

The Friends of the
Turnbull Library

Smart Alex Competition: Y 9-10

WINNER

KRISTEN ROXBURGH

Selwyn College, Auckland

Right-side up

The day after she died, I found her shawl
the one she wore so often, the one I loved
a plain silk shawl, black all over

but things come right-side up, eventually.
The shawl was not plain black, right-side up –
it was a garden filled with hidden wonders

blooming flowers in all shades of emerald green and coral pink,
birds shining with such bright blues and yellows
that they seemed to fly off the fabric

like doves bearing the olive branch.

We laid that shawl on her coffin
right-side up.

Artist unknown :[Embroidered Chinese silk shawl belonging to
Katherine Mansfield] [made ca 1900] ♥



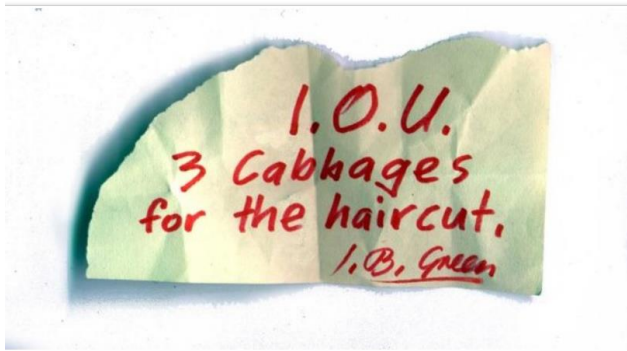
Ref: [D-014-007](#)

Date: 1900 - 1910 By: Bing, Anna Estelle, 1970-1950

The Haircut

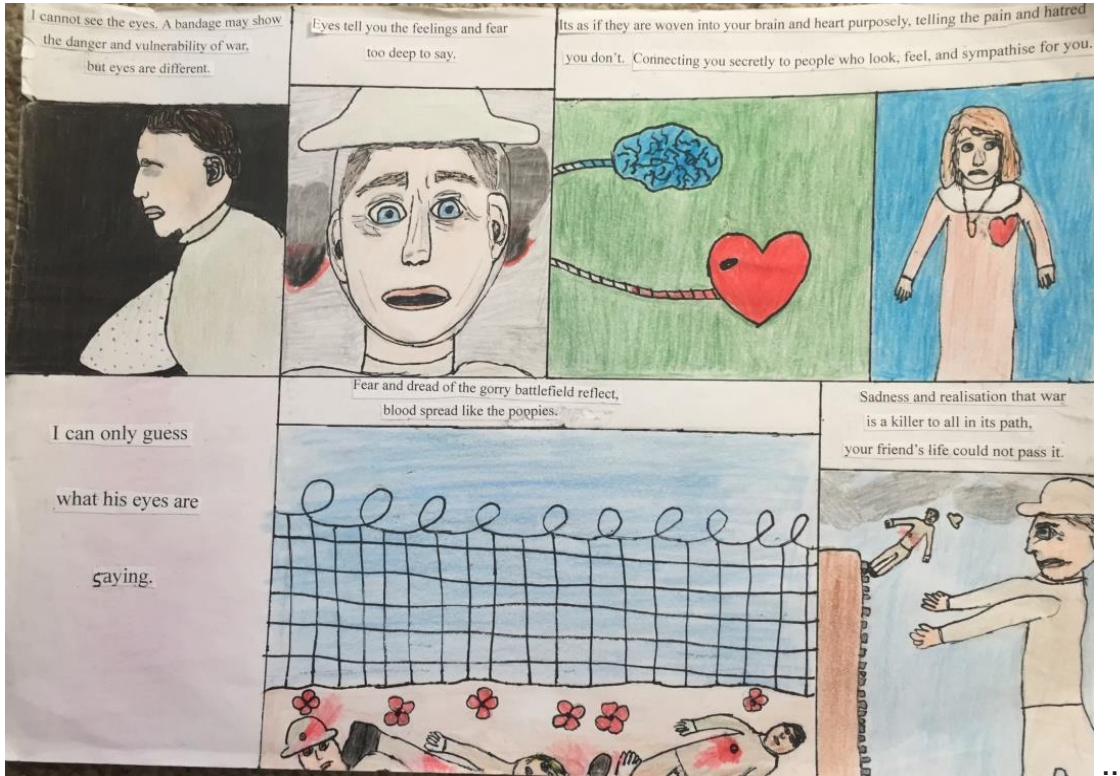
I always knew this was a bad idea. Trust Mum to go for the cheap way out. Here I am sitting in a old armchair, springs poking into a place I'd rather not mention, probably going to be murdered by a shear-wielding lunatic. Of course, by the shear-wielding lunatic I'm referring to the 'hairdresser'. You may notice I've put that in quotation marks, because, in the simplest way to put it, she isn't a hairdresser. The crazy old bat claims to have been at the top of fashion back in her day, so I guess that says enough about her fashion sense now. I can hear her now, singing to herself, making an awful racket as she rummages around her hairdressing equipment (cough, cough) garden tools. Maybe I can make a break for it. Oh oh, she's blocking the door. The window? Too late! I can hear her coming, her carpet slippers make muffled noises against the floor. She shuffles into view, in full dressing-gown glory, her hair's height rivaling that of any skyscraper I've ever seen. She gestures at me, motioning for me to give her something. That something currently being crushed in my fist, as I cling tightly to it. This was it. The sealing of my doom. With sinking dread, I hand the small piece of paper over. It had only a few words on it.

nith, Ashley W., 1948- :I.O.U. 3 cabbages for the haircut. I.B. Green.
G business - mercantile gazette, 11 June 2001. ♥



Ref: [I.O.U, 3 cabbages for the haircut. I.B Green](#)

I cannot see the eyes



The Circulating Library

I cautiously peer down the unlit alley. All I see are chipped brick walls that seem to close in on me. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I see a glint. It's a gold knocker, accompanied by a plaque, showcasing the library's services:

The door is painted to look like the walls. As instructed in the letter, I twist the knocker ninety degrees and the door unlocks. I walk in, smelling a hint of lavender. The building seems normal, until I take a step forward and the floor starts to move. I cannot even begin to explain what it's like, but what I can tell you is that the floor is some sort of rotating disc, and the wall around it is filled with bookshelves. They take 'circulating library' quite literally, it seems. In the centre of the room is a strange machine with valves and pistons. Plush seats are scattered about the room, lit by oil lamps. I can see only one person there, arranging the books. She turns around and smiles in pleasant surprise.

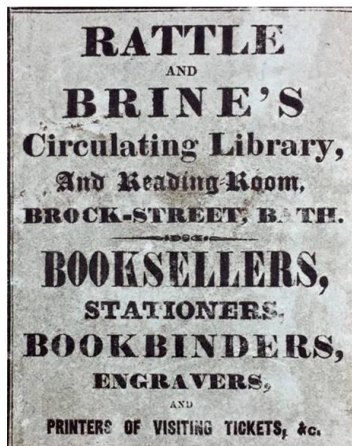
"Hello there. Mary?" I nod and smile. "I'm George Brine. Well, Georgina. I'm the library's book selector. Mr. Rattle is not here today, he works on the machinery and such." I shake her hand.

"Hello Georgina, I'm here to deliver my book." Georgina brightens even more.

"Lovely. Your novel, it's called...?"

"Frankenstein." I say.

"Sounds enthralling. Thank you, Mrs. Shelley. I'm sure our members will love it."



Pavement Dance

Familiar eyes
Hook me in.
What does he know?
Can he see through my lies?
Does he know my mothers name?
Should I have given way, stepped to the side?

His curls, his whiskey smile, his gold tooth, his dusty laugh.

Step to the left.
Step to the right.
A pavement dance.

Crocodile eyes stalk me through a murky sea of unfamiliar faces.
Me, a floundering fish, trapped in his gaze.
A slap on my back
Weathered leathery hands
His chalky voice lets loose a faint laugh.
He sinks into the crowd.
The ripples remain.

