

Bulgarian Creative Writing Competition in English is intended to foster creative thinking in Bulgarian students of English, and to encourage the use of the language in a fun way.

In 2011, Bulgaria began participating in a competition called the International Writing Olympics, a contest created and run by Peace Corps volunteers all over the world since 2003. In its first year here the contest was a volunteer-run initiative and only host schools of Peace Corps Volunteers took part in it; in 2012 the competition was opened to all public schools and the plan is in 2015 to open it to the private schools as well. The number of the students participating in the competition increases each year – from 300 during the first year to about 4000 in 2014.

Since 2013, an independent version of this competition is organized by CORPLUS Foundation. This new incarnation, called the Bulgarian Creative Writing Competition in English, maintains the original spirit of the first competitions, but with a more sustainable outlook, and new possibilities for prizes and recognition of its outstanding young writers.

In 2014 the competition was supported by the US Embassy in Sofia, American University in Bulgaria, Express Publishing, Klett Bulgaria Ltd, Macmillan Bulgaria and private donors.

The competition itself is simple. Firstly, all teachers of English in public schools are welcome to have their students participate. The competition is open to students from 6th to 12th grades, although each grade level is separate from the others.

When the official topics for the competition are sent out, participating schools select a time and date within a predetermined week for their students to write. Students are given one hour to respond to one of several creative, unusual themes (these are different for each grade level). Over the course of the hour, students may not consult dictionaries, grammar references, the Internet, other students, etc. The goal is instead to create their own unique pieces of writing, to think “outside the box”. After the hour is over, they turn in their personal information sheets and essays to the teacher, who then mails them to the regional judges.

Once all the essays have been received, panels of regional judges convene in their respective locations to read the essays, which remain anonymous during this process. Using various criteria, the judges select the best essays from each grade level in their region. These finalist essays are sent on to national judging. At the national level, essays are again read and rated; first, second, and third places are awarded to the top pieces from each grade.

These students are invited to the national awards ceremony, where they are presented with prizes: high-quality English-learning and writing-related materials donated from supporting organizations. There are also several additional prizes provided for outstanding writing.

Of course, prizes are only one reason to participate in the BCWC. Our main goal is to show students that every sort of talent deserves to be cultivated and shared with the world. Everyone’s voice matters!

This book is a collection of the winning essays of the 2014 Bulgarian Creative Writing Competition in English (we have preserved the original punctuation of the essays with only minor spelling corrections made when needed).

Enjoy reading!

CORPLUS Team



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Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of your favorite pair of shoes

Maria Milenova Slavova
OU „Vasil Aprilov” – Burgas

Hello there Maria,

It's me your favorite pair of shoes. No, not the ones with the blue stripes. I'm your high heels. The red ones which you loved the most. Now you're probably thinking "Can shoes talk or am I hallucinating". Just so you know I can't talk, but I can write. Now you're thinking "I need to get a specialist" I say no! And before doing anything stupid I want to tell you my feelings. Well first things first. I know you've been searching for me for a week. And yes I know that, because your black boots faceted me. I have to tell you something.... I went to Alaska. I know that sounds impossible, but it's the truth and I can prove it. If you look on the other side of the sheet you can see a picture of me on my new friends feet. The girls name is Lacy. She found me in her mailbox. And she fell in love with me. Don't worry I told her that we can only be friends. Now I'm staying in a nice cupboard with lots of shoes in it. I know you're going to miss me. But that wouldn't happen if you didn't throw me away when you got back from a birthday. I was really hurt though. I mean literally. You threw me so hard that I broke a heel. Do you know how much time did it take to fix it. No, you don't know, because you weren't there for me when I needed you. Sorry I got away from the subject.

Anyways I want you to know that I'm staying here and I'm sure I'm not coming back. So don't wait for me. I can sense that you're upset now, but that's just how things turned out. We are not meant to be together. For some reason I'm upset too and I think I'm going to cry anytime soon. Again don't worry for me I'll be fine. You can come and visit me sometimes, but no it will look awkward. I can imagine it. You'll be like "Can I see my shoes, because I really miss them. She will say "Yes". Then you're going to hug me and she'll be standing there looking at you like you're crazy. So I don't recommend that. You can write me a letter instead. I'll be glad to read it. And yeah I can read. I'm the smartest pair of shoes in the world. And by the way I won an Oscar. Who do you think was on Naomi Campbell's feet. Except that I'm smart I'm famous too. Miley Cyrus even wanted me for a night, but I said no. And before you ask something "It's because of reasons"!

So I think It's time to say goodbye. Omg why is it so hard. Okay goodbye I'll miss you so much, but I want you to be strong for the both of us. I know I sound like those cheesy TV shows that we both hate, but that's life. And my life took a new direction. And I think you should move on too.

Hugs and kisses: Your high heels (Haily is my new name for your information)

P.S. Pease throw this away when you read it. I don't want your parents to see it. They'll think that you're going nuts.

Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of your favorite pair of shoes

Paola Stoyanova Dimova
OU „Sv.sv. Kiril i Metodiy” – Sveti Vlas

Hi, Paola! We are your favorite pair of shoes, and we want you to tell you a lot of things. First, our names. The left shoe is Gooley and the right shoe – Thalia. We didn't have names when they (the factory) made us in Germany, so we named ourselves. Gooley is called that way because you (meaning, him) once stepped in a piece of very sticky gooley stuff. I think you call it gum. The other shoe is called Thalia because you once read aloud the third Percy Jackson book "The Titans Curse". The right shoe sneezed just when you said 'Thalia'. She liked the name, so it became hers.

We also wanted to warn you to clean your shoes immediately after you get home when you've went to the woods. Not the day after, especially if it was muddy. Our favorite songs are "What the Fox Said" and "Dumb Ways To Die" so I hope you listen to them more often.

We heard you were going to Hungary soon and are hoping to take us along with you.

Can you wear dark purple clothes more often, because that's our favorite color. And please tie your laces more often we hate being stepped on our fingers.

When you take off your shoes can you leave us inside, not outside the door. It's freezing during the night.

Please don't put your phone and money in is. It's awfully uncomfortable.

When you choose your socks, think about us. We don't like polka-dots, as does the rest of the world.

Your cat sometimes sleeps in us, so please put us in a safer place.

We would be thankful if you do the things we told you to, but we'll love you even if you don't. We're loyal shoes.

P.S. *Try not to forget us when you go to Hungary!*



You open your freezer and you find that it has become a passage to the North Pole...

Simona Georgieva Byuzukeyva
45th OU „Dimitar Talev” – Plovdiv

The passage was glowing in the dark room. I could see the ice cubes and the snow falling down the ground. It was getting cold but I kept staring in this unique passage. Could I really go to the North Pole? It could be dangerous.

Suddenly I saw one silver wolf with fur more pure white than the snow. His yellow eyes were reflecting in mine as he was calling me. There I understood it needed my help so I quickly took my jacket and jumped into the passage. The travelling itself was a fascinating journey. It felt like I'm flying, capable of watching worlds unlike ours. Every single one was similar to Earth but somehow better – cleaner nature, more animals and people who don't harm each other. I was dazzled.

The next moment I remembered was in front of a frozen lake. Everything seemed normal so I stood up and started looking for the wolf. I didn't find him but there was a scarf on the ground with a name on it: Saber. The scarf itself was ordinary but the words on it were written in blue. They were glowing like created from light. I decided to keep the scarf and continue searching for the wolf. Across the lake there was something. I passed it and saw the wolf. I was looking at me very carefully. I decided to give him the scarf because he was shaking. Then he spoke to me:

Ahh, my long lost scarf... Thank you, girl. I was shocked. When the wolf took the scarf, his eyes became blue like the sea. He continued:

If you found my scarf, then...you must help me! I'm Saber, the leader of my pack. They are all trapped in one ice cave. The men took them there and soon will kill them for their white fur. Will you help me? You're the one my scarf has chosen!

I couldn't leave this so beautiful creature. I decided to help him so he let me get on his back. Riding Saber was faster than anything. He wasn't walking or stepping on the ground. He was just flying close to it.

As far as we were going, the sky was getting darker and darker. It seemed everything came from the cave. When we reached it, I saw inside there were five other wolves. One man was guarding them and the other one wasn't there. Then Saber gave me his scarf and said: I will lead the men far away. You have to save the others! Use the scarf to wake them up and run for the lake after that!

I took the scarf as Saber was already distracting away the guards. I went in the cave and found the wolves. They were sleeping and they looked like dead. I didn't know how to use the scarf so I just put it over them. Nothing happened at first. Then the wolves opened their eyes and slowly got back their strength. They got up and thanked me. I found their scarfs close to the entrance. Each one of them was in different color and different name. I didn't have the time to read them because Saber was running to the cave. The men were chasing him with giant bear! He was telling me to run. I took the scarf and got on one of the wolves.

We joined Saber and started running to the lake. Fortunately, there was no way the bear could outrun these magical wolves. We reached the lake and stopped there. Saber came to me and looked me with his blue eyes gratefully. He gave me his scarf and told me to go back to my home because soon they would notice I'm gone. I thanked him and said goodbye to the whole pack. Then I came through the passage.

**You sit down to a meal with your family.
The main course begins to speak to you. What does it say?**

Ralitsa Stoyanova Tabanova
122nd OU „Nikolay Liliev” – Sofia

I was in my room and I was drawing some rainbow colored unicorn. I loved unicorns and I still do. I always believed that I'm a unicorn, because I'm really weird. So back to the story. So I was drawing in my room when my mother shouted:

– Time for dinner!

I left my pencil next to my drawing and went straight in the kitchen. We were having mashed potatoes and some strange chicken. When we started eating when I was about to take my first bite of the strange chicken something whisper-shouted:

– Hey don't eat me.

At first I thought it was my imagination but then I heard:

– Hey if you bite me I'm going to stab you with my spoon.

I looked around and saw only my parents and my brother just sitting there eating peacefully. Then I felt something moving in my hands and then I saw the strange chicken was alive and it was talking to me. I was a little surprised, but not very much because as I said I'm a weird person. Then again:

– So are you going to take a bite from me so I can stab you with the spoon? – said the chicken.

– You can't stab me with a spoon because the spoon is round – I said to the chicken.

Then my mom asked me:

– Honey, who are you talking to? And then I realized that my parents can't hear the chicken neither does my brother. So then I said:

– Nobody. Mom can I finish my meal in my room

At first my mom was a little bit confused but then she said yes. So I went back in my room, closed the door and asked the chicken:

– Ok. What's going on?

– Well my brother melted because of Molly. – said the chicken.

– Who is Molly? Who are you? What is going on? – I asked again.

– Ok. So I'm Roger, my brother's name is Frankie, he is a marshmallow but he melted because he was really in love with Molly- his girlfriend, she is a chocolate pudding.

– Wait. Your brother is a marshmallow? What's that? Doesn't he have to be a chicken? Or don't you have to be a marshmallow?

– Well my mother is a lollypop and my father is a chicken. Don't ask me about them because I don't get it too.

– Ok. So you're Roger right?

– Yes, and you are a girl. Your name is Veronica.

– No, my name is Ralitsa.

– Oh but you look like a Veronica.

– And how does a Veronica look like?

– A Veronica looks like you.

– And how do I look then?

– Like a Veronica.

I groaned and told Roger to forget it because I wasn't going to argue with a chicken.

**Choose any two items (not people) in the room and write
a conversation between them.**

Reni Yordanova Ilieva
SOU „Vasil Levski” – Karlovo

- So...how's it going? – the phone asked
- Well, considering how many people prefer using you instead of me, not good.
- What do you mean buddy?
- Do you really not understand? – the pencil was curious.
- To be honest, no. What's the big deal?
- I'll tell you what's the big deal. Our planet is losing its talents.
- Huh? – apparently the phone still didn't understand.
- Do you think Leonardo da Vinci did his paintings using his phone? No. Or Joanne Rowling wrote Harry Potter using it? Exactly. Years ago, people actually did these things themselves. All they ever had was their hands and me. Take a good artist for an example. You see this drawing here?
- Sure do! – the phone replied.
- Well, guess what? He needed me all the time. The sketches, the colors...everything! He took his time and drew it. Take "The Fault In Our Stars" by John Green. Obviously, he took inspiration from somewhere but not from his phone for God's sake. It was probably from another amazing book that hmm... was supported by me. Or how about the script of a play, the text of another Christmas oldie that makes everyone smile...?
- It might sound crazy but I still do not get it – the phone answered as it started giggling quietly.
- Stop! That's not funny. It's actually pretty sad. All you see on the street is people sending messages to each other via e-mail. In the 18th century they sent letters. Nowadays, you're a lucky girl if you get a "ur hot :)" text from a guy. People used to write songs and poems for their girl, not acting like some "dudes", who can't even spell correctly. Let's not comment their looks...
- Ugh, I know you're right about this – finally the phone agreed. – Have you not seen their pants?
- It's like they don't even feel like putting them on.
- So... what were you saying?
- See, I'm not going against you. I just feel like the phone addiction is kind of getting out of control. The kids could go and study for an exam and write down important things on a notebook using a pen or a pencil, not doing in on a "notebook tablet"
- But us, the electronics help people keep in touch! – it started defending itself. – Thanks to us, you can have Skype wherever you go. This way you are able to have a connection with the people you love no matter where or what happens.
- Okay. I think that I've come to a conclusion. It's all right unless people use you for needless things and they use me for a talking/writing bad stuff about others – the pencil said.
- I agree! Let's not talk about it again, it's become a sensitive topic!
- Ha-ha, got it! :) – now it was all good.

**You open the front door to discover a parcel on the step.
Suddenly the parcel begins to move.**

Ivona Ivaylova Ivanova
AG „Geo Milev” – Ruse

The first thing I would do, of course, is poke it with a stick. However, this is not the case this time.

I started wondering what could be inside. Many normal things crossed my mind. Things such as a puppy, a toy car or a ball. But you know, when imagination kicks in, things change very fast. It could be my ego, taped inside a box and left there, it could be my fear, trying to break through the walls and take over me. Out of simple curiosity, I took a stick (you thought I was joking?) and opened the top a little. Nothing went out.

I went close to the parcel and glanced inside. There was water, simple water. Water, so clear and crystal-like, that I could see a detailed image of myself. Still confused, I dipped the tip of my stick into the fluid. The contact between the wood and the water made a bell-like sound. I pulled my “poker” (that’s how I call sticks) out and realized that the fluid on the tip of it had a rainbow-like color. A few drops of the water fell on the floor and I realized that their colors made figures. One like a little puppy, another – a goldfish. I poked my head to see if I was dreaming, but apparently I wasn’t.

There I was, in a dilemma. Should I touch the fluid? Should I leave it? My influenced-by - The Hobbit- book side told me to go for it. As “Baggins” as I was, I took the parcel and splashed the water all over the floor. Using my fingers and the stick I spread it around. Each time I touched the fluid it made a different figure. Then I realized: The figures were part of my life. My first puppy, my goldfish, my friends, my family.

I didn’t care if I was dreaming or not, I had to try something. I made a few steps back and I jumped right into the colorful fluid.

Opened my eyes and I realized I was falling. I was between the sky and a lake, as colorful as the water. At one point I simply stopped. So, there I was in the mid-air, just staying like that. I guess I had to decide. Without hesitation I rolled myself so that I am facing the sky. I whispered “go” and I started flying back up.

I blinked a few times. I was still holding the stick, deciding if I should open the parcel or not. I ran to it and tear the tape apart with my bare hands. It was still moving a little, but I managed to open it. Inside, there was a brush and a note next to it. The note was saying:

*“You made the right choice.
Remember always strive
upwards to higher places.
Be ambitious!”*

Under the note there was a little kitten, which seemed to be the cause of the whole-magical-moving-parcel thing. The brush needed no water, no paint. It has the magical fluid on it and it was meant to draw what I think, what I desire and what I need. In the end, what was in the parcel was my own mind.

Tell a story: You wake up one morning and find that a horn has sprouted from the center of your forehead. Then...

Dimitar Dimitrov Dimitrov
GPChE „Vasil Karagyzov” – Yambol

The alarm clock rang. I was so sleepy I could hardly get up to stop it. As usual, I went to the bathroom to get ready for school. I brushed my teeth and took a shower. Everything was normal until I looked myself in the mirror.

“M-o-o-o-m!!!” – I shouted. I could hear my parents rushing towards the bathroom. They opened the door and stared at me for a while. I didn’t blame them because I couldn’t stop looking at my... HORN either... Yes, that’s what I said... horn. A horn has sprouted from the center of my forehead.

“What is this thing?!” I asked frightened.

“Oh, nothing to worry about!” – my dad smirked.

“What... What do you mean nothing to worry about? I’ve got a HORN!! I’m like a unicorn for God’s sake.”

“Our baby...is becoming a man!” – my mom looked like she was going to cry.

“What is this?” – I was really horrified and out of my mind.

“Maybe we should tell him...” – my dad said.

“Tell me what?!”

“Ah ...puberty...” – my mom smiled. “You know how some teenagers have acne or hair growing? Well, in our family we grow... horns...”

“What? Is this some kind of joke!? – I couldn’t believe it.

“I’m afraid not” – my dad said – “Don’t worry about it. It will be gone in a couple of days”.

“How am I supposed to go to school with this thing?” – I asked.

“You’re not” – my mom said. “You get a couple of days off.”

“For real?”

“For real.”

After a while my parents left for work. I was all alone and wondered what I could do. I decided to go to the back yard and play with my dog – Roger.

I had this small yellow ball with green spots on it which Roger adored playing with. He did look at me a little puzzled because of the... you know... the horn... but we had a good time playing.

Everything was really great until I heard one of my neighbors shouting:

“Oh my God! A monster!!! ”

I glanced around. I didn’t see anyone.

“Maybe it’s just my imagination...” – I thought. But no. In a couple of minutes I heard a police car.

“Oh no”! – I shouted.

The police officers stopped in front of my home and started walking towards me. They grabbed me and put me in their car.

“Thank God that man called us. Otherwise we wouldn’t have found this disgusting thing” – said one of the police officers.

Tell a story. You wake up one morning and find that a horn has sprouted from the center of your forehead... Then...

Diana Iskrenova Nikolova
American College – Sofia

Now, before I start my story let me give you a small piece of advice. If one day, one of you suddenly woke up and there was something really weird with your... appearance, don't go freaking out just yet – first you need to look at the bright side. The second step is to go and weird out as many people as possible.

You probably already suspect what I'm going to tell you. It's the story of the day I grew a horn on my forehead.

It was a sunny morning, somewhere in the end of the beginning of spring, when the weather is warm, but there is also a cool calming breeze. I could hear the birds chirping outside as a gentle blow of wind rushed through my room. A tiny ray of sunlight shone from the small gap between the curtains. I opened my eyes slowly and lazily, then turned on my side to look at the clock. 9:36 am, the read numbers flickered. I yawned and stretched, then rubbed at my eye and sat up in bed – which had been a mistake, since it was followed by a dull ache in my forehead. I groaned and shook my head...only then I noticed how weird it felt on my shoulders.

"What the..." I muttered and lifted my hand up to my forehead, feeling a weird structure coming out of the flesh. I wrapped my hand around it and pulled, flinching at the pain that that caused me. Confusion stirred in my head.

I threw my blanket to the side and stumbled out of my fluffy, pillow-covered bed, then ran into the bathroom, flicking the light on. In the tall mirror hanging from the wall stood me – well, almost me. There was a straight, dark horn coming out of my forehead. I do admit it was a beautiful horn – but why was it coming out of my forehead?

A small sigh escaped my lips as I tugged on my pajamas. What was wrong with me? I'd never done drugs and I never will, so that couldn't be a hallucination...was I, perhaps, dreaming? I frowned. No, the pain was too real for this to be a dream. I scratched my head, dragging my feet back to the room and changing into my daily clothes. My t-shirt inflicted me some pain, due to the horn, but I still managed to put it on somehow. A hat stood perched on top of my head – a small attempt to hide the horn.

I got out of the house, locking after me and dialing my sister's number.

"Hello?" She answered in a few moments.

"Hey, sis, it's me, Maka. Can you meet me over at our place? It's urgent..." I said, a small smile growing on my lips.

"Sure... is something wrong?" I shrugged at the question.

"You'll see." I answered and hung up, crossing the street and entering the woods on the other side. "Our place" was a small spot deep in the woods, hidden by the surrounding trees. My sister and I had found it a few years ago.

"Hazel, you're finally here!" I smirked at her and she puffed her cheeks out.

"Aha, whatever. What's the matter?" She asked, sitting on the soft grass next to me. I took my hat off, revealing the dark horn and looked straight at her with a serious face.

"I'm a unicorn." I said and watched amused, as her jaw hit the ground. She poked the horn a few times, then stared at it.

“Maka, what on Earth is that thing on your head?” She asked, pointing at it. I shrugged my shoulders and giggled.

“I don’t know, guess I’m morphing into a unicorn, as I said earlier.” I stated. She brushed some hair off of her eyes and frowned.

“Can you do magic with it?” She asked and I laughed.

“I don’t know. I called you as soon as I found out.”

She nodded understandingly and then her gaze met mine, excitement twinkling in her eyes.

“Let’s try it and see what it can do!” She exclaimed and shifted so she was sitting right in front of me, then held up a stick. “Here, try to make that float in the air.”

I nodded slowly, not showing to her how weirded out I was, and fixated my stare at the small stick. As much as I stared at it and tried to will it to life – nothing would happen. The pain in my forehead just got sharper.

Eventually, she left the stick on the ground and sighed.

“I guess that means I’m stuck with a horn...” I muttered, ripping some grass off the ground and letting it float away with the wind. My sister crossed her arms in front of her chest and pouted.

“But this isn’t how it happens in the movies and books...” She whined and I smiled slightly, throwing some more grass to be carried away by the cool breeze.

“I could stab people with it... I don’t feel like cleaning it though...” I chuckled and laid down on the ground. Hazel giggled as well and crawled over next to me, poking my cheek.

“Oi, sis...” she grinned. I raised my eyebrow. Even though I was the younger one out of the two of us, she was way more childish than me. And now her eyes were sparkling, as if she was a kid in front of the Christmas tree.

“Hmm?” I answered, feeling her poking my cheek again.

“You’re a unicorn.” She said and I smirked.

“Yeah, I’m a unicorn.” I yawned and smiled at Hazel once again.

And let me tell you, it isn’t easy hiding a horn from people. Well, at least I didn’t stab anyone with it.



If rain was a person, what sort of person would it be?

Nadezhda Georgieva Metodieva
PGT „Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov” – Plovdiv

Rain is the nanny of the Earth's children. When Mother Earth is sleeping, or too lazy to take care of the tiny newborn flowers, basking in the heat of her husband, the Sun, rain comes to caress the skin of everything alive and breathing. Sometimes Earth forgets to do that and when the ground is soft again after a day and a night of raining, letting the mother rest peacefully, the Sun thanks the nanny with a gorgeous smile from sky to sky.

Sometimes the work becomes too much, sometimes animals are too wild, fighting with each other, and trees are being stubborn and not letting their fruits grow. That's when nanny Rain gets angry. And she can throw a great fight with whoever's being naughty. Rain's anger turns to cold ice fists, punching everything daring to come out of its hiding place. Rain can be mean and destroy, but since she's getting very old, Rain forgets fast and her fists often get tired. You know old ladies, most of the time they don't mean to be rude, they're just teaching you a lesson while hitting you on the head.

Even though Rain is old, she is still very beautiful. When she sleeps up in the sky, she takes a form of fluffy white clouds. She would turn around in her bed and her hair would flow creating interesting forms. When she comes down to the ground, she would switch her form to tiny little droplets, hitting the windows with a calming sound that wakes us up. Her beauty is in her grace and calmness, that elegant way she watches over everything... Okay, maybe sometimes she turns into the creepy old lady, but at least she doesn't have the ninety-nine cats.

Nanny Rain also works as a beauty consultant when it comes to hiding mother Earth's crinkles. She fills them up with water, moisturizing the skin and helping the beautiful flowers, Earth's hair, grow wild. I must tell you, I am very jealous of the colorful hair!

I can go on and on about nanny Rain, but straight to the point, Rain is a very confident, brave, sometimes mean but always with a reason, old lady taking care of, pretty much everything that means life. She gets sick, angry, tired, happy... Yeah, mood swings much, but hey, crisis of the middle age, she's handling it pretty well.

Bottom line, Rain is just another woman and we must treat her with the respect she deserves. I will hold on to my point and admire Rain, since I am a feminist. Cheers!

Imagine that you have a full-length mirror that talks to you. What does it say?

Boryana Yankova Ivanova
EG „Plovdiv“ – Plovdiv

My fingertips slightly caressed the surface, as my reflection repeated the movement. I almost felt how I'm touching another person, though the mirror was too cold to let me think it's normal for human skin temperature. I slowly stepped back and saw myself change – my eyes turned blue, my skin went pale, my lips suddenly became thicker. But I could still recognize myself in the blurry reflection. In fact, there was something different about the silhouette, I could catch the scent of power and confidence.

– Speak – the girl standing opposite me had a louder and deeper voice than mine. – What worries you?

I reconsidered answering, since that really didn't make much sense to me and it all seemed like a weird dream.

– Don't be afraid, I'll try not to hurt you. – She mumbled with annoyance, as I got goose bumps when I heard her say "try". "This is definitely not my reflection" I thought, as I turned around to check if there's anybody else in the room. But there wasn't, and that frightened me even more.

Now I saw her hair change – from the warm, brown color I got used to during the years, it turned silvery – grey and reached the bottom of her spine.

– Who... who are you? – My side sounded unsure and weak. How I hated myself at this very moment.

– Didn't you recognize me? – Her laugh filled the room and dived into the snow white walls. – I am the person you've always wanted to be. I am you, but...a bit better.

I almost felt like crying. What did this even mean?

– All your fears are just my advantages. All your nightmares are my reality. All your flaws and mistakes are my perks. I complete you.

Those final words caused my full confusion. I've never thought of myself that way, even if I wanted to change certain things about me. I've always tried to accept myself the way I am, and now this... thing appears, trying to tell me something.

– But... what exactly do you want from me? – I asked with honesty, because I clearly have no idea what's going on. I didn't even know how that mirror appeared!

– Oh, nothing, sweetheart...You summoned me. I am only here to listen.

I sat down on the cold tiles, figuring out what to say, connection the dots, putting the pieces together.

– My apologies if I messed up your mind. I'm trapped here, being forced to see you walk around carelessly. Think of it, the only thing I don't have and you do, is...

– Freedom. – I whispered, realizing she was sitting opposite me, as if she repeated all my movements.

Well now everything made sense to me.

We stood there for a while in complete silence. I could hear my heartbeat echoing in the room, and my breath battling the stale air.

– So... you're basically me?

Imagine that you have a full-length mirror that talks to you. What does it say?

Gabriela Georgieva Dimitrova
SOU „Neofit Rilski” – Harmanli

“Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the fairest of them all?” I ask. The mirror just stands there, imitating my reflection. Then, suddenly, it smiles. It’s my smile. So warm, yet with an undertone of sadness, of anger. The smile morphs into a smirk.

“Well, not you, certainly.” It replies with the slightest mocking tone. Of course, if it was anyone but me, it would sound sweet, not meant to hurt. But this is me. And I know myself.

“Aren’t you rude?” I ask again, voice filled with indifference. After all, I don’t care much anymore.

My reflection laughs. So full of life, of love, and yet, so hollow and untrue.

“Indeed, I am rude.” It dips its head in apology, without respect. “But I am a mere reflection of you, am I not? I answer what you would.” His smirk is back, softer, almost a smile, and yet, again, not. Just like mine.

“Well, if I’m not the fairest of them all, mirror, then, where do I stand?” The cold indifference shows that I don’t care. But it knows the truth. It knows I know.

“I do not understand beauty, girl, nor do I know where you stand. But you know. So I shall tell you.” It’s angry that I ask what I know, because that would be my reaction.

“You will always be the middle ground, not pretty, nor ugly. And yet, you could never be just pretty, nor be just ugly. That is who you are, is it not? Neither hot, nor cold, but at the same time so much more than both, put together.” It smiles, this time, however, it’s a real smile, sweet, understanding, pitying and again, mine. The description of me is accurate as well. Exactly what I think of myself, covered in a cryptic message that really no one could understand to its fullest, not even I, but I know what it’s supposed to mean. So I ask the mirror.

“Will you explain what you meant?” I do not know why I ask and anger it, but the sadist in me says I should.

It sighs. “Dear girl, I do not understand you. Why must you go to such lengths to confuse me and thus, yourself?” There is no smile on its face, not is there confusion. Just a blank face. “I shall not answer you. I refuse to.”

“And may I ask why?” There is sadness in my voice. Real sadness.

It sighs again. “Alright child, I’ll answer your question. But first, come closer.” And so I do, just as it does too. I stop inches away from the mirror and look into those cold, calculating, lonely red eyes. My eyes.

“Because, child, you are different. You do not think highly of yourself, you know who you are, but there are times when you misjudge. You believe in yourself, and yet you lose faith in everything. And, child, you know you are beautiful, yet others do not justice you. “It takes a breath. I press my forehead to the reflection’s forehead. “You, girl, will always be a cryptic book and yet you are so easy to read. Because you see things that others refuse to. Because you are you.” The red eyes soften and they close. The mirror breaks.

Is the fish mute or does it not speak because it knows everything?

Anita Ivanova Katsarska

IV EG „Frederic Joliot-Curie” – Varna

Long ago there weren't rivers, seas or lakes. It was just the majestic Ocean that gave a shelter to many creatures. But there was only one fish. It wasn't the golden fish from the fairytale, but a very little green fish called Burton. What we don't know is that the fish is very intelligent and Burton was the only fish in the history of the Universe that could speak.

Why is that? You would ask. Why the fish now is mute? The answer is simple – because Burton had a big mouth.

When Burton, the first fish was born, God decided to give him the precious ability to make sounds. He put him in the Ocean and said: “Talk”! Burton started talking immediately. He was a good fish and he liked helping others.

Then appeared the humans – what a strange specie. And they could talk too. Humans were born full with curiosity and desire of knowledge. They always wanted to learn new stuff and nothing was enough. But the world was created to be sometimes a mysterious place. God hid many secrets and he wanted to teach the people that they have to find the key to these secrets themselves along their evolution in life.

At the same time Burton lived in the Ocean exploring it every day. He knew that there were too many things to go and he couldn't just stay in one area. He was good to everyone. That's why God decided to give him something more. He gave Burton all the knowledge in the world and the key to every single secret or mystery.

But as I already said, Burton had one problem – the big mouth. One day he reached the land where people walked. They met and because Burton liked them, he started telling them storied every day. But he didn't know where to stop. He showed them many secrets and people stopped searching the truth, because they had the little fish friend. They lost the desire to learn things themselves.

When God found out he was very disappointed. He took Burton's voice and left him in the Ocean. Since then there hasn't been a fish that could talk. We know that the brain of the fish is small, but there hide all the things that we haven't discovered yet. That's why when we see it in the water the fish just opens and closes its mouth – Burton's children are always trying to tell us something.

Is the fish mute or does it not speak because it knows everything?

Ivanka Ralcheva Rakova
SOU „Nesho Bonchev” – Panagyurishte

Once upon a time, a few centuries ago, fish were extremely intelligent and chatty creatures. They knew everything from the minute they were born: they could read, they knew maths perfectly and they were even capable of building facilities. But one all of them were cursed to be mute forever, thankfully to the stupid fish Emelda.

It was the greatest celebration of the year and all of the fish gathered around the most colorful coral reef to celebrate and have fun. The water creatures were swimming in small groups to reach the reef because sharks and other frightening fish were observing around. I beg you pardon, not all of the fish swam together – Emelda Fisher was probably the only stupid animal to decide hanging out alone.

When she left her underwater home she chose a “short” track to the reef because she wanted to be the first fish which would taste Mrs. Spilchy’s pie. Emelda was feeling happy and excited because she was more independent than the other fish. All of the “short” track she passed whistling and with a smiled smug face.

After 15 minutes of swimming the stupid fish found herself in front of a little cave with a sign saying “The forbidden uninvestigated waters”. Emelda looked at the sign in a curious and challenging way and she convinced herself to enter the cave.

She entered (“the stone door”) there only to find herself in front of the best view she have even seen. An endless space of water full with most picturesque coral reefs and the most colorful and astonishingly beautiful fish.

Emelda began swimming again and after a few minutes she saw enormous white castle: “I castle underwater” – she thought. Her curiosity was so strong that she asked one yellow fish what’s that castle and does anyone live there. But the remarkable yellow fish only opened her mouth and a few bubbles went out of it. Emelda thought that the fish there don’t talk and her interest about the new water space she found increased. She approached the castle.

When the curious fish reached the massive white door of the castle she saw a sign saying “If you enter you might not go out, but if you escape you will be happy – there is no doubt”. Emelda Fisher decided to enter but behind the door the most frightening and unpleasant view was hiding.

Dead fish were laying on the floor – Emelda’s family and friends. The fish was scared and she swam away as fast as she could. She entered other room – a vast and light room. Emelda decided that at least that room is safe and when she had crossed the middle of it she found herself chased by a whale.

She ran in the back yard but sharks were hiding there too. Emelda screamed and I am sure that if you could hear her screaming you would be stupefied. Suddenly everything disappeared and a sign showed up saying “That was the castle of fear. Everything you are afraid of appeared inside of it”. Emelda started laughing how stupid she was but a new sign showed up saying: “Finally you have escaped and we saved your scream at a tape. You have revealed our secret but we are not sure you can keep it, for a punishment all the fish in your

Is the fish mute or does it not speak because it knows everything?

Stanislava Dimitrova Rizova
EG „D-r Petar Beron” – Kyustendil

Imagine that you are in a place, where darkness rules and the sun is just some distant glowing point, which you can only catch a slight glimpse of... No, you are not in Heave, not in Hell... You are not even in a Dark World ruled by demons and creepy nightmares. In fact, you are rather calm. You find yourself in Space, in the deep and endless Cosmos, traveling and flying through the stars... And then, imagine, just as you are breathless, but somehow still alive, you see something...

Probably a rock, a planet... You do not know, nor are certain, but you watch it develop, you watch it start a life, turn green and new, then suddenly you are able to do something, yet you couldn't do before. You feel lighter – you can actually breathe...

You feel the tiny raindrops on your forehead and praise the Mother Nature for what she did. But she is not as giving as you think. She then decided to take your life, to take every humans life.

And just then, when she takes out your last breath with her cold hands, you seek no mercy... You want an answer and you ask yourself this simple question at hand:

“Is nature truly this vicious and also noble? Is she really going to leave no one who witnessed the Earth's birth? I am dying, melting like a cube of ice, but are the next generations truly going to forget about this view I myself saw?”

Mother Nature takes you away, back to her, but she is rather calm and confident, regardless of your thoughts.

Who is the one bound to bare all this responsibility in order to keep all this a secret? No human is capable, so probably an animal then? And why not the fish – it was there from the beginning itself, swimming in the just-born waters of the clean ocean... It saw everything... It lived everything.

Probably the fish is bound to know that, having no voice so it can tell us. Mother Nature will always remember but why should not her children also know and remember?

The beginning of Earth and life – that is everything humanity has searched and sought for. Answers.

And it is only natural for her to trust a child of her own, who was there when it all started. One that shall never speak, but shall know it all in return.

The fish is mute, but maybe it is mute for us, and us only. Or we tend not to listen? Or is it trying to tell us but we so hard are trying to forget our history?

No one knows. No one is probably ever going to find out the truth of our creation. The secret is hidden deeply in the ground and depths of Earth...

Or is swimming freely in the waters right before our eyes, so close, that we cannot see it... Humans tend to be the ones who are thought to know most things about life. The funny thing actually is... Well...

...We know nothing.... We can only guess, because if we know, we will destroy

**You are an alien invader. Explain why you have chosen
to either take over Earth or leave it as it is.**

Tsvetelina Emilova Atanasova
SOU „Petar i Ivan Kanazirevi” – Razlog

“Wow” I thought to myself as I was landing on an empty field. “Is that what it’s left from this Planet?” In this very moment thousands of thoughts ran through my head. I started thinking about the stories the oldest shaman of our tribe used to tell me.

He always uses to draw Planet Earth in my mind as something outrageously beautiful and picturesque. He said that on Earth people have feelings, unlike us, and they can spread positivity and contain love, fear, freedom, hate, creativity and anything you can imagine inside themselves. The old shaman said that people here give all they have for making the Earth the best it can be. He used to tell stories that always made me think that human beings are actually Gods.

I’ve heard a lot about this planet, but one story in particular fascinated me. The old shaman once told me that he traveled all the way to Earth just to observe the annual tear gathering. The tear-gathering was an unusual tradition, when humans pour out all the tears they’ve cried throughout the year. They gathered every single tear and hand it back to their mother – Earth, so that they can hydrate it with their own emotions and so that she can become even more fertile and lovely. Because of all that, the Earth seemed to always do something in return – one time, it even created beautiful tree-altar that can heal any wound – physical or mental.

“Now, by the way the Earth looks like I feel so disappointed!” – I thought to myself. This was my very first time on this planet. I had so many expectations! I thought that here would be heaven for my race, since we are literally plants – green chlorophyll skin, hair made out of branches and shell of blooming flowers. I hoped that maybe I can learn to love, feel and be compassionate.

But it seems like people here changed. I see nothing but chimneys and grey clouds. Frowny faces and cold hearts. Zero environment. Crying leaves everywhere. Polluted water, air and earth. I felt something inside! I have never felt before! I cried for the first time in my life. I guess I got what I wanted – emotions. But they weren’t the kind I was hoping for. I felt terrible.

When I first came to the Earth I was having the intention to learn about people. I wanted to observe humans and try to be like them. They were my idols and their planet was my dream destination. I never meant to take over the Earth, I wanted to offer them the ability to take over MY PLANET! But now, as I am standing here, on the suffering ground beneath my feet, I wanted to take over this place. I want to make it as perfect as it sounded in my dreams...

While thinking this, I felt harsh pain in my chest. My feet had let down roots and now I had dirty polluted water circulating inside of me. I turned into a lifeless grey plant. I guess I should’ve chosen to leave this place as it is...

If you had to remove ONE feature from your face, what would it be and why?

Eleonora Dimitrova Hristova
NGHNI „Konstantin Preslavski” – Varna

Seven days ago I had a dream.
A flattering and much relieving one,
which didn't make me scream.
I was standing in the crowd at dawn,
and my annoying freckles were suddenly gone.

Six days ago I had a dream.
A little sad
and definitely not a cozy one.
I was standing in the crowd at dawn,
and my precious dimples were suddenly gone.

Five days ago I had a nightmare.
A slightly fairy-scary one,
so I decided not to care.
I was standing in the crowd at dawn,
and my delightful hair was suddenly gone.

Four days ago I had a nightmare.
A somehow frightening one,
so I didn't feel like walking on air.
I was standing in the crowd at dawn,
and my mouth, eyes and nose were suddenly gone.

Three days ago I had a nightmare.
A very terrifying one,
and to move I couldn't even dare.
I was standing in the crowd at dawn,
and my shiny skin was suddenly gone.

Two days ago I had a nightmare.
A strange and unbelievable one,
so some electric shock went through my hair (but I didn't have one)
I was standing in the crowd at dawn,
and my bones were gone.

One day ago I dreamt my face was gone.
Today I'm standing in the crowd...alone.
I wish my soul was gone.

**If you could be attractive and stupid or intelligent and ugly
which would you prefer and why?**

Iliana Stoyneva Bezinska
EG „Akad. Lyudmil Stoyanov” – Blagoevgrad

If you ever ask me what I prefer
to be highly attractive but my thoughts kind of blurred
or intelligent, shrewd, but well, ugly as Hell
here's what I'd be able to tell:

I'll be a pretty young woman with the soul of a saint.
When I walk on the street, boys around me will faint.
They'll be amazed by my gorgeous face,
but what is in my mind – that's a different case.

I prefer to be foolish and dumb like a duck
But enjoy my own beauty, and believe me, that's luck!
Rather than know all the unanswered questions,
And be more creative than Google's suggestions.

Because people all over the planet of Earth
Fall in love with the looks of a beautiful girl.
They don't see inside her, they don't want to know
if she's thinking of something or nothing at all.

I am very intelligent, I must admit
I'm also attractive and self-loving a bit.
But if I'd been given the option to choose
my mind is what I would prefer me to lose.

My genius thought, my exciting ideas
And all of my dreams of a doctor's career
I would delete them in the fastest way
even if this had to happen today.

Ugly face is what I don't want to see,
when I look at a photo they've taken of me.
Cause no matter how perfect your thoughts really are,
no one would listen if you don't have a charm!

If it sounds egoistic, I'll tell you it's not.
It's just that I love my looks quite a lot.
And if I can be even prettier than I am now,
I will make it happen, no matter how!

One day you wake up and find that you can read people's minds

Dima Kirilova Genova
EG „Bertold Brecht“ – Pazardzhik

To read or not to read,
choosing not to do it is a noble feat!
When you wake up and find out
that you can read everybody's mind
you have a choice to make
to use or to ignore the new trait
Your first option is to be that man
who knows what's on the mind of everyone.
The plans for dinner of this famous chef,
What hear the people who are deaf,
This driver's route to his home,
this orphan's letter to his mom,
Your crush's thoughts on you,
a drug addict's decision to sniff glue,
Your mom's disappointment with your grades,
The happiness of a madman breaking plates,
The cheating woman's lover's name,
Your little brother's favorite game,
The lies your best friend feeds you every day,
a politicians monthly pay,
What these ants thought when they
crossed your floor the other day,
A dying man's last will,
why do newborns always squeal,
What are the answers to this test
how to do your very best
these things and many more
would be stored behind your mind's closed door.
But if you embrace this gift
won't it make you want to hit
everybody who has lied
even once before they died?
Would you be happy like that
knowing the thoughts of every rat, or cat,
or bat, or anybody fat, or with hat?

I think I might be best as I am
not able to read the mind of any man.
Being naïve and all that jazz
might make me lose some of my class,

Would you rather travel forward in time to the future, or backwards to the past? Explain your choice

Monika Andreeva Ivanova
GPCE „Yordan Radichkov“ – Vidin

From the moment I saw it written on the board I knew this would not be an easy question to answer. Especially since my time is limited. Sixty. But it is happening now. Fifty nine. And it's a bit complicated. Fifty seven. Long story short a very unusual sequence of events drew me to a place, or an object – if we need to be more specific – which endowed me with the incredible power to control the measure through with we define the changes in matter- time. Forty five. Ok. I'm getting too loquacious now, but most people tend to do the same in tense situations – and this one is inarguably of the kind. Thirty six. I'm running out of time. Ok. Be quick. Just name it – future or past. It's hard to make a decision while your head is crowded with thoughts that are striving for your attention like millions of exulted fans fighting for the first row on a rock concert. Twenty one. Ok, past. But, what happens if I change something? Remember the time-machine novel? One unintentionally killed butterfly and the ruling party in this year's elections is changed. One short movement, one little word in history and the whole future changes – someone's birth does not take place. What if it's my own? The obscure aftermath is a bit frightening. Sixteen. How about future then? Hmm, that sounds enticing. I could see the answer of the university, for which I'm applying. Or, no, I could see the winning numbers of the lottery! Ten. No. There's always a price for meddling in Destiny's affairs. Nine. Hay, wait. To be a time-traveller does not necessarily mean to travel "miles" away from the present moment. Six. Past is the previous sentence and future – the next one. Now I hate it all figured out. Two, one. BANG!!!

Everything looks perfectly normal, except the fact that now is yesterday and tomorrow is past.

- Don't forget to take your lunch honey!
- Ok, mum! Bye.

It's strange to hear my own voice coming from the hall while at the same time I am at the kitchen. Should I meet my yesterday's me or just observe secretly her daily life?

"Shh... quiet! My mom is coming!"

One day you wake up and find that you can read people's minds.

Dimitar Valeriev Trifonov

DTG „Dimitar Hadzhivasilev“ – Svishtov

My first thought? “Woah I can read people's minds”! My second thought? “Woah, I can read people's minds”! , but this time accompanied by a devilish grin and an eyebrow raise (Home Alone style). Okay, realistically I may freak out a little at first after hearing my pet dog's plan to assassinate me in my sleep and my grandma's unspeakable thoughts about the handsome TV repair man. Other than that, I think it would be a sweet superpower to have.

Most people would probably use their power for good (perhaps to stop North Korea's leader from unleashing his toy missiles and bombs? That could be useful I guess). But me? Nah, I admit it, I'd use my superpowers for my own selfish reasons (please don't write my name on the Hell list, God...No, no, drop that pen, drop it! Okay, good boy.).

Anyway, off the top of my head I think I'd want to know where I should continue stalking her or not. Yeah, yeah, “Oh you should man up and tell her how you feel and quit being so desperate, you loser”. Easier said than done, I'm afraid...

Okay, what else... oh, right! This one is kind of cheesy, but whatever (hey, it's my superpower, don't judge me). I'd want to know what my parents think of me. I don't think I'm a failure as a child and I've heard them say they are proud of me, but then again... people lie. A lot. Well, it's not like I'll start hating them in case they consider my existence a disappointment... I'll just silently dislike them and find a job similar to theirs, so I can earn their love and respect, while leading an exceptionally boring life. That was sarcasm, by the way. And yes, I like to write more than one full stop at the end of my sentences to make them seem more deep than they really are...

And, of course, the most selfish use of all – personal gains. Using people's troubles and weaknesses to get the better of them, finding ways to blackmail them and get free stuff etc. You know, all the usual stuff. Okay, I'm not that horrible, but if you tell me you would never even consider doing that given the circumstances, then you are simply a liar, good sir/madam.

Well, I think I covered the pros, but what about the cons? How could there be any cons, you say? For one thing, it would be pretty annoying to have to listen to everyone's boring thoughts all the time. An example – you're in the bathroom, minding your own business and all of a sudden you hear – “Aah, did I remember to pick up the milk?”, coming from your neighbor next door. Or imagine this – you're just about to go to bed after a long, tiring day, when all of a sudden your neighbor starts listening to thrash metal on his headphones and the music goes directly into his thoughts. Oh man, that'd drive me insane, not to mention make me go deaf (although I'm not sure if one can go deaf from thoughts alone? Well, there's one idea for the next episode of Mythbusters).

My hands are starting to swell from all this writing, so here are my conclusive thoughts (no pun intended). I don't want your stinking superpower. It sounds good in theory, but I'm pretty sure I would be on my way to the asylum in less than a week, after having to process and filter so much useless information. Of course, if the whole thing had an on/off switch, It'd be a whole different story. I guess I should be grateful for having such an ability in the

