



Things  
that  
live  
in the  
shadows



Zoe 7F  
12/11/2017



Coburg High School's 2017 Writing Challenge



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## Amelia Corboy 7C

### Shadows

I not afraid of shadows,  
Not even the Shadow Man,  
I see him floating on the snow,  
Looking like a madman.  
Everyone around me runs,  
While I just sit and face the sun.

He will try to scare me in my sleep,  
But I won't let him roar,  
So he goes to find my friends to creep  
And my friends are an easy score.  
Overnight I hear their screams,  
Which nearly makes me crack,  
They wake up all my lovely dreams,  
When the Shadow Man comes back.  
So I will look him in the eye,  
And firmly say goodbye.

So if you're ever nervous,  
When the Shadow Man's approaching,  
Think about my service,  
And you will not need coaching.  
If you always find the light,  
The shadows will be bright.

## Clementine Baskett 7H

Last summer. A weird motel on the corner. A murder. This is where the Madison Riley case begins. Madison was always the smart one, the funny one, the popular one. Her wrath was like a storm engulfing the school and everyone tried to calm her down. But what Madison wants, Madison gets. Everyone wanted to know her. Everyone wanted to be friends with her.

The Madison Riley case came as a shock to everyone. But to some it came as a relief. Madison adored the spotlight. She craved the spotlight. She loathed anybody who stood in her path. She would always whisper and spread rumors about people who annoyed her.

The summer that Madison disappeared, many people started noticing small but strange details. Some reported seeing her arguing with 'outlaws' from the town and others said they saw her sneaking around behind dumpsters or in back alleys behind restaurants and shops. The most confusing detail that was uncovered was the security footage from the alley behind the coffee shop on George street. It showed Madison trying to pull something out of the dumpster. She was stressed and kept frantically looking back at the car behind her. There was someone else in the car that night, a boy from the school called Ethan Williams. After searching recklessly for 12 minutes, Madison rushed back to the car - empty handed. Ethan grabbed her hand in rage and bellowed at her.

The footage then showed her struggling to get out of the car when Ethan tried to pin her down, she was clawing scratching and screaming. He put his hand over her mouth and paused for a moment thinking hard. At that moment he suddenly looked directly at the camera. He stopped, got out of the car and stood, looking at the camera for around 30 seconds then walked carefully out of the alley. You could see Madison's eyes wide and scared when she abruptly started trying to get out of the car again. She stopped when Ethan walked back towards the camera - with a broken pipe. The security camera was then cut off and the police found the camera destroyed and lying on the ground. The pipe was nowhere to be seen.

Two days later, Madison's body was found. She had checked into the Blue Swallow Motel at 9:56 P.M on the 19th of the July. The credit card receipt was found by the Motel staff. Madison had paid with Ethan's card. At exactly 10:37 P.M on the 19th of July, a call was made to the front desk. Madison's voice could be heard on the other end of the line, distraught and terrified. She kept repeating, "Someone took it. Where is it? Where is it? I need it! Please! Where is it?" Brenda Davis, the reception supervisor tried to calm her down but failed. She proceeded to ask Madison what she was looking for.

"Sweetie, what are you looking for?"

"I need it- I need it now!"

"I can't help you if I don't know what you're looking for."

"It was in my drawer but now it's gone. Who took it?"

"If you tell me your room number, I can come and help you look sweetie."

"Someone took it- I need it, I need it now."



There was a scream on the other end and the line cut off.

At 10:39 P.M on the 19th of July, another call was made. Ethan's voice could be heard.

"Uh- could we order the mac 'n' cheese to Room 13 on the second floor?"

"Yes, of course-"

Ethan hung up.

At 10:47 P.M on the 19th of July, there was a knock at the door of Room 13. Brenda's voice could be heard saying that she could unlock the door for Madison. There was a jangling of keys and the door creaked open, Brenda gasped.

What Brenda found that night would never be forgotten. Madison's body was sprawled out on the living room floor. There was blood soaking into the carpet from behind Madison's head and the rusty pole was lying by the bed. The window was shattered and the room was trashed.

At exactly 10:50 P.M on the 19th of July, yet another call was made from Room 13 on the second floor of the Blue Swallow Motel on the corner of Smith street.

This time it was to the police.

Karla Shanley 71 – *POETRY WINNER*

With eyes as dark as midnight and teeth as sharp as blades,  
the type of thing that chills your bone until your dying day.  
His ghastly breath and hungry jaw could bite you clean in half,  
creeping through the shadows, he'll surely cross your path.  
Warnings have been sent out, more than just a few  
but you do not believe these things, you think they'll all fall through.  
So torch in hand you light the way, stomping through his home  
The midnight bell has just rung out and now you're all alone.  
Your mind is playing tricks on you, you think there's something there  
You shake your head and move along, you think it's just a hare.  
You grab your knife but it's too late, it's jumped out from the dark,  
in one foul swoop it's got your head, your body falls apart.  
And so in turn it drags you back into its stinking lair,  
full of rotting flesh and bones of things that once died there.  
And so it says the story goes the boy who died alone,  
he ventured once without a chance into the creature's home.  
So let this be his tale, a lesson if you will,  
to never look inside the dark...  
because shadows; they can kill.



## Nat Grainger - Twyman 7I – *YEAR 7 & OVERALL WINNER*

### **The Beginning**

‘Strange,’ it pondered, spiked tail flicking, ‘such beautiful things don’t tend to hide in the shadows.’

The amber-coloured butterfly landed upon the monster’s polished black beak, it’s small torn wings fluttering weakly.

‘But then again, not everything that hides in the shadows is what it seems.’

The monster’s rounded ears twitching forward, breathing in the faint flowery scent the butterfly exerted. Narrow leaf-coloured eyes, hidden by overgrown fur, widened to watch the winged insect with interest.

Warm sunlight began to glide over the wasteland, the faint sound of birds’ songs reaching the monster’s dark ears. The golden butterfly quivered, it’s small pupil-less eyes studying the monster.

Plunging forward, the ageing monarch butterfly flew off on wings fuelled with seemingly tireless energy. The monster watched it with curious eyes as the amber butterfly glowed silver, illuminated with the moon’s mysterious light.

The small amber-winged butterfly fluttered towards the moon, sinking so low in the sky as the rising sun stepped up to its role. The softest of golden rays hit the creature’s midnight black fur. Its forest green eyes gazed at the dawn sun, eyes closing for the briefest of moments before turning its head back to the fading moon.

The mist-enveloped butterfly fluttered back and forth, seemingly beckoning the monster. The monster lifted one large bulky paw, hesitating; warmth hit its back, yet it still felt cold.

How could this monster go on, knowing that its kin were drowning within the darkest depths of their own fears. It trembled; how selfish could it be?

It clambered to its oversized paws, casting one final, hopeful glance towards the welcoming sun. Heaving one deep breath, it leapt after the small monarch butterfly, faith in its actions were right, trust in the little butterfly to pave the way to freedom.

‘There is one thing that I now have,’ it thought as it bounded off towards the unknown,’ and what I have is hope.’

## Zoe Beaumont 71

I wake up.

There's no noise. The faint and airy waves of the fan and the occasional swaying of trees in the wind. It looks grey outside, blank and dimly light skylines crowding the horizon as far as my eyes can see. Everything looks the same. I don't know if I was expecting some sort of change, a book to be moved or a cabinet unlocked, but it is always the same. Everything is always the same.

Grey pavements. Small cracks and creeping patches of grasses and moss, slowly decaying in the brisk winter breeze. Grey clouds, grey roads, grey towns, grey people. Every person, following the same mundane routine as any other day, mindlessly moving their legs in a timeless rhythm yet to end. It was always the same. Grey sky, grey world.

Class. A series of lessons surrounded by people whose sole purpose is to get out and move to the next brainless collective of words. Hollow and grey, their souls speak of no other task. I have no person to drag into my own meaningless rituals, instead I follow along with every other robot in this building. I stand up, and watch everything fly past in such a slow and dull way that I feel comfortable being hollow, and I leave to join another series of the same events. Hollow, a classroom is not complete without the ones who give up.

My mind is not clear.

In order for me to continue with my own outlook on these passing days, my monologue has to be cut short by the pressing need to turn on my Keynote. It's a cycle, clapping for each presentation, regaining my own thoughts carefully. The teacher who dictates over me and the rest of the students around me tells me to continue. I stand, shuffling in small strides towards the front, setting my laptop down ever so carefully to maintain my thoughts onto the protection of this item. Standing, I begin to concentrate on the words I had spent hours of my time focusing and gazing at - just for this to fail.

At this moment, words fail me, and I am left stumbling and stuttering, breaking the perfection and simplicity of the lesson. No groans, no laughs or grins from the grey people. They stare, and I feel a chill: fear. They say love is the most powerful emotion, but it's fear. Because fear always stays with us, while love passes by, coming and going every so often. I panic, a natural response to fear. In that fear, there is disgust. Disgust with myself for falling into panic, disgust with myself for feeling too confident and disgust with myself for failing. My legs shake, and the stuttering flows out of my mouth unevenly and with great force. Completely embarrassed, I sit in the uncomfortable wooden chair as the same monotone applause sounds out.

The ringing continues as I slowly walk along the train tracks that act as bored for the suburb. It's dull and grey, just like everything else, and the trees swayed so slowly that even the world turns faster. Dark green woods thickly coating the left side of the tracks. Rusty and old, the tracks have not collapsed yet.

Then, there is a noise. A quiet rustling, or the creak of swing set, I look ahead. Maybe I freeze, or maybe I start to walk towards it, but eventually I find myself across the tracks and Coburg High School's 2017 Writing Competition – Things That Live in the Shadows



facing the wilderness. Another rustle, another creak, another step. An old train, covered in dying mosses and ferns. It holds a glow, because the red paint peeling off seems brighter than anything else. It's bold, and new, and different, but it is so wonderful. The colours are bright and beautiful that surround the old carriage, green flora, brown stems, clear dew drops hanging on the edge. It's new and colourful, so breathtaking. A colour, a colour so magnificent that not even words can describe it. I step forward, gently resting my hands on the worn out door frame of a carriage and peer inside the rusty machine. The colours are so new and fresh, so vivid that I get lost in my thoughts. Grey seems like a memory to me, and these colours fill my eyes.

A red swing, brown in the eyes of another, gently rocking in the wind. There are no colours in this town. They say I'm crazy, that there was no shadow in the train, that there was never a carriage to begin with. That the colours that I saw, that the *thing* I saw, never existed. But it was there, it still is there.

Sometimes it follows me, sometimes it leaves and presents me with the most astounding colours I've ever seen. It's always there, always watching me.

The dying mosses, the decaying vines. It's all grey to me. The shadow that whispers horrible things, it never left. Maybe it was never on the train, and it always haunted me. Because that day, where the shadow followed me back across the tracks, everything folded into the grey again. And the moment of noise, forgotten.

I did the only thing I could think of; I left. And the shadow creature follows me everywhere. It becomes so overwhelming that I cannot even breathe because its thoughts are so suffocating. I realise that there was no shadow monster, but me. The shadows I created, the shadows lurking in the back of the mind. The blind spots I hid away and ignored.

I could never escape it, and in turn I let it consume me the way the grey used to. Maybe if I had searched harder, pushed into my mind a little bit more to open it up and remove the shadows in my mind, show the colours I was secretly surrounded in. If I had paid attention to the thoughts disguised in the darkness.

Because it's the things in the dark you never see coming.

## Eva Anderson 8E – *YEAR 8 WINNER*

‘We are but dust and shadows’

If only that were true. I took another step into the darkness, ignoring the eerie whispers of the wind. I allowed myself a glance at the full moon that lay above me, seemingly watching every step I took, waiting for the opportunity to seize me. I sharply inhaled as a cloud passed over it, shrouding me in darkness that I didn't want nor need. How did this happen to me? Being hunted down like an animal, chased by faceless souls that did everything in their power to track me down and rip me to shreds.

Fear was one thing, but this, this was so much more than that. Fear was a deception, fear was an excuse, fear was a coward's lie. This was real. Every last stitch in the embroidery of darkness that relentlessly chased me, twisting and invading my mind, was as real as I was. I tried to take another step but was paralysed in fear, my eyes flicking around every which way to see what was going on around me. All I could make out were the shadows closing in on me. My breathing quickened in panic as I tried to break out of the ironclad grasp that held me in my place to no avail. Everything seemed to happen at once, darkness, screaming; and then nothing.

Then it all stopped. I was no longer there, all I was was a thought, a memory, a whisper... but that's the only thing I ever really was, wasn't I. Just another shadow.



## Gabe Webb-Johnson 9A – YEAR 9 WINNER

Mum and I have always looked similar, No question that I was her son. We were both quite skinny and we had high cheekbones. We shared eye structure and had identical noses. The only difference that set us apart was her luxurious brass coils which glisten in the sun like gold that would often hang triumphantly in a high bun atop her head. Hair colour would be the only thing I shared with my Dad. That being an earthen brown which seemed to match our eyes. However, I was nothing like my father in appearance.

Dad and I have grown apart recently. It isn't his fault. He has been, distant and angry. It all started after he suffered injuries after a car accident four months ago. The only one who even seems to be alive and happy around here is Mum. Hell, even Dad and Mum don't talk anymore, I suppose she still hasn't forgiven him for crashing that car. It's so weird seeing Dad do all the chores Mum would usually do, like cooking and such. However, I guess he is just trying to make up to Mum for all the hardship.

Dad sat two plates on the table and started to eat. He didn't even put one out for Mum! I couldn't believe it!

"Dad!" I said in a near angry manner

"Oh sorry Markus, I'll get Mum a plate, one moment."

Mum never ate the food anyway because of how stubborn she was anyway. So often he would just throw the plate of food away.

I noticed Mum had a black eye. I asked her how she got the black eye and she simply replied,

"Markus, everything is going to be okay, I promise."

After breakfast we decided to go to the movies. Dad had said that it may be a good chance for us to connect again and we could "have a break", whatever that means. He walked up to the concession stand and asked for three tickets. The woman stared strangely at him, she obviously saw Mum's black eye and thought the worse, she may even think that someone was hurting Mum. However she gave him the tickets without saying anything.

As Dad was discussing with the concession stand lady, Mum dragged me away and sputtered out quickly, "Your Dad is killing me, he has beaten me every night. I don't think I can survive much longer like this."

Shocked, I didn't say anything. She continued. "If I start to look worse, please take me to our doctors." Dad started to approach. She quickly spat out, "Markus, everything is going to be okay. I promise."

Feeling shocked I said nothing as we walked into the theatre. It wasn't until that night. I had finally worked up the courage to face my Dad. I told Mum to follow me downstairs. I walked up to Dad and shouted, "Are you proud of what you have been doing!?"

Playing dumb, he said he didn't understand.

"Look at Mum, how does she look!?"

"As beautiful as the day we met," he said, all choked up.

My stomach dropped thousands of kilometres, my eyes became glassy and tear-filled. My mouth and forehead fell and melted into a scowl. My posture grew rigid. My eyes bolted to the floor. Then back to Dad, then back to the floor. I tightened my fist, my bones solidified into boulders of pure diamond and my skin turned to steel as I tried to attack my Father, for I realised what he had meant. How long had this abuse been happening for? Had he been beating her since the wedding day?

He dodged the attack with reflexes like a fly. He looked at me horrified. And screamed at me to go to bed or I would wish I was never born. Knowing I couldn't fight my father, no matter how angry I was at him and how disgusted and anxious it made me, I reluctantly went to bed. I sat on my bed crying, listening to My Dad moan and cry accompanied by my Mother's tears. I cried and became hysterical. Exhaustedly I fell asleep.

I woke up. Stumbling into my room was Mum, looking half-dead and bloodied. She said, "Please, please take me to the Doctors tomorrow, I can't go on like this. Markus, everything is going to be Okay. I promise."

We laid together and drifted off to an abyss of absence. The only place I ever seemed to be truly happy, where nothing could hurt me and time seemed to go faster and not be filled with anxious ticks.

This morning, I apologised to Dad for my blatant aggression. I also played oblivious and stupid and asked Dad if we could go to the clinic because Mum looked like she had fallen over. He said no. However, I insisted that she needed to go. I said that I would take her independently if he refuses. That is when he let out a huge sigh and agreed to take her.

Dad and the doctor had a chat first in private. I bet he was making up a story to cover his abuse. I saw the doctor nodding and then I saw them both leave.

"Uhhh."

The Doctor stared at me and the rest of the room. Eyes were jolting in every direction except towards us. He eventually mumbled out in a deep voice, "Mrs Kelly, I will see you now."

I went in with her to ensure that the Doctor understood the abuse taking place. In tears, I explained everything.

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He looked intrigued yet mortified. His posture hunched and humbled. He was taking notes on a notepad and kept on nodding. It took a while for him to reply since he was writing down viciously on the notepad. Presumably about the condition of my poor mother.

He sighed and then looked at me with eyes of devastation and some regret. He then was eventually able to say to the floor..

“ Looking at the state of your Mother, I believe you. I'm here to help...”

His eyes darted around and stared at an empty seat, Mum was standing next to me sobbing slightly.

“Here come with me and we will get your Mum to a hospital. And your Dad to prison, where he belongs. Come quickly.”

Joyous, I shouted my thank you and paraded him a hero and my saviour.

He once again sighed and he gave a small smile which cut the smallest recesses of his face. He said in a voice of a defeated man, “You’re welcome.”

He then asked me to stay in the office whilst he talked to Dad. I stared out the window.

The Doctor and Dad were talking in the waiting room, I could see them through the glass. The Doctor was showing the notes, Dad burst into tears... I nearly felt bad for that abuser. He came quietly to the car. I supposed he accepted it...

We rode silently in the car. Not a single word was spoken until we reached the hospital. “Markus,” Dad said to me, “we are here at the hospital, but not for Mum... I'm worried about you. It seems that you are afraid of the deepest recess of your mind. This must be your way of coping...”

"What? I don't understand, Mum is sick, you beat her! She needs help!" I blurted out, nearly in tears.

“You have been talking to your Shadow.”

"What? Mum, is this true?" I asked Mum.

“Your Mum died a long time ago in the accident Markus. I was driving the car that killed your Mother, I will never forgive myself for that.”

I am absolutely shocked by what is being said to me, Mum reacts the same way. We look at each other and before I could utter anything Dad spouted out.

“Me 'abusing your mother' is just your angry mind trying to process the feelings.

Your Mum does not live in your Shadow...

The plates, the cashier's glances. Hell, I even told the doctor to play along with what you were saying. But he said that if we don't deal with it now. It could develop into something much worse. You have been acting so aggressive lately. I've been worried sick about you... Haven't you noticed we've been acting strange?"

I feel confused, angry and most of all frustrated at the man. I was physically shaking.

"Mum is in a better place, we need to move on, I know you can't help it but you need to move on..."

His eyes squinted and he started to talk slower and slower. His words were accompanied by sobs and whimpers of pain. He looked solemnly out the window avoiding eye contact with me. He talked, but I did not listen. He shook and moved his stiff body backwards towards the back seat where Mum and I were sitting. He stared into my soul with those brown eyes we shared. His lips quivered like an earthquake on the face of a broken and depressed man. He took a deep breath and said, holding back his emotions and sobs.

He spattered out words that quivered and shook me to my absolute core. That pierced my heart and mind.

"Listen... I've said it to you many times and I'll say it again. Markus, everything is going to be Okay, I promise."

Mum and I looked blankly at each other. This cannot be true.

## Mahnoor Naqvi 9D

She watched the sun and gazed at darkness,  
while wandering through the clouds to stash some stars.  
She thought of the light as a shadow of blackness,  
and found the Earth as a sky to Mars.

A storm then came with heavy rain,  
a poet within had a revelation.  
Humanity beneath was crying in pain.  
Because reality is illusion and illusion is deception.

Our bodies are the shadows of our souls,  
where life's staged by the shadows of our whims.  
We are caught in a prison, no more goals,  
because life is nothing but a show of sins.

## Riley Van Rynsbergen 9E

We live in the shadows. Not seeing the light of day. Waiting for the murderous monsters outside our small rotting walls to leave us alone. We are being held captive in our own home in a war that isn't ours to fight.

We have no way to retaliate, powerless against the constant onslaught of terror that we face every second of the day. The people of my religion and beliefs are being tortured, enslaved and eventually killed, just because we aren't the "desired" race. When will the devil knocking down our doors stop and get what he deserves? Why can he live in the sunlight with millions of supporters raising their hands in unison to show their allegiance. They act brave and proud but they are really just doing it to protect themselves even if that means wiping out a race in their path. For us it's a deadly game of hide and seek but when we are caught there's no escaping. Sometimes our only option is to hide deeper in the abyss of shadows and darkness.