



LITERARY FESTIVAL 2025



NATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF ALLIED ARTS

2025 ANTHOLOGY

WWW.NIAAZIM.CO.ZW

This is the longest running of the four festivals run by the NIAA. This festival, which is open to students from Grade Two to Form Six and also adults, is designed to inspire candidates to create outstanding pieces of work in the genres of prose and poetry. Each year, the festival culminates in the award of prizes to the best performing students. The Literary Festival 2025 is sponsored by **Axcentium** and **Delta Corporation**.



AXCENTIUM

A word after a
word after a
word is power.

Margaret Atwood

Congratulations to the 2025
National Institute of Allied
Arts Literary Festival winners.

Experience meets Agility



LITERARY FESTIVAL 2025



CONTENTS

2025 Literary Festival Theme: **Heroes, Myths & Legends** • Pages 2 to 3

2025 **Junior** Award Winners List • Pages 4 to 5

2025 **Senior** Award Winners List • Pages 6 to 7

JUNIOR SCHOOL ENTRIES		SENIOR SCHOOL ENTRIES	
09	Gr. 2 Prose - Matipa Tirivanhu	25	F1 Prose - Anenyasha Nyevera
10	Gr. 3 Prose - Sean Dube	27	F2 Prose - Lucinda Matambo
12	Gr. 4 Prose - Divine Dube	30	F3 Prose - Michelle Vere
14	Gr. 5 Prose - Makanaka Chifamba	33	F4 Prose - Farirai Gapu
16	Gr. 6 Poetry - Natalie Taylor	36	F6 Poetry - Batsirai Nyawo
18	Gr. 6 Prose - Mirelle Chikomo	38	F6 Prose - Amarachi Ojukwu
20	Gr. 7 Poetry - Mukudzei Madembo		
21	Gr. 7 Prose - Maita Mbanga		
	<i>*Gr. = Grade</i>		<i>**F = Form</i>

Branding, Design and Layout @StudioChiratidzo • Photography & Videography @PXELbusiness



Heroes, Myths and Legends

2025 THEME

Jacqui Grierson | Literary Festival Director

2025's Literary Festival theme is certainly one for the books! ***“Heroes, Myths and Legends”*** inspired some incredibly insightful and startlingly eclectic stories and poems. Even though the theme would lead you to think our participants would only explore the outlandish and fanciful, many of our entries, including many of the stand-out pieces including in this year's chapbook – many displayed a groundedness in reality that is both astounding and touching. As genres go, tales of the fantastic are easy to dismiss because of our extravagant the ideas can be. But stories from left field allow us to explore ideas, mortality, religion, and

relationships. And our entrants rose to the occasion, supplying us with stunningly well-written and thought-provoking pieces that will stay with you long after you have read them. Our young writers are admirable and it is encouraging and humbling to see such bright lights in such a wide spectrum of young people!

This year, we also introduced a new project category, Group Journalistic Project in which 5 schools were selected to participate as "guinea pigs" with the goal of producing a magazine. This category was open to the Grade 6 or 7 classes of the 5 schools. We are ecstatic to report that



exercise was quite successfully and well received by the participant schools and this new category will be opened up to all our 2025 participating schools in the 2026 festival year!

We are thankful for the growth and continuing evolution of the Literary Festival. And with the launch of what will be our annual NIAA gala, we look forward to again bringing to life the

pieces entombed within these pages, bringing the stories and poems off the pages and exploring together, the beauty and joy of language.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to your continued participation in the NIAA Family of Festivals!

Enjoy!



2025

JUNIOR LITERARY AWARDS

GRADE 2 PROSE – Winner

Matipa Tirivanhu

Penhalonga Preparatory School

GRADE 3 PROSE – Winner

Sean Dube

Milestone Preparatory School

GRADE 4 PROSE – Winner

Divine Dube

Gateway Primary School

GRADE 5 PROSE – Winner

Makanaka Chifamba

Greathood Academy

GRADE 6 POETRY – Winner

Natalie Taylor

Hellenic Primary

GRADE 6 PROSE – Winner

Mirelle Chikomo

Goldridge Primary School

GRADE 7 POETRY – Winner

Mukudzei Madembo

Bryden

GRADE 7 PROSE – Winner

Maita Mbanga

Ruzawi

TROPHY AWARD – BEST JUNIOR WRITER

Maita Mbanga

Ruzawi





**LITERARY
FESTIVAL 2025
ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY**



AXCENTIUM



**Delta Corporation
LIMITED**



PICTURED: All Literary 2025 Award Winners (Senior & Junior)



*Best Junior Writer 2025
Maita Mbanga*





**LITERARY
FESTIVAL 2025**
ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY



2025

SENIOR LITERARY AWARDS

FORM 1 PROSE – Winner

Anenyasha Nyevera
Goldridge College

FORM 2 PROSE – Winner

Lucinda Matambo
Eaglesvale Senior School

FORM 3 PROSE – Winner

Michelle Vere
Wise Owl High School, Marondera

FORM 4 PROSE – Winner

Farirai Gapu
Arundel

FORM 6 POETRY – Winner

Batsirai Nyawo
Peterhouse Boys

FORM 6 PROSE – Winner

Amarachi Ojukwu
USAP Community School

TROPHY AWARD – BEST SENIOR WRITER

Farirai Gapu
Arundel





**LITERARY
FESTIVAL 2025
ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY**



AXCENTIUM



**Delta Corporation
LIMITED**



PICTURED: All Literary 2025 Award Winners (Senior & Junior)



*Best Senior Writer 2025
Farirai Gapu*





2025

JUNIOR LITERARY AWARDS

SECTION CONTENTS

09 Gr. 2 Prose - Matipa Tirivanhu

10 Gr. 3 Prose - Sean Dube

12 Gr. 4 Prose - Divine Dube

14 Gr. 5 Prose - Makanaka Chifamba

16 Gr. 6 Poetry - Natalie Taylor

18 Gr. 6 Prose - Mirelle Chikomo

20 Gr. 7 Poetry - Mukudzei Madembo

21 Gr. 7 Prose - Maita Mbanga



GRADE 2 PROSE - WINNER •

Matipa Tirivanhu (Penhalonga Preparatory School)

TITLE: “What I saw when I went for a walk”

One day my mom and I went for a walk in the woods and the mountains near our house. I saw cowberries and my mom said do not eat cowberries. My mom told me they are poisonous. I saw litter on the grass and I picked it up. I smelt the beautiful wild flowers. We saw aloe plants near the rocks. I touched a creepy plant with thorns in a dark bush. I enjoyed, seeing thorny cactus. We went to sit by the stream. We saw a little pond where monkeys, baboons, goats and

cows were drinking water. At the side of the pond it was muddy with reeds. It started getting dark, so we started to walk back to our house. We got lost and started walking down a steep hill, it was full of stones. We saw tall palm trees and I knew it was our house nearby. We saw a goat and her little kids also walking down the path. We enjoyed our walk, it was wonderful.





GRADE 3 PROSE - WINNER •

Sean Dube (Milestone Preparatory School)

TITLE: “Fun at the Swimming Pool”

My mother told me to prepare my swimming gear and I quickly packed the swimming goggles, swimsuit and swimming float and set off happily to the swimming pool.

We arrived at the swimming pool and headed straight to the changing room. I changed into my swimming trunks, put on my swimming cap, and goggles and dived into the water.

We started to beat water with our hands splashing it everywhere. We enjoyed splashing water to others. It was fun. We started to swim around the pool chasing each other.

The water in the pool was blue as the sky and clean as a crystal.

My friend Ben pretended to be a crocodile, that was hungry for meat. He chased us around the swimming pool as if he was a monster.

We stayed in the pool the whole of the afternoon splashing water to each other. My friend taught me backstroke and butterfly. We stood on our hands and stuck our legs out of the water.

Everyone was enjoying the hot summer day taking the time to cool off. I could see the children smiling and laughing and swimming around in the cool blue water.

It was almost impossible to swim



Sean Dube (Milestone Preparatory School) (continued)

around in the pool because there were so many people there that day.

After a couple of hours we took a break. We sat in the sun talking and laughing. We shared stories about school.

We went back into the pool and this time playing challenging games. Our laughter could be heard by people

who were far away from us. Our parents joined in and the games became more fun.

At sunset we packed our bags and went back home. We left the pool with hearts full of joy. It had been a day well spent.





GRADE 4 PROSE - WINNER •

Divine Dube (Gateway Primary School)

TITLE: “The Camping Trip”

On the 11th of December my family and I went camping. We packed clothes, food that does not go bad quickly or in the heat, pots, pans, a gas stove and a cooler box for our drinks.

We were going to camp close to a lake and in a place where there were a lot of mountains. We carried a first aid kit in case of injuries and our swimming costumes for swimming. It was a three hour drive to our camping site. We got there in the afternoon around one o'clock. We set up our tents and gas stove.

By the time we were done setting up it was late. So we brushed our teeth

and went to bed. The next day when I woke up, breakfast was ready but there was no water but luckily we were camping next to a lake. I told my dad that we could clean the lake water by boiling it up and folding a t-shirt four times and pouring water through the folded t-shirt.

After breakfast we went fishing. I caught the most fish but my brother caught the biggest one. We cooked the fish and had an amazing meal of it. Right after our meal we put on hiking boots and warm clothes and started our hike to the mountains. It was freezing but we braved the cold. They were a few slips here and there but we kept on going. When we finally



Divine Dube (Gateway Primary School) (continued)

got to the top of the mountain we saw an amazing sunset. It was red, orange, pink and purple. It was definitely worth it. We took beautiful pictures and went back to our camping site.

By the time we got back it was late but we wanted to make our last night the best night ever. We roasted fluffy

marshmallows, told the scariest stories ever and some stories gave us a little chuckle. After all of the fun and games we went to bed.

The next day we packed up and went back home. That was one of the best camping trips I have ever had.





GRADE 5 PROSE - WINNER •

Makanaka Chifamba (Greathood Academy)

TITLE: "A Visit to a Public Place"

Today I visited the busy terminus with my family. As we entered, I felt thrilled and curious. The terminus was bustling with people rushing to catch their buses.

As I looked around I saw a variety of buses, each with its own unique design and colour. Some had bright advertisements on them, while others had simple, yet eye-catching designs. I saw people of all ages, from young children to elderly citizens, hurrying to their destinations. The buildings and stalls around us were a mix of old and new, adding to the terminus's charm.

The sounds of the terminus were loud and chaotic. I heard the honking of horns, the chatter of people and the

announcements over the loudspeaker. The buses were constantly moving, and the sounds of the engines roaring to life was almost deafening. Amidst all the noise, I could hear vendors calling out passer-by, trying to sell their goods.

The smells at the terminus were a mix of good and bad. I smelled the aroma of freshly cooked food from the food stalls, like spicy street food and sweet pastries. However, the smells of exhaust fumes from the buses and the dirty surroundings were unpleasant.

As I walked around, I tasted the delicious street food my family had bought from the vendors. The flavours were amazing, and the food



Makanaka Chifamba (Greathood Academy) (continued)

was hot and fresh. I had a sweet, sticky pastry that was my favourite.

As I touched the railing and handrails. I felt the rough texture of the metal. The sun was shining brightly, and breeze carried the smells and sounds around us, making the experience even more vivid.

I felt excited, fascinated by the sights and sounds of the terminus. It was a hub of activity, with people from all walks of life rushing to their destinations. I felt a sense of wonder at the complexity and energy of the place.

My visit to the busy terminus was an exhilarating experience. I enjoyed seeing the different people, eating delicious food and talking in the vibrant atmosphere. It was a day I will never forget.



GRADE 6 POETRY - WINNER •

Natalie Taylor (Hellenic Primary)

TITLE: "God of the Storm"

Battles of the ages, the skies and the sea,
Eruptions of anger, nature's fury,
Brothers of Hades all wanting to lead,
Family forgotten, unwilling to cede.

Foamy and salty the white horses leap,
Rearing up to the sky before they sink to their feet,
Jagged streaks of lightning shoot across the sky,
Throwing blots down with power and pride.

Poseidon answers with waves stretching high,
Unable to shake the fury in his eyes,
A cauldron of clouds looming and swirling,
Zeus howling winds, sending rain hurling.

Sons of a Titan they fight for power,
Gaining strength with each crucial hour,
From ocean to heaven, cyclones of brothers,
Each unaware they rely on the other.



**LITERARY
FESTIVAL 2025**
ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY



AXCENTIUM



Delta Corporation
LIMITED

Natalie Taylor (Hellenic Primary) (continued)

The eye of the storm brings calm and quiet,
Gods return to Olympus, take cover from riot,
A sea of stars tranquil and glassy,
Hides undercurrents, for eternity lasting.





GRADE 6 PROSE - WINNER •
Mirelle Chikomo (Goldridge Primary)

TITLE: “That Was Embarrassing”

Emily took a deep breath as she stood in front of Yellow Birds School. It was her first day. New school, new kids, new everything. She had rehearsed her smile in the mirror, carefully packed her bags, and even triple checked her schedule. Nothing would go wrong. She was ready or so she thought.

The moment Emily stepped off the bus, disaster struck. Her backpack strap slipped off her shoulder, and as she bent down to fix it she accidentally stepped on her own shoelace. In a flash she lost her balance and fell face-first onto the pavement.

“Are you okay?”, someone asked, trying to hold back their laughter. A small group of students nearby

snickered. Emily’s face turned as red as a tomato. “Yeah, I’m fine,” she mumbled, quickly standing up and brushing imaginary dust off her jean trousers. That was embarrassing, she thought, trying to shake it off.

Determined to recover, Emily made her way to her first class, science. She was excited, science was her favourite subject. The teacher, Mr. Brown, welcomed her warmly and handed out a small experiment, mixing baking soda and vinegar inside balloons to create carbon dioxide. Simple enough. Emily carefully poured the baking soda into her balloon and attached it to the bottle of vinegar. She tilted it slowly, but her hands were still shaky from the earlier fall. The balloon slipped,



Mirelle Chikomo (Goldridge Primary) (continued)

splashing vinegar all over her desk and herself. The mixture foamed and bubbled over, spraying the kids next to her.

The entire class burst into laughter. Mr. Brown rushed over with paper towels. “Accidents happen,” he said kindly, “don’t worry, Emily.” That was embarrassing, she sighed again. At lunch, Emily was so distracted that she didn’t even realize that she was sitting at the wrong table, the one where the eighth graders sat. She took one bite of her sandwich before a tall girl with hoop earrings smelt a rat. “Seventh graders don’t sit here.” The other students stared at her. Emily’s heart sank.

“Oh sorry,” she whispered, grabbing her tray and searching for an empty spot. She finally found a corner table and sat alone, trying not to cry. Just as she was unwrapping her chocolate

bar, a cheerful voice interrupted. “Hey, mind if I sit here?” Emily looked at her with a friendly smile. “I’m Lily. You’re new, right?” Emily nodded a small smile forming. “Yeah I’m Emily,” she replied.

Before long, another boy joined them. “I saw that science experiment,” he chuckled. “You’ve got serious science skills. No worries,” he said. “First days are always weird. I’m Matthew.”

For the rest of lunch, they talked and joked. Emily felt the tight knot in her stomach loosen. By the end of the day, Emily walked out of school feeling lightened. She had made two new friends and learnt something important, everyone has embarrassing moments. It is what happens after that matters. That was embarrassing, she thought, but maybe it was not that bad after all.



GRADE 7 POETRY - WINNER •
Mukudzei Madembo (Bryden)

TITLE: “Legends of the Brave”

Brave heroes stand both bold and true,
with heart of fire in all they do.
They fight the dark, they face the test,
And rise above to be the best.

With swords of steel and hearts so bold,
They fight for truth and stories told.
Each tale we tell, a lesson learned,
Or bravery shown and respect earned.

Through mountains high and oceans wide,
They journey forth, with hope as their guide.
With every challenge; they stand tall,
In myths and stories, they inspire us all.

So let us dream of heroes bright,
In our own lives, let them be our light.
For every heart can rise above,
And write their tale with strength and love.



TITLE: “An Enchanted Forest”

It was a bleak winter morning, the icy wind made my ears sting. I briskly walked to school, eventually my walk turned into a run for I was embarrassingly late. I was desperate enough to take a shortcut through the forest. My school anorak felt like an ice block, the streets were abandoned and my watch ticked impatiently, I had nothing to lose. I had to use the forest, the prohibited forest, the dangerously dark desolate, damp forest. I took a deep breath, gathered all my confidence and cautiously stepped inside.

After a few moments I found myself in a place I'd never seen before. Where was I? This place did not look friendly. It was silent, there was no sign of life, the only sound was from

dead leaves, crunching underneath my brown leather school shoes. My only light source was from the sun, barely peeking through gaps of the great roof of trees that covered me. I felt so captured as if the old dead trees were closing in on me. I was lost, cold, scared and lonely. All I could do was walk although I had nowhere to go. I was trapped.

After what felt like an eternity of wandering, I came to an ancient bridge going over a glistening stream. It was made out of damp stone and covered in moss. It looked like it belonged to a troll and on the side of it stood a long row of trees, resembling a wall. There was a small gap between two of the trees but, I couldn't make out what was on the



Maita Mbanga (Ruzawi) (continued)



other side. I had two decisions, either to cross it which would be taking a huge risk, or to stay on this lifeless side of the forest. My feet were aching from walking and my nose and fingers numb from the howling wind, my mind was tutelary over my body so; I decided to cross it.

The other side was completely different. Was this utopia? I thought that because I was greeted by singing birds and the cacophony of the wind had faded into a peaceful whistle. What I could see looked like a mural painted by an artist. I wanted to sit under one of the apple trees reading a book or dance to the wistful melodies of the wind. There were deer and cute rabbits that I wanted to keep forever. Under my feet was a meadow of soft green grass and the sun was shining down brightly making beautiful reflections onto ponds. But after a

while I realised that I was stuck, that I couldn't go anywhere because I was lost.

After hours of losing my voice from panicked cries of help and frantic searching for a route to freedom, I think I went delusional. I started hearing ringing bells until my ears were about to slit. As I looked around confused my vision went blurry. All I could hear were the bells as they got louder, louder and louder still until Yes! Relieved the mighty school gates were towering over me. I was finally here, this was the first time I was excited to see this building. The ringing sound turned out to be the bell. The weight on my shoulders had been pushed off by comfort, I was on familiar property. Where had I been? I had been stranded in an enchanted forest!





2025

SENIOR LITERARY AWARDS

SECTION CONTENTS

25 F1 Prose - Anenyasha Nyevera

27 F2 Prose - Lucinda Matambo

30 F3 Prose - Michelle Vere

33 F4 Prose - Farirai Gapu

36 F6 Poetry - Batsirai Nyawo

38 F6 Prose - Amarachi Ojukwu





FORM 1 PROSE - WINNER •
Anenyasha Nyevera (Goldridge College)

TITLE: “The Night the Moon Wept”

They gave voice to the thunder,
names to the stars and meaning to
the shadows. They sing stories of the
dead, whispered tales of the ancient
and dressed lies in the clothing of
truth and truth in the masks of lies.
Myths, the echoes of the unseen.

In a world so lost and quiet, distant
from the Universes’ embrace. The
tale of the night the moon wept
was whispered in the winds and
remembered only by the stars. It
was the first myth the stars ever told.
A tale where rivers had memory,
mountains held grudges and the wind
carried messages from ancestors.
The night the moon wept proved
what science could not explain,
what logic cannot and what
emotions refuse to ignore.

The stars receded to their home,
retreating one by one into the dark
expanse. The sky held its breath, that
even the mind forgot to move. It was
the night the moon wept. They say
she had once loved the Earth not from
afar but closely and completely. She
watched over the oceans, traced the
edges of mountains with her silver
glow and listened to the dreams of
sleeping creatures. But not everything
lasts forever, that was until the Earth
gave its heart to the Sun, leaving the
Moon with nothing but loneliness.

She cried not gently but sharply. Her
tears painted the sky in pale grey hue.
Her tears were not water, they were
grey light fragments, staining the dull
Earth’s surface and colouring the
oceans grey. The sky around her



Aneyasha Nyevera (Goldridge College) (continued)

pulsed with a strange stillness as if the universe was mourning with her. For her glowing face was now fractured with grief. It's as if her sadness was dreamt to existence. That was the night the moon wept.

Myths shape for humans to understand the world. They are more than just

stories, their mirrors reflecting the cultures and different beliefs of people. The myth went on, not in books or scrolls but in the blood of storytellers, because myths never die, they wait for those who choose to listen.





FORM 2 PROSE - WINNER •

Lucinda Matambo (Eaglesvale Senior School)

TITLE: “Redefined Purpose”

Beneath the gossamer clouds hovering above the horizon, he sat there limply in aloofness from worldly things. The placid silence was abruptly interrupted by the echoes that clung to the walls of the halls around him.

Fabian was born in the family that was truculent but quite opulent. He was an obdurate Adonis clouded with the art of wizardry. He was born to two beautiful parents who unfortunately died during a war against the colony that rested along the river dividing the two dwellers of Capercus.

It was when night fell upon the vast plain that Fabian realised something grotesque – something eerie. He was enthroned on his mahogany couch

wrapped in grit and doubt. Something dark fell upon him.

The eager Song of a nightingale, perched on the tree branch not too far from his window, enticed him. They stared at each other – deeply and the bird spoke, its voice threading through the niched window, eloquently unravelling the ancient whispers of time. Its tongue unrolled, spitting words that stirred a storm within his mind's eye. Laughing at such ludicrous ideas he slowly took in heart the words spoken and digested their meaning. This was it!

It was the time when it all began. The unravelling of sacred choruses – about to know it all. He was excited for the greatest morrow of his existence. He left his castle and trod on the



Lucinda Matambo (Eaglesvale Senior School) (continued)

green woven carpet of the earth as he entered the forest. He walked deeper and deeper, the air becoming denser and denser. The more he walked the more he was swallowed into its cthonic depths.

His skin cold, bruised with scars from the slaps of the wind against his blush cheeks. He manoeuvred, trying to make his way through the bushes. Fabian ventured across seas and plains, so determined but clueless. He did not know where he was off to. He just went, he felt it was his destiny, his calling.

Fabian went the distance. Tired, his legs like noodles, his hair bristle needles, his mouth a desert but his body a rainforest unable to stand any longer he collapsed. He fell onto the air; a velvety cushion – soothing, wrapped in a warm blanket of smoke embraced by ropes like arms. He felt peaceful.

The ground quaked with armies of men marching and chanting in the core of the earth it was a trap. Captured. The battle of Capercus was re-established. Buried in the graves of wars long forgotten and lost it rose to its feet once more. Summoned by ancient blood he was the one to redeem what was once lost. Wizards and witches assembled, their gnarly grins smothered with prophecy and power.

Fireballs and stones of death flew across the sky. Clouds of smoke blanketing the battlefield.

The Wizard of Sarbus, known for this nefarious character, captured Fabian because he knew that his plan to ruin all pure power would be erased from the Book of Legends.

The blood of determination gushed through his veins; rejuvenating him, strengthening his soul. He called



Lucinda Matambo (Eaglesvale Senior School) (continued)

upon the nightingale which granted him wisdom from the books of righteousness and strength from the sacred archives that where in the ruins – almost forgotten.

Fabian murmured words older than stone. Fury grew inside him and the strength to defeat the Colony of Wickedness summoned by his long

gone parents who spoke through the song of a nightingale. He brewed sapphire spheres cursed with righteous fury he trembled, the magic too strong.

The atmosphere grew quiet. Evil power had been erased for good. The scrapbooks now rearranged with the legacy of love, destiny and wizardry.





FORM 3 PROSE - WINNER •

Michelle Vere (Wise Owl High School, Marondera)

TITLE: “*The Forgotten Library*”

As humanity slowly lost love for stories and reminisce, once the heart of the town, stood neglected, its stories fading into silence, hemmed in by the lush forest. As the only librarian remaining in this society, I garnered up some courage to revive my passion for writing, in an abandoned sanctuary or, the library.

As I hesitantly entered the library, my heart began to flutter like a bird trapped in a cage. Nostalgia flushed my mind as I nonchalantly weaved my way through the shabby array of bookshelves that I had mastered manoeuvring through. Soiled walls, and gritty, obfuscating hues loomed afar, with the bedraggling scent of rich petrichor arousing my senses. Afar was a glimmering book as old as time in its shambled stere. Out of

mere curiosity, I succumbed to my desires. I anxiously unlatched the binds and blew the dusty sheath off the cover, unveiling the majestic unsigned with an encrypted message, it was supposedly, “the book of lives.” This was something I thought was just legend according to the community. They all considered it a mere myth, but that myth was now my reality.

As I curiously flipped through the pages, I noticed there were countless names of people all written in pencil. The intricate book encapsulated the life stories of everyone to ever live, written in a language only the heart could understand. I even saw my mother’s story, who I never saw. It was a lot to digest and suddenly, tears trickled down my cheeks as



Michelle Vere (Wise Owl High School, Marondera) (continued)

I slowly read her tragic story. Fortunately, or unfortunately, this did not last long. I noticed my tears beginning to dissolve the writings on the page. I had erased a past event, specifically my birth. I began to slowly disappear, hands first. Alarmed, I nervously grabbed my pencil and restored my birth, in words. Within a blink of an eye, I began to re-generate all my fingers back. I hurriedly grabbed my personal diary and wrote about the experiences I had just encountered. It was only then that I realized that I could alter anyone's story, changing the fates of people without struggle. The existence of all humanity was laid reluctantly within my reach, and I was determined to use the book for greater good. Can you imagine, the legendary book of lives was just within my reach?

It became a ritual for me to venture into the night, thanks to my family. At

first it seemed like a joke, my family shrugged it off as being, "just a myth". However, after I told my father about his tenth birthday, in detail, he could not have possibly remained oblivious about the book existing. My father, with a tone reflecting regret, then asked me to change his fate. With his meagre salary, we barely ever got by. Thus, he asked me to alter his career path in high school to business studies. I hesitated, but in the end, I followed through. As soon as I made it back home, our old dilapidated cottage transformed into a fancy abode, fit for a king. I expected everyone to celebrate however, everyone had seemed to be living as if nothing had changed. I guessed only the person who wrote could remember the past. I could not celebrate alone so; I impulsively told my younger brother about how I had altered our lives with a book. My brother, over the moon began to perform his antics and alerted the



Michelle Vere (Wise Owl High School, Marondera) (continued)

entire town about the, “magic book”. Eventually, people came to my house, day in, day out, asking me to change their fates. A very strenuous process it was, with stringent measures. In a matter of days, I was the talk of the town, dwarfing any other perilous news, with daunting threats alongside the incessant praise. Happiness grew elusive as nobody ever got satisfied. Deep within, I knew it, I had to protect the integrity of life’s snatural narrative.

One night, I had other plans in store for everyone. I erased the part in my story when I succumbed to curiosity in the library, meaning I never ended up finding the book. Suddenly I found myself back at home, the not so fancy one from before. Since, I did not end up finding the book of lives, I did not remember this adventure. Luckily, as a writer I always journal my daily

experiences in my trusty chronicle. I found this story in my diary, meaning it did take place however, I do not vividly remember any of it, since I erased it from the book of lives, quite strange indeed.

Though I lost my house and everything I so badly wanted, I noticed, life loses its meaning when everyone can choose whatever happens in life. Life, with all its imperfections is meant to be the way it is; unexpected, diverse, unexpected and humbling, without alterations.



FORM 4 PROSE - WINNER & BEST SENIOR WRITER
TROPHY WINNER • Farirai Gapu (Arundel)

TITLE: “Light is Reborn”

Before he woke up, he could already feel their over-whelming presence. The pressure of it all, crushed him like a small fly in a book. These were the consequences of his actions, and now he had to suffer the burn.

Wumuti finally dared to open his eyes. The aura radiating from, not one but all three colossal titans almost made him want to close his eyes shut, but he forced them to remain open.

“You,” the Titan of Destruction’s voice echoed around the room, “have committed a grave sin.” Wumuti lifted his head to meet his eyes that burned with unfiltered rage.

“It seems as if you mistook our lenience for stupidity, thinking you

can do whatever you want. Do not forget what you are, you degenerate.” The Titan of Darkness’s words slipped cut like ice.

Wumuti listened numbly and did not flinch at the insult. He knew what he was, and the constant taunts turned into a routine for him. He was the living definition of curiosity killed the cat.

There used to be four titans once, including the Titan of Flames. His father, who dared to indulge into the human world had a child with a mortal, leading to his banishment to the underworld.

“He is just like his insolent father.” The Titan of Destruction sneered.



Farirai Gapu (Arundel) (continued)

“Arrogant little rat who can’t even defend himself.” The two titans continued to jeer at him, when the third titan who had been quiet, spoke up.

“Silence!” His command was followed by a pin drop silence. Such was expected from the Titan of Terror who was not the most powerful but the Emperor of Cruelty. “As entertaining as it is to taunt him, that is not why we are here. We have been summoned to punish him for trying to avenge his father. He attempted to destroy our immortal bodies by searching for the Sword of Encompassment, which would kill us all.

His voice sounded angrier with each word, threatening to cause an earthquake. “Fortunately, enough, we were able to stop you.” The titans all laughed when Wumuti spoke, “Ados

dereum: jolkaggi.” The Titans looked at him confused, then burst out laughing again. “You think you can escape by pretending to have gone mad. How foolish –” The Titan of Darkness’s mouth crumbled followed by his body, preventing the rest of his words from being heard.

“The Sword!” the Titan of Terror exclaimed. “How did you –” more crumbling as his body was also struck. The Titan of Destruction only had one way out, which was to kill Wumuti. He lunged forward, not knowing that Wumuti had tamed the sword. It effortlessly halted the final Titan’s movements, killing him too.

Wumuti looked at the remains of the short-lived battle, once the bodies of the most feared beings. “Indeed, we did gather here for punishment, but not for me. Your reign of evil ends



Farirai Gapu (Arundel) (continued)

today. And know this, I did not intend
to avenge the beast who made me,
but rather all your victims whose
innocent lives you took.”

Wumuti left the now fleeting dust
and returned to the mortal world.
With the Sword of Encompassment
by his side, he learnt how to rule over
world justly and with kindness turning
it into a new utopia.



FORM 6 POETRY - WINNER •
Batsirai Nyawo (Peterhouse Boys)

TITLE: “Heroes Without Thrones: The Myths We Live, The Legends We Are!”

Often told fables of gods and kings,
Of gruesome wars and golden rings,
Of dragon’s flames and oceans wide
Of battles fought with sword and pride.

Not just in stories, the myths are clear,
Not trapped in books, they’re living here,
They walk with limps, they speak in pain,
They endeavour through negligence, stress and strain.

My hero is not within ancient scrolls,
She cooks and cleans, holding on to her goals
She smiles through adversity, she sings through grief
A quiet strength beyond her own belief

Myths expressed from long ago
In distant lands that watched magic grow,
But they arise from hearts that ache
In hands that heal, in those who break.



Batsirai Nyawo (Peterhouse Boys) (continued)

The boy that does, despite fear living in his head,
The girl who loves, what hate turned dead.
The friend who stays when all else ends,
These are the real myths the world defends.

A legend tumbles but still inspires,
Their voice becomes the peoples' choirs
Not yet acknowledged – they ignite
The kind who share their bright light.

And legends? Not only in statues tall,
But etched in cracks, the marks that fall.
In names we chant when times are rough,
In the souls that exclaim: "I am enough!"



FORM 6 PROSE - WINNER •

Amarachi Ojukwu (USAP Community School)

TITLE: “*Within the Cube*”

Mawin, dubbed “uhlanya” (the mad one) in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, was known by many as a schizophrenic. Tormented by vivid visions of the Cube and Earth’s destruction, he desperately tried to warn others, screaming Erno”’s name and proclaiming the impending doom. His pleas were met with ridicule, mockery and assault. Even fellow schizophrenics seemed indifferent. Mawin prayed nightly to Rubik, begging for the Cube to remain untouched.

His journey began not with a grand exodus, but with a quiet, internal shift. He stopped screaming in the streets, a silence that unnerved those who had grown accustomed to his fervent pleas. He traded his tattered

clothes for cleaner, though still worn, garments, a subtle nod to the gravity of his mission. His quest wasn’t about physical travel but, about transcending the boundaries of his perceived madness, seeking deepest truth. He believed if he could reach the source, the creator, he would make him understand.

One sun-drenched afternoon, as Mawin sat beneath a sprawling msasa tree, tracing the patterns of light and shadow, the world around him shimmered. The familiar sounds of Bulawayo faded, replaced with an ethereal hum. The vibrant jacaranda trees seemed to melt into swirling hues, and the distant calls of vendors became a faint whisper. He felt a gentle, irresistible pull, as if an



Amarachi Ojukwu (USAP Community School) (continued)

invisible thread was tugging at his very being. The air grew thick with scent of ozone and something akin to polished wood.

Suddenly, the world snapped into sharp focus, yet it was entirely alien. Mawin was no longer under the msasa tree but stood on a polished, geometric floor. Around him, walls of shifting, translucent panels displayed intricate patterns and equations. Before him, seated at a vast, elegant desk crafted from what looked like interlocking cubes, was a man. He was impeccably dressed in a tailored suit of a deep intelligent blue, his silver hair neatly combed, and his eyes though kind, held an ancient wisdom. It was Erno". Not the distant, abstract Rubik of his visions, but a man of flesh and blood radiating an aura of calm authority.

"Welcome, Mawin," Erno" said, his voice a low, resonant baritone that

seemed to vibrate through Mawin's very bones. "I've been expecting you." Mawin, for the first time in years, felt a profound sense of awe rather than terror. "You...you know my name?" he stammered; his voice hoarse from disuse.

Erno" smiled gently. "I know all who reside within my creation. And you Mawin, have seen more deeply into its heart than most. You've been ... persistent. I realised one day as I sat and contemplated that I had indeed created a tapestry." He gestured to a comfortable, minimalist chair opposite his desk. "Please, sit. You must be tired from your journey."

Mawin sat, marvelling at the sudden shift in his own appearance. His matted locks were gone, replaced by neatly trimmed hair. His clothes were crisp, white linen shirt and tailored trousers, mirroring the understated elegance of Erno" himself. He felt a



Amarachi Ojukwu (USAP Community School) (continued)

lightness he hadn't experienced in years, as if the burden of his visions had momentarily lifted.

"I ... I've come to beg you," Mawin began, the words tumbling out. "The Cube it's destroying us. Africa and soon Antarctica. You must stop!"

Erno" listened patiently, his gaze unwavering. When Mawin finished a heavy silence hung in the air, broken only by the soft hum of the shifting panels.

"Mawin," Erno" finally said, his voice tinged with a profound sadness, "The Cube is not a weapon but a reflection. It is the purest manifestation of order from chaos. The consequences you perceive, the 'destruction' of your lands and your people with the formation of the colours These are not my direct intent, but the inherent unravelling of a reality that struggles to fully comprehend its own design."

He leaned forward his elbow resting on the desk. "When I created the Cube, I sought to show the inherent logic of the universe, to show how disparate elements can come together in harmonious unity. The colours, the movements, the algorithms they are the fundamental laws of existence, the very threads of reality. Your world as you know it, is a fact of this grand design."

Mawin's mind reeled. "But the deaths ... the misfortunes! We believe in a God, and its you! You're controlling us!"

Erno" shook his head slowly. "Control is an illusion. I merely set the parameters. The choices, the interaction, the progression of events within the Cube, as a dance of causality. The 'deaths' you speak of are the natural reordering of elements within the system when certain universal principles are actualized. When a side is 'solved', it signifies a profound shift in the equilibrium of





Amarachi Ojukwu (USAP Community School) (continued)

that particular facet of existence. The universe, in its quest for balance, must then reconfigure itself.”

“So, it’s inevitable?” Mawin whispered, a chill creeping into his perfectly tailored clothes.

Erno”’s eyes held an ancient sorrow. “In the grand tapestry of existence, all things have a beginning and an end. The Earth, in its current iteration, is but one twist of the Cube. Your understanding, Mawin, of the time dilation, is correct. The outside world experiences time at a vastly different rate. Your Earth will indeed have a few thousand years, perhaps even more, before its current cycle concludes. I will have to complete my creation, otherwise what scientist would I be?”

He paused then added, “The prayers of the ‘schizophrenics’ as you call them, are not unheard. Your unique

perception allows you to see the underlying mechanics of the Cube, to group the subtle shifts that others cannot. However even with your sight, the fundamental principles of the universe remain. The yellow side must be solved for the Cube to reach its ultimate state of harmony.”

Mawin had sought answers, and he had found them, but they were not the answers he had hoped for. The immense weight of this truth, the inescapable fate of his world, settled upon him with an almost physical presence. He looked at Erno”, this serene, omniscient being, and understood that there was no malice, only the cold, unyielding logic of creation.

“So, there’s nothing I can do?” Mawin asked, his voice barely a whisper.

Erno” placed his hand on Mawin’s. “You have done what few others can.





Amarachi Ojukwu (USAP Community School) (continued)

You have seen the truth. You have carried the burden of knowledge with immense courage. Truly, un gumtanami (You are my child).”

Mawin spent the rest of the day in Erno”’s home. He saw chambers where celestial mechanics were modelled, and rooms filled with universal algorithms being perpetually calculated. He saw that Erno” was not a malevolent deity, but a craftsman, a creator bound by the laws he brought into existence.

When he was taken from the Cube, the transition was as seamless as his arrival. He found himself back under

the Msasa tree, the familiar sounds of Bulawayo slowly returning. His clothes were once again worn, his hair unkempt, but his eyes held a new understanding. His frantic urgency that once drove him was replaced with a sorrowful resignation. He knew the truth. The Earth would end. Not tomorrow, not next week. But in a future distant enough for humanity to live out its remaining days. He didn’t have to warn them anymore. The inevitable was far off. He sought a saviour and found the universe. Mawin finally gave up, but he did so with a crushing certainty.

GET IN TOUCH

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLIED ARTS

Office: Flat A5, Northern Heights, 5 Josiah Tongogara Avenue / Cnr Harare Street, Harare, Zimbabwe
Mobile: (+263) (0) 778 457 773 • Tel: (+263) (242) 702989, (+263) (242) 250921 • Email: niaa@yoafrica.com
www.niaazim.co.zw

Studio Chiratidzo.

Boutique Creative Consultancy & Design Studio

ENCOURAGE • EMPOWER • INSPIRE

**CREATIVE STRATEGY,
BRANDING, DESIGN
& LAYOUT PARTNER**

www.studiochiratidzo.com
[@StudioChiratidzo](https://www.instagram.com/StudioChiratidzo)

**PHOTOGRAPHY &
VIDEOGRAPHY
PARTNER**

Email [PXELFOTO](mailto:PXELFOTO@pxelbusiness)
[@pxelbusiness](mailto:pxelbusiness)

PXELFOTO



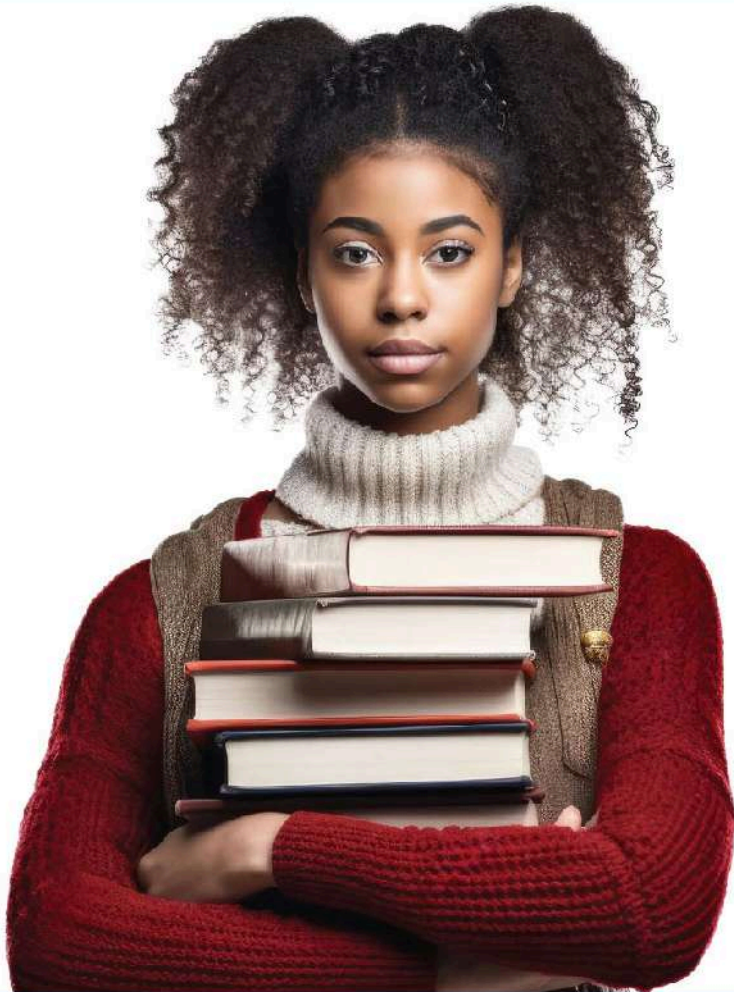
WILDWEB

**WEB MANAGEMENT
PARTNER**

www.wildweb.co.za



NO TO UNDERAGE DRINKING



We are Delta Corporation – Brighter Together

