



TALES FROM TROY

A COLLECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S WRITING CREATED AS PART OF THE TROY PROJECT
FACILITATED BY JANE RAPE

FOREWORD FROM

ROB CHERRY

PRINCIPAL

Tate St Primary School was indeed fortunate to receive Arts Victoria funding at the end of 2008. It was the beginning of a fantastic adventure for both students and teachers to work so closely with Western Edge Youth Arts throughout this year. Their passion for the performing and visual arts and quality literature has been conveyed to the students at every turn. They inspired our Year 5/6 learners to reach levels of excellence that they didn't believe possible. The school community gave testament to this when they attended the stunning performance of "The Tale of Troy" at the Blakiston Theatre at GPAC in September. It was undoubtedly the best Primary School student performance I have seen in 33 years in education. We, the parents, staff and students of Tate St P.S. owe Dave Kelman, Jane Rafe, Kylie Gral and Kris Juresko from WEYA a great debt of gratitude for broadening the lives of these young people in such a memorable way.

The benefits are still in evidence today. The teachers have noticed such a great growth in the students' self-confidence and self-belief; their oral language skills have been greatly enhanced as has the quality of their writing, some of which you are now about to read. So please enjoy the poetry and prose on offer in this booklet. My congratulations to all the students involved in this project and to Jane Rafe who has brought out the best in them once again.

We are all looking forward to Western Edge Youth Arts continued involvement with Tate St P.S. in the future.

DAVE KELMAN

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SCHOOLS PROGRAM - WESTERN EDGE YOUTH ARTS

The young people's creative writing in this booklet was a very important part of our residency at Tate Street. We wanted the young people to look beneath the surface of things and explore the importance of Homer's 2700 year old tale to the present day. What they have achieved is beautiful and moving work that captures some of the excitement and depth of this ground-breaking project. It was a huge pleasure to go on a journey with the young people, through drama, back into Homer's world. I hope this writing will help you share something of that journey.



INTRODUCTION

The Grade 5/6s at Tate Street recently took part in an arts residency program with Western Edge Youth Arts. The major outcome of that project was the performance at GPAC of the play **The Tale of Troy**. However, alongside the drama and theatre workshops ran creative and reflective writing workshops. These continued intensively into Term 4, and the following collection of students' writing is a selection from their work. Some were very early pieces, but most date from after the performance, and it is interesting to note that the process of making the play has clearly intensified the quality of the writing. When asked why the story was an important one to tell, one student replied, *"If Troy is destroyed, there'd be a piece missing, torn out of the history book... there'd be no one to remember who was there..."*

Jane Rafe

These first seven pieces date from very early in the program when students were first learning about the story, the mythology, the history and the archaeology of Troy.

THE WALLS OF TROY

The Trojan view

We live inside the walls of Troy. You may think that the walls are scary but to us they are protective, and our homes are inside it. The gigantic walls protect us against enemies so we don't get hurt. The wall is like our amour. I felt safe inside the walls of Troy. When I think about what it would be like to be outside the walls, I realize how lucky we are to have the walls.

Maddie

The Greek view

When I came ashore and saw Troy I felt a burning "pang" of worry and uncertainty. The walls were like menacing monsters that would lash out and strike me down if I ventured any further. But imagine that! A brave soldier like myself being scared by walls! It is a disgrace, no matter how frightening and humungous they are.

Julia

HECTOR FAREWELLS ANDROMACHE

Students had improvised the great soldier Hector saying farewell to his wife, after hearing an account from Homer's Iliad.

Andromache: Hector, my love, my darling, please don't go.

Hector: I must fight. My country needs me!

Andromache: I NEED YOU! You are not only my husband but you are my family, my life!

Hector: If I don't go you won't have a life, and if you do it will be a miserable existence.

Andromache: Please, I beg you!

Hector: It might sound absurd, but I have a better chance of living happily with you if I go. Do you trust me?

Andromache: Of course I do! But...but...oh be careful!!

Julia



"War is horrible – you see it with Hector and Andromache and she's telling him not to go and putting the baby in his arms to make him not go, to think, what about his son?"

ARMING PATROCLUS

Patroclus was Achilles' cousin, a Greek warrior. Students listened to and discussed several versions of the arming of Patroclus, ranging from the challenging – Fagles' translations of the original Ancient Greek of Homer – to the more accessible – Roger Lancelyn Green's version for children, 'The Tale of Troy'. They imagined how the armour of Achilles would look, and how they would feel on being asked to wear it in battle.

I am Patroclus and this is what happened. Achilles agreed to give me his armour for me to go and fight in his honour. As I was putting it on, I realized it was like no other; it was gleaming in the light. Then suddenly I heard the smashing together of swords and spears from down the hill. As I was preparing myself for battle I saw Achilles' helmet. I felt so relieved to see him - I had thought it was a bunch of Trojans ambushing me. Achilles said I should take his men, the Myrmidons, to war, "they will fight well for you". They looked vicious - a couple of them only had one eye.

Liam

I am Patroclus and this is what happened to me...

I woke up this morning thinking everything would be normal but it wasn't. A series of strange things happened to me. They were strange, but wonderful. Today my best friend Achilles looked up at me he looked like he was thinking I was curious, but also worried. He said to me he wasn't going to fight but I was to take his place. I couldn't refuse, it was such an honour to fight under the name of Achilles, but it was also a brave and frightening quest. I put on Achilles' lustrous, dazzling armour and I felt like I could fight a million armies and not get a scratch! I picked up his shield gleaming with victory and from that moment I knew what Achilles felt like, a true warrior. When I saw the Myrmidons I couldn't believe my eyes. Achilles brought them to me. Even though they were fighting for me they were still horrifying in my eyes. Achilles also brought me his immortal horses - they were a beautiful sight. I saw a shimmer in Achilles' eyes and then I knew he believed in me.

Abbey

ACHILLES MOURNS PATROCLUS

Patroclus is killed by the Trojan leader Hector, and Achilles is brought the news of his death. He then kills Hector in revenge.

Oh no! My dear cousin Patroclus.....

I feel shame and guilt for letting him go out in my armour. I am very very sad, and now I must kill Hector because of him killing my one and only Patroclus. I feel so lonely now; I wish it was me and not him because he was my life, but now he is gone, my cousin, my brother, my Patroclus.

Patroclus – now I know what it is like to lose someone in your family that you love.

Now Hector will face his doom because of Patroclus. I wish I'd died not him. I really want Patroclus to be here with me now so we can rule Troy together. My hatred for Hector is indescribable. I would kill him and his family. I am hungry to kill Hector. I am angry, I am terrified, I want my armour back from Hector's body, it will be the best day of my life.

Nick

THE REVENGE OF ACHILLES

I held my spear in my hand, my eyes only on Hector; I had only seconds to throw my spear. I threw it with all my might and skewered Hector in the shoulder. A gush of blood came out. I felt fantastic- he was my total enemy – but then a whole lot of mixed emotions...happy because I'd done it, rage at killing an evil man, sad because I had killed their best warrior, regret and worry for what I had done. I didn't want to be here anymore, for a moment I am paralysed by fear.

Nick

ANDROMACHE'S LAMENT

The women's stories are not especially well represented in Homer, so we spent quite a lot of time thinking of how they would have experienced the events of the story. Here we see the grief of Andromache at the death of her husband, Hector.



"Hector's death reached to my heart, I felt really sad..."

I begged Hector not to go but he did not listen and now I have to sorrow over the death of great Hector. Not only that but my babe Astyanax no longer has a father. I have total despair and my heart is longing for my husband. I feel like my heart has been smashed. I keep staring at the bed where he once lay. My mouth is dry and my teeth are chattering. I do not talk, I am so stunned at this agonizing death.

My son no longer has a father, a role model and no one to teach him how to be a man. Now Astyanax is the only man and will have to support us. Hector is wandering the underworld, friendless and no one to turn to. He will never be at rest, the walls are dark dry stone. He is bereft.

Zoe

I stand here begging Hector not to go but it will not work. He goes, knowing his fate. NO!!!! it cannot be, my Hector has left us, he has been killed. My heart is in torment, what do I do? I must have his body back. Why, why did I let him leave? I have lost all my family except my dear son Astyanax. All I can hear is the dreadful cry of Hector's mother signaling his death. My heart is aching, I am drowning in grief. All I can think of is Hector's poor body being eaten by animals and worms. Hades will be forever waiting for him in the Death kingdom, and I will never be able to wrap his body in his shroud.

Abbey

I think of my son's future life, with everyone teasing him, not for his glorious dad, but for his weak father dragged back dead from the fight, wrapped in a towel, face covered in dirt. I worry that Hector will be fed to the vultures, and never get to Hades, because he has not been buried. He is gone.

Jasmine



"I felt the pain they had felt, loving the person they had loved..."

THE TROJAN HORSE

What must the Trojans have thought as they watched from their walls, and saw this extraordinary sculpture being built down at the Greek camp?

Watching the Greeks
Hammering, sawing,
What are they doing?
Three days
Non-stop building,
Taking shape
It's a horse -
Immense!
The Greeks have fled,
Long gone.
The size of it,
The huge legs towering above!
Should we take it in?
Of course,
The Greeks are gone.
Fifty men to take it
inside the walls.
The gates opening,
Rattling and screeching and rusted
from lack of use.
The horse pulled in –
People shocked at the sight.
An offering to the gods!
'Burn it' says one
'no keep it,
we may boast tonight and sleep silently.'
But I'm haunted by merciless battle cries
Ringing round my mind
Like racing chariots...
We rest in peace
Under our horse's silent watchful eye.

Toby

The Greeks have been building something – we don't know what it is yet. As days go on we see the shape of it – it's a horse! What are they doing with it?

They leave it here and sail away. We argue – should we bring it in or not? The king says yes, he sends me out to have a look. We open the gates and I walk out – I smell the fresh new wood. As I get close I see how huge it is, we can't believe the Greeks have given it up. It takes 12 steps to get around one leg! It is massive!

It is so heavy to pull inside the walls of Troy.

Then king Priam yells "we will party long into the night" and everyone cheers.

Julia

Liam



PULLING THE HORSE INTO TROY & WAKING TO A FALLEN CITY



"The Trojan Horse"

Cassandra's fate was to be able to correctly foretell the future, but never to be believed by those who heard her. Here are her thoughts..

I'm standing right by the gates of Troy, thinking to myself if Troy will ever fall...I'm staring at this horse with a suspicious face, the horse is suspicious. I know Troy will fall, in my mind I see fire and destruction coming from this horse. I told the king it was evil and we should burn it but he just laughed. I see the streets run with blood.

Georgia

We have been pulling for hours. Three times we have broken parts of the gate to get the horse through. Now we are all happy that the long and painful war has ended. The horse is the hugest thing in Troy!

Hamish

This wooden horse is big. Seeing it makes me want to sing...but I have a strong feeling it is a trap that will lead to our doom, or will it really bring us luck? It is taller than the walls of Troy, the wheels are huge, it's so heavy it must be hard to pull.

Later...

I hear screaming, crying, shields hitting together; I hear fire crackling, stones crumbling, is this the end, will I be killed? Out of the window I see the walls of Troy destroyed by the fire..

Jess

I can't believe I'm here watching this great scarily built horse getting pulled into our city. I see my dad pulling the horse, using all his strength. I dance and sing with my friends, so happy the war is over. Something is wrong though, I feel. I'm not sure what, everyone is drifting to the gates, there's a rattling sound, now the horse is stuck in the gates! They'll have to force it! Chunks of stone are falling, splinters of wood, if it breaks any more we may find out what is inside....

Jasmine

Here I am, 6 years old, standing in front of a 4 metre high horse. I want to tell the rest of Troy, but they don't listen, they are too busy celebrating. But I see the terror of what might happen – sweeping soldiers fill me with fear. It is as if my blood was fear, a disaster, my worst nightmare.

Abbey

Well I am a bit suspicious of bringing this horse into our city. People are cheering but I thought I heard something inside the horse. I'm too frightened to tell our beloved king Priam, but I thought to myself – 'I have to do it!'

Later, out of my window and lit up by the moon, I see a man, a Greek! I screamed "Noooooo!", but too late.

Nick

The horse is ginormous ! I can hear rattling of metal as it moves but everyone is too excited to notice; some men are cheering and drinking wine to the sweet song of the women. Other men are struggling because this huge horse will not fit through the gates, though the men are pulling as hard as they can. Our soldiers are doubtful it will get through without damage to the gates or our magnificent walls. We wait in anticipation, wood splinters, it is finally pulled through!

Later...

I hear the crackle of fire as I lie in my bed, as still as a picture on a wall. ...then screams of mothers crying for their children, the sound of armour clashing, the moans of the dying and wounded. I rush to the window, and try to escape onto the roof. There is a soldier, one of ours, a Trojan, looking up at me as I climb. He looks surprised, I think he may help me but then he runs for cover and is gone.

Zoe

This horse is huge! Why is it here? Inside I am excited, but still suspicious. Too scared to say anything. What if it affects the whole city? Of course I play along, singing and dancing, not sure if I'm doing the right thing. It's stopped! Stuck in the gateway! What will happen now? What will become of us? I'll be scared to go to sleep tonight.

Later...

I wake to screaming, crying, armour clashing, nothing but horror, panic. I knew something would happen! I run to the window – fire, huge flames, how will I get out of here? Should I have spoken out before? I run outside, but too late! Someone grabs me, and takes me away....

Tianiah

So you want to hear about the night the Trojans brought the horse into Troy? Well, ok...the night a gang of people dragged it in, the gates squealed open, the horse was pulled in. I was scared but excited. We slowly fell asleep not knowing there were hundreds of Greeks inside the horse.

I slowly woke up and heard the cries of people, not cheers, the 'shing' of swords, the bang of shields ramming into each other...out of the window I see fire, blood flooding down the horse...

Lionel

Lying in bed I wonder why the Greeks gave up suddenly and left this gift for us and the gods. When they pulled in the horse my heart beat faster, I could hear people calling to 'come and look'...

Later...

Something has awoken me, whispering from near and far, armour banging on swords, but the war is over, why can I hear these things? Through the window I see orange shadows on the walls, then screams and when I run out it is terrifying...

Madison

Happily dancing, singing and drinking! But I still have an urge that this isn't over. I push that to the side by dancing. Seeing this great horse – such an unusual thing!

But why did those Greeks leave? Just one of hundreds of questions I want answered.

We give offerings to the gods for our victory, but I hear the horse's wood creaking, my mind wondering what that could have been? Now footsteps are tapping, drunk men are rapping, it's all a bit unusual to me.

By night time I've forgotten - it never happened! I feel safe knowing it's all over.

Later...

Waking up hearing the resounding clang of weapons – or was it my mind? It can't be –the war is over! Another resound – out of the window arrows fly like rain from the sky. I put on my armour and grab my sword. Outside the twang of arrows, men fall like stones off a cliff face. I fight them off. I see the Greeks come like a tsunami, Troy is doomed! Streams of blood gushing, my heart for Troy is no more.

Toby

Pulling the horse we all hear sounds of armour but we don't realize, we are all too excited, and then we've done it and all you heard was the footsteps of a thousand people rushing and stumbling and crashing and banging and hurrying, and music and excitement and at the end of the night the last thought I had is we have done it – we have survived this war.

Later...

I woke to the sound of a worried scream. It was unusual because the city wasn't quiet like before, it was more alive. Then, most worrying of all, the sound of metal on the ground, like metal footsteps. In that moment I realized – we were all fools. From my window I can see Greeks flooding from the horse, Troy is doomed.

Simone

POEMS ON THE FALL OF TROY

During the poetry writing workshops, students were led through a process of listening to stimulus material, collecting and listing interesting words, brainstorming creative ideas and then distilling their writing into its poetic essence.

Our play ended immediately before the Fall of Troy – the soldiers had just emerged from the horse – so all the writing from here onwards was an imaginative recreation of how the story might have continued. Our main source for this story was Virgil's Aeneid, and Penelope Lively's wonderful retelling for children, "In Search of a Homeland"

The clashing of armour, the screams of the men.
A fight? Much worse, it was war...
We had been tricked!
In grave danger, I have to wake the other women;
Will we be taken into slavery
To become another man's wife?
I run, I panic, what will happen to me?
Concentrate: keep the others alive,
Run down the hall,
I'm petrified!
I screech – 'we must flee!'
Outside I saw the bloodshed,
I froze....

The sound of screams
Fire burning, metal clashing
My thoughts turn black
Kids are crying
Shouting dying
Panic, chaos is in our city
Wonderful Troy is gone.
Outside is mayhem
My hands reach out
I grab someone – a Greek!
Children screaming for their mothers
Trembling with fear
My heart, my world is no more.

Abby

Georgina



Blood flooding the house,
Breaking of windows, warriors shouting, swords clashing
Streets running with blood
Reflecting the swarm of warrior bees;
Silver armour reflecting red blood,
Slaughter everywhere.
Warriors kill themselves rather than being slaves
Screams of terror, houses burning
Greeks and Trojans dying.

Slashing at thin air, then I pull back my sword
The silver gleam of the moon reflected
In black blood
A boy falls in blood
I fall in fire....

Dary

Screams, cries, shouts
Earsplitting, bloodcurdling.
Strange, so strange, the view out the window
Terror, horror, chilling to the core.
The Greeks!

So the horse is a trick,
But no – we won, we won, we won!

My brother's face, lit by the fire,
The fire that licks, consumes, devours our city.

Frozen with terror, my muscles tense, my limbs lock –
The sight of my brother shocks me back.
Put on my armour, my sword, my shield,
Sprint into battle!
In a few strides I'm finished –
But I must go on.

Julia



"the clashing of armour, the screams of the men.."

NEOPTOLEMUS

Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, is remembered for slaughtering Hector's infant son by throwing him from the walls of Troy, and murdering King Priam and one of his sons, amongst other atrocities.

Neoptolemus, 'man of new war'
Cares only for destruction;
Most barbaric of the Greeks,
Thirsty for blood
He loves the smell of death;
Man with no heart, a rotten soul
Brutal, savage, he walks by night
"Death to all" is his war cry

Toby/ Maddie/ Simone/ Lionel

Neoptolemus, 'man of new war'
Wants payback for his dead beloved father
Regrets nothing
Determined to destroy
Barbaric, crazy for revenge
A monster, a beast, he does not care.

Tianiah/ Jess/ Jasmine/ Zoe

PRIAM'S DEATH

Priam's brutal murder by Neoptolemus, also known as Pyrrhus, is witnessed by Aeneas, another of the Trojan heroes. What might it have been like to witness this horror from a hidden corner of the Temple?

Standing here I'm frozen still as ice. My hands cold. Throat dry.
What I have just seen will remain with me for the rest of my life.
I want to float away and act like I never saw it.

But I did. I did see Pyrrhus drag Priam through his son's blood and guts, and then being killed,
falling into the blood of his son. Horrifying.
Now what will become of Troy?
Where will we all end up with our great king gone? Who will take over?

Tianiah

Now I fear Troy will fall, something bad will happen to me, to everyone here in Troy! Why did
Priam have to die like this? Seeing him dying my heart beats faster, my body freezes. I want to help
but my feet will not move, I'm a block of ice! I want to look away but my head is frozen.

Jess

As I am clutching my hands tight around this pillar, my hands are desert dry, my whole body
changing from hot to cold and my head rock still, my bottom lip dropped to the terracotta tiles. I
know Priam, our king, is gone. I am a witness of this brutal and gruesome stabbing. My stomach
churns and my thoughts spin too fast to think.

Zoe

I escorted Priam to the temple. I was told to leave but I couldn't leave my king. So I hid. When I
looked up I saw a shadowy figure dragging Priam through his own son's blood. I knew then Troy
was doomed. I was dizzy as I tried to take in what had happened. My hands dripping with sweat. I
did not know where to go or what to do.

Maddie

My mother, my father, lying dead;
Now King Priam's body makes me dread
My hands are tingling
My heart has stopped
I see King Priam stabbed and drop.
His body dragging across his son's remains
How putrid the feeling and unbearable pain
That dead man dying in vain.
He had no chance, that was his fate
As like a fish to a hook with bait.
Flames burning all around
Twenty metres from the ground!
I stand without making a sound.

Toby



"Death of Achilles"

SEEING HELEN AS TROY IS TAKEN

In Virgil's poem, Aeneas tells us that as he is escaping Troy that fatal night, he sees Helen hiding in a temple. Helen's desertion of her husband Menelaus for Paris is the reason the Greeks went to war with Troy. In our workshop, students were asked to imagine they see Helen, reputedly "the most beautiful woman in the world", as they run for their lives through the battle torn streets of Troy.

I am running for my life, to where I don't know but running all the same. I pass the temple where I used to pray to the gods, pray for Helen, for our wonderful gifts, for our safety.

That was when I saw her – Helen! For a moment I stopped running to bask in the beauty of her glorious face. Just a moment, but she was beautiful enough to make it seem like a lifetime...

...then I heard the Greeks coming and I immediately regretted the moment I'd stopped. Curse Helen and her beauty! Now the Greeks have a chance to catch me, the Greeks who are here because of Helen. She will be the death of me. It is for her I lose my city, it is for her I could lose my life.

I'd better run, run for my life!

Julia

I was in the middle of the fighting
Following Aeneas
It was horror and terror;
The walls are trembling
I have to get out!
I hide behind a temple
There in a flash of light
There she is!
The most beautiful woman in the world -
Helen!
She seems scared, terrified...
I turn back
Aeneas is gone
Where is he?

I'm running through the streets of Troy,
Being chased by men.
I stop, just to catch my breath
And I see her – the amazing Helen!
The one who brought the Greeks here.
I feel myself filling up with anger,
I want to kill her,
I see her guilt and shame.

Her beauty is no use now,
She will die like the rest of us.
It is the end for her.
I won't be sorry to see her die.

Hamish

Tegan

Walking through Troy, before I knew it, I see the one and only Helen.
She walks through Troy with a fierce face, looking at all the dead.
She closes her eyes and says fierce words
I hear her say 'horror' and 'terror' and 'disaster'.
She has made me say the same things.
She hypnotises me.
I feel her great horror
I'm sorry for her
I'm surprised by her terrifying words,
the words that seem to come straight out of her mind.
I close my eyes, I open them – she's disappeared.

Georgia



HELEN'S GUILT AS TROY FALLS

But what was Helen herself feeling?

I can't believe it, Troy is dead and it's my fault. I'm ashamed to be walking the streets with people knowing it's me. I go to the Temple, every wife and child was crying. It was terrible to be me seeing this. I hid in the temple for shame. Troy is gone forever and I deserve to die. The Greeks hate me, I'm such a betrayer, I do not deserve to live. And the Trojans think I'm arrogant to come into their city...

Jake

I caused this war – why did I go with Paris? My thoughts told me I shouldn't but my heart knew it was right. Menelaus is the kind of man who fights for what is his. I shouldn't be a coward, hiding in this temple, I should be out there facing the consequences. My guilt is a volcano waiting to erupt. I am holding on to this pillar so tight my hands are blistered. Should I go out there amid the screaming and yelling, and let them kill me for what I have done, or should I hide and watch others die for my folly? Troy is doomed, Cassandra spoke, we should have listened, she knew the truth.

Madison

The pouring of blood the terror of the children, this is all my fault!
Should have stayed with Menelaus, kept myself out of trouble.
I have brought war to this land.
People stare, fury filling and overflowing their hearts; some of the children can't look at me, they tremble in fear. I have made people die that are not ready to die;
I have brought tears to the ones that should not cry.
I am filled with guilt, don't blame the ones who hate me; I WANT them to hate me – it will keep them away from the curse of my bad luck.
If I live, I could never go back to Greece, they would kill me!
I cannot stay in Troy. I am a disgrace to the gods!
I am confused and scared and don't know where to turn.
Oh gods help me!

Abby

Now I'm cowering, I've caused this misery, I'm an abomination. I can't believe what I have done, no more hope, I weep, I sorrow, I'm a disgrace.
The Trojans think I'm vain, stuck up, they are angry because I brought war to my husband's city.
The Greeks think I'm a traitor, untrustworthy, I betrayed them.
If I hadn't left we would all be in peace, I would be happy, but then I would never have met my beloved Paris. I would give up being a princess, I would go anywhere, just for peace, peace for me.

Jasmine



"Penthesilia – she had to be pretty brave, not scared at all, she wouldn't run away..."

I cannot believe what I have done! Troy is doomed, Troy will be destroyed, all because of me. I hate myself, because of me Priam is gone. I am an abomination. I have nowhere to go, I have lost Menelaus' trust, and Priam is gone, nowhere to run to, but I think I must deserve this.

Jess

I watch this doomed city fall
Greeks tearing down the city
Greeks will have their glory.
Priam is gone
The people of Troy are gone,
I'm ashamed I followed Paris.
Troy hates me!
It tears my heart to bear the thought
Of Troy destroyed for me.
Perfidious me!
I deserve to die....

Zoe

I witness Troy's fate -
A terrible disaster in front of my eyes,
My blood is churning with terrible feelings,
My bones are misery,
I will never forget this day.

Abbey

Scared, terrified, I don't know what to do
Everyone running and screaming in fear
How will this all end?
I feel shame and guilt.
Shame and guilt
That I, Helen, started this war.

It is so gruesome and sad, being tugged,
ripped in two, by two sides' hatred.
In tears I see my people's pain,
Dying in horror,
Screams of agony
Blood and guts on the dust.

Through smoke I see a warrior, a strong one
Then an arrow pierces his arm!
He falls.

Chloe



"You are putting yourself in another person's situation, so you learn from the other person because you put yourself in their shoes."

ESCAPING THE RAVAGED CITY

Only a few hundred people escape the City of Troy; eventually Aeneas leads them to safety, though many are lost on the way.

A Child's Fear

I'm trying to escape Troy with my mum. I can see dead bodies, I'm scared so I try to grab mum's hand, but when I look, she's gone. In the middle of Troy I'm all by myself, there's war, I'm so scared, I run, I find a dark spot, I hide there, I hide and look out for mum but all is dead bodies and fire.

Jess

I'm escaping with our great leader Aeneas. I can still hear cries, we run, my hand grabs for my youngest daughter. She is gone! And my family, gone! Were they taken, killed? So I'm alone now, the others are way ahead. I feel I can't breathe. Everywhere is dead quiet, the fire crackles on the walls, I stare. They have all vanished – I stare at the hallway underground. I am hollow, I am lost.

Jasmine

As the chaos rushes through the city, I am getting knocked around; I turn and my husband Amous has vanished, with our newborn son, Negus, curled up in his arms. Deserted in the city with all our supplies under my arm, I run ahead hoping they have run on in the midst of all the panic. Everywhere are dead bodies, and Greek soldiers fighting to bring our city down. I keep running in despair for my loved ones; my parents are dead, Amous and Negus are all I have!

Zoe

My hand is suddenly cool, surrounded by blistering, scorching fire. Where is the sweaty clammy feeling of my little brother's hand? That terrified squeezing is gone. My darling, my little brother – captured, gone, dead? The realization of this fact comes crashing down on me like waves to the shore, like weights from the sky. The air rushes from my lungs, impossible to breathe, every breath more rapid and uneven. I call out but from my lips escapes only a measly terrified squeak, no better than lowly vermin.

For a moment I feel I'm drowning, I taste salt tears in my mouth, my throat burns, I am swallowing fire. I want my brother, my family, my friend and companion, my world.

Julia

I'm running as fast as I can, trying to get out of this mess, gripping my son's hand. I freeze when I feel his hand is no longer there. I turn and drop to the ground. What has happened? Where has he gone? Fire and flames are rising higher, my friend pulls me up says 'we have to go!', but I want to sit and weep. His cries are in my head; in my head they get louder and louder like a never ending voice...will his cries never go? Will they be there forever?

Tianiah



THE WOMEN'S CHORUS



"The women's chorus, it was sad... it tells people that all of them have lost people they love, their families..."

This poem was written jointly by a number of girls for the play script. It was an important and moving part of the young people's performance. We include it again here as it is such a powerful statement of the losses borne by those left behind in war.

*Oh the horror for our husbands
Oh the horror for our sons*

Seeing their bodies torn apart is heart-rending

The dead, mangled and unburied will wander as spirits,
As we see them lying there we weep and weep and weep..

Oh the pain, how can I tell my son his father is gone?

*Her voice rang out in tears,
And the women wailed in answer
War – irrational, pointless war.*

Why did we not hear Cassandra's cries?
Slavery for us women will be a living death

War, stupidity, sorrow, horror, mourning, heartbreak, loss.

Grief, despair, pain, oh the unendurable pain,
Our tears gushing like waterfalls, uncontainable.

Our tears gushing like waterfalls, uncontainable
Helen is the cause of all our grief, my hatred searing every inch of my body.

*Her voice rang out in tears
And the women wailed in answer
War, stupidity, sorrow, horror, mourning, heartbreak, loss.*

The waste of lives!
Paris stole Helen and we are accursed

My parents are dead, I'm all by myself,
I hate war, why do men have to fight?

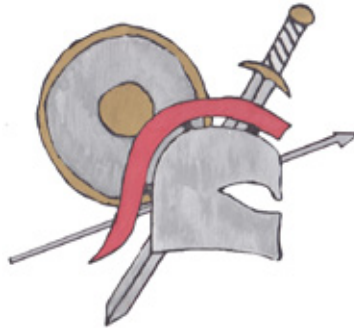
The gods have abandoned us, there is no hope for Troy
Why did I have to see my brother dead?

*Her voice rang out in tears
And the women wailed in answer*

Astyanax a babe without a father, Hector gone, I am cut to the quick.
I watch all the women sorrow and despair, we sob, we weep.
I feel for all women deep in my heart
With Hector gone, who will protect Troy herself?

All these young men gone – what might their lives have been?
My dreams for the future are gone, all gone

War – irrational, pointless war.



Many of the young people spoke about how positive the whole experience of the Troy project had been for them, so it is to one of them we give the last word:

“Personally I never thought I could act or perform in front of a crowd, but I thought about the person I was acting and thought how they would have felt... then I just did my best. Afterwards people told me how well I’d acted, and I felt personally touched, it felt great. It really was a once in a lifetime opportunity.”