

**We Want To
Shave Off All
Our Hair**

the 2020
Lockdown
Anthology



By the DGS Young Writers

Editor's Note

Well, it's been a YEAR (what an understatement)! Back in September 2019, when I began another year as Patron of Writing at DGS (and also, for the first time, at SBS), nobody would have predicted that, this summer, schools across the UK, Europe and the world, would be forced to close their doors for months on end.

Back in March, we were about 10 weeks in to the 20-week Young Writers' Mentoring programme, when the world changed. Like most other groups, we were forced to find new ways to continue, and it's thanks to lockdown that I've been running this writing mentoring programme remotely and online, successfully, for the first time.

As in all other spheres of lockdown life, there have been challenges, but I've been delighted that a core group of about 7 writers have stuck with it, for 20 weeks: writing at home, sharing in our online group space, reading poetry (especially each other's poetry), encouraging each other and writing in response to the prompts and challenges I've set them. For some, their writing has been a place to check-in and remind themselves who they are. For those feeling the social isolation and its impact on mental health, it's been a lifeline.

This anthology is the pick of the crop, some of the best poems written by these young writers over the last 20 weeks. Some of the pieces are gut-wrenching and some are uplifting but they are all excellent, and I'm deeply proud to share this anthology with the world.

And, of course, I can't wait to do it all again, next year ...!

Elaine Baker
DGS Patron of Writing

With thanks to all our Home School families, who've been supporting in the background, and to the staff at Didcot Girls' School, especially:

Lara Martin, Head of English

Tom Goodenough, former Headteacher

Rachael Warwick, Executive Head – for her continuing support and vision, for this very special and unique project.

The 2020 Lockdown Anthology

Contents

<i>Nina Winstone</i>	I want to shave off all my hair	4
<i>Keira Mason, Lower School Poet Laureate</i>	Watching spring rain	5
<i>Sia Veersamy</i>	What every girl should carry along with her	6
<i>Iris Rogers, Upper School Poet Laureate</i>	China blue	7
<i>Nina Winstone</i>	A Modern-day scenario	8
<i>Maria Cunha</i>	All about the guy	9
<i>Thomas King</i>	What every confused boy needs	10
<i>Nina Winstone</i>	Black, two sugars	11
<i>Thomas King</i>	Nightmare's kiss	12
<i>Sophia Katz</i>	Collide	13
<i>Sia Veersamy</i>	Not mine	14
<i>Nina Winstone</i>	Sure, I'd love a cuddle	15
<i>Iris Rogers, Upper School Poet Laureate</i>	Cherry children	16
<i>Maria Cunha</i>	The unspoken things	17
<i>Thomas King</i>	I want to stride before my English class	18
<i>Keira Mason, Lower School Poet Laureate</i>	Human.Nature	19
<i>Maria Cunha</i>	Bitter sweet	20
<i>Claire Hague</i>	The Republic of School	21
<i>Emilia Friend</i>	What every me should carry	22

I want to shave off all my hair

on the roof, shouting my head off
so that no one can turn away or look
at the floor, I want to see their minds
reel with confusion, flopping like
a wet fish on the deck, chewing through
thought and reason

I'd stare right back, at a thousand
blank pages, hole punched black
and blue, all turned to my
balding head, as the sun christens
the falling strands, breathing the
kiss of life

I want to chew chunks off, ripping
my scalp bare, letting the flaxen feathers
drift to the ground, cushioned by the
tarmac as a thousand empty faces
gawp and glare. Just so they know
that without it – I'll still be okay.

Once I've caught their gaze, I want to
paint them a picture, using my own blood
for ink, so that they know that each bare
stroke was my own, each bare thought
torn from my bare head, bled from my
bare arms near blinding their brains with beauty.

Nina Winstone

Watching spring rain

When even
the rain is
shine and beam.

When I grasp
simple seconds like
gold and gleam.

I say thank you
for time's
laboured steps,

that stick like
honeyed glue, of
that clock's well-kept

Tick, Tock, Tick.

Keira Mason
DGS Lower School Poet Laureate

What every girl should carry along with her

Girls need make up
Girls need lip balm

Girls need phones
Girls need purses

The most critical thing we need, are tissues,
to wipe our pain away.

Today I awakened,
with emotional bruises.

My heart is further than I thought.
It has lost its glow.

I feel my sun setting in paradise.
Then it dawns on me.

What every girl should carry with her:
her Avah by her side.

Sia Veersamy

Note: Avah means 'granny' in the Telegu language

China blue

You keep wilting flowers in a jar.
Dust gathers, blue, as lives are.
Growing dry, feeble, fated to die,
Deceptive elegance, reflecting a lie.
The world, an illusion on the inside.

You keep wilting flowers in a jar.
They dream in indigo,
reaching pale, frail blue hands
to endless ocean skies. You wonder

are they grateful for life at all?

Iris Rogers
DGS Upper School Poet Laureate

A Modern-day Scenario

As she stood there,

Hair clinging to the final specks of summer

Golden wisplike tufts of spun sugar

Innocent giggles blooming across her cheeks

Jumping in little red wellies

In the clotted water on the paving slabs

Rain coming in sheets of controlled chaos

Splaying freckles of the murky puddle

Her father stood beside her

Suit painted on with army-like authority

Phone in hand, thumb twitching frantically

Droplets of water decorating his precious briefcase.

Nina Winstone

All about the guy

Do your makeup.
Call your friend.
Vanilla based perfume
Drives men wild.
Should I use it?
Get the dress the shoes.
Put on a smile,
Say cheese.
It's the right thing to do.
Do what he wants.
What he likes.
What interests you,
Doesn't matter.
If he's happy you're happy.
Right?
Never disobey him.
How could you?
He'll call you names,
Ask if you love him.
Never say no.
Consequences await.
In the end it's all about
The guy.
Right?

Maria Cunha

What Every Confused Boy Needs

Pens. Phone. Glasses.

Check.

Knitting needles? Yes. Latest knitting project, too.

Piece of gum you step in and discard without a second thought –

No. That's my heart.

Plot for bad gay romance.

Notebook of doodles.

Saucy notes passed to a friend in English class

about when I choked on that Mars bar that one time.

Books. Cotton. Tissues.

Check.

A worm on a string called Twizzle.

Half-eaten Dorito.

I need my hugs.

Thomas King

Black, two sugars

I look up from the sterile floor,
momentarily broken from the restless stupor
by the simple act.
Scarves of mist spiral above
the cheap polystyrene cup
its tendrils reviving the frozen slumber
as I sit,
knees a jive,
beating the heart back into my legs.
Crystals leach nectar into
the coaxing poultice,
sweetening the bitter
just
enough to force down my throat,
glug, glug, glug
it scalds away the icy lump
that delayed the brimming tears.

Nina Winstone

Nightmare's Kiss

If they ask what it was like, say it was the chocolate coating your tongue from when we shared it last night.

If they ask you how it felt, say it was warm and fluffy, like the thickest of furs pressed flush on your naked flesh

and later, say each sound was a thorn in the heart, each jolt tearing the gash further, black trickling out with a hiss.

If they ask what you heard, tell them it whispered with a knife-tongue, slowly cutting into your being.

Tell them he held you, hushing, that everything was alright, the evil forced outside by those safe arms.

When they ask what people will eventually get round to asking, How did a touch halt all thought with a single swipe?

tell them, we don't want to get up, five more minutes.

Thomas King

Collide

Two galaxies divided by light years.
A million stars surrounded by solar systems.
A billion chances of life.
But not one is noticed.

The other galaxy explored but barely reached.
Similar millions of stars.
Billions of chances of life.
But there is only one.

In billions of billions of years the two galaxies will meet
and fall in love. But today is not then.
They will collide and become stronger and greater,
Together.

Sophia Katz

Not Mine

I speak the words I am meant to speak
I say the things I am meant to say

My mind doesn't think these things
The words flow as a river, out as a lie

I speak to impress
But not to teach

I speak to belong
But it's not me

If I speak of the truth
My sun will set

I'm not me
My words aren't mine

Sia Veersamy

Sure, I'd love a cuddle

You stare,
knowing you are the
only object
withing their gaze

the milky spheres pondering,
enveloping every crease with
innocence in abundance,
never flickering

soft, plump slumber
moulded to your chest
the breaths a harmony
tuneful and content

the whisper of a smile
drifts across their face,
a brief moment,
recognition.

Then,
you pass them back,
slipping in like a key
to a well-fitted lock,
the warm weight still
lingering in your arms
now

empty.

Nina Winstone

Cherry children

What a childish way to live,
wishing such things would come true,
as to drift away silently,
to drop like cherry blossom from the bough
as if time's stream were ever silent!

*Cherry pink cheeks,
conscious laughter,
tucked hoodie strings,*
how pleasant to wish that away,
as the choice of an ungrateful youth.

With age comes such thoughts,
by nature's will,
just as crevices on the face,
of human or wood,
comes the only way cherry blossom
may fall in silence.

Iris Rogers
DGS Upper School Poet Laureate

The unspoken things

You ask me if I'm fine.
Do you really want to know?
You ignore the truth.
Signs pointing to suicide
Deny.
You ask me if I'm fine,
Adults don't really listen.
Deny, Deny, Deny.
You see the scars.
A lie slips from my lips.
Yet you're still ignorant.
Dearest daddy has a mistress,
Deny.
Little Claire has a problem,
Deny.
The unspoken things lie
Between us.
Emotions bottle up,
Come roaring out.
And yet you still wonder
Why you saw me hanging.

Maria Cunha

I want stride before my English class

and growl and snarl
and hiss and spit
about how I truly feel under the many chains
of misconceptions,
baring my teeth and wearing whatever skin takes over me,
a beast, a demonic entity,
never an angel.

I am not an innocent little bean. I thirst
for things your minds would never understand,
for violence beyond reality and lust
unhuman. I am not
one person, I am not
one being, simply a puzzle
constructed in a rush, thrown together
in a hurricane of disgust
and hatred.

Sometimes I'm a rose, delicate to the touch
and riddled with thorns of emotion.
Sometimes I'm a demon of
German tongue, husking filthily into
waiting ears and crafting lies like
a spider's web.
Sometimes I'm an alien prince with a mouth
of sharp fangs of anxiety
and hunger for pain, eager to tear apart each
compliment hurled my way, to reveal it
as the rubbish it is.

Thomas King

Human.

Nature.

nature,

we say,

adapts,

changes,

improves,

survives,

and we mean

nature,

accepts.

Keira Mason

DGS Lower School Poet Laureate

Bitter sweet

Axe body spray
envelops me
comforts me
because I know,
it's you.

You spin me round.
We're face to face,
soft lips on mine.
Caramel, Vanilla, Coffee.
This is what you taste like.

Arms snake around me.
Warmth coming at me
like a wave.

I'm drunk on your sweet kisses.
I'm cold.
I open my eyes
you're walking away from me
into the darkness.

You keep walking and walking.
I scream, I shout, I fall.

Axe body spray,
Caramel, Vanilla, Coffee
I hate you.

Maria Cunha

The Republic of School

I climb over tough branches into the Republic of School,
leaves and branches surrounding me with no way out.
I fight through thick, gloomy, dark branches to find friends.
I am so behind that all my thoughts get twisted in my mind
like a vine squeezing my head.
I walk into rooms full of silence
leaves surrounding me, scaring me.
I watch the gathered faces
it sounds like they sing in harmony with every breath they take
and I long to sing too.
I watch as the time goes by
like a snake slithering through the forest.
I go through the long day, with my mind everywhere
and the leaves following me.
At last, the light shines through the forest, waiting for me to come out
and when I'm out
I see a forest with rain and sun,
a rainbow lighting up my mind as I walk
home through the forest, back through the vines,
home to my bed
calling my name.

Claire Hague

What every me should carry

An umbrella for rainy days,
A raincoat in case it's a day where I don't like umbrellas,
A keyring from that scary ride at Disneyland,
A zip that fell off my pencil case that day at school,
A piece of paper from a falling-apart script,
A book by Enid Blyton,
The other part of the falling-apart script
And a maths test I got 92% on.

Emilia Friend

