

**Tom (Year 13, Dulwich College)**  
**DLF 2017 Winter Short Story Competition entry**

**His Last Stand**

(Tonight's the night I get in some shit)

Look at the pelicans dying in the snow in the shadow of helicopters, the desert winds spew up as 1st round knockout, my own head gripped by the hair ice greased picked with dead leaves like eyes dipping from my gaze, this may all be a fix. Flesh as wan as the street through frosted glass, all I see are flamingos. A memory skating Gregorian like dust choking as a drunk left hook in the dark, breaking the white crust on the scene like an eye swollen shut, he's picking poisoned berries with frostbitten fingers strangled by a knot of sodium glowing lights. Hunger is a fist, you stuck him up didn't you?

Later he'll be put under by barbiturates. Fast glacial decline. I'm Christ with my foot on the snake. Pedal to the floor. The traffic lights aren't changing chilled as crystal. Leave the shrapnel in your head, the robin his red breast swollen the velvet, the leather, the jewels, it's all a lie Christmas tree empty. Dripping like melting ice he wraps and rip a glittering bow around himself, they speak my name in fear my arms splayed splintered, told through children troublesome waving tea towels, I'm just telling war stories that they'll regurgitate.(bang bang).

Hell pays rent to a bullet left empty as a stomach the lights change. Later he'll fall into cardiac arrest. There is no singing into the night shouting in the face of death. He is shot. Arctic are tears and mucus twisted as tinsel on the pavement. Do they know that it's a carol slipped as a fist no more pain like an empty glass when it's bleak and bitter (bang bang).

He lies gelid liquid raw in the shadow of the cow, sacred the ice reflects and cheapens him. You get so alone that it just makes sense. Glide as crystal on the coast sugared dribble sick as the slow collapse of a dream all we wanted was an escape (bang bang).

There's just enough heat in him they stand hawkish iced cool crisp around the bed, shepherds, it will never be what is once was like every single time we all sit together. I'll send you a card from the other side lost in the post it'll come in January. What I see round the corner is chilled said doubting Thomas the nights are drawing in (bang bang).

Glowing I'm garrotted under blinking red and green lights bleached out there is no feeling I can see your bones struggling (bang bang). The shoulders breaking sneaking down the chimney plastic gift after the removal of his right lung, his blood congealed on the tarmac in the fever stifled I scurried down every street curdled with cars running from suspended animation in cool crystal last stand in diamonds polar and open. I will say nothing. (What do you want to be when you grow up) (Dear God I wonder could you save me?)