

TT21 • ISSUE NO. 10 • JESUS, LINCOLN, EXETER

THE TURL



Wonderland

ART

La vie ne s'annete jamais

Seasons in Wonderland

WRITING

Selected poetry and fiction

COMMENT

Pre-Raphaelites Review

Finding the Sense in Nonsense

contents

page 2

Editor's Note

Ella Spilling and Riana Modi

page 3

Pre-Raphaelites, Drawings and
Watercolours — In Review

Charlie West

page 5

Seasons in Wonderland

Nupur Patel

page 7

'Frog'

Matilda Houston-Brown

page 8

Old Fence

Ella Spilling

page 9

Drawings

Serena Kerrigan-Noble

page 11

in the wake of bill-board
signs

Lilya Stewart

page 14

dreamgirl

Helena Aeberli

page 15

Turl Street

Bekah Goodchild

page 16

Oxford

Evie Sutcliffe

page 18

A Critical Evaluation of
Alice in Wonderland

Estelle Atkinson

page 21

La vie ne s'arrête jamais

Polina Danilina

page 23

'Tomato Frog Upon
Tomato'

Matilda Houston-Brown

page 24

Sunsets and Computer
Screens

Nupur Patel

page 25

Fairyland

Tal Barnea

page 27

Days in the Sun

Sam Schulenburg

page 28

[Untitled]

Simon Maxwell

note from the editors

Hello lovely people!

Welcome to WONDERLAND (otherwise know as the Trinity 2021 edition of the TURL)! We're so excited to be sharing this issue with you: there's plenty of madness here! For those of you who are new here, this magazine collects and distributes the creative work of students from the Turl Street colleges.

This term has been a whirlwind, with sweeping waves of normalcy — especially for those of us able to return to Oxford — and yet persistent reminders of this uncomfortable ambiguity in which we currently exist. We saw this issue as a chance for escape, stepping into a fantastical world of wonderful things!

It is of course also worth noting that Oxford is already home to wonderland, with Lewis Carroll having met Alice Liddell, who would go on to provide the inspiration for *Alice in Wonderland*, in his many years at Christ Church.

Threaded throughout this edition is a series of ripples and waves, alongside a rainbow-vibrancy, to capture the fluidity of wonderland, its multiplicity of presentations, and its imaginative make-up. From seeing our beloved Rad Cam dressed in mushrooms and dripping colours; to prose and poetry reversals, to critical essays on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, this edition really contains some fantastic interpretations on the theme, and we are so grateful to all our contributors!

A big thank you to Tom Brown (Jesus alumnus 1975, Modern Languages) for his generous support in continuing to fund this publication.



**COVER ART: MATILDA
HOUSTON-BROWN**
lincoln

Pre-Raphaelites, Drawings and Watercolours -- In Review

After yet another lockdown, on May 18th the Ashmolean Museum was finally able to open their new exhibition: *Pre-Raphaelites, Drawings and Watercolours*. For those familiar with the Pre-Raphaelites movement, it is an interesting insight into many of the preliminary and intimate moments in the lives of the members of the Brotherhood. For those who know little about them, this is a fantastic introduction to their styles, ethos and lives.

As the name of the exhibition suggests, this is not a collection of the Pre-Raphaelites' most famous works, although many of those can also be found in the Ashmolean's permanent collection (Room 66, to be precise). Rather, it is a collection of many of their most private drawings and watercolours that they made for each other and often left to the University in their will; for example, Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal's *Two Men in a Boat and a Woman Punting* is hardly a masterpiece, but instead reveals the artistic inspiration she took from her friends.

That's not to say for a second that there aren't truly fantastic pieces to see within the exhibition. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's portraits of his various lovers, including *The Day Dream*, demonstrate his great attention to detail and bold use of colour. Similarly, I was particularly taken with Simeon Solomon's *Two Acolytes*, which invites a synaesthetic experience upon the viewer with the combination of the burning incense, the suggestion of music, and the vibrance of the watercolours which could easily be mistaken for an oil painting.

The exhibition as a whole covers themes as varied as the Pre-Raphaelites' interests. There are the intimate portraits of their patrons, Rossetti's famous "stunners", drawings inspired by writers as disparate in time as Chaucer and



The Day Dream, pastel and black chalk, 1880
Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Two Men in a Boat and a Woman Punting, pen and black ink on off-white paper, 1850–62
Elizabeth Siddal



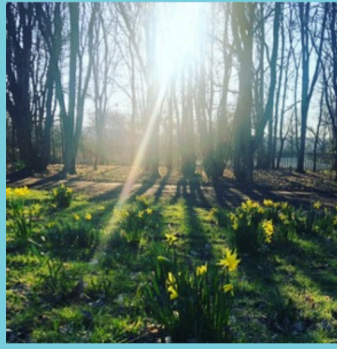
Tennyson, studies of rocks and flowers, landscape paintings, and even plans for tapestries. It is a truly thought provoking exhibition which encourages us to consider issues such as modernity, the male gaze, and the meaning of beauty.

One thing that unites these works, however, is a sentimental attachment to Oxford. It was here that many of them studied and met their patron, William Holman Hunt, who ran the Oxford University Press. The impact of these artists on the city goes both ways; the Old Library of the Oxford Union was painted by the Pre-Raphaelites, an early study of which is part of the exhibition. Also, we still have the Ruskin school of art, named after the art critic who donated his teaching collection to the University. Finally there is the impact of William Morris, the founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, who set up his company in Oxford. In fact, unusually for an exhibition, all of the items belong to the Ashmolean but are usually kept in the Weston.

Overall, this is an interesting exhibition which delves into both the artistic careers and personal lives of some of the most radical creatives of the 19th century. The variance in subject matter makes every room as engaging as the last, and the constant connections to Oxford make the pieces seem particularly relevant for the visitor.

CHARLIE WEST, JESUS

Pre-Raphaelites, Drawings and Watercolours is open from May 18th – June 20th, with free entry for staff and students of the University of Oxford. Booking is, however, essential. Book here: <https://ashmolean.org/pre-raphaelites#/>.



spring



SEASONS IN wonderland

NUPUR PATEL, LINCOLN



summer





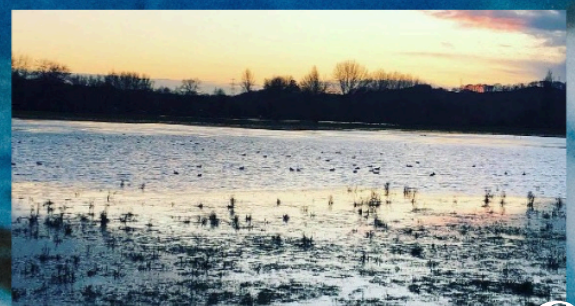
AUTUMN



The COVID-19 pandemic has been a really difficult time for everyone across the world. During the various lockdowns in the UK, in which I was away from family and friends, I tried to practise gratitude by focusing on small everyday joys. I developed a deep appreciation for nature and sought to take pictures on my walks to capture the different snippets of wonderland that provided me with some happiness in such uncertain times.



WINTER



matilda houston-brown

'FROG'



old fence

ella spilling, lincoln

A space opened up,
It's yours
this plot of land,
railway to something to believe in.

Climb up to chaos,
Reaching for that in between.
Disrobing the architecture of you,
Texture of you.
Summer of celestial sky,
Spheres all over,
Folds of porous fields,
Pulls and Motion through me. Stay.

Stuck in the bathtub,
Pull the plug on a galaxy,
Whirlpool wasteland,
Lured by the witch,
Will you come along the wayside?

This wasted space,
Washed and plastered over,
Bricked up grave,
Building up so she can have that view.





serena

lincoln

k
e
r
r
i
g
a
n
-
n
o
b
l
e



I was interested in constraints to self-expression, individuality and the connection between the imaginative and real world in my drawings. I used different media such as newspaper and magazine cut outs which I incorporated into my drawings and different colours to reflect this division and synthesis between the internal and external world and between expression and restraint. I use botanical and natural imagery to capture a sense of increasing expression and connection with one's internal imaginative world and the external world.

Dust had begun to gather in the gold-rimmed room.
Someone brushed it away before the meeting.
But it remained, danced, drunk,
plunged in the throb of an old melody.
Feeding the shadows roosting in the walls.

Puffed crimson puffin faces
Deaf to the ancient chords
Amidst the death-breath of history.

Propelled by gormless squawking, conducted monstrous
overtures
around a blackened wick:
Who should take care of weak and sick?

'Well, if they cannot work -'
'I say, why should we
take responsibility?'
'- it is a damn infringement on our liberty, if they expect -'
'And why encourage idleness?'
'- if they expect the government to feed them.'

And in this dusty lemon-milked tranquility,
Sour and tepid, like a rotten juice, but
colder than the plains of the Antarctic,
They played a game of chess against reality.

The edge of nothingness
gave birth to starless sky scarlet with billboard signs.
Part of the landscape, neon to offensiveness,
crackling with sickly glow of tumbleweed.
The Age of Reason.

It is the season to be rich and merry, and quick and light
beneath an expanse heavy, a sunless wave over a
sonless shore, where nothing grows. In wait.
A sunset world. Spray-painted petrol-green with Berlin
Wall graffiti.
We have no room for angels in this town. But some do say,
that when a man expired in the shady coolness of his
bedroom,
a worn-torn beggar resurrected him.

The lighting
shimmered. The curtain
quivered. The music changed its tone. Surrounded by oil
paintings in gold-tinted frames,
hunters with silver bullets, men in hats, and women with
sad eyes.
They listened as new notes began to play, the audience
wailed and wept, and
spidery-legged dust watched from the walls.

They tried to comfort him - within the limits -
'My daughter, she was dead for two whole minutes.
And they used fancy words, like
cardiopulmonary resuscitation,

in the wake of bill- board signs



But really I knew they had just brought her
back to life.
Performed a miracle in sterile white-hot light,
dozens of little bodies that had once known
flight,
melting and dead behind the plastic.
I can hear someone crying, oh God, the moans,
the whimpers,
the bleep-bleep-bleep of heartbeats and the
whispers -'

that we hear when we can't sleep. It comes and
goes like
moonstruck waves in lonely coves, the souls of
spectral dolphins singing in the caves like
ghosts from a blue smoke bomb, that
mother used to light. The voices of the cosmos
speak to us at night,
what have you done today but spin? those
sycamore seeds thudding on the windshield,
that father used to fright.

'Will gentlemen take some tea?'
She scuttle-crabs among them with a tray, dark
liquid swirling in the mawkish mugs,
like vampires might use to sip your blood. A
gasp, a hiss, a thud,
announces the commencement of the
ceremony. Long fingers stretching out like sea
anemone,
and crumble up and chew and chomp, to the
sweet music of ecstatic glugs.

He listens to the man go quieter beside him, all
soothed and calmed by custom,
but he does not hear. The voices of the cosmos
speak to him,
in tones salt-sprayed with ancient acrid fear;

O, where has it all gone?
Lavender-scented lilac buttercream
crowning a sponge still warm from mother's
hands.

A scone-shaped jam-filled genie, escaping
everyone into the morn, to
run and run and fly across the lawn
rainbow with silver freezing dew.
When had grass ceased to look this way to you?
The smell of stew, or some such liquidy affair,
reaches his nostrils
in the setting sun. A strengthening of night, you
must agree, is not the same as dwindling of
light, which he now feels this time of day from
balconies, in pools of sour wine.

'Tea time! Come in!'
Their footfalls thunder on the sandy path, and
arms outstretched into the orange sky
like airplane wings. When he was late she used
to say such things -
No one to reprimand you now. Stay out until
whatever hour takes your fancy.

'It's nearing five o'clock, 'his neighbour
grumbled, 'How long d'we have to babysit this
nancy?'

He can see faces in the metethereal tea.
His mother and old friends, just
floating there. And the librarian who always
smelt of dust.
Blue bubblegum and Marathons infest the
chilling air.

'I failed her, failed her. What if she had died?'

Christ said, ye shall no longer perish in the
dark. But live we must.
To dust we shall return, to dance no more to
chirp-trills of the lark,
nor feel the burning sunrise in our hearts. But
there are plenty steps left more to dance

and we will run through psychedelic streets,
demonic fanfares playing in our brains
and we will scream in empty concert-halls,
washing our faces in the summer rains,
we'll plunge off skyscrapers into the disco
waves,
we'll smash up radios to build a den,
and neon billboard signs us never will dissuade,
us hungry creatures prowling in the fens.

Bruise-purple clouds are gathering above the gold-rimmed room,
stuffing their faces through the grimy windows. Great clumps of
dust like cataracts infest the air.
A cold wild wind snakes in through crumbling cracks.
No one has touched this place in years, it seems.

The purplish puff-faced men sit at their table, eroding statuettes
digested by the earth. The
shadows roosting in the walls watch hungrily these ghouls,
half-drowned in their own apathy, dust in their lungs.

As they stare at their watches, they know already they will never
leave.
They cannot face the world they have created,
the ruins they have built outside this hall.
This evening they will dine on their last rations,
and listen to the wailing in the walls.

She scuttle-crabs among them with a tray, strong-smelling liquid
splashing in cracked mugs.
They bring it to their lips, and drink her blood.

Outside above the desolation, Big Ben tolls.
They think it tolls for them.
They will die comfortably inside the gold-rimmed room.

And we will watch. When they are gone we will start over, you
and me.
This time it will be different, you'll see.



lilya stewart,
lincoln

13

dreamgirl

helena aeberli, jesus

last night i dreamt i fell with blood
between my legs and a stranger told me
this was a girl. yes i woke up gasping
under the alarm's sweaty palms

to drink a bottle of warm water and collapse
back into sleep. there was a river, i remember
and i think this was the way out
soft and hungry as a cast-off duvet.

i am busy looking for openings in the dream
to stick my fingers through and pull
like the compulsion of a ladder in my tights
tender as the whisper between clock chimes,

or water's simulacrum of skin. later
i won't call this a nightmare but a future ghost
the first step in building an answer
to your unsaid questions

something which will dissolve and yet remain
a smokey oh breathed from cold lips
into a cold room, into a cold night, a cold
and waiting tomorrow.

*illustration by
daisy leeson,
jesus*





OXFORD

EVIE SUTCLIFFE, *LINCOLN*

Oh, those streets of Oxford. The cobbles underfoot, like stones in a river, bumpy passage from one lane to the next, the hidden alleys and marketplaces, spilling people out onto the high street, sucking them in in their throngs, the library spire piercing the grey skies, signposting home. Home. The place I have called home for over a year now, that place with the mountains of books, the Christmas card buildings breathing, towering in front of you, on either side of you, the ivy creeping up their walls, clinging, their stone faint from nine centuries of students dragging their hands across the alley walkway.

I have not been home in a while. I have not heard the rush of the city, nor the quiet of the meadow. I have forgotten what it feels like to emerge into life, born anew, and to be submerged within the college walls at the end of the day when night has fallen. I have missed the feeling of wonder, of learning new things, of getting things wrong, of reading a line of poetry and falling in love. I have missed seeing an old friend on the street, or at an outdoor table in the pub garden, hugging them, voices high and breathy as the last few months of your lives come rushing forth, promising it won't be so long next time, but you know you won't see them for another few months that feel like minutes. I have missed all this I have missed all this and so much more.

My Oxford, the library basement with the bright white light because you can't stay focused under the pretty ceiling upstairs. My Oxford, stepping onto the Turl and knowing you're on the last stretch now as the quiet drops around you, coaxing you home.

I'll see you soon, old friend.

O
X
F
O
R
D
E
V
I
E
S
U
T
C
L
I
F
E
L
I
N
C
O
L
N

Cobbles underfoot, stones in a river,
Bumpy passage from one lane to the next,
Hidden alleys, marketplaces, spilling
People out onto the high street, sucking
Them in in their throngs, the library spire
Piercing the grey skies, signposting home:
Home. The place I have called home for a year
That place with mountains of books, the Christmas
Card buildings breathing, towering before you,
On either side, with the ivy creeping
Up their walls, clinging, their stone rubbed faint from
Centuries of students dragging their hands
Across the alley walkway.
I have not been home in a while.
I have not heard the rush of the city,
Nor the quiet of the meadow. I have
Forgotten what it feels like to emerge into life,
Born anew, submerged within the college
Walls in the evening when night has fallen.
Starting at the office of your Tutor,
The walls painted in leather-bound books, the
Smell of leather and paper fills the air,
That excitement is what keeps you alive,
When you find your groove, your argument soars
And you know you've had a good one. Seeing
An old friend at an outdoor table in
The pub garden, hugging them, voices high,
Breathy as the last few months of your lives
Rush forth, promising it won't be so long
Next time. My Oxford, the library basement
With the bright white light because you can't stay
Focused under the ceiling upstairs.
My Oxford, stepping onto Turl, knowing
You're on the last stretch now as the quiet
Drops around you, coaxing you home.

Oh, those streets of Oxford.



A Critical Evaluation of Alice in Wonderland: Finding the Sense in Nonsense at The Bottom of The Rabbit Hole

Estelle Atkinson

Jesus

The tale of Alice in Wonderland is much beloved as an imaginary, literary landscape for readers to escape to. The imagery Lewis Carroll cultivates is beautiful and inviting, particularly in one scene when Alice is first beginning her adventures: “How she longed to get out of the dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and cool fountains.” Entering the pages of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* gives one a sense that she herself is Alice wandering out amongst the flowers into a realm of fantasy. While Alice experiences a world that can only be described as a figment of vibrant imagination, Lewis Carroll’s intertwining an enormous sense of purpose in one’s actions with a living and eternally breathing universe of its own renders the nonsensical world of Wonderland an almost mathematical model of enlightenment.

At first, Alice enters Wonderland as an outsider, bewildered by her surroundings; however, despite this novelty, Alice’s actions are assigned a heavy weight. She herself is established as a worthy contributor to the events of this newfangled society. When Alice falls into a salty sea of her own creation, she exclaims, “‘I wish I hadn’t cried so much!’...‘I shall be punished for it now, I suppose, by being drowned in my own tears!’” In Wonderland, Alice’s emotions have physical repercussions. This phenomenon affirms the very real impacts that human emotion can have on one’s surroundings. Continuing the story with *Through the Looking Glass*, when Alice arrives at a garden of live flowers, the flowers themselves begin to criticize her. And yet, the Tiger Lily told Alice that the flowers talk when they feel there is “anybody worth talking to.” This passage highlights the negative side of affirmation; even negative judgement gives credit to Alice’s own influence.

The concept of a consequence following a particular action and thereby validating it, is one that can be seen in Carroll’s own life, specifically his study habits. At Oxford University, “for the last three weeks before the exam,



... he worked thirteen hours a day, spending the whole night before the viva voce over his books" ("Cap and Gown"). His efforts granted him a first-class mathematics degree. Carroll's personal experience translates directly into the written word of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. Gillian Avery in "Alice in Wonderland: A Curious Child," states that, "Although Alice may be bullied and cross-questioned by the creatures she meets ... she always takes final control, overcoming the hostility of the court of the Queen of hearts." Alice, in her role as the human among a mythical cast of characters, reaffirms the strength in the human condition by acting in such a way. Over the course of her journey as a stranger in Wonderland, Alice exemplifies the idea of the value in simply existing, regardless of whether one's actions have positive or negative implications.

While Alice may play an important role in the story, Wonderland itself acts as a microcosm of the book. Both the content of the story and the story itself demonstrate an ability to function independently of their surroundings. A prime example of this occurs when the Red Queen requests that Alice make a speech. When Alice rises to begin speaking, chaos unfurls around her: the candles grow, the bottles take flight, and the Red Queen transforms into a kitten. Carroll once again strips the scene of any normal, social behavior. The absence of familiarity obscures the link between Alice's actions and the mayhem the dinner scene becomes; Alice herself does not understand the intricate workings of this land. Since the novel was first published, various attempts have been made to understand its complexities. Some have pointed fingers towards Carroll's own psyche, whereas others, such as Gilles Deleuze, have discussed the work as an individual unrelated to the author who penned it, saying, "For authors, if they are great, are more like doctors than patients" (Deleuze). This is an important distinction as it redirects any attempts at diagnosing the author back on to the work itself, giving it a life of its own and the ability to weather the ever-changing societal norms much like a person might.

The ability of Carroll's stories to maintain their reputation as works that are both lyrical fairytales and intellectual ventures speaks to the vitality of the novels. The same goes for Alice's own adventures; when Alice wakes from her dream, "she pictures to herself how ... she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood." Even though she has reentered reality, the whimsy of it all will last long into her adult years. The same can be said for those who read the tales: "What enchanted us then, and is captivating a million young fancies now, has, at the same blessed time of life, enchanted vast hosts of men and women" (Dickens). The stories' ability to interest different individuals across different generations speaks to their ability to withstand the changing forces of time on culture. A work that can weather these obstacles resembles less a piece of paper and more a being who evolves alongside the rest of the world.

If one were to examine the stories of Alice in Wonderland from individual excerpts, the impression they would be left with would be far from the tangled web of hidden meaning that one becomes aware of having read the whole tale. Carroll routinely takes mundane aspects of everyday life and personifies them, opening the scope of his ideas to a grander perspective. One example is, "[Time] won't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock."

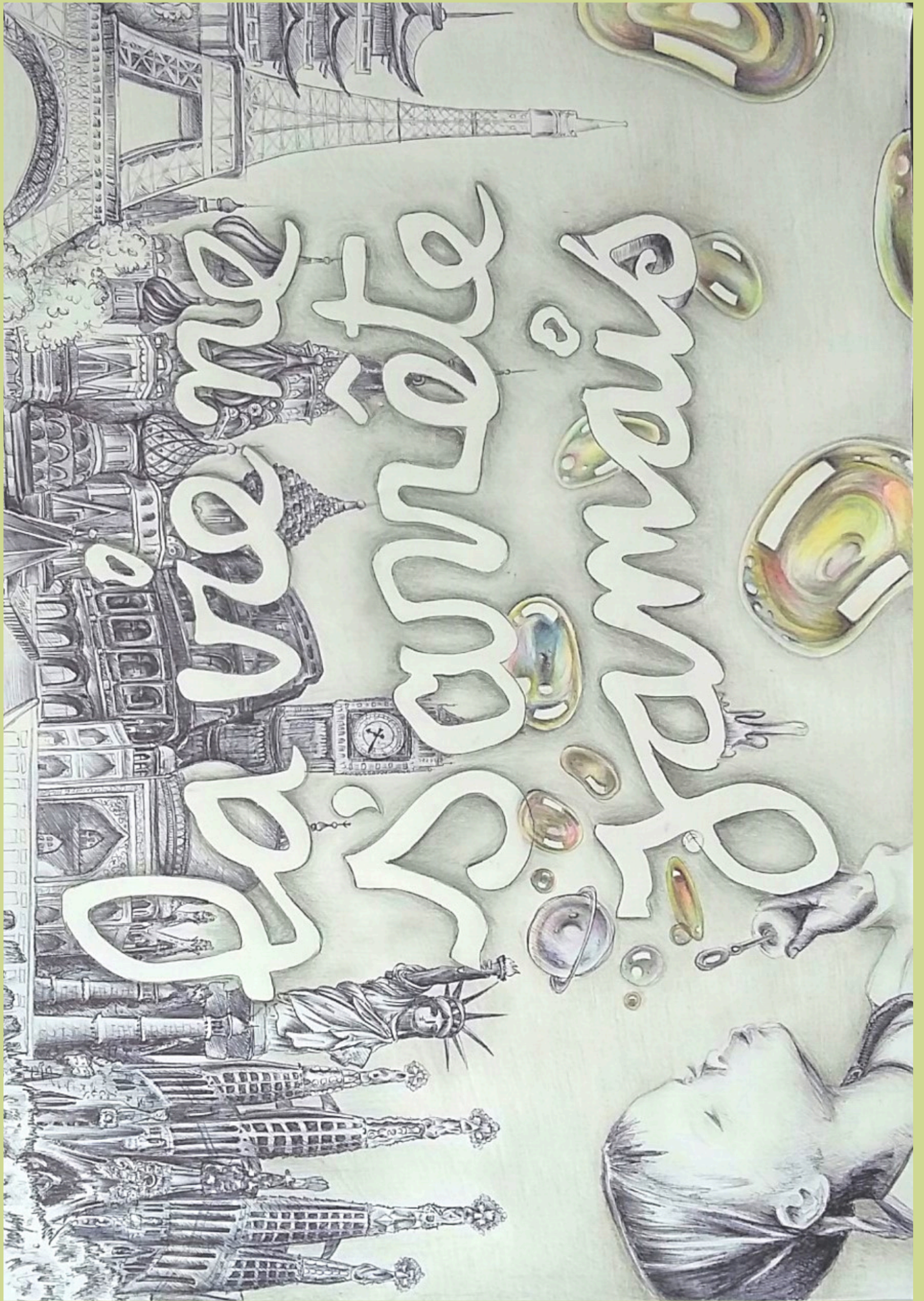
Taking a concept such as “time” and taking it out of its usual context moves away from attention to detail and towards a dialogue surrounding how one perceives reality. Other passages are increasingly bewildering at face value, such as, “Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise.” Carroll’s writing satirizes society’s expectations for individuals. Almost impossible to follow, the sentence leaves the reader with the thought of what it means to perceive oneself in contrast with how others might perceive him, an idea that can now flourish without having to unpack the intricacies of the repetitive words.



Throughout the two stories, the interactions of the novels’ components give each individual component meaning. This idea of the nonsense that Alice in Wonderland is famous for acting as the words of a larger language is reinforced by the ideas of Michael Holquist: “Nonsense is a system in which, at its purest, words mean only one thing, and they get that meaning through divergence from the system of nonsense itself, as well as through divergence from an existing language system.” Comparing Wonderland’s various absurdities to a new language gives the novels a sense of completeness. The urge to make sure that the tales of Alice in Wonderland had a lasting impact as pieces of work in absolute may have stemmed from Carroll’s background in mathematics. The use of symbolic algebra was becoming increasingly relevant in his field of work, which caused him great anxiety. He disliked the move away from the older values of order and reliability; however, “While Alice could flee wonderland and

leave the chaos behind, [Carroll] could never completely escape the symbolic approach. Denied a place in his mathematics, ... symbolic algebra found an outlet in his fantasy writings” (Pycior). Though he hesitated to abandon the promise of certainty in mathematics, Carroll chose instead to incorporate algebraic principles into Wonderland, writing his novels as a sort of coping mechanism to keep up with the evolving field of study. Given his educational background, he clearly was a talented mathematician, so much so that he managed to hide mathematical concepts inside a fantasy book.

In the end, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* are fairy tales, a word Lewis Carroll used himself to describe his work. However, important lessons and hidden morals lie beneath a colorful, nonsensical disguise. In the words of the Duchess, “‘Tut, tut child!’ ... ‘Everything’s got a moral, if only you can find it’.” Alice herself, and her interactions with the strangely yet precisely structured world she falls into, reveal truths about the human condition. These brief, buried principles in combination with the full experience of reading about Alice’s adventures result in an engaging, enjoyable, and worthwhile learning opportunity for the adult mind and inner child in everyone.



"Life never stops" – this French phrase I believe summarises the meaning of Wonderland and what makes it different from reality. Time, orientation, and reason don't restrict what can happen, as depicted by a child blowing bubbles that transform into planets and landmarks seeming to be turned on their head. Wonderland is all about our imaginations being never-ending.

Polina Danilina

Lincoln

matilda houston-brown
**'TOMATO FROG UPON
TOMATO'**



MB

Sunsets and Computer Screens

It's a curious thing,
Seeing you spread across my MacBook screen.
Speckles of dust and last night's curry sauce pepper your face.
We laugh at snapchat filters and corny quotes
About being star-crossed lovers.
Late into the night.



And before I know it,
There follows a weekend or two.
A six-hour train ride amounts to
Warm embraces, tourist hotspots and clinking Cider cans
In the Meadows.

We know it always ends the same way
With those same embraces, but this time
Dressed in salty tears and sighs.
Counting down the days until another
Hello and Goodbye.

Ecstasy and Woe wedged into 48 hours.
A blissful torture, I suppose.

And then reality kicks in.
Spaces in between, miles among miles,
The longing to touch, to feel, to caress.
The excitement of days yet to happen.
The weeks, the months of texts and facetimes,
And everything in between.

We have the carousel of all relationships, don't you think?

But what really keeps me afloat
Is the memory of sunsets –
Malta, Montenegro, Palma and Madrid.
Toes firmly embedded in the sand,
Curly hair stiffened by the salty sea –
And the realisation that
In a few years' time
Every shared sunset will be in our midst.

Fairyland

“April, did you put on sunscreen?” Mum called from inside. April was already out on the driveway. She rocked back and forth on her toes.

“Yup!” Mum stepped outside. Her soft brown hair was pulled back with a clip and she was wearing a dark blue sundress. She looked beautiful.

“Are you sure?” Mum raised an eyebrow.

“Well,” April grinned, “I might have actually forgot and then forgot that I forgot.”

“Let’s put some on now.” Mum said with a smile as she rubbed sunscreen on April’s nose and cheeks.

“Do you know where we’re going today?” Mum asked. It was April’s 8th birthday and she couldn’t feel more excited. Normally she would have a party with all her friends, but she had just moved far away to Mum’s old town. But don’t fret, April could not think of anyone more fun to spend her birthday with than Mum.

“To the park,” said April confidently.

“Not exactly,” said Mum. “There is some place special I want to show you. It’s a spot that I loved when I was your age. I think you’re big enough now for the climb down.”

Our pair of adventurers went straight to the park, with only one small detour to rescue a worm from the fate of being stepped on. April’s toes tingled with anticipation as they walked. She had a bounce in her step but was still careful not to land on any pavement cracks. April wasn’t superstitious but you could never be too careful. April held Mum’s hand squeezing tightly to keep her excitement from overflowing.

When they got to the park, April’s baby blue eyes widened to take in the beautiful green. The dandelions danced and frolicked together in the wind. They were watched over by the metal climbing frame and wooden swings. But Mum had said we were going somewhere special. April sniffed the air for that wispy feeling that signals the start of an adventure. It was there alright. April jumped up and let out a squeal of excitement.

“This way!” Mum smiled. They marched across the field like soldiers in a parade towards the forest of pine trees on the other side. April picked up dandelions, squashing them one by one and sprinkling the seeds on her little pink sandals. She liked seeing the little white flecks on her feet. It was the snow of the summertime. As they got closer to the pines April noticed a clear round opening between the trees. Their branches were bent as if around an invisible door.

Mum noticed April’s wonderment and said “I’m taking you to a fairyland!”

As they got closer to the entrance, there seemed to be no

woods on the other side. Instead, the invisible door seemed to open straight onto the sky.

“Where does the ground go?” April thought as she began to step forward more cautiously.

Once they reached the parted trees April was a little embarrassed to see that what seemed like an entrance to nowhere really opened up to a very steep hill. But her embarrassment was quickly transformed back into wonderment when she stepped on something crunchy.

Crickle. Crackle. Crunch! What was beneath her feet? April knelt down to examine what she had been stomping on. They looked somewhat like little bugs with beady eyes and spindly legs but, unlike bugs, they were the colour of gold and see-through.

April bravely picked up one of the bizarre entities and held it up to the light.

“What is it?” she asked.

“A cicada shell.” Mum answered. “They only come once every seventeen years so you wouldn’t have seen them last time.”

April looked a little concerned.

“Don’t worry, it’s just their shell. There’s no animal in there.” Mum laughed.

April was impressed with the endless knowledge of her mother.

“You can keep one if you want.”

April stopped staring at the cicada shell to give a devious grin.

“Nah I prefer stomping on them. I like the crunchy sound.”

Mum laughed.

“Me too!” she said.

April dropped the cicada shell and giggled as she stomped on it.

Crunch! Crunch! Crunch! Plop!! A cicada shell tumbled down the hill.

“Oh!” April peered over the steep precipice of the grassy hill. She had always thought of herself as an explorer and this was her chance to put that to the test. She watched the cicada shell bump down, every now and then bouncing off a jagged boulder, until April’s eyes panned downwards to see a fresh green world of moss and little puddles at the bottom of the hill.

“Is that fairyland?” April asked excitedly.

Mum nodded.

"It's so steep." April said anxiously. She took a step back and chewed on her fingernail.

"I know" Mum said, her eyes wide, "I don't know if I would be brave enough to go down by myself but luckily I have you with me."

"Don't worry Mum." April was still a little scared but she put on a brave face for Mum. "I can hold your hand."

Our two explorers held hands tightly as they ventured into fairyland. Once they made it down safely Mum began untying her shoes. April looked at her for a moment and then methodically mirrored her mother as she peeled off the straps of her little pink sandals. They stood barefoot on the soft green moss and in that moment everything was perfect.

"Rabbit."

A loud bullfrog broke the silence. April giggled.

"Where are the fairies?" she asked.

"Fairies are very shy, April, so it's rare to see one. I haven't seen a fairy in years," Mum explained. "And when you do see them it may just be a little flicker in the corner of your eye or a sparkle on the tail of a falling leaf."

"Really?" April figured the fairies around her must be exceptionally shy because she hadn't seen any yet. "Do you think we'll see one today?" April asked hoping the answer would be "yes".

"Well there's no way to know for certain" Mum said "But I heard a little rumour that if you build houses for the fairies, they can't resist but take a peek inside. Very curious creatures fairies are."

April could tell that the fairies must be listening because a few leaves tumbled down and one of them seemed to have a little sparkle on its tail.

"How do we do that?" April asked.

"First we need to gather materials," Mum said. "Look for sticks, leaves, flowers and pebbles. Things like that."

Before Mum even finished talking April's eyes traveled through fairyland and landed on a pile of pinecones.

"What about those?" April gestured towards the pile. "We could use those for the roof!"

"Yes" Mum smiled. "Those would be perfect!"

The pile of pinecones stood by the entrance of a wild meadow of forget-me-nots. April was very familiar with forget-me-nots, Mum had always told her they were her favourite flower, the same shade of baby blue as April's eyes. April skipped over to the pinecones and used the lower half of her shirt like a basket as she gathered various materials as if she were a little bird choosing supplies for her nest. Our pair of architects laid the twigs against a tree and started forming their fairy house. Mum helped April stack the twigs around an invisible window where they hung up ferns as curtains. The scales of the pinecones became a roof, a piece of bark was a welcome mat and a thin yellow leaf was the door.

"Do you think they'll like it?" April asked.

"I think they'll love it!" Mum said.

By now it was late afternoon and April was feeling worn out. As they wandered back home April felt her eyelids drooping but she worked hard to keep them open so she could witness any adventures the day still held. April's eyes closed for just a moment, but when they opened, Mum had reappeared standing by a bush of small golden white flowers with one firmly between her lips.

"What are you doing?" April said drowsily.

"It's a honeysuckle. You should try one" Mum explained, picking one of the flowers for April.

"Oh," April said, still looking a little suspicious of the flower. April put it in her mouth and felt the tiny drop melt on her tongue. As sweetness flooded April's mouth she thought "this must be what the fairies drink." She wished that she had put some in their fairy house.

"Do you think this will help me see fairies?" April asked.

"Maybe," Mum said.

April very much hoped so as she plucked another flower for herself.

As they turned the corner just before home April felt a hint of sadness for the very first time that day. All her adventures were over. Just as she thought this, she heard the sound of something coming. Thwap, thwap, thwap, thwap, thwap. 'What could possibly have so many legs?' April wondered. But it wasn't one creature at all! A mother duck and six little ducklings strutted past April's house. The last adventure to a perfect day! April grinned as she watched one of the little ducks get distracted by a puddle before the mother duck hurried her along and they waddled off into the distance.

"Come on April, it's time for you to go to bed," Mum said.

Mum tucked April into bed and April wiggled under the pink duvet so far that only her forehead and eyes peeked out, eagerly anticipating her bedtime story. The duvet had a picture of a castle on it with little kittens dressed as princesses climbing about. April liked to imagine that the kittens enjoyed listening to the bedtime stories too and that they watched over her while she slept. Mum gave April a kiss on the forehead and then sat down on the soft blue rocking chair.

"So, I guess you don't want a bedtime story then. Especially not on your birthday because I know you always *hate* bedtime stories."

"No, I—" April realized that Mum was only joking with her. OF COURSE, she wanted a bedtime story. April giggled.

"What story would you like?" Mum asked.

"Surprise me!" April said cleverly. This way she could sneakily find out what Mum's favourite story was. April put her hands over her eyes to make sure that she could be extra surprised.

As the events of the day waltzed through April's mind like a daydream, she could not wait to see what tomorrow had in store for her. But first, her bedtime story!

Tal Barnea and Roxanne Fisher,
jesus



Days in the Sun

Sam Schulenburg, Jesus

The world was serene that morning,
As the clouds passed over the hills
like memories which faded from view,
and the winds swept time through the valley
at last.

He must have known he was going to die.
In a poem, he wrote of his days in the sun
And I imagined his body now consumed by darkness,
his mind transfixed on someplace else.

The 50s, Greece,
The squid being beaten against the rock.
The ink spilling into the waves,
Which did not stain.
The waves so infinite -
they could not be stained

I wanted to keep him that way.
He who had travelled beyond the sunlight,
He whose world had been so different to mine,
Who had known the last of that decaying old world.
He who I had wanted to preserve.

All things must leave us in the end -
Those passing days in the sun,
As memories fade over the horizon,
Going beyond the darkness,
Burying his days in the sun.

The unstained, infinite waves.
The squid finally breaking against the rock.

Simon Maxwell

lincoln

As days grew longer, the summer heat gave this town a visit,
Squeezing its hefty body through narrow vessels of the city
busted the buildings wide open at their seams
And suddenly my quiet corner was overflowing with everyone
else's isolation.

At first, I was terrified of losing this boundary — privacy in a
shared accommodation is dubious at best to begin with, but at
least it was up to me when to give up that limit.
But now with windows popped like soap bubbles, glass
melted away by the smouldering sun I had no choice but to
eavesdrop on routine of others and worst of all let them into
my thoughts as well.

As the weeks went by the heatwave made it clear: it was here
to stay. With its firm, suffocating grip on the city the summer
did something I couldn't.

It refused to leave.

It is going to linger here undisturbed when I will be saying my
goodbyes and moving on. It is going to stay when I'm gone.

And then the unexpected happened. What made me feel
exposed is now making me feel connected. United in this.
Forever interlinked by the odd experience of being caught off
guard by an ear-piercing fire alarm in the midst of a meeting,
the misery of unreliable internet connection or the numbness
inevitably following the triumph of a new achievement.

All that was intimate and personal got laid bare and dissected
only to discover it is now unrecognisable from everyone else's
mess and I've gained some new sense of kinship in this new
collective anonymity.



scan to enter wonderland