

Karamu High School, NZ, 2013
with poet Hannah Mettner
Transcribed Student Poems



Back Scratchers
by Bethany

The trees are friends,
they give everyone shade.
Don't cut them down,
this is why they were made.

They make oxygen,
for you and me to breathe.
Their arms stay high in the sky,
so people can fit and pass by.

Trees love what they do,
and we love them too,
and when there is a breeze,
we eat all of leaves.

So please leave the trees,
They do help you too.

Concrete Beachfront
by Holly

Once fresh and perfect,
Merely rocks and sea,
Naked and bare
She was.

But they say
'perhaps an addition?'
A sculpture,
 pathway,
 playground,
 golf course,
 swimming pool,
Better yet,
A beachfront covered by concrete.

**Broken
by Abbey**

Everything is,
broken,

once,
a fearful word,
is all that remains,
token gestures,
meaningful letters,
swallowed,
up,
into thin air,

friendship,
nothing,
but ,
particles, travelling,
through air,
as we hit,
“accept friend request”,

it is meaningless,
everything under,
the sun is meaningless,
broken,
fragmented,

We are all,
no more,
than a number,

No one notices,
we flit and float,
in and out,
unnoticed,
forgotten.

Everything is meaningless,
we come and go,
with less care,
than waves on the shore,

nothing,
but,
numbers.

Dark Body
by Scarlett

I once saw an old woman, perched on a chair,
her eyes seemed to sparkle behind that black mask,
two moons caught in magnifying rims.
Her dark body seemed to sway back and forth,
back and forth as if no worries in her mind,
only sweet melodies formed in her thoughts.
The people around her, their face like parchment,
glowered down at her while they sipped,
watching; waiting.
Two men with strange pointed heads approached,
long white capes drifted over their heads, wavering at their feet,
walking like the leaves that fall before the blast of cold.
She was alone,
nobody would dare sit next to her
as they yanked her, without emotion, rigid.
It's funny, you know,
Because you claim you greater than us,
but really,
who said we were afraid of you?

Hospital Hill
by Shannon

In the light you can see her deformities
Crumbling brick thin the foundations like a balding head
Windows have shattered fragile bones
Slanderous words tattooed across her weathered skin
She still stands tall
though will never know love
For no one loves
a battered broken thing

Darkness encroaches
the stigma is blinded
She is cloaked with a veil
Her impairments rush to hide

A single light moves inside her
A companionless man
shuffles through her decaying skeleton
The only one to love
this misshapen thing
For this thing is him
and he will only ever belong here

hand-held metropolis
by Justin

I glance at a newspaper
-three quarters advertising
one quarter articles-
high school house music makes the front page.
A five dollar local magazine
delivers conservative views
of crusty mouths
and strand-by-strand comb-overs
as the region's best gossip.

Loosening their blazers,
tightening their crow's feet,
some are 'concerned' about the brain drain.
Who could be blamed
for disappearing themselves?

There's a strange sense of self importance in sadness
letting time roll past
sinking
 in blankets
 and lassitude

Though fulfillment
seems beyond the
tick
tick
tick

tick

decelerating through being

My iPod squares my eyes,
a hand-held doorway into electric metropolises
attracting
 and far away
from this leaky tap I live in.

The long white cloud; sky prisoner
by Oliver

There she lies in the sky observing the land below
Moving slowly not by her own force, not by her own will
She is locked in a cycle, a repeating cycle
But she can't always be sadly forgotten, as the cycle repeats again
So every night she sneaks away only to the ocean's edge.
And she smiles to herself as the sun sets washing away the day
And for a few precious moments, a glimpse of happiness is hers once more

Ki te kahore he whakakitenga ka ngaro te iwi by Caitlin

Haumia ponders in lambent waters
softly lightening her followers.
She sings to the ocean's heart.

But even here, the witch, Wairua,
half animal, half plant
with fingers like worms,
coils beneath *Te Moana Nui*.

Souls belonging to Ikatere
stretch out their unwelcome arms
strong as iron, flexible as *taura*,
between Haumia and home.

Forced between whirlpools,
crushed in their rude grasp,
under Wairua's fins, Haumia
is suffocated
slowly
she cannot breathe
the waves

the lurid sea

Wairua calls her creatures
to creep all over Haumia.

Deeper and deeper
she falls.

Glossary:

Ki te kahore he whakakitenga ka ngaro te iwi - a Maori proverb: Without foresight or vision the people will be lost
Said by Kingi Tawhiao Potatau te Wherwhero, to show the urgency of unification and strong Maori leadership.

Te Moana Nui- The Ocean

Taura- Maori rope

Scratches and scrawls
by Laurie

Doodling will be outdated,
people eaten by lions? No more.
Teachers saved from being drawn into alligator pits.
Hairy faces enrol in the margins of essays no more,
no longer
watching,
waiting,
reading.
Scribbled words replaced by others...
The delete key.

Open up a drawing program...
Not the same.
Scratches and scrawls aren't made with a mouse.

The End
by Jack

Everyone is on me, torturing me and wounding me
Sticking buildings on me
Landing heavy planes over me
They shoot their guns
All I hear is BANG BANG BANG
They drop bombs on me and make me crumble
I have a plan
To get rid of these scummy bacteria by using my best defence
An EARTHQUAKE
I'm going to get rid of these bacteria
City by city
Starting with Hastings and Napier in New Zealand
I gather all my energy
And channel it to Hawkes Bay
Energy erupt
A massive earthquake in Hawkes Bay
I swallow buildings into the tears in my skin
I swallow up their roads which act like cement chains tied around me
Revenge feels like concrete spewing through my skin
Finally the city was gone
A weight had been lifted
I do it so casually
Swallowing up cities
It's just a hobby to me
But hell for those who were in it

**Taylor's Mistake
by Phoebe**

I'm left clinging to
the rock that once supported
my entire house, my entire body.

Now of course, I'm nothing
but a chimney.
Bricks black and
charred from the very same flame
that ate the doors
and walls that once stood proud.

I'm left alone, unclothed.
I'm the only visible proof
of the batches that used to
occupy these caves.

Over time, I suppose,
I'll be gone too.
Unpicking the last seams of these
already frayed memories.

**You Smell of Cigarettes
by Rebecca**

I didn't know you were gone until I met you
my damp jersey smelt of dog
and you of cigarettes
and talk of getting drunk in your sweatpants

Your course is good, new tattoo and
funny stories about your flatmate
who's a dickhead
dominate he-said-she-said highschool
so I listen,
shuffle rain off my umbrella
ignoring the mass of physics on my back in favour of your future

I didn't know you were there until I met you
my varsity jacket smells of airport bathrooms
and you still of cigarettes
supermarket RSI band familiar on your wrist