

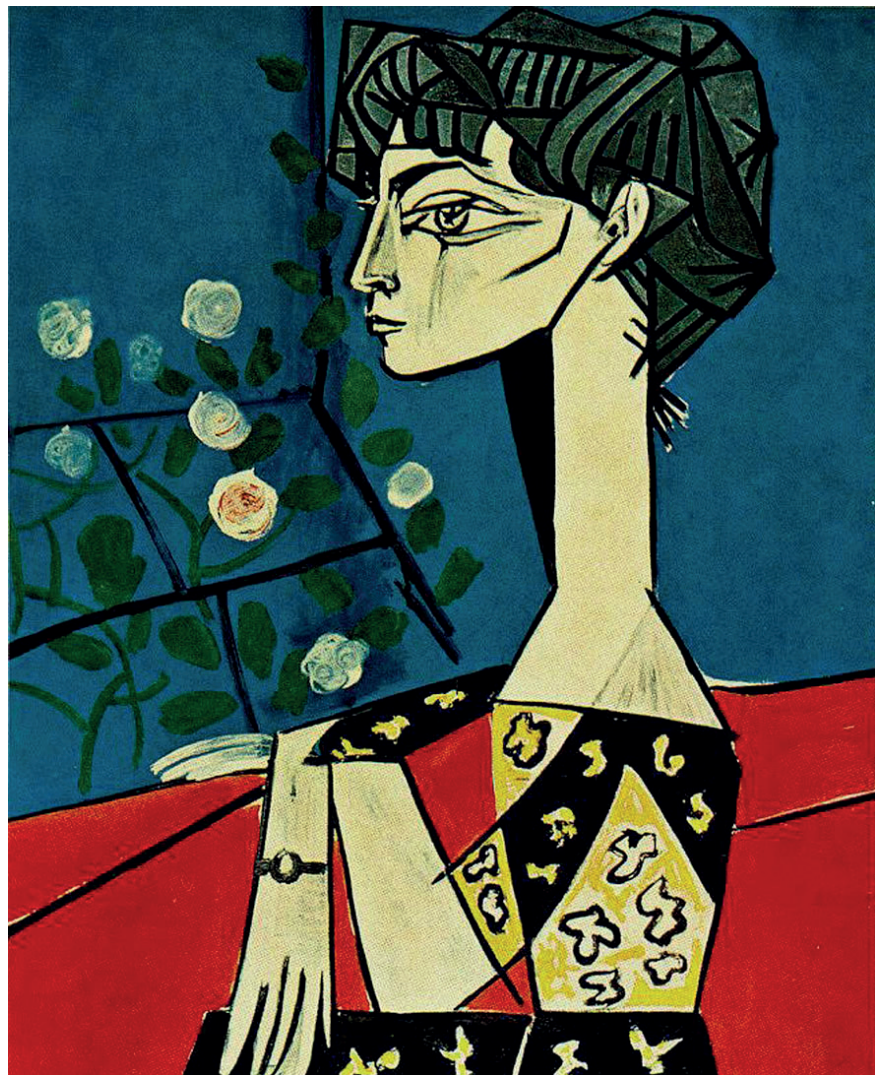
SŠ DUKE NÁHORNÍ

WHERE  
VISUAL ARTS  
MEET  
CREATIVE WRITING

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ENGLISH  
SHORT STORY CONTEST  
2022/2023





**Jacqueline with flowers**

Pablo Picasso, 1954

# A Painting of a Pale Woman

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Adéla Vilímová, 2.N

I feel dizzy. My head is spinning.

What is happening? My eyes are blinded by to me unknown source of light, aiming for my gaze, not letting me see where have I ended up. Only the soft, freezing wind brushing against my skin somehow keeps my mind calm.

I was walking towards a bus stop a second ago, and when the bus was on its way towards me, the headlights...

They took over my vision...

My eyes seem to have adjusted to the light. Perhaps I'll see where am I...

I think to myself as I notice a pale woman with skin lighter than a paper, wearing colorful, rather cheery clothes and black hair, which rezonates with her skin tone rather perfectly. She is much taller than me, reaching her hand towards me. Her white skin is almost blinding. I take a quick look into her empty eyes before I realize I'm falling. Perhaps I was too focused on her looks..? What... What has she done?

And then I open my eyes again.

I see a panicking doctor's face above me, his lips moving. His eyebrows just above his thick glasses shape themselves into a worrisome look together with his dark brown eyes as he screams.

Around him all I can see is light. I notice I have a headache.

„What?..“ I mumble, finally catching onto some of his words.

„Stay with me Tom! Stay with me!“

Tom? I think to myself. My name is Jason.

The headache gets much worse when I actually hear the doctor's piercing voice. I seem to be laying down as he's taking me somewhere in a hurry. But before I get to ask questions, I pass out.

Years have passed since that incident. I remember it randomly and decide to ask my mother about it.

„You have never been to a hospital, let alone due to an emergency „, she raises her eyebrows and begins cleaning the dishes again. I shrug it off as a weird dream I've had. After all, I'm not Tom, I'm Jason.

I grab my bag and go towards the bus stop. A strange nostalgia that I haven't experienced before hits me.

And I forget what I'm doing, and I pass out...

„Jason, are you okay?“ I hear my mother's soft worried voice, so caring.. If only this sharp pain didn't distract me.

I open my eyes and notice my arm appears to be in an unnatural shape.

She keeps calling out to me, but I can't stop thinking about the strange feeling I've had a second ago.

I've had a couple regular check ups, but they've changed my doctor after taking off my cast.

I walk into the waiting room. There are already three people sitting in a line; first a man with a painful expression in his face.

Next to him his wife, I suppose. I hope he's okay.

A man next to them with a rather huge build, reading his newspaper.

When the man gasping in pain leaves the waiting room after being escorted by a young nurse, the doctor calls out my name. I look up and gasp in surprise. The doctor's mustache, his thick eyebrows, his thick glasses... Could it be..?

Perhaps a coincidence? He looks oddly familiar, and he has clearly aged, with some gray stripes decorating his mustache.

I walk inside with him and answer all his questions with a simple nod, until I ask, suddenly and unexpectedly even to myself.

„Have we met before? No, I'm sure we haven't. I recall every single face I've ever seen“, he smirks at me reassuringly, with a raised eyebrow suggesting my question took him by surprise.

But he begins typing on his keyboard again, and I think nothing of it.

I let the nurse escort me back into the waiting room as I briefly thank the doctor, though he says nothing in return.

As I walk out, the nurse says a name that doesn't even reach my ears. It sounds like static.

The man, being the only one left in the waiting room, puts his newspaper aside and stands up.

His body takes up quite a lot of space, so I only get to see what was behind him all along now. He silently walks into the doctor's office, and I'm left alone in complete, deafening silence. I hear a slight ringing in my ears.

I can't stop staring at the painting in front of me.

That woman... And in the corner, clearly written, I read „Tom“...

# The Queen's Rise

Hana Pejchová, 3.A2

The war between the Blacks and the Whites was unstoppable. It was spreading like a virus among the streets, and the omnipresent feeling of unsafety was crawling under the skin of each and every citizen.

It was an ordinary day in the kingdom. The king was sitting on his throne drinking wine with a serious expression on his face. Too serious expression for someone with a full stomach and a warm bed in the huge secured castle. He received unpleasant news from the battlefield. His army was weakened by hunger and the long-lasting cruelty of the war. His people started protesting. „They want you to lead them to the battlefield. Their complaints are starting to hoard, my lord.“ The messenger bowed quickly. The king shook his head „Who would stay and watch after the citizen? Who would suppress the uprising if needed? The Queen?“ The king suddenly went silent. „The Queen...“ He repeated.

...

The queen was visiting her favourite place, the garden. Even in times like this, the roses bloomed beautifully. She loved the contrast between the soft petals and the sharp thorns. She often got cut, but still didn't want any servants to take care of them. The garden was her own little kingdom.

People saw her as an innocent, elegant and reserved lady, but that couldn't be further from the truth. The gardens were not the only place where she loved to hold all the power, she had talent for rulling and leading. Her husband, the king, knew about that and they often discussed politics and even the battle plans. Her solutions were often rough, but in the end very effective.

...

The king finally raised his head „Bring my wife to me“

...

„You must sacrifice the knights, there's no other solution.“ The queen said confidently. The king sighed in displeasure „What would they think of me? I simply can't do that“ The queen recognized that look he gave her and knew he wouldn't listen. She sensed an opportunity and grabbed it. „Or I can go there.“ She knew it was a risky idea and it might enrage the king but she was prepared. She was prepared to argue, she was prepared to be underestimated...

...

The answer came quickly. Maybe too quickly, so when she heard it, it hit her a way harder than she expected. „I have thought about the same thing actually.“ He said with a cold steady voice. The queen stood there in disbelief. How could he? How could he expose her to danger so easily like that? She realized she's wanting to say something, so even before she opened her mouth, she stopped herself. At that moment she decided to take the responsibility for her own words. She decided not to run

away like her husband. „You obviously don't have to fight. You'll just be my eyes and ears.“ He added quickly, but she already had a different plan. „I will be leaving right tomorrow.“ She didn't even look at him as she walked away to pack her things.

...

„The queen goes to H5!“ Shouted the commentator, „and that is a checkmate!“ he finished the sentence and the players shook their hands.

The Whites had won, the war was over and the queen was the main hero of the war. The king had stood in the same position during the whole bloody game, he never moved a muscle even when his army was close to being crushed to the dust. The queen returned to her garden and knew something had changed in her. Why was her potential death more acceptable than the king's? Why does the useless king have all the power? She decided that day. If he's so certain about his strength, why not test him?

And with that, she gripped the scissors in her hand even tighter.

## The Jeweler

Šárka Kroupová, 2.B

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She wasn't sure of how she got into this strange situation, all she knew was that her boring Tuesday was no longer dull at all.

„Mademoiselle, mademoiselle! What for that lovely bracelet of yours?“

There, in the front of her, stood a man. Jacqueline noted that he look like some strange blend between a tiny round man and a goat!

„I'm afraid that there's nothing I would exchange my bracelet for, good monsieur.“ The stranger reminded her of a wolf in sheep's clothing.

„But I would give anythin' mademoiselle, anythin'! T'is I swear on my own head, mademoiselle.“ With those words the man took of his hat, showing his perfectly bald head.

„If you say anything, then I'll give you my bracelet in exchange for.. The sweetest apples in all France.“

„Very well, young mademoiselle. The sweetest apples of all France, that is!“ And with those words the man reached his hand into his hat, and pulled out three apples, that seemed to be just as rich in taste as in their colour.

Jacqueline could do nothing more than just stare, as her bracelet was ripped of her wrist, and instead the apples were showed into her arms.

These events kept repeating in her head as she walked home, even as she laid those apples on the table and left to change. And they surely repeated in her head as she came back to the kitchen, only to find handful of ashes in the place where her apples were just a mere minutes ago.

„Mademoiselle, mademoiselle! What for those shiny pearls of yours?“ The next Tuesday seemed to repeat the last week's events.

„Unfortunately, those are not for sale, sir.“

„But I'll give anythin', mademoiselle! T'is I swear on my head!“ Once again, the goat-man tapped his skull.

„If you swear on your head, then I'll exchange these for your head, nothing less.“

To her utter horror the man did not even flinch as he dropped his hat, and with both of his hands he twisted with his neck, until his head came off. The man's face smiled at her, as her pearls were torn down from her neck, and the head was showed into her arms.

It seemed that she didn't need to think of any use for it, for when crossing the street, the head jumped from her arms, and with a sick laugh started rolling away, into the direction of the Godforsaken park.

The young girl spent the next days thinking of how to overbeat this strange man and his tricks. However, no matter how hard she tried, the poor girl could not come up with anything. And so, after seven days, she once again found herself facing the creature.

„Mademoiselle, mademoiselle! What for those glorious earrings you've got?“ The goat man, fatter than before, stood in the front of her- even with his head.

„Nothing, monsieur. Those are not made for any of your evil tricks.“

„But I'll give anything, child. I swear t'is on my own head!“

„I'm not interested in your head, nor apples that turn into ashes! Your deals are only evil tricks.“

„Oh, but there must be somethin' you wish for! ,‘

„That is true, I wish for my golden bracelet, and my pearls.“ The man smiled triumphally. You see – ladies and gentlemen – goatman Joseph believed that those earrings were worthy more than both her pearls and her bracelet.

„Of course, of course, child. Here it is!“ The man reached into his hat, but unexpectedly, his hand withdrew empty. His smile faded as he started searching through his pockets. While doing so, many jewels of different colours and sizes fell to the ground from underneath all of his clothing.

„I hope you have not lost them.“

„Of course not, kid. I swear on my gold and jewels! It's right here, right here..“ But even with those words, Joseph knew that he could not find what he was looking for. And as he kept on frantically searching, his moves started slowing, being seemingly heavier with every passing second. Jacqueline watched as all the colour from not just the man's face, but even his clothing, started turning yellow, and then gold. Within few more seconds, the man stopped moving. His outstretched hand full of jewels took on the same colour as the rest of him. His dark eyes turned into shiny red rubies.

And so, Joseph stood there, no more a man or a goat, but a golden statue, reflection of his biggest greed.



## Jacqueline with flowers

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Valerie Ečerová, 2.B

The cafe started to get depopulated, there were only a few people left besides me. I sat in the farthest corner on a red chair and watched the flowers to my right with tears in my eyes, because whenever I looked across, all I saw was an empty place. I listened to the clinking of glasses and the flirting of the guests, but then I heard footsteps coming in, I turned around and it was him, walking towards me. Finally! I immediately stood up and headed in his direction. He was already shouting his excuses at me from a distance. I wasn't listening.

He talked for at least half a minute when he realized: „You're not listening?“

„A bit,“ I replied as I walked past him.

„Wait,“ he gasped, running to me.

We both reached the street. He instantly grabbed my wrist and pulled me to him, biting his lips and leaning to me. I broke free from his grip and continued with quicker steps forward. But he ran out of patience and started yelling at me again. I didn't listen to him again.

People walking by stared to look at us curiously.

„Jacqueline“ he yelled so aggressively that it echoed down the street. I once again turned to him and silently waited for the excuses. „This time...“ he started telling but I disturbed him.

„What happened this time?“ I shouted at him because I also runned out of patience.

„You were so distracted by your paintings of me that you forgot about the real me because you live in your own world, but honey that's not reality.“

„Are you listening yourself at all? he shouted back,“ you ingrate...“ he freezed, looked directly in my eyes and right away stomped his way to the other side of the street. Tears welled up in my eyes, I didn't mean it that way, but sometimes he really hurts my heart.

Still in this bad mood I stumbled home. As I was walking across the bridge as usual, certain flowers caught my attention. I saw similar a while ago in the cafe. I came closer to smell them when I heard a familiar voice behind me.

„I love flowers too...maybe we could still go for a walk in the park today and get to know each other more... and I'm really sorry for earlier.“

„Maybe“ I replied with a smirk.

## Jacqueline

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Jasmina Dhibi, 3.C

The woman in the painting is a vision of beauty and grace, standing in the middle of a field of flowers that appear to bloom and dance around her. She is surrounded by a rainbow of colours that swirl and blend together to create a sense of movement and energy.

The painting is an emotional and colour masterpiece, a testament to the artist's skill and vision. It captures the essence of the woman, her beauty and spirit, and it speaks on a deep, intuitive level to the viewer.

The viewer can't help but feel awe and wonder as they look at the painting. They are drawn into the world of women and leave with a sense of peace and contentment.

The painting is more than just a piece of art; it is a window into the woman's soul, telling a story of beauty and inspiration. It serves as a reminder that even in the darkest of times, there is always hope and beauty to be found.

This painting is a true masterpiece, demonstrating the power of imagination and creativity. It will be treasured by art enthusiasts for generations to come, and it will be remembered as a symbol of hope and optimism.



## **Green Sky**

Enrico Garff, 2017

## When the Eagle Flies

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Olga Tichá, 3.C

A dawn. The sky was full of beautiful golden and red colors. A little child with longer brown hair, which was covering most of his face, sighed. They did not see the thing they were looking up to. They stood up and turned around, looking down to the tiny little town named Afterday, where they had to go every day. They started walking.

The child was quite known in this little town. most of the people knew that they did not live there with their parents, but no one could be really bothered enough to do something about it.. They also knew that the child didn't really talk. They sang, though. It was quite beautiful to listen to, and that's why the people were always happy to give something to eat to the child.

The kid stood on its usual spot and started its job. For a lot of people it was a single thing that got them through the whole day. It had a calming melody and it was telling a very beautiful story about eagles, even though the majority of people didn't even know what kind of a bird it is. It was believed that the hunters killed every single one of them, due to the unusual feathers they had. It symbolized glory and honor on everyone who could afford to wear them. And now it was even more valuable than ever before. That's why the child was singing that song out of any other. That's why the people found it so beautiful and calming. The people loved it, as it was telling a great story that one day the eagles will return, but only after a sacrifice of someone who would be very dear to the others. Too sad it could never be true, right?

As the day passed, and the sun was setting down, people in the street, where the small child was, were disappearing into the houses. The kid after a short while was almost alone there. They sat down on the stairs of a closed shop and ate some of their hard earned food the generous people gave them. It was quite delicious. After all, you wouldn't find a better bakery in the whole world than one in Afterday. Then they got up and walked through the tiny town on the hills, where some children were playing tag, or something similar. The child wasn't really interested in joining them, even though the other would happily let them. They went around them on the biggest hill in the distance, where they were living.

Day after day, dawn after sunset. People of Aferday slowly started to worry. The small child, who would sing every day in the one small street, suddenly disappeared. Some were worried enough to look for them outside the small town, some just hoped that they're somewhere safe. Not in a million years would anyone guess that one calm day, when the sky was blue like sapphires, a strange noise would come out of the trees on the hills and for the first time in centuries, people of the tiny little town would see eagles fly through the air.

# The Green Sky

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Šimon Junek, 3.A1

The roar of agitated groups of people echoed often, since The Arrival.

„How am I supposed to feed my family when I get kicked out of every job because they come and offer to work for next to nothing? I won't be discriminated against as a true citizen of this country, because of few aliens that are going to beat up my wife on her way home“

The first group came four months ago, crashed their ship in the center of Ústí nad Labem. The area was immediately cleared off and 6 alien beings placed into quarantine. But the word spread and soon it became a wide world knowledge that aliens have come to earth. Not long after, people formed „Alien liberation front“, stating that they should have rights as humans do.

One spokesman on Letná during an anti-government rally let herself be heard: „Seeking refuge is not a crime. What right has the government to lock them in prison? I demand a change in the chart of human rights of OSN to include non-human beings coming in peace looking for a new home!“ As the crowd cheered and nod in agreement.

The spokesman continued: „Until our demands are met I declare immediate strike! For Alien life has the same worth as any of ours and should not be mistreated!

In the end the event escalated, and the city erupted into riots and violence, leading to deaths of 4 people by trampling. The crowds were dispersed, upon arrival of officers with full riot gear and armed with non lethal means.

After the protests and riots linked to „free the aliens movement“ started, the officials had no other option but to release all six aliens into public. With the help of a new department of UNHCR all six happily found jobs as cleaners and farm workers. Claiming in an interview for BBC that because the planet they come from is almost out of basic resources and in constant war over the leftovers, they built a ship and went looking elsewhere for work and shelter.

Supposedly the environment of their planet is permanently damaged by overuse of oil and coal and natural gasses causing that the sky is sickly green and almost without animals. The alien cities are overpopulated, destroyed by war and starving, unhygienic living gives rise to infectious diseases.

Salary of each alien was set to 3,5 pennies a day which, back home, is a fortune, according to the aliens, who intend to send all the money back to their families.

It didn't take long and other alien ships started arriving in Ústí nad Labem. In fact, 28 spaceships containing 196 aliens landed in one day, saying that families of those that came before them are much better off. And many more followed every day since. 19.8 2023 according to ČSÚ, the percentage of alien refugees in population of the Czech Republic is 2.03%. Ústí nad Labem became a reception center for space refugees. They are given upon arrival a Visa and residence permit and employee card before they are allowed in. Currently more than 31 000 asylum seekers are waiting to be let in, in the ruins of the city that is now surrounded by fences and police patrols.

Many non profit organizations help aliens find their place in society. Aliens often aspire higher than expected and not only hold low income jobs but can be found working in scientific, educational or medical facilities as well, which is a source of controversy. No matter the position, aliens are being paid between 2 to 10 pennies a day, and working six days a week thus refusing regular 40 working hours a week and so the international alien law was established.

At the beginning of the year 2024, most of human low income workers became unemployed and all their positions got taken over. Situation quickly became critical as more and more jobs happened to be occupied by aliens, causing often physical clashes between a group of unemployed men and a single alien. Several aliens got beaten to death and civil war emerged as a serious threat. Luckily the Swedish social democratic party (SAP) with new strict immigration policies rose to power, explaining that aliens are fleeing their homeland because of poverty and hunger and war.

„In order to get rid of them it's necessary to make their planet residential again, not battle them, nor fear them.“

And so, united as one, the first human diplomatic delegation, food and water and fuel stock were being loaded onto a rocket to space.

## Green Sky

Michaela Havlicová, 4.A1

I am really doing it.

That was the last thought I had before I fell asleep and woke up exactly one thousand years later. One thousand years, after I stepped into a cryogenic freezer and let them freeze me.

I've been thinking about it for a long time back then, but I was too scared. My life was never perfect – my flat was small, I barely ate because I never had enough money for proper food – but I was still scared. I spent my whole life making art that no one wanted to buy, but it was the only purpose I had. My paintings were my perfect world, my brush was like a drug. Until that one day when I realised I'd lost my life. I needed to start again, but not in a different place. At a different time.

I still don't know how I came across this idea, but somehow I did. I sat behind the desk, opened my laptop, and started searching.

Cryogenic Laboratory, New York.

Then it all happened so quickly and in just a week I was standing in this cold white room and the young scientist in front of me was typing the date.

07/01/3017

That was the exact day I woke up. I was expecting a lot. I was full of motivation, plans, and dreams. But I'll tell you one thing: Once you are a loser, you are always a loser. It's inside you and you can't escape it. Not to different places, not to different times.

I started looking for a new job. But shortly I got hit by reality. I had no idea how this world works, I had no money or place to live. I had no one to help me.

So there I was. Living the same horrible life, questioning what to do next.

I took a turn to the main street, hands in the pockets of my black hoodie. It was just a few metres from the museum when my legs slowed down.

Do I have to do this? Am I that desperate to become a thief? Even worse... Thief and art forger?

My skills and knowledge of art were a big advantage to it. I would be able to make an exact copy and then sell it for really good money. I was preparing for that "career" for a few months now. But can I handle it as an artist myself?

I stopped and looked up at the dark sky. I used to love the sky. It was always my muse. I loved how much life was there and how little attention we paid to it. I remember one of my favourite paintings I made. It was one summer day, right before this huge storm when an eagle flew over my head. He was so majestic flying through the stormy grey clouds. And I had painted him. But that was a long time ago.

Breaking into the museum was quite easy, and so was stealing the painting I chose. They are not really secure these days. Museum was all silent and dark, just a few lights were on. It kind of looked like a museum in my time.

As I was on my way out, carrying the small painting, something in one of the lights

caught my interest. It was just a second but it immediately shocked me. I almost dropped the painting when I turned around. I couldn't believe what I saw. On one of the walls, right above the huge open door, there was a name written. My name...

In just a second I was standing in the middle of the room behind the door and suddenly I felt like I'm in my worst nightmare. My old brushes, unfinished works, sketchbooks, and most of all... my paintings. Hanging on the walls. I am looking around too stunned to speak, and then I see it. The eagle painting. The one I called "Green sky". And next to it, a short text summing up my whole life, ending with a short sentence.

No one knows what happened to him...

"I know..." I said quietly. "I know! I am him! I am famous! These are my paintings!" I cried out of my lungs, ignoring the sound of an alarm that went on because of my voice.

"I am him, these are my paintings..." I repeated quietly with tears in my eyes as two cops ran into the museum.



## When Will I Miss You?

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Eliška Skalická, 4.B

I always saw you by the door to the church. That's what you get from living by the cemetery I suppose. I could never tell if you were Christian or not, till I started writing down your visits to make a sense out of it. You did go to the church on Sundays, but not every Sunday. You made me confused even then. I wasn't Christian but I was also still curious about where my faith laid. I tried very hard to be practically invisible, I hate when people start paying attention to me.

The first time I was near you, it was late August and you were wearing a funny hat. I wasn't able to see a lot of birds in the sky, it was almost midday and I was dying from the heat. You looked like you didn't mind. You were also looking up at the sky. Do Christians really believe in God? Or do they like the rules, not being able to be free, having someone else to tell you what's good and what's bad? I guess it's kind of reassuring, to always have some logic holding your hand. I always liked logic. To some degree, our logic was the same. I had my axioms, which were unprovable and you had your God. He is also unprovable to some point. We were both morons.

You were always sitting on one grave, not by it, but on it. Like that someone was your special someone, your great friend. You didn't have to show respect, only love that was left in you. The grief was written all over your face the day I met you and was the same when I saw you for the last time. My favourite axiom, axiom of equality, sometimes called the axiom of infinity. You were my favourite maths problem but in person. People are incapable of change. And people always lie.

I never saw you cry nor smile. It was as if you were in your own unbreakable bubble, just floating around. You were often looking up. I suspected that it was to hold back the tears, but maybe you were looking up to see them in the clouds.

Sometimes you brought flowers, sometimes a candle. You were going inside the church more often and I wasn't really comfortable with following you there after getting to know you little. I just stayed outside and watched birds and clouds. I stayed there, watching them swirl around in the air till you got out.

I watched you as you looked at me, well, through me and stepped somewhere outside. You were just gone. Only sometime later I understood that you didn't watch your step and you practically stepped right in front of a car. I couldn't see anything behind the walls of the cemetery, they're too tall and I was never too good with the floating thing. But what I never got was where your soul went. I do have my theory though.

Like I said at the beginning, I never had much faith. But you obviously had a bunch of it. You prayed, did the stuff that's supposed to help with your heathen soul and swore to tell the truth from now on. But now on never came, that was your lie. Because why would you tell the pastor you can see the dead? Why would you mention your suicidal thoughts? You were just talking about how birds look in the morning sky. And you know what? I once read a thesis that was definitely right in one thing. "Christians believe their souls get into heaven. But I believe that we are free."

## **Oblivion**

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Nikola Staňkoá, 2.B

I saw the green sky that day when I escaped the prison. The prison wasn't a room with four walls and bars. It was the life I lived.

I hated my job, door handles, car wheels, chalks, color blue and art galleries. I despised loud people, crying children and security in shopping centers.

It was hard to decide to escape, but it would be harder, If I stayed.

I was searching through the nature that I loved so much. I tried so many times to find something that could help me.

**I was a lost cause and I knew it.**

I was so naïve. I thought that God could save me. Every day I prayed before the end.

„God, please help me. I can't do this anymore.”

My eyes were always full of tears. Believe me, I tried so much. I did so much for YOU, but it was never enough.

I thought I would survive because of this divine madness. Madness is unstable and unpredictable. Divine madness was created by anything which hated everyone and wanted everyone to suffer.

I was cursed by madness. The little black hole in my head was always there from the time I could remember. My brain was cursed and my heart was just there.

**Emptiness. Silence. Solitude.**

Three feelings that created my whole life in prison. I was so grateful to have the

opportunity to change, even to escape.

My whole being I couldn't remember. Nothing made me happy. I was a ghost. You always knew I was there, but you did nothing about it. You were just scared, sometimes not even it.

Happy little noises made me vomit. I tried to become part of the society. I really tried, believe me, please, please, God please.

Everything was unrequited. I felt so alone and abandoned. No one could see me.

My end was rather quick. I committed suicide near the coast. It was a warm summer day.

For the first time in my life I felt free and light as a feather. I went to finish everything I did and did not with wide open arms.

### **Final step and I was free for eternity.**

The last thing I could remember before I escaped the prison and finally the devil took a turn with my soul was the green sky with a free-flying eagle that served God.

## Letter of a Doomed Author

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Barbora Fischerová, 2.B

I find life quite ironic. We, people, trap animals to look at them. Not necessarily to observe and learn. Sometimes we just like to look at them. Why? Where does the weird satisfaction come from? Maybe it has roots in our troubles with differences. After all, humans don't like anything that differs from what we consider as 'normal'.

But when we, people, trap fellow people, it is to keep them out of everyone's sight. Perhaps out of fear, that others will get to see how imperfect we can be. There are no human zoos. At least not anymore, thank god.

When you differ, as a human being, you're not stared at with curiosity. Kids don't get excited about seeing you. You are shunned, destined to be hidden out of 'normal' people's sight.

The funniest thing is, that even such an abstract difference, such as an opinion, will get you doomed like this.

That is, dear, the reason behind my disappearance. Please know that I'm sorry.

By the time you'll finally get to read this, I'll be far, far away. Gone, in my own shut-down zoo. My biggest regret is that I never told you how much you mean to me. Deep down, I know you know that. You always did; we didn't need to talk. I am just angered that this is how our story ends. All because of an idiotic opinion. Maybe I never should've become an author. But you and mum were always so proud of me, always so supportive. The majority of the public liked my works too. I should've known that, sooner or later, Fate will catch up on me.

She never liked being questioned. Everyone knew it. What a stupid mistake.

You know, I expected to be writing this letter in a dirty cold cell, not knowing when my day will come or being painfully aware of how much time I have left. I did not expect to be sent away to a small deserted island.

Look, I need you to know how sorry I am. I know you've warned me. Several times, you did. I just needed to get the word out there. I trust that one day things will change. Maybe we'll be long gone, or maybe we'll get a chance to see the new beginning.

I know I hurt you. I know you'll miss me as I miss you already. I know you'll curse me for everything I did. Sacrifices just sometimes have to be made.

My last finished work is under my bed, in that little chest my father made me. Please, do me a favour and make sure the world will get to see it one day also. I think you'd like it too.

Where I'm going now, I will not get to write anymore. Maybe if I manage to create my own ink and paper and pens, but I assume I'll be too busy trying to survive another day.

It is a sad ending for another unsuccessful writer. Isn't this how history is made? I am not significant in your story anymore, but we might be a part of something bigger. That thought calms me down a little. That and the belief you'll be safe now. Take care

of mum for me, please. She'll need you now more than ever.

I should finish my previous point. Ironic about thinking of animals as very different from us is the fact that we're exactly the same. We're in the same place, trying to survive and reproduce. Animals just don't make it an impossible task for themselves. They live how they're used to, meanwhile, we create ourselves obstacles.

My punishment is freeing in a way. Should I be feeling sorry for you, instead of you for me?

Paper is running out, I assume it's my time to finally shut up and just say goodbye. My ride to the island is quite pleasant. Above me, green sky. There's only one bird. Perhaps my new companion.

I hope I didn't ruin zoos for you.

Farewell, my friend.

With regrets,  
your Richard.

## Feathered Soul

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Helena Horešovská, 1.A1

We stood there. On top of the bright green hill surrounded by the scent of violets and fresh air as the wind sang its song. The sun slowly falling behind the mountains and was preparing to say today's last goodbye to this beautiful place as the moon and stars were slowly becoming brighter and brighter.

„Hello.“

„Hello.“

Our eyes met even though we had none. Our hands waved even though neither of us had a body. We came closer to each other and placed our sight on honey colored pines that stood far away from this hill and the meadow in which our hill stood.

„Is this real?“

„What do you think?“

Silence fell as we thought about our questions. Who said the first question? And the second? Was it me or the other soul? Did it matter?

Finally, I stood up. Eying the pure cloud of light in front of me as part of me touched it.

We stood there. On top of the bright green hill surrounded by the scent of violets  
„Let's go, shall we?“  
„Yes,“ the cloud answered, „to the pine woods.“

We flew above the meadow, we flew through the woods. Everything was shining.  
Everything was... alive. One big branch made us want to sit on it. There was  
something special about it.

„Where are you from?“ The soul asked.

„I am from Earth. This is my body's home.“ I answered.

„You?“

„Me too. Well, my body is.“ The cloud seemed a little bit calmer. It made me happy.  
Why? I did not know this soul. Or did I?

„Look!“ I stopped trying to remember and immediately looked up, just to see  
an eagle flying above us.

„He reminds me of a bird that I used to know. His name was Feather because he was  
featherless. It was his condition.“

„You take care of birds as a job?“ I asked the now familiar person sitting next to me  
on a pine branch.

„Yes, I like helping them and caring for them. It is my purpose in this life. What's  
yours?“

I saw our light shine brighter. We were calm and happy because of our encounter.

„I do not know, yet.“ With a smile I looked at the setting sun. It was time for me to  
return home to my body.

„I have to go. It was nice today. Thank you for the great time we spent together.“

„I had fun as well. Thank you. I have to go as well. Will we meet again?“

„Sure. What's your name, may I ask?“

„Adrien. Yours?“

„Sophia.“

„Alright then Sophia. Farewell.“

With this I woke up in my bed, in my house. Was it just a dream? Should I forget it? Should I forget the magical wonderland full of possible adventures?

It is already a month after that dream. My life has changed since that encounter and I have changed as well. The impact of that dream on me is huge for it opened my eyes. I feel tired yet more alive. This day was especially tiring and I would like to go to sleep after a nice bubble bath.

Knock, knock.

What was that? It came from the window. Who would knock on a window!?

I should open it.

...

Whoow. An eagle? An eagle on my windowsill? Wait, what if...

„Adrien?“

„Craw.“

## **The Bird**

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Barbora Hudičáková, 1.D

A bird was born in a nest in a tree. The first thing it saw was its mom, who went to hunt for something to eat. For the first few days, it just ate and slept. It had a curved beak and white down feathers. After some time it grew up and started training its wings and imitating its parents. It ate mice, weasels, hares and other animals. But the world watched from the safety of the nest. For the next months, it learned everything necessary for a free life. The first time it flew just a little bit. It left the nest after 90 days. When it soared high, it had a wonderful feeling. The wind ruffled its feathers. Below it saw forests, meadows, in front of it saw a big mountain, but from a height it is smaller and smaller. Suddenly it got dark and rained. It hid in the rocks until the rain stopped. It was getting dark and it was still waiting. Then it flew back to the nest.

