



Winning, Highly Commended &
Commended
Entries

14-18 Age Category

The 18th Elmbridge Literary Competition 2023

The Road

Some are long and winding and some lead to nowhere while others to Hell, even if paved with good intentions. From the ones less travelled to those that go ever on and on, roads and the journeys, real and symbolic, taken along them have always been a common theme in literature.

2023 is the 30th anniversary of The R C Sherriff Trust. Much of Sherriff's writing involved journeys, some literal; the charabanc day trip of his first play, A Hitch In The Proceedings, the family heading off for their annual holiday in his novel, 'The Fortnight in September', or the journey home taken by David Preston every night, except one, in 'Home By Seven', some metaphorical; Harry Faversham in 'The Four Feathers', Johnny McQueen in 'Odd Man Out' and the journey undertaken by Stanhope, Raleigh, Trotter and the soldiers in Sherriff's most famous work, a journey that leads to a fateful climax in the trenches of the First World War.

For the 18th Elmbridge Literary Competition, The R C Sherriff Trust and Elmbridge Borough Council, were looking for short stories and poems on the theme of 'The Road'.

Previous Competition Themes:

2005:	Cook Up A Story
2006:	On My Way
2007:	A Life In Colour
2008:	Once Upon A Time
2009:	A Symphony of Life
2010:	The Elmbridge 100
2011:	Breaking The Barrier
2012:	A Dickens of A Christmas
2013:	One Act Radio Play
2014:	Dear Diary
2015:	Flights of Fantasy
2016:	Love
2017:	Luck
2018:	A Shiver Down The Spine/Things That Go Bump In The Night
2019/20:	New World
2021:	Music
2022:	Enigma

Category: Short Stories

1st Place: The Forgotten Road

Ginny Martin

I was eleven when I found it. Nursing numerous fresh bruises from the bullies at school, and sobbing quietly into my grimy shirt, I crouched down behind the school bins – the only place that I could be alone. The reek kept everyone but the most desperate away, and heaven knows I was desperate, though I knew that I would be given a severe detention for walking into yet another class stinking of rotten eggs and worse. I dared not think of what foul gloop could inhabit the mountains of rubbish vomited from the insides of the grey containers. I wiped my nose on my once white sleeve, and looked up through swollen eyes to prevent the sun branding my neck as Bruce had threatened to do five minutes earlier. I looked around. I had been here often enough to notice if there was anything different about the scenery, and sure enough, when I saw the small, dark gap that had appeared in the forest surrounding the school, I started. A tree had been slain in last night's summer storm - there it lay, a fallen warrior. It was ancient and twisted, and had been my favourite. Feeling saddened, I got up gingerly and peeked nervously around the corner before scurrying across the patch of open ground to have a better look.

The tree had fallen back into the forest, and as I approached, the dark smell of earth from its airborne roots was like a honeyed perfume after the miasma of the bins. I ran my fingers down the damp, rough trunk and marvelled that even my dad wouldn't be able to circumnavigate it with his arms. Looking back, I realise now it was a huge beech, but back then I didn't know, and simply felt a thrill of something – excitement, joy, sadness maybe – as I delicately brushed the glowing russet leaves. There was something about their simple beauty that amazed me; I was more entranced by them than I had ever been by anything I had learnt at school. I was so enraptured in tracing the curve of each branch with my hand, that I didn't see it until I literally stubbed my toe against it. A flagstone. Half buried in moss and undergrowth, but still visible in the dappled shade. I bent down to look closer. It had a dip in the middle as if worn down by constant trampling by thousands of feet. I frowned. It was a bit odd, finding a flagstone at the edge of the forest by a modern school with its concrete walls, concrete floors, concrete everything...

I looked around. Surely there was an explanation for this. There! Before me was a second flagstone, this one cracked in half with jagged bits running down the side. The crack was not fresh – the edges of the stone were worn and no longer razor-sharp. Looking on I saw yet another flagstone, submerged in moss. And then another, plunging straight into the heart of a vicious bramble. I made my way around the bramble, and continued to follow the flagstones, whatever they were. A path? No – paths weren't made of flagstones. A road? Yes, I would call it that. The road was two or three flagstones wide by now, but so drowned by plants and fungi that it was almost impossible to pick out in the clearest places, and I lost it at several points. However, it always emerged again, calling me forwards. I began to hurry, as if dragged by some force that demanded my very being to come that instant.

Feeling neither the cuts from the brambles nor the scrapes from the closely-knit trees, I stumbled forwards over roots that grappled with the road, and, looking closely, saw the road veer left. I continued to follow it, and as I did, a sound reached my ears, like a song. Entranced, I stopped for a heartbeat, and then carried on. As the road led me on, the song grew louder, and with a thrill I realised that it was not a song, but chords of water. A pure, clear stream bounced beside the road, jumping with glee over rocks and pebbles along the way. Another turn, and it had dived over a shallow waterfall, to swim in a transparent pool. Sunlight gleamed on its surface, and the whole picture looked so magical and yet so real that I laughed out loud. I sat down right there on one of the hollowed flagstones and listened and watched as if my life depended upon it.

It must have been a quarter of an hour later that I looked at my watch and panicked. My first lesson after lunch started in fifteen minutes and it must have taken me half an hour to get there. Springing to my feet, I whispered desperately "I'll be back" and fled back up the road as fast as I could recognise flagstone from forest floor. I dashed into class five minutes late and got a detention, but, for the first time in my life, I didn't care.

All that night I barely slept – images of the forgotten road and the hidden pool danced around my room in all their glorious beauty. When I finally did fall asleep, it was only to wake with the heavy fear that it had simply been a dream. Never was the lunch bell to end class more welcome. Barely stopping to wonder at the lack of my usual terror of it, I sped outside and scurried around the back of the school. There lay the tree, just as it had yesterday. I crept forwards and found the ancient road again. Tracking its course, my face split in a huge grin, I followed it all the way to the pool. That lunch, for the first time, I ate in peace - not fleeing from the other kids at school, but sitting quietly in the calm beauty of summer.

And so, over the next few weeks and months, the road became my refuge. I dug out a hollow under one of the cracked flagstones and hid my swimming clothes there, so I could bathe in the luxurious water of the pool. Bobbing around in the ripples, breathing the cool spray of the small waterfall, I imagined myself by the sea; the road became the beach, the trees transformed into towering palms. As autumn and then winter approached, the road froze into an iceberg, the stream metamorphized into lonely Norwegian fjord.

Spring drew on, and never had it been more hopeful. With it came a sudden desire to give the road a new life just as the road had given me. Working strenuously, I began to clear the overgrown flagstones, clean the scabbling moss, and cut away the clutching brambles. I left the entrance overgrown, lest my hiding place be discovered, but gradually the long-forgotten highway transformed into, in my eyes, a proper road. To me it was the road to freedom, and I hoped that I was freeing it as much as it had freed me.

It was the year afterwards that I found her. Nursing numerous fresh bruises, and sobbing quietly into a once-white shirt, she hid in terror behind the revolting school bins. She looked up in surprise and fear as I approached, but I simply held out my hand towards her. Her dirty fingers brushed mine and then drew away – she reminded me of some frightened, injured bird. Yet

when I faded, phantom like, back into the forest, I saw her glance around and then creep after me. I smiled. Curiosity had overcome fear, just as it had in me. I pretended not to notice as she shadowed me towards the road, but I turned at her gasp when she beheld it. Strings of purple flowers lined its edges – the forest's gift to us. The view held her spellbound for a moment, and then she was tearing down it, following the road's call. When I caught up she was standing by the pool, tears of joy upon her cheeks.

2nd Place: The Road
Alejandro Enriquez

I'm in the passenger seat. I don't know who the person driving is. I don't know where we're going or how long we've been moving, but I know I've been here for a while. As I look out the window, the landscape is eerie, nothing but a dull expanse of rocky desert skin and a tired sky that hasn't changed since I woke up. The horizon lithely splits the sun in two and its setting glow fills the surrounding space with a static purple haze. The road feels out of place, a clean black slice across the otherwise uniform land.

I turn to the driver. "Where are we going?" "You're going to the end of the road." Although I can't recognize him, he feels familiar. "I'm sorry, but who are you?" "You've known me your whole life, though not for much longer now. This is as far as I can take you and beyond here it's out of my jurisdiction. It'll be up to her then."

He stops the car and the door opens seamlessly. I step out and, looking backwards, see the shivering lights of a city where the road meets the horizon. The man notices and a bereaved sadness crosses his face.

"You're not going back there."

Confused, I survey the way ahead, a double-laned strip that seems to meet no end. When I turn back, the car is gone and the road has become my only friend. I begin walking. Occasionally, I stop to let my gaze drift around the breathless landscape, casting wistful glances at the city far away. Its lights wink invitingly and it beats full of sound and smiles, but I somehow know that the road won't let me return, so I keep walking.

Suddenly, a voice emerges next to me. "You'll have quite a way to go. Might as well have some company right?"

It's a boy, my height with my voice and clothes. I would have thought he was me if it wasn't for his face, which constantly blurs and assumes new features, forever becoming older and younger. I should be scared, though as with the man, I'm not.

"Have you been walking with me this whole way?"

"I started where you started, though you haven't noticed me until now. Honestly it's a pity. I'm about to go anyway. "

"What? You're leaving already? But ... but you just got here. You said you'd keep me company - don't renege on your promise."

"I never promised anything. It's only you to yourself. Either way, what I meant was that these are going to be our last moments together."

It's hard to read his expressions, so I avoid looking at his face and continue on the straightforward road.

"And who exactly are you?" "Shouldn't you know?"

"No! Of course I don't! You come out of nowhere, like that man ... hell I don't even know who he was. I don't even know what you are or what this place is or what I'm doing here. It's like some inbred instinct is telling me to walk in that direction but I still don't know why!"

“Oh. I’m sorry. I thought you knew. Look, I’m not really in much of a position to help you understand. It’s one of those things you need to experience, and that won’t happen until you reach the end of the road. Also she’ll probably be annoyed at me if I do her job for her.”

“You still haven’t answered my question.”

His face turns towards me and I can feel his liquid stare pool on my shoulder. “Take a guess.”

“I’ve never seen someone without a proper face before. How should I know? Also who’s this ‘she’ you keep mentio-”

“Are you sure you don’t know who I am?” He interrupts my query. “Yes.”

“Look at me. Closely.”

He grabs my shoulders and pulls my face close to his. I stare unsurely at his ephemeral features, earnestly scouring memory, when suddenly I see my face in his for a split second. And in that split second, he’s me. Then his face becomes babyish, childlike, ancient, weathered, yet I start to notice how similar his eyes have stayed.

“You’ve known me. Every moment of me. Every frozen emotion and every fractured image of me, you’ve known. I’ve brought my share of pain and resentment, venom coursing in your eyes, and your hands pulled away my skin to change it. You’ve loved one face, hated another, but I’ve lived every one and so have you.”

I close my eyes while a resigned realization settles in. “So many faces yet you’re still lonely aren’t you?”

“As much as you were.”

His hold loosens and I pull away. We stare at the still sun for a few breaths before continuing our walk.

“You’re telling me that the only way I could have escaped you was by coming out here? To the middle of nowhere.”

“Yes. Once you go too far and I can’t follow you anymore, I’ll still live on in the windows of the city back there. That’s where I belong. It’s only right for you to leave me behind eventually.”

“I guess we all have to.” He nods.

Our journey persists, every meter along the road revealing but another meter past the horizon. Sometimes we talk, other times we travel in silence, and through it all the tepid sun never blinks. After what feels like a second lifetime, I’m finally able to make out the end of the road. The desert stretches far beyond it and a tree sighs at its threshold, which I make out to be a yew the closer we get.

The boy stops. “What is it?”

“I can’t go any further.” “Why?”

“Look.” He points at a woman walking over, who up until then had lain hidden in the tree’s bark.

“I’ll miss you. You’ve been my closest friend.” “And don’t forget your closest enemy too.” “Without a doubt. Till death do us part?”

“Till death do us part.”

He vanishes into the windless air just as the woman reaches us. Her eyes are old and gentle, soft heartbeats set into her face, while her hair cascades down like sand through an hourglass. When she opens her thin mouth, words escape as meted starlight.

“You reached the end of the road. I’m sorry it’s so quiet here. When people leave the city, they always leave alone, no matter how many others see them off. You only have yourself to keep you company, and so the silence comes with it.

“Then who was he?”

“Why, haven’t you figured it out already?” “He’s me.”

“Yes, or at least the memory of you. Don’t worry, he’ll be there to replace you long after you’re gone. Now it’s my turn to take care of you.”

“And the man who drove me here ... who was he?”

“Life, and I’ve been his opposite. He took you as far as he could so I could be there for you. I’m just glad it wasn’t your choice to go. Sometimes people leave of their own volition and it always hurts me to hug them.”

She embraces me. “The sky’s getting tired. Let’s finally let it sleep.”

We lay down against the yew tree. The road stretches into oblivion, blanketed by a cool dusk glow. The sun has finally fallen below the horizon.

3rd Place: The Fall of Rome

Adithya Prakesh

She stalked into the camp, the light glinting off her glossy, ivory fur. Her very presence commanded the respect of the legion. The gentle murmur of conversation was replaced by the cacophony of noise made by a hundred legionaries standing to attention. They were resplendent in their armour, and all were grizzled veterans of war. For all that, the wolf outshone them still, her muscles defined clearly in the half-light, her elegance plain for all to see. She was Lupa, the mother of Rome.

As she strode into the camp, the soldiers squirmed in her presence. She usually only interacted with the Romans during the training of their troops, to make sure they had the resilience to become true defenders of Rome. The legionaries were living examples of the harsh discipline that Lupa and her pack instilled in each and every one of her pupils. Her lessons were written on their skin.

Lupa threaded between the campfires, heading towards a colossal man who was sitting outside the largest tent, sharpening his xiphos carefully with a whetstone. As she approached, he gently set the sword down. Lupa nuzzled against him briefly, and the troops breathed a collective sigh of relief as she disappeared into the tent, the centurion following swiftly behind. The troops went back to their conversations, their mood tempered by the appearance of the Wolf Mother.

Once he was inside the privacy of his tent, the centurion sagged visibly, all pretence of invincibility discarded. Lupa understood - the burden of leadership takes a toll on even the greatest commanders. The tired centurion sat down cross-legged on the packed earth, waiting for Lupa to speak, as etiquette dictated.

“He is deadlier by the day, Marcellus,” she said, her voice gentle in the centurion’s mind. “I availed the Oracle of Delphi and the signs all point in one direction only,” she continued, worry evident in her tone. “I take no pleasure in telling you this, but Octavian is a danger to the pack. He must be dealt with. Immediately.”

As she kept talking, a lean youth dressed in a simple knee-length tunic and leather braces stormed into the tent. Octavian had come to them.

Tears ran down his face as he screamed at his centurion,

“What have I ever done to you Marcellus? What do you know of my power, of my burden ?”

Lupa growled as she saw tendrils of pearly mist wrap around Octavian’s arms. He was getting dangerously close to losing control. As it twisted around his body, he seemed to calm down and his breathing slowed. Lupa’s raised hackles lowered; Marcellus removed his hand from his dagger. Octavian breathed out slowly, and the fog encircled the tent. For all their strength, Marcellus and Lupa could only watch helplessly as it slowly obscured their vision. As they stood back to back, they heard only one word: “Sleep.”

Sleep took them.

Marcellus awoke suddenly, jolted out of his dreamless rest. He inspected his surroundings suspiciously but all he saw was a grassy glade, surrounded by small laurel trees. A mellow breeze wafted towards him, carrying the calming scent of earth with it.

Marcellus glanced to his right, where he saw Lupa lazily basking in the afternoon sun. He lay down in the soft grass beside her - if Octavian meant them harm, he could have killed them already. Of that, Marcellus had no doubt. All that was left to do was wait.

The sun was setting when the laurel trees rustled to admit a familiar face to the hidden glade. It was Octavian, but this time, there were no tears, only a steely determination that Lupa secretly approved of. He looked at the centurion, and the boy's composure broke for a second, revealing the raw hurt in his eyes. He gave Lupa a cursory glance and walked back to the ring of laurels, waiting for them to follow.

Lupa and Marcellus gave each other a quick glance and trailed cautiously behind Octavian. As they stepped beyond the glade, the boy paused, taking in the path ahead. A long, winding road stretched out in front of him, fading into the horizon.

Octavian finally spoke, "My life has always been a series of choices - choices that have levelled nations and killed innocents." His voice held a hard edge as he spoke. "It's time you saw the consequences of my actions."

Lupa and Marcellus were stunned as the route in front of them diverged in front of their eyes into two paths, each wreathed in the cold mist that had transported them there. "Choose," Octavian said, his voice distant. Both roads were shrouded in a haze, concealed from mortal eyes.

"You would command your centurion?" Marcellus exclaimed, baulking at the thought of a legionary commanding his superior officer. As he started forward to confront Octavian, Lupa growled, her voice angry. "Are you so blind that you cannot see the signs, Marcellus? Listen to the boy!" Marcellus quailed, his anger quickly diminishing in the face of Lupa's angry logic. Lupa began walking down one path, indistinguishable from the other. Marcellus had no choice but to follow at her heels like a scolded pup. As Lupa disappeared into the pervasive fog, the centurion glanced behind him, only to find that Octavian was nowhere to be seen. He quenched his fear - he was a valiant centurion of Rome. It would take more than mere fog to undo him. His ego thus padded, he continued into the fog, which changed in front of his very eyes.

Marcellus halted, observing the bustle of the market square with a shrewd eye. No-one seemed to have noticed the three travellers. They had arrived in Temple Square, where moneychangers plied their trade, the chime of money echoing in the square. Pilgrims queued for miles to change their shekels for the more common Roman currency. Suddenly, the man in front of Marcellus stormed towards the moneychangers' desk, jostling angrily through the pilgrims, who scattered like frightened pigeons. When he reached the merchants' tables, he upended them, without so much as a word of warning. Gleaming coins flew everywhere, and the pilgrims turned the square into a battleground in their greed for money. As the ocean of people raced towards them, the mist materialised from thin air, whisking them back to the relative safety of the road.

Lupa and Marcellus blinked as they recalled the short vision. Octavian stood in front of them, two roads trailing into the horizon behind him. Marcellus was confused - the boy was meant to be a bad omen for the Roman Empire. What did a riot in the Square have to do with

Rome? He opened his mouth to ask the question, then remembered Lupa's chiding and quickly closed his mouth.

"Choose." Octavian's voice echoed in their heads. This time, they were prepared. Lupa and Marcellus took the road on the right, the mist wrapping around them once again. Marcellus recognised the city immediately. They were in Rome, and he was finally home. He sighed in relief, his feet sinking into familiar soil. Then he froze, the unmistakable scent of blood in the air. The scene before him filled his heart with dread. The clash of weapons and the roar of men filled his ears. Dead Romans filled the streets of the once-beautiful city. His city. He watched, paralyzed, as a powerful Roman legion was decimated by monstrous barbarian forces.

Lupa watched, heartbroken, as her worst nightmare came to life – her nation shattered, her home trodden into the dust. As she watched her people fall, she recoiled in shock. The man from the Square was leading the charge, wielding a titanic recurve bow. Every arrow heralded the death of another Roman soldier. Time seemed to slow as he let his last arrow fly. It sank into the emperor's skull. The emperor of Rome. Their valiant protector. He died instantly. A perfect shot. The end of Rome.

The man raised the emperor's body above his head with inhuman strength. The anger in his eyes was mirrored by the barbarian horde. They let loose a guttural roar that shook the foundations of the city. As their leader began to speak, the mist coiled around them once again, ripping them free of the nightmarish vision.

Once again, they were back at the crossroads. "Choose." Octavian's voice rang incessantly in their heads. Marcellus had turned a ghostly shade of white, reeling from the horrific vision. This time, however, the paths ahead were visible, one that opened into the Roman's camp, an escape from the unceasing visions Octavian was inflicting on them. On the other path lay more war and bloodshed, but a small butterfly was visible, flitting around the battlefield – hope.

Marcellus walked slowly towards the camp, unprepared to watch his men die without warning them. Lupa watched him go, and as the mist claimed him, she walked the path of carnage - if there was any hope for her nation, she would find it. For she was Lupa, the mother of Rome.

Highly Commended: The Road

Avinesh Jay Kenny

Perspiration trickled down his spine, when the aged hawker pushed his cart for business in the early night; with the hope that his earnings would be sufficient to fend his family of five. He had a *Cerebral Palsy* child, Anna who required the wife's 24/7 attention. The child was bedridden. The hawker and his wife had conceived her after 8 years of marriage. Anna had a special place in his heart. That particular night, the child had a terrible fever. But the hawker was the sole breadwinner and he had to go out to work. He also had two other school going children, Joe and Sam, who used the street light to do their school homework. As he pushed the cart, he was delusional by fear of the future. Some customers were already waiting for his business to start for the day. Seeing them there, his face brightened up with hope camouflaging the tears that rolled down his cheeks earlier. He was a man with hope for a better tomorrow. *The road acknowledges his resilience's!*

The skies were dark. The winds were blowing hard. Thunders were giving a warning that there would be a heavy downpour. The hawker's face grimaced that the weather will be unkind to his business. "Will my hopes for a better earning today be dashed again?" A thunderstorm was likely to unfold that night. He said a prayer under his breath. At that very moment, a mother clasped her hands in prayer. She was in the hospital at the end of the road. Her 2-year-old boy, Aaresh was due for an open-heart surgery. "Will the doctor be late for the procedure?" A thousand thoughts raced in her frantic mind. He was her only hope. "Godd...!" she pleaded. *The road acknowledges the love of the mother!*

As the skies opened up with showers of rain hitting hard on the ground; just across the road where an age-old tree stood, under the shrubs of the bushes a young cat was struggling in pain as she was about to deliver a litter of kittens. The first-time mum was clueless what to expect and the weather was not in her favor. But her maternal instinct was so powerful that the safety of her newborns was her first priority. She inched for shelter and within minutes, she delivered 6 kittens who knew only their mother as their pillar of support. They found warmth as they suckled their mother's milk hungrily. She protected them fiercely against the night prowlers. *The road acknowledges the young mother's intentions!*

At the streak of lightning that illuminated the dark night, a sleek BMW raced the rather lonely road to the shock of the passersby. "Are you out of your mind?" shouted a stranger. "May he meet with an accident and die", swore another onlooker. The driver drove impervious to the surroundings. The hawker recognized the driver and knew his motive. The driver on the other side, knew he was racing for time and the need for the adrenaline rush. *The road acknowledges the driver's urgency!*

The mother was overwhelmed with fear. She was petrified as the doctor was not here. "He'll be here" reassured a family member seeing the mother's hot tears streaming down her cheeks. The sleek BMW drove up the emergency unit. The doctor had arrived. He was rushed to the operating theatre. The doctor trusted his skills and the mother trusted in God. The operation was a success. The mother's prayer was answered and the doctor aced his skills. "Thank you doctor," The mother had put her palms together to thank the doctor. The doctor just merely smiled to show that he was grateful the operation was a success. *The road acknowledges the joy of the mother!*

Down the other side of the road, a family was having a small birthday party. However, the ten-year-old birthday boy, Charles was saddened that his father did not attend his birthday party as he had to rush to conduct an open-heart surgery for another child. Was the other child more important than him? He kept asking himself this question. His ten-year-

old mind could not comprehend it. All he asked for his birthday was the 'hot chicken soup' sold by the hawker down the road. He didn't ask for pricy gadget or expensive clothes. Was it too much to ask from a famous Cardiac Surgeon who was wrapped up with his job? "Wasn't I of any significance to him," Charles still couldn't comprehend. *The road acknowledges the plight of the child!*

As the team of paramedics congratulated the doctor for his excellent job of saving the child, the doctor excused himself to rush for his son's birthday. He knew it was really late but he knew saving the child's life was a priority. As he raced his sleek BMW down the road, he suddenly remembered his son's simple request of the hot piping chicken soup. "It will go well on this cold day" he thought to himself. The rain had stopped and the hawker was closing his shop. He stopped his car in front of the hawker. "Can I have 2 packets of your chicken soup?" The aged hawker immediately took to task and prepared two packets of hot chicken soup for him. "You seem very happy doc," said the hawker. "It's my son's birthday and he just wanted your chicken soup for his soul" said the doctor flashing a big smile. "I am glad to hear that" replied the hawker. "My birthday wishes to him". Then the doctor who knew the hawker's financial plight handed him 500 dollars. "Whatever for doc?" asked the hawker. "I saved a dying child's life today and I want to share my joy with you. Keep it for your family" the doctor said and drove away. The hawker stood there with tears brimming in his eyes. "I will take my daughter to clinic tomorrow".

As the hawker pushed his cart back home rejoicing of his streak of luck, where the money will be handy for his daughter's medical bill, he was stopped by a noise from a purring cat. The young mother cat had just stepped out after feeding her litter of kittens. She was hungry and weak. The kind hawker immediately took out his packet of rice which he did not eat and served the young mother cat. She gobbled hungrily all the food. Before they parted ways, the cat looked up at the hawker as if she had expressed her deepest gratitude for the food. *The road was humbled by this act of kindness!*

After 30 minutes of pushing his cart, he arrived home. He expected his 3 lovely children would be fast asleep as he arrived home. Just as gloomy as the night was earlier, his wife greeted him with loud sobs and heart wrenching cries. The hawker found out that Anna had an episode of seizure due to her high fever which resulted to her death. The news was heartbreaking for the hawker who had slogged all day long for the family. "Why did I have to go through this" he cried unstoppably. *The road acknowledged his pain at the deepest level!*

Highly Commended: Ferry Road

Daniel Harden

Colour rising in his cheeks, he stumbled past his road's tall, brown-brick Edinburgh houses, tripped over and almost ruined a pot of blue-pink hydrangeas outside of a flower stall (repeating apologies to the concerned woman at the till, as he continued to walk).

Pulling out his cracked phone, he saw that, horrifically, Amir had already replied: "No worries. It was nice meeting you." two thumbs up emojis. Matis wanted to push over the table he was walking past.

His ears were now entirely red, and his surroundings had begun to blur and warp in front of him. Matis walked on, staring right back at the bemused pedestrians ahead of him. He had known in his mind, if not his heart, that this was always how these things ended, but it didn't make anything about the disappointment softer. Perhaps he would never learn.

"You have - 1 new voicemail from - Amir Bukhari. To listen, press-" "Hi, it's Amir. I just wanted to say, I...genuinely don't hold anything against you. Anyway, I thought there'd be no harm in asking, so here it is - I saw this poster the other day, for a local 'Pride' march that's happening next Friday, and I didn't want to go alone, and I wondered if you wanted to come, as friends. That's all. If not...I get it." An under-the-breath swear was cut off by the dial tone. Amir had been at the back of Matis's mind for days. They had been in the local restaurant, on the terrace overlooking his street, and to put it bluntly, Matis had abandoned the date with Amir halfway through, after paying for both of them, at least.

It took him seven hours after receiving the voicemail to reply, and he had to do it at 3am, barely conscious. He gave a cursory glance at Amir's picture, him with his cat, his curly brown hair. He dialled the number quickly.

"Yes! Let me know when. Cheers." He dropped his phone to his chest, feeling his heart pounding against it.

The sky was clear, except for the occasional cloud drifting slowly against the sky, and a procession of rainbows was advancing through the streets of Edinburgh, against the backdrop of a tall, grassy mountain in the distance, and the odd quaint-looking stone-brick house. Matis looked in the mirror, trimming his salt-and-pepper beard. He slowly smiled, even as his heart thumped in his throat. Meticulously, he combed his hair, the same colour as his beard, and brushed it into a side part, into what he hoped was smart. It wasn't advertised as a formal event, on the poster Amir had told him about in a local cafe, but it never hurt anyone to look presentable.

Placing the comb back on his table, his eyes fell back to the tattered photograph of his road - Ferry Road - from thirty years ago, when he first came to Edinburgh from Vilnius. It was tattered and torn from handling; he had printed it out and carried it with him everywhere when he first got his current flat purchase confirmed. That road, once a dream, had become the stage of his life. He remembered the excitement from his little brother when he saw, the badgering with questions, the joy. Matis felt a lump form in his throat, looking away.

Today, he kept it in his most expensive frame. Whenever he had a bad day - such as yesterday, and the road he called home took on an air of monotony, he just had to look at that photograph, and that joy came flooding back. It kept him grateful.

To the side he saw Amir, leaning against the third column underneath the arches on the side of the road, where they had agreed to meet. He looked as effortlessly confident as usual, in a way Matis was envious of - leaning against the pillar looking into the distance - but there was a fear in his eyes, the only time he had ever seen in months.

"Amir!" His expression lifted greatly, as he saw Matis approach the column.

"You look very dapper!" Amir grinned, looking down at Matis's blazer, shirt and tie. "I feel extremely underdressed."

"Well, one of us had to make the effort. Show that we cared."

Amir looked around. Every person in the crowd seemed like they knew who they were and what they were doing, grouped together with their friends. A hint of nervousness returned to his face. "So, what do we do, just *walk* with everyone?"

"I think that's the idea. First, though, I have a gift for you. It cost me a whole pound, so you'd better appreciate it." He drew from his pocket two small, slightly bent flags, a striped rainbow next to a triangle. Matis held one of the two out to Amir, who looked at it, and then at Matis, like he had just taken out from his pocket a fist-sized emerald, and handed it to him.

For the first time Matis had ever seen, there were tears. Wordlessly, he pulled Matis into a hug.

"I wish I had met you when I was eleven." "We've met now. I think that's just as good."

Amir extended a hand. A pang of adrenaline. "Platonically. Of course." He added, smiling dryly. Letting the feeling remain, Matis took it, and they began to march together.

The day passed by quickly, the crowd advancing through Matis's road under string-lights, past church spires and bookshop fronts, past supermarkets and restaurants. growing throughout the day, advancing as one unified group. It was as the population of Ferry Road had come out from hiding. For months, the street had felt saturated with greys, but the sun was shining today, and the street was filled with life and colour for what felt like the first time since he first arrived, stars in his eyes.

Frank and Amir began the march on the outskirts of the gathering, and by the evening they were in the centre of the advancing crowd, flags waved high above their heads. When the day was over, they walked home together, under the soft starlight, at that time in the day when everything is coloured in blue, with strokes of yellow that glinted on the pavement, lined window-sills, and glimmered on drainpipes. The memory would transform Ferry road forever.

Amir's bedroom felt suffused with warmth against the cold of the street. The walls were covered in posters of Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and several more covered close to every inch of one wall - and opposite, one rock guitar and one acoustic, both peppered with stickers. Sketchbooks and mugs piled up precariously on chairs and shelves. Matis imagined, amused, that Amir's bedroom hadn't changed much since he was a teenager, more than thirty years ago.

"Come on, I'll teach you guitar." Matis sat next to him, as he strummed it, turning each peg and plucking each string until the correct note resounded. Each peg, intricately decorated wood, creaked gently as Amir turned it. Matis saw that he had calluses on his left hand, on the same finger as an engraved silver ring set with a black opal. Fragments and specks of colour glowed and disappeared as Amir moved his hand, purples, blues, reds, glinting in the light.

Amir, to the right of Matis, took his left palm in his hand, and gently positioned Matis's fingers into place. Matis stared intently at the top string. "There. Try strumming that." The strings rang out with a pleasant major chord. "You're a natural!" Amir grinned widely, and looked at him. He looked very impressed and proud, more than was deserved.

Amir went on, but Matis wasn't listening. Amir's ring sparkled and shifted as he pressed his fingers to the fretboard. Mercurial scales of blue, red, purple, orange, yellow, briefly glinted in the light before vanishing, or flashed across the surface of the jewel as Amir artfully moved his fingers. He looked like a classical work of art in the low light, with his curls, and his look of gentle concentration.

“Amir?”

Amir looked up.

“Listen. I... haven’t properly apologised to you for what happened on the date. I just wanted to say to you, properly, that I am sorry. It wasn’t mature to do.”

“Hey, listen, guilt is a useless emotion.” The trees rustled in the wind.

“It’s not that. I have feelings for you.” Silence.

Amir said nothing. The panic hit Matis like a flood into a village from a burst dam.

Matis’s speech was getting more and more shaky. “But, you deserve someone who isn’t constantly unsure. I don’t even feel like I can trust any of my own judgements or past actions. At the very least, you deserve someone who can kiss you in public-”

“Matis!”

Amir held Matis’s face in his hands, and kissed him next to the window. Ferry world and the world beyond seemed to dissolve. The black opal glittered in the headlights of a passing car, the colours blazing and fading on Amir’s finger, against Matis’s cheek.

Commended: The Path

Allison Xu

Zing! Zing! Acelin was sharpening his sword in short, bitter strokes. Each slash made a strident, high-pitched sound, grinding against my ears. I knew the day was coming. The day he would kill me, the king of the Qrovian kingdom.

In the centuries of being a king, I'd seen it all: the good days and the bad days, the days of glory and the days of stringency, the days of triumph and the days of loss. But no other day had made my heart ache, almost bleed, like now.

I stepped in front of the massive copper-framed mirror and my aged reflection stared at me. My once bright red-golden scales were dull and faded. My wings, which used to be a symbol of vigor and eminence, were weather-beaten and covered with scars and wounds, already losing the ability to fly.

I had to admit I was an old dragon now.

Then, Acelin's youthful face surfaced in my mind. As the kingdom's most distinguished knight, he was also the strongest human I had ever seen, broad and hefty. Acelin was a master of swordsmanship, his blade never missing any opponent he targeted. His bravery and victories won him the highest honors and numerous cheers and applause. But slowly, the humility in his eyes morphed into conceit, then greed for power.

One evening, I overheard him speaking to one of his warriors, "Soon, the crown of Qrovian will belong to me! Those old dragon limbs don't stand a chance against the wrath of my sword." His harsh cackle sliced through the air.

A chill raced down my back and brought a wrenching sorrow. I couldn't believe those words were from my dear Acelin.

The following days, I thought about taking action before he made any move. I

could've thrown him into the dungeon for life or banished him to a distant desert, but I didn't. I still had a flicker of hope that Acelin didn't mean it.

But now, the shrill of his sword scraping against the rock warned me that I could be wrong.

It was a sleepless night for me. Probably for him too. The sky outside was pitch-dark, clumps of clouds obscuring the moon. The wind swished through the pine branches as if whispering a long-lost story.

The next morning, I heard a knock at the door. I was greeted by Acelin's steel-gray eyes with a savage look in them that registered a readiness to kill, his right hand on the grip of the sword at his waist.

Before Acelin said anything, I suggested in a gentle voice, "Acelin, it's a beautiful morning. Why don't we go on a walk like we used to?"

A mix of confusion and hesitation fled across his face before he replied, "...certainly."

We wound our way along a dirt path heading into the forest. An earthy smell, a blend of mud and wet leaves, hung in the mist around us. We passed a cluster of cottonwoods whose tops were almost tangled with each other. Under their outstretched branches were scattered rocks, jagged and bulky, except for a dove gray rock which was flat and smooth. We stopped in front of that rock. I hunched over to run my talon along its damp, cool surface.

"Years ago, I found a crying human baby wrapped in a blanket here. I didn't know what to do; I'd never come across anything like that. But I couldn't leave him out here in the

forest, so I brought him to the castle. I'm glad I made that decision..." I peered at Acelin, whose eyes were fixed on the rock, and added, "...because that baby was you, Acelin."

His breaths sounded heavier. "Thank you for your kindness." His voice was tight and low, and his hand still clenched around the sword grip.

We strolled forward on the path now lined with wildflowers and shrubs, our steps pounding on the leaf-strewn ground like drumbeats. The path led us out into a clearing, where canopies of willow trees encircled an expanse of tall grass.

"It was right here, where I trained you to become a swordsman. You were skinny and short, unlike me, a giant dragon. But you had talent. I always believed in you, even when you doubted yourself." I chuckled. "But look at you now! All of the training paid off."

Acelin stepped forward, scanning the clearing. For a long moment, he stood rooted as a balmy breeze stirred his russet-colored hair. A spurt of uncertainty flashed in his eyes despite his effort to settle back to a calm demeanor.

We continued on the path sloping toward a rocky mountaintop. Trees and bushes became scattered, allowing sunlight to spill in and sending us a pleasant feeling of warmth. We reached a meadow dotted with purple snowbell flowers. I slowed my pace and asked, "Do you remember here? This is where you had your accolade when I declared you a knight and bestowed you the kingdom's sacred sword."

Acelin was about to say something but stopped, as if there was a lump lodged in his throat.

"That was the happiest I'd ever seen you. It feels like yesterday. Time flies." My eyes gazed over him while he was lost in thought.

For the rest of the path, we walked in silence until we reached the end, a mossy cliff.

I turned to Acelin and broke the silence. "Acelin, you need to know that I'm willing to give you everything I have. I know you've wanted my crown for a long time and I'm the only obstacle in your way." My voice slightly trembled but I kept it steady. "Don't stain your sword. I can jump off here myself." I managed a weak smile. "You have my blessings."

I stepped to the edge and closed my eyes, saying my last goodbye, when I felt Acelin's arms wrap around me.

"No, don't go! Your Majesty, I don't want you to die." He let the words sink in. "I wouldn't be who I'm today if it weren't for you." He choked between words, tears glinting in his eyes. "Forgive me."

I embraced him in my veined wings. A moment felt like centuries. Then, I said, "Let's go home."

Commended: Dark Angel
Lucy McAleese

“The Angel of Death”. That’s me. 300 years of rescuing humans from earth and no one learned my name. No one asked. When I bring them home with me He locates an eternal stay for them, either with him or to be unruly. I’ve never seen where the latter go, I’m too afraid to ask. I’ve stayed curious, silent all these years.

Everyone expects a pitchfork, some even pray for my “evil” to take them away, but most beg. They beg senselessly. Sometimes I wonder what I did to Him to deserve it. Why do I have the worst role in the kingdom? Why must I endure every “I’m not ready”, every cry and plead? Their words echo every day, through and through. Each return to earth gets tougher but I don’t dare refuse. I feel Him glare down at me occasionally like my puppeteer. I have no choice but to obey.

“John” He tells me. Commands, “it’s John next, bring him back to me”. And I go. John was described to me as “a wilting man”. Rumour has it, his nurse thinks he’s on the brink of death but she refuses to tell his daughter. Yesterday was his 49th birthday. He spent the day with just his daughter and a small cake, buttercream frosting, a tulip iced on top, one candle. His wife’s favourite flower was a purple tulip. I took her years ago, the same day his daughter, Lily, was born. I cried and begged not to take her from John, but He has final say. Ever since, he’s been a fragment of the man he was, with only Lily to live for.

Lily’s a sweet young girl, on the edge of 23. She’s been working towards her nursing degree. Watching her father’s health deteriorate from grief motivated her, but it destroyed the poor girl. It’s my fault, I remind myself every morning and night. I killed three people that day, an entire family destroyed. “A life for a life” I’ve been told. I wish I could be the one to create it.

I’ve always kept an eye on John, particularly lately. I’ve watched the wrinkles consume his face, he’s been aging abnormally, appearing a man 30 years his senior. Like Lily, he’s kind, acts brave for her, buys her tulips on her birthday but never tells her why.

Standing under John’s porchlight, I almost call it quits for the night, when he arrives home at 9pm with a small plastic bag of pastries. It’s a Saturday night and he always makes Lily breakfast on a Sunday. She tells him it’s unnecessary, that she can cook for herself but he insists, saying she needs the strength for her studies. I catch him under the first glimmer of the night’s moon- it’s a full moon tonight.

“I’m sorry to catch you like this John”.

“Who are you?” He questions, with his hand already extended to shake my own.

“I’m the Angel of Death.”

“Is that your name, son?” John’s hazel eyes meet mine. It’s a November night and he’s visibly shaking.

“It’s Damon, can we go inside?”

With little caution, he unlocks the door. For the first time in all these years, I notice a golden locket wrapped around his neck, ‘always’ engraved on the outside. I wonder how it neglected my attention for decades. With the direction of his frail hand, displaying two matching

wedding bands, with the smallest on his pinky, I enter his home for the first time in almost 23 years.

"I caught a glimpse of you when you took her." I could practically see the glass shatter in his eyes as he fell to tears, broken windows to his soul.

"I follow directions, John. It's not my decision." I'm losing track of which of us I'm trying to convince.

"Me or Lily?" I can feel his anxious desperation fill the room.

"You, John." It disappears.

"But it's not your time".

"If He wills it". Something about John's acceptance of his fate causes a tear to form in the corner of my left eye, a feeling I'm not familiar with.

"John, I cannot take you from Lily".

"Damon, is- is it His will?" The crack in his voice is only solidifying my decision.

For the first time in 300 years, I'm going home alone tonight. The road is long, drawn out, and then suddenly I arrive. As I cross the golden stairs,
"Where is John?" His voice haunts and echos.

"At home." I pray that He cannot sense my fear.

.....

"Where am I?" I scream but my voice falls flat.

"Isn't this what you wanted?" He hollers "To make your own decisions? You're king here".

I woke up beside a scepter and a throne, my skin dyed red. John by my side, forever separated from his loving wife. It takes a while to adjust my eyes and come to senses, but soon I notice them- the outcasts, the unruled.

I am king of the unknown.

Commended: The Road of Life

Jake Zarek

Elapse road has one hundred houses, they continue on one long row right down the middle of the city.

Each one looks different, but feels the same. They feel the same in their paint, which is cheap and peeling. They feel the same on the inside of each window, where the sun beats down and heats wooden floors, enveloping you in the winter and saturating you in the summer. Each house has a dim light that glows from within, these run on batteries, that are slowly burning down.

A person has a house at the start of the street, it has a number on its front, nailed into wood that has begun to splinter, zero. The person is moving about their day, they shift their boxes and their furniture. They water their plants and watch movies on their television.

They are normal.

One day they came out onto the porch, and sat there, in the corner there was a rocking chair. Sat in it wrapped in a coat and scarf, was an old man. His skin was leathery from years in the sun, and his face was marred with long wrinkles, deep crevices lining his eyes and forehead. His brow was dusted with wispy white hair, and his head was bare. He looked up at them with deep blue eyes that seemed like wells. They were depths of life and stories. But they could also see an air of sadness in them, gliding beneath the surface. They could see the crushing nature of a man whose life was meant to be something grander than it was, but instead he stood at the end of it shortchanged and spent.

Though they had never seen the man before, they felt they knew him, not in memory but in feel, they could feel the comfort he gave. So when they spoke they did it in a soft and respectful way "Hello, sir." They had said, stepping forward gently. "What are you doing here on my porch, could you be lost?"

The old man looked up at him with a soft smile that crinkled the corners of his eyes. "No m'boy, I'm not lost, I came here to speak to you."

The man frowned, "I don't know you."

The old man smiled wider. "No, you don't, not yet." he paused. "But I know you, and I have for some time and will for some time more." he gestured next to him at the steps leading off the porch. "Come sit, you may call me Tempus, I find it most apt."

The Man frowned at the Tempus' strangeness, but found himself sitting anyway. "How do you know me?" the man asked, looking up at Tempus.

Tempus smiled with soft eyes that peeked out from his white brow. "I know all the people here m'boy, don't worry..... I am a stranger to no one" and the man oddly knew it to be true, though he sat with this man for the first time, they felt like two old friends.

"Why are you here?" The man asked.

"I'm here just to watch." Tempus said with a smile. "Watch what?" The man asked incredulously. "Everything." Tempus said softly.

"What is everything?" the man said.

“Everything is everything m’boy. I sit here to watch all, I watch the blade of grass sheltered under a sprouting flower. I watch that flower, stretch up to the heavens. I watch the bee in multicoloured fluff, stripping its pollen. I see the small bird eat the bee, fluttering with joyous chirps. I see the small bird, and the great eagle snatching it out of the sky with hooked talons, and tearing it apart in sprays of crimson blood. I see the great ocean, so great and vast in its unbridled majesty, heaving and dipping with great waves that crash upon the shores. I see the storms in the sky crackling with liquid fire and booming with drums of thunder, lashing the lands below with vicious rain.”

The man sat there stunned. “What else do you see?”

“I see the stars, thousands of them, like salt dusted across the sky, I see their broiling nebulas and fiery white dwarves. I see the abysses of black holes, drinking in galaxies. I see the infinity of space and the grandeur of the universe.” The man paused. “But I also see you, though you are small in my sight, I see you every day in your house, and in your car, and at your job, and in your house once more. I hear you when you say your dreams to empty rooms, and I watch when you achieve them, or not.”

The man nodded slowly. “Is that all...”

Tempus nodded “Yes and no, but we are out of time.”

The man looked down at his hands which were now rough and wrinkled, swollen and wracked with arthritis. He looked back at his house, which was peeling and crumpling, and the batteries on its lights were running low. The numbers on his door were falling off, and they read eight seven.

He looked back at Tempus who hadn’t moved from his chair.

“So that’s it?” He sputtered. Glancing around desperately. “But I haven’t done anything.”

Tempus smiled sadly, climbing up out of his chair and taking the man by the hand, he gently pulled him up and carried him indoors with startling strength. He took him all the way to the bedroom and laid him down gently onto the soft bed. “I didn’t do anything.” The man croaked voice coarse.

Tempus sighed “No, you spent your time listening to and looking for me, waiting for me to finish my tale, not knowing that when mine ends you cannot start yours.” Tempus placed a hand on the man’s shoulder. “I’m sorry.” He whispered “that’s your only one.” At that the batteries in the lights ran out, the numbers fell from the door, and the whole house and the man with it, crumbled into nothingness.

Category: Poems

1st Place: Ode to the Road Toad

Martha Blue

your slit-split back is writ dark against the black death-run tarmac,
grotesquely, the puddled rain that encircled as you died denies you float away nor sink;
your greyed splayed limbs harmonised with the greyed mid-road lines,
O' toad,
who purpled rough your not-tough-enough skin?
who carved your green grin into the wet-reflected road sheen?
did a cat play with you and pin
you to the death-bed where you now rest your bloated head in your water-coffin?
no: ribs that will no more rise and fall as bouncing summer rains
are crushed against a blackened smoke-road; toad,
your legs will no longer feel the rhythms of dancing grasses,
you will no longer lean to, poised, ready to plop-flop and drop into a smoothing,
moody-skied, mirrored pool;
please pardon, toad, the blindness of the road-careless,
whose pointless lights are as fireflies that dance fierily
against your natural-green head,
designating your death in Nature.

2nd Place: The Invisible Road

Lydia Pannett

The cranes soar over the wetlands
Necks outstretched, long legs dangling
Unison calls uniting the group
As they take flight in a perfect arrow

Past oakwoods, fields and pastures
Fringed with reedbeds and lamenting willows
Branches waving, mirroring the strokes of wings
Swooping and diving and dancing
Through the penetrating cold

Their bugling and trumpeting calls echo
Around the peaks and troughs of the mountains
Silently watching the ancient migration

Wings beat on the pathway unseen
Amidst the creaking and rattling of their sociable songs
Songs that compete to dominate the still air

The setting of the weary winter sun
Guides them to their destination
Red crowns highlighted against the metallic sky
Wings slowing their rhythm as they near the ground

Agile legs skitter on the virgin grass
Graceful tail feathers droop and brush the earth
In the whistling wind as the flock congregates
For their final roost on the invisible road

3rd Place: Road Trip

Allison Xu

Sail against the hot wind and dodge
the pinch of rush hour. Tires trace strokes
stretching freely, a rhythmic expression
of hearts untethered. Piney woods
on both sides fleet by in a blur
like the old books we thumb through.

Dusky sun widens into a blooming zinnia,
leaning down to kiss the mountain-scarred horizon.
When the path flattens out into a grassy field,
we drink in the breath of evening air. In the near
distance, deer saunter by and sate themselves
on holy berries and puddle water.

Free from time's constraints,
we turn back to the young kids
who sneak out to the backyard, waiting
for darkness, waiting for stars.

Highly Commended: The Road To Loss

India Dale-Hill

I'm stranded on the empty road, cold and alone.
Surely you haven't left me to the mercy of the unknown.
Open heart and open mind,
we were to have all the happiness we could possibly find.
Protector, companion, the one who would never leave,
Please don't tell me I was just being naive.

I never failed to give you the benefit of the doubt
which you in turn never failed to discount.
Keeping me in obeisance,
abusing my patience with endless complacence,
Even so, your failings are little compared to mine
as I have been broken by a man with no spine.

Is there truly nothing that can make our paths converge,
no hope that from the depths of betrayal we can re-emerge?
Do you know I'd do it again, all the pain,
if we could just sit down and be there together again.
There must be something I can do,
a way back to you and everything else that I once knew.

I'm starting to question if there is anything to save,
or if love ever really existed, at least in the way I crave.
Holding on for the both of us made me feel so weak.
If I was really cherished would I still feel this bleak?
Every hour without you weights heavy on my heart,
But perhaps you are right - we are better apart.

It was glamorized,
but I was polarized by the idea that I could be prioritized.
A girl like me saw in a boy like you
protector, companion, but instead you just withdrew.
I'm finding my feet, finding the life that I'm owed.
I can survive this bend in the road.

Commended: The Road of Regret
Scarlett Siva

'She's so far away from me'

That's what I said back then,
When all the roads and homes between us,
Were the biggest reasons to be apart

To see,
To have,
To hold,
but it was never enough for us, was it?

And now, she's too far away
from me, in the clouds she can finally call home,
A one way ticket to heaven because
hell could not have taken someone so precious,

But I'm left here on the
road I had no time to travel on back then,
It's only now that I seem to spend hours
pacing it when you're gone,

So with tears, I will walk these roads and lanes,
These paths and bridleways day after day for you
so that you can see just how much I regret
not walking on them for you when you were here.

The R C Sherriff Trust is an independent charitable trust, established through the terms of the Will of playwright, R C Sherriff. It has been promoting and developing the arts in the Borough of Elmbridge, for 30 years. Further details about the Trust can be found at www.rcsherrifftrust.org.uk

Elmbridge Borough Council's Arts Development seeks to increase opportunities for people to engage in the arts, culture and heritage of our Borough, either individually or through partnerships, such as those with the R.C. Sherriff Trust that make Elmbridge Primary Schools Festival possible. With the aim of engaging residents, Elmbridge Borough Council's Art Development supports arts organisations and presents arts-based activities that improve the physical and mental health of people who live and work in Elmbridge.

