



to



As a piece of creative writing, some of our group experimented with writing something starting with fourteen words in the first line, then diminishing by one word in each subsequent line. Or, building from one up to fourteen words. On completion, we agreed that this task was enjoyable, and we would like to share our results with the rest of the Kenton & District u3a members.

If you are inspired by this, you would be welcome to join our group, which meets twice a month.

14 words away

Running for my life, I ran towards the light falling from the open lift.

I jumped inside, frantically pushing the button taking me to Reception and freedom.

Five floors to go down. Time to ring for help. Please answer.

“Martin”, I gasped. “I’ve just seen a murder call the police.

Listen, I’m at work and Greg’s bashed someone’s head in.

There’s no time, he’s racing to meet my lift.

I’m frightened what he’ll do if I’m caught.

I’ll run for security, wait for help.

Reception is only fifty yards away.

I’ll call out to George.

The lift has arrived.

I love you”.

Doors opening.

Footsteps.

The Appointment

Come on, don't be such a coward, just dial the number – do it now!
You are procrastinating, you know you are, and it won't just go away.
The voice at the other end is brisk and efficient, even soothing.
I take a deep breath, explain the problem, await the reply.
She gives me a choice of dates: Monday or Friday.
Monday: less time to worry. Friday: longer to dread.
OK, mission accomplished, next Friday is my nemesis.
I am a rational adult, aren't I?
Why am I still so terrified?
A trauma from my childhood.
The door beckons me.
Two little words.
Dental surgery.
Ouch!

The Disposal

I was tasked with throwing away a crate comprising 12 bottles of contraband whisky.
Such a crime to destroy twelve perfectly good bottles of an excellent Malt.
So, I decided to take a nip from each before pouring away.
Uncorking the first, I sampled the contents, poured the remainder away.
I proceeded to act similarly with the next 5 bottles.
The room then slowly started to rotate direction clockwise.
Bottle seven refused to give up its cork.
The room's clockwise rotation increased in velocity.
I couldn't immediately find my mouth.
The room started to darken.
Legs folded beneath me.
What was happening?
Who cares?
Hic!

Back and There Again

Clang!

Door opens.

"Get up now".

I try to stand.

The bunk above is low.

I crack my head wide open.

Warm blood drips slowly from my nose.

They grab me as I try to stand.

Down endless corridors, doors unlocked and locked behind me.

Name, date of birth and home address they ask again.

I still don't know why I am locked up in here.

"Andre Gorkiv, fifth of June 1976, 1357 Gorbochov Plaza, Minsk" I reply.

Silently they push me into the courtyard where the outer gate is open.

I step through the gate onto the snowy track and some kind of freedom.

The truck stops on a snowy track, and I fear the end of freedom.

Silently they push me through the open outer gate into the courtyard.

They scream "Tell us your Name, date of birth and home address".

"It's Andre Gorkiv, fifth of June 1976, 1357 Gorbochov Plaza, Minsk."

I've no idea of the reason they've brought me here.

Down endless corridors, doors unlocked and locked behind me.

Then I fall as they push me forward.

Warm blood drips slowly from my nose.

I taste the saltiness of blood.

I crawl to the bunk.

"We'll see you later".

Fear grabs me.

Door closes.

Clang!

Pie 'n Mash (Where have all the Eastenders gone, long time passing?)

It has hit the London news that there is a plague across the nation.

No, it is not those pesky Nationalists, or Covid, it is called Gentrification.

Take Joe Cooke's pie shop in Hoxton which provides a good example.

Now such a yuppie area his pies no one will sample.

Your pie and mash? ugh! give us pizza, sushi, vindaloo.

Now life is very tough, Joe's customers are few.

To feed the desperate poor of Old Shoreditch,

That was great grandad Henry's only mission.

Not pander to the yuppie rich.

Bereft of soul or vision

For Auld Lang Syne.

In voice sublime

Let's render

Hallelujah.

Displacement

On a recent Monday morning there was unrest and rumours in the tower block.

Surveyors were examining the cladding and structure. There were thoughts of Grenfell.

Ahmed and family were refugees from Syria. They had had enough upheaval.

Their three children who were quite settled at school dreaded change.

The housing association had made preliminary suggestions, nobody trusted them.

Would alternative offers be acceptable. It was highly unlikely.

The children would have to leave their friends.

It had been a long day wondering.

Finally, a knock on the door.

There would be temporary accommodation.

All out by Friday.

Some residents refused.

Gather bags.

O U T.

The Family

Once upon a time there was a family who lived happily in suburban Kenton.
Their house was a neat semi detached in a quiet cul de sac.
There was a mother; a father; three children and their elderly grandmother.
The mother and father went out to work early each day.
The three children walked briskly to school with their grandmother.
Then the grandmother went to buy food for supper.
When she got home, she made their meal.
She made stew and vegetables and pudding.
Then all the family came home.
They ate Grandma's lovely meal.
And went to bed.
They slept well.
Good night,
AMEN.

Anticipation

She had been told it was the most spectacular sight in the whole world.
Better even than the pyramids in their desert majesty, towering over the sphinx.
More splendid than the hanging gardens of Babylon, known only by reputation.
Taller than the Colossus of Rhodes, bestriding the harbour's marble entrance.
More thrilling and redolent of death than the ruined Colosseum.
More difficult to reach than hiking to Machu Pichu.
More atmospheric than Stonehenge's towering circle at midnight.
Gleaming whiter than the marble pillared Acropolis.
Myth-laden like the Giant's Causeway.
More distant than Ankor Wat.
Through knotted trailing vines.
One more step.
The waterfall.
Disappointment.

Lost and Found (14 to 1 and 1 to 14 format)

'You won't need that where you are going' said the Nazi holding a gun.
The woman removed her fur coat laying it gently on the frozen ground.
It was heavy, thick, big, and expensive. Two Polish villagers rushed forward.
The women knocked the Jewess to the ground, grabbed the coat,
Running into the woods. Rummaging in the coat they found
Gold, diamonds, rings, silver jewellery, sewn into its lining.
In one pocket there was a little baby.
"Take the items, I'll take the baby".
The childless and barren woman said.
She raised Maria with kindness.
Her background kept secret.
Maria was studious.
Qualified paediatrician.
Bereavement.
Week after,
Stranger visited Maria.
Told her the story.
Initially Maria was very sceptical.
Go, find the pendant you wore
When first found. It had strange lettering.
It was Hebrew, her 'mother' was not true.
A rabbi was consulted, Maria was accepted as Jewish.
Go to Israel he advised. She did, married, had children.
Employed as consultant in Jerusalem hospital when terrorist bomb injured many.
Find my granddaughter, the wounded man pleaded. The girl was found.
She wore a unique pendant. He'd created one each for his two daughters.
Believed one had perished. Not so. Then was Miriam reunited with her true father.

Adapted from a true story in 'Small Miracles of the Holocaust' 2008 by Yitta Halberstam and Judith Leventhal