



QUEENS' SCHOOL
Dare to Write

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER MAY 2023:

YEAR 10 SUPER SPOKEN LANGUAGE



This term Year 10 students have been working on writing and performing their speeches as part of their English Language GCSE course. We have had some amazing performances on topics as diverse as the importance of music to the toxic nature of the media in the noughties and the impact of the 9/11 tragedy. The whole department has been incredibly impressed by the Year 10's assiduity and articulacy. Well done Year 10!

CLASSICS CLUB:

The Classics Club continues to meet every Tuesday lunchtimes in room 6. All new members are welcome. They have undertaken a range of activities this year from creating their own eruptions of Mount Vesuvius to a Cluedo style adventure based around mythological adventures.

THE SPELLING BEE BEGINS:

This term, Ms Jacobs has also been running the first few rounds of the much-anticipated Spelling Bee. Year 7 students continue to impress their exceptional literacy skills and we cannot wait for the final next term.

STILL TO COME NEXT HALF-TERM:

- The results of our annual Book Review competition
- The Spelling Bee Final
- Caroline Boxall, renowned children's author will be running workshops with some Year 7 and 8 pupils thanks to the generous help of the QPA
- The Year 8 Poetry Slam
- The results of our Vocabulous Championship
- The fabulous Year 7 trip to see 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at the Globe Theatre



WHAT SHALL I READ?

Every month, the English department offer a Key Stage 3 and adult recommended read of the month. You will find our recommendations for September and October below. If you would like to find regular recommendations, then follow us on twitter: English@Queens'. You can also find further book recommendations on the Queens' School website: <https://www.queens.herts.sch.uk/students/lrc/reading-lists/>



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APRIL RECOMMENDED READ – YOUNG ADULT

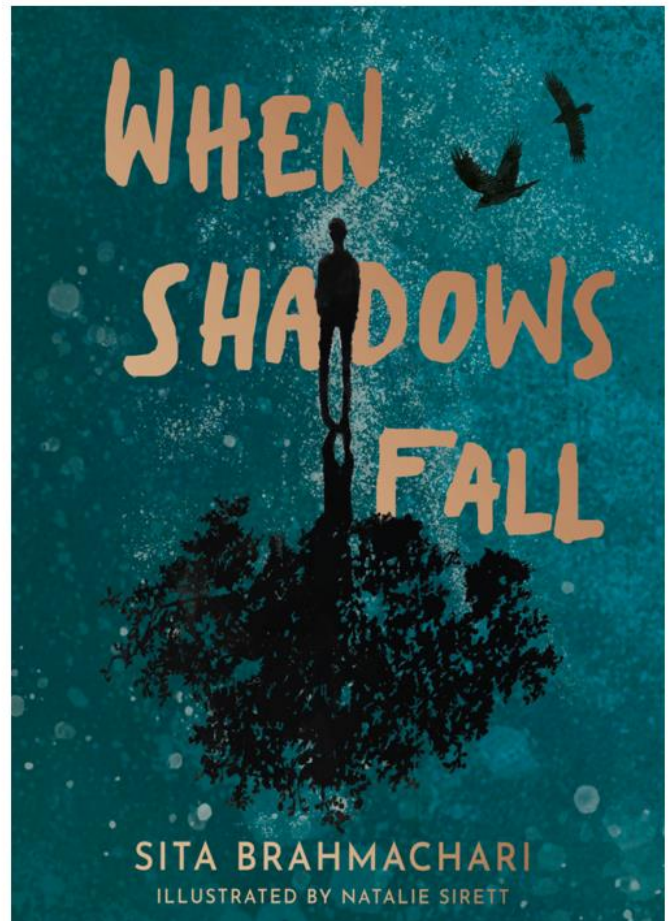
'WHEN SHADOWS FALL'

Sita Brahmachari

Short listed for the Yoto Carnegie Medal this year, 'When Shadows Fall' is an evocative and often poetic portrayal of a family in peril. Set in the heart of London, the central character Kai finds solace in the patch of wilderness beside the estate on which he lives. It is from this space that he is able to reflect on the breakdown of his family and the huge loss that they suffered and that nearly destroyed him.

Unable to cope with the emotional fallout, Kai finds himself increasingly divided from his friends and family, kicked out of school and involved with a group of boys who will only cause him more trouble. Beautifully illustrated, the novel is told from a range of perspectives switching between Kai and his friends who watch him spiral out of control but feel powerless to intervene.

This is not necessarily an easy read and not suitable for those below 13, but it is a raw and heart-wrenching depiction of the struggles too often faced by young people and the terrible impact that mental issues can have on adults and children alike. However, it is also a novel about the power of friendship and nature to heal, rescue and redeem. Told through a mixture of illustrates, prose and poetry, Brahmachari brilliantly captures a range of perspectives whilst also addressing issues about belonging, loss and trauma with sensitivity and empathy.



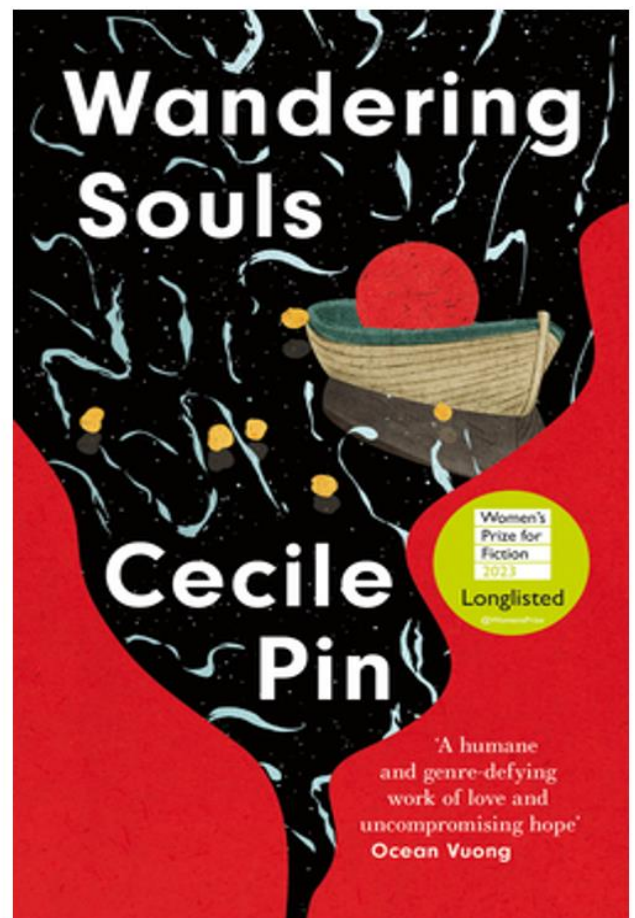
APRIL RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

'WANDERING SOULS'

Cecile Pin

Long-listed for the Women's Prize for fiction this year, 'Wandering Souls' is an innovative and emotive narrative. Pin reveals the lived experience of the Vietnamese Boat People settling in England in the early 1980s. Whilst this is a deeply political novel commenting not only on the Vietnamese diaspora, the nature of Thatcherite Britain and contemporary attitudes and mistreatment of immigrants, it is also an incredibly personal story. Partly narrated by the youngest brother who tragically dies in the crossing from Vietnam to Hong Kong, Pin's novel follows the story of the three eldest siblings as they are compelled to leave the only home they have known and are then housed in one camp after another before arriving in a very alien and often unwelcoming London.

Pin masterfully conveys the tiny moments of both hostility and kindness with which the family are confronted whilst also demonstrating their unity, struggles and resilience in prose that is at once underpinned by emotional sensitivity and Vietnamese culture whilst never becoming melodramatic. As she takes us on a journey from Vietnam and back, Pin reveals the importance of both cultural understanding, forgiveness and family. Despite the traumatic nature of the events she relays, this is, nonetheless, a novel of hope, reconciliation, and the healing power of family.



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MAY RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

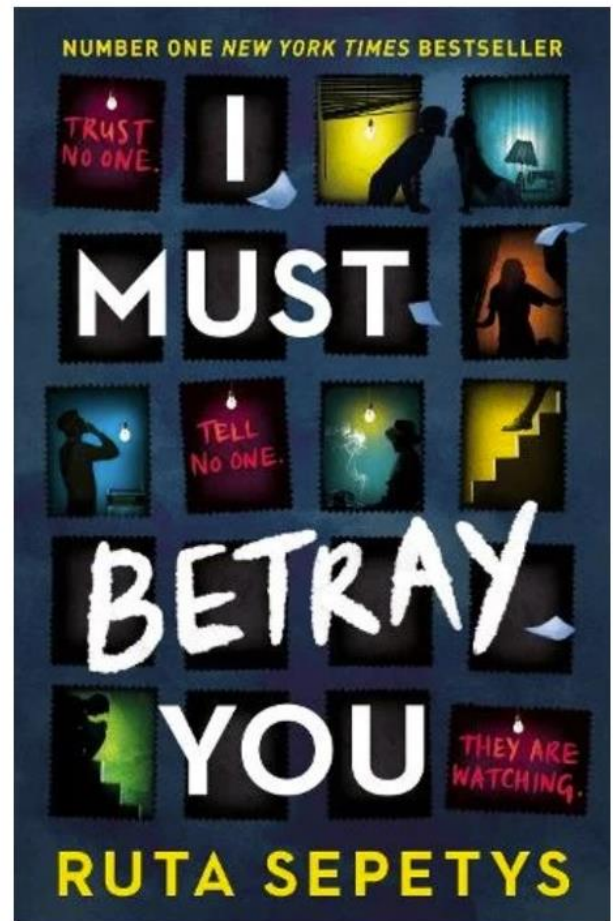
‘I MUST BETRAY YOU’

Ruta Sepetys

Short-listed for the YOTO Carnegie medal this year, Ruta Sepetys has created another stunning novel unveiling a little-known era in history and focusing on the victims and heroes who stood up against oppression. Told from the perspective of seventeen-year-old Cristian Florescu, Sepetys thrusts us into the bleak world of Romania in the late 1980s run as a tyrannical, communist dictatorship by Nicolae Ceausescu.

With subtlety and emotion, the story reveals the human cost and suffering of living in a surveillance society where even the most basic, every day items are luxuries and individuals live in a state of fear, unable to trust even their neighbours. Focusing on the lead up to the revolution, we follow the struggles of the Florescu family as they attempt to survive and protect those they love whilst also standing up for their freedom.

This is a powerful and haunting narrative that reminds us of an all too recent human atrocity but told with compassion and sensitivity. The short pacy chapters generate a gripping tale that thoroughly immerses the reader in an unfamiliar world where the wrong word can cause you terrible hardship as Cristian discovers when he is forced to become an informer to save his beloved grandfather. Sepetys shines a light on a dark period in European history with insight and empathy. This is my potential vote for the winner of this year’s Carnegie.



MAY RECOMMENDED READ – ADULT

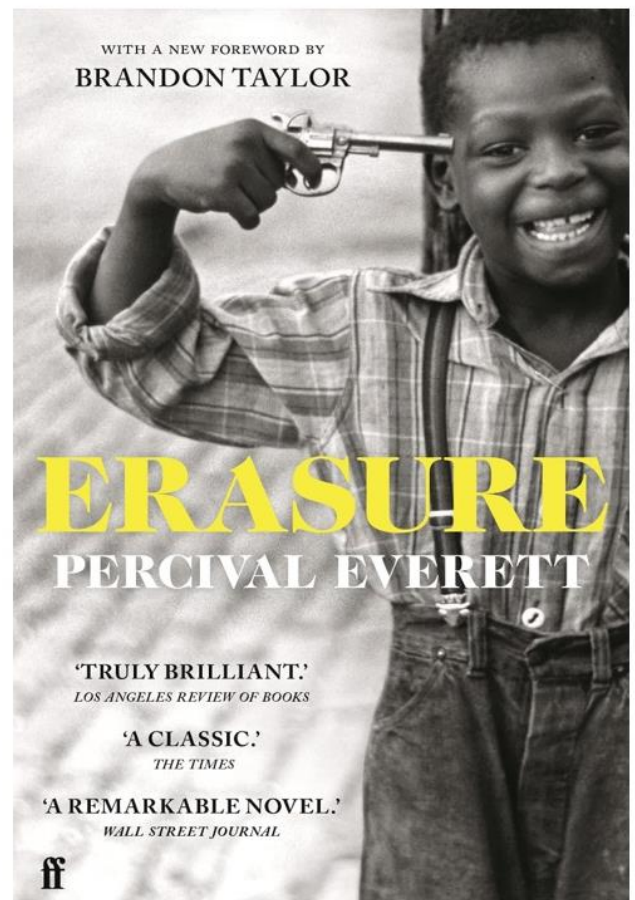
‘ERASURE’

Percival Everett

Brilliant, witty, and highly intellectual, Everett is genuinely one of the best writers of our generation and ‘Erasure’ is yet another unique narrative in his fictional oeuvre that includes over twenty novels. In ‘Erasure’, we follow Thelonious ‘Monk’ Ellison, a professor of literature and prolific writer who has repeatedly been sidelined in favour of more populist fiction.

Whilst he simultaneously deals with his mother’s illness and his own beleaguered love life, Monk also faces repeated professional rejection. Bleakly comic, Everett tackles issues with regards to racism incisively. He particularly examines the way in which black writers are pigeon-holed and certain experiences are valued and popularized over others in a manner that only further others and stereotypes through the use of certain vernacular whilst denying certain groups intellectual and cultural value.

Cleverly structured using the embedded narrative of Monk’s own parody novel, Everett manipulates genres, mixing the comic and tragic to explore contemporary issues about race, class, identity, and family in a manner that is entirely original. Whilst this novel is complex and difficult to define, it is also immensely readable and propulsive offering a perspicacious insight into the darkest elements of today’s society.



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