "Thank you, dear." Victoria smiled back at her, put the box on the floor, and leaned over to kiss her on the forehead. "Oh, and there was something else in the box. A pair of ice skates," she said as she lifted the ice skates up from the box. "I thought they were my old pair at first, but they look far too old. Are they yours?"

Annie looked stunned by the sight of the ice skates. A sense of overwhelming joy seemed to infect her at the thought of seeing these skates again. "I thought I had lost these forever", she croaked. Her eyes remained glued to the bladed boots as she spoke, taking in every aspect of them:

the shape, the texture, the colour. Each patch of smooth leather was connected together through brown stitches. The laces intermingled to form a crisscross pattern running up the throat of the shoe. And the blade, despite still being dusty, glimmered in the intruding beam of sunlight cutting through the crack in the curtain. It was just like the first time she had unveiled them.

Annie was a beautiful 17-year-old girl living in Blackpool in 1961. She was the most popular girl in her year. She was always with her friends wherever she went. It was mid-December, and Annie and a group of 5 friends had just broken up from school for the Christmas holidays. They decided to catch a 20-minute bus ride to Blackpool Pleasure Beach to celebrate their freedom. They whizzed round and round on the carousel, they zoomed up and down on the rollercoasters and fired corks at moving targets in the shooting gallery, smiling and giggling all the while. As the winter night sky drew over them, they were just about to call it a day and retire to their homes when their eyes were drawn to it. The winter wonderland ice rink.

They could not believe they hadn't seen it earlier. They all knew they had to give it a go. The rink was not too crowded, luckily, because all the children had been dragged back home for their bedtime, despite their wailing protests. They borrowed some ice skates from the cabin next to the ice rink for an hour at the cost of one pound and three shillings. Then, all six of them rushed into the rink before it closed, slipping and sliding as they did

so, and howling as one, two, three of them fell down like bowling pins. There was not a care in the world between the six of them, as if there wasn't a world outside of the walls of the ice rink. The cold, hard surface glimmered with the sparkle of a thousand diamonds in the reflection of the fairy lights that were hung around the circumference of the rink. Shavings of frost rested on the blade-etched, icy surface, like sprinkles on an ice cream.

Annie had always gone ice skating in the winter with her father, who had skated competitively throughout his youth, so she already knew a thing or two about skating. She had always wanted to follow in his footsteps, but was never as good as her competitors, so she gave it up. Her friends, on the other hand, knew nothing about it and frantically struggled to stay on their feet for more than five seconds. Annie started to get impatient with her friends, so she skated away, turning her head back, still laughing at them holding on to the railings for dear life.

She went gliding across the ice, one foot after another, gently swaying from side to side. Every so often, she would jump a foot or so off the ground, spin in the air, and land smoothly, making it look like child's play for her. Every time she did so, people around her would applaud, whilst her friends watched her from further back in awe. Before long, she had attracted a crowd in the ice rink who would stop their skating session to hold onto the railings of the wall and watch her as she floated so peacefully across the ice. At times, she forgot the audience was even there, until they all broke into cheers and applause after each swift trick. Her friends, of course, were cheering the loudest. She would jump off the ground and rotate 540°, landing perfectly on the blades whilst moving backwards. She was the

magnificent entertainer in this circus act.

As her tricks and skills went on, she started to get tired, so she thought she should give the spectators one big, final skill to climax. She skated into the centre of the rink and began pirouetting at astonishing speed. It seemed as though she sped up after each turn; it was that quick. As the crowd's noise began to crescendo, she lifted one leg and stretched it forward, balancing on the other whilst still spinning. Her cotton scarf flailed from her spinning neck in the harsh winter blow, like a ballerina's ribbon, hurling round her. She lowered her body position into a spinning single-leg squat. The gasps from the crowd were deafening. Annie's distorted view could only see blurs of the fairy lights and the silhouettes of the other skaters watching her. Just as the audience's gasps started to die down in disbelief, leaving them transfixed on her movements, she stood back up and came to a gradual stop. The silence lasted for a second or two, so Annie was worried she had imagined the whole thing and that nobody was really there. And then everyone around erupted into a cacophony of whistles, cheers, and applause. She didn't know what to do or say, so she stayed in the middle of the rink, taking all the noise in.

Her friends rushed over as quickly as they could without falling again, which was not very fast at all, screaming and wailing at her. When they eventually reached her, she was submerged in one great, six-person hug. They all held onto each other for support, making sure they didn't slip on the ground. Each girl's high-pitched squeals of amazement overlapped and interluded with the other. Annie remained speechless and motionless, in a trance of overwhelming shock. Soon, she was surrounded by strangers' praise. Young men and women she didn't know gave her extremely positive remarks, whilst they skated past her. After the crowd had dispersed and carried on with skating, trying to copy her moves and failing miserably,

one of Annie's friends spotted the time on a large clock just outside the rink and informed her friends that it had already been an hour and three minutes. Realising that you were fined if you overstay your session on the ice, they quickly shifted themselves across the ice to the exit of the rink. Annie followed behind them when, all of a sudden, she slammed into someone skating across her path and went flying across the ice. She made forceful contact with the ice, but her fall was cushioned by her padded coat. The young man who knocked her over came rushing towards her, helping her up with desperate apologies. His panic was slowly relieved with Annie's reassurance that she was okay. "What's your name?" he asked as he helped her skate out of the rink. "Annie", she said, a little dazed. "What's yours?"

"Francis", he replied. They had a long, laughter-filled and meaningful conversation with each other until Annie's friends realised she was no longer behind them and ran back to the cabin to find her. Both were disappointed to have to part but promised each other they would meet on the same bench in the cabin at the same time next week to continue where they had left off. That day was the first time she met her beloved Francis.

Her Francis, who helped her when she had fallen. Her Francis, who greeted her with flowers when they next met, and the time after that, and after that. Her Francis, who proposed to her on her twenty-first birthday. Her Francis, who held her hand as they introduced their little girl into the world. Her Francis, who loved her and stood by her all those years. Her Francis, who fell ill at sixty-eight and was taken from his Annie. Cancer is the cruellest of all cold-blooded killers.

She never saw her beloved husband again. Every day for the last thirteen years, she had been separated from his love. There was something missing inside of her that had

started to decay when he first fell ill, and was completely dead the day he died. And the minute she heard his heart monitor reach its formidable fate, she was flooded with the feeling of loneliness. But when she started to fall ill, she began to feel closer to him, as though he was just behind the doors, ready to greet her with flowers and a kiss. She had been ill for some time now, worsening with every day that dawdled by. Cancer is the cruellest of all cold-blooded killers. It takes too long to do the deed of bringing the poor lamb to the slaughter, and it leaves a burning mark on those around, who are forced to watch their loved ones wither away. But finally, after months and months of chemotherapy and lying in this lifeless white room. After constantly having needles in her arm and coughing fits. After countless visits from nurses and anxious family members. Annie was ready to open those doors. She was ready to see her Francis again.

Creative Writing Runner Up

George Plumley
(Fourth Form)

In the Blow of a Whistle

Arras, Northern France, April 1917

It stops. For one second. The moments that once flew, now stuck in the mud with the men of the Royal Fusiliers. They come together to create a painting with such dull colours. The earthy brown of the hastily-dug trench and the crimson red of a few unlucky German scouts mix like in some strange palette. The men stand at the ready, all thoughts of non-essential kit abandoned around them. Rifles, shovels, uniforms, all belonging to the dead, are haphazardly thrown around the interior of what the men like to call "Shell Target Alley", a fitting name for the grave of so many by so powerful a weapon of war.

As I speak, Geoffrey Richardson is floating in mid-air, his spine curved into a cruel longbow by the bellowing of the Big Berthas. Poor lad. He comes from Chester, the heir to a highly successful fine china enterprise, and has a father who sees little in his boy other than yet another son to join his Order, a thing to show off rather than a living man, a second attempt to stave off the failure of his predecessors. He's far too old to be here. He should be a sergeant, at least. Yet no stripes emblazon his left sleeve. He even had the opportunity to avoid the draft, but took his duty like any British man should. For all his honourable, heroic actions, he dies in France, in agony, contorting and writhing like a snake, commanded by the donkeys who call themselves officers. He is, was, 34.

Next to him, recoiling with a mix of disgust, shock and the sheer force of landing artillery, stands the freckled, proud mess of Lance Corporal George Evan-Rees. He is still



younger than almost all of his comrades, maybe younger than the whole British Army. He was one of the first to sign up, back in the summer of '14, then only 15 years to his name. A tall boy, admittedly, but the face betrays him. Like the recruiters cared. He was sent to boot camp, given his khakis, shot his rifle, taught all the patriotic songs. And here he stands now. Still underage by a few months, the smart, carefully ironed tunic that was once shown off to his mother is now engulfed in the intestines and vile, thick blood of his friend. His face contorts in fear and revulsion, and he will never be the same again.

Further along, behind the line of spectators for the annihilation of Geoffrey Richardson, shivers something once considered a man. The soldiers seem to remember him being called Alex Ashman, though it's hard to tell with hands clamped so fervently over his mud-splattered face and with a bullet heading right between the eyes. The bullet is spouting out like a firework from the prized Webley revolver of Lance Corporal Jonathan Thomas, the hated Military Policeman of this battalion. Jonathan's mouth opens in rage, his eyes pincering, focusing on the man he sees as a coward, one who uses some strange idea called shellshock to excuse himself from duty. Fear is tantamount to desertion in the eyes of the Royal Military Police. Jonathan will soon be going over with the others, making sure that any stragglers either keep going or meet their maker. As for Ashman, his name will be struck off any memorials and his parents will be told that their son died a coward, in a war he didn't want.

Yet for all this anarchy, three men stand on the parapet, above the others, simply biding their time.

The first is Corporal Charles Sillence, a veteran of many a campaign. South Africa, Tirah, Gallipoli, Somme, they decorate his mind like medals held in proud display on a wall. This is routine to him now. He has lived so long as a soldier he has almost lost the memories of his father's train, now all the way back in Ringwood. His wife he has not seen for years, his daughter knows no father but the one who hangs in a photo on the mantelpiece. His son only saw the glory, the victory, the decorations. He joined the Royal Marines hoping for some romantic adventure, but now lies in a ditch in Greece. Charles has not had true friends for years, they all died for King and Country. It's not safe to have friends in the army. Charles' eyes focus forward. He's seen this before, and if he lives through the day, he'll see it again.

The second is Private Robert King. A newcomer, to the point where even Evan-Rees would be remiss not to call him green, who would be the most hated man in the line were it not for Jonathan's "summary executions". He still sings the songs as if they were gospel, still talks of the despised Haig as if he were the greatest man alive, still to see battle. He calls the veterans cowards for not wishing to sacrifice themselves for a country that has never cared for them and has done nothing for them. He wakes up, he jokes some anti-Bosche propaganda given to him by the good old King, he destroys all contraband. The model soldier. Yet for all this, for all his attitude, his eyes widen in fear. He doubts for the first time. He realises he's scared. He cherishes that. It might be his last thought.

The final man on the line doesn't care for his name. He won't care if you get it right. He doesn't care for anything. His friends around him, the rat crawling on his boot, the lice in his hair. He has just received word that his sweetheart was killed by German naval shelling on the coast. The rage, the wreckage he will make of the Germans is all he wants to think about. He will tear them limb from

limb, he will send them to hell. And he will go with them. He doesn't want orders, he doesn't give a damn if he takes his friends with him. He's got four grenades strapped to his belt, all with the pins ready to be pulled out, his teeth grip around a fifth, ready to lodge up some Jerry. He will take them with him, he will take them all.

At this second, a wheezing is heard. It grows louder and louder, joined by bagpipes. It's unmistakable. The push is on. The freeze stops, the men charge, climbing and climbing, fixing bayonets, discharging shots, remembering home one last time, all to the tune of a strange instrument:

Rat-a-tat. Rat-a-tat. Rat-a-tat.

CREATIVE
WRITING

Creative Writing

Third Place

George Wooding-Jones
(Lower Sixth Form Form)

The Waiting Crater

The fog hung low over the battered heath, thickening the air enough to almost completely engulf the far end of my rifle. No birds crossed the sky, and no wind worried the small hairs that covered my arm. The earth beneath us was packed so tightly, pressed by the boots that once were in motion. I stayed still, following the actions of everyone else who feared to move. My fingers curled around the cold metal chamber and grasped the stock of my rifle nervously. I pushed my rigid spine into the raised edge of the crater, and felt my heart kicking against my ribs, fast and reckless. Each beat felt louder than the guns we knew were waiting beyond the fog.

To my left was a boy, not much younger than I, very visibly uncomfortable. He was curled up to his weapon, embracing it like a child with their teddy, and shivered uncontrollably. He wiped his clammy hands on his trousers, adjusted his helmet with fear, and opened his mouth as if to speak, then forced it shut again. To my right was an older man stretched out facing the edge of the crater. His rifle lay rigidly just over the horizon of the crater wall, his hands gripping it softly with his finger hovering over the waiting trigger. He hadn't moved since we arrived. We all waited, balancing on the edge of something that had not yet happened, knowing that once it did, we would yearn for this current stillness once more.

My body could handle the need to stay quiet, but my mind could not obey. It moved in sharp, useless jumps from one



thought to another without wanting to settle. I became aware of things I had wanted to avoid: the itch underneath my unbuttoned collar, the uneven pattern of my breaths, the way my left hand trembled whenever I gripped a bit tighter. My attempts to clear my mind were never-ending, but the stillness around me filled my head with thoughts that I could not ignore. I thought of home, the familiar and comforting bits: a door half-open, a voice calling my name from across the hallway, the warm smell of the living room that you could never place. These memories didn't comfort me; they only served as a reminder of how much motion there is in a world foreign to this place. I heard someone saying, "Waiting is the easiest part." But over here, waiting gave fear time to stretch itself out and to expand itself into every corner of my mind. In this uncomfortable crater, there is nowhere to hide from it; there is nothing to do but feel it grow.

The boy beside me finally failed to contain himself. He shifted his weight, his hands scrambling over the loose mud and his boots scraping against the damp ground. His hands crawled to his helmet strap, once again to tighten, loosen, then tighten again in fear that it could be the one piece of equipment that could save his life. Struggling to keep noise down, he leaned closer to me. Close enough that I could smell the thick breath escape from the warmth of his mouth.

"Do you think they can see us?" he whispered.

He swallowed, itched his nose, and rubbed his hands

together in an attempt to mitigate numbness. He breathed out into his hands and gazed into my eyes, patiently waiting for a response. Before I could answer, before I could think of a helpful answer, he spoke again, more nervously this time. "They said it would be soon, but that was a while ago, wasn't it?" I didn't reply. I wasn't totally sure that he wanted one. He surrendered back into his original curled-up position and tilted his head downwards, trying to escape from the haunting stillness. His leg bounced up and down uncontrollably, and his hands trembled. For him, it seemed unbearable.

To my right, the older soldier sighed heavily after hearing my interaction with the younger soldier, for he had been resting completely still at his post. He hadn't fidgeted, nor had he checked his watch. He simply lay, his head resting softly on the stock of the rifle, letting time flow by slowly in silence. "Enough," he demanded quietly to the boy, not with anger but just certainty. The boy froze, mid-motion, as he heard these words. "Learn this," the soldier continued, his eyes still focused on the fog ahead. "Moving now won't change what's coming. Nothing will. All we can do is wait and watch."

I glanced at the young boy once more, watching how he'd respond to this advice. He sat upright and barely tightened his grip on the rifle. He looked over at the older soldier and analysed his position, then carefully replicated this. In desperation to empty my thoughts, I scrambled onto my chest and followed suit with this same position. In a place of danger and vulnerability, any guidance would be listened to. Even in the waiting, the boy squirming beside us and the fog constantly swallowing the horizon, I felt his words. Motion without purpose could kill, patience in the stillness could survive.

A low groaning roar with heaven-splitting violence cut the silence sharply.

A soldier lay slumped against a trench wall, maroon

blood splattered on his uniform, his hand clenching his injured thigh. It seemed he had moved too soon instead of embracing the silence and waiting patiently with it. It was almost like the stillness had taught him a valuable lesson, as now, he was still, entirely still, except for the slowly decaying shallowing rise and fall of his chest.

The young boy beside me looked on at this wounded soldier; his motion was finally paused by fear. Even the veteran interrupted his lookout, and his calm gaze flickered for a moment. The wounded soldiers' breaths became distant, uneven, and ragged, slowly disappearing into the thick fog. Each of his last breaths served as a reminder that his actions carried consequences even long after the movement had ended. Impulsively, I tense and ready myself to aid the wounded man; however, it was too late. Time has consumed its prey, and the soldier lay there lifeless, waiting for the fog to capture him.

No one spoke. The fog seemed thicker now, heavier, pressed down on us after swallowing the painful cries of that unfortunate soldier. The boy looked on into the distance and began nervously twitching once again, and the other soldier slowly rotated his head back, resting on the rifle, showing no emotion. We all lay there, clueless about when the waiting would end, and begging silently for the silence to stop.

It had been what felt like hours that we kept watch when a sharp voice cut through the haze. From a trench just beyond the crater we had accommodated, a broad silhouette of an officer emerged, rigid and grounded. The thud of his polished boots sent waves through the damp terrain, and the sound bounced and reverberated off the walls of the crater. He didn't approach to sit; he moved with purpose, surveying us like the guinea pigs of his next scheme.

"Positions!" he barked, his voice reaching from across the distance. His orders flew towards our crater and hit the crater floor like grenades, demanding movement from our bodies that could barely twitch. He raised his arm and tapped

the analog watch on his wrist to remind us that time was creeping up upon us.

The boy beside me trembled and pushed his head deeper into the mud, scrunching his eyes closed and squeezing his body into the most compact way possible. The older soldier only slightly moved, adjusting his position so that he could be fully alert and aware of his surroundings and potentially brave for what was about to come. His eyes fixated on the officer and continued to search deep into the fog. He noticed the officer raise his right hand and point his index finger towards the line of the trench, then a bellow is heard from the officer once more:

“Two minutes. We advance. No hesitation.”

The crater seemed instantly smaller, as if the walls were pressing in on us. The fog grew heavier again, almost solid now. We were now pinned by not just the fog and the shrapnel, but also the pressure of being ready for the longing end of these two minutes. The stillness has kept us alive until now, the command has been given, and despite our hearts now racing, we would advance into the fog.

Seconds were passing, but they dragged, thick and heavy, like cattle driving a plough. The boy's knee bounced again in a nervous twitch, not much, but enough to interrupt my focus. The older soldier still hadn't moved, only blinked slowly, still tracing the officer's figure in the trench like a habit he couldn't break. The wounded soldier let out a faint final exhale, barely audible over the soft wind, and I felt that breath in my chest as if it were my own. Every small sound or movement was amplified: the rustling of fabric as soldiers tried to get comfortable, the distant whistle of wind as it flows past your head, the tremble of a hand brushing against a rifle, the impatient tapping of the officer's boot in the trench. My thoughts raced faster than any motion could match; the memories and useless thoughts were thrown at me at speed. I tried to slow them and control the rhythm of my breathing, but each heartbeat insisted on moving faster.

The boy whispered again, voice trembling. “How long . . . how long before...?”

Again, I didn't answer. I couldn't. Even the silence of the veteran beside me seemed to stretch the moment further. The truth is, we were suspended in the moment, trapped by the time of what was surely now only one minute. The time that we were all counting nervously was all we had, and it was too much.

The ticking of the analogue watch drove me insane.

“Click, click, click, click, click, click”

The small repetitive clicking of metal cogs turning could send anyone into a spiral of madness. I have never wanted the time that we hung on to for so long to end so badly. I needed the interruption, I needed the chaos, I needed the motion to begin. I counted to what I thought was two minutes and waited.

The silence around the field was so loud. You could feel the heart rates of every soldier increasing, pounding through their chests in great attempt to escape.

Suddenly, the officer's voice cut through the silence once more.

“Up!”

It was a simple command, small and final, but it landed heavier than any shell could.

For a moment, nothing happened; the fog remained, the trenches kept silent, the field stayed at rest. Even the boy beside me had stopped his nervous twitches as if that one word had frozen him. The veteran's jaw tightened slightly whilst he subtly adjusted the grip on his rifle. The only movement he allowed himself. The officer raised his hand, palm flat, signalling us to hold positions, not moving yet. This was the final pause. Stretched tight between what we

are and what we were about to become. I felt it in my chest,
the adrenaline and pressure of holding a breath for too long.
This was the calm before the storm.

The hand dropped.

And the world remembered how to move.

CREATIVE WRITING

DRAMA



Drama Winner

Riddha Athreya

(Fourth Form)

The Moment Before the Move

I step up to the board, and suddenly the world shrinks to sixty-four squares and the quiet between my breaths.

Everything else fades— the noise, the rush, the weight of the day— until all that's left is this battlefield of order and possibility; this frozen landscape waiting for the first tremor of motion.

Chess begins in stillness. Pieces standing like statues, holding their breath, pretending they don't already know the chaos they're destined for. The pawns lined up like a wall of calm, the knights coiled in their corners, the queen pretending she isn't the most dangerous thing alive.

And me— I hover above it all, caught in that sacred pause before the first move. That moment is the universe. A quiet so deep it feels like the board is listening.

Then— motion. A single pawn steps forward, small, simple, almost shy. But that tiny shift cracks the stillness open. The board wakes up. The air changes. The game begins.

Every move is a heartbeat. Every pause holds breath. I glide a bishop across the diagonal like a whisper slicing through silence. My opponent counters— a knight leaps, breaking the straight lines, a burst of motion in a world of discipline.

I study the board— not just the pieces, but the spaces between them. The tension lives there, in the gaps, in the possibilities, in the futures that haven't happened yet.



A rook slides like a door closing. A pawn falls— quietly, almost politely— as if it knew this was coming. The queen storms forward, a comet across the board, and suddenly everything is moving, everything is alive, everything is loud even though no one has spoken.

And then— a pause. A long one. The kind that stretches time. The kind where you can hear your own pulse echoing against the edges of your ribs.

Because the king is in danger. Because the next move matters. Because stillness is not the absence of motion— it is the gathering of it. The coiling. The wait. The moment before the strike.

I breathe. I chose. I moved.

And the board shifts again, like the earth turning under my feet. Pieces fall. Lines open. Traps are in spring. The end approaches.

Check. Stillness. Check. Motion. Checkmate.

Performed by Seb Davis (Fifth Form)

DRAMA

Drama Runner Up

Liam Jacob

(Fourth Form)

So Far, So Close

Joe (*busy side of the world*):

Everyone's rushing.
Footsteps, engines, people shouting into phones.
I keep moving because everyone else does.
Stopping feels dangerous.

Emily (*quiet side of the world*):

It's calm here.
Nothing pushes me.
Nothing pulls me.
Sometimes it feels peaceful . . . sometimes it feels empty.

Joe:

I don't choose to walk —
I'm carried.
The crowd moves my feet for me.

Emily:

I sit on the grass.
The pitch is silent.
The ball doesn't roll.
I don't either.

(*A pause*)



Joe:

Then it all cuts out.
The noise drops.
The crowd disappears.
I'm standing still . . . in your world.

Emily:

And suddenly I'm there —
your side.
Too loud.
Too fast.
Everyone moving like they're late for something.

Joe:

I don't know what to do here.
No one's pushing me forward.
The silence is heavy.

Emily:

I don't know where to look.
The motion never stops.
It's like being dragged by the air.

Joe:

I sit down.
I feel the ground.
For the first time, nothing demands me.

Emily:

I start running.
Not because I have to —
because I want to.
I bring the ball with me.

Joe:

Your stillness follows me.
It slows my breathing.
I realise stopping isn't failing.

Emily:

Your motion follows me.
But it's different.
It's focused.
Controlled.

Joe:

Stillness lets me arrive.

Emily:

Motion lets me disappear —
into the game.

Joe:

I bring calm into the noise.

Emily:

I bring flow into the silence.

Together:

When we switch worlds,
we don't lose ourselves —
we balance them.

Performed by Lockie Gray and Kian Walia (both
Fourth Form)

DRAMA

Drama Third Place

Lawrence Hollowood

(Remove Form)

The Tree in the Garden

When I first moved into my new house, I always was amazed by this tall oak in my garden. I don't know why but something about it amazed me maybe the colour of the wood or its great size but me personally I think it's the way that it is so still but does a hundred actions.

For an example I remember I got back to home from school on a Tuesday it was about spring, anyway it was just sitting there still with crows or squirrels in the tree and the whoosh a gust of wind crows fly out squirrels scurry and the tree is just swaying in the direction of the wind the branches the leaves all majestically flowing in one direction it didn't feel real it felt like a movie scene or one of those pictures you see on social media where it's really beautiful but they're fake except this time this is real

My mum always catches me instead of doing my Homework at the dining table just sees me marvelling in awe at the tree.

Usually on weekends I bring a book home from school and since I have to read it, I usually bring it to the tree where it's calm and serene free of any distractions then enter a state of mind so beautiful that it is quite incomprehensible on how to describe it, it's like an open field paired with a crystal blue mountain lake and beautiful green trees all into one.

This tree as soon as we arrived at the house I always wanted to climb it but the first branch was too high up so I used to get dad to lift me up to the first one and from



there it was pretty much smooth sailing, there was a gap within the leaves and some point so I used to go there and call for dad until he was in frame and keep climbing up the tree

When I look at the tree, I'm usually thinking what could be happening within that tree that I just can't see insects crawling underneath the bark or a murder of crows lives there or a parliament of owls or even a dray of squirrels

Today new neighbours have moved in and they've reported a property violation so my mum has decided that we have to cut it down so before that day I tried to take as many photos as I could before it got cut down and tried to kind of create it into a timelapse video and I'm really proud of what I've made from the photos

The day it got cut down I gave it one real good look cleared out the animals of the tree and as it fell, I felt a tear fall down my cheek I would never expect this though for a tree to make me tear up.

When the tree had fallen they made little blocks and put them through a shredder creating some wood chips, I asked the man leading the operation if I could store some wood chips in a box and he agreed so I put the chips in stuck pictures of the tree around the box then wrote R.I.P oak tree but I decided to name him now so instead of oak tree it says oaky and It says a long time ago-2025.

Performed by Jonjo Laing (Remove Form)

Drama Third Place

Bay Chater

(Remove Form)

Character age, gender, and setting are flexible.

You ever notice how the world never really stops?

Even when you do — even when you freeze, mid-breath,
mid-thought — everything else keeps moving.

People rushing past, clocks ticking, leaves trembling in
the wind.

It's like the universe is tapping its foot, waiting for you to
catch up.

I used to think stillness was peace.

Silence.

A place where nothing could touch me.

But stillness. . . real stillness. . . it's loud.

It echoes.

It forces you to hear the things you've been running from.

Motion — that was my escape.

If I kept moving, I didn't have to feel anything.

Didn't have to face the choices I made, or the ones I
avoided.

I could blur myself into a streak of speed and pretend that
meant progress.

But then I stopped.



Just. . . stopped.

And the world didn't fall apart.

I did.

In that stillness, I saw myself clearly for the first time.

Not the version I performed for everyone else — the one
who always had a plan, always had momentum — but
the one who was tired.

The one who needed to stand still long enough to
understand why they were running.

And now?

Now I'm learning that motion means nothing without
intention.

And stillness isn't the absence of movement — it's the
moment you choose your direction.

So / I'm standing here, suspended between ropes hanging
waiting for the correct moment and then swoosh my
troubles flew away.

Performed by Hamish Timmins (Fifth Form)

DRAMA



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