

INTERROBANG

Creative Writing and Arts from James Hargest College



*In memory of Kerri Sullivan
founder of Interrobang*

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Editors' Note

Welcome to 2019's *Interrobang*. Thank you so much to everyone who has contributed and helped in any way. Throughout this mag you'll get a taste of poetry, art, writing and photography, created by our very talented students here at James Hargest College. Special thanks to Mikah Buchanan, for designing our amazing cover, and Sophie Morris for piecing together and designing the interior. Our thanks also go out to Mr James who helped us every step of the way.

We had some amazing contributions this year. It was so hard to choose which pieces were put in. The talent this school has is outstanding. You might also notice that this year we have incorporated some works from Junior Campus, as we couldn't let the talent down there go to waste.

It's been a lot of fun putting together the 2019 edition of James Hargest College's *Interrobang*. We're grateful for the opportunity and we sincerely hope that everyone enjoys the fabulous creative pieces in here. It has been an honour to be this year's editors.

- Miakkae Henderson and Kaela Harley, 2019 *Interrobang* Editors



by Soyul Lee

In The Cafe

Editors' Note: This is a piece of writing that we wrote during one of our planning meetings for Interrobang. It's a nonsense piece as we did it in a 'round-robin' style with prompts for each new section, so you might notice different writing styles. I've done a quick scan through to hopefully make it more consistent, but the errors are all part of the fun! This piece was worked on by editors Miakkae and Kaela, Mikah who designed our front cover, and one of our contributors Claire McEwen. Each paragraph was written by a different person. This is the first piece of writing in this year's Interrobang, and we hope you enjoy.

Someone sits alone, eating in a cafe. They take a deep breath and slowly pick up their menu. It has many options written on it. As they read through it their eyes catch upon one option. The frown on their face draws the waiter over. "Can I help you?" he asks. "Yes," they reply. "Do you really sell this?"

"Ahh...that," the waiter said. "It is considered a delicacy in many of our..." He stops, listening, outside.

The placid blue has been replaced by thick black clouds. A growl comes from outside, startling them. Bangs in one direction alert them to the door, which has been flung open by a gust of wind. Several waiters dash to hold it shut, eventually succeeding. But they are all pushed out of the way when a strange woman enters with an immense force. She is wearing all black, and has long brown hair. They stare. She is certainly not a normal person.

She catches them staring and they avert their eyes. She heads towards their table and sits down across from them. They look out the window, waiting for her to say something. The woman clears her throat and says, "What are we going to do about Lisa?"

The tone is conversational, but the body language and expression on her face are obviously conveying a different message. The message being: "I don't want to do this, and I'm feeling uncomfortable about this situation, but here we are." They drum their fingers on the table nervously. Like her, they've been avoiding this conversation. They had hoped that by leaving town for a few days that the situation would magically repair itself, but alas, that was not the case. "How odd, we must look," they mused. Two very different people sitting in a cafe now discussing their adopted daughter.

"What can we do about her?" they asked. "I don't know," she said, looking visibly frustrated. "She's gone off the rails, crazy!"

"Well, I can't look after her," they said. "You know that my job has me doing all sorts of things that I can't take a crazy 10 year old girl on."

"Well I can't either!" Her voice rises, "I've just got a promotion, I have to move to the city! No way would I be able to look after her as well."

"That's the trouble with fae," they muse. "They all go crazy after a while. Do you think we can return her to her world?" She sobers, "It's worth a shot." They stand up and leave the cafe, two strangers once more. Behind them a 10 year old girl fades into view.

"We'll see about that."



by Suah Kim

The Language of Doors

by Miakkae Henderson

Polished Red Door

Living out of the pocket of plenty
Red carpet appearances
buy what you want, no material needs
Fine fabrics, crisp suits, perfect tailoring
formal dinners and chandeliers
arguments grow into a tornado
Kids left lonely and bored, unsure how to play
rage from the upper class silhouetted behind velvet curtains
Light pours through every open space between fibres
Unhappy hearts, a perfected facade

Shabby Orange Door

Comfortable not content
job stability, financial security
On the third floor looking up
thirty minute walks, bus rides, subway station
Day by day
narrow pathway to upward mobility
Stuck in between

Faded Yellow Door

Four jobs and no sleep
chipped floorboards, water runs cold
Hours of laughter
raise the temperature of the house
a couple of degrees
Weight lifts from their shoulders
They know they have more
than briefcases n' suits,
that give away what we earn to the man who shines shoes

I Wish For An Eternal Day

by Megan Donlevy

Looking back, I had seen my loving wife smiling at me as she tended to our two young children. It was a glow that lit her face that I could never forget. A bright grin of excitement, of hope for our future raising our children together. We had been out as a family that day, a day we had planned to go out to the river in the small town we had inhabited. It had been brisk that morning, but the shining sun promised a warming afternoon.

The river was crystal clear and tame. The moment I saw the delicate flow, I knew the children would love it. It flowed so smoothly, with ripples of water licking the rough edges of the large outlining made of rock. Small fish swam down the river dodging the tramping feet of other early-comers. They were colours of oranges and yellows, which brightly highlighted the dull stones. They were fast, I remember that. They would be caught within our net-like hands for a moment before they managed to escape out of the small holes that had formed for only seconds. The trees swung down and swayed to the melody of the soft wind. Often their branches would reach down and tickle unsuspecting children, giving them a small scare, giving the rest of us a cheeky grin. The greens that hung from those dark branches were so vibrant and beautiful, they could only make my mouth form an appreciative smile.

I didn't realise it then, but those days were the happiest of my life. Not a care in the world plagued me and around me were only people who I knew deeply loved me.

That day my mind was at ease. The children were joyous and we were together. We had danced in the river for hours and hours until our clothes had soaked through. We made sure each member of the family had been splashed and had felt the cool trickle of water crawl its way down each person's back. Laughing, the children squealed and squirmed as we grabbed them and dunked them in the deeper sections of water. If only some days lasted forever.

Often, I am drawn back to this rippling river, but the war has killed its joyous appeal. It is a gloomy morning and the breeze is brisk like a cold stare. The booming colours of the river that once seemed to light this place, have lost their magic and illusion. It is hard to imagine that this river held such cheerful times. Without my family here to enjoy it, the beauty the flow withheld is hard to recognise. When I returned from the war, I realised that our small town like many others had been raided, that many of the existing folk had been killed or exiled. It was only then that I saw how the seemingly unimportant raids we had completed had been devastating to many. They didn't matter to me, but they mattered to someone. My family, I realise, were subject to the pain and suffering I had caused to others. I wasn't here to protect them. I'm glad they are all buried here beside the everlasting flow. They would have thought it a peaceful place to rest. They shouldn't be here now. I should have stopped all this from happening, but I wasn't here, I wasn't here to save my family.

When I sleep at night I dream of only the

Bond

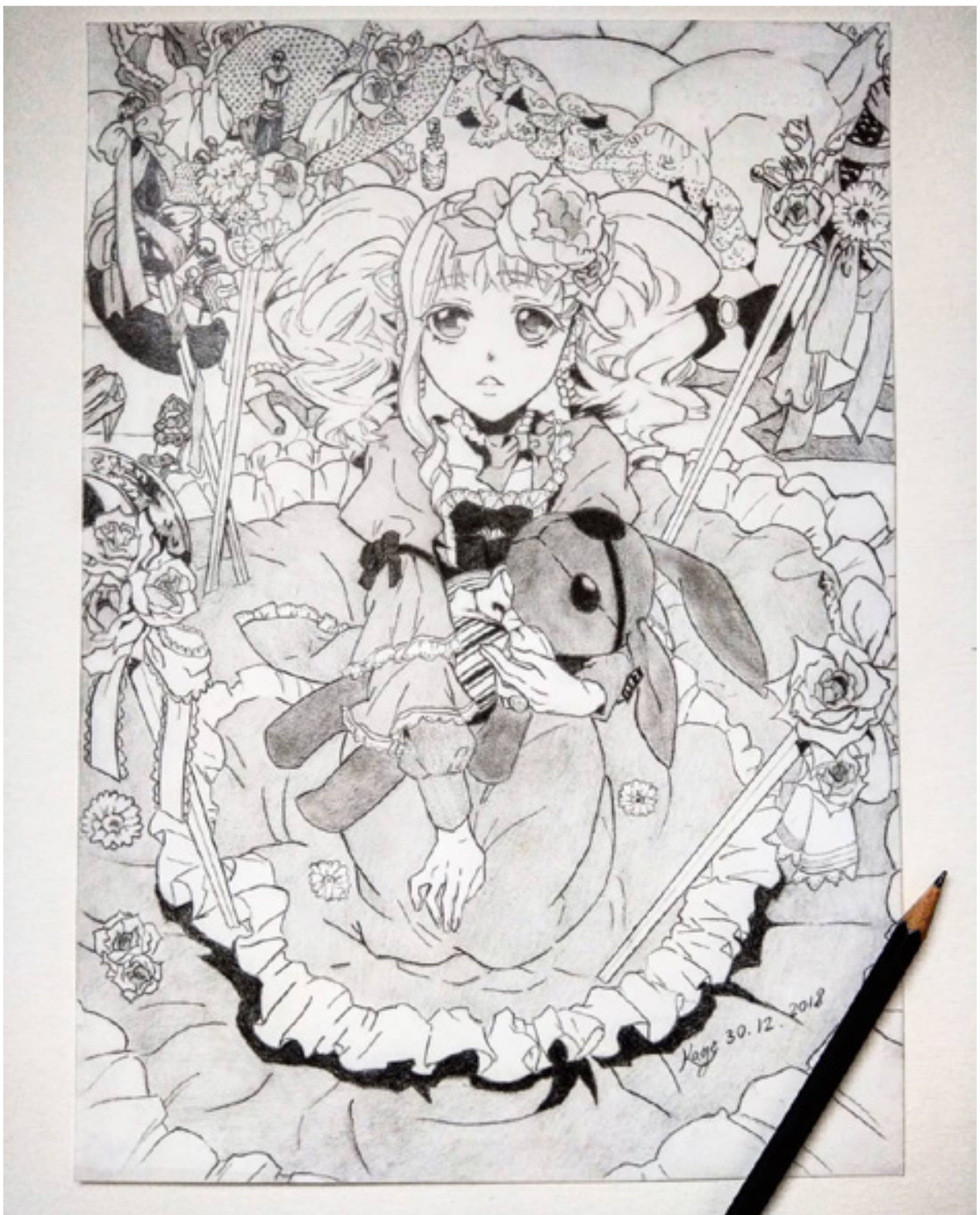
by Sarah Zhao



blinding fear that those sweet innocent children faced me with, before I took them from life. Instead in my dreams, their faces are replaced by my children, their eyes puffy and wet as they know they are about to become nothing but a lifeless being. When I wake I am reminded of the people I have caused this to, the families who weren't mine to break, the lives that weren't mine to take.

I am alike to the soldier who took my family. As I had been my victims' last thoughts, he would have been my family's. I often wonder whether I was somewhere riddled in their last thoughts. I hope I wasn't. I hope they despised me for I have committed such crimes. I hope they didn't pray for my safety or survival. Yet, I hope they still loved me, as they once had. When I am

lost in my thoughts, I see the battlefields I fought and hid in. Those were fearful days. Each day I had hoped would not be the last so I could return home to the people who matter most. I had fought hard and done my duty, but for what? I gained nothing from this bloodshed war and instead am only plagued with fear of violence and the loss of the only ones whom I truly cared for. I tell myself I fought for their safety, but how can I say this while I am sitting beside their graves? Instead, I am here alone, at the river we had once enjoyed together. We listen to the sounds of the running river together, the sound muffled for my buried bloodline. For I wish they were here to watch the never changing flow. I think of that smile my wife had beamed so brightly that day and I smile too. How I wish some days had never ended.



by Yo Yo Wu

If Only

by Kaela Harley

If only I could say,
I'll love you,
Always.

If only I could feel,
My heart beat,
For real.

If only you were here,
To take my breath away,
My dear.

If only we could be,
Together,
Forever.

But I have to back away,
With so much I want to say,
Knowing I'm in your way.

You have a future,
You have a reason,
On a distant shore.

So I'll back up,
I'll distance myself,
Filling a cup,
With my tears.

I'll miss you,
I need you,
If only I could wed you.

But together we cannot be,
I'll dream of these days,
Of you and me.

If only I didn't love,
If only we didn't care,
If only you were enough,
To silence these fears.

Thief in the Night

by Miakkae Henderson

R:

I carry my head past my shoulder, catching a glimpse of an elderly lady behind me. I feel the frost of her disapproval before the sirens call. Picking up pace, I dart through empty streets and uncharted areas, slowing down when muffled chatter increases in volume. Now at a crawl, I wend my way past a bunch of early morning joggers, greeting them with a voluntary, but nervous smile. For a moment we continue at a snail's pace before picking up the pace and jogging off. Two more blocks down I come to my favourite place, Myer's Park. Young mothers hold firmly onto their children. Weaving my way through swing sets and large insect sculptures, I scamper into the bathroom. To the last stall on the left. Click.

Old Lady:

The morning is the best time for a stroll. It's the only time I get to watch the sunrise to decorate the sky. No one else is usually awake this early, aside from myself and the "single parents" jogging group that trek the same route every morning. This is why her act caught me by surprise. No one else is normally up this time of the morning, especially not a little girl with a "warm home."

R:

My breathing dissipates and evens out into an unsettled rhythm. Normally I aim for two-three hours in the stall, to ensure no one catches me. In that timeframe I get many knocks from ladies curious to know what type of woman locks herself in a toilet all day. They all receive the same answer. Silence (it's a classic). I'm yet to dive head first into my treasure chest. The handbag dangles from my skinny arm. Expensive, probably designer.

Perfect vertical stitching bound to the finest creamy hued leather. The cotton trims matched both the thread and the exact shade of lipstick the lady wore. Fine details. The image remains quite smitten in my mind till it blurred. Now the woman's mouth lay resting in a natural pout.

To pass time I immerse myself in the conversations from and fantasise about the abundance of ladies that strut in and out of these walls. Today we have a thick South African purring about the date she's been invited on tomorrow. I take her context and picture the city. Just coming out of darkness they veer to the right. A few more paces, they are momentarily distracted by the fragrance of warm croissants and fresh mildew. Feet grounded, they stop short of the skeleton of metal projecting up into the sky that is rapidly turning blue. Gripping her hand they push up the stairs. The clang of their feet echoes. Squeezed into the small space up top, he turns to face her... I always stop myself short. These stories never have endings because I can never seem to convey their happiness. By now I can agree with my subconscious. We've been huddled in here for a good three hours. Removing myself from the toilet seat, I grip the handbag and inch my way out. My nerves were a blanket on my ears, burying the other sounds bouncing around the bathroom. Mothers and their children shuffled round the bathroom. Laughter and conversation decreased. All eyes were on the motherless girl that plodded out of the stall, everyone still restrained from making comments, until a little girl asked her mother, "Mum, what is that boy doing in the girls' toilets?" Laughter erupted again, followed by hushed conversations. Soon they file out

one by one. Finally alone I give myself a good wash, then stand in front of the mirror pinned to the wall and look at myself. I can't distinguish which feature stings their eye the most. I'm not filthy like most homeless people and I don't reek of sweat (but I like to think I'm quite the catch). I leave the bathroom before any childish mothers drop more snarky comments.

They all live in a bubble. The thought runs in one ear and out the other as I hop down the sidewalk. A perfect bubble around their lives. The bubble clouds their vision. It doesn't let them see past the perfectness of their households. Past their white picket fences to notice the homeless man seeking refuge under the bus shelter four houses down. His name is Gary. Gary was sick, but couldn't pay his bills, so everything was lost. Gary settles into the bus shelter corner with takeaways he bought with money he stole from someone. He can't remember who. Guilt. Gary does feel guilty sometimes, but when you've been left in the wilderness, all you want is to survive.

I prop myself up on a park bench. Tissues, \$13.40 in change, a driver's licence and some hard candy. Zero "special" items in the bag but I happily pop one of the hard candies into my mouth.

The guilt sits not in my chest but in my brain. I try to make amends with it in subtle ways (like picking up rubbish. It does erode the soil), but guilt is a stain, an ugly scar. It's gasoline pouring down my throat. My insides slowly perish from the toxicity. The fire burnt me so badly that for a while there was nothing left but a shell, an outline of

me. After time, the pain subsided. Though it's hard to move past my mistakes, I own them. What else is a rat supposed to do? When humanity is lost, stealing is a key asset in survival. These perfect homes can lose a toothbrush or two. They aren't burdened with guilt, nothing shakes them from their bubbles. Plus that old lady today. I may have stolen her handbag, but at least she has a warm home to return to, which probably has a computer, where she can jump online, and order a new one. I'm too encased in my guilt to notice the flashing lights.

I move nothing but my eyes, every muscle rock still. Heads wander from the people near them to my general direction as I'm escorted through the double doors. They park me down on a seat before leaving me. One door. No windows. No way out. My thoughts run wild before two blue figures parade in. I jerk upright, my wrists refusing to move. I stare down at the handcuffs rubbing against my wrists with slight irritation. The man politely asks for my name. I stay silent. "*Your name?*" the woman repeats sternly, but is left without an answer. We continue this routine for an easy 20 minutes before they both give up. Storming out, the volume increases in the hallway. A new face appears and shuffles me into another room to wait. No light. No shadows. Just the colour of empty white. I'm ready to flee as she glides through the doorframe.

Old Lady:

Her face wears a puzzled expression. Her mind I can see is surging with perplexity as I collect my things and sign off multiple

documents. The child observes me with the gaze of a stranger, an aloof judgement with no strings. From afar she has made some opinion of me. To my delight I notice the only thing missing in my purse is one of my hard candies. Kind eyes escort me into a private room. The child sits opposite me as two men in fancy suits explain my intentions. Astonishment covers her face. For a long time after the conversation is finished she remains silent. I'm more than ready to withdraw my offer as she breaks the silence with a simple "okay." Relief washes over me for there is no worse fate for a child in this city than to lose her parents.

R:

I gaze up at the old woman before me. Her motion is wonky with arthritic joints, and her eyesight falling faster than my attention span. Were it not for the lines sculpted into her face I'd think she was at least 90. Her skin so deep and saggy, like it no longer has a connection to the skull beneath. Yet it's

her eyes and articulation of speech that get you, an echo of youth in someone I guessed so old. Standing in front of her I want to pull away the mask of age to see the person inside. The girl she was all those years ago, who for some reason has pitied me after my terrible crime and still decided to take me in as her own. I contemplate running. The poor lady is old, she has not yet realised what she has propelled herself into. Then she speaks, more like hums with her angelic tone. I am with her now. It reassures me, makes me want to stay. Listening to her words I pay attention to her smile, to her eyes, she's still in there as much as she ever was, old age aside. I think I would have liked to group up with her (the 60's is my favourite).

We stroll out of the building. Hand in hand as we come to a stop at her car. As she unlocks the door she asks me for my name.

"It's Rosie."



by Danielle Ogilvy





by Mudmee Chetchatree

They Call Her Lana Del Rey

by Natasha Guha-Tyrie

Puff in, puff out. The cigarette smoke tasted crisp and inviting. The golden hoops on her ears tinkled and jangled like windchimes. Glittering, gleaming beads of lavish luxury encircled a single finger. Silently, she watched, the balcony was wide and arching. Waves rolled over each other in a constant struggle to gain power, only to crash into the sea and disperse into nothing. Rolling and crashing, rolling and crashing, rolling and crashing...

Her eyes twinkled, mirroring memories of the past. The older men who lusted after her childlike charm. Some with light stubble that prickled the skin, others with bushy beards cascading from their chins. Leather jackets slicked with mysterious danger. Dull grey suits giving an aura of absolute ordinary. Although, through her eyes they all looked the same, an endless sea of blank faces. The same people, the same wants, the same desires.

It seemed that people always wanted something from her. Back in the day they were just simple pleasures. Secret favours done late in the night at the back of rusty taverns. And for what? A couple of twenties and a kiss on the cheek. So many nights spent parading around sketchy bars, flirtatiously decked in devilish red sequins. Fluttering about like a stupid peacock.

Her hand shook with quiet reflection. Wind whipped at her cigarette, causing the smoke to dance and billow in the air. Cold, callous nights spent meandering on the streets. A pretty doll. Catches your attention with her cherry red pout and glossy locks of hair that swayed seductively at even the slightest kiss of breeze. Play with her if you want, and once you're done with her throw her to the bottom of the barrel and forget about her forever.

The stillness of her situation gnawed at her. Picturesque, that was what this scene was. The sand, rich as golden silk, matched the pearly white hue of the house perfectly. Pesky seagulls flew in the distance, squawking in their shrill, awkward tones. And her, sitting there, an image of utter elegance. She had come from nothing, and now she had everything. Her purpose, her identity, her people. And they called her Lana Del Rey. She drew in another breath of the deeply intoxicating smoke. Puff in, puff out.

Amygdala

by Zak Thomas

Unsightly things happen in the dark of night.
Moonlight shines and the shadows loom and creep.
The sounds are accentuated by the mind
In acknowledgement of the figures lurking.
Plant life withers as the cold swoops in,
The swift movement in the corner of the eye,
The darkness sparks the anxious matting
Of the hairs on the arm.
When all is silent the shadows breathe from every crevasse,
Their slow exhale echoes through the night,
An eerie gloom that both unnerves and shatters.
The breeze patiently waits for the eyes to close,
Extinguishing the very thought of rest
As it promptly enters the room.
An incessant twitch of the leg
Stems from the shudder.
The shadow's whisper wistfully brings
Potential danger to the ear.
The ceiling dims with the shifting clouds.
Then,
At the brink of the mind's break,
The scratching sounds as one claws for the light
For one knows,
Unsightly things happen in the dark of night.



by Rachel Sherriff

The Parcel

by Claire McEwan

There were many things that he was sure of. The constant nature of the weather patterns, the assurance that the sun would not burn out for many millions of years, the knowledge that civilisation will carry on for many centuries.

All this disappeared however, with the parcel.

He knew the precise amount of oxygen there was in the air, yet logic flew out the window as the air seemed to escape from his lungs.

Logic. The one thing that he thought that he could rely on.

He knew that logic explained the inexplicable. It was logic's job. It revealed that the sun didn't in fact rise in the sky, but instead, it was our perception of the Earth rotating. Logic also dictated that certain things shouldn't alarm him, and one of those things was the parcel.

Curse you, logic.

This still didn't help in any way. If anything, he was just delaying having to deal with the parcel. Procrastination. He didn't indulge in procrastination often, and if he did, it was to deal with unforeseen happenings like Mrs Browning, (although how you couldn't see her was the mystery), who would often "drop in," and would have to be persuaded to leave with a gentle "how do you do, yes I'm very busy, good day to you too!" which he had perfected after she worked out that an automated answer phone couldn't answer back. At least now he could finally put his experiments in the wardrobe instead of using it as a hiding place.

This parcel, however, couldn't just be placed in a wardrobe, or ushered out the door.

For starters, Charlotte would kill him. He wasn't being metaphorical, she knew how to use kitchen knives, and unless he wanted to end up like a julienned carrot, he would have to be very attentive to the parcel. It was just for three hours.

Said parcel was currently blinking up at him from her carrycase on the dining room table. Like a beacon in the middle of an ocean, she stood out from the sea of paper in which his life's work was carefully measured, written and annotated. Her light blue eyes were large, the spheres of her irises round and innocent, adding to her charm. She had been expressing her thoughts by making sounds and moving her arms and legs in a disorganised fashion, and seemed perfectly content to sit by herself for another ten minutes.

He decided to move his papers out of harm's way, eyeing the parcel suspiciously as he cautiously crept forward. He reached the table, and began sliding the loose pieces of paper towards him, all the while gazing at the parcel out of his peripheral vision. It cooed, shaking a pudgy fist at him, dribble slowly sliding down from its asymmetrical mouth. Ignoring all the warning signs that his brain emitted, he took his eyes off it, glancing down at the papers in his hand, assessing the damage that the parcel had done.

No dribble, creases or questionable stains. How fortunate.

His soliloquy on the condition of his papers was interrupted by a shout, which caused him to startle; "Oh Hugh! I know you're in there!"

Today was just getting better and better. Surely even Murphy hadn't expected this when he composed his law?

Mrs Browning was rapping at the door now. Hugh gazed towards the parcel, and contemplated putting it in the hiding place in his wardrobe, but decided against it. He had dangerous chemicals in there, and if the parcel was injured, Charlotte would be having “Julienne de Hugh” for tea.

It was too late anyway. Mrs Browning had appeared at the door in all of her large, satiny glory, a big grin on her swollen face.

“Hugh!” she exclaimed, waddling forward to encapsulate him in her beefy arms laden down with a plethora of shawls and heavy fabrics. He struggled against the behemoth woman, and finally managed to slip out, rubbing any creases in his shirt out irritably.

“Yes, good morning Mrs Browning.” he muttered, though her attention was transfixed elsewhere when she heard a shrill shriek.

“Oh a baby! This must be Charlotte’s daughter! Lucy, isn’t it?”

The massive woman sauntered towards the table, squealing in delight. Hugh traipsed behind her, wondering why he had let in that infernal woman. Damn social niceties.

Mrs Browning’s question seemed rhetorical, as she unclipped the parcel and reached forward, scooping it up in her mammoth arms and murmuring nonsense to the parcel. She completely ignored Hugh, who was standing baffled in the middle of his dining room wondering why logic had escaped him yet again.

Perhaps all he needed was a parcel to keep Mrs Browning’s nonsensical fussing at bay?

Just as Hugh was pondering this, however, the parcel decided to show her allegiance. In a spectacular display, it gurgled before producing the partially digested baby formula that it had consumed previously. All over Mrs Browning.

As the poor woman stood still, covered in baby vomit, Hugh felt a rush of affection for the baby. It seemed that Lucy couldn’t stand Mrs Browning’s inane prattling either.

“Oh dear! Lucy, you should know better.” Hugh couldn’t help but say. Lucy clapped her hands together, giggling happily, adding to her innocent and angelic image. As angelic as a demon, perhaps.

Lucy was suddenly thrust into his arms, squirming and unhappy, yet still Hugh tried to hold her.

Mrs Browning seemed to have found her voice, as she started to speak, voice quivering slightly; “I think I left my oven on. Good day.”

And with that, she slowly turned and stiffly walked out the door.

As the door swung shut with a soft click, Hugh felt a rush of relief flood through him. Mrs Browning was gone and Lucy wasn’t dead. Speaking of which...

He looked down at the now sleeping baby in his arms. His niece. The thought terrified him, yet logic resurfaced and informed him that Lucy had chosen her side, and baby vomit was probably not going to be aimed in his direction. Besides, Charlotte was only going to be gone for a few hours...

by Mudmee Chetchatree



Child and Vulture

by Georgia Donaldson

One signature. “Adeline, honey, come and sit down, I want you to eat your breakfast.” A smile lingers on her three year old face and her hopeful eyes meet mine. She has a look of hungry desperation in her eyes, ready for her Weet-Bix and somehow I can faintly recognise it. That look bounces around in my memory and all of the traumatic guilt hits me like a tonne of bricks. One signature. My mind shutters and the nightmare filled with guilt and pain flushes over me. Here I am in the middle of a dusty, dry desert, looking to photograph the disaster in front of me. All I see in front of me is a limp, raw and lifeless body. One signature. I thought it was dead but as I come closer, I can recognise the features of a little girl. Dehydrated, dried out, and bone is all I see left of her. She looks as dried out as stale bread. One signature. The girl looks the same age as my sweet Adeline.

The aches fill my chest when the realisation kicks in that I have to leave. I look around one last time at this scene in front of me and I see big, brown, hopeful eyes latch onto mine. One signature. Looking around her, I am met by the sight of a vulture. A dull, hunched-over, manky-looking vulture waiting, watching, ready for the life to leave the girl. One signature. Adrenaline kicks in and I rush over to help save the girl, but then I remember the signature, my one signature that is the difference between life and death. The sound of the flies buzzing around her will haunt me forever more. One signature, the reason I have to leave this little girl to die. This girl, an innocent, harmless, human being, to die because of one stupid signature. The feeling of the dry, grainy dust whipping in my face, makes me have goosebumps. Vomit crawls up my throat at the thought that the life is going to leave this girl and it is because I can’t do anything. When I signed up to come over to Africa to photograph the war, I didn’t quite realise the emotion it would bring. Why should my one signature decide whether I can save this girl’s life? Instead I do what I do well, I grab my camera. With the strap safely around my neck I look into the lens. I put my eye into the lens and I feel something wet slide down my cheeks. As I snap the photo of the child and the vulture all my emotions take over and next thing I know my eyes are swollen. Guilt, anger, hurt and confusion take over me and I am stunned at how people can be so inhumane.

“Dada, dada,” I snap back to hear Adeline crying out my name. “Why are you crying dada?” I lift my hand up to wipe the dampness off my cheeks and eyes. I will never forget that girl, I will never get over the guilt, the pain and the anger and the hope in her eyes. All because of one signature.

On Governments and Rebellions

by Kaela Harley

She sighed. It was hard sometimes, to get enough money. With jobs not always being constant and the abrupt changes coming from the top, money wasn't always at the top of their priorities. Now she knew how the other side lived at least. Those who hadn't been raised like her in the palace. Sometimes she regretted her choice, the choice that had led to her downfall. Other times she knew she had done the right thing, even if others didn't agree.

The back of her neck prickled. There was someone watching her. She subtly turned her head to try to see who. There. Sitting towards the back, not looking at the stage, but directly at her. He looked slightly scruffy, but not enough to stand out. They wouldn't want people who stood out. She knew they would want to recruit her. Disillusioned, wealthy, fallen down the tiers to the bottom, new poor. It was obvious, and she had been close to those who ruled, close enough to have information to give them.

She turned back to the stage, now she knew she had their attention. She wanted to join up, to be one of those protesting against the current regime. To make a difference in her world. She had heard rumours of their recruitments. As soon as they recruited you, you disappeared, but first you had to make it through recruitment. They were always careful with who they allowed to join, the whispers said. It was impossible to get past if you weren't wholeheartedly for the cause. Once you got their attention, you were either in, or you were dead. But the cause, they said, was worth it. Fighting for those who couldn't. Fighting to create a new world, a better one. The rumours weren't always pretty, but those who believed in them, found it ideal.

She had heard all these rumours, yet she wanted to be one of them more. They weren't afraid to make the hard choice, but neither was she. As she continued on her day, she waited for them to approach her. Attempting to act as if she hadn't noticed their many minions watching her. She wanted to appear as if she didn't know they were going to recruit her. After all, they wouldn't want her to seem too good to be true. She wanted them to recruit her, not to scare them off.

They approached her later that afternoon. They didn't make it obvious, not at first. If she didn't know they were going to approach her, she wouldn't have worked it out. They started off talking about money troubles, a common topic amongst those she was now one of. Then they transferred over to her opinion of the government. She had made sure to make it obvious how much she wasn't happy about what was currently going on. Then they had gone on to finding out her opinion of the rebels. Of course, she had told her "new friend" how much she admired them and their cause. After circumnavigating around their reason for approaching her for what seemed forever, they finally got to the point.

She took her time to let them know. She wanted to make it seem as if she was weighing the consequences, having come from a rather cushy lifestyle. They wanted her to go with them, rather than stay and help recruit amongst the other poor. They wanted what she knew, along with some of her other assets. She was mostly well-fed, and fitter than many of the rebels likely were. She would definitely make herself useful to them.

She made the arrangements with them

and went home to get all her stuff that she wanted to take with her, that had survived the demotion, which wasn't much admittedly. Having packed all that up, she had one more thing she needed to do before she could disappear and join the rebels. She rang up her sister. The number dialled and then connected.

"Well?" came the voice of the person who ran the country from behind the throne.

She smirked victoriously. "I'm in."



by Suah Kim



by Danielle Ogilvy

The Fifth Emergency Service

by Miakkae Henderson

Days pass like shadows
no blanket or bed
Tuesday 2:00pm
line up for food, clothing, a package of any sort
fragmented woollen jacket
shoes without socks
fallen into a sub-human class
growl and grunt from my stomach
food: a current obsession
I didn't choose this life for me

I watch you watch me
eyes full of pity
rattle your supermarket carts
pretty purses and bright fingernails
ripped jeans because they're "in-style"
stores are their oasis
for me a mirage in the desert
stream of eyes, lip curled
safely redirect yourself to the other side of the street
carry on like the rest
will you catch a disease?

You can't tell from my clothes
the person hidden inside
will I have a burial
or slip away and die
the fifth emergency

The End

by Cassie Gray

His hand shakes, causing a few drops of black ink to drop onto the already splattered page. He realises he's been holding his breath. But when he exhales, the sigh comes out uneven. And it cracks. Mm. That used to be the worst sound imaginable. The break in someone's voice right before they cry. But now, he was thankful. For it showed him; even in a post-human dystopian world, there's still part of the old him left.

It's unfair how much pressure he's under. He has been putting it off; he was sure someone else would come, so he didn't have to stay. But he's been signaling for months, and he's running out of food, running out of water, running out of time. He's tried so hard to find someone else, set it all up for them too. He's collected all the things he thought important: *The Bible*, the *Mona Lisa*, *The Great Gatsby*, the script of *Hamlet*, and other assortments of human history. That's what the letter said to do, so that's what he has done. The letter has an important and mysterious aura around it. It draws you in, catches you and doesn't let go. You feel as though you don't have a choice. You feel as though you can't just put it down and walk away. You feel as though you have been chosen, and you have to follow through.

He's given up fighting the feeling now though. It's been too long and he's tired of the constant battle. And he's almost finished. Tomorrow should be the last day, if he is properly prepared. The splattered ink page that tells his story is placed at the door of the vault. The door has been coded and locked how the letter instructs. Buried far below the earth, the vault is hidden under the Louvre in the long-lost catacombs of Adremai. The

items that the letter listed are safely placed and locked inside the vault. So no matter what happens between The End and The New, this vault should be preserved.

Now, he must rest.

When he arises in the morning, the smog covering the sky seems thinner. The grass peeking through the rubble seems greener. The murky water that has gathered in ditches seems clearer. So he leaves his hideout, an old 7-Eleven that's still half standing, for the last time. His boots crunch over the frosted, oil spilled grass as he makes his way to The Spot. The Spot, for search of a better name, was very specific. The letter gave him three exact coordinates, how far north, how far east, and how far above sea level. He studied many resources to get this right, because if he didn't this would have been for nothing.

When he reaches The Spot, he makes sure there are no animals nearby that would affect his plans. Then he chuckles, the first time he's laughed since, well, he couldn't remember. But how silly, he thinks to himself; he hasn't seen an animal in a long, long time, he doubts one will show up now. He places the letter on The Spot, makes sure it is perfect. No creases, no dirt, no marks, perfect. Now, for the most important part. The blood of a living, innocent human being. He does not know why this is so important; It didn't seem essential to the process, but the letter said to do it, so he does.

Prick.

He lets the blood fall.

A singular drop of deep red human blood
falls from the hand of the innocent.
And hits the page in exactly the right spot.

And there it is. The bright light he'd been
searching for all this time. It engulfs him;
wraps around his arms and brings them up;
seeps through his skin and runs through his
veins. He feels absolute content with the
world, for the light fills every crack in his

soul.

He was the light, and the light was him.

But then, he was gone.

And there was nothing.

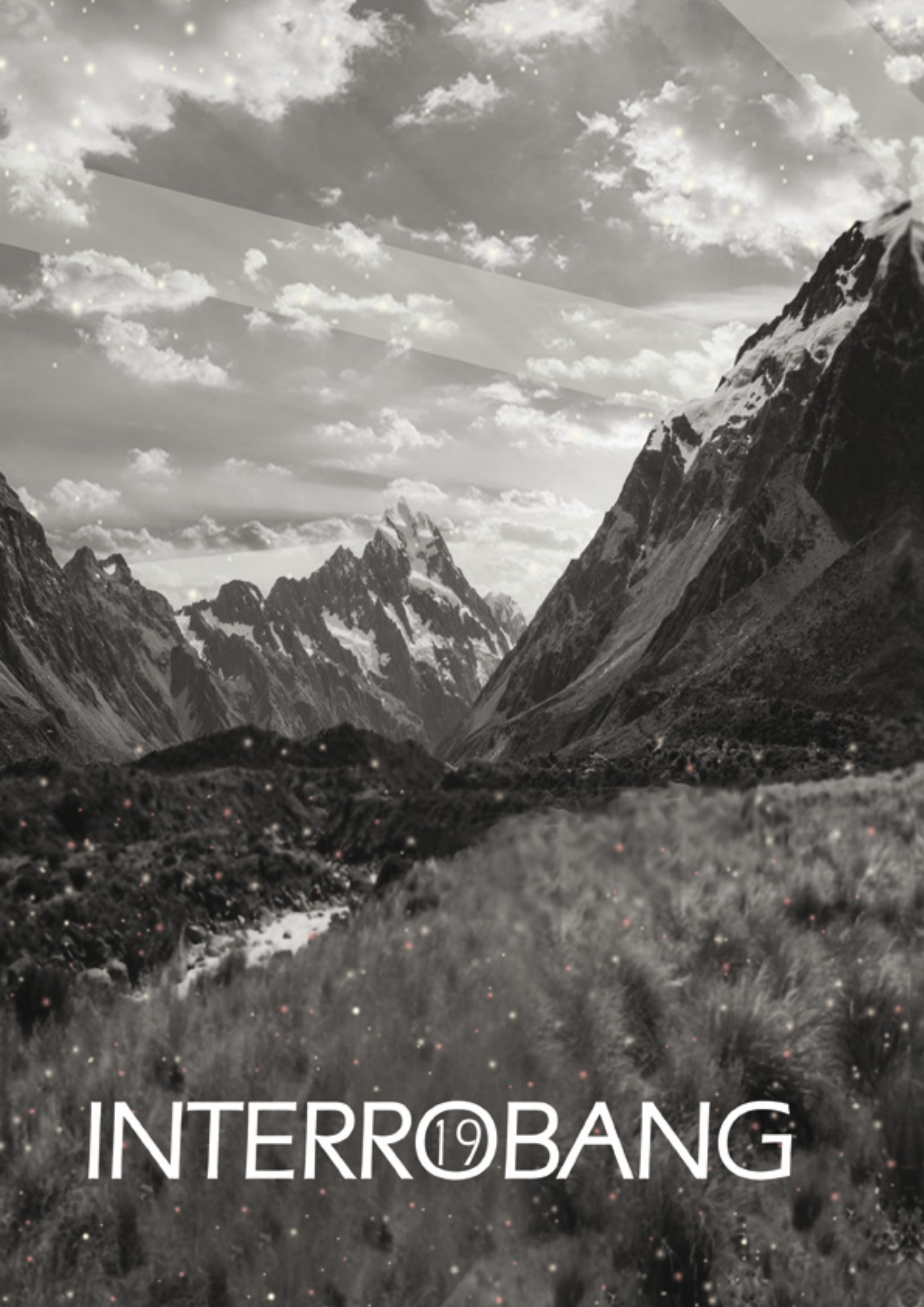
But still, somewhere, there was light.



by Mary Zhang



We would like to dedicate this year's edition of *Interrobang* to Kerri Sullivan. An English teacher at James Hargest College, Ms Sullivan came up with the idea for a magazine when she saw the high standard of her students' work. So she, along with JHC students, launched the very first edition back in 2011. Her idea: if more students were writing, then more would be reading. We give special thanks to Ms Sullivan as if she hadn't started *Interrobang*, then many students wouldn't have been able to work alongside other creative individuals and have their work published in the amazing magazine *Interrobang* has grown into.



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