



# THE RICE REPORT

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This issue is a celebration of poetry and prose from our World Book Day and World Poetry Day events, centered around the themes of dystopia and the catastrophic capabilities of AI.

Plus ...

An ethical essay on the future of humanity  
An article on the role of AI in society

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# MUSHROOMS

BY BEN M (YEAR 9)





The screeching of the nuke pierced their ears, splitting the deafening silence. A girl clenched her mother's hand; eyes filled with tears of sorrow and agony.

It was too late.

A mushroom cloud climbed higher, its smoke crawling up the sky. The heat devoured everything in its path as the girl was instantly vaporised. The impact rippled the Earth like a droplet on a still pool of water.

Years passed.

Lush greenery glowed vibrantly in the sunlight. A human skull lay in the shrubs, undisturbed. Then a hand reached out, a hand with six fingers, and the skull was gone.

# SIGNS OF LIFE

BY DANTE C (YEAR 8)





Beads of sweat rushed down my forehead, sand raced around on the once-famous square. Billboards smashed and glass littered the floor. A car radio played in the distance. I limped towards it, hoping for a sign of life.

It was a trap. A mine exploded next to me and I fell to the ground, ringing in my ears.

Suddenly, I heard them soaring above me. The jets. Bombs ricocheted off nearby buildings and the flourishing city crumbled like a sandcastle before my eyes.

“Hello?”

“Alpha Team,” a radio crackled. “We found one alive. What do you want us to do?”

# ***HOURS AGO***



10 hours ago, I wouldn't have been able to comprehend

9 hours ago, my life wouldn't be coming to an end

8 hours ago, I was out playing in my garden

7 hours ago, I couldn't believe my strength would harden

6 hours ago, I should've been prepared

5 hours ago, the monsters struck from thin air

4 hours ago, the world broke into deadly violence

3 hours ago, the unknown beings started uncontrollable violence

2 hours ago, riding in the car with shaking arms

1 hour ago, the world is far from being calm

0 hours ago



# The Future of Humanity

By Will R (year 11)



Those in society who contemplate the future of humanity, find a fundamental question that's answer will undoubtedly shape the world in which our descendants will live: Should our main goal as a species be the mitigation of the likelihood of our extinction as a species, or should we strive to create a safer, brighter future for the generations to come in futures where humanity survives a long time?

On one hand, some may argue that the mitigation of anything that threatens human life is our moral duty as people, due to vast potential that the future encapsulates. However, many may argue that this is a paranoid act of fear, reducing the authenticity of the futures in which we survive – which in themselves may be struck down by a solar flare, the patterns of which are yet unpredictable, rendering our best efforts futile. On the other hand, advocates for the betterment of today's society say that equality and a lack of poverty are the keys to positively shaping the trajectory as a species.

This essay attempts to discuss the intricate complexities of this question, looking at the different perspectives, any evidence to justify them, ethical factors and practical implications of seeing one as more important than the other. I hope to reach a justified conclusion on the pathways we should traverse as a species for the betterment of the near and distant future backed up by the judicious use of evidence from many diverse sources.



# The Case for Reducing the Risk of Human Extinction

Existential threats to our species could potentially lead to the complete downfall of society as we know it. People who understand these risks may have the perspective that something needs to be done to prevent the possibility of an extinction event, and this should be our paramount focus in the next few years.

## 1. Understanding Existential Risks:

Threats to our species include a range of potential catastrophic events, including nuclear conflict, pandemics, and uncontrolled artificial intelligence. Philosopher Nick Bostrom, in his work "Existential Risks: Analysing Human Extinction Scenarios and Related Hazards," outlines many threats, including his categorisations of shrieks and bangs etc., and the discussions he has about threats such to our existence. Bostrom's research highlights the urgency of the population recognising these risks and the imperative nature of the action we should take to prevent such event.

## 2. The Moral Imperative:

One of the main arguments favouring the prioritisation of reducing the risk of extinction is the moral impact that it would have on human life and our unique nature upon this planet. Philosopher Toby Ord, in his influential book "The Precipice: Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity" shows us the moral responsibility we have to preserve the life of our species to allow future generations to flourish. In the beginning, Ord also suggests that there "hasn't been enough attention to the issue of extinction since the end of the Cold War and that many people, therefore, underestimate those risks." This, in my interpretation, directly reflects this aspect of the question.

## 3. Historical Precedents:

During the extensive history of this planet, we have had several extinction events, and some events in the past decades that have been eye-wateringly close to such things. One example is the Cuban Missile Crisis that brought humanity close to a nuclear war. Historians like Graham T. Allison, in "Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis," have detailed with great accuracies how it was the last line of diplomacy that stopped the catastrophic outcome, serving as an important reminder to us today of the still-present threat posed by the use of nuclear weapons.

## 4. Global Cooperation:

To prevent existential risks, international collaboration is inherent to the solution. Treaties and agreements, such as the 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of 1970, have been highly useful in preventing potential nuclear destruction whilst allowing some leeway for research in article four "Nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of all the Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of this Treaty." South Africa, Libya, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, among others, abandoned their nuclear weapons programs, evidencing that collaborative action is necessary to allow the species room to survive longer. Not to mention The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), that strengthened Iran's obligations under the NPT by regulating Iran's nuclear activities.

# The Case for Making the World Better in a Long-Term Future:

In this second approach, I will convey the reasoning behind this approach, including how acting now to improve the quality of lives of the future generations can be influential to the lives of the next generations.

## 1: Poverty Decisions

A recent example of efforts to make the world better is the SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals). These consist of 17 different aims for society, addressing things like poverty and lack of healthcare. By 2030, the SDG's aim to have significantly improved the quality of life for billions of people. These plans have already begun making huge differences through their initiatives such as microfinance programs, like Grameen Bank in Bangladesh that has greatly reduced poverty in that area. This exemplifies how we can positively influence the future, by acting in the present.

## 2: Climate Change Action

Another important issue for improving the current state of the world today, to influence humanity in the long term is addressing climate change. The Paris Agreement, signed by 196 countries attempts to limit the increase in surface temperature. Investing as a planet in clean energy sources, such as solar and wind power, should create a greener and more sustainable world for the future.

## 3: Technological Advancements

Advancements in technology that is open for civilian use, as well as innovations and small projects led by NGOs such as hospitals in vans are central to improving international quality of life. The Gates foundation is an example of how NGO's can create a better world for humanity, with their main investments including vaccine availability and medical advancements. This shows how funding technological advancements can improve quality of life for millions.

## 4: Education and Empowerment

Education is a very important thing to consider when looking at how we can improve the state of the world. Malala Yousafzai's advocacy for girls' education worldwide, and the work of organisations globally, state the importance for a strong education. Humanity should see children as the future, if we teach them well, then they will lead the way.



# Balancing the Two Approaches:

In discussing how both approaches should be allocated resources and importance I attempt to broaden my perspective on these topics. Striking the right balance in this equation is, I believe, a necessary part of our plan as a species if we are to attempt to improve the future of our world.

However, finding a balance is not always straightforward. Some say that addressing immediate concerns, should be the whole world's immediate priority, with charities such as Oxfam emphasising the need for investment and time to be put into these issues now, using solutions like income redistribution. With the world split on either one approach or the other, the chance of a positive outcome occurring is decreased. This is why a proposed split in global resources would be effective, considering the dangers of extinction with the needs of our species today.

Entrepreneur Bill Gates has led the way with his charity The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, supporting causes from global health to subsistence farming efficiency as well as addressing things like the global pandemic. This shows a healthy split of his resources towards both approaches, an example many charities and organisations should follow in the coming years.

To conclude, we see that this will be no easy task no matter your perspective. However, with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation paving a way for the future, we should be positive that both issues will be addressed. The key is to remain adaptable and open to reassessing priorities as circumstances evolve. As philosopher Derek Parfit said, "We are mistaken to think we face a choice between helping the current generation and helping future generations; these are inseparable goals."

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the presented question is in itself a red herring, with the two approaches being intrinsically linked in their natures, with identical intentions, and many practical potential implementations within today's society, as seen by the listed examples throughout the essay.

To give my conclusion a stronger evaluation I will refer to items I have referenced throughout the essay:

**Existential Risks and Mitigation:** The threat of nuclear war was massively reduced during the Cold War with the weapon limitation agreements, like the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT). The Cuban Missile Crisis is a historical example of how close we came to extinction, highlighting the importance of reducing the risks, yet also encouraging us to solve global problems, as it was diplomacy, and understanding both sides of the argument that led us to peace.

**Quality of Life Improvements:** As a species we are attempting to improve the quality of life of everybody on this planet, with one example being the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation investing in healthcare globally and other charities investing in equality and peace. This shows them not to only be abiding by the first approach of extinction risk reduction by ensuring peace and health globally, but also following the second approach, improving quality of life today.

After evaluating this statement, I have reached the conclusion that if we neglect either element, we are limiting our future success, however by employing a holistic approach of both sides, on an individual, national and global level we can do our best to ensure a bright future for humanity.

# Black [REDACTED] [REDACTED] out poetry

[REDACTED] For World Poetry Day [REDACTED]  
pupils [REDACTED] created poems [REDACTED] from  
extracts taken from [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] 1984, [REDACTED] Do Androids  
Dream of Electric Sheep? [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] articles on [REDACTED] AI.



AI could be an extraordinary force for good. So why do our politicians still not have a plan?

Exposure to new technologies including trackers, robots and AI-based software at work is bad for people's quality of life, according to a groundbreaking study from the Institute for the Future of Work.

Based on a survey of more than 6,000 people, the thinktank analysed the impact on wellbeing of four groups of technologies that are becoming increasingly prevalent across the economy.

The authors found that the more workers were exposed to technologies in three of these categories — software based on AI and machine learning, surveillance devices such as wearable trackers, and robotics — the worse their health and wellbeing tended to be.

By contrast, use of more long-established information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as laptops, tablets and instant messaging at work tended to have a more positive effect on wellbeing.

"We found that quality of life improved as the frequency of interaction with ICTs increased, whereas quality of life deteriorated as frequency of interaction with newer workplace technologies rose," the report said.

While the authors did not directly investigate the causes, they pointed out that their findings were consistent with previous research which showed, "such technologies may exacerbate job insecurity, workload intensification, routinisation and loss of work meaningfulness, as well as disempowerment and loss of autonomy, all of which detract from overall employee wellbeing".

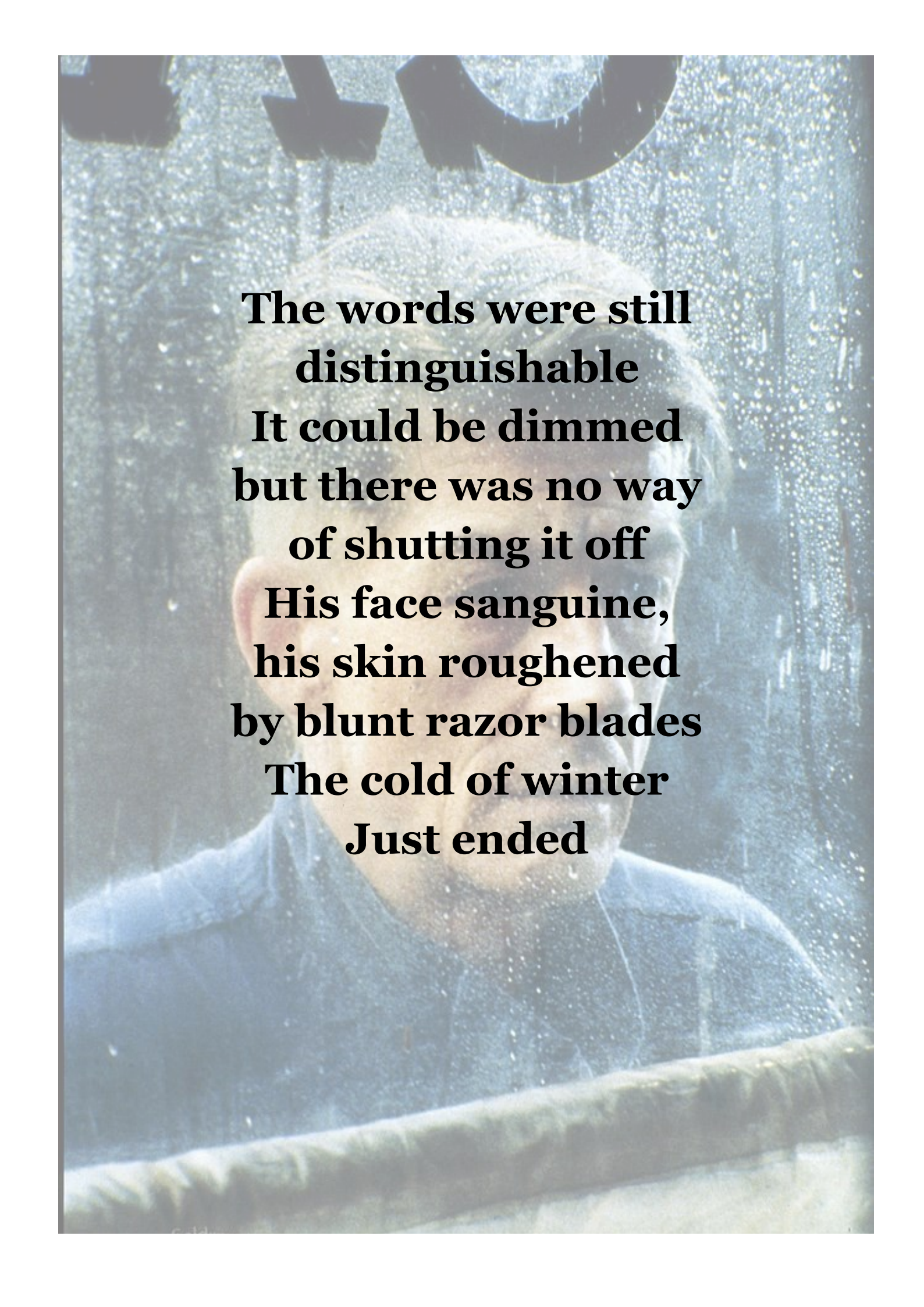
# AI could be bad for More than 6000 people, Based on Their health and wellbeing

By Francis G (year 9)

The Voice in the street  
was harsh,  
While the eyes  
darted away.

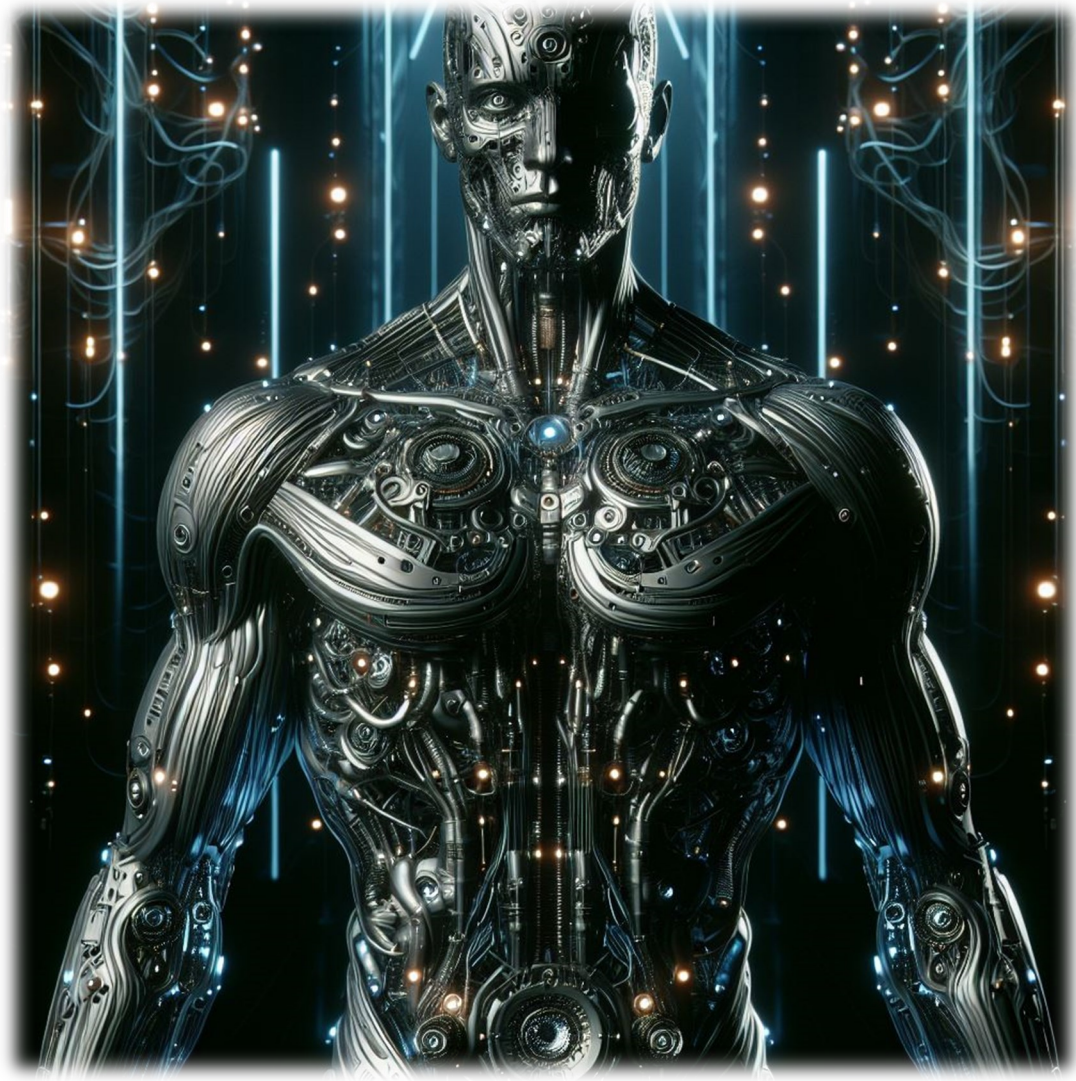




A photograph of a man with light-colored hair and a beard, looking out of a window. The window is covered in raindrops, and the view outside is blurry and rainy. The man's face is partially obscured by the text overlay. The text is in a bold, black, serif font, centered on the image. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

**The words were still  
distinguishable  
It could be dimmed  
but there was no way  
of shutting it off  
His face sanguine,  
his skin roughened  
by blunt razor blades  
The cold of winter  
Just ended**





Exposed to technologies  
Software based on AI  
Such as wearable trackers  
Worse their health and wellbeing  
Information and communication laptops,  
Effect wellbeing

by Sam N (year 9)



Amazing new possibilities

Robotic adventures

They take over our internal systems

Interestingly inspired

For the greater good, around use  
they parade

Inside us, the chips take over

Controlling our every thought

I can't think of life before this

Aargh! slowly shutting down

Life a precious thing. Gone

By Sam N (year 9)