

Whitsunday Voices Short Story Competition

Grades 7 -8

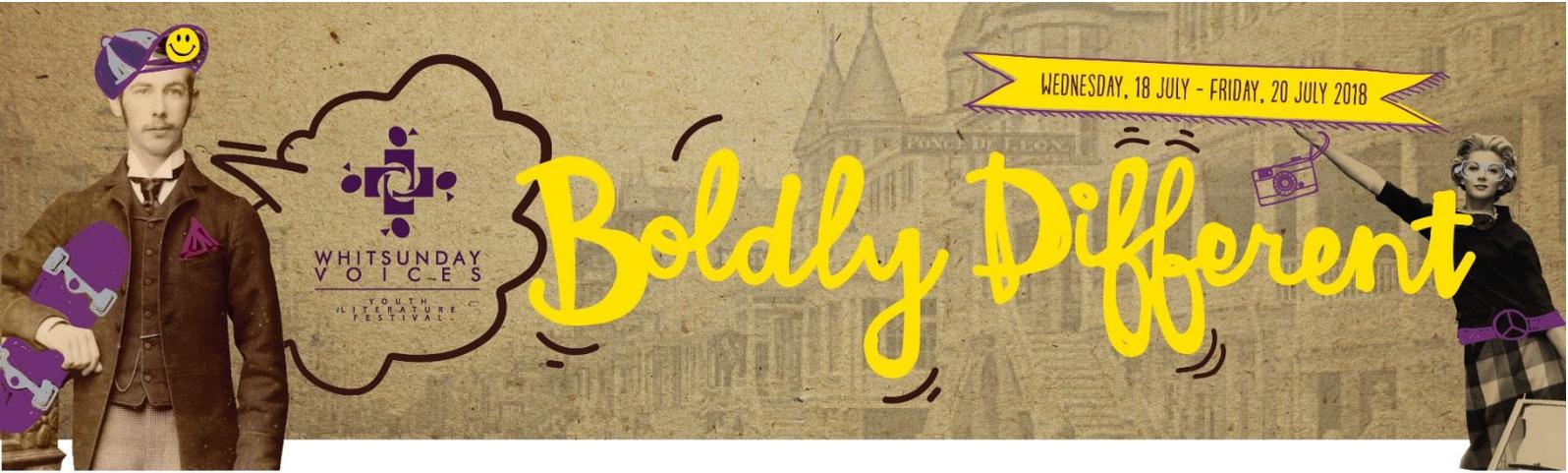
Runner-Up

William Hall for

The Journey

The waves smashed against the hull of the wooden ship. The sun scorched its passengers during the day and wind howled during the night. For weeks the refugees endured. Scanning the horizon for the land for hope.

Ali was from Iraq. He had been travelling for months. Through Iran, Pakistan, India, he had travelled. He had entered illegally by boat into Indonesia and was sailing for Australia. Ali had never been on a boat before and couldn't swim. Sailing from India to Indonesia was the most terrifying experience of his life. This was worse. Ali had watched in terror as the other refugees bailed out the water when the waves crashed against the boat, he was certain that the boat would flip. Once the engine had broken down for a whole day. He had given up, but thankfully, the captain kicked it back into life.



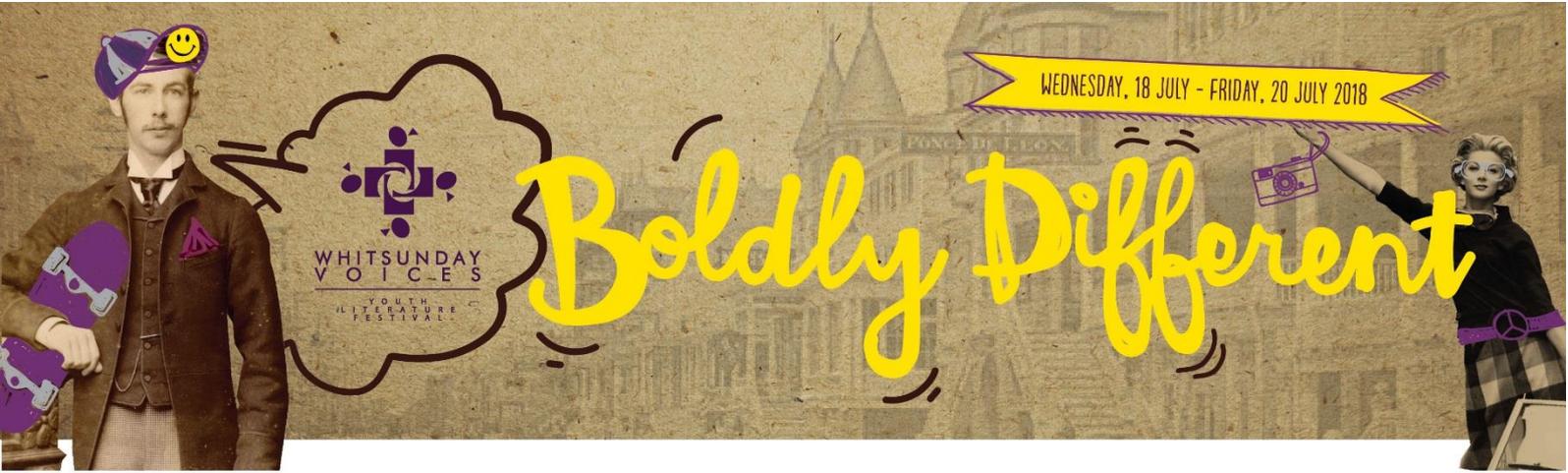
Ali watched as the engine stuttered again and again and again. It struggled against the wind and waves of the night. People swayed dangerously, threatening to fall into the water. The boat was so crowded it creaked and groaned under the weight of the passengers. How will this hold Ali thought, we must arrive soon.

Ali woke to the heat of the sun. The wind whipped across his face and the waves sprayed salt water into his eyes. He rose heavily onto his worn out legs. As his vision cleared, the horizon came into focus. Land! He gasped in relief and joy. Land that stretched as far as he could see. The sea was angry today. Dark waves rose out of the ocean and rocked the boat.

The boat propelled them toward the shore. Every hour brought them closer and every hour made all the refugees happier. Some even laughed after a silence of weeks. The engine let out another stutter and they were closer. They had arrived.

The wind rose and with it the sea. The sun disappeared behind the clouds and the rain started to fall. Ali watched in horror. The rocks, they would be smashed on the rocks. The waves crashed and they were spun around. The belly of the ship was facing the rocks.

The refugees were struggling and pushing for position on the boat. Ali's world stopped and braced.

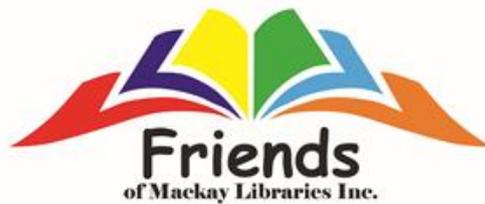


The rotten wood shattered on impact and people screamed.

Everything was sinking. Ship, food and people alike as the waves drove them on to the rocks.

Ali saw the water churning as he was struggling against the waves. A boat! He was going under. He made one last effort and lunged at his rescuers outstretched arm.

“We’ve got you mate” a voice said.



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