

ENGLISH: *CREATIVE WRITING*

A flutter of birds

The effervescent rays filter through the fractured clouds, hitting his body in a fragmented fashion. The light reflected of the single drop of sweat rolling down his pale skin. His long brown hair was tinted from the sun despite it being in the midst of winter. Rupert reminisced about everything he would miss, including the sunlight. He turned his head equally to each side, flicking the small droplets as his white Labrador had done just moments before, before continuing his morning jog.

The small grey house sat on the right of the hill. Its little windows like eyes, looking down at the sea below. The ladder reached up the cliff face, covered in red rust and broken from the storms. Rupert had climbed this ladder almost every day of his eighteen years, his hands moulded into the rock face as he avoided the old ladder rungs.

Dear Pop,

Andrew cleaned his home; he had been dusting for weeks. The tiny duster was worn to the ends, and his hands peeled with skin from the bleach. Andrew always struggled to make the house as his wife used to, its old nature meant that the light fittings were too tall to clean, and had dust two centimetres high around them. It was like this everywhere Andrew had complained to his son, he wanted to move away; an apartment in the city was in his plans. 'Oh father, you will never leave. This is ... mum's place...' his eyes wandered to the tall jacaranda, its purple flowers covering the entire garden, 'like little fairies...' a small tear fell down the edge of his wrinkled face.

I had the best time this summer,

The car jolted left, crossing the two-lane highway into Newcastle. The small crosses on the road forced Rupert to look away, two boys they were in his year... he never knew them. He shifted uncomfortably in his chair, 'It's just for three weeks.' His mother grumbled. The car shook on the rough gravel road, until it halted at the railway tracks. Another world, a sharp shiver went down his spine.

A small drop of liquescent dew fell onto Rupert's head as he opened the gate to the estate. The muscles on his arm tensed precariously, and he tightened his grasp on his cargo bag. The grey mist swirled around his ankles, teasing him with its cool touch. Rupert quickened his pace, and walked with his head forward as if running into battle.

I will really miss you, pa.

Rupert glanced up at the filthy door, noting the small pieces of brass missing from the corner of the door handle. He shook his hands to remove the brass, frowning angrily. His skate shoes scuff loudly against the dirty wooden floors, leaving a trail through the dust. The sound echoed through the large run-down domicile, the empty room embracing him with its isolation.

The bitter staleness engulfed his nose, but was pushed out by a large sneeze. He pulled his bags to his sides, protecting him from the scary atmosphere. He glanced at the door, as it was pulled open slowly, 'Rupert. I've been waiting all day' his grandfathers kind smile was rejected by his anger at his grandfather obvious impatience. His grandfather offered his hand; Rupert simply proceeded up the hallway.

There was one thing he disliked most about his grandfather. His disapproving nature, he believed somehow he had a view on everything in life. He appeared to have discovered the meaning of life and universal truth, though he held it all on his shoulders. Rupert had always believed that it was old age, and its affect on his overweight, wrinkly form that had brought him to this conclusion but he had decided it was a mixture of the two.

Rupert's dreams of becoming an engineer meant he studied for hours in his room each night. His grandfather even insisted his opinion onto this also, "What is it with pens these days? Horrible little pieces, I had a pen I bought in 1932- it was a red coloured beauty- used it for thirty-two years, and half the price of your plastic, they don't make such things these days." He had insisted on telling him three times, until Rupert locked the door and turned up the rap music instead.

Each time Rupert returned his grandfather's mood was more grouchy and sulky.

He disapproved most normal behaviour and was getting more and more frustrated that nobody paid any attention to his words of wisdom. "What is this?" he proclaimed last visit, thrashing his new iPhone on the countertop. He had become a consummate cynic. Rupert kept his distance.

It hadn't always been this way; Andrew forced his mind to remember. He had been peaceful and calm, his best friend. They would spend hours sitting in his aviary with Rupert perched in a tree, asking him about each different species. He had lost his magic touch, the aviary had become over grown and the birds all died or flew away. After his wife had died, Andrew didn't seem to care much for them anymore. Andrew struggled with old age daily, it had hit him like a train, and he ignored this. He had wanted his grandson's companionship, and need their connection. So he endeavoured to return it to its original state.

Andrew had busied himself in his dilapidated shed. He built feeders, nests and built new wires for the doors and sides. He worked for hours in the aviary, as part by part he repaired each part determined to leave the disaster area. He removed himself back from the area, smiling its returned old state. He worked late into the night; frequently he would work until the sunlight tipped the edges of the distant horizon.

Wish Nan was here too,

Rupert slept late into the day; a loud rattle on the door was muffled by the rock music still playing from the night before. He opened the blinds and flicked on his contact lenses. His retreat downstairs was silent; he ducked into the large kitchen. The small packet of coco pops sat on the bench near the milk. He grabbed it quickly. 'Rupert, you're awake'. Rupert's shoulders sunk, and he turned slowly, 'I want you to come into town with me today. I have to buy something special'. Rupert frowned 'Not an iPhone I hope.' His grandfather laughed with a snort.

The large new car hummed down the highway, his grandfather had bought himself a Mercedes insisting he won it at the club. The leather seats felt uncomfortable under Rupert as if they judged

him. Andrew arrived at the local markets, pulling Rupert out of the car. He walked up to a man with a store full of birds, 'I'll buy them all.' He stated. Rupert felt funny, he stepped back. Rupert swore his grandfather was mad, there had to be thirty birds in front of him. He continued to pile them all in his car, and purchased seeds on the way. Rupert sat in shock in the car.

One year, I cannot wait.

Rupert looked in admiration when he returned home, his heart fluttered in his chest. An aviary. How he loved birds. He jumped from the car, running over to the site, he felt his grandmother's presence, her kind warmth, her smile. A small tear fell from his face. 'It is amazing' he states with a smiled tone. Rupert sat silently, engulfing his mind with the different birds, zebra finches, Gouldian's, ringnecks, bright yellow canaries, chestnut finches, cordon blues as they fluttered in their new home. He felt a warm hand on his shoulder.

Love Rupert, age 10.