

THE LAST WORDS

It began in a library. All the books turned to sludge. What strange vandalism, we all thought. If it was, then it wouldn't have spread. A city's books were liquefied overnight. Then there were more victims. Postboxes of letters, billboards, posters and more, all melted. But only the words.

Whatever it was went around the world in four months. Clothing, keyboard keys, anything with letters decayed. Even braille signs and hieroglyphs crumbled alongside reason and sanity as catalogues of histories and fiction slowly died. Then it reached computers. Our final records rest on tongues, but now silence is spreading...

By Samuel Cooper

SUBMARINE 919

On the HMS Endeavour, radar operator, Lieutenant Hughes, spotted a large unidentified object gliding seamlessly through the cold Atlantic waters. Its identification code read 'SUB919'. Impossible! the lieutenant thought to himself. That submarine was reported missing over 80 years ago! The radar started bleeping loudly, piercing the already tense atmosphere. Hughes' eyes fixed onto the radar screen in terror, a small shape was speeding towards the ship. It was a torpedo! There was an enormous bang. The ship became a fiery inferno. The submarine then disappeared into the murky depths, waiting for a new ship to prey on.

By Joseph Rheams

THE BOY THAT SHOULDN'T HAVE GROWN UP

I woke with a start. I felt strange, I didn't recognise myself. I lifted my arms, they were long, very long. "What's happening?" I said. Wiping my eyes, I stood and looked in the makeshift mirror, a face stared back. I didn't recognise it, but strangely it was familiar. Before I could look closer, there was a bang on the door. Deep voices shouted from the other side. I opened it and was confronted by men in boys' clothes. I was confused, they knew me.

"Peter, is that you?" said a comforting, reassuring voice.

"Tinker Bell, you've grown!" I said.

By Sam Phillips

FIGURES OF 8

I'm stumbling around in figures of 8. This hallway never ends. I turn a corner and it just stretches further into the darkness. My shoes echo on the marble floor. As I hear the sound ricocheting into the distance, I lose hope. Leaning against a pillar, I groan as I feel something pushing against my back, the number 8... flipped on its side? Something suddenly clicks in my brain... infinity! This hallway will be infinite if I don't change something. I spin the symbol round to 8 and 8 metres away I see a doorway emerge. My escape.

By Maia Turner

A LONGING FOR LOVE

Dark clouds form an obsidian mass. Rain is imminent. I run. I dive into bunker 93. For a moment, I don't breathe. If rain touches my skin, I'll be irreversibly contaminated. I turn to check I haven't been followed. My heart skips a beat.

Mum's eyes are white, devoid of emotion. She extends blistered arms towards me and her lopsided mouth forms one word... my name. My heart aches. I feel an irresistible longing to be loved. This distorted version of my mother will proceed to attack me, but I don't care. I step into the rain and embrace her.

By Isobel Murray

A BANQUET IN THE PAST

Suddenly, I was travelling through time. "Not again!" I groaned.

You might think it's exciting, whizzing into the past every time you sneeze, and it was at first. But it soon got boring, especially in flu season, and especially when you can't control where you land and you end up being chased by Vikings or stuck in a prehistoric swamp.

The spinning stopped and I looked around. A feast lay before me: roast meats, warm bread, fresh fruits. I sat on a velvet chair and tucked in.

"Who sits upon my throne!" boomed an angry voice.

Oops! Time to go!

THE SHOCK OF DEATH

"You're early," said Death, looking up from his list. "I wasn't expecting you until next year."

"I-I don't-" the man started, but was interrupted by a pop! as another spirit appeared next to him. Then another, and another, and another, until there was a queue of hundreds, thousands, maybe millions of confused people stood before the Grim Reaper.

Death was not easily shocked – he'd seen much in his thousands of years as sentry to the afterlife, but this was enough to leave him speechless. Millions of people had died when they shouldn't have. Something had gone terribly wrong on Earth...

A STOPPED CLOCK

When I woke up, at first I couldn't work out why the silence was so strange, then I realised: I couldn't hear the clock. The never-ending tick-tock of my father's clock had fallen silent. I took it down from the wall and placed it on the table, a puzzle to be solved later.

I grabbed my keys and stepped out the front door and immediately stopped, astonished. A boy was on a bike, feet on the pedals, but motionless. A pigeon was frozen mid-flight. It wasn't just the clock, the whole world had stopped, apart from me...

FORGOTTEN

When Lucy walked into the kitchen one Saturday morning, she wasn't expecting her mum to scream in her face. "Who are you? Why are you in my house!"

"Mum? What are you talking about?" replied Lucy, confused.

"Get out before I call the police."

Lucy backed out of the kitchen, scared. She grabbed the phone and called her dad. "Dad, there's something wrong with Mu-"

"Who is this?"

"It's Lucy."

There was silence on the other end of the phone, then he spoke in an icy, threatening tone. "That's not funny. Lucy died five years ago."

NIGHT AND DAY

The sun hadn't risen for five years. The world had stopped spinning, stopped orbiting the sun. No one ever found out why. People on one side of the Earth were plunged into unending darkness, whilst those on the other side were tortured by relentless daylight.

Crops and plants died either from lack of sun or too much. Food chains were disrupted. Millions of people died. Those who survived moved to the border of night and day, trying to find some balance. But then the animals followed. Animals that were hungry. Animals that were desperate...