

Flash Point

A collection of flash and micro fiction
by Midlothian Men's Group
Supported by Access to Industry



Flash point

Hello, I'm Helen Evans, Creative Writing tutor for Midlothian Men's Group and I am delighted to introduce the second collection of writing by the group. This collection is an exploration of flash, nano and micro fiction. Simply put short stories, in some cases, very very short stories.

We wanted to use different skills than those we had used in the Recovery Road poetry booklet. This collection explores a new range of writing techniques in ten sections that also highlight the relationship between words and numbers.

The pieces are a mixture of the shocking and the humbling, the insightful and the painful.

Please also be advised before you read that some of the pieces contain some violent and graphic imagery.

Thank you from all of us at the Creative Writing workshop in Dalkeith and we hope you enjoy the booklet.

Helen Evans

Creative Writing tutor



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Author Profiles



Alan Mulholland

Hi, I'm Alan and I want to share with you the work I have created as a member of the Midlothian Men's Group. I had never written before; in fact, I went to pieces when asked to read or write. Now I am much more confident and use a variety of techniques to make my voice heard – including dictation. You too will have a lot to say and I trust this collection may give you the confidence to write your own story.



Alex McCathie

Hello – I'm Alex, or Alec to many. The Midlothian Men's Group gave me a second family and for that I am grateful. The writing gives me a way of expressing myself more fully to that family and helping them with self-expression too. Writing has been cathartic and liberating. It has also allowed me to share knowledge and experience in a collaborative environment. I trust you will enjoy the collection as we all share a little of ourselves with you through our words.



Ben Gidney

I've always been a creative soul. I remember as a child sketching Disney characters. My love of fashion blossomed in my early teens which was around the time I first picked up a musical instrument. I was introduced to words by a girlfriend who had her masters in English literature. She taught me the power of adjectives and adverbs. Later I became an English Language teacher which accelerated my curiosity of words and prose which, in short, led me to this point today. I'm now an apprentice copywriter and will attend Queen Margaret University to study Digital Marketing.

Hi - I'm Kenny, always quick-witted and with a keen eye for what's going on around me, but little confidence when it comes to my own writing. I didn't believe anyone would want to listen to, let alone read, anything I had to say. This work is where I show how much imagery and the power of words can be used to help to convey an experience. I trust you will enjoy this collection.



Kenny Barnes

Hello, I'm Sofiane! A chaotic, perhaps slightly talented, art fan and lover of all things creative! Music, photography, writing... the list goes on. My instagram handle is sxsxv_11gxc



Sofiane Sanhaji

Hello, my name is Wojtek. I look after the group on behalf of Access to Industry. A reluctant participant in creative writing, I discovered I quite enjoy writing very short stories and the puzzle-like aspect of fitting the narrative in so many words. I feel privileged to be included in this compilation and proud of the collective output of our group. Hope you enjoy reading our stories as much as we enjoyed writing them.



Wojtek Wcislik

Monologues

You will have heard a monologue in a film - it is a speech by one person. It is often used as a means to convey innermost thoughts - the deeper and darker the better usually.

Try and spot monologues in day to day life - adverts, films and tv all use monologues.

It plays on a show reel of horror in my head – over and over again the same image - blood – lots of blood.

They called me a murderer but they had no right. They had a right to lock me up as they did, but not for that – that horror was not my doing. I see my hands on his throat as the blood seeped out - felt the warmth of him and the fear. I noted the time and the stillness – a voice that sounded like me but far off shouting at a door to open, for someone to come and for the blood to stop. Help came, looked at him; his ragged, torn, silent throat that made a deafening accusation - I was guilty – job done. I said I was reading a comic – just reading a comic –they came into the cell, slit his throat and left. I tried to save him. His murderers told a different story – one that was easier to believe - turning Queen's evidence they turned me into a killer.

That show reel plays again - the strange thing is that there is no sound that fits; maybe because I spoke and no one listened ... not until there was DNA. It spoke for me and then they listened. I was acquitted – found innocent. That was a long time ago but the show reel still plays, forever projected forward and there is always blood.

Alan

Bullies are man-made; over time they morph, manifest into monsters.

They say bullies are cowards. I find them clever, manipulative, devious, jealous, insecure, horrible people.

They always amass a following of so-called friends, supporters, protectors, who in turn have no personality themselves. Weaklings who gain strength from being in a gang, achieving protection and belonging – mini bullies. Misguided fools who will learn in time, alas not before damage has been inflicted.

I was subjected to bullying. Start of secondary school pupils were placed in classes with pupils from other schools. Although I was a "skinny ma link" it had never been a problem at primary school in fact I had many friends.

The teacher collecting our dinner money, amounting to £5- 5 shillings asked what amount this is called? The answer was 5 guineas I answered 5 and a quarter pounds. This was correct but it created a lot of mirth amongst the class - including our teacher.

Enter my nemesis. MY BULLY.

He was not the biggest but he was the loudest. A lout, an ignoramus. He claimed respect which unbelievably he easily achieved.

Then it started: name calling, horrible nicknames, bad mouthing my family especially my mother. Spat upon, kicked, punched for what? Bravado, power, showing off? I WAS ONLY 12. Too old to be a child too young to be a man.

My schooling suffered. Who did I tell - NO ONE. You didn't in those days, anyway if I told my parents they would have just said "hit them back".

Away from the bully his legions tried to be friendly that was till he came on the scene whereupon they reverted to mocking me. This continued throughout first year.

Summer holidays came, new friendships formed. On returning to school inexplicably bullying stopped. The bully was still there but we were now in different classes. Sadly the damage was done, and recovery? Did I ever really recover? I certainly never forgot.

As for my tormentor where is he now?

I HOPE HE'S DEAD.

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Alex

Fuck you! How dare you just sit there and ask question after question, you think this is some kind of interrogation? Who do you think you are to pick me apart, to take from me at will. Composing riddle after riddle, wiggling yourself free from responsibility. I'm not some experiment to test your theories on. You masquerade your deepest fears as idiosyncrasies - hiding the depths of your soul you're too scared to face - and so what better way than to project it and mould it into something rational and resonant, and that... that is the thing that scares me the most. That these are the minds that moulded mine. That shaped me and make me feel like I'm not good enough. Not because I lack the ability, but from the beliefs you instilled in me.

Never letting your glass stray too far from your face - seeking comfort from outside yourself to cure the misery of loneliness. You're so consumed by your emotions. You can't step outside of yourself even for a moment. Taking astrology and forming it into a religion that guides you and prides you into thinking it's all for a reason, like it's all God's plan. As if the universe has got it all figured out.

I was forged from such great men, so how the fuck did I become what I've become? How did it all, crumble and fall? The demise of what could have been, is now a reality.

Ben

Cut it!... Cut it!... Lines must be straight and long – no deception tapping the length, pure drone – no salt lines. Ripping, shredding, tearing, slashing – shards of glass slicing through the nose and ‘boom’ – enter the shadow lands. Rocketed into another dimension...rocketed beyond imagination.

Psychosis, hallucinations, delusions ... obsessing over a lover that shape shifts ...it doesn't matter the form...powder, liquid or solid...legal or illegal... what matters is the high ... when we are together nothing and no one else matters – no one ever matters. Killing for you would be easy, no conscience...no one comes between us – not friend, not family, not child – no one. We are all that matters and without you desperate obsession creates illusions and a creature who hunts and hurts without thought...prepared to go to any lengths...any lengths...beyond imagination.

Duologues

A duologue is a conversation between two - not necessarily two people!

Who, or what, would you have a conversation with if asked?

Underwater

- A You there? I can't see you!
- R **I'm here - looking right at you!**
- A I got scared - thought you'd left
- R **I'm always here**
- A I needed to get out
- R **Your face is funny - different colours and damp.**
- A It'll be ok once the noise stops
- R **Is it always that noisy in there?**
- A Only when they're drunk and angry
- R **Are you scared?**
- A Sometimes - scared of- the different kinds of hurt.
- R **I wish I could come out and play - we could run away.**
- A In my head we play - miles from here - wallee, chap door run we run a lot!
- R **I'm sorry I can't run.**
- A That's ok - seeing you is enough - it helps.
- R **I'm glad but I don't understand how I help.**
- A Knowing you are me but free and without pain.
- R **But I'm trapped and underwater!**
- A That's ok - because in a way so am I - for now.

Familiar Friend

I miss the way you feel in my hands. Scooping you up and jumping in a taxi.

I miss the way you used to hold me. I always felt safe with you, like you'd never lose me.

Remember when we were packing, not knowing what to take. Which to leave and which to keep.

You decided to take that stupid salt lamp and you made me hold it the whole time. I could have killed you.

All the adventures we've been on, the sights, the sounds. The smells and the colours.

Do you remember running to the platform and you threw me onto the train?

I remember. Do you remember when I had to carry you up that escalator in Vienna? I was so tired, I could barely pick you up. My back was sore for a week after that.

I remember walking across the runway in the morning, sun peeking over the horizon, I felt so excited.

I'm sad we don't see each other anymore; it feels as though we're drifting apart.

I know, I'm sad too, we had a lot of fun together. I'm certain we'll meet again. Our next adventure is just around the corner...

Ben

Sense of taste

S **Hey - waster - you see what I do?**

A Yeah - you sniff a trigger did you - something you remember?

S **Go on my son you know you want to - you can handle this.**

A Whisky poured on screen - smelling it in my head - I can taste it again - perhaps you're right! I can handle it this time.

S **You can get your old life back - the old you - confident-life of the party - my best mate!**

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A Trouble is mate the old life had you and whisky in it but nothing else.

S **You don't need anything else - just me and the whisky.**

A Trouble is I've now tasted family, pride and self-respect - I like the feeling and no mass-produced liquid or shitey little inner voice can give me that can they?

Alex

Tricolons

Humans like thinking of, or referring to, things in threes. It's a numerical comfort zone - and in literature groups of three are referred to as tricolons.

There are lots of famous examples - we chose some well known ones and created a three paragraph piece of micro fiction.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness

United states Declaration of Independence

Flowers, champagne and a hot wife. Things were looking up. We had something to celebrate. I was out. Going home and I knew she would be waiting for me. She was at home alright but I didn't expect to be seeing my arresting officer again quite so soon. Especially not in my bed with my wife.

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The champagne shattered and scattered. I battered him with a golf club then turned myself in – freedom was short lived. My brief warned me my temper could cost me eight years.

Much to everyone's amazement – including mine – the case was dismissed. Charges were not pursued. They deserve one another. Me - I feel liberated.

Alan

I came, I saw, I conquered

Julius Caesar

"Those biscuits aren't going to eat themselves". As the doors slid open I sped down an aisle for what I so desperately wanted. "Damn it! I only came in for some milk". Peering across the checkouts I spy the shortest line. I spin around and march over to claim my spot amongst the chaos. As I came around the corner, there they were.

She had a black bow in her hair - he was wearing a bandana with an air of arrogance. I stared into her eyes for probably longer than I should've. The bandana looked me up and down as if to say, she's taken. Our eyes met for a second time as I cut across the aisles - it was that same look again. Our egos sound the siren. I carried on, my place firmly established behind a family of four. My competition was now in the aisle beside me. The girl slips in behind me as the bandana follows, cradling everything you need for a night of netflix and chill.

Over the loudspeaker a woman announces checkout four is opening. Without a moment's notice the bandana barges past me. The girl whispers I'm sorry as her brown eyes look deep into mine. The bandana stands proudly waiting with a look of content and confidence. Now the family of four starts to move forward. I can feel his eyes on me. The frustration brewing in his face - his chess move hasn't paid off. She's trying to hide the fact she can't stop staring at me and now I'm at the front of the line. A storm in a teacup, but a keepsake remained. A piece of paper with a note but no name.

Tetrads or fabulous four

The famous philosopher Pythagoras had a theory that all numbers represented something symbolically.

The number four is associated with the four elements of Earth, Air, Water and Fire.

In Pythagorean theory the number four is also linked to justice.

Uncharted Waters

“That’s the last time I’m doing that!”

The rain in Prague that spring hadn’t been as bountiful as they said it would, but my once in a blue moon bonding trip was here and this time we’re going canoeing. Fully informed during the drive down, we inflate our canoe and get ready for our journey down the Sazava River. As we both got in he asked me “do you want to steer at the back or paddle from the front?” This man is an ex Captain of the Royal marines, I’m not about to try and give him orders.

As we set off the canoe approaches a small rapid, he starts yelling “straighten out the boat, you’re paddling too hard!” The canoe begins to turn and before I know it we’re going in sideways. There’s a sudden jolt as the canoe gets caught on a rock and I go tumbling overboard. It’s freezing. After a rock that adjusted my spine more than a chiropractor would charge for, I climb back in a little less fond of my father.

At points we had to walk the giant inflatable down the river, trying desperately to keep my balance on the mossy rocks. The trip was arduous, my knees were battered and bruised from the granite rocks that lined the river bed. We stopped off at a riverside bar. An arm reached out and attached to it was the jumper off his back.

Being a man of few words it was the olive branch that was notably deserved. With a full belly and drier clothes we finished our trip floating down between steep cliffs and small cottages. We ended that trip in silence. The misty rain enough to keep us both in awe of the spectacular scenery. Never to be spoken of again.

Ben

Dribble

A dribble is a fifty word short story. It is also referred to as flash fiction.

We took as our inspiration new words, or additional definitions of existing words, added to the Oxford English dictionary in 2023/24.

Rizz*

Blonde and experienced with sports cars and houses - I never knew babysitters had it so good. I wanted some of that- she wanted me – a fair trade. Sun, sea and a clawhammer – I was not even eighteen and nothing prepared me for the ride I was in for – nothing.

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***Rizz is short for “charisma,” and it simply means an ability to charm and woo a person. It's pronounced, well, rizz. The term found its way into teen slang through TikTok and other social media. Rizz is not simply being hot — though that can be part of it.**

Alan

Deepfake*

Gran excitedly told me that Martin Lewis had appeared on her computer promoting an offer of a lifetime. I explained scam probabilities but she encouraged Mr Lewis to contact her again and then for a third time. "Don't invest", I pleaded. "Not me", she smiled. "I'm just wasting his time."

****Deepfake - a way of adding a digital image or video over another image or video, so it appears part of the original. Used by scammers often pretending to be someone famous.***

Fugazi*

24 Barolo and pancetta consume the mountain air. Loud, metal, currency press. Reverberating off corrugated walls, echoes a locomotive. The aesthetic mimics the deception of Donnie Brasco's diamonds, the dream - the dream is tangible. Bang! Warm crimson blood oozes, turning to brown from the dust on the ground. Hope is dangerous.

***Fugazi - means fake or counterfeit and is associated with Italian communities living in New York. Made popular by the film Donnie Brasco and hip-hop - it also means damaged beyond repair.**

Ben

Hallucination*

Robert was using his AI to explore new travel ideas and looked incredulously at a map of non-existent continent.

- Atlantis?! Run a self-diagnostic.

System displayed self-check progress bar. Robert switched to newscast and froze. It showed aerial photos of a land mass that surfaced overnight in the middle of the Atlantic.

***Hallucination - false information that is produced by artificial intelligence (a computer system that has some of the qualities that a human brain has - including the use of language).**

Wojtek

The six word story

Classed as flash fiction, and anecdotally made famous by Hemmingway, the six word story is firmly established as a challenge to all would be writers.

It is rumoured that Hemmingway claimed he could write a story in six words. The result was the haunting

'For Sale: Baby shoes. Never Worn

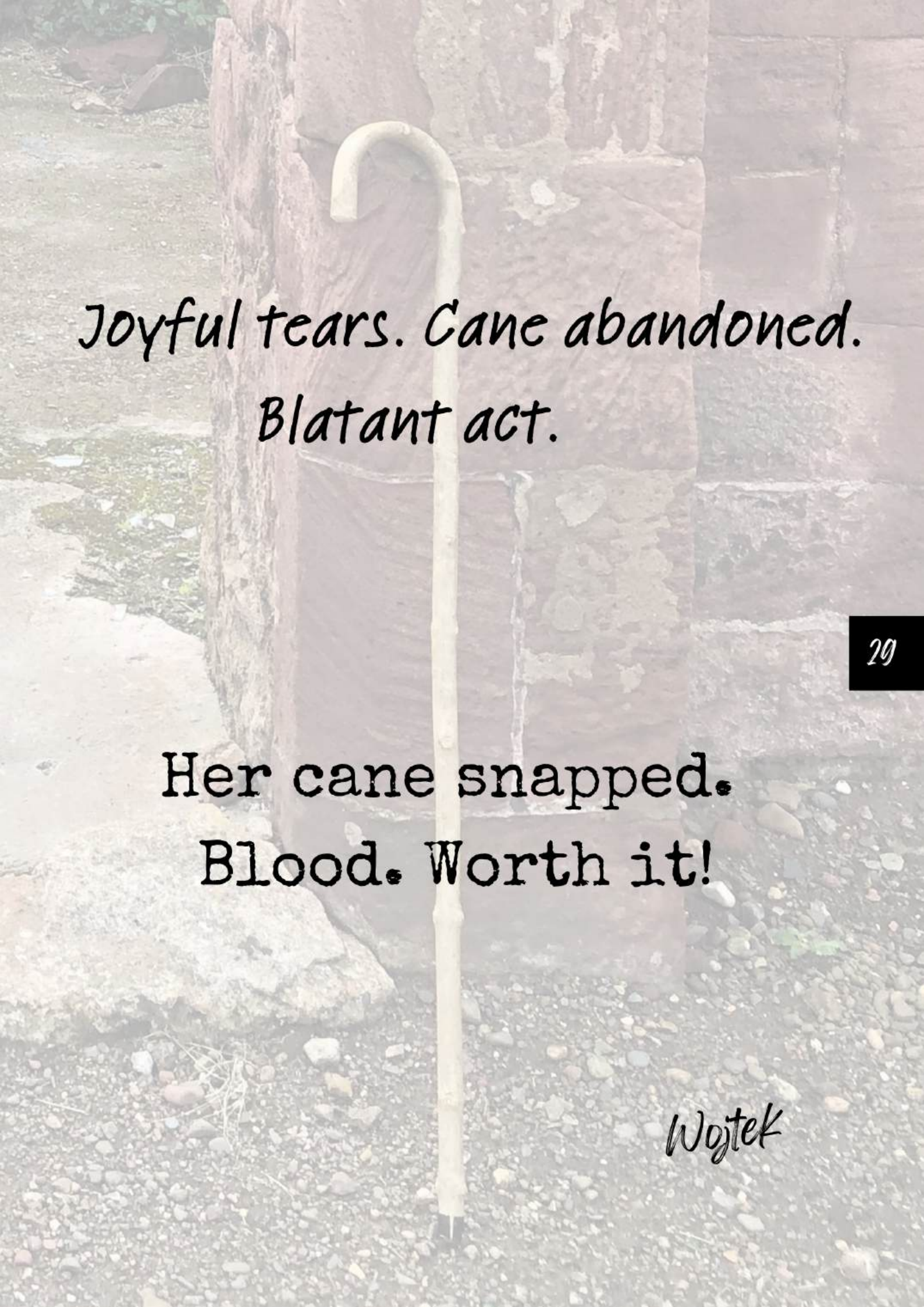
We used a wooden walking stick, a cane, as a prompt. What stories would you create from one item?

Found: used, man's
cane, with
engraving.

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Engraved man's cane.
New. Not needed.

Ben



*Joyful tears. Cane abandoned.
Blatant act.*

**Her cane snapped.
Blood. Worth it!**

Wojtek

The seven deadly sins

The seven deadly sins have their origin in religion and are widely accepted to be pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth.

There were actually originally eight sins, or evils, but sadness was removed.

Laziness

'Hey mongo! What you do this time?'

Bleeding, standing outside the classroom door – hurt, angry and lonely. If a teacher won't listen to you then no hope that anyone else will. The classroom teacher had given up on me and I knew she felt the same as everyone else; that's why she sent me to the remedial class.

The first walk we took down the hall to the remedial class meant I was different, but the way she passed me over it wasn't different in a good way. Another teacher, a different kind of teaching – his way meant if I couldn't or, as he said, wouldn't read then I was defying him. He hit me and put me outside the door. So much for learning 'support'.

It didn't matter how many times they asked me to read words just blurred. Flying around never sticking to the page - they were like insects trying to settle but always shape shifting in a white haze. This was a daily torment. Belittled and humiliated by teachers and mocked and bullied by kids because I couldn't read.

They told me that anger issues meant I was not allowed in the classroom but had to report to 'the base'. I knew they had labelled me thick – unteachable. I just couldn't read. No one listened.

'I wanted to scream, hit out tell someone that I had a lot to say. I wanted to learn but needed help. Eventually help did come. She took time to understand me and why reading was so difficult. She began to show me for the first time that I could share in learning. For her I was different but in a good way. She cared.

It didn't last though and the day she left the school I was alone outside the door again – just waiting for someone to care.

**Sloth is often referred to as laziness.*

Alan

Envy

"Look at him and all his cars". About a year ago I found this guy on Youtube. Perfectly harmless. Something to curb the mindless bingeing of old tv shows. He repairs crash damaged cars and then modifies them. I was hooked. It reminded me of my much younger self reading car magazines and dreaming of living in Japan - working on the best cars in the best workshops.

I quickly became addicted to the anticipation of the newest video. "What's he gonna do next?" "Which car is he gonna have?" While my interest grew, I was also starting my own business, but it wasn't going well. I'd always watch his videos and wonder "How does he do it?" "How is he so sure of himself?" I was captivated by his 'fuck it' attitude. He could tear apart something so expensive and not worry about the outcome. I couldn't help but envy his ignorance.

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I met him once. I didn't know I was gonna meet him. Walking through a crowd and suddenly..."I know that Lamborghini!". He's here? I went into a state of shock, and then panic. I wanted to talk to him but, how could I? He was him and I was... me. I waited, creating an opportunity to bumble through a few meaningless words. Would he even care? There he is! As he approached he seemed confused - as if he was supposed to know me. I couldn't help but think, "Why does he look nervous?" He was different in person. His eyes shifted down and away as I paid him compliment after compliment. Thanking him for making me feel like my dreams are achievable too.

They say you should never meet your heroes. Maybe we should be our own heroes.

Ben

The eight types of love

Love, arguably one of the most common themes in writing.

According to the ancient Greeks there were 8 types of love.

1. Eros - romance, attraction and passion
2. Philia - deep friendship
3. Storge - love of family
4. Agape- selfless love
5. Ludus - fun or playful love
6. Pragma - enduring or lasting love
7. Philautia - self-love and self-compassion (not selfishness)
8. Mania - obsessive love

Derelict

She could see from the look on his face he didn't believe her. Pursed lips. His cheeks turned from rosie to red. A tear formed, rolling over his contemptuous face. His legs were shaking so much he had to lean against the wall to prevent his knees from buckling.

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But what could she do? She was in love with her.

Ben

Nine personality types

The enneagram is a system of nine personality types often used in fiction, film and tv. Not to be confused with character types - that's a different list!

- The reformer
- The helper
- The achiever
- The individualist
- The investigator
- The loyalist
- The enthusiast
- the peacemaker
- the challenger



We selected one. The challenger personality can be powerful, domineering, self-confident, decisive, wilful, confrontational and vengeful.

We all agreed this was a personality type we could all identify with and/or write about. To add a twist we combined it with poisonous or parasitic plants.

Conium Maculatum

To the outside world all seemed normal. Shirley, the wife, a domineering woman, Martin, her husband, the opposite. This was a sexless marriage. All that was to change.

Martin was head of his sales team when a new recruit joined. Laura was pretty, much younger than him but an instant attraction between them was apparent.

The company had organised a weekend away – a bonding exercise. The inevitable happened. Martin and Laura became lovers. The affair intensified and Laura implored Martin to resolve to separate from Shirley or she would seriously think of ending the relationship.

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Martin had never been so happy since Laura had entered his life yet he knew Shirley would never set him free. News of their liaison reached Shirley and Martin's thoughts inevitably became devious. Shirley had to go.

He spent hours searching the internet until he found the only feasible solution.

Now he knew what, how to administer was his problem.

The plant was easily found growing wild and he found a source near farm roads not far from his house. The plant is extremely pungent from leaves to stem. Disguising the odour would be a problem as Shirley was a keen gardener.

It would be Shirley's birthday soon and it was always recognised by Martin baking her a cake. They put aside differences and he went to work baking the annual birthday cake – adding just enough of the extra ingredient. The cake now sat proudly on the kitchen table.

Unknown to Martin, Laura decided to pay Shirley a visit. She was warmly invited in, much to the dismay of Martin.

Shirley demanded that Martin go and fetch more wine from the cellar. On his return to the kitchen, he watched in horror as Laura finished off a large piece of Shirley's birthday cake.

Shirley smiled.

*Conium Maculatum is commonly known as hemlock

Alex



Lady Datura

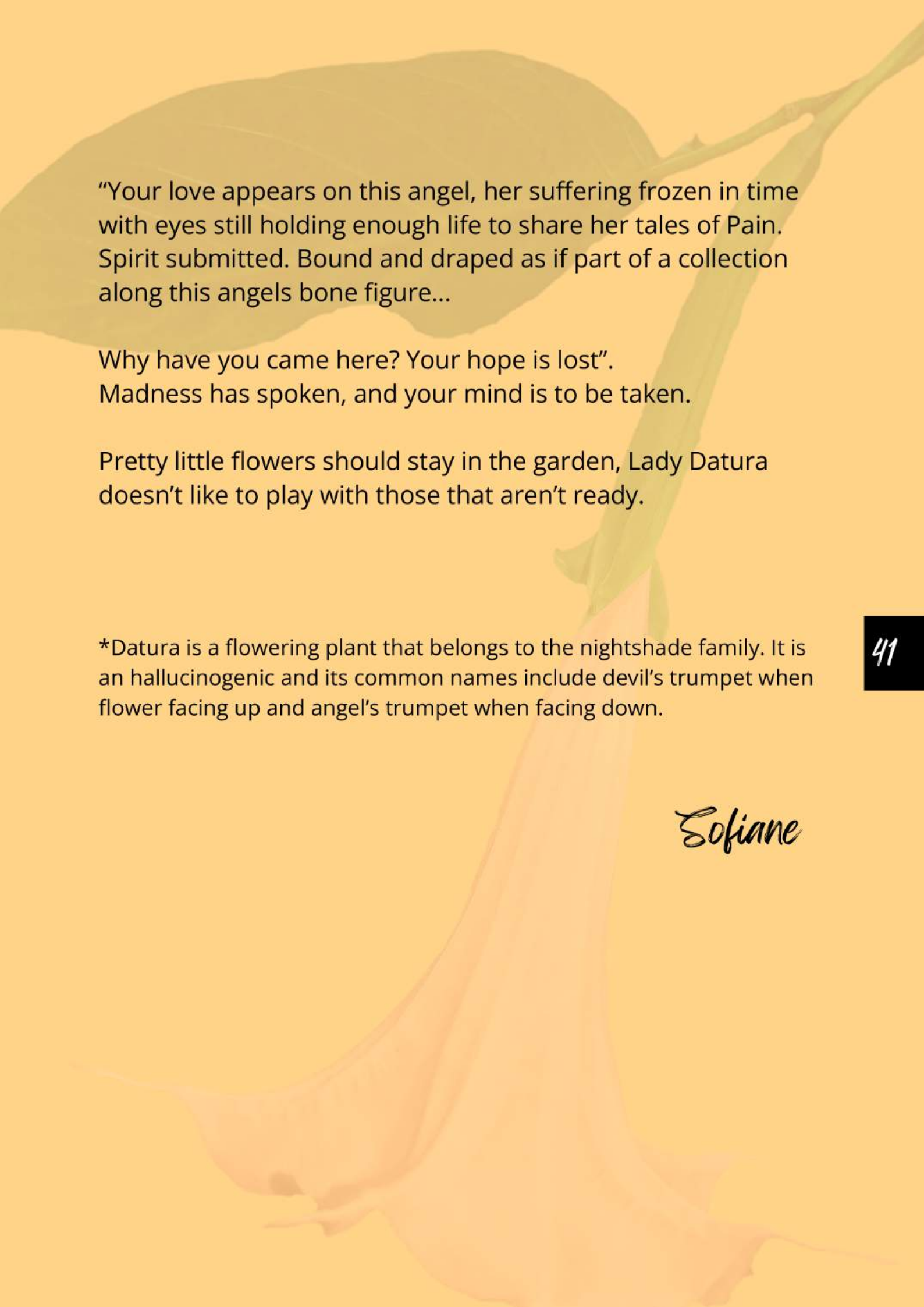
Detached from reason gazing at her beauty delicate and pale, desire took her reign, she granted your invitation to another world. One desperately sought out by many but cherished by few. Over time many had sought pleasure only to be met by insanity and suffering, descriptions of a sensory inferno fuelled off of entropy, a complex organism churning out an array of sights... your blossoming mistress will guide you to this land.

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A land of no laws, where the boundaries of your realities physics need no longer apply. Your assumptions were misplaced though, without warning the comfort you felt turned to dread. Your conscious has fractured and your mind has spilled, the warmth of your mistress has left you, despair and regret are to become your captives sorrow and mutilation are to become your friends.

An arousing entity stood divine. Its rib cage captured from its vessel holding dear her heart and soul . Jagged bones, sharpened. Engineered to cut through prayers of help.

Draped in flesh her bones had been stained from the decades of trauma seen through your eyes.

Eyes...so symbolic to humans. What they see... most importantly though than what they remember, for what you remember is what your mind creates here"



"Your love appears on this angel, her suffering frozen in time with eyes still holding enough life to share her tales of Pain. Spirit submitted. Bound and draped as if part of a collection along this angels bone figure...

Why have you came here? Your hope is lost".
Madness has spoken, and your mind is to be taken.

Pretty little flowers should stay in the garden, Lady Datura doesn't like to play with those that aren't ready.

*Datura is a flowering plant that belongs to the nightshade family. It is an hallucinogenic and its common names include devil's trumpet when flower facing up and angel's trumpet when facing down.

Sofiane

Drabble

The Drabble is a form of flash fiction written in a hundred words.

As our inspiration we chose politically correct phrases that spoke about life experiences.



Chemically Inconvenienced

It was an accident. I was wearing banned flipflops on unstable stairs – there was only one outcome. Falling was not the worst part. A fractured wrist, split head and loss of face. Treatment Centre staff looking on as I fell.

One day clean. Image in ruins. I needed a different kind of hit. One good thing – this has to mean hospital! Hospital means Valium!

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Result!

Reality check – hospital yes –Valium no. It was made clear - Paracetamol will have to do.

Alan

Motivationally Deficient

As I sit patiently in my car outside my colleague's house, tooting my car horn has no effect on him whatsoever. He does not appear. I drive away.

Off to work I go, shorthanded to a job with an imminent completion date which is becoming more unrealistic every passing day.

Transforming a garden through my landscaping skills I am alone and in the hands of mother nature. I estimate four days work to complete but only two calendar days left. I reflect on my colleague's frequent, unexplained absences.

If I have to work through the night he is sacked!

Residentially Flexible

That frayed orange backpack stuffed with belongings, nostalgia and keepsakes - wasn't always ready to go at a moment's notice. Predictably drifting through adolescence, I had always held ambitious dreams of seeing country after country. I remember as a child I went on a plane. I was the embodiment of thrill and glee. Being catapulted down the runway, into the sky, was a feeling I cherished. I've come to realise, country after country, no matter where you go it's all the same, unless you face yourself with ruthless honesty. That backpack, a silent beckoning, calls my name... so where to next?

Creative workshops

Midlothian Men's Group Creative Writing workshop, with Ben Gidney, Alan Mulholland, Kenny Barnes, Alex McCathie, Sofiane Sanhaji, Wojtek Wcislik, Helen Evans and Paul Lambie.



Acknowledgements

A thank you to Dalkeith Baptist Church for their unwavering support. Without the use of their premises and the calm atmosphere it provides we may not have written the enclosed.

A thank you also to guest writers and poets, such as Paul Lambie, who have given up their time to share their experience.

To Callum Maguire of Queen Margaret University for supporting the group and encouraging them in their varied academic ambitions.

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To the team at Access to Industry for all their help and continued moral support.

To Helen Murray, for once again her professional eye, her invaluable advice and time. To our tutor Helen Evans - pushing us; encouraging us; and still never letting us give up.

Flash forward - the last word

The Midlothian creative writing group were invited to Queen Margaret University to discover more about what the university had to offer. They were made very welcome by Callum Maguire, Head of Widening Participation and Outreach, who also kindly accepted an invitation to a workshop in Dalkeith. His comments and compliments are our 'last word'.

'I've worked in community outreach for over 20 years, and I can honestly say that meeting the participants in the Midlothian Writer's/Creative Group has been one of my career highlights.

It was evident that from the warm welcome I received at our first meeting, and how willing the whole group were to share their powerful and moving life stories, that this is a very special and talented group of men.

Talent aside, what struck me the most was how supportive, open and honest the group were with each other when it came to talking about their lives and sharing their creative outputs. A truly humbling and inspiring experience, it has been my genuine privilege to meet and engage with such a talented and welcoming group of individuals, who I know for sure are going to do even more amazing things in the future, not just for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others...and that's what makes them so special.'

Callum Maguire

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