



Poetry

Group 4

Heartless

Carmel School – Elsa High School, Goldberg, Ella – 15

He does not see
He does not feel
He does not care
He does not fear

A heartless man, who lies with ease
His every word, a false disease
He'll never show his true intent
But it's plain to see he's not content

He'll play the game and take his chance
To fool everyone with a single glance
The truth has no place in his heart
Where lies and deceit do their part

He'll tell you what you want to hear
And make your faith seem so sincere
But when it comes time to be true
The betrayal will come out of the blue

My life's been turned upside down
I'm left to pick up the pieces on the ground
His deceit has taken its toll on me
His lies have made it hard for me to see

My life will never be the same again
His true colors will be shown in the end
His actions speak louder than words
And his lies will be what you heard

He does not see the tears I shed
Nor feel the love we once had
My broken heart he cannot hear
For his is far away and unclear

He does not fear the pain I bear
Our happy life a thing of air
We once lived a happy life
Together we shared our strife

With a mask of innocence and charm
He fooled the world and did no harm
In the end the only thing left is an empty shell
An empty heart with nothing but sorrows to tell

An unspoken truth hidden behind a devious lie
A man so selfish that he'd rather have his kids die
He thought to cover his past and break free
So he sent someone to kill me

His wife and children with no warning or chance
He could have cruelly taken their lives in a single glance

Timeless Gratitude

Carmel School – Elsa High School, Rebibo, Liora – 14

This poem is from Judge Bao saying thank you to Lui Yun for influencing and mentoring him.

Lui Yun, you influenced the worthy me.
Like a zhà měng full of nobility and wisdom.
As I once said when I received the Duan inkstone:
"Those who are incorruptible are worthy of the people;
those who are greedy are the thieves of the people".

You are my interpretation of "incorruptible".
Who I am today is thanks to the choices I made yesterday.
The birth of my life journey started the first yesterday you guided me.
Piloting me into a reality which opened my eyes to the corruptible.

One case reminded me of your mentoring:
A businessman was wicked on the strength of bribery.
Immense pressure I was under; yet, I held the truth throughout.
An image of fearlessness and righteousness flashed,
It was always part of me but you helped me embrace it.

I accompanied my parents when I returned to Luzhou.
Filial piety for long, all along, but you were still there as magistrate.
I was present until the last breath arrived for my teacher.
But you mentored me even then, I profoundly thought 'How?',
How to become a hard-working official and serve the court?

So I ought to Thank You,
Not only for influencing the experienced and superior me.
For guiding me to be the best zhà měng there is, like I know you are.
Whether in terms of knowledge or morality,
I extend my thoughts to reach the point of kindness.
The kindness of friendship that you have shown me.

Warm Moon

Chinese International School, Li, Adele – 15

you listened as the grown-ups watched the news.

tales of deceit; rote injustice;

and your home froze over

in this cold cold age of guile.

my dear; come, sit. warm

your hands in mine as I tell you a story.

let me thaw your frost-bitten heart

with tales

of the Great Justice Pao.

I

They say his hands were callused,
wizened with life. Deep recesses
carrying memories of himself
(*bao zheng, twelve, ambitious scholar son*)
climbing the days to age twenty-nine.
Imperial scholar, at last!

II

They admired him for
his sense of family;
the man was a son before he
was a judge.
Thirty-five, heavy with
filial piety,
his tear ducts carrying the weight of
his return home
(*hefei, luzhou, ageing folk*).
Carrying his parents' bittersweet
welcome to the afterworld.

III

Now, in the courtroom
once again,
his ears were tuned
to the voice of the people.
Fourty years young, exerting
reform after reform
with no machination, no hesitation
(*as clean and clear as the sky*).

It was cold when
Li Chen bowed before him,
bitter when
his nephew confessed his crimes,
so Pao rose higher, virtuous fire,
(*they say he smashed down his gravel*.)

IV

By fifty his eyes were piercing,
but blind to exaltation.
So when the rotting sun sank into the sea,
and the gloaming sky shone black,
they say he was judge to the mighty gods.
It was night when
Feng Meng killed Hou Yi,
dark when
the Empress was stolen away,

so Pao stood bright, a beacon of light
(*they say he smashed down his gravel*).

∞

He was the universe and more.
The unmovable moon,
the sharp spires of constellations,
earth's certain orbit around the sun.
Ageless, timeless
(*they say he transcended humankind*).
The moon in his forehead held
the earth on its axis,
crescent; incandescent;
nestled in his dark night of skin.
Glinting without the company of come-hither
people, emperors, gods,
lighting his eyes to see every being
as equal.
Now, in bloodlines of
the sedulous Hong Kong patriarch,
behind TV screens buzzing in convivial warmth,
he waits, guileless,
for you to see that his moon has not dimmed.

The Mother and Her Son

Creative Secondary School, Cao, Oswin – 16

Judge Pao, eyes wide open so he can see,
Who on Earth is the liar or the thief,
Wild accusations that may set them free,
But the innocents never go in grief.

A merchant with a large bag steps forward,
“Please Judge Pao this fool cannot be set free,
My mother is dead because of this coward
Look him in these eyes and reveal his greed.

He stole from her and beat her till she bled
He then accused me of beating her down
Now I will never sleep well in my bed
Please Judge Pao he needs punishment now”

“You will be sentenced to 10 years scum!
Deceiving us as you murdered your mum.”

Justice

Creative Secondary School, Cuadra, Steven – 15

Judging what is right or wrong

Understanding what is fair

Standing up for those in need of help

Trying to listen to both sides

Informed with wise decisions

Caring enough to take action

Equal opportunities for all.

Move it Move it

Creative Secondary School, Datta, Kieran – 16

Here comes Judge Pao entering the court,

He likes to move it move it like Mort.

He shook that fat booty,

He twerked to Tutti Frutti,

That booty bounced like a ball in a sports court.

Life of Judge Pao

Creative Secondary School, Gim, Ciyo – 15

Born with a life in poverty and pain

Darkness at the start with a light of hope

When solving cases with his clever brain

He theorizes the outcome through his scope

Entering the intense and heated room

Everyone's eyes looked at him with respect

Deciding their sentence without a gloom

“It is now the time for you to reflect.”

“Judge Pao, I’m innocent!” the thief pleaded

Knowing his principle of right and wrong

Judge Pao knew this phrase has been repeated

The thief knew he would be in jail for lifelong

A bright light left the room, knowing that there

Would no longer be darkness in his life

Pao's Influence

Creative Secondary School, Ip, Sophie – 16

Justice is known to all
Ugly court cases need to be forestalled
Don't lie and be upright
Gonna serve you right
Ensure justice is known to all

Pao as a Judge
As different as he may be
Ought to be right and you will see

Judge Pao's Cuisine

Creative Secondary School, Kaur, Mausimran – 15

Justice will be served to the innocent as they wish.
Uttered truth as a spice for the dish.
Delicate, somewhat bitter
Guilt isn't based on gender or race or color but the sins of the sinners,
Equality will be provided as a side dish of dinner.

Peeled truth, some with the flavors of tears, whilst some with tears of
Anger.
Objective sentences will be served according to the sued.

Judge Pao

Creative Secondary School, Ma, Lotta – 15

a flick of an eye
a shake in the hands
a swallow of saliva
a slightest hint of a stutter
none of which can escape his gaze
nothing escapes under his eyes

the blinding white crescent moon shines upon me
piercing through my soul
as if it can see the darkness and crimes i've done
i couldn't look at it
it's brightness and purity mocks me
i try to hide it
i try to meet his eyes
i try to calm my nerves
i try to but with no prevail
nothing escapes under its light

or perhaps it's the guilt gnawing at me
even my sub-conscience wants to rat me out
after all
a guilty conscience needs no accuser

Judge Bao

Creative Secondary School, Nazil, Jasmine – 15

the one and only justice bao,
one's greatest arch-nemesis.
whoever comes before him bow,
unlike me i emesis

wise and witty,
with eyes behind his head.
he never felt pity,
when they bled.
even i, the evil of the city,
never made it past his shed

i tried to play his little game,
i tried to blacken his mighty name.
but justice bao remains unscathed,
for his tactics were well played.

The Final Breath

Creative Secondary School, Nylander, Allan – 16

Picture this, you're an ancient Chinese guy
Working till you're dead, farming til' it's late
You have got neither the will, nor the why
Staying poor seems to be your only fate

Your neighbour's got money, that's what you heard
I mean, you have a family to feed
But stealing the money would be absurd
No, you can never give in to your greed

And yet you need to do it for the pay
You steal all their money, pitchfork in hand
At the same time, a man gets in your way
You have officially murdered a man

In trial, Judge Pao sentences you to death
Under the noose, you take your final breath

Judge Pao

Creative Secondary School, Sidley, Maia – 15

Jacket filled with secrets
Underground and above
Devoted and confident
Got no sympathy
End with justice served

Pack away the crimes
Absence of control
Obey the law

Judge Pao

Creative Secondary School, Tian, Tina – 15

A clear moon in the darkness
The representation of fairness
the best embodiment
of brave and accomplishment

Persevering righteousness,
bring happiness
Refusing corruption
Reaching stabilisation

An impartial judgement
Wicked brought to surface
Providing perpetrators with punishment
Welcoming love and peace
for victims
for all

Endeavors at Night

Creative Secondary School, Wijewardena, Yehansa – 15

Just like that
Under he goes
Down to the depths
Guided by his insight
Each case, recognised

Prone to right judgment
Acknowledged by all
On his own, just like that

Xiaolongbao

Creative Secondary School, Wong, Jeff – 16

Immolates his life, immolates his life,
Immolates with his life onward,
Into the 18-storey of hell.
May the lotus now blossom,
In the ditch of pitch-black water,
Marched the uncontaminated one.
Under those deceptive blindfolds,
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the pleasants knew,
Someone has wronged.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to drown and die.
In the ditch of pitch-black water,
Lies the balanced scale.
Strings on the right of him,
Gold on the left of him,
Ascendancy in front of him,
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed with rain and mud,
Boldly he stands,
Under the heavy rain,
In the middle of hell.
Marched the intrepid one.
Sabring the leeches there,
Standing in front of them.
Burning in the deep ditch of water.
Royals and corruption.
Falling one by one.
Shattered and sundered.
Then he comes back, but not
Not the glorious one.
Swords to the right of him,
Spears to the left of him,
Snakes behind him.
Laughter and scorns;
Stormed with rain and mud,
While the lotus wither.
He had stood so well,
Pierce through the endless abyss,
Back to the abominable hell,
As the crow flies,
Quenched the blazing one.
How can the triumphant noble fade?
The wild choice he made!
But they never expected.
Just from another side of this ditch.
A red spider lily is igniting.

The Case of Two Nails

Creative Secondary School, Wong, Yan Kiu – 15

Two nails, driven in different bodies.
In rural China, where we lay our scene,
A suspicious death led to an autopsy,
An unfortunate expiry date unseen.

No wounds, no scratches, blood no longer flows.
Natural death, not caused by a knife.
To the coroner's bride, maybe she knows.
Nail to the brain, no injury, said the wife.

The dead man's widow confessed thereof,
Arrest and punishment wrote her new page.
Dubious Pao was of the coroner's love.
Revealing her first groom, bygone by this stage.

His coffin was dug up from the dirt dull,
And there lay a man with a nail in his skull.

Judge Pao

Creative Secondary School, Yuen, Howie – 15

Judge Pao the legend , he is the hero of the people
His value goes from zero to ten thousand euros
He is the owner of the restaurant Books Dining
The judge prefers to serve his books cold
He has got the heart of a stone
Pao is the boss of the restaurant people overrate
Cooking books in the kitchen until he starts entering the flow state
He admits that cooking books are easier than baking cakes
Serving people 12 hours everyday
The judge is as hard working and flexible as a snake.

One day he spots something weird about his customer
Dining like usual then starts asking for the Judge's phone number
Judge is starting to doubt if he is a undercover
So They argue pointlessly for an hour with no direction
Suddenly the undercover's friend shows up
Pao therefore finds out he is a big fat stool pigeon
Pao's dirty secret is getting leaked out to the public,
After realizing that he has been swindled
He blows the whistle
The stool pigeon has been caught red handed
This boy tries to convince to the cops that he is trying to save the planet

In the end he is just another ordinary bandit.
The state of his restaurant is not so rigid
After the incident , Judge Pao wants to retrieve his respect
His restaurant is now empty so he is upset
His dirty little secret was so well-kept
So Judge Pao has a plan B up in his head
This time he tries not to involve the feds
Instead he turns his whole restaurant into white and red
Because he realizes now its Christmas
And his restaurant is going to run out of business
He starts introducing new dishes
But no one is coming in because his food is not in anyone's wish list

Judge Pao is running out of money
So he starts searching for food on the streets like a monkey
As Pao starts to see the cruel reality
He might have to go back to the MasterChef Academy

Judge Pao sits down , reflects his actions and write this poem
Then starts blaming the justice system for no reason
The Cops find him sitting on the bench
Into the prison he goes
His life just went from Hero to Zero.

Pao Qing Tian

Diocesan Girls' School, Mak, Shan Shi – 15

Red on the walls
Tiger in the halls
Here he comes!
Pao will ne'er fall

Poor people get rights
Rich people set sight
No longer on money
Fame or victory
But on Pao's admirable might

Deceit will cease
So will sleaze
Run away you fools!
Pao will ne'er appease

Out with the flood
In with the Judge
Displaying integrity, firmness, impartiality
Clearer than "green sky"
The innocent shall not die!

Look to the left
Glance to the right
Whene'er danger's near
Pao will appear!

Corruption dies
Truth trampling lies,
Pao's legacy will live longer than the mystery
Of how judges came to be
And now we all are free –
From the tyranny of our ancestry
To do justice, as Pao'd agree.

New Tales of Judge Pao – Above the Dream of Pride and Power

ESF Island School, Wong, Nicolas Lik – 16

Whilst above the dream of pride and power,
He does not punish because law so wills,
Nor in vengeance, corruption or wrath.
As a true advocate of justice, he does not
Punish those who grimly seek eye for eye,
Or tooth for a tooth, but those who have wrongfully sinned.

Whilst above the dream of power and pride,
He does not capitulate to greed and materialism,
Regardless of crusading desires that seemingly
Clash with justice. Staying emotionally impartial
From judgement, he is unafraid of serving justice
To those that have sinned, even to his family.

Whilst above the dream of pride and power,
He sits above us, as he waits to oversee
our eternal judgement in the afterlife.

Dichotomy

German Swiss International School, Tse, Chloe – 15

Every impasse is a rite of passage:
Suffering, and the success that tails it.
Reigning Gods were once mere mortals:
Humility, and the power that hails it.

Revered Him, of the cyan sky
resolute among whispers of crime,
behind the façade
of obfuscated truths
and effortless lies.
Revered Him, of the radiant night
stalwart guardian of nocturnal sight
amidst the stealth
of creeping unease
and writhing disease.

Afflicted are the officials, the civil servants,
sick faces red in fits of fiery rage
blind with greed and deaf to pleas
people prostrated, servants slandered
no choice left but to go down under.

The head bows:
the bow sinks
into obscured black ink.

The lamp perches
steady on the lone ship. Divinity
hovers, on its own,
above the tumult
of waves roiling.
It comes. It goes.
It rests, and rows
across the throes
of the night stained bold
Its glow, all alone
speaks brighter than
the sovereign's throne,
shining true, and through
obscuring fog, birthing anew:

the child, the seed, the foal
the timeless thing with lustrous feathers—
reborn in depths of the fire, the coal,
It perches steady atop the soul;
nocturnal Sun warming the cold
of discomfort, insecurity,
and unease—driven riots;

Order, It seeks, among the entropy of the universe,
rife with disorder and an absent border
domains expanding, particles colliding,
exploding from the barrel of celestial mortar
relentlessly preying upon pieces of fodder
charred cinder remnants of crucified symbiosis:
feeding upon fear, annihilating justice.

As I tilt my head up today I see the remnants
of a persisting war, the haze
of the hubris,
reaching far beyond the surface
of my window, to the unexplored realms of the abyss—
we look up and recount tales of how
You, our God, the axis of madness
stilling the wild cyclone of turbulence,
delving in after a keen eye has noticed
exquisite inkstones that hid the darkness
of bribery, veiled nepotism that
dulled the spark of the emperor's palace,
You are the lone star in our polluted night sky
our God that witnesses; you're one of us, transcended
yet the world will not remain in stasis.

What comes out of this ancient mess
won't coalesce into staggering success
nor suppress inevitable distress.
But what we can emulate, what we can do best
we will settle, for nothing less: above
us, waxing, above us, waning. A relic, engraved.
A confident stroke, from the chisel
carved deeply, into white marble;
a fine imprint, of bone-white chalk
powdered gently, on the lead block

until then:
Do not praise, and do not mock
heads hung high on the chopping block—
resulting in salvation, a life unlocked
freed from the tick-tock of broken clocks
or a forced stop, a steady walk
slowed by time grinding to a halt.

What we're seeing will amount to nothing
for anything, everything never persists.
Not supremacy, nor strength.
Not inferiority, nor weakness:
The dragon only concedes to unfurling
timelines, continuous cycles, evolving
into the ouroboros—
retracing steps, repeating history.
Nothing betrays the balance, belies the shifting
of dynamics in Chatelier's equilibrium. Herein lies
the harmony,
the dichotomy. The Yin
and the Yang.

The Moon reflecting
off the Sun, the Night bleeding
to-Day. The Past morphing,
transforming
that persisting Present.

Judge of Diyu

Heep Yunn School, Chan, Hiu Laam – 17

Revered by all is the judge who bore
a heart of steel and a righteous zeal
His virtuous gaze would seethe before
crooked lords and common thieves

None escapes his lawful judgement
Best be truthful when you see the crescent
Honest men sleep sound at nightfall
Dammed souls wail as judgement befalls

“O’ mighty judge I beg for your mercy
I’ve done no harm by taking a few dimes
All that I’ve taken, I took for family
I’m no saint but for hell I’m unworthy”

And the judge replied,

“All that you’ve taken, you took from a family
who suffered the forfeiture for your felony
a daughter was sold so her brother was fed
Yet all that you took, you took so casually”

And the damned soul pleaded,

“Gold and silver and precious jewels,
all those I’ve taken I’m offering to you
O’ mighty judge don’t be so cruel
Had I another chance I wouldn’t be a fool”

And the judge replied once more,

“Save the pilfered stones for your family
I have no use for a dead man’s bribery
A self-serving thief will be your legacy
For your avarice you’ll repent in agony

Now hurry along the road you chose
the depths of Diyu shall be your abode”
With distance the damned soul’s wails were silenced
Yet another scale has now been balanced

!Our Great Judge Pao!

Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section), Liu, Jenny – 17

Judge Pao judge Pao he is smart
Always judging the right way
Judge Pao judge Pao he is kind
Helping people out of woe

Let us praise you mister Pao
For all good deeds you have done
Let us worship mister Pao
Spread the love that he has left

Have you seen the crescent moon
It's on his face shining bright
Don't be afraid of his iron face
It's how he scares villains away

Judge Pao! You are our hero!
Millions of people you have helped will remember you forever!
Judge Pao! Such a star!
You will be praised even thousands of years later!

New Tales of Judge Pao

St. Clare's Girls' School, Yang, Wai Ting – 16

As the clock struck twelve, the mist
And crescent kissed.
I woke up upon the coldness,
Realised it was time to end this ridiculousness.
Such a conspicuous truth,
But I was blinded by my ruth.

Far from the city and the puissance of nobilis
Was the Village of Amaryllis.
A place to be jaunted,
But was recently said to be haunted.
The succession of tragedy
Began with a male corpse in nudity.

With another young life fading away,
I was invited by the village head to stay.
The terrified atheists
Asked me to judge the deadlines.
For the purpose of sustaining justice,
I started to collect evidence for the crisis.

All victims were males
Carved with bloody spells cursing them to hell.
Nonetheless, under the depictions of their wives,
They were said to be innocent and white.
Everything seemed normal and right,
Except for the occasional cries during the night.

Trying to investigate the streets
At night, but was asked by villagers to retreat.
Avoiding the monitors, I sneaked into the worn-out
House where the shrieks were extremely loud.
Showered in the crimson
Moonlight, there stood a long-haired woman.

To my horror,
She was dissecting a man whose face was distorted by terror.
I ran to stop her
And brought this executioner to the villagers.
However, the story was far from an end,
As the creepy woman ascended
In air and vanished.

She was a vengeful soul,
Creating immense tolls.
Later, I helped the villagers captured
The ghost with an amulet and they were raptured.
Yet, after the effacement of the ghost,
A villager suddenly ran to me and forced me a dose
Of poison.

To their surprise, I stood there unaffected,
As I was protected.
The ghost and I made a deal,
I would help her achieve her ideal
Revenge, as these villagers
were human traffickers.

Blinded by their pathetic appearance
Of losing a close friend of family member.
I failed to realise their abhorrence
Act of trafficking maidens, who made the cries in despair.
The encounter
With the ghost allowed me to understand the fact of the matter.

Thus, we put on a play
At midnight and gave the villagers the last chance to repay.
Fortunately, they chose to murder me
So as to bury the truth forever and to flee.
I left the village in flame,
As the villagers were the one to blame.

“When there is no more room in hell,
The dead will walk the earth.”
Humanity were sometimes scarier than demons
And ghosts. The dead cannot cry out for justice,
It is the living who could be the daemon
Of fairness and judge of injustice.

Amaryllis — the flower of blooming beauty,
Buried the youth of hundreds of maidens in
A small and isolated village, it is my duty
To fight for their justice and allow the lost souls to be redeemed and to begin
A new journey.

The Way of Pao

*St. Margaret's Coeducational English Secondary and Primary School,
Chan, Colloton Grace Din Yung – 15*

A mighty mind,
Ascending from above.
Where thy generations may rest.

He is just and he is fair.
Under any circumstance he would stand,
For what is right,
Not for thy wrongs.

He is not an executioner,
He never kills.
He is not a person of hate,
But a person of love,
Who has not been corrupted,
By the ugly visions of this world.

He is smart,
Almost too smart.
He can solve any crime,
Understand any mind.
He can enter the minds of people,
Learning what made thee sin.

I dare thee.
Let him look at thee right in the eyes,
Even for a second.
He will know all the things thee have done,
All the things thee want to do,
All the sins thee have committed.

His stories are known world-wide.
From the catching of a thief,
To the innocence of a guilty mind.
His ways of proving the guilty
Are intriguing and never alike.

He is full of scientific knowledge,
That helps solve crimes.
Yet he is religious with his craft,
Making righteousness and justice,
his divine inspiration.

A tale once told,
Long, long ago
But close within our hearts.
Is that he was no ordinary man.
Instead, he was no man.
Just an image one creates in one's mind,
Just a persona one wants to achieve.

Every day we leave our haven,
We see him in the form of us,
His new adventures awaiting to happen.
But still we ask...

Is Pao still here?
Is he within us?
Is he us?
Is he the angel that sits on the right side of our shoulder?
That tells us to do just and right,
To not ignore that nagging doubt?

And now I have this crime to solve,
A crime this detective cannot pass on.
Would Pao see the guilty mind as plain as can be?
Or would Pao's attempt be as vain as me?

The situation is long gone,
The weapon is lost,
The suspect is here.
But without the help of proof.
The case will go cold.

With a check and check again,
I think of Pao and his men,
How will they construe this man?

Where will the suspect have left the weapon of sin?
Maybe a look in his eye will tell me all of his sins.
Just a look right in his eyes,
Will give me a sign.
A beacon of light to stride this case to its victory.

I close my eyes,
A strike of light comes across my mind.
A strike,
A strike,
A strike.

The weapon found,
My case solved.
Another day with Pao in my mind
Helping me,
Guiding me,
To justice,
And to right.

The Modern World?

St. Paul's Co-educational College, Mak, Wing Tung Gloria – 15

A man of righteousness, wisdom and loyalty
presides above all in his court, high and mighty
Known to others as Judge Pao of Song,
tirelessly does he work to discern those who have wronged

For many years, he has brought prosperity to the land,
trustworthy advisors, cunning wit and a fine set of morals always at hand
But when taken to the modern day,
perhaps he will discover the differences of his ways

Wandering down the street, Judge Pao makes a peculiar observation
Young women in tank tops and skirts, quite the abomination
Surely this is a misdeed, for women should show restraint
But this is the modern world, where dressing conservatively is mundane

Passing by a school, Judge Pao hears something atrocious
Children jeering and calling their teachers nicknames, acting all precocious
Surely this is a crime, for children should show respect
But this is the modern world, where impertinence goes unchecked

Near a pedestrian crossing, Judge Pao witnesses a terrible episode
A contemptible man with finger poised over phone, not helping his senior mother cross the road
Surely this is a sin, for all human beings should show filial piety
But this is the modern world, where family is no longer as valued in society

Throughout all this, Judge Pao realizes
there is a vastly contrasting set of beliefs that modern civilization idealizes
No amount of wit and righteousness in one man can change this situation
It is up to each one of us to bring about true alleviation

I See it in the Stars

St. Paul's Co-educational College, Yeung, Nga Yee Winnie – 16

On a darkened night, when dried leaves crackled,
From the basement came an evil cackle.
A smartly dressed boy, bound tight to a chair,
Mouth muffled with rag, emitting sounds of despair.
Cold sweat dripping and eyes full of fear,
He stared at the man who stood with a sneer.
“Your father better pay up, so say your prayers”
The kidnapper smiled at the son of the mayor.

When the mayor heard the news,
His eyes turned red and his lips turned blue.
His only son, kidnapped! And there was a note,
On which the culprit daintily wrote:
“Want your son back? Then bring me this:
10 billion dollars, then you’ll have Chris.
Put them in an envelope, then give it to me,
Toss it in the mailbox on 12 Fletcher street.
You better hurry, my patience is already wearing thin,
72 hours you get, let the countdown begin.”

The mayor’s eyes widened at the sight of the request,
“**10 billion dollars??**” **I must object!**
The city is broke, and so am I,
From the covid pandemic that swept through the night!
I can’t afford this, oh what should I do?
Oh dear heavens, I plead with you!”
Desperate and panicked he started to weep,
For he had no idea where for help he should seek.
Then he remembered, today was the day,
When the fabled Judge Pao would come for a stay.
“**There is hope!**” he cried, “**A glowing light!**”
“**To save my child from this plight!**”

Furrowing his brows Pao peered at the note,
He rubbed at his chin and smoothened his coat.
“**It’s rather unfortunate, it’s a bit of a shame,**
That the man didn’t sign with his name,”
Murmuring to himself as he puffed his cigar,
“**Instead there’s only a simple star.**”

*After a day of investigation,
Coffee breaks and consideration,
The boy was guessed to be in a remote location,
With the culprit – hired by a dark association.*

Toward the end of the 36th hour,
Pao had figured out the main source of their power.
The man was a crook at night, but by day,
He was a worker at a local cafe.
So they cornered the shop and brought in the men,
And questioned each one, again and again.

But there was a problem – they all claimed they had,
Nothing to do with the wrong and the bad.

But Judge Pao had a plan. “**Gents!**” He cried,
“Come along now, follow me inside.
We all wish to see justice restored,
So kindly draw a star on this whiteboard.”
Everyone stared in confusion: *Draw a star?*
His scheme to catch criminals: Tell them to make art?
But Pao remained resolute: Do as I say,
And I promise you we’ll find him at the end of the day.

So the men trudged up and drew, one by one,
A five stroked star, and when they were done,
Pao pointed at the third fellow in the row,
“**T**is you!” he roared, “**I**m certain, I know!”
The man’s face covolted in shock,
His knees trembled and his face turned chalk.
“**N**—no! I swear! You have no such proof!
No right throw false accusations under this roof!”

“**O**h but I do, for the stars have spoken.”
Pao gestured towards the board, and with a swift motion,
He circled the third star, gave it a tap,
“You fell right into my trap.”

“Using a dying pen was your mistake,
I could identify the order of strokes that you made,
You started from the top, then went bottom right,
Upper left, across, bottom left, the trails get light.
And just now I observed how you
Drew your star, **that’s** how I knew.”

“**A**rrest him guards! **H**andcuff him now!”
Another case solved by the great Judge Pao!



Creative Writing
Poetry
Group 4

The Peacock Broach: Ruminations of a Judge

Shanghai High School International Division, Huang, Mia – 16

There are days my stagnant gaze,
fixates on the ragged contour of the Linden tree out my windowsill.
Asymmetrical heart-shaped leaves flutter off in silence,
its absence unnoticed, leaving the foliage unchanged.

My palms clench the sword of justice,
while a pumping heart panics in my human flesh.
Expectations of righteousness push against my ceramic mortal skin,
like steel marbles bouncing off a sheet of glass on the brink of crumbling.

I live with my camouflaged cries, existing more as a symbol,
hiding away from all human emotions like an unspoken oath,
shepherded by a lifelong commitment I never recalled having pledged.
I desperately conceal the flaws and vulnerabilities that once made me human.

They say love is a bias, an infesting weakness,
so I estranged my body from the people I once loved,
deserting my all, in exchange for fair integrity.
All was done without a second thought.

Public scrutiny and their viral voices send me through spirals.
I watch myself aching, failing to subsist with grace and dignity.
The golden pin behind the turquoise peacock brooch stabs into my fingertips,
tainting the gold tips with beads of scarlet ichor.

Looking out the window, a little girl waves at me.
She tugs on the hem of her mother's floral dress, trying to raise her attention.
I hide my vacant body behind the dusty umber curtains.

But there are cries for righteousness,
the gavel hammers them onto the back of my mind,
awakening me from the existential dread.
Stories of corruption, hot-stamped onto the sheer surface of my sizzling skin,
leaving behind the agonizing pain and charcoal-like scent of burnt skin.

When I close my eyes, I hear the young child's cloaked cry
in the dark alleyway, when the clock makes its twelfth strike.
She watches her girlhood stripped away, with her face
vigorously pressed against the blemished brick wall.
The masked man scavenges through her inanimate body,
his rummaging fingers, trampling the last trace of bliss and ignorance in her.
She wonders how the hometown that once

tingled her skin with delirium at its every mention,
could leave every inch of her body marinated in a gut-wrenching numbness.

When the man leaves, the young girl stabs a fractured piece of a beer bottle into her thighs, hoping to simply feel something aside from the daunting vacancy.

Her hands shiver, as she watches her parents' blood gushing out of her body.
She sends her prayers, hoping the surging blood would wash away the shame and guilt.

The brick wall stands in the alleyway, every night when the clock makes its last strike,
a fresh lip print on the muddy brick marks a new defeated soul,
with no crystal glass slipper left behind.

At home, the girl violently rubs the lavender loofah sponge against her unvarnished skin,
hoping to cleanse out all evidence of his existence,
while her mother picks out snapped branches of the Linden tree from her hair.
The mother holds the girl, while the rest of the world fights
for the unborn life in her body, which she is yet made aware of.

She does not know that in that dark alleyway,
she too, has made an unspoken promise to the world,
marking her liable for fostering the remains of the crime he has left behind.
She does not know that one day,
she will be telling this unborn life the story of Leda and the Swan.

When I push my body out of the apartment door,
I am made aware of the things I stand for, the things we all stand for,
but my unveiled skin can only display so many narratives.
With bodies next to bodies, we should stand,
displaying the collection of stories we piece together.
Piece by *peace*.