

Chrysalis



Chronicles

an
anthology
from
guys marsh

WRITE TO FREEDOM

Masterclass Tutors

Nathan Filer
Swagata Ghosh
Emily Koch
Robin Mukherjee
Lucy Sweetman

Contents

Preface / 5

Kam / Out There: An extract / 8

Josh / Talawa: An extract / 14

Ian / Duress: An extract / 22

Steve / Remembering The Indispensible Man / 32

Masterclass Tutors / 36

Project Partners / 38

Course Coordinator: Ella Simpson
Cover and Anthology Design: Swagata Ghosh
Published: Bath Spa University and Not Shut Up

Preface

They said it couldn't be done. One prison, 12 weeks, five professional authors and a final anthology of publication-standard writing by prisoners dedicated to their literary craft. Respected colleagues with extensive experience of creative writing in prisons raised sceptical eyebrows at the chances of prisoners consistently attending workshops for a three month period – 'they'll never keep coming back for that long'. Fellow tutors applauded the idea of taking creativity into the custodial realm but were less convinced about the level of study - 'Metaphors? Are their literacy levels up to it?'. But least convinced of all were the men themselves. They doubted their abilities, questioned the integrity of the publishing industry, mistrusted their chances of success.

To an extent my colleagues were right. It was hard to retain the men, we began with 10 and by the last session we were down to four. Sometimes there were literary devices that seemed more like abstruse contraptions designed to ensnare rather than allow us to share our words. Sometimes the men wrestled their own doubts and distractions in order to produce the work, sometimes they felt like giving up, sometimes they did. But four remained, steadfast, dedicated, determined. And it was exactly these difficulties and their struggles to overcome them, their raw tenacity and persistent efforts, that in the end turned dreamers into writers, wannabe celebrities into practicing authors, the scatter of individual egos into a community of serious, committed wordsmiths; novelists, screenwriters, memorists. It has been a privilege to share that journey with them.

The experience has convinced me more than ever that just because it's difficult, doesn't mean we shouldn't try it. HMP Guys Marsh has a solid track record in offering creative activities that challenge and develop their learners' abilities and skills. More widely though, there has been a tendency to offer ad hoc arts provision, parachute in a famous writer for a day, provide a week-long project from a

visiting facilitator, and while this is exciting in the moment, the lack of continuity can leave participants disappointed and demotivated. Another criticism of the arts in prisons has focused on the poor quality of the work produced. In terms of creative writing it is sometimes claimed that we patronise prisoners by applauding them for writing doggerel, work that is no better than that of a six-year-old. The work in this anthology, I believe, speaks for itself, and the way to achieving such excellence lies in taking the aspirations of workshop participants seriously. In the same way that we offer our students at Bath Spa University opportunities to learn under the tutelage of acclaimed authors and working professionals, so too we brought to Guys Marsh the very best of the South West's writing talent. Recorded masterclasses aimed at inspiring and stretching the participants were augmented by workshops that supported their efforts and built confidence in their achievements.

Creative writing was undoubtedly at the centre of everything we did in the group, however the relationships of trust and cooperation that developed between the men were of equal and, perhaps, more far reaching importance. Observing and being included in the growing sense of a cohesive community of support was the most valuable part of the project for me personally. Each one of these men demonstrated an abundance of sensitivity, altruism and emotional intelligence towards the others in the group – qualities, like literacy skills, that prisoners aren't supposed to have. They said it couldn't be done, but these men proved that it could.

Relationships were also paramount to the development and delivery of this project and while some colleagues were at times a little sceptical, it didn't prevent a groundswell of the most generous and enthusiastic support for the project. Thanks must go to the Angela Clarke and Katerina Diamond, the two authors who first showed an interest in my lunatic schemes, and who have continued to support the project over the years since that first conversation. Bath Spa University have, as ever, leant institutional backing and in particular the work of Dr Catherine Morgan, Jonathan Barden, Frederick Reed and Paul Meyer have made the project possible. Of equal importance have been those practitioners who have been directly involved in the delivery of the work; thank you to Nathan Filer, Swagata Ghosh, Emily Koch, Robin Mukherjee and Lucy Sweetman, who have been the ultimate 'masters' and continue to show interest and encouragement. Nor could the project have been delivered without the generous support of prison education management and staff, in particular the stalwart and consistent efforts of Elva Longfoot, Deb Darvell and Isabella Franco. These women provided a solid foundation, putting in extra hours and going out of their way to facilitate the work – like foundations they are often invisible, but everything is built on their efforts. Finally, thanks to David Kendall who has been a much valued advisor through the development and delivery of this project.

Ella Simpson
December, 2019

Kam | *Out There*

Kam saw an advertisement for a creative writing class in HMP Guys Marsh in September, 2018. Having written his first play in July that year, the content of the course, which included script writing intrigued him and he applied. Upon starting the course his tutor, Ella Simpson, advised him to write a novel even though he was intent on writing a script. *Out There* is his first offering as a novelist.

About *Out There*

A single mother struggles to build a meaningful relationship with her children after subjecting them to a traumatic event, while struggling to carve out a corporate career in 1980s Britain.

Out There explores the negative effects of not having a good work-home balance, which leads to her losing her son to the one place she is so desperate to protect him from – the streets.

Out There

Josh sat quietly on the floor with a mountain of lego in front of him. His sister complained when she stood on a piece as she walked past with her times-table book in her hand. She was practicing for a test she had the next day at school. The room was too small for three people but Josh, his older sister and his mother had lived there for as long as he could remember. The brown carpet was worn and frayed, it left imprints on Josh's legs when he switched positions. At one end of the room was a small sink filled with dirty dishes. Directly opposite was a small window that had a view of the street to the front of the building. Josh had perched himself between the double bed that they all slept on and the built in wardrobe opposite which housed their clothes.

In the corner between the window and the wardrobe was a small television that had a coat hanger for an aerial. Josh didn't know what he was building, it didn't matter, he'd know when it was finished. It's gonna be amazing, he said to himself.

"Nine times nine equals eighty one. Ten times nine equals ninety. Eleven times nine equals ninety nine," said his sister as she paced up and down the small room. The door to the room opened and Mrs Markman quickly entered with four heavy Safeway bags.

"Why are all these dishes in the sink, Layla? I told you to make sure you have done your chores before I came home," said Mrs Markman furiously. Josh continued to build his structure, oblivious to his mother shouting at his

sister until he heard a scream and the sound of breaking crockery. In that moment time seemed to slow down for Josh. He looked up to see his sister standing next to the bed with the fear of god in her eyes. Thick red blood ran down her face from the gash that seemed to cover her entire forehead. A broken coffee mug on the floor at her feet.

Josh had never felt adrenalin before. Never been so scared he couldn't move before.

He had never seen so much blood, he thought his sister was going to die. He slowly turned to look at his mother but saw only what he could describe as a monster with wild eyes and snarling teeth. He froze with fear as she turned to him and said;

"It's not your fault, it's not your fault."

The words echoed as Josh woke up sweating, shivering and cold. Happy it was just a dream but haunted by the memory of the day he realised his mother was a monster. He pulled his duvet to just under his eyes. The house was silent apart from the sound of him inhaling and exhaling through his slightly blocked nose. He looked at the window at the bottom of his bed. Condensation ran down the pane of glass like tears running down a cheek. The branches of a big oak outside his window danced as the wind howled through them.

Suddenly Josh heard creaking floorboards. Someone is stirring he told himself. He switched to breathing through his mouth in an attempt to hear clearly the slightest movement. A few moments later the floorboards creaked again, this time he heard a door open and someone walking in the hallway. He lay completely still listening intently as a door closed followed by the sound of running water.

She's up, he told himself. She's having a shower and going to go out soon. He lay in the same position for what felt like an eternity as he listened to his mother moving around the house, visualising every sound until he heard the noise he'd been waiting for. The unmistakable sound of keys followed by the doof, doof, doof, of someone going down stairs.

The sound of the kettle boiling and a spoon stirring in a cup indicated he was close to getting what he wanted. A few minutes later Josh heard the front door open and close, quickly followed by the sound of the car door closing.

He listened as the car engine burst into life followed by the crunch of the sticky reverse gear as the car backed off the drive and out of the cul-de-sac.

Josh attempted to get out of bed but the aching of his body slowed his pace, a reminder of the beating he endured the previous night. He sat on the edge

of his bed, took a deep breath and got up. He opened his bedroom door and looked at the bathroom door directly in front of him on the other side of the hallway. He quietly crept towards the toilet, a door to his right just before the toilet opened. He froze as the door swung wider and Layla walked out.

"Why you just standing there you weirdo?" She said as she rubbed her eyes and opened the toilet door.

"I was gonna use the toilet," replied Josh.

"Well you gonna have to wait," said Layla as she closed the toilet door. Josh leaned on the banister and waited patiently for his sister to finish in the bathroom. He crossed his legs in anticipation as holding his pee became difficult.

"Hurry up, I'm gonna wet myself," he said to his sister.

"Use the downstairs toilet," came the reply from behind the bathroom door.

"It's too cold in there," Josh replied as frustration began to set in. The sound of a flushing toilet was interrupted by the bathroom door opening and Layla's angry face marched towards him.

"Move," she said as she brushed past him and headed downstairs.

Josh quickly maneuvered down the hallway into the bathroom and lifted the toilet seat. He hopped from one leg to another as he tried to free his manhood and take aim into the basin.

"AAHHH!" he said as he finally emptied his bladder. He flushed the toilet, washed his hands and brushed his teeth. When he finished he made his way downstairs to join his sister.

Layla was in the kitchen making herself some fried eggs on toast with baked beans.

"Can I have some breakfast?" Josh asked his sister.

"Make it yourself," she replied angrily.

Josh opened up a cupboard and took out a box of Frosties. He went to the fridge and removed a two litre bottle of milk and put it next to the Frosties box on the counter. His sister sat at the table in the kitchen and watched his every move. Josh opened up another cupboard and took out a small cereal bowl. He opened the Frosties box and began to pour the contents into the bowl. His sister sat in silence eating her breakfast.

A few Frosties spilt onto the counter, he turned and looked at his sister who didn't say anything, her eyes fixed on him. He picked up the two-litre bottle of milk and attempted to pour it into the bowl. Cereal and milk spilled everywhere as he struggled with the weight of the bottle.

"You're so stupid you can't do nothing right. All you do is get me in trouble. Why don't you listen to mum? Why don't you just do what you're told?" Layla barked at him.

“How do I?” replied Josh.

“When you don’t come back from school who do you think she takes it out on? Me,” said Layla as she put her dishes in the sink. “Make sure you do your chores before she gets back.”

Josh cleaned up the spilt milk and cereal, sat at the table and ate his breakfast. Layla washed up her dishes and went back upstairs to her room.

Josh looked out the kitchen window as he washed his breakfast dishes. The washing machine hummed as the spin cycle drew to a close indicating the wash was almost finished. He watched the neighbours’ kids playing on their bikes. Smiling, laughing doing what kids do on a weekend. How he wanted to be out there too. Having fun, enjoying himself, laughing and smiling like the other kids. But he knew he couldn’t, he knew he wasn’t like the other kids. He had work to do and not a lot of time left to do it.

As he finished putting the Hoover away he heard a car pull up on the drive. He peeped out the kitchen window and saw the brown Ford Orion on the drive. She’s back, he told himself and quickly ran upstairs and closed his bedroom door. He sat quietly under the window at the far end of his room with a book about mythical creatures. Ogres, goblins and fairies, it was his favourite book to read.

He heard a key turn in the front door followed by his mother’s voice calling his sister.

“Yes mum,” Layla replied.

“Come and help me with the shopping. Where’s your brother?”

“In his room, I think,” Layla said, sure that would be the only place he would be in the house. Josh listened to keys being placed on the kitchen table followed by the doof, doof, doof, of someone climbing the stairs.

Josh’s bedroom door swung open, he looked up to see his mother in the doorways.

“Have you had breakfast?” Mrs Markman asked.

“Yes mum,” replied Josh.

“Have you finished your chores?” Josh nodded his head. “What about your school uniform?”

“It’s on the washing line,” replied Josh.

Mrs Markman closed the door and went back downstairs to join Layla in the kitchen putting away the shopping.

Josh stayed in his room reading stories of faraway places where goblins hid gold under the undergrowth in the forest. Knights slayed dragons to save princesses and paupers found genies in lamps and amassed vast amounts of wealth.

Josh read until the natural light faded and his eyes hurt. He listened to his mother in her room laughing on the telephone. In the background Cilla Black was presenting Blind Date.

The smell of chips in the air made his stomach rumble. It was way after 6pm and he hadn’t eaten since breakfast. Ten minutes later Josh was startled by the voice of his mother.

‘Layla, Josh. Come and get your dinner.’

Josh went downstairs to find two places set at the dinner table. He sat down and moments later his sister entered the kitchen and sat opposite him.

Mrs Markman placed two plates on the set table in front of Josh and his sister containing chips, beans and a pie.

“Make sure you wash up when you’re finished,” she said to Layla as she left the kitchen and went back upstairs to her room. Josh and Layla sat in silence eating their dinner. When Josh finished he washed up his plate, put it in the draining rack and left the kitchen leaving his sister to finish her meal by herself.

Josh went back to his room where he stayed for the rest of the night. He put on his pyjamas and got into bed, listening to the TV in his mother’s room through the wall until he fell asleep.

Josh | *Talawa*

Joshua always had an interest and certain talent for writing and this interest realised itself as he stumbled upon a niche genre, urban fiction. Josh has managed to overcome great obstacles and challenges in becoming a writer and prides himself on narrating realistic, gritty stories from the streets.

About Talawa

A young man navigates the dangerous British underworld while simultaneously trying to find himself. Emigrating from Jamaica to England to live with his drug lord father, he falls head first into a perilous, fast-paced lifestyle with only two positive outcomes... can he find a way to survive the life which was handed to him, a life designed for him to fail?

Talawa

A short jolt woke me from my sleep as our van thundered down the A40 towards Northholt. My black Ray Bans were doing all they could to shield my eyes from the bright sunlight flaring in through the window. However, the battle was soon lost and the early morning sunshine fully woke me from my nap.

Most people probably wouldn't be able to sleep so soundly in a vehicle that was full of automatic weapons, and after having broke at least two of the good Lord's five commandments. That being said, I'm not like most people.

Kingston, Jamaica is a holiday makers dream location; sunny skies, sandy beaches and a cuisine to die for, however, I reason that if foreigners knew the nightmare I experienced growing up there, I'm sure tourism would be dead. At ten years old I was homeless. At 12 I caught my first body. And by 15 my twin silver berettas were more commonplace to me than any school books.

Where I grew up was nothing more than a training round for the lifestyle that I currently lived. Probably explained why my primary concern after having just robbed a major drug importer in the county was my brother's erratic driving waking me from my sleep.

"Nigga, the fuck is wrong with you, driving like you wanna end up in jail tonight. Remember how much shit we got in the car," I growled.

"Bro, I dunno bout you but my belly has been hurting me since you shot that guy and made him shit himself. If I don't get back to the spot soon Ima throw

up in here,” Kai replied whilst holding his hand over his mouth.
“Ha ha, you’re gworming like a gyal, an I ain’t prepared to get into a shootout with the feds jst because of your belly,” I said.
Kai kicked the gym bag that was on the floor in between us and said, “I got a mac with enough shells in there to take on any firearm innit!”
I simply closed my eyes, kissed my teeth and replied, “Whatever.”

That was my brother for you; crazy, arrogant and extremely violent. I love him but sometimes he really gets on my damn nerves. And technically, he’s only my half brother, the so-called father of mine who initially left me and my mother for dead in Jamaica, and who only sent for me after finding out my mum had died six years after the fact, had a whole other family in the UK, comprising a wife, who he now disowned and a son. But as I said before, I love Kai. And if you think of fucking with him I’d put you in the ground and shoot up your funeral.
“Darrell, phone,” Kai said as he tried to hand me his black alcatel phone. Oh no, this nigga did not just wake me for a second time, I snatched off my sunglasses and glared at him, trust me if looks could kill, my brother would be in a body bag. I grudgingly took the phone and put it to my ear. Just as we were nearing our destination.

“Hello,” I said into the phone.
“We good?” The deep voice at the other end replied.
“Yeah, we good.”
“Good, make sure you two tidy up before you reach back.” That was my father’s way of telling me to burn out the van and the clothes we just used.
“Done.” I replied, just before hanging up the phone.

You know it’s funny how life works, there I was sleeping rough and literally killing for food during my childhood, and my father just happens to be one of the biggest drug suppliers in Europe. This nigga had had the British cocaine market cornered for years. He kept a tight grip on his market by ensuring the best product, at the lowest prices, and if this shit wasn’t enough to ensure your loyal custom, he would send his two murderous sons round to rob you and send a message, which usually included leaving your brains under the kitchen sink.

The van screeched to a halt in front of a set of garages, and no sooner had the vehicle stopped, me and my brother were out and moving. Kai went round to the back and grabbed three gym bags filled to the brim with cocaine bricks, he then proceeded to load these bags in the garage two doors down from the one I was currently unlocking.

To the average passerby the garage I opened was simply just filled with junk, and aged furniture and the old sofa at the back, which looked like it belonged on a scrap heap. It certainly wouldn’t have turned any heads, but little did anyone know this little old sofa contained a life sentence in firearms.

I quickly and carefully took the two glocks and the mac 10 from the gym bag and placed them in the base of the sofa amongst an arsenal of weapons that included grenades, handguns and even an AK-47. I smiled to myself, thinking how far I had come from carrying around that little rusty revolver when I was 13. I then replaced the sofa cushions, turning the weapon cache back into a eye sore of a sofa, removed the black boiler suit which I had on, and changed into the clothes which were waiting in a pre-packed bag in the garage.

The cold air struck me as I returned outside, the hair on the back of my neck stood up as my senses immediately told me that something wasn’t right, where was Kai? It’s funny how perception works, when I first got out the van the row of garages on this derelict estate gave a feeling of temporary safety, now they felt cold and menacing.

“Hands up, nigga,” a familiar voice whispered, as a handgun barrel was pushed against my temple.

“You must want me to chop out your seed bag,” I confidently threatened. In his excitement of trying to catch me sleeping my brother hadn’t noticed the jagged edged hunting knife lightly pressed against his crotch.

“Come on you know I’m always on point, you play too much,” I chuckled.
Kai put his gun back in his waistline and I placed my hunting knife back in its holder.

“You shouldn’t be bringing a knife to a gunfight,” my brother arrogantly stated as he grabbed my throw away clothes bag, put them in the back of the van and closed the doors.

“Guns can jam, my baby Lucine always has my back, and she almost had your balls,” I replied, referring to the blade of the hunting knife gifted to me by my father. “And don’t think I don’t have that heat on me as well.” I reminded my brother as I tapped the beretta on my waist with Lucine. Kai simply smiled knowingly as he turned and headed to the van’s drivers’ side door. He liked to take the piss but Kai knew full well that I was surgical with Lucine.

As my brother drove off to go dispose of the van and our work clothes I made my way over to the garage my car was parked in. My custom BMW was nothing short of a police officer’s nightmare; spike proof tyres, bullet proof windows, and enough power to run rings around the most competent interception squad. To top it all off I had two specially made stash spots installed. Now this isn’t your average low level drug dealer stash spot, these stashes cost me the most part of ten grand a piece, and wouldn’t be discovered even if the national crime agency hired a team of engineers to take the car apart piece by piece.

I got in the car and confidently placed my weapons in one of these spots and pressed the ignition button. The noise that erupted in the small garage was nothing short of explosive as the twelve cylinder car’s exhaust sang out, vibrating the walls and the ground. I drove out of the garage, stopping just outside in

order to get out and lock up, and upon finishing I got back in the car and pulled off. My phone's bluetooth instantly reconnected to the car and resumed playing the song I was listening to before parking up. the sounds of '21 Savage' blazed through my speakers as I made my way home back down the A40.

The second song on the mixtape hadn't even reached its chorus before my phone rang.

"Yo," I answered irritated.

"Where you been!" A female voice instantly shouted upon me answering. Oh for fucks sake, if I had bothered to check the caller ID and see that it was Shante calling, I never would have answered the phone.

"Who the fuck you think you're talking to, you too bright, you must want me to box you in your face!" I barked back, allowing my Jamaican accent to slip in my anger.

"Baby you know I didn't mean it. I just get worried and you haven't been answering your phone for the last two days," she quickly backtracked.

I kissed my teeth, "you're my baby mother not my woman, what's it to you if I don't answer my phone?"

"DJ I don't know why you're acting like this, you know I love you," she whined.

"Why don't you come over?" Aaliyah is at my cousins, I can make you breakfast, after I really take care of you," she cooed.

Now I may act like I don't give a fuck about Shante, but with a slim five and half frame, complemented by smooth caramel skin, green eyes and an ass to die for, this was a hard request to pass up. Just as I was about to take her up on her offer, I noticed the distinctive blue lights flashing in my rear view mirror. 'Ima call you back,' I told Shante, hanging up before she could argue.

The unmarked police car was way too close to simply just want to get past, so I indicated and moved over to the left hand lane before safely slowing to a halt, all the while being closely followed by the police car.

'Let's see what these pussies want,' I said to myself as I turned off the engine and rolled down my tinted window in anticipation for the bullshit to come.

It was already past midday by the time I pulled up outside Shante's. Even though it was the middle of the day and the sun was out, there was a still a real chill in the air, forcing me to retrieve my fur lined Canada goose jacket from the back seat. After I put my jacket on, I went about grabbing my phones and wallet from the car's middle compartment, and my chrome plated Beretta from its hiding spot. I couldn't help but chuckle slightly as I recalled the dumb look on the Trident officer's face when he came up empty after searching my car, and was forced to let me go. I have to admit it does feel good to always be one step ahead of the police. Once I was ready I turned off the ignition and got out the car. Fucking English weather, I muttered to myself as I proceeded towards

Shaunte's apartment block. The cold breeze produced goose bumps on my neck as I walked the short distance from my car, I made a mental note to invest in a scarf the first opportunity I got.

"Yo DJ!" I heard someone calling me by my nickname from a distance. I looked round and saw one of the local boys approaching on a pedal bike.

"Lil Gaps, what's good?" I replied once he was close.

"Nothing man, it's dead out here. When you gonna have some more work for me? You know I always come correct."

"I got you man, just bear with me, shits been crazy lately."

"I hear that," Gaps said before smoothing the spliff which had been perched between his ear and his head. He put it in his mouth, lit it, and took a long drag. 'Just make sure you remember me,' he said in between laboured breaths as he blew out the weed smoke.

"You wanna hit this?" Gaps asked, offering me the spliff.

"Nah I'm good, I got shit to do today," I said before continuing towards Shante's, signalling that the conversation was over.

"Alright fam," Gaps said, more to himself than to me, before remounting his bike and riding away. Gaps couldn't have been older than 18 and I had to respect his hunger. I could send that boy to do anything from dropping off a kilo of coke, shooting up an old people's home, and he would do it, no questions asked, as long as I looked after him that is. Gotta keep guys like that close. I entered the apartment block, approached the elevators, pressed the call button, and stood in order to wait. Shante's new build apartment was right on the outskirts of west London, situated in between what most would describe as a bad neighbourhood, and some of the most expensive houses in the capital. This city was a master of irony like that.

After what felt like a long wait, but was probably nothing more than a minute or two, I heard a 'ding' and the doors opened. I got in, pressed the button for the fifth floor, and turned to face the mirror inside. As the doors closed and the lift started moving, I really had to smile at the man looking back at me. Many a woman had told me that I was beautiful over the years, but right here looking at myself I was reminded of that fact. Back in Jamaica I was frequently described as a Pretty Boy, and going into my mid-twenties had done nothing to change this. With my flawless brown skin, shoulder length hair, which I wore in stylish plaits and my well-built physique, I felt I was justified in my opinion that I was god's gift to womankind. A thought that resounded in my head as I got off the elevator and headed towards Shante's door. I walked up to it, knocked, and waited for an answer. I could hear some rustling around inside, and two long minutes and four more knocks later she opened the door.

"What?" She said, her words dripping with attitude. She used her body to block the door.

"D'Fuck you mean what? Matter of fact come out my way and stop playing games," I said before barging her out the way, and going inside. I took off my

shoes, went straight into the living room, put up my feet and turned on the big plasma screen TV. Shante quietly followed me into the front room and stood over me, staring in my face while I made a futile attempt to relax and watch TV. "Bitch, what?" I asked irritably in order to get to the bottom of her behaviour. "So I don't hear from you for two whole days, your daughter could have been dead for all you knew, then when I finally get through to you, you hang up the fucking phone and ignore me for hours," she paused and reinforced her point by making a dramatic hand gesture. "Then you just show up at my door and have the audacity to walk up in here like you own the place."

"Well I do pay the bills in here," I arrogantly stated.

"That's not the point and you know it," she said in a defeated tone, as she finally sat down. 'I need you to stop acting like I'm just some any side chick and you don't love me.

"How many times I got to tell you that you're not my woman, furthermore where are you getting this love idea from? I love Aaliyah but that's about it." Patience was not my strongest attribute, and I was running out of the little bit I had.

"Are you forgetting who's been here since day one? Who was there for you before you got in good with your father and got this reputation? Who was there before the money, cars and jewellery? I know you love me, you may not want to admit it to me, or even to yourself but I know you do." And without another word, she got up and left.

I sat there quietly and watched her leave the room. I wondered if her words had any truth in them. Sure she had always been there for me, but I was no longer that naive kid trying to prove himself. And with that conclusion I dismissed the whole notion and went back to watching TV. I grabbed the remote and flicked through the channels, looking for something to watch to take my mind off this bullshit.

'In other news, a barber shop in west London has been the victim of an arson attack,' a reporter read out as I stumbled on BBC news channel. "The Kutz Barber Shop in the Shepherds Bush area was attacked by two masked men armed with petrol bombs during the early hours of the morning. Luckily no one was hurt in the attack, and police have already begun their enquiries.'

It was as if all other thoughts in my head had just melted away, and I was completely drawn in by the news I had just heard. The emotions of shock and anger simultaneously filled me, as I reached in my pocket for my phone. Fuck, I said to myself. I looked at my phone. It had been on silent in order to ignore Shante's relentless phone calls. Fuck! I cursed again. I had multiple missed calls from both my dad and my brother. This wasn't good. I called my father back, after a few rings he answered.

"Why the fuck haven't you been answering your phone?" he bellowed the second the call connected. "We have a problem."

"I know, I just saw it on the news, do we know who?" I replied, side stepping his initial question.

"Kai is already working on that." I knew what that meant; my brother was probably in a basement torturing some poor soul.

"Go help him, I expect some answers before the day is done," and with that my dad ended the call.

Ian | *Duress*

Ian was born in Paddington, London in the 1970s. He grew up in the then, international drug zone of Notting Hill. In the racist climate of the 1980s, discrimination saw him robbed of schooling from the age of 10. The high crime area soon became his school, which led to prison at 13 years old.

Apart from all of the rubbish prison brought into his life, one good thing was meeting the successful poet, Femi Martin, who encouraged him to write his first poem. The poem was a success and ended up stealing the show. He entered into the Koestler Awards 2018 and won the poetry category.

About *Duress*

A prominent family stand to lose their home and business in the small, picturesque resort town of McCall in the state of Idaho, USA. The Hawk clan accept the unfortunate turn of events. However, one member of the family is not so accepting and plans to rectify the problem forcefully.

Middle son of Thomas Hawk, Terrin, breaks away vowing to find work in nearby Los Angeles. In reality he quickly escalates from small time crime to becoming the leader of a notorious and almost untraceable professional heist crew of high-end thieves.

The road is bumpy; setbacks, betrayals, ups, downs, twists and turns arise as Terrin's aim of saving the Hawk residence is sabotaged and he strives to avoid the extensive risks to his life, welfare and freedom.

Duress

The Hawk residence was unusually quiet as a beautiful orangey red sunset began to take hold and aggressively steal the last remaining strands of daylight. The Hawk residence was a large light colored wooden panelled home situated in the small resort town of McCall, Idaho, close to the Payette Lake. Terrin Hawk lovingly watched as his older brother Brett played with their beloved baby sister, Taryn, who was only six years old and easily 'the' most beautiful child in the whole town. Her beauty was noted by all – she was adorable with medium length blonde hair and strangely rare and unusual sea green eyes with a slight blue tint. She probably was the most kind, caring and totally unselfish child in the world! She spoke with a captivating, soft and innocent voice and would fuss over anyone who expressed the slightest problem. She was so caring that everyone had to be careful not to complain around her as she would refuse to go to bed or run and get her pocket money to help or demand to assist you in whatever way she could. Everyone adored her and called her Angel as a nickname.

Terrin, who at 19 years old was like the oldest Hawk child despite being three years younger than Brett who was born mentally slow. Terrin equally loved and totally adored his more handsome older brother, who everyone called Pretty Boy and most of the time he looked like he had just stepped out of a professional photoshoot. All three of the Hawk children were born, raised, schooled and even worked within the Hawk residence and adjoining farm equipment and general supplies business, which was founded by their great great grandfather

Hubert Hawk back in the late 1800s. Like previous generations the Hawk residence was pretty much their world. Over the years the Hawk residence was continuously extended to accommodate their growing business and need for more and more storage and display areas. It would be fair to say the Hawk residence was more like a mansion than a house by now and the whole Hawk clan loved and adored their home and birthplace.

Due to their long standing business the Hawk family were well known throughout the town of McCall and its Christian church community. Being a moderately devoted Christian family, they attended church every Sunday and they also attended every Christian function in the small town. Just like the previous generations of the Hawk family, they were prominent and well known members of the community in the small picturesque town.

10 Years Later

The Hawk family business had been doing badly in recent years, making losses and barely breaking even regardless of how hard everyone worked and despite all the new products, services and price deals and offers they tried. The industrial age had caught up and the big corporations had moved in and undercut everything. Terrin's father, Thomas Hawk along with his brother, Uncle Henry, and their sister Katherine, Aunt Kath, had called a meeting which was also attended by Terrin's mother, Stacey and his brother and sister. Terrin's father headed the meeting and got straight to the point:

"We are closing the business! It's none negotiable! It's just no longer viable and we are constantly losing business clients to the corporations who can afford to be cheaper than us for everything we do. It's no longer viable! We need to stop immediately and sell off all of our stocks and equipment for as much as we can get while the opportunity is there. I know it's tough but life is tough and I'm trying to not make it get any tougher because there is a financial disaster that could arise that I'm worried about and it could result in us having to sell the house and downscale."

The room became completely silent – nobody would speak as the dreaded thought sank in. They, like previous generations of the Hawk family had all been born and raised in the house and on the land.

Thomas added, "It's not definite but it's a possibility. If we do not sell our stocks and vast equipment for the right amount we could end up owing the suppliers and the banks and the banks are already indicating cost raises soon. I want you to all start listing and preparing everything for sale and auction..."

It had been a sad day for everyone...

Terrin, who was almost 30, was miles away in thought. And there was this

scary, adamant voice in the back of his mind saying constantly no matter what I have to do there's no way we are losing the house! Even if I die trying to save it! Terrin tried to stop these thoughts but the reality of what his father had said seemed to resonate in his mind that the possibility was actually real? The fact that everyone now seemed on edge and his beloved siblings appeared to have worried looks on their faces was harassing and distracting his mind. His beloved teenage sister, Taryn, who had blossomed into a beautiful young lady with her supermodel looks appeared to look stressed and worried and that was shaking him up! Because this time he was juggling with the idea that for the first time he would not be able to comfort and assure her or his brother, Brett, like he always had before. He was watching Taryn as his thoughts were interrupted with the sound of his name being shouted.

"Terrin! Terrin! What's wrong? I've been calling you? Why are you looking at me like that!?"

Taryn ran up to him and flung her arms around him, placing her head on his chest and squeezed his torso tight while saying,

"It's what dad said isn't it? Don't worry Terrin we got each other."

He didn't say a word. He didn't even move! He just looked down at his baby sister's blonde head and what she was doing as if watching like a bystander or witness taking in what was happening. The anger was rising in his heart, mind and soul while thinking, 'MY' baby sister comforting 'ME' in 'HER' distress??? It was that exact moment when his heart of hearts and his mind of minds told him what he was going to be doing should the need arise. Suddenly with a new state of mind and energy he snapped out of it and lied to Taryn in order to ease her mind, saying, "No what you talking about? I was just trying to remember where I put the keys to the truck silly."

Taryn looked up with her bright and jewel-like eyes, saying,

"Really?" while wearing an unsure and doubtful expression.

Terrin was aware she wasn't young anymore and was extremely blessed with intelligence. So before she could say another word he said, "Right come on you, let's get busy listing the stocks," gently lifting her off him and kissing her forehead before walking off.

Suddenly, life had become eery for Terrin Hawk and from that moment he was no longer playful and fun loving. His mind was overtaken by worry, the thought they were going to lose the house and the dominant, overbearing vision of his innocent little sister's face which he imagined to bear an even more intense expression of worry and stress. His troubled mind seemed to be multiplying everything by ten and intensifying the underlying worry, anxiety and subsequent stress to such an unbearable level that his concentration was being harassed and bullied as vivid visions of him taking drastic measures to rectify the problem began to regularly penetrate his mind. And everytime the thought of losing their home returned it would be quickly followed by an

imaginary bank robbery or other high value theft. The following few days were very difficult for Terrin as signs of the inevitable seemed to be bearing down on him from all angles – from loss making sales of stocks and machinery to a reduction of groceries and everyday supplies. As far as Terrin was concerned, his imaginary visions were flash-forwards of what he now knew he would have to do, and would be doing.

The following night was sleepless for Terrin as he reasoned with himself about how and what he felt he must do. Although his sleep was interrupted all night he was able to think and decided what action he would take. He would be leaving for Los Angeles immediately and he decided to break the news to his family the following afternoon after dinner. Strangely, once he had made up his mind Terrin was able to sleep uninterrupted with total serenity the rest of the morning through.

At 10.45am Terrin was awoken by the sound of the tractor and other work going on at the farmhouse outbuildings. Terrin felt a lot more relaxed, stress free and in a weird way kind of happy. However, he was conscious that this was not due to the problems disappearing but rather that the stress and anxiety had almost disappeared.

Terrin was now focused and partially excited like an explorer about to embark on an adventure. He had slight feelings of doubt and insecurity but Terrin was easily able to override these with ‘necessity’ and the vision of his young sister’s wary expression, which acted as a sort of adrenaline boost for confidence and drive. When it arrived, dinner time was unusually quiet, to the point that Terrin considered postponing his announcement. However, a slight glance at his beloved little sister silently eating her meal with straight faced intensity struck him like a lightning bolt. The vision of her worried expression clicked something in his mind and great anger began to rise aggressively in his heart, mind and soul. Almost involuntarily he heard himself blurt out loudly, ‘I’m leaving!’ As if in shock everyone at the dinner table remained totally silent. Long enough for Terrin to wonder if he had actually said it or imagined he said it. His thoughts were then suddenly interrupted by his father who said, without looking up, while cutting meat on his plate, “Where you going son?” Terrin replied, “The city.” As he looked and noticed for the first time that his sister Taryn had a look of dread and horror on her face as the family stared at him as they ate.

Terrin’s father, Thomas said, “Which city, LA?”

Terrin replied, “Yep.” Thomas said, “All they got in LA is gang bangers and drugs and Hollywood riches taking em. What you going there for, son?”

Terrin replied, “To work. I figure I got more chance to help save our home by working in the city.” Thomas asked, “What you gonna do?” Terrin replied, “Anything and everything. Hell, I will probably end up with three jobs, days,

nights and weekends. I love this house and we are not losing it.”

Thomas quickly said, “We are all trying to avoid that but for now let’s just enjoy our meal, you and I can talk about this later, son.”

Taryn suddenly said in an aggravated tone, “Terrin, you gotta take me with you, Terrin!” But as soon as Terrin began to explain why that could not happen Taryn got up and ran out of the dining room in tears.

Terrin went after his little sister to comfort her but all she would say is, ‘You have to take me with you,’ over and over. He promised her that he would Skype her everyday and visit on weekends. Taryn wasn’t taking it well, after all it would be the first time in their lives they would be separated. Terrin decided to leave on Friday so that he could use the weekend to settle into a motel. Over the weekend he hoped that Taryn would get used to the idea of him leaving. Over the next few days, however, she tried instead to talk him into staying.

When Thursday arrived Taryn appeared to go into overdrive in her attempts to disrupt Terrin from leaving. However, he kept reminding her that they would see each other and speak everyday on Skype and that he would visit as often as possible. This seemed to calm her down. That night Terrin packed a few sets of casual clothing, his only suit and some underwear, sneakers and a pair of shoes in his suitcase.

He pooled together all of this savings from hiding places and counted it. It came to \$3,890. Terrin also had several thousand dollars in his savings account, but for the meantime he wanted to leave that untouched in case it was needed to help the house. Everything was packed and Terrin went to bed.

The following day arrived and Terrin said his goodbyes and after he had placed his suitcase in the family saloon his father, Thomas, began the drive to the airport. The drive was mostly silent apart from Thomas saying, “Son, make sure you keep safe out there. Don’t get yourself involved with the wrong type of people, there’re a lot of crazies out there!” Terrin replied, “I know dad, I’m just going to work and earn as much as I can – I don’t care to meet people.”

They soon pulled into 3rd Street, Highway 55, along Deinhard Lane and into the airport, which was situated on the southside of McCall. Terrin and his father exited the vehicle and his father walked around to the trunk, removing Terrin’s suitcase. He turned to his son, saying simply, ‘Keep in touch and look after yourself’ whilst half embracing Terrin with his arm around Terrin’s shoulder and neck. Terrin took his suitcase and started walking towards the McCall Air reception area, then turned back saying, “See you soon, dad. Tell Taryn and Brett I will call them soon as I’m settled.”

Terrin booked himself in and was soon in a plane taxiing down the runway on a journey towards the unknown. Following the short flight, Terrin was

mesmerised as he took in the extremely busy and fast pace of LA.X Airport. He managed to get directions to the airport taxi bay. Outside the airport he saw a young black man in his 20s wearing short dreadlocks in a ponytail. He asked him if he knew which taxis were reserved or for hire. The man replied, "If you're looking for a taxi to hire, problem solved. I'm a taxi and I'm for hire!" Terrin replied, "Okay, that's cool."

The man said, "This way, please," and led Terrin to his green and white taxi cab, which had a roof sign saying 'Taxi' in large letters with call numbers either side. He walked Terrin to the trunk, lifted it up and gestured for Terrin's suitcase, which he carefully placed in the trunk. He then told Terrin to get in and asked Terrin the destination.

Terrin replied, "To be honest with you, I'm not that sure, I've come to LA to look for work. I need to find a reasonably cheap motel to stay."

The taxi driver asked, "Where you come from?"

Terrin replied, "A small town called McCall."

The taxi driver replied, "Yea, I've heard of it, it's a country town aint it?"

Terrin answered, "Well you can say that."

The taxi driver said, "Hey, man, look my name's Jackson," reaching over with his right hand, which Terrin shook and said, "Terrin, Terrin Hawk."

Jackson continued, "It's nice to meet you Terrin! Welcome to LA. I'm gonna help you out but I need to know what you're looking for, something cheap or dirt cheap? Believe it or not there's a big difference in LA! Dirt cheap got a lot of crime so you need to know..."

Terrin replied, "Somewhere reasonable, not too expensive and not too cheap, say anything up to \$350 a week."

Jackson replied, "I think you will be just fine in my hometown of Watts. As long as you just keep yourself to yourself and mind your own business, you will be fine like me. I mean everywhere has gang bangeres and crime if you know what I mean, but I just keep out of its way and I've been fine."

Terrin said, "Sounds good. That will do!"

Jackson stated in a raised voice, "Watts it is." as he fired up the engine, checked his rear view mirror and swung out towards the airport exit. Within a few minutes they were cruising along the freeway towards Watts.

Sunset began to take hold as Terrin took in all the scenery, while he and Jackson conducted small talk. After 20 minutes on the freeway Jackson started to veer off the main freeway and declared that they were nearly there. The small talk continued and as Jackson was talking about his focus and just providing for himself and his wife and daughter, Terrin peered over the edge of the freeway bridge and saw a dead end road. On the side of the last building there was a massive yellow motel sign. Terrin asked Jackson to look at it and asked where it was. Jackson replied, "That's just part of the area."

Terrin asked if it was in Watts county and Jackson confirmed this. Terrin said,

"Can you take me to that motel?"

Jackson said, "Yes, of course. It's near to where I was heading anyway."

It wasn't much longer before they turned into the dark end of a terrace street. Jackson slowed down and brought the taxi to a stop outside the motel. Terrin stated, "I better go and check they got a room first before you leave."

Jackson agreed before Terrin left the taxi and slowly climbed the steps after crossing the pavement. Terrin could see into the adjacent street facing windows and could make out the flicker of a television in the slightly darkened room. He rang the doorbell while looking through the door's glass panel into the amber lit reception hall. After a while and no answer Terrin rang the bell again, he also reached over and tapped on the nearest part of the street facing window. After a few seconds Terrin saw another light come on deeper down the reception corridor before a short old man with a balding hairline appeared and sleepily ambled along while rubbing his eyes before opening the door.

"Hi, how can I help you?"

Terrin told the man that he had seen the motel sign from the freeway and he needed a place. The old man replied, "I got three nice rooms for you to choose from; one double and two singles. Why don't you come in?"

Terrin said, "Yea, okay, but I got a taxi waiting. I just wanted to make sure there was a place available before I let him go."

The old man said, "Yea, you can let him go."

Terrin turned and quickly descended the steps in twos and ran to the taxi, opened the door, leaned down and told Jackson there was a room. Jackson got out of the taxi and quickly walked around to the trunk, whilst saying in a friendly, jokey tone, "I wish you all the best, all the best Mr Hawk! That will be fifty bucks," as he passed Terrin his suitcase. As Terrin prepared the fare, Jackson said, "Remember to mind your business and stick to good people."

Terrin agreed as he passed Jackson his fare. Jackson said, "Listen, if you ever need a lift or any kind of help or advice while you're here just call my HQ and ask for me, the number's 555 1810." He also pointed to the taxi sign with the same numbers. Lastly, Jackson said, "So long," as he got into his taxi and pulled away.

Terrin picked up his suitcase and watched Jackson turn his car around as he left and waved. Terrin began climbing the steps. The old man, who looked like he was in his early sixties ushered him into the reception hall towards the desk.

The old man said, "The name's Chuck! What's your name, son?"

"My name's Terrin Hawk."

Chuck replied, "Where you from, son, coz you sure ain't from round here?"

Terrin replied, "I'm from a town called McCall."

Chuck said, "Oh, a country boy! What brings you out here son?"

Terrin replied, "Work, I'm looking for work."

“What kind of work you do, son?” Chuck asked as he prepared some paperwork. Terrin replied, “I’m looking for any type of work, I have an emergency need to earn as much as I can.”

Chuck said, “Okay, if I can help or direct you, we will talk about that later, in the meantime can you fill in this form?” He passed a clipboard to Terrin and said, “When you finished signing I will show you the rooms. All are fully fitted with amenities, fridge, cook top, kettle, TV and phone.”

Steve | *Poetry and Memory*

Poetry and memory are inextricably linked, from the mnemonic forms of Ancient Greek poetry, written in rhyme to be remembered, through the rote learning of school days and on to the more raucous rhythms and anthems of folk poetry, football chants, song lyrics and those dirges and ditties that do the rounds of bar room bawdery.

Poetry keeps memories alive across time. Poetry is sometimes seen as 'high' culture, not for the likes of us, those ditties and dirges may not even be considered 'real' poetry. However, poetry itself knows no class, it insinuates itself where it will, cropping up in the cadence of everyday speech, tripping off the tongue, beatboxing the airwaves, slipping through the boundaries of high and low, and as it does it evokes memory. This is certainly the case with Steve's poem, which brings together the work of an award-winning poet, Saxon White Kessinger, with the folk philosophy of the building site. Thinking back four decades, Steve recalls the poem, *The Indispensable Man*, taught to him at the top of a crane tower in the middle of a working day. With no pen and paper in easy reach, Steve memorises the poem as he descends the tower, one rung at a time. Forty years later, the poem still remains and with it come the memories and a sure and certain wisdom that connects us all.

Remembering *The Indispensable Man*

My story begins when I was in my early twenties. I was working on a building site as a Site Technician. One day the Site Agent told me to spend some time with the Tower Crane Operator.

I took it upon myself to climb up to the top of the tower crane to join Mike the Tower Crane Operator.

It was whilst I was up the crane that Mike recited to me the poem *The Indispensable Man*. Mike enjoyed telling me his 'story' in his strong Liverpudlian accent. I had no pen and paper with me. I had to listen carefully to his recital.

After 20 minutes I returned to the site officer where I obtained pen and paper and carefully wrote the poem down for the first time.

In the past forty years, for now I am 62 years old, I have recited the poem to certain individuals as I have seen fit and proper.

On the accompanying page I have written the poem for good measure.

I have found over a number of years the poem has come to my 'service' at various circumstances in my adult life.

The Indispensable Man

*Sometime when you are feeling important
Sometime when your ego's in bloom
Sometime when you take it for granted
that you are the best qualified man in that room
Take a bucket and fill it with water
Put your hands in up to your wrist
Take them out and then note what remains
Is the measure of how you will be missed
You may splash all you please as you enter
You may stir up the water galore
But stop just for one moment and the water
will return just as before
The moral of this poem is simple
Just try the best you can
Just remember that there is no "Indispensable man".*

Masterclass Tutors

Nathan Filer

Nathan Filer is a qualified mental health nurse. *The Shock of the Fall*, his novel about the life of a young man grieving the loss of his brother, has sold over half a million copies in the UK, was a Sunday Times bestseller and translated into 30 languages. It won The Costa Book of the Year, The Betty Trask Prize, The National Book Award for Popular Fiction and The Writers' Guild Award for Best First Novel. He has written for the Guardian and the New York Times. His BBC radio 4 documentary, *The Mind in the Media*, which explored portrayals of mental illness in fiction and journalism was shortlisted for a Mind Media Award. He's currently a Reader in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University.

Swagata Ghosh

Swagata Ghosh worked as a journalist on two continents before joining Bath Spa University. It was during her time as a reporter in India and later as editor in the North West of England that she found her research calling, exploring Indo-European history through transnational writing. Her recently completed novella *Noel Bibi* explores ideas of home and migration along the cultural fault-lines of 18th century Bengal through the eyes of six European women. Swagata writes regularly for the National Geographic Traveller and other leading news and web publications in Britain, India and the Middle East. She has taught creative writing at the National Institute of Design, India. Swagata visited HMP Guys Marsh in 2018 to talk about her writing and discuss techniques of pitching in Publishing.

Emily Koch

Emily Koch is an award-winning journalist and author. Her debut novel *If I Die Before I Wake* has been described by The Guardian as “a debut to be reckoned with” and The Daily Mail as “exhilarating”. It is a psychological mystery told from the perspective of a man with locked-in syndrome, who discovers that the accident which put him in hospital was no such thing – someone tried to kill him. It was shortlisted for the Crime Writers' Association Ian Fleming Steel Dagger award, longlisted for Authors' Club Best First Novel Award, and selected as a Waterstones Thriller of the Month. Emily visited HMP Guys Marsh in 2018 to talk about her work and discuss the writing aspirations of the SW XPress participants.

Robin Mukherjee

Robin Mukherjee has written extensively for television, film, radio and the stage. He has also published both a novel and a book on screenwriting. He has won numerous international awards for his work, and has been nominated for a BAFTA. His first feature film won the Audience Prize at the London Film Festival, his most recent film, *Lore*, was Australia's official entry to the Oscars. He teaches Scriptwriting at Bath Spa University.

Lucy Sweetman

Lucy Sweetman is a Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University. Her research is focused on memoir, the literary essay, and using creative writing to respond to and make sense of national and global political events. Lucy also researches and writes about teaching and learning in higher education. Before coming to Bath Spa University, Lucy spent more than 20 years working in the voluntary sector with vulnerable and marginalised young people.

Project Partners

Bath Spa University

This has been an exciting opportunity to work in partnership with people in and outside the university. The project has brought together academics and specialists from the subjects of Criminology, Creative Writing, Publishing, Film and TV at Bath Spa University with practitioners and writers from HMP Guys Marsh. The potential of creative writing has been realised in a multi-dimensional collaboration which reflects a key commitment at Bath Spa: to encourage flexible multi-disciplinary engagement. Creative writers have been taken into prison via the medium of film. Workshops have developed participants' confidence, skills and abilities. An anthology has enabled creative expression and given people voice. This has helped build connections to a world that is often cut off from the wider community in a positive manner which can support desistance and rehabilitation.

Dr Catherine Morgan

Former Subject Leader, Criminology and Sociology

Weston College

Inspiration abounds in our prisons and I never cease to be amazed at the ingenuity and entrepreneurship from those we engage with. The written word however can inspire, it is akin to a seed germinating and some of the most ingenious pieces of writing can come from those who often hide away their talent for expressing themselves. As you read the enclosed stories they will jump off the page and transport you into a variety of worlds, with people who come alive and who suddenly become very real. These stories are about people, but also express the feelings of many and within it all there is a clue, a key to a future which we must ensure flourishes.

Dr Paul Phillips, CBE

Principal and Chief Executive, Weston College

HMP Guys Marsh

The education department at HMP Guys Marsh has a strong record of supporting and encouraging different ways of learning and the projects that facilitate this.

Known as 'Ella's Writing Course' between four and six learners have regularly attended this Saturday morning group for the past three months. 'Prisoners' became 'writers', homework was done, stories read and critiqued. They now speak knowledgeably about metaphors, similes and the value and impact of grammar and the English language in life and work. But more than this, the group developed further Life Skills, worked as a team, listened to each other and looked forward to the future and possible income generation.

None of this could be possible without the support and leadership of Ella Simpson and the feedback from each writer has spoken about the positive impact the course has had on them. Thanks to Ella, the Creative Writing Group and those in Education, HMP Guys Marsh.

Elva Longfoot

Education Tutor

Not Shut Up Magazine

Not Shut Up is delighted to be associated with the Guys Marsh masterclass series and anthology in partnership with Bath Spa University and Weston College. As the only national creative writing magazine for prisoners, *Not Shut Up* has spent over 10 years showcasing the very best of prisoner writing. There's a great deal of it, but opportunities for nurturing this talent and publishing the results have become fewer and poorer in recent years. With this in mind, we are delighted to support this new initiative which demonstrates again the literary talent and ability to be found in the prison estate. Connecting with the dynamism and potential of this current project, it is our hope that we will be able to share this work with a much wider audience in the very near future.

Ella Simpson

Chair, Board of Trustees

Stories are a way for individuals to escape, both writing or reading can set an individual free. Nowhere is this more important than in our prisons. Having the ability to read is hugely important but being supported to write a short story is an achievement many of us will never get to do. I am really proud of this piece of work and of all of those who have contributed to this book. I am also grateful to Weston College and Bath Spa University in supporting all at HMP Guys Marsh. My hope is that this is a stepping stone for more pieces of work like this and for those who have started to write to continue to do so – the work is simply inspirational!

IAN BICKERS

Deputy Director, Head of Education,
Employment and Accommodation
Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

