

**YEAR 7-8 CATEGORY**

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**Year 7-8 Winner:** Rosie Franzke [Mount Beauty Secondary College]**Title:** *On the Holidays*

It's the last day of school, free dress!

The final bell rings and we leave the school a mess,

Head home and watch movies till late,

Then sleep in and wake up at eight,

On the Holidays.

We would ski and run and ride and paddle,

Climb a mountain or a far-off saddle,

We'd sleep in a tent beneath the stars,

Then hike back down and join the halting line of cars

On the holidays

A family reunion, it was somebody's birthday,

But it was just a chance to play chasey today.

There was cake and chocolate and honeycomb.

Then it ended, how sad and it was time to go home.

On the holidays.

And all too soon it's back to school.

No more playing or movies or water fights at the pool.

told to sit at a desk and be a good kid.

The teachers will ask us to write about what we did,

On the holidays

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**Year 7-8 Runner-Up:** Tom Zhang [Trinity Anglican College]

**Title:** *The Things we Love*

the things we love

the enjoyment of a water park

the colossal water slides which pumps your heart with adrenaline.

the delicious taste of watermelon freshly picked and ready to eat

the lazy river is one of the many features that NOTHING can beat.

the things we love

the plants we adore and the flowers we dedicate our life to

the luxurious warm green leaves

the bees swarming to get a taste.

the fresh rosemary scented odour bringing more flavour and delicacy

and the exquisite patterns amongst those trees.

the things we love

our families,

the sense of belonging that embrace,

the joy of childhood, the chaos of family, the pain of fights

but the joy of knowing you are always welcomed and loved.

**Year 7-8 Runner-Up:** Abigail Karlake [Albury High School]

**Title:** *Home*

I'm a simple city girl. That feels like my home.

My grandparents lived on a farm. The outback is the home of my little, delicate soul.

Sitting on a dark-coloured deck on an early, brisk, winter morning. All around me, kookaburras and cockatoos squawk and screech. Some people would find it bothersome, but they are angels singing a song of joy and sorrow to me. I see and hear the whisper of the wind against the surrounding gum trees. I'm all bundled up in blankets, scarves, and jackets, sipping a warm homemade hot chocolate and eating a warm piece of toast. I watch as bats fly above in the sky finding a place to sleep. I watch the early morning sun peek its head out over the horizon. The colours dance and play.

A perfect morning.

*I* feel at home in the city. The bustling morning streets while I cuddle up in bed with a book. A loud motorbike speeding down those same busy streets but my soul feels at home in the outback, Australia's backyard.

This is my idea of cozy.

This is my idea of snug.

This is my idea of security.

This is my idea of sheltered.

This is my idea of home.

Home. It's where your heart, your soul, your mind, yourself, feels the happiest.  
Home

**YEAR 9-10 CATEGORY**

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**Year 9-10 Winner:** Abbey Quinlan [Victory Lutheran College]**Title:** *A Ballad of Things we (Should) Love*

Should a frosty gale lash one's cheek,  
The winter solstice at its peak,  
Pray, they will, for warm summer's breeze,  
And foliage to adorn bare trees.

Moments pass with small consequence,  
A false, inadvertent pretence.  
Moments change to memories of:  
Tragedy, loss, and distant love.

Water, food, shelter and safety.  
Human rights, human liberty.  
Those who reap this grand advantage,  
Often fail to know the privilege.

Healthy heart, eternal beating,  
If thanks is spared, it is fleeting.  
Its rate may slow and dip and climb,  
Wounds to it would last a lifetime.

Then, when fog, rain and snow give way,  
The heedless sun burns dirt to clay.  
Fires will rage and crops will be lost,  
Forging wishes for winter's frost.

**Year 9-10 Runner-Up:** Lara Diffey [The Scots School, Albury]**Title:** *To be Full*

I remember your smile, real and raw  
The way it would translate from the curves of your lips to the creases around your eyes  
Your eyes  
I remember their luminescent blue, the way they gleamed and glittered fueled by moonlight  
I remember your vigour  
The magneticity of your laugh, your smile's infectiousness and the zestful approach you took to every aspect of life even when things weren't great  
I remember when things weren't great  
When losses came more than wins  
Something slipped, something had been stripped  
Stripped so harshly leaving you naked and vulnerable in strength  
I remember my obliviousness, my inability to notice the signs  
I chose to ignore the looming mountain of tension and secrecy because I was scared  
But you were terrified  
I remember seeing you for the first time  
We were near, yet the smell of isolation had never reeked so foully  
Sunken sockets of skin, bordered by protruding bones  
So pointy and sharp they could cut through straw  
Yet so weak that even the smallest of touches would leave a dent  
Your eyes looked greyer, dull almost  
As if the moon that once powered them had not risen for a while  
The sun following in suit  
Leaving you in a world of black and darkness  
I remember you wrapped your arms around me, and I wrapped my arms around you  
Trying to convince myself, begging myself to believe it felt like home  
It didn't  
I remember feeling like the worst friend  
So many things were unspoken  
Yet it felt like my voice box had been ripped from my throat  
I remember wanting to drown you in love  
Congest you with happiness  
Engulf you in peace  
Make you so full that my love would compensate for your lack of  
That it wouldn't matter you denied your body what it needed  
Because all I wanted was for you to be full

**Year 9-10 Runner-Up:** Madeleine Steer [The Scots School, Albury]

**Title:** *My Dad is an Oncologist*

I remember fairy dust sprinkled around us like stars, their reflection prosperous in his eyes.

I remember the plush pillows beneath us, the headboard behind us and the warmth of his head upon mine.

I remember my eyes drooping with drowsiness, drawing on the night, a dreamscape setting in.

I remember him sitting next to me, a book in hand, stories of elves, wings and Jack Frost, stories of another land.

I remember his soft low voice, buffeting in the strength of his solidity.

I remember the mix of joy and minty toothpaste when I thought of the next story.

I remember the cosy yellow light and the bedside lamp illuminating our pages,

But not the goblins beneath my bed in the dark, a darkness with a glint, one that became quite stark.

I remember the fairies flying out of the books, their dust coating my dreams like powdered sugar.

I remember each night, as he closed each book, wondering what he did after each story.

I remember the gentle fall of sleep as that blackness closed over me.

I remember when the goblins drew his stories away.

I remember when the stories started and when they stopped, not aware of the sparkly balloon having been popped.

I remember when Dad stopped reading to me.

I remember starting to read my own books.

I remember growing up.

I remember the last story, the last goodnight, his thundering footsteps carrying him away from our land of dust and fairies.

I remember thinking his world had the same sort of sparkle, the same sort of light as ours. But now I only see Frost, the book paper's black ink covering his hands.

Now I remember his unshaved chin, his stiffly starched shirts, and his cold stress lines.

Now I remember the light in his eyes, reflecting mine own, that light in his chest, a recited poem.

Now I remember the darkness that seized him away, something that consumes him still, today.

Now I remember there can still be light, like a family dinner or a movie night. We both no longer seek the sparkles of a fairy tale, but the simple company of each other, until we both become frail.

**YEAR 11-12 CATEGORY**

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**Year 11-12 Winner:** Ava Kennett [Tallangatta Secondary College]**Title:** *The Beginning*

And so I stand here,  
Watching you fall in love,  
With what is right before your eyes,  
Unable to stop you,  
Unable to give it a second thought,  
Because watching you,  
Fall in love,  
With me,  
Is endless poetry,  
More beautiful,  
Than anything,  
I will ever witness.

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**Year 11-12 Runner-Up:** Skye Carlisle [Catholic College, Wodonga]**Title:** *The Portrait*

He found happiness in the strokes of acrylic,  
The way the colours caught his eye,  
A piercing feeling of peace in the paint.

But that brush turned into a pencil, a pen,  
Then happiness now cost him time.  
He now stroked words rather than pictures,  
And document things he didn't understand,  
Or things he just didn't want to know.

His canvases turned into paper; exams,  
The life containing pain tubes dried out,  
But that black and blue ink was never ending.  
Discouraged by his peers, his parents,  
That paint never paid.

So, he stuck to those papers,  
He used only a pen,  
And since the time he had lost his brush,  
The only portraits he had painted,  
Were those on his resumes and reports,  
To paint a life in black and white paint,  
A life that stole his colours.

His paints continued to dry in their case,  
The bristles of his joy had frayed apart.

Life was no longer his canvas,  
And meaningless books took up his nights,  
Only to suffer headaches in the day,  
Just to sit in an examination room,  
That gave him a number,  
To paint a dull, new portrait of himself.





**WRITE  
AROUND  
THE  
MURRAY**