

WORDPLAY

Writers' Forum

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Ezine, Issue 7, August 9th 2010

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ACTION IN AUGUST

August is in full swing. Actually the opposite is true. August is the month where things traditionally go to sleep. The media refer to it as the 'silly season', where news is slow. Not so here at WordPlay. Our local monthly Forum boasts five new member writers, meaning that we have now exceeded our first year local membership target within seven months. The worldwide Ezine subscribers' list has swelled again, as has the number of pages of incredible copy. And it doesn't stop there. In addition to the first of our writing courses introduced last month, we are proud to announce the launch of a brand new quarterly online magazine open to all for contributions (see page 13 for more information). We also have the first winner of our cash prize online competition, a cracking story about... why not turn to page 2 to find out? Our development will continue apace. WordPlay is committed to encouraging writers to write and getting them read. Visit our website www.wordplaywriters.com or email us at wordplayenquiries@mail.com and become part of it. Thanks to all our supporters everywhere. Happy reading

and writing everyone.
Michael and Ian.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

This month we feature one of WordPlay's first members, Migel Jayasinghe.

Now retired, Migel, who has lived and worked in Asia, Africa and Europe, is a very active author and freelance journalist. Having established a vocational assessment and rehabilitation facility whilst Senior Occupational Psychologist with the Royal British Legion Industries between 1996 and 2001, (a groundbreaking facility helping ex-services disabled men and women back into appropriate further education, training and civilian employment), Migel moved to Spain in late 2001. Although devoting most of his time to creative writing, Migel's current life mostly concentrates on the area of

life coaching, having gained a distinction in this regimen from the Life Coaching Academy (UK) in 2002. Indeed his credentials are such that he presented and ran a workshop at the First Russian International Life Coaching Conference held in St Petersburg in November 2002. He uses an eclectic range of counselling and coaching methods to help clients achieve goals they had considered beyond their reach. A prolific, intellectual writer, his published works include **Counselling in Careers Guidance** (2001) Open University Press, Buckingham, UK, **A Miscellany: Essays, stories, poems and a play** (2008) Outskirts Press, Denver CO, USA and, **Renditions, 30 Topical Essays** (2009) Outskirts Press, Denver CO, USA. You can read one of Migel's poems in this month's Poetry Page.

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WORDPLAY OPEN SHORT STORY COMPETITION

JULY 2010 WINNER – £75 first prize



GOOD TO GO by Christian Cook



Judges' Comments:

In a small field of strong contenders, Christian's entry immediately stood out. His descriptive prose alone is worthy of commendation, but then he augments this with the strong characterisation of a wilful, and yet troubled, mind. A mix of serious and humour adds to the reading experience. Although not all stories benefit from an echoing of first line at the last, this is one of those that does. The reader is left questioning if the protagonist has changed his mind. A neat trick.

Now, this doesn't look good. Brake lights, brake lights, brake lights. A domino topple of red stop lights ripples back from some non-event up ahead. Some idiot blew his nose too abruptly and a Mexican wave of mini traffic lights all went red in neat little pairs. There are no green lights on a motorway to tell you that you can go. You just go when you can. Another short burst of hemmed in freedom until the next tsunami of 'stop' floods the road. And everyone stops. It's what you do. Well, not everyone. Occasionally someone will be thinking about a typo in a spreadsheet and end up turning the four cars ahead into a mangled concertina – metal and occupants whining in harmony. But no one would deliberately avoid stopping. Even if you were in the darkest cloud of depression, you can still see clearly that this is no way to go. 'Go.' We use that word for death. Not 'Stop.' Some elderly relative whose legs have stopped for years and now whose heart suddenly stops. Everything stops. The relatives breathe a sigh of relief. But it wasn't time for them to stop; it was obviously time to for them to go. But, if you wanted to go, this was no way to do it. Cars are not designed to kill. Cars have crumple zones; people are crumple zones – head-to-toe squashable flesh and bone. There was a website I saw once, one of those weird things you get emailed on a Friday afternoon when even the notion of pretending to work has left the building, it was all about methods of suicide. The basic gist was that there isn't a nice clean way to go. An overdose will more than likely be survived, only to leave an irreversible and slow, agonising death from liver failure. Jumping off a high building is probably the best method, but you have to go high enough, or else you just end up crumpling your legs and spine and have to be slopped into a wheelchair with a fish slice. But going high has two big drawbacks. The fall is long enough for you to change your mind several times on the way down and then there's the mess. Imagine taking the top of a toothpaste tube and dropping that onto concrete; your body is exactly the same. When you hit the ground, all your innards come spurting out through your arse. You're obviously too dead to notice or care about such details, but spare a thought for the poor sod who has to cat's cradle your intestines into the body bag. At least in a car there's a box to hold you all in. A crumply box, but a box all the same – your flexible friend. If you could drive your car up onto a building then you could just drive off and put on some distracting music to take your mind off things. Or one of those adverts on commercial radio would do it. I've always felt sorry for the session singers that sing the ad jingles. They spend their lives honing their voices to angelic perfection, only to end up having to pretend to be emotional about creosote. You could sing along to this woman who's on now, belting out an anthem to the joys of ending trapped wind, oblivious to your car sailing through the air towards the terminal terra firma below. But here on the motorway the ground is only a harmless foot away. Everything else is squashable. The cars, their drivers, even the crash barriers have no stamina and will crumple at the slightest impact. But there's always the flyover. The huge smooth concrete wall welcoming you to dive into it like a fresh snowdrift. Turn a flyover into a flyinto and you might wake the corpses of gangster sleeping inside, but the flyover itself wouldn't budge. Plough a car into that massive immovable slab and the flyover wouldn't so much as itch. But the

most dignified gift of the flyover is that there's no stigma for those you leave behind. No coroner is going to hang the label of 'suicide' on the family at the inquest. At best they will blame the car and at worst they'll just criticise your driving. He was too fast. It was too wet. A lack of concentration. A loss of control. Car. Flyover. All over. Don't let this morbid topic fool you, I am not suicidal: at least not in the regular way. Look at this line of traffic cones parading along the central reservation, preparing to ambush the fast lane with some surprise road works. There's a cone about every metre; you could easily remove half of them and still have an effective barrier. But what about if you just removed a single cone from somewhere right in the middle? What difference would that make? **Absolutely none at all.** People who commit suicide have given life a 'go' and failed to a point where they decide life is irreparable. I have never given life a go. I am not sad or depressed in any way. I just don't feel like I should be here. It isn't that my time has come to go; it was never my time. I feel I am an anomaly that needs to be removed. **But removed cleanly. If you don't leave a suicide note, then endless questions will always be asked. "Why did he do it?" "Why didn't we see it?" "What could we have done?"** There's no point removing your erroneous life from the world if you leave hundreds of tormented people talking about you forevermore. Or not talking about you and finding nothing else to say – that black silence – who wants to be the dead elephant in the otherwise-living living room? **But leave a note trying to explain all this and you will still fail. Why erase yourself from history, but leave a written document shouting, "Woohoo, I was here once!" for all to see and ponder endlessly? If you ever want to be remembered then disappear and leave a note saying 'forget me.' They never will.** But the beauty of the flyover. Unfortunate accident. Life over, the unfortunate accident of my existence undone. With a good run up on the hard shoulder and then? And then nothing. The run up never ends. No army of brake lights ahead and no brake lights on your own car. Never stop. It's time to go. Go! Go! Go! **The biggest worry I have now is my thumbs. I heard this DJ on the radio once talk about how his airbag firing off in an accident had caused the casing of his steering wheel to rocket off with such speed that it took his thumbs off and left them hanging back the wrong way. Whenever I recall that broadcast I quickly fold my thumbs up with my hands, out of the way of the steering wheel's escape route, but it's tricky to drive like that for too long. Can I keep control of a car at high speed on a rough hard shoulder with thumbs safely tucked up and still hit the flyover neatly. The thought of my entire body as a whole entity being crushed is an abstract and vague notion that I am comfortable with. But the idea of feeling the pain of my thumbs being wrenched back at rocket speed, even for a tiny fraction of a second, is not something I am prepared to live with. Or die with. Traffic has started moving at a nice pace now. I can get up to quite a speed and there's a lot of clear diagonal spaces where an 'out of control' car can slide from the frenzy of the fast lane across onto the calm serenity of the hard shoulder. I start taking note of the concrete candidates making blurry auditions so I can get a feel for the best type of structure to make my exit. I judge all the different types on ease of access, straightness of wall angle and length of run up. Up ahead I see one of those highway maintenance trucks parked up that have the huge flashing 'keep right' arrows upon it. It seems like a perfect piece of irony that is calling me in. It's now or never. Now is my never. The car eases neatly onto the hard shoulder and I tuck my thumbs up. I take a deep breath. What good is breath now? A man begins singing on the radio that sounds like he wants to make love to his loft insulation. I begin to sing along and realise that this idiotic crooning may be the last piece of human contact I receive. And that's when I realise that I just cannot do this. No, I am still going to slam my car and life into a motorway flyover at top speed. I just can't bring myself to do it while singing about loft insulation. It isn't a distraction at all; the ludicrous jingle is just emphasising the seriousness ahead. It's not as if anyone will ever know. There will be no record that I died while signing, "Even my beams are beaming now I've installed Thermostreaming," but it just feels wrong. I shouldn't really care, as I won't be around to recall the moment, but something about the inappropriateness just feels as if it will leave a mark. A permanent stain upon time itself that will always be there, marking the fact that this was done in a way that was wrong. It would be like**

shooting yourself through the skull with a double-barrelled shotgun, only to have two neat pools of blood form Mickey Mouse ears around your head as you lay dying. **I need a clean getaway. I need a half-decent sounding song.** As I scan through the subliminal crackles of the tunes on offer, a burst of colour explodes into my peripheral vision like a firework. Too small to be a car, possibly a road sign, most probably a motorbike. I have no idea if the rider is still near it or safely clear, but this uninvited obstacle has no part in my plan and, before I can think through this change in events, I have instinctively swerved back towards the heaving rat race to the right. **Abort! Abort! Abort!** But having chosen to leave the race of life, I am not allowed back in quite so easily. The suspension is having a panic attack, bumping along a cobbled purgatory between the hard shoulder and the road. **And then I am free of it all. Flying. Having found a neat ramp in the angled end of the crash barrier, the car has elegantly sailed into the air and is spinning over. Up is down. Down is up.** I see the horrified stares of the brake lights below me through the windscreen and even press my own brakes with all my might. But brakes are no help when you're airborne. Even airbrakes are no use unless your name is Bugs Bunny. **Now, this doesn't look good.**

About Christian Cook.

Christian Cook has published two previous novels, 'Broken Eggshells' (a black comedy about terrorism) and 'Pulling Power' (a dark medical tale). A third manuscript, 'Nix Ex Machina,' regarding online snow sales to the Inuit of Alaska, is nearing completion. **When not writing, Christian is a freelance designer and photographer. He currently lives in Surrey with his wife, Hayley, and their two daughters, Amelie and Lara.**

If you are a publisher or agent and would like to contact Christian, please email **WordPlay** at wordplayenquiries@mail.com

Runners Up:

Callum Green with his story entitled "Snow Blind", wins £25 and **WordPlay** Writing Accreditation

Commended: Andrew Campbell-Kearsey for "Silent Triangle".

YOU TOO CAN BE A WINNER!

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How our internal competition works:

Any genre of writing is allowed.

The maximum length of work is 1,000 words of prose, or 40 lines of poetry.

Entries are judged by all the members of WordPlay, on an anonymous basis, so the winner is the piece most enjoyed by readers of writing.



THE WORDPLAY INTERNAL WRITING COMPETITION WINNER

Theme: 'Water'



THE TRACKS OF MY TEARS by Michael Barton

Rain cascades down the window of the passenger train that is my temporary cocoon. The vast freshwater lakes to the north, and the snow capped peaks of the sea to the south, are nothing more than a monochrome blur through the zebra striped glass. Water, it's everywhere: the sea, the lakes - even the sky. But all this water pales into insignificance, when compared to the tears in my heart that manifest themselves incessantly down my cheeks. Who was it that said 'cry me a river'? Soon, I'll have sobbed an ocean. I should have seen it coming, of course. In the beginning things were so good. He treated me like I was the only woman on earth. He made me feel like a princess. He held me close in the street, and pulled me even closer in coffee shops just to say 'I love you'. I can't remember the last time he whispered those three words to me. We shopped together. We'd make a grab for the same tin of beans and fall about laughing. The merest touch of his hand against mine gave me goose bumps all over: there was electric between us. Now, shopping is my responsibility. Holidays were about us. We chose the destination, booked and paid together. When in the resort we played together. Now, he holidays on the slopes with his 'piste pals'. Our whole life was about togetherness. We were the perfect couple. All our friends said so. But that was in the beginning, the first few months. I try to force these thoughts from my mind, to focus on the outer world that resides on the other side of the glass, and avoid the looks of the passengers travelling with me. I wonder where they are going: I jumped on the first available train to god-only-knows-where. It's like a simile for my life - travelling with no idea of my final destination. The landscape is hurtling past, a mirror image of my three years with him. Steve said it was his fault not mine, but now, alone with my thoughts, I realise this is not true. Our break up is as much my fault as his. I shouldn't have trusted him quite so much. When he first started going out with his friends, and not me, alarm bells should have started ringing. They should have deafened me. He said that I should have my own friends, too. So, I knew I could trust him, didn't I? I don't know when it happened, but one night a week became six. He was out with his friends, business or pleasure, while I was playing the dutiful wife staying at home, and making home. My friends had found other friends. He still had his. One night a week was our night. It was what I lived for. I used to plan the meal, and cook it lovingly. I would leave work early, so that I had his drink ready for him when he returned from his office. Recently, his homecomings had coincided with burnt offerings - for which I am blamed. Now, sitting here, I realise, painfully, that he controlled me, and I had been complicit in our relationship becoming about him, not us. Making love to me had become no more than sex in a back alley, though, thank god, I never allowed the fulfilment of that desire. Was that where I went wrong? Was I deficient in the bedroom? Did I lack adventure, and drive him elsewhere? He never said so. In fact, thinking about it, he never said much about anything. He never talked about his feelings, his emotions. He left all that to me. More control, I suppose. I'm woken from my thoughts by a gentle touch on my shoulder. I screw my eyes, look through my tears to see a kind face, salt and pepper hair. His blue eyes smile gently at me, as he hands me a handkerchief. Without saying a word, he caresses my shoulder once more, nods knowingly, and returns to his seat in the far corner of the carriage. He reminds me of someone I once knew. Someone I lost contact with because of Steve: he had even taken that away from me. I take my mobile from my pocket, finger the buttons and retrieve the number I need. I hesitate. Perhaps he's changed numbers? Maybe he would hang up on me, without a word? I'm not sure I could deal with that on top of everything else. I press the speed dial hoping we will be reconnected. He answers almost immediately. Then he listens. There are no recriminations, nor a single 'I told you so'. No lectures, just understanding and love. Love in his voice and in the silence as he listens. God, it's good to be listened to. He tells me everything will be fine, though it doesn't seem so right now, and he tells me to forget all the other stuff. He says its just water under the bridge. I put the phone down, and look out of the window once more. Through the zebra striped pane, colours start to appear. The horizon is no longer blurred. Blue sky is burning through the haze. Now, I know my destination. I'm going to see the man I should never have lost contact with, the one to whom I'll always be a princess. I look to the far corner of the carriage, for the man with salt and pepper hair. I search for him amongst the others, so I can say 'thank you' for his singular kindness. I ask the lady opposite if she saw where he went. The man that gave me the handkerchief, I explain. She stares at me. Am I mad? I look at the tissue, which proves he was here with his tender hand on my shoulder. My tears come again. For the letters in its corner, identifying its owner, say all they need to. They simply spell DAD.

Ahh, the Summer is well and truly here. Time for that holiday that you so richly deserve. Now where should I go this year? Joy and Ian express contrasting views of two rather different holiday destinations...

BELLA ITALIA

The first introductory “Whistle Stop Tour” of Italy’s most famous cities almost scrambled our brains. Oh, the majesty of Venice! To see painter Canaletto’s (little Canal) print of The Piazzetta on the wall of my childhood home became a reality before my eyes, was a joy; and as we alighted the ferry, was that Vivaldi’s music I could hear?! There is a magic veiling Venice that delights. Were we really walking across the vast Piazza San Marco, gazing at St. Mark’s Campanile and the Doge’s Palace? Alas, there is only room for a thumb-print! Travelling through Italy’s verdant countryside, with the divine voices of Pavarotti, Carreras and Domingo (radio-borne) we were charmed by the terracotta roofs dotting the horizon, the abundant flowers and the adjective-begging scenery passing our window. It seems criminal not to give a brief description of Assisi, but we were impressed .. Next stop, Rome, not a place you could ignore – from the vastness of St. Peter’s Square to the incredible Sistine Chapel; and the many churches and museums. Our brains were in danger of over-load...We added our coins to the three offered in the film to the Trevi Fountain; stood in the Coliseum which seemed steeped in death and from which I escaped ASAP! Via the town of Pisa with its famous leaning-tower (yes we had our photo holding it up) we arrived in Florence – “Cradle of Renaissance,” wondered at The Duomo (cathedral Santa Maria del Fiore), and the quaintness of the Ponte Vecchio, shop bearing bridge straddling the River Arno. Yet another jewel in Italy’s impressive tiara. Satiated by so much antiquity, we longed for the following week’s, calmer, atmosphere. Catching us by surprise... inducing a coach-load of travellers to catch their collective breath, the town of Riva suddenly lay at our feet; the sparkling waters of Lake Garda, lapping the hem of its skirt. Praises buzzed in the air like bees, smiles inhabited faces. We were in thrall of its beauty, and had surely found a little bit of heaven! As recorded by ruins and mosaics, ancient Romans visited this lovely haven. No fools they! Elongated Lake Garda sits grandly in the north eastern part of Italy, surrounded by towering cliffs and mountains with abundant vegetation; saucer-like, creamy magnolias grew on its slopes. Every day, around late morning, a wind whipped up the lake water: cue wind-surfers, who appeared like water-borne butterflies. Later, fun over, they disappeared as the wind dropped, leaving the lake serene. Our hotel - more than we hoped for after the basic fare of our first week’s tour, was delightful, with “silver-service” at our elbows! (It was, after all, only a reasonably priced package holiday.) Service was impeccable, the food delicious, and the waiters handsome... As in Spain, the pleasing *Passeggiata* – promenading – was popular with local families, the praiseworthy public gardens the venue. Riva has a tranquil, refined air; the inhabitants elegant Italians. The shops and produce were a delight, and the restaurants and cafes had me purring like a spoilt cat. As for the rest rooms –there were “state of the art” loos in Riva – self-flushing; taps which turned themselves magically on. (Our sons thought me odd when I sang their praises!) So, what did we

do in Riva? We explored, admired, laughed a lot, ate a lot...fortunately walked a fair mile or two...And ferry-chugged across the satin-like waters of the lake to sup coffee and eat delicious pastries in a delightful minimalist café on the far shore. Exploring the many towns peppering Lake Garda's banks was a must (a bus hugs its contours). The narrow, medieval, cobbled streets come alive as I recall the charms of Sirmione and Malcesine, and in Desenzano there is a castle and grounds where outdoor concerts are held. A trip to pristine, pretty Gardone, pleased and a day in buzzing Verona - "Wherefore art thou Romeo" intrigued. An aged edifice boasted a painted fresco: a faded scene, in part depicting the devil prodding his fork into the ample posterior of a well-endowed maiden, bawdy enough to bring a blush to a Nun's cheek. *Ah, Bella Italia – you made our hearts sing!*

Joy Lennick

B&B: THE NORTH AND SOUTH COLLIDE

Seaside resorts in England are simply the pits. In general they are populated by drunken, pot and pink bellied people not knowing how to behave, or indeed, enjoy themselves other than by displaying large quantities of bigoted boorishness and turning their obesity the colour of lobster, a dish seldom served at the calorific cafes of their choice. *Evidence of this abounds wherever you care to look. Blackpool. Now, it is important to decide what you want to be, and be the best at it. Blackpool does tacky triumphantly. If you want cheap and plastic, look no further. As for the people there, resident or visiting, see it as a giant holding pen for the Jeremy Kyle show. From red rose to white rose – if only they were that fragrant. Bridlington. The sea is a sort of grey/brown sludge that blends brilliantly with the equally dismal skyline. Everyone here walks around as if they are lost 'care in the community' escapees. If anywhere epitomises the backward bile of provincial England, this is it. The Town Hall's motto may well be 'You can always tell a Yorkshireman, you just can't tell him much'. This is by no way confined to the north. Next stop, Brighton. So, you are planning a weekend away from your metropolitan lifestyle. I know – Let's go and sit/lie on a beach of seriously uncomfortable pebbles surrounded by a disproportionate number of homosexuals being gay. Try a campsite instead. Further west there is another example – Bournemouth. Pavements pregnant with pushchairs. Yet more benefit drawers (sorry, Job Seekers) who have decided that being lazy is better spent by the sea than in say, Salford (where they only have a canal), or, indeed Salisbury, where plainly they only have rocks to look at. *The watchword here is, when planning a holiday, avoid resorts that have piers.**

Ian Alexander

****The views expressed here are not necessarily those of WordPlay. If you feel strongly enough to reverse the above sentiments, then please feel free to join WordPlay and join in. More information at www.wordplaywriters.com**



LEARN TO REMEMBER: THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS WRITER'S BLOCK!

Even when writing about a completely fictional character, perhaps one in an odd line of work, an author draws on his, or her, own experiences to give depth and breadth to that character. Even if you are writing a story about an Astronaut, of whose work you know little (I'm assuming here that you have never travelled into outer space), you will bring your character to life by allowing him to display a few basic emotions. Fear, love, happiness, sadness... the list goes on. You conduct research for the technical stuff: how the astronaut walks in space, for instance. What will really give life to your character for a great reading experience is adding in all the bits that a reader can identify with. The good news here is that they are all things you will have experienced yourself. So it is good practice to train yourself to evoke memories and draw on them for inspiration. We all meet someone for the first time. The emotions we felt upon meeting that special person may be generally commonplace. We may have laughed, copied their mannerisms, felt a warm glow in their presence. How many times have you heard the phrase 'there was a spark between us' or 'we had a chemistry'? But that first kiss: how was that for you? Did your lips tingle? Did you get goose bumps all over? Did your face redden as you pulled away? General emotions, and unique emotions. Much of what you write will be gleaned from the depths of your memory. Consciously or sub consciously, you will draw on your past. Then you will use it in your prose and your stories will be all the richer and more endearing for it. Think about it: we all have a favourite story from our school days, and one that we probably like to recall at every opportunity. Mine is the time our chemistry teacher fainted when a test tube exploded, and a few in the class decided it would be a rather funny idea to draw a chalk mark around him, the sort you see around the victim of a homicide. This is an example of a memory that is easily recallable, because I have done so many times before. But what about digging into the depths of our memory? Next time you are staring at a blank page and can't think what to write, remember. That's all you have to do. If you have a task to write about a day at the beach, and nothing is jumping from your head to the paper in front of you, just think back to your childhood. Train yourself to bring your own unique memories to the fore, and you will never suffer the mythological "writer's block" again. Your writing will have added depth and meaning for your readers, and your productivity will increase exponentially.

Why not try this exercise?

Here is a list of keywords. Take a quarter of an hour on each word, describing the imagery that it conjures up. Let your mind empty before tackling the next word, and then just write whatever comes into your head, thinking back and drawing on past experience.

Christmas Tree; Bedroom; Beach; Snow

So, what did you write? Was it a list of associated words, or did you venture into coherent sentences? Did you describe the images that popped into your head? Were you amazed at what you could remember, and the emotions that you felt whilst travelling back in time? Perhaps you have written something fresh and energetic; described sights, sounds, or smells with words only you could have put on paper. After all, these are your unique thoughts.

Adapted for Ezine publication from the **WordPlay** Creative Writing E-Course, available from www.wordplaywriters.com

THE CARDINALS OF SCHENGEN
The exciting debut thriller by Michael Barton
www.peterhudsonthrillers.com



Make Word Work For You

Here are a couple more tips to help you get the most out of Microsoft Word. Remember that different versions may have different options. If your version has the Office Button (top left corner) give it a click then Word Options (see the bottom of the window) Now in the list on the left you will see Proofing – give that a click and a whole new world of proofing options will appear before your eyes. Take some time to study the options and set-ups or click the question mark, top right, and let Word help you. Later versions of Word have the option to save a file in the format 'DOCX' The bad news is that older versions are unable to open 'DOCX' files. So be careful about creating 'DOCX' files – especially if you are submitting to competitions or publishers. Some clearly state in their rules and guidelines that 'DOCX' files are not acceptable. If you receive a 'DOCX' from someone you trust, but your version of Word fails to open it, there are some free converter software programs on the net (search via Google) that will do the job.

TON UP!

Let off steam in 100 words.... You choose the subject.

Writer's block. Well, add 'ol' after the b and pluralise it. The fact that I can't draw or do water colours doesn't mean I've got Painter's Palette Syndrome. It just means I'm no good. Similarly Hyper Activity Disorder (or whatever pseudo-medical term they use) is simply bad behaviour. Give me three words at random and I'll write something. So should you be able to, unless of course, you don't write. Thank You!

Ian Alexander



WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Our members review their latest read.

The First World War changed many things and created the stimulus for authors to put pen to paper and remind us of the senseless slaughter orchestrated in the name of King and Country. Michael Morpurgo is one such man who through his skills brings to us the horrors, deprivation and sadness of what took place. **Private Peaceful** –

winner of the Blue Peter Book Award – is a book that brings to us the simplicity of callousness and hardship that existed before that 'Great War'. It is a story of people, love, poverty and the uncertainty of life. Then the war came taking two brothers to France and Belgium. Life in the trenches, artillery barrages and the horror of gas warfare is told here. The story of a country family unfolds in an articulated way and is compulsive reading. Prior to this book I had read **The War Horse**, by the same author, and this too, is set during that time. It is another story that has a rural beginning and ends up passing through the horror of the battlefields. It is a simple story and exquisitely told through the eyes of the horse – the star of the book. It is a story of friendship, with the added ingredient of fondness and love between boy and horse. Set in a period when horses and men were expendable, it is an absorbing tale and touches the very core of values. The play of the same name played for two seasons at The National Theatre and now can be seen at The New London Theatre. For me these two books are a must read to remind the younger generations of what has gone on and is still occurring today. I think every child should read them. They are well written for that purpose and make a suitable present.

John Edwards



WORDS

Words have no mystery
except to those in awe
of beginnings biblically shrouded
and wreathed in ghost-like lore.

The meaning is in the medium,
a genie inside the bottle
conjuring up an ocean
of barely-concealed delirium.

Shake the genie out from its rut
and the sleep of a million years
when words will spring from the earth's
crust
to a *Homo Sapien's* ears.

Hamlet questioned by Polonius
responded, 'words, words (and) words';
words still are a mystery
to literary poseurs like us.

Migel Jayaginghe

**WORDPLAY: OPENING
DOORS FOR POETS
WORLDWIDE**

Poets abound. Not only can members get their efforts read here in the Ezine, but WordPlay will be holding quarterly competitions dedicated to the verse voices amongst you. (Scriptwriters note that we will be running similar opportunities bi-annually). Keep an eye on www.wordplaywriters.com and our other publications for details.

VANTAGE POINT

Though I do view
not five feet two,
but five feet from the ground:
a world not great or fine –
not really yours or mine;
not neat, complete or sound
but filled with 'ifs' and 'buts,'
bureaucrats and idiots;
coloured tape,
perfection aped;
a canvas nature painted
for large and smallest fry,
a world of minute miracles
of puzzlements and ridicules.
No! it does not count a jot
that five feet I am not.

Joy Lennick

Raining Jasmine and Bullets

It's raining jasmine in Spain:
minute, virginal parachutes,
larger than snowflakes,
whirl down in the breeze,
sweetly perfuming the air,
my hair and my eager nostrils;
beautifying a mundane moment.
Nature's benediction.

It's raining bullets in Afghanistan
small, hard, penetrating.
Larger than bird.shot
they zing-ping in the breeze.
pollute the air,
matt and bloody hair, blow nostrils apart,
shattering a mundane moment.
Man's benediction.

Joy Lennick



Last month, John Edwards set a challenge to all to 'write tight', observe and record.

We were so impressed with Roberta's Collection, entitled "A Rainbow of Brollies", that we decided to dedicate this page to her efforts. We've even moved away from our trademark blue and red print! Well done, Roberta, for rising to the challenge and producing some great work!

WordPlay

Black

Black Brolly
City Slicker
Crash Coming
Black Monday

Green

Green Umbrella
Stuck between
Envious in
the extreme

Brown

Umbrella Brown
Not up
Not down
In the proverbial

Red

Red Umbrella
Furled
Pointless
Redundant

Purple

Purple Parasol
Blushing
In the breeze
Flapping

Yellow

Yellow Umbrella
Resisting its
Opening
Cowardly

Sky Blue

Sky Blue
Heaven sent
Dry but
Winter Cold

To advertise here contact
Wordplay
via Email:

wordplayenquiries@mail.com

NEWS FROM WORDPLAY AND ITS MEMBERS

WORDPLAY – WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

We hope you enjoy our monthly publication, the content of which is provided by WordPlay members and competition winners and read around the world.

You'll find each issue packed with a variety of great writing, from short stories to poetry, as well as valuable tips for writers, and regular features such as the A2Z of Words.

WordPlay also offers a **comprehensive range of services** to suit all, and we are adding to these all the time. See here for more information:

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/servicesforwriters.html>

WordPlay Members can take advantage of **huge discounts of up to 50% on all our services**, as well as access member only pages and submit contributions to our publications. This link provides you with more information:

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/membership.html>

The WordPlay Short Story Competition

Our monthly short story competition is open to all, with a first prize of £75 and publication of the winning entry in the Ezine and end of year anthology. Entry is free to WordPlay members, £5 to non-members. Find out how to enter here:

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/writingcompetitions.html>

Finally, as part of our main aim of encouraging writers to write, and then to get them read, we will be developing **a range of e-courses**, the first of which (Creative Writing) is available here:

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/id30.html>

Each issue of the WordPlay Ezine is delivered to your email account at the beginning of the second week of the month. Please read and enjoy, and feel free to post onto your contacts, and print off a copy to place in your local bar, café, sports club, etc.

STOP PRESS!

EZINE HAS A SISTER

Here at WordPlay, we love great fiction. We also love to promote great fiction, particularly stories penned by (as yet) unknown talent. We also love to reward writers of great fiction.

So, we thought it would be a great idea to give great writers of great fiction an outlet, and reward them for their efforts.

This is where our new quarterly publication, working title “The story behind the story”, comes in.

We want YOU to submit stories of between 1500 and 2500 words, in any genre from thrillers to romance, murder mystery to humorous (excluding erotica).

Add in a 100 word biography, written in the third person, and a couple of sentences about the inspiration that led to the writing of your story.

For each story submitted by a WordPlay member, and accepted for publication, we will pay £10.

All stories accepted for publication from non members will be rewarded with a WordPlay Writing Accreditation for the author.

Initial circulation will be to subscribers of the WordPlay monthly Ezine, and selected Literary Agents.

Closing Date for submission for the first edition is 30th November 2010, with and expected edition date of January 6th 2011.

For more information see our website www.wordplaywriters.com

Member News

- ◆ Ian Alexander has been commissioned to write a series of business management articles for The Jersey Weekly.
- ◆ Rob Innis has become a regular contributor for the Expat site www.expatica.com, and had a letter published in July's Writers' Forum magazine.
- ◆ Simone Segal is soon to be presenting her own inspirational show on SolTV, after impressing during an interview about her book “The Gift”.

THE FIVE W's OF WRITING

WordPlay member Joy Lennick tells us her five W's.

WHERE DO I WRITE? Where do I not write...“officially” I write in my second bedroom, now fully fitted as an office, with multi-shelving for books, desk, computer, etc., but also, sometimes, in my dreams, in my daily diary, on pieces of paper and in note-books. **WHEREVER!**

WHEN DO I WRITE? Usually after breakfast, after lunch, and after dinner, unless going somewhere special, or mundane chores intrude. Being “retired” is a blessing, although there are lots of welcome interruptions (the brain needs a break); and a walk to stretch the legs is a must, as is Tai Chi (when it's cooler.)

HOW DO I WRITE? As mentioned above, on pieces of paper, in note-books, diary and computer. More and more these days, straight on to the computer, except for “Eureka” moments, when the former come into their own.

WHY DO I WRITE? Good question. Follows closely on Why do I eat? Ingrained habit? A compulsion? Probably both. Not being musical – such a blessing – and only minimally artistic (water-colours) words are as close as I can get to expressing myself, which is a heart-felt need in my nature.

WHAT DO I WRITE? Whatever comes into my head. Sometimes, humorous poetry, Sometimes, quirky, now and then serious. Articles, travel writing, letters, short stories, factual books (two) fiction (three quarters complete) biography (one) autobiography (back burner) self-published booklet of poetry, and at present, an experimental book with a literary “other”. I draw the line at

OVER TO YOU.....

Tell us your five W's of writing.

Email them to wordplayezine@mail.com

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A TO Z OF WORDS

PLAY WITH WORDS

In a recent issue we ran a piece by regular contributor Joy Lennick entitled 'What's in a Name?' Names matter, as any writer knows. Characters can be established by their very name. What do these names conjure up for you? What are your name associations?

Adrian: Middle class, Captain Sensible type, unless abbreviated. Adie is completely different – not least when Kate Adie.

Barbara: Mumsy is the first thing that springs to mind, unless it is anteceded by Windsor – in which case Babs, if not Baps.

Colin: Nerdy at first hearing. It may be why opposition supporters refer to the fiery football manager Neil Warnock by his anagram. You work it out.

Daphne: Old fashioned, straight laced, sensible shoes, that sort of thing.

Edward: Classic, gravitas born of royal connection. Eddie meanwhile is slightly less so. The Eagle, anyone?

Fiona: Flighty, flirty, and fun loving. Not to be confused with Fifi Trixibelle which is just plain barmy.

Graham: Dadsy. It doesn't even work when abbreviated, it's still dull.

Helen: Statuesque and stylish.

Ian: Never used as a central character in novels, films, or any other art form. Hmmm.

Justine: Classy and sophisticated. It doesn't even demean itself to a readily used abbreviation.

Kevin: Screams tattoos and shopping TV jewellery.

Linda: Council estate unless accompanied by something more racy, like La Plante.

Michael: Solid character until shortened to Mike, matey.

Nicola: Aspiring and upwardly mobile, its diminutives somewhat less so.

Oliver: Middle to upper class.

Penelope: Posh. Look no further than Thunderbirds.

Quentin: Effeminate.

Rosemary: Utterly lovely, doubtless allied to the Irish origin.

Stephen: Complicated by the alternative 'v' spelling, the latter automatically being harder and tougher.

Teresa: A saint, obviously.

Uriah: Heaps of trouble finding a male name for this letter.

Veronica: Another posh lady.

William: Not unlike Edward until reduced to Willie – maybe not so different after all.

Xanado: Another celebrity nonsense name.

Yves: Sweet talking, perfumed, continental cad.

Zena: Quirky and out of the ordinary. A woman of interest.

Parents have a lot to answer for if our names determine how we are perceived. Tune That Name, writers.

Ian Alexander

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