

Byron



Byron College

THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Voice

ISSUE 5 • KEY STAGE 4 • APRIL 2022



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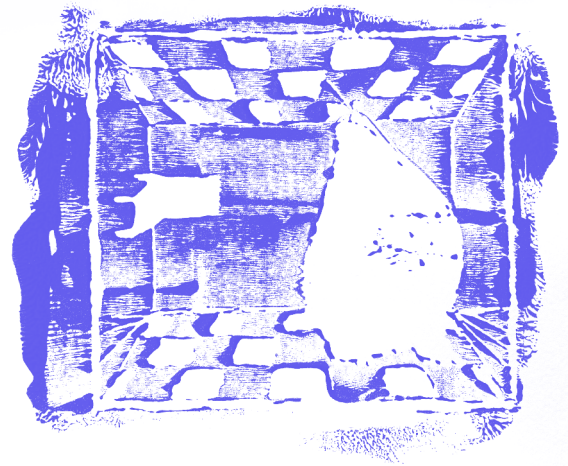
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ALL WORK AND NO PLAY?

HOW TO HAVE A GREAT EASTER BREAK

MESSAGES FROM THE KEY STAGE 4 STUDENT LEADERS



From multicoloured Easter eggs and bluish-pink bunnies to endlessly revising upon pages and pages of work, the Easter Break is a time of blossom and enjoyment. I myself have fallen into the trap of a limitless revision schedule but seeing the cloudless, sunlit skies already here, take advantage and take a stroll to find your neighbourhood's secret Easter treasures! You never know: you may find a rabbit springing across the field of verdant grass!

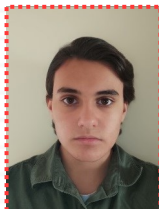
Pro Tip: when revising, have a bowl of chocolate eggs next to you... It helps!

JOHN ROY AMURAO, STUDENT AMBASSADOR, YEAR 11A

For those of us that have our exams coming up, this is a very stressful period of time; however, it is important to remember that the best way to reduce stress is being well prepared. Remember that you need to spend time on some productive revision, while also not underestimating the significance of a good rest.

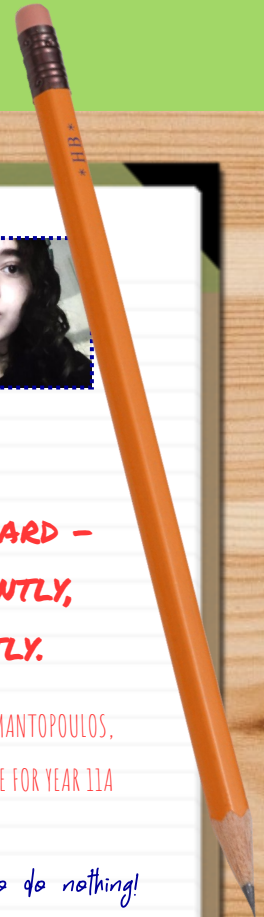
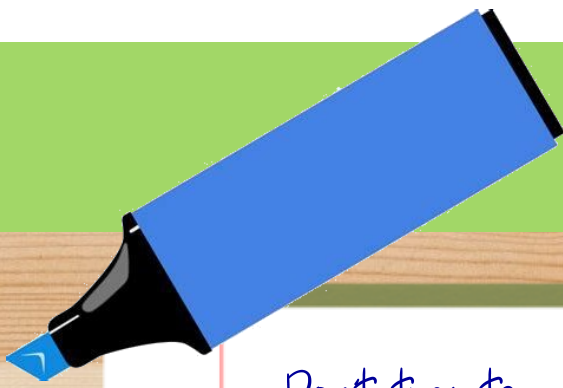


ANDREAS MICHAS, STUDENT AMBASSADOR, YEAR 11B

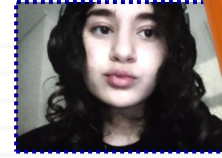


You might think the key to success is work, work and work. Actually yes, but it is important to rest and stop piling up information; instead, make sure you understand and are up to date with your lessons, without stressing too much. Studying is important but so is rest. Have a lovely Easter.

PETROS BOURKOULAS, FORM REPRESENTATIVE FOR YEAR 10B



Don't stress too much over exams.
Make sure to take care of yourself!



JOUD ABUSALAH, FORM REPRESENTATIVE FOR YEAR 10A



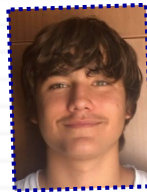
**WORK SMART, NOT HARD -
BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY,
WORK CONSISTENTLY.**

ADAM PAPADIAMANTOPOULOS,
FORM REPRESENTATIVE FOR YEAR 11A

Taking a rest day is one of the most important things to consider. I believe you should make the most of these rest days and spend it on taking care of yourself both mentally and physically. However, do not forget to have a balance between rest days and productive work days!

YUMNA ABUSALAH, FORM REPRESENTATIVE FOR YEAR 11B

As important as work is, relaxing is always prioritised during the holidays, right?



Take on a new hobby, try to find a good work-play balance and make sure you recharge your batteries before returning!



DANAI GEORGIADOU, PERSEUS HOUSE CAPTAIN, YEAR 11B

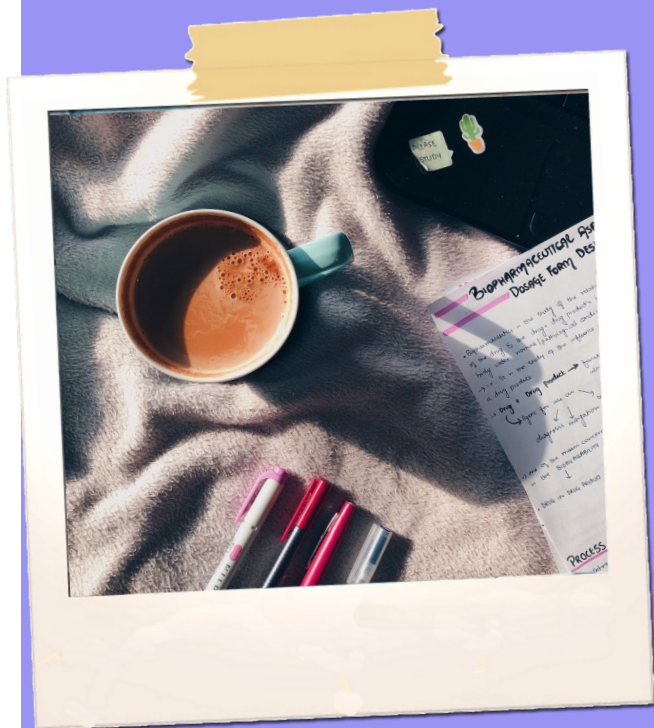
Don't be afraid to do nothing! Boredom has been scientifically proven to help sprout creativity, so don't feel guilty about it, and spend your time with your loved ones—of course do a bit of revision, but it's Easter. Take a break!

ORION FEURTADIO, PERSEUS DEPUTY HOUSE CAPTAIN, YEAR 11B

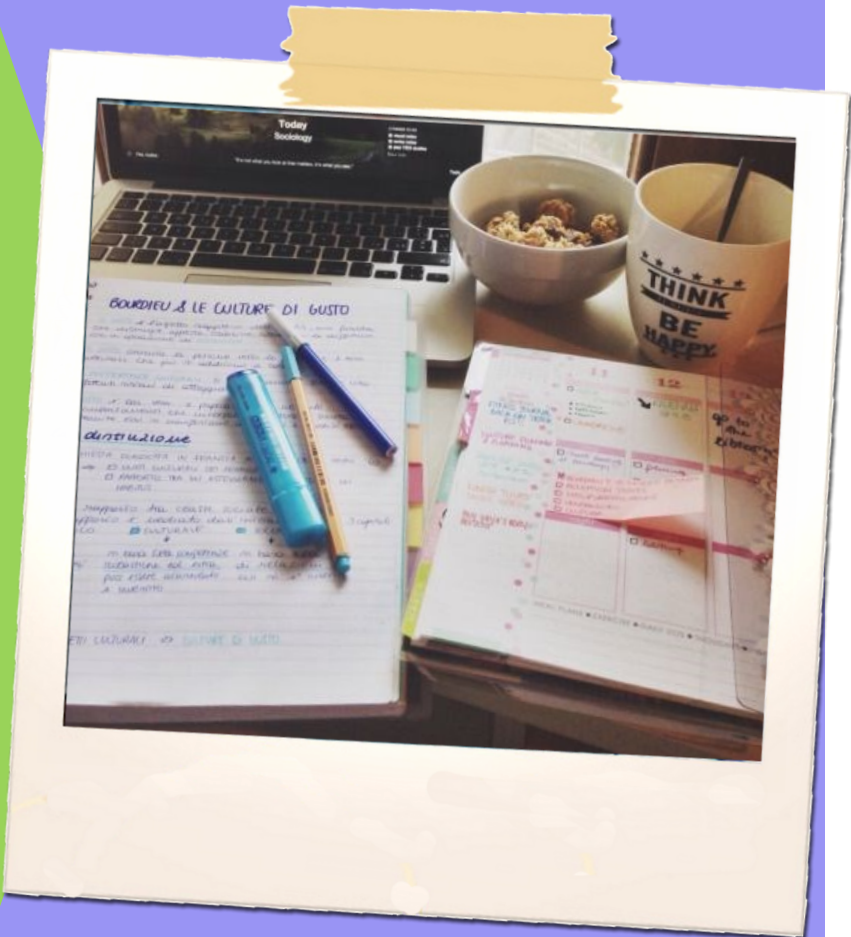


A VIEW FROM THE

SIXTH



FORM



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SIXTH FORMER

8:00 Wakey, wakey, eggs and bakey. I crawl off the bed and don the nearest clothes. Fashion is but a social construct that pales in importance compared to the rest of the coming day.

9:00 Three periods of Maths in a row first thing in the day! This can't be real. It almost feels as if I'm in an alternate dimension. This would imply the existence of a reality much less dreadful.

12:00 The prophesied Free Period. It is upon us. My mates and I must now scheme a plan with which to challenge (read: grumble about) the latest major school change that we consider an attack on our collective free will.

16:00 They say learning never ends outside the classroom. This rings especially true in the life I live: a life riddled with past papers and the studying of entire books multiple times over, all for the next day. There once was room in my life for *viedo gaems*, I think they were called, but alas, I remember not how long ago that was.

23:00 What should normally be slumber time is now merely a reminder of the society we live in. A society where sleep has become but a myth. A fable dreamt up by the utterly deranged and told to younger children to hide the truth from their pure minds.

03:00 I just went through the strangest dream. Wide awake in a cold sweat, I recall... seeing three upcoming tests. The questions were illegible as I do not know what the real test questions will look like. But then... behind them... was me... a man the height of, like, 30 stories. 'Fee, fi, fo, fum,' he said in a booming voice. 'You are become dumb.' That doesn't even make sense! It doesn't even rhyme properly! What is the meaning of this? I ponder my shattered existence as I return to Dreamland.

NICK CHIONAS, YEAR 13

Appeal for Ukrainian Refugees

The disaster that has unfolded in Ukraine over the past weeks is a major concern for us all both in moral and political terms. Ukrainians are right now not only defending their homeland but also acting as the defenders for values of democracy and freedom around the world.



The humanitarian devastation is already massive: almost 4.5 million people, mostly women and children, have already fled the country, seeking shelter in neighbouring Poland and many other countries. All of these families had homes and livelihoods - and now they have been forced to become refugees.

These families are in dire need of support: material, emotional, financial. To do what we can within our school community, we have launched an appeal to collect goods that are urgently needed, ranging from medical supplies to essential food and hygiene products. Thanks to your help we have now collected 27 boxes' worth of goods, 26 family packs of diapers, and several warm blankets. Thank you very much - *Duzhe diakuiu* - Дуже дякую!

These boxes will be delivered to the Ukraine Aid Centre which is coordinating donations in the Stadium of Peace and Friendship in Peiraius. From there, volunteer drivers are ensuring that the goods reach refugee reception centres at the border with Ukraine.

To every refugee and every individual caught up in this tragic conflict, we would like to say:

We wish you all the best

Бажаємо вам
всього найкращого

Adam Papadiamantopoulos,
Form Representative for Year 11A

ARTIC, LES

WAR AND THE FAILURE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW



Initially I was going to write a piece concerning the importance of law in today's world, with an emphasis on the need for justice that is equitable and consistent. This notion changed on 24 February 2022, when Russia declared war on Ukraine, and we all sat speechless and helpless as we watched the horror unfold before our eyes. We looked at our Ukrainian friend and we could find no words to console him. We felt his absolute anguish at the thought of what his extended family in Ukraine were going through.

Our world may have changed, but how has the world changed for the people in Ukraine? In the capital Kyiv, home to almost three million people, warning sirens blared out as traffic queued to leave the city and crowds sought shelter in metro stations.

Young boys were ready to be called up to fight: it is simply inconceivable.

Several neighbouring countries are preparing to take in many refugees, and some are also expecting Putin's wrath. One is not sure who is next and this, in a world which has attempted to avoid war and conflict, is despicable to say the least.

“This is not how my generation expected the world to be.”

In analysing how Russia goes about promoting its status as a global power at the UN, the concept of international law stands out as Russia's most important narrative. In speech after speech, both Putin and Lavrov have stressed the importance of upholding international law. Lavrov often contrasts this law with an alternative that he maintains the West is promoting to expand Western interests and values; in a 2018 address, for example, he charged: “Today we can trace a tendency to substitute for international law, as we all know it, some kind of ‘rules-based order.’ That is what a series of our creative Western friends call it.”

In that address, Lavrov does not define the rules-based order except to ascribe to it a series of developments that displease Russia. This idea becomes even more ironic and darkly comical as we are witnessing what is happening today. It is evident that we are just pawns in a large chessboard, and we yield to pressure, like that of a

playground bully who threatens to beat one up if they do not part with their lunch money or anything that the bully may feel he wants.

“My heart goes out to the thousands of displaced people, dead children, broken lives.”

Russians and Ukrainians are brothers and in many ways their cultures are interlinked. I question the sentiment of the average Russian regarding the atrocities that Putin is committing. One is hard pressed not to draw a link between the inexplicable atrocities committed by Hitler and Putin's attack, with regard to the total disregard for international law and the principle of a country's sovereignty. After the war, many Germans feigned ignorance regarding the absolute horrors that Hitler and his generals had ordered and committed. They said they did not know. Is it possible that an entire nation was ignorant of what went on in the concentration camps? Were they truly ignorant or did they choose to be, either out of fear or self-gain?

We gasp in horror as the world adopts the attitude of quiet diplomacy: yet quiet diplomacy has never worked and will never work on a bully. They say history repeats itself and again I am forgiven for remembering the Munich Agreement between Chamberlain and Hitler, in which another bully's demand were indulged in the hope that he'd ask for no more.

It is prudent to acknowledge the role of mass blanket propaganda in deceiving the general Russian population. Many Russians are truly unaware of the current unfathomable nightmare in Ukraine. Consider the fact that Russian state TV stations are professing that they are liberating their brother-neighbours from a fascist Nazi

government, and this narrative has been propagated since at least 2014 when the Russian government began its aggression against Ukraine.

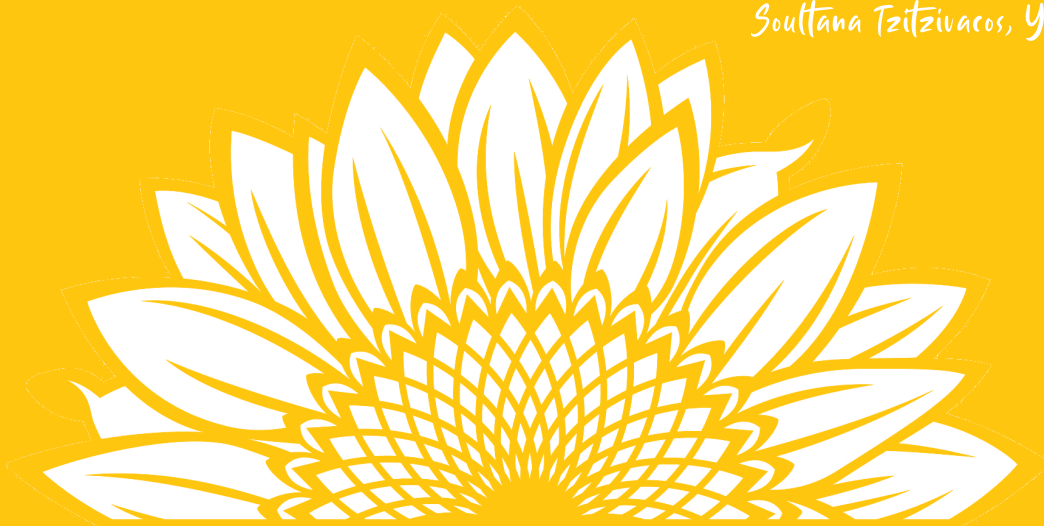
This notwithstanding, thousands of Russians have taken a stand by protesting publicly against their government and in so doing demanding decency regarding Ukraine and at the same time sending a message to the world that their government doesn't represent them. These are the largest protests Russia has seen in a long time, and they are fraught with danger: many protestors have not escaped the government's wrath and have been arrested. As of recently, under a new dispensation, Russian citizens can be sentenced up to fifteen years in prison if they dare call what is happening a 'war' or an 'invasion'. Russian citizens have virtually no freedom to speak about the war, and the last remaining independent media stations such as Dozhd have now been forced to close by this oppressive new law which gags free speech completely. Russians now live in even greater fear than before: while previously there may have been an illusion of free speech, now there isn't even that illusion. They simply get arrested by the hundreds and, as we've seen in recent weeks, thousands – pensioners and children included – hostages to their own government.

One would be mistaken in believing that this is a provoked war between two countries that erupted due to some act of aggression. It is a despicable war of a power-hungry politician who seems to have cowed the world into submission and tacit enabling via insufficient action. The question arises: how many thousands of people must be sacrificed by him in order for this act of terror to grasp the world's attention?

My heart goes out to the thousands of displaced people, dead children, broken lives.

This is not how my generation expected our world to be. •

Soultana Tzitzivacos, Year 11A



THE REJECTION OF MODERN MEDICINE

A MODERN

AFFLICTION

Vaccines are one of the miracles of modern science which have enabled us to move beyond those days where you could die or be crippled for life by any number of curable diseases. Yet people still question the validity and success of these miracles of modern medicine. 'Anti-vax' sentiment now exists, fuelled only by the assertions of one unethical doctor, Andrew Wakefield, in 1997, who suggested a completely spurious link between autism and the MMR vaccine – a vaccine which has saved millions of lives.

The smallpox vaccine was invented in 1896 by British physician Edward Jenner. He was the first to publish evidence for its effectiveness, yet smallpox was only completely eradicated in 1979. By then it had already killed between 300 and 500 million people.

As the results of vaccinations proved successful, in 1974 the World Health Organisation adopted the goal of universal vaccination by 1990 to protect children against preventable diseases such as measles, tetanus and tuberculosis. Whilst wealthy nations saw a dramatic decline in measles cases with the introduction of the vaccine by the 1980s, less than half of children in developing countries were vaccinated.

They cite freedom of choice as a basis for a valid argument against vaccination; but this is not an absolute freedom, and needs to be weighed against other individuals' right not to be infected.

Even though massive polio epidemics were unknown before the twentieth century, the disease has been responsible for paralysis and death throughout human history. Polio had already been an endemic pathogen for millennia when severe epidemics began to emerge throughout Europe from the 1900s. By 1910, epidemics had become commonplace across the developed world, particularly in cities during the summer months. Polio would paralyse or kill more than half a million people every year during its height in the 1940s and 1950s. The polio

vaccine was miraculously developed by American physician Jonas Salk in the early 1950s. The reduction in polio rates and its devastating effect on people's lives was dramatic, and the entire globe exhaled a sigh of relief.

This gave rise to the term 'preventive medicine' which refers to measures aimed at preventing disease in individuals or communities as a whole and is an important aspect of what is more commonly referred to as public health. Preventive medicine plays a vital role in preventing disability and mortality, in addition to reducing the risk of disease.

Since when have we become so selfishly dogmatic that we believe our individual rights are paramount and overrule everybody else's rights?

The sad truth is that, years after these deadly epidemics traumatised communities, leaving such a trail of human devastation in their wake, the horrors of these diseases have been all but forgotten. Indeed, with the help of Google and unscrupulous disinformation online, some individuals are doubting the monumental contribution to science and human progress that vaccines have made. Despite drinking, vaping, smoking, polluting, and having a general disregard for our environment, these individuals actually question the validity and effectiveness of the Covid vaccines. They cite freedom of choice as a basis for a valid argument against vaccination; but this is not an absolute freedom, and needs to be weighed against other individuals' right not to be infected. Since when have we become so selfishly dogmatic that we believe our individual rights are paramount and overrule everybody else's rights? By getting vaccinated, we fulfil our social obligations as citizens of the world by helping to protect our fellow citizens, creating communities in which both the non-vulnerable and vulnerable are safe. These concepts – of social responsibility, the collective good, and living as part of a wider whole – seem to have been forgotten by those who decided that their freedom of choice is more important than another's freedom to live. •

Isabella Tzitzivacos, Year 11A

Joud Abusalah, Year 10A



THE CLIMATE CRISIS:

THE WALL THAT WE HAVE BUILT

I'm here today to share a story – not my story, but an experience we've all lived through. When I was ten, my friend and I made a decision to pick up all the cigarettes and plastic litter from the filthy ground and throw it in the bin. At ten, I wondered what I could do to solve the issue. To my dismay, I discovered that it wasn't that simple.

The climate crisis is like a wall we all build. Every brick in that wall represents a decision we make that harms the planet. When I was ten, my friend and I made a different decision: we decided to remove one brick, a consequence of someone else's action. Over the years, we have all built a wall: however much we want to overcome it as individuals, we can't do it without ladders. The government mustn't be an enemy but an ally to the cause. Without ladders to help us reach the top of the wall, we'll collapse over one another. When it acts harmfully, the government also adds mortar to the wall, making its destruction even more difficult; society follows the example that the government sets.

The government has the power to ban items that harm our planet, such as plastic straws and non-biodegradable plastics. The government is also able to promote green energy at a massive scale, as well as make strides to educate citizens on the climate crisis. Even then, the government is not doing

enough for the planet – especially when the people in charge are receive financial support from fossil fuel companies.

Due to governments' failures around the world on this issue, many individuals have taken it upon themselves to motivate others by organising marches in city centres, reducing their meat consumption, avoiding excess consumerism and recycling whenever possible.

When I was ten, I wondered if anyone would have picked up the litter on the ground if I hadn't. Today I wonder if the government is the one making the most significant change to this wall that closes us in all around, or the individual – but the answer is never that simple. If there is no mortar, there is no wall; without ladders we are stuck, and without individuals taking action, we can't reach the other side, with the wall of indecision and selfishness finally in pieces at our feet. •



A single grain of rice can tip the scale.

Piano for DUMMIES



Nowadays, more and more people tend to appreciate the piano because of its brilliant sound. Often, children are forced by their parents to learn how to play, whereas others enjoy it as a hobby. Whatever your experience, many people struggle with how to start and what to learn. The following introduction and advice on how to start playing piano might help you. Remember, though: there are no shortcuts to anything!

In order to have fun with the piano, some basic knowledge is necessary. The piano is a keyboard instrument, and it has the reputation of the 'King of Musical Instruments'. It consists of white and black keys: the more you go to the right, the higher the sound. With that in mind, you can try to play something on your own – though the sound might be awful and unbearable. This is normal, of course. This highlights the role of the music score which is the 'soul' of the piano. While improving your speed in reading music isn't easy, with persistent practice one can certainly improve. Here are some techniques which can help you:

Have a brief look at the score before you start playing

This is useful because it will help you to have a general grasp of how the melody will unfold throughout the entire piece. As a result, when you are practising, you will be certain about what you are playing instead of losing confidence due to parts you didn't expect as you go along.

Look more at the score and less at the keys

Staring at the keys is not helpful to become familiar either with the score or the keyboard. Always remember familiarity with the keyboard is embedded in the muscle memory of the fingers.

Let your eyes 'walk' in front of your hands

Many people play in stops and starts because they don't have time to read ahead on the sheet music to see what comes next. To improve the flow of your playing, let your eyes look beyond the current notes on the score to the part that comes next.

Oh, and one last thing: don't forget to trim your nails before you start playing! This is a mistake made by many piano players.

That's all I wanted to talk about. The piano is a wonderful instrument. If you start playing it, you'll see that you'll be able to keep up the passion, confidence and perseverance for it so that it becomes a real companion with the years. •

Michael Wang, Year 10A

CREATIVE



EXPRESS

ION

The Rain Wept

That morning, I awoke with a feeling of strong foreboding in the pit of my chest.

The weather only helped to feed my anxiety. It had been raining cats and dogs since the previous afternoon, the air thick and musky. I decided to ignore my gut instinct – an abominable mistake.

Tick, tock, tick, tock... The clock in my second-period Physics classroom whispered rhythmically. I could not keep my eyes open, it seemed. They began to shut without my consent, and my breathing slowed. ‘Michael, could you at least try to stay awake? Come up here and answer the question on the board for the class.’

Before I could answer I heard a low, faraway crash sound in the distance. Almost inaudible – almost. ‘Miss, did you hear that?’ My voice was not like my own at all, but like scratches on a chalkboard. The sound became louder, and a cold shiver slithered up my spine. A jolt of electricity. My peers’ eyes burning at the back of my skull – I was the only one who had heard it. Once again the sound got louder, only now I realised two things.

First, the sound was not the same I had heard before – now children’s screams also mingled into the distant chaotic cacophony. Second, the sound was not a crash at all: it was banging. Gunshots – one by one. Every time one was heard, new waves of screams began. Despair, clinging to the hope of survival; screaming until their throats shattered into a million glass shreds. Thin streams of perspiration lined my brow, as cold sweat suffocated my being.

As the noise got louder, thoughts started creeping into my mind like haunting ghosts. And then I wondered who the ghosts were. Had anyone died yet? Their bodies cold and lifeless, fighting for one final breath. One final hug from their best friend, one final kiss from their mom, one final lick of affection from their dog, one final memory with their grandmother – my thoughts spiralled.

And then there was nothing.

‘Open the door!’

Banging. Doors loudly crashing open. Thuds. Shrieks. Cries. Yells. Phone calls to parents – last goodbyes. Slowly the school began crumbling into itself, and so did I. Face first on the frigid floor, someone collapsed on top – I was less playing dead, and more hoping to be.

It occurred to me that the body above me was too still – no pulse.

As dead as a doornail.

The rain from this morning kept on booming, unaffected. The rain was weeping with me now, as the police sirens came closer. I was still alive, at least physically. But something told me my mind was as dead as the body on top of mine.

Penny Tritsinis, Year 10A

The dark night covered the sky like a blanket; the soundless wind blew towards me... My hair flew back as I walked. The lunar moon lit up the sky in strands of light piercing through the misty cloud. A dull, icy, gusty night it was. Nothing felt right. All alone.

I had no direction of where I was going, no idea where I was or how I arrived. A bright light appeared, filling the sky like a lamp in an attic – then a sound like an explosion and a vibration in the ground. The moon disappeared, the sky was dark, and the environment was soundless once again. I stared around, wondering, trying to figure out a logical solution.

It came like a thunderstorm from the East: the trees banged against each other, the wind flowed fast against the mountain. A landslide appeared; an avalanche of rocks fell from the cliff, causing dust to descend into the air. I slowly turned downwards. The sea was disturbed, wave after wave crashing against the bay, the boats hitting violently against the marina wall, while alarms went off from cars and roads started to crack. The oak trees fell, dug out from the ground like bombs from fighter planes. Lights appeared in the sky once again, the lunar moon emerged from behind the opaque clouds. An object, rectangular in shape, flew across the sky. Zig-zagging.

The sound it made was like a strong wind, screaming against the sky. The night, once peaceful and soundless, was now violent and uneasy. Trees fell abruptly to the ground, making heavy vibrations. Every bone in my body shook.

The once doleful valley, the once calm river were disrupted from their usual routine. Sirens echoed through the forest.

The sky opened; cold rain sprinkled on the ground. The object had fled. However, the damage it had caused was unimaginable as the moon shone bright over the valley. My reflection was in the sea. The wind had died down, but the rain still sprinkled down. The city was a mess: cars destroyed, buildings collapsed, canals overflowing, roads turned from asphalt to dirt, trees uprooted from the ground, buses stationary and windows shattered. The beautiful city had turned into a war zone. A deadly sight. Not something you want to relive. Not something you can forget easily. Always a memory. Always a nightmare.

Nick Petrou, Year 10A



Time has stood still in Café Antique. Faceless figures come and go while I stay put in a bleak, forgotten corner at the far back of the café, sipping at my espresso; my eyes are hooked on the door. As it opens it lets out a shriek that makes me shiver. Copious amounts of spilled beverage run down my fingertips, burning off cracked, brittle pieces of my once silky-smooth skin. I let out an anguished, desperate cry as I rush towards the bathroom. Judgemental shadows turn to face me as they proceed to elegantly take another elegant sip of their Cherry Sencha tea. Sour. I twist the iron faucet and drops of ice-cold water numb my wounds, drying out drops of vermilion-red blood.

Lifting my lace dress from the damp, flagstone tiles of the bathroom floor, I speed back to my seat, nervous for her arrival; my heels pierce the marble floors with their razor-sharp tips as I go. Disappointment weighs down my heart as I sit back down and watch the waiters hop from one table to the next. A cobweb hangs from the ends of the hand-woven, white tablecloth like a loose string. A spider is my only company as I rock back and forth, meaninglessly.

Boredom. I have already completed the children's activity pack as well as an A3 drawing of Cinderella using a twelve-pack of Crayola. I sigh and look up, towards the ceiling. A dim light hovers over my table, shielding me from the mundane dark grey of the winter sky; the wind floats gently through the single open window on the other side of the store and its bordeaux, velvet curtains dance a graceful waltz. An aged gramophone standing in the centre of the room plays a familiar, yet unrecognisable tune. The sound of the rosewood Chinoiserie clock ticking and ticking and ticking over and over again has taken over my brain.

I have seen four seasons come and go through the foggy glass of the windows. Countless empty espresso cups are now flooding the mahogany table in front of me. Drops of bittersweet beverage drown the tablecloth and sink into the wood. The pungent smell of dried coffee taps on my shoulder every time I doze off. The waiter seems concerned as I call her one more time, for one more coffee. As I open my mouth to order, I hear the distinct sound of the opening door and a familiar gait head towards me. She is here at last.

Ellie Papa, Year 11B

You

It is dark. Not the kind of dark that makes your heart burn with uneasiness but the dark that comes just before the sunrise.

The dark that takes place just before the promised dawn arrives. The wind pierced through my skin and coloured my cheeks red as snowflakes danced gracefully to the owl's lullaby. It is a peaceful night, one that would have you blissfully unaware of the pain from the cold.

The smell of black vanilla, pear and blooming gardenia fills the air, a powdery, pleasant scent staining itself into my memory. The fragrance is so sublime that one finds oneself addicted. I look next to me to see him: his nose is a flushed red colour that matches his cheeks, while his lips are blue and trembling due to the unforgiving weather – and yet he still stays. The silence of serenity covers us both as we stare out over the city. The lights that once were the only source of brightness are now extinguished and the city becomes dull once again. The view from the roof makes the remorseless world seem small and, as the snow covers all streets and corners like a white fur blanket, the intoxicating perfume is now more prominent.

A sudden warmth spread throughout my frozen body: comfort settles in. I look up and see him. His eyes are bright as the constellations that had been strewn all over the night sky. Puffs of air took form as we both exhaled, proving the reality of this moment. Slowly, the sky became suffused with different hues of orange and gold; the Sun's rays kissed my skin; the atmosphere filled with tranquillity. Under the once sad, calamitous sky, we now stood flooded with light.

As he embraced me, I looked into his eyes and felt the fatal sparks. His cheeks stretched and formed a smile while the wind played with his silky hair – all the sorrow and pain that used to be present were gone and replaced with an innocent child-like smile. His arms were irresistibly soft, like a billowing cloud, and in his arms he took the pain away, even if only for a moment. I felt like I was floating, and the numb feeling was replaced with warm salty tears. Just like that, I felt like I was submerged in a new feeling of agony and hope.

Katerina Koutsantoni, Year 11A



The World Is Your Oyster

After devoting a whole day of my sojourn to the most monumental and distinct symbol of Paris, the Eiffel Tower, I dragged my fatigued feet through the traditional cobblestoned streets of the city in a state of extreme enervation. We were heading to a restaurant where we had reserved a table. Once we arrived, there was yet another obstacle that stood before me: the stairs... In the mental and physical state that I was in, they appeared before me like a Herculean task. I would not, however, concede defeat just like that. I trudged up the long flight of stairs with heavy and steady steps until I reached the marble landing.

I was suddenly blinded by a bright and vivid light. I concluded that after such a great endeavour that this was the light guiding you to heaven after departing from this life. But no. As my eyes slowly focused and adapted to it, I realised that it was the restaurant. Still dazzled by the light reflecting off the golden walls and the crystals from the massive chandeliers hanging by a proliferation of implausibly thin chains, I made my way towards our table. We sat on the soft upholstered chairs, ordered our food and discussed various topics. Rather, the adults discussed; I simply sat and observed the waiters passing by and the people entering and leaving the restroom. I was expecting a flavourful and rather delectable dinner; we were in a fancy restaurant after all.

Each time the uniformed waiters passed by, I was hopeful that they would produce the dishes with a flourish and set them down on the wooden table protected and covered by a chalk-white tablecloth. And indeed, the time had finally arrived: I saw the waiter. He was holding with both hands a cumbersome two-tier silver bowl. I couldn't discern its contents but I could tell by his scrunched-up facial muscles that it was of considerable weight. He exhaled heavily as the large dish thumped on the table. It was seafood... I stared at the dish, irresolute. Covered in ice, the bowl contained... *oysters*. My desire and appetite had faded, vanished, gone in the blink of an eye – or rather gone as the stench of those repulsive, abhorrent *things* reached my nostrils. Their shells weren't even close to being appealing: unlike the ones I used to pick up on the beach, these ones looked mutated. I even saw one of them move! My brother took the plunge, consumed one of these supposed delicacies... and proceeded promptly to the restroom to puke.

Never, ever again shall I try seafood.



Frangiskos Lago da Silva Sourtaggias, Year 10A

Sweet Sensations



Gradually, the sun's rays filtered through the pâtisserie shop window, painting all the sweet delights inside in a golden hue. Displayed in the vitrine were a variety of sweet delights of different colours, giving life to the dull, pastel shop from within. The smell of the lightest, puffiest pastry baking flooded the shop with its ambrosial scent, enticing me to foray into the inner sanctum of the kitchen to check on the irresistible delicacies. They were ready.

Carefully, I took out the scarlet macarons, letting their sublime scent overwhelm my senses. Behind me, fellow chefs bustled around the kitchen in a bee-like manner, bent on ensuring that all the baked goods would be ready before the shop would open. Cupcakes, with their fluffy comforting taste, were being frosted with different arrays of colours, the frosting that now dressed the once-bare cupcake looking like a puffy skirt. The chefs were veritable *artistes*; their desserts were their masterpieces. They decorated and gave life to their work, making the lush, fine goods look too exquisite to do them the disservice of consuming them for mere mortal pleasure. Frosting coated the luxurious red velvet cakes while the cake pops were dipped in glorious, smooth lakes of chocolate.



I began working on my prized masterpiece. First, I added the angelic, air-whipped cream to the crispy base of the macaron, the smell of infused vanilla overlapping with all others that filled the small, hive-like kitchen. I topped it off and continued the same process with the others – my pace faster now – time was running out.

Sweat began to build upon my forehead, the hairnet sticking to my skin. The serene atmosphere changed and panic began to mingle with the medley of vanilla scent and demerara sugar.

We did not have enough time. Head Chef Gaston began bellowing orders, his voice croaky from old age but dominant from experience. Faces contorted all around the kitchen and my hands began to ache. The oh-so-delightful smell was now becoming sickly sweet. I felt constricted from the heat, with multiple oven doors opening and closing all around me while we were all at sixes and sevens. *Ring!* The door of the shop opened...



Katerina Koutsantoni, Year 11A

who

Who am I?' I said, as I looked at the distorted figure in the mirror. I breathe in, I breathe out. The mirror gets hazy, but the figure still stares back at me through the fog: a solid, faceless shadow. I look down at my pale hand and the veins that branch beneath. I am grabbing a towel tightly; my palm feels damp. Should I wipe away the haze that rests before me? No, I'll set the figure free. I am scared; I am scared it will look right through me, take over me. Then again, why am I so afraid? Isn't that figure me? I gently touch the barrier that stands between us. It touches back. I could almost feel its cold, dry skin on mine. We move as one, so the shadow must be me. But which one of us is just a reflection? I must be it. I am never in control. I must be the fraud, the puppet, the mere illusion. I don't, and I can't exist on my own – only when the shadow sits in front of its mirror. The shadow is beautiful, the shadow is free, and I am nothing. My empty soul drowns with jealousy as I stare at the things I yearn for the most belong to the being I despise more than anything. Fulfillment lies right across from me and yet it is unreachable. 'Leave! Leave! Leave! Leave!' Blood runs down my fingertips, staining the once pure, white towel. My cheeks wet, my eyes blurry, my body numb. I look up. The mirror is now shattered, fragmented; cracks run through it. I am now many. Which one of you is real? Which one of you is me? The figures stay silent and glare back.



Am


I

Ellie Papa, Year 11B

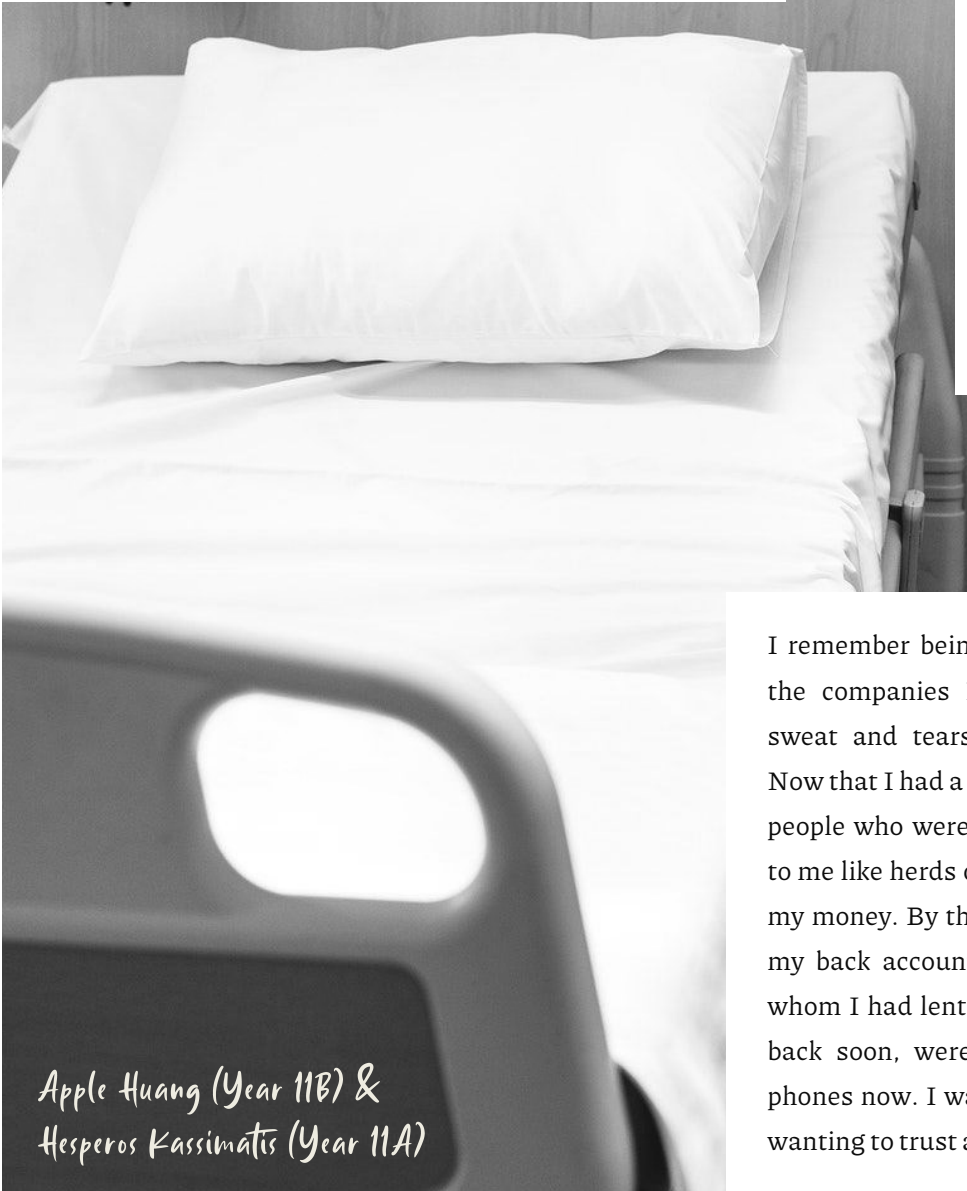
PARASITE

As a child, I always thought wealth would bring me happiness, but I only now realise on my death bed that there are some things money cannot buy.

Looking back to my early days, I remember playing in the park on that sunny day, laughing with my friends and having no worries in the world. Where am I now? In a dull hospital room all alone, patiently waiting for that heart monitor across the room to stop beeping so this pain can finally go away. I start to wonder. How did I end up like this? Where did I go wrong? It was the thought: the thought that I would be happy as long as I had money. The thought that was implanted in my brain, the one that would end up slowly taking my happiness from me.



It was after I graduated that this thought, this parasite started driving me to isolation. I would spend weeks on end in a dark basement typing my life away. Not letting the slightest glimpse of light to enter the room. I'm like a hanged man, and the rope is money. I would let my family and friends slip further and further away from me. If only I had realised earlier that this wouldn't bring me long-term happiness, maybe I wouldn't have wasted my life.



I remember being really happy when one of the companies I had spent all my blood, sweat and tears on finally broke through. Now that I had a lot of money, all of a sudden, people who were once out of my reach came to me like herds of locusts. They only wanted my money. By then they had already drained my back account. All my so-called 'friends' whom I had lent money to, promising to pay back soon, were not even answering their phones now. I was back to square one, never wanting to trust anyone ever again.

*Apple Huang (Year 11B) &
Hesperos Kassimatis (Year 11A)*

A HERO'S

Thursday. I awoke to the sound of the siren,
My heartbeat louder than the exploding bomb;
My pain more piercing than the guns firing.

I heard sobs. 'We're being attacked,' said my mom,
'We must go underground to be safe.'
I hugged her and told her, 'We must stay calm.'

Panic leads to nowhere; one must be brave.
Freedom's not for free; our duty is to fight,
What's life if you accept to be a slave?

Each side will now wage war for what they think is right,
Or what they're forced to think is right by the oligarchs above,
Thus, on this sunny day, begins a long, dark night.

Some argue that the world is driven by love.
Naivety! For man is born for avarice and war,
His favourite bird the vulture, his enemy the dove.

One truth defines this world - and nothing more:
It's present everywhere, however near or far:
The strong will crush the weak, the rich will rob the poor.

Who, Man, do you think you are?
Who gave you the right to decide when an innocent life will end,
To steal dreams and smiles, to extinguish the brightest stars?

JOURNAL

And to what end?
For power? For fame? For money?
Your selfish interests to defend?

For the common man, all this is funny.
What greater joy than to fill your short time on earth
With memories, laughter, children learning, growing, running?

Our overlords all think that they can find life's worth
By lying, stealing, killing, suppressing the victim's voice,
As if they won't one day, like all of us, return to worthless dirt.

I see, then, that I have a choice.
I know that all you want is to see me cry.
But I don't have to grant to you that joy.

You have determined my fate - that I cannot deny.
But it's my choice if I will fight or if I will surrender,
For if I cannot have freedom, I would rather choose to die.

I will not hand you my city! To the death I will defend her!
You think you can defeat us by causing sorrow and pain...
You think your empire's strong - well, we'll be the ones to end her!

And, thus, the world will know that we the brave died not in vain.
Our nation will remember us, the ones who fought for freedom,
The ones who with their last breath uttered 'Glory to Ukraine!'

Andreas Michas, Year 11B



LOOKING AHEAD

When life has reached the point of utter sorrow,
When nature's ceased to shine a vivid green,
We all must strive for an improved tomorrow,
For life hides wonders we have not yet seen.

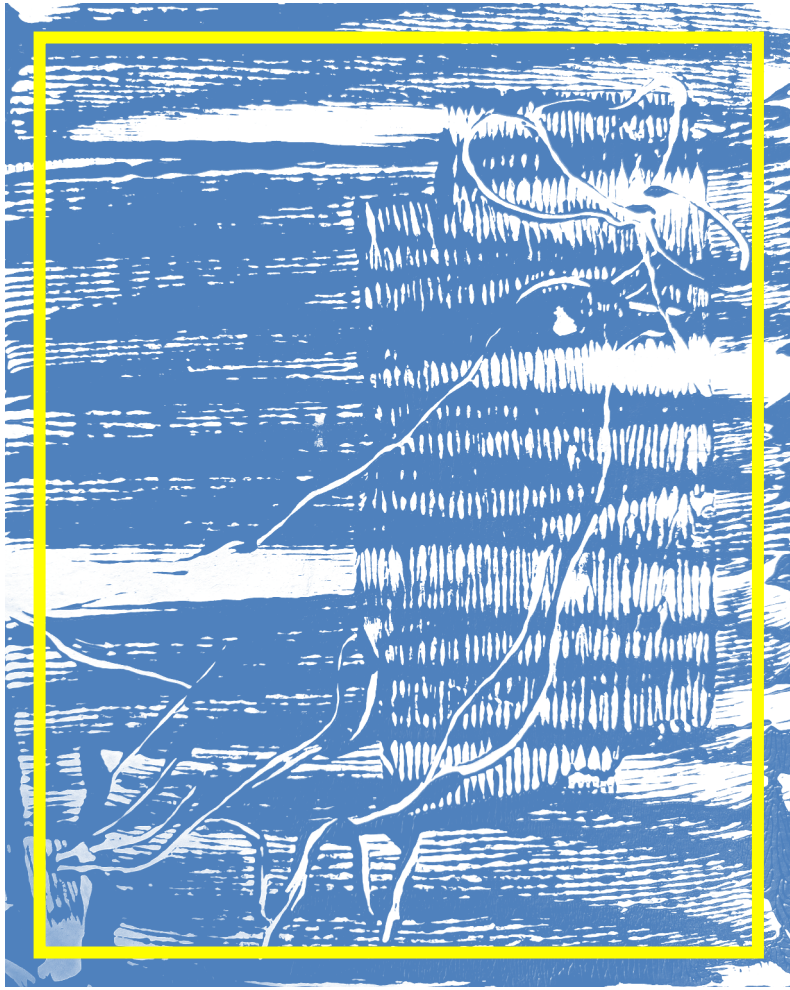
One might be fooled and think the world is ending,
That joy is lost to ne'er be found again,
But restless hope, our bitter thoughts transcending,
Now comes to put an end to our pain.

A moment's mis'ry never lasts forever;
The bleakness of our lives will not persist,
For after every storm and any weather,
The sun's sweet rays will shine to clear the mist

That covers our eyes, and takes our vision,
That even the most valiant unnerves,
Preventing us from making the decision
To build the better future we deserve.

The sun-lit sky now sends us all a warning,
Its words resounding, thund'rous, though unsaid,
That time has come to end our sombre mourning,
To free our minds of woes and look ahead.

ANDREAS MICHAS, YEAR 11B



You may say I'm a dreamer
but I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

from 'Imagine' (1971)

John Lennon

LIVE TO WORK...

OR WORK TO LIVE?

WORDS OF WISDOM FOR THE EASTER BREAK

MESSAGES FROM THE KEY STAGE 4 TUTOR TEAM



It's incredibly difficult to find a balance between work and a social life. We tend to over-focus on one aspect at a time, leaving the other to lessen in importance. The goal is, and always has been, to find a manageable middle ground between the two.

MR SCOTT, YEAR 10A FORM TUTOR

If you want to see the rainbow, you must first become friends with the rain!

MR CHRYSOCHOOU, YEAR 11B FORM TUTOR



The balance between life and work is the key to success and happiness.

MS DELIKARI, YEAR 10B FORM TUTOR



"Life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced."

Soren Kierkegaard

Enjoy Life!

MS VERIKIOU, YEAR 11A FORM TUTOR

"It always seems impossible until it's done!"

Nelson Mandela

MR KAVIERIS, KS4 FORM LINK



*"You can do what
I cannot do.
I can do what you
cannot do.*

Together we can do great things."

MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA

LETTER FROM THE
HEADTEACHER

I am delighted to present to you the second edition of 'Byron Voice' from this academic year. As always, I am very proud of this newsletter as it is for our students, by our students and this version has been put together by the talents of Key Stage 4. A wholehearted thank you to all the students who have contributed and a massive thank you to Ms Vekinis, along with the English Department, for overseeing the production.

So, the global pandemic continues but I think it's safe to say that we have all learned so much. About ourselves, our children, and the field of education itself. We have seen everything from struggles to successes. We've seen great progress, change, and advancements as we continue to grow stronger together. While this has been the hardest of years at times, it has also been the most rewarding in many ways.

What makes me say this? Simple: the relationships that we have built as a community are the best I have ever witnessed, beginning with students and with parents and staff also at the forefront. I believe that much of this relationship-building was made possible by everyone doing their bit despite the many frustrations we have all faced. Kindness and positivity are prevalent everywhere in the Byron community and we are able to highlight the positive characteristics that are unique to each student, with this edition of 'Byron Voice' being the perfect example of what we continue to achieve.

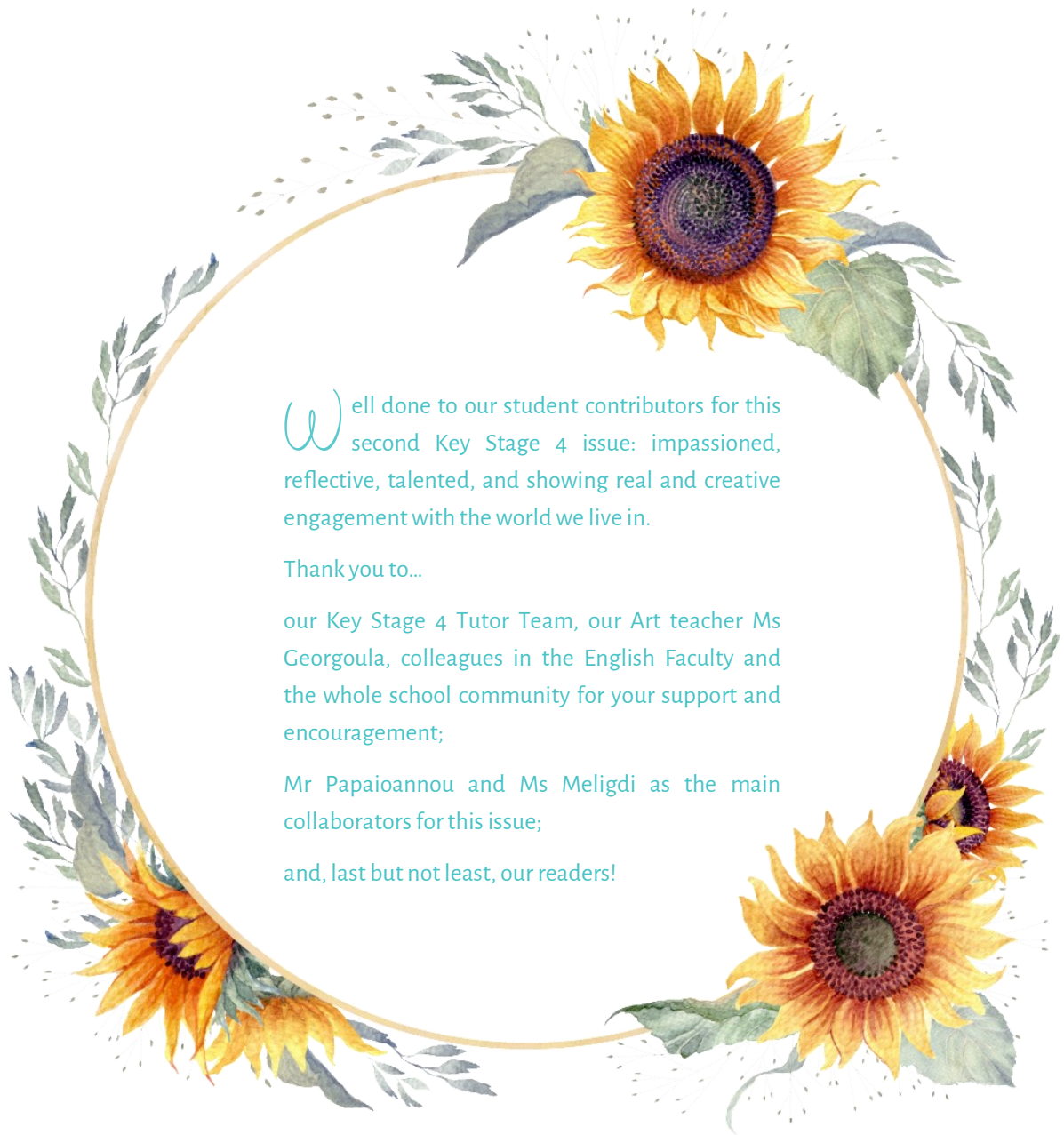
I again wish to thank all the Byron Staff who have continued to work against the odds and deliver an education to each and every one of our students. You continue to inspire our students and make them achieve what they thought was impossible. I wish to thank all of our parents for their support and kind words over the past terms.

All that is left is to wish everyone in the Byron Family a very happy Easter and we look forward to welcoming you all back for the summer term. Continue to stay safe and take care.

With kind regards,

Matthew Williams
Headteacher

A Word of Thanks



Well done to our student contributors for this second Key Stage 4 issue: impassioned, reflective, talented, and showing real and creative engagement with the world we live in.

Thank you to...

our Key Stage 4 Tutor Team, our Art teacher Ms Georgoula, colleagues in the English Faculty and the whole school community for your support and encouragement;

Mr Papaioannou and Ms Meligdi as the main collaborators for this issue;

and, last but not least, our readers!

Editor's Note

Byron Voice is the magazine and creative writing showcase of Byron College, the British International School in Athens, Greece.

Three issues are published each year: the Key Stage 5 December Issue, just in time for Christmas; the Key Stage 4 April Issue; and the Key Stage 3 June Issue to welcome in the summer holidays.

It is written by our students for the Byron family and it is offered in a spirit of intellectual curiosity, creativity, generosity, and fun.

*Produced by the Faculty of English.
Byron College. Athens. Greece*

Featured Artwork

FRONT & BACK COVERS:	XIAOYI (JOY) ZHANG (YEAR 11B)
INNER FRONT COVER:	JIENI (JENNY) YUAN (YEAR 11B)
INNER BACK COVER:	XIAOYI (JOY) ZHANG
CONTENTS PAGE:	YITING (RICO) GAO (YEAR 11A)
PAGE 27:	JIENI (JENNY) YUAN





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