



# WRITE ON!



BEFRIENDERS HIGHLAND LITERARY NEWSLETTER

INAUGURAL ISSUE

SPRING 2014

Welcome



Hello and Welcome to the first edition of the new creative writing magazine. First off, I would like to introduce our two editors, Isolde and Graeme. Isolde is editing everything to do with poetry whilst Graeme is working on stories, non-fiction and plays. Both have done an excellent job in bring this magazine into fruition. So a big thank you to both for your hard work !

We've been bowled over by the brilliant & varied work we've received for our first edition. I hope all our members can take inspiration from what they read and get their creative juices flowing. We want to build a really exciting, supportive & inclusive community of writers. So pick up your pen and get involved! Inside are briefs & ideas to get you thinking.

Each issue will have a letters & comments page. If you have any thoughts, ideas or musings on what you have read here, please send them in and be a part of the conversation.

## IN SIDE THIS ISSUE

### LETTERS & COMMENTS

### FEATURED SELECTIONS:

#### POEMS

- ∞ *SOMETHING FUNNY*
- ∞ *LIMERICKS PLEASE*
- ∞ *MEMORABLE QUOTES*
- ∞ *WITH SOME GRAVITY*
- ∞ *A LIGHTER LOOK*

#### SHORT STORIES

- ∞ *LIVING THE MOMENT*
- ∞ *MAKE IT REAL*
- ∞ *ANIMAL TAILS*

#### WRITERS CORNER:

- ∞ *Rant & Rave*
- ∞ *JUST OUT OF INTEREST*
- ∞ *YOUR SUBMISSIONS*

I hope you enjoy our magazine & a big *Thank You* to all the talented writers who've made the first issue a resounding success !  
- Alan Duncan



Much appreciation goes out to Befrienders member John for his words insightfully describing the value his letter friendship has to him. In verse he writes:

To Befrienders All,  
Be You Scribe or E-Mail,  
Pen-Pals Savour Recall  
Keeping in Touch Non-Fail.

Even a Scribble of News  
Shared Cordially to Lift  
If Trials Gave the Blues,  
A Message of Hope Can  
Perk Up Doldrums,  
Shadows Shift.

Camaraderie Grows  
With Each Exchange  
On the Grapevine  
A Prized Friend Knows  
Empathy when  
Deep Joy or Pain Range.

- John

## ***SOMETHING FUNNY***

### The Budgie and the Budget

Shall I sell the budgie or keep it and buy another?  
Or throw the whole thing out to save on bird food?  
Poor budgie, I could sell it for a cup of tea.  
In fact that's how hard up I am.  
Yet, I could budget for the budgie

– Keith



### The Bio-Computer

I believe they are working on the chemical computer.  
I don't know if they've started on the bio-computer,  
But it could lead to some interesting developments.  
When I want to wake, I tell myself when to get up or set an alarm.  
The living computer could direct you when to wake up  
And you could direct it when to tell you.  
But, it could take over the mind like personality-bending drugs.

– Keith

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### ***LIMERICKS PLEASE***

Keith's short piece, titled "The Budgie and the Budget", inspired Isolde to create a limerick based on the ideas he set forth. Including it here is by way of inviting you to feel free in the future to compose and submit your own humorous limericks to this newsletter.

There was once a poor man without resource  
Who pondered selling his budgie in due course  
His budget too low to buy her some seed,  
He pitched her for the sum of one cup of tea  
And gulped it down with no further remorse.



**"When writers die they become books, which is, after all, not too bad an incarnation."**

- **George Luis Borges**

## WITH SOME GRAVITY

### The Silent Caller

1.

I am the Silent Caller-and you  
all know me well:

I represent the ultimate in  
communication hell.

You dread my call in daytime,  
you dread it more at night.

You search for words to reach me  
and they never seem just right.

2.

I give you no assistance by  
telling you my name,

Or any of my secrets of  
agony or shame;

And in the well of silence you feel  
its darkness too,

Your words my only anchor:  
correct, select, and few.

3.

Perhaps you do not know me, but

Then perhaps you do –

I am the Silent Caller-this tells  
so much to you.

It tells you I am human  
and very, very scared.

My silence speaks of deeper pain  
than others may have shared.

4.

Sometimes my tears are dropping  
in quiet hopelessness,

Sometimes my silent screams are  
heard beyond the universe.

Am I the Silent Caller? Does silence  
ever call?

Do words more eloquently say what  
I can't say at all?

5.

I am the Silent Caller- and

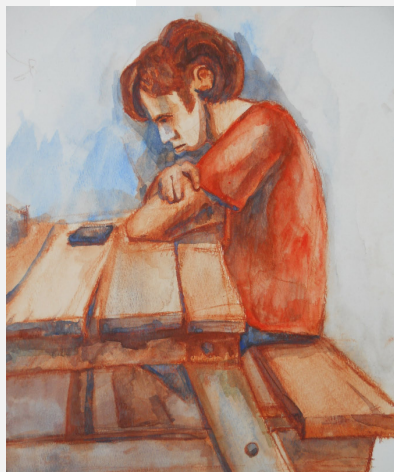
I appeal to you:

Don't ever underestimate the  
healing work you do.

You strive to find the perfect words  
to show how much you care.

I think you said it all to me  
by simply being there.

**Mary**



## WITH SOME GRAVITY

**IT**

There IT was  
Broken in a million pieces  
Scattered across the floor.

IT was complicated  
It was complex  
It was trouble  
IT was different  
IT was solitary  
It was too difficult  
IT was best left out  
IT was forgotten about

There IT lay  
Waiting  
Hoping  
Praying  
Too many pieces  
Too much of a problem  
Too much effort  
IT longed for Someone.

Someone to come  
Someone to try  
Someone to understand  
Someone to gather up the pieces  
Someone to mend

IT waited

IT realized no-one was coming  
IT cried  
IT reached out for a friend

Someone answered  
Someone found IT  
And gathered the bits together  
Slowly  
Methodically  
Carefully  
Tenderly



IT began to take shape  
IT looked up again  
IT saw the sky  
IT smiled  
IT thought .....



Thank goodness for.....Someone

- Norma

## A LIGHTER LOOK

### AUTUMN LEAVES

It's when they fall off trees  
To be scattered round the town,  
And start to change their colour  
By turning russet, gold and brown.

They gather up in collection  
After going floating in the air,  
And end up in a messy whirl  
Not just one here and there.

As you go walking through them  
They will make a rustling sound  
Watch it doesn't trip you up  
And get you on the ground.

They need swept up in the garden  
Using a shovel with the brush  
Keeps you busy outside the house  
When you're not in a rush

- Susan



## WHEN



One certainty that you're able to surmise,  
Is that like portents, events lead the way  
Whether unheeded or beyond your recognition,  
This would be really hard to say.

Be they perfectly visible signs of consequential size  
Or minor events beyond your scope of reference,  
You never took into account their accumulated power  
To transform your life, with no regard for preference.

You must accept this change. You can't do otherwise.  
Wondering when it occurred doesn't matter at all.  
It's a question that'll never be answered,  
So let go of what you can't or won't recall.

The one who adapts to change is the one who survives.  
Foolish of you to want to resist.  
Your advance depends on embracing the new.  
By letting go of the past, it can no longer persist.

A shift may be where your happiness thrives.  
Favoured by successive moments in transition  
Continuous and unstoppable as this may be,  
It is perchance, bettering your position.

Whenever and however new fortune arises,  
Be ready without hesitation.  
Seek that path paved with promise,  
The possibilities are worth your investigation.

- Isolde

## HOME SWAP

Home swap  
Heart stop  
Big Mistake?  
Could be great

Deep breath  
Baby steps  
Find your feet  
Highland beat

Slowed down  
New hound  
Mountain Views  
Walking shoes

No friends  
Mind cleanse  
Start again  
Little wren

Nature speaks  
Rosey cheeks  
Rising up  
Above the snub

Digging deep  
Awake the sleep  
Spirits soars  
Open doors

Stepping through  
Restored anew  
Inner smile  
...I am worthwhile



## SESAME

Honey comb hair  
Everywhere  
Floating in my coffee

Random wees  
Wants to please  
Life is full of glee

Mountain trail  
Waggy tail  
Rabbit poo for pudding

No more hams  
Fleecy jim jams  
Lots and lots of snuggling

Sesame  
Full of glee  
Life now has a melody

- Clare T.



- Clare T.



## *Walking in the Dusk*

*Walking in the dusk makes me feel at peace.  
All my problems of the day just seem to cease.  
Not quite day, not quite night, a mysterious path follows.  
The day is ending yet again, a new dawn awaits tomorrow.*

- Tracey

## SHORT STORIES

### **Living the Moment**



### **Marooned**

Marooned. Abandoned. Deserted by the sea as it creeps ever further away leaving us trapped on this narrow strip of isolated shore, it's gentle waves laughing at us as they steadily retreat, finally leaving us all alone. We stand staring in disbelief at our skiff which we had left gently bobbing in the sun on a beautifully calm sea. It now lays tilted and distraught, little more than a useless wreck without the support of the retreating sea.

Undaunted we explore the shoreline, we will go inland and find a road, but we are not allowed to escape, there is no way inland, a thin cover of mocking trees and then impenetrable marsh. Our plan was to spend the day salmon fishing off the coast of northern British Columbia. We had departed from Prince Rupert early that morning but after a fruitless morning's fishing had decided to come ashore for lunch, and now we are unable to leave.

We could try to pole the skiff towards the retreating tide so we set about collecting tree trunks, of which there is no shortage. After much pushing and pulling, and dragging and heaving the skiff is sitting perkily on top of a set of rollers. The theory is, push the skiff forward off the back log which can then be dragged around to the front and we will slowly catch the sea; the reality is the skiff won't move. Back to the drawing board. Maybe

we need a pivot and lever mechanism to push the skiff on its rollers. Success, the skiff is moving!! but we lose, skiff 25 metres, sea 100 metres.

Exhausted, we are now becoming concerned. Whilst we were procuring nature's home-made rollers we discovered footprints; large footprints, larger than my hand; fresh footprints; grizzly footprints! The far distant waves, crashing onto the edge of the coastal platform, are howling with glee as we realise that we have been abandoned at the point where the grizzly bears come down to the shore and we have no way to escape them, we have nowhere to go!

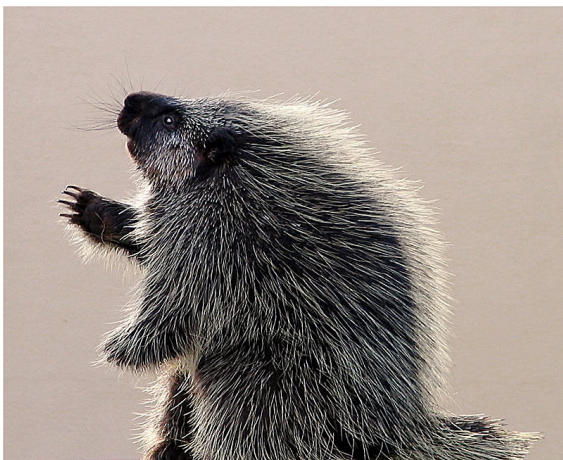


Fire. That is our only recourse, our only way of protecting ourselves as we have left the rifles behind; we were not expecting to need them. Now the shoreline comes to our aid thwarting the mischief of the sea. Quickly a pile of bleached white, dry driftwood is accumulated and we are able to relax and absorb the beauty of this wilderness place while we watch the gently curling smoke drift lazily up to join the cotton wool clouds which float overhead.

My mind wanders with the smoke as I idly day dream in the warmth of the afternoon sun. Suddenly I stiffen. There is something coming towards us, too far away to be

identified but heading straight for us. I bank up the fire. What can it be? I realise it is too small to be a grizzly but I can't identify it. It wanders slowly towards us with a curious rolling gait. It obviously hasn't seen us but why hasn't it smelt the smoke? It seems completely oblivious to our presence and to the fire. Tension mounts. The fire is our only protection but if it is not deterred by the fire, then we are defenceless. We have no means of escape. In the distance I become aware of the mocking sound of the waves and I smell the acrid scent of the smoke, all senses being heightened as my body readies itself for the fight.

My fear suddenly changes to delight as I am finally able to identify our visitor as he wanders ever closer, still totally unaware of our presence. Coming towards us is a large porcupine. He is now close enough for us to hear the gentle swishing of his spines as they roll against each other as he slowly ambles along. I become concerned for him as he is heading straight for the fire, his head down as he snuffles his way along. I discover I am holding my breath as he is now no more than two metres away and still unaware of our presence. Judy claps her hands. Suddenly startled, he rears up on his hind legs astonished to see us. He sways there for a few moments like



an untidy bundle of garden brooms and then, planting all four legs firmly on the ground, he turns and shuffles quickly away to the safety of the trees. As I watch him disappear I suddenly realise why he wasn't

afraid, he has never seen a human being before nor has he ever encountered fire.

I settle down again by the fire with a smile on my face, now quite content to wait until the sea has had its fun and decides to come back for us.

Muriel



## The One

His friends, or drinking partners would probably be a better expression, were gathered around their usual positions in the bar. The band was just completing their fine tuning before starting their set.

This was his life, every weekend without fail. The 'friends', whose conversations he was paying scant attention to, were all looking forward to the band's performance. Normally, so would he but tonight was different.

The reason for his distraction was standing at the other side of the bar. He had moved his position slightly so he could view her through the small passageway that separated the stage side bar from the more quiet social area. She was beautiful in every way, but it was her eyes and smile that captivated him. Having walked past her when he had entered the bar he knew she had the figure to match her looks.

The familiar feeling entered the pit of his stomach. He was constantly castigating himself for these feelings of nervousness. The nervousness was briefly replaced by anger. Anger directed at himself. These



feelings had stopped him trying to develop any sort of relationship since his wife had left him five years ago. Although he had fully understood her reasons, her departure had still left him heartbroken.

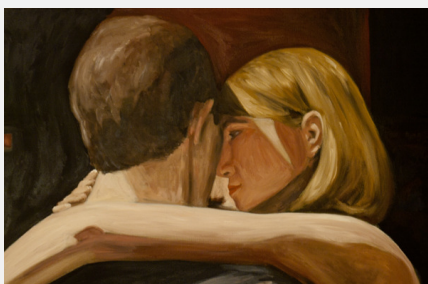
He knew that she was the one. He knew a lot of the women in the bar, but he had never had the confidence to try and develop things further with any of them. Before venturing out tonight, he had vowed that tonight he would be stronger. But he was not quite ready yet. He headed towards the toilets at the far end of the bar.

As he washed his face and sprayed on the deodorant he had taken as a precaution, he wondered what his first words would be. He had never been one for corny chat up lines. When he had first met her, his wife had been attracted to his smile and his interest in her. Taking deep breaths to ensure he was fully relaxed he headed back to the bar.

Fortunately the toilets were situated at the social area side of the bar. Again taking a few more deep breaths, he made his way slowly towards her. She saw him approaching and smiled. Perhaps she had been aware of his admiring glances.

After talking for a few minutes she allowed him to lead her to the stage side. The band was just starting their first song. It was very appropriate. This was the song he had first danced with his ex-wife to. As they held each other close, they gazed at each other and smiled. The chance encounter with his ex-wife the previous Sunday had turned his life upside down. They had talked, agreed to meet up on the Saturday night and see what developed. At the moment everything was going well. He had been right. She was the one. Always had been. And hopefully always would be.

Graeme



## ANIMAL TAILS



### The Pheasants, The Pine Marten and The Fox

My husband and I holidayed together last year for the first time in probably twenty five years - the reason, we no longer had any pets. People speak of animal ownership as being such a tie. Don't we know it! A lifetime of living with a variety of animals, including poultry and persuading neighbours and friends to give eye to them to enable one to get a break; we gave up and realised it was easier to take it in turn and holiday separately. What caused our lifestyle change was the death of our last pet, an elderly Dalmatian.

The wild birds which frequented our garden gained more significance and attention. Through no longer having an animal to whom one could feed household scraps mixed with their regular diet, the birds diet was extended with assorted treats. The consequence of this we had not foreseen. Three hen pheasants began to feed each morning amongst the smaller birds outside my kitchen window. However, they were very nervy and when they caught a glimpse of me they immediately took flight. Sadly, their number was systematically reduced through becoming casualties on the road passing our home.



At the end of last summer I was surprised to see a delightful looking pine marten sampling our household scraps and this was in broad daylight. At dusk on subsequent evenings I saw him running along the bottom of the garden and even posing, statue like on a rock, surveying what he'd adopted as part of his terrain.



As autumn turned to winter and the hours of daylight quickly depleted, if the pine martin continued to visit it was unseen. The birds fed well with seed and nuts regularly added to their diet. Then one evening in mid-December, I was stood on the kitchen doorstep smoking, when a large, very handsome fox walked round the corner of the house and we both jumped simultaneously in surprise. He ran away, which I felt compelled to do something about immediately. I spoke to him and tried to entice him back using my voice. I was thrilled when he cautiously reappeared and walked towards me. He gave me a wide

berth of maybe six feet, but stood in front of me and for several seconds we gazed at each other. He then walked passed me and preceded to eat the bird food. A couple of subsequent evenings I saw 'my' fox from the kitchen window.

The New Year brought the return of fox fairly regularly, probably aided by my husband purchasing tinned dog food from the supermarket and I weakened buying Bonio dog biscuits. He's delightful to watch as he's not greedy. Appearing to savour his food, he even sits down when enjoying a particularly choice morsel. The birds' peanuts appear to be a favourite. After an absence of weeks, one evening recently we saw the pine marten from the kitchen window checking out what food was on offer. But when I went out with a bowl of food just a couple of evenings ago, the fox seemed skittish and I was aware this was not 'my' fox as it was smaller and probably a vixen. Even she fed within my vicinity and did not appear ravenously hungry, so must have sensed I was not a threat.

Do we need another pet? It would appear that the local wildlife has adopted us!

Joy



## Looking For A Home

"Quick! Quick! It's them," cried the grey kitten, "Get up here and poke your head through the tyre."

"Who's them?" asked her grey and white brother, still half asleep.

"You know, them, them from the big house across the river. Now get yourself up here and look cute." his sister hissed.

"Oh! them, right, move over a bit then and let me get up."

They had heard the Lady saying to the Farmer's wife when she bought her eggs last week that she would like a kitten and the Farmer's wife said she could have as many as she liked, there were far too many around the farm, now the Lady was back for more eggs...and two kittens, if grey kitten had anything to do with it. But oh! oh! a problem, she had brought the Man with her.

"Oh look darling, just look at those two little kitties over there. Aren't they adorable," she crooned.

"Yes very," said the Man, "but one is enough."

Four little eyes blinked up at them through the tyre.

"We shall not be separated. Two or nothing, that's our offer." whispered grey kitten to grey and white kitten.

"We can't take any today as we won't be home for the next two days, so that's settled for now," said the man. The Lady sighed, collected her eggs and away they went."

"Hmm, plan A didn't work but don't worry, I'll find us a home together very soon, you'll see." said grey kitten.

The following week they came again.

"They are here!" squeaked grey and white kitten. "What do I have to do this time?"

"Follow me" said grey kitten.

Off they strutted to the big machine that brought the Lady and the Man. "Look, there they are again," cried the lady pointing to the two kittens. "They are coming to greet us."

"Keep close to me." hissed grey kitten, "We'll crack this today."

"Ooh! I can't! I can't! They look so big and that noisy machine. I'm scared. I'm off," cried the grey and white kitten and scampered back to the barn as fast as his little legs would carry him.

"Wimp" thought grey kitten as she blinked her eyes at the Lady. The Lady scooped her up and put her on the seat of the noisy machine.

"Isn't it just gorgeous, we must have it," she said to the Man. "Can I take it home please?" she asked the Farmer's wife.

"Of course you can," she replied, she was glad to get one of them off her hands.

"Oh no you don't," said grey kitten, "both or nothing," and with that she leapt from the machine and bolted back to the barn.

"Well you blew it didn't you!" she cried to grey and white kitten, "If you had stayed, we would be on our way to the big house now."

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'm not as brave as you," muttered grey and white kitten. "Fancy letting her put you up in that noisy machine. It might have eaten you up," he said full of adoration for his brave sister.

"Stupid boy! How are we going to get to the big house if we don't go in the machine then? Tell me that," she said disdainfully. "Now the next time they come, stay with me or I will go and leave you here to look after yourself."

"You wouldn't do that would you? I'll try to be brave the next time I promise," he said and promptly fell asleep.

"Lazy thing," thought grey kitten "I suppose I shall have to find supper for both of us again." she sighed.

The following week the Lady came alone in a much smaller machine.

"Right, now this is our last chance. Keep with me or I shall go and leave you," said grey kitten.

"Oh please don't, please don't leave me," cried grey and white kitten and scurried to catch up with his sister.

"Well I never," exclaimed the Lady, "here they are again, do you think they both want to come home with me?" she asked the Farmer's wife.

" 'Course we do you silly woman why else would we be here?" muttered grey kitten.

"My husband said I could only have one but it would be a shame to separate them don't you think."

"Definitely" said the Farmer's wife, seeing a chance to get rid of two of kittens. "They would be company for each other."

During this time grey kitten was rubbing around the Lady's legs and purring, whilst grey and white kitten just stood and trembled.



"That's settled it then. I'm taking both of them," said the Lady.

"Hooray," cried grey kitten and gave grey and white kitten such a nudge that he fell over.

"I'll get a box to put them in. It will be safer than leaving them on the seat," said the Farmer's wife.

"I don't think I want to go in a box," whimpered grey and white kitten.

"Nor me," answered grey kitten, "but it won't be for long. Just down the road and across the bridge. So be brave."

"It's dark in here and I want a tinkle," said grey and white kitten "Whoops! Can't hold it any longer."

"Now look what you have done to my coat," hissed grey kitten, "I'm all wet and smelly. Now the Lady won't like me."

"Sorry but I'm frightened and you know what happens when I'm frightened," said grey and white kitten.

"Wimp," she answered.

"Here we are my little darlings. You are in your new home," said the Lady as she lifted them out. "Oh dear, you poor little things, were you so frightened in the box? Never mind. I'll soon have you both dry again," she crooned.



"See," said grey and white kitten, she still likes us."

"Lucky for you," muttered grey kitten.

The pair of them wandered around the big room inspecting everything.

"Yes I think this will do nicely. I'm sure we will be happy here," said grey kitten.

"Look, look" cried grey and white kitten, "the Lady is bringing us food."

"Of course she is you idiot, that's all part of her job. Now eat it properly and don't spread it all over the floor. Keep it in the dish," said grey kitten.

"What's a dish?" asked grey and white kitten as he dragged a piece of chicken across the floor to eat under a chair.

"You are so ignorant! A dish is what the food is put into and you eat it from the dish, like this. Watch me carefully," said grey kitten, but grey and white kitten was far too busy with his chicken under the chair to bother about manners.

"Well now, what have we here? said the Man. "I thought we were only having one kitten."

"Well dear, it seemed such a shame to part them and they will be company for each other whilst we are at work." said the Lady.

"Hmm I see, and I suppose they are to be allowed to have my chair" he said pointing to the two furry bundles curled up in his armchair.

"Too right" thought grey kitten "too right."

"We must think of names for them dear. Have you any suggestions?" asked the Lady.

"Plenty," replied the Man "but you wouldn't like any of them."

"Cheek," said grey kitten, jumping down off the armchair to go over and attack the cotton reel on a string hanging from the dresser drawer knob.

"What about William for the boy?" said the Lady.

"Hee, hee. Suits him, Willie the Wimp," giggled grey kitten.

"And Jasmine for the girl" she added.

"Whatever you wish my dear. I shall probably just call them both cat" said the Man and went back to reading his newspaper.

"Try it mate and you'll find that we won't answer you at all. Jasmine is a very nice name. I like it and if you don't use it, I shall just ignore you," said grey kitten loftily.

Noticing what William was doing, Jasmine said crossly, "You don't eat it, you tinkle in it"

William was trying to eat cat litter. "I thought it was rather a big dish, silly me," he said sheepishly.

"You are so stupid William." said Jasmine. "We have only been here a few hours and already, you have upset the Man. If you don't behave yourself, you will get us chucked out or *"re-homed"* as the Man yelled when you were sick in his slipper."

Jasmine licked her paw thoughtfully and added, "Just watch me and do as I say and we will be OK. We have to let him think that he is the Boss for a little while. Don't worry. I'll get him trained very soon. The lady is no problem. Actually, I quite like her. I might try sitting on her lap and purring later. That usually pleases them."

"How do you know all this?" asked William.

"Well, if you had listened to Mother instead of playing around all the time, you would have known it yourself. It's called intuition. Our Mother had plenty of it and she passed it on to me. I must have your share as well," she said loftily.

"Can you eat intuition?" asked William.

"Did you see me William! William! Leave that box of tissues alone and listen to me. Did you see me?" repeated Jasmine. "I crept onto her lap, got right up under her chin and she cuddled me." It was lovely and you know what?

She has two shelves on her body and I sat on one of them and put my head on her shoulder," sighed Jasmine.

"Nah, I didn't see you Jasmine. I was in the cupboard where our food comes from but I couldn't get any out of those tin things." replied William.

"Well, later on I'll do it again. You follow me and get on the other shelf but don't put your claws out if you slip. They aren't very big shelves but ever so soft and warm." explained Jasmine.



And so it was, the lady didn't mind both kittens cuddling up around her neck.

The next day after a lovely warm sleep beside the big iron fire and a breakfast of porridge, the two kittens began to explore.

"Wow! Look at this for a place to sleep," cried William. He was looking at a huge four-poster bed. "We could play running up and down those long floppy things."

"Come out of there! I'm sure we are not supposed to be in here. Although, I must say it does look inviting." said Jasmine. "It fair wore me out climbing up all those stairs. Let's have just a little sleep but no running up those floppy things."

"OK, maybe tomorrow we can play that game." answered William.

They curled up together on the big bed and that's how they were found three hours later when the Man and the Lady came home from shopping.

"We shall have to make sure that all the doors are shut properly," said the Man as he lifted Jasmine up from the bed. She opened one eye and stared up at him and gave a little purr.

"Yes my pretty, you are coming downstairs," he said and held her gently to him as they went down.

"He's going to be a doddle," thought Jasmine and snuggled into him.

The Lady carried William who didn't even wake up.

"Come on you two, here's your lunch," called the lady.

"Cor, more food," said William as he dived into his dish as though he were starved. Jasmine sighed at his lack of manners and began to eat hers daintily.

"They need worming. William is ravenous which is sure sign of worms," observed the Lady.

"I'm fine, honestly. No worms have been in here eating my food. I eat it all up myself." replied William.

"She means we have worms inside us, eating our food," explained Jasmine. "Mother told me this as well. She said if we had stayed on the farm we would have eaten special grasses to get rid of the worms but now we are "tame" we have to have a tablet."

"Oh I see," nodded William, not seeing at all and understanding even less.

"Come and see what we have bought for you," said the Lady as she put a large fluffy mouse and two Ping-Pong balls on the floor.

"Stand back! Stand back! I'll kill it," cried William and pounced on the mouse. "There you are, dead as a dodo."

"Are you sure, it doesn't look very much like the mice in the barn. It is very big isn't it?" she exclaimed anxiously. She tentatively put out a paw to touch it but it didn't move, "Yes you are right. It is dead, so shall we play with it now?"

"What's that big black and white thing over there," whispered William.

"I think they call it a Dog," Jasmine whispered back.

"Is it alive?" asked William.

"Of course it is. All Dogs are alive. Let's say hello to it." Stepping closer to the dog, Jasmine said, "Hello dog. Are you friendly?"



Dog lifted her head and looked intently at the two intruders. "Yes I'm friendly as long as you leave me alone" she responded. She knew all about kittens. They were pests, always jumping on you and trying to steal your food.

William peeped out from behind the dresser and crept up beside his sister. "Hello dog. We have got worms, have you?" he said importantly.

"No I haven't and you won't either in a few days' time" she said with agitation. "Stupid little cat." The Dog thought to herself.

"Why didn't we see you yesterday?" asked Jasmine.

"Because, I am a very important member of this household. I was allowed into the sitting room whilst you two settled in. I am also allowed in the car so I went shopping this morning, that's why." retorted the Dog.

"Have you got a name besides Dog?" asked Jasmine. "I am called Jasmine and my brother is William the Wimp" she giggled.

"I know your names, I am Anna. Now please, leave me in peace" ordered Anna.

"What shall we do now? I'm tired of chasing these little balls around," complained William. "I'm bored."

"I know," said Jasmine "Let's try to get up on to the window ledges and see what is outside. The problem is how to do it. They are very high up."

"If we get up onto a chair first then over on to that big wooden thing where the Lady makes our food and then jump, we might be able to hang onto those long floppy things and then jump down onto the ledge," proposed William. "What d'ya think eh?"

"Ooh! I'm not sure. It's a big jump from that wooden thing which, by the way, is a table, to the floppy things, which are curtains. We might fall." said Jasmine.

"Who's the wimp now," answered William  
"Come on, we won't fall and Anna is lying underneath so it would be a soft landing if we did," he chuckled.

It was easy to get as far as the table, but then came the difficult bit.

"You go first William," said Jasmine.

"Right" he said, "here we go" and gave one almighty leap. "Whee! That was great," he cried, clinging to the curtain for grim death. "Now, just a little jump to the ledge. Made it!" he cried triumphantly "Now your turn Jasmine. Come on, it's easy."

The little grey kitten shut her eyes and leapt, just catching the curtains by the skin of her teeth.

"Help! help! I'm falling" she squealed and tried to jump onto the ledge but in her panic she forgot to let go of the curtain. She made the ledge all right but took the curtain with her.

"Now you're in trouble," growled Anna from beneath the curtain which had dropped to the floor.

"Sorry Anna. I didn't mean to cover you up. Do you really think we shall be in trouble?" asked Jasmine.

"No doubt you will purr and simper your way out of it but don't expect me to stick up for you." Grumbled Anna as she crawled from beneath the curtain and went and lay down as far away as possible from these two troublemakers.

"What's in the pot?" asked William.

"A plant, you dope and no, you can't eat it. Don't tip it over William or we shall be really for it. Oh too late! Now look what you have done and look at the mess!" cried Jasmine.

"It's a bit like our tray isn't it? And I want a tinkle," replied William.

"We shall definitely be re-homed now, you horrible cat" wept Jasmine, putting her paws to her eyes and wiping away little tears.

"I'm getting down from here and going to lie beside Anna and when the Lady and the Man come home you will get all the blame," she added.

"Don't know what all the fuss is about. It's only a little bit of dirt and the Lady always

does cleaning things when she comes home, so she probably won't even notice. Hey! This plant tastes good and look, I can make pretty patterns all down the leaves with my teeth," exclaimed William.

Within half an hour the spider plant was almost non-existent and William was asleep on the window ledge amongst the debris.

"Please don't shout at him," pleaded the Lady, "it's obvious he was bored with being indoors all the time. It's not his fault." She picked William up and cuddled him. He looked smugly over her shoulder at Jasmine and Anna, both of whom could not believe what they were hearing.

"He would get away with murder," muttered Jasmine.

"In future they stay in the barn during the day," said the Man angrily. "I'm not having this house turned into a tip by two kittens."

"Brilliant" thought Jasmine, "We know all about barns. We shall have a whale of a time."

So from then on, each morning the kittens were shut in the barn with their food, beds and a litter tray. It took them all of one and half hours to find a hole in the wall



and out they went, playing in the long grass, returning now and then for a feed and a nap but ignoring the litter tray. It was much more fun to dig up the flower beds and watch the Man's reaction.

"There must be more cats around here," muttered the Man. "Just look at the state of the flower beds. It can't possibly be our two. They are shut in all day." Four little eyes looked up at him so innocently, "Haven't got a clue about cats have you, sunshine?" said Jasmine.

William and Jasmine continued to cause mayhem. There were a few days respite when they had to go to the Vet's. William complained of feeling sore when he had a tinkle. Jasmine just felt sore all over.

"I'm off to work now dear. Where are those two monsters? Ah, here's William. Now where is your sister?" The Man called and called and the Lady called and called but no Jasmine.

"I shall have to go. If she isn't here before you leave, wedge the barn door open and maybe William will go and look for her," he said to his wife. "Well I'm off now" and he climbed into his four wheeled drive vehicle. His wife, who had been standing in front of the car suddenly screamed.

"Stop! Stop! I can see her. She's behind the radiator grille." Sure enough, there she was peeping out through the bars.

"How on earth did she get up in there and more to the point, how do we get her out?" said the Man.

"You will have to lie on the ground and reach up and grab her," said the Lady.

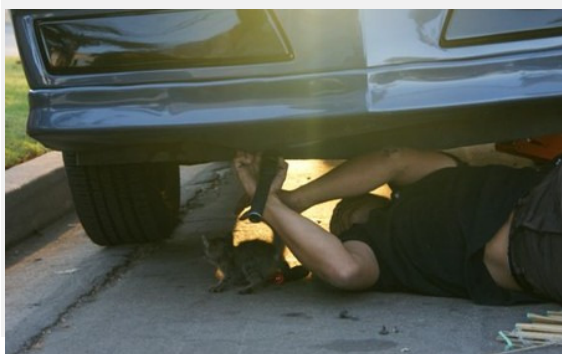
"Thought it might be me," muttered the Man. "Get me something to lie on then."

The Lady brought out one of Anna's blankets and put it on the ground under the vehicle.

"There you are dear. Please hurry and get her out. She will be so frightened trapped up in there." she said anxiously.

The man lay down and wriggled under the car." Come on Jasmine, good pussy, come to Daddy" he crooned.

"Dunno what all the fuss is about," wondered Jasmine as she jumped down onto the Man's head. "I get down the same way as I got up."



She then proceeded to stalk across the drive to the barn, pausing once to look back at the

Man who seemed to be in the throes of having a heart attack. Very red in the face, he exploded, "These wretched cats are more trouble than they are worth. They are going and that is final."

"Oh dear," sighed the Lady. "I thought you quite liked them now and that Jasmine was your favourite and after all, there was no harm done was there?"

"No harm done! No harm done! I might have killed her." he screamed.

The Lady just smiled.

The next day in their kitchen, the Man was hunched behind his newspaper and the Lady was laughing. It was one of those kitchens with a stone floor, a big table and a big iron fire, normally known as a Rayburn. And the cats? Oh yes, the cats. Well, they were tearing around the kitchen; now onto the chair then across the room, under the table and using Anna as springboard, onto the Man's lap, then round again, stopping occasionally to slide along the stone floor in an empty tissue box; the tissues having been ripped to shreds that morning when the Lady was in the garden.

"Oh they do have fun don't they dear?" laughed the Lady.

"If they land on me once more they are going outside," announced the Man just as Jasmine landed slap bang into the middle of his newspaper. She stopped, purred, rubbed his hand with her cheek and carried on, closely followed by William. The man put down his paper, smiled and admitted defeat.

"Well I guess I have lost this round but I'll be waiting for you pair of perishers. I'll re-home you yet." He then picked Jasmine up and held her close.

William was already snuggling up to the Lady.

Jasmine peeped over at William.

"We've cracked it Wills. We're home," she murmured.

**Pam P**

**To be continued...**





## One Man's Testimony

Not just me but every man, every woman and every growing child either started life with problems or we picked them up upon life's chosen avenue.

Having someone to lean on is such a help. Otherwise, everyone else is to blame for what life throws at us.

As for me, I sought my peace by having to prove I was as good as anyone in society who rejected me. I called on God many times to help. It seemed to me He never did, so God didn't exist for me.

Back then, when low, very low and without my realizing, I believe now that there was a *presence* which convinced me over a period of time to accept without question my lot in life and to give up fighting to prove that I was better than I really was.

Myself, I did become a Christian and slowly my life has become better though my willingness to trust in others is something new to me.

I am by no means perfect and never will be but because of my Belief I am much happier. So I can only ask of others to try Faith before rejecting it.

Anyway, that is my story and may I say to anyone reading this, have a lovely day.

- Jim

## RANT & RAVE

### A ROMANTIC MOMENT FOR OUR OLD LADY

***Our lady and her husband Tom were lying reading in bed.  
She turned to him and softly said: "When we were courting  
You told me that you were my hero and that you would protect me always.  
Do you still feel like that?"***

***Instantly putting his book down and turning towards her,  
Smiling Tom replied: "Absolutely. My darling,  
I would risk any danger to protect you."***

***"And you always said that you would climb the highest mountain,  
Sail around the world and do anything for me?"***

***"Yes of course dear, I would do anything for you."***

***"Anything?"***

***"Whatever"***

***Well, be my hero. Learn where the tea bags  
And the kettle are and make me a cup of tea."***



***Ed: Fellow husbands and husbands-to-be, be very careful what you promise to do.  
By the way, how do you make tea?***

**Submitted by Pam R**

## **JUST OUT OF INTEREST**



### **STORY & POETRY STARTERS**

If you're not used to writing stories or poems, you may be at a loss as to where to start. One place to begin is by finding a subject to write about. On the one hand, this can be all about seeing and experiencing the world around you which provides an endless supply of ideas. On the other hand, as you can tell from this first issue's selections, our inner most thoughts often provide wonderful heartfelt material. In other words, a short story or a poem can be about anything, from fear of the unknown to describing the rusty gate hinge at the old farm. With such a vast amount of choice, perhaps if we propose themes for the coming magazine issue, it would give us a place to start.

Following a magazine format, it's pretty much a given that there will be *featured selections* of both a serious and humorous nature. There will also be regular special categories to spark your interest like writing about animals and pets. If you have any suggestions for these broader topics that will regularly appear in each issue, they will be appreciated.

### **THEME GUIDANCE :**



A theme is the central topic addressed in a work and on a broad scale, it offers a certain perspective. A theme for a story or a poem could express for example, something everybody feels in different ways. Or it could be a widely held or disputed viewpoint. Or, it might be a strongly felt emotion. Or maybe it's an insight garnered from an experience or events that occurred. Or, a theme can simply be the moral to a tale. Whatever the theme is, it is something everybody relates to in some way or another.

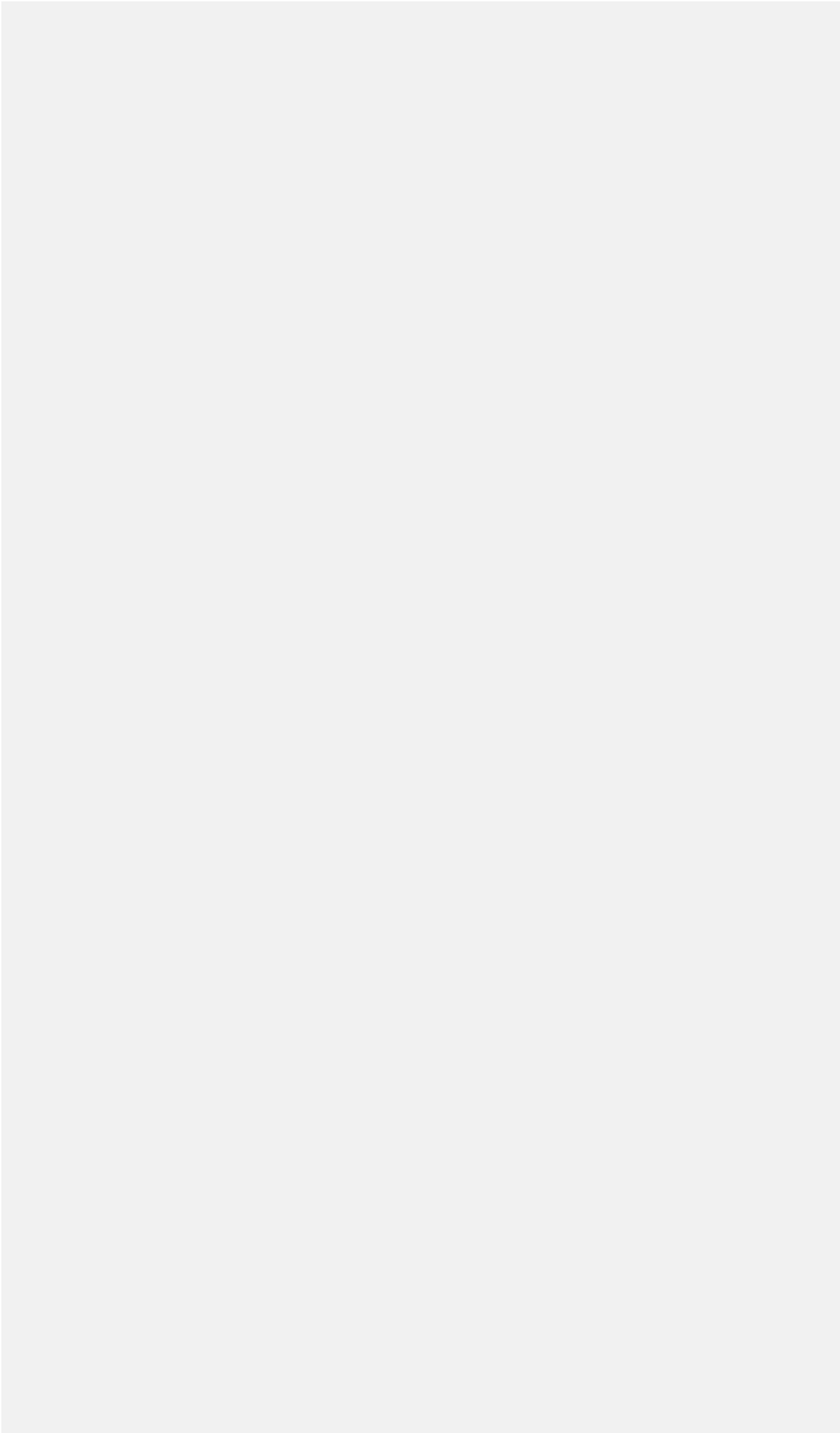
In your story or poem the theme can be approached either directly or indirectly as you decide. And, it's entirely possible that other themes pop up playing a supportive role to the main one. I use Isolde's poem, *When* as an example, where "accepting change" and "inviting choice" are themes that assist the poem's main theme of "a change in direction".

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### **AN INVITATION TO YOU**

Are you a budding poet, short story writer or playwright? We are looking for further submissions to our newsletter. They can be on any subject as long as they are no longer than 1000 words. We hope in the future to develop themes but just now we are interested to see what submissions we receive. Just in case you need a jump start, here are some possibilities for our next issues:

- LOVE NOT LOST, BUT FOUND
- WHO REALLY WINS ?
- ALL IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS TO BE
- FROM A SAFE DISTANCE
- WHAT'S IN MY WARDROBE



**Congratulations to all our writers who sent work in. We hope you enjoyed the first issue. Write On has received so many interesting pieces that we couldn't include everything in the first issue, so fear not if your work wasn't here we will be publishing it in future editions.**

**If you have any writing, comments or ideas please get in touch, we would love to hear from you.**

**The deadline for the next issue is the 30<sup>th</sup> June.**

**Isolde is editor for poetry & Graeme is editor for short stories, non-fiction and everything in between. If you have anything for them get in touch with the details below and we will forward them on.**

**Happy scribbling everyone!**



**Alan Duncan**

**Befrienders Highland**

**Write On**

**19 Church Street**

**Inverness**

**IV1 1DY**

**01463 235675**

**[alanduncan@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:alanduncan@befriendershighland.org.uk)**

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