

## We Have the Same Eyes

by Esme Thomas, 17

We have the same eyes

She and I

Brown

Same sun, same sky

Same age, same life?

Small house, small bunk bed

I used to have a bunk bed.

And in her hand she holds a phone

And when the music plays she is no more alone,  
than me... I say to myself.

For our hips can move and our faces can smile

And for she and I a photo can bring on

The arrowing ache

The endless grab in the dark

We stretch our arm for the,

The panic cord

The path

The trail of bread crumbs

To you, to me, to her, to she.

The burnt mud slips into the water

It makes a whirlpool in the bucket

It looks like a hurricane but instead of Dorothy, her house and her little black dog

Bugs.

The yellow path back is a long winding slope.

The house is now dark and solemn.

And the picture's corners bent and worn.

I'll make it okay

You will see

For we have the same eyes

She and I

Just not the same minds

But now the plane is landing

And the sky is upside down

For she is not me

And I am not her

And my conscience is not clean

Because now I see her eyes were blue.




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Esme says, 'This poem is inspired by my time with The Nasio Trust Charity who help to break the cycle of poverty in Kenya. When there I found myself looking for similarities between my life and the community in Musanda. I was able to meet a girl my age named Judith, I saw her strong relationship with music and thought of mine, I heard her grief and thought of mine, saw her life and tried to improve it, the best I could. But I felt guilty, my impact was a tiny drop in the ocean, our lives were far from being anything near "In common". I hope this poem will raise awareness, help people acknowledge their advantages and encourage them to use that to help others.'

# The Litmus In Common

**'You're the future. Write about what it feels like to be in the present. Write about what we have in common, the good, the bad, anything and everything the phrase brings to mind. Send what you write to us.'**

This invitation went out in late 2019 from Ali Smith, Senior Creative Arts Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, launching The Litmus, a new UK-wide writing initiative for school students in Years 9 to 13 (or equivalent).

This volume collects their responses, not least to the turbulent experiences of 2020 that have radically altered 'what it feels like to be in the present'. Their voices speak, as Ali Smith admiringly notes in her Foreword, with 'furious, energised, thoughtful and shining vitality'.

