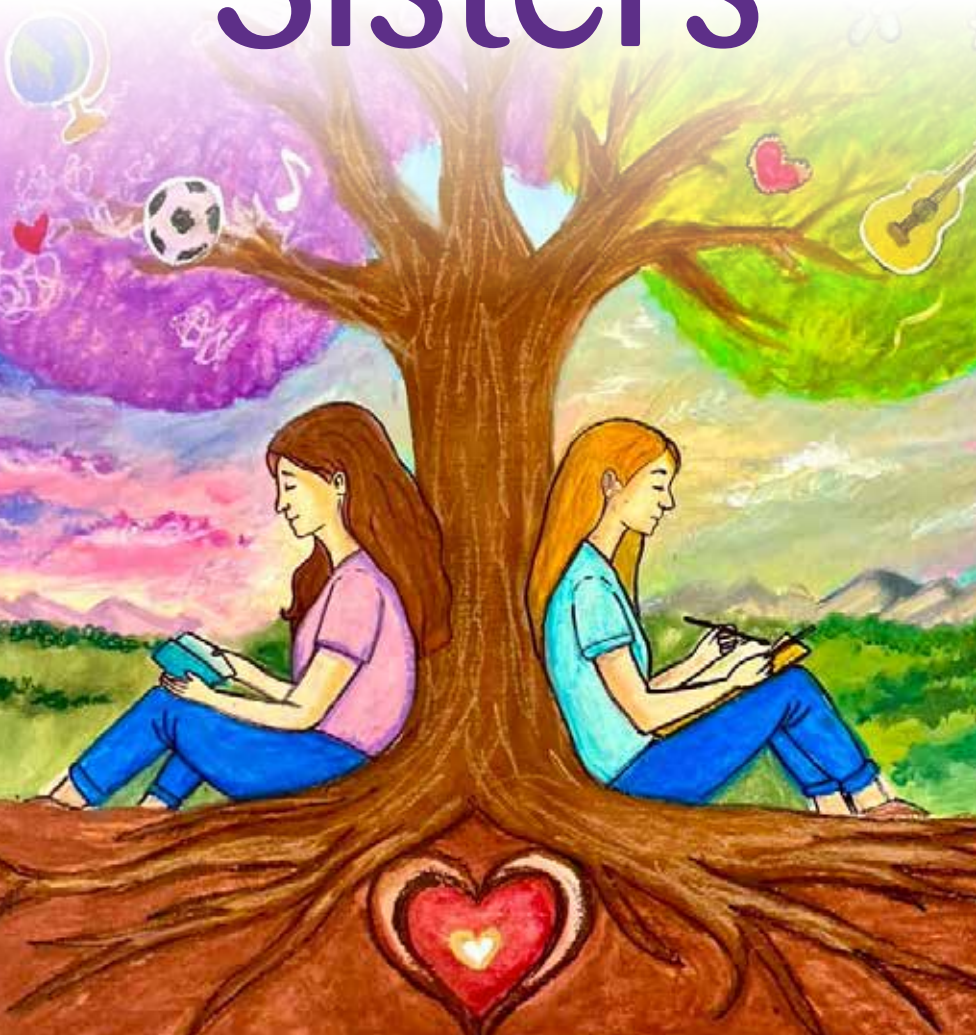


FOR OUR Sisters



Mulberry
Schools Trust

GLOBAL
Girl
LEADING

**APPLIED
STORIES**

Front cover artwork:
Shared Roots of Love

Ana Sophie Rincon Guerra
Colegio Carol Baur, Mexico

INTRODUCTION

from Alice Ward, CEO
Mulberry Schools Trust

This year's Global Girl Leading anthology, *For Our Sisters*, is the fourth anthology in our series, celebrating the voices, experiences and creativity of girls and young women.

Global Girl Leading has been an important part of Mulberry Schools Trust's work with girls and young women for many years, creating opportunities for them to develop their confidence, leadership and voice, and to build connections with other young women in the UK and across the world.

The anthology project has become a special part of that wider programme. We began with *Letters to Our Daughters – Volume I*, followed by *Letters to Our Daughters – Volume II*, and last year, *For Our Mothers*. This year, *For Our Sisters* celebrates sisterhood and the strength that comes from girls and young women supporting, encouraging and standing alongside one another.

The original inspiration for these anthologies came from *Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters* by President Barack Obama, a book brought back by Mulberry students following a civil rights study tour in the United States. Its message about the people who shape us, the values we pass on and our hopes for the next generation has remained at the heart of this project.

Global Girl Leading is founded on our belief that girls should have the confidence and opportunity not only to find their own voices, but to use them. An equally important part of leadership is helping others to find theirs. That is why this year's theme feels so important. Sisterhood is about recognising that our progress is connected – that we are stronger when we support one another, celebrate one another's successes and stand together when things need to change.

There is still much to do to achieve gender equality. Across the world, girls and women continue to face barriers to their education, opportunities and leadership. We want our young people to know that they have a part to play in changing this. Global Girl Leading encourages them to be ambitious for themselves, while also thinking about what they can do for others and the world around them.

I would like to thank everyone who has made *For Our Sisters* possible, particularly Fin Kennedy for his continued work with our young writers, our panel of judges, our schools and international partners, and all the staff who have supported students to take part.

Above all, congratulations to the girls and young women whose work appears in these pages. Your words are thoughtful, joyful, powerful and deeply personal. I hope you are as proud of them as we are.

As you read this collection, I hope it reminds you of the importance of the girls and women who stand beside us and of what can happen when we choose to stand beside them too.

Alice Ward

CEO, Mulberry Schools Trust

INTRODUCTION

from Fin Kennedy

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to once again be asked to deliver Mulberry Schools Trust's joyous celebration of lyrical tribute writing, *For Our Sisters*, for the Trust's annual Global Girl Leading conference.

Like 2024's *Letters to Our Daughters*, and last year's *For Our Mothers*, this year's contest has been truly international, with schools taking part as far afield as Malaysia, Mexico, India, Kenya, Australia and the United States, as well as here in the UK.

Once again it has captured the voice of a generation, with poems and letters of extraordinary lyrical eloquence depicting the pleasures and pains of sibling love and rivalry. The focus this year has generated a more playful set of poems, all showing a precocious confidence in wielding the literary tools of metaphor, simile, rhythm and rhyme to convey the unique bonds between young women from birth to adolescence.

Blood relatives of course feature prominently, but our relaxed definition of sisters and sisterhood has allowed for best friends, cousins, aunts and female peers of all kinds to be honoured - 'sisters of the heart' as one piece so memorably puts it. The result is this kaleidoscopic volume of laughter, tears, fights, forgiveness and undying love for figures who will be there through thick and thin.

While poems for an imagined future daughter asked students to look forwards, and for a mother backwards, this year's theme of sisters and sisterhood has allowed our young writers to look sideways, to those who have always been there and always will, and in doing so to see something of themselves reflected back in a unique and sacred bond.

I hope you enjoy this unique collection as much as I enjoyed supporting the young writers it celebrates. And if you have a sister or sister figure in your life, give a copy to her.

Fin Kennedy

Artistic Director

www.appliedstories.co.uk

A note on content

If you are affected by any of the themes in this collection,
please talk to a teacher or responsible adult.



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THE AFTERGLOW

I still remember the morning you first came home,
A fragile feather five years behind my own.
I sat beside your crib to weave a whispered word,
Singing sweet refrains to my newly settled bird.
Like the sun and the shadow, we moved as a single pair,
Believing our golden days would always linger there.

You laughed, and the lilacs would lean from their trees,
The wind seemed to whisper your name through the leaves.
And when your changing body brought a wave of fear,
I held your hand through that first crimson and stayed near.
I wiped away the tears and told you you were safe,
guarding the quiet borders of our childhood grave

Yet time, like a tide, leaves no note and no sign,
It carries away what was once yours and mine.

We were two paper boats set loose on one stream,
Then carried by currents toward different dreams.
No quarrel divided us, no storm split the sky.
We simply grew taller as seasons slipped by.
And I miss you sometimes in small, quiet skies,
like sunlight that lingers at the end of the mile.

You chose a world I could not pursue,
and the faces were no longer mine.
The games that once glittered like jewels in the sun
became old constellations whose burning was done

Now separate rooms hold our separate wines,
And whole conversations lives only in sighs.
The hallway between us, though only a few feet,
Sometimes feels wider than any two streets.
Guess that's what we are, half full, half ajar

Perhaps the girl you outgrew no longer exists either.
The girl that you knew is no longer quite true.
And maybe one day, when the bright crowds depart,
And the world leaves its wintery weight on your heart,
You'll think of the girl with the songs and the strings,
Who taught you that cardboard boxes were wings.

For you are the keeper of all that I've been,
The keeper of summers, of places unseen,
The witness to whispers no stranger could hear,
The witness to wonders once held close and dear.
Some love is not loud, nor does it need a cast;
it lives in the silences, quietly built to outlast.

And that no matter where you fly, or what you choose to do,
In a world of shifting faces,
You're the only person who has ever truly, deeply known.

Aakriti Chamoli

St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School, Janakpuri, India

NOT BY BLOOD

I never thought I'd find it so hard
to say goodbye to someone
who became such a big part of
my life.

It's strange really -
how a person who was once a stranger
can become the first person you want
to tell things to
the one who makes ordinary days
feel a bit brighter.

I'll miss the little things the most:
Our chats that somehow lasted
for hours,
the laughs over things no one else
would understand,
Knowing that no matter how miserable my
day had been,
seeing you would make everything better.

Soon we'll be heading off in
different directions,
making new memories and meeting new people,
but that doesn't make leaving
any easier.
Some friendships leave a mark
and you've left yours on me.
The places we've shared
will still be here,
but they'll feel different somehow
because they hold pieces of us-
moments that I'll carry with me
wherever I go.

So, this isn't really goodbye.
It's just one of those moments
in life where the
road splits for a while.

And though I'll miss you more
then words can say,
I'll always be grateful that our
paths crossed in the first
place.

No matter where life takes us,
you'll always be one of the
best parts
of this chapter in my life.

We may not be sisters by blood,
but we'll always be sisters
in our hearts.

This is not goodbye -
only a turning of the page,
before the story finds us
together again

Aisha Miah

*Mulberry School for Girls,
London, United Kingdom*



Blessine Nafuna Wandabwa
Lenana Girls High School, Kenya

SISTER YOU ARE MY STELLAR

There existed an endless-open abyss, a black empty canvas that stretched miles and miles away.

We were both stars that were of different dimensions, different trajectories. Yet somehow, both stars collided, a once in a millennium occurrence. You, became a part of my stellar evolution.

I saw you with the perception of science, and adored you with the catastrophe of art.

Friendship is a biological and psychological mechanism, not just a social luxury.

A friendship most people yearned for, was a familiar face to me.

Connection being the hallmark of human behaviour, *our* connection *being* the significant turning point in my solitary life.

We weren't related. We were far from the same. Especially our languages. Languages that are used primarily to communicate and establish our own cultures. We both spoke very different languages, yet our understanding for each other surpassed beyond words.

And if we were to ever part, you will be the language I am no longer fluent in but still remember how to read.

The memories we've had will forever remain stagnant in my *hippocampus*. The part of the brain that stores and classifies memories, that you are embedded in.

If my mind worked the same as it did in *Inside Out*, the movie portraying the human mind, you would be my *core* memory.

Your name, Chloe, derived from the greek word *khlóros*---referring to greenish-yellow springtime shoots and the *chlorophyll*; the green pigment that exists in plants.

Like the *chlorophyll*, you brought the colour that bled through the dull and monotonous moments of life.

Since then, it has never stopped being colourful whenever you are around.

As long as you are here, I'll continue to burn brighter than stars and I'll paint every corner of the black empty canvas with the remnants of the meteoric dust I leave behind.

For you are my constellation sister, until the last remaining stars explode.

Amira Fatin Qashrina Binti Muhammad Fuad

SMK Convent Sentul, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

OUR STORY NEVER BEGAN, YET MY LOVE NEVER ENDS

I once felt like I was in a very dark cave with a couple of bats staring at me on top of my head. I was so scared that I could not find my way out. Then, I saw a very bright light coming towards me and I knew at that moment that was the hope that I was seeking for. It wasn't how I imagined it, but it turns out the bright light that was coming towards me was my sister. I was not expecting her to come and help me, I thought it could be someone or anything else.

A sister. My sister.

When I entered the world, I opened my eyes and saw someone staring at me with the brightest smile. At first I did not know who it was but that person welcomed me like she had known me for years. She held me in her arms and introduced herself to me. "I will take very good care of you, lil sis," she said, and she did. Through the darkest of nights and the brightest of days, she was there for me during every second. There was no burden too heavy to bear or happiness too much to share, she was always there. Even when she hit rock bottom, she made sure I had a way to climb up.

When my tiny hands gripped onto hers, the whole world seemed to dissipate around us. I believed she would never let go and her smile would continue to shine on my day.

"I love you," she said every time; just because.

The day she moved out to college was the day I thought my life would be over, but it simply was not true. I may have not believed it at the time, I might have thought she broke our very first promise. Though what I did not realize was that she will still love me even in the distance between us. The photos hearted in chat messages, shooting texts when we were free, and saying "I miss you" every chance we got. Those were all proof of love and proof that she was, is, and will be the one person I can count on the most. We may have grown up, but we have never grown apart. I am grateful to have unconditional love defined in a sister.

Ammara Khaleela

Sekolah Seri Puteri, Cyberjaya, Malaysia

TWO LIGHTS, ONE SAME SKY

Before we learnt who we were,
discovered our strengths and fears,
The Almighty had already written
our names
into the same story.

Dear Sister,
If someone asked me
about God's greatest gift in my life,
I would not think twice;
It has been you.

He knew that one day
We would become two different
people
With contrasting dreams, varying
personalities,
distinct ways of seeing the world,
yet somehow remaining connected
by something deeper.

I often think of us as the sun and
the moon
One brings warmth to the day,
the other light to the night;
I sparkle in gold, you shine in silver
equally unique in every way.

Neither was created to replace
nor outshine the other.
When an eclipse occurs,
something extraordinary happens:
different lights meet in the same sky.

Two different people,
one shared purpose:
To bring light wherever we go.
Never in competition, nor in conflict
always in harmony
when the whole world stops to
look;
This is what sisterhood feels like to
me...

You are one of the pillars of my life
The funny thing about pillars is
You do not always notice them
walking past them every day,
You grow used to their presence.

When everything feels heavy
needing something to lean on,
You suddenly realize,
They have been holding you up all
along.

That is who you are to me.
I might forget how much I rely on
you
Whenever life becomes
overwhelming,
each time I need you most,
You are always there.

Steady, faithful, strong.
A light that outlives the dark,
even when unseen.

We are branches that grow,
opposite directions,
our own identities and talents,
but still born from the same roots.
That is what makes our bond so
beautiful,
Sisterhood is not about being
identical
It is blooming together to awaken
ourselves.
You have qualities I admire and
hope to have,
never forgetting what I have
taught you.

Thank you, little sister
for standing up for me
When I needed courage,
believing in me
even when I doubted myself.

Endless gratitude for being my
defender,
my teacher, my support,
one of the greatest blessings
God has ever given me.

No matter where life takes us,
I will always be grateful
that our stories were written
side by side.

Because before I had anyone else,
I had you.
I now have learned:
the brightest lights
are not the ones that shine alone
But the ones that inspire others.

Sophie Rincón

*SMK (P) Jalan Ipoh,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

UNTITLED

A sister is someone who laughs with you until you can't breathe,
Who holds you while you sob about nothing,
Someone who goes with you through three moves
Four schools
Two countries
A support that doesn't stay behind even when everything you know does
Who played with you when you don't speak the language of your peers
Who believes in you when your teachers call you stupid and lazy
My sister is my best friend.
The person who is always there
The person who puts gold stars on my head
And does research projects on my brain
Who calls me smart when I can barely read
And stupid when I try to bake
A warm hug and an elbow in my stomach
The person who will hit me over the head and also run to me screaming
in excitement
The person who now is leaving
Who I will miss
But always my best friend

Ana Vilareal Sanchez

Great Valley High, USA

LOST WITHOUT YOU

As sisters we sit under the Sicilian sun,
Playing cards, laughing, just having fun,
A memory floats, blue as the sea,
Not a happy one though, for you or for me.

You screamed. I cried, holding my head,
Terrified our world would tear apart.
Again.

We were taken to a woman, to share with, to bring hope,
But I was a helpless dinghy, tossed around by the waves,
barely staying afloat.

I remember that day,
blurred by our tears,
hiding our worries, our anger, our fears.

Mum said to us: 'we're just taking a break'
I clung to you tightly, refusing to believe,
Our dad was going, willing to leave.

From that day on, we grew apart,
Your walls sprang up as the problems started,
Our love was still there, drowned by waves,
And yet alive all the same.

Day after day, I hid, fingers in ears,
Blocking out noises of fights and tears,
The sister I loved more than anyone else was in bits
And I was entirely powerless to stop it.

Then the rage came,
Washing over our souls,
The dark to my light, as black as coals,
It wasn't your fault. I know that. But sometimes I ...

We learnt to live,
To set ourselves free,
It taught us to love,
To cry, to be

Six years later our bond has regrown,
Not the same. Scarred.
But I have my sister back now,
No longer alone.

Anuka Davis

Parkstone Grammar School, Poole, United Kingdom



Complicidad de Mujer (Woman's Complicity)

Lika Ait Ameur

Colegio Carol Baur, Mexico

WHEN I FORGET MY SONG

I sit hesitantly on my piano stool,
The black and white blur making me feel like a fool,
My sister knows how my fingers stop,
When confidence leaves and spirits drop.

When the tempo drags and stalls,
And the melody trips and falls,
She won't leave, she's by my side,
Not to play, just to guide.

She hums the tune I cannot play,
Her presence keeps my panic at bay,
She taps her feet, keeping in time,
And moves my fingers to keys I can't find.

The song builds up, a beautiful sound,
My missing confidence is suddenly found,
The music sung, the notes began to blend,
I played from the start, right to the end.

Ella, you put me on the right path when I lose my way,
So to you I want to say,
Thank you.

Asta Brindley

Parkstone Grammar School, Poole, United Kingdom

UNTITLED

We started out with tangled strings,
And childhood dreams on paper wings,
Through every rainy days and sunny days,
You held me through my lowest.

When the night sky spread,
You joined me with my star gazing,
A steady breath, a gentle laugh,
The truest friend right by my side.

We shared our secrets in the night,
And laughed until we lost our breath,
We stole each other's clothes and had
many outfalls. We talked about our fears,
And turned to gold the passing years.

Even when one of us was praised by our parents,
Even when things were intense between us,
When we grew resentful of each other,
We found each other through the tenebrous
moments in our life.

No matter where life takes us,
Or wherever the wind guides us,
The bond we share will always stay,
Untouched by dangerous events, untouched by time.

Through every achievement, every test,
You're an anchor that keeps me from sinking.
You're the best. What we share is a piece
of love. A melody that keeps me going.

Through activity we share,
Like the time we lost in the tenebrous pit,
With no hope, you somehow saved us,
You were right by my side, my saviour.

So here's to you, my confidante,
The one I always look upon
through every joy and every heartbreak,
I will always love you for the rest of my
life.

Ayesha Akter

*Mulberry School for Girls,
London, United Kingdom*

A FAMILIAR BECOMING

People search for resemblance in obvious places,
in mirrored smiles or matching eyes,
as though love only knows how to repeat itself visibly.
But my sister and I were written differently,
two stories bound into the same spine,
raised beneath the same roof,
yet growing along different lines.

For years, I held onto those differences.
I gathered them carefully, like proof—
proof that she was her,
and I was me,
proof that our paths were leading
toward different versions of ourselves,
toward different truths.

Not because I admired her any less.
But because some comparisons never felt fair.
She had carried burdens
I had never been asked to bear,
walked roads I had only watched from afar.
So I mistook distance for difference,
and difference for identity.

I thought becoming myself
meant becoming less like her.
Yet slowly, without asking permission,
I began finding her in places
I thought belonged only to me:
in my stubbornness,
in my silence,
in the way I carried more than I said.

The resemblance was never in the face.
It lived in smaller places:
habits,
instincts,

the quiet ways we moved through the world.
And with every year,
the similarities grew harder to ignore.

Not because our stories were the same.
They weren't.
Her life asked different things of her,
just as mine asked different things of me.
And yet beneath those differences,
something familiar remained—
the same determination,
the same guarded tenderness.

So no, we do not share the same face.
But every year,
I find another piece of her
waiting in an unexpected place.
And what once felt like a comparison
now feels like a connection.

Because the deepest resemblance
was never in reflection,
but in direction.
I spent years defining myself
by the space between us,
only to discover that somewhere
between distance and devotion,
resistance and recognition,

I had never been becoming her.
I had simply been becoming
a sister.

Ayushi Banga

*St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School,
Janakpuri, India*

IN THE SCHOOL BATHROOM BETWEEN THIRD AND FOURTH PERIOD

The girls' bathroom is always the loudest after
someone has been crying,
when the tears have dried
and the tissues stashed away,
and quiet sniffles ring against the tiled walls.
In the mirrors, reflections multiply:
a fleeting glance, a knowing sigh,
a quiet, "He's an idiot anyway,"
enough for laughter to bubble up
from tightened throats and swollen eyes,
and for five miraculous minutes,
nobody has to explain anything at all.
There is no award
for the girl who makes everyone laugh
minutes after wiping tears off someone else's cheeks.
No medals for the almost-strangers
who stitch each other back together
with safety pins and half-finished gossip,
and the quiet understanding
that sometimes being a girl
means fighting invisible wars
and still offering another girl
a smile and a compliment;
but I think the world survives
because of girls like that.
The yearbook will remember
our grades and our faces,
but not who kept spare hair ties
looped around her wrist
for girls she'd never even met.

And years from now,
when girlhood feels as distant as a country
I once belonged to,
I think I will still ache
for those fluorescent sanctuaries
where we stitched one another back together
before the next bell rang.

Bhakti Ohri

St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School, Janakpuri, India



Kamila Plotnikova

Mulberry Academy London Dock, London, United Kingdom

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Do you remember teaching me how to fold a square of paper,
into an origami box so neat,
while mine looked nothing like yours,
and yet you told me it was perfectly complete?

Do you remember walking to school,
passing our lucky tree each time,
our fingertips brushing its branches,
like it knew your hand and mine?

Do you remember creeping up the stairs,
as the packets of sweet treats rustled underneath,
the muffled sound getting louder with every step,
trying to keep our secret sweets beneath our teeth?

Do you remember loud songs playing,
words that I could never understand?
You sang the words, I sang the sounds,
with our make-up brushes in hand.

Do you remember teaching me Pool,
showing me where to stand and aim?
You never laughed when I got it wrong,
you simply helped me try again.

Do you remember the batter spills,
the microwave flashing bright,
the sugar dust upon the counter,
and laughing long into the night?

Do you remember going shopping,
clothes piled up on the fitting room floor?
And walking back out again,
with only two finds worth shopping for.

Do you remember stations rushing past,
taking photos of our funny faces?
Printing through crowded platforms,
catching the train going places.

Do you remember our black swimsuits,
that matched our brightly coloured caps,
neon yellow, green and shining smiles,
as we laughed and posed for our silly snaps?

A sister is not always Family,
not someone who shares matching blood and genes,
but someone who stands and grows beside you,
through a thousand little memories and dreams.

Cecilia Batchelor

Convitto Nazionale, Marco Foscarini, Venezia, Italy

CHOSEN SISTERHOOD

People think sisterhood is supposed to look obvious,
Made of matching faces and shared blood.
I don't think so.
I think it begins quietly,
in borrowed hair ties,
half-finished conversations,
In someone saying, "come sit with me"
when the world feels too crowded.
I think sisterhood
Is learning another person
like a second language.
It is knowing
Which silence means anger,
Which one means sadness,
and which one simply means "stay."
Maybe sisters are not always the people you're born with,
Sometimes, they arrive slowly,
through years of laughter and
Inside jokes no one else understands,
Through surviving the same storms
And calling each other brave afterward.
And that's what sisterhood feels like to me,
It is not about sharing a home,
But becoming one
For someone else.

Chetanya Rathi

St Mark's World School, New Delhi, India



Avni Sharma
St. Mark's Group of Schools, India

OUR PERFECT BLEND

To Amira, the girl who helped me navigate the storms of adolescence.

I like to think that fate dictated our alignment. You were just another face in the sea of new students, and yet, even when thrust into a blur of unfamiliar voices, we still shared one thing — unparalleled confusion about which class belonged to us. I remember the conversation vividly:

“Hey, is this the line for students in 1B?”

“I think so.”

As you know, we both ended up waltzing into a completely different class. That was the prologue to our entire story, and I find it astonishing that you, who were once a complete stranger to me, became my second half, the sister that I never had.

We grew up in completely different environments. You had to pilot alone through a tumultuous hurricane, and all I had to face was the occasional chilly breeze. When we first met, I was quite the spoilt brat, but you made it your mission to pull me away from digging my own grave. Amira, you and I couldn't be any more different. I excelled in mundane exams, and you excelled at turning the mundane into pure gold on a canvas. You are a vault of endless patience, and I am one who rushes headfirst into the fire.

Despite all our differences on paper, as I got to know more about you, I found a sanctuary of solace, a person in whom I could confide all my doubts and certainties. For years, you have provided me with a constant stream of comfort, and you bore the weight of my troubles valiantly, even when your own hands were full. We entrusted each other with Alpha and Omega, from discussing the dismal state of the school's *nasi lemak* to sharing the latest obstacle life threw at us.

As a girl who suffered living under the regime of two brothers, I consider you my soul-tied sister. You have shown me that even in the face of peril, a friend will stay by your side till the very end. For me, that is more than enough to be my chosen family. In simple terms, the *teh tarik* to my Pu-erh tea. All jokes aside, Amira, I hope that I can continue to navigate the storm known as life, by the light of your torch.

Your ride or die,
Chloe

Glossary:

Nasi lemak: Literally meaning “fatty rice”, this is Malaysia’s beloved national dish. It consists of rice cooked in coconut milk and pandan leaf and is often accompanied by various garnishes.

Teh tarik: This iconic tea is common across Southeast Asia, but holds a special place in every Malaysian’s heart. The name is derived from the action of repeatedly pouring (or “pulling”) the drink from one container to another, which gives it a frothy texture.

Chloe Debendra

SMK Convent Sentul, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Aradhya Bhatia
St. Mark's Group of Schools, India

WHAT STILL GROWS BETWEEN US

"Sisters are different flowers from the same garden"
Brought up together in the same environment
One has petals audaciously pink
Dancing softly at the garden's brink.
One has thorns that are as sharp as knives
Strong, determined and fearless as she thrives.

One has a stunning and stylish bloom
Her smile unfolding, illuminating every room.
One has obstacles they must overcome
Ambitiously striving to be number one.
Same but different with their unique hues
A vibrant pink
A violent blue.

They both want sunlight, though sometimes it burns
They both want nourishment, something they yearn.
Sometimes the weeds attack bringing the pain
But for the flowers to grow, they need the rain.

Each one unique beneath a shared sun
Side by side in the garden they bloom as one.
They may fight, they may lie, they may even steal
But in the end, these different sisters learn to heal.

Daisy Mason

Parkstone Grammar School, Poole, United Kingdom

YOUR SILENT PRESENCE

I never had the chance to grow up with a sister. I do not have any memories of her. Everything I know about my sister comes from my family. She passed away when she was only two months old, and I was just one year old. Although I was too young to remember, she will always be a part of my family.

Even after all these years, my mother still cries whenever she talks about my sister. The pain of losing her has never completely gone away. She brought happiness to our family, even though the memories were very short and brief. Listening to their stories helps me feel close to her and reminds me that she will always be my sister.

Whenever I visit her grave, I know I never had the chance to know her because we were both so young. Even though I cannot remember her, I always feel a sense of peace and comfort when I am there. It makes me feel close to her in my own way. I usually spend a few quiet moments thinking about her and praying for her. Those visits always remind me that family bonds can last forever, even if we are separated.

Sometimes I wonder what life would have been like if she had lived. We might have played together, shared our secrets, laughed at silly things, and supported each other as we grew up. I believe she would have been my best friend and someone I could always count on.

Though my sister's life was short, she will never be forgotten. She will always hold a special place in my heart. Her memory teaches me to appreciate my family, cherish every moment with the people I love, and be thankful for the time we have together. I will always remember her with love, even though we never had the chance to make memories together.

She may not be with us today, but she will always be my beacon and I pray that she is at peace. I am sure that we will meet each other, if not here, in the hereafter.

Delisha Hafiya binti Mohd Dafrizal Shah
Sekolah Seri Puteri, Cyberjaya, Malaysia



My Promise to You
Regina Berlanga Wong
Colegio Carol Baur, Mexico

WE ARE NOT WEAK

We are not related by blood,
yet something within us speaks a language older than names,
a quiet understanding that rises like morning light
across different faces, different stories, different lives.

The woman in us does not ask permission to exist
she simply appears in shared silence,
in laughter that heals what words cannot reach,
in eyes that recognize struggle without explanation.
We are not one family by birth,
yet we become one through becoming.

Each month, our bodies remind us of pain uninvited,
a heaviness that curls beneath the skin,
a storm that does not wait for convenience.
And still we move
through classrooms, streets, expectations, and time.
They call us weak in those moments
when our strength is simply quieter than usual.

But weakness is not pain.
Weakness is surrender.
And surrender is not our language.

They say women cannot lead, cannot stand, cannot rise,
yet the world is written with our resistance.
From voices that broke silence across nations,
to hands that rebuilt hope from ashes,
to hearts that carried justice when others looked away.

Leadership was never waiting for permission.
It was created in defiance.

We are not waiting for a seat at the table
we are building it.
We are shaping it with every choice, every voice, every step forward.
And those who once doubted us
now stand in the world we helped shape.

Not all leaders wear crowns.
Some carry groceries, hold children, heal wounds,
teach lessons, fight invisible battles,
and still rise the next morning without applause.

Sisters, we are not strangers.
We are reflections of resilience walking in different directions.
We are the same fire learning different ways to burn
sometimes soft, sometimes fierce, always alive.

So when the world speaks in limits,
we answer in becoming.
When it whispers "you cannot,"
we reply with everything we already are.

We are not related by blood,
but we are bound by something stronger
a shared becoming,
a shared rising,
a shared refusal to disappear.

And in that unity,
we are unstoppable.

Divya Ap Ranjan

SMK Convent Sentul, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Sahera Islam

Mulberry School for Girls, London, United Kingdom

मेरी दनुया, MY UNIVERSE

I am a girl blessed with many sisters,
but not all of us are linked by blood.
We are tied by our prarabdha
(प्रारब्ध),
the spirit that links everything and
everyone in our universe.
It connects us through our past,
present,
and will continue into our future.
From this life to the next.

I have three sisters by blood.
I am the oldest.
These girls are my shadow.
Everything I do. Every decision
I make
Will pave their path,
and guide them forward.
They will look to me for help,
they will ask me the questions
they cannot ask our parents.
They are my responsibility.
Our prarabdha is responsibility.

I have five sisters who chose me.
I am the youngest.
These girls are my ground.
When I am in trouble,
when I don't know what to do.
I know that they are all only one call
away.
When I think of girlhood, I think of
them.
They are my support.
Our prarabdha is support.

I have six sisters I chose.
We're all the same age.
These girls are my sun.

I've spent almost every day of the
last nine
months, for the last four years,
surrounded by their laughter and
their joy.
Like the steady rise and fall of the
sun,
day after day.
They've given me the gentle light
I needed to grow,
and the harsh fury that kept me
humble.
They're in almost all of my
memories,
both good and bad.
They are my comfort.
Our prarabdha is comfort.

Each and every one of my sisters,
whether we were born stuck
together,
found each other as little kids,
or carefully pieced each other back
together as broken teenagers,
We are all connected.
We all have the prarabdha that
links us

Whether they are my shadow,
ground, or sun,
these girls are the pieces that fit
together
to make my universe.
My world. मेरी दुनिया.
And I love them all the same.

Diya Sharma
Great Valley High, USA



Kaysan Ahmed

Mulberry Academy London Dock, London, United Kingdom

自成一屋

(A ROOM OF HER OWN)

My cousin was abandoned
not because of who she was,
but because she was a girl,

The unfortunate thing,
fourth sister in a family
with no space left for another
daughter.

In rural China, 1990,
under the One Child Policy,
survival came before sentiment,
sons valued,
daughters useless mouths to feed.

Birth is not a blessing,
especially a girl.
It brought a fine
as high as an annual income.
Her arrival mourned not celebrated.

Her existence held against her
mother,
a womb failed to give a boy to the
family.
She was born in silence,
thick as white snow.
Shame lingered for years.

Once again, fate pushed her out
She was sent away,
adopted by a poor family
in another village.
mercy or curse,
hard to tell.

Education was a luxury,
money saved for her brothers.
Tuition become rice bowls,
wedding money,
cement for sons to build homes.

At sixteen,
she folded her memories away
left school behind,
rejecting an arranged marriage,
a poor offering from parents,
treating her as livestock
traded at market.

Heading to Shanghai
"I'm leaving to wander," she said,
in her ears the words,
"If a woman is not married by 25,
no man will want her."

But she counted time differently.
They counted years
she counted hours,
like train schedules never missed.
Left morning before dawn,
every night watching
the stock market until
the sky was darkness,
dreaming a different future.

She worked all the time.
studied for certificates
fragile papers that allowed
entry to a position
that was never meant for her.

When I was thirteen,
I lived with her for a week.
A broken air conditioner,
a narrow bed barely holds
one person in a shared room.
Books spread across the floor
yet everything was in order
as she built a life.

Fourteen years of toil,
then she bought her apartment,
in a city that gave her second life,
one square metre ten thousand US
dollars.
Some says she's lucky,
some says she's too tough,
too ambitious,
too independent,
Not wife material
but I saw something else.

So, I no longer question,
why she moved on quickly
I only think how far she had to go.
The world once pushed her out,
but she builds herself into a house

No longer an unfortunate thing,
a girl who made her own space.

Echo Huang
*St Peter's Girls School,
Adelaide, Australia*

BUBBLE TEA

Walking through the streets
I used to hold your hand I don't do that anymore.
Talking about everything and nothing. Our favourite shows,
Our favourite books and foods. These walks meant so much to me.
When we get to our destination we look at the menu already knowing
what our usual orders are you pay always like it's your job to look after
me even though we both know I would look after you in any other
situation. 'IT'S READY' – calls the man placing the bubble tea
down on the counter. Picking up our drinks we walk
back sipping on our drinks you always get the
mango drink and tropical pearls I get the
lemon drink and strawberry pearls.
The place we go to is closed
down now but the
memories
live
on.

Edith Barder

*Mulberry Academy London Dock,
London, United Kingdom*

PENCIL HEAD

We don't talk or see,
Or tease or miss each other much.
Every three months,
Feminist lectures, with tickets sponsored by Dad.
They're awkward every time.

You, are late as usual,
Bumping into strangers (sorry, excuse me, pardon me)
"Hi"
I give you a tight-lipped smile.
You shuffle and fidget, I sit motionless,
Until I spot something.

My. Sweater.
That I lost last year.
You clock my glance at the stolen sweater,
We sit in silence.
I will bank it for later.
The lecture goes on.

At the lobby, we chat about the weather (she looks exactly like Mum)
Some laughs finally emerge.
She looks exactly like Mum.
I try to hug her, but she pushes my shoulders,
"What was that for?"
"I was trying to hug you"
"Oh, I thought you were trying to rip off the sweater"
Our embrace is awkward,
Goodbyes are due.

Mum's memorial is here.
A somber day, but neither of us feels somber.
Flowers in hand, a stolen figurine in tow,
You try to sneak it back in Dad's house, but I am somehow roped in.
We creep up the stairs, praying Godmother won't see us (upstairs is strictly off limits)
You perch the figurine haphazardly, Godmother walks in.
Her eyes dart to the stolen figurine.
"That's where it is!"

"That's where what is?" (I stifle a snort. You are exactly like Mum)
Silence and tension abound.
"Your Dad needs you both downstairs"
We walk in tandem
Down the stairs we played on.

As the leaves change,
We see each other more (and we quarrel more).
One gloomy day, as you run in the cemetery,
I storm to your bench.
My eyes are red and swollen.
"I didn't take your sweater!"
"What?"
"Nothing"
I sink down next to you.
"What is it?"
"You have to promise not to laugh"
A grin forms; you look exactly like Mum.
I remove my hat.
"I look like a pencil."
You cackle (you sound exactly like Mum).
You are in fits, tears welling up as you laugh at me.
"Did you go to Anthony?"
"I told you not to go to him."
I am exasperated.
"It's chic. Very... French", you try.
That's not good.

You march into Anthony's,
Grieving my hair that once was.
"No! She asked for this!"
"She looks like a pencil!"
Anthony shows her the picture I brought.
"Oh."
We leave in tandem
Round the streets we grew up on.

Elizabeth Ho Mannavant

SMK (P) Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

NEVER JUST A GIRL

She tells me I look great, even when I don't
She promises to be there, occasionally she won't
I forgive her, I always do,
That's what it means to have someone who's sisterly and true.
She knows, really knows what hurts the most.
She's seen you howl, and scream, turn to a ghost.
Sitting with you quiet, when there's nothing much to say
And loves you not despite it, but because of it... okay!
She isn't always blood. Yet she's never just 'a girl'
sisterhood ain't pretty...
But it's bold, brave and beautiful
Strong female hands. rarely letting go
They don't save you. They don't fix the mess
They do stand with you, champion, and that's enough.
And that's yes!

Ella Brown

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, Wales, United Kingdom

UNTITLED

Age 0 to 5 we lived on separate streets,
Worlds close by, but never meet,
Age 6 to 10 we moved in different lanes,
Different schools, different names.
Then secondary came, and there you were,
Shy at first, unsure, a blur.
We're African – that's where we start,
Quietly that stitched our heart.
Different rhythms, different pace,
Yet somehow we found the same space,
Now we argue loud 'bout nothing much,
Silly things that barely touch.
We make up fast don't hold the fight,
Losing a day of you would not feel right,
No big speech, no grand design,
Just two lines meeting in real time.
Wouldn't want anyone else seeing it through
From stranger to this – I'm glad it's you.

Greatness Onyebule

*Mulberry Academy St Leonards,
Hastings, United Kingdom*

MY SISTER

Bound by blood, woven through tongue,
for you I'm a shield in front of a gun.
We fight and we argue, I make you a pun,
as different as stars are always one.

A glance and a smile, a knowing look,
I shall always read you like a book.
My love and my hatred, the peace in my war,
No matter the place, you make me soar.

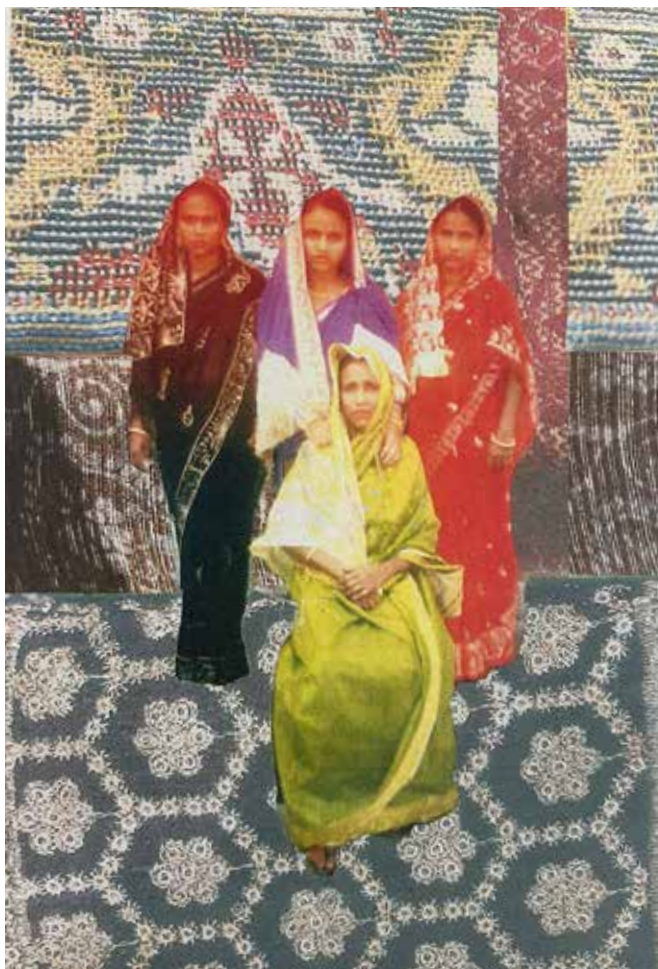
Through every mistake, you steady my hand,
A compass that points where I misunderstand.
We wander through storms, yet laugh in the rain,
two souls intertwined both in joy and in pain.

You echo my silence, you finish my thoughts,
a mirror that shows me the battles I've fought.
We clash like the tides, but return like the sea,
no matter the distance, you anchor me.

In moments of darkness, you spark me alight,
a wildfire burning the edges of night.
We stumble, we rise, we break and we mend,
our footsteps through time, shall never end.

Gwyneth Gwynfil

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, Wales, United Kingdom



Saaliha Ali
Mulberry School for Girls, London, United Kingdom

IN EVERY CROWDED HALLWAY

We never agreed on anything,
Not music, clothes, or favorite things.
Yet somehow I still looked for you
In every crowded hallway.

I remember the day I forgot to bring my lunch,
You slid your lunchbox across the desk.
We started interacting more and more,
Sharing stories between classes and lunch breaks.
Your seat became the first thing I looked for every morning,
Soon enough you became my home.

You knew something was wrong
When I didn't say a word.
You didn't hurry or force me,
You quietly sat beside me until I was ready,
listening even when I made no sense,
and never once judging me for it.
Your arms held me so gently,
Your prayers hugged me when I had no one,
I knew that day, we're made for each other.

We happily watched movies together,
Until our stomachs ached due to laughter,
And our eyes filled with tears at the emotional scenes.
The memory of us trying to be superheroes and fairies,
Of wearing bedsheets as capes and running around the house,
Will forever be etched into my brain.

We argue over little things,
Over words that fade by morning light.
You vanished all my lingering doubts and fears,
But nothing compares to the comfort
Your hugs bring after every fight.
Even after all the noise,
You're still my safest kind of voice.

And when the bell rang for one last time,
We walked together hand in hand,
Mumbling words we'll forget by tomorrow.
One umbrella over our bodies,
And laughter that still echoes in my head.
Years may pass but my eyes
Will still search for you in every crowded hallway.

Ipshita Malik

St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School, Janakpuri, India

THE BRAID

My sweet sister, darling of mine
It's okay you can trust my heart
Sit beside me to braid your hair
I'm the one who will always care
Through all the tangles, tears,
and thoughts
I will help you loosen the knots.

Our souls were always intertwined
Each strand crossing a heart or mind
You cannot tell the start or end
And that is where I found myself
Not from one single lock
But being a part of a whole.

Our bodies share a language
Older than speech itself
Our hair falls in the same direction
As if it remembers a common root.
We cramp, soften and rise with
the moon
Our skin has memorized the
same sun
And our hands to loosen the
same knots.

Through sisterhood, I found my
womanhood
Like finding a world I always knew
I could
A thread alone can be pulled apart
But braided together, we become
a rope
That holds the weight of the world
I am more myself beside you,
than I have ever been alone.

Sharing my life with you has taught
me to be a woman
Not gently, not always, but truly
I became who I am in the space
between your fingers and mine
We are braided, you and I,
Not forced but chosen, strand
into strand
The braid does not end
It is passed down, worn again
This is the way we grow,
Not from a single lock
But from the braid we are.

Isabela Moreno Cadena
Colegio Carol Baur, Mexico



Matilde Celestini
Liceo Foscarino, Italy

BECAUSE YOU WERE YOU, I BECAME ME

I watch you enter a room
like a quiet storm,
like you don't owe anyone anything,
like you're not there to impress
anyone,
but just to be.

That is how you stand out most.
You do not chase attention.
You don't reshape yourself
to fit whatever trend
is trendy that week.

You stay the same,
authentic, true to yourself,
and real, while everyone else
is learning how to edit themselves,
cutting their colours, softening
their edges,
trying to become what the mirror
wants.

You never let the world convince you
that you were broken in any way
not your face or voice,
nor the way you think.
You wear every scar like a story,
to show how you have made it
this far.

And that's rare.
In a world where everyone
is trying so hard to be liked,

you move like a soft sunrise,
gold against grey skies,
bright without begging to be
noticed,
light that shines without asking to
be seen.

You do not follow just to belong.
You do not bend yourself
to fit ideas
of what beauty is said to be.
You just are,
and that has always been enough.

That is why I love you for yourself
your honesty and confidence,
and the way you carry yourself
without needing to become
someone else.
Your spirit is strong,
like a river that never forgets its path
like a mountain that refuses to move.

You remind me
that being yourself
is more powerful than being popular,
is something worth protecting.
And when I think of you
I think of strength
that remains steady
even when the world gets loud
like a quiet anchor in a storm.

You have always been a big sister
I look up to because you remind me
not to lose myself.
That means so much to me,
because I've seen how difficult it is
when the world makes beauty feel
like a rule
instead of something personal.
In you I see someone who never let
those standards decide who she was.

I see someone strong enough
to stay original,
brave enough to be real,
and whose confidence is
like walking in your own weather,
never asking for sunny days.

Isabella Birdie

*St Peter's Girls School,
Adelaide, Australia*

THE LIGHT MY SISTER BRINGS

Growing up with a sister,
it's like having a built-in best friend.
We fight like a storm
is breaking out in the house
waves of emotion
filling every room.
But as the water recedes
we always make up.

Helping hands always given,
from little buds to bright flowers
to help you bloom.
I grow towards her
like she is the sun.
I never saw her importance
until she was gone.

Coming home after a long day,
not seeing her fluttering presence,
the nest is empty.
I watch her grow independent
as if she were a baby bird
flying for the first time
enjoying the creations of her
new nest.

If my sister were a colour,
she would be pink.
Her compassion,
always rose-coloured,
is sometimes not credited,
but everyone is always grateful
for her rosy words and thoughts.

I know our separation
will be hard as we will
no longer sing a duet
and I cannot harmonise
with myself,
but her melody I remember
will never fade.

I used to push her away
but now I realise her importance.
Go back and remember
shared childhood memories
and inside jokes
never wash away
Go back and remember
Holding on to those memories
until I see her again.

Isla Fahey

*St Peter's Girls School,
Adelaide, Australia*

DEAR SHADOW

Dear Shadow,

To my dearest sister, my shadow, my guide.

My shadow, because we have grown side by side since the very beginning. Only ten months apart, sharing one journey through two different paths. You are my guide, not because you show me where to go, but because you have shaped the way I see the world.

You have taught me to see people with my heart before my eyes, to find beauty in differences, and to recognise that the things that make us unique are often the things that make us extraordinary.

You were born with Mosaic Down Syndrome, a rare condition that has made your journey through life a little different from most. Yet to me, it has never been the thing that defines you. When I hear the word mosaic, I think of a masterpiece made from many unique pieces each one valuable, each one beautiful.

I have watched the world pass by without always noticing the quiet magic you carry.

Some people see only what takes you longer while others overlook the unseen. I see your determination when life asks more of you. I see your courage when things feel difficult. And I see the joy you bring to the people lucky enough to know you.

Like a shadow, you have been there in every chapter, in the laughter that echoed through childhood, and in the tears no one else understood. You are the reason for my patience and courage.

Like a shadow, I will always be there for you. Not to protect you from who you are, but to protect parts of you that others sometimes fail to see, to remind the world of who you truly are, and to empower you to be the very best version of yourself. And no matter where life leads us, I will always be your shadow in the brightest days and darkest nights, beside you when the world understands, besides you when it does not.

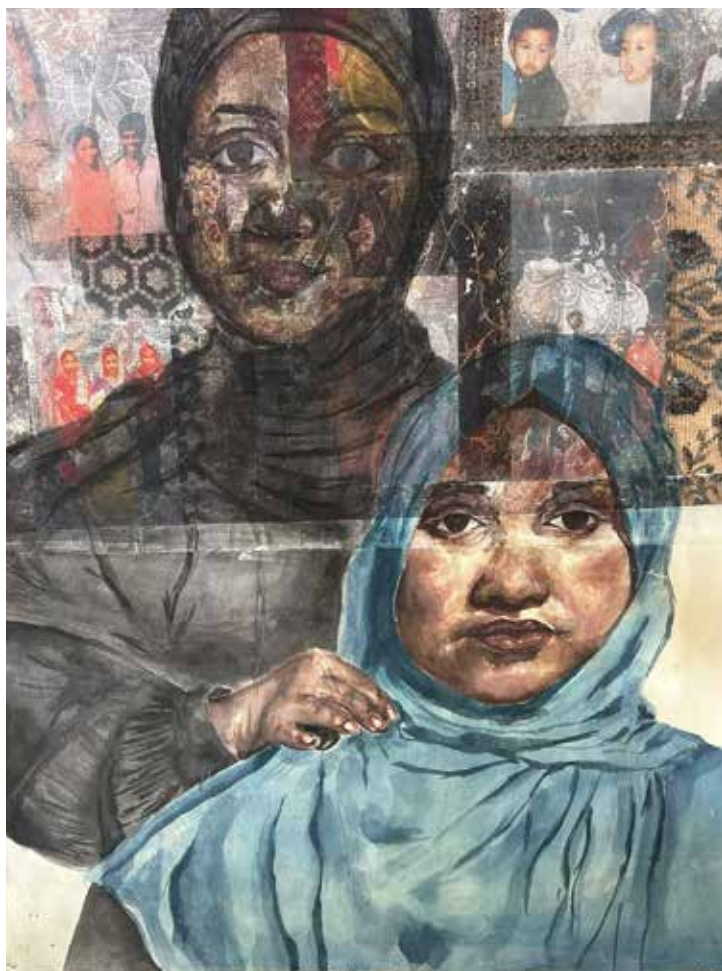
So today, my dear sister, I celebrate you. Not only as my sister, but as my partner in life, my best friend, and a bond that will never end.

Because while a shadow may follow from behind, you have always guided me forward.

With all my love,
Your shadow.

Jannah Ali

Mulberry Academy London Dock, London, United Kingdom



Saaliha Ali
Mulberry School for Girls, London, United Kingdom

POEM ABOUT MY GROUP OF 4

There's four of us, all completely different,
But somehow, it just works.

One talks too much
One disappears half the time,
One acts sensible but definitely isn't
And one just goes along with everything.

We had random arguments,
awkward moments
And conversations that make no sense to
anyone else.

But we've also had the laughs that make your
Stomach hurt
The inside jokes nobody understands,
And those moments where nothing special
is happening
But somehow, they end up being the
best memories

Were not one of those perfect groups
In films,
And honestly that's probably why it works.

People change, things change,
And maybe one day we won't all be together
Every day.

But right now, I hope we stay little like this,
four girls
more like sisters than friends,
And memories I don't think I'll ever forget

Jannat Hussain

Mulberry School for Girls, London, United Kingdom

THROUGH ONE ANOTHER

We were girls with scraped knees and kajal-smudged eyes,
trading glass bangles beneath the Delhi skies.
You tied pink plastic clips like butterflies in my hair,
while I sat cross-legged beside you on the wooden chair.
I remember hoping Amma wouldn't notice her lipstick twisted crooked
and small,
its red stains blooming across our wrists and the bathroom wall.
Some evenings we chased monsoon barefoot through the lane,
our silver paayals splashing wildly through the falling rain.
On others, we'd slam cupboard doors and swear we'd never speak again,
yet still sleep tangled side by side when thunder shook the windowpane.

Then the world grew teeth beneath fluorescent bathroom light,
so we carried all our softness as birthright.
We shared perfumes, tiny earrings, lip gloss shining cherry-red,
borrowed dresses from each other, fixing hems with thread.
One girl feared what every mirror and cruel angle made so clear,
while another pinned her hair back softly and held her near.
Some nights we slipped out into streets lit in neon pink and blue,
heels clicking fast against the pavement, laughing louder than we knew.
And when heartbreak smeared mascara down tear-streaked cheeks at 2 a.m.,
another girl would hold her face and make her laugh again.

And somehow all our circles grew beyond the lives we knew,
till hands that once held only us embraced countless women too.
From crowded streets beneath our skies to foreign winds and rain,
we recognised our stubborn grace in women yet unnamed.
From sisters wrapped in different cloths and speaking tongues unknown,
we'd braid wild, wind-tossed hair and make strange cities home.
We stood with all our mothers' names still burning in our veins,
hands once crowned with mehendi flowers now break old, silent chains.
Though they taught us how to shrink and turn ourselves away,
they'll hear how brightly glass can sing when gathered all one day.

Jaspreet Kaur

St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School, Janakpuri, India



Shreya Singla
St. Mark's Group of Schools, India

SISTERS

We shared the dust of that small bedroom floor,
whispering secrets till the dark wore thin,
mapping out where the shadows learned to hide
and where the quiet fires start within.

We grew like branches from a single root,
drinking deep from one wild, hidden well,
scabbing our knees and forging who we'd be
through truths that only you and I can tell.

You knew the ghost of who I used to be,
before the world turned deafening and loud,
the jagged doubts, the raw, unfiltered tears,
the fragile kid who shrank behind the crowd.
Now, time has locked the language we began,
those lightning glances, heavy, unspoken sighs.
The ragged, bleeding map of who I am
is read entirely inside your eyes.

We split the sunlight, tore our own ways free,
yet tangled in the roots childhood weaves.
We built a kingdom out of inside jokes,
a fortress made of smoke and fallen leaves.
Your borrowed sweater pulled against the frost,
the lifeline thrown across a suffocating room,
you know the exact bruises where I hurt,
and hold the anchor through the midnight gloom.

So let the roads go wild under hostile skies,
the blood-red string between us stretches tight.
We do not need to walk in perfect stride
to know we fight the same wars in the night.
No miles can blur the second skin we wear.
It is a fierce, unyielding sort of prayer,
your hand is forever branded into mine,
woven in the heart, by a sacred, scarred design.

Now when the winters gather at the door,
and other voices blur into the gray,
I hear the echo of that
bedroom floor,
a quiet truth that time can't wash away.
We are the keepers of a sacred spark,
two stubborn fires burning side by side,
no matter how the road winds through the dark,
we have a compass that the world can't hide

Jayvaniyaa Rjayaselan

SMK Convent Sentul, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Keira Knight

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, London, United Kingdom

CHANGE OF THE COSMOS

The Star –

During the golden days of our youth,
We built a world of whispered truth
We watched as the rushing years pass by,
Never knowing we'd say goodbye.

The comet –

I hear your whispers in the wind,
And bleed for how our story thinned.
You think I threw our world away,
And simply chose to disobey.

The star –

We tried to take control of fate,
Before we learned it was too late.
Our laughter faded, calls grew grim,
As different lives began to spin.

The comet –

But control of fate was never mine,
I watched our tangled paths untwine,
I saw your tear-stained, fragile face
And feared my flaws would crowd your space.

The star –

I still recall your playful grin,
And how you treated me as kin.
But soon your laughter and your grin,
Felt like daggers in my skin.

The comet –

The "daggers" that you felt inside,
Were shields in which I would hide.
My warmth to others was a mask,
To survive a heavy silent task.

The star –
I shared my secrets and my thought,
But look at what those secrets brought.
You left me like all the others,
My so-called sisters, so-called brothers.

The comet –
I did not want to walk away.
From promises to always stay,
But drowning in your heavy thoughts,
I broke beneath the weight they bought.
I had to leave to catch my breath
Before our bond became our death.

The star –
Yet in the scrapbook of my mind,
A warmer place you'll always find.
Just like a star from outer space,
Time cannot dim your glowing face.

The comet –
I am not cold, I am not free,
Your scrapbook holds the ghost of me.
Across the world beneath the night,
I see you as a burning light.
I carry what you gave me,
Locked deep within memory.

Meghan Rees-Oimec
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf,
Wales, United Kingdom

SIMILES OF SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood is like a simile,
It is everchanging, evershifting, and ever evolving,

At times sisterhood is like a spilled bucket of paint,
It might first seem like a splattered unappealing mess,
But once you take a step back,
You realise you have created an artwork.

Every streak, though not intentional, is beautiful,
Every inch of mess is necessary for the big picture,
The more opposing the colours of paint are,
The more complimentary they are to each other.

Sisterhood is like a simile,
It is everchanging, evershifting, and ever evolving,

Sometimes sisterhood is like a dice,
You could roll a 6 of the exchange of snacks and late-night chats,
Or a 1 of name-calling and tattle-tailing
One second, they are your partner in crime, the next they are
telling mum.

There is no way to predict what you are going to roll,
But underneath that layer of unpredictability,
Is a steel layer of dependability.

Sisterhood is like a simile,
It is everchanging, evershifting, and ever evolving,

At other times sisterhood can be like a coral reef,
Every strand of entangled seaweed, every sheet of algae,
Stand together, their unique colours and textures making
a beautiful tapestry of nature,
The delicate interdependence of each and every coral,
Is as resilient as it is fragile.

Every sea plant of the reef faces the current together,
No matter scared or brave, they all face the wave,
Even the strongest current cannot break the bond,
Of my sisters whom I am so fond,
So once the wave blows over,
A tranquil, glassy pool is left for us to thrive,
Side by side.

Josie Lidell

Mulberry Academy Bexhill, Bexhill, United Kingdom



Student

Mulberry School for Girls, London, United Kingdom

UNTITLED

Dear sister,

You help me through the journey upon the rocky seas. On our little boat that you help steer, guiding me across the ocean. We watch the soothing waves go up and down, reminding me of distant memories of many trips we've experienced in the past.

The aquamarine colour of the ocean makes us think back to us at the seaside doing handstands. Till we fall and burst out in tears of laughter. We smile at each other and realise we were thinking about the exact same thing. Whilst riding in our little boat.

When the darkness falls over the sky and tiny specs of light dance. The dots swirl into patterns leaping across the sky. You are the lighthouse shining so I can see; creating a path for which I follow until the sun starts to rise. We admire the dawns colours blending into one, upon are little boat.

You set the sails, fighting the wind that seems to surround us. We sail along the rocky seas and to the safety of the harbour. Forever you help me on our little boat.

Yours truly Juno Fisher

Juno Fisher

Mulberry Academy St Leonards, Hastings, United Kingdom

GIRLS WHO STAY

Sisterhood was supposed
to feel like safety.
Maybe that is why
we keep searching
for sisters everywhere.
In girls who notice
when your smile
becomes forced.
In gentle voices saying,
I'm here.
Tell me what happened.
I used to believe
a sister meant shelter.
A safe space.
A voice that would stay
when everything else started falling apart.
But some people leave
exactly when you need them most.
And absence is cruel.
Not because it screams.
Because it doesn't.
It sits beside you.
In the silence beside my mother
where another heartbeat
should have been.
And suddenly I realised
some strangers carry your pain
more carefully than your own family.
I realised that girls
who know almost nothing about you
show more kindness
than the people who helped shape you
Still,
the world kept moving.

And somewhere in that movement,
God gave me
a sister not by blood,
but by choice.
A non-biological sister
who saw I needed someone
and stayed.
Not because she had to.
Not because we shared a name.
But because she recognised
something familiar in me.
A reflection
of a girl she once was.
And when she saw it,
she stayed.
And in the places
where absence once echoed,
her presence became proof
that sisterhood is not cruel.
Because there are girls
who carry kindness
like it is something sacred.
Girls who hold you when you cry.
Girls who just decide to stay with you.
And maybe sisterhood
was never meant to be perfect.
Maybe it exists
so that when the world teaches girls
to disappear,
someone else is there
to say:
I can still see you.

Kamila Plotnikova

*Mulberry Academy London Dock,
London, United Kingdom*

THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME HOW TO WRITE (*NOTES ON SISTERHOOD*)

I.
When I was asked to write a poem for my sister,
I hurried home.
For years I had watched poets wrap people in
language,
turning them into constellations and suns,
and I was delighted
that my sister would finally have her turn,
for she was the one who once taught me how
to write.

I remember smiling the entire way home,
already deciding which parts of my beautiful
muse I would keep.
The way she reached for the ripest mango first.
The sketches she left on my notebooks.
I called her name.
What was her name?
I searched the house that had surely seen us
grow old together.
But every room returned only itself.
The frames of my birthday hung silently on the
wall—
When was her birthday?
What kind of person forgets a sister.
The thought made me recoil from myself,
and I wept. For loss or for absence,
I still did not know.
I begged my mother for the first letter of her
name—
She gave me nothing.
No favorite song. No scrap of handwriting.

And then a terrible thought arrived quietly:
perhaps I did not deserve having a sister.
Death, at least, leaves bones.
But what evidence is left behind
by someone who never becomes certain
in memory?
All I possessed was absence.
Absence, difficult to describe.
It has no eye colour, no fingerprints,
Yet somehow
it occupied every room.

II.
Each evening my mother's voice climbed
the staircase
with only a single name in it.
When I was ten,
I used to leave space beside me on the bed
without knowing why.
When thunder pressed its ear against the house,
it repeated my mistake—
trying to hear a presence out of absence.
Thinking sisters must be the sort that
you never learn to look for.
Like your own reflection.
Like the second shoe in a pair that has learned
to walk alone.
While monsoon water stitched silver threads
down the glass,
we spoke in the careless language
of people certain they would be forgiven
by morning.
And years passed like that.
Grieving someone who never completed
becoming real.

III.

Standing before a closed door,
I feel the absence of her so sharply
that I almost knock.
Because of the sense that the world was
assembled incorrectly,
and I have been living inside the missing piece.
As though somewhere beyond it
a sister is growing older too,
wondering why I never came home.

At the end of it all,
it was her absence
that taught me how to write.

Khwahish Makka

*St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School,
Janakpuri, India*

SISTER

To my sister,
You know me better than everyone else,
Secrets I was scared to admit myself,
You know my hug and what makes me laugh,
You gave me more than I ever thought I'd have.

To my sister,
I hate when you cry or when we bicker,
When our words get harsh and air gets thicker,
And still you held me close when I fell apart,
For that, you'll always have my heart.

Because of my sister,
I've always have a second here,
Whether it's in her arms or down the phone,
From hair flips to option picks
She's been there from the best to worst bits.

Because of my sister,
I learnt how to truly love,
Even if I don't believe in a god above,
I know in every life time we come to be,
She's the sister made for me.

Kisa Robertshaw

Mulberry Academy Hastings, United Kingdom

UNTITLED

Dear Sister Mitchell,

It has been a long time since we last talked and laughed together, but through this letter, I hope we can reconnect and share our thoughts once again.

Since you left home, I have often felt lonely and missed your presence. The house is not quite the same without you, and I find myself thinking about all the wonderful moments we shared together.

The main reason I am writing this letter is to tell you how much you remind me of the beauty of nature. Whenever I look at the breathtaking scenery around me, the green forests, the majestic mountains, and the flowers blooming after the rain, I am instantly reminded of you. Just as nature quietly nurtures and brings life to everything around it, you have always shown love, care, and dedication to those around you.

You are like a young tree that continues to grow stronger through every season, standing tall despite the winds and storms. Your hard work and determination in school inspire me every single day to work harder toward my own goals. You approach life with a nurturing spirit, always giving your best and pouring your heart into everything you do.

More than anything, it is your resilience that shines the brightest. I remember when you faced challenges in your studies and received a grade that disappointed you. Instead of giving up, you worked even harder, stayed focused, and eventually achieved the excellent results you were aiming for. Your determination taught me that setbacks are only temporary and that success comes to those who persevere.

Your kindness, love, and unwavering support mean more to me than words can express. You have always believed in my dreams and encouraged me to keep moving forward, even when I doubted myself. Because of you, I have learned the importance of courage, patience, and believing in my abilities.

Thank you for being such a supportive, warm-hearted, and inspiring sister. Your strength, dedication, and beautiful spirit continue to light the way for me. Never stop believing in yourself, and never stop working hard toward your dreams.

Keep shining just as brightly as you always have. I am incredibly proud of you, and I feel truly blessed to call you my sister.

With love and admiration,
Mary Nafula

Mary Nafula

Lenana Girls High School, Kenya



Pranavi Jonnalagdda
Great Valley School District, USA

OUR MOVIE

When the lights dim low and the world turns grey,
You are the glow that guides my way.
A quiet strength, a guardian role,
The gentle protector of my soul.

No script required for what we share,
No spoken lines to show you care.
You read my silence like hidden pain,
A language deeper than words explain.

Fate cast us in this part,
Two actors bound by one shared heart.
No sharp plot twist, no distance wide,
Could pull apart what lives inside.

Each picture, each memory frame,
Spells out a bond no time can tame.
We sit through life like scenes on a screen
Without you, life would lose its theme.

And wherever the next scene may be,
Across the world or endlessly,
The role you've played will always prove,
You always know the smartest move.

Through every challenge life can send,
Through shifting scenes that twist and bend.
Two souls in a film that lasts forever,
Bound by a love no end can sever.

I don't need to say it,
You know it's true.
No matter the fight,
My dear sister, I'll always be with you.

Lili Ouazza

*Mulberry Academy Woodside,
Haringey, United Kingdom*

SORELLA

My prism of colour in a monochrome world, my guide when I'm lost. In boredom's captivity, you keep me company. With you, I'm never alone. To the world you are my twin sister. to me you are the world. On a rainy day, you take me to a realm of magic through your stories of fantasies and dreams. As bright as Jupiter at nightfall, as radiant as Apollo, as warm as a summer full moon....

We race each other to see who would reach the other side of a blooming, sunlit meadow first; we splash through the turquoise waters of Italy, lost in laughter. You would serenade me with your soothing piano music.

I recall when the light in our world dimmed, when the people we loved were rarely around. The air felt heavier than usual, and everything seemed uncertain. Yet you were there. You acted as an anchor, holding us together when we felt like we might drift apart. In that stillness, your presence alone was enough to steady me. Your love expressed through silence.

So let me remind you, that you made it through things that would break you, you stood in the face of delusion, you could have stopped trying, you could have stopped believing. Yet, you didn't and you kept on going, persisting. Your dreams clutched close. You have inspired me to keep looking forwards, to keep dreaming. As bright as Jupiter at nightfall, as radiant as Apollo, as warm as a summer full moon. To the world you are my twin sister, to me you are the light. Grazie.....

Linda Viola

Mulberry Academy London Dock, London, United Kingdom

THE OLD TV

In the old house,
We watched TV.
My favourite memory of you and me.
Sat together, always there.
An inseparable pair,
You'd let me pick what we were watching
Then we'd sit through the movie talking.
When the TV turned on,
The light took over the dark.
Comfort for us, nothing but trust.
You took away the background noise,
Always full of joy.
In the new house, it's all different.
A plug switched on and off,
Arguments that feel like they never stop.
Sat on the same sofa, opposite ends.
You are still my comfort and joy.
And even though you take the remote,
I'll forever laugh at your jokes.
Now that we are older,
I watch TV.
I turn it off and see reflections of you and me.

Lucia McDermott

*Mulberry Academy Bexhill,
Bexhill, United Kingdom*

MY SISTER MUM

My mother, my sister – the one who stays through it all.

You had me as a daughter, yet somehow, we grew up as sisters. You were young and alone, carrying everything solo.

Trying your best, but still, you had me.

I love you like a mother, but I see you as my sister too – The one who'll laugh, who'll care, who'll joke, rarely arguing, hardly ever raising your voice, because love always spoke louder.

My earliest memories are you and me,

One is walking and playing on the green

Like a garden we never actually owned.

We'd admire the cherry blossom tree each year, but you were the only one who understood.

Watching the petals fall once, twice, again – pause,

remember it while it bloomed.

I'd soon get bored and climb the bench, leaning on your shoulders for balance while you fussed

Half a mother, worried I'd fall, half a sister laughing at my daring.

Funny poses, careless balancing, your hands steadying me, your face mirroring mine in every silly expression.

You were young, almost like me, carrying the weight of the world that should've never been yours so early.

Still, you lifted me with you – Your hands trembling but your heart steady.

That reminds me of my childhood staple.

The little wobbly scooter, too small for me now.

But the memories it holds are steady.

I took it everywhere we went, always pushing your patience just a bit.

Now it's rusty, but somehow still stable, alive through the numerous trips so far.

We laugh, we care, we joke.

We are so alike

Reflections only we can recognise – Yet somehow different in our ways.

Still, we'll laugh, we'll care, we'll joke, two peas in a pod –

The pod I'll struggle to leave when I grow up.

My mother, my sister, someone I'll always need.

Mum, I love you. Please don't ever leave.

Maia Wellstead

*Parkstone Grammar School,
Poole, United Kingdom*

TO OUR SISTERS

To our sisters. We write to you with full gratitude and great respect. With all our hearts and all the love and joy you bring to us. From wherever we are and whatever we do, your resilience and brilliance continues to inspire us. You are all the heroes behind all those masks of confidence. You are the ones that listen and rebel. You are the ones that would do anything for us just to make us the people we want to be. You are by our side whenever we need it and if you are not, you are still in our hearts guiding us to triumph and success.

We all rise together and when one falls we all lift them up. When one of us hurts we all feel it. This letter is a warning for those who made you suffer and a reminder that our sisterhood is not just a word – it is a promise. A promise that may not have ever been discussed, but was always there from the start – longing and mutual.

For far too long, girls have been asked to fight twice as hard for half of the recognition that boys get. And yet everyone expects so much from us all. Despite the inequality, our sisters kept pushing, kept learning, kept rising. They tried to silence our voices but it was no match for faith and strength within us. We stand taller because we stood together. Because that is what sisters do.

Maria Ahmed

*Mulberry Academy London Dock,
London, United Kingdom*

THE SISTERHOOD CIRCUS

I don't know about yours,
But my sisters are the safety net
Under a high wire
And also a custard pie in the face,
When they need to be
So many acts!

But I do know - when the show ends
Our stage personas don't let go

If the conjuror produced
A blood test
From under her hat,
Our DNA would clash
like the stripes on a big top;

It needn't be that
The adoring audience
Needs us to be related

Just
To be astounded at
What we do

Together.

Roll up, roll up
I roll up my umbrella
After
A wet walk into school

Truth be told, we're
Not the most popular performers in
the ring
But when I laugh with my sisters
I realise
The heckles are really cheers
In disguise

An umbrella.
Sisterhood, an umbrella term

Ours is a variety show, different
Styles, abilities

There are no supporting acts
We all support each other

Anyone can join
Granted that
They too
Share the one collective feature
Of this female theatrical triumph:

An openness to what it means
To be
~~A girl~~
~~A human~~
Alive.

Martha Redhead
*Wallingford School,
Oxfordshire, United Kingdom*

UNTITLED

Study, eat, sleep, seems to be your national anthem. I don't know how you do it, but you do and the awards you have plastered on your walls show it. I want to be like you, but my worst fear is becoming you. So, I'll do all the extracurriculars get the grades and allow myself to be relieved whenever someone says 'you and the sister are so similar'. Even if it is inevitable, I don't want to become the person losing sleep over perfecting assignments, or the person who revises during lunch and break. Sometimes, I wish you weren't so brilliant, because even though I'm smart, I can't celebrate things without thinking 'your sister already did that'. It's not your fault though, none of this is, I just wish your name wasn't said whenever I walk into a room. I just wish that everything I do that's on merit wasn't appreciated in comparison towards you. If I didn't care much about school would people even compare me to you? No, the answer is no.

I see Mum and Dad's face whenever people mention you, the silent admiration on Mum's face and Dad's pride radiating off him as he goes on to list all of your accomplishments. And then they ask about me, and our parents are quick to mention how I'm following in your footsteps. Like the trajectory, my life has to be as full with academic success as yours.

But you are the person who taught me how to curl my hair, so not the person that I like to spend my weekends with. You are the person whose clothes I steal when I need something to wear, you are someone I'd like to emulate in the areas that matter. It doesn't matter how much we squabble, because we'll always end up doubled over laughing when it's over.

Muhsinah Chowdhury

Mulberry School for Girls, London, United Kingdom

அ”கா

This world is not kind to girls like us.
Beauty that costs something,
blood that proves something
a struggle that is worth nothing.
She had less than every one of them,
her beauty a curse,
she will get what is
hers.
She is dying,
born into a fate that she never chose,
the universe a cruel force.
'Treasure the day' she says,
'Question the sky,
the heavens will not save us
the gods do not show us mercy.'
Her voice does not tremble,
when she lifts her chin,
and asks the sky,
Why?
This world is not kind to girls like us.
A story carved into our skin
we become each other's shelter,
stitched together in whispered
strength, in shared glances,
in knowing.
Akka - she wrapped her saree

around both of us
as if six yards of red cotton
could keep the world
from getting in,
and for a moment it did.
Blood under their nails.
She has done nothing wrong,
she has done nothing wrong,
hands that make art hold scars,
eyes that have seen too much,
and still open every
Morning.
She does not flinch,
she does not ask forgiveness for
existing.
Uyir - still moving through
her still moving through all of
us —
this world is not kind to girls like us.
but we are still here,
we are still here.

Nefertara David

*St Peter's Girls School,
Adelaide, Australia*



Two souls united by a single heart
Aimeé González Tena
Colegio Carol Baur, Mexico

TO MY SISTERS

To my sisters,

No matter race,
ethnicity,
religion,
nor blood.

To my sisters,
oppressed or expressed freely.

We have never met, though we
relate to each other.
Whether you're walking through
neon-lit streets, fetching water from a
nearby river, or surviving in the midst
of rubble, you are my sister. Bound by
an invisible thread, we are connected
through shared history and the
universal experience of our struggles,
whether it is the unpredictable mood
swings through our puberty, or the
effort to fight for our rights.

Although our struggles may look
different on the surface, shaped by
different cultures and laws, the root
remains the same: the yearning for
equal respect and the freedom to
define ourselves.

Feminism is a lifeline that connects
all of us. A collective refusal to
accept that our gender determines
our worth. Global sisterhood means
recognizing the efforts we do
for one another. When a girl across
the globe fights for her right to go
to school, she opens the path to
a better future for all the girls that
come after her. We simply cannot

look away from the hardships that
our sisters have to face in warzones
or impoverished regions.

When one of us breaks a glass ceiling
in a corporate boardroom, we all
breathe a little easier. Today, we are
carrying this momentum forward,
whether it is through our phones,
in the classroom, or on the streets.
Through digital network that crosses
oceans in a split second, we share
and validate each other's pains.
With voices loud and diverse, we
rewrite the law, reclaiming spaces our
ancestors could only dream of.

Look around you. The immense,
unstoppable wave of girls and women
reclaiming their power. We are
healing from centuries of limitations
and building a world where the next
generation of us will know no limits.

To my sisters, everywhere, never dim
your light to make a fragile world
comfortable. Stand tall in your truth,
speak your voice even if it shakes,
know that you are never walking this
path alone. Let us promise to hold
the line for one another. Millions of
us are walking beside you.

With all my love and solidarity,
Your sister.

Nurzaleeya Binti Mohd Zaidi
*SMK Convent Sentul,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

I remember when I first learned about you.
And it was 10 years later.
But in that moment, I thought about how those 10 years
could have been if you were not the one that got away.

Mom dropped the news about you on a random day.
Dad never mentioned you.

I learned that you were a little baby girl.
We would have been best friends.
Like me and Owen, but sisters.

Then the questions started consuming my head:
Would we have shared rooms?
Would we have fought?
Would we have shared clothes?

But in the end, it did not matter.
You were the one that got away.

I thought about the pain mom and dad felt knowing that
they could have been the parents
of another beautiful little girl.
The pain they felt when they went in for an ultrasound and
learned that you were gone.
Forever.

I think about how much I love the ocean.
How the waves come to me, and how they leave me once
the ocean calls them back.
That is how I see you.

You were coming towards me; you were almost in my hands.
But then the universe called you back.

You were the one that got away.

Olivia Kuratnick
Great Valley High, USA



Abhi Silva

Mulberry Academy London Dock, London, United Kingdom

LEFT, RIGHT, YOU

You've always reminded me of a song.

Familiar enough to hum by heart,
yet intricate enough that every time
I hear it,
I discover something new.
Like a melody hiding notes between
notes,
you never seem to end where I
expect you to.
You can make guitar strings tell
stories,
and leave traces of yourself wherever
you go.

When we were kids, you wore your
shoes on the wrong feet,
stepping through the world as if left
and right were merely options.
I was sure, even then,
that you would spend your life
choosing your own direction.
While the rest of us followed
signposts,
you followed curious horizons.

You rarely let a good remark go to
waste.
Every remark lands with the precision
of a paper airplane,
gliding across a room before finding
exactly where it belongs.
Sometimes you yell loudly enough to
shake the walls,
and the walls, loyal witnesses that
they are,
seem to hold their breath until you're
finished.

Yet wherever the road turns
unexpectedly,
you are always beside me, already
smiling.

When I think of us,
I think of paint-stained afternoons at
our grandparents' house.
Christmas ornaments hung from our
fingers
like tiny planets caught in orbit,
while golden memories settled in
sunlit corners.

It's funny how we spent years around
board games,
negotiating impossible deals and
imaginary fortunes
as though the stakes were somehow
real.
Kings rose and fell across cardboard
kingdoms,
alliances formed and shattered
before dinner.
Yet our most ridiculous battle
was over a charger that was
apparently "busy."
As if it had appointments.
As if it had somewhere important
to be.
I laughed then,
and I laugh now.

Being older meant trying to teach
you things:
how to stand your ground,
how to let people hear what you
really mean,
and how to stop apologizing for

taking up space.
I walked beside you through scraped
knees,
school projects, family holidays,
and all the ordinary moments
that quietly became memories.

The years kept moving,
stitching new chapters into a story
neither of us has finished writing.
Somewhere between childhood and
now,
protecting each other became a two-
person job.
That is what sisters become; I think,
not mirrors,
not copies,
but bridges stretching across
changing landscapes,
connecting every version of who
we've been.

We are nothing alike in many ways.
You leave things everywhere;
I put them back.
You need ten reminders;
I give eleven.
You are quieter.

I am not.
Yet somehow our differences fit
together
like mismatched puzzle pieces
completing the same picture.

And even after all these years,
you are still the first person
I want to share things with.
If one day I have children of my own,
and they ask me about their aunt,
I already know what I will say.

I will tell them about the little girl
who wore her shoes on the wrong
feet
And I will tell them this:
If I ever need someone in my corner,
it will always be you.
Loudly.
Sarcastically.
Occasionally while yelling.
But always you.

Prisha Anand

*St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School,
Meera Bagh, New Delhi, India*

SISTERHOOD POEM

Just 3 different flowers from the
Same big garden,
rooted together in the very same dirt.
Our eldest is the wise, serene lotus.
Rising above so she never gets hurt.
Our youngest is the bright energetic daisy,
Sprouting with a wild and innocent grace,
And right in the middle sits the
Snapdragon
masking a mischievous grin on my face
My flower means 'grace' when you look
at the chart
But 'clever' 'deception' is its secret true part.
which makes total sense because I am the
One,
Who steals your best clothes just to have
a bit of fun (nothing else)

I'm the referee when you two start to clash.
The keeper of secrets we never will trash,
I keep peace in our wild crowded space.
Though I still know exactly which buttons to chase!

We snap each other like wild, tangled weeds,
Slamming our doors over silly misdeeds.
but no one can make me laugh harder than you,
And no one can heal me the way you both do,
We are a messy bright stubborn bouquet,
Bound by a bond that will never decay,
I'm proud to be stuck in the middle with you,
from the deepest of mud to the brightest sky blue

So, remember I love you with
all of my soul
And no, I will not give your shirt back!

Punam Kundu

Mulberry School for Girls, London, United Kingdom

A SISTER BEYOND FAREWELL

She lets go of her held breath when
I first took mine,
She welcomed me with a smile,
unwavering yet so divine,
When she first held me in her arms,
All of a sudden, my world lost its
gloomy storms.

She held my stubby hands when
I took my first steps,
Guiding me slowly through life's
early depths.
I shed tears whenever she leaves
for school,
But she always promise to come
back looking cool.
I wait for her every afternoon,
Hoping she will come back to me
soon,
I beam with a bright smile when
I hear the lock turn,
Knowing she is back, I no longer
yearn.

My teenage life isn't as bright as
expected,
Where smiles are forced and feelings
are neglected,
Even if I feel that way,
She will always guide me to the
right way,
The advice she gives are always wise,
It makes my hidden confidence rise.

It isn't a sisterhood without any
conflicts,
A special bond always comes
with restricts.

She took my jacket without
permission,
Taking it back became my mission.
Loud voices filled the air,
Turning a simple moment into a
heated little glare.
She finally lets go, the jacket resting
in my arm,
Even our arguments can never break
her charm.
Now I let out a slight giggle
whenever I think of it,
How a jacket made us almost split.

I stood in the memorial hall,
Tears quietly starting to fall.
I stood next to her, lifeless she seems,
All I wanted to do is scream.
My voice stayed trapped in a silence
too deep,
As memories of her began to creep.
I reached for her hand knowing she
would not respond,
But I still felt her near, like a fragile
bond.

Time kept moving as I stayed in
place,
I search in every crowd, hoping to
see a familiar face.
Even though she was gone, I refused
to believe,
That a bond like ours was meant
to leave.

Ranice Chong Qin Yi
*SMK (P) Jalan Ipoh,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*



Hiteshi Jain
St. Mark's Group of Schools, India

TO MY SISTER

To my sister,
The unspoken words.

I want to say sorry,
sorry for everything,
Sorry for showing you my worst,
when you wanted my best
sorry for being ignorant
whilst you were resilient
And I love you for that.

I love you, even if it doesn't seem
like it
I love when someone says I resemble
you even though I act repulsed
I love when someone asks if I'm your
sister even if I act offended
I love when someone tells me you're
cool even though I feign indifference
I love when you speak to me even if
I'm awkward and tongue-tied
I love when you give me advice even
if I stay silent
And that's why I thank you.

Thank you,
Thank you for being the mirror that
argues back
thank you for holding my tarnished
past

thank you for being here for me in
the present
thank you for all the guidance you
will give me in the future
Thank you for being my older sister
and I'm proud of you

I'm proud of you
I'm proud when I see you accomplish
significant things
I'm proud when I see you get along
with everyone
I'm proud of all of your exam results
I'm proud when I see you stay true to
your morals

We are different but if I was a rose,
you'd be tulip
if you were a mermaid, I'd be a siren
if you were a fan, I'd be a heater
If you were a window, I'd be the
curtain
And that's why I love you
You are not just a chapter of my story
you are the bookmark.

Rayann Khan

*Mulberry School for Girls,
London, United Kingdom*

THE EXTRA LETTER

When a brother becomes a sister
It seems like a huge thing
But it's just an extra 's' on the 'he'
She/her instead of he/him

The world doesn't stop
Nobody gasps
It's just the new idea of a sister
You simply have to grasp

Really, it's only an extra letter
She hasn't changed at all
She just feels more like herself
The difference couldn't be more small

For 16 years I knew him
And now I get to know her
It isn't a big deal
I just say 'sister', not 'brother'

To my sister, I'm sorry
For all the times I've said 'he'
Because that's not who you are
Or who you want to be

I hope that one day
You get to be free
You can be called my sister
Without hesitation on the 'she'

Rosie Newton

*Wallingford School,
Oxfordshire, United Kingdom*



Kashfia Md Shahjahan

Mulberry School for Girls, London, United Kingdom

CIVIL WAR AT HOME

Two sisters, soldiers of rival states,
Divided by invisible lines,
Words slammed like iron gates,
We guarded emotions like buried mines.

The rooms echoed with bitter quarrels,
Sharp syllables shot in the air.
Our bedroom doors had better morals
Than the pair they were forced to bear.

At dinner, the stench of tension stained the room,
A silent storm, a conflict that became more.
For far too long we had led this battle to doom,
Our knives scraped on the plates like weapons of war.

But you crossed barbed borders despite the strain
And sat beside me whilst there was rain
You returned when I hadn't the courage
You taught our wounded hearts to flourish.

Still, my stubborn stares were met with softened eyes,
And gentle hands without lies,
Slowly, barricades turned into bridges,
Intertwining our hriday (heart) with stitches
Sunrise glowed like a clean new slate,
The house glimmered without hate,
Enduring the chaos we designed,
Reassured at last, our fractured hearts aligned.

Hur Mozammal

*Mulberry Academy London Dock,
London, United Kingdom*

GROWING UP BESIDE YOU

A sister's bond, a special tie.
A friend, a confident, standing close by
She shares your laughter, wipes away your tears, and a
comforting presence.
She's a giver of kindness.
A heart full of grace, always ready to brighten your face.
A sister is someone who cares about your wellbeing and
shares hopes and loyalty.
Sisterhood isn't loud, it's not just laughter spilling into the
midnight air or secrets traded
Like precious coins.
Sometimes it's quiet like the hand that finds yours without
asking why it's shaking
The look that says I see you when the world pretends not to
It's showing hair undone, heart tired but still choosing each
other again
Sisterhood is not perfection, it's sharp words softened by
forgiveness, distance closed by
understanding and the stubborn decision to stay
It's a mirror that reflects strength when you've forgotten
your own voice, that reminds you
Who you are.

Sameera Khatun

*Mulberry Academy Shoreditch,
London, United Kingdom*



Jessica Neves

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, London, United Kingdom

TWO LANTERNS, ONE LIGHT

I.

We were not born merely daughters
of one name,
Nor bound by blood alone, nor
sheltered all the same;
We were two lanterns learning how
to bear the night,
Two fragile hands becoming one
unwavering light.

II.

You carried my sorrow before I gave
it sound,
Found trembling pieces I had not yet
found;
And when the world grew sharp
beneath my feet,
You made survival feel almost soft
and sweet.

III.

You knew the storms I buried
underneath my tongue,
The lullabies of grief I never dared
leave unsung;
And when the world demanded I
grow steel instead,
You stitched soft constellations
through the cracks I bled.

IV.

You were the steady lantern in my
most unraveled night,
The compass when my reasoning had
forfeited its right;
The harbour when the ocean of my
doubt grew vast and steep,
The only voice that called me back
from waters dark and deep.

V.

And I have failed you too — in
seasons you were bare,
Arrived too late, too hollow, too
consumed to care;
Yet you forgave me with the quiet
grace of dawn
That does not ask the darkness why
it stayed so long.

VI.

This is the mother tongue of
sisterhood — unwritten, deep,
Not spoken but inhabited, not
learned but lived and felt;
A language made of glances,
silences, and promises we keep,
Forged in every wound, and every
blow that life has dealt.

VII.

So let the world dissolve its grandest,
loudest claim —
No bond it builds can rival what we
became;
For we were not just daughters of a
singular refrain,
But architects of love that even time
cannot contain.
Two lanterns, one light — not born
of the same flame,
But burning, still burning, still
burning, just the same.

Sana Juneja

*St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School,
Janakpuri, India*

LIFE IS BETTER BECAUSE OF YOU

My little sister loves cute clothes,
She tries on mine when no one
knows
she takes my hoodies, tops, and
jeans,
and styles them like she's in
magazines.
She stands for ages by the mirror,
Fixing her hair to make it look neater.
She twists and turns, then gives
a grin,
And says, 'This outfits totally in!'
But then I go to grab my top,
and find it missing - what a shock!
I open drawers, I check the chair,
but all my clothes are not there.
she sometimes borrows things
from me,
like hoodies, trainers, tops and jeans.
Three different outfits in oneday,
Then forgets where she put them
away.
We argue nearly every night,
About whose clothes are wrong
or right.
She says my clothes are really cool,
yet still breaks my every rule.
Ask me first! I often say,
but she just laughs and runs away.
Then I get mad and slam the door,
and we don't talk for hours or more.
She rolls her eyes and says I'm mean,
then acts like nothing has been seen.

She'll sit beside me on my bed,
And borrow something else instead.
One morning we had a big fight,
about a jacket – black and white.
I needed it to go outside,
But she had already claimed it with
pride.
We shouted loud, we both got mad,
It was the biggest fight we'd had.
She said, 'you never share with me!'
I said 'that's not how it should be'
But later she came to say,
'I didn't mean it that way'
she handed me a chocolate bar,
And suddenly things weren't so far
We still argue that much is true
like sisters always seem to do.
But even when we don't agree,
she still means everything to me.
She can be messy, loud and fast,
And tests my patience every day.
But when i laugh or feel so blue,
She's the one who pulls me through.
Even when she steals my clothes,
And takes the shoes I chose,
I know I'm lucky, this is true,
Life is better because of you!

Tahiya Jannat
*Mulberry School for Girls,
London, United Kingdom*



Paree Ranjan
St. Mark's Group of Schools, India

DIFFERENT INK

We are two drafts of the same
childhood,
written in different ink,
and the world, glancing once,
mistook us for one.

Memory remembers more than
arguments.
It remembers the pause after anger,
the first glance that softened it,
the quiet return of your voice
when neither of us wanted to stay
divided for long.
And perhaps that is what sisterhood
is —
not sameness,
not peace,
but shared memories
that make two lives
feel like one story
written in different ink.

I once wanted an elder brother,
someone to stand ahead of me,
someone the world would hesitate
around, before life ever learned
my skin.

But instead, I was given you —
not ahead of me,
not behind me,
but close enough to make distance
feel small.

We finish each other's sentences
often enough that even we forget
who first gave them shape.
And when someone calls me by your
name now,

I seldom correct them.
Somewhere along the years,
the mistake grew familiar enough
to stop feeling like one.

We were not one, never one.
We were two drafts of the same
beginning,
two hands writing the same story
in different ink.
And still, in all the little ways the
world
misread us,
you were there —
in the room, in the silence,
in the part of me that stayed steady
when the day grew difficult.

So let the world keep mistaking us.
Let it call our faces the same,
our names interchangeable,
our lives a single reflection.
We know the truth:
that we are two different selves,
held together not by sameness
but by the quiet certainty of your
hand in mine.

And if, in the next lifetime, you chose
to borrow my ink,
I would not mind the page becoming
ours.

Tanmeet Kaur

*St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School,
Janakpuri, India*

THE ONES MY HEART CHOSE

I used to think that sisters
Was something written into blood.
Shared bedrooms, matching childhoods
Old photographs turning gold with dust.

But then life placed two girls beside me.
Like morning light casting warmth through curtains,
At first, their presence was subtle, almost unnoticed.
Not the kind of love that demands attention,
More like thread holding together
A sweater beginning to unravel.
The girls who waited for my reassuring small text,
"Reached home safe?" before they rest.

More like a lighthouse
That never asks to be thanked,
Like hearing footsteps you trust
When the road home feels endless.

The borrowed clips, the "eat your food,"
The random calls to fix my mood.
The "you seem quieter today,"
The way they always chose to stay,
Even when my weary voice
Deceived them, whispering that I was doing okay.

They read my silence like folded letters,
Like subtitles beneath a foreign film
Hearing the words I could never explain,
Catching the storms before they became rain.

On aching afternoons
When my body felt like a battle I had to hide,
They stayed beside me
Like the quiet hum of a refrigerator at midnight,
Soft proof that the house is still alive.

Like pockets carrying fragile treasures
Without letting them fall apart,
They held my hurting days carefully,
warmth, with chocolate, with silence,
With the kind of care
That never asks

How broken something is
Before deciding to hold it.
So no, not every sister shares your name,
Some simply arrive and absorb your pain.
Some become the second pair of hands you never
knew you needed,
Ready to catch a plate that threatens to slip from
your grasp.

And if my life is a sky learning how to weather the
storms,
Then they are the two steady stars
The first bright points my heart discovered
Whenever the night grew too vast.

Tanvi Singh

St. Marks Sr. Sec. Public School, Janakpuri, India

SISTERS ARE LIKE A RAINBOW

Sisters are like a rainbow after the rain
bringing light and beauty into our lives.
Even though each one is different from the other,
they are all one in making such an eternal creation.

Red signifies the courage to face challenges,
Orange symbolizes the warmth of our heart
Yellow represents laughter which we share
in our lives in our very own special way.

Green is a symbol of our growth together,
Blue stands for the comfort we get when we cry
when our sisters help us turn
things around with a smile.

Indigo stands for our hopes, our aspirations,
making us believe in ourselves and in what we can do.
Violet represents our love that endures forever
and that strengthens with time.

Though I don't have a sister by birth,
I have found a sister through friendship
and the bond that we now share.
I am blessed because even if she is not
my blood sister, the love and affection
She shares with me is still the same.

At times, sisters fight like storms in the sky,
Their harsh words can hurt before long gone by.
But just as the clouds eventually go away,
They learn to return to each other again.

Their reconciliation is filled with love,
Forgiveness, and everything good,
Realizing their hearts beat as one,
Despite the separation of the colors in the rainbow.

As sisters grow up, they develop into great bonds,
Created from all memories that they have stored,
From games and adventures played during childhood,
To problems tackled in life and successfully resolved.

The sisters can be a teacher, counselor, friend,
Who would help you in every situation and stand by you,
Celebrate your successes and overcome all your fears,
Making your life unforgettable and full of cheer.

Like a beautiful rainbow that shines brightly in the sky,
Symbolizing that there is hope for all that lies ahead,
Sisters bring joy and colors into the dull routine,
Adding light to every aspect of your life.

That's why whenever I think of my sisters,
I think of a rainbow in all its brilliance,
filled with colors, warmth, and light,
shades coming together to create
beauty that cannot be destroyed.

Valentina Morales Magaña
Colegio Carol Baur, Mexico



Tiesha Verma
St. Mark's Group of Schools, India

UNTITLED

Dear sister,

We are like a hot air balloon. We sometimes fly up high, soaring through the vast open sky. But, when hit by an engulfment of wind, it can all come falling down, tumbling to the ground. However, we always repair it, using a stronger rope, a stronger knot, a stronger bond.

I will always be there to cheer loudly when you accomplish the smallest of things. When I see the embers start to illuminate within you, I feel it spark something in me. But, if it starts to dim, I will always be the first one sat by your side until I see that great fire ignite within you once again. We will always be the vents and valves, the fire and flames, the laughter and the games.

My relationship with you is more than just a bond. It's everything. It may not always be at its absolute best, but that's what keeps it sturdy. No matter how high we fly or where we land, I'm so glad we share the same sky. You are someone I deeply trust and care for. You make my hot air balloon rise up towards the clouds.

Best regard, Willow Hawes.

Willow Hawes

Mulberry Academy St Leonards, Hastings, UK

UNTITLED

You walked into my life and rearranged the furniture of my heart.
I've called you a friend, but the truth is you've always been a sister.
Not by blood but by choice.
The louder kind.

I see you in blue, always.
That's your colour. The calm, the sky before the storm.
The shade you wear when you're listening more than talking.
And your hair, brown like the earth,
Now cherry red like the way you live:
Bold, warm, impossible to ignore.
You dyed it, and suddenly the whole room had more colour in it.

Your name means Free.
That's exactly how you make me feel.
Free to laugh at the most random things,
Until we couldn't breathe, until our sides hurt.
Free to joke about our taste in guys,
Then turn around and defend them to the world.
Because that's what sisters do.
Even when we're in different places, different scenarios, different
lives.

We're still going to be teenagers for a while,
Even now you're homeschooled and our schedules don't line up like
they used to.
But we're growing up.
And that means we're not going to see or talk to each other that
much anymore.
That's just a reality.
The kind that doesn't ask permission before it changes the schedule.
Different lives, different hours, new chapters pulling at our sleeves.
I know the gaps will get longer.
I know the quiet is coming.

So let me say it now, while the room is still full.
In case the day comes when we never speak again.
I want you to know I'm glad I met you.
I'm glad for every dumb laugh, every 2am talk.
Every time you chose me on days I was hard to love.

You taught me sisterhood without a plan.
You showed me what loyalty looks like.
Showing up, saving me a seat, remembering the story I forgot.

You made me brave by standing next to me first.

So hear this and keep it:
I will choose to be your soul sister in every lifetime.
In this one, with the blue skies and cherry red hair.
In the next one, whatever colours we're given.
I'll find you.

You're my sister,
That won't ever expire.

Yasmin Walker

*Mulberry Academy Bexhill,
Bexhill, United Kingdom*



Tama Almas Ishaq Ibrahim

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch, London, United Kingdom

THE COMFORT OF MY UMBRELLA

To Zimbabwe and Nigeria
This one's for you

All my life's odyssey
All over Africa
Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa
All different regions
Yet we met at God's perfect timing
Ogechi is my native name

Thank you for being my umbrella through the stormiest
nights of my life

Every time the sky turns grey
And the sun is hidden behind the overbearing clouds
When all the tears of my life come pattering down,
Without warning, without apology

I look out the window
Taunting me with all my concealed tears I've cried alone
at night
Now exposed on the glass pane running down drip by drip.
Cruelly.

Every time it's too much
Every time I know that I can't get through it
When I, overwhelmed with emotions, discovered
underneath the lonely emptiness of my night
I feel the linger of your gentle grip
Tenderly rest on my anxious hand
A kind reminder you are here
And in the void of the world I know I have nothing to fear

I place my hand on the handle
The shaky hand I call my own cautiously onto the metal
handle
Inching the door open bit by bit

I take my time comforted by your presence
When I finally take a step outside
And confront all my tears
I shy away, weak
But knowing that you're always here
I click the umbrella open
Seeking refuge from the vicious unforgiving rain,
When I'm not strong enough
You're there to save my rainy day

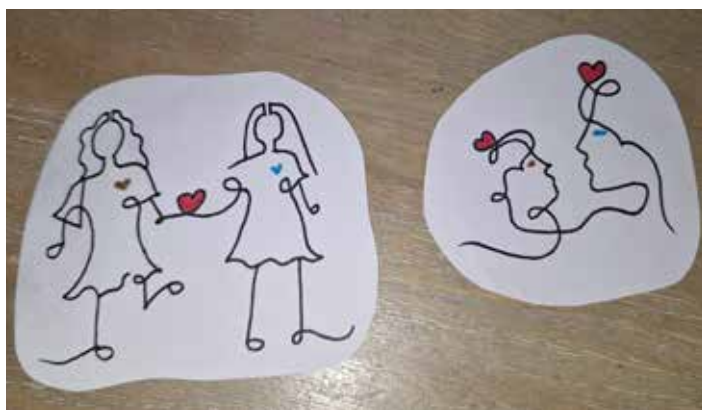
You hand over me like an angelic fuschia flower
Swaying gracefully at the gush of wind

From Ghana to Nigeria
From Nigeria to the UK

Thanks to my umbrella
For helping me through my sad rainy days

This was always for you,
From Ghana

Zoe Ogechi Nwuju,
Mulberry Academy Bexhill,
Bexhill, United Kingdom



Maia Wellstead

Parkstone Grammar School, Poole, United Kingdom



Participating schools

Colegio Carol Baur (Mexico City, Mexico)
Great Valley High (Philadelphia, USA)
Lenana Girls High School, Kenya (Kiminini, Kenya)
Liceo Foscarino, Italy
Mulberry Academy Bexhill
Mulberry Academy Hastings
Mulberry Academy London Dock (Tower Hamlets, UK)
Mulberry Academy Shoreditch (Tower Hamlets, UK)
Mulberry Academy St Leonards
Mulberry Academy Woodside (Haringey, UK)
Mulberry School for Girls (Tower Hamlets, UK)
Parkstone Grammar School
Sekolah Seri Puteri (Cyberjaya, Malaysia)
SMK Convent Sentul (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
SMK (P) Jalan Ipoh (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
St. Mark's Group of Schools (Meera Bagh, New Delhi, India)
St Peter's College
Wallingford School
Ysgol Glantaf (Llandaff North, UK)

To access the free resources used to create these poems and letters,
Please visit appliedstories.co.uk/for-our-sisters

To find out more about Global Girl Leading, please visit
www.mulberryschoolsfoundation.org/global-girl-leading

The site features:

- Videos about crafting letters
- Workshop plans
- Writing guidance and worksheets

If you would be interested in taking part in a future iteration of the project,
please email info@mulberryschoolsfoundation.org to register your interest.

To join the Applied Stories mailing for news of future digital audio projects
please email fin@appliedstories.co.uk

Global Girl Leading

'For Our Sisters 2026 was commissioned as part of Mulberry Schools Trust's Global Girl Leading programme, with the aim of developing girls' confidence, creativity and awareness of their place in a global sisterhood.

Global Girl Leading is a leadership development programme 'by girls, for girls'.

Supported by teachers, girls together learn to lead change.

They co-create learning activities which include negotiation skills, teamwork, risk-taking and campaigning. They are given platforms and coaching to make their voices heard.

The shortlisted poems and letters in this anthology were featured at the Global Girl Leading Summit on Friday 9th October 2026.

To listen to audio-recordings of these tributes and to find out more about Global Girl Leading, please visit appliedstories.co.uk/for-our-sisters

Judging panel

Fin Kennedy

Jill Tuffee

Kaltoun Yusuf

Ayesha Begum

Special thanks

Go Agency

Shanaz Jameson

Alice Ward

All the teachers and staff involved in making *For our Sisters* such a success.



Edith Mclean
Ysgol Glantaf, Wales

About This Anthology

Bringing together a vibrant tapestry of poems and letters penned by young writers from across the globe – including voices from the United Kingdom, Mexico, Australia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Malaysia and the United States – this anthology is a lyrical celebration of the bond between sisters—or a sisterly figure. Each piece in this collection is more than just a tribute – it is a testament to the power of memory, gratitude, and emotional truth.

Whether through quiet reflection, vivid storytelling, or lyrical praise, their words resonate with authenticity and emotional depth. Together, their voices are a moving reminder of how deeply sisterhood can shape our lives, transcending cultures and generations.

Readers are invited to pause, reflect, and celebrate the sisterly figures in our lives. This anthology is a global chorus of appreciation – a mosaic of love stitched together by the hands of the next generation of poets and storytellers. May their voices inspire you to remember, to cherish, and perhaps even to write your own tribute.



Mulberry

Schools Trust

Mulberry Schools Trust is a family of schools serving children and young people across London and East Sussex. Our schools educate pupils from primary age through to sixth form and technical education, united by a shared commitment to providing an exceptional education for every young person, regardless of their background or starting point.

At the heart of Mulberry is a belief in equality, inclusion and social justice, and in the power of education to open doors and transform lives. We want our young people to be ambitious for themselves and for others, to understand the world around them and to have the confidence to make a positive contribution to their communities and wider society.

www.mulberryschoolstrust.org