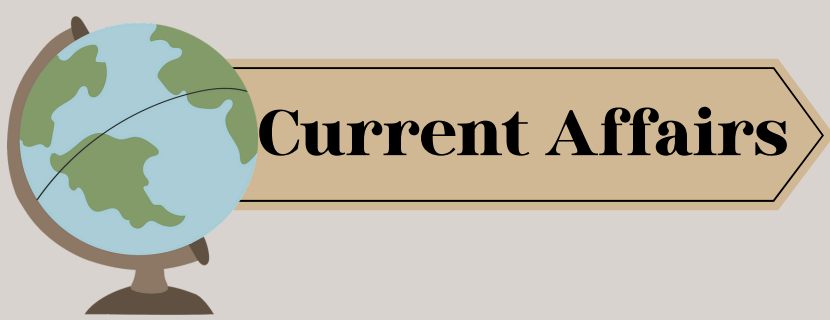


THE NEO SHAKESPEAREAN

Lo, after a term full weary and long, we have at last arriv'd at the end of Semester One. The scrolls of report are dispatch'd, and thou may'st now set thy fretting aside ... and turn thy noble gaze to this humble newsletter!



Aussie Journalist shot in LA protests against ICE

By Aria Purohit - Year 9

On the 8th of June, 2025, Australian journalist Lauren Tomasi, a U.S. correspondent for Nine News, was struck in the leg by a rubber bullet while reporting on protests outside the Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles.

The demonstrations were in response to the Trump administration's intensified immigration raids. Despite being clearly identified as press, Tomasi was injured during a live broadcast as law enforcement officers began dispersing the crowd.

In the footage, she is seen reporting on the situation when she suddenly cries out in pain, clutching her leg.

The incident created immediate outrage in Australia. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese condemned the shooting as "horrific" and stated that the Australian government had raised concerns with the U.S. administration. He emphasised the importance of press freedom and the safety of journalists, especially those clearly identified as media personnel.

Senator Sarah Hanson Young also called for accountability, urging Prime Minister Albanese to address the incident directly with President Trump during the upcoming G7 meeting. She stated "US authorities shooting an

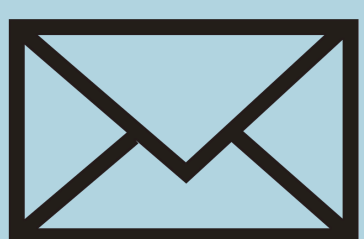


Lauren Tomasi hit by rubber bullet while reporting live in LA (9 News)

Australian journalist is simply shocking. It is completely unacceptable and must be called out."

The Los Angeles protests have seen multiple journalists injured, raising concerns about press freedom and the treatment of media personnel during such events. The LAPD stated that its professional standards bureau is investigating allegations of excessive force.

Lauren Tomasi's experience underscores the risks journalists face while covering protests and the importance of safeguarding press freedom. Despite her injury, she remains committed to her role, stating she will continue reporting.



Are you a writer? Send your edited compositions to
melonbahsnewsletter@gmail.com

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Drowning Whispers

By Anonymous, Year 9

Narrative



He found himself on the shore of the lake with no memory of how he got there. The waves gently lapped at his feet, as if trying to soothe the raw, unyielding pain that enveloped him, reminding him of what he had lost and the void it left behind—a gaping wound.

The air was thick with mist, curling low over the water like ghostly tendrils. The sky was darkening, heavy with the weigh of an oncoming storm. He shivered, though not from the cold. Something felt wrong. His clothes were damp, clinging to his skin. His hands, scraped and trembling, were coated in sand and something darker—something that smelled like metal. A dull ache pulsed at the side of his head, but when he pressed his fingers to his skull, he felt no fresh wound.

He turned, scanning the shoreline, searching for something familiar. That was when he saw it.

A car.

It lay at the edge of the lake, half-submerged, its windshield fractured like a spiderweb. The front was crushed against the jagged rocks, metal broken beyond recognition. Water lapped at the open passenger door, pooling inside. A flicker of memory surfaced. Laughter. Headlights cutting through the night. Fingers laced together. A flash of white as she turned to smile at him. And then—

His stomach lurched. His breath came fast, uneven. He staggered forward, his feet sinking into the damp earth with each step. As he neared the wreckage, the details sharpened. A dented license plate. A familiar bracelet hanging from the shattered window. The sickening realization settled deep in his bones.

Panic clawed at his chest. He lunged toward the open passenger door, gripping the edge as he peered inside. His breath caught. She was still there. Her blonde hair clung to her cheeks, strands drifting in the shallow water. Her seatbelt was still fastened, her head tilted slightly to the side. Her lips were parted, as if caught mid-sentence. But her eyes— Her eyes were open. Vacant. Unmoving. The world tilted. His knees buckled, and he barely caught himself against the car. A strangled sound escaped his throat.

“No, no, no.”

His hands reached for her, shaking violently. He yanked at the seatbelt, his fingers slipping against the buckle. The storm roared above him, wind howling through the trees. Rain began to fall, droplets splattering against the wreck, against her lifeless skin. He tried again, pulling at her arm, but she would not move. The water around her was rising, swallowing more of the car. Terror surged through him. A voice whispered through the wind.

"You left me."

His breath hitched. He turned sharply, eyes scanning the shore. There was no one there. Just the rain, the trees, and the lake stretching endlessly behind him. But the voice had been real. He had heard it.

His pulse pounded as he turned back to the car. He reached inside once more, gripping her wrist— Her hand twitched. He recoiled, stumbling back into the sand. His vision blurred, his head spinning. She wasn’t—

A sudden force yanked him backward.

He gasped as icy water closed over his head, dragging him under. The lake swallowed him whole, darkness wrapping around him like a chain. His limbs thrashed, lungs burning as he struggled to break free. Beneath him, something moved. A hand.

Her hand.

It grasped his ankle, pulling him deeper. The lake distorted her face, but her eyes—wide, empty— locked onto his.

"You left me."

His scream was lost in the water. He kicked, fought, clawed at the surface, but the grip was unrelenting. Cold fingers tightened around his wrist, his throat, pulling, dragging—

Then, silence.

When he opened his eyes, he was on the shore again. The storm had passed, the lake was calm and the car was gone. His clothes were dry. His hands, once stained, were clean. Even the pain in his head had vanished. For a moment, he sat there, frozen, the memory of the water still burning in his lungs. Had it been real? Had any of it? Then, he saw them.

Footprints.

Leading away from the lake, pressed deep into the damp sand. Not his. Smaller. Bare.

And beside them, the faint imprint of a handprint—lingering, waiting.

Saviours of the Empire

By Mankaran Singh, Year 8

Chapter 1

“You found me?” Justin’s voice trembled, the words slipping out in disbelief. The room felt too perfect—too still—compared to the storm of emotions battering his chest. His heart sank when his eyes met hers. His mother. Alive. But she shouldn’t be. Not after all these years. The shock hit him like a punch to the ribs. Anger, relief, and confusion twisted together inside him like a knot of raw emotion. Her eyes—bloodshot and tired—locked onto his, and Justin couldn’t tear his gaze away.

A dim blue shimmer from the setting sun cast an eerie, golden hue over the room. The world he once knew—quiet, ordinary—now felt distant, as though he’d stepped into another realm entirely. The myths he’d grown up hearing—about elves, magic, and ancient empires—weren’t just stories. They were real. And he was part of it all. Part of something much bigger—and much darker—than he could’ve ever imagined. He was changed. Genetically altered. Powers that he couldn’t fully understand had made him something else. Something dangerous. Something extraordinary.

“I’m sorry, Justin,” his mother whispered, her voice strained, each word heavy with regret. She dropped her gaze, unable to meet his. The silence between them thickened—thick with so many things unsaid. “Faking my death... it was necessary. For your safety.”

His chest tightened. He could barely breathe. His thoughts scattered in all directions. He’d always wondered, deep down, if the stories from his childhood were true. But seeing it all unfold before him? It was too much.

“I know this is hard,” she continued, her voice trembling. “But I promise, you won’t have to face this alone. Not anymore.” Her hand reached for his, tentative, hesitant.

Justin hesitated, then allowed her fingers to close around his. He wasn’t sure if he should pull away or hold on, but something—a flickering ember of hope—stopped him from retreating. But it wasn’t enough to quell the storm crashing inside his chest.

Before he could speak, a sharp voice sliced through the air.

“Hold it.”

A figure appeared in the doorway—tall, lithe, with an air of authority that immediately shifted the room’s energy. Justin exhaled a quiet sigh of relief. His friends. Two figures emerged from the shadows. Joshua, with his teal eyes and the scar running across his brow, followed by Argove, who stood a half-step behind, still as the night. Justin nodded toward them, his voice hoarse. “This is Joshua,” he said, barely above a whisper, “And that’s Argove.”

Joshua gave him a quick, reassuring smile, though his eyes scanned the room with practiced precision. “Don’t worry,” he said, his tone warm but edged with concern. “We’re with Justin.”

“Friends,” Justin clarified, his gaze darting between his mother and his friends, trying to steady the whirlwind of emotions inside him.

He noticed the unease in his mother’s eyes. She didn’t trust them. Didn’t trust anyone. The tightness of her stance, the wariness in her eyes—it was clear she wasn’t just afraid for herself. She was afraid for him too.

Joshua took a step forward, his casual demeanour masking the seriousness beneath. “We just came to check on him,” he said, his eyes narrowing as they fell on Justin’s mother. “We heard she’s ... your mother?”

Justin swallowed, his pulse quickening. He nodded, his voice caught in his throat.

Argove’s voice cut through the silence. “Is everything okay?”

Justin’s eyes dropped, his voice barely audible. “Yeah. It’s just... everything’s happening too fast.”

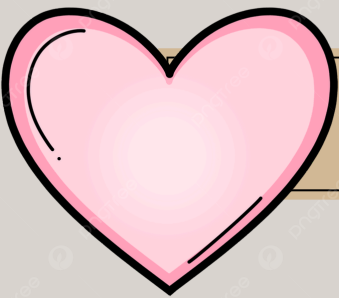
The room fell quiet, heavy with unspoken words. Then, with a cracking sound, Justin’s voice broke, and the question slipped out. “Where’s Dad?”

His mother stiffened. Her face crumpled. Tears welled up in her eyes as she spoke, her voice faltering.

“I’ve been looking for him. Everywhere.”

The sharpness of her words hit him like a physical blow. But it wasn’t just her grief he felt. There was something darker underneath. Something that made his skin crawl. The distance between them felt vast, insurmountable.

To be continued ...



The Pen

By Manvik Ankam, Year 8
with the guidance of Manyuu Vangari and Ayo Okeowo

The pen conquers the world
The pen can provide
The pen can erase
The pen conquers the world

The pen can kill
The pen can revive
The pen can write your future,
It can also write your demise
The pen conquers the world

Your pen is your voice
Theirs is theirs
No matter who prevails,
The pen shall write their tales
The pen conquers the world.

You

By Bryan Inthilath, Year 9

I hate how you love me i wish i'd let you leave
I love d you
I hate love
you love me

I hate d you
I hate how i'd let you leave
h e love s you
I hate how you wish i'd leave
I hate you
I love you
I hate how you love me i wish i'd let you
I hate how i let you leave|

Upcoming Writing Competitions



Competition Name	Submission Date
The Marjorie Bernard Short Story Award	31 st August, 2025
The Hilarie Lindsay Short Story Competition	31 st August, 2025
Insight Creative Writing Competition	20 th September, 2025
Blacktown City Council Mayoral Writing Prize	29 th September, 2025