

Years 7 & 8

1st Place and Best Overall: Mudith Kariyawasam

Year 8, Perth Modern School

The Song of the Sea

Someone once said that the sea was its own composer, kindling its own symphony of songs with the melody of the wind and the coming of the waves onto the shore.

Today, the ocean was humming. It was a beautiful melodic tune that seemed to ring across the shore. Above me, gulls were arcing and wheeling between the morning light's witchcraft, and an eerie and resonating shriek would echo from the cliffs from time to time. The expansive view leading to the horizon was breathtaking. A lone albatross streaked out to sea, sleek wings flapping to the point where sea and sky merged and vanished.

In their liquid robes, the waves were simply snoozing, sluggish, and slumbering. They dribbled up the shore, then shuddered and drizzled their sea spray onto its surface, whisking the stones before releasing them. A cold electric current flowed through the air. The usual slapping of the sea had been muffled into a metronomic murmur.

Memories flooded into me. I recalled moments with my younger brother sitting on the sandy shores and singing with the ocean. Every day I would feel the warm golden-brown sand and the salty water on my skin. After all these years, the sea has become our sanctuary. Then, my thoughts were disturbed by a voice.

"Are you coming?" my brother called out.

"Nah, it's too cold," I replied.

"Sure, but I'm still going in," he said before jumping into the ocean

I shook my head in exasperation. My brother was always the more boisterous one. Instead of standing there in the cold, I decided to return to get the fishing poles to make myself useful.

The water was still, relatively calm and composed. That was until the wind came. The wind had become the orchestral conductor of the sea, sending waves into their crescendos all through the ballad that was the night. It seemed like the sea had sprung to life, pulsing with a powerful energy that coursed through the water. The result was a stunning display, a harmonious blend of wind and waves that enchanted anyone who laid eyes on it.

As I returned from the Ute, I realised something was different. Suddenly, the storm became the opera of the skies, determined to sing out the ocean. Even the rain came in orchestrated rhythm, appearing as the master of the scene yet arriving without notice. The sky was now in power.

The grey clouds swirled in a tumult of stormy air. They were the type of grey that could even make a quarry rock proud. The once beautiful and melodic ocean had fallen into the hands of the storm, and it could do nothing to stop it.

The waves were sloshing, slurping, and slobbering with their salty lips. They pounded into the cliff of the sheltered cove, then paused and pounced with malice onto its ankle, slamming the rock before receding. The sea bubbled. Trembling, throbbing to its rotten beat. The sea foamed, pounded, and bashed the cliff foot. I looked out into the sea. My brother was struggling. He was tossing and turning in the waves, gasping for air. I shouted for help, but there was no one else in sight. I was paralysed in shock. I didn't know what to do.

Then, I saw it; his head bobbed under the surface of the water, and for moments, I waited, hoping, praying that it would come back up to the surface. But it never did. The ocean had swallowed him whole. I was shocked. Once that first tear broke free, the rest followed in an unbroken stream. Collapsing onto the wet sand, I cried, fixated on the spot where he had disappeared beneath the waves. That night sirens rang. A rescue team went out to find him, but they returned empty-handed.

I was devastated. Broken beyond repair. My only brother, my only lifeline, was gone. The next morning the locals found him washed up on the shores of the beach. Days stretched into a lonely abyss. A part of me withered away, leaving me empty and desolate. I missed hearing his cheerful voice, warm aura, and love for the sea. We had his funeral a week after he passed. It was a sad day for everything. That day, the clouds wept, the wind sang prayers, and the ocean sang a song of forgiveness.

The beach stretched out alongside the water as they worked in tandem. The water came in and out as if soothing the hot sand. I stood as the waves lapped at my feet, trying to feel my brother's essence. They felt warm and cool, like tea that's been forgotten and returned to. My toes wiggled in the water, in the lips of the ocean as she sang. I listened to the soft sound of the waves gently caressing the sand. The mesmeric beauty of its beat was captivating.

In my arms, I held his urn. He had loved the ocean, and it only made sense to let him rest there when he was gone. As I held him in my hands, I knew this might be the last time I would see him in a long time. A single tear ran down my cheek as I thought about him and everything we had been through.

"He's in a better place now," I whispered to myself.

Then, I let him go. I let him drift off into the water that had taken his life a few weeks ago.

All the creatures of the sea. The dolphins, turtles, fish, and even sharks, seemed to gather, watching my brother's final journey. The ocean cradled him tenderly, like a

loving parent rocking a child to sleep, as he drifted away, becoming one with the sea

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