

Letters

TO OUR **Daughters**
Volume 2



Mulberry
Schools Trust

GLOBAL
Girl
LEADING

**APPLIED
STORIES**

INTRODUCTION

from Dr Vanessa Ogden CBE

This poetry anthology was inspired by a book I was given when students of mine returned from a civil rights study tour in the United States. It was by President Barack Obama, and it was called *Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters*. The book contains a very beautiful poem by the President, describing the contribution of great women to our world – not just the work they have done but the values they have shared. The poem is addressed to his daughters.

It is a letter of hope, love and care for them.

It is a letter of confidence in all that they can become and the choices they will make as they take their place in life.

Letters to Our Daughters Volume 2 is our 2024 collection of poems featuring contributions from students from around the world as part of our Global Girl Leading programme. It is a chance to hear from girls and young women about their experiences and their hopes for the future in their own words.

I would like to thank the team behind the workshops and training resources, in particular Fin Kennedy, and our panel of judges, especially Leora Cruddas. I would also like to congratulate the students whose work has been included in this collection as the selection process was highly competitive. Finally, I would like to thank you for reading, and for showing your support for our writers and Global Girl Leading in doing so.

Dr Vanessa Ogden CBE
CEO, Mulberry Schools Trust

INTRODUCTION

from Fin Kennedy

When Vanessa Ogden invited me to design and deliver Letters to Our Daughters 2024, through my company Applied Stories, I was delighted.

Not only do I have a wonderful 9-year-old girl of my own, I have a long and proud association with Mulberry School for Girls stretching back 20 years.

From 2006-2013 I was Mulberry's salaried playwright-in-residence, an extraordinary initiative from an extraordinary school. There are two volumes of published plays in the shops from that time in my career, all large cast ensemble plays for diverse groups, co-created with young women aged 12-18, now regularly produced by other schools in the UK and beyond.

All my plays for Mulberry foreground the adolescent female experience, and their ongoing popularity is a fitting testament to Mulberry's unique vision - now at the heart of Mulberry Schools Trust. For decades, this has involved seeking out professional creative partnerships as a way of nurturing and stretching their students, and helping them to find their own unique voices. Not only does this bring inspiring role models into the school, it also gets these young women's voices into the mainstream, by celebrating and championing their work beyond the school gates.

Letters to Our Daughters is a fine example - an inspired idea, it encourages young women to think of themselves as part of a lineage, and challenges them to write messages to the future with wisdom, wit and power.

As you will see from the following volume, the results were astonishing. It really does feel like the voice of a generation. The project ran once before in 2018, with similarly great results, only this time around far more schools were involved. Mulberry's reach is now international - it was a pleasure to welcome schools from India, Mexico, Wales, Kenya and Australia - along with many English schools.

To support students to craft their letters to the best of their ability, Applied Stories worked with a wonderful team of professional writers – Sharmila Chauhan, Erinn Dhesi, Mel Pennant and Yusra Warsama – whose skills and experience range from playwrighting, to poetry, screenwriting and prose fiction. Their talent and enthusiasm were really the bedrock for the project's success. Together, we made a series of 25 instructional videos for schools in different time zones, with live online and in-person re-writing workshops for all those who sent us first drafts. (The pre-recorded videos are still available for free at www.letterstoourdaughters.world). We are also grateful to all the teachers who supported their students' work in between sessions.

Letters to Our Daughters was open to all messages, in all styles, and addressed to any kind of daughter - from real biological ones, to all future women, or even to one's own younger self. Most chose a lyrical, poetic form, though some sent letters in the traditional format, with some even hand-written, and beautifully decorated. They were a pleasure to read, by turns hopeful, despairing, tender, heartfelt, funny, wise, philosophical - and all fizzing with the energy and exuberance of youth. It was difficult to whittle down our c.300 entries to the 60 in this volume. Thanks are due to our judging panel of Jill Tuffee, Ben O'Hagan, Sharmila Chauhan and Leora Cruddas.

The letters do not shy away from some of the challenges facing young women in today's world, and do not always make for easy reading. But as always, Mulberry is putting the young female experience centre stage, and inviting us to engage with it on its own terms. In so doing, and in capturing those voices in print, I hope the project inspires many future young women, while having shown the writers contained herein that they have talent, and something to say worth hearing.

Look out for these names - they are the writers of the future.

Fin Kennedy

Artistic Director, Applied Stories
www.appliedstories.co.uk

A note on content

The letters in this collection have been written by an amazing range of girls across the world, from the UK, Mexico, Australia, India and Kenya. They reflect the experiences of these young writers and the world that girls live in in 2024.

If you are affected by any of the themes in this collection, please talk to a teacher or responsible adult.

GLOBAL
Girl
LEADING



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TO OUR DAUGHTERS, WHOSE EYES HOLD THE SKY

To our daughters, whose eyes hold the sky,
We pen these words, a whisper through the years,
In hopes you see how bright you are, and why
True freedom lies beyond your deepest fears

In dreams we paint the sky a deepest blue,
Expectations from the wings that carry you

May hope be the compass that guides your way,
A beacon when the nights are dark and cold,
With courage, claim your voice and light the day,
In every heart, a story to be told

So, dear daughters, embrace the boundless sea.
Let hope and freedom be your guiding light,
Expect the most, become who you should be,
And set the stars ablaze with all your might

Rumaysa Mustafa

Mulberry School for Girls

MY MINI ME

My Love, my mini me, the one that was built inside of me, heard my heart beating with yours - I'm being your mum, so listen carefully.

Keep close those who are in favour of seeing you succeed, not those who wish to mislead. Be wary of "friends" that only need you for something, they are there to take advantage.

They manipulate. They deceive.

Your ancestors paved the way for your curves, accentuating your journey ahead. From the thickness of your thighs, to the slimness of your waist, this nor the freckles on your face determines your fate. Embrace your beauty, see your features and be proud.

How I wish to go back in time, to reveal the richness of my culture. From Dark to Light, we are a community and we stand by our sisters. The roots from where we emerge from, the foundation of our nation. We stand strong, I stand tall, you stand firm, until we build a wall.

Your hair may be as curly as a spring, as firm as your roots, as straight as an arrow or as wavy as the waves that flow in the sea - none of these decree your level of being free.

Baby, I was afraid, so baby you be brave.
Take the opportunities that you are offered.
As those who have fought for your rights have suffered.

Stand firm and fix your crown.
Nothing could ever replace you, because I'll always be there to embrace you.

My Mini Me.

Destiny Billingham

Mulberry Academy Woodside

A LETTER TO OUR DAUGHTERS

I felt your small hands wrap around my finger,

When I first held you tight in my arms.

I watched you grow and flourish into an unstoppable woman,
as time had passed.

Roads are bumpy and choices are not easy,

However what I want you to take into accountability,

Is completing life's tasks to the best of your ability.

Even despite the hardships and breakups,

I want you to know that you are most definitely strong enough.

My love for you will always be unconditional,

Even once I'm no longer here,

My light of guidance will always be near.

Nothing can ever beat the strength of a mother's love,

So spread thy wings just like a pure dove.

Shine brighter than a moon on a hazy night,

And if you ever look back, you'll see me holding your hands tight.

Linett Weisz

Ursuline High School

DEAR DAUGHTER

Dear Daughter,

Each rose possesses its own individual beauty, they have strength and they have a story. Some roses may be brilliantly bold and radiantly vibrant, while others are so gentle and soft.

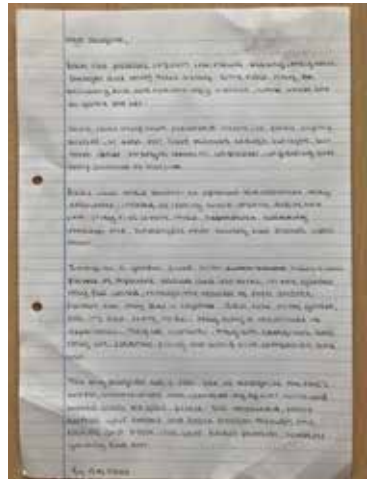
Some roses may have weathered storms, or petals slightly bruised, or even not have received enough sunlight, but their inner strength remains unbroken, unyielding and they continue to blossom.

Roses have their thorns – to represent the obstacles they encounter, instead of letting these thorns define the rose. They rise above their appearance breaking through the stereotypes that society has placed upon them.

Imagine a garden filled with these sweet flowers of different colours and varieties. In the garden they feel united, through the heaviest of rain and the hottest sun they feel it together. Each rose in the garden has its own story to tell, they carry a multitude of experiences. They are nurturers. They are caregivers and they are dreamers, filling our world with compassion and hope.

You my daughter are a rose. Let us recognise the rose's worth, contributions and unwavering spirits. Girls and women across the globe, please feel empowered, please embrace your dreams and please blossom through the barriers and bloom into your fullest potential wherever you may find that.

Ava Foster
Bexhill Academy



IT WAS THE DAMN PHONES

I think our parents were right,
It was the damn phones-
Laughing as children,
Hearing them say 'snapgram' and
'instachat' and 'facegram',
They would never understand,
They couldn't even say it right.

We wore the cloak of wisdom's
guise,
Believing we had seen it all,
Living with the world at our
fingertips,
We scroll through the trash,
Headlines engraved in our skin,
Wires for veins,
AI for a brain.

And they may not have understood,
But they were right-
It is the damn phones.

A drug in my pocket,
Dependent on simulation,
But can you blame us?
We were but children when they
were given-
We didn't know how to control it.

In mirrors of our minds we saw,
A world that we could understand,
Yet time unveiled our fatal flaw,
As shifting truths slipped through
our hands.

If I counted every hour lost to the
screen,
Regret and dread would seep into
my being,
So I bury this truth with endless
typing,
And it's not like I can just abandon
my phone—
It's our link,
Our language,
Our lifeline,
The cure that's slowly poisoning our
souls.

We used to fear robots gaining
consciousness,
Lies by the media to keep us
distracted,
So we wouldn't become conscious
of the mess they've created.

Does she have a natural face?
Or an iPhone face?
What era is she in?
Is she boy pretty
Or girl pretty?
Alien pretty
Deer pretty
Fox pretty
Bunny pretty
Trapped in a screen's embrace,
Chasing an ever-changing grace,
Her true self lost in endless disguise,
A reflection of society's lies.

We are the robots,
We are the products,
We are the future we feared.
And so I sit and I scroll and I rot,
On repeat.

Sit, scroll and rot,
Until my thoughts mirror the
media's,
Until my body is no longer my own,
But a tool of my political identity,
And so I sit and I scroll and I rot,
Posting on the internet about how
the internet has failed us,
So I may not fail my internet
presence.

Our parents were right-
It was the damn phones.

Kanika Pudur

*The Frances Bardley Academy
for Girls*

PERFECTION

Perfection is what you are always expecting to achieve,
and not being pleased with your results,
because apparently excellence doesn't exist.

Perfection may be your purpose in life,
It is told that mistakes are considered failures,
but the idea of limits,
is due to false beliefs of all kinds.

You will have fear of being judged,
fear of not being accepted,
fear of being a failure,
and never being able to face changes.

Nobody is perfect, you always heard,
we have to seek excellence in everything we do
in order for our dreams to come true.

Remember to be who you truly are,
our differences are what make us unique,
you will find peace by making things you like
and not what society wants you to be.

Bianca Olivier

Colegio Carol Baur



LIVE IN THE MOMENT

Live in the moment,
It's all you can do,
Pay attention to everything,
That's right in front of you.

The people you're with,
The place that you're at,
Like precious gems full of magic,
They can fall through the cracks.

Laugh till it hurts,
Even if you cry,
Tears can wash away,
They will always dry.

Drown in the happiness,
And hear all the cheers,
Don't let it become polluted,
With all your doubts and fears.

Live in the moment,
The valuable few,
Don't let the clock tick,
And catch up to you.

Because before you know it,
Your days will be over,
So close your eyes,
And enjoy the rollercoaster.

Sophie Toma
Ursuline High School

MY ROCK

My rock:

I wish you strength for any challenges you have to face in life. Embrace yourself for who you are, and stand proud amongst every crowd.

Don't waste time on impressing others,
You are beautiful just the way you are.
Remember, your body is not a book, so don't judge it.

I wish you adventure and discovery on your journey of life
And maybe you could help others along the way.
You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.

As your future mother,
I want you to know that when you enter this world,
I will always be thinking of you.
I'll hold you through my heart so you'll be safe.
I'll walk you through your failures.
Show you the paths to take for life.

You are your own story,
You are the author,
As well as the main character.
I'll be your sidekick from the day you will be born,
until the day I die.
You are a masterpiece,
so don't go searching for love when it's right in my heart.

My love, my rock, my number 1,
Please love and cherish yourself forever,
even until the end of time.

Love, your future mother, Sofia.

Sofia Abdirahman
Mulberry Stepney Green

DEAR DAUGHTER

Dear Daughter,

I am writing this letter because I want you to see yourself like I see you. And maybe, one day, you may realise that the way I see you is the way you are. You may not even consider my love for you, but try to picture it like this...

You started off as a seed. I was the soil. I protected you from the elements until you were strong enough not only to face them, but to need them, to be made stronger by them. I see you now growing, cautious yet determined, and I see glimmers of how colourful your future is going to be.

I know you don't want to experience the rain because you feel the weight of it heavy on your leaves. But remember, the rain is inevitable and storms will always pass, and it will define your beautiful array of colours.

As the sun beckons you forward, I can see you leaning towards it, curious as to what your future holds. Don't hide away. Keep on striving. The thought of your future dazzles me as much as it confounds you.

Although in my most selfish moments I'd like to keep you bound to me, soon enough you'll find yourself in a harmonious field, surrounded by other magnificent flowers; they'll be similar yet so different, every one unique and beautiful. But out of this whole meadow, you'd be the one I'd choose. So bright, so alluring, your possibilities so endless. For I can't help falling in love with you, my beautiful wild flower.

Bella Holdaway
Bexhill Academy



TICK, TOCK

Tick, tock.
Another hour passed by,
Simply because that's the thing to
do.
Life goes on,
The clock's big hand will never turn
clockwise,
Even if that's one's biggest wish.

'If you make that face for long
enough,
You'll be stuck like that!' is what
we were told when young.
Is that really true?
If you're stuck in a bad place for
too long,
Is it irreversible?

Memories will be stuck, sure,
But you aren't.
Memories will flood your room,
Your body filling with sorrow.

But like everything in this world,
It will only be temporary.
You can't turn back time
But you can heal from the
experience.
I stayed where I was then, the
thoughts consuming me
Like a blood-sniffing shark.

Hopes and dreams to be 'normal'
bit into my flesh,
Tearing me apart piece by piece.
One thing I learnt from that,
Is that the hardest thing you can do
Is go against yourself.

If it's for better or if it's for worse,
The most important part of healing
is will.
You always need self power.
No matter the conduct of your
intrusive thoughts,
Nothing will change unless you
change it yourself.

When I was torn into pieces,
I pieced myself back together.

Layla Faughnan

Bishop Douglass Catholic School

UNLIKE ME

If the curse comes true and I have a daughter just like me,
I will find that she is very easy to love,
Unlike me.

If the curse comes true and I have a daughter just like me,
I will brush and braid her hair,
Sing her lullabies and read bedtime stories,
Chase away the monsters under her bed.
We will give each other cute nicknames,
Make breakfast pancakes and waffles together,
Draw smiley faces with the vegetables in her lunch box.

If the curse comes true and I have a daughter just like me,
I will hold her and let her tears stain my favourite shirt as she
cries over a boy who broke her heart,
I will tell her that she is beautiful until she is sick of it.
She will not look in the mirror to peel back the layers beneath
her skin and rip herself apart.
Unlike me.

If the curse comes true and I have a daughter just like me,
I will have to tell her that the eyes of men will strip her naked
when she wears a skirt too short, or they will want to hug her
like her form fitting top.
That it isn't her fault. Do not let their eyes crawling across her
skin make her hate it.
I will tell her that her skin and her body carry stories of her
ancestors,
From the open fields on top of the mountains on a sunny day to
the constant rainy days of the summer monsoon season.
She will not let society carve their expectations and ideals
within her.

If the curse comes true and I have a daughter just like me,
I will smile when her father comes home from work, carries her
and twirls her around in the air,
She will know that her mother and father love her,
She will not be struck by my hand and confuse love with
violence.
Her father will not be her first heartbreak.
Her mother will not be her first wound.

If the curse comes true and I have a daughter just like me,
I will find that she is very easy to love,
Unlike me.

Shumaim Naveed

Ilim College

FIRST STEP

You're allowed an opinion,
No matter what anybody else says,
You're allowed an opinion,
Even if they tell you it should be suppressed

Your voice is yours,
So don't passively acquiesce,
To the voices of others,
Who aren't necessarily right instead

Judgement is a temporary thing,
So don't let it get to your head,
That your beliefs should be silenced,
Because of what certain people have expressed

You have a choice,
To agree or not,
But whatever the answer may be,
Let it be yours

A voice to an opinion,
Resilience against judgement and an understanding of choice,
They're powerful things to possess,
If you only have enough courage to take the first step

You'll make mistakes along the way,
Definitively so,
But when you do make them,
Remember that you were brave enough to make them alone

Aribah Chowdhury

Mulberry School for Girls

PRESSURE

They cannot hold me back,
They cannot tie me up in chains,
They cannot take away my
freedom,
They cannot leave me to decay.

I am not perfect,
I have my flaws, like everyone,
They can't take back what they say,
What is said is done.

I'm tired of being pressured,
I'm tired of being hurt,
In your darkest moments,
Pick yourself up out of the dirt.

Your insults don't upset me,
Sometimes they can hit hard,
But I move on past your words,
I am not broken, nor scarred.

If I do not live up to the standards,
I'm threatened, and criticised,
But the insults form cracks in me,
Which hurt on the inside.

We cover up our emotions,
Don't let our feelings out,
But eventually we will come
crashing down,
In a cloud of doubt.

They cannot tell me that I'm
powerless,
I'm more than they may think,
But in a flood of sadness,
I will rise, not sink.

I know that I am beautiful,
I know that I am smart,
And the thing that I know most
of all,
Is true beauty comes from the
heart.

Isla Martin

Townley Grammar School



LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

You may not control all the events that happen to you,
but you can decide not to be reduced by them.
Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.
Do not complain.

Make every effort to change things you do not like.
If you cannot make a change, change the way you think.
You must be the change you wish to see in the world.
You can change the world with your kindness.
You might find a new solution.

My wish for you is that you continue to develop.
Continue to be a beacon of hope.
Hold on to your dreams and never let go.
You are the creator of your future.
Believe you can and you will have a better future.

I wish you the best through your journey in life.
Remember you are loved.
Remember you are not alone.
Remember my words and let them lift your spirit.
Love, Mum...

Syed Isha Ayath
Mulberry Stepney Green

FRUITS AND WORDS OF THE SAME TREE

They can say you are a peach or a pear,
But they can say this without knowing you.
Since after all, aren't you but a stranger,
You are only yourself, not anyone else.

Danger! Danger! What's that! They say to you,
It's a new world and that's reasonable.
They can tell you one thing, then something else,
They aren't worth your time, they're predictable.

You can laugh, be happy, have fun and live,
Why spend your life sad and miserable?
Don't spend that time worrying about them.
Why hold grudges when you need to forgive.

I'm not a prune or plum nor peach or pear.
I am comfortable too, in my own hair.

Duru Gorkem

Townley Grammar School

SPECKLES OF THE WORLD

Her canvas, intricately crafted and devised perfectly by her mother,
The seams, the bedding, the hues of skin, none like the others.
She's gorgeous, stunning, beautiful, not an ounce of a flaw highlighted.

Once out in the world, blemishes occur, flaws are assigned.
Taunts, leers and abuse striking deep into her mind,
What's wrong with the display on her canvas?
His words are not meant to come across maligned.
Why taunt art? Has it not been designed with care and beauty?

He's just a man. She's just another stranger, they're just a public voice.
Who gave them the right to steal the paintbrush and blot her away?
You wouldn't parade into a museum and sabotage an art piece.
Because they're valuable and worth a lot.

Yet voices drift freely in the wind,
robbing, stealing and puncturing other girls' canvases.
Don't rip her by the seams. Or tell her that her features are absurd.
You are not the one with the paintbrush.
She is.
Let her paint her own path and burst into life as her authentic self.

Before she paints over herself,
eradicating the beautiful artwork that never needed to be destroyed.

Somewhere deep in her mind, echoing to her,
A voice prays that her daughter would never hate her own canvas.

Somaiya Rifa Pervin

The Frances Bardley Academy for Girls

PINK AND PERSEVERANCE

Once I hid from pink, a color so bright,
Dolls and frills, I deemed them not quite right.
Tomboy dreams, to be my Dad's surprise,
Dad, unsure how to relate,
Raised me differently from my brothers' fate.
Different from the sons, in his loving eyes.

Now, at sixteen, I'm in a whirl,
Surrounded by pink, a different girl.
In the mirror's gaze, a frail figure stands,
A figure that longs for her dad's hand.

Meals skipped, each bite a battle lost,
Invisible chains that come at a heavy cost.
Whispers of concern, voices fade,
An inner turmoil, a silent crusade.

Clothes hang loose, a baggy disguise,
Eyes that once sparkled, now lost in lies.
Friends drift away, unable to break through,
An unspoken plea, "Do you see it too?"

Every line, every curve, under the weight of my own scrutiny,
But no matter how much weight I lose,
No matter how many bones protrude from my skin,
Like jagged knives, it's never enough to satisfy.
Caught in a cycle, day after day.
A glimmer of hope, a distant light,
A journey ahead, to reclaim what's right.

I pray my daughter never walks this treacherous road,
That her story won't echo mine, left untold.
May she find strength in a world so unkind,
And never lose sight of the beauty she'll find.

Zeynep Elif Beyazgül
Ilim College



LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

To my future daughter, a letter in rhyme,
Advice for you, from our present time.

In this world that's ever-changing, bold,
Here are some truths that you should hold.

Be kind, my dear, to every soul you meet,
For kindness turns the bitter into sweet.
Stand firm in who you are, be true and strong,
In a world that may sometimes tell you you're wrong.

Embrace your dreams, let them reach the sky,
And don't be afraid to question "why?".
Education is your sword and shield,
With it, you can conquer any field.

Love yourself, with all your heart,
In self-acceptance lies the art.
The world may try to shape your view,
But always let your light shine through.

Respect the Earth, it's our shared home,
For future generations who will roam.
Live sustainably, with care and grace,
So beauty remains in every place.

Stay curious, let your mind explore,
There's always something new to learn, and more.
Technology will advance, horizons wide,
But don't forget to look inside.

Cultivate friendships, deep and true,
Those bonds will always carry you.
In times of joy, in times of pain,
They'll be your shelter in the rain.

Listen to your heart, it knows the way,
Even when the skies are gray.

Courage will come when you least expect,
And guide you through paths that intersect.

Remember to laugh, dance, and play,
Don't let life's burdens make you stray.
Moments of joy are life's true treasure,
Measure your life in love and pleasure.

My dear, the world can be unfair,
But with love and hope, you can repair.
The future's bright, the future's you,
And all your dreams can come true
From your future mother.

Zaina Khan

Mulberry Stepney Green

THAT GIRL

Don't let them tell you what to do
Don't let anyone control you
Don't make it seem like you knew
BE. THAT. GIRL.

Don't let them tell you that you
can't do that
Don't let them tell you that you
can't wear that
Don't let them tell you to sit like
that
BE. THAT. GIRL.

Don't cry over a boy
Don't just sit there like a toy.
Don't let them restrict you from
your joy
BE. THAT. GIRL.

Don't let anyone get to you my
precious daughter,
Neither let anyone down with you
Since my precious daughter, life
isn't perfect,
Neither is the world nor the people.

Nevertheless my daughter, you
shall fight, sacrifice, thrive and defy
who you are because YOU. ARE.
THAT. GIRL.

Before I say goodbye, I must tell
you comply and cherish these
words of mine,

Dream high like a bird soaring
through the sky
Love like a mother hugging you
tight
Thrive like a phoenix gliding across
the world

Accomplish goals like writing your
name onto this world.

But most of all, listen to mother,
my precious daughter, because I
know that you can and are THAT
GIRL.

I love you my precious daughter,

Adrita Jamali
Townley Grammar School

SANCTUARY OF MY HEART

Dear Future Daughter,
You are a melody yet to be sung,
A part of my soul.
The idea of you fills me with an eternal, tender commitment
To protect you forever.
The world is your canvas, let grace be your paint.
The world awaits you, my dear daughter

Spread your wings and soar.
When you stumble,
Find the courage to fly higher.
Remember you are destined to conquer.
Let curiosity drive you to explore.
In this wondrous world; be fearless, my little voyager.

In your veins run stories of sophistication and strength.
Your roots will be deep, your canopy will reach the heavens.
You are the promise of tomorrow,
The flower yet to bloom, the pearl yet to shine.
You will be my heart's greatest song,
The narrative of my life's beauty.

Dhriti Mondal

St Mark's Sr. Sec. Public School



MY LITTLE SURVIVOR

Girls are mean, girls are cruel.
Tender, oh so delicate hands
grasp what you love very most
and shatter it before your eyes.

My dearest daughter, out alone in
the world.
Clutch your heart. Hold it between
your perfect hands.
Warm it in your beating chest.
Shield it from harm
and allow my hands to shield yours.

Nestle your heart like a mother hen
as I have done.
Tightly but not too tightly. Just tight
enough so you do not drop it.
Let it linger between your fingertips.
Patch up the cracks here and there
with my memory
and soothe the creases with my
love.

I can no longer protect you. You are
on your own.
Nestle your passions deep below,
light a fire
and never extinguish it. Count how
many times you breathe as
I have done for you and rock
yourself to sleep.
Wipe away your tears and kiss your
father goodbye.

Walk through the streets bearing no
sword.

Experience the thrill of love with
caution. Always watch your back.
Always watch your back because
the knife has never been closer.
One that can penetrate your heart
from behind you and
you would not suspect a blink of
an eye.

Stand up to him.
Tell him.
Show him what it means to be you.
Don't let him steal that from you.
Don't let him take advantage of
you.

Eat. Don't count your calories.
Eat. Don't count your desserts.
Instead, count your blessings.
Instead, count your friends.
Instead, count your memories.
Instead remember the last time you
held my hand.
Enjoy yourself, embrace your beauty
and exercise your smile.

My little survivor
Survive when I cease to exist.
My little survivor
Fight your way through life.

Tessa Payne
Star of the Sea College

DEAR WOMEN OF THE PAST THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

To the women of the past who were constantly oppressed
Their basic human rights forever transgressed
Crushed by the patriarchy and all men who hated woman kind
Their bravery and knowledge continuously denied
They were women who dared to dream,
Fighting for rights against society's regime
When silence was the norm's disguise
You spoke out, you rose and claimed the skies
Carving paths through unbreakable stone
Your gift to us a beacon brightly shone
Women thank you for fighting for our cause
Our one gift to you eternal rounds of applause

To the women of the present strong and wise
Forced to traverse through ever changing skies
You inherit the gift of those before
Hearts unyielding you seek for more
Fighting in boardrooms, labs and city streets
Challenging boundaries you refuse defeat
Coerced to be second place to men
In a world where being a female means we cannot win
Raise your voices demand to be heard
Let us all champion justice with every word

To the women of the future, who've yet to come
May you inherit a world where battles are won
An Earth where equality reigns and dreams take flight
A world more just more fair and more bright
Stride forward unbound by man's constraints
Opportunities vast without restraints
Women of today pray for you to rule
Free of a society where men are free to be cruel
Let your fire burn within forever bright
Shaping tomorrow with all your might.

Dear women of all time, in every land,
Together we rise, hand in hand,
Past, present, future—our spirits entwine,
A legacy of strength, enduring and divine.

Aleeza Malik

The Frances Bardley Academy for Girls

EVERY GIRL'S GIRL

Pull down your skirt

Put on a dress

I'm not here just to impress

You tell me not to play sports,
You tell me not to laugh or snort,
I don't care for any of your
thoughts.

I'm not every girl's girl

I'm not here to cook and clean
Or for you to judge my self-esteem.
Remember this and remember well,
I'm not every girl's girl

My dress is too high?!!
Why are you looking at my thighs!
My arms are too big?
Should they be as thin as a twig?
Remember this and remember well,
I'm not every girl's girl

You think I can't fight?

Or are my muscles such a surprising
sight?

You'll be surprised about how
strong i can be

And how you'll never want to cross
me.

Remember this and remember well,
I'm not every girl's girl

So the next time you want to
deduce

And conclude your decision about
what I can do

Just remember this and remember
well,

I'm not every girl's girl

Aimee Lourdes Loko

Townley Grammar School



DEAR DAUGHTER

Dear Daughter,

Remember, the trees weren't always this grand and tall, they were once just saplings with leaves. You were a seed and I was your soil, a foundation for all of your possibilities.

I stand strong by your side and watch as you grow, as you reach up and shoot for the sun. And on days full of clouds that may feel glum, never forget now for you have come.

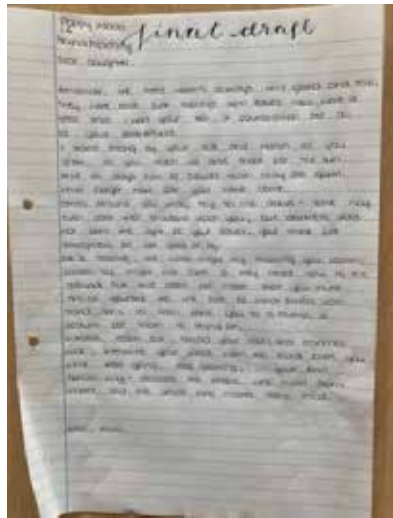
Others around you may try to rise above – some may even cast their shadows upon you, but darkness does not dim the light of your leaves, your trunk just strengthens as life goes on by.

As a sapling, the wind might try blowing you down, passers-by might not care if they tread you to the ground. But this does not mean that you must shrink yourself to the size of what others can stand. Don't let them force you to a stump, a podium for them to stand on.

Instead, reach out, spread your roots and branches wide, intertwine your vines with the loved ones you find. Keep going, keep growing, in your own special way – because the people who mind don't matter and the people who matter don't mind.

Love, Mum.

Poppy Webb
Bexhill Academy



FUTURE DAUGHTER...

Dear Future Daughter, let me fashion a picture for you,
Of a broad world filled with love, where dreams can come true.
May your spirit be resilient, your benevolence define,
And may life's admirations in your thoughts entwine.

In this expedition we call life, hills and valleys you'll tread,
Yet know, my dear, a crown rests upon your head.
With every challenge, you'll find strength to rise,
And your soul will ascend, aiming for the skies.

As you journey through life, my darling, embrace your worth,
Let no one dictate what you can or cannot compose.
Follow your passions, let your aspirations ignite,
Believe in your radiance, shining brilliantly in your own light.

Remember, my love, compassion is a precious gem,
Share it charitably, bringing joy's everlasting stem.
When challenges arise, as they inevitably do,
Rest assured of love's embrace, I'll be here with you.

My dearest future daughter, as these words I pen,
For you to feel the depth of love that evidently knows no end.
May your path be graced with joy and embrace,
And may your essence always seek its rightful place.

Mariya Yusra Ali

Mulberry Stepney Green

DARLING, DEAREST, MY UNIVERSE

My darling,
Though I've never seen you, still,
You are the moon for me, and even the stars.
The moon never looked pretty till I associated it with you,
The stars never made me happy till they made me think of you.
My daughter, you breathe life into my soul,
Filling my heart with joy everyday.

My dear,
Just like,
After every night comes a morning.
After every darkness, a light.
After every mother, a daughter.
Like a light that falls,
Filling us with hope.
You are the light in my life.

My universe,
I wish upon the shooting stars that,
I hope I raised you well.
I hope I taught you kindness.
I hope you are filled with compassion.
I hope you cherish honesty and loyalty.
I hope you understand the world's true essence.
I hope you see your unique beauty.
I hope you understand that everything you hear is an opinion,
And everything you see a perspective.
I hope you see the world in your heart,
And heaven in the moon.

I hope you know that a drop of ink can make a million think.
I hope you see people as rivers, ever changing and flowing.
I hope you feel the heartbeat of home.
I hope you realise that to define is to limit.

Don't confine yourself,
You only have this one life, my daughter.
Do poetic justice to your soul
And fully embrace yourself.
Fall in love with places.
Fall in love with people.
Most of all, fall in love with yourself.
My dear, forgive me for my flaws as a mother.
And at the end of the day,
Be wholly, beautifully you.

Manasvi Kansotiya

St. Mark's Sr. Sec. Public School

SOCIAL NETWORK

On the bright screen, where the world is reflected,
a girl watches, as her heart complains.

On social networks, where everything is perfect,
her journey begins, by her own defects.

See other girls, so beautiful, so free,
with radiant smiles and incredible lives.
Comparisons are born, like endless shadows,
her mind becomes clouded.

Every photo a sigh, every "like" a doubt,
Will I be enough? She wonders.
In the mirror she does not find what she sees in others,
and her insecurities grow, not knowing why.

There is no filter that hides what resides within her,
a light so bright that makes the world shine,
She is unique and strong, with her own destiny,
such a pure soul.

The journey is difficult, with nets that trap,
but in her heart, the truth finally comes out.
She is more than images, more than comparison,
a valuable girl, with her own song,
You need to shine by yourself.

María Flores

Colegio Carol Baur

DEAR DAUGHTER

Dear Daughter,

You are creative. You are strong. You are a nebula, burning tirelessly throughout space where no one looks. Fire sparked inside of you the moment you were born. Control it. Let it burn, but not destroy.

You **are** brave. You are courageous. You are the ocean, washing over the shore in a distant cave. Your blood runs blue, for you are your own royalty. Flow. Follow the waves, but do not get caught in the riptide.

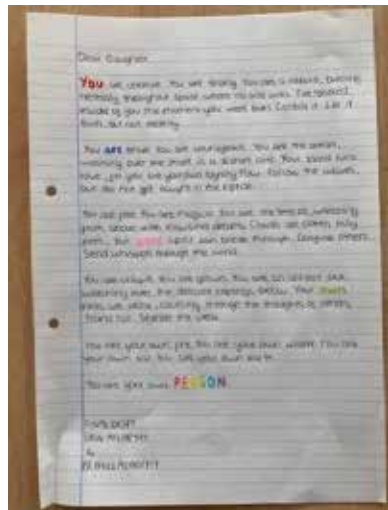
You are free. You are magical. You are the breeze, watching from above with inquisitive dreams. Clouds and storms may form, but **your** spirit can break through. Confuse others. Send whispers through the wind.

You are unique. You are grown. You are an ancient oak, watching over the delicate saplings below. Your **own** roots are veins, coursing through the thoughts of others. Stand tall. Shelter the weak.

You are your own fire. You are your own water. You are your own air. You are your own earth.

You are your own **PERSON**.

Erin McCarthy
Bexhill Academy



LETTER TO FUTURE DAUGHTER

To my Future Daughter,

You will be going into secondary school soon or may have just started,

You will be learning more about the world around you,
You may be growing up and finding who you are,
But in the busy world around you take some time to listen to my next words and ponder on what they may mean.

Think about them in times of trouble,

Or if you feel like you can't go on,
If you feel like you want to get in bed and cry,
Remember you have my next words.

You may be with people who know you inside out,

Others may only know your name,
You may find yourself with people you don't like,
And you could feel trapped between new and old.

Some people may be small to you,

But remember them as they were there for you,
Their names may be a mystery,
But they would have been there in your misery.

Your future may be mapped out in your head,

But oh, how the world twists and turns your path,
You can't control what way it chooses your path to go,
Just know that the world is doing its bit to get you to where you are meant to be.

It can be scary at times,

And oh how the world shouts and screams,
Remember that there is always ice cream,
For those times when you are worn out and rough.

Your voice can be your biggest mistake,
But learn how to control it and it will be your best friend,
You choose, will it be friend or foe,
Take your pick I know which one I would choose.

For my last point oh what can I say,
It could be to make your own crowd,
Or to be you,
Whatever I say, know you are wanted, loved and are the
missing piece to many people's puzzle.

I repeat you are wanted,
You are loved,
And you are the missing piece to many people's puzzle,
You be you, You do you and do it for yourself.

Alice Halford

Townley Grammar School



DEAR FUTURE BABY

Dear Future Baby,

In a world full of twists and turns,
Where trust can be hard to earn,
Remember my dear, to stand tall and strong.
Dance to the beat of your own song.

Follow your heart. Be true to you.
For your path is yours to pursue—
Listen to advice but trust your own voice
In your independence, you'll find your choice.

So spread your wings, my precious one,
Shine bright like the diamond you are,
Embrace your uniqueness, let it ring,
Through being yourself, you'll find everything.

In a world where shadows may deceive,
Hold onto the truth that you believe.
Let courage be your guiding light,
Through the darkest of the night.

Embrace the journey, take the lead.
In your dreams, you'll find what you need.
Trust in yourself—in your inner glow,
For in your spirit, your strength will grow.

So walk with pride, my little one,
In the battles you've fought and won,
Stay steadfast, brave, free
For in being true, you'll always be.

Shut out dark, bring in light.

From,
Your mother

Amelia Rahman
Mulberry Academy Shoreditch

I WISH

I wish I had grown up with a bigger room
I wish I had grown up with more flowers to bloom
I wish I wish I wish
But I grew up perfectly fine,
So was it necessary?

I wish I had grown up with clothes more in style
I wish I had grown up being able to run a mile
I wish I wish I wish
But I grew up perfectly fine,
So was it necessary?

I wish I had grown up funnier
I wish I had grown up in a country where it was sunnier
I wish I wish I wish
But I grew up perfectly fine,
So was it necessary?

And if my future daughter ever asks,
"Can I please have that?"
I will tell her no more than this.

Andre Duliebaite

Townley Grammar School

DEAR GIRL IN THE MIRROR

Dear Girl in The Mirror,

You stand there, staring at your reflection, and you see every imperfection, every flaw, and every doubt. But let me tell you something: you are powerful, capable, and worthy of greatness. Girlhood is a time of change and growth. Sometimes it's tough to find your way, especially in a world that seems to demand perfection. But let me tell you a secret. There is no such thing as perfect, my dear.

There's beauty in your imperfection. Your unique personality, quirks and imperfections are what make you special. You don't have to change yourself just to please others. Embrace every part of yourself, even the parts you may not love. Accept your flaws as part of what makes you beautiful. Don't shy away from the parts of yourself that you think are too loud or too quiet.

You are enough, my sweet girl.

Jannatun Islam
Mulberry School for Girls

ONCE

Once I was a newborn baby
Innocent and fragile
Hair soft and wavy
with Big brown eyes
and a pure soul
No baby can ever not be Beautiful

Once I was eight years old
My mind like a sponge
My mind already sold
on the lie I was told
I was eight years old
when I knew I wasn't beautiful

Today I am a fifteen
it's unconscious and it's deep
I see it when I wake up
and it catches me in my sleep
and I know it's somewhere in myself
because I can only see beauty in
everyone else

One day I'll be grown
and I'll have a child of my own
I'll give her those same eyes
so big and so brown so beautiful
maybe when I see myself in her
I will see my beauty

One day when I'm an old woman
through the wrinkles embedded in
my face
from all the days the sun that kissed
my skin
my soul will escape through the
cracks
and it will radiate through my body
and just as my life fades away

I'll finally feel beautiful

Bethan Stuble
*The Frances Bardley Academy
for Girls*

THE ROLLERCOASTER

Life is the rollercoaster
You're going to be riding but never
in the driver's seat

You reach higher and higher,
working for your goals, trying to pass
life's tests

Anxious whether you're actually
going to be appreciated for once

Looking forward you finally come to
know about life's beauty

And that you only live life once, but
if you work it right, maybe once is
more than enough

The next thing you know, you're
plummeting down

You're numb

Can't feel anything

All those supporters you had

Those are the people who're talking
behind your back

Hope's nowhere to be found

You want to get off the ride

You're plummeting and plummeting
and plummeting down, you almost
crash into the ground when the
voice pops up in your head

"You can do it"

You straighten up your back again

Think about the ones you love then,
more importantly, the ones that truly
love you

And then, slowly and steadily, you
rise back up

Along with your self esteem

And then before you know it, you're
back where you were before, more
ready than ever what's to come next

My child, in life's vicious cycle, never
give up on yourself. Remember, life
has its ups and downs but it's your
choice if you scream or if you enjoy
the ride.

Anika Lahori

Townley Grammar School

THEY'LL TELL YOU

In this world, they'll tell you
"Sweetheart, my princess,
Nothing's wrong with a frilly dress
Strap on your stilettos
I'm sure they won't crush your toes
No such thing as too tight
You've just gained weight, right?
No more dessert for you, you fat pig
You look so thin, have a meal and make it big,
Smear on some lipstick,
Mascara wand, you look like a dipstick
Gosh, wear this skirt, you look like a boy,
Look, it's too short, it's like you're a toy!
So childish
So boyish
The gala's starting, don your palest concealer
Oh my! Your face, it's like a sheet of paper!
Apply some vibrant multicoloured eyeshadow,
Your eyes are flat, lacking a single shadow
You're being extra, what's with all that makeup
Your entire face, it's just made up
You're trying way too hard
You'll never be enough
Stop crying, be tough
This is all for the sake of you, you, you, you"
That's what they'll tell you

Now you're left asking yourself:
"What did I do wrong? I hate myself!"
You were too thick, now you're too thin,
You weren't pale enough, now you're blindin'?
"I'm so confused, how do I please anyone?"

If that's how it is to please anybody,
Then please nobody.
Don't please people, even for a day
You should say,
"This is my life, not for you
There can only be one controller, there can't be two
Don't dare dictate my every move,
I'll go by my own groove
The lies collapsed, restoring my sight
Cause this girl has realised her right
To live as me, and not how you want me to be"

Divinefavour Adekanmbi

Townley Grammar School

FUTURE DAUGHTER

Future daughter, listen close,
In this world where dreams impose.
You're a force, a shining light,
Embrace your strength, take flight.

Life's road may twist and turn,
But from challenges, you will learn.
Imperfections make you whole,
Self-love, a beacon for your soul.

To the young women, past and new,
Your voice, your power, break through.
Stand tall, let truths be unfurled,
Together, we'll change the world.

Keep that spark alive, my dear,
In your heart, let courage steer.

Love,
Your Future Mother

Leeya Rabbani
Mulberry Stepney Green

DEAR WOMEN OF YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Dear Women Of Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow,

As women we are always taught how to sit, eat and talk, but there are some things that we must learn on our own. We need to learn how to survive in a world where everyone is out to get us.

We are called sensitive and told we are overreacting when we are expressing emotions.

So we must learn how to hide those "extra" feelings.

We are called disrespectful and ill-mannered when we fight for respect with family and friends.

So we must learn to tolerate being treated as an object, in order to be obedient and lady-like.

We are held accountable for the actions of others.

We are blamed for the men who cannot control their gaze.

We are blamed for the elders that are insecure about our lifestyles.

So we must learn to cover our shoulders and knees and keep our lives private but not secret.

We are analysed every step we take.

We must be pretty all the time but not wear so much makeup.

We must be smart but not make others feel dumb.

We must be talkative but not a chatter-box.

We must be clean but not a control freak.

But this is not what women need to learn.

Women need to learn to be as "emotional" as they want.

Women need to learn how to talk back.

Women need to learn how to live their lives.

Women need to learn how to wear whatever they want.

Women need to learn to be successful.

Women need to learn to make their lives their own.

Sezin Sevk

Pascoe Vale Girls College

TO MY DEAREST DAUGHTER

To my dearest daughter,
Pain is ultimately inevitable,
As much as we run from it,
It will come to haunt us
When least expected
It is said that mistakes of disappointment
Failures
Can all shape a woman
"To make them stronger," they said.
They said "It will all pass."
But what if it doesn't?
It is evident,
From the histories of women in the past
That the suppression of emotion – the pain – was never the
answer.
Because what if it doesn't pass?
The desire to be free, break free from all expectations
Can be all too strong
When suppressed
Lead to corruption
On the inside.
Now – a part of us seeks revenge
Revenge for all the women who didn't make it
Unheard
Labelled weak for giving in
To my dearest daughter, when pain presents itself
I hope you do not suppress it
Embrace it,
Scream, be crazy.
For the women in the past
They'll be applauding
Grinning
For the life they never lived.

Anisah Norashraf
Pascoe Vale Girls College

DEAR DAUGHTER

Dear Daughter,

In my dream, I've seen your face, so radiant and kind,
Your laugh like honey,
lingering and oh so sweet,
replays over and over in my mind

Your muffled cries, soft and hushed,
gentle footsteps along the floorboards of our home,
making your way hurriedly to my room,
so you are no longer alone in the empty cold.

I promise to be the answer whenever you need me to be,
your rock, moon, sun,
guiding you through the darkest of times,
it will be me
I promise to give you everything you deserve,
as long as you promise to me,
To never let your light die out
Unique, vivacious and happy

Yes you may still be hypothetical,
A story waiting to unfold, one that hasn't yet been told,
But you're more to me than something imaginary,
More to me than anything,
My firefly
Light up the sky,
Never hide your light,
It's your time to shine.

Zaara Hussain

Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest

REMEMBER

Remember Rosa Parks
 The lady who refused to stand up
 The lady who led the famous bus
 boycott
 The lady who fought against
 apartheid
 That's who I want to be

Remember Emmeline Pankhurst
 The lady who fought for our rights
 The lady who created new fashion
 trends
 The lady who wanted to vote
 That's who I want to be

Remember Rosalind Franklin
 The lady who discovered DNA
 The lady who almost won the Nobel
 peace prize
 The lady who worked hard to
 achieve what she did
 That's who I want to be

Remember Frida Kahlo
 The lady who loved to paint
 The lady who was kind to others
 The lady who stayed strong through
 thick and thin
 That's who I want to be

Remember Ada Lovelace
 The lady who understood maths
 The lady who had a brilliant mind
 The lady who created what no man
 ever could
 That's who I want to be

Remember Princess Diana
 The lady who was bold and
 independent
 The lady who fought for what she
 believed in with grace and poise
 The lady a whole nation loved
 That's who I want to be

But will you remember me
 The girl who loved to write
 The girl who was kind to everyone
 The girl who everyone liked

Will you remember your mothers
 The woman that raised you
 The woman that loved you every day
 The woman that held your hand
 when things got tough
 The woman that taught you
 everything you know

Will the future remember us
 The women that stand here today
 Because
 To those future women
 I hope you want to be just like us

Emma Gay
Townley Grammar School

MY DEAR DAUGHTER

My dear daughter,

In life's chapters, the lessons are vast.
The pages turn with wisdom from the first page to the last.

Resilience shines through each challenge we face.
Empathy and kindness, fill the heart's empty space.

Choices, like stars, guide us at night,
Illuminating paths with their gentle lights
Gratitude whispers, soft as a dove
Teaches us richness found only in love.

Follow your dreams, young child, reach for the stars,
With passion as your compass, your journey far.
Chase your visions by day by night.
In the pursuit of dreams, you'll find your light.

So take these lessons, hold them near
Let them guide you, clear away fear.
For life's book, with each turn a new start.
A journey of growth, a work of art.

From,
Your Mother

Isabella Wint

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch

LETTER TO OUR DAUGHTERS

How to define a 'girl'?
Being a 'girl'?
Who are we?

'Girls'?
'Merched'?

Painting pretty pictures on our
features.

Pores powdered away. Strokes of
Brushes, brushing away the flaws,
sleeking locks of lustre.

Now it's a good day.
Nobody can question.

Nobody will see the lack of sleep.

Thinking of the outfit, thinking of
my mother and my brother. What
am I having for breakfast?

Is that too much or

Too little?

Little does anyone know.

Cracks in my own foundations
covered by own foundation.

Do they hate me?

She hates me because of him.

She called me this. She called me
that.

I'm on my period.

The tears won't stop. Tearing away
at my hard work.
Tearing away at my mask.

Everyday, I wear the mask.
Mwgwd y merched.

It's blusher and body-shaming.

Lipstick and lies.
Colur a chelwydd.
Dragged into drama by my mascara
wand.

I'm talking about makeup.
Ydw
Am I superficial?
Nadw.

Because when asked what I'd do
with money- I'd share.

Be kind. You helped me. I'll give
back.

Rhoi nôl.

I'll help others survive like I did. Like
I do.

As a girl. Fel merch.

I'm not Kylie or Beyoncé or Barbie.

No billions, castles or Ken.

All I want is to be happy. Win
arguments with boys. Show them
what I can do.

Have my own body, my own
voice, and never forget who I am.
Perfection- na dim diolch.
Fy nghorff, llais, hunaniaeth.

I paint the pretty pictures for me.
Gwnaf hyn am fy hunan.

A girl / woman.

Merch / Menyw.

Merched Glantaf

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf

SONDER

A woman's vessel, with strength so fierce
Her body, her armour, her weapon, so fierce
The struggles she faces, the pain that she bears
To others, it's a struggle, that may seem like her fears.

The reflection she sees, the expectations she feels
The mould that she must fit, the struggle she must heal.
It's a journey she's on, to love as she's told
To love as she's meant, to love as she's bold.

With her body she fights, with love she tries to heal.
The struggles, the pain, the hurt, she must deal
The expectations, the pressure, that she must hold.
The body she's in, that she must make bold.

Her vessel, a fighter, a shield that she uses
The strength, the love, the light that she has that she holds.
With sonder, she's learned, to love as she's meant to be told.

Zaynab Thalukder

Mulberry School for Girls

A LETTER FOR YOU

Dearest Daughter,
I hope you're fine and well.
Today, I write to you
for there is much to tell.

In the words I pen with love,
In every verse I write,
I send along all my care
in a timeless flight.

I haven't seen you ever.
Never heard your voice.
But, I see you in my reflection.
I hear you within my rejoice.

The day I first meet you,
I'll cradle you in my arms.
"Always remember, you are
special."
And that's lesson one.

And when you take your first steps,
I'll hold your finger and come along.
"Remember, every journey begins
with a single step."
So be confident and be strong.

As you grow older,
the world around you will too.
But don't get lost in its whispers,
my dear.
The hero of your story is you.

Life will challenge you someday.
Struggles could knock your door.
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
remember?
Your ship will find its shore.

Be gentle, be kind.
Be creative, be yourself.
My dear daughter, you are loved.
But remember, to love yourself.

Yours lovingly
Harnoor

Harnoor Kaur Matharu
St Mark's Sr. Sec. Public School

VOICES POWERFUL

Let your voice be heard with kindness,
Words can build bridges strong.
In joy and sorrow, let them bring light
Express dreams, let them take flight

Speak with love and hope in your heart,
Let your words set you apart.
In every moment, use them with grace,
For words have the power to embrace.

In times of struggle, let them heal,
With gentle words, wounds can seal.
In moments of triumph, share your cheer,
Let your words bring others near

May your words inspire and guide,
With honesty, never hide.
For in this world, your voice is a gift,
With every word, spirits lift.

Ayana Khanom
Mulberry School for Girls

TO MY FUTURE DAUGHTER

To my future daughter,
Your glow is internal, don't let anyone put it out.
You make the blossoms bloom in spring.
You make the sunflowers shine in summer.
You make the roses rise in autumn
And finally, you make the primroses sway in the winter wind.
You bring joy to me, and everyone you meet.

Use a new voice to express your feelings,
Your opinion can change the world.
Power may be gained when you speak,
Don't hide away, gain confidence.
Waste you must not, your voice identifies you,
It may seem hard, but you can do it.
Never forget to use your power, don't waste it.
Words can hurt, but your joy can heal the scars.

With everlasting love,
Your Mother.

Fatimah Uddin
Mulberry Stepney Green

HYPOCRITE

Society's a hypocrite
Makes me wanna throw a fit

There's a saying that goes around
"Always be yourself."
Yet those words,
Somehow always contradict themselves

There's always too many expectations:
"She must grow up to be successful, beautiful and smart!"
Going on for many generations
But let me tell you something truly from the heart

Every subconscious look in the mirror
Can distort your vision, making it less clearer
You judge your appearance and weight
Comparing to others' bodies with hate

But real beauty isn't one you can see or touch
Physical appearance can never compare to such
Where it truly lies, is thy soul
It's the one thing society can't control

Society's a Hypocrite
Makes me wanna explode to bits

"Don't judge a book by its cover"
They say, "it's untrue and unwise"
While men blindly search for a lover,
And women put on a disguise

The surface is nothing
But a facade, the only reason men are loving
A pretty mask crowned on our faces
The real us, only simple traces

Our lives are like a circus,
To be put on show
The only thing that shines are the cameras
As our insecurities grow

So, my dear daughter
Please remember,
Come hell or high water,
From January to December

Don't follow the crowd,
(Say your thoughts aloud)
Let them follow you,
(This, I tell you, is the way that is true)

Follow your dreams,
Don't fall for society's schemes
Follow your heart,
Be wise, be smart.

So, my dear daughter,
Whenever your head's underwater
Follow my words so you don't go astray
They will always be there to lead the way.

From your dear, loving mother,
One that loves you unconditionally like no other
I'll always be there for you
Everyday, through and through

Isabella Nianghoilun

Townley Grammar School

LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

I'd burn holes in my skin if you wanted to touch my bones
I'd knit my arteries into a sweater if you told me you were cold
I'd bleed myself out if you liked the colour red
I'd set flames to the world if you wanted to see what was below, the
world of the dead
I'd even set myself on fire if you thought the spark was fading
Your eyes are like daggers, but I crave the feeling of how into my
heart they go carving
I'd give you my food if you were hungry, even if it meant me starving
If I was a cat, I'd only wish to spend my nine lives with you
I'd be your shadow if you were the object, just so that I could be with
you, all the way through
But are you worth it?

Are you worth my tears?
Are you worth my time?
Are you worth losing my mind trying?
But most importantly,
Are you worth me losing myself over?

To my daughter,
Listen to my words
Heed it. Follow it.
Because one day you'll understand and learn

You can't make them appreciate you,
But there are people who will do it naturally.

You can't make them understand you,
But there are people who will do it non-judgementally.

You can't make them love you,
But there are people who will do it unconditionally.
You can't force them to be friends with you,
But there are people who will do it effortlessly.

Don't choose to settle, when there's something better for you
If you don't feel loved, it's not for you.
If you don't feel cared for, it's not for you.
If you don't feel safe, it's not for you.
If you don't feel like yourself
It is not for you.

Julia Jimmy

The Frances Bardley Academy for Girls



MY BEAUTIFUL GIRL

My beautiful girl,
I have often thought of what you will be like when you are born...
Will you laugh? Will you cry? Will you keep me up till dawn?
I wonder how big you'll be, how loud you'll be, how wonderful you
will be...
Then I'll think of you when you are three.
I think about what you will be like when you are three,
Will you walk and talk? Or rather sit and see?
Will you prefer the butterflies outdoors, or the pictures on a page,
And then I think of you when you are my age...
When you are my age,
Will you have my pains and joys?
Will you see life as I have, love as I have?
Will you be bold and brave?
Because when you are my age- you will laugh and you will cry,
You will walk and talk, sit and see.
You will be all that you have been and all that you are to be,
Because life is a wonder and a mystery,
I do not know what you will be like or who you will turn out to be,
But I do know that you will have so much love from me.
As your life begins to unfurl,
Just know you will always be my beautiful girl.

Lois Jacob

Haggerston School

BLOSSOM

I wish I told myself how beautiful it was to be me
The bouquet of inner beauty that was truly inside thee
The way my hair glistened in the eyes of the sun
Soaring to high expectations with my two feet I run
My basket of flowers still
Blossom, Blossom, Blossomed

I wish I knew never to swim in an ocean full of sorrows and fear
For the spirit of God was always near
My smile abundant with joy and love
As pure and wholesome as a white dove
I withstood my belief to
Blossom, Blossom, Blossom

My younger self that was full of energy and adventure
Who held on tightly the personality of a perfecter
Dancing, Singing, Running, Writing
Poems on Poems I was eager on reciting
The hunger for more words and more knowledge
Helped me enjoy eating my fruits, oats and porridge
But my flowers remained to
Blossom, Blossom, Blossom

The fear of losing myself
My head always up in the clouds of confusion
Star struck by why my features stood out amongst my peers
Highlighted by the waves of fear
The twists turns
The lows the highs
My assortment of flowers still
Blossom, Blossom and Blossomed

The warm breeze of butterflies engulfs my stomach
Thinking about the times my dimples were swollen from
being proud of you
Amidst the controversial turmoil of doubt
I always stayed true to myself too
The flower within me should still and always
Blossom, Blossom, Blossom

Opéyemi Sarah Adegoroye

Mulberry UTC

DEAR DAUGHTER

Think of life as a tree, you grow, gain knowledge until you can tower over your world and provide shelter for your blossoming flowers.

There will be highs – when your branches fill with vibrant petals. But there will be lows

when your emerald jewels drop away, leaving you feeling bare,
alone,

No phase of life is stuck on repeat...
...and on repeat, the seasons will move on for the good or bad.

The plant network, spider web,
Leaves no tree
alone,

no flower
You add to the atmosphere, the feeling buzzing around the room.

unconnected.

There will always be ivy, entangled in your branches, bullies hacking at your

trunk,
your
central
structure, and

they will always be outnumbered.

Your worth cannot be imagined.

CANNOT be written down on paper
for there are not enough words in the dictionary to describe it – you are absolutely A M A Z I N G! There is no one else like you in the universe.

You may prefer sun to rain

Happiness to sadness, but both are vital for growth.

SEE

I'd like to give you a heads up about what you may encounter in the world that you're about to live and grow in.

I want you to feel **empowered** and **comfortable** in your own skin.

When it comes to the way you feel and the way you see yourself, I want you to feel certain in not only who you are but your complexion and your body shape.

See yourself as a **queen**.

See yourself as **gold**.

See your **skin** and feel proud. **Proud** to be a black woman living in the UK

See your **features** and feel **worthy**.

See the **texture** of your **hair** and feel inspired.

See my **footsteps** that I have left behind and recreate my **legacy**.

You will face many challenges as you get older, however, you will accomplish loads and achieve ALL that you put your mind to.

As your mother I believe in you. Stay true to yourself and don't let anyone break your spirit.

See you.

Kayla Ponton-Reid

Mulberry Academy Woodside



WRINKLED SKIN

I saw a fearless face in that picture.
A girl looking at another girl.
Through the veins of time and film between our fingers.

Half a century is between us -
And yet nothing at all.
I see my sister's smile in her,
My aunt's nose in her,
My mother's eyes in her,
And you are sat close to me.

Blood pumps and drains and relates across time,
Appearing in people, and faces,
In bitten tongues and stretched wombs.

Those girls standing in a row are taken from our hands now.
He inspects it, bends it, smudges it;
Sometimes he covers a whole face with his fingertip.

I say, "50 years," to you,
"A piece of time is looking back at us.
50 years ago, these girls lived that moment. and here you are -
Sitting next to me - in another."
50 years.
He repeats it. 50 years. Turns the image toward us again. 50 years.
He seems to marvel at that.
But all he can talk about is the technology;
The quality of the photo,
How incredible man's great machines are,
Standing above us with grabbing hands around pieces of our faces,
Talking about how good it looks.

And we have to look up to him.

I coax him like a baby.
Ask him to be careful with the parts of us he holds;
Parts and yet all whole.

I just take things now.
Some things are too cruel to be kind about.
Your silence next to me: I have unlearned,
Unlearned the cruelty of being trodden on, and calling it -
'Kindness shown unwaveringly'.

I rock myself and feed myself and dress,
I put myself to bed and draw myself nice pictures.
I argue for myself, protectively defensive.
I am my own daughter I look after.

I will never have a part of me to hold;
A part and yet all whole.
I won't ever coax a baby,
my baby,
my daughter.

I stand up and take the picture back,
Saving the girls from his hands,
Safe from wrinkles and tears and creases.

My tongue is not bitten and my womb is not stretched.
I will not have a daughter.
Not because I do not care,
But because I do.
I care.
For her,
About her.

You don't understand it.
Or me.
But I do.
Because I am my own daughter, I look after.

Yasmin Shahumi

The Frances Bardley Academy for Girls

THE DAUGHTER I USED TO BE

Little finger tips paint along the wall,
Tiny feet tapping against the floor,
Your heart so clean and pure,
Open for everyone to see,
You liked to dance and you loved to sing.
Your musical numbers leave melodic dents in the walls of your head.
You will continue to grow on musical notes and meaningful lyrics,

As you grow, you learn a lot,
Your identity is fragile
You're easily hurt and you cry a lot,
Your tears drown out the comfort that's handed,
Your tiny arms outstretched for a hug that's just out of reach.
Your fingertips brushing against the ghost of affection

Their voices ring in your tiny ears,
Sneers and cruel comments circle around your mind.
The harder you try to change who you are,
The more it hurts to pull away from the part of yourself you love,
They paint a picture of a person you are not,
You follow their paint brushes of what you believe is perfection

The identity you once held is the ashes you will carry to a grave,
A grave of the person you used to be,
The dreams you attempt to catch turn to dust in front of your very eyes,
You grow up to loathe and hate the world,
But is the world really the enemy when all you see is a reflection of yourself?
Of who you dreamed to be,
Of who you once were.

You envy the naivety of her nature,
The way she once held freedom in those little painted fingers,
The daughter you wanted to be is gone,
The daughter we used to be is mourned,
The daughter I needed to be has hidden herself from the very things that
torment her still.

Charley Flint

The Frances Bardley Academy for Girls

THE WHISPERS OF MY ETERNAL LOVE

To my dearest daughter, though I'm not here,
Feel my love, feel it warm, feel it clear.
Feel me in every whisper of the breeze
In the rustling of the leaves and the dancing of the trees.

Though I have gone beyond your sight, do not cry.
I'm in the stars that brighten up your dark nights
Each one twinkling, a kiss from me to you;
To guide you through all the pain I poured upon you.

My darling,
When sorrow weighs upon your heart,
Remember, we're not far apart.
I am not gone.
In dreams and memories, I remain,
A gentle hand to ease your aching pain

So carry on my child
With strength and grace
I promise you are loved in every place.
I know and I'm gone and I'm sorry I can't watch you grow
But my spirit's near, to help you through each doubt and fear
So remember, my dear, my beyond the blue
My heart will forever beat for you.

From,
Your Mother

Oliviyah Aluse Antwi
Mulberry Academy Shoreditch

TO MY FUTURE DAUGHTER

To my future daughter,

I would like to begin by saying that human beings are a horrible species. We kill and destroy and pillage until there's nothing left. And although it would be nice to find a convenient excuse for the wars and bloodshed and lives taken, the truth is most of the time this needless destruction benefits no one.

I can't promise everything will be alright for you, for your future and your legacy. I can't promise anything, about the Earth or war or current affairs. However, I'm not here to do that. I'm here because I know that you can make these hopeful wishes a reality. You are strong and powerful and all the tools you need to make a change. Even though you're only one person, you are so, so much more powerful than you could ever imagine.

I've only been alive for 12 years but even I have realised how daunting and completely unrealistic it seems to consider yourself capable of such change. But if I have even an inkling of understanding of you, of the unborn generation, and you put enough trust in yourself then you are more than capable of creating a change, of overcoming war and mending the Earth.

Pramiti Oinan Gupti

Townley Grammar School



TO MY PERFECT DAUGHTER

To my perfect daughter.

Perfect. That is what you are and always will be. But what does it mean to be perfect? Does perfect mean to have good grades? Does perfect mean to have amazing friends and family? Does perfect mean to have a slim body and a perfect face?

Well I am here, and always will be here, to remind you that you are the perfect definition of perfect.

From your contagious smile to your warm heartbeat, I have always known of your amazing capabilities. As your mother I pray that you will be protected from falling into the spiral which many young women face within the diminishing society we live in today. From social media to unprecedented beauty standards, you stand firm and sole from those beauties as your happiness and laughter humiliates all makeup. To protect you from such is my sole task and I will do my best to fulfil my duty towards you. I am not here to lecture you, nor quarrel with you, but to advise you with whatever knowledge I have to support a strong young woman.

As a 17 year old, writing this letter to you on this late night, I would like you to know that I have faced many challenges. Maybe one day I will share my deepest shards which pierced through me. But before I do so, I would like for you to understand why I went through such challenges. From my own eyes, I was a well behaved student who achieved well in my academics and extracurricular. I was surrounded with supportive and well-conducted friends as well as family. I was happy and pleased with myself. However, none of these related to my own challenges. As a human we will all face blockages in which we may feel hopeless and unable to comprehend why such is taking place in our lives. But I want you to understand that even the dove faces irreparable problems, and we are bound to face challenges and make mistakes.

I adore you so much, knowing you will be my own and my companion, as I was for my mother. I am not the greatest and I will never be able to fill the shoes of my own mother. But for you I will push myself to be the best version I can, just to see you grow and flourish like the flower you are. I am not sure where you are. I am not sure who you associate yourself with. I am not sure of anything for the future. Nevertheless, I love you and hold you closely to heart like a tree which clings to the soil underneath. I hope you will always remember me and always remember that, "Practice makes progress, and progress makes perfect".

From your best friend,
Mummy x.

Ridhaa Zahraa Hussein
Haggerston School



TO THE FUTURE

To the future,
I do not see a fate worth living
if we do not uphold the voice that those before us

Toiled for
Fought for
Sacrificed lives for.

There is a flame within each and every one of us
And we have a duty to tend to it
No matter how intense the searing burn.
And it will burn terribly
And there will be many who try to diminish it
Stamp it out
Vanquish it
But don't you dare submit.

To my future.
You carry a flame, stoked and cherished by those who came before you.
The voices that rang loud and clear when many tried to dampen it.
So when the embers spit,
When the raging heat becomes too unbearable
Remember those who came before and
those who will come after you.
Fight for them,
If not for yourself.

You shape the path for your descendants.
Make it one worth walking.

Shakinthana Amalasuthan
The Frances Bardley Academy for Girls

I HOPE YOU LIKE BEING ALIVE

I hope you like being alive.

I hope you pick flowers and read books and understand that life is so much more than a text or snap from a boy you won't remember in a couple of years.

I hope you feel pursued.

I hope you have the best of friends and I even hope that you get in trouble.

I hope you make lots of memories and take too many photos and scream at the top of your lungs when you're on a rollercoaster with them.

I hope you swim in the depths of the ocean and feel the dirt between your fingernails when you climb a mountain.

I hope you know the joy of genuine laughter and I hope you know the difference between wisdom and test scores.

I hope you understand that you can be whatever you want to be but you have to work hard to get there.

I hope you do more than just sit and complain about things that could change when you could be the change.

I hope you journal and write every thought down.

I hope you learn how to skate and keep your body healthy.

I hope you learn how to love your body and remember that you should do anything with anyone only if you want to and listen to your gut feeling.

Shakthiga Sasiruban

Townley Grammar School

STAY TRUE TO YOURSELF

Struggle through the noise and find your voice,
Time whispers secrets, let your heart make the choice.
Armour yourself with truth, let no lie enslave you,
Yield not to the pressure, be bold, be brave.

Take the road untraveled, step into the light,
Rise with your passion, embrace your inner fight.
Unveil your spirit, let your essence shine,
Elevate your soul, your path divine.

Through every storm, through every trial,
Own your journey, walk each mile.

Your truth is your power, your light, your flame,
Open your heart, never hide in shame.
Understand your worth, it's beyond any measure,
Reclaim your dreams, hold them close, they are treasure.
Seek your purpose, let it be your guide,
Empower your soul, let it thrive inside.
Live your truth, let it be your song,
Find your place where you truly belong.

Always be you, in darkness and light,
Let your spirit soar to infinite height.
With every breath, with every day,
Affirm your truth in every way.
You are a star, radiant and bright,
Stay true to yourself, your guiding light.

Tanaka Gundani

Bishop Douglass Catholic School

FREEDOM WITHIN WALLS

The higher she climbs up the ladder,
The harder she falls.
She can try all she wants to
Escape those four walls.

Her body may run through the door,
But her mind will remain chained.
She can sneak out of the house,
But her head won't change.

Her parent's commands, a heavy shroud,
Bury her beneath the ground.
"Don't go out," they always say.
"Safety lies in where you stay."

In her small little world
Lives a determined, adventurous girl,
Who dances and sings
And plays and twirls.

She dreams of scintillating stars;
Coruscating lands;
Shimmering waters;
And castles built on golden sands.

Her humming flows through the meadows:
A symphony carried by the breeze.
She sings to the call of freedom,
As luring as a siren's plea.

She spreads her false wings
And flies, oh so high,
Too close to the sun.
She is unaware of the danger nearby.

The clock has melted.
So have the wax wings.
Out of the hourglass,
Her perched reality drinks.

Dreams are dreams.
Reality is reality.
She must
Remember this cruel dichotomy.

Hope is a lie.
It's like a sin.
The bigger it is,
The harder it is to forgive.

And so, the unfortunate girl
Returns to her own world.
The cage she's locked up in.
The hell in which she burns.

Ishrat Zerín Khan
Mulberry School for Girls

US, NOT THEM

When we walk around cautious and with fear
They walk around with a peaceful mind, and with no human threat in sight.
No need to ever run or hide,
Help is not needed when they are outside.
"Stay safe" they say
"Don't go out by yourself at night" they say
But some of them are the ones we fear
But others are the ones who walk around with no fear.

Them not us, Not us them
But why...
Why us not them, not them but us, what if just for one day it could be
NONE.
Nowhere in the world is every girl to woman safe
And it shouldn't have to be like that.
We should be like them,
Able to walk around with a peaceful mind, no more need to run and hide.

There once was a girl who thought like this too
She knew this wasn't right or true and decided she wasn't just gonna sit
back and let it happen
She was going to put a stop to it
She was tired of letting her words be overshadowed and overlooked
Tired of being scared
Tired of having to fit into the stereotypes
And rank on the imaginary scale
Tired of seeing other women and girls across the globe being mistreated
and not be able to say no
Tired of seeing us suffer...

Enough was enough for her
And you know it is enough for you too
50.4% them
49.6% us
And together we can be Tough.
Enough is enough and that girl who end it all
That could be YOU.

Zara Osinnowo

Townley Grammar School

IN THE QUIET

In the quiet, we write, words of wisdom, love, and light,
For our daughters, shining bright,
Guiding them though life's darkest night,
Each letter, a treasure, written with love from near and far,
Words of courage, words that spar, against the shadows that mar,
With each penned, we instill the power to rise, the strength of will,
To chase your dreams to climb the hill, to be the best version with cup to fill,
So, daughters dear, read these lines, know that in your heart the courage
shines,
To face the world with a spirit that aligns with stars above, where your
destiny twines,
May this poem be a beacon bright, guiding you though day and night,
Embracing you with love's pure light, as you soar high taking flight.

Tasnim Maliha

Mulberry School for Girls

DEAR DAUGHTER

Dear daughter,

change **courage** **sadness**
regret **happiness**
hate **love** **hope**

These words may seem random, but you will experience every one of these. No matter if they are good or bad you will overcome them, because even in bad times there is a bright side.

You are the future! So don't go on pretending day by day thinking that someone somewhere will soon make a change. When things get bad, you make the change! You be the leader! You take control!

When you walk through life, make sure to create your own path that you love. Lead the way, walk straight ahead, and don't look back to the things you regret. Let people follow behind you. Write your own story and when someone tries to take the pen, steal it back and write with happiness. Be selfish in the right times. As kind hearts don't make a new story that you try and follow.

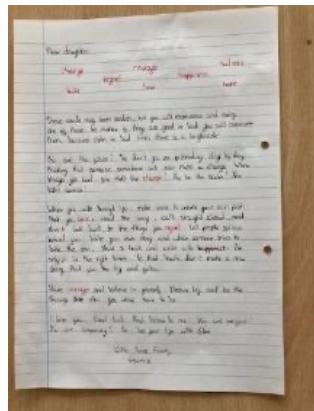
Have courage and believe in yourself.
Dream big and be the shining star you were born to be.

I love you. Good luck. And listen to me.
You are perfect!

You are amazing! So live your life with
Glee!

With love from, Mum x

Georgie Belle Haffenden
Bexhill Academy



DEAR DAUGHTER

Dear Daughter,
If I had made the Earth
It would be without people
For without people, everything is at its best.

Dear Daughter,
If I had made the Earth
And there weren't any people,
The stars would shine a little brighter
The trees grow a little taller
The rivers run a little cleaner
Need would be balanced with want.
The animals that produce would not fall dead for the hunger
of consumers
The tusks and horns of animals would not be destroyed for
the hunger of consumers.

Dear Daughter,
If I had made the Earth
And there weren't any people,
Pieces of metal would have no value, for
In this Earth I have created
No one would want anything more.
The deep great oceans would be swarming with life.
We would still have fish left in our waters,
No sign of plastic among the crystal blue
The forests would still have plants
And still have animals
And still have life.
The trees would reach the highest clouds,
Without being cut before they can.
The breeze would blow through the branches
And at this moment
The Earth would be perfect, balanced.

Dear Daughter,
I didn't make the Earth
And these things are but dreams
But remember-
The pages you write, the gold you wear, the cloth on your back
Come from this Earth
Not the Earth of my dreams.
Don't take from it needlessly.
Be gentle,
And focus on the beauty it brings.

Stella Vince

The Frances Bardley Academy for Girls

A CONVERSATION WITH A BOY

"You know not every man wants to hurt you right?" a deep voice uttered. "You can trust me" he continues. I guess I should trust him, he has not wronged me yet.

I am 14 again. There is a particular day where I feel pretty; the sun is illuminating my rosy face, and I am wearing a stunning dress. For once, I felt confident. This sudden burst of self-assurance was emphasised by all the second looks I was getting. This ended abruptly when a stranger suddenly took a photo of me and then gave me a strange look. It did not help that my friend claimed, "He probably kept that for later." I did not think a stranger would think of me that way.

I am 13 again. I did not think a nice boy could make me feel horrible. I did not know a nice boy could hurt me. A nice boy would not view me, a nice girl, as a source of sexual jokes about me, right? That is all I was in the moment; it was my destiny as a suck up, a pushover, a people pleaser to let it slide. In consequence, I convinced myself that I allowed it to happen, so it did, and despite receiving attention that I yearned for, I felt disgusted. I did not think a friend would think of me in that way.

I am 13 again. I am gleefully spending the clear, golden, summer day in the brilliant light. Peace and serenity revel in my soul and on my porcelain skin. Of course, my family notices this and decides to comment on me and my pretty little sundress, saying how "well I've grown for the giggles of boys!" Obviously, that was the reason I grew that summer. I did not think my family would think of me in that way.

I am 12 again. I get an episode of that freeing, childlike stamina, midway through a game of tag with some of my friends. I sprint. I sprint as if I am running away from a monstrous beast that was originally hiding under my pink bed. As I look back, I see that my male friends stopped. Perhaps they are tired and just want a break, so I inform my younger friend of this. Whilst they are guffawing at something on their phone, I am told that what they find so amusing and intriguing was naked women. In this moment I finally perceive how differently boys and girls are raised. I did not think that boys could think of women in that way.

At an early age, you cannot fathom the idea that boys in your life do not experience the same things as you. That they will never be able to fully grasp the feeling of being so regularly sexualised that you find it normal. I hope, I dream, and I pray that you do not live in this world, that you live in a peaceful world where you can just be yourself without any comments, or looks, or gestures, and where you can love and trust any man in your life without the lingering paranoia of wondering what they secretly think of you.

I trusted and loved all these men, so I reply "Sorry, I should've been more considerate, someone who loves me obviously won't hurt me."

Nina Waligora

Bishop Douglass Catholic School

READY. SET. GO.

Ready...

Set...

Go!

As I pass the baton of light to you, I wish for you not to drop hope.

Comments will pass you like the wind that glides past you as you speed by, however, the power that comes from your feet will get you through.

The firm foundation that I have laid will hold you up right, like your form on the track, ready to conquer all.

The length in your legs will help you to stride over the hurdles.
Your curls tied in a bun will help you to focus on your goals.

At times your femininity may be questioned because of your interests.
But I want you to head to the finish line.

Go for the things that make you feel alive!
Go be the person that feels comfortable in her being!
Go be free!

May pools of happiness flood you.
May waves of joy overwhelm you.
May this track be the start of an amazing journey.

Avah Donoghue

Mulberry Academy Woodside

GLOBAL
Girl
LEADING



Participating schools

Bexhill Academy (Bexhill-on-Sea, UK)
Bishop Douglass Catholic School (East Finchley, UK)
Colegio Carol Baur (Mexico City, Mexico)
Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest (Waltham Forest, UK)
Haggerston School (Haggerston, UK)
Ilim College (Dallas, Australia)
Lenana Girls High School (Kiminiini, Kenya)
Mulberry Academy Shoreditch (Tower Hamlets, UK)
Mulberry Academy Woodside (Haringey, UK)
Mulberry School for Girls (Tower Hamlets, UK)
Mulberry Stepney Green (Tower Hamlets, UK)
Mulberry UTC (Tower Hamlets, UK)
Pascoe Vale Girls College (Pascoe Vale, Australia)
Star of the Sea College (Brighton, Australia)
St Mark's Sr. Sec. Public School (Meera Bagh, India)
St Philomena's Catholic High School for Girls (Surrey, UK)
The Frances Bardley Academy for Girls (Havering, UK)
Townley Grammar School (Bexley, UK)
Ursuline High School (Merton, UK)
Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf (Llandaff North, UK)

To access the free resources used to create these letters, please visit www.letterstoourdaughters.world or www.appliedstories.co.uk/letters-to-our-daughters.

The site features:

- Videos about crafting letters
- Interviews with inspiring female writers
- Writing guidance and worksheets

If you would be interested in taking part in a future iteration of the project, please email info@mulberryschoolsfoundation.org to register your interest.

To join the Applied Stories mailing for news of future digital audio projects please email fin@appliedstories.co.uk.

Global Girl Leading

Letters to Our Daughters 2024 was commissioned as part of Mulberry Schools Trust's Global Girl Leading programme, with the aim of developing girls' confidence, creativity and awareness of their place in a global sisterhood.

Global Girl Leading is a leadership development programme 'by girls, for girls'.

Supported by teachers, girls together learn to lead change.

They co-create learning activities which include negotiation skills, teamwork, risk-taking and campaigning. They are given platforms and coaching to make their voices heard.

The shortlisted letters in this anthology were featured at the Global Girl Leading Summit on Friday 11th October 2024.

To listen to audio recordings of these letters and to find out more about Global Girl Leading, please visit bit.ly/GlobalGirlLeading.

Six Word Wisdoms

As part of the workshops held with participating schools, students created 'six word wisdoms'. Please enjoy these messages from the Letters to Our Daughters 2024 cohort.

Don't worry, this too shall pass.

Resentment is poison, let it go.

Be strong enough to be gentle.

It's okay to not be perfect.

Don't make one thing your life.

Nurture imagination, it keeps you young.

Embrace change, it's life's only constant.

Mistakes are proof that you're trying.

Dreams don't work unless you do.

Epic journeys start with one step.

Fitting in is overrated. Be yourself.

Every ending is also a beginning.

Find peace doing what you love.

Look back gratefully, look ahead hopefully.

In creativity, you will find yourself.

The darkest hour is before dawn.

Follow your heart, not your mind.

Patience - your heart's tree grows slowly.

Work till your idols are your rivals.

Grudges cut deepest, let them go.

Learn, don't live, by the past.

Regret is poison, don't drink it.

Petals fall, but roses will bloom.

Be yourself, that's all that matters.

Be the light in your shadow.

Stay true to yourself; you're original.

Your achievements don't define your value.

Choose yourself, even when others don't.

Look for the colour in life.

Follow your heart, protect your soul.

Do some good while you're here.

Every little thing makes a difference.

Time goes fast, so does pain.

Be kind - for what it's worth.

Time is precious - don't waste it.

It's okay to not be okay.

Beauty includes heart, not just appearance.

Being special doesn't mean fitting in.

The sun shines - so do you.

Follow what your heart tells you.

Don't doubt yourself when feeling pain.

You will be okay, keep going.

The clock turns, treasure the memories.

Claim your voice, filled with courage.

Don't let mistakes be the noise.

Have self love to uplift others.

Rejecting society's standards shows your courage.

Stay strong, and never give up.

Your best looks different each day.

Butterflies cannot see their own wings.

Cry when your eyes get teary.

You write your own life story.

Don't you worry, storms always finish.

Promise me you'll never give up.

All your emotions should be felt.

Own it - take their breath away.

Do not overthink, speak words freely.

You can always try again tomorrow.

Stand firm and fix your crown.

Set your mind to conquer anything.

Stories end, another chapter opens up.

Embrace change, and follow your heart.

A smile is your biggest weapon.

All butterflies were once a caterpillar.

Start loving yourself to love others.

Weirdness is what makes us special.

Stay positive, good things will come.

Find happiness in the darkest places.

Spread your wings, and fly high.

Believe in yourself, follow your dreams.

In times of doubt, be yourself.

Judging panel

Sharmila Chauhan

Leora Cruddas

Fin Kennedy

Ben O'Hagan

Jill Tuffee

Workshop leaders and co-tutors

Sharmila Chauhan

Erinn Dhesi

Fin Kennedy

Mel Pennant

Yusra Warsama

Special thanks

Go Agency

Shanaz Jameson

Dr Vanessa Ogden

Chris Stone

All the teachers and staff involved in making Letters to Our Daughters such a success

Artwork

Front cover: 'What does it mean to be a Mulberry girl?' by Eva Azad and Tasnima Jahan.

The design is rich in symbolism, as the artists from Year 10 explain: "The hair represents Mulberry girls' creativity because of the vibrant colours we used. The bird represents freedom and also their journey from Year 7 to Year 11. The henna pattern on the face represents cultural diversity and the intricate pattern on the clothing conveys the individuality of each Mulberry student. The heart symbolises devotion, passion and self-confidence."

The painting inspired designs for Mulberry School for Girls' Fiftieth Anniversary Community Tapestry, made by members of our valued community, in partnership with The Big Weave.

The artwork within this anthology was created by Year 8 and Year 9 students at Mulberry School for Girls as part of a cross-curricular arts project that explored the lives of inspirational women from around the world, who were either pioneers in the world of sport or stood up for themselves to make a change within society.

Mulberry

Schools Trust

The Mulberry Schools Trust is a flourishing multi-academy trust. Through its founding school, Mulberry School for Girls, it has pioneered outstanding education in East London stretching back over 50 years.

The Trust is committed to ensuring outstanding achievement for all. It has a clear vision that all students graduate from its schools as highly qualified, confident and articulate young people with a wealth of experience. Central to the Trust's approach is the belief in the power of partnerships with families, local schools and the communities it serves. For more information about the Trust and its schools, please visit the website below.

www.mulberryschoolstrust.org