



WRITE ON !

BEFRIENDERS HIGHLAND LITERARY NEWSLETTER



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Congratulations again to Steve for winning the competition to name the newsletter. Here he is being presented with the prize and as if by magic also with the books he purchased with the vouchers! Which was 'The Spooks Revenge' by Joseph Delaney and 'Four Tales' by Phillip Pullman. Happy reading!

Now were well into the Highland Summer it seems a good a time to introduce you to the second edition of Write On! We hope you gained some inspiration from the first issue and enjoyed the varied and interesting contributions.

In this issue we have some great new poetry pieces & the second part of 'Looking for a Home' as well as some new short stories. All in all there is lots of different work to get you reading & hopefully spark some inspiration. Keep your eye on the suggestions & themes guidance page as it would be great to get some work together along a similar theme & enjoy the different points of view.

Enjoy the issue and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Alan

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We have had lots of positive feedback on the first issue. So have a read of the letters page to see what some of the members thought. If you have an opinion on what you have read either to a piece, a feature or a letter send in your thoughts. We appreciatively share here several encouraging comments we received.

-- Alan

Keith writes: *Dear Write On, I have been writing for many years but still get writer's block. I'll just have to do something different for a while. Also, I have had schizophrenia since Summer 1970, so that is a shame but sometimes a stimulus. Thanks for the magazine; I like it.*

Joy writes: *I was really impressed by the first edition. The illustrations certainly added interest. I thought the poem 'When' most professional. I liked 'Looking for a Home' and look forward to the next episode. The observation of kitten behaviour's so accurate.*

John H. writes: *I liked the story of the two kittens adopting a family and new home. The personalization of the kittens was akin to Walt Disney's 'The Incredible Journey'. The writer crafted an interesting and believable narrative. Look forward to the sequel.*

On the Theme of Prayer

Religious conviction can be a very powerful incentive to write because there is a deep-felt need to share personal spiritual experiences. The trick is to present them to those who have differing views in such a manner as to be acceptable and better even still, contain a bit of inspiration.



All faiths through the ages have offered a ray of hope to those who are looking to restore broken lives with the aid of holy intervention. One of our members tells us that he was "on the outside looking down with no up" but fortunately for him, he chose to "take a chance" as he puts it, on embracing Christian belief. Acknowledging the strength he personally has gained from making this choice, he advocates for those who wish to do so, focusing on prayer as an appeal to a divine source for assistance in solving problems.

He explains that an approach to prayer which actively seeks to join the Holy Spirit's efforts to his own has proven to be for him a useful strategy. His understanding of biblical verses found in *Romans 8:26*, has given him insight into petitioning God's help. Put simply, during the act of fervent prayer, there is an experience by the believer that a saintly presence acts on his or her behalf by "taking hold together against" the problem. Prayer if it is to succeed is therefore a joint effort.

Prayer as a powerful support for coping with his troubles has become a heart-felt theme in Jim's writing. Though his submission has been edited, his contribution to Write-On is much appreciated.

SOMETHING FUNNY

FLIP FLOP



It was a dark and stormy night late in November,
Chico was frightened by the lightning flashes and the sound of thunder.
He was alone in the house and weird shadows were everywhere.
And the wind was causing strange creaking noises somewhere upstairs.
It was then that he heard the cat flap go flip-flop.
This made the poor Chihuahua's heart nearly stop.
Chico told himself it must be the cat coming home from her evening hunt.
Terrorizing the local rodent population was her usual stunt.
Then he suddenly remembered she had not returned from her last trip to the vet's.
In truth she would never be returning and this caused their human to be quite upset.
So who or what had just entered the house through the cat flap ?

- ISOLDE



LIMERICK ANYONE ?



di dum di di dum di di dum
di dum di di dum di di dum
di dum di di dum
di dum di di dum
di dum di di dum di di dum

Contributed by Maureen



THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN FROM BENGAL
WHO WENT TO A FANCY DRESS BALL
HE THOUGHT HE WOULD RISK IT
AND GO AS A BICUIT
BUT A DOG ATE HIM UP IN THE HALL

"OPEN WIDE" SAID A DENTIST CALLED BERT
TO A MAN-EATING CAT WHOSE TEETH HURT
"WHEN I'VE FINISHED THE DRILLING
I'LL GIVE YOU A FILLING"
HE DID AND THE FILLING WAS BERT.

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new".



- Albert Einstein

"Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss if enthusiasm."



- Winston Churchill

"I cried because I had no shoes. Then I met a man who had no feet".



- Wally Lamb

"If a child lives with approval, he learns to live with himself."



- Dorothy Law Nolte

-- Contributed by Maureen





WITH SOME GRAVITY

SHADOWS IN MY MIND

Life begins, uphill or downhill
At the age, where do you go?
Love lost or in discontented bliss
Looking to start again

*Shadows in my mind
Ghosts on every street
Echoes of the past reminding me
Of chances taken and chances missed
In fear of ridicule or love of laughter*

Time they say is a great healer
Time just makes it easier to remember the pain
Domesticity may suck
But no longer young free and single

*Shadows in my mind
Ghosts on every street
Echoes of the past reminding me
Of chances taken and chances missed
In fear of ridicule or love of laughter*

Hindsight is a wonderful thing
So many people, so many places
The bitches and the bastards along the way
But the good honest people hold sway
False confidence is no use
Carpe diem, seize the day

*Shadows in my mind
Ghosts on every street
Echoes of the past reminding me
Of chances taken and chances missed
In fear of ridicule or love of laughter*

- Graeme



FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

THEY GAVE THEIR TODAY
SO WE COULD SEE OUR TOMORROW
VALOUR FOR VICTORY
A POPPY; PRIDE, POIGNANT SORROW

THESE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN
QUEEN AND COUNTRY HONOUR AS HERO
THEY DID NOT FLINCH WHEN DUTY CALLED
THE SWORD, AND THE PEN
MEMORIES BITTERSEET TEARS TO STORE
FAITH'S GLOW

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS THE LEGACY
LOVED ONES TAKEN FROM HOME
IN A FOREIGN FIELD SORROWS DELICACY
IN THEIR PRIME A TOMB OR
A LASTING WOUND FOR SOME

TRAUMA NEEDS PATIENT NURSING
GIVING THERAPY AND COMING TO TERMS
LEARNING TO COPE; A FAG FOR CURSING
LETTING OF STEAM AS MANAGEABLE STORMS

STORMS DIRECTED POSITIVELY
INTO PRODUCTIVE CHANNELS
OIL-PAINTING, MUSIC THERAPY,
POETRY WITH VIM

THE UNIFORM MILITARY FLANNELS
THAT COMBINE WITH MEDALS
FOR BRAVERY OVERCOMING THE GRIM

-- John H



As anyone who has set out to compose a poem will testify, the process leading to a finished piece of writing involves considerable revision. **John H.** has provided us with a brilliant example of just that. His final draft of “Remembrance ”is the outcome of two prior attempts; “*Harvest for Heroes*” and “*Remembrance Poem, November 2013: Role for Retrained Soldier*”. The progression from the first two poems to the final one is so engaging that we thought it well worth sharing all three with all our members. So in the order of their submission, here is the first of John’s memorable creations.

HARVEST FOR HEROES

Come ye thankful people, come
Raise the song of Harvest Home.
Veteran soldiers once labelled
As shell-shock, now Post-Battle Fatigue,

Can these veteran heroes who fought and bled
Be given the chance of retraining
As a possible teacher in the classroom jungle?
Maturity in surviving in hostile insurgence reigning
Will make them avoid making a bungle.
The life skills of surviving and two- way empathy
From pupils, mutual respect gaining.

The civvie world expects soldiers to march
Into Hell for a heavenly cause
A sapper knows if he can shoulder any attack
This needs discipline’s pause.
To win over trust is give and take
But “losing the head” is the first mistake.

Don’t label me –I’m human
Sexuality is natural in man or woman
Het, Homo, Bi or Trans varied as nature
Not being homophobic – no lepers
He or she “ain’t heavy”, a brother or sister secure.
So the ex-soldier as a role-model
Christ didn’t turn away the 10 lepers
But only one thanked God for his cure.

Laissez-faire if it works, so let it be
But turning a blind eye could lead to tragedy.

Wait

Don't break down the wall between us.

Even if you hear me cry.

Sometimes walls are not obstructions.

Sometimes breaking down confines.

Don't break down the wall between us,

But don't go because it's there,

Wait with me a little longer.

Help me find an open door.

-- Mery

DOMESTIC POEM

Once to the shop

Once to the dustbin

Now a coffee break

In for a while

**To the blue recycling
bin and back**

Been out twice

Now for tea and cigarettes

Is this a bit of a rut?

Yes, it is. Yet

I'll watch TV and

See the world on the box -- Keith

A LIGHTER LOOK



GEODE
(INNER BEAUTY)



A strange word. It comes from the Greek *ge-o'des*, meaning "earthlike."

It is a stone that is roughly spherical, hollow, and varying from an inch to more than a foot in diameter.

Its outward appearance is only so-so, as stones go.

But break it open! Look inside!

Feast your eyes on those jammed-up piles of sparkling purple crystals!

The geode formed around a cavity in sedimentary rock. As it grew, cracks developed in its surface, allowing mineral-bearing water to filter in, and as the minerals precipitated, crystals grew inward from the cavity wall.

In time we have a crystal-lined geode.

They produced a purple variety of crystallized quartz called amethyst.

Its outward appearance may not be much, but its inner beauty is dazzling!

Have you not known people who are like geodes?

Quiet, maybe shy, perhaps rather plain-looking on the outside

But you take the time to get acquainted and they

Open up and show you an inner beauty that glows.

A warm, kind spirit emerges, a delightful personality unfolds.

You discover depths you never suspected.

A REAL GEM.

-- Colyn



SHORT STORIES

Living the Moment



What to do with a day off work?

From Muriel

Today was a rare day. No work!! So, what should we do with the day? How about lazing on golden sands beneath gently swaying palms and swimming in a turquoise sea? Day-dreaming again? Well, no. It could be possible as we were living in Fiji close to the sea. A short walk down the road and we were approaching the seawall. Ahead stretched a thin ribbon of gold with gentle waves lapping at its edge. A sudden movement and the illusion disappeared leaving the reality of a stretch of sticky mud dotted with hundreds of small holes. The ribbon of gold was a horde of tiny crabs, each guarding its little burrow with one huge golden claw held across its body like a shield.

The nearest beach, so we had been told, was an hour's drive away at Pacific Harbour. How to get there? A hot tiring walk led us to a noisy bustling throng of people and old dilapidated buses, the bus station in Suva. Yes this bus was definitely going to Pacific Harbour. Crammed on a dusty lumpy seat next to a glassless window with only a piece of old rag tied above it in case of rain, we were bumped and jostled and squashed until the driver eventually shouted 'Pacific Harbour'. Alighting, we found ourselves standing by a dusty road with trees either side, no habitation and no sea. Could this really be Pacific Harbour? As the mountains reared high on our right, the sea, if it existed, must be on our left, so we took the first track we found going left. After a short walk we came across a small office in a wooden building.

"We're looking for the sea", we explained, "having been told Pacific Harbour was the place to come to for beaches".

"This is private land, we have a beach but it is for our holiday makers only. As there are only two of you, you can use it today. Follow this path and it will bring you to the beach."

Finally, we felt sand beneath our feet and looked across the turquoise sea to a small island adorned with luscious green forest. The adventurer within me was immediately eager to find a way to get to the island, but no, this was a day for relaxing on the beach, having used up so much energy just getting here. Worries as to



how we were going to get back home safely banished, we settled down in the sun beneath the gently waving branches of a palm tree. For a while I watched the languid movement of the palm branches as they swayed overhead. All was quiet. All was still.

I closed my eyes and listened. the quiet murmuring of the sea . . . nothing more. I dozed . . . I slowly became aware of a quiet rustling which quickly grew into an angry slapping. Alarmed, I opened my eyes and was startled to see the now violent motion of the palm branches above my head. I heard the mounting grumbling of the sea as it was woken by the increasing agitation of the wind, and then the raindrops started to bite. Slowly at first but with increasing rapidity until it felt as though I was being attacked by a swarm of vengeful insects bent on inflicting as much pain as possible. The force of the drops increased, the storm was hurling small silvery spears at me and suddenly, our quiet, beautiful beach had become a nightmare of sound and pain, the palm branches now lashing each other and bending to the ground in their effort to reach us as they joined the wind in its terrible rage.

We had to escape, but to where? The only place we could go was into the sea. Would it protect us from the savageness of the storm or would it join forces against us?

In desperation, we took the plunge. All was grey. All sense of time and place had gone. Reality was suspended and I found myself in a grey nothingness, I was surrounded by grey mist, immersed in a grey sea. It was as if time was standing still, all sound had faded. The world was holding its breath. I was holding my breath.

I found myself surrounded by silvery jewels sparkling in the light as the sea rose up in slow motion to meet with the sky. Sea and sky became one as the beautifully sculpted globes of liquid joined each other in a silent, graceful dance. The beauty of the moment was made complete by a small shoal of silver flying fish dancing around me as they wove their way between the glistening globes in the magical world I had dared to step into.

All sense of anger and rage had gone – here was true peace.

Returning back home in rather wet clothes was another adventure in its own right, one that would have been even more difficult without the kind help of a local policeman. Our relaxing day at the beach had turned out to be very different than expected, but it was an experience that I will remember for ever.



TEDDY

(Looking for a Home Part 2)

from Pam

'I wonder what my name is? Surely it can't be "*THAT CAT*" but that's what those people called me, those ones who put in me a box and then in a car and then up tipped the box beside all that water. They were not very nice to me before that though. I would have liked some cuddles and nice food but I didn't get either. I tried to be nice to them but they pushed me away, not cruelly but it was obvious they didn't want me now I am quite a big cat.' The beautiful ginger and white cat sighed and nestled down on the soft leaves under the tree. He didn't like being beside the water so he had made his way along a track where he could see buildings in the distance.



It was a pleasant autumn day, so he didn't rush as he thought it would be better to wait until it was getting dark before he ventured very close to the house. As the light faded he kept to the shadows and soon realised that no-one was about. As he cautiously entered the big barn, he stopped and listened ...rustling noises. Maybe it was his supper. He waited and then in the gloom he spotted a cat, a big cat, bigger than himself.

"Hello there, do you live here?" he asked. The big cat jumped about a foot in the air.

"Blimey! You scared the life out of me, where did you spring from?"

"I was tipped out of a box down by that big stretch of water. I think I have been dumped," replied the ginger and white cat.

"Happens a lot" said the big cat. "You are in the Highlands now. We get city people bringing their cats here thinking they will be able to fend for themselves but a lot can't. Very sad, very sad indeed. What about you, can you catch your own supper?"

"Oh yes" replied ginger and white cat. "No-one gave me proper food. I had to get most of it from bins. Occasionally they threw something on the floor and said *THAT CAT* will eat it. Sometimes I did but most times it was horrible."

"Well, you are welcome to catch yourself something here for the time being but this is my patch and I have three ladies to look after as well so there isn't a lot going spare," said the big cat.

"Thank you very much. I appreciate it. I am very hungry just now."

The big cat curled up on a pile of sacks and slept, while the ginger and white cat hunted. He had a good feast and then looked around for somewhere to sleep.

"There is another pile of sacks over here, help yourself," said the big cat. Ginger and white cat felt contented after his supper and slept soundly.

"What's this then, bringing more waifs and strays home are you?" the lady stood in the doorway of the barn, hands on hips and looking stern. Big cat strolled up to her and fussed around her legs. He looked back at ginger and white cat who was cowering in the back of the barn and winked. "She's a push over don't worry."

The lady had brought biscuity things for big cat and his ladies to eat and he generously pushed a pile of them over to ginger and white cat.

"Gosh these are nice" said ginger and white cat. "I've never had anything like this before."

"I'll show you where the clean water is and then I think you should make your way down the Glen and try to find a patch for yourself," said big cat. "I know that the next house down hasn't got any barn cats, only poufy ones in the house and they are not let out."

"Ok I'll be on my way and thank you for your help. I feel much happier now." said ginger and white cat. He trotted off down the road which he presumed was the glen; stopping now and then to look around in case he had to find his own lunch and also to sit down and have a good scratch.

Just in case there were people or dogs about he again waited until it was quite dark before going to close to this house. All seemed peaceful so he crept into a shed and had a good look round. He found somewhere to sleep on an old sheep fleece but decided he would go outside and find some supper. He noticed some rabbit holes nearby and thought it might be a good place to catch something to eat.



He had a good nights sleep on the fleece, so good in fact that he didn't hear the footsteps coming up to the shed door. He cowered down into the fleece but too late. He had been spotted.

"Hello young man where did you come from." It was a kind voice, a ladies voice, so he crept out of his nest and did what big cat had done, brushing around the lady's legs. "Well, you are not a feral cat are you, but I have not seen you around here before. Would you like some breakfast?" The lady went away and returned a few minutes later with a dish with meat in it. He couldn't believe his eyes! If poufy cats got this sort of food then he would very much like to be a poufy cat! The lady watched him clear up the dish of food and felt sorry for him. "You are welcome to stay here but you must live in the shed. It will be good to have an outside cat again to keep the mice down." She bent down and stroked his head and went away into the house. He didn't get a dish of meat every day either; just on odd days. The lady said that he had to catch his own food sometimes to keep the mice down.

Ginger and white cat was quite happy but he thought he would like to have a cat friend to talk to. He had glimpsed the poufy cats sitting in the window. They were so very haughty and he couldn't imagine them coming out to play. So he made quite a few forays down the glen to see if there

were any friendly cats around but it was mostly dogs at the farms.

One day he went quite a lot further than he had meant to and came upon a farm where he could see two people with three big dogs and two even bigger donkeys. He was quite close to a barn so he crept inside and listened. The voices sounded friendly and the dogs and donkeys looked happy. "Wonder if they have any cats?" thought ginger and white cat. He waited until the people had gone away with the dogs and then wandered round to the other building where the donkeys were eating their supper. They ignored him. Good, that meant they were used to cats. A silly old sheep blustered his way in and started to help eat the donkeys' supper. Another good sign.

Just as he was thinking of making his way back up the glen he spotted a little grey cat going into the barn. "Excuse me, do you live here?" he asked.



"Yes, I live here with my brother. Who are you?"

"I don't know my name but some people up the glen have been kind to me since I was put out of a box by some water. I would like to live with other cats really but the kind people wanted me to keep the mice down by myself," replied ginger and white cat.

"Well, I don't know if you could live here or not. My people are very kind; we can go indoors or stay out just as we like. We have cat flaps in doors just for us. You hang about and I will fetch my brother and see what he thinks." The grey cat disappeared inside the house through a hole in the door and re-appeared a few minutes later with a grey and white cat.

"This is my brother William. I have told him your story and he wants to meet you." William walked around ginger and white cat a couple of times looking him up and down. He had no idea what he was looking for but it made him feel good.

"I can't see a problem," he said to grey cat who was called Jasmine. "He will have to live in the barn for a time until we can get our people to have him in. We will help you to meet them." With that William yawned and went back through the hole in the door.

Jasmine grinned and said "if you hang about in the barn for now, you will have to get your own food for a bit as we eat indoors with the dogs."

"With the dogs!!!" screeched ginger and white cat. "Don't they try to eat you?"

"Course not silly. We are all pets together. We curl up with them when it is cold. They are good hot water bottles."

Ginger and white cat continued to stay in the barn and on Jasmine's instructions came around to the house and sat with her and William when they knew the people would be coming out.

Looking out of the window the cats could not see her, the lady said "Where has that ginger and white cat come from? Our two seem to have adopted him." The man said that he had seen him in the barn a couple of times but had shoo-ed him off. "That was not very nice of you" said the lady. "He looks lovely. Somebody might be looking for him. You wouldn't like it if any of ours decided to live elsewhere". "S'pose not," he answered. She agreed and said "I'll just pop outside and see if he is friendly."

Over the next few days ginger and white cat continued to make himself known to the people. He sat with William and Jasmine as per their instructions. The big dogs didn't take much notice of him but the people realised that he wanted to stay. They started putting a dish of biscuits in the barn and ginger and white cat devoured these hungrily. He was getting fed up with catching his own food. The people began calling him when they brought the food and most times he answered them and came charging round the corner of the barn to see what they had brought.

He allowed them to fuss him and whilst the lady was doing that she found lumps on him. "Ticks," she said. "We must get him sorted and the other two at the same time." Next time they came she held ginger and white cat quite firmly whilst the man put stuff on him. He didn't feel a thing.

A few days later she came with a dish of meat. Wow!! This is great, he thought. It had little white spots on the top but he didn't care. He wolfed it down. Satisfied, the lady said, "There that's him ticked, flea-d and wormed. And the others

have been done too. Also the three dogs so they should all be ok for a bit". Rubbing her hands down her trousers she noted, "He's wet; he must have been out in the night."

"He can stay but he must live outside. The barns are warm and there's plenty of hay and straw to keep him warm." said the man

The lady began to protest, "But he is so friendly and William and Jasmine like him, so why can't he come into the house?"

"Both our cats are out at night when the weather is dry so he will have them to keep him company" replied the man and went on into the donkeys' field to do his chores.

This is not what I wanted thought ginger and white cat. I will have to speak to William and Jasmine. "No probs.," said William, "When we go in through the cat flap tonight, you come with us. It is a wet day so we can all get as wet as possible, you in particular. They won't turn you out but you will have to get used to having a dry with a towel though."

"What's a towel?" asked ginger and white cat.

"It's a big thing that gets rubbed all over you and is very nice. Doesn't take us so long to lick ourselves dry."

Evening time came and the cats were thoroughly soaked. Poor Jasmine hated the rain but she did as she was asked by William. They all three went through the cat flap into a little cupboard place and then through another one into the lobby and sat in the middle of the room.

"Cats are in. I had better dry them off," said the lady. "Oh! Look what I have found". She wrapped ginger and white cat up in a towel and took him into the warm kitchen. Ginger and white cat held his breath and blinked at the man who grinned and said "I knew it wouldn't be long before this happened." He let out his breath and quickly took it in again as the three big dogs came to have a look at what their Mum was holding. Just another cat they thought and went back to sleep.



"Excuse us for interrupting but what about drying us off as well," said William. The lady rubbed ginger and white cat almost dry and put him down beside the big iron fire. He snuggled down and slept. The lady dried the other two off and they all snuggled down together.

"What shall we call him," asked the lady, "What about Teddy?"

"As good as anything." replied the man and went back to his paper. "One thing more though. He will have to pay a visit to the Vet as soon as possible."

Teddy had his trip to the Vet about a week later and was very disgruntled as he felt very sore but within a day or two he was back to his old self. Life was good; lovely food, lovely

company. Even the three big dogs were nice and his lovely people, who he now called Mum and Dad. There were a few mishaps such as when he tried to bring a whole rabbit through the cat flap and got stuck but Dad sorted it out for him and Mum asked him nicely not to bring stuff in again as he had plenty of food given to him. He tried to remember but sometimes couldn't resist the urge to show off.

Ah yes, life was good.To be continued.



Roping a Deer [story originated in Oklahoma]

⌘

I had this idea that I was going to rope a deer, put it in a stall, feed it up on corn for a couple of weeks, then kill it and eat it.

The first step in this adventure was getting a deer. I figured that, since they congregate at my cattle feeder and do not seem to have much fear of me when we are there (a bold one will sometimes come right up and sniff at the bags of feed while I am in the back of the truck not 4 feet away), it should not be difficult to rope one, get up to it and toss a bag over its head (to calm it down) then hog tie it and transport it home.

I filled the cattle feeder then hid down at the end with my rope. The cattle, having seen the roping thing before, stayed well back. They were not having any of it. After about 20 minutes, my deer showed up — 3 of them. I picked out a likely looking one, stepped out from the end of the feeder, and threw my rope.

The deer just stood there and stared at me.

I wrapped the rope around my waist and twisted the end so I would have a good hold. The deer still just stood and stared at me, but you could tell it was mildly concerned about the whole rope situation.

I took a step towards it...it took a step away.

I put a little tension on the rope and then received an education.

The first thing that I learned is that, while a deer may just stand there looking at you funny while you rope it, they are spurred to action when you start pulling on that rope. That deer EXPLODED.

The second thing I learned is that pound for pound, a deer is a LOT stronger than a cow or a colt. A cow or a colt in that weight range I could fight down with a rope and with some dignity. A deer— no chance.

That thing ran and bucked and twisted and pulled. There was no controlling it and certainly no getting close to it. As it jerked me off my feet and started dragging me across the ground, it occurred to me that having a deer on a rope was not nearly as good an idea as I had originally imagined. The only upside is that they do not have as much stamina as many other animals.

A brief 10 minutes later, it was tired and not nearly as quick to jerk me off my feet and drag me when I managed to get up. It took me a few minutes to realize this, since I was mostly blinded by the blood flowing out of the big gash in my head.

At that point, I had lost my taste for corn-fed venison. I just wanted to get that devil creature off the end of that rope. I figured if I just let it go with the rope hanging around its neck, it would likely die slow and painfully somewhere. At the time, there was no love at all between me and that deer.

At that moment, I hated the thing, and I would venture a guess that the feeling was mutual.

Despite the gash in my head and the several large knots where I had cleverly arrested the deer's momentum by bracing my head against various large rocks as it dragged me across the ground, I could still think clearly enough to recognize that there was a small chance that I shared some tiny amount of responsibility for the situation we were in, so I didn't want the deer to have to suffer a slow death, so I managed to get it lined back up in between my truck and the feeder – a little trap I had set before-hand ... kind of like a squeeze chute. I got the deer to back in there and I started moving up so I could get my rope back.

Did you know that deer bite? They do! I never in a million years would have thought that a deer would bite somebody, so I was very surprised when I reached up there to grab that rope and the deer grabbed hold of my wrist.

Now, when a deer bites you, it is not like being bit by a horse where they just bite you and then let go. A deer bites you and shakes its head –almost like a pit bull. They bite HARD and it hurts.

The proper thing to do when a deer bites you is probably to freeze and draw back slowly. I tried screaming and shaking instead. My method was ineffective.

It seems like the deer was biting and shaking for several minutes, but it was likely only several seconds. I, being smarter than a deer (though you may be questioning that claim by now) tricked it.

While I kept it busy tearing the bejesus out of my right arm, I reached up with my left hand and pulled that rope loose. That was when I got my final lesson in deer behaviour for the day. Deer will strike at you with their front feet. They rear right up on their back feet and strike right about head and shoulder level, and their hooves are surprisingly sharp.

I learned a long time ago that, when an animal — like a horse -strikes at you with their hooves and you can't get away easily, the best thing to do is try to make a loud noise and make an aggressive move towards the animal. This will usually cause them to back down a bit so you can escape.

This was not a horse. This was a deer, so obviously, such trickery would not work. In the course of a millisecond, I devised a different strategy.

I screamed like a woman and tried to turn and run.

The reason I had always been told NOT to try to turn and run from a horse that paws at you is that there is a good chance

that it will hit you in the back of the head. Deer may not be so different from horses after all, besides being twice as strong and 3 times as evil, because the second I turned to run, it hit me right in the back of the head and knocked me down.

Now, when a deer paws at you and knocks you down, it does not immediately leave. I suspect it does not recognize that the danger has passed. What they do instead is paw your back and jump up and down on you while you are laying there crying like a little girl and covering your head.

I finally managed to crawl under the truck and the deer went away.

So now I know why when people go deer hunting they bring a rifle with a scope so that they can be somewhat equal to the Prey.



A Bitter Pill **from Graeme**

Ricky Bell was in the lift taking him up to the third floor of the offices where he worked. He was humming 'Dignity' by Deacon Blue hoping that at the concert the following night he would be able to impress more than the cold lifeless silver walls he was enclosed in.

The night out with his work colleagues had been fun, but he had suddenly remembered the envelope for the record producer he and his band were seeing tomorrow, was still locked in his office drawer. As Lisa, his live-in girlfriend of six months, and he were going to see Ricky's sick uncle in the morning and then preparations for the concert would take all afternoon, Ricky thought it expedient to come to the office tonight and collect the envelope. Tomorrow night was Ricky's big chance and he wanted everything to go smoothly. The producer was impressed by the demo tapes Ricky's band had sent to him. The music was a mix of old and new, from Buddy Holly's 'True Love Ways' to REM's 'Everybody Hurts' – all Ricky's favourite songs including six he had composed himself. He was very proud of the song he wrote for Lisa – 'Love Is Special Always' (she had grown to love the song after Ricky's constant serenading to her).

As the shrill ring notified Ricky that the lift had arrived on the third floor, Ricky wracked his brain trying to remember the security code for the office door. He exited the lift and turned right towards the office when, from the boozy haze that was his brain after five pints of cider, the number came to him. He typed the code and the click told him to open the door and enter. To his surprise all the office lights were on, indicating someone was obviously working late. He glanced right towards his boss's office. Steven Robson worked late most nights, but on Fridays he preferred to leave on time so he could spend the weekend away somewhere Ricky could only dream of earning the salary to afford. Most of Steven's office was blocked from sight by the pile of boxes stacked high in preparation of the office move to a smaller, less comfortable environment – all in the name of Shareholder Profit Value.

From what Ricky could see, Steven was having an argument with someone as his hands were gesturing in frantic movements; Ricky had seen enough of those gestures in the past to know what they meant. He was unable to see who Steven's visitor was and, as those staff in the higher echelons of the chain of command had soundproof offices, he was also unable to ascertain what the argument was about. Deciding not to make his presence known, particularly in his slightly intoxicated state, he walked to his desk at the far side of the office, pulled out the important envelope from the top drawer and, without a further glance in the direction of Steven's office, exited and headed towards the lift.

The lift had just started its descent when Ricky heard footsteps coming out of the office from whence he had just come. Thinking they would belong to either Steven or his guest, Ricky let his curiosity abate and waited for the lift to arrive at its final destination where he would then, after signing out on the security guard's log book, get a taxi home and hopefully have a restful sleep in preparation for the big day ahead.

Dreams of standing ovations at the Royal Albert Hall were just fading and the first sense of what lay ahead that day appeared when Ricky was fully awoken by the sound of the doorbell. Leaving Lisa to sleep, he put on his dressing gown and headed for the front door. The two men flashed their police ID and introduced themselves as DS McIver and DC Simpson. Ricky was shocked that their presence at his front door was to inform him that Steven Robson had been murdered at his office last night.

Recovering his composure, Ricky invited the two detectives into the flat, shepherding them into the living room that was adjacent to the bedroom. Ricky was thankful that

he had closed the bedroom door, hoping that Lisa would not wake.

DS McIver stated that Steven Robson had been found in his office by the security guard when doing his routine check of the building. The cause of death had been determined and certain evidence had been found, neither of which DS McIver would elaborate on. Ricky was not a suspect but as he appeared to be the last person to see Steven Robson alive, other than his killer, the two detectives needed Ricky to tell them what he saw, or heard, when visiting the office the previous night. Of particular interest from Ricky's statement was the apparent argument with an unseen visitor and the sound of footsteps leaving the office. After clarifying some points the two detectives thanked Ricky for his time and left. Ricky had questions he wished to ask but did not think DS McIver would be forthcoming with any answers.

Pre-occupations with Steven's murder had finally passed by early evening. Lisa, her normal becalming self, kept assuring Ricky that Steven's death was not his fault. Despite this, Ricky had been unable to concentrate fully on the concert preparations. Only now, with an hour to go, was Ricky ready for what was the biggest night of his life. The other band members' understood how Ricky must be feeling but had become exasperated when rehearsals were interrupted by Ricky suddenly stopping in mid-chorus, his mind once again plying his conscience with guilt.

To Lisa, the most interesting facet of Ricky's persona was how a normally shy man, too shy often to ask a shop assistant for help, would become a passionate extrovert when singing, be it on karaoke at the local pub (where they met) or singing with the band. Ricky once explained to her that music gave him a natural high and kept him sane. Ricky's performance on stage and his delight at the reception each song received from the audience proved to her that Ricky was on his biggest natural high; his lifelong dream would appear to be coming to fruition.

At the after-show party Lisa and Ricky's work colleagues' concurred that the performance had been excellent. The thunderous applause was still resounding in Ricky's head even half an hour after coming off stage. Normally about this time the natural high would start to abate and there was only one thing Ricky desired, a drink – preferably alcoholic. Lisa satisfied his thirst by handing Ricky a bottle of beer. As Ricky took a drink, Lisa passed the other drinks she had brought from the bar to some of Ricky's work colleagues. She then turned and headed back to the bar to help David Pullman with the remainder of the drinks order. The pain that hit Ricky's stomach was akin to the nails being hammered into Jesus' hands at the Crucifixion.

....to be continued



OUR READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Getting to know a bit about **Write-On** members as individuals will help us establish and strengthen our own community of writers. With that in mind, a regular addition to our magazine will be a brief **member's profile** where we'll find out more about each member's interests and connections to writing. For the first profile we put the questions to member & valued editor Isolde to find out what makes her tick in the world of writing. Here's her responses to several of our questions (from the questionnaire to be posted to members). If you would like us to put the questions to you next time let us know and we will be in touch.

Write On Profile No 1: ISOLDE

- So Isolde, great to discuss your interests with you. Can you start by telling us a bit about what and when first garnered your interest in Writing?
I was fortunate in having a high school teacher, Ruth Gorham who encouraged and inspired students to write creative essays.
- Your poetry work has been a great feature of Write On, can you talk a bit about your writing process and how your poems come to fruition?
I tend to loosely follow a rhyme scheme and not be bound by a strict metre structure either. Composing lines engages my mind.
- What excites/ inspires you to write?
I'm often captivated by what I read – enough to write about it. The poem "When" came about after being attracted to a paragraph in a Montalbano mystery by Andrea Camilleri
- What do you look for in a good piece of writing/ What do you most value in a writer's work?
For me, the sound of phrases as I read them out loud to myself is especially important. Another aspect of solid word craft is choosing descriptive words that bring images to the mind. And lastly, memorable writing hits an emotional chord in me.
- How do you overcome the dreaded writer's block? What do you do & do you have any tips on how to overcome it?
I definitely don't sit down with the intention of putting finger to keyboard. Playing with an idea in my head while going about my day, results in a recordable line or two. Then I begin.
- Over the years what do you think reading/writing has done for you?
Setting down thoughts for others to read takes courage but the rewards are a sense of self-worth, accomplishment & belonging. I believe strongly that what I read and write profoundly affects who I perceive myself to be. So it is vital to nurture this gift

Puns Explained

She was only a whisky maker, but he loved her still.

Conjunctivitis.com is a site for sore eyes.

The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.

A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.

He had a photographic memory which was never developed



MELON COLLIE

A pun is basically a humorous use of words that involves a word or phrase that has more than one possible meaning. A pun is said to be **a play on words** because it uses words with similar form or sound in such a way as to “play on” two (or more) possible ways of applying them.

Among the various kinds of puns there are two popular types

The first type makes use of multiple meanings from a single spelling. An example of this would be a word like “*pen*” which can either be a writing tool or an animal enclosure.

The second type of pun uses same sounds but different spellings and different meanings. For example: “scent” & “sent”, “jeans” & genes”, “buy” & “bye”.

A pun can run the gamut from obscure to patently obvious. The success of the joke largely depends on the subtlety and cleverness of the wordplay. One that is too obvious usually evokes a groan from the audience. Why do people groan when a pun is told? Children love puns. Maybe adults are going to have to learn to be a little less *groan-up*. 😊

**Please feel free to share your “groaners” with our readers in
the next issue of Write-On! [write-on / right on Get it? ehrrrrrrh]**

SUGGESTION BOX



***What do the rest of the group think of doing book reviews on
anything they've read? Maybe even DVD's included. -- Jay***

CREATIVE WRITING PROMPTS



THEMES FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

We offer these in hopes they'll inspire you

A Sense of History

Neighbours

Unexpected Adventure

Early Morning

For Sale

NEXT ISSUE'S SUBMISSION DATE WILL BE 30th SEPTEMBER

It has been great to see so many varied and interesting pieces of writing, well done to all the contributors who made the second issue so colourful. Big thanks again to Isolde & Graham for their work editing the magazine.

Whether you're a new member or an old hand; get in touch, we would love to include your work. Sharing your writing can be a great confidence builder and having an audience is a valuable part of being a writer so make the first step and share your ideas with the group!



Happy scribbling everyone! Send your work to: Alan Duncan, Befrienders Highland, Write On,

19 Church Street, Inverness, IV1 1DY. 01463 235675 alanduncan@befriendershighland.org.uk