

Manchester City of Literature

Blackbeck Tarn by Seren Morris
St Aiden's Church of England High School
(Highly Commended, Key Stage 3)

Dip your feet in the most northern point of Blackbeck Tarn and she'll pull you in
They say
Take a lone walk along the riverbank and you'll hear her
They say
Climb to the tallest point of the surrounding hills and you'll see her
They say

A simple walk
Along the jagged rocks
A simple walk
In a pretty white frock
White turned red
In the dark of a night long dead
Lovely purple flowers
Where in just a few hours
A body would be found
Sleeping on the ground
The endless sleep of saints
One of which she would never awake

Swim deeper down in Blackbeck Tarn and you'll find him
They say
Sing a sweet melody to the trees and he'll sing back
They say
Skim stones along the surface and his bony arm will grab them
They say

A simple skip
A stone he missed
A simple skip
The fall of kings
Skid marks in the snow
No one would know
A lantern left burning
The only thing found in the morning
-But where has he gone-
Taken by the icy one

Let loose your dog in Blackbeck Tarn and he'll make a friend
They say
Throw him a ball for him and two will catch it
They say
He'll start barking at the ground
They say

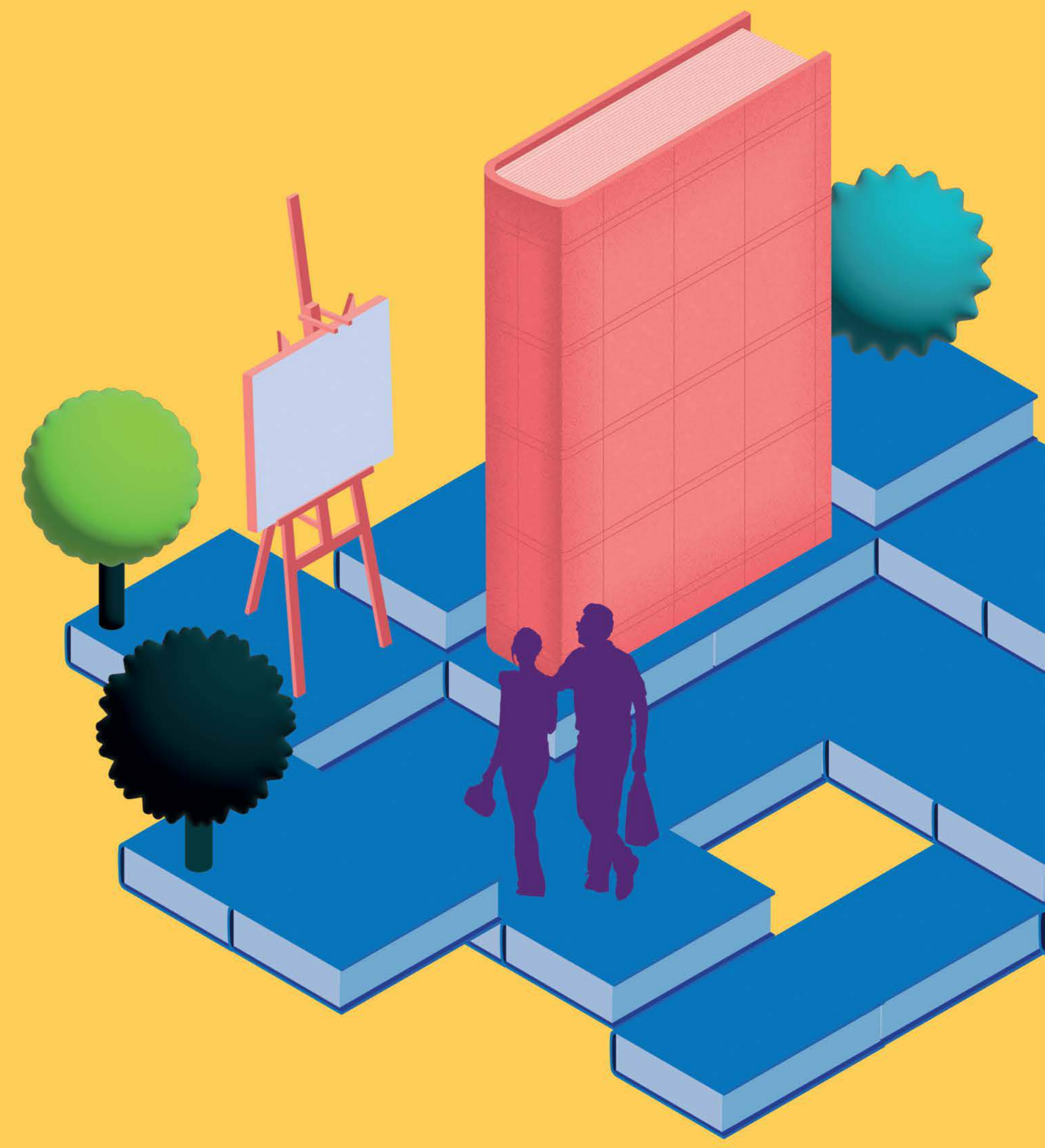
A simple swim
Caught by the wind
A simple swim
Black fur floating as the sun went dim
Calling his name were a woman and a man
They wouldn't find him he was no longer on land
Black fur in the river
Black fur of the no longer living

So just remember, as you sit with your picnic
As you kiss in secret,
As you play like children,
That below you is he and him and she
Lost souls, lost lives of you and me...



Schools Writing Trail

Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers



1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



A UNESCO City
of Literature



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



Manchester City of Literature

An excerpt From *A Night Out on the Town*
by Matilda Llewellyn-Lomax
Xaverian Sixth Form College
(Highly Commended, Key Stage 4)

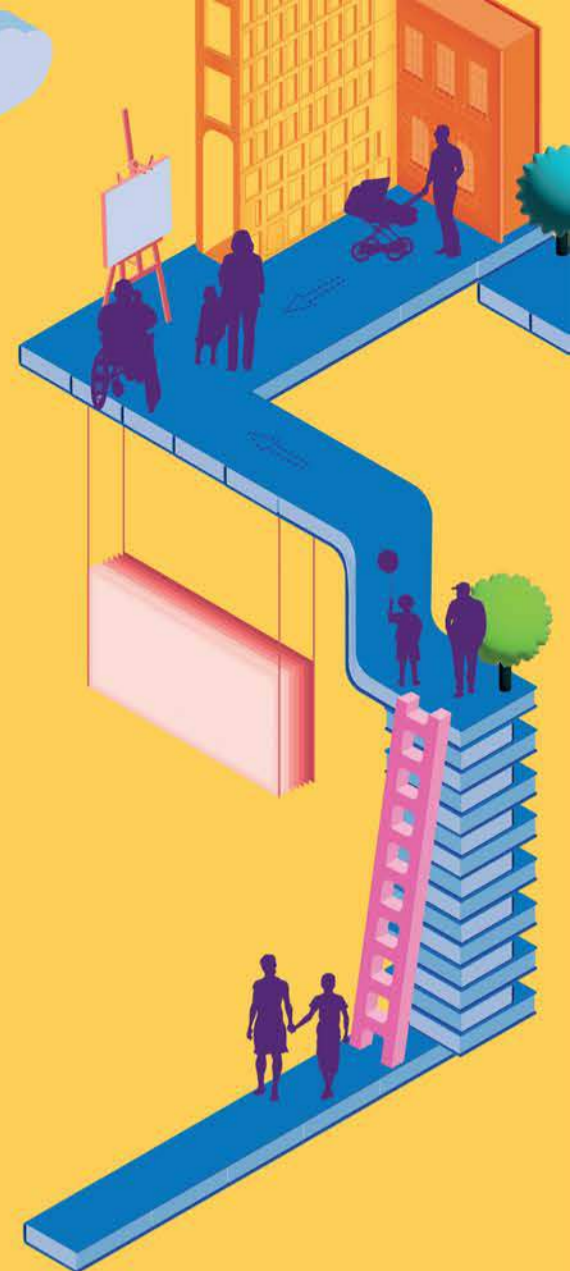
The earth swayed uneasily below me as a mass of bodies spilt out onto the cobbled street, like rubbish falling from a bin that has recently been kicked over. Goosebumps spread across my arms up to the top of my spine as the cold air hit my hot skin. Directly opposite me a woman hobbled across to the pavement, vehemently tugging at the hem of her mini skirt, her platinum blonde hair splayed behind her by the frosty autumn breeze. I exhaled slowly as I walked away from the crowd, my hot breath fogged up in front of me before dissipating into the cold night. The scent of tobacco and beer lingered on my jacket as I hastily buttoned it up, my only defence from the relentless wind which pushed against me as I walked, urging me to take a different path. My hands shook slightly as I pulled my scarf tighter but the thin material rendered it almost useless against the cruel night. Shoving my hands in my pockets, I continued down the street. The thumping bass of an Oasis track throbbed out onto the street causing the ground to vibrate unnaturally, rising as a crescendo as I neared the offender, an old pub over spilling with people. I crossed the street to avoid the noise. My boot slipped under a half-drunk bottle of Newcastle brown, I yelped in surprise as my body slammed into the ground, the sound was lost in a chorus of Don't Look Back In Anger.



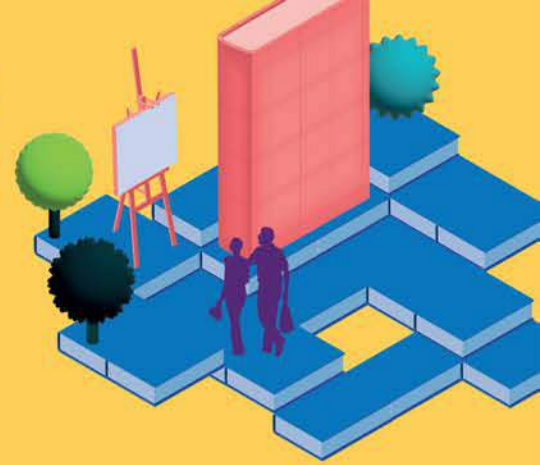
Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



Manchester City of Literature



An excerpt from *Crongton* by Thomas Lane St Antony's RC High School (Special Mention, Key Stage 4)

The Pritchard family recently found out that their little girl has a terminal illness. Everyone is really gutted as you would imagine but I never imagined what would happen next. It was her birthday on a Saturday and word had got around Crongton, everyone came out of their house at 5pm and started to clap for the little girl, you could hear it for miles, people were banging pots and pans, hooting car horns and letting off fireworks. The family were so overwhelmed with all the messages, support and presents. It made them feel better and it was the first time they had a smile on their face for a while.

Sometimes you realise it's the people not the place that matters most.



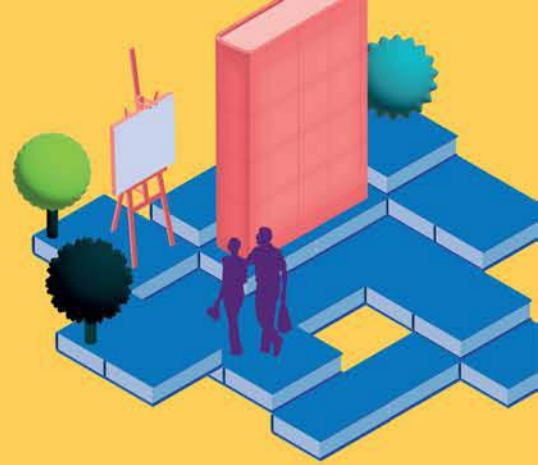
Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



Manchester City of Literature



An excerpt from *Journey to School* by Aaron Ankrah
St Bede's College (Highly Commended, Key Stage 5)

Soon the bus was halfway down Rusholme's famous curry mile, as shops opened their shutters for the new day. The smell of the most amazing spices began to seep through the small open window of the bus allowing the aromas to transport me to South Asia. I sat there in the most blissful of states as the finest Sarees lined the streets taking me closer to my new home.

Stepping off that bus a few moments later proved to be almost a whirlwind. My adventure had just ended but a bigger one had begun. I took solace in the knowledge that I had explored the streets that revolutionaries once called home and survived to tell the tale. From Marx and Pankhurst to Turning. We all share a bit of madness in this city, which so easily pushes us to our limits and challenges our every idea.

So as I took my first steps through the lofty gates, I was ready to be challenged, and to meet my group of intellectuals and bohemians. For I was beginning a journey of discovery. It may seem conspicuous to some but I was starting to learn that judging people and places based on what I assume to be true can be quite dangerous.

Looking back at moments like this I am reminded of the words once penned by a famous honorary Mancunian, "How easy it is to judge rightly after one sees what evil comes from judging wrongly."

Now that five years have passed, these words will always be etched in my mind as will those journeys. High school did prove to be a great adventure. But no teacher, no classroom, no book could have ever taught me more about humanity and the danger of prejudging others, than those fateful commutes.



1-15 June 2023

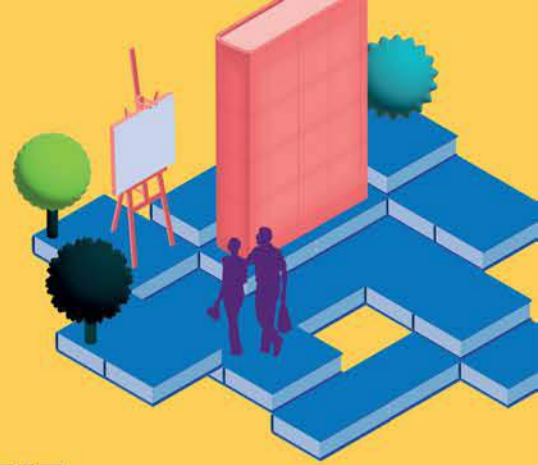
#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail

manchestercityofliterature.com

Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers



Manchester City of Literature



An excerpt from *Liverpool Slaves* by Jack Harrison
Lady Barn House School (Winner, Key Stage 2)



Olaudah Equiano's journey to England

Hello dear reader. My name is Olaudah Equiano, and I am head of the sons of Africa. Our aim is to stop all slavery in the British empire. I bet you want to know how I became the person I am today. If you do dear reader, then you are in luck because that is what this whole story is about. So, get under your blanket make some hot chocolate and brace yourselves for the ride of your life.

I could hear the susurrantion of the wind blowing through the long grass. I could taste the absolute pureness of the air. I could feel the harsh texture of the baobabs tree that I was leaning on. I could smell the strong smell of the King Proteas. I could see the beautiful African sunset setting in the distance. As I looked into the sunset, I thought I was the luckiest child in the world.

It was getting dark time to head back. When I was walking back though I could smell smoke but when I got closer to the village the smell got stronger and stronger. When I came to the village, I saw that the village was engulfed in flames. This made me ask questions like... Who did this? And why did they do this? In the mists of the battle, I saw somebody who looked humanoid but at the same time looked nothing like a human at all. It was perched upon a huge beast covered in iron. As the beast came nearer, I was shocked to see how muscular it was. Like the beast this monster of a man was covered in iron, but this man was as pale as the moon in the depths of the night. From its belt it drew something metallic and sharp, and the beast started moving towards me, so I ran. My pursuer was like a cheater, and I (his prey) was like a gazelle.

I was sprinting as fast as my legs could carry me, but it was no use it was gaining on me. Now multiple of these things were chasing after me. Any second now they will catch me, and I was right. They were now circling me. One of them jumped off the beast and drew out a club. He hit me and I started feeling very dizzy then everything went black, and I was asleep.

When I awoke from my deep slumber, I found out I was on a ship.



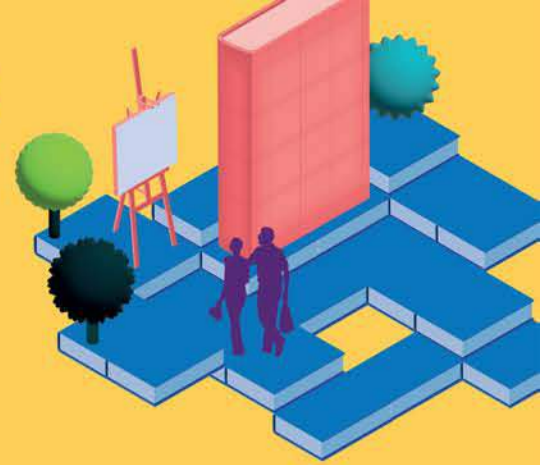
Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



Manchester City of Literature



An excerpt from *Pikachu at Durham Cathedral* by Harry Moore
Frosterley Primary School (Special Mention, Key Stage 2)

On a hot day, Pikachu looked at Durham Cathedral. He saw a tower and some stained-glass windows. At the front of the cathedral was a huge door. On the door was a scary face made from metal. This is the Sanctuary Knocker. It had a hole in its head. It came from a spear.

Pikachu hears a blazey sound and loud footsteps. He feels scared. He turns around and there was a big orange dragon behind him. It was Charazard. He starts to bound along chasing Pikachu. He was breathing fire as he chased him. Pikachu runs towards the Sanctuary Knocker. He jumps and grabs onto it. Pikachu is now safe. Charazard stands and glares at him. Suddenly, Charazard flies away angrily. Pikachu lets go of the Sanctuary Knocker. He lands on the floor with a pop sound.

He runs inside the cathedral and meets Mimiku. They went to visit St Cuthbert's shrine. They decided to have lunch in the café. Pikachu feels happy because Charazard has gone. They have fun at the amazing Durham Cathedral.



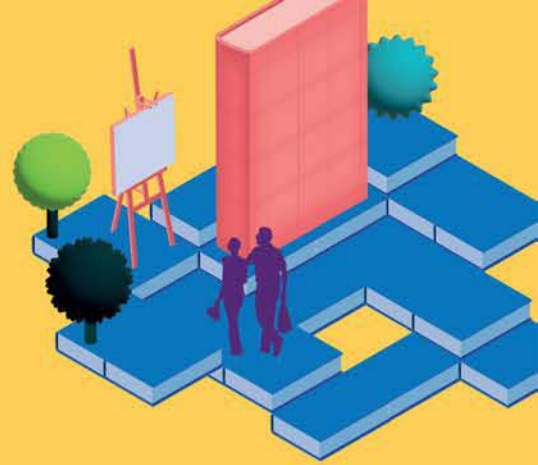
Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



Manchester City of Literature



An excerpt from *Rose Tinted* by Laaibah Wahid
Loretto Sixth Form College (Winner, Key Stage 5)



Our car trundles along the motorway.

"I can't believe you left the door open!"

Dad's been going on about that since we had to turn around and go home to close the front door. Mum only sighs and messes with the radio.

It doesn't bother me though. I kick my small, chubby legs from the booster seat and feel the summer sunshine tickle my cheeks as I watch the golden light cast shadows over the grey, cracked motorway tarmac. My brothers sit beside me, heads down. Zedan with his DS, likely playing Pokemon, and Suliman playing on the PSP, a Metal Gear game, I'd assume. My dad's Black Golf car has a sunroof, open to let the air and sunlight in. Sometimes I reach my hand up to it, and I think, maybe, just maybe, someday my arms will be long enough to reach up through it to touch the fluffy white clouds and pick a piece off to see if it tastes like candyfloss from the fair.

Then, we enter, after that drive that feels like it took hours, making me believe we were a million miles from Manchester. Knowsley Safari, I hear through my 4-year-old ears. I know lots of animals, but my favourites are cats. The only animal I've really ever seen up close are pigeons and that stray cat that wanders in through our back door when mum opens a tuna can.

Our car follows the arrows into the park, and I try to spot the animals in the booklet my brother is holding. I'm good at this, I've already seen five of them.

We go into the Lion's den, and I see a few lazing about beneath the shade of the trees. This heat must remind them of home. There's one walking alongside our car, a large male with an impressive golden mane and I meow at it, making my hands like paws.



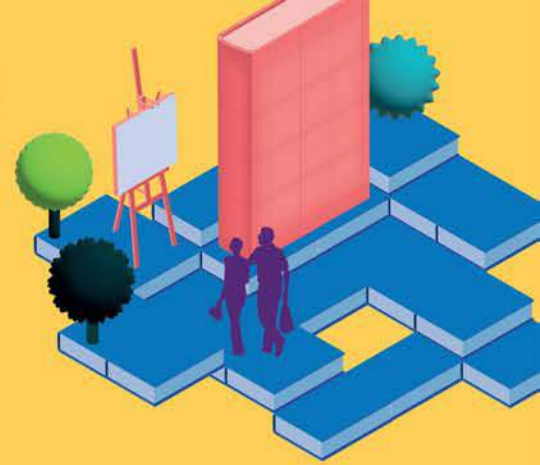
Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



Manchester City of Literature



An excerpt from *The Beehive Mill* by Carlota Pascual-Simpson
Saint Aidan's Church of England High school (Winner, Key Stage 4)

The Beehive Mill

• Bolton, 1946 •

Bolton: not the grandest town, or the richest, but it's my town. There's a quaint, welcoming comfort from the small houses as I pass them, all shuffled together in a line like dominos. Their small windows peer at me, some flickering with the light of a yellow bulb, some still darkened by the hush of sleep, but all slightly different. Some slope off to one side, some have paint curling away from the frames, one is even missing a pane of glass. But I smile. People are wonderful at making do.

I turn down Alexandra Street, feeling my steps grow heavy with the weight of work, when I spot the old widow from her small, well decorated window. There's a small plant pot sat on the ledge, complete with the shape of her tabby cat pressed against the glass. With a wave and a hearty grin, she manages to lift my spirits, although her cat doesn't seem too pleased. It shoots me a jealous glance and judges me warily. I laugh aloud as it jumps down out of view, unsatisfied by our interaction, but no one else is around on the streets to give me a glare. It's early morning after all.

She motions towards her humble kettle, offering me a brew, but I quickly shake my head. I don't have much time and rations are ongoing, leaving us all clinging to every crumb. But I can almost hear her tut through the glass at me. With a grin, I wave goodbye, comically checking an imaginary watch on my wrist as she chuckles. I raise my eyebrows theatrically and dash, pretending to realise how late I am, and I catch a glimpse of her laughing before she disappears out of view.



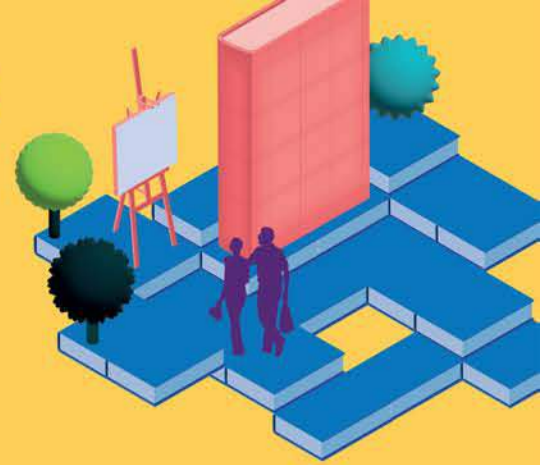
Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



Manchester City of Literature



An excerpt from *The Manchester Blitz* by Sophie Chadwick
Lady Barn House School (Highly Commended, Key Stage 2)

The sirens rang out across Manchester, screaming their warnings to the night over and over again. My sister started to cry, calling for our mother, tears streaming down her face. I tried to comfort her but as the siren rang on, I realised that there was no time left. I scooped her up and sprinted for the shelter.

As I ran, I noticed that my sisters' cries of mama had changed to cries of teddy. I placed her down on the soft blankets in the corner of the shelter and ran inside the house. The force of the first explosion knocked me to the ground. I staggered to my feet and stumbled further into the kitchen, another explosion nearly sent me sprawling but this time I was ready and grabbed the table, holding on for dear life. Slowly I edged around the table, my body tensed up in wait for the next bomb to fall, I reached my sisters chair and grabbed the teddy lying in the floor. Then a huge explosion threw me to the floor, and everything went black.

I must have been unconscious for no more than a minute. The bombs were still falling but the sound seemed muffled, I leapt to my feet, still holding my sister's teddy. I raced out into the garden and down to the shelter. My sister had crawled to the entrance, so I almost tripped over her. I snuggled into the soft blankets, my heart still pounding in my chest. My sister clambered onto my lap and somehow, we fell asleep, I only know that because I remember waking up.

I stepped out of the shelter into the cold crisp air of early morning.



Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



Manchester City of Literature

An excerpt from *The Tram* by May Gibbons-Hughes
St John's RC Primary School
(Special Mention, Key Stage 2)



SLAM!

Gran is waving merrily from the window, crossing her eyes to make me laugh. She knows I'm nervous to go on the tram all by myself and I can see that she's trying, so I force out an awkward chuckle. Turning my head forwards, I take a deep breath and visualise the way to the tram stop. Start walking.

When I get here my energy and confidence instantly dip. The bright yellow Metrolink colour I'm so used to looks...darker. Even the tram bulletin board looks like it can't be bothered. The tram pulls into the stop and I clench my fists and step onto the carriage. I look round at the passengers: a man with a long, matted beard bobbing his head to the music, a young woman reading a book with a jumping dog in her arms and a woman sitting in the priority seats nibbling her lip, who doesn't look like a priority but maybe she is.

I sit next to the woman reading the book with the dog who looks kind enough, and stare out the window ducking my head.

I sit still and stare at the houses rushing by for what seems like a year. We're about halfway through the journey and the doors open for the third time, I look round my shoulder to see if the man with the headphones is still there, when I see something else entirely. A man about my dad's age chortling and grasping a glass of beer, talking to random people and breathing foul breath everywhere. My heart begins to bang loudly, and I try to stifle the drum beat in an attempt to make myself invisible. I wonder if he will talk to me. What if he sits next to me! Who even has a glass of beer anyway? Has he just walked out of a pub or something?



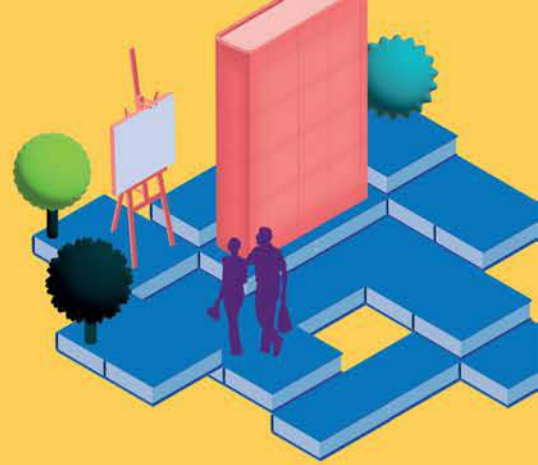
Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com



Manchester City of Literature



An excerpt from *Your Hands* by Evie Wolstenholme
Manchester Enterprise Academy (Winner, Key Stage 3)

It was December 20th of 2018. Thinking this would be a normal day. My parents had invited me over for lunch. I wake up with the sun gleaming in through the peaks in my curtains. I take my car keys, stepping out into the open air with the frost beneath me crunching under my feet. My thoughts twist as I pull up to their house. I noticed a car I don't recognise. My mind wandered with questions. Wouldn't they tell me if someone was coming round. surely?

The door swings open from my mum's arms surrounding me. "she's here!" She grabs me. I smile at my dad giving him a hug. "Say hello." I'm confused I realise there is someone sitting on the other side of the room. "Who's this?" I question. "This is Daniel" she looks out with a wide smile pushing me to sit down next to him.

I turn around, nudging my head towards the kitchen wanting to speak to my mum, taking me by my hand leading me in. Closing the firm wooden door. I immediately start asking her questions "Stop overreacting!" She snaps at me. I slump onto a chair. Facing the large open window. Her green eyes lighting up from the sun, "I will tell you. we want grandchildren!" She says I start to fidget with my hands picking at my dry skin. "Daniel finds you attractive. He wants to take you out." From being snappy at me, to a feverish loving mother. "Fine. I'll go," that day I could not express how much anger I had for my parents.



Schools Writing Trail



Take a walk with Manchester's
brightest young writers

1-15 June 2023

#MCRSchoolsWritingTrail
manchestercityofliterature.com

