

ELIZABETH EARNSHAW

Elizabeth Earnshaw (29.8.73) was a most talented former pupil of St Columba's.

She was killed in a road accident in the spring of 1998. Elizabeth had many interests, including Music and Creative Writing. 'The Elizabeth Earnshaw Memorial Prize for Creative Writing' commemorates a young life cut too short.

The writing below was found on Elizabeth's computer after her death.

What I enjoy most about leaving my adopted home is coming back

You swoop you glide and stutter through the solid river of smoke, pollution and crazed commuters that is the M8, and the riverbanks' scenery slowly changes from the open fields and flat plains of old Stirling, to grey suburbs, and then (and now I know I'm home) the towering British Gas sentinels, telling you how hungry the city is by whether they're full or almost empty, big blue comforting monsters with Mr Happy on the side proclaiming "GLASGOW'S MILES BETTER". The river speeds on, coming to a halt as we crest the hill and march over the flyover and just before the Kingston Bridge we leave the currents and commuters and head to the West End.

Having spent most of my formative University years in the West End I admit that I am little biased and rather taken (my mother might say blindly in love) with this peculiar multi-cultural enclave to the west of the big smoke. Its cliquiness and trendiness intrigue and infuriate me, and yet you can be completely oblivious to the latest fashion trends and still not feel out of place. There are bars and bistros and clubs and pubs enough for everyone, each one with its own unique atmosphere and "crowd". You only need to leave the city, as I did, for three months, and things have changed, been moved on by the fast moving currents of fickle fashion trends and fashion conscious customers, and another 'in' place has gone, to be replaced with anything from Australian theme bars to Italian-American style coffee bistros where you can watch smartly-dressed executives grab a quick cappuccino while reading the business sections of the broad-sheets.

The river moves on, past the harassed executives, past the schools of students darting from Union to lecture rooms to library, past the small ethnic corner shops where you can buy huge, beautiful bunches of fresh coriander, unrecognisable and exotic spices and enormous cuts of meat at reasonable prices, and its tributaries join it, from Byres Road, from Queen Margaret Drive where the stately BBC sits gazing over the Botanic Gardens, on up the wide boulevard that is Great Western Road, taking us back out to the North, to the A82, to the lochs and mountains of Argyll and the Highlands. And we leave the rapids behind until the next time, when we revisit the old and familiar, and explore the inevitable new.